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## **Politics of Economic Blockade: A Case of Manipur Experience**

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### ***Abstract***

*Considering the significance and effects of economic blockade in the region, the paper tries to study various facades of issues surrounding politics of economic blockade in Manipur by highlighting recent example of the economic blockade undertaken by Naga or NSCN (I-M) and their cognate groups and Sadar hills Districthood Demand Committee or Kuki-Chin groups on the National High Way no. 2 and 37. The paper tries to argue that economic blockade in Manipur is not to be treated simply as means to pressurize the union and state government as claimed by NSCN and Kuki groups for it has its larger impact on the normal life or against the Right to life of the people in the state particularly the community settling in the valley. It also, however, suggests that the impact of economic blockade extend to all the people of Manipur including the periphery people. The paper also addresses whether the economic blockade is legitimate or not. Therefore economic blockade is not simply an outcome of the policy failures of the state, but also a serious manifestation of ethnic conflicts which have been tormenting Manipur for the last few decades.*

*Key words: Economic Blockade, Ethnic Conflict, Civil Society, National Highway, Territorial Integrity, Manipu*

Economic Blockade, a means used by pressure groups/interest groups or civil society to push through specific demand, is often experienced in India, particularly North East region. It is taken to be a quite effective means especially because of the fact that the states in the region are mostly land-locked. Particularly, this affects Manipur, the land of diversity in terms of ethnic groups, in vulnerable terms. In fact, the term economic blockade is not a recent term in the region. The word is very familiar as well as recognizable means of assertive,

re-assertive and reaction issues of the present day politics. Most of the states of North-East India is geographically located in hilly region and composed of land-locked states. Only the Brahmaputra and the Barak rivers provide the opportunity of water transport while these rivers are not so much important for transportation in the region. All the states of North- East India depend on rail line and land road for transportation of goods and passengers. Therefore, when there is an economic blockade that affects the rail line and land road transport it also

affects normal life of the people. We all know that the North-East India is a home to multi-ethnic communities. Thus, in the region, the problem of ethnicity has become quite a complicated issue. Though there are contextual differences in terms of the nature of conflicts, there is not a single state amongst the seven sisters that does not face the problem of ethnic conflict. The region has often been described as a “boiling cauldron” by many academicians and journalists because of various inflicting problems. Manipur, more particularly, in the last decade of the twentieth century was marked by violent ethnic clashes. First, there was the Kuki-Naga clash which started in 1992 and continued unabated till the end of 1998. It was followed by many other clashes including the one between the Meeteis and the Muslims in May 1993. In June 1995 again, there was a sudden eruption of Kuki-Tamil clashes in Moreh. In 1997-98 the peace of the state was shaken by Kuki-Paite clash, Kuki and Meetei had broken the age old friendship in 2005 and since then Manipur continues to be one of the most conflict prone states in the entire country (Koireng:2008). Besides, sequences of ‘Indo-Manipuri’ conflicts, since Manipur merge to Indian Union, have also created immeasurable violation of the Human Rights of common people. It is also seen that the civil society uses many means, from the Gandhian means (see Iron Lady Sarmila issue) to Machiavellian culture, for the protection of their human rights. The ‘boom tactics’ of the underground is not a serious pressure to the existing political and economic condition of the state. However, the Gandhian means can indeed be an effective pressure tactics to the social, political and economic condition of the state. Therefore, *economic blockade* is a fruitful means used in inter-intra relationships of ethnic groups and restoring the normal law and order situation.

Economic blockade is an effort to cut off economic related items and essential commodities of life like food clothe, supplies, medicine and communications from a particular area by force, either in part or totally (<http://www.wikiorg.in>). Most blockades historically took place at sea, with the blockading power seeking to cut off all maritime transport from other states to the blockaded country and vice-versa; although stopping all land transport to and from an area may also be considered a blockade. In Manipur, there is no opportunity of maritime transport since it is connected with other states only with land roads and air lifting. Therefore, any group who wants to call for an economic blockade can easily do so on the National Highways. Manipur has only three National Highways connecting with the rest of India and the neighboring Burma.

**Why blockade happens in Manipur and how?**

When an economic blockade happens in Manipur, it is mainly done by civil societies of either the Naga or the Kuki. In Manipur, all the National Highways pass through the Kuki and the Naga congested area. Thus, the economic blockade conducted by the Kuki group or the Naga group for their own interest is one of the effective means to lobby with the Government’s decision making process. Armed groups also describe it as the last option of **Pressure Tactics**. Economic blockades have been used as a means of agitation since the 1990s for any kind of contests between different ethnic communities and also for their assertive and re-assertive demands.<sup>1</sup>

The Naga civil organizations often launch economic blockades just to put pressure on the Union and the State government and urge that it is not against the spiral community. When the Naga peace process (NSCN-IM and Government of India) appeared to be floundering, an impetus to Naga demand was provided by the ill-timed

decision of Manipur Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh. In a hasty decision, Ibobi Singh declared June 18 as “State Integration Day”. That is the day in 2001 when at least 24 people were killed and dozens wounded in Manipur’s capital Imphal after police open fired to disperse agitators protesting against New Delhi’s decision to extend the jurisdiction of a ceasefire with the NSCN-IM beyond Nagaland to cover Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The Nagas

of Manipur perceive the government's move to commemorate the 2001 uprising as a challenge to their goal of integrating all Naga-inhabited areas of the region. However the citizens are of the opinion that the government should preserve and protect the territorial integrity of Manipur.

**Citizens’ Opinion on Issue of Manipur’s Territorial Integrity**

**Table No. 1**

Opinion on Manipur’s Territorial Integrity	All	Valley	Hills Naga	Hills Kuki
Manipur should remain the way it is	70	96	2	31
Naga dominated areas should be merged with Nagaland	11	1	51	6
Naga- dominated areas should be given Greater Autonomy within Manipur	12	1	42	24

1. All the figures are in % and rounded off; rest of the respondents had no opinion
2. Question asked in the survey: now I am going to read out few statements. Please tell me which of these you agree with most. (a) Manipur should remain the way it is without any division. (b) Naga dominated areas should be merged with Nagaland. (c) Naga-dominated areas should be given greater autonomy within Manipur.

Sources: Figures are based on post-poll survey carried out by Center for the Study of Development Society.

By this decision, Ibobi Singh wanted to make political capital in Manipur. But it also stirred emotions in Nagaland and in Naga dominated areas of Manipur. This decision provided the trigger for the blockade as it was contrary to the position of NSCN. The All Naga Students’ Association of Manipur (ANSAM) stated that the decision of Manipur government was against the Naga demand for the unification of all Naga-dominated areas, including those in Manipur. The organization started a

blockade to force the Manipur government to withdraw this decision.

On the issue of ‘*Muivah home-coming*’ and ‘*Autonomous District Council Election*’ conducted 57 day long economic blockade by Naga civil society, but non-Nagas claims that it is a torture to the entire Manipur and particularly the Meeteis. The issues were simultaneously rise up and brought out a political turmoil in Manipur because the underlying agenda of the issues are doubtful which can be against the interest of ethnic non-Naga. Remembering June 18, the people try to justify Muivah’s home-coming as serious threat to the state politics. Peace process and Naga unification as Naga right in the one side and other side non-Naga’s unique history, the protection of territorial integrity and law and order situation had been tussled in the local and national media. The permission of the Union Government is void and invalid (against the unitary federalism of India that order of the Union Government is rejected by state government on the interest of the state) and Mr. Muivah’s *home-coming*, which was approved by the Union Government, was blocked by State Government at the Mao

gate, a border town between Nagaland and Manipur. Here, the most remarkable thing is that the Secretary General of NSCN-IM, Muivah, was born at the Somdal village of Ukhrul District, Manipur. Still he has his relatives, brothers and sisters with memories of past childhood in romance. His last thirty years exile against India for campaign of the Naga unification movement is based in Nagaland. Therefore, the group NSCN-IM (fraction group of NSCN) is recognized in Manipur as *C-team insurgency*.<sup>2</sup> The recent demand of the peace talks should be concluded to an Alternative Arrangement for Manipur Naga itself out of imagine Greater Nagaland contiguous Naga dominated area of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. It was supported and welcomed by some Naga community that Muivah's home-coming is a canvass for the Naga unification in general of the fifty years the Naga blood and tear of untold story.

In 2010, the state government decided to conduct Autonomous District Council (ADC) election and consequently, the state government conducted the election. The ADC was postponed more than 20 years as a result of the demand for the implementation of *Six Schedules*. The Nagas are opposing the election, until their demand to amend the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act-third Amendment 2008 is fulfilled. They alleged the council's history, that the present Manipur District Council Act did not give enough monetary power to District Councils. In a statement expressed by Manipur Tribal Joint Action Committee (MTJAC) it will intensify the fight against holding elections to the District council under the New Act. With the same demand, ANSAM conducted an indefinite economic blockade along the National Highways.

The longest economic blockade was launched by Sadar Hills Districthood Demand Committee (SHDDC) staff by the Kuki people of Manipur in demand of

SARDAR HILLS to be converted into a full-fledged Revenue District. It is a surprising event in the world. On the issue, the committee conducted 127 days long economic blockade on the National Highways (NHW No. 2 and 37) of the state. The most interesting thing is that such economic blockade is criticized by another counter economic blockade of 127 days conducted by the Naga people. Manipur Tribal Joint Action Committee (MTJAC) opposed the District Council elections, the Kukis are part of the members. However, the Kukis welcome the election and this signifies the Kukis' desire for peace and development (Arun: 2011). The Kuki's demand is when Manipur attained Statehood in 1972, *The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971* was passed by the Parliament for the creation of Six Autonomous District Councils, in which Sadar Hills District was one, with the intention that all of them will ultimately become full-fledged districts, and however, Sadar Hills has not yet given its proper due. All the other Five District Councils have been converted into full-fledged districts more than thirty years ago, whereas, Sadar Hills is kept as part of the Senapati district till today. Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council had been functioning like other district Councils of Manipur under the same Act on equal status. The SHDDC had all along petitioned to all successive Governments to upgrade the Sadar Hills into a full-fledged district, but the same has not been fulfilled and the Act passed by the Parliament in 1971 has not been implemented in respect of Sadar hills alone (Memorandum submitted to Home Minister: August 16, 2011). On 5 August, the State Cabinet meeting discussed on the matter of granting Districthood to Sadar Hills and pronounced it a *genuine demand*. The cabinet, however, decided that an in-depth deliberation and wide ranging consultation

is essential before granting the demand. On 6 August SHDDC President, Ngamkhoaho Haokip blamed the editorial of a local English paper, Hueiyen Lanpao saying that the paper has needlessly provoked the people of Sadar Hills with its acerbic observation on the emerging issue. “We are thankful” for the provocation, he said with visible sarcasm. While opposing the cabinet decision, the ANSAM always refer to the Government of Manipur that there were many Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) signed between the Nagas of Manipur and the Government of Manipur and the Naga Students’ Federation (NSF) and the Government of Manipur during the then Chief Ministership of Rishang Keishing and W. Nipamacha Singh respectively on the proposed creation of the Sadar Hills district in the State of Manipur. The ANSAM in particular and the Nagas in general would like to reiterate the stance of the Government of Manipur that the Sadar Hills district should not be created by carving out or cutting away parts of the Naga inhabited areas in the State of Manipur. ANSAM also warns the Government of Manipur that they must not make any kinds of policies and plans to create unnecessary confrontation among the ethnic groups in Manipur. The formation of the proposed District should be through consensus and also with the consent of the Nagas failing which the Government of Manipur will have to face unwanted consequences. (See commentary on the issue of SHDDC)

### **Responses of the valley people**

A joint consultative meeting of civil society organizations was hosted by the Sadar Hills Districthood Demand Committee (SHDDC) at Kangpokpi on the raging issue of the Sadar Hills. The consultative meeting was participated by valley based organizations AMESCO, United NGO’s Mission Manipur, Senior

Citizens Manipur, HERICOUN, AMUCO, ICHAM, FREINDS, NIPCO, AMKIL, IPSA, UPF, All Manipur Tammi-Chingmi Apunba Nupi Lup, MAPI Council, UMO, DESAM, KSA and MSF. Talking to media persons after the meeting, SHDDC President, Ngamkhohao Haokip said that all the civil society organizations of Manipur which took part in the meeting expressed their support to the movement for the Sadar hills district. Though the meeting could not adopt any definite resolution, the civil society organizations agreed on doing whatever is possible to achieve the demand for a full-fledged Sadar Hills district before the 10th Manipur Legislative Assembly elections. If the Sadar Hills are given Districthood before the elections, the blockade will be called off automatically. Senior Citizens Manipur maintained from their side that giving the district status is something which cannot be denied to Sadar Hills. They also appealed to stop the blockade in the interest of the suffering masses. AMUCO too proposed to call off the blockade as it has resulted in untold misery to all sections of the population. However, FREINDS expressed their opinion in favor of carrying on the economic blockade. NIPCO highlighted the need for the re-adjustment of the Sadar Hills area so as to ensure peaceful coexistence of all communities. Regarding the question of whether the blockade should be lifted or not, NIPCO left it to the wisdom of SHDDC. They also underscored the need for collective responsibility in demanding the districthood status or imposing economic blockade. UPF observed that the Government is too strong-headed. They proposed to carry on the movement further until the demand is achieved under an understanding with the Government. Maintaining that the Government’s mentality does not deserve any faith, MAPI Council said that neither the blockade nor

other forms of agitation should be suspended.

**Consequences of the blockade**

Common people who are victims of the economic blockade appeal to the agitators to stop using blockade for getting their demands. The state government also appeals to the agitators not to use this means; however if the agitators do not heed to the government's warning the state has to exercise its power and suppress the conductors of the economic blockade by order of Warrant. Human Right Activist L.C Ginine Meetei submitted a plea to the Guwahati High Court (Imphal Bench) through the Right to information (RTI) demanding a clarification from the side of the state government on the issue of economic blockades in Manipur. Blockade conductors blame that both the State and the Central government are totally unmindful to their demands which they submitted through

memorandums. They gave the view that any kind of activities to get their demand became ineffective.<sup>3</sup> Thus, economic blockade becomes the only means to get the attention of the State and the Central government. Considering the hardships faced by the people of the state due to the economic blockade, the State Government had been trying to procure essential commodities on one side and also negotiating with the agitators to end the economic blockade. However, the problem of the scarcity of essential commodities due to around four months of economic blockade is not solved completely by the arrangements of the State Government. Many businessmen took the advantage of the economic blockade and sold the essential commodities at high prices. The following table shows the price of commodities during the economic blockade.

Table No.2

Item	Original prize	Prize during Blockade
Rice	Rs. 15 per kg	Rs.50 per kg
Potato	Rs. 17 per kg	Rs.55 per kg
Onion	Rs.25 per kg	Rs.80 per kg
Sugar	Rs. 15 per kg	Rs. 50 per kg
Milk	Rs. 80 per kg	Not available in market
Petrol	Govt. rate	Rs. 250 per liter
Kerosene	Govt. rate	Rs. 60 per liter
Diesel	Govt. rate	Rs. 100 per liter
Candle	Rs. 10 per packet	Rs. 30 per packet
Fish	Rs. 100 per kg	Rs. 280 per kg
Chicken(dress)	Rs. 180 per kg	Rs. 300 per kg
Pork	Rs.180 per kg	Rs. 250 per kg
Tomato	Rs. 80 per kg	Rs.150 per kg
Eatable oil	Rs. 80 per liter	Rs. 300 per liter
Dry fish		Rs.300 per kg
LPG	Rs 440	Rs.2000 (Not available)
Egg	Rs. 4 per one piece	Rs. 10
Bus fare	Increase triple times from the original fare	

Source: The data is collected from the News Paper and broadcasting by All India Radio Imphal, during the economic blockade conducted by Kuki and counter blockade by Naga on Sadar hills issue.



The recent blockade conducted by the Kuki State Demand Committee (KSDC) is great significant in the state politics of Manipur too. The blockade initiate to the last stage of NSCN-IM's peace talk with the Government of India. It is generally termed 'Final Conclusion' of the peace talk and the main demand of the Nagas is not possible to realize while an alternative arrangement may possibly be worked out. This Alternative Arrangement too is both very sentimental and emotional to the Nagas of Manipur that the main beneficiary for the peace talk must be classified into Nagaland Naga and Manipur Naga.<sup>4</sup> The prediction of the people to the agenda of the Alternative Arrangement will be some kind of undesired or curve the boundary in the future. People demanded that the terms and conditions of the Alternative Arrangement must be made open to the public. Civil societies particularly in the valley look at the situation to be restored the state boundary very attentively. Therefore civil organizations of the Nagas and non-Naga groups are standing into the mouth battle.

On the other hand, the KSDC put a pressure on the State and the Center Government that the Kuki home state must be realized first before the final settlement of Naga issue. KNO also warns the government that SoO will be closed and they will take up arms which are deposited at the designated camp, having two locker keys; one owned by the Indian Army and the other by the Kuki underground. KSDC also provide a map demanding the Kuki Homeland which is overlapping with the map of greater Nagaland. The map is not different from the map provided by the KNO in earlier days. The difference is that, unlike the Naga published map, the Kuki's doesn't cover the Kuki inhabited areas of other neighboring states. In regard the mapping too Kukis and non-Kuki civil organizations objected with each other

which can be seen in the media channels. KNO spokesman, Seilen Haokip asserts for "*the demand for creation of Zalengam, under the Constitution of India.*" Further he said that "*we are not anti-national, but merely asking for our political rights.*"<sup>5</sup> This organization KSDC which is not known in earlier time call indefinite blockade from 15 November 2012 for the full fledged statehood.<sup>6</sup> The United People's Front (UPF) which is a conglomerate of 9 armed groups of the Kuki declared that they would not support the proposed indefinite blockade call of the Kuki State Demand Committee. They also said that KSDC is an unknown organization.

After the public blockade started the state government invited KSDC for a talk on 20 November 2012. But it failed in arriving at a solution to end the blockade. Now the remarkable thing is that the issue of Kuki State demand is became national issue because of this public blockade and no one knows when the public blockade came to end. In academic circle, the non-Kukis questions arise whether the Kukis have the right to form a **Home State** in Manipur. They are migrant people from Burma and they have around 8 lacks populous out of the total population of the state where indigenous Kuki people are little according 2011 census. The public blockade that began to affect normal life in general and the Nagas issue are keeping silent and side-lined for a short time.

#### **Victim of the blockade:**

No one can able to describe the extreme troubles which are faced by common people during the economic blockade. No Oxygen and Live-Saving Drugs are available in the hospitals, and the doctors have to postpone any kind of operation minor or major, including emergency operations. The local productions are not sufficient to meet the demands for survival of the people in the state, Manipur. Therefore, Manipur is

required to import the goods to fulfill the Right to life of the people. The increasing price of household items during the blockade goes three times higher than the original price. This was the biggest problem of the people. Even the items which were available in the markets were not quality-controlled. Even though the blockade is over, the scarcity of primary requirement like food, petrol and its products are continues. In such situation no one be hope for peace which is, therefore, the main factor of causing *ethnic Diaspora* of Manipuri.

The capital of the state Imphal is at the center of the state and connects with the other district through either National Highway or State Highway. In Manipur, the most important National highway No.2 known as Imphal Dimapur Road pass through Senapati district, Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal district and touch Tengoupal sub-division of Chandel district before it meet her Moreh town and Tamu town of Burma. The National highway 37 known as Imphal Silchar Road pass through Imphal west, Tamenglong district and Jiribam sub-division of Imphal East and connects with Silchar town of Barak valley of Assam and National highway 150 known as Tiphaimukh Jasami road, starts from the Churhandpur district pass through Chandel district and joints Ukhrul district before meet Nagaland. Guite road passes through Imphal west, Bishenpur District, Churhanpur District and joints Aizwal of Mizoram. State Highway connects Ukhrul District Head Quarter (DH/Q) directly to state capital Imphal and Chandel (DH/Q) and Tamenglong (DH/Q) link by National Highway No. 2 and 37 respectively via State Highway.

**The blockade affected victims can discuss under the following District wise:**

The administrative unite of Manipur have nine districts. Four districts are based in Imphal valley and remaining five districts

are based in the hills.<sup>7</sup> Economic blockade is conducted mostly on Impha- Dimapur road and Imphal-Silchar road because it serves as the 'Life line' of Manipur. The goods imported from other states of India are first stationed at Imphal then the goods are distributed to other District Head Quarters (DH/Q). During the blockade truck drivers have to face high risk as they are target by the agitators besides bad road condition. The drivers do not want to drive without full security. Even though security is provided to them, they are personally threatened by the agitators. So, the question is what will be happen to them after the economic blockade is over? Which profession will they take up after the economic blockade? These questions are in their mind.<sup>8</sup>

All the trucks carrying public goods reach Imphal lately. One day journey might turn out to be more than one month, sometimes two months. All the stock soon gets empty due to withdrawal on demand without deposit. Businessmen collect the goods and deposit them in their own store and are supplied to 70% population-congested areas of Imphal valley which has only four districts. Besides, private *passenger bus*<sup>9</sup> drivers carrying goods earn a profitable sum of money during the economic blockade. So in Imphal valley had to face the scarcity of essential goods during economic blockade.

What about the remaining five hill districts? During the economic blockade, Senapati district and Ukhrul district gets the essential goods from Nagaland to their district H/Q without any disturbances. In Imphal valley the price of goods increases triple times from the original price, where as in such district head quarter price increase to a little amount.<sup>10</sup> Likewise Churhanpur district gets the necessary goods from Aizwal of Mizoram. From Burma, the goods are imported to Tengnoupal sub-division via Moreh where necessary items are available in cheap amount. Chandel district and



Tamenglong district have no direct road links with other states or country. The district H/Q of these two districts are connected with Imphal by National Highway and then by the State Highway. They have less population, occupied large space of land, bad road condition, and

lacked security arrangement. Private businessmen have not interested to invest in such areas. Even government gives less attention. Besides, they are engaged in a negotiation with the agitators to end the economic blockade.

### Land Holding Among the Kukis and Nagas in Manipur

Table No. 3

Sl. no	District	Kuki	Naga
1	Churachandpur	100	NIL
2	Chandel	75	25
3	Senapati	50	50
4	Tamenglong	35	65
5	Ukhrul	30	70

Source: T.S Gangte (2007) Problem of Ethnicity and Identity in Contemporary Manipur: A Scenario in Manipur Hills.

#### Ethnic people wise:

We also know that the important National Highways passes through the Kuki and the Naga congested areas. Jiribam sub-division is dominated by Meetei people but it is connected with Imphal through NH no. 37 (Imphal- Silchar Road). The Kukis and the Nagas settle next by next to the National Highways. The State Highway connecting the district H/Q of Chandel from Pallel town also passes through the Kuki and the Naga dominated areas. The State Highway connecting Tamenglong and Imphal is dominated by the Naga habited areas only. When an economic blockade happens, it may be conducted by either the Nagas or the Kukis, and the most affected people by the blockade is those who are settling at the periphery. Tamenglong and Chandel district is dominated by the Naga people. Saikul sub-division, Kangpokpi sub-division of Senapati district dominated mostly by the Kuki people is also affected by the economic blockade.

#### Un-affected area

Kakching sub-division of Thoubal district situated at the Imphal valley is a kind of *model village*. The people mostly belong to Schedule caste category, and are the descendant of Chakpa community.<sup>11</sup> They occupied large space of land area which is one of the very fertile areas in the state. People living in this part of the state enjoy high productivity in agricultural products. Dry woods for fire are also collected from the nearest foothills of the village. Villages at far away in the hills are not affected by the blocked in a sense that they can survive in primitive way of living.

#### Conclusion

In Manipur, three ethnic people, namely, Kuki, Naga and Meitei are in the conflict situation since last decade of the twentieth century. Such unwanted situations affect Manipur, the land of diversity in terms of ethnic groups. Of course, conflict between Naga and non-Naga is a serious problem. Sadar Hills and statehood of Kuki issue is also another headache to the non-Kuki groups in the state of Manipur. The conflict

between the Naga and the Kuki in 1990s is an unfortunate event not only in Manipur but also in the entire Northeast. Besides, there are many issues involving multi-ethnic groups which disturb the peaceful coexistence of the people in the state. Having different interests the ethnic groups used every means to lobby the state and central Governments' decision. Among the lobbies or means economic blockade is one of the simple, easy and effective means. No one knows where, when, and how, the issue of the economic blockade emerged. But frequent and long term economic blockade conducted by any group directly threatens the Right to Life of the entire people of Manipur. In another sense when economic blockade happens, it happens against the interest of other ethnic groups. It distresses all the people of Manipur, particularly people living in the periphery, i.e., the tribes. *"We feel the pain of people who are affected by the blockade. We express our regret on that. It is not only the valley people who are suffering. People in the hill districts are also suffering"* said David Choro, President ANSAM. Biju Kamei, a street Vendor from Tamenglong, does not know Bangla and Hindi properly. She sales her items in the street in the Premtala Street of Silchar town with limited customer. She wants to go to Imphal, where, the women get more empowerment.<sup>12</sup> Van drivers (school service) have to face every challenge during the blockade, especially to get petrol or diesel in the state. They cannot increase the fare though they have to buy the oil in high price. There is no increase in labor charge during the blockade. One could not even imagine the problems faced by the poor rickshaw puller during the blockade.

<sup>1</sup> There is many economic blockades in the state Manipur since Independence. Recent blockade are on the demand of ethnic interest that Naga wants to be member of

greater Nagaland and Kuki wants to be Sadar hills into full fledged district or Kuki State.

<sup>2</sup> C-Team insurgency is small type of insurgency which main demand is autonomy within the Indian constitution and now under the constitution follows cease fire or suspension of operation. Their based are mainly from outside Manipur for ethnic chauvinistic manner instead of united Manipur. (Sanajaoba: 2010)

<sup>3</sup> ATSUM, Position statement on our unresolved issues, May 31st 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Naga leaders express that the Naga issue would be resolve only by venture of the Nagaland people. Naga of Manipur would be decided for their own Manipur. Times of India, November 2 and 5, 1212

<sup>5</sup> The Sangai Express, November 3 2012

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. November 13 2012

<sup>7</sup> Four districts of valley are Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal and Bishenpur and hill district are Ukhrul, Chandel, Churcharpur, Senapati, Tamenglong

<sup>8</sup> Interview truck drivers running on NH.37

<sup>9</sup> Passenger buses are allowed to run during the blockade by staff of SHDDC.

<sup>10</sup> All India Radio time to time broadcast the price of the items which are available in the market. Personally I meet the situation around one month in Ukhrul town and Moreh town during the economic blockade.

<sup>11</sup> Chakpa is quite an early tribe inhabiting this land whose way of life was basically different from the rest of the people. At one time they were independent but later they were brought to the subjugation by the Meetei and to pay tributes to the Meetei King. Hence, they were given the name 'Loi' (Hodson 1908: 8-9) (Ibohal:1986)

<sup>12</sup> Interview conducted during the economic blockade in the Silchar town. The respondent is suddenly come across and talk by Manipuri language

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