

Tribalism and the naga society

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The Naga Hoho must review and revise its mandate with an aim to concentrate more on the pan- Naga rather than local issues affecting individual Naga tribes. There is plethora of organisations dealing with individual tribal issues.

Tribalism has taken its toll onto the Naga society. The Naga tribal community is plagued with inter-tribal disputes and individual tribal grievances. These have to be dealt with my respective tribal blocs / groupings. In such cases, the Naga Hoho or other apex tribal bodies should only intervene in case, the situation so warrants. Issues related to inter-bloc disputes could be referred to the Naga Hoho and the same could also be discussed in forums like the FNR and the Joint Naga Peace Mission. NTC must focus on safeguarding the interest of its associated tribes without getting into confrontationist mode with the Naga Hoho. The relationship between the two has to be collaborative and not hierarchichal.

The UNC must review its role and responsibility as an apex tribal body for Naga tribes of Manipur. It has to focus on garnering greater acceptability through transparency and unbiased outlook to generate greater confidence amongst the associated tribes. It must develop its own ideology and not blindly follow the dictates of NSCN(IM). The ZU and ZB must work towards ironing out their differences which could be facilitated by a neutral interim body. Tribal unity amongst the Zeliangrons must be restored through a collaborative process and not in an authoritarian manner.

Inclusion of the Kuki tribal blocs in the overall resolution strategy will increase the scope and acceptability of the final outcome of talks. In fact,

simultaneous talks involving the Kuki and Naga stakeholders on a single negotiating table moderated by respective eminent leaders and intellectuals may lend greater credibility to the final outcome. Such an arrangement is likely to address most of the grievances in respect of both the groups. Civil society and tribal organisations can play a significant role in not only being important stakeholders but also in facilitating such unique arrangement.

The government's stance on territorial integrity is valid to maintain India's international status in general and security in South East Asia in particular. The issue however, becomes more complex with the fact that there is a large Naga-inhabited area spilling contiguously into Myanmar. The issue of Greater Nagalim-sovereign or otherwise, as envisioned by the NSCN factions must also involve Myanmar talking at the same Naga peace process table. In this too, if the Naga tribal entities in Myanmar demand from the Myanmar government for an inclusive process involving the Indian tribes, the outcome could be more holistic and lasting. The Naga social entities like ENDO, ENPO and ENSF can play an important role in this regard. Continuous engagement has to be thus made with these organisations too to achieve desired inclusivity in the peace process as also post any concluding agreement / process in this regard.

The ENPO is a crucial entity in the border areas and has to be continuously engaged by both, the Government of India as well as the Government of Myanmar. It can act as a critical link between the Naga areas on both sides of the international border, and may facilitate in developing people to people contact thus establishing greater harmony and peace.