

Dynamics *of*
Democratic Instability
in MYANMAR

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I would like to thank my family, specially my Parent Tapan Das, Anita Das Elder brother Ronjan Das and life partner Susmita Das encouraging and having faith in me.

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Preface :

Myanmar stands as one of the most tragic paradoxes of our time — a nation blessed with rich cultural heritage, abundant natural resources, and a resilient people, yet repeatedly trapped in cycles of hope and heartbreak. The title **Dynamics of Democracy and Instability in Myanmar** reflects this painful reality. Since gaining independence in 1948, Myanmar (formerly Burma) has oscillated between fragile democratic experiments and prolonged military authoritarianism. The brief democratic spring that began in 2011, symbolized by Aung San Suu Kyi's rise to power, raised global expectations. However, the military coup of February 2021 brutally shattered those aspirations, plunging the country into a devastating civil conflict that continues to claim thousands of lives.

This book explores the complex interplay of forces that have made genuine democracy so elusive in Myanmar. It examines the structural, historical, ethnic, economic, and geopolitical dynamics that fuel persistent instability. From the deep-rooted dominance of the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) and its self-proclaimed guardian role, to the challenges of managing ethnic diversity across numerous armed groups, the analysis reveals why democratic institutions have struggled to take root. The book further investigates the role of external actors — China, India, ASEAN, and Western powers — whose competing interests often complicate rather than resolve the crisis.

The central argument of this work is that Myanmar's instability is not merely a domestic failure but a reflection of deeper contradictions inherent in transitioning from authoritarian rule to democracy in a multi-ethnic, post-colonial society. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for Myanmar but for scholars and policymakers grappling with similar challenges across Asia and Africa.

Drawing upon extensive field observations, interviews, official documents, and theoretical insights from comparative politics and international relations, this book aims to provide a balanced yet critical account. It is written with the conviction that only through honest analysis of the past and present can a sustainable path toward peace, federal democracy, and national reconciliation emerge in Myanmar.

As the people of Myanmar continue their courageous resistance against oppression, it is my sincere hope that this book contributes meaningfully to both academic understanding and the broader global discourse on democracy and resilience in the face of authoritarian resurgence.

Acronym

A19	ARTICLE 19
AAM	ActionAid Myanmar
AAR Japan	Association for Aid and Relief, Japan
ABC	Agency for Basic Community Development
ABCD	Action Based Community Development
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ACRD	All Country Agency for Rural Development
ACS	Agape Community Service
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ADRA-Myanmar	Adventist Development and Relief Agency Myanmar
AEPRY	Agency for Education of the Poor Rural Youth
AFP	Action for Public
AFXB	Association François-Xavier Bagnoud
AHRN	Asian Harm Reduction Network
Alliance	International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Amara	Amara Foundation
AMDA	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
American Red Cross	American Red Cross
AMMT	Aye Mya Myitta
AN	arche noVa Initiative for People in Need
APOPO	Anti-Persoonsmijnen Ontmijnende Product Ontwikkeling: Anti-Personnel Landmines Detection Product Development

ARBRO	ARBRO River Basins Research Organization (Yangon)
ASA	Action for Social Aid – Pyapon
Australian Red Cross	Australian Red Cross
AVI	Australian Volunteers International
AVSI	Association of Volunteer Service International
AWB	Airway Bill
AYO	Ar Yone Oo Social Development Association
AYTMSWA	Ar Yone Thit Myanmar Social Workers Association
BAJ	Bridge Asia Japan
BANCA	Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association
BBC-MA	BBC Media Action
BC	British Council
BDA	Border Areas Development Association
BDM	BadeiDha Moe – Civil Society Organization
BGF	Body Guard Foundation
BH	BRAVEHEART Foundation
BI	Burnet Institute for Medical Research & Public Health
BL	Bill of Landing
BLO	Better Life
BORDA	Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association
BPG	Beneficial Partner Group
BRAC Myanmar	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee – Myanmar
BUD	Better and Undisruptive Delivery Support
BuildingMarkets	Building Markets
CACH	Caritas Switzerland

CAD	Community Agency for Rural Development
CARD	Community Association for Rural Development
CARE	CARE International in Myanmar
CARITAS-Thai	Caritas Thailand
CDA	Community Development Association
CDEC	Comprehensive Development Education Centre
CDN	Consortium Of Dutch NGO's(The Netherlands)
CFN	Child Focused Network
CFSI	Community and Family Services International
CHAD	Community Health And Development
Chemonics	Chemonics International
Christian Aid	Christian Aid
COM	Charity-Oriented Myanmar
COMPASS	COMPASS Community Development
Cord	Cord
CPI	Community Partners International
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
Cuso	Cuso International
CVT	Center for Vocational Training
CWS	Church World Service- Asia Pacific
DAI	Development Alternative Inc (USAID - Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)-funded program)
Danmission	Danmission
DCA	Department of Civil Aviation
DCA	DanChurchAid
DFAT	DFAT Australia (Formerly - AusAID)
DFID	Department for International Development
DM	DEAR Myanmar
DOTP	Department of Trade Promotion
DPDO	Disabled People's Development Organization
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRD	Department of Rural Development

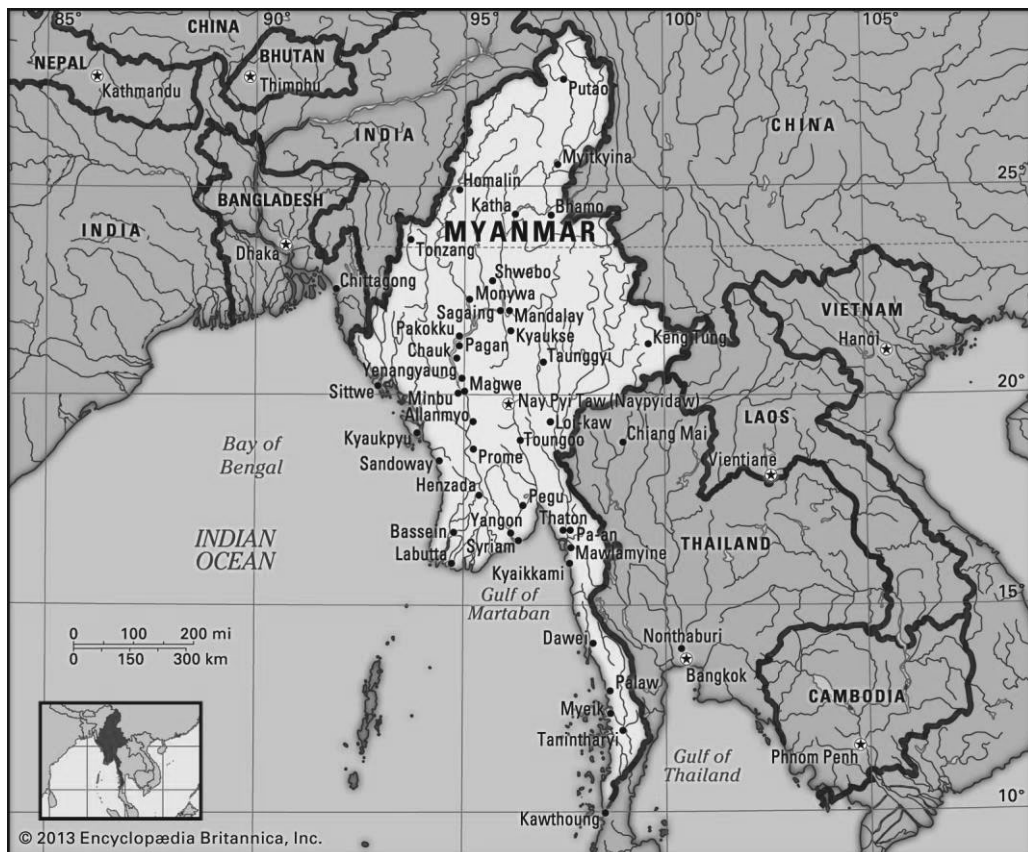
DRK	Danish Red Cross
EBO	Euro Burma Office
ECDC	Eden Centre For Disabled Children
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
ECLOF	Environmental Conservation and Livelihood Outreach Foundation
EcoDev	EcoDev
EdM	Entrepreneurs du Monde
EDNA MM	Entrepreneurship Development Network Asia – Myanmar
EERi	Environmental and Economic Research Institute
Egress	Egress Myanmar
EKTA	Enviro-Klean Techno-Associates
Embassy of Switzerland/ SDC	Embassy of Switzerland / Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
EMB-Australia	Australia Embassy
EMB-Bangladesh	Bangladesh Embassy
EMB-BD	Brunei Darussalam Embassy
EMB-Brazil	Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil
EMB-Canada	Embassy of Canada
EMB-China	Embassy of the People's Republic of China
EMB-Denmark	Diplomatic Mission of Denmark
EMB-Egypt	Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
EMB-Germany	Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
EMB-Indonesia	Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
EMB-Israel	Israel Embassy
EMB-IT	Embassy of the Republic of Italy
EMB-JP	Japan Embassy
EMB-Kr	Embassy of the Republic of Korea
EMB-Kuwait	Embassy of the State of Kuwait

EMB-Lao	Embassy of the People Democratic Republic of Lao
EMB-Norway	Diplomatic Mission of Norway
EMB-Pakistan	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
EMB-Philippines	Embassy of the Republic of Pakistan
EMB-Russia	Embassy of the Russian Federation
EMB-Serbia	Embassy of the Republic of Serbia
EMB-Singapore	Embassy of the Republic of Singapore
EMB-Sri Lanka	Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
EMB-Turkey	Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
EMB-US	Embassy of United States of America
EMB-Vietnam	Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
EMW	East Meets West
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAO ESFSP	Food and Agriculture Organization
fauna-flora	Fauna & Flora International (Myanmar Programme)
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FFA	Foster Family Association
FFH	Friends for Health
FFSS	Free Funeral Services Society
FHDP	Forever (Humanitarian and Development Projects)
FHI 360	Family Health International
FI	Food Itmes
FNF	Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit
FORM	Friends of Rainforests in Myanmar
FREDA	Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association
FSD	Foundation Suisse Deminage

FSWG	Food Security Working Group
GDI	Gender and Development Initiative
GEN	Gender Equality Network (Formerly Women Protection Technical Working Group)
GH	Good Hands
GIZ Myanmar	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GNI	Good Neighbors International (Myanmar)
GOLD	GOLD Myanmar
GPRS	General Pocket Radio Service
GREEN	Grassroots Empowerment and Ecosystem Nurturing
GRET	Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques
GRT	Gross Register Tonnage
GWM	Grace Works Myanmar
H.I	Humanity International
HAI (M)	HelpAge International (Myanmar)
hbs	Heinrich Boell Stiftung
HCG	Humanitarian Care Group
HDC	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
HELVETAS	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
HF	High Frequency
HOPE	HOPE International Development Agency
HP	Human for Peace
HPA	Health Poverty Action
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICAP	ICAP at Columbia University
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center

IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	Instrument Landing System
IMS	International Media Support
INGO	International Non Government Organization
INGO Forum	INGO Forum
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IOM	International Organization for Migration
Ipas	Ipas
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRD	International Relief and Development
IRI	International Republican Institute
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IWT	Inland Water Transportation
IYCA	Interfaith Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (IYCA-Myanmar)
JF	Ju Foundation
JH	Japan Heart
Jhpiego	Jhpiego - an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JOICFP	Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning
JSI	John Snow Inc. (JSI Research & Training Institute)
KBC	Karen Baptist Convention
KVA	Kilo Volt Ampere
LCA	Logistics Capacity Assessment
MM	Myanma Railway

MOGE	Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise
MPA	Myanma Port Authority
MPPE	Myanmar Petroleum Product Enterprise
MRMA	Myanmar Rice Millers' Association
MSU	Mobile Storage Unit
MT	Metric Tons
Natala	Myanmar Ministry of Border Affairs
NDB	Non Direction Beacon
NFI	Non Food Itmes
NGO	Non Government Organization
Oikos	Istituto Oikos
RoRo	Roll On Roll Off
RRD or DRR	Rescue and Resettlement Department
St	Street
TEU	Twenty Foot Equivalent Unit
The Union	International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)
Tsp	Township
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
VHF	Very High Frequency
VOR	VHF Omnidirectional Radio Range
VSAT	Very Smart Aperture Terminal
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WCO	World Customs Organization
WH	Warehouse
YGN	Yangon



MYANMAR MAP

References: <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/>

1.

Introduction :

Myanmar occupies a peculiar and troubling position in the contemporary study of democratic transitions. Few nations in the modern era have oscillated so dramatically between the promise of political liberalization and the brutal reassertion of authoritarian power. From the junta-controlled decades of the late twentieth century to the cautious democratic opening of the 2010s, and ultimately to the catastrophic military coup of February 2021, Myanmar presents a laboratory of democratic fragility — a case study in how deeply structural, historical, and institutional forces can conspire to undermine even the most celebrated transitions toward self-governance. Understanding why democracy in Myanmar remains so profoundly unstable requires moving beyond surface-level political events and engaging with the complex architecture of forces that have shaped the country's governance crisis across generations.

At its most fundamental level, Myanmar's democratic instability is a product of a state that has never fully resolved the foundational question of who belongs to it. Myanmar is home to over 135 officially recognized ethnic groups, including the Bamar majority alongside the Shan, Karen, Kachin, Rakhine, Chin, Mon, and dozens of other communities, many of whom have maintained armed resistance against the central

government for decades. The post-independence vision of a unified Burmese nation was imposed primarily by and for the Bamar ethnic majority, leaving peripheral communities systematically marginalized within the constitutional and political order. This ethnic fragmentation is not merely a social characteristic — it is a political fault line that has been deliberately exploited by the Tatmadaw, Myanmar's military, as a justification for sustained intervention in civilian governance. The logic of security, of holding a fractious and fragile country together, has been the perpetual alibi of authoritarian rule.

The Tatmadaw itself stands as perhaps the single most consequential variable in Myanmar's democratic equation. Unlike militaries in many post-colonial states that gradually subordinated themselves to civilian authority, Myanmar's armed forces developed an entirely separate institutional identity — a state within a state — replete with its own economic enterprises, educational institutions, social hierarchies, and ideological self-conception as the only true guardian of national sovereignty. The 2008 Constitution, drafted under military supervision, enshrined this parallel power by reserving twenty-five percent of parliamentary seats for military appointees, granting the Tatmadaw autonomous control over key security ministries, and establishing a legal threshold for constitutional amendment that effectively required military consent. Democracy was therefore not introduced into Myanmar as a blank slate; it was introduced into a constitutional architecture designed to contain and limit it, ensuring that electoral outcomes could never fundamentally threaten military prerogatives.

The brief democratic experiment that followed the 2010 and 2015 elections illuminated these tensions with striking clarity. The landslide electoral victory of the National League for Democracy and the ascent of Aung San Suu Kyi to the position of State Counsellor was, on the surface, a remarkable democratic achievement. Yet the NLD government

operated under extraordinary constraints, unable to control the military, unable to end the ethnic armed conflicts in the country's borderlands, and increasingly unwilling — or unable — to confront the Tatmadaw's conduct, most devastatingly its genocidal campaign against the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine State from 2017 onwards. The international community's disillusionment with Suu Kyi during this period reflected a broader misunderstanding of the structural limits within which the civilian government operated, even as it also raised legitimate questions about democratic leadership, human rights accountability, and the moral costs of political compromise.

The coup of February 1, 2021, in which the Tatmadaw arrested Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and scores of other elected officials, dissolved the civilian government, and declared a state of emergency, was in one sense a shocking rupture — and in another, a predictable reassertion of an institutional logic that had never fully receded. What has followed is among the most violent civil conflict in contemporary Southeast Asia, with mass protests brutally suppressed, a parallel civilian government formed in opposition, and armed resistance spreading across the country. The coup did not merely reverse a democratic transition; it revealed that the transition had always been conditional, always subject to veto by an institution that regarded electoral democracy as a temporary concession rather than a legitimate reordering of political authority.

This paper examines the dynamics of democratic instability in Myanmar through several interconnected lenses. It analyzes the structural inheritance of colonial governance and post-independence authoritarianism that conditioned Myanmar's political development. It interrogates the institutional design failures that allowed the military to retain dominant power throughout the democratic transition period. It considers the role of ethnic conflict and the unresolved question of

federalism in sustaining the conditions of political fragmentation that undermine democratic consolidation. And it reflects on the international dimensions of Myanmar's crisis — the roles of ASEAN, China, India, Western powers, and multilateral institutions — in either enabling or challenging the dynamics of democratic breakdown.

Myanmar's story is ultimately about more than one country's travails. It raises fundamental questions about the conditions under which democracy can take root, survive, and deepen in societies marked by deep ethnic diversity, powerful militaries with autonomous institutional interests, and colonial legacies that distorted the formation of state identity. As the post-coup resistance movement continues to evolve — generating new forms of popular mobilization, armed opposition, and alternative governance — Myanmar also poses urgent questions about what comes next when democratic transitions fail: not whether democracy can be restored, but on what terms, under what institutional arrangements, and for whom. The dynamics of instability, in other words, are not merely the story of a democracy lost. They may yet prove to be the difficult foundation on which a more inclusive and durable democratic order is eventually built.

2.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Southeast Asian countries having been liberated from colonial rule after the Second World War, adopted democratic constitutional governments. But within a short span of time, such democratic arrangements found to have collapsed and taken over by either military or semi-military rule. Burma is no exception to this characterization; From this point of view this chapter attempts to study the constitutional development and highlights the working of democratic government.

At the end of the Second World War, British government had clearly decided to accord full independence to Burma. As a result, the newly elected Prime Minister of Labour Government, Clement Attlee, categorically declared in the Parliament on 20th December 1946 of granting full independence to Burma. Subsequently, he had invited a delegation of Burmese representatives to London for the discharging smooth transfer of power. The people of Burma were provided with an opportunity to decide whether or not they wished to remain in the British Commonwealth. On 27th January 1947, a meeting of Burmese delegation was called to discuss the issue at length. The delegation under the leadership of Aung San met in London. The London meeting in January 1947 was an historic event. After long discussion the meeting reached to an agreement. Consequently, the pact of transfer of power was signed

between Prime Minister Attlee and Aung San on some conditions. The British government put conditions on Burmese leaders because of the issue of Minority groups. This issue came in the way of transfer of power. The minority groups: Shan, Karen, Kachin and Chin demanded separate state, as they felt that their interests in Union of Burma may not be protected. British government made clear to the Burmese delegation, that unless the minority issue is resolved it would not be possible to transfer of power to Burma. The minorities would be free to decide their future whether to join in the Union of Burma or secede from Burma. The British government openly supported the establishment of an independent Karen State. However, British did not support Shan for separate. Aung San appealed them to join in the Union of Burma. He said, "We shouted slogans 'our race', 'our religion', 'our language'. These slogans are out of dated now. What is race after all? What are its tests? We have in Burma many indigenous peoples; the Karens, the Kachins, the Shans, the Chins, The Burmese and others. In America, though the many people speak a common language, they spring from many stocks; there are British, the Italians, and other peoples but they have become assimilated and they identify themselves as 'Americans'. Thus, race does not have rigid values. Religion is not test either, for it is a matter of individual conscience, in Burma the majority are Buddhists but there are those who freely accept Christianity, Islam or animism. "Most of the minority groups responded positively to the appeal of Aung San. They desired to join the Union of Burma also assured co-operation to the interim Burmese Government. This historic agreement was known as 'Panglong Agreement. This pact was made between Aung San and the leaders of Minorities on 12th February 1947. It is possible that Aung San with his force of character and magnetic appeal might have made Burma what it was called, a union, but the task proved too difficult for U Nu, his successor. The Constitution which was inaugurated after independence had an article granting the ethnic people right of

succession after ten years i.e. 1958 specially Shans and Kayahs were given the right to secede ten years after independence, and their leaders were given special status. But this right has never been exercised though a lot of debate ensued. Even the ethnic minorities, up in arms against the Union Government for decades. This factor was the most responsible for military take-over in Burma. By resolving the issue of Burmese Minorities amicably, Aung San went to London with a document of pact. Hence, the conditions fulfilled and transfer of power to Burma found its way clean. Consequently, the programme of elections to the constituent Assembly was planned in April 1947. The British Government also declared that 'Governor's Executive Council' shall act as interim government under leadership of Aung San in order to implement the programme of constituting the constituent Assembly in May 1947. In April 1947, elections to the Constituent Assembly were held. Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League Party had swept the polls. This party had gained 172 out of 182 seats. Aung San, a nominated chairman of the Constituent Assembly, had put forward seven-point resolution before drafting 70 committee and he appealed to members of drafting committee to prepare the Constitution in the light of resolution. The resolution was as follows. "Burma would be sovereign, independent, democratic Republic. This Republic would also be known as Union of Burma. The Sovereignty would be in the hands of people. People are sovereign. This Constitution would guaranty all the citizens social, economic and political justice, it also guaranties, that the rights of the minorities would be protected The Assembly had elected twenty-seven members on drafting committee and was entrusted with the task of preparing the draft of the Constitution. The drafting committee had prepared the draft on 23rd May 1947. The constitution makes took maximum efforts to accommodate the seven basis points in the constitution. The nature of the constitution was discussed in the pages to come. Aung San's interim government was highly credited for preparing the constitution and particularly Aung San

gained great reputations as a mass leader among the Burmese people. However, the group within his party led by U Saw did not like the increasing influence of Aung San since the formation of the party. Consequently, U Saw had assassinated Aung San and his six colleagues of cabinet on July 19, 1947. "After the assassination of Aung San, U Nu became leader of the AFPFL and also chairman of the constituent Assembly. Under his leadership, the Assembly completed its remaining work and he went to London along with his team in October 1947 for the last settlement of transfer of power. An agreement was signed between British Prime Minister Attlee and Burmese 71 leader U Nu on 17th October 1947. This important treaty recognized as Burma as independent state called as the Republic of the Union of Burma, with effect from the decision of the parliament. A bill for the grant of independent Burma was moved in the British Parliament in the month of November 1947, the same bill accordingly passed by the Parliament and called 'Burma Independent Act' of 1948, Sir Hubert Raneer formally handed over charge to the first President a Shan Chieftain, the Sawbwa of Yaungghwe, Sow Shwe Thaik. Finally, Burma was declared as independent state on 4th January 1948. The day, on which the Burma declared as Independent State, the Constitution was made available for enforcement. The preamble was totally democratic one. The preamble of the constitution runs as follows: "We the people of the Burma, including the frontier areas and the Kaieni states, determined to establish in strength and unity a sovereign independent state, to maintain social order on the basis of eternal principles of justice, liberty and equality, and to guarantee and secure to all citizens justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship vocation association, and action; Equality of status of opportunity and before the law, in our Constituent Assembly this tenth day of Thadingyout waxing 1309 B.E. (Twenty Fourth Day of September, 1947 A.D.) do here by adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution. The philosophy of the 1947 Constitution was

influenced by the liberal thoughts. The liberal tradition provided the basic idea underlying the Constitution Sovereignty was resting in the hands of people. The rights and freedom of the people granted in the Constitution shows the impact of liberal thoughts. The Constitution reflected the philosophy of socialism. It guaranteed private property and private initiative, but it gave the state the right to limit foreign property and to expropriate with due compensation. The Constitution permitted nationalization of natural resources, water transport, rice export, and national financial institutions. Provision was made for national economic planning, state ownership of public utilities and state aid to economic organizations which are "not working for private property". The state was to concern itself with the raising the standard of living of its people and to be the most active agent in converting Burma in to 'Pyidawtha! or a Welfare State.' The Constitution had adopted a bi-carmiral Legislature and Parliamentary democracy. The creation of a parliamentary democracy embodied the cabinet system and the rule of law. The document contained guarantees for democratic rights of all citizens, irrespective of race, birth, religion and sex. The constitution also established a welfare state providing for individual rights of education, employment, health care and support for the aged. The government power was to be derived from process of popular participation the great values such as freedom, equality, and justice were another important pillar of the Constitution. All the power-making laws were vested in Parliament by the Article of 122 of the Constitution. All the agreements, pact, etc. entered by the government are to be rectified by the parliament. This constitution took adequate care for protecting the interest of the minority groups. These minority groups living in the mountain areas. The tribal groups like Karen and Shan were given the freedom to succeed from the Union of Burma after ten years. Though some observers were very critical about such separate constitutional arrangement, creating a chamber of Nationalities. Most of the Burmese

leaders were British educated and the constitution had impact of liberal traditions. The constitution consists of 14 chapters and 4 schedules. The first chapter provides the composition of governmental structure of federal state. The second chapter deals with the provisions of citizenship and fundamental rights of the citizens. The third chapter enumerates the welfare objectives of the government, directive principles of state. This chapter also enumerates the welfare objectives of the government, directive principles of state policy and values of social justice. The rights of citizens were protected through Constitutional provisions. Various writs such as 'Habeas Corpus', 'Mandamus', 'Prohibition', 'Quo Warranto', etc. are provided to the citizen for ensuring their fundamental rights. Accordingly, independent judiciary was established in order to protect the rights of citizens.

3.

MYANMAR POLITICAL PROCESS: AN ANALYSIS

3.1) POLITICAL PROCESS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE:

From the geographical point of view Myanmar is a country in Southeast Asia. Total area of Myanmar is 676,575 sqkm and total population of this country is 544 crores (2020). Myanmar is bordering with India, Bangladesh, China, Laos and Thailand.

Myanmar was one of the British colonies till 1942. During second world war Myanmar was won by Japan. A local army fought against Japan with the help of allies (US and UK) and gained control over Myanmar again in 1945. The invasion of Japan opened the awareness level of nationalism and independence in Myanmar. This awareness of independence and nationalism made Myanmar free from British rule. But before independence and after world war-II Myanmar faced a political instability from the ethnic groups and communist rebellion of Myanmar. That time in 1947 the leader of the local army Aung San crafted a historical agreement. However, Myanmar succeeded in achieving independence from the British on 4th January 1948. A new government under U Nu was established. U Nu was one of the original thirty comrades

and chosen leaders of Aung Sung. He opened a parliamentary democracy with the federal structure.

3.2) DEMOCRACY AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

Soon the country plunged into endemic insurgencies and civil war as already mentioned. The communist started revolt fast. They went into open revolt just three months after independence which greatly undermined the legitimacy of U Nu government. 4 month later the People's Voluntary Organization under Po Kun and La Yung also revolted. Those minority groups who were not satisfied with the constitutional arrangement also started revolt. By the end of August and starting September 1948 the Karen also rose into rebellion. The first year of independence thus faced a series of revolt. U Nu tried his best for saving the country from disintegration, but each of his effort seemed futile.

In January, Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) was against the government, aided by some deserts of the government's own Karen military and police units[1]. These units occupied Bassein and Prome in lower Irrawaddy, the city of Insein in the Sittang valley where they collaborated with the communists though marginally[2]. Geographically with the exception of Rangoon, by far the most important part, all was in the hands of rebels [3] In the starting of 1950's the Shans formed ad-hoc alliances and fought against the government[4]. And in the midst of these crises, there was the strike of the Ministerial service union of the civil servants in February 1949 protesting against imposed salary cut. The cut was mainly to supplement the source of government revenue caused by the non-payment of taxes from rebel occupied areas. The strike during this period paralyzed the U Nu government. There were fighting, lootings, destruction of villages, burning of schools and places of worship all over in the country [5] The insurrectionary activities spread rapidly all over the country. For this dis unity and lack of co-ordination

among the insurrection groups U Nu with the help of army chief Ne win was able to bring under control by 1952. His government officially banned the communist party of Burma (CPB) in 1953. However, intra-fighting in the party continued with no solution in sight.

Then, the ongoing intra-party conflict within his ruling AFPFL became the most serious crisis for the survival of U Nu government. The continuing intra-party conflict was even worse than the armed insurrections and rebellions as it grew from within. In the early stage of independence, particularly in the provisional government period which lasted until 1952[6], the ruling AFPL had no real opposition. This situation changed during the second General Election of April 1956. U Nu government lost popularity because of its failure. Consequently, in this election the ruling party could not maintain its absolute dominance. Though AFPFL won the election the real picture was dismal unity was lacking within the impressive 155 members of AFPFL government. The opposition NUF registered two third of the votes obtained by AFPFL candidates, the combined opposition amounted to forty six percent (46%) of the total [7]. This was the sign of breaking down of party's internal structure. But they were not ready to rectify themselves, Instead, mudslinging and criticism of each other continued. In June 1956 Premier U Nu even stepped down from office for nine months leaving the reins of the government in the hand of U Ba Sues the deputy prime minister. This was done with the sole purpose of removing corruption from the party but without success. Further to resolve interval crisis and differences a peace convention in the form of Third All Burma Congress of the AFPFL was initiated. The congress which was held in the peace pagoda site in January 1958[8]. Was attended by about thousand delegates. In that the political crisis in the U Nu government became more critical. The differences with the AFPFL became so intense that it led to split of the party in May. But political crisis does not end. Rather, the political situation became more

complex and confusing. Also, the economy of the country slowed down. On 26 September 1958 U Nu was compelled to resign in favor of a 'Caretaker Government', led by General Ne Win [9].

General Ne Win was installed by the parliament as the new Prime Minister of the caretaker government on 28 October 1958. He ruled the country for eighteen months during which he proved that an armed force can run the country more efficiently than the civilians. He successfully conducted General Election in February 1960.

After this his military dictatorship continued in Myanmar. And he forcefully imposed his ideology on the citizens. Because of this, the economic and social condition of the country was terrible. Till the 1980's Myanmar was considered as one of the least developed country by UN. In 1988 General Saw Maung replaced General Ne Win, by then the anger of citizen about the country's condition had peaked. Here enters the most famous political leader of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi. She was daughter of freedom fighter Aung San, who had significantly contributed towards getting the independence of Myanmar. Because of this he is referred to as the Father of the Nation in Myanmar. Around the same time, end of the 1980s She formed the party, National League for Democracy (NLD)[10]. Its main aim was to bring democracy back to Myanmar and the military dictatorship is removed. The military, on the other hand went ahead with its oppressive measures. On 21 July 1988, the military announced that two leaders of the movement Aung San Suu Kyi and General (retired) Tin U were placed under house arrest. From 23 to 25 July 1988, an emergency congress of the BSPP was held to discuss Myanmar's economic and political crisis. In the meeting, Chairman Ne Win put forward his intention to hold a National Referendum for the reintroduction of a multiparty system in Myanmar. However, Ne Win's suggestion was rejected outright by the congress delegates. There was a major shuffle at the leadership level. Later Ne Win and President U San

Yu resigned from their respective positions along with three other colleagues. Sein Lwin, previous Joint General Secretary of the BSPP and head of the country's riot police was appointed the new party Chairman of the BSPP and also President of the country on 26 July.

The coming of Sein Lwin to power did not help the problem. The students in particular were against him as they hold him responsible for killing civilian demonstrators in 1962, 1974 and 1988. Thereafter, fresh anti-military demonstrations were started in July mostly in Yangon. On 3 August 1988, martial law was imposed in Yangon and the security forces were ordered to shoot at the demonstrators. Yet undeterred by moves of the military, the students and Buddhist monks organized a series of massive demonstrations and strikes in Yangon and other cities and towns between 8 and 12 August demanding resignation of Sein Lwin and restoration of democracy in the country. However, the military responded to the demonstrations by carrying out a series of massacres in which up to 3000 people were killed.¹³ On 12 August, the BSPP and the government summoned an emergency party congress and Council of State meeting. On 19 August, Sein Lwin resigned as Chairman of the BSPP and State President after only twenty-three days. He was then replaced by Maung Maung, a Yale graduate and a civilian, who had close ties with Ne Win. After coming into power, he lifted martial law and ordered the military to return to the barracks. He also opened up opportunities for people to express their grievances about the governance. Subsequently, Aung Gyi (a former close colleague of Ne Win and an outspoken critic of the regime) was released, and permission was also given for the formation of the All Burma Students Union (ABSU)[11].

Sein Lwin's resignation could not bring stability to the country. By 24 August demonstrations returned to the streets. By September students and Buddhist monks had assumed control of the municipal government of many towns. It may be noted here that by that time the

demonstrations became increasingly violent. Subsequently a parallel government was formed on 9 September in which the former Prime Minister U Nu was proclaimed as the legitimate ruler. U Nu then contacted diplomatic missions in Yangon to seek recognition. To handle the situation, a Special Congress was held on 10 September by the military. The Congress proposed to hold multiparty democratic general elections in 1990. The People's Assembly also decided to hold a multiparty general election within three months. On 12 September, the then Chief-of-Staff General Saw Maung promised to help in holding free and fair multiparty general elections[12]. Subsequently, U Aung Gyi, one of the prominent leaders of the demonstration hailed it as a victory for the people, and called for the strikers to call off the demonstrations saying that the road to democracy was open now.

However, the situation did not end here. Aung Gyi later changed his mind and joined with Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin to issue a joint statement calling for an interim government. The political situation further deteriorated and foreign intervention began to occur. The developments gave the military an opportunity to assert themselves. They argued that there have emerged three new developments which threatened the unity and integrity of the country. First, there was the sighting of a United States naval fleet of five warships, including the aircraft carrier Coral Sea, within the Myanmar territorial water in the morning of 12 September 1988[13]. Secondly, there were reports that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was prepared to take the Shan State by using the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) as a front, if the United States fleet or troops landed in Myanmar. Finally, there was possibility of major offensive strikes by various insurgent groups as per information received by the military intelligence, particularly by the BCP in the northeast and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in the southeast.

Subsequently, the BSPP issued a statement which required the military and armed forces personnel to withdraw their membership from the party on 16 September 1988. On next day, the military issued a public statement requiring its members to fulfil the 'original duty' of the perpetuation of the Union, national unity and national sovereignty. As destiny would have it, it was on this very day that a demonstrating mob seized a military platoon of 24 personnel at the Trade Ministry Building. This ultimately led to the immediate coup d'état on 18 September 1988. The military justified their action saying that the coup was a result of the grave provocations that took place on the 16th and 17th September. The military claimed that if there had been no provocations and all parties had joined to control the situation and restore the peace, there would have been no coup. However, some argued that the military created the chaos so that they might be praised for ending it.

After the takeover of power, the military declared martial law. All state institutions (including the People's Assembly, the State Council and the Council of Ministers) were abolished, demonstrations were also banned and a night-time curfew was imposed nation-wide. The military also prohibited the gathering of five or more people in public places regardless of whether the act is with the intention of creating a disturbance or of committing a crime or of peaceful gathering. The police also began arresting anyone they believed to be in opposition to the government. However, demonstrations in favour of a civilian government continued unabated.

Saw Maung enumerated his government's four tasks: i) to maintain law and order; ii) to provide secure and smooth transportation; iii) to strive for better conditions of food, clothing and shelter for the people and render necessary assistance to the private sector; and iv) to hold multiparty democratic general elections. At the end of April 1990, Major General Khin Nyut, first secretary of the SLORC and the head of the

Directorate of Defense Service Intelligence, announced that three of the four major tasks were accomplished, and on 27 May elections were held in Myanmar. However, after the elections the military refused to transfer power to the newly elected party, and continued to hold power. All the while, it is to be noted that the country continued to be under sustained domestic and international pressure to carry out sweeping political changes for the establishment of an elected civilian government.

In 2003, the head of military intelligence, General Khin Nyunt, was appointed as the Prime Minister. After coming into power on 30 August 2003, he announced a 'seven-step roadmap' towards "disciplined democracy" that aimed to create a new Constitution and establish a civilian government. The roadmap towards "disciplined democracy" included the following points: i) Reconvening the National Convention that had been adjourned since 1996. ii) Step by step implementation of a genuine and disciplined democratic system. iii) Drafting a new Constitution in accordance with basic principles and detailed principles decided by the National Convention. iv) Adoption of a new Constitution through a National Referendum. v) Holding of free and fair elections for legislative bodies (Pyithu Hluttaws) in accordance with the new Constitution. vi) Convening of Hluttaws attended by Hluttaw members in accordance with the new Constitution. vii) Creating a modern, developed, and democratic nation by the state leaders elected by the Hluttaw. Opposition groups rejected the roadmap declaring it to be an effort to divert international attention from the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD leaders. The Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (ENSCO) proposed an alternative roadmap that called for the drafting of a Constitution acceptable to Myanmar's various ethnic groups fighting in Yangon. However, most ceasefire groups welcomed the government's roadmap in the belief that they would be part of the National Convention.

The next wave of protests was seen in 2007. When the large number of Buddhist monks protested. This is known as saffron Revolution. The 2007 Saffron Revolution is another uprising against the military regime that has controlled the country since 1962. It was the first major nationwide uprising since 1988. The Saffron Revolution of 2007 was in part caused by public dissatisfaction with deteriorating economic and social conditions in Myanmar. It was triggered by the announcement of military government in August 2007 that all government subsidies would be removed from imported diesel and natural gas. On 15 August the government increased price for petrol, doubled the cost of diesel fuel and the price of compressed natural gas rose by 500 per cent leading to inflation in other commodities, such as rice, cooking oil and other foodstuffs. Consequently, on 19 August, hundreds of people came out and marched in the streets of Yangon against the government's decision of rising price of fuels and natural gas. They were led by activists from the "8-8-88 Students" group and the NLD. The protestors were severely harassed and beaten up by the military forces. Within two days, the military arrested a large number of student's leaders. Yet the marches, instead of subsiding, spread to other cities across the country. It was against the backdrop of these developments that in late August, Buddhist monks in the western city of Sittwe began to join the marches.

On 5 September, around six hundred monks marching in the town of Pakkoku in central Burma were brutally attacked by the military forces. The All Burma Monks Alliance (ABMA)* then demanded a formal apology from the government within 17 September for the Pakkoku incident. The ABMA also demanded reduction of commodity prices, release of all political prisoners and enter into dialogue for national reconciliation with the democratic forces. But the military government refused to apologize leading to more widespread protest in the country. On 22 September, thousands of monks, surrounded by civilians, began to march in the

streets of several Burmese towns and cities. The government tried to control the situation through mass arrests, torture and murder. It also started raiding monasteries and prevented monks from going out. The security forces also continued rounding up marchers in the streets. They searched for suspected protesters and went ahead with political executions. However, unlike in 1988, the world witnessed the oppression in great detail via cell phones, digital cameras, and the internet. Overall, the Saffron revolution was another significant chapter in the struggle for democracy in Myanmar.

This time the military was forced into drafting a new constitution. It happened in 2008. The first Constitution of the country was adopted on 24th September 1947, a few months before getting independence on 4 January 1948. The second Constitution was adopted in 1974 after holding a National Referendum, providing for a one-socialist-party system for the country. However, this Constitution was abandoned in 1996. The genesis of the 2008 Constitution can be traced back to 1988 mass uprising and the election in 1990. After the election, the military did not transfer power to the newly elected representatives. On 28 July 1990, the NLD which won majority of seats adopted an amended version of the 1947 Constitution to allow a smooth transition from a single-party to a multiparty system. In that, provisions regarding the formation of States have been cancelled on the ground that it was no more necessary. However, the SLORC refused to recognise any temporary Constitution. On 9 January 1993, the military junta opened a National Convention to draft a new Constitution. But NLD withdrew from the National Convention on 28 November 1995 because the SLORC did not allow the party to chair the constitutional reform process, despite its winning the 1990 elections. However, another source claimed that NLD withdrew from the National Convention because the military did not allow open discussion and debate amongst participants. On the next day, the military junta expelled

all the NLD delegates. Later, on March 1996, the military junta suspended the Convention without explanation till date. The same year, the military also introduced a law which sentenced public critics of the National Convention to a maximum of 20 years in jail to prevent anyone from criticising the National Convention and drafting a Constitution outside the National Convention.

On 30 August 2003, the military junta adopted a 'seven-step roadmap' towards "disciplined democracy" to speed up and help the process of democratisation in the country. After the adoption of the roadmap, the National Convention was revived as the first step which was adjourned since 1996. After the National Convention was reconvened on 17 May 2004, a series of other sessions followed. On 19 October 2007, the military formed a Committee to draft the Constitution based on the Basic Principles and Detailed Basic Principles laid down by the National Convention held in 1993. On 9 February 2008, the Secretary 1 of the SPDC, Lt. General Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo announced that the Constitution will be approved in a National Referendum to be held in May 2008. On 19 February 2008, the military announced that the Committee has finished drafting the Constitution. Subsequently, referendum was held on 24 May in the twenty-four townships. In that month itself the government announced that the new Constitution has been approved by 92.4 per cent of the voters. However, Donald M. Seekins in 2008 argued that the validity of the referendum was dubious. It alleged that people were given ballots already marked "yes", and that Than Shwe originally used the constitutional drafting process as a delaying tactic to offset domestic and foreign demands for genuine political liberalization.

The final version of the Constitution drew heavily from the 1947 and 1974 Constitutions with some new provisions including the section outlining the election process. The Constitution contains 457 articles divided into fifteen chapters. The Constitution came into force on 29 May 2008, and

the first regular session of the Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Assembly) was held on 31 January 2011. It provided for a national bicameral Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly) which comprised of a Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw (National Assembly). It also provided for 7 State and 7 Regional Assemblies (Pyineh and Taing-dethagyi Hluttaws). The political system of the country under the Constitution is described as a "disciplined, flourishing, genuine multiparty democracy."In the Constitution, 25 per cent of seats in all three legislatures i.e., Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw) and local parliaments for each of the seven States and seven Regions are reserved for the Defence Services. These members are to be nominated from the Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services. Under the Constitution, the President is also elected from among three candidates – one each put forward by the two Houses and another by the military. The President will be elected after a vote in a joint session of the Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw). The one who wins the vote becomes the President and the remaining two becomes Vice-Presidents. An amendment of the Constitution requires support of more than 75 per cent of members in each of the two Houses comprising the Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw) – the Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities or Upper House) and Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives or Lower House).

It may also be mentioned here that the 2008 Constitution was drafted to transfer power to the elected representatives of the 1990 elections. However, Article 91 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law announced on 10 March 2010 by Than Shwe, Senior General, Chairman of the SPDC repealed the SLORC (former name of the SPDC before 1997) Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law No. 14/89, 31 May 1989. Therefore, Than Shwe argued that the result of the 1990 multiparty democracy general election held under the Election Law in 1989 repealed by this 2010 Law was no longer

consistent with the Constitution. As such, the military claimed that result of the 1990 election was invalidated automatically. As a result, the military government did not transfer power to those representatives elected in 1990 election but decided to continue to be in power.

Based on the new 2008 Constitution, parliamentary elections were held on 7 November 2010. The election was the fifth and the crucial stage of the 'sevenstep roadmap' to 'disciplined democracy'. The election was held for: 440 seats of the Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Assembly or Lower House) out of which 110 were reserved for non-elected military representatives; 224 seats of the Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities or Upper House) of which 56 were reserved for the military; as well as for 14 State and Regional Assemblies. This meant that 25 per cent of the seats in both houses of the National Parliament were reserved for the military. A total of 42 parties were registered for the elections but only 37 were qualified to contest the elections. Besides, a number of other parties (some genuinely independent, some representing ethnic minorities) as well as individuals were excluded. The government cancelled voting in some 3400 villages in ethnic minority border areas of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin (Karen), Mon and Shan States on security grounds.⁸⁵ The NLD did not join the election because the electoral law disqualified Aung San Suu Kyi from contesting the elections. The law prohibited anyone convicted of a crime and serving a prison sentence from membership of any recognised political party, and also barred members of religious orders and civil servants from membership of a political party. Still, a faction of the NLD i.e. the National Democratic Front (NDF) contested the elections.

After a long time, elections were conducted again in 2015. It was won by NLD a landslide. For her years of struggle, Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize as well. But in 2017 her international image suffered after the Rohingya crisis. Like you know almost a genocide of Rohingya

Muslims was conducted in Myanmar around 2017. This genocide was actually conducted by Myanmar's military. But people blame Aung San Suu Kyi because even on international platforms she did not speak out against the military but her supporters argue that she did not have many powers to speak out. Had Aung San Suu Kyi spoken out against a coup to overthrow her government. Here we can say that she spent the last 5 years trying not to aggravate the military. This is often an accusation levied on the politicians of such countries.

At last an election held in November 2020 in Myanmar in which Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD won in even drastic landslide. Additionally, last year Suu Kyi had said that she wants to bring such constitutional changes in the country. That the 25% rule of reserving seats for the military in parliament be scrapped. But obviously, to bring this constitutional changes, the military's support is required. And the military vetoed it. But after losing to such a large majority the military is scared of losing its powers. Because the military could see that the citizens support was shifting to Aung San Suu Kyi's party gradually. And soon the military could have been removed from the constitution. This is the exact reasons why in February 2021 Myanmar's military carried out yet another coup and overthrew Aung San Suu Kyi's party from power. With the excuse there was election fraud committed in the recent elections and a military coup had been conducted. But in reality, the international organizations that oversaw this election stated that the election process was very fair and transparent and no fraud were committed.

3.3) POLITICAL ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO YEAR AND GOVERNMENT OF MYANMAR

1885-86 - Burma comes under British rule.

1948 - Burma becomes independent.

1962 -The military junta takes over, initially in the shape of a single-party socialist system.

1990 - Opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) wins landslide victory in elections, but the military ignores the result.

2011 - The military hands over to a nominally civilian government following elections the previous year.

2015 - Elections. Opposition National League for Democracy - led by Aung San Suu Kyi - wins enough seats in parliament to form a government.

2018 August - UN accuses Myanmar of genocide against Rohingya Muslims.

2021 February - Government overthrown in military coup.

4.

Testing the actors of change

4.1) ROLE OF ETHNIC GROUPS

Myanmar's ethnic conflict is one of the bloodiest conflicts in the world history; and, it is also one of the least studied conflicts in the contemporary times. Throughout the Cold War period, Western liberal democratic Governments had not shown any interest in resolving ethnic conflict in Myanmar. Instead, they made several attempts in saving Myanmar from communism along with other colonies. Even after cold war, world powers gave least attention to ethnic conflicts including Myanmar's ethnic conflict. When ethnic wars result in fleeing thousands of refugees, and the international community more readily pay attention to refugee's issues rather than ethnic conflicts, the root cause of refugees. Myanmar's neighboring countries such as China, India and Southeast Asian States have also justified their foreign policies of non-alignment and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Similarly, Western liberal democratic governments imposed 'economic sanction' against the military regime in Myanmar that indirectly helped the military rulers in consolidating their positions.[1] It is argued that Myanmar's ethnic conflict is not much different from the ethnic conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia of Georgia that caused Russia to invade Georgian territory and occupied two Georgian separatist provinces in

2008. It has clearly shown that Myanmar's ethnic conflicts are potential threats to regional and international security and stability.

Although ethnic conflicts in other parts of the world have been extensively studied by social scientists, the ethnic conflict in Myanmar has not been studied systematically.[2] President Thein Sein, the ousted former military regime Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi affirm in unison that ethnic conflict in Myanmar is the core political problems in Myanmar.[3] Similarly, all Burmese scholars such as Martin Smith, Mary P. Callahan, Silverstein, Robert H. Taylor, David I. Steinberg, Ashley South, Bertil Lintner etc also remarked Myanmar's ethnic conflict as the core political problem of Myanmar since independence in 1948.

Ethnic conflict in Myanmar is a conflict between Barma ethnic majority and non Barma ethnic groups [4]. The conflict is identity-based conflict and it can be tracked back to 11th century, but the present ethnic conflict began right after Myanmar gained Independence from British in 1948. When the democratic government of Myanmar failed to address the cultural and political demands and the Mon, Karen and Arakanese nationalists [5] these ethnic groups took arms and fought against the government for greater autonomy. When the Prime Minister U Nu declared Buddhism as the state religion on 26 August 1961 in the parliament, ethnic cleavages increased [6]. When non Barma groups (Shan, Kachin and Chin) demanded constitutional reforms for greater autonomy, democracy was overthrown by General Ne Win on 2 March 1962 to block non-Barma groups to gain greater autonomy [7]. Ethnic conflict was the main cause of this democratic downfall. The ethnic conflict in Myanmar has been there for more than sixty years. As a result, thousands of people have given their lives and thousands of people have become refugees while other people have displaced their homeland and have been forced to migrate to neighboring countries.

Since independence, discrimination has been ingrained in Myanmar's law and political system. For example, citizenship is largely based on ethnicity. The 1982 citizenship law states that only members of ethnic groups that lived in Myanmar before 1823. When the British first occupied parts of the country, are full citizens. This has rendered hundreds of thousands of lifelong Myanmar residents and members of entire minority groups, particularly the Rohingya. Under the 2008 constitution. Only full citizens are entitled to most rights, such as nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and freedom of expression. The constitutions also prevent those not considered to be full citizens from particularly independent process such as voting and counting of office Anti Muslim sentiment also been rise in predominantly Buddhist. Myanmar Buddhist extremist, who promote the supremacy of Buddhism, have attacked Muslims and spread hate speech.

Divisions purposely created under British colonial rule and ongoing discrimination have fueled long Ahly armed conflicts between the Tatmadaw and more than twenty ethnic armed organizations, as well as dozens of smaller military groups, producing what some analysts have described as world's longest continuing civil war Following the country's independence, several ethnic armed organizations fought for greater autonomy Tensions were exacerbated when the military junta took over in 1962 and curtailed ethnic minorities rights.

Fighting has primarily occurred in Myanmar's border area, with the Buddhist and pro-Rakhina Arakan Army in Rakhine state the Karen National Liberation Army in Rakhina state, the kachin Independence Army in kachen state and shan state army and the united Wa state army in shan state, among other groups. In recent years, human rights monitors have documented the Tatmadaw's abuse against civilians, particularly in the state of chin and Rakhine, these include extrajudicial killings, forced labour, rape, torture. The instability has also allowed

Myanmar to become a global center for illicit drug production and transshipment, particularly in areas of shan state.

Nearly one million people are believed to have fled abroad and hundreds of thousands are displaced internally. Most of these refugees in recent year have been Rohingya, an ethnic Muslim minority that has faced decades of repression. In 2016 and 2017 the Tatmadaw and local security forces mounted a lowtal campaign against the rohingya, killing thousands of people and razing hundreds of villages. Right groups and UN officials suspect that the military committed genocide against the Rohingya. Most Rohingya move sought refuge in Bangladesh.

The government of the Thein Sein and Suu Kyi attempted to negotiate an ethnic armed organization, but efforts largely failed.

4.2) ROLE OF BUDDHISM

The relationship between Buddhism and democracy has been a regular subject of political discussion in Myanmar, at least since the late 19th century. With the country's current political transition and a Buddhist majority increasingly seeking to both protect itself and assert its dominance, the question will likely remain central in years to come. However, even though some common threads in the discourse can be identified, there is a range of ways in which Buddhists in Myanmar understand democracy.

In addition to the rights-based democratic notions within the Burmese discourse, I identify another category of "moral democracy" [8]. In some cases, political actors hold both conceptions simultaneously, with a resulting tension in their views on democratic practice. For example, drawing on a common logical thread in Theravāda Buddhist thought, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has emphasized the causal links between the conduct of the political authority and the prosperity of the nation,

claiming that “The root of a nation’s misfortune has to be sought in the moral failings of the government”. A lack of moral purity in the political authority would set the tone for the conduct of the rest of the people.

Much like Ledi Sayadaw, however, she also envisioned a central moral role for citizens, albeit one that was dependent on the character and actions of the government. In a speech on March 13, 1989, she explained to listeners that as people gradually lost their rights, their moral conduct correspondingly declined. It was a damning critique of the broader moral effects of the repressive policies of the military government. This statement was reminiscent of the oft-quoted aphorism in Burmese politics, “One can only keep the precepts with a full stomach,” acknowledging the necessity of a stable political and economic environment for proper moral practice. It was also closely connected to her call for a “revolution of the spirit,” as an integral step in Burma’s struggle for democracy (1991). Aung San Suu Kyi’s conception of moral democracy is one that protects freedom yet still bounds it, not by arbitrary laws or authoritarian dictates, but by each individual’s commitment to correct moral practice.[9]

Another representative iteration of moral democracy comes from the Burmese monk Ashin Eindaga, who preached about the concept in a public sermon in Yangon on January 31, 2011. In the sermon, Ashin Eindaga began by discussing the concept of *taya*, a word that carries several meanings, dependent on context. It can refer to fairness, justice, or equality; to moral principles or moral truth; to a natural law or the nature of things; or to the specific law of the Buddha, the *dhamma*. After asserting that democracy was consistent with the Buddha’s teaching, he went on to say, “If you have *taya*, you will have democracy.... Democracy means acting in accordance with *taya*, having laws. If society is fully endowed with morality, won’t it also be fully endowed with democracy?”

In my interpretation, this statement represents a particularly Buddhist interpretation of democracy. As a requirement for democracy, *taya* is also a quintessentially moral concept; it not only means truth, it refers to the specifically Buddhist truth of a particular understanding of cause and effect. By asserting that democracy means acting in accordance with *taya*, Ashin Eindaga reinforces the view that Buddhist moral teachings are not only relevant in the political realm, they are an essential element of a Burmese Buddhist understanding of democracy, promoting free choice, but a freedom that is constrained by its basis in moral practice. That is, democratic freedom also means acting in accordance with the moral truths of Buddhism, whether one is part of the government or simply a citizen.

There are, then, ways in which the logic that underpins Burmese views of moral democracy overlaps with other conceptions of democracy that limit citizen participation, such as that which guides Myanmar's current transition, the military's "discipline-flourishing democracy". The Theravāda Buddhist ambivalence toward the capacity of *pu htu zin* (ordinary people enslaved to desire) to participate in ruling themselves not only anchors military dismissals of Burmese citizens' democratic abilities, it is also present in the moral rhetoric of those who have opposed the military. A Buddhist moral conception of democracy necessarily includes the circumscribing element of moral laws or discipline. An interpretation of human nature that focuses on the moral failings of human beings would be inclined (as in discipline-flourishing democracy) to prescribe a more authoritarian remedy to guide fallible individuals, whereas a view of human nature that emphasizes the ultimate capacity of humans to achieve moral perfection would see the value of democratic freedom in allowing people to achieve that self-perfection.

However, even interpreted in a more democratic way, the link between morality and governance poses challenges. In Ashin Eindaga's formulation of democracy in accordance with taya (truth), how is one to understand the "truth" of Buddhism and its relevance for politics? Who has the authority to interpret whether the actions and policies of any given government are in accordance with taya? In a religiously plural state like Myanmar, can a Buddhist notion of moral conduct be effectively or fairly universalized or secularized to apply to people of other faiths? As a moral concept, taya might be more challenging to implement than other principles of justice, especially in the face of the persistent belief that most people are unable to consistently act in accordance with moral principles. While moral language and reasoning appear to be inseparable from Burmese notions of politics, the relationship between moral practice and democracy remains an area characterized by tension and will likely need to be addressed by Burmese political thinkers as part of Myanmar's emerging democratic discourse.

Myanmar's political transition has opened up more space since 2011 for research on Buddhism and politics. While some commentary remains entrenched in the model of dichotomous struggle between the authoritarianism of the military and the democratic inclinations of the opposition, newer research rejects this categorization in favor of analysis not based on political considerations. The emergence of an anti-Muslim and sometimes anti-liberal, monastic-led nationalist movement just a few years after tens of thousands of monks marched in cities across the country in support of democracy is evidence that Buddhism can inspire a range of different interpretations that reflect drastically different ideologies. Concurrent with more possibilities for research on Buddhism and politics is the opening up of space for Burmese political discourse itself. While this is likely to focus on various iterations of democratic

politics, the previous section demonstrates how much diversity of thought there is even within that category.

Burmese political concepts are deeply influential in the country's politics, yet remain generally unexplored and disconnected from the largely English-language body of literature. Future studies by Burmese or non-Burmese scholars with fluency in the language will reveal with more subtlety differences of interpretation in competing and overlapping streams of Burmese Buddhist political thought. Also ripe for further research are the Buddhist beliefs and practices of those ethnic groups outside of the Burman majority, especially inasmuch as they influence political ideas within those groups. Finally, the very notion of Buddhism itself in a Burmese context needs to be further disaggregated through critical studies of normative conceptions of Buddhism held by both Burmese and foreign scholars. Previous scholarship often artificially sectioned off as not Buddhist practices such as worshipping or propitiating local or ancestral spirits or wearing tattoos, amulets, or other protective devices. Challenging this imposed categorization, French anthropologist Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière offers a sorely needed correction that demonstrates the ways in which these practices, some of which predate Buddhism, complement Buddhist ones and have been incorporated into the wider Buddhist moral universe (2009).[10]

Burmese Buddhists have creatively interpreted the concepts and practices that make up their religion, from its cosmology to its ethical injunctions to its overarching moral framework. In doing so, they have argued that Buddhism is compatible with a wide range of political and economic ideologies. Even without explicitly Buddhist rhetoric, this religio-cultural influence still affects ostensibly "secular" political discourses in the country. The Buddhist moral framework—and its relevance for politics—is particularly perpetuated by monks in their role as guardians of the religion. As Myanmar experiences an uncertain

democratic opening, Theravāda Buddhism will continue to be a framework used by most of the population for making sense of and critically evaluating politics. A deeper understanding of these dynamics will be essential for anyone studying politics in Myanmar.[11]

4.3) DEMOCRATIC DOWNFALL OF MYANMAR:THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA

For nearly fifty years Myanmar was ruled by a military junta. It did not tolerate any criticism, and severely punished anyone who dared to oppose them. At the same time, it cut the country off from the rest of the world, preventing it from being informed about Burma's internal situation. The announcement of the changes came when Thein Sein's first civilian government was formed in 2011. Almost 10 years have passed since then and Myanmar, according to the Press Freedom Index, is considered to be one of the countries where freedom of speech and freedom of the media are commonly violated and journalists are often persecuted and punished. Freedom of expression is one of the pillars of a democratic society, the basis for its development and a condition for the self-fulfilment of the individual. One of the most important ways of exercising freedom of speech is through free and independent media.

The issue of respect for freedom of expression and freedom of the media must be seen in a broader context. It should be noted that there is a close link between respect for human rights and peace keeping. Although freedom of expression, and thus freedom of the media, is one of those freedoms which may be restricted in specific situations, it cannot be done arbitrarily. Under public international law the exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the

prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary. The authorities of Myanmar, when introducing and maintaining restrictions on freedom of speech and media, often invoke the need to restrict freedom of speech and media for reasons of state security, protection of morality or public order. However, one can venture to say that they are in fact afraid of criticism and possible public actions against the current authorities.

In the 1974 Constitution affirmed that “every citizen shall have freedom of speech, expression and publication to the extent that such freedom is not contrary to the interests of the working people and socialism”, but in practice the military regime of General Ne Win interpreted the article so restrictively as to prevent the expression of any dissenting opinion through the mass media. All journalistic work, and even poetry or films, were carefully analysed and selected before they could be made public. Interestingly, not only were works in which the authors dared to criticise the actions of the government banned, but also the so-called “bad news”, for example about some natural disasters and sometimes football matches that were lost by national teams. Printers and Publishers Registration Law of 1962 imposed an obligation on the printers and publishers to submit all books and publication to Press Scrutiny Board to obtain permission for possible publication.

The Commission had very broad powers, it could demand implementing relevant amendments and even a ban and destruction of the whole publication. This prevented publishers from carrying out activities that could expose them to enormous costs. It was also difficult to predict exactly what content could be criticised by that committee. Therefore, in 1995 Memorandum to All Printers and Publishers Concerning the Submission of Manuscripts for Scrutiny, Issued by the Printers’ and

Publishers' Central Registration Board was announced, according to which it was not permissible to publish any material containing a) anything detrimental to the Burmese socialist programme; b) anything detrimental to the ideology of the state; c) anything detrimental to the socialist economy; d) anything which might be harmful to national solidarity and unity; e) anything which might be harmful to security, the rule of law, peace and public order; f) any incorrect ideas and opinions which do not accord with the times; g) any descriptions which, though factually correct, are unsuitable because of the time or circumstances of their writing; h) any obscene (pornographic) writing; i) any writing which would encourage crimes and unnatural cruelty and violence; j) any criticism of a non-constructive type of the work of government departments; k) any libel or slander of any individual. As can be seen, the rules on permitted content in the publication remained unclear. Their harshness was enhanced by an amendment to the Printers and Publishers Registration Law, introduced in 1989, which increased the penalties which could be imposed on those convicted of breaching the law. Under this, anyone who failed to comply with any rules or regulations framed under the law could, for example, be imprisoned for up to seven years and fined up to 30,000 kyats.

In practice, the Emergency Provisions Act of 1950 had little in common with states of emergency in practice. This law made it an offence, punishable with imprisonment for up to seven years, to commit any act which violates or infringes upon the integrity, health, conduct and respect of State military organisations and government employees towards the government.

Then, the State Protection Law of 1975 also called as the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts, allowed a sentence of up to five years' imprisonment as well as

detention without trial. Such a punishment could affect anyone who, in the opinion of the authorities, could in any way (for example by disseminating certain information) threaten the sovereignty, security or order of the State. There was still no commentary or jurisprudence, allowing for example to foresee what kind of the publication may be prohibited. Such vague regulations gave the military junta enormous scope for interpretation, often dependent on their authoritarian decisions. What is interesting, in 1994 the SLORC announced that they would be justified in holding anyone arrested under the law for a total of 6 years, arguing that the period of five years specified in Section 14 was in addition to the period of one year initially allowed under the section.

The Television and Video Act of 1995 on the other hand required organisations and the public to obtain an approval of the Ministry of Communications to own TV and video equipment. The 1996 Motion Picture Law imposed an obligation to obtain a permission from the Myanmar Cinema Company to make films and then censor them if, in the opinion of the authorities, there is a need to do so.

The Official Secrets Act, adopted back in 1923, which provided for a prison sentence of up to two years and/or a fine for possession of any information and documents which, in the opinion of those in power, could threaten national security, relations with other states or public order, was still in force. Then, Martial Law Order 3/89 provided regulations that any publication, without the prior consent of the Ministry of the Interior and Religious Affairs, is a criminal offence. One can also mention here The Burma Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1933, adopted back in 1933, which required a permission to possess any kind of equipment enabling remote data transmission. At the turn of 1995/96 the military junta supplemented this document by obtaining permission to have a fax and/or a computer.

Subsequent documents refer to the content published on the Internet. And so, the Computer Science Development Law of 1996 required the user to obtain a prior consent of the Ministry of Communications to own and use a computer. Wide Area Network Establishment and Service Providing order No. 3/2002 concerned creating a computer web. And finally, the Electronic Transactions Law of 2004 provided penalties for anyone who commits any offense by using electronic transactions technology.

Also, other acts which clearly restrict freedom of expression and media were in force. One can mention here Section 122, Penal Code of Burma, The Law Protecting the Peaceful and Systematic Transfer of State Responsibility and the Successful Performance of the Functions of the National Convention Against Disturbances and Oppositions as well as The Unlawful Associations Act 1908.

The first of the aforementioned made it an offence to commit treason against the government established by law. This offence was punishable with death, or with imprisonment for life. Over the years, it has been used against all people who have merely expressed peaceful dissent against the authorities.

The second of the aforementioned documents made it an offence, among other things, to: a) incite, demonstrate, deliver speeches, make oral or written statements and disseminate [them] in order to undermine the stability of the state, community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order; b) incite, deliver speeches, make oral or written statements and disseminate [them] in order to undermine national reconsolidation; c) disturb, destroy, obstruct, incite, deliver speeches, make oral or written statements and disseminate [them] in order to undermine, belittle and make people misunderstand the functions being carried out by the National Convention for the

emergence of a firm and enduring Constitution; or d) draft and disseminate the Constitution of the state without lawful authorization. Each of these acts were made punishable with imprisonment for between three and 20 years and a possible fine, as were attempts or abetment of them.

One also cannot forget The Unlawful Associations Act 1908 which, though primarily used to deny freedom of association, was often applied in a manner that has impacted adversely on freedom of expression. This law, among other things, made it an offence, punishable with imprisonment for between two and three years and a possible fine, to have contact with any organization which the Burmese authorities declared illegal.

Passing a new constitution in 2008, which guaranteed freedom of speech and the media did not in fact change anything. The authorities have not repealed any of the documents mentioned above, which, after all, made it impossible to use the freedom of speech and media given on paper. Any kind of pretext, such as the publication of St. Valentine's Day wishes, was enough for a journalist who disobeyed the military junta to end up in one of forty-three prisons, sometimes for many years.

Among the victims, the following ones can be mentioned: Maung Thura, Thet Zin and U Sein Win Maung, Hla Min, Htay Win, Thida Aye, Ma Thida. The number of all victims during this period is practically impossible to estimate. Zarangar (actually) is a popular Burmese comedian, film actor, and a film director, a critic and a political prisoner of the Burmese military government. Zarganar was banned indefinitely from performing publicly or participating in any kind of entertainment related work. He was arrested in 2008 for speaking to foreign media about the situation of millions of people left homeless after a cyclone devastated the Irrawaddy Delta and then sentenced to 59 years in prison, convicted of "public order offenses", under the criminal code. Then, Thet Zin and U Sein

Wing Maung were accused of possessing documents relating to human rights in Burma and the “Saffron Revolution”, which were seized during a search of the offices. Draconian law would often be used to arrest and imprison members of the NLD party, as in 1990, when Hla Min, Htay Win, Thida Aye and others were arrested for attempting to publish, without permission, a report of the NLD’s historic Gandhi Hall meeting. The writer Ma Thid was sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment for distributing anti-government leaflets.

The persecution of journalists lasted until the end of 2010, and even longer – still in 2011, after the first media reform was launched. Before it had been introduced there were more than 150 private dailies and magazines in the country. However, they could only publish content that had previously been approved by the Media Commission. Some tried to smuggle some democratic content during the first general parliamentary elections. They did so with varying degrees of success, but each time they were liable to fines, imprisonment, suspension or closure of the editorial office. The authorities also published their own newspapers, namely: “Kyemon”, “Myanma Alin”, “New Light of Myanmar” or “The Yadanabon”. Electronic media (television and radio) were under the complete control of the ruling authorities. The Internet, although existing, was also subject to control. The services of foreign broadcasters such as BBC, RFA, VOA and DVB could be received in the country. Although they broadcast in Burmese, their activities were strictly controlled. Many international journalists were notoriously being refused the right to enter the country.

The reforms announced in 2011 finally gave some hope for respecting media freedom. In the same year, the authorities announced amnesty for dozens of political prisoners, including the blogger Zarganar, Sein Win Maung, editor of Myanmar Nation and three reporters of the Democratic Voice of Burma. One of the most important steps towards media

freedom was the abolition of the obligation of prior censorship, as well as the obtaining operating licences by the print media. However, they still had to be registered with the Ministry of Information. Internet censorship in Myanmar was largely abolished in 2014.

Two laws were passed in 2014 to regulate the issues of the printed media, namely The Printing and Publishing Enterprises Law (PPEL) and the News Media Law. The Broadcasting Law of Myanmar was passed in 2015.

The Printing and Publishing Enterprises Law (PPEL) replaced Printers and Publishers Registration Law of 1962. In fact, the provisions of the Act explicitly referred to the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law. However, the penalties provided for in the new law were not as severe as in the 1962 Act. The prison sentence was reduced from seven years to six months and the fine was limited to approximately \$12,000 for the owners of the publications. Article 7 prohibited the publication of any publication “a) expressing subject matters which may cause harm to an ethnic group or among the ethnic groups, or those which may insult other religions; b) provoking for the purpose of deteriorating the rule of law or encouraging mass violence; c) expressing nudity; d) encouraging and stimulating crimes, cruel behavior, violence, gambling and the act of committing crimes using opium and abusive drugs; e) publishing expressions and texts which are against and violate the provisions of the Constitution and other legislations.”

The News Media Law guarantees for example “freedom from censorship to express, publish, or distribute freely as part of rights and privileges granted to every citizen in compliance with regulations stated in the national constitution”, the rights and freedoms of media workers, and stipulates that the media is the fourth state authority.

In accordance with Article 4, media employees have the right “a) to freely criticize, point out or recommend operating procedures of the legislative,

the executive and judiciary in conformity with the constitution, b) to investigate, publish, broadcast information and related opinions to which every citizen is entitled in accordance with rules and regulations, c) to reveal issues relating to rights and privileges lost by the citizen, d) to collect information, to be provided with accommodation and to enter into certain offices, departments and organizations in accordance with regulations of relevant departments or organizations". If media personnel operate in war zones or during riots or demonstrations, they cannot be arbitrarily detained and their equipment cannot be destroyed or confiscated. Furthermore, they may ask relevant entities to guarantee their safety and security. Additionally, they shall be entitled to obtain unclassified information from the activities of non-governmental organisations, as well as entities operating from public funds. Employees are obliged to observe professional ethics. Investigative journalists may conduct an investigation, without disclosing their personal information, with the consent of the relevant publisher and the approval of the proposed action. Possible confiscation, destruction of materials is allowed only by court judgment. At this point it is worth mentioning the protection of information sources. According to the Media Code of Conduct (COC) of 2014, "Media outlets have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information and to respect confidences knowingly and willingly accepted in the course of their work. This Code supports that obligation." However, the document serves as an industry standard only. Journalists themselves are unable to protect sources of information.

Article 12 of The News Media Law established Myanmar's News Media Council, which is primarily responsible for monitoring the media and ensuring that high quality media is maintained. It is an independent organisation, consisting of employees of various media, as well as scientists.

Another law mentioned above is The Broadcasting Law of Myanmar. It imposes an obligation to obtain a licence for broadcasting media. However, the Act does not address issues relating to the digital terrestrial television transition. The Act established the National Broadcasting Council, which is also an independent organisation with similar functions to Myanmar's News Media Council.

Despite these changes, it should be noted that the legal system for the media in Myanmar is outdated. Although the Emergency Provision Act of 1950 and the State Protection Act of 1975 were repealed in 2016, the state still has laws in force that undermine media freedom and journalists face legal consequences for their actions.

We may not forget that the development of media is also influenced by changes in telecommunications law. In 2013, the Telecommunications Law was passed, under which the telecommunications industry was privatized. Myanmar now has three national telecommunications providers. Privatisation of the sector has resulted in a sharp drop in SIM card prices, making mobile phone ownership accessible to a large part of the population and thus increasing Internet access. It is also worth mentioning the Competition Law of 2015, which prohibits monopoly practices or various regulations concerning the possibility of advertising in the media.

Changes in media legislation have caused a real boom in the publishing of printed media. However, problems with maintaining their continuity quickly emerged. State-owned media have a clear competitive advantage over private media, both in media production and distribution. There are media that are strongly supported by political parties, such as the National League for Democracy's D-Wave Journal, or the Union Solidarity and Development Party's Union Daily. Ethnic media are likely to represent the interests and views of their associated armed

wings, rather than the Bamar central state. However, there is no accurate publicly available data on printed media. Similarly, data on circulation and sales is difficult to come by. According to UNESCO print media cannot adequately provide for the information needs of all segments of society, most notably poor and rural populations. Due to the country's weak road infrastructure, print media circulation is mostly limited to urban and peri-urban areas. In Myanmar many citizens rely on broadcasters for their information and entertainment needs. All broadcasters in the country are either state-owned or joint-ventures between the State and private companies. Private, public and community broadcasters do not exist in Myanmar yet. Myanmar has two state-owned broadcasters. MRTV operates under the Ministry of Information and Myawaddy operates under the Ministry of Defence. Both of these broadcasters provide TV and radio broadcasting. Moreover, Myanmar has seven joint-venture radio stations. Another medium through which many people in Myanmar access news and information is TV broadcasting. Joint-venture broadcasters offer subscription services; therefore, they are not affordable for some groups of the society. Both state broadcasters (MRTV and Myawaddy) offer a free-to-air channel. Their channels are more commonly viewed, particularly in rural areas.

The Internet is becoming more and more popular. Most major print publications in Myanmar have a web version, however there is a heavy focus on social media. The list of the most popular websites consists of: Facebook 7 Day, Eleven, BBC Burmese, Irrawaddy Burmese, VOA Burmese, Mizzima Burmese, MRTV-4 and DVB TV (random order).

There are associations and journalist unions in Myanmar, such as Myanmar Journalist Association. The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Myanmar, The Myanmar Journalists' Union (MJU), the Myanmar

Journalists' Association (MJA), and the Myanmar Journalists' Network (MJN).

The state media as Myanmar Ahlinn, The Mirror and The Global New Light of Myanmar all take in news from state feeds around the country. This may come direct from Myanmar News Agency (MNA), which falls under the Ministry of Information, or from Myawaddy, which is a military-run news service. State media also retains subscriptions to Press Trust of India, Reuters and Tass. International wire agencies such as AFP, AP and Reuters have fully-staffed bureaus in Yangon. Other international news organisations retain correspondents or stringers.

4.4) ROLE OF SOCIAL ELITS IN MYANMAR:

The role of elites is one other explanatory variable that is widely associated with democratic transition and consolidation (Lijphart 1969, Lijphart 1977, Hagopian 1990, Diamond 1999, Roberts 2002). Lijphart examines the role of elites in segmented societies; Diamond stresses the power and influence of elites; Hagopian analyzes the limitations of elite power; and Roberts focusses on the relationship between a dominant party and weaker groups. Christian Welzel discusses regime elite and regime opposition. According to him, regime elite is a "coalition of forces that can split under certain circumstances into an orthodox status quo camp and a liberal reform camp (Welzel 2009, 83). Similarly, regime opposition can be of two groups: one group forming a moderate camp and the other a revolutionary group. The argument is that democratization occurs when there is a split within the regime elite, which may be caused by economic crisis, a lost war or other critical events that undermine the legitimacy of the government. Under such circumstance, the regime opposition is led by a moderate camp that is willing to enter dialogue with the elite group that wants a liberal reform towards democracy. Another argument is that non-violent mass

movement is crucial in toppling authoritarian regime and for establishing a democratic government. Democracy can be achieved by the collective action of ordinary people against the regime elite when such movements are ubiquitous thereby becoming difficult or impossible for the regime elite to suppress (Welzel 2009, 83).

According to Arend Lijphart, elites attempt to form a stable democratic government by accommodating the diverse views and interests of people belonging to different cultural groups. A successful democracy requires that the elites have the “ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of the subcultures” and also have the “ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival subcultures.” The possibility of such cooperation between rival elites would depend on their “commitment to the maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability” provided that the elites understand the “perils of political fragmentation” (Lijphart 1969, 216). For a democracy to sustain, it requires the leaders to commit for the unity of the country as well as towards democratic practices. Segmental leaders also must be willing to engage in cooperative efforts with leaders of other groups in the spirit of moderation and compromise. In doing so, the elites should retain the support and loyalty of their own constituents. The elites must also continually engage in difficult balancing act with their own members and also with leaders of other groups (Lijphart 1977, 53).

Larry Diamond argues that because of their disproportionate power and influence, elites matter most in the stability and consolidation of democracy, not only in their behaviors but in their beliefs as well. Even beyond their direct power and influence, the elites play a crucial role in shaping political culture. When elites are contemptuous about rules and culture in society, their followers tend to follow suit (Diamond 1999, 66). Frances Hagopian, while examining the role of political pacts in political

transition in Brazil, argues that political pacts bargained by elites that made regime transition possible in the 1980s limited democratic consolidation despite widespread opposition to authoritarianism and support for civilian rule. By restoring old regime elites in the new political set up in return for their support for democratic transition, political pacts allowed the military to retain certain formal and informal powers. Political pacts also preserved clientelism and undermined political parties to transform themselves into genuine nonelite interest parties (Hagopian 1990, 147). The case of Brazil suggests that fragile democracies cannot be consolidated by political pacts alone. In other words, political pacts neither deepen democracy nor create strong democratic institutions (Ibid., 166).

David Roberts in his article Democratization, Elite Transition, and Violence in Cambodia, 1991-1999 argues that stability in transition from authoritarian single-party state to pluralist society is most reliable when the weaker challengers accept the conditions set by the dominant elites. However, it is also important for the dominant party to accommodate the demands of elites in the opposition party and their supporters through networks of patronage and clienteles. The dominant party needs to create the necessary institutions to address such concerns. When a challenger party's support is threatened by its inadequacies or actions of the dominant party, conflicts are likely to happen (Roberts 2002, 533).

4.5) ROLE OF EXTERNAL AGENCIES LEADING TO DEMOCRATIC DOWNFALL OF MYANMAR:

The influence of external agencies is one other important factor associated with democratic transition, especially in third world countries. The impact of external agencies is mostly economic (Pinkney 2004, Potter 1997, Huntington 1991, Grugel 2002). Robert Pinkney says that with

globalization comes the growth in free global market policies. The impact of global market means the manipulation of global economy by the most powerful countries and the institutions they dominate, especially on third world countries that heavily depend on foreign trade (Pinkney 2004). The socio-economic development in the 1960s and 1970s promoted the opening up of societies to foreign trade, investment, technology, tourism and communication. The pro-democratic influence of international entities such as World Bank and the United States began to promote liberal democracy in Asia in the 1980s by putting pressure on authoritarian regimes which depended on external agencies for loans, aid and trade (Potter 1997).

Similarly, Samuel P. Huntington asserts that policies of global actors such as the United States and the European Union caused democratization during the third wave in the 1970s and 1980s. The pressures generated by global political economy are influential in promoting democracy because they can penetrate societies dependent on external assistance. Nevertheless, external intervention can fail if there is no significant support from domestic groups. Similarly, external assistance will only serve a supporting role if democratization is generated by internal social pressures (Grugel 2002).

Edward D. Mansfield and Jon C. Pevehouse in their article Democratization and International Organizations take a different approach on the impact of globalization by arguing that democratization is an important impetus to international organization (IO) membership. States undergoing democratic transitions have a strong incentive to join IOs because it sends credible signal to domestic and international audiences that the reform process is sincere. Joining IO can help leaders credibly commit to reforms since the IOs convey information, ameliorate problems, and improve the reputation of new member states, especially if the organization is composed primarily of

democratic members. Democratizing states tend to join organizations composed of democratic nations. Joining IOs composed of relatively democratic members can help reduce the prospect of reversion to authoritarianism (Mansfield and Pevehouse 2006).

5.

International response with special reference to Regional/EXTRA REGIONAL politics (India, China, USA)

5.1) INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO REGIONAL POLITICS (INDIA, CHINA)

International Relations is an important branch of Social Science. The Scope of International relations is the complex relations existing among the sovereign states of the world. It is mainly concerned, among other things, with the study in depth of all events and situations affecting more than one state.

The great Greek Philosopher Aristotle, said that man by nature is a social animal. Being a social animal, man can't live in isolation. His basic nature and his basic needs make him to satisfy his numerous needs in association with others. Moreover, no man is self-sufficient even in his daily needs and therefore, he has to depend upon his fellow man for existences. Just as no individual can live in isolation, no state can afford to live in isolation. Like the individual no state is self-sufficient. Naturally, it has to cultivate relations between states. These relations are the subject matter of International Politics.

International relations can be defined as political activities and other kinds and aspects of interactions among two or more states. The academic field of international relations is a branch of political science that is concerned with the study of relations between states, the foreign policy of nation-states, and the mechanisms and institutions (such as international organisations, inter-governmental organisations, international and national non-governmental organisations and multinational corporations) through which states interact. The study of international relations involves many subjects such as international and regional peace and security, international organisations, nuclear proliferation, globalisation, human rights, economic development, intervention, international financial relations, and international trade relations.

In this chapter we are going to discuss the international relation of Myanmar with the neighbouring countries (India, China) and also with USA. Because the democratic downfall of a country also affects the world politics. World politics and neighbouring countries may also cause of internal political problem of any country. My objective of this chapter is to examine the role of international politics for democratic downfall of Myanmar.

5.2) RELATION BETWEEN INDIA AND MYANMAR:

India and Myanmar had strong historical ties since ancient times. The spread of Buddhism from India to Myanmar and vibrant cultural interactions, had often been referred to demonstrate the strong historical ties between the two countries. However, history had also given some unwanted baggage. It was during the British colonial times that India and Myanmar (then Burma) had intense interactions.[1]

Myanmar had substantial presence of People of Indian Origin (PIO's), before the Second World War. According to the 1931 census, the number

of Indians in Burma was at 10,17,825.[2] The exact figures during the colonial period was not certain as many may had listed themselves under the category 'Burmese Speaking.[3] Therefore, by 1940, the number of PIO's would had been way above the numbers suggested. The perception among the local Burmese that their employment and business opportunities were shrinking because of the presence of the 'outsiders', laid the foundation for the emergence of xenophobic tendencies, which impacted India - Myanmar relations to a significant extent for a considerable period of time.[4]

It would not be an exaggeration to say that India's economic engagement of Myanmar had been less than satisfactory. According to statistics compiled by the European Union, India was the third largest trading partner of Myanmar. However, a closer look at the figures revealed the absence of diversity in Myanmar's international trade and also India's weak trade links with Myanmar. China and Thailand being the first two and they accounted for 31.4 percent and 28.8 percent of Myanmar's international trade respectively. This implied that China and Thailand accounted for more than 60 percent of Myanmar's international trade while on the other hand, India's trade with Myanmar was a mere 7.6 percent of the latter's overall trade. This was despite the fact that India shared approximately 1643 km of land border with Myanmar (four Indian States shared border with Myanmar) and for India, Myanmar was a critical land bridge to Southeast Asia [5]. India had shared about 1643 Kms border with her north-eastern neighbour Myanmar (formerly Burma). This border touched four out of seven North - Eastern states of India, viz., Arunachal Pradesh (520 kms), Manipur (398 kms), Mizoram (510 km.) and Nagaland (215 kms).[6]

Although cross-border contact and movement of people was known throughout history, but they had not led to any strong economic interdependence between the two regions, viz., North - eastern region of

India and Myanmar. In the pre-colonial era, cross- border contacts used to take place mainly through distance trade, war and invasion and of course, through common racial affinities.[7]

However, the land - based agriculture oriented feudal and tribal economies provided little scope for intensive trading and cross - border economic cooperation. During the colonial era, the British security perception, her policy of frontier management and above all, her imperial interest did not allow local economic potential to grow across the border. The situation had, however, changed following the end of the Cold War paradigm, rise of East Asian tigers and release of forces of globalisation. While the demise of the bi - polar world had freed the nations, who wanted to forge new strategic partnership, the globalising forces had brought economic interest in the forefront of nation's foreign policy. With the growth of regional trading arrangements, border areas were now visualized as economic corridors. It was in this perspective, which had dawned in both India and Myanmar in the early 1990's, that an attempt had been made to seek to analyse the economy of Myanmar, to find whether there existed any complementarity across the border for mobilizing the synergies for the development of the north-eastern region (NER) of India.[8]

5.3) India-Myanmar Relations during British Era

India and Myanmar both were under the British imperial occupation during 1857 to 1947 and 1886 to 1948 respectively. Conflict began between Myanmar and British, when the Konbaung Dynasty decide to expand into Arakan in the State of Assam, close to the British colony of India. This close contact led to the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), which the British won with the help of Siamese, and Myanmar had to give up Assam and other northern provinces. Then, in 1852, the Second AngloBurmese War

was provoked by the British who wanted the teak forests in lower Myanmar as well as a part between Calcutta and Singapore.[9]

The British were victorious in Second Anglo-Burmese War as well, but were still not satisfied, as they wanted access to the teak, oil and rubies of northern Myanmar. This prompted them to begin the third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885[10]. The British government justified their actions by claiming that the last independent King of Myanmar, Thibaw, was a tyrant and that he was conspiring to give France more influence in the country. Thus, in 1885, after three wars gaining various parts of the country, the British finally occupied all of Myanmar, renamed it Burma, and made it a province of British India. On 1 January, 1886, Lord Dufferin, then viceroy of British India, issued a proclamation of annexations of Burma.[11]

After the annexation of Burma, the British took certain administrative measures for the pacification of their newly acquired empire. In 1887, Charls Crasthwaite, then Commissioner of Burma, decided to replace the traditional system of local government with a new one modelled on Indian pattern. Thus, a system of administration by district each under the control of a British Deputy Commissioner was introduced. As a result, many Indians from Lower Burma and India who were found to be well conservant with the British method of administration were absorbed into services.

In 1897, the executive head of the province became a Lieutenant Governor. He was provided with a legislative council with himself as President and nine members, four of them officials and five non-officials[12]. After the Morley Minto Reforms of 1909, the legislative council was reconstituted but the Lieutenant Governor continued to be the President. In 1915 the legislatures were further enlarged to a membership of thirty out of which, only two were elected. Thus, during the post-

annexation period, “the council remained almost exclusively a vehicle for British official and mercantile opinion, while throughout the country the districts administration was directed by British officials who ruled their charges with a paternal authority”[13]. In British colonial rule, Burma underwent many social, political and economic changes. As these changes basically served the British interest, the Burmese did not take a passive view of the whole development. The economic exploitation of Burma and the introduction of western concepts of government and politics by British India provoked the Burmese to raise voice against the alien rule starting the Burmese nationalism.

5.4) Political Relations during the Nationalist Movement:

India and Myanmar (Burma) relations during nationalist movement were quite close because Burmese nationalism was influenced by Indian national movement. It was India that served as a source of inspiration for millions of Burmese who raised their voice against the British colonial rule. Indian nationalists set the pace for reforms on the various stages in Burma and demonstrated methods of political action aimed at gaining freedom from British colonial rule. The boycott, the hartal and the legislative walkout were the techniques of political agitations which spread the Burma from India.

Nationalist movement of both countries realized the need for mutual understanding and collaborations for attaining freedom from their common British imperialists. Opposition to this common enemy strengthened the bond of cooperation between the nationalist movements of both countries. But an important feature of the nationalism of Burma was its antiforeignism directed against the British but at the times against the immigrants from India as well¹⁹. Presence of a large number of Indians in Burma, their economic position, their transitory character, the appearance of exploitative nature of the Indian

money lenders and the growth of aggressive nationalism in Burma created bitterness against Indians in the minds of the Burmese people²⁰. Despite this bitterness against Indians, the people of India and Burma cooperated with one another. Nationalist leaders of India advised the Indian settlers in Burma to cooperate with the Burmese people.

Nationalism in Burma was basically an indigenous force even though influenced by India. The first explicit expression of Burmese nationalist feeling came from the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) founded in 1908 by a group of youthful Burmese. The objective of the YMBA resembles with the objective of the socio-religious movements that took place in India during the 19th century such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission and Theosophical Society. The YMBA and GCBA (General Council for Burmese Association) became more active in awakening political awareness in Burmese national movement.

India and Burma started the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920s to attain complete independence – 'Purna Swaraj' from the colonial rule of the British Empire. During the Non-Cooperation Movement in Burma, the strikes were organized by the employees of the British Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and the railway, tram, dock and mill workers to manifest their political aspirations. Even the school boys and university students went on strike in the name of patriotism²¹. Burma had a branch of the Indian National Congress, the membership of which was confined mostly to the Indians settled there. But a number of prominent Burmese nationalist too were members of the provincial Committee of the Indian National Congress and attended its sessions.

In early 1930s, the national movement in Burma started as Indian freedom struggle intensified. The new generation of young leadership who called themselves Thakins had started emerging. These Thakins

formed the Dobama Asi-ayone or “We Barman’s” society to intensify the nationalist drive. Thakin, Aung San and U Nu were their leaders²². These Thakins wanted to assert their right to equality with the foreign ruling class. They had as such no ideological unity among them and also lacked ideological clarity, but they were all united in one respect- their burning desire for freedom. Thus, the most important political issue which Burma faced from 1930 to 1935 was how the country should be separated from Indian Territory and if so on what terms. The issue was finally resolved in 1935 when the British Parliament passed the Act of India and Burma. A new constitution, embodied in the Government of Burma Act 1935 came into force on 1 April, 1937. Thus, Burma became a separate country and all her administrative links with India were severed.

After separation of Burma, relation between India and Burma continued on the basis of friendship and mutual understanding. The initiative was started by India when two months after the separation Jawaharlal Nehru visited Burma. He met many important leaders of Burma to appeal for wider cooperation and preservation of friendly spirit between Indians and Burmese.

Burmese leader Aung San led a Thakins delegation to the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress in March 1940. The delegation met important congress leaders including Gandhiji and Pundit Nehru at Ahmedabad, on 7 April, 1940. Aung San, addressing a meeting of students had said, “If Mahatma Gandhi’s experiments in non-violence succeed, it will give a new light to the world and we are watching it sympathetically”.

A significant development during the period of Japanese occupation of Burma was the liaison between Subhash Chandra Bose (Netaji) and some important Burmese leaders. Burmese leader Ba Maw had been

impressed by the revolutionary leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose and tried to maintain close links with him. Netaji who had declared the establishment of the Government of Free Sovereign State of Azad Hind at Singapore in October 1943, now shifted its headquarters to Rangoon in January 1944. Many Indians living in Burma and many Japanese too, enrolled themselves in the Army of Netaji. This had obvious impact on Indo-Burmese relations. During the critical days of the Second World War, India did not forget the interests of her Asian neighbors. In 1942 when the All India Congress Committee (AICC) gave a call for Quit India Movement; it did not confine its demands for freedom to India alone. Rather, it demanded freedom to entire Asia including Burma²⁷. It was not only Indians who supported the Burmese freedom struggle; similar sentiments of sympathy towards India's struggle for independence were reciprocated by the Burmese nationalists. On 24 July 1946 Aung San, expressed his deep concern for India in the following terms- "our policy towards India..... in Burma is one of the broadest cooperation and generosity..... We stand for more than friendly relations with our neighbors. We want to be not merely good neighbors, but good brothers even..... we stand for immediate mutual understanding and joint action, wherever and whenever possible, from now for our mutual interest and for the freedom of India, Burma and indeed all Asia. We stand for these and we trust Indian national leaders in India implicitly"

As a result of mutual understanding and close contacts between the leaders of the independence struggle contributed to friendly relationship, India and Burma achieved independence from the British rule on 15 August, 1947 and 4 January, 1948, respectively. Thus, the independence of both countries marked the end of an era of struggle of the different but identical nationalist movement against the colonial rule of the British imperialists.

5.5) India-Myanmar Relations during the Post-Colonial Period:

Post-colonial era of India's relations with Myanmar is full of ups and downs till the early decade of 90s. India-Myanmar relations can be divided into three phases: 1948-1962; 1962-1992 and 1992 – till today.

During the first phase, 1948-1962, India and Myanmar had friendly relations. The first Prime Minister of Myanmar, U Nu, had close friendly relation with Indian Prime Minister Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, and used to consult Nehru on many issues of mutual cooperation. Nehru always laid emphasis on the maintenance of Indo-Burmese friendship despite minor differences that might crop up in future. In December 1949, in a message to the Friends of Burma Society, Nehru said, "it is inevitable that India and Burma should co-operate each other for mutual advantages and we must not forget this fact even though we might have occasional differences but we cannot change our history and geography." [14] Since 1950, Indo-Burmese relations became so informal that the Burmese Prime Ministers or other members of the Burmese Government were welcomed in Delhi whenever they felt the need to discuss their problems with Nehru and the Indian Government.

The most important development in Indo-Burmese friendship took place on 7 July 1951 when the two countries signed a treaty of friendship. The signing of the treaty was a concrete step towards strengthening and developing the already existing friendly relations between them. The treaty which was to be effective for five years was signed in Rangoon on 7 July 1951 by Sao HkunHkio, the Burmese Foreign Minister and M.A. Rauf, the first Indian Ambassador to Burma. M.A. Rauf, speaking on the occasion of the signing of the treaty said that the treaty was merely a token and symbol of the great goodwill which already existed between India and Burma. [15]

India and Burma cooperated and maintained friendly attitude not only on bilateral level but also on regional level. During the post-independence period they made sincere efforts to ensure the peace and security of the region. In this way, the year 1954 marked the beginning of good neighborly relation between India, Burma and China. The five principles of peaceful co-existence, namely, "Panchsheel" were firstly formulated in the preamble to the agreement between India and China signed on 28 April 1954 at New Delhi. On 29 June 1954, Myanmar and China also signed the Panchsheel agreement in Yangon in order to make Panchsheel the basis of permanent relations with India and Myanmar and reaffirm adherence to five principles of peaceful co-existence.

Indo-Burmese relations are not confined to the walls of bilateral and regional matters. They jointly played an important role in world politics. At a time when the world had been divided into two power blocs, both India and Myanmar followed the policy of non-alignment. Their aim was to bring more and more countries to the non-aligned bloc and in that process lessen world tension and maintain world peace. India and Myanmar also owed their deep faith in the institution of the United Nations as a mechanism for ensuring global peace. Thus, friendly atmosphere maintained at the higher levels between Nehru and U Nu ensured that no gross injustice was inflicted on Indians. Both Prime Ministers handled the problem of Indian citizenship, immigration and compensation etc.

The second phase (1962-1992) under General Ni Win and his Revolutionary Council was an era of complete political isolation of Myanmar. During this period India's policy towards Myanmar was to maintain an active or close relation. General Ne Win policy of political suppression and restriction of Indians and deportation of around 100,000 Indians [16] was not supported by India and widened the gulf between India and Myanmar. Fluctuation in relations could be seen at this time

also. Under his Burmese way to Socialism and Enterprises Nationalization Law, General Ne Win expelled about 300,000 Indians even though most of them had been in Myanmar and had never previously left it[17]. Talks between the leaders of India and Myanmar were carried out on the issue but with no positive outcome.

In the whole, diplomatic relations remained cordial but mostly formal. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had meetings with General Ne Win during her tenure. The Myanmar visit by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1987 was a sincere endeavor to inject fresh momentum into the relationship, but it was overtaken by the turbulent events that shook the country to its core. However, it was only from 1988, with the mass uprising in Myanmar, that India started taking active interest in the affairs of the country.

When the democracy uprising of 1988 broke out in Myanmar the fallout impact was felt immediately in India. Among the proximate neighbors of Myanmar, it was India alone that officially followed a clear-cut policy as regards to supporting the democracy movement. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi appeal to the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. A program called 'Voice of Burmese People' was subsequently started from September 1989 in the All India Radio's Myanmarese Service to express solidarity with the democratic forces [18]. The relations between the two countries breathed its lowest level when, it was discovered that Indian embassy was involved in 88 uprising and providing safe passage to the students of Myanmar and assuring them of political asylum. At that juncture, New Delhi was of the view that a democratic regime in Myanmar would be more sympathetic to India's national security interest.

Early 1990s saw a gradual policy shift in the attitude of the Government of India towards the SLORC regime. Within the government, there was strong protest from many of the military intelligence, and foreign ministry

officials against the policy of supporting the democracy movement and sidelining the Junta regime at the cost of national interest. Shift in the stance of India became necessary with the changing strategic economic and security concerns.

India and Myanmar both countries were under the British colonial rule. The independence of both countries marked the end of an era of struggle of the different but identical nationalist movement against the colonial rule of the British imperialism. After independence, both countries marked an important phase as far as their friendship, cooperation and mutual help was concerned. Centuries old geographical, cultural and strategic links between these two Asian neighbors coupled with mutual economic interests and identical foreign policy made their relationship a notable example of friendship.

Since independence to 1990s, India Myanmar relations were characterized by many ups and downs. In the phase of 1948 to 1962, India Myanmar relations were friendly but 1962 to 1988, in the General Ne Win era; India-Myanmar relations were normal but not close. India's special emphasis to the ideology of liberal democracy also remains a strong basis of its Myanmar policy which had to be compromised in the face of its national interest in the later stage.

5.6) ROLE OF CHINA FOR DEMOCRATIC DOWNFALL OF MYANMAR: -

Now we are going to discuss about the involvement of China which influenced the conflict of Myanmar. The main problems which I am going to discuss the problems of Rakhine Kachin and Shan as well as China's impact on overall Myanmar's peace process and democratic downfall.

Since gaining its independence from British colonial rule in 1948, Myanmar (also known as Burma) has faced ethnic division and conflict. For decades, an array of ethnic political movements and their armed

wings have sought political, economic, cultural, and social rights as protection against domination by (majority) Burman authorities, even as the Myanmar military (the Tatmadaw) has asserted that its mission is to ensure the country's sovereign independence, territorial integrity, and unity. Majority-minority ethnic relations and the distribution of power and resources have been the most serious problems since independence. Achieving mutual trust and a system of governance agreeable to all of Myanmar's diverse peoples are the country's defining challenges.

In northern Myanmar near the Chinese border, fighting between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups has increased despite efforts to advance a comprehensive peace process that gained momentum under the Thein Sein government beginning in 2011. A Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement (NCA) was signed by eight groups in October 2015, but most of the larger groups abstained, including those along Myanmar's border with China. Under the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, progress has been slow: the peace process has stalled, confidence in it has fallen, and violence has increased, particularly in Kachin and northern Shan states along the Chinese border. Divisions between NCA signatories and nonsignatories have grown, the divide roughly corresponding to whether a group is located on the India or Thai border (signatories) or China border (nonsignatories). Several nonsignatory groups formed the Northern Alliance to strengthen their military and political power.

Driven by security concerns, economic interests, and a desire for political influence in a country with which it shares a 1,500-mile border, China is playing a key role in Myanmar's internal security and peace process. Armed clashes between Myanmar's military and ethnic armed groups along the Myanmar-China border occasionally spill into China. The Chinese province of Yunnan has sheltered tens of thousands of refugees during periods of intense fighting in Myanmar. In 2013, China designated

a special envoy, selected from among its most seasoned diplomats, to serve as lead point of contact and formal observer to Myanmar's peace talks. This envoy, who changed in 2015, remains an important player in facilitating talks between the ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and the Myanmar government.

China has also come to the defense of the Myanmar government over the crisis in Rakhine State to the west, where the Tatmadaw has carried out a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing, if not genocide, against the mostly Muslim Rohingya population. China has protected Myanmar from sanctions at the United Nations and has offered rhetorical and material support for its handling of the so-called terrorist attacks. Furthermore, China has extensive economic interests in Rakhine, including a major port at Kyaukphyu, a planned special economic zone (SEZ), and a road, rail, and pipeline network to move energy and other materials and supplies from the Bay of Bengal through Myanmar to Yunnan Province.

For its part, the United States has long supported Myanmar's reform process but has had a limited role in the peace process. This is in part—though by no means entirely—due to China's explicit opposition to US engagement, particularly in areas along the Chinese border, and general concern about US influence in Myanmar. Myanmar will serve as the ultimate arbiter of any US involvement in its affairs. Nonetheless, assessing China's role in and perspectives toward Myanmar's internal conflicts may offer important insights into overall conflict dynamics inside the country and help inform potential US peace-support policies going forward.

5.7) HISTORICAL RELATION BETWEEN CHINA AND MYANMAR: –

Myanmar's approach to China reflects its historical suspicion of big powers and its desire to fiercely protect its national sovereignty. Its geographic location between India and China and its experience over

the centuries of foreign invasion, colonization, and political pressure from various countries have made Burmese leaders wary of foreign intentions and fearful of their country's becoming a pawn of foreign powers.

Sharing a 1,500-mile land border, China and Burma have been inextricably linked for centuries through politics, war, bloodlines, and commerce. From the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty in the late thirteenth century through the Qing dynasty in the 1760s, China repeatedly attempted to conquer Burma, yet geographical obstacles such as mountain ranges and rivers proved unsuitable for large-scale military action[19]. The two sides signed a peace treaty in 1769, and Burma had loose tributary ties to China until the British colonized it in 1885.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China and Burma increased contact via borderland horse caravans, rebels, and refugees that moved between Yunnan and northern Burma as a result of ongoing wars in China and expanded bilateral trade[20]. Chinese immigration to Burma increased during the colonial period, as it did in many Southeast Asian states. As a result, many of the same ethnic groups in Burma also are in China, and the border creates opportunities for smuggling, illegal activities, and investment that strongly affect Sino-Burmese relations today.

During World War II, the Republic of China allied itself with the United States, the United Kingdom, and other allied powers, dispatching an expeditionary force into Burma to aid the British troops against the invading Japanese forces. The China-Burma-India theater became the Achilles' heel of Japan's occupation of mainland China. This large Chinese military presence during World War II, followed by the retreat of the Chinese Nationalist, or Kuomintang, forces into Burma after losing the

Chinese Civil War in 1949, complicated relations between Burma and China. In the early 1950s, Burma suspended a US economic aid program for several years over CIA aid to the remnant Kuomintang forces[21].

The decolonization of the British Raj after World War II gave birth to the independent nations of India and Pakistan in 1947 and Burma in 1948[22]. The delineation of the borders between these newly identified nations created tensions that are still unresolved. The most pressing concern for Burma is that the lines drawn in 1947 and 1948 meant that hundreds of thousands of Bengali-speaking Muslims, later known as Rohingya, remained in Rakhine, and that communities with similar demographics found themselves citizens of East Pakistan, which in 1971 became independent Bangladesh [23].

Postcolonial Burma was among the first non-communist countries to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) following its establishment in October 1949. Burma and China established official diplomatic relations in 1950, and the Yangon government coined the term *pauk phaw* to describe the friendly (fraternal) relationship between the two countries.[24] In 1960, Burma and China peacefully demarcated the colonial border that previous Chinese governments had refused to recognize, both sides ceding some territory to the other. China agreed to this in part to demonstrate internationally that it was not an aggressive state [25].

The expulsion of Chinese communities from Burma in the early 1960s under General Ne Win and the anti-Chinese riots in 1967 during the early stage of Mao's Cultural Revolution generated hostility in both countries [26]. In the aftermath of the riots, Beijing severed bilateral ties and began overtly supporting the armed

struggle of the Burma Communist Party (BCP) against the Burma government; it viewed party-to-party relations as different from state-to-state relations.[27] The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) provided financial, military, and personnel support for the BCP to help it establish a “liberated area” of more than twenty thousand square kilometers along the shared border in Shan State [28].

China’s active support for the BCP is just one example of China’s support for similar communist party-led insurgencies in virtually every Southeast Asian country. [29] After Deng Xiaoping came back to power in 1978, he severed all these ties—except the CCP’s relationship with the BCP. In 1989, China finally ceased its assistance to the BCP, leading to the latter’s collapse, but has maintained relationships with former BCP splinter groups. Chinese support for the BCP is not forgotten within today’s Tatmadaw, many of whose senior leaders fought the BCP insurgency and their Chinese allies in their youth.

Nevertheless, in the 1990s, China-Myanmar relations improved. Nearly two-thirds of the Myanmar army, navy, and air force personnel sent abroad for training between 1990 and 1999 received training in China.[30] In return, the Tatmadaw offered China access to natural resources in Myanmar’s remote areas, especially Kachin State, and Myanmar’s generals profited from Chinese investments. China was interested in opening the border for trade and extracting natural resources to fuel its own economic development, particularly in southwestern Yunnan Province.

China’s relations with Myanmar also improved following their respective crackdowns on political reform movements in the late

1980s that resulted in the international isolation of both. China supplied Myanmar with military assistance that was no longer available from Western countries and pursued broad military cooperation with the military government. Since the late 1980s, China has been a major supplier of military hardware to Myanmar, providing more than 90 percent of its military transport. [31] China's military sales also include anti-ship cruise missiles, targeting radar, naval guns, and corvettes [32]. Myanmar bought \$1.4 billion in arms from China between 2000 and 2016, approximately \$1 billion since 2011, when Thein Sein became president.¹⁸ China also used its permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council to shield Myanmar from international condemnation and sanctions in the 1990s through the 2000s.

A shift in China's approach to Myanmar took place after 2011 as Myanmar began to transition from military rule toward an elected civilian government and China found that it could no longer rely on its strong relationship with the military to protect its dominant position in the country. Chinese leaders shifted their engagement to the quasi-civilian government of President U Thein Sein, who was also a former prime minister and a general. They were shocked, however, when in September 2011 he suspended construction of the Chinese-financed Myitsone dam project in Kachin State following protests by local residents and others across the country[33]. Coupled with more protests against Chinese-backed mines and factories in Myanmar, the Myitsone suspension underscored the risks to China of relying on relations solely with one set of actors in Myanmar, such as the military or the Thein Sein government, to protect their interests. Accordingly,

Chinese policymakers sought to diversify China's engagement and embarked on a multilayered engagement strategy to improve relations and its public image in Myanmar, including outreach to the NLD, other opposition parties, and the public [34].

5.8) China's Relations with the NLD and the Tatmadaw:

Today, Beijing is bolstering relations with both the NLD government and the Tatmadaw because it recognizes that it needs the acquiescence of both to achieve its interests in Myanmar. When the NLD government won the 2015 elections in a landslide, Chinese observers worried that China-Myanmar relations would weaken under the new leadership because Aung San Suu Kyi appeared to be more open to the West. Beijing was at first fearful of her because, among other things, she had been educated in India and in Britain and had strong ties in the West. In response to improved relations between Myanmar and the United States, Chinese authorities worked to restore China's close relations with Myanmar, appointing a high-level special envoy for Asian affairs to concentrate on Myanmar.

When the NLD took office, the Chinese mounted an aggressive campaign to strengthen ties between Beijing and Naypyidaw. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was the first foreign counterpart to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi in her capacity as foreign minister, and Xi Jinping has continued to court her since. In fact, Aung San Suu Kyi has made several trips to China since taking office. Chinese officials opened multiple channels of communication with the NLD and maintained a strong interest in the peace talks launched in 2011 with ethnic armed forces along the border. The Chinese government also courts Myanmar citizens through diplomatic outreach and "soft power" study tours, and this pattern of Chinese engagement has increased after the onset of the Rakhine crisis in 2017.

Beijing has also made efforts to strengthen its military-to-military relationship with the Tatmadaw, continuing to enhance contacts and increase training and technical exchanges between China's and Myanmar's armed forces. In May 2017, the People's Liberation Army Navy

(PLAN) conducted its first joint exercises, including communications and search and rescue, with the Myanmar navy. Chinese navy ships visited Myanmar in what is seen as an important milestone in the projection of Chinese naval power into the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. [35] Amid ongoing fighting along the China-Myanmar border, Beijing is also seeking ways to improve cooperation on border management [36]. The Tatmadaw, however, does not want to be solely dependent on China and has cultivated military ties with—and purchased weapons from—Russia, India, and Israel, among other countries.

5.9) WHAT CAN CHINA DO TO RECOVER THIS SITUATION

China, Burma's most significant patron and neighbours, seems to have become the focus of attention as the international community searches for a means to stem the regime's brutality. Governments, exile groups, human rights groups, and political pundits, believing that Burma's generals will bow to Beijing in return for its protection, are asking that China bring the generals in line. But does China really have enough power and influence over the generals to modify their behaviour? To answer this question, we must look at the various factors that China must consider.

Considering General Than Shwe's obsession with history, Burma's historical experience with China is no small matter. The two countries have a troubled past. As Burmese kings consolidated their empire, they confronted Chinese adversaries more than once, and over the years many tribes of Chinese origin have been incorporated into Burma. The large Kachin tribe in Burma's far northern state spreads into large parts of Yunnan province, as do the Lahu, Wa, and Kokkang groups. Burma also hosts a very large immigrant Chinese population. Chinese residents have been expelled from the country more than once, for example by Ne Win in 1964, when wealthy Chinese families were perceived to be

threatening the well-being of ethnic Burmans. In 1967 there were riots against Chinese urban residents when they tried to promote the Cultural Revolution in Burma. China knows that resentment against the Chinese population in Burma still lurks just below the surface today. Even more significantly, Burma's ruling generals earned their first medals fighting Chinese-supported communist insurgencies along the border between 1968 and 1978, and they do not harbor warm feelings for China. They probably remain very distrustful of China and resent that they must rely on its patronage.

Second, China has come to see Burma as a significant resource for its voracious economic appetite. Burma abuts one of China's poorest and most isolated provinces, Yunnan, which lags behind the economic revolution that is sweeping the rest of China, at least in part because it does not have access to cheap energy. For more than a decade, China has sought to develop a road from Yunnan through Burma to the Bay of Bengal to facilitate its trade with the rest of the world, but the generals appear reluctant to open their country to China. Over the past two years, however, China has finally succeeded in wearing down this reluctance, probably with the lure of very large financial returns. The two governments recently announced that they have reached a preliminary agreement for China to build two gas and oil pipelines from the Bay of Bengal across Burma to Yunnan. Burma has also given the green light for China to extract natural gas from an offshore deposit in the Bay of Bengal and ship it to Yunnan through the new pipeline. And finally, an agreement was reached for China to build three sizable hydroelectric dams on Burmese rivers near the Chinese border to provide electricity to Yunnan. Burma's returns from these projects will easily run into billions of dollars over a thirty-year period. China will be the country's largest investor by far, and Burma will become essential to the development of Yunnan Province.

Aside from these future prospects, Burma already provides a sizable export market for China and is a source of wood, jade, minerals, and other materials for China's burgeoning economy. Much of the trade is illicit, finding its way across a porous border where customs officials can be easily bought. It is not a relationship that can be readily regulated.

Third, China is concerned about maintaining security and stability on its southwestern flank. The tribal groups on Burma's Chinese border all have ties in China and have achieved varying degrees of autonomy from the SPDC through a series of cease-fire agreements, which ended their insurgencies but left them with autonomous territory and their own militias. The tribal groups' economies are oriented more toward China than toward Burma, aided greatly by Chinese-built roads, and many groups actually live on both sides of the border. Chinese "triad" gangs traffic drugs and people across the border with relative impunity, flooding Yunnan with drug addicts and HIV infection. Chinese criminal suspects often seek refuge in Burma, and Chinese law enforcement officers have on occasion made cross-border incursions to apprehend them. Recent reports suggest that China has begun to take an interest in the welfare of some of the ethnic minorities on its border, providing assistance with HIV/AIDS protection, for example. How the SPDC treats these border groups is of concern to Beijing because a return to insurgency could radiate into China and cause new problems in Chinese-Burmese relations.

Also, in the interest of security and stability on the China-Burma border, Beijing must balance its attempts to shield the SPDC from international retaliation with its desire to forge cordial relations with a future civilian government in Burma. This delicate situation would be greatly eased if Beijing were to find a way to be the facilitator of peaceful transition from military to civilian rule. There are some signs that Beijing has weighed in usefully with the SPDC, for example, in facilitating UN special envoy

Gambari's recent visit to Burma and his meetings with Aung San Suu Kyi and the top generals. China has also developed channels of communication with Burmese exile groups, including democracy advocates and ethnic minority refugees.

Finally, China must consider how its relations with Burma can affect its image as an emerging international leader. As China becomes more deeply involved economically with rogue regimes, the world demands political responsibility as well, for it is no longer a world where economics and politics can be easily separated. If Beijing aspires to a leadership role, it must take seriously its responsibilities to promote good governance, and nowhere will such efforts be more salient than in its relations with this southern neighbour that it now dominates economically.

5.10) MYANMAR-U.S. RELATIONS:

Beginning in late 1949, U.S. policy towards Southeast Asia was in the process of being overhauled and strengthened, the stimulus to this reappraisal came from many directions. Among them was the complete Communist victory in China in 1949, domestic attacks on the

administration's policies towards China, the inability of Britain and France to defend non-Communist Asia and as a consequent to this, the resulting pressures on the United States to take over more and more responsibilities in the area. The Korean War gave additional urgency to policy formulation and helped to clarify U.S. objectives. Signs of the changed policy were not slow in coming. On December 15, 1949, Philip C. Jessup was designated Ambassador-at-large to review the situation in Asia and make recommendations. This new effort was later carried forward by committee consisting of Jessup, Raymond B. Fosdick, Everett Case and John Leighton Stuart. In February 1950, Ambassador Jessup presided over a regional conference of U.S. envoys at Bangkok, which

considered “the affirmative steps which could be taken by the United States to carry out its announced policies of extending friendly support to the United States in Asia which may desire such assistance.” The conference recommended

that the United States provide military and economic support to States resisting Communist aggression. It was also announced in February the next year that a mission headed by R. Allen Griffin would visit Rangoon, Bangkok, Saigon, Singapore and Djakarta with the objective - “to prepare the way for the most expeditious and efficient use of whatever technical assistance and funds may become available for that area.” In his inaugural address in January 1949, President Truman had proposed as a supplement to the Economic Cooperation Act (the Marshall Plan), the point IV programme of technical assistance and as a result of the new direction of policy, this programme played an important role in Asia beginning in 1952 and 1953. Around the same period the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia began operations on 1 July, 1951. The Plan, as designed by the Commonwealth, sought to resolve the correlation between poverty and communism. It was based on the logic that poverty and underdevelopment and a huge population, made the non - communist states in the Asia - Pacific region vulnerable to communist subversion and that economic development was the most effective weapon against this menace and that a significant improvement in living standards in the region would render communism less attractive to the people. The new policy towards Asia had immediate results for Burma. Both

the Jessup and Griffin missions included visits to Burma. The Griffin mission arrived in Rangoon, one day after Prime Minister Nu had issued a new invitation to foreign capital to invest in Burma as an “instrument for upholding democracy.” One result of the mission was the signing of an agreement on economic cooperation on September 13, 1950. On the

occasion of the signing, Ambassador David Mck. Key, explained its purpose: "the purpose of agreement is to assist Burma to achieve those sound economic conditions and stable international economic relationships, so necessary for the maintenance of individual liberty, free institutions and independence." Under the agreement, the United States was prepared to furnish economic and technical assistance towards these ends. The detailed working of the economic cooperation program was to be decided later by mutual agreement between the Governments of Burma and the United States. The nature of the projects to be carried out would be determined on the basis of the proposals put forth by the Government of Burma. In playing her part, the United States would provide physical equipment and technical experience in the areas of recovery, rehabilitation and economic development in a wide variety of fields, including agriculture, mining, transportation, communications, medical and general health projects. The program also included the provision of consumer goods of importance to general welfare. The United States government would look forward to receive from the Government of Burma the detailed proposals and was fully confident that, aided by our joint efforts, Burma would move steadily along the road to recovery and economic strength. Two months later, the United States made available to Burma, ten river patrol craft. However, the Burmese Home Minister insisted that only eight arrived under the U.S. Mutual Defence Assistance Program adopted in October, 1949. Patrol craft were of special value because of "the unique importance of the navigable river system of Burma to commerce and the over all wellbeing of that country." Training for Burmese naval personnel and spare parts for the completely rehabilitated vessels would also be provided. The new U.S. policy was off to a good start in Burma. Useful economic and minor military programs were slowly added to modestly expanded cultural and educational exchange programs. In the immediate

turmoil of the Communist takeover in China and especially in the stress of war in Korea, Congress was willing to provide substantial funds for these similar purposes. For the government of Burma, the Colombo Plan offered both economic possibilities and political pitfalls. How much aid was the country likely to receive through the programme? Would participation in the programme not impinge on its policy of neutralism and nonalignment. The task of the promoters of the Colombo Plan, the United Kingdom in particular, was to convince the Burmese that the programme was not 'political' in orientation or purpose and was designed primarily to promote regional stability and economic development. The major focus of U.S. policy towards Burma during 1950's and the next several years was on economic and technical assistance. The aid programme was designed to build strength, through technical and material aid to essential services and through economic rehabilitation and development, as was in other countries of Southeast Asia that were "not secure against internal subversion, political infiltration or military aggression." It was based on the expectation that the national government would gain political strength and stability through the aid programme, which would also demonstrate "the genuine interest of the United States in the welfare of the people of Southeast Asia." Productivity, political stability and a concrete demonstration of U.S. friendship were the prime goals, as a contribution to thwarting any further expansion by international communism in general and by communist China towards Burma in particular. U Nu's return to power in 1960's did not signal any change in U.S.-Burma economic aid policy. Nor did the U.S. exert any effective influence on the declining powers of leadership exercised by the Prime Minister. The Burmese spent some fifteen months working out their disagreements in the formulation of the Second Four-Year Plan from 1961-65. This was a somewhat more ambitious plan than the First-four Year Plan of 1956. It contained greater emphasis on the private sector and allocated a larger

share of government investment to agriculture (including irrigation and forestry), mining, transport and communications, industry and the social services. It expected that law and order would require a lower investment. To the United States, Burma was a British preserve until World War II, except for American Baptist missionaries who, mostly in the nineteenth century, worked effectively among non-Burman and non-Buddhist groups, some of whom readily responded to their new teachings. The United States significantly contributed to the campaign to wrest Burma from the Japanese, who had occupied that country early in World War II. At an emotional or ideological level, President Franklin Roosevelt was interested in freeing the colonies from their colonial masters throughout Asia, but little or hardly any action took place in this regard. U.S. interests in Burma were essentially a product of the Cold War. The defeat of the Kuomintang Nationalist Government in China in 1949 and the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1950, together with the Korean War that year, gave immediate focus to the anti-Communist sentiment in the United States, which had already become apparent in Europe and in the American military occupation of South Korea (1945-48). An official investigative team was sent from Washington in 1950 to the countries of Asia, including Burma, to see what types of assistance the United States might provide to stem this perceived communist advance (communist-inspired uprisings in Burma, the Philippines, Malaya and Vietnam). Burma was the first country to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) and since that time, in spite of problems in the relationship, Burma had felt it had to be neutral in the Cold War and as well as in the Sino-Soviet dispute in 1969. Given the long, indefensible border with China and having a massive population, Burma had always been vulnerable. The U.S. aid program started soon after Burmese independence, but because of covert U.S. and Taiwanese support to the nationalist troops that had fled from Yunnan into Burma (and who, with U.S. prodding, hoped to "re-invade" China and overthrow

the People's Republic), the Burmese government under U Nu was fearful that the Chinese would pursue them into Burmese territory over which the Burmese central government had little or no control. In spite of vehement, but misleading U.S. denials that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were funding Kuomintang (KMT) troops, the Burmese government stopped the U.S. aid programme. In 1956, the programme was restarted and it lasted through the coup of 1962 and into the beginnings of the socialist period. It was again stopped in 1964 by mutual agreement because of rigid socialist policies and disagreement about projects, especially the siting of the proposed new road to Mandalay. With a change in foreign assistance policy at the first BSPP Congress in June–July 1971, when the decision to seek foreign aid was endorsed and following the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, the Burmese may have felt more comfortable in requesting, the restart of U.S. assistance in 1978.¹¹ That programme, focused on basic human needs, lasted until the coup of 1988, when it was once again ended by the United States. The Cold War and the perceived threat of Chinese expansion were not the only reason the United States sought to continue good relations with Burma. In Rangoon, with both Chinese and Soviet embassies active there and having useful listening post for observing the Sino – Soviet split and both countries had foreign assistance programmes. Besides, the United States was also concerned with the trade in heroin, which was flooding the United States from Burma. Stopping the production and supply of opium – which was converted into a morphine base and then into heroin, became a U.S. priority. Since the failed people's revolution against the BSPP military regime, the coup of 1988 designed to share up military control over society, at the end of the Cold War, U.S. interests had been refocused. U.S.

concerns from 1988 to the end of the Clinton administration concentrated on political rights in Myanmar which were absent. Essentially, U.S. policy

from 1988 through 2001 was on a single track – human rights. Economic, strategic, narcotics, even humanitarian issue were not pursued. The human rights policy was in part dictated and supported by an effective human

rights lobby in the United States and the industrialized world. Had not the military coup been so brutal in 1988 in repressing the popular riots throughout the country, the United States and the industrialized world would have welcomed the most important economic policy change by the military since 1962 – the abandonment of socialism and the opening of the economy to both the foreign and domestic private sectors.¹⁵ Of less concern, but of great potential importance to the United States, was the strategic place of Myanmar. Myanmar was a nexus of potential rivalries among China, India and the ASEAN states. In the Sino – Indian war of 1962, Burma flanked the still disputed border between those two countries. Although China might not have felt a threat from India, the reverse was not true. Indian defence Minister Fernandes announced in the late 1990's that China was India's potential enemy. Chinese penetration of Myanmar had been extensive, in the supply of military material (some US

\$2 billion in arms and equipment), the training of officers, the construction of infrastructure, a growing influence on the economy and massive illegal migration into the country to take advantage of clear economic opportunities that were denied to provinces in southwest China, such as Yunnan. Of concern to India and to Japan (which viewed China's preeminent role in Myanmar as strengthening of the PRC), as well as had been the apparent effort by China to gain access to the Bay of Bengal and the Malacca Straits.¹⁶ India, which for several years, following the coup of 1988, pursued a strong anti – SLORC policy, changed to a policy of accommodation because of the likelihood of continued military control and the apparent rise of Chinese influence. The entry of Myanmar

into the ASEAN in July 1997 was, many say, in part, prompted by ASEAN concerns to limit Chinese influence in Myanmar, as much as by Burmese interests in tapping into ASEAN direct investment in that country. The perceived vulnerability of the Burmese to U.S. intervention in the eyes of the Burmese military leadership, no matter how far-fetched and illogical to Americans given the paucity of U.S. vital interests in that country, was still palpable in high-level Burmese military circles. The fear of U.S. military action, however unrealistic to foreign observers, was palpable to the Burmese leadership. U.S.-Thai military exercise (Cobra Gold) also excited and affected Burmese. The United States had been the international leader opposed to the military regime in Myanmar. It imposed sanctions and refused to nominate an ambassador (there is a U.S. embassy with a charge d' affaires). The U.S. Department of State had complained about human rights issues and the illegitimacy of the military, since it had refused to recognize the result of the 1990 elections and essentially vetoed any potential multilateral assistance on political grounds. In October 2000, the military began a quiet, unannounced dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, who was under a modified house arrest at that time. Fostered and encouraged by Ambassador Tun Sri Razali Ismail, the UN Secretary - General's personal representative and backed by Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia. This tentative effort at confidence building measures went well along at the time of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and the subsequent U.S. war on terrorism. These two events, the dialogue and the response to the September 11 attacks, were on parallel paths, which seemed to have merged in 2002. "Terrorism" had become a popular designation in Myanmar, with meanings varying, according to the political position of each party. So the Burmese government called all dissidents, terrorists and the opposition in the country as government terrorists. Myanmar, suspicious of U.S. intentions, but fearing a U.S. intervention, demonstrated an interest

in improving U.S. relations and was quick to respond in a positive manner to U.S. interests in anti-terrorism. The government was said to have supplied the United States with intelligence information that the Burmese might have had, allowed military over flights to the Middle East and took steps to protect physically from terrorist attack, the very vulnerable U.S. embassy building in downtown Yangon by sealing off that portion of the street on which the embassy was situated. While the government of Myanmar and the United States had differences in the past years, they were pragmatically in full agreement that terrorists must be given no sanctuary. Burmese motivations for cooperation were probably fourfold: the generalised suspicions of the Burmese military authorities towards the Muslims in the country, the fear of U.S. intervention, should it be demonstrated that there were al Qaeda cells in the country, a useful and internationally acceptable rationale for cracking down on Muslim groups in insurrection and a general attempt to improve relations with the United States. Myanmar foreign policy towards the United States had been largely reactive. This reflected the regime's understanding that while it wishes to resist U.S. pressure, it had very little leverage to alter the dynamics and tone of the bilateral relationship, short of relinquishing power. Yet giving

into Washington's central demand for regime transition was unacceptable to the military-led government. The SPDC saw itself as the only institution able to guarantee national unity and stability in the longer term, given the difficult relations between the Burman majority and the ethnic minority groups, as well as the perceived disastrous historical experience of Burmese democratic politics which, in view of the military, saw politicians indulge in personally motivated struggle and internecine squabbling at the expense of national interests. In any case, Washington's demands were considered as utterly unwarranted interference. As the former regime spokesman Hla Min had put it, 'as a sovereign

independent country we do not like to be pushed around.' The SPDC effectively saw US sanctions and its support for the NLD and ASSK and other pro-democracy activists as a form of low - intensity warfare. In June 2005, Washington tried but failed to place Myanmar on the agenda of the UNSC. At the subsequent ASEAN, PMC and ARF meetings, US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick referred to Myanmar as a 'Cancer' that could spread to the wider region. In October 2005, the US administration claimed the publication of the Havel-Tutu report and continued denial of access for Razali and the UN Special Rapporteur for Human rights Paulo Sergio Pinheiro warranted the UNSC discussing the situation in Myanmar. President Bush received at the Oval office activist Charm Tong, who was associated with the Shan Women's Action Network - which claimed in 2002 that the Tatmadaw was systematically using sexual violence against ethnic - minority women along the border. Besides markedly impressing the President, she had also met the National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley. Myanmar's diplomatic counter-offensive had so far had two main elements. First, the foreign ministry had rejected in its entirety the Havel- Tutu report, arguing that had the situation in Myanmar posed a threat to regional security, its neighbours and ASEAN would have surely noticed it and called for action. Second, having been encouraged by both China and Russia blocking initial moves by the US to place Myanmar on the UNSC agenda in June 2005, the military government had sought a commitment from Beijing and Moscow for extended diplomatic protection. Through its mass media, the SPDC had suggested that the US was anxious and in a rush to install a puppet government in Myanmar with the apparent intention of checking China's growing regional influence. The government held out the possibility of a major long - term gas deal with China, just days before the UNSC briefing in December, 2005. By also strengthening economic cooperation and leveraging its energy resources in its relations with Russia, the SPDC had sought to secure the favour of a second veto at the UNSC. Yangon had

hoped that China and Russia would block a UNSC vote on any substantive matter relating to Myanmar. The new US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in turn identified Myanmar as one of several “outposts of tyranny” at the beginning of George W. Bush’s second term. Such language, which reflected but also amplified the sentiments by many a U S senator and congressperson, made very clear that Washington sympathized with the suffering and democratic aspirations of the Myanmar people and was strongly opposed to the military regime in power. Former President George W. Bush was himself strongly antagonistic towards Myanmar’s military junta and the then first Lady Laura Bush also publicly advocated herself as a keen supporter of human rights and

democracy in the country. Both personally met with anti - regime activists and these meetings seemed to have strengthened their moral resolve to stand up against the perceived tyrannical rule of Myanmar’s military junta. One might thus hold that time wise the origins of US - Myanmar rapprochement lay squarely in the period following the announcement of the Obama administration’s Burma Policy review until September, 2009. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in February 2009, announced a Burma Policy review during her inaugural visit to Japan and Indonesia. Though the announcement of the review was accompanied by acknowledgement that Washington’s previous sanctions - heavy approach had failed to bring about a political change in Myanmar, she also suggested that ASEAN’s “constructive engagement” approach towards Myanmar was equally a failure in this regard. The key idea that emerged from the policy review, which involved interagency exchanges and discussion with different stakeholders on Capitol Hill and civil society, was that the administration should introduce a second key pillar to influence developments in Myanmar, in addition to the continued reliance on sanction, namely the pursuit of a political

dialogue at a senior level. Since then, progress in US – Myanmar relations had by some yardsticks been quite spectacular. Normal diplomatic relations had been re-established, economic sanctions imposed against the SPDC had been eased significantly, military – to – military ties were being cautiously revived and a reciprocal state visits had already taken place. To what may this positive trend in bilateral relations be attributed? Arguably, four main factors have underpinned the level of progress achieved so far.

CONCLUSION:

The democratic downfall and transition of Myanmar is the main subject of my study. Many other factors have also come to describe the cause of this democratic downfall. These are ethnic conflict, uprising of military regime as well as, growing conflict among the Bama and the non-Bama groups. It was argued that ethnic conflict in Myanmar cannot be resolved without constitutional reforms.

It has been observed that the constitutional reform was vetoed by the military regime as the constitutional reform bill must be approved with the 75 percent of majority parliament. The current constitution gives 25 percent seats of the parliaments to the appointed military representatives. The 25 percent of the military MPs are regular military personal who attend parliamentary session in military uniforms. They can be substituted by the Commander in Chief at any time. From 2011 to 2014, some of the military representatives have been substituted. It is assumed that as long as the Commander- in Chief of Myanmar Army enjoys this power in the parliament, the military are likely to be in parliament, more than one term. The Commander in Chief frequently declared that protection of the constitution is the main duty of the military regime. It is assumed that all articles and clauses of the charter with regard to the military regime would be the main concern of the

military regime. In this respect, the military regime will not support the idea of rewriting of the constitution. The main opposition party the NLD-led by Aung San Suu Kyi also does not support the idea of rewriting, but it supports and advocates the constitutional reforms within the constitutional framework. To the extent, that all civilians including non-armed ethnic groups formed political parties, contested election and casted their vote for the 2010 general election. They will do the same in the fourth-coming 2015 general election also. It indicates that the people of Myanmar excluding ethnic armed forces would support the constitutional reform rather than rewriting of it.

The non-Bama ethnic armed groups claim that they do not accept the current constitution against the idea of the military regime who usually asks them to accept it. In this respect, the Myanmar military is unlikely to make an attempt to resolve Myanmar's ethnic conflict if ethnic armed groups reject the constitutional reforms. Therefore, "Ethnic conflict in Myanmar cannot be resolved without constitutional reforms", is positively proved. And this is the first factor of democratic downfall or ghost democracy of Myanmar. Thus, the second research answer's question is answered. It also covers the 1st objective of my study.

Myanmar's ethnic conflict is ethnic conflict between the Bama and the non-Bama group based on ethnic identity. It is one of the bloodiest ethnic conflicts in the contemporary times. Myanmar's ethnic conflict can be traced back to the 11th century but it was different from the present ethnic conflict because it was the conflict between the Bama and the non-Bama groups (Shan, Rakhaine, Mon and Karen). There was no ethnic conflict between the Bama and the Chin and the Kachin ethnic groups.

During the British rule in Myanmar from 1824 to 1948, there was neither attempt to resolve ethnic conflict in Myanmar or fighting between the

Bama and the non-Bama groups. It did not necessarily mean that ethnic conflict in Myanmar was resolved. It was just silent. Instead, the Kachin and the Chin people were added into Myanmar's ethnic conflict. There was no uniformity in the perspectives on the British among the people of Myanmar. To the Bama ethnic people, the British were the invaders of the land but for the non-Bama groups, the British were like a kind of liberators from the domination of the Bama people. Such different views on the British had widened the gap between the Bama and the non-Bama people. Subsequently, the so-called British policy of "divide and rule", "preferential treatment" and democratic system also had widened the gap between the Bama and the non-Bama groups. During the Japanese occupation of Myanmar from 1943 to 1945, the Bama ethnic people had cooperated with the Japanese troops while the non-Bama maintained their loyalty to the British. It is argued that the Japanese occupation of Myanmar also had widened the gap between the Bama and the non-Bama groups.

Just before Myanmar's independence in 1948, people of different ethnic origin in Myanmar had their own independent movements. The Bama ethnic group led by General Aung San demanded complete independence from the British; the Karen ethnic people had also attempted to gain independence. The Rakhaine ethnic group also had planned for independence while the Karenni (Kayah now) hoped to regain their own sovereignty. Similarly, the Chin, Kachin and Shan ethnic groups had attempted to form united frontier Area country through continuation of the frontier area territory which is larger than the Bama ethnic group's territory. Politically speaking, the people from the frontier areas (Chin, Kachin and Shan) had been the most powerful groups among the non-Bama groups on those days.

The political dialogue between the Bama ethnic group led by General Aung San and the Chin, Kachin and Shan held in 1948 and Panglong

agreement signed by all, had guaranteed power-sharing between the Bama and the non-Bama groups. It is observed that such political dialogue between the Bama and other non-Bama groups (Karen, Karenni, Mon and Rakhaine) was not there. However, Panglong agreement of power-sharing between the Bama and the Chin, Kachin and Shan was likely to be acceptable to the Karen, Karenni, Mon and Rakhaine as there was no demand from these groups.

When Myanmar became an independent nation in 1948, ethnic autonomy was given to the Panglong signatories (Chin, Kachin and Shan) but it was denied to the non-signatories of Panglong agreement (Karen, Karenni, Mon and Rakhaine). The denial of ethnic autonomy to the nonsignatories of panglong agreement was the cause of ethnic conflict between the central government of Myanmar dominated by the Bama ethnic people and those groups. In addition, the Bama nationalism aiming at the protection, preservation and promotion of Bama Buddhist culture became stronger. It is argued that the Myanmar's independence was likely to be the driving force for the Bama ethnic people to build the Bama kingdom over the whole region of the non-Bama ethnic groups.

Apparently, Panglong agreement had not been implemented fully. Instead, centralized administration against power-sharing between the Bama and the non-Bama had been adopted to prevent the socio-economic development and empowerment of the non-Bama groups. When the nonBama groups demanded constitutional reform and political dialogue for greater autonomy in 1962, the Myanmar's military regime led by General Ne Win did not agreed to conduct such political talks with the non-Bama groups.

Instead, he took power to prevent granting greater autonomy to the nonBama groups. It indicates that the denial of political dialogue with the nonBama groups for greater autonomy was the cause of ethnic conflict

as well. The above-mentioned factors show that there was no the connection between the ancient ethnic conflict in Myanmar and the current ethnic conflict. Therefore, the current Myanmar's ethnic conflict is the product of the activities of the Government of Myanmar.

The research study found that the democratic system form of government established by the British in the Burma Proper (Bama dominated areas) from 1922 to 1948 was exclusive, oppressive, discriminating, unjust and unfair. The foundation of that unjust democratic institutions was rooted down a certain extent in the Bama dominated areas (central and lower part of the country) when the British left Myanmar in 1948.

The British had given military training and knowledge to the nonBama groups such as Kachin, Chin and Karen on the other side. It has shown that there was an unjust democratic system was at the hands of the Bama people while guns were at the hands of the non-Bama groups. The said two groups have not known each other properly. Due to General Aung San's leadership, they have agreed to form modern union of Myanmar through signing panglong agreement (power-sharing agreement). Before mutual trust had been built, General Aung San was assassinated in 1947. As a result, mutual suspicion was revived strongly. All these factors have a negative impact on ethnic relations and the nation building process in the post-colonial Myanmar.

After independence in 1948, the Bama majority people have dominated public policy and the constitution of the land. In fact, different versions of democracies that could not accommodate the non-Bama groups into the main political stream of the nation have been emerging. Then, the implementation of panglong agreement by the successive governments of Myanmar after independence has been still missing. Four elements are found to have prevented the implementation of that power-sharing

system (panglong agreement). The first one is Burmese nationalism (Bama nationalism) that aims to create a 'ethnocratic state where one ethnic group (the Bama) came to dominate in both government and national armed forces since independence [1]. The second is legacy of colonial rule that aim to establish an autocratic state where the rulers divide public policy. The third is the elite competitions that concentrate on capturing power at the centre as well as at the regional government. The fourth is pursuit of homogeneity that focuses on creating a homogenous society where the ethnic communities are forced to assimilate within the majority culture.

The history of Myanmar shows that there were attempts for democratic transition in Myanmar in 1922, 1937, 1943, 1948, 1962, 1988 and 2010 but none of these transitions was achieved peacefully except the 1948 transition. It is learnt that the 1948 transition has been successful when both sides agree to be equal. The panglong agreement had proved it enough. (Panglong Agreement can be called an agreement of equality). However, in post independent Myanmar, equality of treatment of all ethnic groups ceased to exist because panglong agreement was not honoured which reiterate the fact that the Bama majority group have dominated public policy.

All democratic transitions in Myanmar were a top down democratic transition. In no time in history of Myanmar, there exists no a strong relationship between the elite groups and the common people. At the same time, the elite groups have not developed contact with the western liberal democracies throughout the past six decades. It is argued that mass' participation in building a democratic government has been lacking till the present date. To obtain the support of their respective people, elite groups have been promoting ethnic nationalism that glorifies the traditional concept of the ancient model of ethnic kingdom that was undemocratic. Civic nationalism that can lead the citizens to

loyal to the government was not promoted. Then, the gap between the Bama and the non-Bama groups is automatically widened in day to day life. When the Bama military elites glorify the ancient Bama warrior heroes such as Anawrathan, Kyansitha, Bayingnong and Alaungpaya, the non-Bama groups also automatically would find their respective ancient heroes. While the ethnic groups processed towards democratic tradition, it nurtured the primordial sentiment of respective groups. Unconsciously, such political development widened the gap between the Bama and non-Bama people.

It is argued that mass democratic movement is required to be developed to push for complete democratic transition and for ending ethnic conflict. Mass democratic movement is a means that has to organize itself and develop the sense of responsibility to develop democratic spirit. In doing so, civic nationalism instead of ethnic nationalism should be promoted and union-nationalism in the place of majority-minority divide has to be articulated to mobilize the mass. Union-nationalism is nothing but equal treatment to all citizens in all fields. In union-model state, the Government is like a father who has several children. Before his children's marriage, the father treats all his children equally and takes care of the administration of the family. However, the father is no more the administrator of his children who married and live in separate house. It does not mean that the relationship between the father and his children was no more but more strong relationship is there, just power is shared between the father and the sons as they have separate house and responsibility to run their family welfare. There is a similarity between the above-mentioned model of family and the union-state. Since Myanmar is the union of Myanmar, power has to be shared between the central government and the states through rigid constitution. Sharing power does not necessary means that the state government would have full power but it means the central

government would have 50 percent power out of 100 while state government would have 50 percent respectively. This is a justice shared between the central government and the state government. In order to realize union-model state, ethnic nationalism should be replaced with civic nationalism and union-nationalism for pushing the government to realize it.

The research study also found that there was one ethnic group called “Pyu” who had fully assimilated to various ethnic groups in Myanmar. It is likely to inspire some of the Bama nationalists to create a homogenous society in Myanmar. Taking this example, the Ministry of Immigration and Population, Government of Myanmar set, “The earth will not swallow a race to extinction but another (race) will, [2] as its motto. The extinction of the Pyu people serves to awaken the non-Bama group’s ethnic self-awareness to develop separate national identity, which they might one day cease to exist as the Pyu. [3] It is argued that union-model of state is associated with multiculturalism which advocates all culture to be protected, preserved and promoted, and not assimilated.

Ethnic groups are getting cultural rights but none of the ethnic language is allowed to be used as state language in any of the ethnic state. Assimilation or integration is still one of the hottest political topics in Myanmar today. The idea of unity in culture or melting pot model is gradually disappearing but the idea of multiculturalism or “Salad Bowl Model” is emerging and requires to be appreciated in a proper manner.

Religion is also found to be as one of the causes of ethnic conflict and democratic downfall throughout the past six decades. The successive governments in Myanmar always sought to promote Buddhism; the former military government was the case in point. After a quasi-civilian Government was established in 2011, there was a revival of Buddhist fundamentalism, and they are likely to pose a threat to the complete

democratic transition. It is argued that giving equal importance to all religions existing within the Union would strengthen the sovereignty of the nation because people of all religious denominations the Buddhists, the Christians, the Hindu, the Muslims and other religion existing within the Union would express their solidarity with the union of Myanmar. Freedom of religion is also fundamental human rights that all people must have, and it also would strengthen the union. It is assumed that the successful establishment of secular state would be the best to strengthen the union for a long run.

The Bama scholars and Bama writers have also failed to write about the modern union-state of Myanmar to remind the people about how the present Union of Myanmar was formed. University admission is prescribed with limitations. It means the non-Bama students who have passed matriculation exam from their respective states are not allowed to join Yangon University. In fact, social intercourse between the youth from the Bama and the non-Bama groups could not have developed.

The Government, the parliament, the military regime, the ruling party (USNDP) opposition party the NLD, all political parties including the ethnic political parties and the ethnic armed groups are willing to have a peaceful resolution, national reconciliation and constitutional reforms. The Government is giving importance to national economic development; opposition party-NLD is giving importance to the successful establishment of civil government while ethnic political party and ethnic armed groups are concentrating for a lasting peace. The government is conducting peace negotiation with ethnic armed forces in one side; the government is also attacking ethnic armed groups in the other side. So, we can say that all the groups of Myanmar don't want permanent democracy. Democracy is not the one and only demand of all people of Myanmar. And this is one of the causes for which democracy of Myanmar can not get a stable position.

Since the military regime's attempt to bring complete and peaceful democratic transition and resolving ethnic conflict in Myanmar so far failed, the military regime to go back the barrack by themselves and let the people decide the fate of their own future. If the military regime had any problem on this suggestion, national referendum on the question: whether the military regime should remain or go back to the barrack should be conducted, and the result should be recognized and accepted. If the majority people in Myanmar agree for the military regime to remain in leading national politics, the military regime should remain as it is now. However, if the majority people in Myanmar voted for the military regime to go back to the barrack, the military regime should return to the barrack immediately. If there is problem on this suggestion, a systematic planning for the military regime to withdraw from the national politics should be drawn like Indonesia model as per the wishes of the people of Myanmar. If the political behaviour of the military regime does not show any signal to follow any one of the above said strategy, the military regime should be overthrown from national politics by non-violent approach cooperated with all kinds of peoples in Myanmar. However, it is assumed that it would not be easy until and unless the present general feel secure. In such situation, the opposition party has a big role to play.

The main opposition party the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi is the only democratic force in Myanmar that has been trying to overthrow the military regime from national politics within the democratic framework of the land. Therefore, the NLD should keep pressuring the military regime to go back to the barrack. However, it would not be easy. In such situation, the NLD should not boycott any election in the country. Boycotting election may consolidate the military regime and justify in getting involved in national politics. The NLD-led by Aung San Suu Kyi should know that the NLD is the current biggest threat

to the security of the present military regime and the former military generals who are willing to bring complete democratic transition and the resolution of ethnic conflict in accordance with their own way. It is urgently needed for the NLD-led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to prove that they are not the threat to the security of the military regime and the former generals.

The government of Myanmar recognizes 135 ethnic groups in Myanmar but there are some smaller ethnic groups who do not have representation in Myanmar's parliament house as well as their respective state assembly house. The main reason is that electoral constituency is set up based on township and population. Since some smaller ethnic groups do not have township, they are not eligible for having electoral constituency. If the same situation continues, there is possibility they could feel that both parliament house of Myanmar and state assembly house do not belong to them. Therefore, it is suggested that township should be created for those groups who are geographically concentrated. After creating township, either lower house electoral constituency or upper house constituency should be given to them so that they would have one representative in parliament. Additionally, at least one state assembly legislative constituency also should be given to them. If the government continue to fail to grant such kind of group right to smaller ethnic groups in the country, there is possibility for those groups to start armed resistance movement against central government as well as states. Along with this, the government should create another political system called "Autonomous District Council" for those smaller groups so that they can run their own government within the state/division government with a certain autonomous right.

It is crucially important for the government of Myanmar to form Peace Supporting Group composed of civilians who have neither the military

experience nor the governmental employment to give democratic awareness across the country. The present peace makers' bodies from the two sides (Government and ethnic armed groups) are intensively dominated by the former generals and ethnic armed forces. This new peace supporting group should be allowed to conduct seminars, workshop and conference among the military officers, ethnic armed leaders, and university students, stakeholders such as lawyers, police, administrators and even among the public with the financial support of the government. This group also should be allowed to conduct political debates from state owned television channel frequently. The main target for forming this group is to promote civic nationalism, union-nationalism, public trust building and alike.

The university students should be given freedom of choice to join any university so that the students from the Bama ethnic and the non-Bama ethnic groups can meet each other and share their life experience. Such university admission system can become a mechanism for social intercourse between the two said groups in a positive way. The existing University System prevents the youth generation to see and know one another. Thus, the ethnic conflict can be solved.

The continuation of the lacking of the reservation system in the fields of education, public employment in police officer recruitment, military officer recruitment, lawyer and administration also widens the gap between the Bama and the non-Bama people. Therefore, reservation system in such fields based on ethnicity, religion, gender, rural and urban areas should be introduced and implemented in a systematically way.

Economic development especially in the rural, remote and the conflict affected areas is urgently needed but economic development should not be prioritized during the period of democratic transition and ethnic conflict resolution. It does not necessarily mean that the government has

to avoid from doing socio-economic development. Actually, the government should do it in an accelerating way as the government has neglected those regions for the past five decades. However, political issue should be prioritized rather than economic issue because economic development can never substitute with political issue. Redistribution policy should be introduced so that the state governments should have a certain income to run their respective states through their local income.

The present equal distribution of upper house legislative seats to all states and division is good. But the position and power are another case. US type of legislative system is more appreciated where upper house has coequal power. Since it is not accepted by the Bama majority, another alternative is suggested. The lower house seats also should be distributed equally to all states and divisions similar to the upper house the fact that there would be a win-win situation.

Regarding religious affairs, the existing Ministry of Religious Affair should be dissolved and combined with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The constitution also should clearly assert that Myanmar is a secular state. Secular state would not be a problem for any religion existing with the union because the state would protect all religions equally. The separation of religion and state would not be a problem but the disrespect to the local religion and culture should be avoided at any cost. If secular state is created in Myanmar, there is possibility for some of the fundamental Bama Buddhists to oppose first it but there is also possibility for some of the Bama Buddhist groups to support it. In the end, majority people of Myanmar would accept it because secularism is such a concept that promotes equality of all religions.

In the context of cultural rights, the idea of homogenization and assimilation should be replaced with the idea of heterogeneity and

multiculturalism. Constitutionally, cultural rights such as promotion and preservation of all culture in Myanmar should be given to all ethnic groups so the culture, language, literature and religion of the non-Bama groups would be preserved, protected and promoted with the state financial support.

However, Burmese language should be recognized continually as the national language. English also should be recognized as the second official national language. Otherwise, there would be a problem in making link language of the state level as there is no single state with one ethnicity throughout the union.

International community should realize that Myanmar is lacking a strong democratic new generation who can push the government for complete democratic transition and ethnic conflict resolution. The present military-drafted democratic system is also likely to continue till at least the next decade. Therefore, in massive scale, a new democratic generation who can become the solid democratic foundation that prevents the re-emergent of the military rule should be promoted in democratic countries. Since it is impossible for Myanmar to promote such new generation, the international community should promote the young students in the democratic countries such as in India, Australia, US and European countries through collaboration with the Government of Myanmar. At the same time, the international community should keep pressuring over the military regime and the former generals to move speedily forwards complete democratic transition and resolving ethnic conflict.

In sum, democratic transition and resolving ethnic conflict is mainly dependent on Myanmar military regime. If the military regime says “Yes” to resolve Myanmar’s ethnic conflict and complete democratic transition, ethnic conflict could be resolved within no time and complete

democratic transition would be done in the same time. Because complete democratic transition demanded by the people of Myanmar and federal form of government with ethnic self-determination demanded by the non-Bama groups are not a new one but the old system and agreement. At the same time, these two political systems are reasonable, not extreme that can be a threat to the union of Myanmar. Instead, the union of Myanmar would be strengthened through democracy and federalism. Therefore, the research study concluded by saying that it is very important for democratic forces in Myanmar and the non-Bama armed groups to know that complete democratic transition and resolving ethnic conflict is dependent on how much they could convince the military regime and former generals, not on how much they are powerful. If the democratic forces and the non-Bama groups could not convince the military regime, peace negotiation and the up-coming political dialogue between the government and the non-Bama armed groups may take a long period of time like the previous National Convention conducted by the former military regime. In order to convince the military regime, democratic forces and the on-Bama groups should have the political culture of compromise, not surrender.

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