

Kuki tribe

March 7, 2022

In news– During the Assembly election rally in Manipur, the Union Home Minister said that his party will end the Kuki insurgency problem in five years, if it is voted to power for the second time.

Kuki insurgencies in Manipur-

- The roots of Kuki militancy lie in conflicts of ethnic identity.
- **First was the demand for self-determination solely for groups belonging to their ethnic fabric, meaning the dream to form a Kukiland** which includes Kuki inhabited regions of Myanmar, Manipur, Assam and Mizoram.
- **The second reason for insurgency lies in the inter-community conflicts** between the Kukis and the Nagas in Manipur.
- The **Kuki insurgency in Manipur grew in real terms in the 1980s and after the Kuki-Naga conflicts of the 1990s.**
- This is when the Kuki National Organization (KNO) and its armed wing Kuki National Army (KNA) were formed.
- Other Kuki outfits like Kuki Commando Force, Kuki Independent army and others were also formed.
- The community could not shed internal differences between tribes and take a single line of action.
- While some militant Kuki outfits demanded Kukiland, including parts which are not in India, some demanded Kukiland within India.
- **At present, the demand has come to the formulation of an independent district–Kukiland Territorial Council** within the purview of the Indian constitution, **modeling the Bodoland Territorial Council(Assam)**, which was formed under the sixth schedule of the Constitution.
- **The Kuki insurgent groups have been under Suspension of Operation (SoO) since 2005**, when they signed an

- agreement for the same with the Indian Army.
- Later, in 2008, the groups entered a tripartite agreement with the State government of Manipur and the UPA led Central government under former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, to temporarily suspend their operations and give political dialogue a chance.
 - **The SoO has been extended by the Government almost every year since 2008**, with Kuki outfits threatening to breach the agreement by taking up arms again and boycotting the Government.
 - In 2012, the groups held a nearly eight month long blockade of highways around their area, costing the Government a couple of crores in losses each day.
 - **The SoO agreement was last extended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in September 2021 till February 28 this year.**

About Kuki tribe-

- The Kukis are an **ethnic group including multiple tribes originally inhabiting the North-Eastern states of India such as Manipur, Mizoram and Assam; parts of Burma (now Myanmar), and Sylhet district and Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh.**
- It is believed that **Kuki people are native to the Mizo Hills (formerly Lushai), a mountainous region in the southeastern part of Mizoram in India.**
- The Chin people of Myanmar and the Mizo people of Mizoram are kindred tribes of the Kukis. Collectively, they are termed the Zo people.
- While Kuki is not a term coined by the ethnic group itself, the tribes associated with it came to be generically **called Kuki under colonial rule.**
- **In Manipur**, the various Kuki tribes, living mainly in the hills, **currently make up 30% of the total 28.5 lakh population of the State.**
- The rest of the population of Manipur is made up mainly

of two other ethnic groups – **the Meiteis or non-tribal, Vaishnavite Hindus** who live in the valley region of Manipur, and the Naga tribes, historically at loggerheads with the Kukis, also living in the hilly areas of the State.

- Of the 60 seats in the Manipur Assembly, 40 are held by Meiteis and the rest 20 seats are held by Kukis and Nagas.
- Some of the **other important tribes of Manipur are Aimol, Anal, Chiru, Chothe etc.**