



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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MANIPUR CRISIS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Manipur crisis". The topic "Manipur crisis" has relevance in the Security section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the topic "Manipur crisis"

For Prelims:

*What are the boundary countries of the states in the northeast?
Also, make a note of the capitals of the northeastern states.*

For Mains:

*GS 3: Security issues
What is the Manipur crisis?
What are the reasons?
Way Forward*

Why in the news?

Army has been called in the state of Manipur which is on fire for a few days. The governor of Manipur also issued the shoot-at-sight order.

What is the Manipur crisis?

On May 3rd, the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur (ATSUM) organised a 'Tribal Solidarity March', which led to violent clashes in various parts of Manipur. In response, the Army and Assam Rifles conducted flag marches in the affected areas.

The march was held to protest against the inclusion of the Meitei community in the state's Scheduled Tribes (ST) list, which was recently supported by an order from the Manipur High Court.

This long-standing demand has sparked controversy and opposition among certain tribal groups in the state, leading to the clashes during the march.

Why does the Meitei community want ST status?

1. The petitioners argued that the Meitei community was recognized as a tribe before the merger of the princely state of Manipur with the Union of India in 1949, but lost its status as a tribe after the merger.
2. They contended that granting ST status was necessary to "preserve" the community and protect their ancestral land, culture, and language.

The court acknowledged that the Meitei/Meitei community, along with other unions, has been advocating for their inclusion in the tribe list of Manipur for several years. The court directed the

government to review the case of the petitioners and submit a recommendation within four weeks of receiving the order.

Why are tribal groups opposing this order?

1. **The dominance of the Meitei community:** Opposition to the demand for ST status for the Meitei community has been strong among the state's tribal groups, who cite the dominance of the Meiteis in population and political representation. With 40 out of 60 Assembly constituencies located in the valley, the Meiteis hold significant sway in state politics.
2. **Economic losses for other communities:** The loss of job opportunities as a result of affirmative actions granted to STs by the Constitution of India.
3. **Language and caste dominance:** Opponents of the demand have also argued that the Manipuri language of the Meiteis is already included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and that sections of the Meitei community, predominantly Hindu, are already classified under Scheduled Castes or Other Backward Classes, granting them access to opportunities associated with that status.
4. **Eviction notices:** The state government's notices since August 2022 declaring 38 villages in the Churachandpur-Khoupum Protected Forest area (in Churachandpur and Noney districts) as "illegal settlements" and their residents as "encroachers" have been a significant cause of dissatisfaction.

What is the way forward?

The situation in Manipur is complex, and any way forward would require a multi-faceted approach. Here are some possible steps that could be taken to address the violence in Manipur:

1. **Dialogue:** The government of Manipur, along with representatives from different tribal communities, should initiate a dialogue to address the issues related to the demand for ST status by the Meitei community.
2. **Re-evaluate the demand for ST status:** The demand for ST status by the Meitei community needs to be re-evaluated, taking into account the concerns of the tribal communities.
3. **Land rights:** Land rights have been a contentious issue in Manipur, with many tribal communities claiming that their lands have been taken away from them. The government should address these concerns by formulating policies that protect the land rights of all communities, especially the tribal communities.
4. **Employment opportunities:** The fear of losing job opportunities and other affirmative actions granted to STs by the Constitution of India has been cited as one of the reasons for opposition to the demand for ST status by the Meitei community. The government should formulate policies to ensure that all communities have equal access to employment opportunities.
5. **Addressing the issue of illegal settlements:** The recent notices issued by the state government declaring 38 villages as "illegal settlements" and their residents as "encroachers" have added to the already volatile situation in Manipur. The government should work towards addressing the issue of illegal settlements in a humane and equitable manner.
6. **Promotion of cultural diversity:** The Meitei community, as well as the various tribal communities in Manipur, have a rich cultural heritage. The government should take steps to promote cultural diversity and encourage the preservation of the unique cultural identities of all communities.
7. **Education:** Education is crucial in addressing the issues of discrimination and marginalisation. The government should focus on providing quality education to all communities, especially those living in remote areas.

Overall, a long-term solution to the violence in Manipur would require sustained efforts toward building trust, addressing the concerns of all communities, and promoting social harmony and cultural diversity.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/manipur-clashes-meitei-scheduled-tribe-explained-8591158/>

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