

# The Portrayal Of The Issues Of Insurgency In The Manipuri Feature Film Mami Sami

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## ABSTRACT

Media plays a crucial role in disseminating information, ideas, and all societal aspects, and representation of all these facets has been the cornerstone of media studies. As a medium of communication, the film has the potential to reach diverse audiences and is favored by most people. Many research papers and dissertations on the representation of gender issues, class conflict, and particular race in films have been accomplished worldwide. Employing qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012), this paper studies how the insurgency issue has been portrayed in one of the most popular Manipuri-language films, Mami Sami, directed by Ningthouja Lancha. Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation guides the analysis. The study analyzed how the insurgency issue and its ensued counter-insurgency operations by state authorities affected the lives of civilians in the Indian state of Manipur via the contents of the film. The outcome revealed how civilians live with a conundrum of how to live a peaceful life while insurgents and the security forces are around them.

**KEYWORDS:** Representation study, Manipuri Films, Mami Sami, Insurgency

## INTRODUCTION

Around 60 years after India witnessed its first feature film, Raja Haraishchandra, in 1913, which Dhudiraj Govind Phalke helmed, Manipur got a glimpse of watching the first Manipuri language film, Matamgi Manipur, in 1972. And this year, 2022, marks the 50th year of Manipuri Cinema. The first film was based on a famous play penned by ArambamSomorendro, directed by a Bengali, Deb Kumar Bose, and produced by a Manipuri Karam Manomohan. The second film of the state, Brojendragee Luhongba, was directed by a Manipuri called S. N. Chand (Wahengbam, 2015). The state has witnessed hundreds of Manipuri films following the two remarkable films. Before the production of the first Manipuri feature film, Matamgi Manipur, the state has been reeling under the significant issue of insurgency and outcomes of counter-insurgency operations. In the northeast states of India, after India attained independence from

British colonial rule, untoward incidents have been reported due to sustained separatist insurgencies, mass agitations, ethnic riots, and heavy-handed state responses resulting in continuous bloodletting (Bhaumik, 2007). Various separatist groups had started mushrooming in the northeast states. In Manipur, United National Liberation Front (UNLF) is the first such separatist group, started in 1964. It was followed by Revolutionary People's Front (RPF), formed in 1978. The RPF later imposed a complete ban on the transmission, screening, and viewing of Hindi movies and entertainment connected with the Hindi language, which are being used as a primary means of Indianization in the course of suppressing the minority communities and the people of Manipur with effect from midnight, Tuesday, the 12 September 2000. (Kshetrimayum, 2011). The sudden ban on Hindi films came as a nightmare to the cinema hall owners since Manipuri language films

were not produced abundantly during the period due to the high cost of film production. Nevertheless, after two years, Manipur started producing digital format films at low cost, with the first film being Kangla Film's Lammei which was released on 24 May 2002. The production of films has escalated since then. From 2007 to 2012, an average of 60 films were produced annually, and Mami Sami is one of the films produced in 2008. Since Manipur is one of the Indian states under the AFSPA 1958, the insurgency issues portrayal in films merited study.

### **PORTRAYALS OF INSURGENCY IN FILMS**

India's northeast and the state of Jammu and Kashmir have been frequently seen on the national news channels, newspapers, or websites, mostly about negative stories. The portrayal of the two areas is seen in various films produced in Bollywood or their native languages. Bollywood produced successful films during the 1990s and 2000s surrounding the topic of insurgency. Moreover, scholars have studied films to know how they are portrayed. Haider (2017) studied how Hindi mainstream cinema portrayed insurgency, human rights, and the Jammu and Kashmir's sovereignty. Szivak (2021) studied the narrative technologies of Hindi films, focusing on how the films highlighted the conflict in Kashmir as depoliticized, domestic affairs. Most researchers focused on Kashmir to highlight the representation of insurgency and human rights violations in Bollywood films compared to the country's northeastern state. Many other researchers also focused on Muslims and their portrayal in Hindi films. One such paper is about Muslim representation in the film "My name is Khan, and I am not a Terrorist." In the said paper, Balraj (2011) references Edward Said's Orientalism idea to explore how Muslims are represented in the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer film. The researcher concluded that the film director portrayed "Muslims" as the 'other' with the role of Shah Rukh Khan and the westerners as 'orient.'

Guided by Benedict Anderson's nationalism study, Hjort et al. (2000) analyzed the portrayal technique of terrorism in popular films in India and deliberated on the rise of stories established on separatist movements in India. In addition, the researcher explored the manners and actions

as recreated by the main talents in forming the stories. The stereotyped portrayal of Kashmiri militants and the Muslim community has also been discussed thoroughly, and most importantly, the external and internal forces in terrorist activities have also been studied. While Sumita discussed Indian popular films, Ramji (2005) dissected how Muslim terrorists are shown in Hollywood movies. Discussing the films - Navy Seals (1990) and The Siege (1998), the researcher argued that the films mostly showed Muslims negatively, and only a handful of films tried to debunk the stereotype. In the same tune, Serdouk (2021) discussed the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in Hollywood films and discovered that films made after the 9/11 incident failed to establish a neutral or positive notion of Arabs and Muslims. The filmmakers of Hollywood, the researcher found, took a crucial role in shaping stereotypes and ideologies concerning Muslims and Arabs.

Ramji (2016) also examined how American films portrayed Muslims. The researcher selected five films for the study and described that the films tried to address the imbalance in the representation of Muslims in films. In another paper, Mundi and Mediyasyah (2020) discussed how Hollywood movies represent the discourse of Muslim terrorists by employing the critical discourse analysis propounded by Fairclough. In this analysis of two films, the researcher found that both films similarly depicted Muslims as victims. Most researchers tried to dig out how terrorism is portrayed in the film. Moreover, mainly how it is shown with Muslims, Islam, or Arabs connected with them. Shafaat (2019) investigates how Muslim men and women are pictured in Bollywood films. In the study, the researchers discovered that Muslims are shown as negative characters and shown as terrorists, and underworld dons. Riegler (2010) discussed the difference in how terrorism is represented in films and reality. Furthermore, how Hollywood shaped or distorted the idea of terrorism through the film text.

Employing the "Agenda Setting Theory," Abbas and Zohra (2013) performed a content analysis of three Indian movies to determine how Kashmiri Muslims are portrayed in those movies. The analysis underlined that the characters are given negative roles by portraying them as rebels and terrorists.

Furthermore, the three films showed Muslims to be playing only negative characters. In another paper, (Parray, 2018) selected three Hindi films, *Roja*, *Mission Kashmir*, and *Haider*, to study the stereotyped representation of Kashmiri Muslims employing Edward Said's ideas of Orientalism (1978) and *Covering Islam* (1997). The paper concluded that the films constructed Muslim/Islam as synonyms of terrorism, barbarism, or uncivilization. Researchers have also done not only movies but studies on movie trailers to understand the impact and effect of terrorism on the content of films. For example, Ivory et al. (2007) analyzed the depiction of terrorism and violence and the influence of the September 11, 2001 incident in the film trailers. The study unearthed that the portrayals tended to be more negative compared to the characters of terrorists in films produced before the fateful incident of 9/11.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To find out how insurgents are being portrayed.
2. To establish how security forces tackle the insurgency issues.
3. To examine how civilians are represented in the film.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

- To determine the portrayal of insurgency through the relationship among insurgents, civilians, and security forces.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is a qualitative one. The researcher has chosen *Mami Sami* (2008), a Manipuri language film based on the insurgency issue in India's northeastern state of Manipur. Furthermore, the analysis is performed by adopting Qualitative Content Analysis and is guided by Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation. Margrit Schreier (2012) defined Qualitative Content Analysis as a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material. Stuart Hall's Representation Theory stressed how media producers, through various mediums, make meaning of society's reality in their media products or contents. For this paper, the material or the data for the analysis are the visual and audio elements of the film. The researcher, after translating the Manipuri language into English, the parts of the data have been assigned to categories through coding

frames. Then the result is given in continuous text format to answer the research questions.

## QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF "MAMI SAMI"

The main characters in the film are Wangthoi, a journalist; Tayal, a student of Wangthoi before he got married to Tombi and later married to Wangthoi. Tombi later became an insurgent. Wanglen is an insurgent leader whose wife, Yaiphabi, was murdered by insurgents for being in a relationship with him. And, Krishnamani is a civilian whom security forces killed.

From the first scene of the film, the insurgency issue and counter-insurgency operations affecting the civilians of Manipur's well-being are shown distinctly. The film's initial part highlights the civilians' status and suffering as insurgents and security personnel pressure them to do their wants. Moreover, both parties' disrespect and thwart the wishes and aspirations of the people. The film opens at a press where newspapers are printing and, simultaneously, the sounds of police tackling protesting people in the background as non-diegetic sounds.

Then Wangthoi, one of the film's main characters, was shown sitting inside a room, and suddenly a phone rang. Wangthoi picked up the call and learned that his wife, Tayal, had been taken to JN hospital as a rubber bullet injured him during a rally. An ambulance was shown, and his wife was taken inside the JN hospital room. The sufferings of protesters, mainly women, in this first scene highlight security personnel's harmful and unwanted side.

Two flashbacks have been employed in the film to show different points in time and how they connected to the present time, picturing the effects and aftermaths of insurgency and counter-insurgency operations.

The relationship between police and the public has been highlighted since the initial parts of the film. When Wangthoi drove home his wife, who was injured, from the hospital, along with some women, their vehicle was stopped by Manipur Police personnel. The police are shown to be callous to the civilians. The police, stopping the vehicle, shouted: "Turn off the light." Then, a policeman pointed the gun at

him and asked him to come down of the vehicle. When Wangthoi replied that they had returned from the hospital, one police officer pointed an AK047 rifle at Wangthoi and yelled: "We do not care. Get off the vehicle." A police officer intervened and tried to settle the situation. A woman continued: "These policemen wanted to shoot me. Allow them. We just came back because one of us was injured. Now that they wanted to shoot us. How can we bear this?" As the confrontation continued, a blast sound was heard, and some policemen ran towards the sound. The police officer told Wangthoi, his wife, and all the women to leave. Soon, the policeman stopped another civilian vehicle and started the same questioning as they were behaving the same way, intimidating the vehicle's passengers.

Inside the newspaper office, Wangthoi was talking with a reporter. The reporter said: "Altogether, it was eleven. Four women in Kongba. Three in Khurai. Keishampat and Kwakeithel, three. And one in Tera. The injured women were in a protest rally where police officers fired tear gas and rubber bullets. The eleven women sustained injuries."

The reporter's statement explained the people's struggle and continued protest against the government's misdeeds—their relationship with the security forces. The initial scenes have talked volumes about the sufferings of civilians. The contributions of women in Manipur since the time immemorial have been immense. Women of the state played vital roles in the freedom struggle. Nupi Lal is an example. The information the reporter expressed about the eleven women who were injured during a protest stressed the contribution of the women in their bid to make a peaceful state.

Wangthoi remembered his past life when he met Tayal at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences's Psychiatrists ward. She had a mental health condition. Mema, a neighbor of Tayal, recounted how Tayal came to that position after her husband's disappearance. Mema narrated a brief story of Tayal's husband's disappearance following a gunfight between two groups of insurgents. His husband was shot and presumed dead as his body was not found. Tayal's life has been badly affected by the insurgency issue. Now, she has a psychological problem. As Mema narrated the story, Wangthoi went to

another flashback where he met Tayal as one of the students at the school where he worked as a teacher substituting his father. Flashbacks have often been employed to show how long the insurgency issue prevailed in the state.

When Wangthoi, some years ago, visited a village in Moirang and stayed at the home of Mema and Ranjit. As soon as he reached the place and talked to the Ranjit, gunshots were heard. When Ranjit said: "Isn't that gunshots?" Mema, who seems less worried or frightened by the gun sound, replied: "Yes, father." The gunshot sounds continued. Ranjit told his daughter Mema to go to her daughter, saying: "Chan-chan must be worried." Mema's daughter is a bit younger than their son. Mema's reaction showed how people have frequently heard such sounds. The scene highlighted how people have gone through such incidents time and again. The civilians consoled their children and could do nothing about it. They always hope for a better day while protecting their near and dear ones.

The next day, when Mema was doing household chores near the pond, a woman walked briskly toward home.

Mema asked: "Ene, you are doing the business even at this early hour."

Woman: "Forget about the business; I came back running. In what they said to be an encounter yesterday, one youth was lying dead in the market. The market has now closed. So I came back running, bypassing through the lake. Do not know what would happen to this state."

On learning what the woman told her, Mema asked Wangthoi: "Wangthoi, where did father go?"

Wangthoi: In the market to fetch some vegetables.

Then Mema started worrying about his father, Ranjit. She said: "Ash. In this situation. Where has he gone?"

Bomb blasts and encounters are highlighted to be regular events. The *Mise-en-scène* is set at a time when the gunshots and encounters were day-to-day events. When near and dear ones are not home, people are worried about what would happen to them.

One of the main characters of the film, Tayal, got married to Tombi, who is from the same locality. The second half of the film opens at the home of Tombi. When the duo was chatting, gunshots were heard. The gunshots were heard from a close location.

Tayal: "Don't we hear it as it happens close by." Gunshots continued.

Tombi: "I heard there was an encounter yesterday also."

Tombi went out and saw if it was happening nearby. He came back and said: "A boat is coming."

An injured insurgent came with their three other fellows. He was wounded in the leg. Wanglen, an insurgent leader, asked Tombi to help them and take him to a nearby place. Tombi had no other choice but to help them.

The scene highlighted the relationship between insurgents and security forces. And also the relationship between insurgents and civilians. As there was an injured insurgent, it has been shown that the security forces are chasing and killing insurgents. And encounters have broken out many times. When insurgents asked civilians for help, the latter couldn't deny it because they feared insurgents. They do not know what their reactions would be. So the civilians are assisting them just because they are afraid of insurgents. Like Tombi, civilians faced both insurgents and security forces and could not deny their demands. Deep down inside, Tombi do not want insurgents to come to their homes and get help. He knew that if the police found out about it, their family would be in trouble for assisting insurgents.

After a few days, those insurgents who took help from Tombi and his wife Tayal came again. This time they brought a chicken and asked Tayal to cook it and have the meal together as a token of their appreciation for helping them the other day. Tombi and Tayal were also given money even though they declined to take it. As they were insurgents, they had no choice. Tayal and his husband did not want them to come and show gratitude. The duo wanted to live life peacefully. After having a meal together, they again asked Tombi to help them reach a particular location. In addition,

one insurgent pulled out a gun and gave it to Tayal, telling her to keep it at their home someday. Tayal and Tombi could not object to their requests. The scene highlighted how insurgents used to visit anybody's house and, without their permission, stayed there. Civilians had no choice.

After a few scenes, Krishnamani, who aspires to be a singer and work as a boatman, brings Yaiphabi, the girlfriend of Wanglen, to the home of Tombi. Tayal welcomed her. Wangen arrived after some time, and the duo was chatting. Yaiphabi told Wanglen he was engaged to another person; therefore, she would not leave and said she would want to be with him. Wanglen denied stating that it is against the principles of his insurgent organization. His statement explained that insurgents are not allowed to be in a relationship with civilians or get married to a civilian. Soon, one of the insurgents, waiting for Wanglen, said: "Sir, Krishnamani has been arrested. And security forces have gathered across Moirang." Civilians here are shown to have no liberty in making their own decision. Insurgents and security forces control them. They are compelled to help insurgents because of fear; at the same time, security forces also mistreat them.

The next day, Krishnamani, who was arrested by security forces, was found near Loktak Lake as a lifeless body. A local came and told Tombi: "Don't know whether it was Krishnamani. A youth was shot and killed and left the body by the lake."

Krishnamani, who is a civilian, has been killed by security forces. On the previous day, Wanglen learned that police had picked up Krishnamani. In all the scenes, Krishnamani is portrayed as a jolly guy whose sole duty is to learn music and live a vibrant life. He was not associated with any insurgent organizations. Like Tombi and Tayal, Krishnamani had to extend help to the insurgents as he feared they could do anything to him if he denied their demands. He, as a boatman, had to carry people around Loktak Lake. When Krishnamani was killed, his parents could not do anything but cry, caressing the dead body of their child as residents gathered around. There was no justice nor an investigation into the matter. In the film, the killing of Krishnamani displayed how

security forces carry out fake encounters. A day after his arrest, his corpse was found near the lake. The parents also did not complain to anybody. Sobbing and grieving for the loss was the only option left for them - the civilians.

After the death of Krishnamani, police were headed towards Tombi's house. However, before their arrival, Tombi ran away. The scene showed that Tombi, a civilian, assumed that he would be taken away like Krishnamani and would have the same faith. Therefore, he does not expect the police will protect him. Nor will the insurgents. Tombi and Tayal's life has been full of troubles.

Soon after arriving, a policeman took a glimpse of the house and said: "Your house is now an insurgents' camp."

Tayal: "No. Who said so?"

The policeman never enquired thoroughly about their ways of living. They do not ask if they are in trouble or how they could help them. However, the policeman pointed out that their home had become an insurgent camp.

Policeman: "We know all. Do not lie. Is it true that Wanglen and your husband are at the same party?"

Tayal: "My husband is a civilian - a fisherman."

Policeman: "It was all civilians before joining insurgents' groups."

Tayal: "He is not."

Policeman: "If now. Why do insurgents stay and eat at your home?"

Tayal: "If they say they want to stay. How would we object to it? What would we say?"

When the police officer asked about Tombi's whereabouts, Tayal replied that he had gone fishing. The policeman told her to tell his husband to visit Moirang Police Station as soon as he returned. This scene stressed that civilians are hunted by security personnel for helping insurgents. The killing of Krishnamani and this scene showed that security forces were targeting civilians. And Tayal's statement explained that insurgents come to their house, and they could not object to their wishes.

In the next scene, Tayal and Tombi are clueless about what they should do and discuss how to face the situation. When Tombi suggested that they should tell the police, Tayal wondered how Wanglen, the insurgent leader, and his team would react to it. The situation was that they could not take help from both insurgents and security forces. Both target civilians.

Tayal: "How will Wanglen and his team feel?"

Tombi: "Yes. What if they killed us for aligning with the police? I don't know what to do."

They are worried that Wanglen and his team will kill them for aligning with the police. After showing a group of insurgents walking through the woods, Tayal was seen to be at an insurgent camp far from their home. The conversation between Tayal and the insurgent leader, Khaba, explained that Wanglen defected from the party after eloping with Yaiphabi.

Khaba, an insurgent leader, told Tayal: "What we are saying is for your good. Suppose you are aligned with Wanglen in the future. You will face the consequences. Tell Tombi carefully. Hiding won't work."

Tayal: "He is doing as he was told. He is not befriending anyone. Nor is he hiding."

Khaba: "Wanglen's decision is very personal. Without the party's approval, how could he live with a woman? You are also involved. What you want to say is that it is because of a condition. We are well informed. Don't do it again. You should not allow him at your home in the party's name."

Tayal: "How would we do that?"

Khaba: "tell them they are not allowed. If Tombi is with him, don't tell him that we are bad. What we are saying is not just cooked up. He will also find it in the newspaper. Wanglen has been permanently axed from the party."

The scene showed that the insurgent organization now had two branches, and the team led by Khaba told Tayal not to allow Wanglen when he visited their home. Tayal also told them how she would be able to protest against Wanglen, who is also an insurgent. He can also harm them. Earlier, Tayal had pressure

from police and insurgents; now, she has to face police, insurgent groups, and a faction insurgent group.

Later, Yaiphabi was found killed and left by a hill near Moirang. However, it was not mentioned who killed Yaiphabi in the talking scene where Tayal, Wanglen, and Tombi hinted that the Wanglen's parent insurgent group killed her. People carry the lifeless body of Yaiphabi, put it in the police gypsy police, and take it away. The scene underlined the consequences of women who were or are in a relationship with insurgents.

In another scene: around midnight, Wanglen came to Tayal's home and asked for money as he would leave the state for some time. "Chinglen has also been apprehended. There were many people. They might also come here," Wanglen told Tombi and Tayal. Tombi and Tayal managed to give Wanglen Rs 65, and he left. After Wanglen leaves, Tombi asks Tayal: "Shall we shift our home?" Tayal: "Maybe in the hills." They even want to leave their home and live somewhere because they cannot bear the trouble from security forces and insurgents.

Soon they heard gunshots. The duo was worried. Soon, the injured Wanglen was brought by a faction group.

An insurgent named Talemba tells Tayal: "Don't shout. Didn't we tell you to be not aligned with him?"

Tayal: "Talemba, hear me out. When we first saw you, I thought that you all had sacrificed for the motherland. You all ate on the same platter."

Talemba: "We go following the party's principles, not by sympathy."

Talemba and his team were about to kill Wanglen. When Tayal told Talemba that killing Wanglen as a punishment for having a wife or girlfriend is not justifiable, Talemba replied: "Sister-in-law, don't speak much. I can even shoot and kill you if you know a lot about sympathy."

The injured Wanglen said: "Sister-in-law, don't say anything. They can even kill women."

Talemba: "Not only women. I will kill you too. I will kill everyone if the principles of the party are broken."

Tayal: "Talemba, I am also a Meitei woman. Nobody can be killed in front of me."

When Talemba points the gun at Wanglen, Tayal picks up a wood log and hits Talemba in the head. Talemba fell. Then, Wanglen picked up the gun and shot one of the insurgents. Then an insurgent with an AK-47 shot Wanglen. Soon, Tayal knocked down the two shooters with the log. Wanglen died on the spot while Tayal and Tombi ran away on a boat. The insurgent kept firing at them. After a while, a bullet hit Tombi. Tayal took the oar and rowed the boat. Tayal left the injured Tombi by the boat and went to EcheMema to seek help. The locals came out and ran towards the boat. When they reached the boat, Tombi went missing. Tayal fainted. The flashback stopped there.

Tayal has moved on, and Wangthoi is now his husband. The film was shown in the present day. When Wangthoi returned home from the media house, where he was working as the editor, Tayal said Memma came, and she was furious as we couldn't make it to the feast she invited. She asked Wangthoi if they could go the next day. So Tayal went there, and Wangthoi would pick her up from Moirang, the native place of Tayal.

Inside the media house, a reporter told Wangthoi that two died and six were wounded in a bomb explosion in Ningthoukhong, under the Bishnupur district. Organizations have called an indefinite band in Tiddim Road to react to the incident. Tiddim Road is the route to Moirang, where Tayal is visiting Memma's house.

Wangthoi: "Still do not know who did it?"

Reporter: "Some say it fell from a customer. Some say it was hurled. Not sure as of now."

While the reporter and Wangthoi were talking, Tayal phoned Wangthoi.

Tayal: "What should we do? The road has been blocked. All shops are closed in Moirang Bazar too. Women have blocked the road."

Wangthoi: "The same situation is here."

Tayal: "EcheMema suggests I stay tonight, and you may come tomorrow after the situation settles a bit. Nevertheless, as you have a press card, you may come today also."

This scene highlighted the situation: innocent people were killed in a bomb blast. When such incidents happened, people would come out and block roads as part of the protest. People have been suffering and facing such violent acts.

In the next scene, Mema and Tayal were rowing a boat and reached an insurgent camp, where Tombi, the husband of Tayal, was found to be alive. Tombi narrated the story of what happened back then.

Tombi explained: "After I was shot, I lost consciousness. When I woke up, Wanglen's party was giving treatment to me. Then, I was taken to Burma forcefully. After some time, the Burmese army attacked the camp, and I was caught. I was kept at Kaliwa Jail for five years; I cannot contact anyone. When I got out of the jail, I heard your whole story. I was furious. But, after I met Eche Mema, I understood everything. Tayal, you are not wrong."

The condition and situations that Tombi had faced pushed him to become an insurgent. Moreover, it indicates that he could not control or decide what he wished to become. Tombi's character indicates how civilians become an insurgent without their will. For fear of security forces, civilians like Tombi had to join insurgents to live a little longer. Police and insurgents' actions are equally responsible for civilians joining insurgent groups, becoming militants, and waging war. If Tombi returns home, the chances are that he will face the same fate as Krishnamani.

As Tombi was narrating, the rapid firing of guns was heard. Then, the insurgents took out their weapons and went. Tayal runs away as Tombi watches her. Then, Tayal bumped into Wangthoi.

Then, she repeatedly said: "Do not make mistakes. Do not be in the wrong." Wangthoi replied: "No one has made mistakes. Time has made us wrong."

Tayal ran again while the sound of gunshots continued. Here, Tayal is portrayed as a civilian who does not know which path to take to survive in a society where everything turned out to be a nightmare. After his husband disappeared, she had already moved on and married Wangthoi, and she was leading a life in Imphal, the state's capital city. However, she faced the threat of state forces and deteriorated law and order crisis. The civilians are constantly embroiled in unpleasant situations brewed by insurgency issues and the state's counter-insurgency operations. When Tayal fainted in the arms of Wangthoi, as she said, do not make mistakes, Wangthoi said the time had made them all wrong. His statement explained that civilians are not in the wrong, but the time and situation have made them look like they are in the wrong. The last scene stressed that encounters between insurgents or police or between insurgents go on, and civilians face the brunt of terror from all sides. There was no improvement in the law-and-order situation from the first to the last scene, but it worsened. As a result, people live in turmoil, not knowing what the next day will offer them. A peaceful life is always the dream of the civilians, but they cannot realize what they expect.

## CONCLUSION

Through the protagonist of the film, Wangthoi, the film spotlights the condition of civilians in the film. Wangthoi is a journalist who used to be a substitute teacher at Moirang, where most of the insurgency issue was stressed. Insurgents are depicted in the film to be those groups who terrorize civilians. Wanglen, Khaba, and Telemba are insurgents having different qualities and ideologies. Wanglen, as an insurgent leader, is somewhat cordial to civilians. Though he was not shown to be a violent or intimidating character, the civilians Tayal and her husband Tombi had to suffer because of him. Wanglen and his team frequented Tayal's home and, sometimes, left their weapon. They had no liberty to oppose their wishes and demand. In the name of counter-terrorism operations, security forces trouble civilians instead of protecting them. Krishnamani, a civilian, was apprehended and killed by security forces and left his body near Loktak Lake. In the initial part of the film, police do not behave well even toward older women, let alone the injured patients. The



intent or goal of insurgent parties is not adequately highlighted in the film. However, their modus operandi was, to some extent, described. The civilians do not receive both insurgents and security forces well as they do not act in their interest. A maximum number of scenes illustrated the living condition of civilians and their miseries. The first scene displayed police cruelty against civilians, and the last stressed how civilians are forced to become insurgents. Tombi, a civilian, had to become an insurgent because he feared security forces would kill him. Civilians like Krishnamani and Yaiphabi, who, in any way associated with insurgents, are killed. A faction group had killed Yaiphabi. Given all these outcomes for being associated with insurgent groups, Tombi, at any cost, did not want the same fate as Krishnamani or Yaiphabi. Tayal, in the last scene of the film, is clueless about what she would do. He could not lead a happy life as mysterious unwanted circumstances unfolded. The ending showed civilians living amid the chaos of the state's catastrophic law and order situation. The film narrates how civilians continue to face and suffer insurgency and counter-insurgency operations in the form of bomb blasts, encounters, fake encounters, and harassment from insurgents and security forces. Furthermore, justice was never delivered.

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