

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND
INTEGRATION OF MANIPUR
1950-1977**

By

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D E C L A R A T I O N

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Certified that the material
presented in this dissertation has not
been submitted for any other diploma
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This study is an attempt to give a brief account of Political Development in Manipur from 1950 to 1977. Before 1891 Manipur was an independent state. The state came under the British control in 1891 as a result of a Palace Revolt by some of the sons of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh. When India became independent on 15th August, 1947, Manipur like other princely states of India, was free to merge either with India or Pakistan. Manipur merged with the Union of India in 1949. With the enforcement of the Constitution of India in 1950, Manipur became a Part C state in the Indian Union.

In the early stages, politics were confined to a very small group of persons. The people of Manipur fought for the restoration of responsible government established under the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947. Progressively, Manipur was granted a Territorial Council in 1957, a Territorial Assembly in 1963 and full fledged statehood in 1972. Now Manipur is in the mainstream of national life.

The present study analyses the various political forces which have been at work in Manipur politics from 1950 to 1977, e.g. political parties, elections, nature

of different governments during this period, defections. An attempt has also been made to study the role of Manipur in the North Eastern Council and relation with the Central Government on some important issues. It was however not possible to deal with all these matters at great length in this short study. What is presented here is only a small effort in this direction.

Due to the lack of published works the present study is based mainly on primary sources, personal interviews, newspaper records, journals etc. The views of several political leaders of Manipur were also obtained and prove very useful.

I take this opportunity to offer my grateful thanks to my Supervisor, Dr. Balveer Arora, who advised me to work on these lines and to Prof. C.P. Bhambri and Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan, who encouraged me at all steps. And I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Director, Centre of Post-Graduate Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Imphal, for granting me leave and to the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for awarding me Teacher Fellowship under the Faculty Improvement Programme of the University Grants Commission, 1976-77.

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CHAPTER - I

THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF MANIPUR FROM PRE-COLONIAL ERA TO THE INDIAN REPUBLIC

Manipur lies on the eastern frontier of India. It is a hill girt covering a total area of 22,356 sq. kms. with a 1,812 sq. kms. fertile valley in its centre. The State is bounded by the State of Nagaland in the North, by Mizoram in the South, by Upper Burma in the East and by the Cachar District of Assam in the West. Its Population, according to the 1971 census, is 1,072 lakhs of which more than two-thirds is concentrated in the small valley, where the majority consists of Manipuri Hindus (Meiteis) and some Muslims. The remaining one-third of the population is dispersed in the hills, with as many as 29 recognised Scheduled Tribes divided either into the Naga or the Non-Naga groups (vide President's Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes List Notification Order, 1956)¹.

The process of development of Manipur as a political entity from the ancient days was similar to that of Indian nationhood. Just as Indian culture and nationhood were not the product of a single administrative Power, the development of Manipur as a political entity did not take place under one supreme political Power. "The feeling of one nationhood was built up through a number of small but almost independent

1. Govt. of Manipur - Annual Administration Report - 1974-75. p-i.

kingdoms which grew and functioned in the manner as the states of Greece did!"² These small kingdoms were in keen competition with one another, and special mention may be made of seven clans which could establish more or less stable kingdoms in different areas of the State. These were the Khuman, Moirang, Ningthouja, Khaba, Nganba, Luwang and Angom clans. According to Colonel McCulloch,* the Political Agent of Manipur from 1844 to 1867 and "the Meitheis were the strongest of several clans inhabiting the Manipur valley, who eventually obtained the mastery and gave their name to all the other clans!"³ In the event of any foreign aggression these small kingdoms were united against the common enemy. "Excepting rare cases of betrayal and fifth columnism by some small kingdoms in the whole history of Manipur, the kingdoms were united in the event of wars with Burma or with any neighbouring country!"⁴ Thus there were some elements of federalism in ancient Manipur.

It was only in the eighteenth century during the reign of Rajarshi Bhagya Chandra that all the clans were merged into one and a single state was brought into existence.

2. N. Tombi Singh - Manipur, A Study - Imphal, Rajstores, 1972, p-5.

3. Shakespeare, L.W. - History of Assam Rifles - St. Martins' Street, London, Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1929. p-15.

*McCulloch was the Political Agent for nearly 24 years, except for an interruption in 1862-63. He wrote a book on Manipur called 'Account of the valley of Manipur and of the Hill Tribes, with comparative vocabulary of the Manipur

Before the British conquest of Manipur, the state was under the monarchical system. All the powers and functions of the state were combined and concentrated in the hands of the king. The king was assisted by a council of ministers. "But the ministers could act on any measure of national importance only with the consent of the Raja!"⁵ During the reign of the king, Manipur was subjected to many invasions by the Burmese forces. In 1819 Manipur lost her independence and was under Burmese suzerainty for seven years which was called "CHAH-I-TARET-KHUNTAKPA!"* The Manipur king sought British help and the Burmese were driven out from the territories of Manipur. Subsequently, Gambheer Singh was recognised as the Raja of Manipur by Art 2 of the Treaty of Yandaboo, 1826, which runs thus: "With regard to Manipur, it is stipulated that should Gambheer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof!"⁶

A. ANGLO-MANIPURI RELATIONS

The kings of Manipur started their contact with the British Empire through its agency, the East India Company

Contd....

and other Languages'

4. N. Tombi Singh, - op.cit. - p-5.

5. N. Tboi Singh - Elements of Public Administration in India - Imphal, Rajri Book Stall, 1974. p-234.

* Seven Years Devastation²⁹

6. R.K. Jhalajit Singh - A short History of Manipur- Imphal, O.K. Store, 1965. p-201.

* Seven Years Devastation

operating in the Eastern Zone of India in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The King of Manipur and the British East India Company entered into an agreement of mutual aid in times of crisis and external aggression. In 1835 a British Resident Officer, Captain Gordon, who had been serving as adjutant since 1827, was appointed by the British Government as Political Agent in Manipur. According to L. Iboongohal Singh, the main object of retaining an officer in the character of the Political Agent was "the preservation of a friendly intercourse, and as a medium of communication with Manipur Government, and as occasion may require, with the Burmese authorities on that frontier, and more especially to prevent border feuds and disturbances which might lead to hostilities between the Manipuris and the Burmese."⁷ The Political Agent was also to advise and regulate the conduct of administration of the Raja. The Court of Directors remarked in a despatch dated the 5th May 1852 to the Political Agent:

The position which you have to assume of pledged protectors of the Rajah, imposes on you, as a necessary consequence, the obligation of attempting to guide him by your advice, but if needful, of protecting his subjects against oppression on his part, otherwise our guarantee of his rule may be the cause of inflicting on them a continuance of reckless tyranny."⁸

7. L. Iboongohal Singh - Introduction to Manipur - Imphal, E. Ibotombi Singh, Moirangkhom, 1960, p-136.

8. Mackenzie, A - The North Eastern Frontier of Bengal - Calcutta, 1884, p-155.

Although Manipur continued to be a sovereign state the relations between the two became increasingly closer. Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh, son of Gambheer Singh accepted the title of KCSI conferred on him by the British government. "Whatever might have been the material changes in the actual relations between the government of Manipur and the British Government, the significance of the acceptance of the British title by Chandrakirti must be regarded as a definite step towards acceptance of the extension of the British empire upto Manipur!"⁹ Again it may be said that Manipur lost a part of her sovereignty in so far as foreign relations of the state were controlled by the political agent.¹⁰ "Manipur ceased to have any foreign relations. That is to say that Manipur was to communicate with foreign states and neighbouring districts through the political agent or at least with his concurrence!"¹¹ "This indicates how stealthily and steadily the British had gained the upper hand in the domestic affairs of Manipur, reducing the status of the state to a nominal independence!"¹²

9. N. Tombi Singh = op. cit. p-13.

10. The general belief in Manipur is that the State remained independent upto 1891. But the writer is of the opinion that Manipur had already ~~xxx~~ lost her Independence much before.

11. L. Iboogabal Singh = op. cit. p-139.

12. J. Roy - History of Manipur - Calcutta - 1, East right Book House, 1973. p-86.

Chandrakirti left two warring camps of his sons born to different ranis. As a result of this, there was Palace Revolt in 1890 led by Tikendrajit, the Senapati, the chief of the Army. The main cause of the revolt was over a girl. Mrs. Grimwood, the wife of the then Political Agent writes:

We know the Pakka sana and Senapatti were rivals too. Both wished to marry a girl who was supposed to be the most beautiful woman in Manipur The two princes were at daggers drawn about her. Once they had a terrible quarrel over her in which the Maharaja had taken the side of the Pakka Sana, and that the Senapatti had sworn never to speak to the latter again. Since then the eight brothers split up into 2 factions, the Maharaja, Pakka Sana, Shamu Hanjaba and the Dolairoi Hanjaba formed one side while the Jubaraj, Senapatti, Angou Sana and Zillangamba formed the other.¹³

The Palace Revolt was the immediate cause of the downfall of Manipur and the whole administration of Manipur was taken over by the British in 1891. "The form of administration known as "Native Rule" was established in Manipur. It made a very drastic reduction in its status or rather, Manipur was put on an entirely different footing."¹⁴ Though Manipur was ruled by a prince, its administration was handed over to a Durbar consisting of eight members with the Maharaja as its President.

13. Grimwood, E. St. Clair - My Three Years in Manipur - London, Richard Bentley and Sons, 1891, p-296.

14. R.K. Jhalajit Singh - op.cit. p-296.

B. GROWTH OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In the pre-British period, politics in Manipur was confined to a very limited circle i.e. the Maharaja, his nobles and a few ambitious man. The people remained completely ignorant of politics due to the lack of communication and education. This had prevented the growth of political consciousness among the people of Manipur. But in the 1930's during the British Period there was some growth of political consciousness. "Factors favouring its growth were the struggle for freedom by the Indian National Congress, the deplorable state of manifold genuine wants of the people, the weakness of the administration and the perverseness of an unscrupulous section of the state officials,"¹⁵ There were anti-British movements also like (i) Nupilal or Women's Movement in 1904, the main cause being the revival of Lallup by the then political agent Lt. Colonel H. St. Maxwell "The revival of Lallup led to the outbreak of the violent agitations and demonstrations in the town by thousands of women to protest against the orders of Superintendent; But it was to be dispersed by force which was obtained from the regiment stationed in Manipur".¹⁶ (ii) "Towards

15. Ibid - P.301.

16. Shakespeare, J. - Administration Report on the Political Agency, Manipur for the year 1904-1905, Shillong-P.1.

the end of 1913, there was widespread agitation against the system of 'Pothang or compulsory labour' by which roads and schools are kept up by the village labour",¹⁷ "Practically every village in the valley except the Imphal villages which were exempted from the system of compulsory labour by the Durbar a few years ago combined in a passive resistance against the system",¹⁸ (iii) The Kuki Rebellion 1917-1919 - The aim of the rebellion was to turn out the British from Manipur and to establish an independent Principality in the hill areas of Manipur "The distinct forces of anti - British, intra-tribal and intra-dynastic were the main features of the rebellion",¹⁹ (iv) The Zeliangrong Naga uprising 1927-32 - It was mainly based on the anti - British and a sort of rudimentary tribal nationalism and (v) the fifth was the great Women's agitation or movement in 1939. On the 12th December 1939 some hundreds of women held a demonstration before the state office and requested the Durbar to ban the export of rice and stop all rice mills.²⁰ Thus non-party and

17. Higgins, H.C. - Administration Report of the Manipur State for the year 1912-13 Calcutta- 1913 - P.1.

18. Ibid - P. 1.

19. Bhadra, G. - "The Kuki uprising 1917-1919 its causes and nature" - Man in India, 55(1), Jan.- March, 1975, P.30.

20. Govt. of Manipur - Administration Report of the Manipur State - 1939-40, P.1.

socio-economic movements preceeded the development of organised political movements and parties in Manipur.

Growth of political parties:

Before 1934 there was no political party in Manipur. In 1934 under the Presidentship of Maharaja Churachand Singh, an organisation called the "Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha" was formed.

The Congress Party: - The Mahasabha was at first a social organisation. But after the Chinga Session in 1938, it became the first political party of Manipur. "The Mahasabha followed the ideology and policy of the Indian National Congress, but the programme had to be modified to suit local conditions."²¹ It marked the growth of strong political consciousness in Manipur. In November, 1938, a petition signed by 356 leading citizens of the state was submitted to His Highness, asking him to set up a legislative council and to nominate the members of the Durbar from amongst the councillo²

In November 1939 the Mahasabha submitted another petition to His Highness to set up a unicameral legislature of 100 members, 80 to be elected and 20 to be nominated

21. R.K.Jhalajit Singh - op.cit-p.301-2

22. Govt. Of Manipur - Administration Report of the Manipur State - 1939-40-p.1

by him.²³ The first stages of Women's or (Nupilal) Movement of 1939 was led by this Mahasabha. Later on there was a division of opinion in the working committee meeting of the Mahasabha. The leader of Movement, H. Irawat Singh joined the Praja Sammelini as President to lead the movement.²⁴ The Mahasabha in course of time developed to be the Congress Party in 1946.²⁵

The Communist Party:

Organisations such as the Kishan Sabha, the Mahila Sammelini, the Praja Sammelini and the Satra Sammelini led by Comrade Irawat Singh were communist oriented organisations. In the beginning of 1948 there was no branch of the Communist party though a few political workers were enrolled as members of the party.²⁶ The Communist party was established around the end of 1948 while Comrade Irawat was in underground. In the beginning of 1950 there were mass arrests of peasants and students. The underground leaders and workers also

23. Ibid - p.2.

24. Sh. Bira Singh - Comrade Irawat - Imphal, CPI Office, 1974. p.7.

25. Ibid -p.11.

26. Ng. Mohendra Singh - "A Brief History of Communist Party" - Khollao, 26.12.1975.

continued their activities and they built up the Communist party in many areas of Manipur.²⁷ The Manipur Krishak Sabha was established as early as 1936 at Nambol.²⁸ "The Krishak Sabha was more or less all embracing and organised to embrace all shades of the peasantry of Manipur, in keeping with the reality that Manipur has always been a predominantly peasant state".²⁹

As the need for organising a new political party was felt, Comrade Irawat, after his release from Syhlet jail and his internement, established the Praja Sangha in the year 1945-46.³⁰ In fact it was not a new organisation. There was already one organisation named Praja Mandal which had been established in 1930 and of which Irawat was the President.³¹ He was also the President of Praja Sammelini. It was under his initiative that a move was launched, for the amalgamation of these two organisations into one effective organisation.

27. Ibid.

28. Th.Bira Singh - op.cit -P.7.

29. Interview with Ng.Mohendra Singh, 23.4.78

30. The source of the information is Oja Bokul Singh, one of the founder members of the Praja Sangha.

31. Interview with Ng.Mohendra Singh- 23.4.78.

"This marked the beginning of a political organisation as distinguished from existing mass or class movements.³²

The Samyukta Socialist Party:- In 1945 Dr. Ram Mahohar Lohia, Joy Prakash Narayan and Ashok Mehta were the leaders of the progressive group in the Congress Party. L. Achou Singh, the ex-president of the Socialist Party, met Dr. Lohia at Calcutta University in 1946. He attended the first annual conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1947 at Kinshik as the representative from Manipur.³³ It appears that Manipur had a socialist branch from the beginning of the formation of the All India Socialist Party. The Socialist leaders of India such as Dr. Lohia and others supported the movement of Manipur State Congress for responsible government in Manipur in 1947.

Hill Parties:- In 1947, a local party called Praja Shanti was also established. Thus before 1947 the politics of Manipur was confined mainly to the valley. As regards the political parties in the hills, there were about 5 small political parties such as Tangkhul Long, Kuki National Assem^{bl}y, Kabui Association, Khul Union and Mizo Union at the meeting of

32. Ibid.

33. Manaba - 23.3.78

all political parties of the Manipur Hills and Valley of Manipur held in November 1947.³⁴ These parties have the aim of preserving and improving their cultures, freedom from external exploitation and unification of their geographical areas into a homogenous political unity. But their origin lies in ethnic factors.

C. MANIPUR AND INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

On the 15th August 1947, when India became free, the paramountcy of the British crown over the native states also came to an end. Paramountcy over Manipur also lapsed on the same date, and the British government decided not to hand over their powers and obligations under paramountcy to any government of British India. Alongwith the lapse of suzerainty, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of passing the Indian Independence Act, 1947 ceased to operate. Manipur was free to accede to either Pakistan or India. Due to geo-political condition Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India, advised Manipur to accede to one of the Dominions. In the meantime the currents of political movements and labour strikes in British India had their repercussions in the state.³⁵ The leftist group

34. The Bira Singh - op.cit. pp.11-12. The Meeting was held at M.D.U. Hall on 30 Nov. 1947 and was convened by Praja Sangha.

35. Govt. of Manipur - Administration Report of Manipur State - 1946-47. p-2.

of the Manipur State Congress launched an agitation for the establishment of responsible government in the state. In view of the wishes of the people the Maharaja of Manipur declared that he would introduce a fully democratic and constitutional form of government in Manipur. He announced the formation of a constitution-making committee consisting of seventeen members, six non-officials from the hills, six non-officials from the valley and five official members. In March 1947 the constitution-making committee formed 2 sub-committees, one for drafting the constitution of Manipur and the other to draft the Hill Regulations. On 8th May 1947, the reports of the two sub-committees were duly passed by the constitution-making committee. A Government Report notes: "It was a great credit to this committee that they could in such a short time bring out an agreed constitution. Manipur and her people will owe to them a great debt!"³⁶ With the approval of the Maharaja it came to be known as the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the Manipur State Hill People's (Administration) Regulation, 1947. It was very important chapter in the history of political development in Manipur, as it guaranteed popular government.

36. Ibid.

Regarding External Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, a bilateral treaty was concluded between the Government of Manipur and the Interim Government of India. It was known as Standstill Agreement. According to this agreement the responsibility of conducting affairs in these three key areas was entrusted to the Government of India. As for the internal administration of Manipur, the Maharaja and the people were free to adopt any method suitable to the condition of the State. This Agreement came into force in August, 1947.

While the constitution making process was going on, the Maharaja, to give effect to the contemplated changes in Manipur, formed an Interim Council in August, 1947. The council consisted of four officials, one representative of the Maharaja and five non-official representatives of the Hills. The council had a Chief Minister, four ministers from the valley and two from the Hills. However, the Maharaja was the ultimate authority in all important matters and the Interim Council merely helped and advised him.

D. MANIPUR STATE CONSTITUTION ACT, 1947

The Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 consisted of eleven chapters and 58 sections or articles. The executive authority of the state was vested in the Maharaja-

in-council:

The territories for the time being and hereafter vested in the Maharajah are governed by and in the name of the Maharajah. All rights, authority and jurisdiction which appertain or are incidental to the government of such territories are exercisable by the Maharajah subject to the provision of this Act.³⁷

Where under this Act or the rules for the administration of the State, it is requisite, that the approval of the Maharajah shall be taken to any measure, the Chief Minister shall seek the approval of the Maharajah in person or in writing and shall obtain the Maharajah's orders thereon. Should in any case the Maharajah's approval be withheld, the Maharajah shall be pleased to inform the Chief Minister in person or in writing and to communicate his reasons for withholding such approval in writing to the council.³⁸

The Maharajah shall be assisted in the exercise of his executive powers by a council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Maharajah in consultation with the elected ministers of the council.³⁹

There was a discussion in the Manipur State legislative Assembly as to whether the ministers would be elected from among the MLAs or from outside.⁴⁰ The matter was put to vote and the President declared to the House that the ministers would be elected from among the MLAs only. The ministers were bound to take an oath of

37. Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947-Section-3.

38. Ibid - Section 10(b).

39. Ibid - Section 10(c).

40. Proceedings of the Manipur State Legislative Assembly - Palace Darbar Hall, 10.11.48.

loyalty and allegiance to the Maharajah, his heirs and successors,⁴¹ The Maharajah-in-council was the constitutional head of the state.⁴² The Maharajah-in-council had the absolute right to promulgate, in emergency cases, orders having the force of law without previous reference to the Assembly. Such orders would have the force of law for six months only and were to be laid before the Assembly as soon as it was reconvened.⁴³

Manipur had a unicameral legislature known as the Manipur State Legislative Assembly. It was elected for a period of three years and comprised "representatives freely elected by the people on an adult franchise and on the principle of Joint electorate!"⁴⁴ There are three categories of constituencies - General, Hill and Muhammadan Seats among them were in the "ratios of 30:18:3 respectively with an additional two seats for the representatives of Educational and Commercial Interests!"⁴⁵

41. Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 - Section-15.

42. Ibid - Section 9(b).

43. Ibid - Section 31.

44. Ibid.-Section 17.

45. Ibid.

The law making authority consisted of the Maharajah-in-Council in collaboration with the State Assembly.⁴⁶ When the Council of Ministers or the Assembly considered that a law should be enacted, the council had to draft a bill. It was laid before the Assembly which could make alterations or amendments. The bill would again be drafted in its final form by the chief minister and would then be sent to the Maharajah, who could either give or withhold his assent. Should the Maharajah in any case withhold his assent to a Bill, that bill shall lapse as if it had not been passed. If the assent of the Maharajah is not forthcoming within one calendar month of the Bill being submitted to him, he shall be deemed to have withheld his assent.⁴⁷ The same bill may again be introduced in the next session of the Assembly. If it is passed without amendment by a 75% majority of the Assembly it became a law without the assent of the Maharajah.

The constitution envisaged a judiciary separate from the Executive. The Chief Justice and two judges were however to be appointed by the Maharajah-in-Council. The

46. Ibid - Section 26..

47. Ibid - Section 29.

liberty of the individual was guaranteed. "There shall be guaranteed to all people, justice, social, economic and political, equality of status, of opportunity before the law, freedom of thought, expression of belief, faith worship, vocation, association, and action subject to law and public morality" ⁴⁸

E. ELECTIONS AND INTEGRATION WITH INDIAN UNION

Elections under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 were held in March, 1948 under the Manipur State Election Rules 1948. To frame the Franchise Rules, a meeting of the Manipur State Constitution making committee was held at Imphal on 14 Oct. 1947 at which 14 members were present.⁴⁹ They formed a Franchise Committee and it was decided by a big majority that the single member constituency system should be followed.⁵⁰ The whole valley was divided into 29 constituencies. Out of these, in the three constituencies where there were numerous Mohomedans, there would be plural voting i.e. one voter would have two votes, one for the Mohomedan and the other for the non-Mohomedan.⁵¹

48. Ibid - Section 52.

49. Minutes of the Franchise Committee Meeting- 8/9.12.47.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

The entire Hills area was divided into 18 constituencies. As for special constituencies, the matriculates, title holders in Sanskrit and Maulavis were given votes under the 'education' category and all the registered shopkeepers under the "commerce and industry" category. 52 The candidate to be sent up had to be a Manipur State subject. As regards Hill men, it was decided that out of the 18 seats earmarked for the Hills, one would be allotted to the Hill men residing in the valley. They would contest in one of the 29 constituencies where there are many hill men. 53

If bribery was proved in connection with an election, the election would be declared null and void, and in addition the guilty candidate was liable to be disqualified for a period prescribed by the tribunal empowered to hear the election petition. 54

Most of the political parties in Manipur such as the Manipur State Congress, the Manipur Krishak Sabha, the Socialist Party and the Praja Shanti contested the elections. The Manipur Krishak Sabha put up 23 candidates, out of which

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid - 13.1.48.

54. Rules for the election and the election petitions for the year 1947-48. - Section.43.

5 were returned.⁵⁵ In some constituencies such as Yairipok and Lilong as many as 10 candidates contested the election.⁵⁶

The elections in the Hills was held after the results in the valley had been announced. "Another peculiarity was the system of quotas in which a particular number of votes could cast their votes on a particular day only at the same polling station.⁵⁷ The following is the break up of the party position in the Assembly:

Manipur State Congress	-	14
Manipur Krishak Sabha	-	5
Socialist Party	-	3
Hills (Independents)	-	18
Independent (Praja Shanti)	-	12
Nominated	-	1

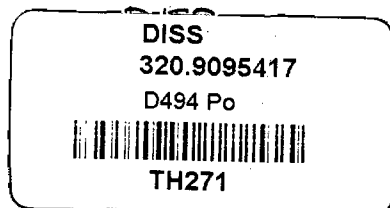
TOTAL: 53

55. The Bira Singh - op.cit. p-13.

56. Resistance - 18.4.78.

57. Ibid.

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A coalition government was formed comprising the Independent group known as the Praja Shanti. For the first time in the history of Manipur a government was formed by the elected representatives of the people. Shri M.K. Priyobrata Singh, younger brother of the Maharaja assumed office as Chief Minister. Mr. T.C. Tiang -kham and Mr. T.Bokul Singh were unanimously elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively. ⁵⁸ Thus in 1948 Manipur had a constitutional monarchy.

The political parties including the Congress organised mass demonstrations and 'satyagraha' to press their demands for the end of monarchy in Manipur. The Congress leaders demanded the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union. The Congress Policy of integration might have originated from the All India Congress Policy of forming United India. The Socialist Party also supported the Congress on this question as they got their inspiration from the Congress Socialist Group of India. In the meantime the Dominion Government of India intended to replace the Dominion Agent by a Dewan so that there might be better relations between the Government of India and Manipur. Meanwhile Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister of India, proposed the creation of a new state

58. Proceedings of the Manipur State Legislative Assembly 1948-49 sitting No. 8 - 19.11.48 - p-16.

named Purpachal Pradesh consisting of Manipur, Cachar, Tripura and Lushai Hills.

The most important force against the policy of the Congress was the movement led by Irawat Singh. He was never against the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union. His demand was that Manipur should be a full-fledged State as good and powerful as any other sister state in the Indian Union. His apprehension was that after merger, Manipur would be relegated to a status lower than that of other states of India. With this perspective in view, he and his party demanded full-fledged statehood and greater autonomy for Manipur.⁵⁹

The opposition against the integration was also launched in the hill regions of Manipur. In fact the merger was favoured only in the valley region which constituted only about one-tenth of the whole area of Manipur. The people in the hills were concerned more about the preservation of their own traditions and culture rather than integrating with the Indian Union. A special meeting of hill representatives was held on 27th July, 1949 at Imphal under the chairmanship of Mr. S. Lune. Resolution No. 2(a) of this meeting stated that the hill MLAs regarded the Congress Policy as

59. Interview with Ng. Mohendra Singh, 23.4.78.

subversive activity. It is also declared that the plain people of only about 700 square miles would not be allowed to decide upon the integration of the hill people of Manipur which covered about 7000 sq. miles and it was not their right to do these things on behalf of the hill people.⁶⁰

The constitutional monarchy in Manipur established under the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947 did not last long. On Sept.15, 1949 the Maharaja of Manipur left Imphal for Shillong. The purpose of the visit was not disclosed to the public. An agreement was arrived at on 21.9.1949 at Shillong for merging the State of Manipur with the Dominion of India between the Maharaja of Manipur and V.P. Menon, Adviser to the Government of India in the Ministry of States on behalf and with the authority of Governor General of India, with Shri Prakasa, the then Governor of Assam, as witness.⁶¹ It was agreed that the Maharaja would cede to the Dominion Government "full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the state" It was also agreed that the Maharaja would continue to enjoy "the same personal rights, privileges, dignities, titles, authority over religions observances, customs, usages, rites and ceremonies and institutions of Manipur" The Manipur Administration

60. Lamyamba No. 50-Nov., 1973. p-27.

61. Government of Manipur (Law Deptt.) - The Manipur Code - Part-1 - Imphal, 1963, p. 265-267.

Order 1949 incorporates the provision that as from 15th Oct. 1949, the ministers of Manipur State would cease to function and the legislature would stand dissolved.⁶²

The Manipur State Legislative Assembly and the Council of Ministers were dissolved. The Chief Court was also abolished. The administration of Manipur was placed under a Chief Commissioner. With the enforcement of the constitution of India on January 26, 1950, Manipur became a part C State of the Indian Union.

62. Notification Office of the Chief Commissioner, Manipur No. 0001/G.G. of 15th Oct. 1949 (Noon).

CHAPTER - II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL FORCES IN MANIPUR(1950-1977)

There are four main political parties which have played a very important role in the politics of Manipur from 1950 to 1977. They are the Indian National Congress, the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India and the Manipur People's Party. Besides these political parties, there are also smaller local parties in the plain and in the Hills. The local parties in the Plain are: the Nationalist Socialist Democratic Party, the All Manipur People's Convention, the Manipur National Organization, the Manipur National Union, the Kanglei League etc. And in the Hills there are the Mizo Union, the Kuki National Assembly, the Khulmi National Union, the Paite National Council, the Hmar National Union, the Naga National League, the Manipur Hill Union, and the United Naga Integration Council. "All of them have the aims of preserving and improving their cultures, freedom from external exploitation and unification of their respective geographical areas into a homogeneous political unity" Besides these political bodies there are also social organisations such as Pan Manipuri Youth League,

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1. N. Ibobi Singh - Elements of Public Administration in India, Imphal, Rajsri Book Staff, 1974. p-245.

Macha Leima, Tangkhullong, Kabui Association etc. The process of separation and unification of political parties is also going on. For example the United Naga Integration Council was merged with the Congress (R) in August, 1972, the Manipur Nationalist Party and Kanglei League with the Manipur People's Party in 7 Jan. 1974 and 1977 respectively. In the sections which follow the ideology, programme, social and geographical support base, organisational structure and membership etc. will be examined.

A. MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS

Ideology and Programme:

The object of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee is the same as that of the Indian National Congress, namely, 'the well-being and advancement of the people of India and the establishment in India, by peaceful and constitutional means, of a socialist state based on Parliamentary Democracy in which there is equality of opportunity and of political economic and social rights and which aims at world peace and fellowship'.² And to be an active member of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee the person must 'subscribe to and work for promoting the principles of secularism, socialism and democracy; and no directly, openly or otherwise, adversely

2. Constitution of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (As amended by MPCC on 15.9.74 and approved by the Working Committee vide letter No. P.C. Manipur 19675 dated 16.10.74, Article-I.

criticise the accepted policies and programmes of the party, except through party forums."3 Therefore, its main objectives are the attainment of Socialism, Democracy, Co-operation and the elimination of poverty in the country.

The Communist Party in Manipur, like the Communist Party of India, cherishes the idea of the propagation of Marxism. Its main objective is 'to establish a socialist society in India and to stop all kinds of exploitation!4 It is intended to be the party of the working class of India. It aims at the establishment of a proletariat state based on socialism,5 and seeks to promote the principles of democratic socialism.6

The Samyukta Socialist Party and the Praja Socialist Party which merged in 1971 aim at the "nationalisation of basic industries, providing land to the landless and improving the conditions of working class!" The socialists want the "eradication of imperialism, racialism, colonialism and other forms of economic inequalities!"7 Thus the All-India Parties in Manipur have no separate political ideology, policy and programme other than those pursued by their respective parent organisations in India.

3. Ibid - Art VB(h).

4. Constitution of the Communist Party of India, CPI (Manipur State Council), p-1.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.- p-2.

7. N. Ibobi Singh - op.cit.-p-248.

The main reason for the formation of the Manipur Peoples' Party was 'to safeguard and uphold the interests of Manipur and to upgrade Manipur politically, economically, socially, culturally, educationally and linguistically!'⁸ The object of the party according to its constitution is 'to achieve politically, socially and economically, by democratic and peaceful means, the well being and advancement of the people of Manipur and to establish an egalitarian society based on democratic socialism!'⁹ It stands for more power for the state of Manipur. The local political parties of Manipur stand for retaining the separate identity of Manipur, to safeguard the interests of Manipur, the regulation of the entry of outsiders into Manipur and quick industrialisation of Manipur. They are not much concerned directly with the other states of India as such.

The Pan Manipuri Youth League and the Manipuri Chanura Leishen Marup generally known as 'PANMYL' and 'Macha Leima' - though social, cultural and non-political youth organisation, have on some occasions played an important role in the political history of Manipur. They exalt the

8. The constitution of the Manipur Peoples' Party
Gen. Secy. M.P.P.-1973 - p.1.

9. Ibid, -p.2

glory of ancient Manipur. The PANMYL appeals to the youth of Manipur- ' It is high time to think about the future of Manipur taking into consideration the present Manipuri Society and the deteriorating political and social conditions of Manipur'¹⁰. The organisation strongly demanded the restoration of Kobo valley to Manipur. "The Pan Manipuri Youth League while strongly opposed to the illegal and wrongful occupation of Kobo valley by Burma, reaffirms and reiterates the most important national demand for the restoration of Kobo Valley to Manipur"¹¹! The organisation stands for socio-cultural unity among the Manipuris living in South-East Asia, i.e. Burma, Tripura, Assam, Nagaland and Bangladesh. The Macha Leima stands for building up the socio-economic and political strength of the Manipur.¹² The organisation demands the reservation by each political party of one fourth of the contested seats for women in the elections to the legislative assembly.¹³

Social and Geographical support base:

If the question is asked whom does each political party represent, it is very difficult to answer. In India

10. PANMYL, - Summer Conference, 20, 21 and 22 June, 1969

11. Memorandum addressed to the President of India by Elanglam Doren, President, PANMYL-7th May, 1970-p.2

12. Macha Leima, - 'Women's Day 12.12.74.

13. Macha Leima - 'Second Resolution' 3rd Annual Conference, Imphal, 7 and 9 December, 1973.

the parties do not represent the rival classes nor do they represent different socio-economic status groups. Because such classes and groups as they exist in India at present are criss-crossed among themselves as well as by several overlapping groups formed around particularistic loyalties. These various overlapping groups have the same membership and therefore, from the view point of the members, they form a scale of loyalties with the ordering of loyalties on this scale varying from place to place and situation to situation. The articulation of conflict at the level of any of these loyalties, because of the uncontrollable situational variables in the process, is unpredictable.¹⁴

In Manipur more than 50 per cent of the members of different parties are peasants and agriculturists. Though the Communist Party is a party of peasants and workers, the Congress alone claims more than one thirds of its members to be peasants.¹⁵ The number of peasant members obviously varies from urban to rural areas. In the rural areas peasants constitute more than 50 per cent of the Congress members e.g. Kakching which is the stronghold of the Communist Party the number of peasants are more than half of the total

14. Sushil Kumar. 'The Problem'-Our Political Parties, Seminar 124.p.12

15. Congress Bhavan, -Permanent Active Members 'Register Maintained under Art. VIII(1) of the MPCC Const.' Imphal, Manipur.

number of active members i.e. 114 out of 141 in 73-74 and 257 out of 405 in 75-76.¹⁶ Businessmen constitute the second largest group among the members of the Congress party in the urban areas. i.e. Yaiskul - 11 out of 48, Keisamthong 21 out of 31, Uripok 9 out of 20, Singjamei 13 out of 32.¹⁷ There are also a large number of social workers in the city districts of the Congress Party. The number of students and teachers are negligible in all the parties of Manipur. But in the 1960s when the S.S.P. was very popular in Manipur, most of party members in the urban areas were educated youths. Similarly, in the beginning of the seventies the Manipur Peoples' Party attracted many students and members of the younger generation. There are very few female members in the political parties of Manipur. The Congress, which is the largest single party in the state, has very few members in the hills, and they are nearly all social workers e.g. in Saikul, Saitu, Kangpokpi, Tadubi, Mao, Karong.¹⁸ This may be due to lack of political consciousness in these areas.

16. Ibid, -1975-1976.

17. Ibid, -1973-74.

18. Ibid, -1975-76.

No political party can therefore claim to have a clearly defined social support base valid for all parts of the state, or even for the same part at different times. Peasants and agriculturists all over the state do not support the same party nor do the businessmen or the urban middle class or workers. Every party is supported by a combination of all these elements. For the same reason the social base of the parties is subject to wide fluctuations. But the parties are labelled and classified as parties of the haves and have-nots from the angle of their political ideology - that is from the viewpoint of their belief regarding the future pattern of group relations and social justice in the country and the methods for achieving it.

Regarding the geographical base of the parties in Manipur, the Congress is the only party which has a deep-rooted organisation in all parts of the state-valley as well as hills. It has a fairly large number of members in all the five districts of Manipur. The CPI has strong organisations in the valley i.e. Lamlai, Kakching, Konthoujam, Keisamthong, Keirao, Kumbi, Sagnu, Mayang Imphal, Thoubal, Wangjing Tentha, Hiyanglam, Khangabok, Wangkhei, Singjamei, Khurai, Heirok, Moirang, Thanga, Bishenpur, Oinam, Nambol,

Sekmai, Sagolband, Uripok, Sagolmang and Khundrakpam.¹⁹ In 1976 the CPI had 270 party branches. Due to religious factors, the party is slow in building up the organisation in the hills. The S.S.P., which merged with the Janata Party in 1977, had a very strong base in the valley, especially in Wangkhei, Singjamei, Kwakheithel, Khurai, etc. and in some areas of the hills in the 1960s. The Manipur Peoples' Party was also very strong in the valley since the beginning of the seventies upto 1977. But now, since most of the founder members have already joined the Janata Party, the party is trying to build up its organisation again. The other local parties concentrate their organisation in some areas of the state only. The Pan Manipur Youth League has spread its branches beyond the territorial boundaries of Manipur i.e. Gauhati, Silchar, Hojai, Lanka, Lakhimpur, Burma and Bangladesh.²⁰

Organisational Structure and leadership:

The Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha which was founded in 1934 was organised on the basis of the ideology of the Indian National Congress. The Political Conference of

19. CPI Office, - Membership Chart, Imphal, 1976

20. Interview with O.Natum Singh-Ex.President PANMYL, 23.2.78.

the representatives of various parties and organisations held at the Aryan Theatre on Oct. 1946, marked the birth of the Congress Party in Manipur.²¹ After the lapse of British paramountcy, the Manipur State Congress demanded a democratic, popular and responsible form of government in the State. The party split into two on the question of the formation of the Interim government in July 1947. One group was led by E. Tompok Singh and the another group by P. Tomal Singh. But the two factions were unanimous on one issue-the need to introduce responsible government in Manipur.²² A meeting was held at the victory Cinema hall on Feb. 1948 for the re-unification of the two factions to face the election of 1948.²³

Manipur was categorised in the Indian Constitution as a Part 'C' State to be administered by the Central Government through the Chief Commissioner or Lt. Governor. The President of India constituted an Advisory Council to be associated with the Chief Commissioner of Manipur, in the discharge of his administrative functions.²⁴ The Congress

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21. Th. Bira Singh-Comrade Irawat - Imphal, C.P.I. Office 1974, p. 11.
 22. Resistance - 10.10.1977.
 23. Bhagyabati Patrika - 21.2.48.
 24. Govt. of Manipur- Manipur Gazettee- Extra Ordinary (A) No. 77-E-37-1950.

had two advisors in this council. But due to the differences of opinion between the congress advisors and the then chief commissioner, the party directed its advisors to resign and eventually all the Congress advisors left the council on 6th February, 1951. When the first election under the Indian Constitution was held in January, 1952, the Congress Party contested in 22 out of 30 constituencies. But it secured only ten seats. Shri Ng. Tompok Singh, a leader of the Congress Party, was elected as the first member of the Rajya Sabha and the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat was won by L. Jugeshor Singh on a Congress ticket by defeating Maharani Ishwari (Independent), Th. Bira Singh (Communist Party) and L. Achou Singh (Socialist Party).²⁵ In the second advisory council inaugurated by the chief commissioner on 5th June, 1953 the congress had four members out of five:

1. Shri S. Krishnamohan Singh.
2. " H. Dwijamani Dev Sharma.
3. " M. Tombi Singh.
4. Dr. L. Kampu.

Although the congress had lion's share in the new Advisory Council, the party started a movement for full responsible government and the restoration of the Legislative Assembly in

25. Congress Bhavan, - Election Results 1952- Imphal.

Manipur. When the states re-organisation commission proposed the merger of Manipur with Assam, the Manipur State Congress strongly opposed it and wanted Manipur to be a separate state. In a memorandum to the SRC, it submitted:

Manipuris are unique people quite distinct ethnically, culturally, linguistically from the people of either Assam or the purposed Purbachal or the purposed North Eastern Frontier Tribal State. We cannot conveniently be merged with any of these states at risk of antagonising the Manipuris against the state in which Manipuris may forcibly be merged. Merger of Manipur with any state will mean the veritable annihilation of its distinctive culture.....If Manipur is forcibly merged with any other state against her will the people will find themselves as if let loose from this moorings with the result that Manipur will become a sick spot in the North Eastern Part of India.²⁶

The Manipur Congress Executive Committee in a joint sitting with the congress members of the Electoral college discussed the State Re-organisation Bill 1956, and declared:

The Committee regrets to note that the bill makes no provision for the introduction of democratic set up in Manipur. The people of Manipur take it as adding fuel to burning fire because they have been long demanding responsible government and they have strongly resented the delay as well as the present degradation of the status of their state to that of a territory.

The Committee therefore, resolved that the government of India be requested to incorporate in the present bill provision for the introduction of responsible government in Manipur consisting of legislature and council of Minister responsible to it.....".²⁷

26. Memorandum submitted to State Re-organisation Commission by Manipur State Congress. Imphal, April, 1954 p.3.

27. Resolution of the Joint Meeting of the Manipur State Congress Executive Committee and Electoral College Members- Imphal 6th April-1956.

The Advisory form of govt. was converted into Territorial Council from 1st January, 1957 consisting of 30 elected members and 2 nominated members. In the election of Manipur Territorial Council, the Congress contested in all thirty constituencies. The Congress won 12 seats but could not command an absolute majority; moreover some of its former members of the Advisory Council namely S. Krishnamohan Singh and S. Tombi Singh were defeated. In the outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency, the Congress candidate, R. Suisa won the seat by defeating Mr. Daiho (Independent) H. Tualvung (Independent) and Rishang Keishing (Socialist).²⁸ The two nominated women members namely R. K. Mukhra Devi and Akim Angnal and some independent members joined the Congress party. The Congress party was thus able to manage the council, of which Sibho Larho was the chairman, till the end of its term in 1962.

In the next territorial council and parliamentary elections, the Congress won 15 seats in the territorial council and its candidate S. Tombi Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency.

28. Govt. of Manipur, (Election office)- Election result of the House of the People from the inner and outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituencies 1957.

The two nominated women members R.K.Mukhra Devi and Lingjaning Gangte, five independent members, namely Paoneikhai, Goukhen Rao, Anaipa, Athuibou and Khersung Anal and two socialists namely T.Solomon and K.Envy joined the congress party and thus raised its strength to 24.

On 3rd August, 1962, M.Koireng Singh (Congress) was elected Chairman of the Territorial Council by defeating L.Achou Singh by 24 to 8 votes and on 21st August 1962, S.Bijoy Singh, (Congress) was elected as vice-chairman of the council. When the Territorial Council was converted into a Territorial Assembly following the Constitution Amendment (Fourteenth Amendment) of the Government of the Union Territories Act, 1963, the chairman of the council, M.Koireng Singh, became the Chief Minister of Manipur.

In the election of 1967, the Congress won 16 seats out of 30 and with the joining of some independent members namely Ch.Rajmohan, Sonkhothang Ason, Gakhangai and Lal Roukeing the Congress legislature party increased its strength to 20 members; Mr.M.Koirong Singh again became the Chief Minister of Manipur. In July 1967, more independent members joined the C.L.P. and the party strength increased to 25 members. But due to a crisis within the C.L.P., the speaker, S.Tombi Singh, Deputy Speaker, Kh.Chaoba Singh

along with 8 other members including one nominee left the party, thus reducing the party strength to 15. The Congress ministry therefore resigned on 4th Oct. 1967.

On 19th February 1968, a Congress Ministry was again formed with M. Koirang Singh as Chief Minister, as more members rejoined the C.L.P. But this ministry resigned following a no-confidence motion on 15th Oct. 1969 and Manipur was placed under President's Rule till the next general election of 1972.

When there was the split of the Indian National Congress in Nov. 1969, the Manipur Territorial Congress remained neutral for some time. But in July 1970, the Manipur Congress was also split into Congress (O) led by R.K. Jhalajit Singh and Congress (R) led by R.K. Birachandra Singh.

Manipur was granted statehood on the 21st January 1972 under the North-Eastern Areas (Re-organisation Act), and election to the Legislative Assembly was held on 6th, 9th and 11th March, 1972. The Congress (R) contested all the 60 seats and the Congress (O) only 10 seats. The Congress (R) won only 17 seats in the election,²⁹ but though it secured the largest number of seats it could not

29. Congress Bhavan- General Election 1972- Legislative Assembly, Manipur Imphal, March 14-1972.

form a government. The congress by absorbing some independent M.L.As raised its party strength in the legislative assembly to 23 on 26.10.72.³⁰

In the mid-term election of Feb.1974, the Congress(R) contested 49 seats out of 60 but could return only 13 candidates. The Congress Party was a partner in the coalition government that was formed on 6th December 1974 with R.K.Dorendra Singh as the Chief Minister. The Party tried to strengthen its party position by taking in other members from the opposition, thus raising its strength to 34 on July 1975.³¹ On 23rd July 1975, Chief Minister R.K.Dorendra Singh tendered the resignation of his D.L.P. ministry, and was sworn in as the head of Congress-C.P.I. coalition. By the end of February 1976, the Congress had a strength of 42 members though it had started from an insignificant figure of 13. The Congress- C.P.I. Ministry resigned ~~on~~ on 13th May 1977 following the defection of most of ~~the~~ members to the newly formed Janata Party.³² Now in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, the party strength is nil. The Manipur State Congress had different fronts,

30. Th.Gokul Singh- Defections in Manipur 1963 to 1977- Imphal, Th.Achou Singh, 1978,p.42.

31. Ibid, - p.61.

32. Th.Gokul Singh-op.cit, p.68.

namely Womens Front, Youth Congress, Students Congress, Seva Dal etc. In every district of Manipur there are district Congress Committee and there are also Kendra Congress Committees which cover an area of 20,000 population and are co-terminus with Assembly Constitutencies.³³

The prominent personalities of the Congress Party before 1950 were E. Tompok Singh, P. Tomal Singh, S. Krishnamohan Singh, H. Dwijamani Sharma, R. K. Bhubon Singh, Dr. N. Leiren Singh and L. Jugeshor Singh. They continued to play a very important role in the Congress Party during the time of Advisory Councils i.e. from 1950 to 1956. In the late fifties and the sixties the leadership of the Congress Party has been taken over by the persons like Mr. M. Koireng Singh who was the President of the Congress Party from July '55 to Oct '57 and resigned from the presidentship on 16.10.57 and S. Tombi Singh who was elected as Congress President on 25.10.59 and held the office upto September, 1963.³⁴ In the beginning of 1970s the Congress Party was not so strong as it was before and most of its leaders also defected from the Congress Party. Now the Congress

33. Constitution of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee, - 1975, p. 10.

34. Congress Bhavan - The Presidents and the term of office of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee - Imphal, Manipur.

is trying to build up its organisation under the leadership of N. Tombi Singh, M.P., I. Tompok Singh, Ex.M.P. and H. Nilamani Singh, the party president. In 1965 the Congress had some 1500 permanent active members in Central, East and South district.³⁵ But the number went on increasing from year to year. In 1975-76 the City District Congress Committee alone consisted of 461 permanent active members.³⁶

Very little is known about the organisational history and structure of the C.P.I. in Manipur because of the suppressive measures of the government. In the beginning of 1950 there were mass arrests of peasants and students and many were put in jail. But the underground leaders built up the organisation of the party in many areas of Manipur. The CPI put up 6 candidates out of 30 in the election of 1952, but only 2 were elected. In the elections the party was able to secure 4 seats out of the 17 candidates that it put up. In the 1962 elections none of the communist candidates was elected. In 1967, the party for the first time had an M.P. elected from the Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency and secured only one seat in the Legislative Assembly. In the elections of 1972 and 1974 the

35. Congress Bhavan, - Manipur Territorial Congress Committee-Permanent Active Members Register 1965 to 1966-67-Imphal.

36. Ibid.

the party fielded 24 and 12 candidates respectively for the 60 member Legislative Assembly. It won 5 seats in 1972 and 6 in 1974. The prominent leaders of the Communist Party from 1950 to 1977 were M. Meghachandra Singh, ex-M.P. and ex-Minister; Th. Bira Singh, M. Bohal Singh, Ng. Mohendra Singh and Th. Meghachandra Singh. In the present legislative assembly of Manipur the Communist Party is functioning as lone opposition party having 4 members under the leadership of Ksh. Irabot Singh. In the fifties and sixties the Communist Party in Manipur had very few members. But from 1971 to 1976 there was sudden jump in the membership of the party. In 1976 the party claimed to have about 4000 members in the valley area alone.³⁷

In the 1950s and 1960s the Socialist Party was a very strong force in Manipur politics under the leadership of L. Achou Singh. But in April 1966 most of the leaders and active members resigned from the party because of the dictatorial nature of the leader.³⁸ The party had 1 and 6 members in the Territorial Council of 1952 and 1957 respectively, and one was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957

37. CPI Office, - Membership Chart - Imphal, 1976.

38. Ngasi - 24.4.66, 25.4.66.

from the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. In the 1962 and 1967 elections, the party secured 5 and 4 seats and Mr. Rishang Keishing, a socialist candidate was elected to Lok Sabha from outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. But there was a decline in the party's strength in the 1972 and 1974 elections as it could secure only 3 and 2 legislative assembly seats respectively. The party has now merged with the Janata Party following the national wave in 1977. In the Socialist Party L. Achou Singh, ex-M.P. and the present general secretary of the Janata Party was the undisputed leader of the party throughout the whole period.

The Manipur Peoples' Party:- The Manipur Peoples' Party was formed on 26 December, 1968 at a meeting convened by late Shri Chaoyaima Singh (Thoubal) Shri Nilachandra (Moirang) Y. Yaima Singh (Cinam) and S. Tombi Singh (Imphal). Later on some of the political leaders of Manipur also joined it. Most of them were defectors from the Congress party and the main reason for their defection was differences over the food policy of the government.³⁹ The first conference of the party was held on 27th January, 1969 at

39. Interview with Kh. Chaoba Singh, Agriculture Minister, 3.3.78.

the Aryan Hall.⁴⁰ The party contested 40 seats in the 1972 Legislative Assembly and secured 15; it was thus able to form an MPP led coalition government by having the support of 3 SP, 3 UNIC, 1 MPCC(O) and 11 independent members. In the 1974 elections, the party secured 20 seats and formed a coalition government with socialist, Manipur Hill Union and some independent members. But the Chief Minister (MPP) handed over the resignation of his council of ministers on 8th July 1974 following the formation of the Progressive Democratic Front by Congress, M.P.P. and C.P.I. The party members were divided on the issue of merger with Janata on June 1977. The pro-merger group merged with Janata on 3.7.77, following a resolution of the Executive Committee of the party.⁴¹ Those who merged were the old members of the M.P.P. and new members coming from M.N.O. (which already joined the M.P.P.). The anti-merger group consisted of those members coming from the Kanglei League.⁴² The anti-merger group expelled the party president and his associates from the membership of the party

40. Y.Yaima Singh - 'Eeikhoigi Wakhali' - 8th Annual Conference of MPP-Imphal, 26 December-75-p.11.

41. Interview with K.Jilla Singh - ex.Gen.Secy. MPP-5.4.78.

42. Prajatantra - 30.5.77.

for working in collusion with Central Janata leadership to abolish the Peoples' Party.⁴³ The leaders of the Manipur Peoples' Party Md. Alimuddin, S. Tombi Singh, Y. Yaima Singh and Kh. Chaoba Singh, all defectors from the Congress Party, joined the Janata Party in 1977.

B. ELECTORAL POLITICS AND PROCESSES

In Manipur one very effective method of campaigning^a is door-to-door canvassing in order to elicit votes. Informal face to face contacts by the candidates are often more effective than mass media communication. The voting behaviour is influenced by these personal touches. There is also community or group feasting. Over the feast the candidates tries to "touch the heart of the voters" in a very congenial social setting.

The political behaviour of the electorate has differed from district to district and particularly between the valley and the hills. The political and electoral participation of the people in the hill-areas have to be increased only by the efficient working of the party system, still in its infancy, and by giving proper education about the democratic process prevailing in the country and the stat^e

43. Ehau - 29.6.77

In the urban constituencies most of the voters remain unattached to party politics. The majority of them are committed voters and most of them judge the candidates from their personal merit and image. The personality factor is a dominant consideration. Urban voters are more interested in national politics.⁴⁴

The First General Elections- 1952:

The first general elections were held in 1952. They heralded an era of People's Participation in the political processes and government of the state. There were two constituencies for the Lok Sabha - viz - Outer Manipur and Inner Manipur. The outer Manipur constituency consisted of the Manipur Hills and parts of the Thoubal Sub-division of the Manipur valley. The Inner Manipur constituency consisted of the central valley and a small portion of the Sadar Hills circle.

The parties which contested the Lok Sabha seats in 1952 were the Indian National Congress, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party among all Indian Parties, and the Gandhi Sevak Sabha, the Praja Santi, the All

44. Ravindra Pradap Singh - The General Election in Manipur, 1972, -Imphal, 1974, P-35.

Manipur National Union, the Historical Research Committee of Manipur and the Kuki National Association among the local parties. The Congress won the Manipur Inner Lok Sabha seat and the Manipur Outer Lok Sabha seat was captured by the socialist candidate who defeated his four rivals.

For the election of the Electoral College consisting of 30 members, the state was divided into 30 constituencies, 20 in the valley and 10 in the hills. Two candidates were elected uncontested from Jiri and Ukhrul. The national parties which contested the election were the Congress, the Socialist party and the CPI. The local parties were the Gandhi Sevak Sabha, the Praja Shanti Party, the All Manipur National Union, the Historical Research Committee, the Kuki National Association, the Mao-Maram Union, the Mizo Union, the Manipur Zaleirong Union, the Paite National Council, the Achumba Pamba Congress, and the Naga National League of Manipur. Besides these, there were 8 independent candidates.

Two local parties Mao-Maram Union and Manipur Zaleirong Union won 2 seats they contested in the north and the north-western hill area of the state. The Communists won 2 seats out of 6 contested. The Socialist Party

secured only one out of 14 contested seats. The Congress emerged as the largest single party with ten members in the Electoral College. Among the all India Parties Congress got the maximum average votes, 1783, followed by the Communist Party's 883.⁴⁵

The political maturity of the people can be gauged from the small number of invalid votes. The total number of invalid votes was only 637, giving a percentage of 0.46.

The main issue among the political parties in the 1952 election was the demand for full responsible government for Manipur.

The Second General Elections- 1957:

Manipur went to polls in 1957 to elect 3 members of the Lok Sabha and 30 members of the Territorial Council under the provisions of Territorial Councils Act, 1956. The Lok Sabha seats were contested by the Indian National Congress, the Socialists, the Communists and the Praja Socialists. There were also five independent candidates. The number of electors in 1957 rose to 3,30,311, an increase of 10.60 per cent over the electorate of 2,96,552 of 1952.⁴⁶ The Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat was captured by the socialist candidate in a five cornered contest. But the outer Manipur Lok Sabha seat went to the Congress.

45. Ravindra Pratap Singh- The General Election in Manipur, 1972- Imphal, 1974, p.35.

46. Ibid. p.37

While the 1952 elections to the Electoral College were fought by 14 political parties, both national and local, besides independent candidates, the elections in 1957 were contested by only four political parties - the Congress, the Socialist, the Communist and the Praja Socialist along with a large number of Independent candidates.

The Congress Party secured 12 seats out of 30 contested with 28.01 per cent of the popular vote and 40 per cent of the seats in the Territorial Council. The Socialists won 7 seats out of 23 contested and the communist could win only 4 seats out of 17 contested. The Praja Socialist Party put up the poorest show as all its 21 nominees were defeated.

In the hill areas the average number of candidates contesting the elections had been 3.6 per constituency, in the valley 5.6 against the state average of 4.9.⁴⁷ The total strength of the electorate was 3,30,211 of which 1,61,337 were males and 1,68,874 females. There was only 85 invalid votes out of 1,74,172 total number of voters showing a superb electoral training of the voters by the political parties and their candidates.

The main issue in this election was also the demand for full responsible government in Manipur.

The Third General Elections 1962:

Manipur went to the polls on 19th, 23rd, 27th Feb. and 6th March 1962 to elect 30 members to the Territorial Council and 2 members to the Lok Sabha. For the Lok Sabha seats there were eleven candidates. They belonged to the Congress, the Socialist, the Communist and the Praja Socialist parties. The Congress candidate S. Tombi Singh defeated his rivals in the Inner Manipur, constituency by securing 46,281 votes. The socialist candidate Shri Rishang captured the outer Manipur Parliamentary seat by a margin of only 42 votes, defeating his nearest rival Shri Sibbo Larbo of Congress.

The elections to the Territorial Council were contested by four national political parties - Congress, Communist, Socialist and Praja Socialist besides a huge number of Independents. The Congress Party's performance was the best as it captured half (15) of the Territorial Council seats with only 29.15 per cent of the votes. The Socialist party captured 5 seats and the remaining 10 seats^{went} to Independents.⁴⁸

As a consequence of the 1960 agitation, the Assembly Demand Co-ordination Committee consisting of all opposition parties i.e. the Communist, the P.S.P. and the S.S.P.

48. Govt. of Manipur (Election Office), - Declaration of election results 1962 Imphal, 1962, pp.238-245.

contested in all constituencies. The main issues in the election manifestos of the ADCC were (a) to bring a responsible government in Manipur, (b) to bring about an alternative to the Congress government, (c) economic viability, (d) development of Industries, improvement of peasants' condition, increase in the salaries of teachers, educational and medical facilities, establishment of a university in Manipur and inclusion of Manipuri language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution etc.⁴⁹ The ADCC appealed to the electorate not to vote for the Congress as the party had not fought for granting of Legislative Assembly to Manipur.⁵⁰

The Fourth General Elections 1967:

In February, 1967 the elections of the Manipur Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha were held. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed by National Socialist Democratic Party (NSDP) and the Manipur Socialist Party with the sole purpose of defeating the Congress Party in the election. Altogether ten candidates fought the elections

49. ADCC - Election Manifesto - 1962.

50. Ngasi - 28.1.62.

for the two Lok Sabha seats, while the Congress Party contested both seats, the Communists fought for inner Manipur and the S.S.P. for outer Manipur seat only. The Communist leader M.Meghachandra Singh was elected by defeating the Congress candidate R.K.Jhalajit Singh by a margin of 18,983 votes from the inner Manipur Constituency. In the outer Manipur an Independent candidate Paokai Haokip was elected by defeating the Congress candidate Rishang Keising by a margin of only 1,541 votes. Manipur which used to be represented by the Congress and Socialist nominees in the previous Lok Sabha, sent a Communist and an Independent this time.

The Assembly elections were fought by the Congress, the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the CPI and the CPI(M), plus some Independent candidates. The Congress Party, which had lost both of the Lok Sabha seats this time managed to get a working majority in the Assembly by securing 16 out of 30 seats. The leftist parties together secured about half of the Congress votes. The Independent candidates formed 63.87 per cent of the candidates (99 out of 155) and bagged about half (48.86 per cent) of the total valid votes polled.⁵¹

51. Ravindra Pratap Singh - op.cit. - p.57.

The election manifesto of the Communist Party laid down that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution has not been implemented in Manipur because of the dissolution of the Manipur Legislative Assembly in 1948 upto 1966.⁵² The party also criticised the food policy of the government. The Communist party offered a 16 - point programme, among which mention may be made of the integrity of hill and valley of Manipur, the conferment of statehood on Manipur, special autonomy for the hill areas, amendment of the Land Revenue Reforms Act, nationalisation of banks, re-organisation of educational policy, & inclusion of the Manipuri language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.⁵³ The UDF in its election manifesto proclaimed that they wanted a new form of government which would demand statehood for Manipur, and described the grant of statehood to Nagaland irrational.⁵⁴

Lok Sabha and General Elections, 1971-72:

When the Congress split into Congress (R) and Congress (O), Smt. Indira Gandhi's government lost the majority in the Lok Sabha, she decided to have a mid-term

52. CPI(Manipur State Council)-Manipur Election. Imphal, 1967, p.3.

53. Ibid - p.20-29.

54. UDF - Election Manifesto - Imphal, 1967, p.2.

poll for the Parliament, one year ahead of schedule. Manipur was also summoned to elect two members for the Lok Sabha. The election was contested by the 2 Congresses, the Communists, the Socialists and the Manipur Peoples' Party. The defeat of 4 party chiefs, which included three former Members of Parliament, at the hands of the then Congress (R) General Secretary, ^{Manipur,} Shri N. Tombi Singh was the most important aspect of this election. The S.S.P. and the Congress (O) candidates even lost their deposits. In the outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency the sitting congress M.P. Shri Paokai Haokip defeated his nearest rival Shri Rishang, an independent by a margin of 3042 votes

The election for the Legislative Assembly of Manipur was held on 6th, 9th and 11th March, 1972. In all 261 candidates contested the 60 Assembly seats. Partywise break up of the candidates fielded and returned to the Assembly are as follows:

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidates fielded.</u>	<u>Candidates returned.</u>
1.	MPCC(R)	60	17
2.	MPCC(O)	10	1
3.	CPI	25	5
4.	CPI(M)	5	0
5.	SSP	16	3

contd...

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidates fielded</u>	<u>Candidates returned.</u>
6.	MPP	42	15
7.	Jana Sangh	1	0
8.	U.N.I.C.	5	3
9.	M.N.P.	1	0
10.	M.N.O.	2	0
11.	Independent.	94	16

All parties combined through some form of formal or informal understanding to break the Congress Party's dominant role. Almost all the parties in Manipur threw a challenge to the Manipur Pradesh Congress and rallied round the banner of anti-congressism.

The manifestos of the opposition parties had a kind of tacit consensus in the matter of accusing the corrupt and faction ridden Manipur Congress as the devil mainly responsible for the bad state of affairs in the state. The Manipur Congress ignored the hate campaigns of these parties and banked with confidence upon the image of the New Congress and the charismatic leadership of Shrimati Gandhi, the Bangladesh issue and the grant of statehood to Manipur. "The conferment of statehood to Manipur is a glorious achievement of the Congress. The leadership

acted with tremendous courage of conviction in taking this decision and in implementing it".⁵⁵

Primarily local issues dominated the election scene and the party manifestos. Party ideology and principles were adapted and diluted to meet local requirements. International issues, Bangladesh affair and other issues of national importance were not highlighted. The CPI manifesto mentions national and international issues like Vietnam war, Indo-Soviet Treaty and the emergence of Bangladesh, abolition of Privy purses, the right to vote for all over 18 years of age and so on. The MPP urged the formation of an Education Reform Commission for proper conduct and 're-orientation of education'.⁵⁶ The election battle was fought by the non-congress parties with an appeal for an 'alternative government' because of the alleged colossal failure of the Congress Party to deliver the immediate goods and redress the popular grievances.

The Mid-term Assembly Elections, 1974:

In the last week of February 1974, elections were held for all the 60 constituencies of Manipur. The Parties

55. MPCC - Election Manifesto-Imphal, 1972, p.66

56. M.P.P.-Election Manifesto- Imphal, 1972. p.5.

contesting were the Congress(R), the Congress (O), the M.P.P., the S.S.P., the CPI, the CPM and the Manipur Hill Union. The party wise break up of number of candidates fielded and returned is given below:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Candidates fielded</u>	<u>Candidates returned.</u>
1.	Congress (R)	49	13
2.	Congress (O)	13	00
3.	M.P.P.	39	20
4.	S.S.P.	18	02
5.	C.P.I.	12	06
6.	M.H.U.	19	11
7.	Independents.	108	08

This time also local issues dominated the election scene. The Congress Party called the last MPP led government unholy alliance, demonstrating the internal weakness of the regionalist party by indulging in massive corruption, acts of nepotism and high handedness.⁵⁷ Among the goals of the Congress Party mention may be made of (a) establishment of a stable government, (b) to provide leadership and guidance to the younger generation towards the mainstream of national life, (c) establishment of a full fledged university and a

57. MPPC - Election Manifesto, Imphal, 1974, p.2.

thorough re-orientation of the education programme to meet the challenge of unemployment, (d) development of the regional language and the tribal dialect etc.⁵⁸ The Congress entered into electoral alliance with the C.P.I. in order to check the rising danger of regional sentiments propagated by the local parties, the show of money power by a large number of independent candidates and supporters of the regionalist forces.⁵⁹

The Lok Sabha Elections- March, 1977:

In the Lok Sabha elections of March, 1977, the Congress, the CPI, the MPP, the Socialist and a number of independent contested the inner and outer Manipur Parliamentary seats. In the Inner Manipur the Congress candidate N. Tombi Singh was elected by securing 10,5670 votes and in the outer Manipur the Congress candidate Yangmaso Shaiza (who has since joined the Janata) defeated all other candidates by securing 10,5006 votes.⁶⁰

58. Ibid - p.3-4.

59. Ibid - P-7. - The same view was also expressed by Mohendra Singh, Th. Maghachandra Singh and Th. Bira Singh of the Communist Party, Imphal.

60. A.H. Choudhury (Returning Officer) - Results of the election to Parliament, March, 1977., Imphal,

C. GOVERNMENT FORMATION AND ALLIANCES

The Advisory Council, 1950-56:

Since Manipur was integrated and its administration taken over by a Chief Commissioner, the Merged States (Laws) Act, 1949, (Act No.59 of 1949) was applied to her. It came into force on the first day of January, 1950.⁶¹ Manipur remained a part C State under the Constitution of India. The former Council of Ministers and the Legislative Assembly were dissolved and in its place the President constituted an Advisory Council, consisting of the Chief commissioner and fourteen other members nominated by the Central Government in consultation with the chief commissioner.⁶² The chief commissioner nominated advisors representing different parties like Praja Shanti, Manipur State Congress and some local Hill Area Parties. The Advisory Council was inaugurated on 9th Oct., 1950.⁶³ N. Ibomcha Singh of Praja Shanti Party was nominated President of the Advisory Council by the chief commissioner. The Advisory Council was dissolved on 1st Nov., 1956, and thus came to an end the Part 'C' States Act, 1951 and a caretaker government consisting of 5 advisors was formed.

61. Govt. of Manipur (Law Dept), - The Manipur Code Part I. - Imphal, 1963, p.65.

62. Govt. of Manipur, - Manipur Gazette Extraordinary (A) No. 77-E-37, - Imphal, 1950

63. Govt. of Manipur, - Manipur Gazette Extraordinary No. 89-E-44, - Imphal, 1950

Territorial Council and Territorial Assembly 1957-1967:

The States Re-organisation Act, 1956 brought into being a new territorial pattern. The part 'C' States (laws) Act of 1950 was modified as the Union Territories (laws) Act, 1956. The Seventh Amendment of the Constitution permitted the creation of a legislature in Manipur by passing the Territorial Council Act, 1956. From 1st January, 1957 the Advisory form of government was substituted by the Territorial Council consisting of 30 elected and two nominated members. In the 1957 elections the Congress Party secured 12 seats and later on the 2 nominated members and five independent members joined the Congress Party. Thus the Party's strength was increased to 19. But due to the division of opinion regarding the leadership of the party, it could not form a government for some time. But from 1958 onwards the Congress was able to manage the council till the end of its full term in 1962. In the election of 1962 the Congress Party secured half of the total seats and formed the Congress Legislature Party (C.L.P.), 2 nominated members, five independent members and 2 socialist members joined the party. Thus the party's strength rose to 24 and Mr. Koireng Singh was elected the chairman of the council.

In July 1963, the Territorial Council of Manipur was converted into the Territorial Assembly and the existing members of the Territorial Council became the members of the Territorial Assembly. Shri M. Koireng Singh (Congress) was the Chief Minister for the whole term.

In the election of 1967, the Congress Party secured 16 seats. The Congress again formed the government under the Chief Ministership of Mr. M. Koireng Singh by having a comfortable majority of 25 members in a House of 32 members (with the joining of 2 nominated members and 7 independents into the Congress Party). But due to defections the Koireng ministry resigned on 4th October, 1967.⁶⁴ It was succeeded by a short-lived United Left Front Ministry headed by Shri L. Thambou Singh which was sworn on the 13th Oct., 1967. The U.L.F. had 17 members belonging to S.S.P., C.P.I., Independents and defectors from the Congress.⁶⁵ Meanwhile some members of the United Front defected to the Congress and a no-confidence motion was considered on 16th Oct. 1967. On 24th Oct. 1967, the opposition congress had 16 members. The House was soon prorogued by the

64. The Gokul Singh - Op.cit., p.16.

65. Ibid - p.15.

Administrator. There was a suspension of the House for 5 months.

Third Congress Ministry (19.2.1968 - 23.9.1969):

A new Congress ministry headed by Shri M. Koireng Singh was sworn in on the 19th February, 1968. The new Congress Legislature Party consisted of 22 members.⁶⁶ On 23rd September, 1969 the Koireng ministry fall and President's Rule was imposed in the state on 16th Oct. 1969.

MPP led U.L.P. Coation Government (20.3.1972-26.3.1973):

On 21st January, 1972, Manipur was granted statehood alongwith Tripura and Himachal Pradesh. Elections were held on 11th March, 1972 for the valley and on 6th and 9th March, 1972 for the hills. A ministry headed by Md. Alimuddin (MPP) consisting of 15 MPP, 3 SSP, 1 Cong. (O) and 13 independents under the name of United Legislature Party was installed on 20th March 1972.⁶⁷ The U.L.P. consolidated its strength with the joining of more M.L.As raising its membership to 37 in a House of 60 members. Soon dissensions cropped up in the government. On 31st July 1972, all the three members

66. Ibid - p.24.

67. Govt. of Manipur - Administration Report-1972-73, p.3.

of N.I.C. and 2 independents joined the Congress Legislative Party. This was followed by the defection of one M.P.P. member reducing the strength of U.L.P. to 31. But the U.L.P. was able to raise its strength to 36 in August, 1972 giving it a comfortable majority.⁶⁸

During the budget session of the Legislative Assembly there was turmoil in the House. Nine members including 2 ministers and the Deputy Speaker of the U.L.P. denounced the actions of the U.L.P. ministry and defected to the opposition on 15th March 1973. One of the defectors joined Congress and the rest formed the Progressive Independent Group. Congress, CPI and PIG joined together to form the Progressive Democratic Alliance on 15.3.1973. The strength of this Alliance was 32 and that of ruling party 26. One M.L.A. remained neutral and one seat remained vacant following the death of a ULP member.

A no-confidence motion was moved against the Government on 23rd March, 1973 and on 26th March 1973 Shri Alimuddin submitted the resignation of his government to the Governor. The Assembly was adjourned sine die by the speaker the same day. On 28th March,

1973 President's Rule was imposed in Manipur and the State Assembly was dissolved.⁶⁹

Second MPP led ULP Ministry (4.3.1974 to 8.7.1974):

After the mid-term elections of 1974 both the MPP and the Congress tried to win over different groups and independents in order to form the government. The Manipur Peoples' Party won the struggle with the support of 2 SSP, 6 MHU and 7 independents. Alimuddin formed the government under the name of U.L.P. on 4th March, 1974.⁷⁰ Just before the swearing in ceremony a section of M.H.U. led by Shri Yangnaso Shaiza left the U.L.P. But the ULP government was able to raise its strength to 38 in a House of 60 on 25th March, 1974 due to the joining of more MLAs.

Meanwhile the opposition parties i.e. the Congress, M.H.U., C.P.I. and Independents formed an alliance called the Progressive Democratic Front and lured as many members of the ruling party as possible to come to their side with promises of benefits and position.

69. Ibid.

70. Th. Gokul Singh - op.cit., p.52.

In the course of the Budget Session six members of U.L.P. crossed the floor on 8th July, 1974. More defections followed in the evening of the same day resulting in the resignation of Ministry in the afternoon of 8th July, 1974 and the Assembly was adjourned sine die.

PDF Ministry - (10.7.1974 to 5.12.1974):

On 10th July 1974 the Progressive Democratic Front Ministry headed by Mr. Shaiza was sworn in. More members defected from ULP and joined the P.D.F. Soon a rift cropped up between Mr. Shaiza and the Congress Party regarding the inclusion of Congress nominees in the ministry. Meanwhile a section of the Congress members negotiated with the U.L.P. for forming another ministry. They could collect as many as 31 MLAs on their side and claimed that 3 members of the Congress Party were kept under duress in the camp of Mr. Shaiza. When the Governor called the 3 MLAs they expressed their support for the Congress - U.L.P. Coalition. So the Shaiza ministry resigned on 5.12.1974.

Congress-ULP Coalition or DLP Govt. (6.12.1974 to 23.7.1975):

On 6th December, 1974, the Democratic Legislature Ministry headed by R.K. Dorendra Singh was installed. Meanwhile the Congress Party tried to form a pure Congress

Government by admitting new entrants in their fold. The party had 34 members. After getting favourable response from the Governor, Shri R.K. Dorendra Singh tendered the resignation of his D.L.P. ministry on 23rd July, 1975.

Congress-C.P.I. Coalition Government(23.7.1975-16.5.1977):

R.K. Dorendra Singh was sworn in as the head of a Congress-CPI coalition on 23rd July, 1975. More MLAs joined the Congress Party and by the end of February 1976 the Congress Party has a strength of 42 members in a house of 60. The Ministry continued upto March, 1977 with a comfortable majority of 50 members in the House. But soon after the Lok Sabha election of March, 1977, and the formation of Janata Government at the Centre

there arose divisions in the Congress legislature party between those who favoured the Janata, those who favoured C.F.D. and those who wished to remain in the Congress.⁷¹ By the middle of May, the Congress Government led by R.K. Dorendra Singh was reduced to a minority as more MLAs continued to join the Janata Party. So the President of India suspended the Legislative Assembly indefinitely

71. Khollao - 4.4.77.

from 16th May 1977 and President's Rule was imposed on 16th May 1977.⁷²

Janata Ministry:

The Janata Ministry under the Chief Ministership of Mr. Yangmaso Shaiza was installed on 29.6.1977. All the members of the Congress Party and MPP joined the Janata Legislature Party. As a result of it the Party had 55 members in the House and the CPI is acting as the Opposition Party consisting of 4 members. There is no Congress M.L.A. One Janata member recently joined Congress (I).⁷³

D. NATIONAL-REGIONAL PARTY LINKAGES

The links of national parties with regional parties of Manipur can be viewed from 2 angles - i.e. theoretical and from the practical viewpoint. Theoretically, there is much difference between the two types of parties. The national parties in Manipur like the Congress, the Communist and the Socialist Parties are branches of the Indian National Congress, the Communist Party of India and the Samyukta Socialist Party of India in so-far as they are controlled and directed by these parties. On the other hand local parties like the

72. Ehau - 29.6.77

73. K.C. Chaudhuri - "Where defections are a way of Life!" Sunday-, 21.5.78, p.39.

Manipur Peoples' Party, the United Naga Integration Council were established solely to protect the interests of the state or of a particular community. Thus the main object of establishing the Manipur Peoples' Party was to achieve the well being and advancement of the people of Manipur by democratic and peaceful means. The party stands for regionalism and grater autonomy for Manipur. Likewise the main object of the United Naga Integration Council was to integrate all contiguous Naga areas in Assam, Manipur, NEFA with Nagaland State, to ensure and promote communal harmony, to press the Government of India to initiate talks for final settlement of Naga political issues, to safeguard the religious, political, economic, cultural etc. rights of the minority communities.⁷⁴ The Manipur Hill Union was established just before the 1974 election by some ex-MLAs of the Hills led by Shri Yangmaso Shaiza. It was said that this party had the support of the hostile Nagas.⁷⁵ Besides these there was also many local parties like the Manipur National Organisation, the Manipur Nationalist Party, the Meitei Marup, the Kenglei League etc. Thus ideologically and theoretically there is a great

74. NIC - Election Manifesto - 1972 - Imphal, 1972

75. Th. Gokul Singh, -op.cit., p.48.

difference between the national parties and the regional parties of Manipur.

But practically these differences mean very little. Actually most of the local parties were founded by the defectors from all India parties. The Manipur Peoples' Party was founded by the defectors from Indian National Congress in 1968. The United Naga Integration Council was founded in 1972 by Rishang Keishing, a person expelled from the Congress; before joining the Congress Party, he was a socialist M.P. Similarly the founders of Manipur National Organisation, the Manipur Nationalist Party etc. are former socialists and congressmen. When the election results are declared or at the time of the formation of the government or during the tenure of a particular government, the MLAs elected on local party tickets often joined the national parties, in some cases even by abolishing the local party itself e.g. the United Naga Integration Council merged with the Congress in 1972, the M.H.U. with the Congress in 1976, and the bulk of the Manipur Peoples' Party with the Janata Party in May, 1977. Now in Manipur there is no strong local party except what is left of the Manipur Peoples' Party (former Kanglei League) and the newly formed Manipur National Union.

Thus there is infact a very close link between the national parties and regional parties in Manipur politics. A minister of cabinet rank can retain his ministerial post in different governments formed by national parties and regional parties by means of defection, as the occasion demands. This is because, as Shri O. Joy Singh, Deputy Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly, puts it: 'Most of the politicians in Manipur do not stick to their own party principles. They are guided by their own interests and not by political philosophy of the party.'⁷⁶ The problem of defections therefore merits special attention.

E. DEFECTIONS AND TOPPLING GAMES

"Power - the first love of every politician is a treacherous beloved. Like those of a pretty woman of little virtues, her wooers are many and her loyalties shifting!"⁷⁷

Traditionally defection means floor-crossing. But the term defection also means any change of political lable and should include all cases such as (i) that of leaving a particular political party after being elected as a legislator on its ticket and joining another party, (ii) of resigning from the party but remaining independent thereafter, or (iii) of joining a particular political

76. Interview with O. Joy Singh-Dy. Speaker, M.L. Assembly - 23.2.78.

party after being elected as an independent.⁷⁸
Legislators who vote against their party in the legislature on basic issues without actually resigning from the party should none-the-less be deemed to be defectors.

After the fourth general elections 1967, the state politics in India was characterised by a novel experiment of coalition governments of widely heterogeneous elements which were responsible for the collapse of many governments. Manipur also experienced such a phenomenon of a large number of legislators indulging in frequent marches and counter-marches from one political platform to another largely with a view to gaining ministerial office or other, often personal, benefits. If necessary, they did this by helping to topple successive governments and forming others in their places.

Defections were not however unknown to Manipur earlier, since responsible government was established in the state in 1948. One Socialist MLA defected to the Congress.⁷⁹ This contradicts the views expressed by Shri M.K. Priyobrata Singh : "When the first election

Contd...

77. S.C. Kashyap - The Politics of Defection - New Delhi, The Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, 1969, p.1.

78. Ibid - p.12.

79. Th. Bira Singh - Comrade Trabotl Imphal, CPI Office, 1974-R 13

on adult suffrage took place in Manipur in 1948, the MLAs were new to the system and did not know defection.⁸⁰

The Congress Party in Manipur succeeded in forming a durable Congress government in 1957 and 1962 by securing a few defections from the ranks of independents in 1957 and socialists in 1962. Here defections led to greater stability. Despite securing half of the seats in a House of 32 members, the Congress was able to form a government in 1967 by the joining of 7 independents and 2 nominated members into the party. Soon a severe struggle for power ensued within the Congress legislature party. Some members were promised contract work and some certain other personal benefits by the Chief Minister; even these promises were apparently not kept. The law and order situation in the hills and plain areas of Manipur also considerably, deteriorated; economic conditions became from bad to worse. The prevailing condition of Manipur became good propaganda material to those who wanted to overthrow the Koirang Ministry, Shri S. Tombi Singh, Speaker, Shri Kh. Chaoba Singh, Deputy Speaker and 8 Congress MLAs defected from the Congress Party and formed the United Front with the Opposition on 19th Oct. 1967.

80. M.K. Priyobrata Singh - "Whither Manipur" -
Resistance 30.5.78.

The Front requested the Chief Commissioner to allow them to form the government. Shri Koireng Singh also contended that he had still the majority. Camps were set up for ULF Legislators at Sekmai and for Congress legislators at Uripok to prevent them from defecting. Shri Koireng Singh had no alternative but to resign on 4th Oct. 1967.

On 13th Oct. 1967 Shri L. Thambou Singh, a defector from Congress became the Chief Minister of the ULF government. Soon Shri Demjalam Kipgen, who had earlier left the Congress to join the ULF, defected back to the Congress and the Opposition raised a motion of no-confidence against the Ministry. The ULF Ministry was defeated by 16 votes against 15 (the Speaker having no right to vote); and the Administrator prorogued the House and the Legislature was suspended. Soon all former Congress members, who had recently defected to the U.L.F. (except Shri S. Tombi Singh and Shri Kh. Chaoba Singh who had been expelled from the Congress) rejoined the Congress. The Congress government was again formed on 19th Feb. 1968. This ministry lasted for about one and a half years before another defection took place. On 23rd September 1969 a motion of no-confidence was moved by Shri Koireng Singh. When the division took place, the motion was supported by 19 members and the ministry tendered its

resignation. Here the defection by some Congress MLAs and 2 Independents were mainly responsible for the political instability in Manipur. They have defected as many as 3 times.

Defections and Toppling Efforts - 1972-77:

In the 1972 elections the Congress(R) secured 17 seats and the Manipur Peoples' Party 15 seats in a House of 60. Both the Congress and the M.P.P. were actively trying to get the support of independent MLAs for the purpose of forming the government. But every Independent member wanted a position in the Council of Ministers. "Isolation camps" were set up by both the parties. At last the Manipur Peoples' Party won the game, getting 32 members on their side (15 MPP, 3 SSP, 1 Congress(O) and 13 Independents). In the Council of Ministers 10 Independents got ministerial posts and one each were bagged by the SSP and the Congress(O).

The Congress on the other hand also tried to strengthen its position by absorbing the Independent MLAs. 'The Naga Integration Council having failed to get posts in the Alimuddin Ministry merged with the Congress'.⁸¹

81. Th. Gokul Singh - op.cit. - p.19

Soon two Congress M.L.A.s **Jayasri Thangkhlal** and **T.Bira Singh** and 2 Independent M.L.A.s joined the United Legislature Party.

On 15th March, 1973, during the budget session, 9 members including 2 ministers and the Deputy Speaker defected to the Opposition, denouncing the actions of the U.L.P. Ministry. On 22nd March, 1973, the opposition moved a no-confidence motion against the Alimuddin Ministry. When the motion was taken up for discussion there were allegations and charges made by both sides against one another. The discussion was adjourned inconclusively till 26th March, 1973. At 3.30 p.m. of 26th March, 1973, the speaker informed the House that the Council of Ministers headed by Md. Alimuddin had tendered its resignation. Here 6 M.L.A.s defected twice during the one year rule of ULP Ministry i.e. 3 Independents, 2 Congress(R) and 1 Congress (O). In all 20 MLAs have defected from their original parties. Thus the toppling efforts of the Congress succeeded at last. "In his report to the Governor on the political situation of Manipur Mr. Alimuddin, the then Chief Minister, pointed out that two defectors had the record of changing sides four times each (both of them were congressmen) and the other congressman defected three times".⁸²

82. K.C. Chaudhuri- 'Politics of Defection in Manipur'-
North-Eastern Affairs-Annual, Shillong, 1973, p.91

Defections continued to play a very important part in the politics of Manipur from 1974 to 1977. Manipur witnessed as many as four different ministries within the short period of one year and three months i.e. from 4th March, 1974 to 23rd July, 1975. In 1974 the Manipur Peoples' Party won the struggle for the formation of government with the support of 2- SSP, 6-M.H.U. and 7 Independents. A section of the M.H.U. led by Shri Yangmaso Shaiza left the United Legislature Party just before the swearing in of the Alimuddin Ministry. Shri Habibur Rahaman, a Congress MLA and the General Secretary of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee and Shri S. Ibomcha Singh (Independent) also defected to ULP on 25th March, 1974 and 27th March, 1974 respectively.

Meanwhile the Opposition parties i.e. the Congress, the M.H.U., the C.P.I. and other Independents formed an alliance called the Progressive Democratic Front. During the budget session in July 1974 four ministers namely, Shri T.P. Kiulengpao, Ngulkhohao, Borthakar Sharma and A.T. Thungam resigned from the U.L.P and went over to the P.D.F. The speaker, Shri R.K. Dorendra Singh and three other MLAs namely S. Biramani Singh, Kh. Nimaichand Singh and Shri S. Ibomcha Singh also supported the P.D.F. This time there was not any no-confidence motion against the Ministry, but on 8th July 1974

the ruling bench was vacant except for Shri S Tombi Singh, Finance Minister, A Shraf Ali, and Kh. Pishak Singh. Md. Alimuddin submitted the resignation of his Council of Ministers to the Governor in the afternoon of the same day. Thus the Ministry was overthrown mainly by the defection of Ministers, Speaker and other MLAs.

Then the Progressive Democratic Front government was formed with Mr. Shaiza as the Chief Minister. Soon there was a conflict between the Congress Party and Mr. Shaiza about the inclusion of Congress Reminees in the Ministry. And there were also divisions in the Congress Party - one group supporting Shaiza and another group against him. The Congress and ULP overthrew the Shaiza Ministry by having the support of 34 MLAs on 5th Dec. 1974. Here the downfall was mainly brought about by the Congress Party, not pleased with Shaiza's Policy regarding the inclusion of Congressmen in the Council of Ministers.

The Congress-ULP coalition government headed by a another defector Shri R.K. Dorendra Singh (MPP to Congress came into existence on 6th December, 1974. Soon other members from the Opposition began to join the Democratic Legislature Party. Now the Democratic Legislature Party had more than 40 members in a House of 60 in July 1975. But the Ministry did not last long as there was no co-operation between the Congress Ministers and the NLP

Ministers. The Congress wanted to form a pure Congress Government. They already had 34 members including one associate member. They also urged the M.P.P. Ministers to join Congress, with promises of ministerial posts.

The second R.K. Dorendra Ministry was formed, in which the Congress had to co-opt the C.P.I. in the ruling party accepting thus the advice of the Governor Shri L.P. Singh.⁸³ More MLAs started to join the Congress Party and the party had 42 members in February, 1976. In the beginning of 1977 the party had 50 members including one CPI member who had defected to Congress. But when the Janata Ministry was formed with Shri Yangmaso Shaiza as Chief Minister (himself elected MP on the Congress ticket in March, 1977 Lok Sabha Elections), all the Congress MLAs defected from the Congress and joined the Janata Party.

So during the period 1974-1977 as many as 47 MLAs defected from one party to another, some of them as many as 5 times.

What are the reasons or causes for defections in Manipur? Many MLAs and Ministers give different opinions.⁸⁴

83. Th. Gokul Singh, op.cit., p.62.

84. This information was gathered from their responses to questions asked during interviews.

Some of them are of the opinion that they have defected according to the wishes and desires of the electorate, some because of the leadership crisis, some (from local party to national party) to join the mainstream of the nation so as to serve the people better.

But the public perception is somewhat different. The popularly held view is that most of the legislators defected and counter defected because of the temptations of office, money or status or denial of the same. They did not take seriously any political principles or party ideology.⁸⁵ In his report to the Governor, Mr. Alimuddin, the then Chief Minister said - "Defections in all cases have been found to emanate from a desire of bargain and putting political pressure on the ruling party for advantages which are extremely difficult to entertain."⁸⁶ "There is a great deal of fragmentation of society, loyalties to groups and individuals are often stronger than loyalty to party, rivalries between individuals within the same party are strong and corruption, which is the main cause

85. Interview with O. Joy Singh, Deputy Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly- 23.2.78.

86. K.C. Chaudhuri, op.cit., p-91.

of defection, is unfortunately more rampant in the Manipuri political system than elsewhere.⁸⁷

The existence of a large number of independent MLAs accelerated the pace of defections dynamics in Manipur. In every election since 1957 many Independents were elected, some of them contesting elections as Independents, on being denied party tickets. Independents played a decisive role in toppling the existing governments and installing new ones.

Another feature is that once a government is formed the members of the opposition party started defecting to the party. This is often the case in Manipur. It may be because of the impulse to wield power. 'Love of Power', like lust, is such a strong motive that it influences most men's actions more than they think it should.⁸⁸

87. Governor's Report to the President of India- 1973 quoted from Hindustan Standard - 29.3.1973.

88. Bertrand Russel - Man and Morals, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938, p.278.

CHAPTER - III

STATES REORGANISATION AND NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL

'On May 12 and 14, 1947, the Hindustan Standard of Calcutta carried a news item that U Aungson, the Vice-President of Burmese Interim Government might visit Manipur and the Manipuris wanted to merge with Burma. This news item created a great political stir in Manipur. The state Congress alleged that the Communist or Irabot Singh had connived with the Burmese'.¹

With the lapse of British Paramountcy on 15th August 1947, Manipur also became independent. And the State was "persuaded" through the Congress to merge with India. Sardar Vallabhai Patel proposed the creation of a new state named Purbachal Pradesh consisting of Manipur, Cachar, Tripura and Lushai Hills. On the other hand, the Naga National Council under Phizo wanted to carve out an Independent Nagaland State comprising the Naga inhabited areas of north-eastern India. At the same time every political party including the Congress demanded Kabaw Valley for Manipur. "Kabaw Valley belonged to Manipur but legal argument was

1. Quoted from Gangumei Kabui- 'Leftist Movement in Manipur'. A case study of Hijam Irabot Singh'- a paper submitted to the 35th Session of Indian History Conference, Calcutta, Jadavpur University, 1974-p.9.

not enough, the democratic rights of the people cannot be ignored. Kabaw valley could not be forcibly brought back to Manipur. If the people of Kabaw valley wanted to join Manipur, the valley would come to Manipur".² The demand of Kabaw valley was closely related to the establishment of responsible government in Manipur.

Among the political parties, there were two groups over the question of merger with India. The Merger Movement was led mainly by the Congress Party of Manipur, and the anti-Merger group was led by comrade Irawat Singh, the CPI leader. 'Irabot Singh was against this movement and tried to preserve the sovereignty of Manipur'.³ The Assam Committee of the CPI sent Baasna Singh as an organiser and criticised Irawat Singh on the grounds that his anti-merger policy was against the official policy of the Assam Committee. But another view was that Irawat was never against merger of Manipur with the Indian Union. His demand was that "Manipur should be a full-fledged state as good and powerful as any other sister state in the Indian Union. His apprehension was that after merger, Manipur would be relegated to a status lower than that of other states

2. Comrade Irawat - Anouba Jug - Imphal, 23 Nov. 1947.

3. Gangumoi Kabui - op.cit.p.11

of India. With this perspective in view, he and his followers demanded full-fledged statehood and greater autonomy for Manipur".⁴

The people of Manipur started to express their views and opinions regarding the merger of Manipur with the Indian Union which was ultimately done on 15 Oct. 1949 when Manipur was put under a Chief Commissioner. It has been alleged that the Maharaja signed the Merger Agreement without the approval of the responsible government established under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947.

A. THE STATES REORGANISATION COMMISSION

On January 26, 1950 with the enforcement of the Constitution of India, Manipur became a part C State. According to G.N.Joshi: "Politically Part C States are not so developed as Part A States, hence provision for parliamentary government in these States is not made in the Constitution".⁵ But the Constitution had some provisions for the introduction of full or partial responsible government in such states. Under Part 'C' States Act, 1951, some of these states like Ajmer, Bhopal, Coorg, Delhi,

4. Interview with Ng.Mohendra Singh - 23.4.78.

5. Quoted from Dr.N.Ibobi Singh - Elements of Public Administration in India, Imphal, Rajsri Book Stall, 1974, p.260.

Himachal Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh and Bilaspur were given Legislative Assemblies and they had thus enjoyed responsible government. But in some states like Manipur, Tripura and Kutch the introduction of responsible government was considered inexpedient. In these states provision was made for the constitution of a Council of Advisers.

In the first general elections of January 1952, 30 members of the Electoral College had been elected. This Electoral College recommended the names of 5 Advisers, who eventually formed the Advisory Council of the Chief Commissioner. But the will of the people are not reflected in the administration. The people who had once experienced the rule of responsible government, (even though for a brief period) could not be expected to remain satisfied with this arrangement. Discontent against the administration was expressed by various political parties and by the people of Manipur. In the meantime the Prime Minister made a statement in Parliament on 22 Dec., 1953 that a Commission would be appointed to examine objectively and impassionably the question of the re-organisation of the states of the Indian Union so that the welfare of the people of each constituent

unit as well as the nation as a whole is promoted".⁶ The formation of the States Re-organisation Commission created some apprehension in Manipur regarding the future of the state.

Two members of the States Re-organisation Commission Shri H.N.Kunzru and Shri K.M.Panikar visited Manipur in April, 1954.⁷ There were differences of opinion regarding the probable changes of the boundaries of Manipur. The Manipur State Congress strongly opposed the merger of Manipur with the bigger state of Assam. But the Praja Socialist Party in Manipur pleaded for the merger of the state with Assam and sent memorandums containing points in favour of the merger.⁸ The memorandum submitted by the Manipur State Congress to the States Re-organisation Commission in April, 1954 strongly criticised the stand of the Socialist Party. The Manipur State Communist Party did not support the PSP Policy of merging Manipur with Assam. It stood for a separate Manipur state with full responsible government.

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6. Report of the States Re-organisation Commission, 1955-p.1. The Commission was formed on 29 Dec., 1953 under the resolution of the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs, No.53/69/53.
 7. Govt. of Manipur- Manipur Gazette No.6- Imphal, April, 27, 1955.
 8. Ngashi - 6.7.1954. It proposed the formation of Purbachal Pradesh.

The hill areas of Manipur, inhabited by tribals, wanted the merger of the contiguous hill areas of Assam and their separation from the Imphal Valley. They were apprehensive of domination by the more populous Hindu Meities of Central Imphal Valley.⁹ They felt that in the pre-independence days their rights had been safeguarded by the British Political Agent. But with the coming of popular democratic forces, the hill tribes of both Manipur and Assam tended to feel that their safety lay in their combined numbers and that they should therefore, join together for self-preservation.¹⁰ But the State Re-organisation Commission was of the view that Manipur and Tripura could not be viable states and anticipated the merger of Tripura in the short run, and of Manipur, in the long run with Assam.¹¹ The Manipur State Congress expressed discontent and submitted a supplementary memorandum refuting the arguments for merging Manipur with Assam or including her in some newly created State. The memorandum also opposed the Purbachal Plan, creation of a Frontier Hill State.

9. Rustomji Nari - Enchanted Frontiers- London, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 106

10. Ibid.

11. S.K. Chaube - Hill Politics in North East India - Calcutta, Orient Longman, 1973, p. 189.

The suggestion of the Commission were:

- (1) Manipur should be merged to have a democratic form of government.
- (2) Manipur cannot have democratic set up so long as it continues its separate existence.

The States Re-organisation Bill was brought up in Parliament for its final approval in 1956. The Government of India however did not accept the proposal of the States Re-organisation Commission for the merger of Manipur with Assam. Ultimately the Seventh Amendment Act, 1956 of the Constitution of India converted Manipur into a Union Territory to be governed by the President through an Administrator to be appointed by him. It also permitted the creation of a legislature in Manipur under the Territorial Councils Act, 1956.

Prior to November 1969, Manipur had been a single District Territory divided into ten sub-divisions. But on 14 Nov. 1969 Manipur Territory was re-organised by the Central Government into 5 administrative units, viz, (1) Manipur Central District, H.Q. Imphal (2) Manipur East District, H.Q. Ukhrul, (3) Manipur West District, H.Q. Tamenglong, (4) Manipur North District, H.Q. Karong and (5) Manipur South District, H.Q. Churachandpur. In 1972, the Re-organisation of the North East India Act converted Manipur into a full fledged state.

B. THE NORTH - EASTERN COUNCIL

North-eastern India commands strategic importance being one of the crucial border regions, possessing peculiar geographical complexities, vast racial, religious and linguistic differences. It became a 'problem' region since independence as a result of the partition of India. The region including Nagaland covers an area of 98 thousand square miles, a little over 8 per cent of the geographical area of the whole country. The administrative guidelines to the hill areas in Assam were laid down by the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. Autonomous District Councils were set up in the Garo Hills, the Lushai Hills (known as the Mizo Hills since 1954), the Naga Hills, the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills and the Mikir and the North-cachar Hills.

The Naga Hills rejected the District councils and along with the Naga Tribal Areas emerged as a full-fledged state known as Nagaland in 1963. Manipur and Tripura became Union Territories as per the recommendations of the States Re-organisation Commission. On April 2, 1970, the Garo Hills District and the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills were constituted into a sub-state of Meghalaya within Assam.

On Dec.21, 1971, the Parliament adopted the twenty seventh Amendment to the Constitution of India, enabling the re-organisation of the North-Eastern region of India. Accordingly the North-eastern region now contains 5 states - Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura and two Union Territories - Mizoram (formerly the Mizo Hills District) and Arunachal Pradesh (formerly NEFA). K.C.Pant, the then Union Minister of State for Home Affairs said: "the basic object of re-organisation is to re-structure the administrative set up of the region and to provide opportunities to the people of different parts to associate themselves in the task of development".¹²

Linguistically, racially and strategically this region has some unique features. No other part in India has so many languages, so many Hill tribes and so great a contrast in life and outlook of the hill-men and the distinct civilization of the plains. The bulk of the population in the region is rural in character. The proportion of rural population to the total population ranges from 85.45 per cent in Meghalaya to 96.30 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh as against the all India average of 80.09 per cent. The tribal population in the region is around 44 lakhs. This represents about 11 per cent of the country's total scheduled tribes population of around 380 lakhs.

12. Pant, K.C. - "New Era in the North East India".
Patrika, 26.1.1972.

Though endowed with abundant natural resources the region has suffered from many ills, impediments to economic and social progress and unfulfilled basic requirements of growth. They are due partly to geographical and historical reasons and partly to some peculiar problems within the region itself. Apart from Assam, other States and Union Territories cannot be said to be economically and financially viable yet. They are unable to provide from their own resources the total financial costs of even the basic elements of administration and technically trained personnel that are required for the rapid development of the economy.

Although the North Eastern region was re-organised into different political entities to satisfy the growing political aspirations of the people, all units together can well be treated as one single unit from the point of view of economic planning. Geography directs that they act as one unit and political separation cannot undo this geographical fact. All the units will have to work in co-ordinated and co-operative manner for the mutual advantage of all.¹³

So to provide the necessary organisational set up for co-ordinated development of the region the North Eastern Council was constituted under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971 and it formally came into being under a Presidential order with effect from 1st August, 1972.

13. North-Eastern Council- Shillong, PRO, NEC, 1972, p.1.

The Council covers the five states of the North Eastern region, viz, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura, and two Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. The common Governor of the five states is the chairman of the council and its members are the Chief Ministers of the five states, the Lt. Governor and the Chief Minister of Mizoram and the Chief Commissioner and a Councillor of Arunachal Pradesh. The Council functions through a Secretariat with the Secretary assisted by Advisers on Planning, Finance and Security and other technical and non-technical staff. The office of the council is located at Shillong.

Reasons for the creation of the North Eastern Council:

The factors which have been involved to justify the creation of the North Eastern Council are 14 -

(a) The size of the political units of the region is not very large. Further the units are geographically so situated that the effects of any major change or development taking place in one unit is bound to be felt beyond its geographical boundaries,

(b) Real development can be effective with mutual co-operation among the various units, especially since all the political units cannot yet be said to be financiall

viable. Funds available for these units for welfare and development purposes need to be utilised to the best advantage avoiding duplication of efforts and expenditure. This can be ensured evidently through co-ordinated regional planning.

(c) In today's world economic and industrial operations have assumed such size and proportions, covering as they do vast areas and varied fields, that it can hardly be practicable for any single unit to undertake in isolation and all by itself any large scale economic operation successfully without adequate co-ordination and co-operation.

(d) The region suffers from lack of adequate infrastructure in various sectors of communications, technical expertise etc. The back log in these fronts can be removed expeditiously mainly through joint efforts and co-ordinated planning. Opening up of the region and generation of much needed power resources will provide a tremendous fillip to the local economy and enterprise and will ensure its continued growth subsequently.

Explaining the objectives behind constituting the council, Smt. Gandhi said that 'the primary purpose of this council is the development of the region for greater human welfare. The first principle of development is co-ordinated activity. I have no doubt that the

different units of the region will gain by such co-ordinated work.....Such co-operation (will not) in any way lessen the authority of individual government'.¹⁵

Functions of the Council

According to the North Eastern Council Act, the functions assigned to the Council are as follows:-

The Council shall be an advisory body and may discuss ~~any~~ matter in which some or all the states represented in that Council, or the Union and one or more of the states represented in that Council, have a common interest and advise the Central Government and the government of each state concerned as to the action to be taken on any such matter, and, in particular, may discuss and make recommendations with regard to,-

- (i) any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
- (ii) any matter concerning inter-state transport and communications;
- (iii) any matter relating to power and flood control projects of common interest.¹⁶

For securing the balanced development of the north-eastern area, the Council shall forward proposals-

- (a) formulating for the states represented in the council a unified and co-ordinated regional plan (which will be in addition to the state plan) in regard to matters of common importance to that area;

15. Indira Gandhi- "Inaugural Speech" North Eastern Council, Shillong, PRO, NEC, 1972.

16. The North Eastern Council Act, 1971- Article 4(1).

(b) regarding the priorities of the projects and schemes included in the regional plan and the stages in which the regional plan may be implemented; and

(c) regarding the location of the projects and schemes included in the regional plan, to the Central Government for its consideration.¹⁷

The Council shall-

(a) review from time to time, the implementation of the projects and schemes included in the regional plan and recommend measures for effecting co-ordination among the Governments of the States concerned in the matter of implementation of such projects and schemes;

(b) where a project or scheme is intended to benefit two or more states, recommend the manner in which,

(i) such project or scheme may be executed or implemented and managed or maintained; or

(ii) the benefits therefrom may be shared;

(iii) the expenditure thereon may be incurred;

(c) on a review of progress of the expenditure, recommend to the central government the quantum of financial assistance to be given, from time to time, to the state or states entrusted with the execution or implementation of any project or scheme included in the regional plan;

(d) recommend to the government of the state concerned or to the Central Government the undertaking of necessary surveys and investigation of projects in any state represented in the Council to facilitate consideration of the feasibility of including new projects in the regional plan.¹⁸

17. Ibid - Article 4(2).

18. Ibid - Article 4(3).

The Council shall review from time to time the measures taken by the states represented in the Council for the maintenance of security and public order therein and recommend to the Government of the State concerned further measures necessary in this regard.¹⁹

Thus the North Eastern Council's most important function is to bring about co-ordinated development of the region with funds, provided by the Centre and without interfering with the respective plans of the member states. The different projects under the regional plan also will be executed by the State government or Union Territory Administration concerned.

The different members of the North Eastern Council have their respective State Planning Boards or Planning Departments which draw up five year and annual plans for their respective States or Territories and get them approved by the Planning Commission at the Centre. An important function of the North Eastern Council is to ensure that the State plan is dovetailed to each other as also the regional plan. In this respect, it is, not only a link between the different political units of the Council but also between the State Planning Boards and the Planning Commission.

19. Ibid - Article 4(4).

The act also gives the North Eastern Council powers to review the law and order situation in different member states. But the Council can only recommend measures to the state concerned in this respect. Therefore, this does not purport to be a dilution of the autonomy of the states as provided in the Constitution. This being a border region it has some extra-ordinary security problems which must be admitted and as the best security is economic security so also economic prosperity is endangered by lack of public order and security.

The Council, has, further more, neither legislative nor executive powers of any kind and has no constitutional or legal power to supervise any of the actions of the States. The Council is an advisory body- it advises both the Central Government as well as the constituent states. It is open both to the Centre and to the units forming the Council to reject its advice. "It is hoped, however, that the advice which the council renders will be so potently in the interests of the constituent units as of the country as a whole that it will not be rejected save for extremely strong and valid reasons. The Central Government has no authority over the decisions or

the recommendations of the Council except that it may, if it so desires, nominate a Minister of the Central Government to be a member of the Council."²⁰

The North Eastern Council had its first meeting on November 7, 1972 which was formally inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She announced that her Government would make available to the Council funds upto Rs.50 crores during the remaining period of the Fourth Plan for regional projects drawn up by the Council. This would be in addition to the funds received by the States and Union Territories under their own respective state plans. She also assured that such special and adequate allocation for development of the North Eastern region would continue to the Fifth Plan also and said: "I can assure you that any worth while idea that it might purpose as being of tangible benefit to the region will not suffer for want of funds".²¹ The Chief Ministers of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur, the Chief Commisisoner. Arunachal Pradesh and the Lt. Governor of Mizoram welecomed unsqvilocally the formation of the Council and assured their co-operation

20. B.K.Nehru - 'Inaugural Address; Sixth Annual Conference of the Assam Political Science Association, 11.1.73, North Eastern Council op.cit., p.33.

21. North Eastern Council - op.cit.p.9.

to achieve co-ordinated and balanced development of the region. The Council emphasised that transport and communications should receive the highest priority in the development programme of the region. The Planning Commission offered to provide necessary assistance and expert service in identifying programmes as well as in drawing up projects for the regional plan.

The second meeting and the first business session of the Council was held on June 22, 1973. It marked the beginning of a co-ordinated, integrated and co-operative approach to the task of purposeful regional planning. Besides the members of the Council, the Adviser, Planning Commission and the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs also attended the meeting. The two most important subjects discussed by the Council were (a) development and improvement of surface communication including railway, road and ropeway communication and power generation. Other subjects included development of agriculture and improvement of veterinary and animal husbandry services in the region. Extension of the railway system in the region was given top priority. The Council accordingly resolved to move the Government of India to (a) extend railway lines into Arunachal, Meghalaya, Manipur

and Mizoram, which do not have a single railway connection at present, (b) take up construction of Bongaigoan Gauhati Broad Gauge railway line immediately to provide through rail traffic from Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay to Gauhati; (c) rationalise the existing railway system in the region in consultation with the State Governments and the North Eastern Council; (d) review the existing financial criteria and considerations governing the construction of railway lines in this region and modify them favourably for this region for a period of at least twenty years.

The members of the council, led by the Chairman, met the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Finance Minister and Planning Minister in New Delhi on 13 September, 1973 and submitted a memorandum arguing the case for extension of the railway network in the region. The delegation succeeded in impressing upon the Central Government the need for giving special consideration for the development of railways and other infrastructural facilities in the region. The Prime Minister issued directions to the Central Ministries of Planning, Home and Finance to develop a 'Convention' whereby all proposals by the North Eastern Council are generally

accepted by the Centre unless they run counter to accepted policies or involve expenditure beyond the allocations to the Council.²²

The meeting also decided to set up six expert Committees on different subjects related to the over-all economic development of the region. These are (a) Road Committee - to review the existing communication facilities in the region and suggest suitable projects to be taken up for development of surface communications with a view to opening up of the region and exploitation of the natural resources of the area (b) Committee on Jhum Research - to go into the related problems of Jhum Control, soil conservation, afforestation and flood control in the region and make recommendations in the shape of feasible definite projects as solutions to these problems, (c) Regional Electricity Board - to examine the legal constitutional technical and administrative implications of a proposal for setting up of a regional electricity board, (d) Technical Power Committee - to work out a detailed programme of investigation of thermal and hydel power potential of the region, to prepare a programme for generation, bulk transmission and distribution of power

22. Statesman - 21.11.73.

and to identify specific schemes, (e) Agricultural Training Committee - to examine the question of organised training in agriculture and (f) Barak River Project Committee - to draw up an integrated soil conservation, afforestation and power generation scheme in the Barak river basin and watershed areas.

The different committees submitted their views and specific proposals for carrying out investigation or survey work or undertaking development projects at different places. Accordingly the North Eastern Council Secretariat prepared a Five Year Regional Plan of development to coincide with the country's Fifth Five Year Plan. The third meeting of the council held on 25 and 26 July, 1974 approved of the regional plan involving a total outlay of Rs.114.44 crores.²³ The regional plan of the North Eastern Council is phased out into annual plans which will be executed by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations concerned on being finally accepted by the Government of India.

23. Statesman - 22.7.78

The Fifth meeting of the Council held on 29 January, 1975 accepted in principle all the three power projects, viz, Kopili Hydel Project (partly falling in Assam and partly in Meghalaya), Kameng Hydel Project (Arunachal Pradesh) and Garo Hills Thermal Project (Meghalaya) for implementation in a phased manner under the North Eastern Council Regional Plan. Governor L.P.Singh, Chairman of the Council, in his introductory remark said: "more ~~important~~ than the location of project is the manner in which the benefits of the project are shared in the region".²⁴ The Sixth meeting held on 22 August, 1975 reviewed the performance in regard to implementation of schemes under the North Eastern Council Plan for 1974-75. In the next meeting of the North Eastern Council held on 30 January, 1976, the Chairman suggested closer co-ordination between the field organisations and the Secretariat departments in the States on the one hand and the North Eastern Council Secretariat on the other, at all stages of planning and execution.

The North Eastern Council met again on 20 January, 1978 and approved a large number of new schemes for the

24. Journal of the North-Eastern Council Vol.1
May 1975- No.2-p.30.

development of agriculture and animal husbandry, water and power, roads, industries, and mining in the north eastern region to be taken up during 1978-79. The agricultural schemes approved by the Council include setting up of seed farms for major field crops and root crops, a piggery station, a fodder sub-station at Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and a feed testing laboratory at Gauhati. Schemes for ground water exploration, first approximation and resources evaluation in Pagladiya and Jiabharali river sub-stations of Assam and pilot projects for eradication of aquatic weeds in Assam and Manipur were also approved. For power development, the Council decided to undertake investigation of a major hydel schemes. The hydel sites tentatively selected are at Damwe, Kuiton, Mokong, Subansiri, Pang-I, Rikar, Idipo, Pakke, all in Arunachal Pradesh and Tuivai in Mizoram and Manipur.

Development of infrastructure in the region was given special emphasis by the Council. Altogether 19 new road schemes are proposed to be undertaken for the period 1978-79 to 1982-83.

The North-Eastern Council has also taken steps not only to arrange for an assessment of the requirements of manpower, but also initiated training programmes for personnel required in the agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, industry, administration and other fields.

Backwardness that has retarded growth over a long period has now to be removed. The North Eastern Council is making a dent in assisting in the economic development of the region.

Manipur and North Eastern Council.

The then Chief Minister of Manipur Md. Adimuddin attended the inauguration of the North-Eastern Council on 7 Novem. 1972. He appreciated the idea of having a co-ordinating body like the North Eastern Council. He was optimistic about the successful working of the Council to bring about rapid development of the North Eastern Region. He offered Manipur's fullest co-operation to the North Eastern Council. Manipur also attended the second meeting of the council held on 22 June, 1973 which marked the beginning of integrated and co-operative approach to the task of purposeful regional planning. The Council resolved to move Government of India to extend railway lines into Arunachal, Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram which do not have a single railway connection at present, within the Fifth Five Year Plan Period. One Regional Medical College had been established in Imphal under the supervision of North Eastern Council. The fifth meeting of the North Eastern Council held on 29 January, 1975

decided that a duly registered society will be formed to run and manage the college with a Managing Committee comprising representatives from the participating units, the North Eastern Council Secretariat and the Government of India. The Manipur Chief Minister will be the Chairman of the Committee. It was also agreed that the college and the teaching hospitals will be run as integrated unit and as a regional institution on the lines of the Regional Engineering Colleges in the country.²⁵

Apprehensions and Evaluation

Some doubts have been expressed about the bonafides of the Centre in setting up the Council. The suspicion is that the Council is designed to reduce the powers of the states in this region and to impose upon them the will of the Centre. The then Governor, Shri B.K.Nehru, who was the Chairman of the council observed: "This never was and is not to-day the intention of this organisation."²⁶ The Prime Minister, Smt.Indira Gandhi while inaugurating the North Eastern Council referred to such misconceptions and misapprehensions and said:

25. 'Fifth Meeting of the NEC' - Journal of the NEC Vol.1. May 1975 No.2-p.36.

26. North Eastern Council, Shillong P.R.O., NEC, 1972, p.5.

I should like to take this opportunity to remove some misconceptions regarding the scope and functioning of this Council. This is an organisation of the various political units of this region, set up under an Act of Parliament, to formulate a co-ordinated plan for development and welfare. It is not a super government. It does not abridge the power of the states and the Union Territories in any manner what so ever. It is not an extension of the Union Government. It is an Advisory, not a supervisory body. It does not alter the relationship of the member units with the Central Government. The Central Government will not use the Council to interfere with the affairs and functioning of the various Governments of this region.²⁷

The North Eastern Council is not an external agency. It is a common forum where the constituent units can sit together, discuss, deliberate and decide on programmes beneficial to all of them. It has been described by the Prime Minister as "a promising innovation in regional planning". On the question of the autonomy of the NE Council, Governor B.K.Nehru observed: "The independence of the Council from the Central Government is symbolised by the fact that its Chairman is the Governor of the North Eastern States and not a Minister of the Central Government as is the case with the existing Zonal Councils in various parts of the country."²⁸ "Unlike

27. Indira Gandhi - Ibid, p.6.

28. B.K.Nehru, Governor of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura - 'Inaugural Address' - Assam Pol. Science Association, 11.1.1973, North Eastern Council -op.cit.

the Zonal Councils, the North Eastern Council has monetary resources and manpower at its command." 29

However, not all the participants share this view of the role and independence of the NE Council. The Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr. Nripen Chakravarty expressed his opinion that "the North-Eastern Council as it existed had little role to play in the development of Tripura and the adjoining Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur".30 Mrs. Rano M. Shaiza, M.P. from Nagaland said: "A separate Ministry at the Centre for the North-East would be able to do much more than the North-Eastern Council as it would have easy access to the various Central Financial Agencies" 31 The Chief Minister of Manipur Mr. Yangamso Shaiza also does not seem to be too pleased with the functioning of North Eastern Council." As regards North-Eastern Council, Plans and schemes cannot be executed for want of allotment of fund in time. The Council takes time for arrangement in its sitting. Sometimes allotment of fund for development works

29. Ibid.

30. Statesman - 16.1.78.

31. Mrs. Rano M. Shaiza - Ura Mail, 31.5.78.

envisage disproportion for one State to another. Unnecessary enthusiasm is to be taken by the State if more fund is to be obtained".³²

The North Eastern Council is facing some deep trouble regarding its structure and functions. The Chief Ministers of the five units had an informal meeting in Delhi on 23 August, 1978. It was decided that the North Eastern Council should be chaired by either a Central Minister or by themselves in rotation, not by the Governor. They were not in favour of a common Governor for all NE States and asked the Centre for a separate Governor for each state.³³ The Chief Minister of Assam (the largest of the units) even questioned the justification for the very existence of the Council. According to him the Council had fashioned itself 'in the image of a mini-planning commission or smaller edition of various ministries of the Government of India and (was) adopting an authoritarian attitude in sanctioning schemes' for the development of the states in the region.³⁴ The Chief Ministers decided to take "preventive measures" so

32. Interview With Mr. Yangmaso Shaiza, C.M. Manipur-
3.4.78.

33. Statesman, 25.8.78.

34. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XIII.
No.36 Sept. , 1978, p.1530.

that the North-Eastern Council strictly remains an advisory body. They also decided to recommend to the Home Ministry the amendment of the North Eastern Council Act which gives it mandatory powers to review public order and security in the region.³⁵

These developments show that all the Chief Ministers of the North-Eastern States are not satisfied with the working of the North-Eastern Council. When the Council was created an assurance was given that "it is not an extension of the Central Government. It is an advisory and not supervisory body".³⁶ But the views expressed of all Chief Ministers of the five units seems to show that the North-Eastern Council is functioning as the Centre's managing agent in the region. For example, the Council has extensive powers relating to the maintenance of law and order in the member states.

One criticism is that the Council has very much grown into a virtual super state as it has on it representatives of the Union Ministries of Home and Defence. In this connection reports of the Union Home Ministry for the years 1975-76 have been cited:

35. Times of India, 3.9.78.

36. Economic and Political Weekly, op.cit, p.1531.

Substantial administrative and financial powers have already been delegated by this Ministry to NEC Secretariat. The question of further delegation of powers is under consideration.³⁷

More administrative and financial powers have been delegated to the NEC Secretariat. (Report of the Union Home Ministry, 1976-77)³⁸

This has been taken to mean that through the North Eastern Council, the Centre is interfering in the little powers the States enjoyed.

In spite of all these criticisms it may be pointed out that the north-eastern region being a very sensitive border area needs 'co-ordination' of developmental activities. The North-Eastern Council offers the model of a new type of sub-federalism in the way of conflict and consensus. The Council is not an assurance of stability. The stability is ensured by the Union Government's power especially in relation to Defence and Finance. And too much control by the Centre over the region may also be the cause of instability.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

CHAPTER - IV

MANIPUR AND CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

According to K.C. Wheare "what is necessary for the federal principle is not merely that the general government like the regional governments, should operate directly upon the people, but further, that each government should be limited to its own sphere and, within that sphere, should be independent of the other!"¹ The Constitution of the Republic of India which came into force on January 26, 1950 has federal features. But the creation of Pakistan and the integration of Princely States in the new body politic "cleared the decks for the inauguration of a centre-oriented federal union which was always the aim of the Indian National Congress!"² K.C. Wheare describes the Indian Constitution as quasi-federal.³ The Indian Constitution, wrote Panikkar, "is federal-----but it is heavily weighted in favour of the Centre!"⁴ We shall examine in this chapter the problems in the field of relations between the Centre and Manipur.

A. MOVEMENT FOR STATEHOOD IN MANIPUR

Demand for responsible government in Manipur

The demand for Statehood in Manipur is somewhat

1. Wheare, K.C. - Federal Government - London, Oxford University Press, 1971, p.14.

2. Griffiths, Percival- Modern India, London Ernest Benn Limited, 1962, p.19.

3. Wheare, K.C. - op.cit.-p,27.

different from similar demands in other parts of India. In the case of Manipur, it is the question of the revival of the fully democratic and responsible form of government which was introduced in 1948, and was unfortunately abolished under Art.7 of the 1949 Merger Agreement. As one representation puts it: "Since the State of Manipur was integrated to the Centre, a gloomy phase of life heralded because of the continued deprivation of the legitimate political and civic rights of the people. The dissolution of the popularly elected legislative assembly with the responsible Ministry and the forced imposition of the unsuited autocratic rule of the Chief Commissioner resulted to the persistent rise of irresistible feelings of discontent and frustration in every nook and corner of the State!"⁵ It can be said that since the day of the merger of Manipur with the Indian Union, the people of Manipur had been demanding restoration of responsible government in Manipur. On the day of the merger the Socialist Party of Manipur organised a public meeting at Bir Tikendrajit Park protesting against the merger; when Manipur was placed as a part C State, almost all the political parties

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4. Manikkar, K.M., The Foundations of New India, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1963, p.230.
5. Memorandum submitted by the Manipur Youth Demand Committee to the President of India for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur, 1960.

in Manipur rose against it. At the time of the introduction of the Advisory Council in Manipur, M.Ps belonging to Manipur, Tripura and Kutch and some opposition leaders sent a memorandum to the Government of India pleading for the introduction of a Legislative Assembly rather than the Advisory Council in these part C States. The Tripura Communist M.Ps Dasarath Birendutt and V.P. Narayan sent up a bill to the Parliament for establishment of the Legislative Assembly in Manipur, Tripura and Kutch. The CPI, Manipur State Committee also supported the bill in its meeting held on 7,8,9 September, 1953 and demanded that from 1953, the Legislative Assembly should be given to Manipur.⁶ Mr. Bishang Keishing, an M.P. from Manipur demanded, in Parliament, democratic government for the Part C States. He argued that the people of all types of states should enjoy equal rights and status and said that the Advisory Council given by the Government was most undemocratic and reactionary, which even the Imperialist Power had not adopted.⁷ When Nehru visited Manipur in 1952, papers were submitted to him asking for the introduction of a Legislative Assembly, by the Socialist Party of Manipur,

6. Resolution of the Manipur State Committee (CPI)-
7.9.53 to 9.9.53, Imphal, CPI Office, 1953.

7. Prajatantra - 12.4.53.

the Tangkhulong, the Paite Union, the Manipur Zelerong Union, the Hind Kisan Panchayat, the Kuki National Association, the Praja Nationalist Party, the Achumba Pamba Congress, the Young Socialist League and the Mizo Union.⁸ Shri Lalitmodhob Sharma, President of the Manipur State Congress, also submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Nehru in which he said that the Congress "was afraid that until and unless the administration was adequately democratised, the people would not be satisfied. They were also of the opinion that the Council of Advisors should be an interim step towards a democratic set up in the state, which, it was believed, would come into existence soon."⁹ The Democratic Front said:

Our immediate demand is the establishment of responsible government in Manipur by setting up a Council of Ministers responsible to the Legislature elected on adult franchise. Because, without the representation of the people and their willing co-operation, a government cannot be run peacefully and to the entire satisfaction of the people. During the years of Chief Commissioner's Rule in Manipur, we have seen wroth things which never happened during the British Rule. The economic crisis and food scarcity are to a large extent due to the lack of local and popular representative in the machinery of the government of Manipur.¹⁰

8. Ngasi - 24.10.52

9. Congress Bhavan-Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the President, Manipur State Congress - 20.10.52, Imphal, 1952.

10. Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by Shri Th. Bira Singh, Secy. Democratic Front, Manipur, 23.10.52, Imphal, 1952.

A strong United Front consisting of the opposition parties was considered essential for the common demand of Legislative Assembly. A strong democratic front (leftist) would bring the right of self determination in Manipur.¹¹ The Manipur Revolutionary Party took the extreme step demanding that a Legislative Assembly should be established within 15 days.¹² The demand for a Legislative Assembly was strengthened by the failure of the Manipur State Congress pledges that they would bring stability and responsible government after the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly established in 1948.

25th June, 1954 had been observed as the Assembly Day by the PSP of Manipur. A movement for responsible government was organised in 1954 led by the Socialist Party of Manipur. Satyagraha was also launched for this cause and a large number of people were arrested in connection with the movement. The Satyagraha lasted about six months. A statement issued by the PSP Working Committee read as follows:

11. Khul - 22.8.1953.

12. Meeting of the Manipur Revolutionary Party at Pologround - August, 1953, Imphal.

Politically Manipuris were not free and democratically they lost their birth rights as the Legislative Assembly introduced after the Election of 1948 was dissolved. For the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur elected on the basis of Universal Franchise, the Party is going to agitate and the party requests the people of Manipur to extend full co-operation.¹³

The Socialist Leader Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia came to Manipur and he was to speak at a Public Meeting at Bir Tikendrajit Park, Imphal. The Government promulgated section 144 in the Park and the adjoining areas. A large number of people, defying the order turned up for the meeting. Dr. Lohia, L. Achou Singh and Th. Chandrasekhar Singh (Socialist leaders in Manipur) were arrested and imprisoned. The Congress also decided to support the agitation in its Political Conference held at Raja Dumbra on 16 and 14 August, 1954. The Party sent a deputation consisting of Shri Lalitamadhob Sharma, Shri Jugeswar Singh and Shri Tompok Singh to meet the Prime Minister and reach a solution. On their meeting, the Prime Minister suggested that the report of the States Re-organisation Commission would be published in 1955 and insisted that they wait till then.¹⁴

13. Statement issued by the PSP Working Committee, 15.10.1954, Imphal, 1954.

14. Prajatantra - 21.8.1954.

Mr. Rishang Keishing, M.P. Said:

There is no reason why the people of Manipur should wait for the publication of the Commission report, as advised by our Prime Minister, and remain deprived of the democratic rights enjoyed by the people of the rest of India and, suffer humiliation at the hands of the bureaucratic regime of Chief Commissioner and Council of Advisors in this way.¹⁵

He also said that the hill organisations and the hill people also resented very much the abolition of the Legislative Assembly and they had been protesting all along these years against the regime of the Chief Commissioner and the Council of Advisors in their own way.¹⁶ The PSP decided to launch the movement from November 1954 if the Central Government did not make a declaration before the end of September 1954 fulfilling their demands. The Central Government was duly informed but gave no reply. The party also sent a deputation to New Delhi and met the Home Minister, Dr.K.N.Katju and informed him that the people's patience had been exhausted and the irresponsible and irresponsive Chief Commissioner's rule could not be tolerated even for a single day and urged the government to fulfill the

15. Statement of Rishang Keishing, M.P.-
'Present Boundary' - 6.12.1954, Imphal.

16. Ibid.

democratic aspiration of the people by restoring responsible government in Manipur.¹⁷ There was complete hartal of the Bazar on 15 Nov. 1954. All the Colleges of Imphal observed a general strike on 20 Nov. 1954. There were processions shouting slogans for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur. The Government adopted every possible measures to suppress the movement. The actions of the police against the satyagrahis was strongly condemned by every section of the population. The Manipur Bar Association demanded judicial enquiry into the alleged police excesses.¹⁸

A United Front Organising Committee was formed. Later it was converted into the United Assembly Demand Committee under the chairmanship of Th. Meghachandra Singh. The PSP Convention expressed its deep dissatisfaction to the Government of India for the imposition of a purely bureaucratic regime directly under the Central Government.¹⁹ 9th January, 1955 was observed as 'Manipur Satyagrah Day'. It was observed in different places of India such as Bombay,

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17. PSP - 'Facts about Manipur Satyagraha' - Anouba Samaj, 15.12.54.
 18. Resolution of the Bar Association- Secretariat Bar Association, Imphal, 26.12.54.
 19. 'The Present Movement in Manipur', Janata 5.12.1954.

Poona, Calcutta, and Gauhati. Shri L. Jugeswar Singh (Congress M.P.) said in the Lok Sabha on 19th January 1955, "if the establishment of a responsible government is delayed or the Commission had decided otherwise and if their demands were not granted, who knows that this lull is a lull before the storm".²⁰

All the Hill Organisations and hill people of Manipur, who constituted one-third of the total population of the state, also submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister demanding responsible government for Manipur.²¹ The agitation was also supported by PSP leaders like Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and Smt. Kripalani who came to Imphal on 10th April 1955.²² The problem continued to be ignored by the Central Government. The issue was not merely a regional one. It posed a fundamental question.²³ The agitation continued for six months and ended with the publication of the SRC report. The result of the agitation was the 7th amendment to the Constitution of India permitting the creation of a legislature in Manipur by the passing of Territorial Councils Act, 1956.

20. Ngasi - 21.1.1955.

21. PSP - 'Facts about Manipur Satyagraha' - Anouba Samaj-16.12.1954.

22. Manaba - Decem. 1971 - p.11.

23. Hindustan Standard - 14.4.1955.

The people of Manipur were not satisfied with the Territorial Council. So the movement for the restoration of responsible government led by the Socialist Party was resumed on the 11th April, 1960.²⁴ Before the movement several memorandums were submitted to the Union government at New Delhi and a deputation waited upon the President, the Home Minister and the Prime Minister in the first week of April, 1960 to apprise them of the situation in Manipur. In the early part of 1960 an Assembly Demand Co-ordination Committee was formed at a Political Conference in Imphal to direct and guide the movement. It consisted of representatives of (i) The Samjukt Socialist Party (ii) The Praja Socialist Party, and (iii) The Communist Party of India. "The Home Minister and the Prime Minister were adamant and expressed their unwillingness to concede to our demand. All the methods for bringing about a peaceful settlement failed, and there was no other alternative for the Committee than resorting to a peaceful and a non-violent satyagraha movement for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur!"²⁵ To mobilise the youth and students of Manipur a Youth Assembly Demand Committee was formed on 16th April 1960.²⁶ A Women's Assembly Demand Committee was also

24. Assembly Demand Co-ordination Committee - "Why Responsible Government for Manipur", Imphal, 1960, p.1.

25. Ibid - p.2.

26. Ibid - p.3.

formed. There was peaceful picketing of courts and government offices and a civil disobedience campaign was launched by the Committee. Severe lathis charges, tear gasing and firing were resorted to by the Police. 'Civil' Resistance Day was observed on 16th May 1960 by a mass defiance of section 144. Several leaders and more than 500 persons were arrested in connection with the movement so far. The chargesheet submitted to the Union Government against the Manipur Administration contains serious complaints of the people, specially, the problem of de-Manipurisation of key posts in the civil service, of the rising prices of rice and famine conditions prevailing in Manipur, of the corruption, wastage and non-implementation of plan schemes in various departments, of the Naga trouble on Manipur borders and of a host of lapses on the part of the Manipur Administration. "All these problems can be solved effectively by a popular and democratic government and not by a Chief Commissioner and his bureaucratic machinery. The real and lasting solution would lie in the establishment of responsible government in Manipur. The denial of fundamental civil and political right of self-government in Manipur is a challenge and the people are prepared to accept it in that spirit!"²⁷ The demand for the conversion

27. Ibid - p.11.

of Manipur Territorial Council into a Legislative Assembly was also discussed in the Territorial Council. A resolution to that effect was passed on 23.9.60 at its 30th session;²⁸

- (1) In order to bring up Manipur to a Statehood, the government of India should amend the Constitution of India.
- (2) In order to safeguard the oneness of the hills and the valley of Manipur a strong form of administration agreed upon be introduced.
- (3) A Legislative Assembly in Manipur be established simultaneously with the ensuing general election.
- (4) As a sure step for establishing a Legislative Assembly in Manipur more powers be given to the Manipur Territorial Council before the general election takes place.

Although the Government of India had made slight changes in the administration of Manipur, the demand of the people of Manipur for a responsible form of government, had not yet been granted on account of the scanty financial resources, small population and the size of the territory. The Union Home Minister in his statement in the Lok Sabha on 26.4.60 said that the annual revenue was only Rs.35 lakhs and annual expenditure for Manipur was more than Rs.5 crores, and that Parliament would not have any sympathy or support towards the movement.²⁹ The argument of the Assembly

28. Proceedings of the Manipur Territorial Council
Vol. IV 1960-23.9.60-p.210.

29. A.D.C.C. -op.cit - p.12.13.

Demand Co-ordination Committee was that no state in the Union can survive without loans and grants from the Centre, and economic viability is hardly a convincing argument against autonomy or statehood or responsible government.

In response to this popular movement, some powers, including law making powers, were transferred to the Territorial Council by the Central Government in 1961. By the 14th Amendment Act, 1962, Article-239A was inserted to the Constitution of India, granting a Legislative Assembly to Manipur consisting of 30 elected and 2 nominated members.

In March 1968 the All Manipur Statehood Demand Conference was held at Imphal and it stressed the need for granting Statehood to Manipur. The demand was strengthened by the granting of Statehood to Nagaland in 1962, having lesser economic resources and population. 'The neighbouring State Nagaland has become the 16th full fledged state in India. But in comparison of the two states our Manipur is not inferior to Nagaland in many respects. But the statehood of Manipur had been deprived by the Government of India'³⁰ One leader said, "We feel very much about the step-motherly attitude towards Manipur!"³¹ "We have not right to cast our

30. Y. M. Yama Singh, Proceedings of the Manipur Legislative Assembly - Fifth Session 1966-67- vol. xxxviii, Imphal, 1967, p.141.

31. Th. Chandrasekhar Singh, Ibid - p.148.

vote in the Presidential election. We are in the grade of 2nd class citizen. It is our crying need to have full-fledged state.³²

In 1968, the Congress, the S.S.P., the C.P.I., the C.P.M. and the P.S.P. staged demonstrations during the visit of Shri Y.E. Chavan, the then Union Home Minister and the other Central Ministers and urged the Central Leaders to grant full-fledged statehood for Manipur.³³ In November 1968 a Congress Delegation went to New Delhi and they were told that it was not the opportune time to raise the issue as the entire region was politically unstable.³⁴ In October 1969, five political parties viz, the S.S.P., the C.P.I., the C.P.M., the M.P.P. and the P.S.P. formed the United Action Committee and started a vigorous campaign for achieving statehood. An All Parties Statehood Demand Co-ordinating Body was constituted by the Congress Party and the five constituent units of the United Action Committee. On 9th May 1970, an All Party Parliamentary Delegation visited Manipur and a big rally was held at Imphal under the auspicious of the All Parties

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32. L. Achou Singh, Proceeding of the M.L.A. - Third Session 1968-69-vol.vii, Imphal, 1969, p.94.

33. L. Achou Singh "The case of Manipur" 1970,p.4.

34. Ioid.

Statehood Demand Co-ordinating Body. A Memorandum declared, "The spontaneity and unanimity among all sections of the people in this movement have reached their peak!"³⁵

After their return to New Delhi, they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister urging upon the Union Government to grant Statehood to Manipur before it was too late. In order to pacify the people, the Centre upgraded the post of the Administrator from the Chief Commissioner to the Lieutenant Governor and empowered him to take decisions on the spot without frequent reference to the Centre. This could not satisfy the people of Manipur who had been agitating for a full-fledged Statehood for a number of years. The movement became very strong after the announcement of Statehood for Himachal Pradesh on 31st July, 1970. The Independence Day, 1970 were boycotted by the APSDCB. It also organised a Civil Disobedience movement from 17th August, 1970.

After a long struggle for about 22 years, the Government of India accepted the demand for statehood. The Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi made an announcement

35. Memorandum submitted to the Honourable Members of Parliament visiting Manipur on 9th May, 1970 by A.P.S.D.C.B.-Manipur, Imphal, 1970, p.4.

to this effect in the Lok Sabha on 3.9.1970. The movement launched by various political parties for statehood was called off at once. The bill for conferring Statehood to Manipur was introduced in Parliament on 9.12.1971. The President of India gave his assent on 21.1.1972 after being passed by both the Houses of Parliament. The Prime Minister Indira Gandhi formally inaugurated the State on the same day.

B. FINANCIAL RELATIONS

One of the most important area of relations between the Centre and the states in a federal government is in the financial sphere. In India the State Governments derive their revenue from four distinct sources, viz., State tax revenue, State non-tax revenue, Share of Central taxes and grants and contributions from the Centre. Different geographical conditions coupled with various other factors account for differing proportions of tax revenue to other categories of revenue in different states. A state government can increase or decrease the tax revenue and non-tax revenue of its state according to the need, whereas it cannot do so in the case of other two sources, viz., share in Central taxes and grants and contributions from the Centre. "The distribution of Central taxes and grants to the States is made by the Central Government according to certain set of principles based on the criteria of population, per capita income of the states and stage of economic development

obtaining in various States etc."³⁶

In 1950 after the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union, the entire range of financial powers were exercised by the Central Government through the Chief Commissioner of Manipur. In accordance with order No. 18 dated 18th January 1950 of the Chief Commissioner of Manipur, a Deputy Commissioner would be in charge for the collection of revenue for the whole of Manipur taken as one Zilla.³⁷ According to Section 42 of the Government of Part C States Act, 1951 the Centre was the sole authority in financial matters of the state. "The salaries and allowances of the Advisers of the Advisory Council shall be such as the President may by General or special order determine."³⁸ The following classes of cases shall be submitted to the Chief Commissioner after considerations by the Adviser in-charge and before the issue of orders:

- (1) Proposals involving the imposition of any tax or the Permanent remission or reduction of the an existing source of revenue;

36. Deptt. of Statistics (Govt. of Manipur) - A Comparative Study of State Taxes, 1973-74, - Imphal, p.1.

37. Govt. of Manipur - Manipur Gazette Extra-ordinary- No. 25-E-9.Feb.4, 1950, Imphal.

38. Govt. of Manipur - Manipur Gazette-1953 - "Ministry of States Order, New Delhi, 6th May, 1953, Imphal, 1953.

- (2) all proposals which will, either immediately or by their repercussions affect the finances of the State or which in particular;
- (3) (a) involve any grant of land or assignment of revenue or concession, grant, lease, or licence of mineral or forest rights or a right to water power or any easement for privilege in respect of such concession; or
- (b) in any way involve any relinquishment of revenue;
- (c) all reports of the Accountant General, Assam or any Officer subordinate to him relating to the accounts of the State.³⁹

In 1956 the Central Government, by passing the Territorial Councils Act, 1956, delegated to the Territorial Council the power to levy certain taxes. They are (a) Taxes on Professions, trades, callings and employment, and (b) tolls on bridges constructed or maintained at the cost of the Territorial Council. Income from Property owned by or assigned to the Territorial Council shall accrue wholly to that Council. The Central Government may pay to the Territorial Council sums equivalent to the proceeds of the following taxes attributable to the area or areas within the jurisdiction of that Council.⁴⁰

- (c) the net proceeds of the entertainment tax including any theatre or show tax;

39. Govt. of Manipur - Manipur Gazette - 1953 - No.12. 27th May, 1953, Imphal.

40. The Territorial Council Act, 1956, Section 36.

(b) such percentage of the net proceeds of land revenue net exceeding ten as may be prescribed by the Central Government;

(c) the net proceeds of the taxes levied on motor vehicles;

(d) the net proceeds of the taxes levied under any law which may be in force for the taxation of passengers and goods or fares and freights and the net proceeds of any terminal tax on goods or passengers carried by road, railways, inland waterways or by air.

The Central Government may, subject to such conditions, if any, as it may impose, make such grant or grants to the Territorial Council as it thinks fit.⁴¹ The Central Government acts as the final authority for abolishing or reducing any tax imposed under Section 33. The Territorial Council may, with the previous approval of the Central Government, by notification in the official Gazette, remit or reduce any tax or fee or exempt any persons or class of persons or any description of property, wholly or in any part, from liability to any tax or fee and cancel any such remission, reduction or exemption.⁴² The Territorial Council may with the previous approval of the Central Government borrow on the security of any property belonging to the Council such sums as may be necessary for any of the purposes of this Act.⁴³

41. Ibid, Section 37.

42. Ibid, Section 44.

43. Ibid, Section 46.

The budgets passed by the Territorial Council was subject to the restrictions imposed by the Centre in the person of the Administrator of the State. While replying to a question put by Rishang, Keishing, member of the Territorial Council on the floor of the House, the Chairman said that, - "though the 1958-59 Council budget was for about 57 lakhs, the Administrator had imposed a restriction to the effect that the expenditure during 1958-59 should be limited to 41 lakhs!⁴⁴ That means the Administrator can amend the budget passed by the Council. But the Council after considering the amendments of the Administrator may or may not accept the amendments in the budget.

Every year the budget of the Council depended on grants from the Central Government. The amount of grants from the Central Government was much greater than what the State may be entitled to in terms of percentage of the performance.⁴⁵ To include provisions in the final budget of the Council in excess of the total approved by the Government of India would be meaningless as it would not be possible for the Council to obtain the required additional

44. Proceedings of the Manipur Territorial Council
Manipur - 1959 - Vol. III-30.3.59.

45. Chairman (MTC) - Proceedings of the 33rd Session
of the Manipur Territorial Council - 6.3.1961,
Imphal.

funds.⁴⁶ And the previous approval of the Administrator is required if the Council wants to increase the deficit between its own income and expenditure.⁴⁷

In 1963 when the Legislative Assembly was granted to Manipur, the annual financial statement or the budget had to be regulated in accordance with Sections 27 and 28 of the Union Territories Act, 1963. The budget prepared by the Government of the State had to be submitted to the Government of India for obtaining the approval of the President under Sect. 27(1) of the Act.⁴⁸ From 1963 to 1969 there was a wide gap between the income and expenditure in the State budget. The gap was always filled up by grants-in-aid and loans from the Government of India.

With the attainment of Statehood, the State had for the first time a balanced budget in 1973. This was because the State was eligible to a share in the Central taxes and duties, higher loans from the Centre, certain adjustments between the Central and the State Government,

46. D.M. Dev Sharma (Member MTC) - Proceedings of the 42nd Session of the Manipur Territorial Council - 14.3.1962.

47. Ibid, Annexure - A.

48. Report of Proceedings-Manipur Legislative Assembly
Vol. I-7.10.1963, Imphal.

grant-in-aid from the Centre and the like.⁴⁹ The process of a planned economy was introduced with the launching of the First Five Year Plan and thereafter the subsequent plans. Prior to the Fourth Plan, the outlays on development in Manipur were quite meagre as can be seen from the following table.⁵⁰

Five Year Plan Outlays and Expenditures (Rs. in crores)

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Plan Outlays</u>	<u>Actual Expenditure</u>
1st Plan	1.55	1.03
2nd Plan	6.25	5.97
3rd Plan	12.88	12.81
4th Plan	32.72 (actual)	32.65(likely)

The main objectives of the State's Fifth Five Year Plan were:

- (a) To build up infrastructure in the field of Communications, skills, Power and irrigation;
- (b) Stabilising economy particularly in the agricultural sector;
- (c) Control of Jhooming;
- (d) Utilisation of Natural resources;
- (e) Creating employment etc.

49. Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XIII-Third Session - 1973, Annexure-B, Imphal.

50. Govt. of Manipur (Planning Deptt.)- Fifth Five Year Plan-1974-79, Imphal, p.8.

Keeping these objectives in view, programmes have been formulated. In the formulation of Programmes, the guiding principle has been that whatever is physically practicable should be made financially possible and the potential of each area should be developed to the utmost extent without inhibition for financial constraints. The Plan outlay of the Fifth Five Year Plan is Rs. 92.86 crores (Tentative).⁵¹

There are also schemes proposed by the state for being carried out in the Central Sector. It includes programmes prepared to be financed out of the funds available with the various agencies in the Central Sector like North Eastern Council, Public Sector undertaking, Border Roads Organisation, Government of India Departments etc. They are construction of railways, Improvement and construction of roads, Power, Industrial Agriculture, Forest, Medical education, Public Health etc.

Still the State Government is dependent upon the Central Government in financial matters. Asked about the question of reviewing Centre-State financial relations, the present Chief Minister Yaugmaso Shaiza said:

'For small states like Manipur which are totally dependent upon the Centre financially, the existing relationship is the best. Increase in the State's share of taxes with a corresponding decrease in the

51. Govt. of Manipur (Statistics Deptt.) -
Statistical Hand Book of Manipur- 1975,
Imphal, p.8.

Centre's share will only mean that the bigger states will claim more share of the taxes. Correspondingly the share of the smaller states will get lessened. In that eventuality the smaller states will be seriously handicapped because they will not be able to bank on the Centre to make up for the shortfall!" 52

The ability of the State to mobilise the financial resources depends basically on its level of economic development. But in our Country the level of economic development of State has been far from uniform, on account of historical and accidental factors. Furthermore, the allocation of financial resources under the Constitution is such that the States are left mostly with inelastic sources of revenue.⁵³ In a less developed States like Manipur adequate financial resources are necessary in order to exploit the abundant natural resources to the extent desirable. The State is faced with a low level of development and inelasticity of finances, with the result that the development potentialities still remain largely untapped.

The State suffers from certain basic difficulties.

These are:

- (a) Law and order situation,
- (b) Extreme backwardness of the hill areas necessitating huge investments in infrastructures,

52. Quoted from Resistance - 27.6.1978.

53. Govt. of Manipur (Planning Dept.), op.cit. p.78.

- (c) Improvement of the general administrative Services both in the Secretariat and district levels,
- (d) Improvement of the Service Conditions of its employees which are much below the standard of neighbouring states,
- (e) Increased Dearness Allowances in view of the very high cost of living.

The entire plan of the State will, therefore, have to be financed through Central assistance. The pattern of assistance must be flexible and liberal in the context that a major part of the State's plan will be towards building up of an infrastructure. The Central assistance may come by way of grants or loans. It will be only through such measures that the state can be prepared to meet on its own the developmental requirements in the future.

In a Conference on Sept. 12, 1978, at Gauhati the Chief Minister of north-eastern States decided to evolve a common approach for retaining the "special status" enjoyed by the States outside the Gadgil formula adopted by the Union Government in respect of distribution of Central assistance for planned development. The Chief Ministers discussed the question of Centre-State financial relations specially concerning the north-easter states in the light of the deliberations of the Committee appointed by the National Development Council. In the case of north-eastern states alongwith Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh

the Centre applied special dispensation outside the Gadgil formula in distributing plan funds. The Chief Ministers felt that even if a change or revision was made to the formula as it is now reviewed by a small working group of the Committees, the special status enjoyed by north-eastern states must not be disturbed.

The Chief Ministers in the Conference also decided to move the Union Government that the expenditure on centrally sponsored and central sector schemes should be fully borne by the Centre and their loan components should be reduced, if not altogether abolished. The Chief Minister of Nagaland suggested that for the 279 centrally sponsored and central sector schemes in this region, the Centre should bear the expenses.⁵⁴

All of them emphasised the need for a concerted move for evolving a special formula for the north-eastern states in view of the peculiar conditions confronted by them.

C. CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE

Manipuri or Meitei language is the only medium of communication among the different tribes of Manipur. About 2,00,000 out of the total tribal population of about 3,50,000 in the State speak and understand Manipuri. "This

54. Times of India - 13.9.1978.

language is understood and spoken by all the members of the Manipur Legislative Assembly irrespective of whether they belong to hill and valley to express their views!"⁵⁵ Thus Manipuri or Meitei language is the lingua franca of Manipur State.

The language was used as the official language and court language of the State when Manipur was under British Superintendency from 1891 to 1907; the Parawanas, or notifications issued by the Political Agent and Superintendent of the State were in Manipuri.⁵⁶ Meithei, the Official language of the State, is the only one of them which possesses an alphabet and a literature! ⁵⁷

Section 58 of the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947, provided that the court language of the State shall be Manipuri or English. In 1957 also the Territorial Council unanimously resolved that the Official language of the Territorial Council shall be Manipuri.⁵⁸ The language was also recognised as one of the Major Indian

55. N. Khelchandra Singh - Manipuri Language, Status and Importance - Imphal, N. Tombi Raj Singh, 1975, p.2.

56. Ibid, p.24.

57. Ibid, p.25.

58. Proceedings of the Territorial Council-1957-Imphal.

Languages by the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. According to Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, National Professor in Humanities and Chairman of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, Manipuri or Meithei is a highly advanced language of the Tibeto-Burman family. "It is spoken by not even full one million people - some of lakhs only but has quite an advanced literature, worthy of having a place in the same line with those of the advanced Aryan languages!" 59

The demand for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII Schedule of the Indian Constitution was raised for the first time in the 35th Session of the Manipur Territorial Council. The following resolution was moved by Y. Yaima Singh (T.C. Member) and was seconded by M. Koireng Singh -

"Resolved that the Government of India be requested to include Manipuri language in the list of Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India. The Chairman of Manipur Territorial Council be authorised to write to Government of India about this!" 60

The resolution was passed unanimously. When Legislative Assembly was granted to Manipur, the question

59. N. Khelchandra Singh - op.cit., p.29-30

60. Proceedings of the 35th session of the Manipur Territorial Council - 26.6.1961.

was again raised in the third session of the Legislative Assembly in 1966-67. The opposition member Th. Chandrasekhar Singh moved a Private Member Resolution regarding the Manipuri language on 4th Feb. 1966:

"Among the Indian nationals we are a small group well known to other Indians for our culture and civilizations. We regret that the Government has not declared Manipuri as a regional language. India is a vast country having various languages, cultures etc. It will be very good if Manipuri is added to the 14 languages mentioned in the 8th Schedule of the constitution!"⁶¹

But the resolution was voted down by 13 votes against 3 supporters. The same resolution was passed unanimously on 2nd September, 1966.

Supporting the resolution that Manipuri language should be the official language of the State, Mr. M. Koireng Singh and Th. Bira Singh said on the floor of the House on 9.6.1972: "The inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII schedule of the Indian Constitution will greatly depend upon the status of the language in the state!"⁶² In 1977, the then Chief Minister of Manipur, Shri R.K. Dorendra Singh declared that the Central Government will be requested to include Manipuri language in the VIII schedule of the Indian Constitution. If the response is not favourable,

61. Report of Proceedings - Manipur Legislative Assembly - Third Session - 1966-67-Vol. XXXII-
p.42.

62. Assembly Proceedings. Official Report. Vol. IV-
1972- p. 193, p.200.

he declared himself ready for any movement.⁶³ The Manipur Legislative Assembly passed a resolution urging the Central Government to include the language in the VIII Schedule. The speaker, Dr. L. Chandramani Singh wrote to the then Home Minister of India Charan Singh on 6th April, 1977 to consider the matter. On 6th June, 1977, the Home Minister, Charan Singh sent his reply:

In a strictly constitutional sense the VIII Schedule has now become superfluous. The inclusion could give no new benefit to the language. However our endeavour is to use constructive methods for the preservation and development of the Cultural and literary heritages of languages not included in the VIII schedule and if you and your colleagues would have any suggestions in this direction, these will be welcomed.⁶⁴

While discussing the reply letter from the Home Minister in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur M. Meghachandra Singh asked that if the VIII Schedule is superfluous, then why is it still in the Constitution? In spite of the reply given by the Home Minister, it has been decided by the members of the Legislative Assembly to press the demand again.⁶⁵ Commenting on this matter, a local daily writes:

63. Simanta Patrika - 28.4.1977.

64. Charan Singh - D.D. No. IV-14014/1/77-NID(E)

65. Prajatantra - 26.10.1977.

Mr. Charan Singh is not the first Home Minister of India who refused the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution. He differs from others only in the promptness and bluntness of his reply.⁶⁶

Recently on 24 August, 1978, the students in Manipur resorted to violence demanding fulfilment of their demands, like the inclusion of the Manipur language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The Manipur Sahitya Parishad also organized a Public meeting at the Bir Tikendrajit park on 28 August, 1978 demanding the inclusion of Manipuri language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Similar meetings were also organized under the auspices of the Parishad in different parts of Manipur and even outside Manipur on that day.

Thus the inclusion of the Manipuri language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution is likely to become an important political issue in the relationship between the Government of India and Manipur.

66. Resistance - 8.11.1977.

CHAPTER- V

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters we noticed that during the period under study (1950-1977) certain fundamental changes took place in the process of political development in Manipur. After the integration of Manipur into the Indian Union, the State was placed as a Part C State in the Constitution of India. From 1950 to 1956, there was an Advisory Council in Manipur, the members being nominated by the Government of India. As such the peoples of Manipur were denied the political rights which they enjoyed in 1948 and 1949 by having responsible government under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. Due to dissatisfaction with the political set up, the people demanded the restoration of the Legislative Assembly set up after the 1948 elections. They could not forget the taste of having a responsible government. So the main issue from 1950 to 1962 in Manipur politics was the demand for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur. After 1962, the Territorial Council of Manipur was converted into the Territorial Assembly and the Administration of the State was conducted by the elected representatives. But this could not satisfy the political aspirations of the people. The political parties of Manipur

launched movements aimed at obtaining the grant of statehood in Manipur. All sections of the people, both of the hills and the plains supported these movements which culminated in the declaration by the Government of India accepting the demand for statehood towards the end of 1971. Manipur became a full-fledged State of the Indian Union on 21st January, 1972.

After getting statehood, the main problems which form the focal point in the political development of Manipur have been:-

- (a) Defections;
- (b) Political instability,
- (c) Relations between the peoples of the hills and the plains.
- (d) Political influence of the underground Nagas of Nagaland especially, the conclusion of Shillong Accord, 1975, between the Government of India and the underground Nagas; and
- (e) The demand for an Independent Sovereign State of Manipur.

Of these the first two viz. defections and political instability are closely related. In the late 1950s and early 1960s defections led to greater political stability

rather than instability*. But from 1972 onwards, defection plays a significant role in Manipur politics, leading to political instability rather than stability. An attempt has been made to analyse the causes of political instability in Manipur. When contacted most of the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manipur replied that defections are the causes of political instability but that they have defected from one party to another according to the desire and wishes of the electorate.**

An interesting feature of Manipur politics is that as soon as a new government is formed, most of the opposition members start defecting to the ruling party. This would seem to mean that the M.L.As, and the electorate, want power above everything else, and they are constantly striving for power. There may be reasons for this. It is generally believed that if an M.L.A. from a particular constituency belongs to the opposition, no developmental work can take place in that constituency. This may be due to the lack of political consciousness in both the representatives as well as the people of Manipur. M.L.As also after defeat for

*See chapter - II, E.

** For further details see chap. - II.E.

personal benefit such as monetary gain. Political instability may thus in turn be the cause of defections.

Another feature in the political development of Manipur is that the State is easily influenced by national or Central politics. It is believed by many that Manipur cannot have a government opposed to the ruling party in the Centre. This seems to be born out by what happened in 1972 and 1974, when the Manipur Peoples' Party Government was toppled. In 1977 also at the time of the formation of the Janata Government in the country Manipur had a congress government having an absolute majority in the House. But within 3 months, most of the MLAs defected to the newly formed Janata Party and Manipur was the first State in India to have a Janata Government without an election.

Prior to 1947, basically, Manipur had a semi feudal society. The Meitei King was able to keep under his control all the tribal chiefs in the hills. This political tradition of the past is playing a very active role even in the politics of to-day. The educated young peoples from the hills feel that their forefathers were exploited by the Meiteis. They no longer want the domination of the Meiteis in the social and political life of Manipur. This becomes apparent when the Legislative Assembly of Manipur repeatedly discusses

the question of the Manipuri language becoming the official language of the State. It was only in March 1978, that the Manipur Legislative Assembly unanimously passed the Manipur Official Language Bill, 1978, designating Manipuri 'written in Bengali Script' as the official language of the State. But the Governor of Manipur did not give his assent to the Bill on the ground that most of the tribal MLAs objected it.

The Hills people are afraid that if the Manipuri language i.e. the language of the Meiteis is the official language of the State, they would be at a disadvantage and may be exploited. Even some hill MLAs warned that the passing of the Bill by the Manipur Legislative Assembly would greatly affect the integrity and unity of the State.

There seems to be some relationship between the Nagas of Nagaland and the hill tribes of Manipur (except some hill tribes in Churachandpur and Tamenlong). There are about 29 major tribes in Manipur. They can be divided into two groups, Naga groups and Kuki or Mizo groups. The Naga groups were the Lahupa, the Tangkhuls, the Kolya, Khoiroo or Mayang Khong group, the Mao, the Maram, the Kabuis, the Marrings including Saibu, the Melloni, the Lapvomi and the Phozameh. The Kuki groups were the Khonjais or New Kukis, the old Kukis, the Simte, the Siktas, the Chussads, the Sinphos and the Pois.

On Nov.11, 1975, an agreement called 'Shillong Accord' was concluded between the government of India and the underground Nagas of Nagaland. Clause 3 of the Accord says that all Naga inhabited areas of Manipur should be merged with Nagaland. If this agreement is implemented it will greatly affect the existing political situation in both Nagaland and Manipur. There is a likelihood of a political conflict between Nagaland and Manipur on this issue.

On the other hand, the Mizo National Front headed by Mr.Laldenga is also demanding that all Mizo inhabited areas of Assam and Manipur should be integrated with Mizoram.

Soon after the Janata Government came to power in 1977 various attempts were made to reach a settlement with the underground Nagas led by Mr. Phizo and the Mizo National Front leader Mr.Laldenga. The first meeting between the Prime Minister Morarji Desai and Mr.Phizo was not fruitful. The Prime Minister's stand was that Phizo must accept Indian citizenship and constitution first. The signatories of the Shillong Accord insist that 'so long as Phizo is alive, he alone can bring a settlement'. The meeting of the Naga National Council at Khonoma on May 11 and 12, 1978 also passed a resolution reiterating the party's confidence in the leadership of Mr.Phizo. The centre has also not 'closed the door' for the solution of the Naga problem. The U.D.F. Government

of Nagaland is serving as a link between the Centre and the underground. This government of Nagaland is committed to solve the Naga problem through peaceful means.

The Central Government also tried to reach a mutually acceptable solution to the Mizo problem by holding talks with MNF leader Mr.Laldenga. According to the July 1976 Agreement, Mr.Laldenga pledged to work within the Indian Constitution. But the Central Government on March 1978 suspended the talks with the MNF leader, because of the double dealing attitude of Mr.Laldenga.

(The solution of the territorial dispute between Manipur and Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram greatly depends upon future developments between the Government of India on the one hand and Nagaland and Mizoram on the other.)

Another development in the North-East is that the peoples of the North-Eastern Hills region want to preserve their own identities. The first convention of all regional parties in north-eastern region was held at Shillong on 19 and 20 May 1977. The Convenor was ^{by 1977} Mr. J. Sailo, the Chief Minister of Mizoram and President of the ruling People's Conference of Mizoram. The convention arrived at a consensus on the need for a 'common form' to provide the constituent units an opportunity to consider matters of mutual interest and of common concern affecting the well-being of the hill people of the north-eastern region. Mr.Sailo wished to draw increased attention of the Centre to

the region, which, he said, is guarding the eastern frontier of India. The executive committee of the convention decided to hold their second meeting in Nagaland sometime in October 1978.

Since the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union, there are some organisations which demand independent sovereign states for Manipur. They are the Meitei State Committee and the so called Revolutionary Government of Manipur. The activities of the Meitei State Committee continued upto mid sixties and that of the Revolutionary Government of Manipur in the late sixties. These organisations always praise the ancient glory of Manipur. Recently there is some revival of this spirit. In 17 July 1978, some of the youngmen believed to belong to an underground Meitei Organisation shot a sub-inspector and a constable in broad day light on the main highway leading to the airport. Next day, a branch of the United Bank of India in Imphal was looted by an armed gang. Again on 19 July 1978, four young men simply boarded a bus coming from Moreh and shot a jawan of the Manipur Rifles who was guarding the arms of his two other mates. The main aim of these killings was only to snatch arms. Because these youngmen had not harmed even a single member of the public nor their actions discriminated against any particular community. This revolutionary party is led by one Bisheswar Singh. They are believed to be trained in China.

Following the incident, the Government of Manipur declared on 21 July, 1978, the whole Manipur Central district comprising the valley as 'disturbed area' under the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act and several arrests had been made in connection with the disturbances.

When discussed in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Dhanik Lal Mandal, Minister of State for Home Affairs on 28 July, 1978 said that there was no connection between any foreign power and the incidents in Manipur. He said that none of the firearms recovered and seized so far bore foreign markings. According to him, there was no involvement of Naga and Mizo hostiles. The spurt of violence in Manipur valley is not linked with insurgency in Nagaland or Mizoram, but is the result of urban terrorism, according to Home Ministry sources. These sources ascribe it to the sense of frustration among the people resulting from a lack of employment opportunities.

Now-a days students also play a very active part in the politics of Manipur. There is a student organisation called All Manipur Students Union (AMSU), which is formed by chosen representatives of the educational institutions (from Junior High School Standard and upwards). The main objective of the organisation is non-political. But all the political parties of Manipur are trying to gain control of the organisation. Recently a peaceful procession of the

students went through the main streets of Imphal demanding the establishment of a Manipur University, revival of the old Manipur script and the inclusion of Manipuri language in the eighth Schedule of the Constitution. A pamphlet issued by the AMSU further indicated that the students are now unlike their parents, very conscious of the distinctive identity and history of Manipur and its people.

Manipur is a very sensitive border state of India. Politically the State is united with the Indian Union, but socially and culturally there seems to be some gap between Manipur and the rest of India (except Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh). But in due course, this gap will diminish as the State has already joined the mainstream of national life.

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11. Shri T. Bokul Singh - Ex-Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly 1948.
12. Shri Ng. Mohendra Singh - Advocate, Imphal.
13. Shri O. Natum Singh - Ex-President, PANMYL.
- 14.

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APPENDIX- A

SELECT CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS
IN THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MANIPUR

- 1891 :- Manipur under the British Rule.
- 1939 :- Women's or Nupilal Movement.
- 1946 :- Birth of Congress Party in Manipur.
- 1947 :- Manipur, an independent state and are free to accede either to India or Pakistan.
- 1948 :- Manipur have a responsible government with M.K.Priyobrata Singh as Chief Minister.
- Establishment of Communist Party in Manipur.
- 1949 :- Merger Agreement signed between the Maharaja of Manipur and V.P.Menon, Adviser to the Government of India, Ministry of States (21 Sept.).
- Agreement comes into force (15 Oct.).
- 1950 :- Manipur become a 'Part C' State of the Indian Union (26 Jan).
- 1954 :- Movements for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur.
- Visit of the members of the States Re-organisation Commission.
- 1956 :- The Second General Elections are held.
- The Advisory Council is substituted by a Territorial Council under the Territorial Council Act, 1956.
- 1959 :- Movements for responsible Government in Manipur.

- 1962 :- The Third General Elections are held
(19, 23, 27 Feb and 6 March).
- 1963 :- The Territorial Council converted into
a Territorial Assembly with M.Koireng Singh
as Chief Minister.
- 1967 :- The Fourth General Elections are held
(19 and 20 Feb.).
- Formation of United Front Ministry with
L. Thambou Singh as Chief Minister (13 Oct.).
 - President's Rule Imposed (25 Oct.).
- 1968 :- President's Rule Lifted (18 Feb.).
- Formation of Congress Ministry with M.Koireng
Singh as Chief Minister (19 Feb.).
 - Formation of Manipur People's Party (26 Dec.).
- 1969 :- Visit of the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi
(23 Sept.).
- President's Rule Imposed (16 Oct.).
- 1970 :- Formation of All Parties Statehood Demand
Co-ordinating Body (April)
- Independence Day Boycotted by APSDCB.
- 1971 :- Lok Sabha Elections (1,4 and 7 March)
- 1972 :- Statehood granted to Manipur (21 Jan.)
- Legislative Assembly Elections are held
(6, 9 and 11 March)
 - President's Rule Lifted (March)
 - MPP led U.L.P. Ministry with Alimuddin as
Chief Minister (20 March)
- 1973 :- U.L.P. Ministry Falls (26 March)
- President's Rule Imposed (28 March)

- 1974 :- The Mid-Term Assembly Elections are held (19, 23 and 25 Feb.)
- President's Rule Lifted (March)
 - Second MPP led U.L.P. Ministry with Alimudding as Chief Minister (4 March)
 - U.L.P. Ministry Falls (8 July)
 - Formation of PDF Ministry with Yangmaso Shaiza as Chief Minister (10 July)
 - P.D.F. Ministry Falls (5 Decem.)
 - Formation of D.L.P. Ministry with R.K. Dorendra Singh as Chief Minister (6 Decem.)
- 1975 :- D.L.P. Ministry falls (23 July)
- Formation of Congress - CPI Coalition Government with R.K. Dorendra Singh as Chief Minister (23 July)
- 1977 :- Lok Sabha Elections (March)
- Congress - CPI Coalition government falls (16 May)
 - President's Rule Imposed (16 May)
 - President's Rule Lifted (29 June)
 - Janata Party forms government with Yangmaso Shaiza as Chief Minister (29 June)

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APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF IMPORTANT
POLITICAL LEADERS OF MANIPUR

ALIMUDDIN, MD.- Member of the Manipur State Legislative Assembly, 1948 - Member, Electoral College Manipur, 1951 - Member, Manipur Territorial Council, 1957, 1962 - Development Minister, 1967 - Founder member of the Manipur Peoples' Party, 1968 - Chief Minister, 1972-73, 1974 - Opposition leader, 1975-77 - Finance Minister, 1977.

DAIHO, ATHIKO - Member, Constitution Making Committee, 1947 - Member, Advisory Council, 1953-57 - Member, Manipur Territorial Council, 1962 - Finance Minister, 1963.

ELANGBAM TOMPOK SINGH - Resign from the State Service Manipur, 1938 - A Congress leader in the forties.

HIDANGMAYUM DWIJAMANI DEV SHARMA - Member, Constitution Making Committee, 1947 - Member, Advisory Council, 1950 - Member, Electoral College, 1952 - Chairman, Manipur Territorial Council, 1957-58.

HIJAM IRABOT SINGH - Resign from the State Durbar, 1938 President, Manipur Krishak Sabha and Praja Sammelini, 1939- Went underground in the early fifties.

IRENGBAM TOMPOK SINGH - General Secretary, Manipur Peoples' Party, 1972 - Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1972 - M.P., Rajya Sabha, 1974-78 - General Secretary, Manipur Congress Party, 1978.

KHONGBANTABAM IBETOMBI SINGH - Member, Manipur State Assembly, 1948 - First Chairman of the Imphal Municipal Board - Speaker, First Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1963.

KHWAIRAKPAM CHAOBA SINGH - Member, Electoral College, 1952 - Deputy Speaker, ULF Ministry, 1967- Founder member, Manipur Peoples' Party, 1968 - Minister, 1972, 1974 and 1977.

LAISRAM ACHOU SINGH - Member, Electoral College, 1952 - M.P., Lok Sabha, 1957-62- Chairman, Assam Socialist Party, 1953-56 - Member, Manipur State Legislative Assembly, 1948- Chairman, Manipur Socialist Party, 1952-57 - Member, Manipur Territorial Council, 1962 - President, Janata Party, Manipur, 1978.

LAISRAM JUGESHOR SINGH - Member, Constitution Making Committee, 1947- Member, Advisory Council, 1950- M.P., Lok Sabha, 1952 - President, Manipur Peoples' Party, 1972-74.

LARHO, S.- Chairman, Manipur Territorial Council, 1958-
Finance Minister, 1967 - Speaker, Manipur Legislative
Assembly, 1968 - Founder member of the Manipur Peoples'
Party, 1968.

LEISANGTHEM CHANDRAMANI SINGH - Speaker, Manipur
Legislative Assembly, 1972- Law Minister, 1974- Revenue
Minister, 1974 - Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1977

LONGJAM THAMBOU SINGH - Member, Manipur Territorial
Council, 1962 - Chief Minister, United Left Front
Ministry, 1967.

MAIREMBAM KOIRENG SINGH - Member, Manipur State
Legislative Assembly, 1948 - Member, Electoral College,
1952- President, Manipur State Congress Committee, 1955-57-
Member, Manipur Territorial Council, 1957, 1962- Chief
Minister, 1963, 1967, 1968-69 - Opposition leader, Manipur
Legislative Assembly- 1972.

MOIRANGTHEM MEGHAGHANDRA SINGH - M.P., Lok Sabha,
1967-71- Member, Manipur Legislative Assambly, 1972, 1974-
Education Minister, 1974 - Medical Minister, 1975-77.

NINGTHOUKHONGJAM TOMBI SINGH - Member, Manipur Legis-
lative Assembly, 1967- Education Minister, 1967-68-M.P.,
Lok Sabha, 1971-76, 1977.

NONGTHOMBAM IBOMCHA SINGH - President, Advisory Council, 1950 - Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1963.

RAJ KUMAR DORENDRA SINGH - Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1974 - Chief Minister, DLP, 1974- Chief Minister, C-ongress -CPI Coalition, 1975-77.

RAJ KUMAR PRIYOBRATA SINGH - First Chief Minister of Manipur, 1948-49.

RISHANG KEISHING - M.P., Lok Sabha, 1962-67- Founder of the Naga Integration Council, 1972- Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1972- Finance Minister, 1974 and 1975.

SALAM TOMBING SINGH - Member, Electoral College, 1952 - M.P., Rajya Sabha, 1972 - Founder member of the Manipur Peoples' Party, 1968 - Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1967 - Finance Minister, 1974- Industry Minister, 1977.

SERAM ANGOU SINGH - Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1963 - Minister, Planning and Development, 1964- Minister, ULF Ministry, 1967- Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1972.

SHAIZA, YANGMASO - Finance Minister, 1972 - Founder, Manipur Hill Union, 1973 - Chief Minister, 1974- M.P., Lok Sabha, 1977 - Chief Minister, June, 1977.

SINAM BIJOY SINGH - Member, Constitution Making Body, 1947 - Member, Manipur State Assembly, 1948- Member, Electoral College, 1952 - Member, Territorial Council, 1957, 1963- Member, Manipur Legislative Assembly, 1967, 1972, 1974 - Minister, 1975.

SINAM KRISHNAMOHAN SINGH - Member, Constitution Making Committee, 1947 - Minister, Interim Government of Manipur, 1947.

YUMNAM YAIMA SINGH - General Secretary, Manipur Kishan Congress, 1947- Organising Secretary, Manipur State Congress, 1955- Member, Manipur Territorial Council, 1957-62- Founder member of the Manipur Peoples' Party, 1968 - Education Minister, 1972-74.

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APPENDIX C

THE MANIPUR MERGER AGREEMENT, 1949.

AGREEMENT made this twenty first day of September 1949 between the Governor General of India and His Highness the Maharaja of Manipur.

WHEREAS in the best interests of the State of Manipur as well as of the Dominion of India, it is desirable to provide for the administration of the said State by or under the authority of the Dominion Government:

IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:—

ARTICLE I

His Highness the Maharaja of Manipur hereby cedes to the Dominion Government full and extensive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the State and agrees to transfer the administration of the State to the Dominion Government on the fifteenth day of October 1949 (hereinafter referred to as "the said day")

As from the said day the Dominion Government will be competent to exercise the said powers, authority and jurisdiction in such manner and through such agency as it may think fit.

ARTICLE II

His Highness the Maharaja shall continue to enjoy the same personal rights, privileges, dignities, titles, authority over religions observances, customs, usages, rites and ceremonies and institutions in charge of the same in the state, which he would have enjoyed had this agreement not been made.

ARTICLE III

His Highness the Maharaja shall with effect from the said day be entitled to receive for his life-time from revenues of the State annually for his Privy Purse the sum of Rupees three lakhs free of all taxes.

This amount is intended to cover all the expenses of the Ruler and his family, including expenses on account of his personal staff and armed guards, maintenance of his residences, marriages and other ceremonies etc., and the allowances to the Ruler's relations who on the date of execution of this agreement were in receipt of such allowances from the revenues of the State, and will neither be increased nor reduced for any reason whatsoever.

The Government of India undertake that the said sum of Rupees three lakhs shall be paid to His Highness the Maharaja in four equal instalments in advance at the beginning of each quarter from the State treasury or at such other treasury as may be specified by the Government of India.

ARTICLE -IV

His Highness the Maharaja shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties (as distinct from State properties) belonging to him on the date of this agreement.

His Highness the Maharaja will furnish to the Dominion Government before the first January 1950 an inventory of all the immovable property, securities and cash balance held by him as such private property.

If any dispute arises to whether any item of property is the private property of His Highness the Maharaja or State property, it shall be referred to a judicial officer qualified to be appointed as a High Court Judge and the decision of that Officer shall be final and binding on both parties.

Provided that His Highness the Maharaja's right to the use of the residences known as "Redlands" and "Less Chatalettes" in Shillong, and the Property in the town of Gauhati known as "Manipuri Basti" shall not be questioned.

ARTICLE - V

All the members of His Highness's family shall be entitled to all personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles enjoyed by them whether within or outside the territories of the State, immediately before the 15th August, 1947

ARTICLE - VI

The Dominion Government guarantees the succession, according to law and custom, to the gaddi of the State and to His Highness, the Maharaja's personal rights, privileges, dignities, titles, authority over religions observances, customs usages, rites and ceremonies and institutions in charge of the same in the State.

ARTICLE - VII

No enquiry shall be made by or under the authority of the Government of India, and no proceedings shall be in any Court ~~of~~ Manipur, against His Highness the Maharaja whether in a personal capacity or otherwise in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by him or under his authority during the period of his administration of that State.

ARTICLE - VIII

1. The Government of India hereby guarantees either the continuance in service of the permanent members of the Public Services of Manipur on conditions which will be not less advantageous than those on which they were serving before the date on which the administration of Manipur is made over to the Government of India or the payment of reasonable compensation.
2. The Government of India further guarantees the continuances of pensions and leave salaries sanctioned by His Highness the Maharaja to servants of the State who have retired or proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement, before the date on which the Administration of Manipur is made over to the Government of India.

3. The Government of India also undertake to make suitable provisions for the employment of Manipuris in the various branches of Public Services, and in every way encourage Manipuris to join them. They also undertake to preserve various laws, customs and conventions prevailing in the State pertaining to the social, economic and religious life of the people.

ARTICLE - IX

Except with the previous sanction of the Government of India no proceedings, civil or criminal shall be instituted against any person in respect of any act done or purporting to be done in the execution of his duties as a servant of the State before the day on which the administration is made over to the Government of India.

In confirmation whereof Mr. Vapal Pangunni Menon, Adviser to the Government of India in the Ministry of States, has appended his signature on behalf and with the authority of the Governor General of India and His Highness Maharaja Bodh Chandra Singh, Maharaja of Manipur has appended his signature on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors.

BODH CHANDRA SINGH
Maharaja of Manipur
V.P.MENON
Advisor to the Government of India
Ministry of States.

SRI PRAKASA
Governor of Assam, Shillong
September 21, 1942