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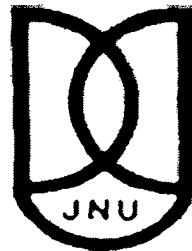


**THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ELECTORAL POLITICS
OF MIZORAM PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE PARTY**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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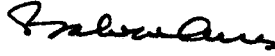
CERTIFICATE

Certified that the Dissertation entitled, *The Political Leadership and Electoral Politics of Mizoram People's Conference Party*, submitted by **F. Lalramhluni** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University, is an original work of her own. This Dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree in this University or any other University.

We recommend that this work be placed before the board of examiners for evaluation.


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Prof. Balveer Arora
(Supervisor)

TO MY PARENTS
WHO TAUGHT ME
THE VALUE OF LEARNING

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ABBREVIATIONS

ALHLC	: All- Party Hill Leaders' Conference
AGP	: Asom Gana Parishad
AIADMK	: All India Anna Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam
BJD	: Bihu Janata Dal
BJP	: Bharatya Janata Party
BSP	: Bahujan Samaj Party
CCF	: Citizen Common Front
CJP	: Chakma Jatya Parishad
CPI	: Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	: Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DMK	: Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam
EITU	: Eastern India Tribal Union
HPC	: Hmar People's Convention
HRC	: Human Rights Committee
MDF	: Mizo Democratic Front
MJD	: Mizoram Janata Dal
MNF	: Mizo National Front
MPC	: Mizoram People's Conference
MU	: Mizo Union
NEC	: North Eastern Council
NEFA	: North- East Frontier Agency
PC	: People's Conference
PPV	: Protected and Progressive Villages
RAP	: Restricted Area Permit
RJD	: Rashtriya Janata Dal.
SRC	: State Re- Organization Committee
SP	: Samajwadi Pary
TDP	: Telegu Desam Party
UMFO	: United Mizo Freedom Organisation

YMA : Young Mizo Association
ZNC : Zomi National Congress
ZNP : Zoram Nationalist Party
ZRV : Zo Re- Unification Volunteer

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Political party today is regarded as one of the most enduring instrument for the attainment of man's political aims. Formation of political party constitutes the lifeline of modern politics. There was time in a human history when any combination for a political purpose within a nation was regarded as an attempt of prejudicial to nation- building or national development. Parties did not hold a respectable place in political theory until late eighteen century. The phenomenon of political parties is a relatively new development on the stage of world political history. In ancient times, political parties as we know them today were nowhere in evidence, though powerful interest did wield political powers directly or indirectly. However political activity was not widespread among the general population and traditional forms of patriarchal authority held sway for centuries. Political power was exercise as a sort of divine right by a chosen few and the question of politicization of the masses did not arise.

The term 'political parties' emerged in the nineteenth century with the development of representative institutions, and the expansion of the suffrage in Europe and United States. Political Parties are the most significant mechanism in the modern democratic government, though they function informally. They perform both the functions of expression and public opinion. They are the chief mechanism of informing and influencing the electorate. Organisation and mobilisation of an electorate is an important function of political parties. They shoulder the responsibility of they government if the win over the support of the masses. In parliamentary system of a government, the political party who wins the majority votes forms the government, whereas the minority party has to play the role of the opposition. Political Parties have become the chief force for political modernization, and the chief agency for political education and socialization.

Political Parties are undoubtedly essential to the functioning of democracy; they performed varied functions within and outside the realm of politics. Their leadership and policies, internal practices, and pattern of interactions with other parties and institutions can have profound consequences for the system of governance.

DEFINING POLITICAL PARTY:

In order to study role and nature of political party, it is necessary to focus on some of the leading and relevant definitions and conceptual explanations in the context of the present study. In the first place, political party is an office seeking group. Its main objective is to capture political power. During the election time, political parties enter into an electoral fray with other political parties in order to secure itself a governmental power. This kind of power activity distinguishes a political party from other associations and pressure groups.

Various authors have attempted definition of 'political party' bringing out several distinctive features of its nature and definition. The most ambitious attempt to carry party theory forward has been that of Maurice Duverger. But Duverger uses a historically determinist framework which makes the mass membership of the party the inevitable product of suffrage and renders archaic many existing and seemingly durable electoral parties. According to Duverger, political parties developed simultaneously with electoral and parliamentary processes. They first appeared as electoral committees that procured for a candidate the sponsorship of certain prominent citizens and raised the funds necessary for the election campaigns.¹ According to him, ideologies, social foundations, structure, organisation, participation and strategies, all these aspects must be taken into account in making a complete analysis of any political party. He maintains that a party is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups dispersed throughout the country (branches, caucuses, local associations etc.) and linked by the coordinating institutions. He also stated that "a political party is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups dispersed throughout the country".²

¹ Maurice Duverger (1972), *Party Politics and Pressure Groups: A Comparative Introduction*, p. 3.

² Maurice Duverger (1964), *Political Parties*, p. 17.

MacIver has rightly observed that, “a political party is an association organized in support of some principles or policy, which by constitutional means it endeavour to make the determinant of the government.”³ According to Giovanni Sartori, “a political party as a political group that contest election, and is capable of placing through election candidates for public office”. Schumpeter considers that “a party as a group whose members propose to act in concern in the competitive struggle for political power”.⁴ In the view of Max Weber, the term ‘party’ should be employed to designate an associative type of social relationship, membership in which rests on formally free recruitment.⁵ Weber’s definition, like MacIver’s, brings out the associative nature of party organisation and links the political party to power even more explicitly than MacIver. Again, Neumann defines political party as ‘the articulate organisation of society’s active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views’.⁶

In the light of the preceding survey and discussion of various definitions of a political party, we can conclude that a political party is an identifiable group of members of a national society who organise themselves on a stable basis with the purpose of acquiring, retaining and exercise a political power within the society in order to secure what they perceive to be the goals of the society, and who endeavour to mobilize to that end by the support of as large section of that same society as possible. Further, a political party is a group of members of a national society as there is no such thing as an international political party.

Types of Political Parties:

The general classification of the party system is between one party system, two party system and multi- party system. In one party system, there is one party, which in either way is partly in power, which dominates all other groups trying to absorb political

³ MacIver (1926), *The Modern State*, p. 396.

⁴ J. A. Schumpeter (1950), *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, p. 238.

⁵ Max Weber (1964), *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, p. 407.

⁶ S. Neumann (1957), *Modern Political Parties*, p. 396.

opposition, or suppresses all opposition groups.⁷ Thus the basic function of the party appears to be recruiting candidates, conducting elections, operating the governmental machinery and providing political leadership. The two party systems can be said to exist when they are only two parties sufficiently strong to win major part of the electoral vote and to exercise political control, and the major party alternates in the exercise of power.⁸ The United States of America and Great Britain have the two party systems. The advantage of the two party systems is that it can produce both the party in power and also a powerful opposition of which the party in power must always be conscious. The multi-party system is one in which there are number of political parties, more or less powerful, but where no party is able to obtain a majority of seats in the legislature. In short, multi-party system leads to the condition of government instability, though the number of parties is not in itself a cause of disequilibrium. Countries like India, France, Japan, Turkey and Uruguay have the multi- party system.

Political Parties are also classified as Cadre based parties and Mass based parties. The distinction between the cadre based parties and mass based parties is not based upon their dimension, but upon the number of their members: the difference involved is not one of size, but structure.⁹ The cadre- based party corresponds to a different conception, the grouping of notabilities for the preparation of election, conducting, campaigns and maintaining contact with the candidates at all levels. Quality is the most important factor, extent of prestige, skill of technique, what the mass party secures by numbers, the cadre party achieves by selection. Duverger analysis of the mass party was based mainly on one criterion, that of open membership, because mass parties had been conceived as organisations to which large numbers of people belonged; the fact that large numbers of people seemed prepared to pay regular subscriptions was considered both as a necessary and a sufficient condition for an operational definition of the mass party.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., p. 397.

⁸ Ibid., p. 396.

⁹ Maurice Duverger (1964), op. cit., p. 62.

¹⁰ J. Blondel, "Mass Parties and Industrialised Societies", in Jean Blondel (ed.) (1968), *Comparative Government*, p. 118.

The distinction between the mass based party and the cadre based party corresponds to a difference in social and political sub-structure. In the beginning, it coincided on the whole with the replacement of a limited franchise by the universal suffrage. In the nineteenth century, the electoral systems were primarily, based on a property qualification, which were the rules. Thus the parties were obviously taken the form of cadre base. There is no question of enrolling the masses at a time when there was no political influence. Moreover, the capitalist financing of elections appeared natural. Indeed, it had survived the property franchise. In point of fact, the coming of Universal Franchise did not immediately lead to the coming up of mass based parties. The cadre parties simply attempted to make their organisation more flexible by pretending to open their rank to the masses. Cadre based parties are based on more branches, centralized and more firmly knit.¹¹ Mass parties correspond to the caucus parties; they are more decentralized and weakly knit. As for parties which are based upon cells or militia, they too are mass parties, but less definitely so. The Communist Parties, Fascist Party and German Socialist Party are the best examples of cadre- based parties.

Functions of a Political Party:

As a keystone political institution in representative regime, the modern political party regularly fulfils three critical functions: nominating candidates for public offices; formulating and setting the agenda for public; and mobilizing support for candidates and policies in an election.¹² Parties are seen, both by their members and by others, as agencies for forging links between citizens and policy makers.

Perhaps most important, the political party provides a link between rulers and the ruled. The party is the channel of expression, both upward and downward, which is crucial to the political management of complex societies. In competitive party systems the upward flow of communication from the ruled to the rulers is relatively strong. Even in such system, the party also functions as a vehicle for informing, educating and influencing public opinion. Where there is a single ruling party, the flow of political

¹¹ Maurice Duverger (1964), op. cit.

¹² Zoya Hasan (ed.) (2002), *Parties and Party Politics in India*, p. 5

communication is mainly downward. In an extreme instance, such as Stalin's Russia in the 1930s, the 'democratic' expression of public opinion from the grass roots of the Communist Party was negligible compared with the 'centralist' flow of directives from the top.¹³

Parties also serve as important agents of interest aggregation. This implies that they transform a multitude of specific demands into more manageable packages of proposals. Where interest groups articulate interests, political parties select, reduce and combine them. At the same time, interest articulation by establishing rapport with the people is another function of political parties. In this, interests are being taken into a wider sense as inclusive of values and ideals. Thus a party may champion the cause of greater autonomy for a particular state or region, or may agitate for the industrial development of, and greater source allocation to a backward region, or may struggle for special economic and educational concessions for certain deprived classes of society. All these examples of interest articulation, by means of which a political party can gain the support of some section or sections in a national society and can act as their spokesman.

When in government, political party leaders are centrally involved in implementing collective goals for society. Political parties have been the prime movers in the revolutionary upheavals of the modern age. In the third world countries, nationalists' parties played a critical role in winning independence and in the subsequent attempt to weld new nations out of traditional societies. In the first world, parties contributed to the creation of welfare states in the third quarter of the century — and to the shift towards more competitive economies in the final quarter. In short, parties give direction to the government. A government without a political party to energize it runs the risk of becoming totally becalmed.

Political parties also function as agents of elite recruitment and socialization. Party cadres or workers must establish contact with the people as to articulate and

¹³ Rod Hague, Martin Harrop and Shaun Breslin (eds.) (1992), *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*, p. 235.

aggregate their interests to secure their support. The party, therefore, needs to have an effective recruitment policy by means of which large number of members are attracted and thereafter trained as activists to win its allies and sympathizers. 'Political Socialization' is an important function whereby a political party educates society politically by inculcating the norms and values that will enable it to strive for the optimal pattern of power- relationships in relation to its task. Political socialization takes place through wide activities carried out by political parties through the media of publicity. They serve as a major mechanism through which candidates for public office are prepared and selected at all levels, and in particular by which national political leadership is chosen.¹⁴ The political party is an essential stepping stone on the long journey to high office. Therefore, political parties act as gate keepers, controlling the flow of personnel into government just as they control the flow of ideas.

THE PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA:

The development of party system in India is different from the party system of Great Britain and other Western democratic countries. Like any other democratic countries, India too developed her own party system with many peculiar characteristics. In order to study political parties in India, it is first necessary to focus on various aspects like the origin and development of Indian political parties, ideology and programme, organisation and leadership patterns, socio- economic basis, pattern of membership, performance and their behaviour, social influence, as ruling and opposition parties. In term of geographical area, they are four types of political party in India, i) National and secular; ii) Regional and communal; iii) local and communitarian; and iv) ad- hoc and fringe organisations. In term of orientation, there are left, right, centre and leader oriented parties.¹⁵ Among the left, there are communist parties and socialist groups; among the right, there are traditional parties formed around religious community and caste- based parties.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 236.

¹⁵ B. L. Fadia (2000), *Indian Government and Politics*, pp. 675- 681.

National or All India Parties:

All India political parties generally known as national parties have been officially defined as those parties with a broad-based support across the country and able to win 4% of votes or more than 3% of the seats in at least four state legislative assemblies. All India political parties are also defined as those political parties who are able to win 4% of votes or 4% of seats in the Lok Sabha. These parties that acquired national status naturally present a national platform and emphasize the national issues in the elections. Since the second general election to the Indian Lok Sabha in 1957, the Election Commission of India has recognized several parties as all India political parties on the basis that they should have secured not less than 4% of the total valid votes in the previous general election, or atleast in four states. Hence, the number of recognized national parties varied from four to eight from 1957 to 1999. Only during the first general election of 1952, political parties claiming to be national parties were 14. These parties draw support from different segments of the society and put up their candidates across the states and country.

Regional Parties:

The second group consists of regional political parties; which clearly represent sub-regional, sub-nationalism based upon the common language, culture and history of that particular region. These regional political parties try to aggregate their regional interests regardless of the caste and religious affiliations of their members. Their political power base and voting strength are usually confined to a particular geographic area. The following political parties are the best examples of regional parties in India: Telegu Desam Party of Andra Pradesh, the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir, Bihu Janata Dal of Orissa, Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam (AIADMK) of Tamil Nadu, Asom Gana Parishad of Assam, Mizo National Front (MNF) and the People's Conference (PC) Party of Mizoram.

Communal Parties:

The third group includes those parties and organisations that are exclusively in their membership; that is, they accept as members only those inhabitants of a particular

religious or ethnic community. They seek to protect and promote the interest of that particular community and ethnic group alone. Communal parties are generally non-aggressive in their nature, and generally mobilize their supporters by appealing to their particular sentiments and their respective religious faiths. The following parties fall into the category of communal parties: Muslim League, Akali Dal (Punjab) and the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

Single Personality/ Issue Parties:

The last group of parties consists of those who organized around powerful persons/ personalities or specific local and state issues are called ad- hoc parties. Such parties generally do not survive for a long period of time. Some of them may appear only for a short period of time and then disappear completely or merge into the national/ state political parties. The examples of such ad- hoc parties can be the Bangla Congress, the Kerela Congress and the BKD of Charan Singh.

FEATURES OF THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM:

Political parties are central to Indian political life. Their role political mobilization, governance, the formulation and implementation of economic and social policy, ethnic conflict, separatists' movements, and the working of democracy has long been the focus of analysis. Their centrality arises from the fact that they are the key link between social process and policy- makers, and influence debates and policies on issues affecting the interests of various social groups in the political system.

One Party Dominant System:

The party system in India does not follow the two party system adopted by the United States and Great Britain. At the same time, it is basically different from the multi-party model countries like France and Italy because one of India's several parties have over shadowed all others by dominated the Indian political scene ever since independence; that is the 'dominance of Indian politics by the Congress Party'. Rajni Kothari formulated category, 'the Congress system' to characterized Indian political system by arguing that the Indian political system can be conceptualized as a system of

one-party dominance, it is a competitive party system but one in which the competing parts play rather dissimilar roles.¹⁶ From the year 1947 to 1967, and from 1971 to 1977 as well as from 1980 to 1989, the system was at the center of Indian politics, spanned three distinct stages in its post independent development. The first phase (1947- 1967) can be called as period of the Congress system, the second phase (1971- 1977) was characterized by the decline and disintegration of the Congress party and the third phase was the domination of Indira Gandhi's personality and the revival of the Congress dominance. Until its rout in 1967, 1977, 1989 and 1997 election, the Congress party existed a monopoly of power at the Centre and, with a few exceptions, it has been continues to be in power in most of the states.

A Multi Party System:

It has been estimated that over 200 political parties have existed in India since independence and this clearly shows that a multi-party system is existed in Indian political system. Since the disintegration of the consensus-based Congress system in 1967, the Indian party system has metamorphosed into the category of a multi-party system. A multi party system has emerged, both at the center and at the state level, without becoming a formal multi-party system, due to the continuances of effective dominant Congress party rule at the federal level till 1989. At the state level, regional and local parties frequently contested the dominance of the Congress party. In some states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Tripura, the Congress has been eliminated as a major political force.

Emergence of Regional Parties:

In India, several national parties have lost strength and suffered in multiple ways. Based on their weaknesses, many regional and state parties gave grown not only in number, but gained an immense of influence in their respective region. They generally represent the interests of a particular linguistics, religious, regional, ethnic and cultural groups. The influence of regional parties may be confined to an area as small as a single

¹⁶ Rajni Kothari (2006), 'The Congress 'System' in India' in Peter Ronald deSouza and E. Sridharman (eds.), *India's Political Parties*, p. 59.

State Assembly constituency or as large as an entire State or region. The regional parties generally do not aspire to control the central authority. At the most, they aim at capturing power in the particular states in which they operate. The 1990s were characterized by the emergence of the state as the effective arena of political competition. Tamil Nadu has become a stronghold of DMK and AIADMK, Punjab is dominated by the Akali Dal, Assam was ruled by AGP, BSP and SP emerged as powerful regional parties in UP Politics, MNF and MPC also dominated the state politics of Mizoram and now Orissa is being governed by BJD. Currently, the regional political parties have gained strong social base in most of the states of India. These parties have started to articulate and seek to defend and to define a region specific identity based on ethnic, religio- cultural and linguistic.

Factions within the Parties:

All political parties in India tend to be involved in factionalism and groupism. In non- Communist parties, the faction leaders tend to be community, caste or religious based leaders who have skills to build patron- client relationship among the members of different castes or communities. Such factional leaders compete among themselves for political influence within the party and in the government, to entering into political alliances with one another in order to keep their political rivals out of power. Most of these kinds of factional alliances are mostly non- ideological; they also tend to shift their base on good deal and manipulation, thus keeping the parties of the state in flux.

Ideological Confusion:

With the exception of Communist parties, no political party has a clear cut ideology, and for capturing political powers, even the political parties in India are willing to sacrifice their policy and commitment of their standpoints. Since 1971, elections have been won not on the basis of the inherent strength of the respective ideology, but on the basis of issues that are of immediate concern to the electorate.

Personality Factor:

Although the political parties have been able to build an organizational structure they rely heavily on certain charismatic and powerful personalities or community and religious leaders. In India, numerous small parties have emerged principally as vehicles for influential and charismatic leaders to gain political power. Such leaders rarely advocate the institutionalization of parties, because parties as an institution constrain individual discretion and the personal power of charismatic leader.¹⁷ The best examples one can give could be how the DMK party in Tamil Nadu continued to cling to M. G. Ramachandran, Telegu Desam in Andhra Pradesh to N. T. Rama Rao etc. The basic reason for this is that the strength of the parties and their very existence depends upon the personality of their leaders.

The Common Socio- Economic Background of the Party Leaders:

There is a remarkable similarity in the socio- economic background of the leaders of the various political parties in India. Most of the leaders of the non- Congress parties who left the National Congress originated from the same strata of the society had the same type of educational background and shared the experience of the freedom movement. Most of them originated from the upper or upper- middle classes. Most of them were educated in the West or in institutions in India that followed a Western curriculum. This was true for the leadership of both the Congress and the parties of the ideological left or right. The middle class and the land owning, industrial, entrepreneur's upper and middle classes/ castes still dominate the political parties in India.

Party politics in India has confronted numerous challenges. Not only has the Congress system destroyed itself, but the fragmentation of the Congress coalition had triggered a new emphasis on self- representation which raises questions about the party system and its capacity to accommodate diverse interests, and also form stable state and national coalitions.¹⁸ An important test facing the policy is to evolve a party system or

¹⁷ Zoya Hasan (ed.), op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁸ Balveer Arora (2000), 'Negotiating Differences: The Challenge of Federal Coalitions' in Francine Frankel, Zoya Hasan, Rajeev Bhargava and Balveer Arora (eds.), *Transforming India: The Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*, p. 180.

political parties that can affectively articulate and aggregate a variety of interests. This requires parties to project broader appeals.

To understand regional political party, one has to understand first what a region is and what are the concepts of regionalism are. A 'region' can be defined on the basis of its geography, economic, social structure, and pattern of life. Then, 'regionalism can be identified with a search of an intermediate control system between the center and periphery of competitive advantage in national area. Talking of the aspects regionalism, it has both positive and negative aspects. On its positive aspects, regionalism connotes a quest for self- fulfillment on the part of regional group or a regional political party which quest is not always antithetical to the process of nation- building. On its negative aspects, it reflects a psyche of alienation from the mainstream, which originates due to excessive centralization and the discriminative attitude of the ruling elite.

The party system in India has been undergoing many transformations since the late 1980s. The fractured electoral verdict in 1996, in 1998 and the same prospect again in 1999 mid- term polls is a direct result of the slow but growth of regionalism witnessed over the last decade or more. The mushroom growth of the regional parties can be directly attributed to the gradual decline of the Congress party, which dominated the politics of the country. The emergence of regional parties in India has a geo- political rationale. The regional parties have developed in India due to the following reasons —

1. After the 1970s there were no charismatic local leaders in the Congress party, which was the ruling party in most of the states.
2. The Congress party also lacked strong organizational structure and leadership at the grass- root level. This paved way for the local leaders with local background and grass- root followers to offer a positive leadership in the region.
3. The regional parties have grown in importance with the realization of the people that their problems could be solved more effectively with a regional part forming a regional party at the state level.
4. Finally, factionalism gave birth to regional political parties with regards to policy matter; some regional parties claimed themselves to be "regional in character with a

national outlook". To counter act such claim, other regional parties maintain that such parties have lost their relevance and failed to represent their regional interests. And on the basis some regional parties did not hesitate even to align themselves with the national parties in power. Such an alignment led to further split in the party and thus more regional parties came into existence as a sort of protest or to build up a new base.

Often, a party is easily identified as a 'regional' party if it propagates the ideology of regionalism or thrives on invocation of regional pride. Regional parties draw their influence from two sources. First is the concentration of their supporters in particular geographic area, which helps them to concentrate their attention over certain constituencies at the election time. Regional political parties generally avoid to field candidates in those constituencies or areas where they do not have at least marginal support base. Secondly, regional parties draw considerable influence from the stability they enjoy. Their relatively constant base of support in particular locales helps them promoting those programmes that would benefit their constituents.¹⁹ This stability of regional parties proves extremely beneficial in certain circumstance especially when the regional parties in a position to form a government at the state level in coalition with other parties.

The relational pattern between regionalism and politics continues to be very powerful. Politics may be regionalized or regionalism may give rise to acute political controversies. Both assist and aggravate each other. Each can fuel another and the relationship being entirely reciprocal; it is difficult to conceive a dividing line. At what point of time politicians would exploit purely regional issues or regional consciousness would permeate political parties is difficult to predict and hence both can be studied in their complementary not in their separation.

¹⁹ K. S. Bhattacharjee, 'The Party System in India: One Party Dominance', in Verinder Gover (ed.), *Political System in India, Vol. 10*, p. 111.

The Indian subcontinent is a loosely joined community of subculture. It is a subcontinent of many communities united through shared experiences but powerfully motivated by regional and parochial considerations. The re-organisation of states along linguistic lines in 1956 gave a strong impetus to the development of the diverse regional political cultures, though the roots of the various regional movements for redressing of provincial boundaries could be traced back to the 19th Century. During the period of dominant party system (1959- 1967) decision- making was concentrated in the Congress controlling both the central and the states governments. The bargaining took place among the interests groups and factions within the congress system. In the fourth general election of 1967, the Congress suffered the first electoral setback. This revealed a new level of political consciousness on the part of the Indian voters, who gained owing their periodic participation in the electoral process. With the persistence of the multi- party system from 1967, bargaining took place among the parties that were ruling and were in opposition in the Union and the States, and thus it became an inter- party affair.

The emergence of regional political parties assumed great importance under the framework of state politics in particular and national politics in general. The growth in the political influence of regional parties may be assigned to many factors, such as, geo-political, cultural, linguistics and personality of the local leader. Different states under the impact of different pattern have different regional politics. There have been three types of regional parties in India. For years, the Congress dissidents, from regional parties and groups, mostly short lived and often for ad- hoc purpose as a bargaining counter. Examples of this have been Bengal Congress in West Bengal, Utkal Congress and Jana Congress in Orissa and Telegana Praja Samiti in Andhra Pradesh. Most parties are really local or at most regional grouping, often hardly more than the followers of some leaders. Such groups spring up, put up their candidates in a general election, and disappear quickly, or merge with similar groups are move in and out of election arrangements, sometimes as a weird character. Thus, some regional political parties are organized on the personality cult.

The second type is tribal parties as focal points of building a tribal political identity and as a platform for obtaining more concessions from the centre. These political groups are found mostly in the North East. In many instances, politically ambitious individuals have found their caste, tribe or religious groups, a natural political unit. The third type of regional parties are larger political formations in ethnically, culturally and linguistically defined groups like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and Orissa. These parties are bigger in their role as important component of the multi- party system in India.

The Genesis of hill politics in the north east started in the Jaintia Hills, with the establishment in 1990 of the Jaintia Durbar, and in 1923 Rev. J. J. M. Nichols- Roy took an initiative of establishing the Khasi National Durbar, and becoming its founder secretary.²⁰ In 1928, with the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission, full scale political activity started in the Khasi Hills by submitting a memorandum to the Simon Commission. Then to demand a separate Hill state for the Hills districts under the Sixth Schedule, Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) was formed in 1955. And in 1960, the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC) emerged as a forum for anti- Assamese language bill. The emergence of EITU and its role in the Hills politics as a whole remained an important chapter in the political history of the North East India. The APHLC was born to safeguard the interests of the Hills people. It was the first and only all- hills organisation and a platform rather than a party.²¹

Observers of Indian politics often accept that, regional parties and their leaders have a somewhat legitimate claim over power structures at the local and state level. But these leaders are not suppose to stake claims to power at the all India level. This power seems to be reserved for leaders with a non- parochial (meaning non- regional)

²⁰ S. K. Chaube (1973), *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, p. 69.

²¹ Lalngurliana Sailo, "All Party Hill Leaders' Conference and the Mizo Politics", *Historical Journal of Mizoram*, (July 2004), Vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 61.

background.²² The mention of the state leaders aspiring for national level power is frequently made with a pinch of cynical censure.

The regional political parties in India prior to 1990s confined their role to state politics only. In contrast, the rise of regional parties in the post 1990 period is marked by their central role in national- level politics. So much so, that some regional parties first became active in all- India politics and then entered the arena of state politics. Lok Shakti, Biju Janata Dal, Trinamool Congress are examples of this pattern.²³

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Literature on political parties in general and regional political parties in India has caught attention of many scholars. In the following section, an attempt has been made to understand the nature and role of regional parties in India.

Regional political parties, as a field of the study, have so far been greatly neglected in India. Only a few works are available on parties like DMK, Akali Dal and Telegu Desam Party. Even in these studies, no attempt has been made to provide a theoretical framework of regional parties. This is a big handicap for scholars intending to study on any other regional party in India. An indirect reference to regional party is, however found in Maurice Duverger's concept of "Minor Party". According to Duverger, "the concept of minor party" deserves special consideration. Duverger defines that; a minor party is one "which is minority minded".²⁴ As to their nature, there is a good deal of controversy over these minor parties or small parties as the case may be regarding their performance in government and opposition. Of late, some distinct types of these minor and small parties have emerged which have played significant role in developing countries.

²² Suhas Palshikar (2003), 'The Regional Parties and Democracy: Romantic Rendezvous or Localised Legitimation?' in Ajay K. Mehra, D. D. Khanna and Gert W. Kueck (eds.), *Political Parties and Party Systems*, p. 307.

²³ Ibid., p. 328.

²⁴ Maurice Duverger (1955), *Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in Modern State*, p. 290.

Duverger's theory of "minor parties" is mainly based on the distinction between major and minor parties reflecting the difference in their understanding. He has made a distinction between minor from a "party with a major bent" are those which command absolute majority. The distinction between a majority and minority party is more keenly felt in a multi-party system than in a two party system. Duverger has coined the term "minor party" referring to those which are minority minded and which seemingly include regional, local and such other smaller parties formed on the basis of linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural interest.

According to Duverger, there are two distinct types of minor parties. They are 'personality minor parties' and 'permanent minor parties'. Duverger considered personality parties as purely legislator's groups. These parties are not based on any real party organization. They mostly originate as dissident groups and subsequently appear as separate organizations. These parties are centered on influential personalities and considerable numbers of people are attached to the charisma of these personalities for the reason of 'prestige of favour'. It is for these reasons that such parties lack true social sub-structure and for that reason also they are neither strong nor stable in their character. On the other hand, the 'permanent minority' parties have organisations in the country which are either national or local. These permanent minority parties represent either a race or a region. However, these parties are relatively stable as they are very strong locally while frequently occupying the position to dominate the party or even of single party at the provincial level.

According to Duverger, regional parties are those which generally and exclusively operate within a state or which represent the interests of particular linguistic, religious, ethnic or cultural groups whose population may be concentrated in an area as small as a single Assembly Constituency or as large entire state or region. In respect of their narrowly defined interests, regional parties stand in sharp contrast to the broad-ranging, diverse concerns of national parties. Regional parties do not generally inspire to secure control over the country's national government. It may be because they are mostly

confined to limited geographic areas. The regional parties are also relatively homogeneous in their policy preference.

Regional political parties draw their influence from two major sources. First is the concentration of their supporters in particular geographic are, which helps them to concentrate their attention over certain constituencies during the election time. Regional parties generally avoid to field candidates in those constituencies or areas where they do not have atleast a marginal support base. Secondly, regional parties draw considerable influence from the stability then enjoy. Their relatively constant base of support in particular locales helps them in promoting those programmes and plans that would benefit their constituencies.²⁵ This stability of regional parties proves extremely beneficial in certain circumstance especially when the regional parties are in a position to form government at the state level in coalition with other parties.

Zoya Hasan (2002) argues that the major transformation have taken place since independence in India's party system. The regional and local parties are developed because of inability of the Congress Party to maintain the political base of its coalition, especially the locality of social disadvantage groups.²⁶ It is true that the Congress party continues to secure support across the social spectrum. From the late 1980s, this party has faced serious challenges by regional and local politics. New political parties BSP and SP are representing the backward and scheduled castes, are regionally concentrated and strengthened their position at the expanse of the Congress

Suhas Palshikar (2003) highlights that ever since the decline of the Congress party became apparent; two features of Indian politics have attracted the attention of the students of Indian political process. One is the coalition- based structure of the party politics and the other is the rise of many smaller and regional parties to prominence in

²⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

²⁶ Zoya Hasan (2002), op. cit., p. 20.

national level politics.²⁷ According to him, a party is easily identified as a 'regional party' if it propagates the ideology of regionalism or thrives on invocation of regional pride.

Lawrence Sa'ez (2002) argued that Indian politics has become rationally and ethnically segmented, claiming neither overriding national issue nor primarily local issues predominate. The regional fragmentation of the Congress party has contributed to the growth of regional politics.²⁸ This transformation was expressed by the mushrooming of regional parties that articulate and represent regional identities and aspirations, generally based upon common language and culture. He also mentions that the impact of regional political parties has been localized in Indian politics.

Balveer Arora (2002) says that the growth and increases prominence of state-based and regional parties introduced a new element in the working of the federal system in India²⁹. There are three specific criteria for the definition of a regional party: the first criterion must, naturally be the territorial differential. By its very nature, a regional party restricts its area of action to a single region, which, in the prevailing situation, means a state. The second criterion of a regional political party is that topically, it articulates and seeks to defend a regionally based ethnic or religious- cultural identity. Thus DMK and AIADMK act as the voice and champion of Tamil cultural nationalism. In the third place, it is in the very nature of a regional party to be "primarily concerned with exploiting local sources of discontent on pressing a variety of primordial demands based on language, caste, community or religion."³⁰ This is so because the electoral destiny of these parties is inseparably linked with their respective region.

²⁷ Suhas Palshikar (2003), 'Regional Parties and Democracy: Romantic Rendezvous or Localised Legitimation', in Ajay K. Mehra, D. D. Khanna and Gert W. Kueck (eds.), op. cit., p. 306.

²⁸ Lawrence Sa'ez (2002), *Federalism Without a Center: The Impact of Political and Economic Reforms on India's Federal System*, p. 47.

²⁹ Balveer Arora (2002), 'Political Parties and the Party System: The Emergence of New Coalitions' in Zoya Hasan (ed.), op. cit., p. 505.

³⁰ Balveer Arora (1989), 'Centralist and Regionalist Parties in India's Federal Polity' in Zoya Hasan, S. N. Jha and Rasheeduddin Khan (eds.), *The State, Political Process and Identity*, p. 198.

James Manor (1995) says that one can no longer refer to the continuance of a one-party dominant system in India. He has attempted to trace some of the growing distinction in the regional party system in India. According to him, some states could be one party dominant system as in West Bengal controlled by CPI (M), some as two party system as in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan, and cases of Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Orissa are being examples of three party states. Political parties sometimes change shape quickly as a result of the high volatility of Indian politics.³¹ In the early 1994, James Manor breaks the party system down into 3 main elements: i) the BJP and Hindu nationalists right, ii) the Congress party in the center and iii) something called the 'center-left bloc' which mostly stands to the left of Congress. According to him, the center-left bloc contains:

1. India's two Communist Parties, the CPI and the CPI- M.
2. Four avowedly regional parties: the TDP from Andhra Pradesh, AGP from Assam, the DMK from Tamil Nadu and one version of the Akali Dal from Punjab.
3. Various elements of the fragmented Janata Dal and
4. Other parties, notably the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) which draws support mainly from the Scheduled Caste and which joined hands with the SP to form a government in India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh from November 1993 to June 1995.

Suhas Palshikar (2004) highlighted the revisiting state level parties, attempts to locate the new spaces created by them and the effects of their accommodation within the framework of all-India competition. He states that the ideological boundaries would not be very strictly demarcated the parties because parties would be more interested in representing certain section rather than making any 'ideological zones'.³² One ideological zone is represented by the rhetoric of social justice (RJD, SP and BSP). Another is represented by regional identity (National Conference, AGP, DMK, AIADMK, Akali Dal

³¹ James Manor (1995), 'Regional Parties in Federal System' in Balveer Arora and Douglas V. Verney (eds.), *Multiple Identities in a Single State: Indian Federalism in Comparative Perspective* p. 112.,

³² Suhas Palshikar, 'Revisiting State Level Political Parties', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 14, 2004, p. 1478.

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etc.). The third ideological zone would be characterized by the development logic (TDP, BJD). The fourth zone is occupied by the idea of politics Hindutva. The fifth is the ideology of neo- liberalism (Congress, BJP etc.). The sixth zone is represented by the anti- globalization (CPI, CPI- M).

L. S. Gassah (1992) pointed out that a few regional parties emerged even before independence; some of them lost their individuality by submerging themselves with the ruling national party, to share the dividends of power shed by a party in power. But after independence, a large number of strong regional parties were formed and these parties have a strong regional base and they were posing a serious challenge to the national parties in the region.³³ These regional parties are parochial, anti- national and a disintegrating force. He highlights some reasons which are responsible for the emergence of such strong regional parties in India: i) there has been a lack of confidence in the Congress party, which uninterruptedly ruled at the Center and most of the states for a period of more than three decades. ii) The people of different regions have felt neglected due to comparatively low attention paid to their problems. iii) The regional parties have grown in importance due to the inability and substantial failure of the 'high command' system in the Congress and the BJP.

Sajal Nag (2003) tries to analyze the problems faced by the smaller states in the Indian federal system, taking into the account of the north east states; how they come into existence and what are the problems and challenges they faced in the Indian federal system. The author argues that the state boundaries demarcate areas with ethnic, linguistic and other identities. Regarding regional parties, the author suggests that the tasks of the parties in small states is to ensure grass root mobilization and compete with the national parties which yield immense power, resources and a country wide network. According to him, most of the regional parties in the north east are conglomerations of people belonging to tribes and sub- tribes, whose tribal loyalties super side the party

³³ L. S. Gassah (1992), *Regional Political Parties in the North East India*, p. 2.

ideology then the political crunch comes.³⁴ Hence, they always remain vulnerable to defection. Thus, defection, dissention, coalition and early collapse have always been characteristics of the regional parties in the north east. Also he mentions about the other thread to the regional parties face in reaching the portals of power has been the invocation of Article 356 of the Constitution.

C. R. Nag (1999) made an analysis to study the political parties and political movements in Mizoram. He argues that political parties in Mizoram began to grow with the rise of middle class, formed through education, enlightenment and outside contact.³⁵ The process had started on the eve of the demise of the colonial rule. Over a period of five decades since the exist of the colonial rule, the political parties in Mizoram have contributed much to the progress, growth and development of the state. At first, the middle class of the Mizos snatched away political powers from the hands of the ruling traditional chiefs. Then with the constant persuasion and movements of political parties, an insignificant Mizo District of Assam was graduated to the status of Union Territory in 1972 which was further upgraded to a full- fledged of the Indian Union in 1987. In all the political and administrative developments of Mizoram, the major contribution was made by the Mizo Union in the first period of the post- colonial times, and the People's Conference Party, the MNF and the Congress in the succeeding years. The community based parties like Mara Freedom Party, Chin National Front and the Hmar People's Convention have made contribution for the upliftment of their respective communities.

Lalchungnunga (1994) made an attempt to analyze Mizo regionalism, as expressed in their political movements from the Pluralistic Approach, to know the stands taken by the major political parties on the question of regionalism. According to him, regionalism has been expressed by political parties in different forms. There have been parties "regional in character and national in outlook", "secessionist parties" and "national parties with regional outlook".³⁶ Regional sentiment is so strong that even all-

³⁴ Sajal Nag (2003), 'The Contest for Marginal Space- Parties and Politics in Small Indian States', in Ajay K. Mehra, D. D. Khanna and Gert W. Kueck, op. cit., p. 364.

³⁵ C. R. Nag (1999), *Post Colonial Mizo Politics (1947- 1998)*, p. 125.

³⁶ Lalchungnunga (1994), *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*, p. 123.

India party in Mizoram cannot really have a national outlook in order to maintain a support base among the Mizos. Therefore, he argued that the common denominator of all Mizo political parties is always regionalism in one form or another. The problem which the parties have always found themselves entangled in has been that of arriving at a workable compromise between the strong regional sentiment of the Mizo people on one hand and the compulsions of maintaining cordial relations with the centre which operates through the one- party dominant system on the other hand. The movements of the political parties clearly show that the Mizo people can accept federal relations with the centre but not the complete identification with the one- dominant all- India party ruling at the centre.

ABOUT THE CASE STUDY:

The case study taken up is the People's Conference party, the political leadership and electoral politics of the party with the relations with federal issues. Issues like the coming up of Human Rights Committee in 1974 and the formation of People's Conference party, and its impact and influence in Mizoram political development has been taken up with special reference to leadership and electoral politics. Also, federal issues like foreigner issue, inner line permit system and boundary issues has also been in focus in this study. The People Conference has captured political power twice in the State Legislative Assembly and plays an important role as a regional party in Mizoram political development. Keeping all these things in mind, the present study seeks to examine and conceptualize the topic and see the relations with the state regarding its leadership issue and electoral politics.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of the research is to study the importance and the impact of regional political parties in India and specifically in Mizoram.

- To study the political process of Mizoram.
- To study the historical emergence of the People's Conference.
- To study the political objectives of the party.
- To study the leadership pattern and ideological base of the party.

- To study the federal relations of the party with the centre as well as with the neighbouring states by looking at issues like Inner Line Permit, illegal foreigner immigrants issue and state boundary issue.
- To study the electoral performance and its significance in the state as well as in national politics.

Scope:

The scope of the present study would like to confine from post 1960 politics of Mizoram till the State Legislative Assembly election of 2003. The scope of this period has various significance in the political process of Mizoram. The scope of this research is set within the limits of subject- matter, the importance of regional parties in Indian politics. To cover this period of time is felt necessary in order to make the analysis complete.

Methodology:

The study is based on using analytical, primary and secondary sources; by looking at literatures available, data collection, government and official documents, journals, party pamphlets, party manifestos during the election time, brochures issued by the party from time to time and informal meetings with political party leaders and prominent citizens. All these will help in studying the historical evolution of the party, what significant role does it play today in the state politics and its impact in the political process of Mizoram.

Chapterization:

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter deals with the theoretical framework of political parties; their origin, role and development of party system in India and origin of regional parties in Indian politics. The second chapter deals with development of political parties in Mizoram and factors leading to the birth of People's Conference party in Mizoram. In the third chapter, an attempt has been made to analyze the issue of political leadership and ideology of Mizoram People's Conference party. The fourth chapter covers the electoral performance and the electoral performance

of the PC party from 1974 onwards till 2003. the fifth chapter presents the federal dimensions of the MPC Ministry with the Centre and the neighbouring states in the issues of Inner Line Permit, Chakma foreigner illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and Mizoram – Assam state boundary. The last chapter presents the findings of the case study and the conclusion of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION AND FACTORS LEADING TO THE BIRTH OF PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE (PC) PARTY IN MIZORAM

HISTORY OF MIZORAM (UPTO 1947):

Mizoram, the name of the state is a compound of two words: 'Mizo' and 'Ram'. 'Ram' means country or land; and Mizoram means the land of the Mizos. Situated approximately between 22.12' and 24. 9' North Longitude and 92.20' and 93.90' East Longitude. Mizoram is situated in the North- Eastern corner of India. It is bounded in the north by Assam and Manipur, on the East and south by Burma, and on the west by Bangladesh and the state of Manipur. After India got her independence, Mizo Hills was put under the administration of Assam as Lushai Hills District in 1952 under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. In course of time, the District Council became Union Territory and was renamed as Mizoram. Along with this, three Autonomous District Councils namely the Chakma District Council, the Lakher District Council and the Lai District Council were formed under the Re- Organisation of State Act, 1971. In 1986, the underground Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Government of India signed a peace accord and Mizoram became the 23rd State of the Indian Union on 20th February, 1987. The State comprises of 8 District with Aizawl as the Capital of the State. The population of Mizoram according to 2001 census is 8, 91,058.

According to Lalthangliana, the Mizos once lived in the Tao valley of KANSU province in the north- west of China and north- east of Tibet 2000 years ago¹. From there, they moved to Burma and occupied the KABAW valley from about 8th century through to the 13th century AD. While they lived in Kabaw valley they developed a culture of high order. They then settled in the Than Range and Manipur valley till the mid- fifteenth century. In the second part of the 15th century, they moved to the TIAU region of Burma and lived there till the 18th Century. Many of their folksongs, customs and traditional institutions which they possess evolved during this time. After this, they slowly moved

¹ See Lalchungnunga (1994), *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*, p. 27.

towards their present land, each lived secluded from each other. The mountainous terrain and vast forests rendered the land inaccessible and free from interference of the outside world. Each village was ruled by its own Chiefs, and the traditional political system was 'autocratic chieftainship'. Though the villages under their respected chiefs may have had customs and traditions different from one another in minor details, the Chiefs' administration were similar in pattern and he was bound by customary laws. The Chief had absolute control over his village, yet his mode of life and his dress differed in no way from the common people. The only difference was that he did not do manual works, and each family had to contribute certain amount of their rice production to their Chief every year. In return for all these, he gave care and attention to the interest of his subjects. The *Khawnbawl Upas* (the village ministers) were there to help the Chiefs in maintaining the administration of each village. The *Tlangau* (village crier) walked around the village and, with a loud voice, informed the people the will of their sovereign.

The British Entry to the Mizo Hills:

Mr. Renvell, Chief Engineer of Bengal went into the Lushai Hills in 1800 and this appears to be the first entry of a European into the Lushai Territory. The Burmese and the Arakan forces went into the Lushai Hills during the First Burmese War of 1824- 25, and during this period, a survey party under Captain Hedgekins and Lt. Sadis did a rudimentary survey of the area.² The village life of the early Mizos was full of fears and superstitions due to their animistic beliefs. They had a common practice of raiding other villages as raids were perpetuated for plunder as well as for the fulfillment of their superstitious beliefs.

Besides these two reasons, there was another reason of the Lushai Raids in the later half of the 19th Century. The ever-expanding commercial interests of the British had done enough to provoke the sensitive Mizo chiefs. The extension of the British tea-plantation on the foothills of the Lushai country was taken by the Chiefs as an encroachment upon their 'future lands'.³ After repeated expeditions and clashes with the

² Ibid., p. 31.

³ R. Vanlawma (1972), *Ka Ram leh Kei (My Country and I)*, p. 19.

Lushai forces, and when the Lushais went to the extent of killing a European and taking his daughter Mary Winchester as captive, the British changed their policy towards the Mizos from that of 'coalition' to that of 'subjugation'. The British entered the Mizo Hills in 1882 and in the absence of a united force from the Mizos; the British could established their authority in Mizo Hills by 1891.⁴ The hill region known as the 'Lushai Hills' was ruled under the administration of Assam and Bengal; 'North Lushai Hills' under the administration of Assam and 'South Lushai Hills' under the administration of Bengal respectively. The North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills Districts existed for the period of 7 years and came to an end on 1st April, 1898 under the law passed in the Lushai-Chin Conference. Although annexed as a district, the Lushai Hills was looked after by a special political agent—the Superintendent, a direct representative of the Governor-General of British India. This is suggestive of the fact that the Lushai Hills was not brought under the political jurisdiction of the Assam Legislature, and thus categorized as "Excluded Area".⁵

The consolidation of the British administration in the Lushai Hills was necessitated not by the British commercial interest in the Hills but by the need to check the Lushais in their territory so that they could not organize themselves to 'disturb' non-natives who had not only established commercial strongholds on their doors but also intruded upon their lands.

Before the introduction of the Government of India Act, 1919, the Lushai Hills District was a 'Scheduled District' under the provision of the Scheduled District Act, 1874, on account of being a hilly area inhabited by the primitive tribes with poor economic resources. In 1919, this district was put under the category of 'Backward Area', on the recommendations of senior officers like Robert Reid, who favoured exclusion of the area from the reform scheme.⁶ As a result, the popular ministry in Assam could not exercise authority over the administration of the Lushai Hills District. The Governor of

⁴ J. V. Hluna (1992), *Education and Christian Missionaries in Mizoram*, p. 27.

⁵ J. V. Hluna (1985), *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, p. 9.

⁶ S. N. Singh (1994), *Mizoram: Historical, Geographical, Social Economic, Political and Administrative*, p. 140.

Assam was directly responsible for the administration of the backward areas. Thus, the Lushai Hills district remained unrepresented in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Further, the Government of India Act, 1935 incorporated the provision of 'Excluded Area' and 'Partially Excluded Area' for the hill districts of Assam. Accordingly, the Lushai Hills district, the Naga Hills district and the North Cachar Hills district were declared as 'Excluded Area' while the Mikir Hills and the Garo-Khasi Hills as 'Partially Excluded Area'.⁷ The administration of the Excluded Area was carried on from 1937-1947 by the Governor of Assam acting independently of the Government of Assam. The British policy under the shadow of Excluded and Partially Excluded Area kept these hills people isolated from the general administration. This arrangement was intentionally done by the British to prevent the tribals from any type of reform. Taking the advantage of this arrangement, the Christian Missionaries with the patronage of the British government, converted Mizos into Christianity. The authority kept them isolated from the rest of the country by imposing Inner Line Regulation. This in one way sowed the seed of separatist tendency.

When the Independence of India became almost an accomplished fact, a section of the Mizos under the patronage of the British wanted to separate from India and join the Chin Hills of Burma. Macdonald, the then Superintendent of the Lushai Hills called a conference of the leaders of the commoners and the representatives of chiefs and formulated a scheme known as 'Macdonald Scheme' which mainly stood for separation of the hill district from the country.⁸ But this scheme did not work out as it was not accepted to the sizeable section of the Mizos. L. L. Peters, the last British Superintendent took initiative and formed a committee of Chiefs and Commoners in 1947, which affirmed that the Lushai Hills would join India for 10 years after which they would decide their political future. This idea was opposed by the Mizo Union, the first political party of Mizoram.

In general, the British did very little developmental works. Their main concern was maintenance of law and order. By and large, education was chiefly run by the

⁷ Ibid., p. 141.

⁸ Ibid., p. 144.

Missionaries in the hill district. The growing Church soon became dominant transforming the Mizo society. With the growth of political awareness post 1946, the people themselves formed political parties with the initial objective of asserting their individual rights and privileges. This necessarily entailed removal of, firstly of all that was British in origin, and secondly, of the very institution of Chieftainship with its innumerable taxations from which the common people receive no benefits. These objectives, after much suffering and sacrifice, were achieved soon after the independence of India in the form of an 'Autonomous District Council' in 1952 under the overall guardianship of the Government of Assam. The District Council had, nevertheless enjoyed the power of a provincial government, drawn from the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE MIZOS:

It could be rightly said that the Mizos have undergone two stages of political development in its history. The first stage was the period in which political ideas were expressed through its political institution called 'chieftainship'.⁹ During this period, the Mizos did not fully grasp what their political ideas really were. The second stage was the period in which the Mizos became aware of their political rights through various factors.

Political awakening among the Mizos could be said to start in the middle of the third decade of the twentieth century. The earliest occasion was on the question of revival of *Zawlbuk*.¹⁰ N. E. Parry's attempt in 1926 to restore the long neglected institution hurt the feeling of certain section of the people who were against the policy of restoration. The common people thought that Parry had a soft corner for the local chiefs. As such, they began to accuse their chiefs and the matter was reported to the Superintendent. He, however, paid no attention to their case. Therefore, they began to find ways of throwing off the old yoke of the Chiefs,¹¹ and looked forwards to attain their goal at the future date.

⁹ Sangkima, "Political Conciousness Leading to the Formation of Mizo Union Party in Mizoram", *Historical Journal of Mizoram*, (July 2004), Vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 2

¹⁰ *Zawlbuk* means a bachelor's dormitory where all the young men of the village slept together at night. It acts like a self defense centre for the village at the times of emergency especially during war times. Besides this, *Zawlbuk* promotes the spirit of companionship and comraderie.

¹¹ Chaltuahkhuma (1981), *Political History of Mizoram 1920- 1980*, pp. 15- 16.

In view of this uncertain development in 1926, a section of the Mizos began to entertain the idea that nothing would be achieved if they remained mere spectators. They began to collect information secretly and tried to find out the means by which they could participate in Assam Legislative Assembly through elected representatives. For this purpose, representatives were sent to Shillong, the then capital of Assam, to explore the possibility of sending representatives from Mizoram. The team thus sent was told by some local advisors that something could be done for them if they could enlist 1000 members or supporters expressing their desire to participate in the Assam Legislative Assembly. After returning from Shillong, they began a drive with a view to getting the support of the required numbers. As political movements were totally banned by the District authority, they did everything covertly. But their activities came to the notice of the District Superintendent and some of their leaders were arrested and their documents were seized. Later, they were sent to jail on 22nd October, 1926. The persons who were actively involved in the movement were Telela Pachuau (Chuaungo), Thuama Ralte (Lelhchhun), V. Z. Biaka Hmar (Varte) and Liansiama Chhangte; all residents of Kulikawn locality in Aizawl.¹² Their Secretary, Laldela was deported to the Chin Hills of Burma. With this the movement came to an end until it was revived some 20 years later.

This political set back was followed by a period of political lull for more than a quarter of a century. Two reasons may be attributed to the failure of the movement. In the first place, the authority had a free hand and absolute power to control any political movement that was perceived to be against the interests of the British administration. In the second place, the movement was not deeply rooted in the minds of the masses in the midst of uncertainties. The fear of the British authority still haunted the people and prevented them from taking any steps against the rule of the British.

There had been an increasing political inclination of the people since 1935 when the non-political body, called Young Lushai Association, later changed as Young Mizo Association (YMA) was founded. The new experiences gained through the activities of

¹² P. Lalnithanga (2006), *Political Developments in Mizoram*, p. 6

YMA highly enlightened their ideas and knowledge and as a result “the Lushais aspired for something better”.¹³ With the grant of permission to form political parties, there had been hectic activities for political attainment among the people. But the picture was blurred by a sense of uncertainty when India attained independence. In the meantime, however, certain other new factors helped in the formation of new political endeavour. Chiefs among them were; the lenient policy adopted by the British Government towards the Mizos due to the outbreak of the Second World War; the strong feeling that India would soon achieve her complete freedom from the British rule; that the Mizo people would soon be freed from the arbitrary rule of the chiefs as well as the heavy taxes levied on them and that the people would be relieved from the monotonous *puak phurh* (coolie labour). All these circumstances and concerns contributed to the increasing entry of the people into the political arena.

The political consciousness which grew among the people following the changed situation in Mizoram was soon to find its expression. Several other factors in this regard were hectic political activities in the neighboring areas of Assam and Bengal, ill-feelings between the chiefs and the commoners, slow and stagnant development activities adopted by the authority, etc. The general situation changed after the Second World War due to the fact that the British Government had to seek support from the Chiefs in their war efforts. In order to win over the Chiefs and the people, the authority changed their policy. Consequently, political as well as other restrictions which had been imposed earlier were relaxed and in 1946, just before Indian independence, the formation of political parties was permitted by the Superintendent. Thus, a new era dawned in the political history of the Mizo.

It appears that the Mizos were politically motivated since the passages of the Government of India Acts, 1919 and 1935 because these two Acts had given political aspirations to the early educated Mizos by giving special status to the people. The people very well knew that they must do something to achieve their future political aspirations. But the District Authorities banned any political activities on the part of the local people

¹³ V. Venkata Rao (1976), *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India*, p. 160.

other than the authority allowed them to do. So there was no question of starting any political activities without the permission of the authorities concerned. By the time India achieved independence, education had already taken roots in the Lushai Hills through the activities of the Christian Missionaries. This alongside the increasing conversion of the populace to Christianity provided them with hitherto unexplored and unarticulated sense of their rights and political dignity. The birth of Mizo Union as a political party in 1946 signaled the beginning of a long political struggle by the Mizos.

FORMATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEM IN MIZORAM IN THE POST- INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:

During the rule of British in the Lushai Hills, the British policy had been consistently legitimized and they uphold the Chiefs' authority through which they achieved a very efficient and inexpensive system of administration. Until 1946, any open political activity was kept at bay as a fitting sequel to the policy of quarantine exclusion from the Provincial Legislature. Simultaneously, the chiefs were allowed to retain their traditional rights and privileges and they became instrumental in enforcing the practice of *puak phurh* (coolie labour). The poor tribals were held in subjection for a considerable period of time under repressive measures of this type through the institution of 'autocratic chieftainship'. Under the imperialist rule of the colonial Britain, the Mizos were virtually reduced to a state of enslavement. It is against this background that a new political movement under the leadership of an educated section of the society that sprung up with an initial aim of curtailing the Chiefs' powers and rights.

The advent of political freedom to the people who had never tasted any measure of political power before made them lose balance. Their vision of political goal was not perceptible in any clear terms beyond the attempt to curtail the chiefs' power and authority.¹⁴ Opinions were sharply divided over the choice to join Indian Union or Burma. A section of political leaders and Chiefs were in favour of joining Burma, but the majority was in favour of joining India.

¹⁴ K. M. Zakhuma (2001), *Political Development of Mizoram from 1946 to 1989*, p. 55.

As a consequence, a rather fierce political competition ensued between the new elites who committed themselves to the task of easing the repressive measures the colonial rulers had imposed through the Chiefs and those who supported chieftaincy. This development had weakened the foundation and moral fabric of cohesive village societies because it led to be more and more outside-oriented.

Birth of Political Parties:

From the early 1930s, the Mizos became conscious of their political right which had been declined to them by their colonial rulers. The young early educated Mizos felt the need to form a united front to fight for their rights. At the time when the eclipse of the British Empire was imminent and active debates were conducted in the Provincial Legislature as to the future of the Lushai Hills District, the first political party came into existence in the Mizo land in 1946. In January 1946, the Superintendent through the exercise of his discretionary power ordered the election of a body of District Conference to advise him in matters of administration of customary laws.¹⁵ This was a feeble semblance of a political body and can be said to be a precursor of unbridled political party of the people. Partly through the repercussion of repressive measures inflicted upon them and partly through the intellectual awakening, the idea of forming a political party had long been fostered by the educated intelligentsia. Mr. P. S. Dahrawka, an employee in the District Veterinary Office, was the brain behind the formation of the first political party.¹⁶

The main focus of this chapter will be on the evolution of political parties in Mizoram with special reference to the emergence of Mizoram People's Conference (MPC). A study will be made to analyze how each party emerged, what their stand point were and their impact on the political development of Mizoram.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

Mizo Union Party:

The first political party formed on 9th April, 1946 by R. Vanlawma and it was first called as the 'Mizo Common People Union', but was later called 'the Mizo Commoners Union', Vanlawma became the first General Secretary of the party, while Lalbuaia and Hrangaia were Adhoc Committee members. The draft constitution of the party was drafted by R. Vanlawma and Dahrawka. The name of the Party was subsequently changed into the 'Mizo Union'.¹⁷ The party elected its first office bearers on 24th May, 1946 in its first conference of the party. Pachhunga, a well known trader and merchant, became its first president and Lalhema, a petty- shop owner was elected vice- president, R. Vanlawma was the General Secretary and Lalbuaia the assistant secretary and Lalhmingthanga became the finance secretary and Thanga, a government employee, was the treasurer of the party.¹⁸ Political activity began with the party when it pressed a demand for replacement of *Upas* appointed by the chiefs with the members elected by the people in the first General Assembly held at Aizawl in September, 1946.

In the first General Assembly, a bold resolution was taken demanding for two third representations on the District Conference by the elected members from the common people instead of equal representatives from the chiefs and the commoners. After a long deliberation over the issue of the future status of the Lushai Hills, the Assembly resolved the Hill district to be a part of Assam state; they were opposed to the retention of their district as an excluded area under an Independent India, but wished to be included in the Provincial Legislature with a sufficient number of representatives who would represent them on concurrent subjects with the Provincial Government. In this resolution, the party also mentioned its desire to bring all the neighboring territories inhabited by the ethnic group of Mizo under the fold of the Mizo District.

Within a very short span, the Mizo Union gathered momentum and support came from all corners except traditional elites. The people were inclined to believe that the party was formed mainly to oppose the so- called despotic chiefs and this enhanced

¹⁷ R. Vanlawma (1972), op. cit., p. 137.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 138.

public support.¹⁹ However, the founding leaders of the party including R. Vanlawma, were soon ousted from the party by a group of new leaders, most of whom were college educated, and called themselves the 'intellectual group'. During the General Assembly of the party in September, 1946, some of its members, mostly the 'intellectual groups' began to express their distrust for the conservative and rich president Pachhunga and conspired to replace him. All of a sudden, the Assembly, decided to elect the office bearers of the party with hardly five months gap from the last election. Instead of Pachhunga, Lalhema was elected as president, Lalbiakthanga as vice- president and R. Vanlawma re-elected again as general secretary. The intra party conflict did not end here, but gained momentum when Ch. Saprawnga, at the meeting of the Mizo Union's block officers' conference held on 1st November, 1946, moved a motion of no confidence against the President and the General Secretary and succeeded in removing them from the office.²⁰ So the conference again elected new office bearers and this inevitably led to the split of the party into two camps. The split in the party brought into existence two parties—the Mizo Union Right Wing and the Mizo Union Left Wing.²¹

Political Movements and Activities of the Mizo Union:

The Mizo Union retained popular support in Mizoram upto the early seventies of the twentieth century. It won the District Council elections of 1952, 1957, and 1962 and even in 1966 when the political scenario became explosive because of the armed revolt of the Mizo National Front (MNF).

However, one of the notable activities of the Mizo Union Party was its pertinacious movement for the abolition of the Chiefs' indigenous administration. In consequence, the government of Assam abolished Chieftainship by a legislation called "The Lushai Hills (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954 which came into force on 1st April, 1954 within the jurisdiction of Lushai Hills District Council and on 15th April, 1954, in the area under the Pawi- Lakher Council of the Lushai Hills District.²² And the

¹⁹ C. Nunthara (1996), *Mizoram: Society and Polity*, p. 128.

²⁰ R. N. Prasad (1987), *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, p. 248.

²¹ K. M. Zakhuma (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 62.

²² C. R. Nag (1999), *Post Colonial Mizo Politics*, p. 76.

responsibility so long shouldered by the chiefs was taken over by the District and Regional Councils. The Mizo Union dominated Lushai Hills District Council already enacted "The Lushai Hills District (Village Council) Act, 1953 (Act No. V of 1953). Under the provision of the act, the first Village Council elections were completed on 24th July, 1954 in which the Mizo Union captured all the Village Councils. Therefore, the indigenous administration of chiefs was replaced by the Village Council administration at the singular initiative of the Mizo Union as a regional party.

Again, it was the Mizo Union, by its constant persuasion, that the name of the Lushai Hills District was changed to Mizo District by an act of Parliament called "The Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954 (Act 18 of 1954) which came into effective from 29th April, 1954. Following the change of name of the District the racial identity of the people was subsequently changed from 'Lushai' to 'Mizo'.

The Mizo Union being the majority in the District Council transferred the payment of *Fathang*²³ at a reduced rate to the District Council as land revenue after the abolition of chieftainship and also stopped payment of some other dues that were practiced during the Chiefs' governance. It also modified the indigenous practice of inheritance of property by extending the right to women also. All these were done by the Mizo Union through the Lushai Hills District Council (Mizo District Council) by getting legislation enacted during 1953- 1956.

Apart from local political and administrative activities, the Mizo Union also launched some other movements from time to time. The Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) was formed in October, 1954. Along with EITU, the Mizo Union joined B. P. Chaliha's cabinet in Assam in 1957. A. Thanglura of the Mizo Union was appointed as Chief Parliamentary Secretary in the Assam Ministry. Relation between Congress in Assam and the Mizo Union was quite cordial until 1959 when Mizoram faced severe calamity — a widespread famine, called *Mautam* in Mizo. The Mizo Union pressed the

²³ Fathang is a tax or tribute paid usually to the village chief at the time of harvest. The amount differs from one village to another village.

Assam Government for quick relief measures to the famine, but the relief rendered by the government was not sufficient to save the people from starvation and death. The attitude of the Assam Government during the famine period extremely disappointed the Mizo Union leaders.

The relationship between the Assam government and the Mizo Union further deteriorated when the government introduced the Assam Official Language Bill making Assamese as the Official Language of the state in 1960. The Mizo Union withdrew its support from the Assam Congress legislature party. In protest against the Assam Language Bill of 1960, and for the creation of a separate Hill State, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) a composite party comprising of North Eastern tribal political parties was formed in July 1960. The Mizo Union extended its support and A. Thanglura, the President of the Mizo Union became the President of APHLC.

By 1962, the Mizo Union had grown past the zenith of its glory. Again the party was weakened by the internal rivalry among its leaders. As a result, it was routed by the MNF in the election held in 1963. It came to realize that a better political goal was needed to attract the voters. This idea led them to adopt a new policy in 1963; a statehood for Mizoram. Consequently, the M. U. left the APHLC because of the demand of statehood of its own. It passed a resolution to re-affirm its stand on statehood for Mizoram in 1966 and submitted a memorandum to the Government of India. In 1972, Mizoram was granted the status of a Union Territory which was accepted by the Mizo Union.

With the change of political status, the Mizo Union won the first General Assembly of 1972 by bagging 21 seats out of 30.²⁴ Then a dramatic change in the political scenario of the Mizo Union took place. Forays were made from July 1973 for the merger with the Congress despite the fact that apart from being the oldest political party in Mizoram, it enjoyed a clear majority in the House. Hence, the Mizo Union decided to

²⁴ B. Pakem (1999), *Coalition Politics in the North- East India since Independence*, p. 109.

merge with the Congress for not only improving the political and economic future of Mizoram but also to gain favour with the Central Congress government. The Mizo Union ceased its separate political identity on 24th January, 1974, and merged with the Congress.

The United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) 1947- 1958:

UMFO was formed in opposition to the stand of the Mizo Union for merging with the Indian Union. It was formed on 5th July, 1947 with Lalmawia as its President. UMFO's main object was the merger of Mizoram with Burma on the eve of India attaining independence.²⁵The reason for this stand was that Burma, enjoying a surplus of rice production, would be able to supply rice to meet the requirement of the Mizos, particularly since Mizoram's production was scarce, and that Burma would help in flourishing trade and commerce between Mizoram and Burma.

This new party was strongly supported by the Mizo chiefs on the ground that it was the only political rival to the Mizo Union, whose political aim was the abolition of the indigenous institution of chieftainship. So to protect their interests, the chiefs extended full support to the UMFO. After losing Village Council election and District Council election of 1952, the UMFO realized its unpopularity and changed its strategy. It launched a movement for separate hill state in the North- East comprising of Manipur, Tripura, and the Autonomous Districts of Assam and North- East Frontier Agency (NEFA). It also placed its demand for a separate hill state in the north east to the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1954. But the Commission recommended the continuation of the hill districts of Assam with the existing Autonomous District Councils. This led to the formation of new political party known as Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) which came into being on 2nd October, 1954 with its headquarter at Shillong under the Chairmanship of Captain W. Sangma.²⁶Its primary aim was to strengthen the position of tribals in the north east. The other objective of the party was to secure a separate hill state comprising of the hill districts of Assam. The UMFO merged

²⁵ C. R. Nag (1999), op. cit., p. 83.

²⁶ Lalsawia (1994), *Zoram Hming- Hmel*, p. 121.

with EITU and in consequence, along with two other EITU members of Garo Hills and Khasi Jaintia Hills District, Lalmawia, an EITU member was inducted in the Assam Ministry in 1958.

Although the UMFO could neither show any remarkable achievement nor succeed in attaining majority in the elections it contested, yet its role in Mizo politics cannot be ignored. From India's independence till 1960, there were only two active political parties in Mizoram — the Mizo Union and the UMFO. The UMFO acted as a strong opposition to the Mizo Union which kept the Mizo Union, fully alert and this prevented party dictatorship in politics and administration.

The Mizo National Front (MNF):

The Mizo National Front (MNF) which rose in revolt in 1966 traced its origin to the Mizo National Famine Front which was formed in 1960 as a welfare organisation for relieving the people who were in great distress due to famine induced by *Mautam* (bamboo flowering). After the famine was over, the organisation had no purpose in continuing to exist. Therefore, on 22nd October, 1961, the MNFF dropped the word 'famine' from its name, became Mizo National Front (MNF) and came up as political party with the objective of creation of a separate and sovereign state of Mizoram.²⁷

But the seed of independent movement had been planted long before the MNF came into existence as a political party. On 21st February, 1947, a public meeting was held at Theatre Hall in Aizawl to discuss the future state of Mizoram. The meeting was chaired by Sainghinga, Assistant Superintendent and about 200 members consisting of important officials, church leaders and teachers were present in the meeting. After a long debate, the meeting decided to take vote for a resolution by rising of hand. Those who voted for independence were in majority and so the meeting passed the following resolution, "We the Mizos should have self- rule and stand on our own feet".²⁸

²⁷ K. M. Zakhuma (2001), op. cit., p. 93.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

The final declaration of the MNF as a regional party in Mizoram took place on 22nd October, 1961 with Laldenga, Lalnunmawia and S. Lianzuala as President, Vice-President and General Secretary respectively. The main objective the MNF was to make Mizoram politically free from the Indian Union and to achieve “Sovereign Independent Greater Mizoram”. By the term “Greater Mizoram”, the MNF meant the Mizo inhabited areas of Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, and Mizo Districts of Assam in India, Arakan and Chin Hills of Burma, and Chittagong Hill Tracts of East Pakistan. This newly formed MNF party’s movement was initially based on non-violent line but soon got tinged with secessionist tendencies.

When MNF came into existence, it drew following from among the members (or ex- members) of the erstwhile UMFO/ EITU and the Mizo Union party. In other words, it attracted all those who had a strong dislike for the Mizo Union. In fact, the Mizo Union stood alone as a party in opposition to the MNF movement. According to Dr. V. V. Rao, “the MNF was able to enlist the tactic sympathy and open support from all types of persons”. The factors for this ‘large scale rebellion’ according to him were: the disbandment of the Mizo dominated 2nd Battalion of the Assam Regiment in 1964, the presence of large number of discontented ex-chiefs and unemployed youths, the readiness of the Pakistan Government to help the MNF, the then Assam Chief Minister Chaliha’s patronage of the MNF in order to weaken the Mizo Union, the growing number of juvenile delinquents who gravitated towards the MNF, and the Assamese language issue. He understood the MNF movement as a popular movement rather than being a stray incident of lawlessness perpetrated by a few section of the people.²⁹

The original aims and objectives of the MNF were:

1. Integration of all the Mizo ethnic groups under one government possessing the highest degree of freedom.
2. Upgradation of the status, and the development of the economic conditions, of the Mizo people.

²⁹ V. Venkata Rao (1976), op. cit., p. 504.

3. Safeguard of the Christian religion.³⁰

The MNF contested the Assembly by- elections in two of the three Mizo District Constituencies in 1963 and won both by a comfortable majority. In the same year, it captured 145 village councils out of 411 in the elections of Aizawl sub- division. The party at the first place favoured non- violence and peace.

The MNF's taking to arms has atleast three versions according to Lalchungnunga. One is that the common membership pressed for it and the leadership had to yield. The second version is that the extremist group in the leadership wanted to start armed- insurrection and Laldenga could not resist the pressure. Thirdly, it is also said that the MNF was out and out for violence but was only buying time to collect more weapons and to find more excuses for the strike.³¹ The MNF declared Mizoram a Sovereign and Independent State with effect from the midnight of February 28- March 1, 1966 and began to attack important government installations and security camps at various places. They could capture important places except Aizawl. The MNF and all its subsidiary organizations were declared unlawful under Rule 32 of Defence of India Rules, 1962 and the MNF had to go underground and began its guerilla warfare from across the international borders. The 'go- slow' process and 'wait and see' policy of the government in this critical juncture fuelled the plan of the armed revolt by the MNF.

Further MNF Insurgency and Government Measures:

Soon after Mizoram was freed from the MNF control, the Protected and Progressive Villages (PPVs) were constituted in Mizoram in 1966 in order to provide security to the people against the activities of the insurgents. Though the Government of India was keen on restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram and welcoming the underground MNF members to normal life, incidents of unrest, attacks of the MNF and counter attacks of the Indian Army continued to stay for quite a number of years. The MNF leaders Laldenga and others were in constant contact with other nations to get

³⁰ Lalchungnunga (1994), op. cit., p. 84.

³¹ Ibid., p. 85.

assistance and recognition. Efforts were made by the MNF leaders to explain to the world the rationale of their liberation movement. They approached the United Nations office in Pakistan and handed over a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the UNO. Their contact with the Pakistan authority was, however, a regular feature. Some nations responded to their appeal with helps while others kept aloof. The MNF also kept in touch with the rebels of Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura. Inside Mizoram, amid strong security measures, the MNF's frequent serving of "Quit Mizoram Notice" for non- Mizos in public places, regular collection of from the non- Mizos, killing and looting remained in vogue.

In spite of the insurgents' activities committed by Laldenga and his MNF party, the Government of India continued to make all possible efforts to bring back peace and normalcy in Mizoram and stop the underground activities of the MNF. Even the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi responded to peace talks with the MNF and the first rounds of talks were held in 1976. A "Peace Accord" as signed by Laldenga on behalf of the MNF and S. L. Khurana, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs on behalf of the Government of India on 1st July, 1976. But peace remained elusive, and accord only a document. Intermittent talks between the two sides yielded no positive result until the Churches in Mizoram on 31st May, 1982 appealed to the Government of India and the MNF to hasten the end of uncertainties. Following this, Laldenga approached the Government of India for "Cease Fire" in Mizoram on 2nd October, 1984.

After the death of Indira Gandhi in 1984, her successor Rajiv Gandhi gave priority to the problems that his mother had taken up but had left unresolved. At his instance the negotiations between the MNF and the AICC took place on 25th July, 1986 followed by a "Political Accord" signed by Laldenga on behalf of the MNF and R. D. Pradhan, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and Lalkhama, Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram on behalf of the Government of India.

By this "Political Accord" of 1986 the MNF, coming down from its earlier stand of attaining "Sovereign Independent Mizoram", accepted Statehood for Mizoram granted

by the Government of India. It is relevant to point out the fact that by the time the peace accord was signed, the Congress government was both at the center and in the Union Territory. The Congress- I decided to vacate the seat of Chief Minister- ship of Mizoram for the MNF leader Laldenga for the interim period until the first assembly election in the full- fledged State of Mizoram. Upholding the Peace Accord of 1986 between the Government of India and the MNF, the Parliament passed the Constitution 53rd Amendment Bill and the State of Mizoram Bill (1986) on 7th August, 1986 which upgraded the status of the existing Union Territory of Mizoram into a full- fledged State of the Indian Union. The result was that Mizoram became the 23rd State of the Indian Union with 40 member single chamber Legislative Assembly, three Districts, nine Sub- Divisions and three Autonomous Hill District Council on 20th February, 1987. Also according to the provisions of Memorandum of Settlement, the MNF Party's constitution was amended and re- organized accordingly.

The Indian National Congress:

The Indian National Congress party was first established in Mizoram by A. Thanglura on 11th April, 1961. The party was headed by A. Thanglura as president, Lalsawia as vice president, Lalthankima as general secretary and Hrangchhuana as treasurer. This body was formed as the first adhoc committee of the party. In the following year in 1962, a conference of the congress workers held in Aizawl formally constituted the Mizo District Congress Committee (MDCC) and proceeded to elect its office bearers consisting of the president, A. Thanglura, the vice president, Lalthangliana, the treasurer, Hrangchhuana and the general secretary Zalawma.³²

Initially, the Mizo people, at large, regarded the party as an organisation of *Vais* (outsiders) which would hamper the existence of Mizo custom and culture. Due to this and several other reasons, the Unit of the Indian National Congress could not make much headway. A. Thanglura, the President of the District Committee was stationed in Shillong, and thus the organisation lacked leadership and systematic hierarchical organisation at home. The majority of the hill people did not appreciate the party

³² A. Thanglura (1982), *Zoram Politic Lumleh Dan*, p. 180.

dominated by outsiders and regarded it as an instrument of exploitation. Furthermore, regional feelings had taken deep roots in the party politics especially in Mizo politics. The regional tendencies of the Mizo coupled with the popularity of the Mizo Union and the MNF did not allow the Indian National Congress to hold a strong footing in Mizoram. Lastly, the language policy of the Congress Government in Assam in 1960 also had adverse impact on the fortunes of the party in Mizoram. As a result, the Congress party suffered setback, and fared badly in the Assembly Election of 1962 and the 1963 Bye-election.³³

From the very beginning, the Congress party was debilitated by the internal fighting between two groups, one headed by R. Dengthuama, and the other by Hrangchhuana who was favoured by the party president, A. Thanglura. This factionalism got intensified as time passed and continued to wreak havoc on the party organizational efficiency for quite a long time. The year following the outbreak of insurgency, elections to the General Assembly was held in 1967. None dared to file nominations from the Congress party except the President who contested from 2 constituencies, Aizawl West and Aizawl East. He was elected uncontested and though this was an ignoble action in the side of the people, it marked an important turning point in the political history of the Congress party. Since then, it gained in popularity. Thus, the Indian National Congress emerged as a strong party in 1967 out of the troubled situation created by the MNF insurgency.³⁴

The development of party politics in Mizoram since 1966 onwards went in favour of the Congress Party in the District. The Congress openly advocated 'Political Settlement' with the MNF, and this helped them to win the District Council election of 1970. Since then the Congress came to control the Mizo Hill District Council but factionalism within the party became more and more prominent. In the course of a year, the Executive Council was toppled twice. The group led by Dengthuama joined the Mizo Union and the rest remained aligned to A. Thanglura.

³³ R. N. Prasad (1987), *op. cit.*, p. 263.

³⁴ K. M. Zakhuma (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 85.

In the wake of the MNF insurgency, the Pastaskar Commission had floated the idea of the Constitution of the Mizo Hill District into a Union Territory, and the Government of India accepted the proposal in July, 1971. The Mizoram Congress was unhappy with the idea but the District Council welcomed it. The Congress workers of the District met Indira Gandhi in September, 1971 and asserted that they may even prefer the Status quo but this was not accepted by the Centre.³⁵

Apart from its national programmes, the Congress in Mizoram laid emphasis on the establishment of peace and was concerned with peaceful settlement of the Mizo political problem as well as with the rapid economic development of Mizoram. The party talked of statehood, the integration of the contiguous areas inhabited by the Mizos with the present Mizoram and industrialization of the state. In spite of all these programmes, the Congress continued to suffer serious setbacks due to split and disunity. Since its very inception, the Congress party in Mizoram had been personality oriented party with complete non-attachment principles and divorced from ideological conditions.³⁶

Merger of Mizo Union with the Congress:

In 1973, a significant trend emerged in Mizo politics when the ruling Mizo Union and the Congress decided to merge unconditionally. While the Congress wanted active involvement in the administration of the territory, the Mizo Union longed to join national mainstream to receive patronage from the Centre by merging with the ruling Indian National Congress. The merger took place on 24th January, 1974 and was approved by the Congress High Command. Accordingly, the Congress came into power in the territory with the merger of the Mizo Union within its fold and completed its five year tenure till May 1977. But they failed to win the 1978 and 1979 General Elections but managed to come back to power in the 1984 General Election of the Territory with Lalthanhawla, the President of the party as the Chief Minister.

³⁵ Lalrimawia, "Indian National Congress (Mizoram Unit) and its Role in Mizoram Politics", *Historical Journal of Mizoram* (July 2004), vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 94.

³⁶ R. N. Prasad (1987), *op. cit.*, p. 294.

The Congress took quite a long time to establish itself as a dominant party in Mizoram. It has been mentioned that lack of unity and dynamic leadership were the main weakness of the party. This certainly hampered the development of the party. After the Mizo Union merged into Congress and became the ruling party in 1974, things began to turn in favour of the party. The whole economy of rural Mizoram had shattered under the weight of guerilla warfare and the people were impoverished. From the very beginning, the party stood for permanent settlement of the political problems of Mizoram and advocate peace talks between the Centre and the MNF. The signing of the 'peace accord' and the stepping down from the ruling ministry by the Congress party left important impact in the political development of Mizoram.

FACTORS LEADING TO THE FORMATION AND GROWTH OF THE PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE:

Since the early part of 1966, Mizoram remained a notified disturbed area on account of the insurgent activities of the MNF. In the first legislative Assembly election of the UT in 1972, the MU party returned with absolute majority and later merged with the Congress in 24th January, 1974. However, the state of political disturbance was so critical that it was not possible for a democratically elected government to maintain law and order. In such a circumstance, the law and order situation was maintained by the Indian Army. Especially in rural areas, where the MNF hideouts were located, the army was a law unto itself. The Army had an overwhelming control of the whole territory and looked after the day to day affairs of the administration during this period. People felt powerless to react to the injustice suffered from the excesses of military operations. They found neither political leaders nor civil administrators who were ready and willing to protect the rights of civilians which were being trampled upon by the army. It was at this hour that Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, a retired Army Officer came to Mizoram and became the spokesman for civil liberty.

Formation of the Human Rights Committee:

The emergence of People's Conference Party can be traced to the formation of 'Human Rights Committee' on 22nd June, 1974, which was set up to protect the rights

and dignity of the Mizos. It was headed by Brig T. Sailo, the founder President of the party.³⁷ The Human Rights Committee, since its inception, set about opposing the army atrocities. In a short period of time, the Committee secured larger support from all the sections of the society. The chairman Brig. T. Sailo toured the country side, explaining what the army can and cannot do under the law and also explained to the public their right under the law. Wherever he went, he also met the security forces and urged them not to act in excess of the law which could defame the reputation of the army. The public also became more enlightened and greatly appreciated what the Human Rights Committee was doing.

After assessing the atrocities committed by the Army which poured in from various quarters of the Union Territory, a Memorandum was sent to the Prime Minister of India on 16th October, 1974, copies of which were sent to leading newspapers across the country. This had the desired effect and within a year the officers of the Army at various levels displayed a change of attitude.

Birth of People's Conference Party:

The leaders of the Human Rights Committee felt the need of a change in the prevailing political situation in Mizoram. They also realized the necessity of an organizational overhaul to make the Committee more efficient. The leaders of the Committee had a meeting at the residence of Vanlalhraia, Chaltlang in Aizawl to chalk out the approach towards forming a new political party and resolved to convene a People's Conference at Theatre Hall in Aizawl.³⁸ Therefore, a meeting was called on 15th to 17th April, 1975 for which invitations were sent to all the Village Councils throughout Mizoram.

The response was good and the Conference was well attended, with representatives from 192 villages and a total of 822 delegates attended the Conference. After two days of deliberations, the Conference unanimously endorsed the proposal made

³⁷ Kenneth Chawngliana (2002), *Mizoram Hruaitute Sulhnu*, p. 5.

³⁸ Ngurthankima Sailo "Emergence of People's Conference Party in Mizoram and its Role in the Development of Mizoram", *Historical Journal of Mizoram* (July 2004), Vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 94.

by Chuanvawra Tlau and a resolution was passed for the formation of a new political party on the 17th April, 1975 under the chairmanship of Lalsawia, Ex- CEM. Thus, was born a new party, albeit one without a name. However, in a matter of days, delegate started referring to the new party as “People’s Conference” (PC) Party.³⁹ Thus, spontaneously and by unwritten consensus the new Party was named People’s Conference Party. An adhoc Committee of office bearers was formed and the following persons were selected:

President- Brig. T. Sailo
Vice President- Rev. Sakhawliana M. A., B. D.
Consultants- Dr. Rothuama, MBBS
J. Kapthianga
Thangridema
Treasurer- Zalianchhunga.
General Secretary- Zairemthanga.

The PC Party adopted a ‘*Cockerel*’ as the symbol of the party and a *Scale* as the Party Election Symbol. It also adopted ‘*Green*’ as the colour of the Party Flag.

Aims and Objectives of the People’s Conference Party:

1. The party will endeavour to prepare grounds for peaceful solution of the Mizo political problem.
2. The Party aims at the unification of all Mizo inhabited contiguous areas now forming parts of India, under a single administrative unit.
3. The Party stands for the wishes of the people to preserve their distinct identity Ethnically, Culturally and Socially.
4. The interest of the people and Mizoram shall be the guiding principles with overriding priority and precedence over those of the Party.
5. The Party will vow for speedy economic advancement with special emphasizes on rural development.

³⁹ Kenneth Chawngliana (2002), op. cit., p. 14.

6. The Party will uphold the aims and objectives of the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the Party also selected the following political principles for its foundations:

- Non- Violence, Justice and Truth.
- Vindication of Fundamental Rights of the Mizo people as guaranteed in the Constitution of India.
- Solution of any political problems through Constitutional means within India by negotiation.
- Creation of atmosphere of goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation between Law and Order enforcement agencies and the general public.

The new Party taught the people on the basis of the following issue:

1. The Human Rights of the people.
2. Assimilation: Firstly to prevent commercial exploitation of the Mizo by traders from outside and preventing from the uncontrolled influx of Non- Mizos into Mizoram. Secondly, to put a stop to the increasing influx of the Chakmas into Mizoram (who are neither Mizo, nor Indian) and their uncontrolled entry into Mizoram, this posed a danger of assimilation to the Mizos.
3. Boundary Issue: To reconstruct the correct boundary of Mizoram as was agreed upon by the British Expedition Force and the Mizo Chief, Suakpuilala in a signed document of 1875, and not as given in the North East Area Reorganization Act, 1971.
4. Economic Self- Sufficiency.
5. Ethnic Identity.

Origin of the People's Conference Party:

Various factors can be attributed to the birth of the People's Conference:

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

- First and foremost, the founder of the party, Brig. T. Sailo endeared himself to the people as a courageous, dutiful, brilliant, brave, hard- working, dedicated and efficient leader.
- Secondly, a number of members from the Mizo Union Party could not accept the merger of their party with the Indian National Congress and its entry into the mainstream politics which they regarded as *Vai Pawl* (non- Mizo Party).they, thus choose to shift loyalty to the People's Conference.
- Thirdly, despite the various efforts made by the Mizo Union- Congress merger government towards the suspension of forced grouping of villages, it was still carried on. Adding fuel to fire, the army committed various types of atrocities on the civil population. In such a situation, Brig. T. Sailo, a high ranking ex- army officer made his presence felt as the perceived saviour of the people.
- Fourthly, the issue of ethnic identity and the dangers of assimilation by the population of the neighboring states and countries, raised by the party workers could win the support of the people at large.
- Lastly, the Mizo people as a whole saw the Party headed by Brig Sailo as a preferable alternative to the Mizo Union – Congress combine government so far as the solution of the Mizo political problem was concerned.

All these factors helped the People's Conference in gaining popularity and supporters. As a result, in the By- Election for 22 Village Councils held between the later part of 1975 upto mid 1976, the PC party won 20 seats and the ruling Congress could retain only 2 Village Council seats.⁴¹ In the meantime, Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared Internal Emergency on 20th June, 1975 and Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was also passed. Following this, thousands of political leaders were arrested including the leaders of the PC Party. When the emergency was lifted and the Lok Sabha election was held on 19th April, 1977, PC party candidate Dr. Rothuama won over his three rivals and became the first PC member to become a member of the Lok Sabha.⁴² In the meantime, the term of the Congress Ministry in Mizoram expired in early May, 1977 but due to the

⁴¹ Ngurthankima Sailo, op. cit., p. 94.

⁴² Ibid., p. 97.

so called 'Peace Talk' between the Central Government and the MNF, Assembly election could not be held. Consequently, President's Rule was imposed on 11th May, 1977.

The First People's Conference Party Ministry of 1978:

The Janata Government at the Centre decided to hold Assembly elections in Mizoram in May, 1978. In this election, the PC Party won 22 seats out of 30 seats and formed its first ministry headed by Brig. T. Sailo as Chief Minister.⁴³ The birth of the PC Ministry coincided with the commencement of the 6th Five- year Plan and the task before the new ministry was to prepare the Mizoram sixth Five- Year Plan. In order to chalk out the strategic approach, a meeting of the Cabinet Minister, Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner was held at Raj Niwas Conference Room under the Chairmanship of N. P. Mathur, Lt. Governor of Mizoram in June, 1978. In this meeting, the Chief Minister evolved the strategic aims of the five year plan and stressed that all future development plan for Mizoram should be 'Basic Needs' oriented which are Food, Water Supply, Power, Communication, Transport System and Rural Development commonly known as 'the Six Basic Needs'.⁴⁴ The party took the question of 'assimilation' very seriously. It also took some measures for repatriation of illegal infiltrators and for preventing further infiltration of foreigners into Mizoram. the party also took up the question of Mizoram- Cachar boundary and Inner Line Reserves and appointed study group towards this.⁴⁵ While peace settlement between the Government of India and the underground MNF was still pending, the PC Ministry demanded special status for Mizoram with constitutional safeguards to Mizos and Mizoram in terms of ownership and transfer of lands, socio- cultural protection and economic provisions.

Split within the Party:

While the new ministry worked towards implementing its plans and programmes, disunity within the party resulted in the splitting of the PC party into two. Eight PC MLAs led by Thangridema flayed their non- inclusion in the Ministry, alleged loss of confidence in T. Sailo's leadership and rebelled against the party. The dissidents brought

⁴³ Lalchungnunga (1994), op. cit., p. 92.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 93

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 94.

about the dissolution of the PC ministry and formed the PC (B), thus reducing the ministry to a minority. The eight PC (B) MLAs with the support of the opposition MLAs then staked claims for forming the new government. The ideological basis of its existence was in no way different from the PC (A), except on the issue of approach towards peace in Mizoram.

At this time, the then Prime Minister, Moraji Desai came to Aizawl on a state visit. He met the two opposing groups separately and disregarding the claims of the dissident groups for 'an alternative government', accepted the recommendation of the Chief Minister. On reaching Delhi, he directed the Lt. Governor of Mizoram to dissolve the Mizoram Assembly which was carried out on 11th November, 1978 and President's Rule was imposed for a while and orders for fresh election were issued.⁴⁶

The Second Ministry:

When fresh elections were held on 24th and 27th April, 1979, the PC Party, despite the split in the party, could win 18 seats out of 30 Assembly seats. Brig. T. Sailo retained the chair of the Chief Minister. The second PC Ministry lasted its full term of five years despite the combine efforts of the Congress- I and the MNF outfit to hamper their development works. Despite the various efforts put forth by the Ministry, due to the time constrains and unhealthy politics prevailing in Mizoram, they could not complete those projects and programmes during their short tenure of about 5 ½ years. Ever since they were voted out of power in 1984, they have not been able to stage a comeback on their own.

⁴⁶ Ngurthankima Sailo, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

CHAPTER 3

ISSUE OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, IDEOLOGY AND PROGRAMMES OF MIZORAM PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE (MPC) PARTY:

In this chapter, an attempt is made to understand the role of leadership in the political party and its contribution in mobilizing the votes. This chapter will also seek to address how the Mizoram People's Conference under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo achieved political powers and their failures in the late period. It will discuss the strategies and plans adopted by him to strengthen the party, whether his policy really works out for the development of the party. At the end of the chapter, an attempt will be made to study the ideology and programmes of the party.

INTRODUCTION:

Leadership like power has been an age-long concern of a political theory. The problem of political leadership has been one of the new dimensions of the political systems. It constitutes an important characteristic of modern political process. The pressing needs of rapid social change have brought transformation in the social structure with alterations in the old values and attitudes as well. These structural and functional changes in the political systems have called for increased direction and decisions by the government and political leadership has been of immense value in modern times.¹

Leadership and authority in political parties are complex phenomena.² Different communities and different periods in time throw up different styles of leadership. The leadership may be based either on the tenure of the office or the formal situation the person is holding, or on his personal qualities.³ In the former case, the leader represents social control, while the latter depends on his personal capacity to influence the people.

¹ J. R. Friedrich Carl (1963), *Man and his Government. An Empirical Theory of Politics*, p. 170.

² David Taylor, "The crisis of Authority in Indian National Congress" in B. N. Pandey, ed., (1979), *Leadership in South Asia*, p. 321.

³ P. K. Bandyopadhyay, *Leadership among the Mizos*, p. 3.

Whatever may be the source of power, a domination subordination relationship develops in a given group when the interaction is not on a parity vis-à-vis group policy.

DEFINING LEADERSHIP:

The term 'leader' means various things to people, but it suggests an image of action and power of one person directing others. Leadership is a process of influence between the leader and those who are followers. While the leader may have powers, influence depends more on persuasion than on coercion. The concept of leadership ranges from an authority that demands absolute admission from others to hold an agency that seeks co operations and agreement in achievements of groups' goals and objectives. According to Weber, Leadership is a process by which people were forward towards to common goal and purpose. "Leadership" says Jennings "appears to reside not in any personality trait considered singly, nor even in a constellation of related traits, but in the interpersonal contribution of which the individual becomes capable in specific settings eliciting such contribution from him."⁴ Leadership is also considered as a role of an individual in a particular setting. Leadership is not an attitude of the personality but a quality of his role within a particular and specified social system. The creative role played by the political leaders in a democratic system need no elaborate recapitulation.⁵ Leadership is not an attitude of the personality but a quality of his role within particular and specified social systems.

The concept of leadership obviously encourages personal and social development of the group members. It relates itself to a sympathetic concern for others, promotes better and understanding between them and assures security of feeling for each other and in the process, he himself may be affected by the demands of those who are led. The creative role played by the political leaders in a democratic system need no elaborate recapitulation. In a developing society, the forces of traditionalism and modernization are both at work, hence, the role of the political leaders become still more difficult. They

⁴ See H. H. Jennings (1950), *Leadership and Isolation*, p. 203.

⁵ G. James Hunt (1996), *Leadership, A New Synthesis*, p. 24.

have to articulate, canalize and balance the diverse and confused demands of several competitive groups living in the society.

Types of Leadership:

An attempt is made to briefly examine three types of leadership. According to Hugh Tinker, there are three types of leadership. 1) Traditional, 2) Traditional- Modern and 3) Modern.⁶ Traditional leaders are those who claim their legitimacy of tradition. These leaders enjoy prescriptive rights over the group or without while the in-group leader having a limited area of his influence either as lead of a clan, village or being a religious lead, might exercise profound influence within his own circle. The out- group leader, on the other hand, mostly derives his power and influence from hereditary status. The examples of such leaders- kings and princes are found in the history. But traditional leadership has changed its form and function and it has acquired some modern elements as a result of political socialization processes. Traditional- modern leadership has often rested upon the success of ascriptive leadership in taking over an achievement role under the new dispensation. The traditional- modern leaders are able to preserve their aloofness and simultaneously some in close contact with the multitudes by exercising their acquired influence.⁷ Lastly, modern political leadership emerges from within the group. Modern leaders draw their powers and influences as much from the traditional affiliations of the old group as from promoting responsible participation and re- enforcing co- operative inter- personal relations within the group. Thus, modern leadership suggests the need for special skills, personality resources and knowledge of dynamic of leadership on the part of the leader.

There are some other types of leaders also being found generally. They are 1) the Authoritarian leader 2) Democratic leader and 3) the Laissez- faire leader.⁸ The authoritarian leader commands and controls the group more directly than the democratic leader does. He claims absolute authority, of control and planning over them. He

⁶ Hugh Tinker (1964), *Ballot Box and Beyond, People and Government in Emergent Asian Countries*, p. 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁸ B. N. Pandey (1995), *Leadership in South Asia*, p. 46.

determines the politics of the group and prepares the plan of operation for the followers. The role of the democratic leader involves encouragement of active participation of all the members in pursuit of the group objectives. He seeks to spread responsibility rather than to concentrate it. The group leader does not enforce his decisions on others. He encourages inter- personal relations between the group members and seeks happy interactions to reduce tension and hostility. The third type of laissez- faire is the go lucky type who does not bother much and let things go their own way.

Leadership in India followed the pattern of other colonial countries till its independence. The pattern of political loyalty and political leadership has undergone changes after independence. Rural India has passed through a period of transition. The new social and economic forces have geared up the large- scale development plans. Under impact of modernizing processes in the post- independent period, the traditional leadership has emerged on the scene.

Functions of an effective political party depends upon several factors like the social content of its programme, its election performance, the network of various alliances and linkages which it forges at the time of election, its social base and recruitment policy, its formal and informal organizational structure, and the socio-economic background of its members with the greater participation of the people in the political processes after independence and especially after the launching of five- year plans, a wider avenue was opened up for display of leadership competence. The post- Gandhian era saw the proliferation of politicians at different levels. It brought into broad focus the juxtapositions have the centrifugal and centripetal forces. As a result of new politico- administration style of leadership emerged with the disappearance of the 'classical' style with an accent on intellectualism and for sacrifice. The states as units of the Indian federation became important centres of political power. The regional political parties that successfully contested with the Congress party and other all- India parties brought about a significant change not only in the party system but also in the leadership pattern as well.⁹ The new leaders who emerged at the state level were drawn mostly from

⁹ Mukherjee, Bharati (1991), *Political Culture and Leadership in India*, p. 67.

the regional milieu. These regional leaders played an important role in capturing the levels of power controlling the channels of inter- party communication of the political base of the democratic framework.

LEADERSHIP PATTERN OF THE PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE:

A regional political party, the People's Conference was originally a conversion of the "Human Rights Committee" instituted by a retired Brigadier Thenphunga Sailo in 1974. The party was built by Brig. T. Sailo and his associates, who were the veteran leaders of the Human Rights Committee. Four months after his retirement from military service, then enjoying a retired life, Brig. T. Sailo received a message from Lalkhama IAS, the then Development Commissioner, Government of Mizoram requesting him to proceed to Mizoram at once and see for himself the increasing level of strained relation between the Army and the public. On reaching Aizawl, he quickly assessed the situation and learned that the army in operation in Mizoram had denied the rights of the Mizos. He, therefore, decided to form Human Rights Committee which would restore basic rights to the Mizo people, which later turned itself into a regional political party.

The People's Conference, under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo was just the type of regional party the people were yearning for during the time of army atrocities, whose main aim is to protect the rights and dignity of the Mizo people. Another plus point was that people had the impression that it was having a friendly relationship with the underground MNF. A leadership which could assert itself and boldly speak against the army atrocities and maintain a good relationship with the underground MNF enjoyed all the advantages to come up during those days.¹⁰ Besides Brig. T. Sailo proved himself courageous, dutiful, industrious, brilliant, brave, hard- working, dedicated, prompt and efficient leader. Being a retired Brigadier of the Indian Army with good service record, the Mizo people looked upto T. Sailo to deliver them from their sufferings under the strong- arm policy. He stated, "The Human Rights Committee in Mizoram set about opposing the Army atrocities. I went around the countryside explaining what the Army can do and cannot do under the law. I also explained to the Public their rights under the

¹⁰ Lalchungnunga, op. cit., p. 89.

law. In a short time, the Army showed some sign of response, and the Public became a little more enlightened and showed great appreciation to what the HRC was trying to do".¹¹ A memorandum was sent by Brig. T. Sailo to the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the following terms,

It must be accepted that the present trouble in Mizoram is not a military problem. It is a political problem and consequently a human problem- a battle of the hearts. The most ruthless measures were.....the so-called grouping centres, reminiscent a concentration camp. The Security Forces have tried to intimidate the public with all manners of atrocities and ill- treatment. However, this strong Army method has not brought about any solution. On the contrary, it has driven solution even farther away. It has only engendered bitterness and hatred against the Security Forces and consequently, India.¹²

One can say that the political leadership of Mizoram People's Conference Party since its formation is based on traditional- modern type. Its founder president, Brig. T. Sailo sought to maintain a balance between the traditional leaders like the earlier politicians of the Mizos who had joined PC Party and the new- emerging educated young Mizos. He could also attract those from outside his party due to his efficiency, policies and charismatic leadership. However, all the leaders of the party are not the same. They differed among themselves in respect of political orientation and motivation.

The structural organisation of the party is similar to other regional parties with the general headquarter at the capital, area headquarters at the district level, block committee at the constituency level and the village level unit organizations at the bottom of the hierarchical structure. The highest authority of the party is the general assembly which is convened at least once in a year. There is a central executive committee at the general headquarters which deals with day to day administration of the party. Besides this, the party has a well organized youth wing, women's wing and *Upa Pawl* (senior wing) dealing with various activities of the party. On all important occasions, the members of the party used to wear '*Tawlloh Puan*' (a traditional shawl) symbolizing the traditional wear of Mizo warriors.

¹¹ Brig. Thenphunga Sailo (2002), *A Soldier's Story*, p. 102.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

At the same time, the leadership pattern of the party is also based on the pattern of authoritarian type of leadership, like most of the regional political parties in India. The party's structure and organization involves around Brig. T. Sailo, who is also the founder president of the party. There could be many factors which can contribute to the reason why Brig. T. Sailo able to lead the party and raised upto the leading political party during the time of political disturbance in Mizoram. The reasons which can attribute to his success and popularity could be explained in the following ways:-

- The concept of human rights – before and during the time of political disturbance was unknown to the Mizo people. Brig. T. Sailo founded the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in 1974. As mentioned earlier, Brig. T. Sailo himself having been a high ranking and popular Indian Officer knew only too well the disproportionate acts of the army and the resultant sufferings of the people at large. With the view to ensure that the unnecessary sufferings of the people come to an end and that the security forces also act within the permissible limits of the law in dealing with the public, and that the relationship between the army and the civilians become more cordial to the advantages of all, he founded HRC and taught the people their rights as a human being, and their rights are protected by the Constitution. He therefore, enlightened the masses on the new concept of human rights.
- Charismatic leadership – being a retired Army Officer, Brig. Sailo was a leader whom people can look upto and he has all the good qualities that a leader should have. He really understood the problems of the masses and traveled all corners of Mizoram to see the problems and courageously, fight for their rights. Due to his charismatic leadership, the party could attract masses from every corner.
- Taught the people on the basis of assimilation – when PC party was formed, Brig. T. Sailo used “Assimilation” as his propaganda, taught the people on the basis of assimilation from the non- Mizos. He strongly condemned the formation of “Chakma District Council” in 1971 at the time of formation of Union Territory of Mizoram, claiming that the Chakmas are Bangladeshis, who illegally migrated to

the southern part of Mizoram.¹³ Besides this, he also convinced the masses that the Congress- Mizo Union merger ministry gave Trading Permit to the non-Mizos illegally and claiming that this can lead to assimilation regarding economic development to the 'sons of the soil'. This teaching of the people on the basis of assimilation to protect minority and for speedy economic development increased the popularity of Brig. T. Sailo.

- Taught the people on the idea of regionalism and favour towards regional political party – during the time of political disturbance, the feelings of regionalism and regional sentiments got increased. Taking advantage of this, Brig. T. Sailo tried to influence the masses saying that regional political parties would strengthen the feelings of regional sentiments. Regional political parties are more effective than national parties. During the time of political disturbance, people were looking up to any regional political party who could meet their regional demands, as the only regional party at that time, the Mizo Union merged with the Indian National Congress. Naturally, when People's Conference was formed, masses supported their ideology and objectives of the party and joined the party in great number under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo.
- Hard working person – unlike other politicians, Brig. T. Sailo is a man of his word. A dedicated, sincere and hard- working leader. He was totally against corruption and corrupt practices in the administration of the government. During his tenure as the Chief Minister of Mizoram, he laid many important developmental projects especially hydro- electricity and infra- structures. Rural development was his main priority and to achieve this, self- sufficiency in hydel projects was necessary. He biggest hydel project so far- "Bairabi Hydel Project" was started by his ministry. Besides, road transportation was also rapidly improved. He created a friendly atmosphere with the Boarder Roads Task Forces (BTRF), who took up the construction work in Mizoram. All these factors show how the People's Conference achieved popularity under the leadership of Brig T. Sailo.

¹³ Kenneth Chawngliana (2002), *Mizoram Hruaitute Sulhnu (Volume- 1)*, p. 23.

At the same time, Brig. T. Sailo tried to tackle the problem of Mizo insurgency by mobilizing public opinion against insurgency and by using police action against the rebels, as he felt that the MNF insurgency was the reason behind the slow progress of development works. Political negotiation with the MNF became a black spot in his political career and by 1984 general election; his party had fallen into disgrace due to the bitter relationship between the PC Party and the underground MNF.

By analyzing the leadership pattern of the Mizoram People's Conference Party, one can say that it followed traditional- modern type of leadership, with authoritarian leader, whose main priority is the speedy economic development of Mizoram and the material well- being of the people of the state.

IDEOLOGY OF THE PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE PARTY:

Political ideology or doctrine is a type of political theory, which upholds certain political systems and values and ideals that sustains it, as the final proximation of the human mind to an ideal arrangement, and claiming this finality seeks to realize it. Political parties are said to be 'most important ideological carrier and interpreter'. It is the key to an understanding of a political party. It tends to significantly influence a party in its organization. According to S. N. Sadasivan, ideology is the religion of the party with a meaningful end and the motivations necessary for mobilizing its organization to achieve that end.¹⁴ Ideology constitutes the minor of the core values of a political party and political parties are said to be the most important ideological carrier and interpreter. Ideology from the social- scientific viewpoint is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basic for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power relationship.¹⁵ Ideologies are not, however, hermetically sealed system of thought; rather, they are fluid sets of ideas that overlap with one another at a number of points. At the 'fundamental' level, ideology resembles political philosophies; at an 'operative' level, they take the form of broad political movements.

¹⁴ S. N. Sadasivan (1997), *Party and Democracy in India*, p. 252.

¹⁵ Andrew Heywood (2002), *Politics*, p. 43.

Political parties, from the stand- point of their ideological foundations, may broadly be divided into two groups – rightists and leftists. The parties that believe in status quo maintenance or seek peaceful changes are the rightists' parties. Leftists parties on the other hand mainly advocate for revolutionary methods. No political party can exist without some sort of ideology. A set of objectives, a plan of action and strategies tactics to be followed is *sin qua non-* for any political process in a democratic policy. India is no exception to this. The regional and state based parties take a variety of regional and non-regional ideological positions. Many such parties are personality based and centered around one leader. Yet, formation of a political party requires an ideological location even if it only like a fig leaf as far as legitimation of the party's existence is concerned.

Generally in India, the regional political parties always propagate the ideology of regionalism or thrive on innovation regional pride. The Indian political parties can be divided on the basis of 'ideological zones'. One ideological zone is represented by the rhetoric of social justice (Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party, BSP etc). Another is represented by regional identity (Akali Dal, AGP, DMK, AIADMK etc). The third ideological zone is occupied by the idea of political Hindutva. The fourth is the ideology of neo- liberalism (Congress, BJP and many others). The fifth zone is represented by the anti- globalization position. The sixth ideological zone would be characterized by the developmental logic (BJD, Telegu Desam Party).¹⁶ Against this background of the ideological foundations of political parties in India, an attempt has been made to study the ideology of Mizoram People's Conference Party.

The People's Conference which emerged as a regional political party in 1974 followed the ideology of development logic. And mostly, it contests elections with the slogan of 'development and infra- structure in Mizoram', apart from trying to solve the insurgency problem, the speedy and all- round development of the Union Territory was the main concern of the party. At the beginning of its formation, one of the aims and

¹⁶ Suhas Palshikar, *Revisiting State Level Political Parties*, EPW, vol. 39, No. 14, April 3- 10, 2004. p. 1478.

objectives of the party was – speedy economic development with special emphasizes on rural development. The main aims and objectives of the party at are:

1. The party will endeavour to prepare grounds for the peaceful solution of the Mizo political problem.
2. The party will aim at the unification of all Mizo inhabited contiguous areas now forming parts of India under a single administrative unit.
3. The party stands for the wishes of the people to preserve their distinct identity ethnically, culturally and socially while upholding the integrity of India.
4. The interest of the people of Mizoram shall be the guiding principle with overriding priority and precedence over those of the party.
5. The party will work for the speedy economic development with special emphasis on rural development.
6. The party will uphold the aims and objectives of the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram.¹⁷

The aims and objectives of the People's Conference depict the nature and orientation of a strictly regional party, founded on the ethico- cultural base. Two points of its difference from other regional political parties were that it put down in black and white its interest in peaceful solution of the Mizo problem, and that it respected the human rights. The stand of the People's Conference party on the question of regionalism is explained by Brig. T. Sailo himself thus,

.....the Mizo people are deeply weeded to the concept of regional party as opposed to all-India party. I want to take this opportunity of once- again clarifying our party stand vis- a-vis all-India party. For some valid and special reason we want to retain regional party. Though regional in character, the PC party has a national outlook and stands fully committed to the integrity and solidarity of the Indian Union and will work towards strengthening the fibre of national unity and territorial integrity. Further, we have a working understanding with the ruling party at the Centre.....we have pledge full co- operation with the ruling party both inside and outside Parliament in pursuit of the principles of secular democracy based on respect of human rights and the protection of interests of the tribal groups and other backward classes and minority.¹⁸

¹⁷ Brig. T. Sailo, op. cit., p 142.

¹⁸ *Public Speech* delivered by Brig. T. Sailo at the Assam Rifles Parade Ground, Aizawl on 5th May, 1979, published by the PC General Headquarter, Aizawl.

He also explained the 'regional in character but national in outlook' concept at another place thus,

I wish to point out two possible extremes. Firstly, some of our people may tend to look at things too much in compartmental fashion and overlook matter of national importance. This will not be the right attitude because main events at national level also concerns us intimately because we are apart of the same country. Secondly and vice- versa, national leaders in Delhi, looking at things from an over all picture, may tend to submerge our identities in the swirling current of national activities and altogether obliterate our regional character. Apart from that, it is the wish of our people to maintain our respective identity ethnically, socially and culturally.¹⁹

The regionalism of the People's Conference is very clear from these words. It is an attempt to strike a workable balance between the regional sentiments of the Mizo people and the pull of centralization re- enforced by one party dominance.

The Human Rights concept, one of the important factors on which the objective and ideology of the party was based upon was a new concept which was taught by Brig. T. Sailo. During the time of political disturbance in Mizoram, the rights of the people were unheard among the Mizos. Therefore, People's Conference party taught the people and traveled throughout Mizoram to spread the awareness among the people. The Human Rights Committee in numerous ways, afforded enlightenment to the public in regard to the discrimination of knowledge of the existing laws and rules in the land in the context of Mizoram situation in general, and the rights and duties of the citizens in particular. Such education and awareness among the public brought about considerable caution and wariness on the part of the security forces in their dealings with the public and appreciably shrank from what they used to be heretofore. This in turn, created a feeling of security and confidence in the minds of the public, and in result the high- handed character of taking into custody without rhyme or reason and torture of innocent and ignorant villagers by the security forces personnel visibly diminished thereby bringing about tremendous relief and easement in the minds of the people.

¹⁹ Lalchungnunga, op. cit., p. 93.

Brig. T. Sailo, being the sole leader of the PC Party, wanted to bring into Mizoram a new politics of integrity and honesty and to solve the Mizo political problem created by the MNF uprising. It was quite clear then that insurgency was the sole factor that caused a set-back to Mizoram development. The new party set itself to the task of preparing a ground for settlement of political problem. Most of the veteran leaders were old-fashioned and it was trying to recruit a new team of politicians among the younger of generations. On economic development of the territory, Brig. T. Sailo felt that Mizoram lagged behind Meghalaya and Nagaland in progress and leveled charged against the Congress- Mizo Union merger ministry of corrupt practices and misuse of power which resulted in a faltering economic achievement. Though his concern for political solution of Mizoram problem was paramount, he was also intensely concerned for a quick and all-round development of the territory. Therefore, one can say that the Mizoram People's Conference party followed the ideology of development logic with promotion to regional interests. The party contests the elections with the slogan of 'development and improvement of infra- structures' in Mizoram.

PROGRAMMES AND POLICY OF MPC PARTY:

The People's Conference Party puts its main effort to infrastructural development in order to develop Mizoram economy besides bringing political stability to the state. The party felt that self-sufficiency in economy would bring all round development and political stability in the state. Soon after the formation of the PC Ministry in 1978, the government had to prepare for the Sixth Five Year Plan. The commencement of the Sixth Five Year Plan coincided with the birth of the PC Ministry. In order to chalk out the strategic approach, the Cabinet meeting was held in the Conference room of Raj Niwas sometime in June, 1978, and Brig. T. Sailo came out with the strategic aim of five year plan. He stressed that all the future development plan should be 'basic needs' oriented, which are self sufficiency in food production, sufficient drinking water for all, production of Power and Electricity from Mizoram, development of communication system, to link up interior villages with road communication and trust in rural development. These are called the 'Six Basic Needs' which are still referred today.²⁰

²⁰ Brig. T. Sailo, op. cit., p. 107.

Rural Development:

- Restoration of Village Council to the *Thlawhbawk*: Due to political instability, and to contain insurgency, villages were grouped in a selected Centre. But by 1970 and onwards, it was relaxed and large number of families left their grouping centres for their old and permanent villages on economic ground, to work in their jhum. The Assam Government called these villages '*Thlawhbawk*' and they were denied of their democratic rights of having the institution of the Village Council handed down to them since independence. The PC Ministry moved the Central Government for its restoration. At last, their tireless effort became successful and on 8th March 1982, permission for the restoration of Village Council for 132 villages was received from Central Government and election for the same was held on 24th February, 1983.²¹
- Development of interior villages: The main grievances of the interior villages in Mizoram were that the development programmes and works could not reach them. It instead, remained confined mainly in the Capital of the state. To solve this problem, the Ministry promised and prepared a Programme. In pursuance of this programme, Schools, Medical Hospitals or Public Health Centres, Supply Offices and godowns and Agriculture Offices were opened in different towns and villages apart from the Capital.
- Transportation: Apart from road transportation, the PC Ministry felt the need of providing easy means of transportation to the interior villages and towns. To start with, permissions were given out to individual business people for running private transportation like bus services.

Administrative Reforms:

- The first and foremost administrative reform is that the Statehood be conferred on the Union Territory of Mizoram without any further delay. According to the Party's memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister on the 17th September,

²¹ Ngurthankima Sailo, 'Emergence of People's Conference Party in Mizoram and its Role in the Development of Mizoram', *Historical Journal of Mizoram*, (July 2004), vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 103.

1982, the party said “Mizoram was one of the districts of undivided Assam, most of which have been granted statehood long time ago such as Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura, and also what was formerly part C”.²²

- The Party promised the masses that those who live in the *Thlawhbawk* areas that the institution of Village Council would be assured to them, which was denied by the Assam Government at that time.
- The PC party promised to take efforts towards the *Thingtam* Famine and assured the people that all the possible efforts were taken to lighten the burden of the people.
- The party promised that the Mizo inhabited areas of other States in India should be unified with the present Union Territory of Mizoram to form one administrative unit, i. e. the State of Zoram (presently known as Mizoram) under the provision of Article 3 of the Constitution of India.
- Revival of District Council: The party propagates the formation of the district council for Aizawl and Lunglei districts also. The party stated that before the Union Territory was formed, the Mizo district council and the Pawi- Lakher regional council were functioning under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. While the Pawi- Lakher Regional Council was reorganized and reconstituted into three District Councils, namely Chakma, Lakher and Pawi by the Government of Union Territories Act 1971, the Mizo District Council was dissolved. Thus in one of the District of the Union Territory, three District Councils were functioning and in another two districts, namely Aizawl and Lunglei there was no District Council. The Mizo District Council served a useful purpose. Therefore, the PC Party wanted to revive again the District Council with jurisdiction over the present Aizawl and Lunglei Districts to satisfy the legitimate sentiments of the Public.
- The People’s Conference promised the people that the Inner Line Regulation now in force would not be repealed for so long as the people of Mizoram need it for safe- guarding themselves against exploitation especially in the matter of trade and business.

²² Brig. T. Sailo, op. cit., p 149.

- During the 1978 Union Territory Election of Mizoram, the Party MLAs promised not to indulge in all the corrupt and evil practices in the administration and vowed to work for the welfare of Mizoram.
- In 1983, the PC Party Ministry passed the Mizo District (Administration of Town Committees) Amendment Act, 1983, further to amend the Mizo District (Administration of Town Committees) Act, 1955. The Act included the following-
 1. a) This Act may be called the Mizo District (Administration of Town Committees) Amendment Act, 1983.
 - b) It extends to the whole of the Union Territory of Mizoram excepting the areas under the Autonomous District Councils of Pawi, Lakher and Chakma.
 - c) It shall come into force at once.
 2. In the Schedule to the Mizo District (Administration II of Town Committees) Act, 1955, after item 20, 1955 the following items shall be inserted, namely: 1955 20 A. 'Regulation and control of public roads and construction of buildings'.²³
- Again, the PC Ministry made the following rules namely 'the Mizoram (Prevention and Control of Fire in the Village Ram) Rules 1983. The Act shall extend to the whole of the Union Territory of Mizoram except the areas under the jurisdiction of the Autonomous District Councils of Pawi, Lakher and Chakma. This Act had been made in exercise of the powers conferred by the section 23 of the Lushai Hills District (Village Council) Acts 1953.²⁴

Agriculture Policy:

- Self – Sufficiency in food production: Since time immemorial, rice has been the staple food of the Mizo and each and every family before the colonial period, tried their best to produce atleast their annual requirement of rice through shifting cultivation and to the certain extent, they were self- sufficient till 1966, except in times of famines such as *Mautam* and *Thingtam*. But from 1966 onwards, due to the political turmoil consequent up on the independence movement launched by the MNF

²³ *Lists of Acts, Rules and order etc*, Law, Judicial and Parliamentary Affairs Department, Government of Mizoram (1986), vol. 3, p. 113.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

and the subsequent repressive measures adopted by the Indian Army to suppress the insurgency, the annual rice production in the whole state declined which could only meet about 25% of the total annual requirement. The remaining 75% requirement has to be imported to Mizoram through Food Corporation of India from places like Punjab, Haryana through long line of road communication via Silchar which posed serious problems. Whenever trouble arises, natural or otherwise along this line of movement, food supply to Mizoram was disrupted. To overcome this obstacle, and achieve self- sufficiency in rice production, the PC Ministry surveyed and explored all the flat areas on either banks of the rivers and slopping hill sides near the flat areas.

- Besides a network of Agriculture link roads, connecting river banks with the National Highway was another agenda of the PC Party. If all the flat lands could be turned into wet rice cultivation with the help of Hydel Project and link roads and harvest twice in a year, then the State would certainly be able to produce enough rice for its population.
- The PC Ministry also clearly perceived that given the determination and a proper direction to the farmers, then Terracing on the hill side can be done successfully to grow rice and other grains.
- To promote Terrace Cultivation, the PC Ministry formulated a new policy by taking the farmers to State like Sikkim where Terrace cultivation was already practiced successfully and instead of helping the farmers directly by providing financial assistance, the Ministry helped them by providing fertilizers, high yielding seeds and supplying raw materials.²⁵
- To support terrace farming, the PC Ministry made several water irrigation systems from the running rivers and streams so that the fields near the river banks can get proper water supply throughout the year. This has been successfully practiced in the paddy fields of Champhai and Khawzawl towns respectively.

²⁵ Kenneth Chawngliana, op. cit., p. 84.

Communication Policy:

From the very outset, the PC Party perceived that without power and communication, developmental work could not be pursued. They therefore aimed at building up two essential infrastructures namely — Communication and Power. In pursuance of the plans and programmes for building and developing communication network, it took the following steps:

- Railway: a) In August, 1981, the Chief Minister Brig. T. Sailo met the then Union Railway Minister and apprised him of the dire necessity of a Railhead for the whole State, till then it had been on the Railhead at Silchar which was often being cut off for movement of essential commodities whenever trouble broke out between Silchar and Mizoram. Brig. T. Sailo, therefore, stressed that the final solution could only be having a Railhead of our own at Bairabi. The then Union Railway Minister Shri Kedar Pande understood the problem and set up plans immediately to start the project. On the 12th December, Shri Kedar Pandey came to Bairabi and laid foundation for the construction of railway line from Lalaghat (Assam) to Bairabi, a distance of 48.76 KM and the said project has been completed which opened a new chapter in the face of development.²⁶

b) Another Railway project, Project Lalaghat — Vairengte rail line was also set up and proposed by the PC Ministry.

- Road Communication: a) to link up different parts of Mizoram by road, the Ministry sought the Union Surface Transport Ministry to build National Highway from Silchar to Aizawl- Lunglei- Kawlchaw.²⁷ This was also approved and work started at once. The new National Highway was given the name 'Highway 54'. The task was entrusted to the Border Road Organization, named 'Pushpak' whose headquarters is located at Zembawak, Aizawl. Initially the work moved very fast and by the end of 1983, most of portion between Silchar and Aizawl was completed. They also set up a ten year project for Pushpak to complete it but could not come into reality as they were voted out of power in 1984.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

²⁷ Brig. T. Sailo's *Speeches and Writings*, Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl: 1983, p. 94.

- b) At the request of the PC Ministry, the Government of India in 1982 sanctioned the following roads of economic importance to be taken up by the Border Road Organization, Thenzawl- Buarpui- Bungle, Kawkulh- Ngopa- Mimbung, Champhai- Khawbung- N. Vanlaiphai.
- c) The PC Ministry also made the master plan of Network Road Communication in Mizoram which was initiated by Government of Mizoram in 1981 and duly approved by the Planning Commission.
- Air Communication: in the early 1983, Brig. T. Sailo met the then Union Civil Aviation Minister Khursheed Alam Khan and appraised him to the pathetic condition of Mizoram in the matter of Air transport system. Within a short period of time, a special team was sent by Civil Aviation to make paper assessment on the ground at Lengpui area. The special team was conducted by Lalhmingthanga, the then Finance Minister of Mizoram. Shortly after their return, the Civil Aviation Ministry took the final decision, approving the construction of an Airport at the Lengpui area which was proposed by the PC Ministry.

Policy Regarding Power and Electricity:

From the very beginning, the PC party perceived that without power and communication, development works in Mizoram could not take progress. In order to achieve development in power and electricity, the PC party drafted programmes and policies and took steps to achieve these in the following ways:

- Right from its formation as a political party, the PC Party paid its utmost attention for the construction of Hydel Projects— Small, Medium and Large for the production of power. When the Party came into power in 1979, the Ministry first task was to complete these projects into reality. The then Chief Minister who was ably assisted by his Power Minister was fortunate enough to have an old Army friend like Major General Jaganathan who was then the Chairman and Managing Director of National Hydro- Electric Power Corporative (NHPC) who enlightened them to evolve on outline Plan on

Hydel Projects in Mizoram as follows— to undertake Bairabi Project first, then Tuivai Project and lastly Kawlchaw Project of the river Kolodyne.²⁸

- Besides then major projects, 17 other mini or micro Hydel Projects were also selected to be undertaken and completed during their tenure. But due to unhealthy politics prevailing in Mizoram, works have been delayed on building basic infrastructures resulting in an unwanted delay in the development of Mizoram.
- To undertake 160 MW Hydel Project at Bairabi on the River Tlawng, the first part of the project namely investigation was started with the National Hydel Power Corporation under the personal direction of Shri Ghani Chowdhury, the then Central Power Minister who inaugurated the opening ceremony for starting the investigation work at Bairabi itself in the beginning of 1982. Later, Shri Chandra Shekhar Singh, the then Power Minister paid a visit to Bairabi to pursue the progress of investigation. Thus, vigorously pursued by the Central Power Ministers and top officials of NHPC, the work of the investigation was completed in record time that is, one and half years as opposed to the normal four to five years required to complete investigation work of Hydel Power Project. So far as Bairabi Hydel Project (160 MW) is concerned, the investigation work on the ground was completed by September 1983 and the project record compiled by the NHPC was finished in March 1984.²⁹
- One more major Hydel Project called Tuivai Project (250 MW) was also investigated by the PC Ministry. Investigation work was needed to be done vigorously by the Central Water Commission (CWC).

Drinking Water for All:

Facing acute water problem is a common phenomenon in hilly areas like Mizoram, especially during winter and spring seasons. To solve this problem, the PC

²⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

²⁹ Brig. T. Sailo, op. cit., p. 202.

Ministry prepared a Project for supplying sufficient drinking water to all the towns and villages by—

- Pumping water from the rivers or streams below the level of the towns and villages by using electric power or diesel engine.
- Renovation and reconstruction of the existing water points.
- Using bigger engines for pumping water from rivers to feed the Capital Town and bigger villages.
- The PC Ministry introduced a new scheme called loan to make water tanker for every family so that sufficient drinking water could be saved from rainy season.
- Also the Ministry helped the educational institutes to make water reservoirs in the institutional areas for storing drinking water for the students.³⁰

Steps have been taken to fulfill the policies and programmes laid out by the Party with great enthusiasm and much has been accomplished during their tenure. For instance, Aizawl and Lunglei Water Supply Scheme which we see as it is today, are the works done by the PC Ministry.

ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTOS OF THE MPC PARTY:

The People's Conference party, since its formation in 1974 gave its utmost importance to the economic development of the state and the party's election manifestos are also mainly based on the development of economy of Mizoram and development of infra- structures. In the elections of 1978 and 1979, the party stressed on the development schemes of providing food, drinking water, power and roads for the common masses and rural community. The party was committed in their effort for economic development and the material well- being of the people. In the process of this endeavour, Brig. T. Sailo found out that the MNF insurgency was the real culprit which hindered the developmental process. It was evident that during the 1977, 1978 and 1979 elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly, the charismatic leadership of Brig. T. Sailo played a more important role than the organizational programme or ideology.

³⁰ Kenneth Chawngliana, op. cit., p. 85.

Since the beginning, little change has been made in the pattern of the party election manifestos. The PC party election manifestos of 1978, 1979, 1984, 1987 and 1989 have more or less the same programmes including peaceful solution of the political problem of Mizoram, formation of village councils in the *Thlawhbawk* (temporary villages), preservation of Mizo culture, traditions and customs, economic development and self-sufficiency in food production within the next ten years and enforcement of liquor prohibition in the territory, to stop the influx of Chakma from Bangladesh, to clearly demarcate the boundaries of Mizoram with the neighbouring state of Assam and to accelerate urban and rural electrification and water supply programmes.

One striking feature of the election manifesto of the PC in 1989 State Legislative Assembly election was that the re-unification of ZO inhabited areas, famously known as ZORO movement. ZORO became the most popular word during the election campaign and the party gained popularity due to the ZORO movement. Even though the public looked upon to the movement as a gesture of true nationalism, they were not yet persuaded to pin their hopes on the materialization of the ZORO movement. Their voting preference was not at all changed by the movement, thus, bagged only 1 seat.

When the Mizoram People's Conference entered the election arena with the coalition of the Congress in 1993, with the MNF in 1998 and with the Zoram Nationalists Party (ZNP) in 2003, the election manifestos are more or less the same, whether the coalition is with the regional party or with national party like the Congress. The election manifestos comprised of promises in the field of political, economic, administration, and social development. Better transport facilities in the matter of road, railways and airways, making new education policy which could be benefited by the youth, to revise Mizoram Industrial Policy and implementing them for stronger and better industries. Regarding public health, the manifestos promised to establish more hospitals and dispensaries in all the remote areas of Mizoram. Importance was also given to the development of hydel-power projects. At the same time, in all the manifestos, protect and empowerment of women and revision of the existing Mizo Customary Laws for the betterment of women. Lastly, eradication of poverty by arranging financial assistance to those who lived below

the poverty line from the Central Governments are the main promises shown in the election manifestos of the MPC party in 1993, 1998 and 2003 State Legislative Assembly Elections.

A study of the election manifestos clearly shows that the party's utmost importance was given to development of the state economy and infra-structure. The party expressed their intention to safeguard the ethnic identity and bring about the integration of Mizo inhabited areas but harping on regional grievances. It is quite clear that the election manifestos of the MPC are designed according to local taste and interest. At the same time, it shows that there were no progressive measures to bring about the socio-economic transformation in the traditional society of the Mizos. Comparing with other political parties' elections manifestos, nothing was pledged to have the reasonable, equitable, distribution of planned development among the average Mizo people. Not only this, the parties' manifestos completely lacked of land reforms measures.³¹The manifestos and programmes of both national and regional parties were more or less the same only banking on the regional grievances. Briefly, there was no practically no difference between the parties' manifestos. None of the parties had, thus, appealed to the electorates for concrete items of socio-economic change and distributive justice in the state.

³¹ R. N. Prasad (1987), *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, p. 334.

CHAPTER 4

ELECTORAL ALLIANCES AND PERFORMANCE OF MIZORAM PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

The focus of this chapter is to highlight the performance of Mizoram People's Conference in Mizoram politics. The study also laid emphasis on the strategies of the MPC to mobilize voters and win the election of 1978 and 1979, an overview of the performance of the party till 2003 election, and the electoral alliances with other political parties. This chapter also seeks to explain the various political policies and agendas of the MPC.

INTRODUCTION:

In a democratic country, the voting choice is more in terms of ideology, programme and policies of the rival parties and the candidates. Thus, elections are not merely about winning and losing seats, nor merely about the game of numbers. Although, it is a problematic, one can see several ways in which electoral mobilization and the larger world of politics mutually impinge each other.¹ This is not to say that the whole election is a perfect mirror in which the essence of the everyday politics reflected in India. Elections provide an opportunity to the people to have a share in the government, to control it, to supervise it, to determine its future and influence its policies and programmes. In this entire process, the political parties play an important role in influencing the electoral behavior of the people. Political parties in general, articulate the interests of different groups and try to create suitable policies and programmes to be implemented once they are elected. Elections are particularly conspicuous and revealing aspects of most contemporary political systems. They highlight and dramatize a political system, bringing its nature into sharp relief, and providing insights into other aspects of the system and the basic nature and actual functioning of the system as a whole.

¹ Bishnu N. Mohapatra, "Electors and Everyday Politics: Local Narratives of a National Event", *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 28, 2000, p. 170.

Elections are complex events involving individual and collective decisions which directly affect, and are affected by political and social processes. They open up channels between the polity and the society, between the elites and the masses, between the individuals and the government. They are major agencies of political socialization and political participation.² The study of political elections provides an opportunity to study a political system of action, using various techniques and methods from survey research and participant observation studies to the analysis of aggregate data. In voting and other types of electoral studies, elections had been analyzed on the basis of the factors influencing and the motivations of the individual voters, the electorate as a collectivity, the representatives chosen through the electoral process, the process itself, the kind of government that is produced and the nature and degree of its actual responsibility to the electorate, and the role of elections in the functioning and development of the political system.

Voting is the most common, the most conspicuous and the most frequently studied act of political participation, but at the same time, it may not be a very meaningful act of participation at all.³ It may be hardly more than a rather meaningless ritual, a symbolic gesture, performed for reasons of social conformity or because of social pressures, rather than a conscious, informed, and studied exercise of political choice. Moreover, it is particularly difficult to study and assess, for since the advent of the secret ballot — a fundamental feature of free elections — it has become impossible to observe its final stages assuming the conventional safeguards of secrecy are preserved. While the anonymous and secret nature of the act of voting made it difficult to study the way in which individual voters exercise their right of franchise, it does not minimize the importance of this act, nor does it prevent ready access to voting results. How an individual actually votes may be not known, but how the voters collectively have voted becomes well known. More significantly, voting is only the final stage, the dramatic climax — of the electoral process.

² Norman D. Palmer (1976), *Elections and Political Development*, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Elections have different meanings and played different roles in different political systems. In some, they are central and in others, peripheral; in some they have definitely destabilizing effect, in some they seem clearly to contribute to political development, and in others a political decay. They may be used as thinly veiled disguises for various forms of authoritarian rule, as institutionalized procedures for system maintenance in established democratic societies, or as an instrument for the increasing democratization of political systems. They may be variously considered as devices for legitimacy, identification, integration, communication, participation, socialization and mobilization, as well as for political choice and political control. Because election served many purposes, they cannot be understood except in a systematic context, they should be analyzed not only with relation to the general theory and the general knowledge that have accumulated as a result of extensive voting behaviour and other electoral studies in many political systems, but also with its relation both to political systems and the distinctive characteristics, traditions, experience, values, and goals of individual systems.

The relationship between elections and political parties is a close one and in almost every type of political systems. During elections, political parties are prominently on display, or, to put it in another way, on trial. As David Butler has observed, 'an election provides an unrivalled opportunity to examine the organization, the personnel, and the policies of the parties.'⁴ Political parties are the main agencies for organizing and for providing political direction to the electorate, and a political choice. As Maurice Duverger pointed out that the electoral system affects the political life of a country mainly the political parties. Elections, in turn, are mechanisms which parties use to maintain their support bases and to establish links between the society, mainly non-political arena, and the political system, in which parties function and of which they are apart. Thus, the relations between electoral and party system are mutually interacting.

Like voters elsewhere in the world, Indian voters live in a political environment of conflicting influences, some of which encourage a political continuity while others

⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

promote changes.⁵ According to Ralph C. Mayer and David Malcolm, the voting and electoral system in India has been affected by economic changes and various public activities like Indira Gandhi's promise to get rid of poverty in 1971, internal strife in the Janata Party before 1979 election, and 1991 (Rajiv Gandhi) elections and governmental corruption in 1989. Elections in India have been central, and not peripheral, to the system. They were undoubtedly shaped and conditioned by the nature of the political and social system, and by general environment factors; but they also served as links between polity and the society, between the traditional and the 'traditional' and the more 'modern' aspects of Indian life and behaviour, between the individual citizen and the government. In India, as in other democratic countries, political parties seek support of the people through periodic elections, and their influence and effectiveness are determined largely by the verdict of the polls. Elections thus are an index of the relative political standing of various parties, and they both reflect and shape the trend of events and forces in the underlying social and political order. The functions of election can be classified as — political choice, political participation, support building or system maintenance functions, and linkage patterns and functions.⁶

W. J. Mackenzie laid down four conditions for the successful functioning of an electoral system: first, an independent judiciary to interpret electoral law; secondly, an honest, competent, non-partisan administration to run the election; thirdly, a developed system of political parties, well enough organized to put their policies, traditions and team of candidates before the electors as alternative between which to choose; and finally a general acceptance throughout the political community of certain rather vague rules of the game, which limit the struggle for power because of some unspoken sentiment that if the rules are not observed more or less faithfully the game itself will disappear amid the wreckage of the whole system.⁷ These conditions do not fully exist in any developing countries, but India comes closer to meeting them than any of the others. In spite of some claims of the contrary, it can be said that India has an independent judiciary and a non-

⁵ Ralph C. Mayer and David S. Malcolm, 'Voting in India: Effects of Economic Change and New Party Formation', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 5, May 1993, p. 507.

⁶ Norman D. Palmer (1976), *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

partisan election administration. Part XV (Articles 324- 329) of the Indian Constitution lay down the basic provision regarding elections. According to the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution (Item 72 of the Union List) responsibility for election to the Parliament, to the Legislatures and to the offices of the President and the Vice- President is vested exclusively in the central government. All major elections are conducted by the Election Commission, in accordance with the power stated in Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.

THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF MPC FROM 1974- 1984:

The People's Conference Party was founded in 1975 during the period when Mizoram experienced a coalition government of Mizo Union and the Congress.⁸ With the popularity of Brig. T. Sailo and the policy of the party, it won the hearts of the common masses and their strength increased by leap and bounds. The PC party, for the first time, contested the Village Council election held in the later part of 1975 upto mid 1976. The PC party won twenty seats and the ruling Congress won only two Village Council seats causing a lot of disenchantment to the Congress leadership as the next Assembly Election was only a year away.⁹

The Lok Sabha Election of 1977:

During the year 1975, an important political event took place in Delhi. The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, seeing the combine opposition of her political opponents could threaten the unity and integrity of the country declared Internal Emergency on 20th June, 1975 under Article 352 of the Indian Constitution. To contain her political opponents, an act called 'Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA)' was also passed. Thousands of political leaders in the country, including PC Party leaders such as Brig. T. Sailo, Rev. Sakhawliana, J. Kapthianga, C. Vulluaia, K. M. Biaksailova, Lallianzuala Sailo and Kiautuma as well as six leaders of Mizo Democratic Front were arrested on the 3rd June, 1976 and were detained at Nalbari Nowgong Special Jail in Meghalaya.

⁸ It was in the same year the Mizo Union merged with the Congress party. This merger brought an end to the Mizo Union party in Mizoram.

⁹ Ngurthankima Sailo, 'Emergence of People's Conference Party in Mizoram and its role in the Development of Mizoram, *Historical Journal of Mizoram*, (July 2004), Vol. 5, Issue. 1, p. 96.

When emergency was lifted, Lok Sabha elections were held on the 19th of March, 1977. Four political parties contested for the sole Lok Sabha seat in Mizoram, the Congress with C. L. Ruala as its candidate, Mizo National Union with H. K. Bawichhuaka, Mizo Democratic Front with Sanglianchhungi and the PC Party with Dr. Rothuama as its candidate. In this election, the PC party won its first victory as Dr. Rothuama was elected as the member of The Lok Sabha. ¹⁰ The votes polled by each party have been shown in Table 1.¹¹

Name of the Candidate	Political Party	Votes Polled
Dr. Rothuama	People's Conference	53, 350
C. L. Ruala	Indian National Congress	37, 342
H. K. Bawichhuaka	Mizo National Union	8, 534
K. Sanglianchhungi	Mizo Democratic Front	1, 449
Votes Polled		1, 02, 075
Valid Votes		1, 00, 725
Invalid Votes		1, 350

Brig T. Sailo, who was detained for six months in Nowgong Special Jail, was released on parole at the end of 1976 but stayed back in Shillong for medical treatment till the result of the Lok Sabha, was out. He was given a warm welcome when he returned to Mizoram to resume his political activities in May 1977. With the victory of Dr. Rothuama, the strength of the PC Party grew stronger and stronger.

The State Assembly Election of 1978:

At the same time of the Lok Sabha Election of 1977 that, the term of the Mizoram Congress- I Ministry expired in early May, 1977. But due to the 'peace talk' between the Central Government and the MNF, the Assembly Election could not be held and so President's Rule was imposed on 11th May, 1977. The Janata Government at the Centre

¹⁰ C. Hermana (2000), *Zoram Politics Thli Tleh Dan Vol. 2*, p. 30.

¹¹ *Brief Report on Elections to Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha 1972- 1999*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, p. 60.

decided to hold Assembly Election in Mizoram on May 1978. There were five political parties which contested this election. In this Assembly Election of 1978, all the political parties fought the election on various issues like political, social, administrative and economic problems. All the parties made an emphatic assertion to the resumption of peace- talk or a solution to the political problems. Statehood and territorial integration of areas inhabited by the Mizo's were popular themes in the election campaign. The PC party had 17 points election manifesto. To summarize, these 17 points included peaceful solution of the political problems of Mizoram by reconciliation, formation of village councils in the *Thlawhbawk* (temporary villages), preservation of traditional Mizo culture, customs and usages, economic development and self- sufficient in food within the next ten years, and enforcement of prohibition(liquor) in the territory. The People's Conference remained to be a close associate of the Janata Party at the all India level but with regional identity at the state level. The result of the election of 1978 is shown in the Table no 2.

Name of the Party	No. of seats contested	No. of seats won
People's Conference	28	23
Janata Party	28	1
Congress- I	26	4
MDP	16	-
Mizo Union	15	-
Independent	42	2
Total	154	30

Source: Report on General Elections to Mizoram State Legislative Assembly 1978, Chief Electoral Officer to the Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.

The People's Conference, under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo was given the People's mandate with such an absolute majority mainly because he acted on the impulse of the people's dire need of the hour. That was the courage to counter the excess of military operation. Therefore, the PC Party formed its first Ministry headed by Brig T. Sailo as Chief Minister, assisted by four Cabinet Ministers — Lalhmingthanga,

Zairemthanga, F. Malsawma, and P. B. Rosanga. Thangridema and C. Chawngkunga were elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively in the first meeting of Assembly on 21st June, 1978.¹² In this election, the actual contest was between the People's Conference and the Congress- I, but it was surprising to note that the Sailo Cabinet had hardly functioned for five months, when the issue for the change of leadership cropped up in October, 1978. The open rift and confrontation between the two powerful groups in the Legislature Party — one led by Brig. T. Sailo and the other by J. Kapthianga, Chief Whip of the PC Legislature party became so manifest that uneasy situation prevailed in Mizo politics, leading to intra party squabbles, conflict and internal dissensions among the ranks of the PC Party. As a consequence, eight MLAs withdrew their support from Brig. T. Sailo Ministry and preferred to form PC Ministry with a new leader than Brig. T. Sailo.¹³ Later, the eight PC rebel MLAs, two Congress, one Janata MLA and two independent legislatures met in a joined meeting and formed United Legislature Party, electing unanimously the Speaker, Thangridema as the leader. In order to affect this, fifteen MLAs of the United Legislature Party submitted their claims with their signature to the Lt. Governor of Mizoram on 30th October, 1978, requesting him to allow forming a new ministry.

This reduced Brig T. Sailo's Ministry to minority by losing eight of its MLAs and the Assembly Speaker. After Brig. T. Sailo submitted his resignation to end political instability advising the governor to dissolve the Assembly for fresh elections. The President of India on Governor's report issued a proclamation of emergency on 11th November, 1978 placing Mizoram under the President's rule for a period of six months. Ultimately, this internal agreement within the PC party resulted in a complete split within the party termed as PC (A) and PC (B), the first led by Brig T. Sailo and the second Thangridema, though the split in the party was not programme based.

¹² R. N. Prasad (1987), *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, p. 327.

¹³ C. R. Nag (1999), *Post- Colonial Mizo Politics*, p. 121.

The Mid- Term Poll 1979:

The mid- term election to the Legislative Assembly was held on 24th and 27th April, 1979. There were six political parties contested in this election. Both the National Parties — the Congress- I and the Janata Party came out with 25 and 30 candidates. The PC (A) put up 27 candidates while the PC (B), the Mizo Democratic Front and the Mizo Union set up 23, 4 and 20 candidates respectively. The results of the election of 1979 is shown in the Table No. 3

Name of the Party	No. of seats contested	No. of seats won
PC (A)	27	18
PC (B)	23	4
Congress- I	25	5
Janata Party	30	2
MDF	4	-
Mizo Union	20	-
Independent	21	1
Total	150	30

Source: Brief Report on Elections to Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha 1972- 1999, Issued by Directorate of Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.

The PC (A) came out with majority by winning 18 seats but with a slender margin, as against 23 won in the 1978 polls with slender victory. Thus in the second poll, it suffered a loss of 5 seats. The PC (B) which contested in its fragmented form, however, fared well securing 4 seats out of 23 seats for the first time.¹⁴ Immediately after the PC (A) came to power, Brig. T. Sailo formed a small cabinet of ministers on 8th May, 1979 with his former colleagues Lalhmingthanga, Zairemthanga, P. B. Rosanga and F. Malsawma. Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana and C. Chawngkunga were elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively. The new ministry promised a clean and efficient administration to deal with the eventuality in the territory and also to respond to the basic

¹⁴ B. Pakem (1999), *Coalition Politics in North- East India*, p. 110.

requirements of the vast majority of the poor people. It was also evident that a personal following in the charismatic leadership of Brig. T. Sailo played a more important role than organizational programme or ideology. At the same time, there was an expectation of stability in Mizoram politics. But contrary to this expectation, the PC Ministry was rife with political violence as troubles cropped up from unexpected sources. There were various politically sensitive incidents such as the freedom Religious Act of Arunachal Pradesh, the new scheme of civil service examination, influx of Chakmas and job opportunities of local youths threatened the political stability from 1979 onwards.

Lok Sabha Election of 1980:

The seventh Lok Sabha Election was held in January, 1980. In this election, anti People's Conference party fought in a common platform. The Congress, the Janata, the PC (B), MDF and the Mizo Union formed a new organization called 'the Steering Committee' and decided to fight the Lok Sabha Election on a common front against the ruling PC (A).¹⁵ Such an alliance was for the first time in made with National and Regional parties in the electoral history of Mizoram. The Steering Committee set up the Candidate Dr. Rothuama and the PC (A) nominated Brig. C. Vankunga. The result of the Lok Sabha election is show in Table No. 4.

Name of the Candidate	Political Party	Votes Pulled
Dr. Rothuama	Steering Committee	74, 431
Brig. C. Vankunga	PC (A)	53, 889
Total Votes Polled		1, 29, 533
Valid Votes		1, 28, 320
Invalid Votes		1, 213

Source: Brief Report on Elections to Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha 1972- 1999, Issued by Directorate of Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.

¹⁵ M. C. Lalrinthanga (1993), *Zoram Politik (1976- 1986)*, p. 104

So far as election result was concerned, Dr. Rothuama of the Steering Committee won the election, thus signifying the victory of a conglomerate alliance based on the single principle of anti People's Conference. Besides, the PC Candidate lost perhaps owing to intra- party faction and conflict, which had a definite impact on the election results. Moreover, the general law and order situation in the territory during the period of 1979 deteriorated more and due to the violent acts of the underground MNF involving deaths of many civilians and subsequent scarce supply of essential commodities to the territory from Silchar, which definitely affected the electors' behaviour adversely.

The State Legislative Assembly Election of 1984:

The fourth election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly was held on 15th April, 1984. There were five political parties and independent candidates contesting this election. In this election, political situation was still unstable and the PC Party's candidate in the North Vanlaiphai constituency was shot dead in the election meeting on the 11th April, 1984, so election to this constituency was countermanded.¹⁶ The result of the Assembly Election of 1984 is shown in the Table No. 5.

Name of the Party	No. of seats contested	No. of seats won
People's Conference	27	8
Congress- I	29	19
Mizo Convention	28	1
Mizo Union	13	-
Mizo Peace Forum	13	-
Independent	13	1
Total	123	29

Source: Brief Report on Elections to Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha 1972- 1999, Issued by Directorate of Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.

¹⁶ Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana, *Mizoram Hruaitute Sulhnu Vol- 1*, p. 119.

As shown in Table No. 5, the PC party suffered a heavy loss in this election, got defeated after completing its five years term. They could manage to get only eight seats. Two Cabinet Ministers in the PC Ministry lost in this election. This could be the fact that the general situation of law and order in the territory during the PC Ministry had deteriorated so much due to the insurgent activities of the MNF and many PC Party workers got killed and were ambushed many times by the underground people. Besides, many civilians got killed and harmed due to this political instability. The MNF leader Laldenga in order to stage a comeback sent a tape recorded speech on the eve of 1984 general election mainly to discredit the PC Ministry. Brig Sailo was hated by the MNF and blamed by the public for refusing to succumb to local political pressure to resign and give a space to install Laldenga's ministry through a backdoor dealing.¹⁷ A propaganda was successfully floated to incite a passion of hatred for Brig Sailo and his party among the rank and file members of the MNF and the latter started to attack and kill top-ranking leaders of the PC party. Besides, the Congress made a relentless attack on the PC Ministry charging with abuse of power, corrupt administration and practice of political blackmailing.

All these charges against the Sailo Ministry did have impact on the outcome of the voters' verdict in the 1984 election. Rightly or wrongly, the mass of the Mizo people were still sympathetic to the cause of the MNF and the PC Party had fallen into disgrace because of its anti-MNF policy. On the other hand, its main rival the Congress Party regained its image of credibility because it was committed to political settlement of the MNF problem. It was likely that there was nothing more appealing to the people than a political rapprochement with the MNF.

ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTY FROM 1986- 2003:

The peace accord known as '**the Memorandum of Settlement**' was signed between the MNF and the Government of India on 30th June, 1986. It incorporates important clauses like the MNF's commitment to end all the underground activities, to bring out to civil life all underground MNF personnel and abjure violence within a

¹⁷ K. M. Zakhuma (2001), *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989*, p. 234.

stipulated time frame. It also contains a provision for conferring statehood to the Union Territory of Mizoram with safeguard to satisfy the desires and aspirations of the Mizo people. Mizoram became the 23rd State of the Indian Union on 20th February, 1987. As a transitional arrangement, it was politically agreed to install the interim Congress and MNF coalition government headed by Laldenga as the Chief Minister and Lalthanhawla as Deputy Chief Minister.

State Assembly Election of 1987:

For the purpose of election, Mizoram was divided into 40 single member constituencies. Out of which, 28 are distributed in Aizawl District, 7 in Lunglei District and 5 in Chhimtuipui District.¹⁸ Of these 40 Constituencies, 38 are classified as reserved seats for the Scheduled Tribes and 2 Constituencies name Lunglei South and Lokicherra are declared as general seats. There were four national and regional political parties contested in this election. The results of the election may be summarized in the following Table No. 6

No	Party	Seat Contested	Seat Won	Poll Percentage
1.	People's Confenrence	31	3	23.70
2.	Congress- I	40	13	32.98
3.	MNF	37	24	36.62
4.	Others	11	-	3.36

Source: CSDS Databank.

As shown in Table NO. 6, the performance of the PC Party has gone done rapidly securing only three seats in the Assembly. Even Brig. T. Sailo lost his seat in this election. Despite the sheer lack of time for structuring the party organization to face the Assembly Election, the MNF was able to secure overwhelming majority with 24 seats as shown in the table. Thus, it can be said that the MNF was elected to power through a sympathy vote. Those who returned after 20 years of sacrificing to resume normal life

¹⁸ At present, Mizoram is divided into eight districts which were enforced 11th March, 1998.

must, in the opinion of the Mizo public, be given a chance to sit on the seat of power.¹⁹ The prevailing public opinion did not debate about the merit or demerit of the MNF, but approved of their being tested for public leadership atleast for one term. This was the main factor which contributed to the reason why the PC Party lost its electoral votes.

State Assembly Election of 1989:

But the MNF Ministry of 1987 could not last long due to factionalism inside the Ministry. 8 MLAs from the MNF Ministry walked out from the party and decided to form a new party and formed a new party called the United Legislature Party. Therefore, President's Rule was imposed on 7th September, 1988 and fresh election was held on 21st January, 1989.²⁰ In this election, 7 political parties came out to contest for the election — the PC Party, the MNF, the Congress- I, the factional group of the MNF known as the MNF- D, Mizo National Union, Hmar People's Convention (HPC) and Chakma Jatya Parishad (CJP). The result of the election of 1989 is shown on Table No 7.

Name of the Party	Seat Contested	Seat won	Poll Percentage
People's Conference	38	1	19.67
Congress- I	34	23	34.85
MNF- D	6	2	5.10
MNF	40	14	35.23
Independent/ Others	8	-	2

Source: CSDS Databank.

Again in this election, the PC Party failed to capture political power again winning only a single Assembly seat. Zosiama Pachuau was the only PC candidate who got elected. The PC Party did not show any sign of progress and the votes pulled by the party has also been decreased from 23.70 p.c. from 1987 election to 19.67 p. c. in the 1989 State Legislative Assembly Election.

¹⁹ C. Hermana, op. cit., p. 107.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

The State Legislative Assembly Election of 1993:

The third State Legislative Assembly Election was held on 30th November, 1993. Prior to this, an important change took place within the PC party. The People's Conference Party converted itself into 'Mizoram Janata Dal'.²¹ After they had been disastrously defeated in the elections of 1984, 1987 and 1989, to invigorate their strength, they joined hands with the breakaway group of MNF led by Lalduhawma and formed 'Democratic Party' on 13th July, 1989 but could not make much headway. With the formation of Janata Party in New Delhi with V. P. Singh as the Prime Minister, the party leadership wanted to join the Central Party. Therefore, they convened the General Assembly of the party on 25th October 1993 and merged with the Central Janata Party and remained as Janata Party Unit. Later, as the Janata Party at the Centre broke away, another Assembly was convened on the 24th October, 1994, the word 'Mizoram' was prefix in the Janata Dal and came to be known as 'Mizoram Janata Dal' (MJD) Party.²²

An interesting fact in this election is that none of the political parties were sure of forming the government by themselves, so all looked forward for an alliance with other political parties. Even the Mizoram Janata Dal, earlier the PC party was also trying to join hands with the MNF at first. But an agreement on the distribution of seats could not be met, therefore, the Janata Dal and the Congress- I formed an alliance in this election agreeing that 24 MLA seats would be shared between the two parties and another 16 seats were declared as 'Free Zones' in which each can have their own candidates.²³ The election results of 1993 are listed in Table 8.

Name of the Party	Seat Contested	Seat won	Poll Percentage
Janata Dal	25	14	23.38
Congress- I	28	16	34.85
MNF	38	8	40.41
BJP	8	-	3.11
Independent	47	2	23.3

Source: CSDS Databank

²¹ Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana, op. cit., p 195.

²² Ibid., p. 196.

²³ B. Pakem, op. cit., p. 113.

- In this election, the Janata Dal, previously known as the People's Conference Party and the Congress- I made a pre- poll alliance.

In this election, Janata Dal and its alliance the Congress- I won 30 seats out of 40 seats and formed United Legislature Party as Mr. Lalthanhawla of the Congress as the President and Lalhmingthanga of Mizoram Janata Dal as the Deputy Chairman, the MJD having 5 Council of Ministers and the Congress- I with 9 Council of Ministers. But the coalition government could not last long, there was an internal fight inside United Legislature Party and MJD withdrew its support from the coalition. This resulted in the formation of a Congress Ministry, after five months of forming the government in coalition with the MJD.

Nevertheless, an important event took place inside the MJD. To get a renewed strength and encourage its party members, another General Assembly was convened on 23rd March, 1995 and this assembly resolved to change over its former name 'People's Conference' but prefixed the word 'Mizoram' and came to be known as *Mizoram People's Conference Party (MPC)*.²⁴

Lok Sabha Election of 1998:

The Lok Sabha Election of 1998 was held on the 23rd February, 1998. In this election, the MPC, the break away group of MNF known as MNF- N and the Citizen Common Front(CCF) joined hands together and supported an independent candidate Dr. Lallungmuana. There were six candidates contesting in the election, the results of the Lok Sabha Election is listed in Table 9.

²⁴ Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana, op. cit., p. 197.

Name of the Candidate	Political Party	Votes Polled
Dr. H. Lallungmuana	Independent	1,06,552
J. Lalsangzuala	Congress- I	1,06,511
Dr. R. Lalthangliana	MNF	82,047
PL Chhuma	BJP	8,998
Lallianzuala	RJD	974
Zailiana	Independent	949

Source: Brief Report on Elections to Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha 1972- 1999, Issued by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.

In this election, Dr. Lallungmuana, the common candidate of the MPC, the MNF-N and the CCF won the Lok Sabha seat and this is a great achievement for the MPC Party, who is voted out of political power for a very long time. This also shows that people are more incline towards regional political party and feeling of regionalism, the joining hands of two regional political parties could not be defeated by a national party.

The State Legislative Assembly Election of 1998:

Election to the 40 member Legislative Assembly of Mizoram was held on 25th November, 1998. Altogether 221 candidates from different political parties including independent candidates contested in this election. The regional and state political parties in India from the late 1980s gained a stronghold in the politics of India and there was a decline of 'dominance of the Congress system in the Indian politics'. Even in the politics of Mizoram, people began to loose faith in the Congress government which was in power for more than ten years. Taking advantage of all this, the MPC again entered into a new coalition politics, joining hands with the MNF. In the pre- poll alliance agreement, it was agreed that 20 seats would be shared by both the parties and another 20 seats would be free zones. It was also agreed that if they could form a government, the Party whoever did not get the Leadership post of the United Legislature Party, would get the Deputy Leader post and both the MPC and the MNF would have atleast five council of ministers

each.²⁵ Besides this, to make the coalition function smoothly, it was also agreed to form Co- ordination Committee. The result of the State Legislative Assembly Election of 1998 is shown below in Table No. 10.

Name of the Party	Seat Contested	Seat Won	Poll Percentage
MPC	28	12	20.44
MNF	28	21	24.99
Congress- I	40	6	29.77
ZNP	24	0	9.29
BJP	12	0	2.50
JD	10	0	0.28
Other Parties	2	0	2.29
Independents	44	1	9.82

Source: CSDS Databank.

The MNF- MPC won the election by getting 33 seats out of 40. They formed the MNF- MPC Legislature Party on 30th November, 1998 as Zoramthanga of MNF as the Chief Minister and Lalhmingthanga of MPC as the Deputy Chief Minister. Besides this, the MPC has four Council of Ministers and Deputy Speaker. The role played by the MPC led by former Chief Minister Brig. T. Sailo in 1998 election was completely reversed of its 1993 pre- poll alliance with the Congress- I. Another important outcome of this coalition government is that the support given to an independent candidate Vanlalzawma in the 1999 Lok Sabha election. Thereby, one can say that the pre- poll alliance made by the MPC with the MNF was successful as far as achieving state political power and winning the Lok Sabha election.

But the MPC- MNF Legislature Party could not last long like the previous alliances. There was an internal difference within the alliance and the Chief Minister asked all the MNC Ministers to submit their resignation letters. Accordingly, the MPC Ministers submitted their resignation letters on the 9th of December, 1999 after a year and

²⁵ Ibid., p. 209.

six days, and this has ended the coalition government of the MNF and the MPC. This was the direct result of the secret alignment of the MPC with the Congress in connection with the Village Council Elections in the month of December, 1999.²⁶

The Fifth State Legislative Assembly Election of 2003:

The fifth State Legislative Assembly Election was held on the 20th November, 2003. The MPC, like the previous elections again joined hands again with the breakaway group of the MNF known as Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP). In this election, the main competition was between the Congress and the MNF, which put the MPC- ZNP alliance into limelight. In the 'Common Programme' issued by both the MPC and the ZNP, their manifestos has been mostly based on the line of regional demands, mainly giving importance to development of hydel electric power and forming transparency government for the benefit of both people from rural areas as well as urban areas. The results of the 2003 State Assembly Election is shown in Table No. 11.

Name of the Party	Seat Contested	Seat Won	Poll Percentage
MPC	28	3	16.16
ZNP	27	2	14.70
Congress- I	40	12	30.06
MNF	39	21	31.69
BJP	8	-	1.87
MDF	2	1	1.95
Others	4	1	0.55

Source: CSDS Databank.

The result of the election of 2003 clearly shows that the policy and programmes used by the MPC failed to win the masses, managed to get only 3 seats out of 40. This is the worst performance of the party compared to the previous elections of 1993 and 1998, in which they made the pre- poll alliance with the Congress and the MNF as in this election of 2003.

²⁶ P. Lalnithanga (2006), *Political Developments in Mizoram*, p. 185.

NATURE OF COALITION GOVERNMENT BETWEEN THE MPC AND THE CONGRESS- I, BETWEEN THE MPC AND THE MNF:

From 1993 State Legislative Assembly Election onwards, the MPC has been involving in electoral alliances with 2 major parties — the Congress and the MNF, though it captured political power in both the elections, it failed to complete its term and the coalition failed to work out, though a proper pre- poll alliance was made in each election. An analysis will be made to study the nature of coalition shared with the Congress and the MNF, what are the impacts on the politics of Mizoram as well as for the Mizoram People's Conference party.

Coalition Between the Congress and the MPC:

Prior to the 3rd State Legislative Assembly Election of 1993, the Mizoram Janata Dal, formerly known as the People's Conference, later on changed the name into Mizoram People's Conference Party, made the pre- poll alliance with the Congress- I. This was the first time in the history of Mizoram politics that two national political parties made a pre- poll alliance and decided to form the election on common grounds. Prior to the election, the Janata Party was trying to join hands with the MNF at first. But an agreement on the distribution of seats could not be met, therefore, the Janata Dal and the Congress- I formed an alliance in this election agreeing that 24 MLA seats would be shared between the two parties and another 16 seats were declared as 'Free Zones' in which each can have their own candidates. Both the parties promised to improve rural economy and set their priority for the development of hydel electric powers. In this election, Janata Dal and its alliance the Congress- I won 30 seats out of 40 seats and formed United Legislature Party as Mr. Lalthanhawla of the Congress as the President and Lalhmingthanga of Mizoram Janata Dal as the Deputy Chairman, the MJD having 5 Council of Ministers and the Congress- I with 9 Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers among the MJD were Lalchungnunga, C. Chawngkunga, Zosiana Pachuau, C. Vulluaia and Thangkima. But the coalition government could not last long, there was an internal disagreement within the United Legislature Party and MJD withdrew its support

from the coalition. Then the Congress Ministry was formed later when the coalition between the MJD and the Congress failed, after 5 months of forming the government.

After working together for just five months, the then Chief Minister asked all the Council of Ministers to submit their resignation letters. All the resignation letters except of those of the Congress were accepted by the Chief Minister and declared that the coalition government had ended.²⁷ When the Chief Minister declared that the coalition government ended, there was a division amongst the MLAs of the MJD. Three out of its eight MLAs, Dr. J. V. Hluna, Lalhmingthanga and Thangkima were against the Congress- I led government, but the remaining five, who were in the Ministry namely, C. Chawngkunga, Hrangthanga, C. Vulluaia, Zosiama Pachuau and F. Lawmkima were still supporting the Congress led Ministry without resigning from their post as an independent, being out of the party.²⁸ And this made it possible for the Congress to form the Government of its own.

Therefore, one can say that the nature of coalition and pre- poll alliance between the MJD and the Congress- I led to the breaking up of the MJD into two among its top leaders, one who walked out from the alliance and another group who still supported the Ministry. This break up contributed for the downfall of the party, reduced the Party MLA into just 3, which made them ineffective in the Legislature, and transformed the party into a weak opposition. At the same time, this has an effect in the strength of the party also; the party lost many of its supporters; of those who supported the group of MLAs who still supported the Congress led government. In fact, this alliance between the two parties strengthens the Congress Party but it weakened the strength of the MJD.

Alliance Between the MPC and the MNF:

Election to the 40 member Legislative Assembly of Mizoram was held on 25th November, 1998. Altogether 221 candidates from different political parties including independent candidates contested in this election. The regional and state political parties

²⁷ C. Hermana, op. cit., p. 126.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 127.

in India from the late 1980s gained a stronghold in the politics of India and there was a decline of 'dominance of the Congress system in the Indian politics'. Even in the politics of Mizoram, people began to lose faith in the Congress government which was in power for more than ten years. Taking advantage of all this, the MPC again entered into a new coalition politics, joining hands with the MNF. In the pre-poll alliance agreement, it was agreed that 20 seats would be shared by both the parties and another 20 seats would be free zones. It was also agreed that if they could form a government, the Party whoever did not get the Leadership post of the United Legislature Party, would get the Deputy Leader post and both the MPC and the MNF would have at least five council of ministers each.²⁹ Besides this, to make the coalition function smoothly, it was also agreed to form Co-ordination Committee.

The MNF- MPC won the election by getting 33 seats out of 40. They formed the MNF- MPC Legislature Party on 30th November, 1998 as Zoramthanga of MNF as the Chief Minister and Lalhmingthanga of MPC as the Deputy Chief Minister. Besides this, the MPC has four Council of Ministers and a Deputy Speaker. The role played by the MPC led by former Chief Minister Brig. T. Sailo in 1998 election was completely reversed of its 1993 pre-poll alliance with the Congress- I and now in the 1998 State Legislative Assembly election with the MNF. Another important outcome of this coalition government is that the support given to an independent candidate Vanlalzawma in the 1999 Lok Sabha election. Thereby, one can say that the pre-poll alliance made by the MPC with the MNF was successful as far as achieving state political power and winning the Lok Sabha election. Besides this, the alliance between the two parties was also successful in achieving 'Peace Bonus' from the Central NDA Government.

But the MPC- MNF Legislature Party could not last long like the previous alliances. There was an internal difference within the alliance and the Chief Minister asked all the MPC Ministers to submit their resignation letters. Accordingly, the MPC Ministers submitted their resignation letters on the 9th of December, 1999 after a year and six days, and this has ended the coalition government of the MNF and the MPC. This was

²⁹ Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana, op. cit., p. 209.

the direct result of the secret alignment of the MPC with the Congress in connection with the Village Council Elections in the month of December, 1999.³⁰

Like the previous pre- poll alliance, the coalition between the MPC and the MNF suffered a heavy set back and could not even complete its five years term. The difference in this coalition is that the MPC did not loose any of its MLAs this time; all the MLAs of the MPC walked out from the coalition ministry and became the opposition party. Being having the maximum number of opposition MLAs in the Legislative Assembly, the Deputy Chief Minister in the coalition ministry; Lalhmingthanga of the MPC became the leader of the opposition. This alliance also shows the disunity of two regional parties in fighting against the national party in Mizoram politics, showing that each one fights for their own political power.

Therefore, one could say that the alliance made by the MPC with both national party as well as regional party did not strengthen the party and helping them in winning the people's trust, instead; it weakened the functioning and the strength of the MPC.

³⁰ P. Lalnithanga (2006), op. cit., p. 185.

CHAPTER 5

FEDERAL DIMENSION OF THE MPC PARTY: RELATIONS WITH THE CENTRE AND THE NEIGHBOURING STATES

MIZORAM'S POSITION IN INDIAN FEDERAL SYSTEM:

Mizoram, earlier known as the Mizo Hills District, was excluded from the Government of India Reforms Act, 1919 and Act of 1935. As a result, the Mizo people remained under the personal rule of the British Superintendents and the hereditary Mizo Chiefs. The Lushai Hills, after having been placed under the 'Excluded Areas' by the government of India Act, 1935 already had unique administrative experience. The "filter mechanism" put in this place by this Act is therefore subject to an acid test as Indian independence becomes imminent.¹ A feeling of nervousness and anxiety seemed to have permeated the minds of the Mizos consequent upon by the Bordoloi Committee's visit which led to a trail of separatist movements. After independence, the Mizo Union accepted the autonomous arrangement enshrined in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India and worked with the autonomous institution for years leading to the autonomous district council administration.² It was only after India's independence that the district had representation in the Assam Legislative and was allotted 3 seats in 1952.

While the Mizo Union strived for the statehood of Mizoram and the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) pressed for independence of Mizoram, the Mizo Union submitted a memorandum to the Bordoloi Committee which demanded 1) the Mizos inhabited areas of the neighboring districts should be included in the Lushai Hills District, 2) Lushais should be called Mizos, 3) internal administration should be left to the Mizos, and 4) liberal financial assistance should be given.³ Differences persist in the matter of administration upon merger to remain as a part of Assam or to be governed by the Government of India directly. Despite their hard stance, the anti- merger group

¹ L. B. Thanga (1994), 'Basic Autonomy Movements in Mizoram: Historical Background', in R. N. Prasad (Ed.), *Autonomy Movements in Mizoram*, p. 73.

² R. N. Prasad (1987), *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, p. 286.

³ Animesh Ray (1993), *Mizoram*, p. 153.

headed by the UMFO did not make its secessionist character very explicit when it framed its Constitution. But this does not imply the demand for independence or separate statehood was given up. The UMFO in one of its resolution in 1953 passed for promotion of a hill state consisting of Manipur, Tripura, Autonomous Districts of Assam and NEFA.⁴

In 1959, there occurred the dreaded *Mautam* famine resulting from the flowering of bamboo which led to a tremendous increase in the number of rats. The poor communication system in the district hampered the relief supply of the government. The estrangement between the Chief Minister of Assam and the Mizo Union had meanwhile reached a bitter stage due to the enforcement of the Official Language Bill which recognized Assamese as an official language in July 1960, leading to the formation of All Party Hills Leader Conference (APHLC),⁵ and the Assam Government charged the Mizo Union, who were in power in the Mizo District Council with non-cooperation.⁶ With official blessings, a Mizo National Famine Front was set up by some former member of the Mizo Union, than becoming a political party called the Mizo National Front on 28th October, 1961. Due to negligence by the Centre as well as by the Assam Government, the MNF took to armed revolts from 1966 and the political situation in Mizoram was changed from this period. The Mizo Union till then pressurized the Indian Government for the status of hill state for the Mizo Hills District.

With the gradual settling down of law and order situation in the hill district and the election of the district council, the question of the future of the Mizo Hills was given a close attention. The Central Government proposed in 1971 that the Mizo Hills would be made a Union Territory. It was, however, first necessary to ascertain whether this status would be acceptable to the Mizos. The Mizo Union, which was in power in the district council, and had long been agitating for the statehood of Mizoram, agreed to accept this. However, the Congress Party was of the opinion that status *quo* should continued till

⁴ Ibid., p. 154.

⁵ P. Chakra borty (1994), 'Autonomy Movements: A Case Study of the Mizos', in R. N. Prasad (Ed.), op. cit., p. 116.

⁶ S. K. Chaube (1973), *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, p. 79.

peace was fully restored in the district. The Mizo Union leaders in a letter to the Government of India agreed to cooperate with the government in the implementation of the proposal for setting up of a Union Territory. The States of Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya, and the Union Territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh came into existence on 21st January, 1972. The North East Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 1971 provided: "On and from the appointed day there shall be formed a new Union Territory, to be known as Union Territory of Mizoram, comprising the territories which immediately before that day were comprised in the Mizo District in the existing state of Assam and thereupon the said territories shall cease to form part of the existing state of Assam".⁷ Regarding the representation in the Parliament, it was provided that Mizoram would send a Member to be nominated by the President to the Council of State and elect a Member to the House of the People, the entire territory forming one constituency reserved for the scheduled tribes.

The Mizoram Legislative Assembly was constituted on 29th April, 1972. As per the provision of Paragraph 20A of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the Mizo Hills District Council was abolished and simultaneously, three districts councils — the Pawi District Council, the Lakher District Council and the Chakma District Council came into existence in the three autonomous districts for the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas respectively in the erstwhile Pawi-Lakher region. The Government, in the Union Territory (Amendment) Act, 1971 made provision for the creation of certain legislature in 1972 by the recommendation of State Re- Organization Act of 1971 and the first election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly with 33 members (3 nominated) was held on 18th April, 1972 on the basis of adult franchise. There was a Lt. Governor as the administrative head assisted by a Council of Ministers, and thereby included Mizoram within the scope of Article 239A of the Indian Constitution.⁸

The beginning of the eighties saw wider participation of the Mizo people to fructify their complete statehood demand. At the same time, peace talks between the

⁷ A. C. Ray (1982), *Mizoram: Dynamics of Change*, p. 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

MNF led by Laldenga and the Indian Government took place simultaneously within the framework of the Constitution of India. On 3rd February, 1982, a joint delegation of Mizoram political parties consisting of the representatives of the Mizo Union, the Congress, Mizo Democratic Front and the PC Party met the Prime Minister – Indira Gandhi and submitted a memorandum urging her “not to mess this golden opportunity to solve Mizoram’s political problem”.⁹ They pleaded the case of MNF whose proposal were seen not likely to affect the integrity and solidarity of India and violate the Constitution of India.

Talks were resumed on 15th February 1985, where Laldenga met the PM and put forward three issues: 1) status of Mizoram state on the lines of Article 370 enjoyed by Jammu and Kashmir, 2) dissolution of Chakma District Council, on the ground that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, 3) special powers of the Governor in the realm of law and order as enjoyed by the Nagaland Governor which was not acceptable to MNF.¹⁰ The MNF at this stage was more amicable and this had paved the way for the resumption of negotiations and thus many rounds of negotiations were undertaken. Meanwhile the political settlement on sharing political powers between the MNF and the Congress was signed on 25th June, 1986 by Laldenga and Arjun Singh in New Delhi. The Cabinet Committee on political affairs approved the broad agreement on the same date after extensive discussion. An Advisory Council would be formed under Laldenga till mid- term election to be held in March- April 1987 would be preceded by the surrender of all the insurgents. As a prelude to signing of the final accord, Laldenga amended the constitution of the MNF and making it a political party which abjures violence as a policy method. Finally, a Memorandum of Settlement was signed on 30th June, 1986 by R. D. Pradhan, the then Union Home Secretary, Laldenga, MNF Chief and Lalkhama, the then Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram.¹¹

This was preceded by the Constitution Fifty Third Amendment Bill adopted by the Parliament and passed into an Act on 7th August, 1986 which conferred full Statehood

⁹ Animesh Ray (1993), op. cit., p. 191.

¹⁰ S. A. Rahman (2006), *The Beautiful India; Mizoram*, p. 211.

¹¹ P. Lalnithanga (2005), *Emergence of Mizoram*, p. 122.

to Mizoram.¹² By this Mizoram became a full- fledged State and was formally inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at Aizawl on 2nd February, 1987. According to this provision, the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram will consist of 40 elected members and an assurance was pledged that no Act of Parliament shall have effect upon the following:

1. Religious or social practices of the Mizos;
2. Mizo Customary law or procedure;
3. Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law;
4. Ownership and transfer of land shall apply to the State of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides: Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to any Central Act in force in Mizoram immediately before the appointed day.¹³

It was agreed that the Inner Line Regulations now in force will not be subject to repletion or amendment without consulting the State Government. It was also agreed that border trade in the local agricultural commodities, will be allowed under a scheme chalked out by the Centre “subject to international arrangements with neighboring countries”. The agreement agreed to preserve and protect the rights and privileges of the minorities in the State and ensure their social and economic advancement.

The North- Eastern Council (NEC):

When the state of Meghalaya came into existence, an Act called the North-Eastern Council Act, 1970 was passed providing “for the establishment of a Council to be called the North- Eastern Council, to identify plan schemes of the States in the north-eastern areas as were of common importance to those areas, review the implementation of such schemes and recommend measures for effecting co- ordination”.¹⁴ The North-Eastern Council (NEC) hailed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi as a promising innovation in regional planning formally came into being on 1st August, 1972. It is in fact, “an

¹² S. A. Rahman (2006), op. cit., p. 52.

¹³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

unmatched administrative innovation” to arrest the evil consequences of what S. K. Chaube called “the balkanization of the north- east.”¹⁵ Although its blue print was provided by the internal affairs committee of the Central Cabinet, which envisaged a supra- state structure for the North- East to be presided over by Union Home Minister with the Central Government retaining the power “to issue directions which the Governor was required to enforce”, the actual genesis of the Council could be traced to the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the “Tribal Panchsheel” of Pt. Nehru, the Administrative Reforms Commission’s recommendation on the administration of Union Territories of NEFA¹⁶, Tripura and Manipur as well as the Regional Councils Act of 1956, along with the necessity to establish linkages between the Hills and the people of the plains emphasising a sense of interdependence among the newly formed states which were comparatively backward and underdeveloped and were not in a position to gear up large scale resources mobilisation and even utilisation.¹⁷

The Council set up under this Act covered the north- eastern areas comprising the States of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura, and the Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. The Council consists of the Governors, the Administrators and the Chief Ministers of the States and the Union Territories. It is an advisory body which has jurisdiction over 1) any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning; 2) any matter concerning inter- State transport and communications; and 3) any matter relating to power or flood control projects of common interests. The function of the Council included formulation of a unified and co- ordinate regional plan (in addition to the State plan) in regard to matters of common importance to the area and review of the measures taken by the States for the maintenance of security and public order.¹⁸

The NEC chaired by the senior most governor of the region, became the nodal agency for the development of infrastructure facilities, especially communications. Here,

¹⁵ S. K. Chaube (1976), op. cit., p. 231.

¹⁶ NEFA (North East Frontier Area/ Agency) now is known as the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

¹⁷ H. Kham Khan Suan, *Special Status of the North- East in Indian Federalism* (Unpublished M. Phil dissertation submitted to CPS/ SSS, JNU, New Delhi, 2002), p. 125.

¹⁸ A. C. Ray (1982), op. cit., p. 144.

the absence of Home Ministry representative is viewed as a sign of neglect, and any move to reduce its role is resented.¹⁹ Given the small size and financial dependence to its member- states, its main advantage is to augment their collective bargaining power in negotiations for increased central assistance. To a certain extent, the NEC can be credited with the development of some degree of multi- state regionalism, which other zonal councils had failed to achieve.

At the NEC Special Meeting on 22nd December, 1981 at New Delhi, Brig. T. Sailo, the then Chief Minister of Mizoram and the President of the PC Party, mentioned the basic needs of Mizoram which included communication, power, drinking water problem, agriculture, industries, housing, man power, price equalization, food supplies through FCI and price fluctuation.²⁰ In his speech, utmost importance were given to communication — both road and air communications and hydro electrical power. By developing these two, others problems like agriculture, industries, housing, and food supply problems could be solved and asked the Centre to grant more funds through the NEC. Brig. T. Sailo asked the Centre to take up atleast 2 major hydel projects (200- 600 MW) from two rivers namely, Daleswari at Bairabi and Koladyne at Kawlchaw. At the same time, he pressurised the Centre to take up atleast one major project for immediate implementation and completion during the 6th Plan Period. Mentioning about the need of hydel projects, Brig. Sailo stated that the diesel generation from Assam which is about 3 MW is not sufficient enough for Mizoram.

ISSUES RELATING TO INNER LINE REGULATIONS:

The Inner Line Permit had its root in the Bengal Eastern Front Regulation of 1873, which was an act made by the British rulers in India. Because of the strained relationship between the people of the plains and the hills, the British Government was very much concerned about the protection of its frontiers under direct governance. Therefore, it was decided to have an imaginary line called ‘the Inner Line’ separating the

¹⁹ Balveer Arora, “Adopting Federalism to India” in Balveer Arora and Douglas V. Verney (Eds.), *Multiple Identities in a Single State: Indian Federalism in Comparative Perspective*, p. 84.

²⁰ *Brig. T. Sailo's Speeches and Writings*, (1983), Issued by Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram, p. 94- 99.

hills and the plains of Assam in its frontier. The provisions of the inner line endowed the Lt. Governor with the power to draw the line to be called Inner Line in each of the Tribal Areas beyond which no British subject and certain classes of foreigners could pass without permission from the authority. Under the section 2 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, a regulation was framed for the peace and Government of the Eastern Districts on the eastern frontier of Bengal, the Governor- General- in- Council notified the Inner Line on the southern frontier of the Cachar district.²¹ Under the provisions of the Inner Line, rules were laid down determining the conditions under which the people of the plains could carry on trade or jobs.

Initially, the Inner Line was created to maintain peace with the settlers of the Hill areas. However, the provision had continued after the annexation of the Hills to the British authority. Further, the relevance of such provision was felt and underlined by the Government of India for protecting the tribals from economic, cultural and social exploitation. In fact, the restriction of entry of the outsiders in the Lushai Hills and other hill areas of Assam were reinforced by invoking the Chin Hills Regulation of 1896. Section 22, 23, 38(2) and 40 of this Regulation were extended in a modified form to all the hill areas of Assam with effect from 9th October, 1911.²² These sections of the Regulation empower the Superintendent or the Deputy Commissioner of the District to order a person, who is not a native of the area, to leave the area within the given time if the presence of that person is considered as injurious to the peace and good administration of that area. Disobedience to such orders is punishable with imprisonment upto six months or with fine. Only the Government has the authority to revise such an order, which cannot be called in question in civil or criminal court.

The inner line kept the people of Lushai Hills segregated from the mainstream of the country. The segregation helped in limiting the exploitation of the Hill people; however it hampered cultural assimilation to a great extent. The isolation seemed to be justified on the ground of step- by- step assimilation. However, apart from the

²¹ V. V. Rao (1987), *A Century of Tribal Politics, Vol- 3*, p. 138.

²² R. N. Prasad and A. K. Agarwal (1991), *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*, p. 140.

assimilation, the possibility of economic exploitation was more important for which even after 1947 and also after Mizoram was elevated to the status of full fledged state, the Inner Line had continued to maintain ethnic and cultural identity. The administration of the Hills had significant difference with the plains. All the tribal areas in Assam were administered in a similar manner. The introduction of an administrative system called non- regulated system was unique. Under the system, the administration of civil and criminal justice, collection of revenues and all other functions of the Government were entrusted to an officer appointed by the Government with the title of the Civil Commissioner. This system allowed the emergence of a single officer to be very powerful and who combined in himself the powers of a Collector, a Magistrate and Judge. This system was the guiding force till the enactment of Government of India Act, 1919. Till date, the judiciary and executive in Mizoram are not separated. The same officials function both as civil and judicial executives.

At the same time, the Government of India imposed Restricted Area Permit (RAP) Order, 1963 and Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958 for foreigners in the interest of protecting the tribal minorities from outside exploitation.

The People's Conference party, since its formation gave the utmost importance to protection from assimilation from the outsiders and taught the masses of the Mizos on the basis of this. When the constitution of the Party was drafted, Brig. T. Sailo laid down the guideline principle of guiding the people in order to prevent commercial exploitation of the Mizo people from outsiders. He said that uncontrolled influx of non-Mizos into Mizoram should not be allowed.²³ In a memorandum that the PC Party submitted to the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi on the 17th September, 1982, the party demanded on the lines of Article 371 A of the Constitution of India, 'the inner line regulation now in force in Mizoram should not be repealed for so long as the people of Mizoram need it for safe- guarding themselves against exploitation especially in the matter of trade and business'.²⁴

²³ Brig. T. Sailo (2000), *A Soldiers Story*, p. 104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Again, in the Memorandum of Settlement, a pamphlet produced by the PC Party in 1986, the Party wholeheartedly supported and welcomed the Peace Settlement between the underground MNF and the Government of India. But the PC Party did not accept the Memorandum of Settlement signed between due to many reasons. One main reason lies in the issue of Inner Line Permit. In the Legal Administrative and others agreement, Clause II, No. 8, it was mentioned that “the Inner Line Regulations, as now in force in Mizoram, will not be amended or repealed without consulting without the State Government. The PC party argued that, instead of the words “without consulting the State Government”, it should be “without prior concurrence of the State Government”²⁵ so that the State government would have the final word. The Party argued for the interchange of word ‘consulting’ and ‘prior concurrence’ so that the final authority lies within the State Government of Mizoram.

In the memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi on the 17th September, 1982, the PC Party stated that “Notwithstanding the political changes that may be affected, the Government and the public in Mizoram are very much keen that there should be no changes in the laws applicable to the Territory of Mizoram. In other words, all laws in force should continue and any law not already in operation by virtue of the area being earlier an Excluded Area or a Sixth Schedule area should not be applied unless otherwise decided by the competent Legislature. In this respect, old Regulations like the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 (5 of 1873) and the Chin Hills Regulation, 1895 (5 of 1896) need special mention”.²⁶

ASSAM- MIZORAM BORDER ISSUE AND RE- UNIFICATION OF ‘ZO’ INHABITED AREAS:

The relations between Mizoram and Assam began way back in the 19th Century in the boarder areas of the Cachar District of Assam. The political relations between the Mizos and the Cachar district was laid in a series of raids committed by the Mizos (then

²⁵ *Memorandum of Settlement (Inbiakremna Thuthlung)*, Pamphlet issued by the People’s Conference Party General Headquarters, Aizawl, 1986, p. 13.

²⁶ Brig. T. Sailo (2000), op. cit., p. 151.

Kukis) on Sylhet and Cachar frontiers. The first recorded raid on the Cachar frontier in 1849 was committed believed to be by men of Lallianvunga's, namely Vanpuilala and Lalngura. As a result, the Government sent a punitive expedition known as Linger Expedition of 1850. The expedition lasted from 4th- 29th January. About this time, Suakpuilala, a great Mizo Western Chief, came into prominence; and for the first time, he along with other four eastern Chiefs sent emissaries in 1850 to Silchar with overtures of peace. After talks with the Superintendent, they agreed to send their representatives Chiefs and wished to pay tribute in return for the protection from the Pawi.²⁷ Suakpuilala visited Silchar in December 1851, and negotiated with Colonel Lister. After this attempted expedition, there was a marked improvement on the Cachar- Mizo relations. The British authority sent John W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to interview the Chiefs. He left Silchar on 20th December, 1869 and spent three months there. During his tour, Edgar arranged, among other things, a new boundary with Suakpuilala.²⁸ Edgar was allowed to visit Lushai Hills again in 1870- 1871. The main purpose of this trip was to finally settle with Suakpuilala the boundary fixed provisionally during his first visit. A written engagement known as "Sunnad" was executed by the two leaders on 16th January, 1871.²⁹

The role of the Inner Line Permit system in drawing the boundary between Cachar- Mizo districts may also be taken into account. There was no such scope of settling the boundaries on the part of the Government with the neighbouring tribes because they were all headed by independent chiefs. But the Government was determined to settle by defining them unilaterally. Thus, the Government settled its boundaries with the tribes by drawing an imaginary line called 'the Inner Line'.

One of the main concerns of the People's Conference Party, since its formation is the border issue of Mizoram. The PC Party claimed that the North-East Area Reorganization Act, 1971 does not recognize the agreement signed by the Mizo Chief

²⁷ Alexander Mackenzie (1979), *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 295.

²⁸ Sangkima, 'Cachar- Mizo Relation (A. D. 1832- 1890)', *Proceedings of North East History Association*, North East History Association (1995), p. 134.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Suakpuilala and the British Expedition Force in a signed document of 1875.³⁰ The PC Ministry constituted a Boundary Commission chaired by (Late) Brig. Vankunga. The reports gives clear picture of the boundary of Mizoram and Assam and this had been followed by a Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi saying that the boundary lines of 1875 should be recognized as the boundary between Mizoram and the neighbouring states.³¹

The PC Party declined the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the MNF and the Indian Government on the line of boundary issues between Mizoram and Assam. In the Memorandum of Settlement, it was mentioned that “the Territory of Mizoram shall consist of the Territory specified in Section 6 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971”. This Section 6 of the NEARA mentioned that ‘on and from the appointed day there shall be formed a new Union Territory to be known as the Union Territory of Mizoram comprising the territories which immediately before that day were comprised in the Mizo District in the existing state of Assam and thereupon the said territories of shall cease to form part of the existing state of Assam. The PC Party rejecting this settlement on boundary issues, claiming that when the Union Territory of Mizoram was formed, the Assam Government put up a stone for boundary marking in Vairengte, the boarder town of Mizoram, near Mr. Khemrianga’s house.³² This milestone has crossed 94 houses and 27 housing pass, which were obtained during the District Council were put under the state of Assam. Not only this, the Assam Authority destroyed all the paddy fields of Phaisen and Buhchang areas claiming that these areas came under the North Easter Area Re- Organisation Act, 1971 Section 6.

When the PC Party came to power in 1978, it formed a committee, comprising of Brig. C. Vankunga as its Chairman, F. Malsawma and C. Chawngkunga as its members, to solve the boundary issue. This committee pressurized the Central Government to settle the boundary issues according to the agreement signed by the British Authority and

³⁰ Ngurthankima Sailo, ‘Emergence of People’s Conference Party in Mizoram and its Role in the Development of Mizoram’, *Historical Journal of Mizoram*, (July 2004), vol. 5, Issue 1, p. 96.

³¹ Brig. T. Sailo (2000), op. cit., p. 151.

³² *Memorandum of Settlement (Inbiakremna Thuthlung)*, op. cit., p. 5

Suakpuilala, the Mizo Chief in 1875. The PC Party claimed that the difference between the Agreement of 1875 and the North Eastern Area Re- Organisation Act, 1971, Section 6 is about 4000 kilometers.³³ Besides this, all these areas were given the land rights during the District Council and Union Territory of Mizoram, and as many as 875 land holders lost their land and property to the Assam Government. Therefore, the PC Party under Brig. T. Sailo urged the Central Government to solve the boundary issue of Mizoram and Assam as fast as possible.

Re- Unification of ZO Inhabited Areas Under a Single Administrative Unit:

One of the aims and objective of the PC Party declares that “the party will aim at the unification of all Mizo inhabited contiguous areas now forming parts of India under a single administrative unit”.³⁴ The PC Ministry, therefore, tried its best to unify these Mizo inhabited areas under one single administrative unit. In a memorandum the PC Party submitted to the Prime Minister of India on 17th September, 1982, urging the Centre to give special provisions that the ‘*Mizo inhabited areas under one administrative unit: Mizo inhabited areas of other states in India should be unified with the present Union Territory of Mizoram to form one administrative unit, that is, the State of Zoram (presently known as Mizoram) under the provisions of Article 3 of the Constitution of India*’.³⁵

When the PC Party was voted out of power from 1984, they used this ‘re-unification of ZO inhabited areas’ as their propaganda and tried to win the support and sympathy from the masses both inside and outside Mizoram. But due to the political disturbance in Mizoram, they could not make much progress and the people of Mizoram are more interest in political stability rather than reunification of ZO people. Therefore, an organization called **Zo Re-unification Organisation known as ZORO** was founded. In a conference held at Lamka, Churachandpur in Manipur, on the 5th March, 1988, between the Zomi National Congress (ZNC) and the People’s Conference it was decided that for the purpose of giving effect to the desire to re-unify the Zo ethnic origin, on a

³³ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴ Lalchungnunga (1994), *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*, p. 90.

³⁵ Brig T. Sailo (2000), op. cit., p. 151.

larger scale, a Convention was to be held, to expedite the issue. In pursuance to this, the first world Zomi Convention on Re- Unification was held at Champhai Chawnehim from 19th- 21st May, 1988. ³⁶ The Convention was largely attended by delegates from various parties and individuals in their private capacities. The historic convention ended in declaration of Charter of Agreement making affirmations which declared that the Zo ethnic groups were from the same ancestors and they were divided by the British colonial rulers, which was followed by the Government of India, when India got her dependence. In this convention, they adopted the following declaration as mentioned below:

1. *We solemnly affirm the truth that members of Zo ethnic origin now living in Burma, India and Bangladesh, are a people of common ancestry, speaking common language, blessed with common social, culture and religious background and destined to common political fate and destiny.*
2. *We sincerely pledge and affirm solidarity and integration to take up a just struggle for Zo Re- Unification under one administrative umbrella within Indian Union.*
3. *We firmly hold the universal truth our political aspirations for Zo Re- Unification regardless of internal boundary constrains are the inalienable rights of all Zo ethnic origin. Further we solemnly acknowledge the claim for Zo Re- Unification to be wholly legitimate.*
4. *We firmly adopt the principle of Non- Violence for attaining Zo Re- Unification.*
5. *We sincerely appeal to the consciences of all heads of States and Governments under whom Zo community are citizens respectively to recognize and acknowledge the rightful claim for Zo Re- Unification. Further, we appeal to one and all believing in the Universal Human Rights to lend support to the just struggle for Zo Re- Unification at all levels and at different stages.*³⁷

Brig. T. Sailo, in his speech at the ZORO Conference at Champhai, mentioned that the PC Party of Mizoram had been cherishing this aspiration ever since its inception but could not take any concrete step due to the violent movement of the MNF. Now the party

³⁶ P. Lalnithanga (2005), op. cit., p. 175.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 176- 177.

happily welcomed the ending of this violent movement. The annual General Assembly of the PC Party held at Vanapa Hall, Aizawl on 9th December, 1987 after careful and full discussion passed a resolution to the effect that — the General Assembly after due consideration resolved to work for the re- unification of all these areas inhabited by their forefathers into one single administrative unit within the Indian Union and through non-violence means.³⁸

The historic Zomi Convention came to an end on the 21st of May, 1988. It was followed by a long march from Champhai to Aizawl by foot at 6 in the morning on the 23rd May, 1988. Around 300 Zo Re- Unification Volunteer (ZRV) took part in this long march. Earlier, the ZRV of Manipur undertook long march from Lamka (Churachandpur) to Champhai which took them 15 days. The march from Champhai to Aizawl lasted for 6 days culminating in a procession within Aizawl town on the 28th May, 1988 and torch procession from Bawngkawn to Kulikawn, from the northern most point of Aizawl to the southern most. The Zo Re- Unification leadership was held by the following persons — Brig. T. Sailo AVSM (Retd), Chairman, T. Gougin, C. Chawngkunga as Vice Chairman, S. Thangkhingin Ngaihte and Lalhmingthanga as Secretaries- General and Thangmawia as Treasurer.³⁹

CHAKMA (ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM BANGLADESH) ISSUE:

The PC party, since its formation gave utmost importance to ‘assimilation issue’ and even taught the masses on the basis of this issue. In the first teaching of the PC Party, it mentioned about assimilation as the following — “first to prevent commercial exploitation of the Mizo people by traders from outside of Mizoram. Uncontrolled influx of non Mizos into Mizoram should not be allowed. Secondly, to put an end to the increasing influx of the Chakmas into Mizoram. In the first place the Chakmas are neither Mizos nor Indians. Their uncontrolled entry into Mizoram poses a danger to the existence of the Mizos.⁴⁰ The Chakmas live in the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh. Their number is about nine to ten millions. They are neither Mizos nor Indians. During the

³⁸ Brig. T. Sailo (2000), op. cit., p. 215.

³⁹ Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana (2002), *Mizoram Hruaitute Sulhnu (Volume 1)*, p. 184.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

British time, a small number of Chakmas were allowed to live within Mizoram near the border with then East Bengal. Their number in that region was about 3000- 4000. After India attained independence, the number of Chakma infiltrators increased beyond all proportion. When the Mizo Hills District was elevated to the Union Territory status by the North East Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 1971 in 1972, the Chakma District Council was created along with the Pawi and the Lakher District Councils in the Southern part of Mizoram. According to 1972 Census, there were around 20, 000 Chakmas present in Mizoram.

Steps Taken by the PC Party Regarding the Chakma Foreigners:

When the PC Party got political power in Mizoram, one of their main priorities was to drive out the illegal immigrants of the Chakmas and stop them from entering the state of Mizoram. During the year 1978 when the PC Ministry was formed, the then Chief Minister Brig. T. Sailo had written a letter to the then Central External Affairs Minister A. B. Vajpayee informing him about the illegal Chakmas in Mizoram and asked the Centre to take appropriate steps. Then, the Central Government intervened and the Border Security Force and the Indian Army, who were on duty in the boarder line between India and Bangladesh, started checking illegal immigrants from Bangladesh apart from protecting the country.⁴¹

On 19th February, 1979 the PC Party President K. Biakchungnunga wrote a letter to the then Home Minister M. Patel, giving suggestions about how to control the illegal Chakma influx in Mizoram and submit a memorandum suggesting that — all the Chakma foreigners should be driven out from the state within 2 months; those who entered the state after 1947 should be declared as foreigners; and suggested that there should be a High level Enquiry to enquire about how Chakma District Council was formed in 1972. Besides, the PC Party formed a Committee to see about the Chakma influx in Mizoram and they appointed Brig. Vankunga, the PC Worker as its Chairman. To see about the illegal Chakma immigrants in Mizoram, he himself went to all the Chakma occupying

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 71.

areas in the Chakma District Council areas and submitted a detailed report to the State Government.⁴²

In 1979, the PC Party issued a pamphlet about how illegal Chakmas had entered Mizoram, claiming that during the British days, the Chakmas used to apply for permission to settle in villages bordering the then East Bengal (now Bangladesh). The total number of Chakmas permitted to settle in the Mizo villages upto 1947 was around 3,000 approximately. After 1947, due to various reasons, there was a certain amount of relaxation in watching the entry of Chakmas into Mizoram on the border. The PC Party accused the Government authority in negligence of checking illegal immigrant into the border. In due course of time, the number of infiltrators was very high. Eventually, on account of certain “political convenience of some politicians (vote bank politics)” the Chakmas claimed to form a small district along Mizoram- Bangladesh border.⁴³ The 1981 Census gave a figure of 20,000- 30,000 Chakmas as opposed to the two or three thousands odd Chakmas granted permission to settle Mizo villages prior to 1947. The pamphlet mainly talked about the steps taken by the government and the general concerned of the party about assimilation from foreign nationals immigrating into the state.

In a letter submitted to the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi on the 14th June 1982, Brig. T. Sailo wrote the “problems of Chakma (foreign nationals) influx” in which he mentioned how Chakma infiltrators had crossed the border illegally and how this can imposed the threat to the Mizos and asked the Centre to take up necessary steps for pushing back the foreign nationals and asked the Centre to put more security forces in the border of Mizoram and Bangladesh. In this letter to the Prime Minister, Brig. T. Sailo too mentioned about the Chakma District Council, saying that “In due course of time, the number of infiltrators became very big. Eventually, on account of certain ‘political convenience of some politicians (vote catching game)’ the Chakmas claimed to form a small district along the Mizoram- Bangladesh border which was conceded to. Thus s strip

⁴² Ibid., p. 72.

⁴³ *Influx of Chakmas of Bangladesh into Mizoram*, A Pamphlet issued by the People’s Conference Party General Headquarters, Aizawl: 1979.

of land of the territory of Mizoram along the border has been made into a Chakma District to accommodate foreign nationals. This is entirely wrong on the part of the then authorities".⁴⁴

During the PC Ministry, the then Deputy Speaker C. Chawngkunga was given the responsibility to study the influx of the Chakma foreigners in Mizoram. During the period between December 1981 to January 1982, C. Chawngkunga visited 56 Chakma villages and submitted a detailed report termed "**Chakma Settlement in Mizoram**" which contained 73 pages and "**Mizoram Boundary Affairs including Chakma Case**" which contained 31 pages to the PC Ministry. In these two reports, the main highlight was how the Chakma infiltrations had been increasing due to negligence from the authorities.⁴⁵

On the 30th April, 1983, the PC Party called an 'all party meeting' that discussed about the Chakma immigrants in Mizoram at Aizawl Club. The meeting passed two resolutions — firstly, to drive out all the illegal Chakma foreigners from Mizoram and to see that no Chakmas crossed the border again; the meeting passed a resolution to submit a memorandum to the Chief Electoral Officer. Accordingly, on 19th November, 1983, Brig. T. Sailo met the Chief Election Commissioner of India saying that due to the negligence of the preceding authorities, the Chakma foreigners had entered Mizoram and requested him to delete all the names in the Electoral Rolls, of those who entered Mizoram after 25th March, 1971.⁴⁶ The same letter was also send to the then Union Minister of Home Affairs P. C. Sethi, on the 14th December, 1983.

The PC Party rejected the Memorandum of Settlement between the MNF and the Indian Government on the account that it mentioned in the settlement that 'the rights and privileges of the minorities as envisaged in the Constitution, shall continue to be preserved and protected and their social and economic advancement shall be ensured'. According to the PC Party, this is the indirect way of saying the Chakmas (foreigner) rights would be protected by the Government of India. The PC Party claimed that the

⁴⁴ .Brig. T. Sailo's *Speeches and Writings* (1983), op. cit., p. 113.

⁴⁵ Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana (2002), op. cit., p. 77.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 74.

Chakmas are foreigners who do not have any status in India and accepting them is a betrayal act of both the parties (the MNF and the Indian Government) to the Mizo people.

During the PC Ministry from 1978- 1984, the numbers of Chakmas illegal immigrants pushed out from Mizoram were as follows:

YEAR	NO. OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS
1978	151
1979	8,897
1980	978
1981	204
1982	678
1983	261
TOTAL	11,169

Source: Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana (2002) "Mizoram Hruaitute Sulhnu Volume 1", p. 74.

When the PC Party was voted out from power in 1984, the party tried its best in influencing the authority about the Chakma issue. In a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his visit to Mizoram on 9th June, 1986, the PC Party mentioned about the Chakmas as the following — *"If the influx of foreign nationals (mainly the Chakmas from Bangladesh) is stopped, and all those who have infiltrated into Mizoram of India in the past two decades or so are detected and pushed back to Bangladesh. Further to ensure stoppage of future infiltration, the abolishing of the existing Autonomous Chakma District Council is one of the pre-requisite steps".*⁴⁷

In the year 1996, the People's Conference Party General Headquarters issued a pamphlet called "**Chakma and Special Force (Engtianga Mizorama Lo Awm Nge An Nih)**". In this pamphlet, they mainly highlighted how the infiltrations took place and the efforts and steps taken up by the PC party and its ministry in solving the Chakma problem. The PC Party mentioned that during the interim government of the MNF and

⁴⁷ Memorandum Submitted to Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, Hon' ble Prime Minister of India by the People's Conference Party of Mizoram on his Visit to Mizoram on the 9th July, 1986, Issued by People's Conference Party General Headquarters, Aizawl: 1986.

the Congress in September 1986 in the Assembly Session, 3 PC MLAs namely Lalhmingthanga, Brig. T. Sailo and K. Biakchungnunga put up the same motion called **'Dissolvment of the Existing Chakma District Council'** to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly on the 5th September, 1986.⁴⁸ But the resolution had been disapproved by both the Congress and the MNF MLAs. The PC Party MLAs felt that abolition of the Chakma District Council should be passed before the President of India signed Mizoram State Bill. When the Assembly Speaker Dr. Thansanga asked the members to take a vote in favour or in against of the motion, only the eight PC MLAs voted for the motion and the rest of the MLAs voted against the motion. Therefore, the motion for dissolving the existing Chakma District Council could not get passed in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly.

During the Congress Ministry of the year 1995, in the Assembly Session of 27th September- 5th October, 1995, the PC Party MLA Lalhmingthanga made a resolution on how to send back the Chakma infiltrators from Mizoram. At the same time, the same resolution has been put up by the MNF, MLA Tlanghmingthanga. After a long discussion, the resolution was voted out and it could not be passed in the State Legislative Assembly.

According to the Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, 1972 the number of Chakma population was 14,806 consisting of 16 villages with 2,391 houses. If we look at the Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, 1992, the number of Chakmas in Mizoram had increased to 54,024. Therefore, the PC Party claimed that the number of Chakma infiltrators had increased day by day due to the existing Chakma District Council. Unless and until necessary steps were taken up, this influx of Chakmas in Mizoram can create a problem to Mizos in Mizoram, especially in the Chhimtuipui District, where the Chakma District Council is functioning.

⁴⁸ *Chakma and Special Force (Engtianga Mizorama Lo Awm Nge Annih)*, Published by the MPC General Headquarters, Aizawl: 1996.

If one look at the steps and efforts put up by the PC Party, it shows that they really dealt with the assimilation issue in which one of the aim and objectives of the party is based. If we look at the party Election Manifestos from 1978 onwards, to check the illegal immigrant of the Chakmas had been the main priority in each and every election manifestos since the beginning of the formation of the PC Party.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter illuminates the whole exercise made in the previous chapters. Based on the discussion, here an attempt is made to summaries the dissertation and followed by some preliminary conclusions and critical comments.

The study begins with defining and highlighting the importance of political parties and party system in Indian democratic set up. This has been followed by the emergence of regional political parties in India; due to the many transformation of the party system in India since the late 1980s. The mushroom growth of the regional parties can be directly attributed to the gradual decline of the 'Congress system' in the Indian Politics. The roles played by regional parties in Indian politics are also analyzed in this chapter. Then the growth of political parties and political development in the north east India has also been highlighted. Important and relevant literatures are being reviewed in this chapter which further helps in analyzing the research area in a systematic way.

In the second chapter, the study specifically narrates the political developments in Mizoram and the growth of political parties in Mizoram. It starts with the birth of Mizo Union, the first political party in Mizoram followed by the United Mizo Freedom Organisation, the Mizo National Front and Congress parties in Mizoram. Special attention has been paid to evolution and factors leading to the birth of People's Conference party, the factors which contributed for the birth of the party during the political disturbance in the Union Territory of Mizoram. The aims and objectives of the party and the factors contribute for the fast growth of the party during this time are also being analyzed.

The third chapter highlights the role of leadership in political parties, and it also tries to seek the leadership pattern and ideology of the MPC. This chapter talks about the importance of political leadership and ideology in the context of Indian political system as a whole also. By analyzing the leadership pattern, one can say that the MPC follows a

traditional- modern type of leadership, along with an authoritarian leader, whose main priority was the speedy economic development of the state and the material well- being of the people. The PC party since its formation followed the ideology of development logic. At the same time, the party is regional in character but national in outlook. This 'regionalism' character followed by the MPC can be viewed as an expression of elite struggle and competition for political power,¹ first between the traditional elites (the chiefs) and the emergent elites.

As far as the party electoral performance is concerned which is the focus in the fourth chapter, it is found that the party had done well in the first two elections of its formation, i.e. the 1978 and 1979 state legislative assembly elections. It was evident that during the 1977, 1978 and 1979 elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly, the charismatic leadership of Brig. T. Sailo played a more important role than the organizational programme or ideology. But due to the sore relationship between the underground MNF and the PC party, the party lost in the 1984 state legislative assembly election. The PC party had fallen into disgrace because of its anti- MNF policy. Again, the PC party made an alliance with the Congress and the MNF in the 1993 and 1998 state legislative assembly election, and managed to come back to political power, but the coalition could not last long and both ended before completing the term of five years. The alliance made by the MPC with both the national party (Congress) and the regional party (MNF) did not strengthen the party and did not helped in winning the people's trust, instead; it weakened the functioning and the strength of the MPC.

Chapter five deals with the federal dimensions of the MPC with the centre and the neighbouring states on the issues of inner line permit, Mizoram- Assam boarder dispute, re- unification of Zo inhabited areas and illegal Chakma immigrants from Bangladesh. This chapter mainly highlights how the MPC tried to make impact to the masses by trying to solve the boundary issues, and trying to push back the foreign illegal immigrants from Mizoram. The initiatives made the PC Legislatures for the dissolution of the

¹ Lalchungnunga (1994), *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*, p. 123.

Chakma District Council which was formed in 1972 along with the status of Union Territory of Mizoram are also discussed and analyzed in this chapter.

The PC party took up various issues during its hold of political power as well as being in the opposition party. When the party was in power, on the economic front, it started the process of meeting what is called Six Basic Needs such as food, drinking water, road, transportation, power and rural development. It took the question of 'assimilation' very seriously. Drawing examples from the experience of Tripuris and Cacharis, the party tried hard to educate the public about the danger of being assimilated by larger groups. It spoke of assimilation as having physical (demographic), economic, cultural and social dimensions. The party takes the infiltration of the Bangladeshi Chakmas into Mizoram seriously and took some measures in pushing back illegal infiltrators and in preventing further infiltration of foreigners into Mizoram. At the same time, the party took up the questions of Mizoram- Cachar boundary and Inner Line reserves and appointed a study group for these.

As far as the policy and programmes of the MPC is concerned, it puts its main effort to infrastructural development in order to develop Mizoram economy besides bringing political stability to the state. The party felt that self- sufficiency in economy would bring all round development and stability in the state. From the very outset, the PC party perceived that without power and communication system, developmental works could not be pursued. They therefore aimed at building up two essential infrastructures namely communication and hydro- electrical power. By analyzing the programmes and election manifestos of the MPC, it clearly shows that the party's utmost importance is given to the development of the state economy and infra- structure. Therefore, one can argued that the PC party since its formation followed the ideology of development logic.

As a whole, we can say that the People's Conference, later on came to be known as Mizoram People's Conference Party (MPC) came up at the right time, when the political disturbance of Mizoram was at its peak and the people looked upto it as their sole survivor from the oppression of the army rule. Therefore, the fame of the party grew

up in a very short time. In short, the PC party in Mizoram as a regional political party rose very fast but except for short span from 1975 to 1984. Formed in 1975, the PC party came to power in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly in 1978 and continued upto 1984. Thereafter, its strength fell abruptly in the elections held after 1984. The way its popularity rapidly increased, its decline followed the same speed. It had, therefore, been submerged by the 'MNF wave' and the increasing popularity of Congress party influence in Mizo politics, whether this will be just for a while or for good is a relevant question. This development may give an opinion that no two strong regional leaderships can co-exist in the politics of Mizoram, and if they are divided equally, the national party will come up.

APPENDIX – A

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE: MIZORAM

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVE:

1. This Committee will endeavour to uphold the Human Rights of the Mizo people as guaranteed under the Constitution of India.
2. the Committee's immediate objectives are two- fold namely:-
 - Firstly, it will seek judicial intervention in the matter of the forcible evacuation of villagers from their villages to other places.
 - Secondly, it will endeavour to restore goodwill; mutual understanding and co- operation between the Security Forces and the Mizo people, thereby removing the feeling of insecurity in the minds of the Mizo people against the Security Forces which has been is still prevailing in Mizoram. And thus it will ensure the safe guarding of individual human rights.
3. This committee is a non- political body. All citizens, Mizos or non- Mizos, Regardless of their occupation, their religious beliefs, their political party affiliations, whether in business or Government Service who have the sufferings of the affected Mizo people genuinely at heart, are requested to lend support, either through a moral force or through prayers.
- 4 Lastly, the Committee will focus the attention of the powers that be in India on the silent sufferings of the affected Mizo people as a direct result of para 2 (a) and (b) above, hitherto unknown to the rest of India.

Sd/-

Zairemthanga
Secretary

Sd/-

Brig. Thenphunga Sailo (Rtd)
Chairman

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE: MIZORAM.

Dated June/ July 1974.

APPENDIX – B

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE’S CONFERENCE 1976

CHAPTER I

1. i) Name : This political party shall be called People’s Conference (PC).
- ii) Symbol : The party symbol shall be ‘cock’.
- iii) Flag : The flag of the People’s Conference shall be green of which the length shall be one and a half of its width, and in the centre of the flag there shall be a red cock in a white circle on both sides.

CHAPTER II

1. Aims and objects of the People’s Conference.
- The Party will endeavour to prepare ground for the peaceful solution of the Mizo political problem.
 - The Party will aim at the unification of all Mizo inhabited contiguous areas now forming parts of India under a single administrative unit.
 - The Party stands for the wishes of the people to preserve their distinct identity ethnically, culturally and socially while upholding the integrity of India.
 - The interests of the people of Mizoram shall be guiding principle with overriding priority and precedence over those of the party.
 - The Party will work for speedy economic development with special emphasis on rural development.
 - The Party will uphold the aims and objectives of the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram.

APPENDIX – C

BRIG T. SAILO, AVSM (RETD)

D. O. NO. CMS
236/ 83/ 8- 9
Dated Aizawl, the 19th Nov. '83.

Dear Shri Trivedi,

A few months ago I met you in your office and apprised you of the problem of influx of foreigner from Bangladesh into Mizoram, a Union Territory of India, with particular reference to the effect of influx on the preparation of electoral rolls. I am writing this letter to you again to repeat what I said to you verbally and to record it on paper clearly explaining the position.

The issue of influx of foreigners into the Union Territory of Mizoram from Bangladesh is of a slightly different nature from other states of the North East similarly affected.

If you look at the map of this part of India vis- a- vis Bangladesh, you notice that the strip of land lying between Mizoram and Bangladesh is directly contiguous to Chakma inhabited areas of Bangladesh known as Chittagong Hill tract. The influx of foreigners, mainly Chakmas takes place in this strip of land forming the border of Mizoram and Bangladesh running from north to south. Should this influx continue unchecked, one day in the future these foreigners (Chakmas) encourage by the Government of Bangladesh may well claim the said strip of land encroached upon by their influx, as a part of their land and will claim it to be as such, which will mean India losing its territory to Bangladesh. This possibility is a very live issue which concerns any true citizens of India because India must not lose even a square inch of its territory to Bangladesh. Incidentally, this issue does not concern not only Mizoram Union territory, but it concerns the territorial integrity of India.

Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, vide their letter No. 11/ 180/ 72-TX dated 30th September 1972 have laid down that foreigners from Bangladesh into

Mizoram after 25th March, 1972 should be treated as illegal immigrants/ entrants. They should be detected and pushed back to Bangladesh.

Over the last few years due to various reasons the authorities in Mizoram have not been very alert to this very vital issue, especially before 1978. The rate of influx of foreigners from Bangladesh into Mizoram increased sharply from 1971 onwards. However, due to inadequate attention paid to this vital issue by the then authorities in Mizoram, the task of detection and pushing back was never tackled in right earnest. Not only that, in successive electoral rolls in the past, officials concerned with enumeration had carelessly done their job and a number of illegal entrants (foreigners from Bangladesh) had been included in successive electoral rolls. Quite frankly, it is only in the last couple of years, due to if I may say so, my personal intervention, this question of detection and pushing back of foreigners had been taken up in right earnest. Side by side, illegal immigrants who might have been wrongly included in the successive electoral rolls have been stressed and taken up by me personally both with the local election officials as well as Home Ministry, Government of India. In short, our aim, that is the aim of Government of India, should be that all those illegal entrants/ immigrants after 25th March, 1971 should all be disfranchised.

I would request you to read this paper very carefully, with particular references to the preparation of electoral roll currently under progress in Mizoram.

Yours sincerely

Sd/- BRIG. T. SAILO

Shri R. K. Trivedi
Chief Election Commissioner of India
Election Commission of India,
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi 1.

Copy to:

Shri P. C. Sethi
Union Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
North Block,
New Delhi 1.

n. o. o.

Copy to: 1. Lt. Governor Mizoram
2. Chief Secretary, Mizoram.

APPENDIX – D

Memorandum of on Economic Development of Mizoram sent to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India by People's Conference (PC) Party on 26th July, 1986.

Respected Prime Minister,

1. On 9th July 1986, the day of your arrival at Aizawl, we, of the People's Conference handed over to you a memorandum of political nature.
2. Your activities during your three days stay in Mizoram convinced us that you take genuine interest in the economic well being of Mizo people. To further confirm this impression of ours, a team of Central Ministers and other important officials have arrived at Aizawl, obviously on our direction. This team of Central Ministers/ Officials is to have a first hand information about the economic needs of Mizoram. On this occasion we are sending are sending a small memorandum of economic nature to you. A copy is being given to each of the Central Ministers now on a visit to Mizoram.

What are the basic needs of Mizoram and the priorities thereof?

3. Mizoram need to be self- sufficient in its staple food, namely rice. To achieve this objective all the flat areas mostly along the principal rivers need to be turned into West Rice Cultivation (WRC) with a view to having two harvests of rice in a year. This is possible only through lift irrigation for which electric power is essential.
4. All the towns and most of the villages in Mizoram face acute water problem. In order to solve this water problem, water which is available in the rivers/ streams much below the level of the towns/ villages has to be pumped up by using electric power. Diesel oil pumping is thoroughly unsatisfactory.
5. The programme of cash crop cultivation like Horticulture, Coffee plantation, Cardamom plantation, Rubber plantation and the economic

exploitation of such cash crops to benefit individual growers and the country as a whole can be fully implemented only if there is a good network of communication and also electric power.

6. Forest wealth of Mizoram can be turned into small, medium and large industries if there is a good network of communication and reliable and abundant supply of electric power.

Basic Infrastructures which are essential:-

7. In order to achieve the basic needs as outlined above, two basic infrastructures are essential namely communication (road, rail and air) and electric power. These two basic infrastructures are practically non-existent till today.
8. During 1980, Mrs Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister was fully appraised of the over- all situation explained above. She then issued a general directive/ instructions to various Central Ministers. As a result, various steps were taken to lay foundation of the basic infrastructures. Though vigorous steps were taken from 1980 onwards, the various projects undertaken have not been completed. It is imperative to pursue vigorously the various projects, the foundation for all these having been initiated and started during the last tenure of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. The various projects constituting the basis infrastructure already started and which need to be pursued vigorously under your direction are described below for your information.

Hydel Projects:

9. **1. 160 MW Hydel Project at Bairabi on the River Tlawng (Daleswari):**
This project holds the key to every aspect of economic development in Mizoram. the first part of the project namely investigation was started with great enthusiasm by the National Hydel Power Corporation (NHPC) under the personal direction of Shri Ghani Khan Chowdhury, the then Central Power Minister, who inaugurated the opening ceremony for starting the investigation work at Bairabi itself in the

beginning of 1982. Later, Shri Chandra Shekar Singh, the then Power Minister paid a visit to Bairabi to pursue the progress of investigation. Thus, vigorously pursued by the Central Ministers and the top officials of NPHC, the work of the investigation was completed in record time that is one and half years required as opposed to the normal four or five years required to complete investigation work of Hydel Power Project. As is known to you, in the world of Hydel Power production, investigation work completed means 50% work of Hydel Power Project completed. So far as the Bairabi Hydel Project (160 MW) is concerned, the investigation work on the ground was completed by September 1983 and the project report compiled by NHPC was finished in March 1984. The project report has been processed ever since May 1984 in the Government of India. On completion of processing the project, it will be released for execution for actual construction of the dam. It is regretted that the **Work in Processing the Project Report** has been very much delayed since May 1984. You are requested to give direction to complete this processing work at the earliest so that work on the construction of the dam may get started without any further delay.

One more major Hydel Project called Tuivai Project (250 MW) is being investigated. Investigation work needs to be done more vigorously by Central Water Commission.

Rail Communication:

10. 1. The foundation stone for the project Lala Ghat- Bairabi Rail line was laid by the Late Shri Kedar Pande, the Railway Minister at the end of 1981. Shri Kedar Pande assured the people of Mizoram that Lala Ghat- Bairabi rail line could be completed in a matter of three to four years. The railway Board started the work on this railway project in right earnest from the beginning of 1982. Somehow things have grown wrong somewhere. The work on this project has been extremely slow in the last couple of years. You are requested to give direction to speed up the work.

Preliminary work on the project, namely preparation of estimate was completed long time ago. Shri Ghani Khan Chowdhury, the then Railway Minister gave assurance that this work would also be taken up in right earnest. In the last two years or so, nothing has happened regarding this project.

Road Communication:

11. 1 National Highway 54 (Silchar- Aizawl- Lunglei- Lawngtlai): Sanction was accorded in the latter part of 1980 for the conversion of the existing Class 9 road into National Highway 54. The BRDB (Pushpak) started the work with great enthusiasm and a lot of progress was made. Lately, the progress has been slow. It is understood that the main constrains are lack of fund and resources (equipments). Secretary, BRDB can confirm this. Please give direction to provide for adequate fund and resources so that work can be resumed with the previous speed.

Other Roads of Economic Importance:-

At the request of the Government of Mizoram, Government of India, in 1982 sanctioned the following roads of economic importance to be taken up by BRDB:-

- a) Thenzawl – Buarpui – Bunghmun (CI. 5)
- b) Kawlkulh – Ngopa – Mimbung (CI. 9)
- c) Champhai – Khawbung – N. Vanlaiphai (CI. 9)

Work had been started but lately the progress seems to be slow, again, due to certain constrains, perhaps lack of funds and resources. Please give suitable direction in this regard also.

Master plan of network of road communication in Mizoram was initiated by the Government of Mizoram in 1981/ 82 and duly approved by the Planning Commission. In this case, work is to be undertaken by the PWD of Mizoram. In the recent past, actual work to execute this Master Plan has been very slow, almost minimal. You may like to give suitable direction in this matter.

Air Communication:-

12. Since 1981 step was initiated for the construction of an Aerodrome of modern specification at Lengpui. Shri Khurseed Alam Khan, the Minister in charge of Civil Aviation played a leading role in initiating this work at our request. Survey of India and other concerned agencies were pressed into service and survey works got started immediately. Unfortunately, nothing had been heard of this project in the last two years or so. The importance of Mizoram being connected with the rest of the country by air service need not be stressed. It is known to you. The present air service by landing Donier aircraft at Tuirial Airfield is only a temporary arrangement. This air service is at best a mini air service. Every State/ Union Territory in the North East is connected with rest of the country by air service (Boeing Airbus). Mizoram need to be linked by similar air service (and not mini air service). Hence the need to expedite construction of aerodrome of modern specification at Lengpui as already approved quite sometime ago. You are requested to give suitable direction in this matter.

The so- called New Land Use Policy Enunciated by the Present Government:

13.1 the underlying idea clearly spelt out in the so- called NEW LAND USE POLICY is the free distribution in hard cash of Rs. 3,000/- annually to a village family. This itself opens the door for nepotism and political corruption, which is already happening in short span of two years of its inception. What is worst is the diversion of a large chunk of plan provision of the development departments such as Agriculture, Soil Conservation, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, Forest from their respective approved plan schemes duly approved by Planning Commission in order to build up a pool of fund to the tune of crores for the purpose of distribution of Rs. 3,000/- in hard cash to a village family. The so- called NEW LAND USE POLICY aims at 50,000 families to receive Rs. 3,000 each in hard cash per year for five years and the ultimate target is 60,000 families to receive such hard cash. Obviously the development departments like Agriculture, Vety and Animal Husbandry, Forest are deprived of their budget provision to implement their plan schemes duly approved by the Planning Commission.

Surely the Planning Commission have not sanctioned sizeable amounts of money to be thrown away in this fashion merely for the purpose of promoting nepotism and political corruption besides sowing the seeds of laziness and dishonesty amongst the Mizo people

Dated: Aizawl
The 26th July, 1986

Sd/-
(BRIG. T. SAILO, AVSM)
President
People's Conference Party
Mizoram.

APPENDIX – E

RE- UNIFICATION OF ZOMIS (MIZOS)

Historical Background:

- a) Before the advent of the British into the Indian Sub- Continent, the mountainous region between the Chindwin Valley in the East, the plains of Manipur in the North, the plains of the present Cachar District, Tripura, domain of the Maharajas, the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the West and the Arakan Yomas in the South was inhabited by the people of the same ethnic stock – the Hill people – known as ZOMIS, having a common language but with different dialects brought about by the compulsions of geographical factors such as hill ranges and rivers.
- b) When the British took over these areas, different British authors referred to them as Kuki- Chin or Lusei- Kuki clans or just Chins and so on.
- c) After the British completed their conquest of the Indian Sub- Continent including Burma, they started dividing these areas into administrative areas purely from their administrative convenience. Thus, the region east of the river Tiau formed part of Burma to be administered from Rangoon. The rest of the mountainous region referred to in para ‘a’ above, was to be administered from Calcutta or Sylhlet or Shillong or Imphal and therefore was subsequently a part of India when Burma was separated from India. Thus the same ethnic group of people (who may be conveniently referred to as ZOMIS for the sake of brevity and convenience in writing of this paper) living in India were divided into different administrative units, e. g. Lushai Hills District under Assam (presently known as Mizoram), the hill areas in southern and western Manipur and the Jampui range of Tripura state.

THE BIRTH OF THE IDEA OF RE- UNIFICATION:

- d) Soon after India gained Independence, political awakening set in. the aspirations of re- unification of the people of all these areas into one single administrative unit gained momentum and became undying force, and quite naturally.

THE WIND OF CHANGE:

- e) The PC party of Mizoram has been cherishing this aspiration ever since its inception but could not take any concrete steps due to the violent movement of the MNF. Now happily the violent movement has come to an end.
- f) The Annual General Assembly of the PC party held at Vanapa Hall, Aizawl, on 9th December 1987 after careful and full discussion passed a resolution to the affect that:
This General Assembly after due consideration resolve to work for the re-unification of all these inhabited areas by our forefathers into one single administrative unit within the INDIAN UNION and with non- violent means.

APPEAL:

- g) We appeal to the leaders both in India and Burma to appreciate our rightful and legitimate aspirations and help us realize our dream into reality.

Dated Aizawl
the 10th December, 1987.

(BRIG. T. SAILO)
President
People's Conference Party
Mizoram.

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