

REGIONALISM IN MIZORAM POLITICS

By

LALCHUNGNUNGA

Department of Political Science

A THESIS

SUBMITTED

For

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

To



NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY

SHILLONG

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North-Eastern Hill University

Mayurbhanj Complex
Nongthymmai Shillong - 793014 (Meghalaya)

Dr. C.N. Bhalerao
Professor of Political Science &
Dean, School of Social Sciences

CERTIFIED that the subject-matter of this thesis 'Regionalism in Mizoram Politics' is the record of work done by Mr. Lalchungnunga under my supervision and that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or to the best of my knowledge and belief, to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other University.

In habits and character Mr. Lalchungnunga is a fit and proper person for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

C. N. Bhalerao

(C. N. Bhalerao)

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PREFACE

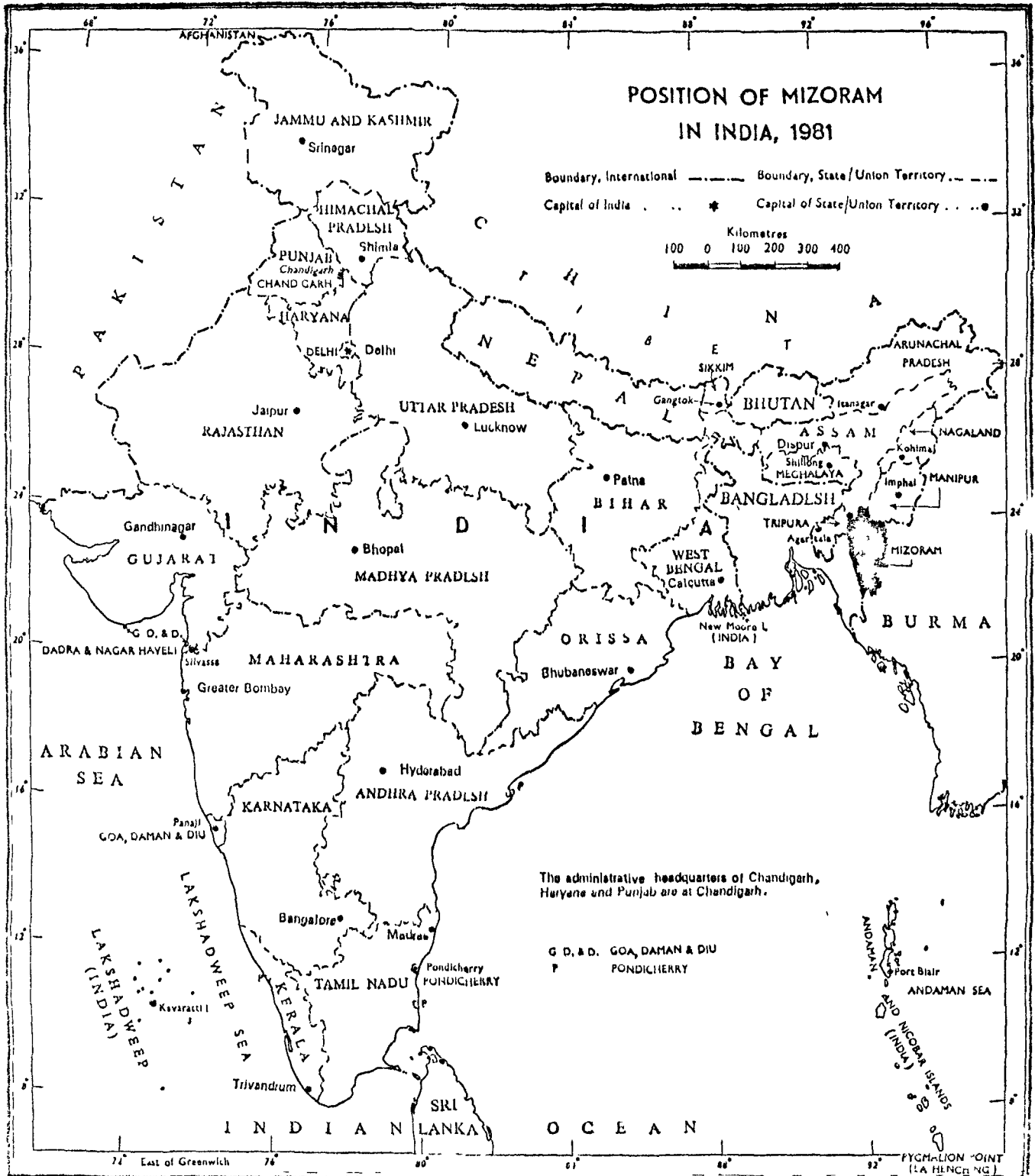
This thesis purports to be the first work on Regionalism with reference to Mizoram politics. The need to have such a work was felt because no analysis of the political developments in Mizoram was known to have been attempted by any scholar within the framework of the dynamics of regionalism in North-East India. The field of the study was found to be suitable because the scholar belongs to Mizoram and has the advantage of getting first-hand knowledge of the socio-political structure and transformation of the State. It was also felt highly desirable, in view of the fluidity of Mizoram politics on account of the uncertain conditions created by the MNF movement and the protracted process of negotiation for its settlement, that an empirical research be done in order to know the real political attitudes and aspirations of the Mizo people. This may hopefully contribute to a theoretical analysis of Mizoram politics and be of help to administrators and policy-makers.

I am grateful to Prof.C.N. Bhalerao, Dean, School of Social Sciences at the North-Eastern Hill University and my Supervisor for his learned guidance and dedicated concern for the successful completion of this work. But for his help and interest, this work would not have been completed and come out in this form. I also owe gratitude to a great number of persons who are too numerous to be mentioned by name here and who have encouraged, helped and enabled me to complete this work. I acknowledge with grateful thanks the invaluable help I have received from them all.

While expressing my thanks and gratefulness to all those who have helped me in this work, I would like to say that I alone am responsible for any errors in the presentation of facts and analysis or in the interpretations thereof.



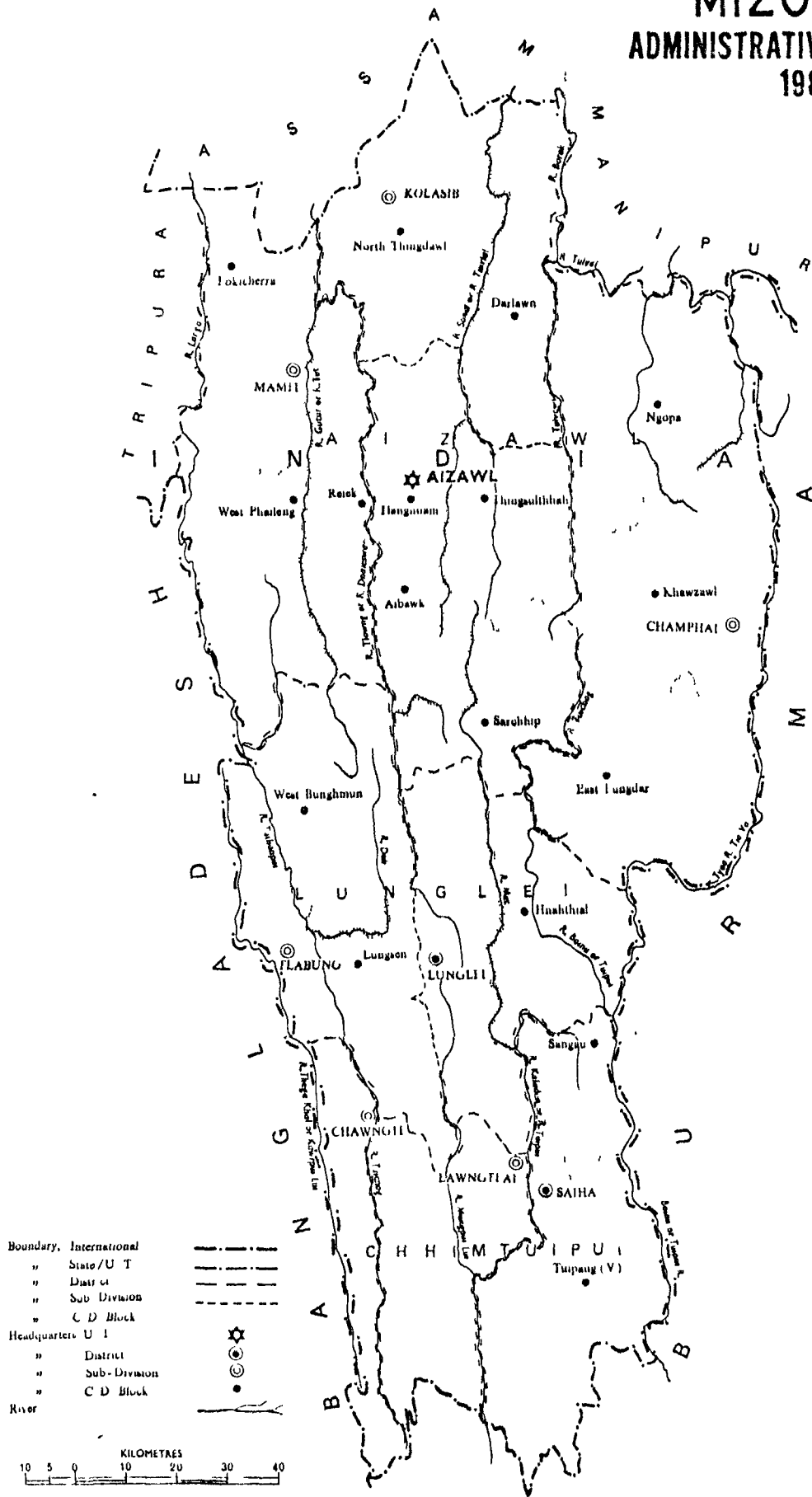
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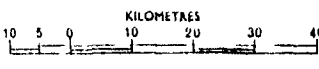
based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of India. The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles from the low water mark of the spring tide base line.

The boundary of Meghalaya shown on this map is as interpreted from the North Eastern Areas (Merger) Act, 1971, but may yet to be settled.

MIZORAM ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS 1981



- Boundary, International
- " State/U T
- " District
- " Sub-Division
- " C/D Block
- Headquarters U I
- " District
- " Sub-Division
- " C/D Block
- River



Based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of India.
The Indo-Bangladesh boundary shown on this map is the one existing prior to the conclusion of the agreement on May 16 1974 between India & Bangladesh.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT MIZORAM

1. Population (1981): 493,757 Rural: 75.33%.
2. Area: 21,081 sq.km. Density of Pop. 23 per km².
3. Sex ratio: 919 females to 1000 males.
4. Literacy: 59.88% Male: 64.46%, Female 54.91%
5. Percentage of urban pop. to the total pop. 24.67.
6. Percentage of Scheduled Castes: 0.03.
7. Percentage of Scheduled Tribes: 93.55.
8. No. of occupied residential houses: 81,341.
9. No. of inhabited villages: 721.
10. No. of towns: 6.
11. Location: 20.20° to 24.27°(N) and 92.20° to 93.29°(E).
12. Altitude of towns: Aizawl 3,715ft, Lunglei 4,008 ft.,
Saiha 4,020 ft., Champhai 5,504 ft.
13. No. of (i) Districts - 3, (ii) Sub-Division - 9,
(iii) C.D. Blocks - 20.
14. Villages electrified as on 1.6.81: 37.
15. Per capita energy consumption: 11 units.
16. No. of Government Employees: 18,058.
17. No. of (i) Hospitals - 4, (ii) Beds - 720,
(iii) Doctors - 67.
18. No. of Educational Institutions: 1,081 including
University - 1 (NEHU Campus), Colleges - 12.
19. No. of Teachers - 4,158, and students - 1,30,497.
20. Total length of road blacktopped: (i) PWD 101,75 kms.
(ii) BRTF 1,136,32 kms.

Sources: 1. Census of India (1981) Mizoram, Gen.Pop.
Table p. 1-2.

2. Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 1981, pp.10-2.

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CHAPTER - I

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Regionalism, though a potent force, having had significant bearing on the nature and texture of politics in India, has not received as much attention of scholars as it deserves. The neglect of studies in the field of regionalism is mainly due to the fact that it has been found operating, in most cases, in conjunction with other political forces like linguism and communalism.¹ Over and above this neglect of study in the field, no study is known to have been attempted on the subject with reference to Mizoram. Studies on Mizos left behind by the British Officers, though informative and helpful they are in their own way, yet do not have direct focus on the problem. The edited works on State Politics in India such as by Myron Weiner (1968) and Iqbal Narain (1976) and on Tribal Movements in India by K.S. Singh (1982) make few references and that also of general nature to Mizoram politics. Such is also the case with A. D. Pant and Shiva K. Gupta's edited work, Multi-Ethnicity and National Integration (1985). S. Chaube's Hill Politics in North-East India

1. P.C. Mathur, "Regionalism in India: An Essay in Dimensionalization of State Politics in India" in Ramakant (ed), Regionalism in South Asia, Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1983, pp. 1-2.

(1973) and V. V. Rao's A Century of Tribal Politics (1976) deal with Mizo politics at some length as part of the Northeastern politics. But, even these works do not contain sufficient analysis of the problem of Mizo regionalism. The observations and insights given by B.B. Goswami's Mizo Unrest (1979) are anthropological in approach. While Nirmal Nibedon's Ethnic Explosion (1981) deals with Mizo politics as part of the whole ethnic movements in the Northeastern region, his Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade (1980) is mainly about the MNF movement presented with some elements of journalistic romanticism. Both works, however, contain much of the relevant information on Mizo politics. There are a few specialised published works on Mizo politics among which mention may be made of Animesh Ray's Mizoram: Dynamics of Change (1982) which deals with the problems of Mizoram in general in the context of national integration, viewed in the administrative perspective; Amit Kumar Nag's The Mizo Dilemma (1984) which is a general presentation of major developments in Mizo political movements; P. K. Bandhyopadhyay's Leadership Among Mizos (1985) which is a commendable sociological-anthropological work on the Mizo leadership pattern; B. Lalthangliana's History of Mizo in Burma (1975) which is a research into the History of Mizos. Among the few unpublished research works on Mizos, the following have been read by the author

and some of the findings and data in these works are incorporated in this thesis with due acknowledgement:

Kenneth Chawngliana's doctoral thesis Christianity and the Mizo Society - The Study of the Impact of Christianity on the Mizo Social Structure (Poona, 1978), which is of great help in understanding the modernizing effect of Christianity on Mizo culture and society; S.T. Ngaihte's History of Zomi in Mizoram and the Surrounding Area (JNU 1979) which gives a number of theories about the historical past of the Mizos; C. Nunthara's doctoral thesis The Politics of Mizo Hills (DU 1980) which suggests that the various phases of political development in the hill areas of Northeast India have occurred on the basis of a dilemma of "integrating with the dominant group at the probable cost of losing their basic identity ... or to move away from it at the probable cost of losing the benefits of integration"; H. Thansanga's doctoral thesis Government and Politics in Mizoram (GU 1981) which is a vast collection of data relating to the governmental and political history of Mizoram; Sangkima's doctoral thesis Society and Social Changes of the Mizos (GU, 1985) which is a systematic analysis of the social structure of the Mizos, factors and areas of change, and response to change.

Besides these, a number of narrative accounts about Mizo political development, society and culture, written by the Mizos themselves, either in English or in Mizo, have been studied with keen interest and made use of in one way or another in this thesis.

Commendable though they are in their respective fields, none of these published and unpublished works on Mizoram has given any specialised attention to the problem of Regionalism. It is, therefore, felt that an attempt at the study of this field is necessary in order to contribute a mite to our knowledge about the force of regionalism in general and that of Mizo regionalism in particular. The present scholar wrote an M. Phil. dissertation on Parties and Politics in Mizoram (1946-1981): A Study of the Development of a Regional Party System at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in 1982, which is, in a way a groundwork for the present thesis. However, a substantial revision has been done and additional data incorporated in order to improve the presentation, empirical data on and analysis and evaluation of Mizo politics with a more specific focus. This thesis is, therefore, a refined, revised and developed form of the M. Phil. dissertation in a more direct focus

on the problem of regionalism. The main difference between the previous and the present dissertations lies in the fact that the latter is analytical while the former is descriptive and general. In terms of subject matter also, the former is a study of the development of party system with a rather heavy application of the One Party-Dominance-Two-Party-Multi-Party models, while the present thesis is a micro-analysis of a specific problem of regionalism.

1. Definition of "Region"

The question, "What is region?" is simple but difficult to answer. Region appears to be an areal concept falling within the disciplinary boundaries of Geography.² Joseph E. Schwartzberg, Professor of Geography at the University of Minnesota, USA, defines "region" in 1966 as "a perceived segment of space differentiated from others on the basis of one or more defining characteristics".³ The 'defining characteristics', he elaborates, may be "natural", "political", "economic" and "cultural".⁴ A region "may be defined on the basis of its geography, economic, social structure and the pattern of life",⁵ or "as a cohesive

2. P.C. Mathur, ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. Idem.

5. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. VIII, 1974, p. 481.

geographical unit with certain economic, linguistic and cultural characteristics which distinguish it from the neighbouring units".⁶ According to Prof. B. Pakem, there are three traditional approaches to the definition of the term 'region' which are of "homogeneity", "nodality" or polarisation around some central place, and "programming" which is concerned mainly with administrative and political coherence, and, 'on the basis of any of these approaches, the Northeast India cannot be called a region. But, this does not, he contends, make Northeast India a non-region, it is a region 'geopolitically' despite its varied physical features and its different economic, political and social systems.⁷ The problem of defining 'region' was taken up at the National Integration Council sponsored four-day seminar on 'Regionalism and National Integration' organised by the University of Rajasthan during January 25-28, 1970. There, the seminarists expressed the view that for the purpose of economic analysis of the concept, the existing federal unit viz. the state, need not be ipso facto considered as constituting a 'region' because

6. Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Vol. XIII, 1968, p. 378. As quoted by Ramakant and B.C. Upreti in "Regionalism in Nepal: A Study of the Tarai Region" in Ramakant (ed) Op.cit., p. 138.

7. Prof. B. Pakem, "Welcome Address" to the UGC-NEHU sponsored National Seminar on 'Regionalism with Special Reference to North-East India', 2-5 September, 1985, Shillong.

even within a state, there can be considerable intra-variations. In the same way there can be a multi-state regionality as in the case of the region of North India in contra-distinction from the region of South India.⁸ In International Studies, 'region' may comprise a number of countries. Others would not believe that India could be described as one country but understand it as a 'region' of many "countries".⁹

On the basis of the implications of these definitions, we can rightly perceive Mizoram as a 'region' perhaps as a result of historical accident. We can take it as a region also on the basis of the natural, political, economic and cultural "defining characteristics" of Schwartzberg's model. However, our perception of Mizoram as a region does not strictly follow, as the analysis would reveal, the existing political boundary of the Indian State of Mizoram. This is necessitated by the fact that the present Mizoram does not cover the contiguous area occupied by the Mizos for centuries. Moreover, the political feeling

8. Satish Chandra, et al. (ed). Regionalism and National Integration, Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1976, pp.177-8.

9. Sir John Strachey, as quoted by K.R. Bombwall, "Imperatives of Federalism in India" in S.A.H. Haqqi (ed), Union-State Relations in India, Meerut, Menakshi Prakashan, 1967, p. 8.

of the Mizos does not confine itself within the limits of the State boundaries of the State of Mizoram as it stands now.

2. The Concept of Regionalism

Regionalism is easily described but hardly defined. Such phenomena as localism, regionalism and community feeling used to be explained with the application of Robert Ardrey's 'instinct' hypothesis.¹⁰ This hypothesis may be valid in the world of the primitive man but, in the world of civilized men regionalism which develops in the sentiments of the people cannot be explained on this hypothesis alone, though some elements of natural attachment to, and feeling for one's own region, cannot be totally ruled out. The formation of social structures has assumed so great a magnitude that we have to look for larger hypothetical framework to analyse the socio-political problems like regionalism. The concept may be defined, in simple words, as "one's love for and feeling of sentimental attachment to one's region of birth and residence over and above other regions". But, this simplistic definition does not go deep enough to identify the factors and ingredients that are involved in modern regional

10. International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences 13:
378-80.

movements. Regional consciousness is taken up as a concept developing from a sense of identity. Regionalism is a social reality whose fabric is woven with the threads of psycho-social behaviour of the individual and community in a region for a number of generations "giving rise to a living tradition in such a society lending meaning to the particular life of that region".¹¹ The eternal verities of human existence, such as love, fidelity, loyalty, faith and trust between human beings find a particular shape and organise themselves into a distinct set of values.¹² Regionalism involves such diverse problems as those of minorities, administrative and fiscal decentralizations, local autonomy, the cult of homeland and local patriotism.¹³

(a) Components and determinants

Regionalism is said to have Subjective and Objective Components. The Subjective components are the ways of living, customs and traditions, art forms, language and literature, social heritage, beliefs, attitudes and values as related to a group of people termed as regional

11. R.N. Mishra, Regionalism and State Politics in India, New Delhi, Ashish Publishing House, 1984, p. 8.

12. Vimala Rao, quoted by Mishra, idem.

13. Idem.

group. The Objective components include the territorial region and the accompanied man-environment complex within which the regional group lives. Together with other factors, the components are the determinants of regionalism.¹⁴

(b) Aspects of Regionalism

On its 'positive' aspect, regionalism connotes a quest for self-identity and self-fulfilment on the part of a particular regional group ... which quest is not always antithetical to the process of nation-building. On its 'negative' aspect, it reflects a psyche of alienation from the national mainstream which originates due to excessive centralization and the discriminative attitude of the ruling elite.¹⁵ Chatterji makes a list of four aspects of regionalism thus, (i) decentralization of administration on a regional basis; (ii) a socio-cultural counter-movement against the imposing of monolithic national unity; (iii) a political counter-movement aiming to achieve greater autonomy of sub-cultural regions; and (iv) a tendency for separatism to fulfill the political aspirations of a regional group.¹⁶ Regionalism is studied in its various dimensions-

14. Arun K. Chatterji, "Sociological Context of Regionalism in India: A Conceptual Framework", in Satish Chandra, et al. Op.cit., p. 31.

15. Iqbal Narain and Selig S. Harrison, quoted by Surendra Nath Kaushik, "Politics of Regionalism in Post-1971 Pakistan" in Ramakant (ed). Op. cit., p. 93.

16. Arun K. Chatterji, Op. cit., p. 31.

territorial, political, psycho-social and economic.¹⁷
 D.C. Burman conceives of regionalism as 'functional' and 'dysfunctional'. As a functional concept, it provides a pleasant diversity to the national life; and, in its dysfunctional aspect, it involves a risk of political overtone which leads a nation towards disintegration.¹⁸

To Prof. Pakem, regionalism is a nebulous concept, a multi-dimensional phenomenon in terms of its components, at once geographical, historical-cultural, economic, politico-administrative, and psychic, which can be broadly classified as positive and negative aspects.¹⁹

(c) Perspectives

The problem of regionalism is observed in different perspectives such as Dominant, Defensive-Nationalistic, Assimilationist, Accommodationist, Communicationist, Elitist, Comparative, Competitive and Regionalist Perspectives. Though, in the words of M. Bhaskaran Nair, "it is difficult to say where regionalism ends and national perspective begins",²⁰ we may attempt giving the general implications of the above mentioned perspectives.

17. P.C. Mathur, Op.cit., p.4.

18. D.C. Burman, "Regionalism in Bangladesh..." in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 118.

19. B. Pakem, Op.cit., p. 1.

20. M.Bhaskaran Nair, "The Emerging Middle Class, Regional Parties and Regionalism in Meghalaya", paper, UGC-NEHU sponsored Seminar, 2-5 September, 1985, p. 6.

(1) Dominant Perspective:

This perspective belongs to the Centrist group of people. Viewed in the Dominant Perspective, the "narrow local interest" must be subordinated to the overall interests of the country, for, only when the country is strong and self-reliant, the problems of smaller groups can be resolved. In this view, the dominance of the 'centre' over the 'regions' must precede the 'autonomy' of the regions. Mrs. Indira Gandhi is said to be viewing the problem of regionalism in this perspective as found in the instance of her speech on the occasion of her visit to the Northeastern Region on April 11, 1981 and her views were endorsed by the Conference of the seven Pradesh Congress (I) Committees of the Northeastern Region held on April 10-11, 1981, which considered the various forces developing in the region as "anti-national", "secessionist", "parochial" and "fissiparous".²¹ This dominant attitude, according to Mohan Lal Sharma, perpetuates the dichotomized modernity-tradition syndrome which regards nationalism and regionalism as two different categories hostile to each other. The proponents of this view think that the transformation or dissolution of traditional ties are essential for the emergence of a modern developed

21. Mohan Lal Sharma, "Elite Conflicts, Regionalism and the Compatibility Crisis..." in Ramakant (ed) Op.cit., p. 48.

nation. Sharma thinks that this intellectual tradition is initiated by Max Weber and developed by Parsons. Scholars who belong to this tradition imply that for the growth of a modern nation, 'individual' and not 'social groups' should be considered as unit of participation - which is essential for the replacement of 'primordial' loyalties by 'civil loyalties'. G.S. Ghurye, Clifford Geerts, M. N. Srinivas, Selig Harrison, Brij Mohan and V.S. Naipaul are said to hold this dominant view.²² Khawaja Ahmad Abbas can be considered to belong to this category of scholars because he writes,

Regionalism and parochialism are two other enemies of which we have to be aware. Parochial parties ... strike at the very roots of democracy, they make the development of a rational outlook difficult if not impossible. They breed arrogance and the 'I-am-better-than-you' attitude among vast masses of people which is the negation of broad humanism which should be our cherished aim.²³

Those who look at regionalism in this perspective, therefore, tend to show a centrist bias in their approach to the problems arising out of regional movements.

22. Ibid., p. 49.

23. Khawaja Ahmad Abbas, "Education and National Integration" in Radhey Mohan (ed), Composite Culture and Indian Society, New Delhi, Vichar, p. 80.

(ii) Defensive Nationalistic Perspective:

Regionalism has also been seen in a perspective with a view that regional movements are inspired by the spirit of 'nationalism' which may be called 'infra-nationalism' or 'sub-Nationalism'. Approached from this angle, regionalism is perceived as a problem involving nationality question, emanating from scepticism and fear of losing ethnico-cultural identity. Regionalism is nothing but the operationalisation of the inbuilt defensive-mechanism in the psyche of a culturally defined group, who feel that their identity is at stake in the face of the dominant culture. It is a response to an apparent threat from alien rule and demographic influx from outside the region. This is what Amalendu Guha calls "a defensive nationalism".²⁴ The Assamese movement and other hill political movements in Northeast India can be studied fruitfully in this perspective.

(iii) Assimilationist Perspective:

Those who look at regionalism in the Assimilationist perspective tend to confuse 'unity' with 'uniformity' and perceive the national life in terms of 'mainstream' and 'side-stream'. They do not sincerely share the belief

24. Amalendu Guha, quoted in Mohal Lal Sharma, Op. cit., p. 70.

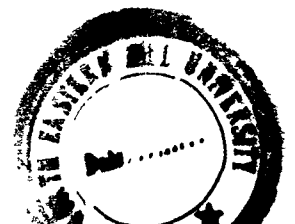
that there can be a unity in diversity. They dream of a nation where the dominant culture permeates all the parts and regions, submerging the regional cultural traits until all of such traits are dissolved in the sea of the dominant culture. It is a non-nationality view "which holds that the process of modernization as it increases avenues of inter-community encounters should lead to progressive dissolution of regional identities. In that way upsurge of regionalism is described as setting the clock back and, therefore, found incompatible with the demands of modern nation."²⁵ "The Assimilationist is always scared of the regional and other movements as detractors of development, democracy and the nation itself."²⁶ Therefore, in the Assimilationist point of view, there can be true national unity only when all the regional identities are wiped out, the sooner the better.

(iv) Accommodationist Perspective:

The Accommodationists, however, perceive India as a multi-nation state and stress on the diversity of Indian nation, not ruling out, of course, the possibility of

25. Ibid., p. 53.

26. Mohan Lal Sharma, "Ethnicity and Regionalism in North East India" in A.D. Pant and Shivaji K. Gupta (ed), Multi Ethnicity and National Integration, Allahabad, Vohra Publishers and Distributors, 1985, p. 149.



unity in diversity. According to Prof. Pakem, "India is a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-national state ... the extent of diversity is greater in India than in any other country ... there is also greater disparity in economic and cultural development among her depressed nationalities."²⁷ In his Welcome Address to the Seminar on 'Regionalism ...' (UGC-NEHU, 2-5 September, 1985) Pakem observes, thus,

These problems (of regionalism) could have been properly attended to by the powers that be had they taken into consideration the First Clause of the First Article of the Indian Constitution which says 'India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States'. Now, the word 'Union' by itself does not indicate the principle of uniformity. Therefore, the authorities concerned should not, and cannot, expect that there should be uniformity of thought, aspiration, expression, and action in the country. Regionalism has to be accommodated. The old cliché that in India, we have unity amidst diversity has not been worn out yet. As such, any amount of effort to bring about any rule for or procedure of action at the expense of regionalism will be an exercise in futility. We have to realise that the struggle in India is to make the country safe for diversity.²⁸

Mohan Lal Sharma observes that "The Accommodationist championing the cause of multi-nationality State system,

27. B. Pakem, "Nationality Question in the Hill Areas of Northeast India", paper, UGC-NEHU Seminar on Regionalism 2-5 September, 1985, p. 3.

28. B. Pakem, Welcome Address, Op.cit., p. 2.

holds them (regionalist movements) as natural expressions and expects the Centre to be more charitable towards them."²⁹ Others hold the view that multi-nationalities are a phenomenon of transition from a traditional-parochial to a modern-cosmopolitan society. Mohan Lal Sharma thinks that such view is closer to the assimilationist thinking because even during the transitional stage their emphasis is on preservation of equilibrium which must be maintained by a central authority.³⁰

Thus, while the Assimilationist would not give any prospect for regionalism, the Accommodationist would like to see that a strong bond of unity is evolved through mutual acceptance among regional groups as they respectively are and through the federal administrative relationship with the centre.

(v) Communicationist Perspective:

There are those who regard the rise of regionalism to be due to gap in social communication. In the Communicationist perspective, the problems of regionalism and national integration are thought to have stemmed from the presence of social communication gap between the 'core'

29. Mohan Lal Sharma, Ibid., p. 149.

30. Idem.

and the 'periphery' and among the regions themselves. This view is based on the opinion that in order to have an integrated and cohesive system, there should be a fusing together of relatively different systems or sub-systems through a process of co-ordination by means of pluralist decision-making system.³¹ The emergence of an integrated community is supposed to precede rather than follow the feelings of solidarity.³² Mohan Lal Sharma thinks that the social communication gap produces a situation of 'anomie'.³³ The implications of social communication for the process of development and integration are also spoken about by Karl W. Deutsch (Nationalism and Social Communication, 1963) and by Lucian W. Pye (Communications and Political Development, 1972).³⁴ Those who look at Regionalism in this perspective hold the view that the situation of anomie is not something to be scared of or to be responded with massive force, because it is simply a means of communicating to the 'centre' on the part of the 'small' and 'remote' regions. It should be responded with tact and patience inspired by an accommodative spirit through a pluralist approach.

31. J. Das Gupta, "Unity in Diversity: A Clue to National Integration" in M.R. Sinha (ed), Integration in India, Bombay, Asian Studies Press, 1971, p. 14.

32. David Easton, quoted by Mohan Lal Sharma, in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 52.

33. Mohan Lal Sharma, "The Troubled North East: Towards Understanding Anomie in terms of Social Communication Gaps" in Iqbal Narain (ed), State Politics in India, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1976, p. 440.

34. Idem.

(vi) Elitist Perspective:

Another angle from which the concept of regionalism is approached may be called "Elitist Perspective". Viewed in this perspective, "regionalism is not something which is irrational and impulsive, but it is a cover or a plank through which the elites compete and fight for power."³⁵ Mass of the people may be hypnotized by talk of emotive issues, but this is cunningly raised as an ideological plank by a group of elite to generate mass pressures and control levers of power.³⁶ "The new and upcoming elite aspiring for power positions at regional or local level, and finding the moral channels unhelpful in that regard, is likely to support autonomy movements in the name of preservation of ethnic, lingual and cultural identity."³⁷ The assertion on and articulation of regional interests very often serve the purpose of the dominant elite class of the region. A. K. Baruah observes, "Regionalism as a concept develops from a sense of identity within a region and as an ideology it emphasizes the distinct physical and cultural characteristics of a homogeneous area.... such an ideology serves the interest mainly of the most

35. Mohan Lal Sharma, in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 50.

36. Ibid., p. 51.

37. Mohan Lal Sharma, in Pant & Gupta, Op.cit., pp.150-1.

dominant section of the people of the region concerned."³⁸ According to this view, therefore, regionalism is nothing but an expression of the power struggle on the part of the regional elite because they cannot expect entry into power centres at the national level.

(vii) Comparative Perspective:

Regionalism may be observed in the Comparative Perspective by which we can know the difference in the nature and quantity of the components of regional movements in various places. When studied in this context, we can be closer to finding out the variations in such movements. This approach will be of great help in distinguishing one regional movement from another and perhaps in suggesting differential treatments for each of them according to their natures and components. For instance, the difference between the regional movement of the Assamese, with its uni-faceted identity worked out around the language issue on the one hand and the regional movements of the hill people in Northeast India with their multi-faceted identity on the other, can be analyzed from this approach.³⁹

38. A.K. Baruah, "A note on the impact of Regionalism on Parliamentary Democracy in India", a paper, UGC-NEHU Seminar on 'Regionalism' 2-5, September 1987.

39. Mohan Lal Sharma, Ibid., p. 164.

(viii) Competitive Perspective:

R. N. Mishra explains regionalism as "a motive force for identity formation and a basis for political competition."⁴⁰ The competitiveness of regionalism, according to him, was fostered indirectly by the Indian National Congress's realisation of the regional distinct cultures and its demand for regional reconstruction on the basis of language. The demand for recognition of language as the basis of administrative and political units gives rise to similar demands based on ethnic and other social factors.⁴¹ Added to the problem of states re-organisation on linguistic basis was the problem of dislocation of minorities as a consequence of such reorganisation process. The regionalist movements in the Indian states, particularly in the bigger ones, can be considered to have developed on this basis.⁴² The language riot in Assam, the Telenganna movement in Andhra Pradesh, the Jharkhand movement in Bihar and such other movements in bigger states are living examples of the regionalism of this variety.

(ix) Regionalist Perspective:

Opposed to the Dominant-Centrist approach to the problem of regionalism is the perspective of the regionalists

41. R.N. Mishra, Op.cit., p. 216.

42. Idem.

43. Idem.

themselves. The regionalists, in the garb of protecting the basic identity and culture of the region, often show a tendency of looking at everything in a compartmental fashion, thus, becoming over-scared of any national process to take shape in their regions. The result of such attitude can be a disadvantage for the region itself. The 'suitability to the local conditions and acceptability to the local genius' principle is quite sound in formulating plan programmes for the regions. But, it is regarded as best if the national planners and the regionalist planners put their heads together and settle the suitability or acceptability question in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust. In the regionalists' view, the centre cannot be strong, stable and prosperous if the regions are weak, unstable and backward. But, the process intended to remove the weakness and backwardness should be managed, in the regionalist point of view, so as not to create the region more unstable in terms of demographic composition and cultural balance. That is why the regionalist is always at a dilemma between the two choices of accepting the development process at the probable cost of losing or disturbing the cultural balance, and of maintaining the regional identity at the cost of the benefits of the developmental process. Here is a vicious circle in

which the regionalist always finds himself entangled, that is, if the developmental process is not staged in the region, it is not likely that the people of the region will ever be able to attain the capability to handle this by themselves; and if massive programmes are set going in the region, he fears that the minority and regional identity may be erased. This is specially true in the case of the hill regions of Northeast India.

(d) Factors of Regionalism

From the various works that have been cited in and read for this thesis, we have identified a number of factors giving rise and sustaining regionalism in various contexts and situations in India and elsewhere. These factors are: economic disparity, socio-cultural differences, language, religion, ethnicity, geography, historical experience, psychology, lifestyle, habits, race, administrative decentralization, political autonomy, elite conflict, the cult of homeland, sons of the soil concept, demographic composition, local interests and sense of defence of minority culture.

While none of these factors operates singly independent of the other, their presence vary in different cases of regional movements. The 'success' or 'danger'

of the regional movements depends very much on the factor(s) that is involved. Whether any of these factors operate in Mizoram and if so, in what measure, is examined in the thesis.

3. Worldwide Phenomenon

Regionalism is a worldwide phenomenon and not a thing peculiar to the Indian situation alone. According to Pakem, it began to manifest right from the early human society soon after the Fall of Man from the garden of Eden in a form of struggle between the agricultural sector led by Cain and the pastoral sector led by Abel.⁴³ When the USA was founded, there was a struggle between the Agricultural South led by Madison and the Industrialised North led by Hamilton. The nationalist movements of the Scots and Welsh in UK, the Basque movements in Spain, the Nancy Programme in France (1960), the French-speaking Canadians regional attitude, the Ukraine and the minority problems in USSR, are some of the instances of the universality of regionalism. In New Zealand it took some time for the biculturalism to be accepted by the native Maori community and the white settlers community. When the developed countries have their own problems with regionalism, the

43. B. Pakem, Welcome Address, Op.cit.

developing countries have more of it. Pakistan has problems of regionalism with the Punjabis, Sindhis, Pashtoens and the Baluchis.⁴⁴ Bangladesh is the end result of regionalism and as an independent sovereign state it has regional problems with the ethnic groups living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.⁴⁵ Nepal has problem of regionalism arising out of the hill people's dominance over the dwellers of the Tarai plains.⁴⁶ Sri Lankan politics has been dominated by the problem of the Tamil militant regionalism as a reaction towards the process of Sinhhalization.⁴⁷ Philippines has a problem with the Muslim minority who are concentrated in the southern block of Mindanao. The nationality and racial questions are the main components of politics in Africa. Thus, no continent is free from the problem of regionalism.

4. Regionalism in India Politics

The north-south antipathy and the mainland-northeast differentiation apart, India has been witnessing one regional movement after another. Though an exhausted list

44. S.N. Kaushik, "Politics of Regionalism in Post-1971 Pakistan" in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 92 f.

45. D.C. Burman, "Regionalism in Bangladesh....", in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 116 f.

46. Ramakant & Upreti, "Regionalism in Nepal...." in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 138 f.

47. Lucy M. Jacob, "Regionalism in Sri Lanka", in Ramakant, Op.cit., p. 173 f.

of such movements cannot be attempted here, some of them are mentioned to show that they are so widespread over the country. The Assam movement, the Telenganna movement in Andhra Pradesh, the agitations of Vidharbha region in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena movement, Chhatisgarh regional movement in Madhya Pradesh, the eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Ladakh regions in Kashmir, Jharkhand movement in Bihar, the conflict between the people of old Mysore and the integrated part of Karnataka, the high land vs. plains conflict in Orissa, the Tamil movement, the Punjab movement, and the various regional movements of the hill people of Northeast India, only show that no part of the country has been free from the direct or indirect effects of regionalism. Apart from the bigger movements, there are local movements as found in the instances of the Zomi in Manipur, the Karbi and Cachar Bengalis in Assam, the Lakher demands in Mizoram. The manifestations of regional sentiments in different forms take us to the next question, that is, national unity in the midst of these manifestations.

5. Regionalism and National Unity: the Indian Context

Are all the regional movements in India, per se, a threat to national unity? Before we attempt to answer this important question, it may be argued that regional movements

in India vary from region to region in nature, roots, support and potency. On account of the variations, there can be no single and foolproof method which will be effective in dealing with all types of regional movements. While fanatic communal and secessionist movements may have to be dealt with firmly, the genuine demands of the people of various regions may be responded accommodatively. The policy-decision in relation to regional problems can be of any approach, demographic, developmental (in its economic sense), militaristic and political.⁴⁸ Of these approaches, the political method has been found to be the most successful and effective.

Economic Approach handled with planning skill can be an effective means of pacifying and meeting the demands of regional forces. But, economic measure alone is not a panacea for all the problems of regionalism, as Radhey Mohan observes, "Today we often take it for granted that economic changes like industrialisation will break down cultural and social barriers, eliminate cultural tensions and weld a single culture out of diverse elements. If this were true, there should have been no separatist Scottish movement in Britain."⁴⁹ Not only that, the economic process, which is

48. D.C. Burman, Op.cit., pp. 127-131.

49. Radhey Mohan, "New National Ethos Needed", in Radhey Mohan (ed), Op.cit., p. 48.

expected to have a magic effect on the regionalistic orientation of the people, can turn out to be the cause of complex problems and tensions in relation to cultural integration and balance. Radhey Mohan is to the point when he says, "In direct proportion to the pressures for larger slice of the economic cake will be the political pressures built around cultural groups. All these tensions would lead to stressing the exclusiveness of cultures and retard the process of integration."⁵⁰

Prof. B. Pakem has rightly observed the futility of careless planning in reference to the hill areas of North-east India. He says that planning is often sloppy and faulty for the Northeastern hill areas which mainly depend upon two sectors viz. Agriculture and Forestry, due to the lack of 'incentive' and 'responsive' factors.⁵¹ He also admits that the hill people of Northeast India are always reluctant to have their areas industrialised on the consideration of the possible negative socio-cultural consequence of the industrialisation of their regions. He warns,

50. Idem.

51. B. Pakem, "Nationality Question in the hill areas of Northeast India", UGC-NEHU Seminar, 2-5 September, 1985, p. 10.

Too much emphasis on industry may lead to more influx of personnel from outside as the hill people are not yet ready nor properly qualified to take up industrialisation seriously. Influx of outsiders had been one of the main sources of conflicting interests with the hill people. That is why there has been practically a nil response ... to ambitious planning having no relevance to the local needs and aspirations.⁵²

There are two polarised views on the question whether regional movements are a threat to national integrity and both views have supporters among scholars of the Indian situation.

To one group, any form of regionalism is a danger to national integrity and it is to be condemned outright. This group of thinkers see more of the 'centrifugal impact of regionalism' in the context of national unity. They seem to be agreed with Arun K. Chatterji who observes, thus,

These trends and centrifugal forces of regionalism are potential dangers to national integration, and if they remain unchecked, may strike at the root of achieving a workable democracy. It is certainly disheartening to note that as yet, perhaps our sense of nationalism is only skin deep. This is all the more significant because in a democratic set up like India's, national stability and progress is determined by the unity of the people transcending regional considerations.⁵³

52. Ibid., p. 11.

53. Arun K. Chatterji, Op.cit., p. 43.

According to this view, therefore, regionalism is a threat to national unity and in order to check the regional forces there should be a strong centre. The supporters of this view would favour the unitary model of national unity than the pluralistic model.

Others do not believe that national unity can be achieved on the unitary model in the midst of "myriad streams of cultures, about 16 major languages, 2000 dialects, a dozen ethnic groups, 7 religious communities... that inhabit 58 socio-cultural sub-regions".⁵⁴ They rather perceive India as a plural society and would expect national unity on a pluralistic model. In other words, they favour the 'unity in diversity' model. R.N. Mishra describes his work on Orissa state politics as based on the hypothesis that "a plural integration model is more suited to our experience rejecting the American model of unitary integration."⁵⁵ Prof. Pakem is in support of the pluralist's view.⁵⁶ E.W. Gilbert has said, "... regions can be regarded as separate limbs of the body politic: regional diversity need not be a danger and it can strengthen the unity of the State."⁵⁷

54. Rasheeduddin Khan, "The Roots and Origins of Composite Culture in India", in Radhey Mohan, Op.cit., p. 1.

55. R.N. Mishra, Op.cit., pp. 22-3.

56. B. Pakem, Welcome Address, Op.cit., p. 2.

57. E.W. Gilbert, quoted in B. Subharao, The Personality of India - Pre & Proto Historic Foundation of India and Pakistan, M.S. University Archeology Series, No. 3, Baroda, 1958, p. 22.

Dr. Pandav Nayak has the view that regionalism is not a danger. What is "dangerous" and "even opposed to sincere intentions of national unity and integration" is, according to Nayak, "to condemn all regionally based movements of people as 'fissiparous' and anti-national."⁵⁸

The plurality of India is stressed by Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan in the following words:

To perceive India as a country is a misnomer, strictly in terms of geography, ethnic identity, linguistic homogeneity, even in terms of belief-pattern, as a matter of fact on every term, except that of territorial sovereignty. That India is a country in terms of territorial sovereignty is very well known.... Beyond political identity, there is no other identity, single and universal. This is nothing to be afraid of or feel anxious about We are plural in the multiple sense of the word. We are the most authentic plural society the world has ever known. This is our strength. Nothing is more repugnant to the culture of India than the attempt to perceive us as a small entity. We are very large. 59

On the basis of these arguments, therefore, one may suggest that any attempt at national unity or integration on the unitary model and at the cost of regional identities is not only unlikely to succeed but also 'dangerous' because

58. Pandav Nayak, "Regionalism, National and Class Questions-Aspects of a Discussion on a Problematic Relationship", paper, UGC-NEHU Seminar on 'Regionalism ...', 2-5 September, 1985.

59. Rasheeduddin Khan, in Radhey Mohan, Op.cit., pp.170-1.

such attempt will rather encourage fissiparous tendencies as a reaction to the attempt because of the pluralistic nature of the Indian society. This is not to say that the pluralists are not aware that there is a danger point at both sides. There can surely be an extreme or fanatic type of regionalism which strains the sovereignty of India which must be dealt with firmly so that the integrity of India is maintained. The Pluralistic view of the problem is, however, realistic and true to the Indian situation. In this context, the 'federal balance' theory is more likely to be successful than the 'unitary integration' theory, because the latter model is not suited to the realities of Indian situation.

In the Pluralistic view, therefore, all the regional movements are not dangerous to the unity of the State. They are, simply, manifestations of the pluralistic nature of the country and there is every scope and room for their accommodation within the federal framework.

6. Mizo Regionalism

This thesis is an attempt to analyse Mizo Regionalism, as expressed in their political movements, from the Pluralistic Approach. This approach has been adopted because in our opinion, it is the most realistic approach to the study of Indian situation. The unitary, dominant and assimilationist perspectives of regionalism are considered unsuitable

to be adopted in this analysis because it is felt that these perspectives will not bring us to the objective explanation of the problems arising out of Mizo regionalism. Within this Pluralistic Framework of analysis, we make an attempt to trace the historical roots and the bases of Mizo regionalism; proceeding from there to the analysis of the stands taken by the major political parties on the question of regionalism, and then to the assessment of the impact of mass-media, educational advancement and economic measures on the Mizos towards national integration.

In Chapter Two, an attempt is made to develop the hypothesis that Mizo regionalism takes its roots in their independent historico-administrative experiences.

Chapter Three seeks to discuss and examine the proposition that Mizo regionalism is sustained by a number of factors; and in doing that, the bases of Mizo regionalism are identified. It also contains an attempt whether and how Mizo regionalism has been an expression of elite conflicts. The contributions of such factors as culture, traditions, ethnicity, religion, psychological difference, language, economic and geography to the sustenance of Mizo regionalism are examined one by one.

Chapter Four deals with the various strands of Mizo regionalism seen in the orientations and movements of major political parties of the Mizos, as an attempt to test the hypothesis that regional sentiment is very strong among the Mizos that all the parties have to appeal to it in order to get the support of the masses.

In Chapter Five, we make an attempt to assess the impact of the various forms of the national integration process on Mizo sentiment examining thereby whether the economic development, educational advancement and the mass-media have made the Mizos feel more drawn to the Union and whether their sense of being alienated from the dominant culture has been reduced or not.

Chapter Six contains the Conclusion of the findings to see whether the hypotheses tested in the Chapters are valid or invalid or partially valid.

The Concluding Chapter is followed by a good number of Appendices containing the tables of figures which constitute the primary data obtained by means of randomized sample survey conducted by the scholar in the field of the research. A Bibliography is given at the last part of the thesis to help readers locate the references made in the thesis and to guide them for related further readings.

7. Methodology, Scope and Objective of the Research

Scholars conducting research on their own communities or place of residence are often suspected to be biased in their judgement. Remembering the possibility of such opinion being held by others, the researcher has tried to be as objective as possible within the limitations, in this respect, of all social science disciplines. On the other hand, research conducted on any given community by a non-member of the community can also be found lacking in exactness, which is an important demand of scientific analysis, because he may not be familiar enough with the intricacies of the relationships occurring within the group. In this respect, a research conducted within one's community can be much more reliable than the work on the same community by an outsider.

Following the example of the Cretan prophet who did not hesitate to describe his countrymen as 'liars', 'evil beasts' and 'lazy gluttons',⁶⁰ we have not failed to make an objective assessment of the Mizo leaders and parties.

In order to avoid subjective judgement, we have tried our best to make the analysis as factual, empirical and impartial as possible. The primary survey data incorporated

60. Paul's letter to Titus, Chapter 1 Verse 12,
The Holy Bible.

in the thesis were collected by means of questionnaire in Aizawl Town, Kawnpui and Thenzawl villages, among cross-section groups, during February to May, 1986, taking responses from as many as 800 persons. One of the findings we have made from the survey which may indicate the reliability of the research is that the percentage, from the responses, of those who favour regional parties, was 61.25, which was negligibly less than the percentage of votes polled by all the regional parties in the Assembly Elections held in the month of February, 1987, which was 64 percent. Interview method has been limitedly resorted to. It was done only in such case where a question was so controversial and obscure that we needed to have the first-hand information from the person concerned. Otherwise, interview was avoided for the simple reason that interviewees often tended to be biased in order to cover up certain things unwanted by them or to give too much importance to their role in Mizo politics. This is more so with the irresponsible politicians.

Scholarly works on parties, party systems, comparative politics, regionalism, integration, Mizo history and political movements, which are not easily available in the market were read in various Libraries including those of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, American Center, Public

Enterprises Centre for Continuing Education, all located in New Delhi; in the Central Library of NEHU, Shillong, and the Aizawl College Library, Aizawl.

In order to get abreast with the current trends of events, various journals, periodicals and dailies were not only read but press cuttings were done wherever possible.

The scholar visited party offices and made himself present at the general meetings of the parties to be in direct contact with the movements and feelings of the Mizo people. Such exercises are found to be really helpful in obtaining data on real situations.

Note-taking from various speeches of public leaders, from press releases of the Government and parties, and from Government and party publications and from rare (some of them banned) documents, was found useful in getting to know the depth of the political feelings and movements. But, such material which is of controversial and sensitive nature and which could have caused personal ill-feeling between people is carefully left out of the analysis.

The scope of the present research is deliberately set within the limits of the subject-matter viz. Regionalism in Mizoram Politics. Developments in Mizo politics which are

significant by themselves but do not have direct or indirect relevance to our problem are deliberately left out. The period covered is from the Pre-British occupation of the Mizo Hills upto the 1987 Assembly Elections. To cover such a long period is felt necessary in order to make the analysis complete. A large scope is still left open for others to conduct research into the politics of Mizoram. The research belongs to the micro-level analysis.

The main objective of the thesis is to present a true picture of Mizo regionalism with some incorporation of insights given by historical, sociological and anthropological studies on Mizos; and to find out how regional sentiment has affected the political orientation, inclination, movement, aggregation and articulation of interests. Apart from this, we have wanted to add something to our knowledge about the various ramifications of the problem of regionalism and to contribute something to the study of the Indian Political situations.

It is, therefore, hoped that this thesis will be a contribution to the study of Northeastern politics in general, and Mizoram politics in particular, perhaps challenging some past findings and confirming other observations made by a few scholars who have studied the politics of the Mizo

people. If new facts and/or new interpretation of facts presented herein are appreciated, the scholar considers his labour is not in vain.

CHAPTER - II

CHAPTER - IIHISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MIZO REGIONALISM

This chapter is an attempt to identify the origin of Mizo Regionalism in their various historical experiences and the administrative developments over a period of about four hundred years. The Mizos, formerly known as Lushais, have undergone rapid structural and social changes during the past few decades, and as it will be seen, these changes had to be effected with due recognition to the dominant regional sentiment of the Mizos because the milieu in which they are brought up is just congenial to the rise and growth of regional feeling. For the purpose of this chapter, the history of Mizo people is divided into three sections as follows: A - Pre-British Period; B - British Period; C - The Post-Independence Period. It will be seen from these accounts that Mizo regionalism has not only taken root in the past history but also remained a dominant force throughout these periods. The constitutional and administrative changes had, therefore, to be adjusted to this force in order to avoid unnecessary friction and to gradually bring the Mizos closer to the national life at the same time.

A. THE PRE-BRITISH PERIOD

1. Ethnicity of Mizos

Mizos suffer from paucity of historical literature about themselves. Some of their history books are written by themselves. These works are mainly based on oral traditions, mythology and legends passed on from one generation to another. A handful of Mizo history scholars are presently engaged in research work into the early history of the Mizos. Some British officers wrote books about the tribes living in the Indo-Burma border area. However, a highly scientific and accurate account of the Mizo history is yet to emerge. No adequate and satisfactory information can be obtained from the existing works alone as to the origin and migration of the Mizos. Research into their distant past is rendered difficult further by the different names given to them by the more civilized people in their neighbourhood. Even at present, there is a confusion over the question of their common nomenclature. They are popularly known as Mizo, but there is an emerging opinion that it is more correct to call them 'Zomi'. Some suggest that 'Zo' being the root-word, there is no much difference whether the term 'mi' which is equivalent to the term 'man' is prefixed or suffixed to the root-word 'Zo'. Since it is generally conceivable that they have emerged as a distinct group out of a

larger group, their history cannot be very exclusive of the history of the people in South-East Asian countries who are akin to them in culture, language and natural feature. It is also physically clear that they do not belong to the Indo-Aryan-Dravidian races of the Indian sub-continent. All of their historical accounts, oral or written, point to the east.

The different names given to the Mizos and the variations in their meanings give us an interesting subject of study. Lalthangliana, a Mizo historian in Burma, suggests that the "hill people living on the north-west of Burma and the north east of India are known as Kuki to the Bengalis" and "the earliest use of this name is found in 1792."¹ Lewin and Rawlins also have the same opinion.² The 'hill people' could have referred to some of the Mizo groups who lived near the Bengal and Manipur borders. At present, some of the Mizo tribes in Manipur state are called 'Kuki'. According to Lehman, 'Kuki' could have been a term of Manipuri origin.³

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1. B. Lalthangliana. History of Mizo in Burma, Aizawl, Zawlbuk Press, 1975, p. 69.
 2. T.H. Lewin. Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein, Calcutta, Bengali Press, 1869, p. 98.
& Rawlins. Cucis and Mountaineers of Tipra, Asiatic Researches, II, 1972, p. xii.
 3. F.K. Lehman. The Structure of Chin Society, Urbana, The University of Illinois Press, 1963, p. 5.

'Chin' is another term used by the Burmese (or Burman) in reference to the hill people living in their neighbourhood. A single definite meaning of this term is very difficult to find. Lehman wrote thus,⁴

The term "Chin" is imprecise. It is a Burmese word (khyang) not a Chin word. It is homologous with the contemporary Burmese word meaning "basket", but I am informed by Professor C.H. Luce of Rangoon that it is in fact an old Burmese word (khyan) meaning "ally or comrade" (Luce, 1959 b). No single Chin word has explicit reference to all the peoples we customarily call Chin, but all- or nearly all- of the peoples have a special word for themselves and those of their congeners with whom they are in regular contact. This word is almost-always a variant form of a single root, which appears as zo, yo, kseu, seu and the like. The word means, roughly, "unsophisticated". A few groups in the Southern Chin Hills have adopted a variant of the term "Chin" for themselves.

From these observations, it appears that the hill people on the side of Bengal and Manipur were known by their neighbours as "Kuki" and those on the Burmese side were known as "Chin", and that these different names applied to the same group of people, of which the Mizos were also a part.

"Lushai" is another name given to the hill people of roughly the present Mizoram. It is an anglicised word, a corruption of the word "Lusei" or "Lushei". The Luseis are

4. Ibid., p. 3.

the dominant clan of the whole group now known as "Mizo". It gradually gained popularity and linguistic dominance over the other clans by virtue of its being the chief's clan. The dialect of this clan, also known as "Duhlian Tawng" (dialect of the Duhlians) gradually developed into the present Mizo language. It has more or less become the lingua franca of all the tribes who can be considered as belonging to the Chin-Lushai-Kuki groups. Smaller sub-tribes and clans are being assimilated linguistically into a common identity as Mizo, although some of them still maintain their own dialects at the local level.

There are a number of opinions as to the meaning of the term "Lusei". One opinion is that it means "headhunter" or "head-cutter", for "lu" means "head" and "sei" when taken as equivalent to "sai" or "sat" means "to shoot" or "to cut". Lewin believes that this interpretation is true.⁵ Rustomji also appears to be agreed to it.⁶ Secondly, when taken literally, "Lusei" means "long-head" for "lu" is "head" and "sei" is "long". This interpretation is based on the opinion that they were "longheads" because the big knot of their rolled hair resting on top of their head made

5. Lewin: as quoted by Lalthangliana, Op.cit., p. 70.

6. N. Rustomji. Enchanted Frontiers, Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 94.

their head appear long.⁷ This is ruled out by Lalthangliana as "a learned explanation that carries no weight".⁸ Lalsawia, former Chief Executive Member and Member of the Rajya Sabha, told the writer that there used to be two groups of Mizo referred to as "longheads" and "shortheads" meaning the "well-to-do" group and the "common" people respectively. The terms "Lusei" (longhead) and "Lutawi" (shorthead) could also have arisen to mean the chief's family and the commoner's family respectively. Thirdly, the term "Lusei" could have originated from a Burmese word "Lu Se" meaning "People Ten". "Lu" in Burmese means "People" and "se" means "ten". This explanation is based on a Burmese oral tradition according to which there were ten distinct groups of the Burmese people who in the past had no particular names. They simply called the different clans or groups in numerical order and the "Luseis" were the tenth and the last group in the order.⁹ Lalthangliana believes that this numeralisation took place while they lived in the "Kabaw" valley in the 8th-9th centuries AD.¹⁰ Fourthly, "Lusei" could have originated from the name of a common ancestor. Lalthangliana observes, "In the absence of any

7. In the distant past, the Luseis, male or female never have their hair cut but knotted into a big ball on their head.

8. B. Lalthangliana, Op.cit., p. 70.

9. V.L. Siama. Mizo History, Aizawl, Lalrinliana & Sons, 1979, p. 8.

10. B. Lalthangliana, Loc.cit.

good explanation we fall back to the most simple of all explanations that the people are usually called after the name of their noted and popular chief and so these people must have been led once by a man called Luseia".¹¹ According to Gougin, the word "luchye" which can be taken as "Lusei" is seen in the Cachar Reports which dated around 1850. This word is believed to be a mis-spelling of the word "Lusei".¹²

In addition to these four views, there are other interesting conjectures about the ancestry of Mizos. One such opinion is that they are the descendants of Jacob (or Israel) of the Holy Bible. To support this view, it is argued that the Mizos are very similar in customs and traditions and mentality with the Jews of Palestine. On a research carried out by Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana for his doctoral thesis, Christianity and the Mizo Society, 1978, he found out that the belief was originated from CHALA of Buallawn village who in 1951 claimed to have been told by God in a vision that Mizos are descendants of Israel. This claim aroused the interest of some Mizos who began to study the Bible and various documents in order to give more weight to the claim. The advocates of this claim went to the extent

11. Idem.

12. T. Gougin. The Discovery of Zoland, Churachandpur, Zomi Press, 1980, p. 9.

of forming M I Z O (Mizo Israel Zionist Organisation) and even sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister of Israel requesting, inter alia, the recognition of their new-found identity, in 1974. In 1976, Dr. X circumcised a number of Mizos who claimed to be Jews. Out of 65 persons interviewed by Chawngliana, 45 held the opinion that Mizos could possibly be the descendants of Israel. Rev. Liangkhaia (Late) one of the first Mizo pastors who was a literary figure among the Mizos, is said to have held the same opinion.¹³ Lalzawna claims that the Mizos are the descendants of Ephraim, one of the two sons of Joseph of the Old Testament.¹⁴ Laldenga, the President of the Mizo National Front and the present Chief Minister of Mizoram State is said to have once shared the opinion that Mizos are descendants of Israel. C. Rokhuma, a Sunday School Teachers' Training Instructor of the Mizo Presbyterian Church and an eminent writer told the scholar in 1980 that the Government of Israel had officially accepted that the Mizos are their people. Mrs. Zaithanchhungi devotes as many as 81 pages in her recently published book HEI LE ISRAEL to argue that Mizos are one of the lost tribes of Israel, by drawing many

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13. K. Chawngliana. Christianity and the Mizo Society - The Study of the Impact of Christianity on the Mizo Social Structure, A doctoral thesis, University of Poona, pp. 275-6.
14. K.V. Lalzawna. Mizoram Exodus, Aizawl, Maranatha, 1980, p. 30.

parallels between the customs and traditions of the Israelites and the Mizos.¹⁵ Many Mizos, even those who do not claim themselves to be Jews, give moral support to Israel and entertain some emotional attachment to and admiration for the people of Israel. Some have even attempted to migrate to Israel at the cost of all their possessions in Mizoram, and quite a few have succeeded in migrating there. Some Mizos do not bother much about this claim because they do not see any need of being descendants of Israel, be it true or false. Some other take it as a religious fanaticism with political undertone. What we can observed as neutral scholars in this regard is that whether it is true or false, the feeling that Mizos are Jews is very real. It can perhaps be taken as one aspect of the socio-political manifestation of the Mizo search for their identity which reinforces their regional feeling to a great extent.

As in the case of the term "Lushai", there are a number of opinions on the origin and meaning of the term "Mizo". The current and most popular understanding about the term is that it means "highlander" because "zo" means "highland with cool climate" and "mi" means "man". Gougin

15. Mrs. Zaithanchhungi. Hei Le Israel, Aizawl, St. Joseph's Press, 1987, p. 356 ff.

thinks that this is not likely because if it has to carry this connotation, it should be "Zomi" instead of "Mizo".¹⁶ There are known to be over 300 clans under the blanket term 'Mizo'. Lalthangliana thinks that they came to be known as Mizo after they built ZOPUI town about 1765 AD.¹⁷ Ngaihte believes that they were known as "Zomi" long before they were known as "Mizo". According to him, they were recorded as "Zomi" in the PONG CHRONICLE. The Pong Kingdom was founded by KHUUL LIEE in 180 AD. The word "zo" appeared in various forms as Jo, Yo, Sho, Chou and the like. He further states that "ZO" could have been the name of a common ancestor of all the groups, or, the name of a dynasty (CHOU DYNASTY) which ruled in China around 1027 to 256 BC.¹⁸ The European missionaries who came to the Lushai Hills in 1894 were called "Mizosap" or "Zosap" before the term "Mizo" became popular.¹⁹ Gougin computes that all those who can be called "Zomi" number around two million and they occupy an area of about 30,000 sq. miles.²⁰ Nunthara estimates the number of Mizos outside the present Mizoram at about two lakhs.²¹

16. T. Gougin. Op.cit., p. 5.

17. B. Lalthangliana. Op.cit., p. 71.

18. S.T. Ngaihte. History of Zomi in Mizoram and Surrounding Area, Unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, 1979, p. 11-3.

19. T.H. Lewin. A Fly on the Wheel, Calcutta, Firma KLM, (Reprinted) 1912, p. 316.

20. T. Gougin. Op.cit., Preface.

21. C. Nunthara. The Politics of the Mizo Hills, Doctoral Thesis, Delhi University, 1980, p. 34.

The question is further complicated by the fact that there were no persons recorded as "Zomi" or "Mizo" in the 1901 Census, the first census conducted in the Lushai Hills. The number of Lushei according to the 1901 Census was 36,332, out of a total population of 82,434 i.e. 44 percent.²² Therefore, the belief that these people of the then Lushai Hills were known as ZOMI centuries back but were known by another name in the beginning of the twentieth century needs explanation. Along with this, there is a question that if they had been in a state society as far back as at least the first century AD, how could they become so primitive again in the Lushai Hills? Ngaihte attempts to explain this problem with his theory of "regression", a phenomenon known to historians in many cases. According to him, there is a possibility that a people who had formed a state society in the past could fall back into the primitive stage if they were dispersed and migrated over a vast tract of land in small groups. The same thing happened to the "Zomi" people. After living in the Pong Kingdom, they were forced to disperse and migrate to the Hills and in the course of this migration in small groups, their society underwent serious stresses and peculiar socio-economic

22. B. Lalthangliana. Op.cit., p. 72.

transformation and they regressed to the clan-based society, to the extent of forgetting their original common name, and calling themselves after their respective clan leaders.²³

K. Zawla believes that when they came to their hilly settlements in the Than Range of Burma around the 14th century AD, they had called themselves "Zomi". One of their hunters, however, reversed the order of the two syllables in a ballad about his successful hunting trip and "Mizo" became more popular than "Zomi" since then. The ballad runs like this,

Keimah Mizo pa, pui raw chawia,
Sa tin kapa,

Which means,

I, a Mizo man, holding bamboo spear,
Shooter of any beast.

So, "Mizo" is a poetical form of "Zomi", according to Zawla.²⁴

In any case, "ZO" appears to be the root-word. Sometimes, 'Mizoram' is also referred to as simply 'ZORAM'. There are many instances of 'ZO' being used as equivalent

23. Ngaihte. Op.cit., the whole Chapter II.

24. K. Zawla. Mizo Pi Pu te leh an Thlahte Chanchin, (History of the Mizo Forefathers and their Descendants), Aizawl, Hmar Arsi Press, 1976, pp. 8-10.

to 'Mizo'. At present, 'Mizo' is the official name of the people of Mizoram, since 1954, when the Lushai Hills was changed to 'Mizo Hills', by an Act of the Parliament.

In Mizoram, the feeling of clan-distinction is more or less non-existent, except for the Pawis, Lakhers, Chakmas and Riangs. The process of socialisation and modernisation has wiped out clan feeling among the Mizos who were originally known as Lushais. But, the Mizos outside Mizoram have a problem in this regard. In their case, identification with the common name and assimilation of their clan dialects into the Mizo language is a rather slow process. Though the clan dialects have many in common, the variations create enough hindrances to their adoption of the Mizo-Lushai-Duhlian language. This constitutes the greatest hindrance to their identifying with the other Mizos.²⁵ But, on close observation, it can be seen that even the Mizo language is a combination of different dialects and it continues to develop with incorporation of many terms in the clan dialects of the Mizo groups. The realisation of the need and the desire for Mizo integration was very high during the beginning of the party political movements of the Mizo Union and the Mizo National Front Parties. In fact,

25. C. Nunthara, Op.cit., p. 34.

all the parties including the Mizoram unit of the Indian National Congress have put 'Mizo Integration' as one of their main objectives. Gougin dreams that the whole ethnic groups akin to the Mizos will one day emerge as a 'Zomi nation' but the present Mizo language (Mizo Tawng) will be adopted as the 'national' language.²⁶

In Mizoram, apart from the existence of clan dialects outside, the Pawis, Lakhers, Chakmas and Riangs continue to speak in their own dialects. Among them, the Pawis are the fastest in speaking the Mizo language. Indeed, many Mizo words in prose and poems are originated in the Pawi dialect. The Lakhers have a dialect quite different from Mizo. The Chakmas and Riangs are the most backward in picking up Mizo Tawng.

Another legend of the Mizos has it that the Mizos came out of a big rock known as "CHHINLUNG". Though a legend, it is believed by many Mizos that this has some historical background. According to some, "Chhinlung" is the way their forefathers remember the Great Wall of China from where they had come out a long time back. Others seek to explain the Chhinlung theory by claiming that "Chhinlung"

26. T. Gougin. Op.cit., pp. 5 & 6.

was not a rock but the way their forefathers remember CHIEN-LUNG, one of the last Kings of the Manchu dynasty which ruled over China in the 17th and 18th centuries AD. According to this explanation, Chien-Lung became a King in 1736 and was later replaced by a more powerful King. Chien-Lung fled to Burma with many followers and founded another kingdom there. Again, his newly founded Kingdom was conquered by another powerful King and his followers scattered everywhere in the surrounding areas. The Mizos are, therefore, believed to be the descendants of one group of the Chien-Lung people who scattered.²⁷

According to Lalthangliana, the Mizos once lived at the T'Ao valley of KANSU province on the north-west of China and north-east of Tibet 2000 years ago. From there, they moved into Burma through the place where the borders of Burma and Tibet meet, expelling the SHAN KADUS into Manipur and Burma. They occupied the KABAW valley from about 8th century AD through the 13th Century AD. While they lived in the Kabaw valley they developed a culture of high order. They left the Kabaw valley for the CHIN HILLS due to the Shan penetration early in the 14th century. They settled on the Than Range and Manipur valley till the mid-fifteenth

27. Tlangchhuaka. Mizoram Politik Chandhin, (Mizoram Political History), Akyab, The General Headquarters, Mizo National Front, 1973, p. 9.

century. It is while living there that their culture suffered a heavy setback on account of the hard living conditions. (This may be read with Ngaihte's theory of 'cultural regression' described on page 51). In the second part of the 15th Century, they moved farther west to the LEN RANGE near the river TIAU in Burma and lived there till the late 18th century. Many of their folksongs, customs, traditional institutions and much of their literature which they possess now point to this period in their history. Towards the close of the 18th century, the enmity between the Pawi tribes and the Lusei tribes compelled the latter to move farther west into the present Mizoram.²⁸

2. Independent Local Chiefship

How the Mizos had chiefs is very difficult to know. While in Burma, they were in a state which was more less like what Hobbes calls "state of nature". In such a state, might was right and each clan was led by a strong man in their constant feuds against one another. One story about the beginning of chiefship among the Lusei tribes goes like this: There were "HNAMTE" clan who had no leader of their own. They felt very unsafe without a leader, and invited

28. B. Lalthangliana. Op.cit., pp. xi & xii. This account, being the result of a careful & serious research done by the scholar, is the most acceptable and most popular about the migration of Mizos into their present habitat.

ZAHMUAKA who had six sons to become their leader. He reluctantly accepted the invitation and gradually became their chief. His sons continued to be chiefs and it is from this family that the Sailo chiefs sprang up. Before the British annexation of the Lushai land, the Sailo chiefs ruled the Luseis in independent villages.

Though the villages under their respective chiefs may have had customs and traditions different from one another in minor details, the chiefs' administrations were generally similar in pattern. The chief was bound by customary laws. It was his duty to protect the life and property of the villages; to frame the general policy of making allotment of village lands for cultivation; and to administer justice according to the customary laws. Besides being a general supervisor of the village life, he had to pay special attention to the maintenance of the village paths and water-springs. The normal form of penalty he could inflict upon the wrongdoer was a fine which could be paid in cash or kind or both. In cash, it ranged from Rs. 5 to Rs. 40 the equivalents of which were a pig and a mithun respectively. When any case was tried by the chief, it was obligatory on the part of the loser to pay Rs. 5 which was known as "SALAM" to the Chief and his council of elders. This was something like a court fee. The chief had the following rights:²⁹

29. Mrs. Ramchuan Sena Samuelson. Love Mizoram, Imphal, Goodwill Press, 1985, p. 6.

- (i) the right to order death penalty;
- (ii) the right to seize the property of the villagers who desired to transfer their allegiance to another chief;
- (iii) the rights over lands;
- (iv) the right to tax traders doing business within the jurisdiction of his control;
- (v) the right to make his sons chiefs;
- (vi) the right to help the 'BAWIHS' (slaves) who were not able to purchase their freedom.

When a person intentionally or unintentionally killed another person, he could seek the chief's protection by fleeing from the avenger of his deed and running into the chief's house. If he could manage to cling to the Chief's 'sutpui' (the central post in the chief's house supporting the roof), it was no more lawful for the avenger to touch the murderer, and the murderer became a slave to the chief. Persons who became slaves in this way were called "CHEMSEN BAWIH" (literally 'Red knife slaves'). There were two other types of slaves, the "INPUICHHUNG BAWIH" (The "slaves of the house") and the "TUKLUH BAWIH" (the "slaves or captives of war"). The 'inpuichhung bawihs' were slaves who became such by giving themselves over to the chief due to poverty and helplessness. They were usually widows, orphans and other destitutes. The 'tukluh bawihs' were the captives of

their inter-village wars and various raids. The system of slavery of this form is a controversial subject. It was different from the slavery that we commonly come across elsewhere. The Lushai slaves could redeem themselves by paying the redemption price. Moreover, they were not saleable. It was not a large-scale institution but stray incident in the Lushai society.

In his manifold functions and responsibilities as a ruler, the chief was assisted by a council of elders who were known in Mizo as 'UPA' who were not elected by the people but nominated by the chief on his personal choice. The chief had close associates, besides the Elders, who were "RAMHUAL" and "ZALEN". The 'ramhual' and 'zalen' families were big and economically better-off households who were given the privilege of selecting the jhum site before other villagers. They, in return, gave double the amount of paddy given to the chief by other villagers.

The chief enjoyed the following privileges:

- (i) Six tinfuls of paddy from every household from the annual harvest;
- (ii) The left fore-leg of any animal killed in the hunt;
- (iii) One-tenth of the amount of salt collected from the village saltsprings;

- (iv) Share of any wild honey collected by the villagers;
- (v) Share of the fish caught in any fishing expedition;
- (vi) Free labour in constructing his house.

The privileges enjoyed by the chief pose a question whether he held the village land as a private property of his own? This question may be settled by examining the manner of payment of the chief's due in regard to an animal killed in the hunt. When a hunter of village A killed an animal in the area of Village B, he had to pay the due to the chief of Village A, to which he belonged. This would suggest that the land where the animal had been killed was not important. If private landholding system was practised, the flesh tax was supposed to be due to the chief of Village B. This led Dr. (Mrs.) N. Chatterji to conclude that the zamindari system of landholding did not exist under the Lusei chiefship and "The practice ... goes to support the point that private ownership of land with the inherent rights thereon was not recognised by the Mizo people."³⁰

Besides the aforesaid privileges of the chief, any demanding chief could forcibly take the property of the

30. (Mrs) N. Chatterji. The Mizo Chief and his Administration, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, 1975, p. 17.

villagers. But, the villagers had a practice of leaving any autocratic chief and migrating to another village. This acted as a check on the chief and no sensible chief would dare attempt to displease his villagers to the extent of letting them feel like leaving him. Normally, the chief was looked upon as father of all the villagers and he usually behaved so. Rebellion against the chief was almost totally absent.

The society under the Lusei chiefship, which was characterised by independent and unco-ordinated administration, was of a primitive nature than of feudalism. Had not the British or any outsider interfered, the Mizo society may have developed into a feudalism.

3. Clashes with the British

Mr. Renvell, Chief Engineer of Bengal went into the Lushai Hills in 1800 and this appears to be the first entry of an European into the Lushai territory.³¹ 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. Sandis did a rudimentary survey of the area.³² The village life of the

31. A. Ray. Mizoram-Dynamics of Change, Calcutta, Pearl Publishers, 1982, p. 3.

32. Idem.

early Lushais was full of fear and superstitions due to their animistic beliefs and their predatory habit. They had a common practice of raiding other villages, which can only be understood as one aspect of primitive tribalism which is seen even in other parts of the world. Raids were perpetrated for plunder as well as for the fulfilment of their superstitious beliefs. They believed that if a person killed human beings and performed certain rites on the head of the victim, the spirit of the killed would be his servant in the "MITTHI KHUA" (Deadman's Village).³³

Besides these two reasons, there was the third dimension of the Lushai Raids, especially of the later half of 19th century, during which they frequently carried out the raids in the neighbouring areas, which cannot be explained just on the above reasons. The explanation may be sought in the context of the expansion of the British East India Company's commercial interest in the neighbourhood of the Lushai country. The ever-expanding commercial interest of the British did it to annoy the more sensitive Mizo chiefs. The extension of the British tea-plantation on the foothills of the Lushai country was taken by the chiefs as an encroach-

33. K. Zawla. Mizo Pi pu te leh an thlahte chanchin (History of Mizos' Ancestors and their descendants), Aizawl, Hmar Arsi Press, 1976, p. 82.

ment upon their 'future lands'.³⁴ Chief Suakpuilala and his descendants were said to be aware of the possible constraints the further extension of the British tea gardens could make on their plan of future expansion of Lushailand, and they began to raid in 1862 areas under Tipperah (Tripura), Manipur, Sylhet (Bangladesh) and Cachar (Assam). Chief Rothangpuia had raided a village in Tripura and killed 186 people in 1860.³⁵ The Lushais carried out many raids on British territories.³⁶

After repeated expeditions and clashes with the Lushai forces, and when the Lushais went to the extent of killing a European and taking a small European girl Mary Winchester as captive, the British changed their policy

34. R. Vanlawma. Ka ram leh Kei, Aizawl, Zalen Printing House, 1972, p. 19. The Lushai Chiefs looked upon the lands towards the Cachar plains as their future lands for building up their sons as chiefs with villages in the area.

Also, A. Ray. Op.cit., p.5. "The chiefs looked with suspicion at the opening up of the foothills by the British who were setting up tea gardens all over the areas. The chiefs asked their subjects not to work in the tea gardens."

& Rev. Zairema. God's Miracle in Mizoram, Aizawl, Synod Press, 1978, p.1. "With the discovery of Assam tea, plantation started at the foothills, bordering Mizoram. Gradually the forest gave way to planters' axes. This alarmed the Mizos at the encroachment of lands they considered theirs. To discourage such expansion they led a number of raids into these tea-gardens, plundering, burning and killing."

35. A. Ray. Idem.

36. Descriptions of most of these raids are given in "History of the relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of North Eastern Frontier of Bengal." Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1844.

towards the Lushais from that of 'conciliation' to that of 'subjugation'. In the absence of a United Lushai Force under the leadership of a King or Supreme Chief, the British could establish their authority in Lushailand in 1891. Even then, they had to face rebellions from one chief or another and it was only in 1896 that Shakespeare, the British Political Officer for Lushai Hills could observe, "that there was no likelihood of any resistance to the British rule in the future and hence it was necessary to give up the strong coercive measures taken so far in favour of gentle rule."³⁷

Therefore, the Lushai raids on the British territory, their opposition to the British entry into the Lushailand, and their rebellions after the British had entered their land, cannot but be taken as strong instances of the Lushai attempt to protect their existing and future lands from the alien 'intruders'. Ray observes, "Had not the Lushais disturbed the working of the tea gardens in Cachar and Sylhet which were under the British ownership ... the British, probably, would have never gone into the Lushai Hills for occupation of the territory."³⁸

37. Report on the administration of the South Lushai Hills for the year 1895-96, Government of Bengal, Calcutta (quoted in Ray, p. 15).

38. A. Ray. Idem.

It may however be argued conversely when the question of the Lushai-British clashes is viewed in the context of the Lushai apprehension about the further encroachment upon their territory. Had not the British tea planters irritated the Lushais by the further extension of the tea gardens, the Lushais would, probably, have never raided the villages and tea estates in the neighbouring areas. Even if they continued their raids for plunder and to meet the demands of their superstitious beliefs, such case may have been very infrequent and easy to check. To argue that the Lushais were so disturbing to the British subjects that it was necessary for the British to occupy their territory does not appear to be an objective view of the whole question. As it would be evident in the case of other colonised countries, it is easy to put the whole blame on the natives for the need of the occupation of their territories by the colonial power, if the question is looked at from the point of view of the colonizer only. We would, therefore, rather subscribe to the view that it was the will to preserve the independence of their territory, free from an alien encroachment whatsoever, that induced the Lushais to react militantly to the disturbing developments around the regions of their direct control.

B. THE BRITISH PERIOD

The consolidation of British administration in Lushai Hills was necessitated not by the British commercial interest in the Hills but by the need to check the Lushais from within their territory so that they could not organise themselves and attempt to "disturb" the "enemy" who had not only established commercial strongholds on their doors but also intruded upon their lands. That the British occupation of the Lushai Hills was against their economic interest in described by Ray thus,

The history of annexation of the Lushai Hills shows the contrast of attitude of the British to the plains and the hills. The plains were occupied by the British with a motive of exploitation and economic benefit to themselves. Hence they were very eager to usher in complete occupation and settled administration in all the plains areas as quickly as they could. It was a different story in the Hills. The British knew that this area would be economically only a burden to them. They tried to keep the hills out of administration as long as they could ... the occupation of the hills that followed was a step against the British economic interest, but it had to take place. 39

Why the British occupation of the Hills "had to take place" while it was "against their economic interest" is a question we cannot pass by, because this determines the

39. A. Ray. Op.cit., pp. 15-16.

course of events and later developments of administration in Mizoram. Certain sections of Mizos tend to believe that the British policy of 'non-interference' in the day-to-day life of the Lushais and in the chief's administration of the village, and the subsequent system of administration adopted by them in the various forms of Regulations and Acts, were governed by the British "respect" for local customs and traditions. Some would even go to the extent of holding the view that it was out of "love" that the colonial ruler saw to it that special treatment was given to the Lushais. While these attitudes towards the British are not totally baseless, the more objective analysis of the whole phenomenon of British occupation of the Lushai Hills and their consolidation of administration there would reveal the fact that basically it was governed by the principle and objective of keeping the Lushais, who were then known by them as the "wild hill tribes", tamed and unable to attempt any uprising at the least possible cost. The consequences of this policy are now inherited by the free India. The fact that the Lushais were not permitted to have any political activity till the 1940's and that they were divided and given to the charge and control of different regional authorities just for the sake of "administrative convenience" and further that they were left in that state

during the British transfer of power to the ex-colonies, would go to suggest that basically the British had none or little of concern about the political future of the Mizos.

A high level conference held at Calcutta on January 25, 1892 in which the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, the Chief Commissioners of Assam and Burma and high civil and military officers participated was called "Chin-Lushai Conference". Had the decisions taken by the Government of India on the recommendations of this conference been materialised, the whole region occupied by the Mizo ethnic groups comprising some portions of India, Bangladesh and Burma would have come up as a distinct political entity. Ray has observed this possibility thus,

Of these important decisions many ultimately did not take shape. Chittagong division continued with Bengal as did Arakan with Burma. Only the North and the South Lushai Hills were amalgamated into one district, which was brought under the control of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. These decisions regarding jurisdictions would show explicitly that the question of keeping these areas under one administration or another was decided mainly from the point of view of administrative convenience. These decisions had, however, far reaching effects. Had the Chittagong Hill Tracts been merged with the Lushai Hills or had these hills been transferred to Burma, the future of the people of these hills would have been different.⁴⁰

40. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 21.

This observation clearly suggests that the main consideration in taking these important decisions was not the unification of the Mizos but of administrative convenience.

What "had to happen" did happen, bringing in its train developments which were later very difficult to undo. It is true that some British officers who looked at things politically and not purely with the administrator's eye were concerned about the future politics of the Mizos, especially those officers of the later years of the British administration. For instance, Prof. R. Coupland, a well known constitutional expert, suggested the creation of "Crown colony of Eastern Agency" comprising the hill areas of Assam and Burma, which would be an independent state between India and Burma.⁴¹ A.R.H. McDonald, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills during 1943-47 also strongly supported this proposal which came to be known as "Coupland Plan".⁴² But, what had been immaterial fifty years before (Chin-Lushai Conference, 1892) could not be brought to happen on the eve of the British departure when the policy of "divide and rule" had taken its toll. Such isolated proposal could not yield tangible results in the absence of political commitment on the part of either Britain or independent India.

41. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 124.

42. Idem.

The Mizos, therefore, had to console themselves with "regional autonomy" under the State of Assam, with certain reservations of course. Thus, the Chin-Lushai-Kuki tribes who could have developed into a state society of their own were left behind as minorities in different administrative units of India, Burma and Bangladesh though the area occupied by them are contiguous hill ranges flanked by the Chindwin-Irrawady valley in Burma, Surma valley in Assam and Gangetic Delta in Bangladesh. A strong sense of unfulfilment is lingering in the Mizo mind because of this and it continues to inspire regionalism in their politics. We will further see in Chapter IV how "Mizo Integration" and "Greater Mizoram" occupy an important place in the policies of various political parties, the unit of the Indian National Congress itself not excluding.

1. Colonial System of Indirect Rule

When the British took upon themselves the administration of the Lushai Hills, two courses were open to them as to which policy was to be adopted. They could assume total responsibility gradually reducing the importance and role of the chiefs, or they could maintain the existing system of chief's rule intervening only in questions of general importance. The second course was followed as it involved

very little expenses" while the first course would entail "a considerable cost".⁴³ The chiefs were, therefore, retained and allowed to rule the village in accordance with the existing customary laws and the Political Officer would interfere only when a chief refused to obey the general norms set by him or in serious cases of oppression of subjects. The chiefs were required to recognise and give loyalty to the British Crown, and their interests were normally protected by the colonial ruler. Any type of mass political mobilisation was forbidden.

This colonial system of indirect rule had negative consequences on the chief-commoners relations. Under the protective authority of the Superintendent (new designation of the Political Officer) the chiefs became irresponsible and autocratic. When their traditional powers, privileges and prestige were reduced vis-a-vis the colonial master,⁴⁴ the chiefs tended to react negatively on their subjects and their rule became harsh. The power of the Superintendent to remove the chiefs encouraged the commoners to lodge complaints to him against their chiefs. While this may have

43. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 22.

44. A.G. McCall. Lushai Chrysalis, London, Luzac and Co. 1949, pp. 201-2. The chiefs' prestige was considerably reduced when many of their traditional rights were taken away by the British.

suited the British policy to divide and rule the Lushais the chief-commoner antagonism and the resultant social tensions blinded the emerging elite and the people of Lushai Hills not to see the distant future of the Mizos.

As described in the foregoing pages, the chiefs were the greatest opponents to the British rule in the Lushai Hills and they fought the British with all their might. Once defeated, they became the main agents and instruments of the alien rule. This was again another success of the British policy of cheap administration to serve their interest elsewhere. The British administration then had no welfare and progressive schemes to be implemented in the Lushai Hills and the condition of the common masses became more unbearable with two masters to serve, the traditional chief and the colonial master.

How the British used the chiefs effectively is commented by Ray thus, "The mystery of how the British could rule these people with so little force and without any trouble lies in their use of the chiefs as fulcrum on which the lever of rule worked."⁴⁵

⁴⁵. A.Ray. Op.cit., p. 30.

Such a system of indirect rule, however, turned out to be counter-productive for the British. The enlightened and educated emerging Mizo elite began to question the perpetuation of the traditional institution of chiefship, and gradually looked upon the colonial power as a symbol for traditionalism and an obstacle to any process of modernisation. It gradually became clear to the Lushais that the colonial system of indirect rule through the traditional system could no longer cope with the rising aspirations of the people.

2. "Protective" Discrimination

As already pointed out in the foregoing pages, the British administrative policy in the Lushai Hills was primarily governed by their economic interest elsewhere. Though the Lushais were checked with military force and with a semblance of administration from within their territory not to be able to attempt any raids on the plain areas, the British would not open up the Lushai Hills for new settlements. They would rather barricade them with protective regulations. This policy of differential treatment of the Lushais was apparently motivated by the desire to maintain the demographic and cultural safety of the Lushai tribes from outsiders' infiltration. But, a closer look at the system suggests its explanation in the context of the basic

interest of the British. As the Hills were only a burden economically, opening up the Hills for other British subjects would only increase interest articulation in the hills and the problems of administration would only multiply, and these would entail greater expenditure on the administration of the hills. It is also questionable whether the British policy-makers were concerned more about the protection of the Lushais than the safety of the British subjects.

Whatever was the motivation, the British worked out a system of Regulations with a view to restrict contacts between the Lushais and any outsiders. Under Section 2 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, the Governor-General in Council notified an "Inner Line" on the southern frontier of the Cachar District beyond which no British subject could move without a Pass from the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar.⁴⁶ Besides this, Sections 22, 23, 38 (2) and 40 of the Chin Hills Regulation, 1896 were extended in modified form to all the hill areas of Assam with effect from October 9, 1911.⁴⁷ Under these

46. Foreign Department Notification No. 2299 P. dated the 20th August 1875, Assam Gazette, September 11, 1875, Part IB, p. 497.

47. Notification No. 784 P, dated the 9th October 1911, Eastern Bengal and Assam Gazette, October 11, 1911, Part II, p. 1882.

Sections of the Regulation, the Superintendent or the Deputy Commissioner of the district can order a person, who is not the native of the area to leave the area within a specified time, if his presence is felt to be injurious to the peace and good administration of the area. Disobedience to such order is punishable to the extent of imprisonment for six months. Such an order cannot be called in question in any civil or criminal court. By the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874 which was made applicable to the Lushai Hills also, the provincial government could determine what enactments were or were not to be in force and with what restrictions or modifications. This was a guiding principle of the administration in Lushai Hills till 1919.⁴⁸

Under the Government of India Act, 1919, the Governor-General in Council could declare any British territory to be a "Backward Tract". Lushai Hills was one of such backward tracts, where the Acts passed by the Assam Legislature could be applied on such date and with such modifications and exceptions as determined by the Governor-General in Council or Governor in Council. In Lushai Hills,

48. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 45.

"only the laws suited to the area were applied."⁴⁹ Even when popular ministries had been formed under the Act of 1919, the subject of backward area was left to the Governor's special power. Thus, Assam Government had no authority over Lushai Hills. The Governors who held direct charges of Lushai Hills did not take much interest in it with the exception of Sir Robert Reid who visited it twice during his Governorship of Assam. His first visit was after an interval of 13 years during which no Governor visited Lushai Hills.⁵⁰

The Government of India Act, 1935 empowered the King-in-Council to declare any area of the British territory to be an "Excluded Area" or "Partially Excluded Area". Lushai Hills was declared an Excluded Area which means that it was governed by the orders and regulations of the Governor of Assam and the provincial government and legislature were not responsible for its administration.

The question of "Excluded Area" was taken by the Indian nationalists as indicative of distrust about the goodwill and consideration of the politically conscious Indians about their tribal brethren.⁵¹ The same view was

49. A. Ray. Ibid., p. 45.

50. A.G. McCall. Op.cit., p. 238.

51. B.K. Roy Burman. Demographic and Socio-Economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India, Department of Publications, Delhi, 1970, p. 113.

expressed by Rohini Kumar Chowdhury in the Constituent Assembly in 1949 charging the British as having framed the rules of administration of these areas to keep these areas as a different country.⁵² According to B.R. Ambedkar,⁵³

The tribal people in areas other than Assam are more or less Hinduised, more or less assimilated with the civilisation and culture of the majority of the people in whose midst they live. With regards to the tribes of Assam that is not the case. Their roots are still in their own civilisation and their own culture. They have not adopted either the modes or the manners of the Hindus who surround them. The position of the tribals in Assam is somewhat analogous to the position of the Red Indians in the United States as against the white immigrants there.

Such was exactly the case of the Lushais. The impact of the concept of "Excluded Area" on the future political developments of the Mizos is observed thus, "All the subsequent political development including insurgency in the Lushai Hills and Naga Hills and the creation of small States and Union Territories in the area could be directly traced to the creation of 'Excluded Areas' by the Act of 1935."⁵⁴

Not only the creation of 'Excluded Areas' but the whole system of protective discrimination in the administration of the Lushai Hills did it to isolate the tribes from

52. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 48.

53. Constituent Assembly Debates, September 6, 1949, Vol. X, No. 27, p. 1025.

54. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 49.

the rest of the dominion. The protection of the tribes from the demographic engulfment and from the cultural assimilation by dominant groups is acceptable as a sound policy. But, it is also noted that the resultant non-involvement and non-participation of the Lushais in the wider socio-political process sustained the independent orientation of the tribes, the further consequence being that their regional sentiment was reinforced to the extent of letting them feel they were never part of India. The Mizo National Front movement which gained prominence during the sixties bears this fact out. Had the British administration opened an opportunity for the Lushais to participate in the political process outside their Hills along with the policy of protecting them from outside exploitation, the regional feeling of the Mizos may not have gone to the extreme.

C. THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

The British had to transfer power to India, Burma and Pakistan when the Lushais had had but little education politically. A close look at the situations in Lushai Hills on the eve of the British transfer of power would reveal the fact that the Lushais were not prepared to decide their political future nor were they clear about whether they were free or not to opt for any political status. 61.75 percent

of the respondents to our questionnaire gave the response that "Mizos were not prepared to decide their political future during British transfer of power to India." There were questions whether they should join Pakistan or Burma or India, or could they remain British Crown Colony or become an independent country. Our respondents' opinions about these questions are given in the Appendices.⁵⁵ Carried by the wave of the fast-changing political situations the Mizo Union party opted for joining India. Even then, the regional sentiment dominated the movement of the party and the post-independence structure also had to accommodate this. This will be seen in the following pages where later developments are analysed. The political structure had to be built on the concept of "regional autonomy". It is seen from the responses that the Mizo Union Party's option to join India is also not very much appreciated.⁵⁶

1. Abolition of Chiefship

Under the leadership of the emergent elite, the Mizo common people formed the first Mizo political party as late as April 9, 1946.⁵⁷ The party ultimately abolished chiefship by a Resolution in the Autonomous District Council and the

55. See Table I in Appendix A.

56. See Table I in Appendix A.

57. R. Vanlawma. Op.cit., p. 88.

Resolution to that effect was approved by the Legislative Assembly to be in force with effect from the 16th August, 1954.⁵⁸

Even before the formation of the first political party, the common people had nursed the anti-chief feeling and been looking for an appropriate forum through which they could mobilise the masses to the objective of abolishing chiefship. They felt that they had enough experiences of the system which had inherent constraints in matters concerning mass organisation and mobilisation which were most essential in the emergent political situation. They had realised the possibility that retention of chiefship would render the Lushai Hills more vulnerable to the more undesirable alien rule, divided and unorganised as the chiefs were even in matters concerning common problem of the whole tribes. Therefore, the launching of a mass-based political movement to put an end to chiefship and the colonial system in order to usher in a new era of popular rule was inspired by the desire to modernise and to have a larger political framework for the unification of all Mizo ethnic groups and for the protection of their identity in the changed situation.

58. Ibid., p. 174.

The abolition of chiefship is considered a right step in the modernisation of Lushai Hills. 56 percent of our respondents are agreed to this view, and only 11 percent think it was wrong.⁵⁹ Had the institution of chiefship been retained in those days, the socio-political condition of Mizoram may have been quite different from what it is now, because the process of the modernisation of Mizos would have been rendered slow by the constraints of the traditional system. It is true that the chiefs were not completely ignorant about the need to cope with the rising aspirations of the common people nor were they indifferent to the maintenance of the regional identity of the Lushailand. They too had their "Chiefs' Council" which had "realisation of self-determination among the people" as one of its objectives.⁶⁰ When Britain declared war on Germany, the Lushai Chiefs held a 'durbar' in September 1939 and separately declared war on Germany. They declared war on Japan at another durbar at Aizawl in April 1942.⁶¹ But, the emergent elite could not have faith in the political consciousness of the chiefs in the context of the fast-changing political situations in the world and the imminence of the British transfer of power to

59. See Table I in Appendix A.

60. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 37.

61. Idem.

ex-colonies. To them the traditional system was too fragile to cope with the new developments and they too were almost too late in this realisation.

2. Regional Autonomy under the District Council System

When the British transfer of power to India, Pakistan and Burma had been so imminent, opinions among the Mizos were divided into four main groups. The District Conference, a creation of the Superintendent A.R.H. McDonald and supported mostly by the chiefs, wanted Lushai Hills to remain a British Crown Colony. The Mizo Union Council, a faction of the Mizo Union party thought in terms of becoming independent as they had been before the British occupied their land.⁶² The representatives of these two groups did not find favour with the Sub-Advisory Committee to the Constituent Assembly formed to study and recommend on the future administrative set-up in the hill areas of Assam.⁶³ Forty days before Indian Independence, a new political party known as United Mizo Freedom Organisation was formed on July 5, 1947, after the Sub-Advisory Committee had visited Lushai Hills. This party tried to mobilise the Mizos towards

62. R. Vanlawma. Op.cit., p. 133-4.

63. The Sub-Committee was popularly known as Bordoloi Committee after the name of its Chairman Gopinath Bordoloi, Premier of Assam. The members were: R.K. Ramadhyan (Secretary), Rup Nath Brahma, A.V. Thakkar, and Aliba Imti. Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga, Mizo Union leaders were co-opted members. They visited Lushai Hills on April 17, 1947.

an objective of joining Burma instead of India, thinking that Mizos would be able to have greater autonomy in Burma than in India.⁶⁴

The Mizo Union submitted a 'Draft Constitution of Mizoram'⁶⁵ to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee which said, inter alia, that

- (a) When India becomes independent, the present Lushai Hills District will be 'federated' with the province of Assam and be connected therewith in certain subjects which shall be decided by negotiations between the provincial legislature and the Mizo National Council;
- (b) There shall be a legislative council of 27 members ... When those areas of Cachar District and Manipur State occupied by the Mizos are incorporated into Mizoram, the number of members will be increased;
- (c) No non-Mizo will be qualified as a candidate (for elections);

64. R. Vanlawma. Ibid., p. 147.

65. Draft Constitution of Mizoram (Lushai Hills) for the future administration of the District within the province of Assam in free India, submitted by the Mizo Union to the Bordoloi Sub-Advisory Committee, signed by Khawtinkhuma, bracketed words mine.

- (d) There shall be a National Court to be called "The Mizoram High Court".
- (e) Any provincial legislation may be applied to the District only with the sanction of the National Council (of Mizoram) with any modification;
- (f) All the above items shall be subject to revision after ten years.

Some leaders who appeared before the Bordoloi Committee individually expressed their views. They all stressed the need of having local autonomy in the future administration of Mizoram.⁶⁶ Fifty accredited leaders of all Lushai political parties held a meeting at Aizawl on August 14, 1947, under the Chairmanship of Mr. L.L. Peters, Superintendent of Lushai Hills, and resolved, inter alia, that if the Lushais are to enter the Indian Union, their main demands were:⁶⁷

- (i) that the existing safeguards of their customary laws and land tenure, etc. should be maintained;

66. V.V. Rao. A Century of Tribal Politics in North-East India 1874-1974, New Delhi, S. Chand & Co., 1976, pp. 165-7.

67. Proceedings of a meeting of the accredited leaders of all Lushai political parties held at Aizawl on 14.8.47, signed by L.L. Peters under No.6927-76 G. of 21.8.47.

- (ii) that the Chin Hills Regulation, 1896 and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, should be retained until such time as the Lushais themselves through their District Council or other parallel District Authority, declare that these can be abrogated;
- (iii) that the Lushais will be allowed to opt out of the Indian Union when they wish to do so subject to a minimum period of ten years.

The Bordoloi Sub-Committee recommended, generally in line with the demands of the Mizo Union and the Accredited Leaders of all Lushai political parties, a set-up based on the concept of regional autonomy in all matters affecting their customs, laws of inheritance, administration of justice, land, forest, etc.⁶⁸ But, nothing was known to public whether the clause which said that "Mizos will be allowed to opt out of the Indian Union after ten years" was acknowledged or not. The later developments in Mizoram only revealed the fact that there was no commitment to this effect on the part of the Government of India. The outcome of all these efforts and representations was the Sixth Schedule provisions of the Constitution of India giving

68. Report of the North-East Frontiers (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee (Bordoloi Committee) 1947, Manager of Publications, Delhi, 1950.

District Autonomy to the tribal areas of Assam including Lushai Hills. The extent of the autonomy of the District Council is summed up by Ray thus,

The proposed autonomy was only in respect of the peculiar tribal customs and it was not to disturb the unity of administration. The State and the Union Government would continue to have the responsibility to secure them the benefits of progressive and liberal administration by promoting with special care their educational and economic interest and protecting them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation as envisaged in the Directive Principles of State Policy. 69

The spirit of the 'regional autonomy' concept is maintained in the administration of Mizoram even after it was upgraded to the state of Union Territory and full-fledged State by the North-Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971, and the Mizoram State Act, 1986 respectively. The "Inner Line" is still enforced, and special provisions regarding the Mizo customs and religion, etc. have been incorporated in the Constitutional Amendment effecting the creation of Mizoram State.

Conclusion

Mishra regards "independent historical tradition" to be one of the main factors giving rise to regionalist

69. A. Ray. Op.cit., pp. 93-4.

problems.⁷⁰ Mathur would trace "the origin of most of these regional movements (referring to the Tribal Regionalism in N.E. India) to the period in which the British rulers were holding confabulations with the leaders of the Indian National Congress".⁷¹ We have now seen the validity of these observations in the case of Mizo regionalism from the preceding accounts. The Lushai chiefs, unorganised though they were, had attempted to protect their 'region' with all the forces at their command. During the British rule, the special system of administration adopted for the Lushai Hills reinforced their isolation and maintained an atmosphere which was too congenial to the sustenance of Mizo regionalism. The political developments in Mizoram in the post-independence period also bear out the reality of the Mizo regionalistic sentiment. A study of their ancient history and racial background shows us that they are more akin to the people of South-East Asia than to the racial stocks of the Indian sub-continent. They have not been involved in the Indian nationalist movement. All

70. R.N. Mishra. Regionalism and State Politics in India, New Delhi, Ashish Publishing House, 1984, pp. 8-9.

71. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India: An Essay in Dimensionalisation of State Politics in India" in Regionalism in South Asia, Ramakant (Ed), Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1983, p. 14.

these facts would go to suggest that Mizo regionalism is deeply rooted in their past history and that there is no wonder that regionalism is a strong force in Mizo politics till today.

CHAPTER - III

CHAPTER - IIIBASES OF MIZO REGIONALISM

As the collective works on "Regionalism in South Asia" edited by Ramakant suggest, regionalism can be traced to various factors and that no regionalism originates from a single cause, be it in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or Nepal.¹ According to Lucy M. Jacob, "Regionalist problems arise only where there is a combination of two or more such factors as geographical isolation, independent historical traditions, racial, ethnic or religious peculiarities and local economic or class interests."² Mizo regionalism also is sustained by a number of factors each contributing to its growth in its own way. Such factors which have most evidently contributed to the growth of Mizo regionalism are cultural and traditional peculiarities, ethnicity, communalisation of religion, psycho-social factors, language, economic factors, geographical conditions and elite conflict. This chapter is an attempt to analyse how these factors together foster and sustain Mizo regionalism.

1. Ramakant (ed). Regionalism in South Asia, Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1983.

2. Lucy M. Jacob. "Regionalism in Sri Lanka" in Ramakant (ed), Ibid., p. 174.

1. Culture and Tradition

E.B. Taylor defines 'culture' as "that complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."³ Others have said that "the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas, and especially their attached values."⁴

In the light of these definitions of culture we may attempt to identify and analyse the main tenets of Mizo culture and traditions. Mohan Lal Sharma holds the view that the differences of the North East India can be traced to the norms governing the politico-institutional behaviour, which norms are being guided by the concept of 'retaliation' which results in acceptance of violence as a normal pattern of behaviour. He would see, among the people of the region, common traits such as love for independent living, undifferentiated structures at local level and local autonomy. He believes that the tribes of Northeast India have such values and norms as liberal universal outlook, plain heartedness, simplicity and high aesthetic tastes.⁵

3. E.B. Taylor, as quoted in G. Duncan Mitchell (ed): A New Dictionary of Sociology, London & Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, p. 45.

4. A.K. Kroeber & Clyde Kluckhohn, quoted in Mitchell, Idem.

5. M.L. Sharma. "The Troubled North East" in Iqbal Narain (ed) State Politics in India, Meerut and New Delhi, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1976, pp. 451-2.

Mr. Mukherjee, a Member of the Parliament once said about the Mizos thus, "These are simple-hearted and genuine people, not the like of you and me who do not always say what we mean."⁶ These 'traits', 'norms' and 'values' are strongly evident in Mizo culture and traditions. Typical peculiarities are also noticeable in the physical aspects of their culture such as music, dance, literature, habits and artefacts. It is clearly seen that in music, dance, habits, costume and lifestyle, they are in affinity to the cultures of the people of East and South-East Asia.⁷ Besides these, the Mizos have a strong socio-cultural norm of 'tlawmngaihna' which is said to have no equivalent term in English. It is the governing principle of Mizo culture by which every Mizo is expected to be industrious, brave, long-suffering, helpful and to be more concerned about the comfort of others than personal gain. Their traditional customs are so different from those of the plains-people that the latter always find it difficult to understand the Mizo sense of justice, fairness and judgement. All these go to differentiate the Mizo outlook on life from those of

6. Parliamentary Debates, Lok Sabha, 3rd Series, Vol. 51, March 1-15/66.

7. For instance, the Mizo 'Cheraw' which is more popularly but wrongly known as 'bamboo dance' is one of the traditional dances of the Philippines. They call it 'Tinikling'.

others that mutual accommodation between the 'out group' and the 'in group' is always characterised with certain amount of frictions.

Mizos are open to the process of modernization, but, they are also apprehensive of the possible obliteration of their cherished cultural traits, norms and values, in the process if modernization goes without proper safeguards to their culture and tradition. When Christianity was introduced, the early Mizo converts thought that many of their cultural and traditional practices were incompatible with Christianity. But, as time passed and when all the Mizos had become Christians, they gradually adjusted these practices with the new found religion by bringing them into its fold. This process of christianization of culture and traditions is an ongoing process and a strong factor of Mizo regionalism, especially with its religious overtones, by which it is pitched against the ever-shadowing dominant Hindu culture.

The 'cultural and traditional differences' is given by our respondents as the strongest factor contributing to Mizo regionalism. 64 percent of the Government Junior Officers and 62 percent of the manual labourers think that this is the strongest factor.⁸

8. See Table IV in Appendix A.

The force of tradition and custom is regarded by Mathur as "an adhesive force to the tribal identity which no other social identity can match" and this, taken together with other factors have "given rise to an isolationist complex ... and to the feeling that the interests of the tribals can be preserved only if they are political masters of the region in which they live."⁹

Therefore, we contend that the peculiar cultural traits and traditional customs contribute in great measure to the reinforcement of regional sentiments among the Mizo people. The acculturation process which have been taking place in Mizoram is more of western than Indian because westernization came along with the spread of Christianity. Mizos find it difficult to adopt any of the dominant Indian cultures because of their peculiar culture and traditions as well as their receptivity to western culture. They can conceive of India as a federated union of varieties of people and cultures than being a country where the minority cultures are assimilated by the dominant culture. Had the Hindu saints gone into the hills before the Christian missionaries, the Mizos may have been highly Hinduised.

9. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India, An Essay in Dimensionalization of State Politics in India", in Ramakant (ed), Op.cit., p. 16.

But, once they have adopted Western Christianity, it does not look possible or desirable to impose the Hindu culture or for that matter any other strong culture on the Mizos, for this will only result in friction which may escalate into socio-political consciousness of the extreme type.

2. Ethnic Base

The ethnicity of the Mizos has been dealt with at length in Chapter Two where we have pointed out that ethnically they are in affinity to the people of the East and South East Asia. The Mizos are an ethnic group formed as a result of the assimilation of many tribes, sub-tribes and clans.¹⁰ The transformation of these tribes and clans into a common ethnic identity is said to be brought about by the deliberate "move for broad-basing of the ethnic identity so as to involve all the tribes living in an area in the struggle for certain basic interests rather than rely on a few hundred or a few thousand people belonging to a single tribe" and this move is facilitated by "the adoption of common symbols like Christianity, roman script and western education."¹¹ To Nirmal Nobedon, the various uprisings in

10. The leading sub-tribes and clans under the generic term 'Mizo' are Lusei, Ralte, Pawl, Hmar, Paite, Chawngthu, Khiangte, etc.

11. M.L. Sharma. "Ethnicity and Regionalism in North-East India-Problems of Multiple identities and Inter-Elite Conflicts," in Pant (A.D.) & Gupta (S.K.) (ed.) Multi Ethnicity and National Integration, Allahabad, Vohra, 1985, pp. 163-4.

the North-East India constitute an "Ethnic Explosion". He observes the ethnic base of the tribal movements in the North East India thus,

"... the feeling of being ethnically and racially different from the rest of the sub-continent was the decisive factor for one major group to launch a defensive guerilla war. Of course the strong feelings of being 'different' would be further galvanised on the mountains by westernized Christianity.... But, strangely, it was ethnicity that was the prime mover, the fundamental cause for the battles of the future. At best religion played a secondary role. It was not the other way round as claimed later by the plainsmen when the tribal tornado struck."¹²

This is a strong observation of the ethnic base of tribal movements, yet, it is very true especially in the Mizo case. The transformation of Mizos into a common ethno-cultural identity, though an established fact, is still an on-going process as a deeper search for identity. The Mizos learn their ethnic lessons from the experiences of the Manipuris (Meiteis), the Tripuris and the Cacharis. There is a strong evidence that the Meiteis and the Mizos are similar ethnically, but, the Hinduisation of the Meiteis has done them to the extent of losing their original ethnic identity. They are now trying to revive their ethno-cultural identity. The case of the natives of Tripura state

12. N. Nibedon, North-East India - The Ethnic Explosion, New Delhi, Lancers Publishers, 1981, p. 16.

is a very sad one in the context of ethnic identity. How they have been rendered strangers in their homeland by the assimilation of their ethnico-cultural identity by a stronger culture is a lesson for the Mizos and they have learnt it. The Cacharis, the natives of the once flourishing Cachar Kingdom (now a District in the State of Assam bordering Mizoram) are not only minorities in their own land but the least assertive and most timid group in the District because they were not adequately protected from the demographic invasion from other quarters, possibly from across the international boundary with the erstwhile East Pakistan. Surrounded by these developments, the fear of losing ethnico-cultural identity cannot but be very real in Mizo politics. This is especially so because they are bounded by Bengali areas on the north and west. They are constantly apprehensive of the possible wave of infiltration engulfing them from across the international and state borders. The issue of Chakma Buddhist infiltration from Bangladesh has always been one of the most burning issues in Mizoram politics. This fear of assimilation by other groups is so real that they even think if the process of economic development is harmful to their ethnic culture and identity, because they are aware that the native ethnic components are often disturbed and dislocated by the massive economic measures, as

happened in cases elsewhere. This is not to say that Mizos do not want modernization and economic development, but to contend that even material advancement can be detrimental to the ethnic group unless it is planned and handled according to the local genius and suitability. We cannot impose our plans just on the ground that they will uplift the people economically if we do not also look into the sensitive ethnic consciousness of the people.

In deeper analysis, it is found that the 'feeling' of being different is based on the 'reality' of being different. The simple fact that Mizos are often taken to be non-Indians by the general public in India and people of other countries just by seeing their feature and lifestyle and habits bears out the reality of the difference. This may be due to lack of communication, interaction and understanding among the various groups in such a vast country like India, yet, it has a repulsive effect on the Mizo psyche. At many places in India, Mizos have to convince their fellow Indians that they are Indians, not to speak about people in other countries. Another simple fact to affirm the difference is that their names and the names of their capital Aizawl are always written incorrectly in national papers, highly standard research works and books and government owned mass media and documents. Not only the names of ordinary people

but also the names of Chief Ministers, Ministers and other State dignitaries are often wrongly written in important and well-known papers and documents. If this is not a callousness on the part of the writers, it can at least be their lack of understanding and unfamiliarity with the Mizos.¹³ This kind of unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge about one part of the country only reflects the indifferent and unconcerned attitudes toward minorities and it is harmful for emotional integration. It is recorded that Prime Minister Desai once asked the Naga elders if they are Indians.¹⁴ One may well ask other Indians if they consider the Nagas (and Mizos) as Indians.

The ethnic difference of Mizos from the rest of Indians constitute a strong base for regional assertiveness and ethnic segregationism. Our respondents give this factor a second place among the bases of Mizo regionalism.¹⁵ In regards to the Mizo attitude towards the plains people, whom they commonly call 'VAI',¹⁶ the responses reveal the

13. In 1980 a group of college lecturers wanted to send telegraphic message from Calcutta to Aizawl and entered AIZAWL in the form, which was the correct spelling. But, the booking clerk asked them to write it AIZWAL because that was how it had been written in the Directory.

14. Nibedon. Op.cit., p. 80.

15. See Table IV in Appendix A.

16. Many plains people tend to regard the term 'VAI' as derogatory because of its common use with prejudicial tone. But, informed sources say that it originated from the Hindi term 'bhai' (brother) which term was picked by early Mizos to identify the plainsmen apart from Mizos because they often heard them call themselves 'bhai'.

fact that Mizos are highly apprehensive of the possible loss of their ethnic identity if the number of 'Vais' settling in Mizoram is not strictly controlled. 67.62 percent of our respondents hold the view that the number of plainsmen in Mizoram is too large, and 73.37 percent want to keep the number always below 5 percent of the total population of Mizos. To some, even this percentage is too high. 68.25 percent do not allow the plains people to hold lands in Mizoram and 65.37 percent have strong objection to Mizo girls marrying plainsmen. The plains people residing in Mizoram are mostly Government servants, teachers, traders and labourers. The distinctive feature of Mizoram from the rest of the hill areas in North-East India is that most of the shops and business firms in Mizoram are owned by the Mizo themselves, but only time can tell whether it will continue to be like this. It is in the context of this that trading by non-tribals is restricted in Mizoram.¹⁷

However, there are a number of cases of non-tribals carrying on trades in Mizoram in the name of Mizos. This is an eyesore to the more conscious and sensitive Mizos, because

17. Trading by Non-Tribals (Regulation) Act, 1974 and the Mizoram Trading by Non-Tribals (Regulation) Rules, 1977. See a compilation of Acts passed by the Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Rules made by the Government of Mizoram, by the Law and Judicial Department, Government of Mizoram, Vol. I, pp. 78-82, & Vol. II, p.341 f.

they think that this backdoor method of economic infiltration can ultimately lead to economic subservience of Mizos and through it to the loss of Mizo ethnico-cultural identity.

3. Communalisation of Religion

Religion can be a strong base for regionalism as seen in the creation of a Muslim majority District of Malappuram in Kerala which leads Mathur to say that "a case of regionalism generated and sustained by a religious identity and such demands for political regionalism are likely to go up (and not down) as a result of this success."¹⁸ He observes that "religious identity has proved to be a potent bulwark of regionalism in North-East India where the spread of Hinduism ... would almost certainly take much fire out of the militant regionalist activists."¹⁹ The instances of religion being used as a base of regionalism are seen in the Khalistan Movement of the Sikhs in Punjab,²⁰ the Buddhist Chakma movement in Bangladesh,²¹ and the Tamil-Hindu

18. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India ...", Ramakant (ed.) Op.cit., pp. 32-3.

19. Idem.

20. Ibid., p. 31.

21. D.C. Burman. "Regionalism in Bangladesh, The Study of the Chittagong Hill Tracts" in Ramakant (ed) Op.cit. pp. 116-133.

vs. Buddhist-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka.²² Similarly, religion, especially in its communalised form, provides a strong base for Mizo regionalism.

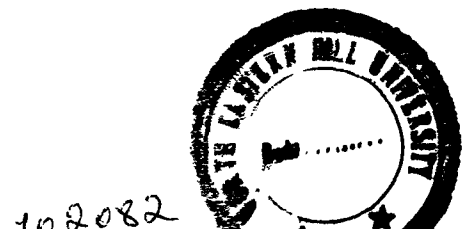
The Mizos had their own religion which was a mixture of animistic beliefs and a consciousness of a Supreme God whom they called "PATHIAN". Protestant Christianity was introduced into the Lushai Hills by the Welsh Presbyterian and English London Baptist missionaries since 1894.²³ The Mizos were so receptive to the Gospel message of Christ that within a period of five decades, the whole tribe was converted into Christianity;²⁴ and now Christians in Mizoram are 83.81 percent of the total population of Mizoram, Buddhists (mainly Chakmas) are 8.19 percent, Hindus 7.14 percent, Muslims 0.45 percent and Sikhs 0.09 percent.²⁵ People who profess religions other than Christianity are those coming into Mizoram from outside, except a few cases of indigenous Buddhist Chakmas and animistic tribes. The Mizos consider themselves to be cent-per-cent Christians. The mass conversion of the whole tribes to a new religion is a peculiar phenomenon and the conversion of the whole

22. Lucy M. Jacob. "Regionalism in Sri Lanka", Ibid., p.176.

23. P.K. Bandhyopadhyay, Leadership Among the Mizos, Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1985, p. 260.

24. Ibid., p. 60-1.

25. See Table XXII in Appendix A.



of Mizo tribes into Christianity is regarded by many as God's miracle.²⁶ The story of this phenomenal conversion to Christianity is taken as very significant "because it is also in a way the story of the political and administrative development of the people of the region."²⁷ Having become the only religion of the Mizos, Christianity acted as a strong agent of modernization and N.E. Parry, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills during 1924-28 could say that "A more active instrument of change than the government is the Christian mission."²⁸ The impact of the Christian on Mizo society is much greater than in any other Christian areas in India. This has led Ray to say that "Nowhere-else in India religion has so much influence on social, political and other temporal aspects of life."²⁹ It brought changes to their primitive customs, gave them formal western education and indirectly made them socio-politically conscious. How Christianity has brought about far-reaching changes in the Mizo society cannot be expressed in statistical form. Suffice it to say that it is Christianity and its sister-agent of education that have made the Mizo people what they are socially, economically and politically.

26. Rev. Zairema. God's Miracle in Mizoram, Aizawl, Synod Press, 1978.

27. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 70.

28. N.E. Parry. The Lakhers, London, Macmillan & Co. 1932, p. 19.

29. A. Ray. Op.cit., p.62.

How, then, Christianity, being a modernizing factor, can also be one of the causes of the growth of regional sentiment, is a question we have to examine in the context of this thesis. Christianity, as a universal religion of "peace" and "goodwill towards men" is not directly contributive to and responsible for the narrow domestic regional feeling. But, it is some sort of 'territorialization' or 'communlisation' of it that becomes a mobilising factor for Mizo regionalism. Such instances of territorialization of religion fomenting regional feeling are often seen in other state and national political systems, be it the case of Hinduism or Islamism, or Sikhism or Buddhism. The same is true about the Mizos. The concept of Mizoram being a 'Christian Land' (which virtually it is) and the politicisation of Mizos with religious overtones result in 'communalisation' of Christianity, and it is in this form that religion becomes a base for Mizo regionalism. The Church never advocates officially the secession of Mizoram from the Indian Union on the basis of Christianity. It rather encourages its adherents to live as good citizens and to contribute to the happiness and prosperity of India. It is also true that Mizo people, especially the educated group are aware that Christianity is not a religion exclusively of the Mizos and that there are many other Christians in

different parts of India. But, the knowledge of this simple fact does not effectively govern their political orientation. It is the capitalisation of the emotive religious fervour propping up Christianity as the Mizo symbol that reinforces their regional sentiments. This form of capitalisation of religious zeal is more evident in the movements of regional parties in general and in that of the Mizo National Front (MNF) in particular which popularised the slogan "For God and for our Land." Why the Indian National Congress and the Leftist Parties cannot strike deep roots in Mizoram is due to the people's consideration of them as Hindu party and Atheistic parties respectively. Christianity taken in this way, therefore, becomes a base for Mizo regionalism and a factor for the strength of regional parties. In this way, Christianity fosters regionalism in Mizoram. It is a time, therefore, that some thinkers revise their opinion that Christianity per se is responsible for the regional/secessionist movements in those areas where Christians are dominant. It may be beneficial to realise the possibility and necessity that Christianity can be an agent of integration of Mizos if it can be taken out of its communal frame. A close look at the MNF secessionist movement reveals the fact that it was for the sake of Christianity that the MNF underground army could not enter into a close

collaboration with the Communist China. Christianity acts as a border sentinel of an Indian territory of Mizoram against the possible attempts of territorial aggrandizement on religious ground by the neighbouring Buddhist Burma and Muslim Bangladesh. Hence, we can rather be thankful that Mizos are Christians, than lamenting that they have been such.

Among our respondents, 51.62 percent "have no problem in being a Christian and an Indian." A low percentage (9.62) give the response that "being a Christian and an Indian is incompatible", and only 3.87 percent say that "Christianity alienates Mizos from India."³⁰ We, therefore, would contend that Christianity per se does not foster regionalism in Indian politics.

4. Psycho-Social Factors

The Mizos are a close-knit society and a minority group in all respects in the national context, yet having great pride in their culture and traditions. They remember their heroes who have become legendary figures for their deeds of valour. The hills have moulded their mental frame and social behaviour in such a way that they are so different from the plains people in psycho-social system and

30. See Table V in Appendix A.

pattern. They are also so conscious about their being no match for the plains people in an open socio-economic competition not necessarily because they lack in capabilities but because of their environmental constraints. These conditions have moulded the Mizo psyche in such a way that they are sharply prejudiced against the people in the plain areas.

That cultural prejudices can provide a base for regionalism is seen in the case of the 'Shiv Sena' of the Marathas. It is observed by Mathur that,

The Shiv Sena certainly drew upon the historical pride and prejudices of the Marathas and turned the 'Shivaji Cult' into a powerful political weapon against the South Indian residents of Bombay who were successfully stereotyped as economic usurpers ... the very success of the Shiv Sena strategy ... shows that it drew strength from psychological prejudices rather than territorial regionalism. 31

The Mizos, though without a written record of their distant history also remember the deeds of their legendary heroes through the oral traditions passed on from one generation to another drawing inspirations from the remembrances of their successful campaigns against their enemies. Nibedon comments on this legacy thus,

31. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India", Ramakant (ed), Op.cit., pp. 41-2.

A few in whom the patriotic spark smouldered, finding themselves isolated and temporarily helpless, bided their time, clinging all the while to the ancient legends of their heroes. A new generation was coming up in the Mizo Hills. Would legend survive history?

In general, the hillmen were perplexed, full of scepticism and suspense. Only one thing remained clear to them in the changing course of history — they had these heroes whom the whitemen never knew, nor would the 'vais' when they came later. 32

Though not as well-known as Shivaji, the legendary heroes of Mizos were the source of inspiration to the young generation towards courageous deeds. One Mizo poet composed a song which used to be sung widely thus,³³

Kan pi kan pu mihuaite dan tha kha mawi kan ti,
Thian chhan thih an ngam fo thin
An hming a thang bawk si;
Keinin chu dan chu zawmin huai taka din kan tum,
Mizo kan ni kan hmel a tha kan tum a sang bawk si.

which in its English rendering may mean somewhat like this,

We admire the beauty of the good rule
That our forefather heroes followed,
Always daring to die to rescue friends,
Spreading their fame far and wide;
True to this rule of valour, we will stand up
courageously
We are Mizos we look so good,
And our aspirations are high.

32. N. Nibedon. Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers Publishers, 1980, pp. 20-1.

33. Rokunga. Thalai Hlabu (Songs of Youth) No. 13.

Inspired as they are by the examples of their heroes, the new generations of Mizos take it upon themselves as their right obligation to fight the 'enemies' with the same spirit of their forefathers. Their inter-village and inter-tribal feuds being the thing of the past, their "enemies" happened to be the British intruders and later the Indian plains people. Their tribal spirit of valour combined with a sense of tactfulness in war caused them to be proud and prejudiced against the plains people. Their spirit is such that they would rather die fighting than give themselves over to the enemies in defeat. How this sense of valour, activated in their various movements, have helped in preserving their identity is undeterminable. Observation on this aspect of Mizo politics may be possible only after some time when we can look at the course of future developments in the absence of this deterrent force. It will be nationally productive if the Mizos are not provoked to activate again this sense of valour and pride in their heroic past.

The Mizos are suspicious of outsiders. They regard their Mizoness as based on their strong principle of life known as 'tlawmngaihna' which is explained elsewhere. They take Indianness as something tricky, crafty, fraudulent and foul. In this respect, their geographical contiguity

with the Cachar plains dominated by Bengalis most of whom are believed to be immigrants and their descendants from neighbouring areas in the erstwhile East Pakistan may be highly responsible. This impression of India prejudiced them against all Indians though they know that the plains people are much better-off economically. The remarks that Mizos are "simple hearted and genuine people, not the like of you and me who do not always say what we mean"³⁴ is too true in their social categorisation of people. They, therefore, find it difficult to have full confidence in the genuineness of plains people and cannot repose full trust in them when the latter, especially those among them who show some kind of concern for their welfare, try to win their confidence in various ways.

The Mizos are by nature slow to talk but prompt to act. They are easily angered and prompted to commit physical act by the "sharp tongues" of certain plains people. To them, verbal insults are enough ground for physical retaliation whereas the 'vais' would volley insulting words between themselves and yet refrain from physical fight. In other words, the Mizos are easily provoked by mere words or attitudes. This psychological difference is often a

34. Mukherjee, Member of Parliament, quoted earlier.

ground for violent actions either in isolated cases or large-scale socio-political spheres. But, once the physical episode is over, they would quickly be ready to consider things rationally.

Being a close-knit, egalitarian and free society, they are apprehensive about the possible inroads of undesirable elements into their society. Their social freedom is so high that they are often taken to be a society where sexual freedom prevails in the loose sense of the term. But, a close look at their social norms and practices would prove otherwise. Men and women mix freely but they do not necessarily misbehave, whereas in the plains, women are confined at home and are allowed to enjoy limited freedom, though whether this practice is a better means of ensuring the chastity, fidelity, dignity and honour of women is difficult to say. Mizo society is highly egalitarian, on account of the high level of socialization. There is no social barrier between high and low. There is neither caste system nor dowry system. Very often, the peon will be seen in the chair at Church services and other social gatherings while his 'boss' in the office where he works will be sitting as an ordinary member of the audience. Very often, the drivers, officers and government ministers will eat together at the

same table. These are rare sights among the caste-ridden societies of India. Mizos are happy to have this type of society and they are sensitively on guard against any possible inroads of unwanted socio-cultural behaviour into their egalitarian society. It is no exaggeration to say that the original Mizo society was very near to the attainment of the utopian society of the idealists' dream. Much of the degradations which have set into the Mizo society can be generally considered as the consequence of the infiltration of outside value systems, which in turn result in the heightening of the regionalist sentiments. Hmartawnphunga, father of the former Congress Chief Minister Lalthanhawla wrote a pamphlet in 1947, wherein he expressed his opinion as to how he thought the Mizos would not be able to live with 'vais'. According to him, the danger of joining India lies in the fact that the 'vais' cannot be made real friends of the Mizos and they are much more selfish than the British.³⁵ It is also known to the Mizos that the plains people are too conscious of economic gains and they are afraid that, given equal opportunity, they would not be able to compete with them. This fear gives rise to a "defensive nationalism" and "it was the same defensive posture and a

35. Hmartawnphunga's Pamphlet dated 5.5.47 (Vaiho zawm nge i duh mahnia din).

bit of scepticism which appear to characterize the budding political attitudes" of the Mizo people.³⁶ Thus, the psychosocial milieu of Mizos not only differentiate them from the plains people but also alienates them from the rest of India. Taking together the number of our respondents who ascribe "psychology" and "lifestyle" and "inherent dislike for outsiders" as one of the factors of Mizo regionalism, they add up to 33.24 percent.³⁷

5. Language

In India, language is not only a factor of regionalism but also a politically recognised base for States Reorganisation since 1917. The Indian National Congress accepted the principle of linguistic provinces in its annual session at Nagpur in 1920.³⁸ This was because the Congress party took the non-linguistic administrative areas as the arbitrary arrangement of the British as a part of their 'divide and rule' policy.³⁹ Language was then regarded as standing for and representing culture, race, history, individuality and finally a sub-nation. After independence, there was a

36. M.L. Sharma. "Elite Conflicts, Regionalism and the Compatibility Crisis: A Study of the Autonomy Movements in North East India" in Ramakant (ed) Op.cit., p. 70.

37. See Table IV in Appendix A.

38. R.N. Mishra. Regionalism and State Politics in India, New Delhi, Ashish Publishing House, 1984, p. 14.

39. Idem.

controversy over the question of the criterion to be adopted for states reorganisation. The Dar Commission of the Constituent Assembly (1948) favoured 'administrative convenience' than 'language' to be determining factor in states reorganisation. The J.V.P. Committee of the Congress party also rejected the demand of linguistic provinces but allowed its experimentation with the creation of Andhra Pradesh on linguistic basis, which took place in 1953. The States Reorganisation Commission set up four major factors including "linguistic and cultural homogeneity" as one of them for the reorganisation of states. It followed two major principles of: (a) language as the broad criterion of reorganisation, and (b) administrative undesirability of too many states. It is this Commission's "pre-occupation with linguistic issue ... which later on released forces powerful enough to challenge the validity and viability of the map of India drawn in 1956."⁴⁰ Since then, "the SRC was literally inundated with pleas and petitions for carrying out linguistic states on the basis of one-language-one-state principles but it did not concede the demand that language must be treated as the sole criterion for demarcation of state boundaries."⁴¹ But, the linguistic pressures

40. Mishra. Op.cit., p. 16.

41. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India ..." in Ramakant (ed.) Op.cit., p. 8.

and demands were so strong that Bombay was split in 1960, Punjab in 1966 and Assam since the mid-sixties, all on linguistic basis. Such splittings of states "gave further impetus to linguistic regionalism in Indian politics."⁴² The past seven decades in India have been characterised by the preponderance of language-related or language-based regionalism.⁴³

In Mizo politics, language, though not a prominent factor of regionalism, has its role in fostering it as a negative consequence of the Assamese linguistic chauvinism, this also in relation to all hill areas in the then Assam and not in relation to Mizoram alone. On November 9, 1947, Nichols-Roy, the initiator of the hills-plains unity week at Shillong urged, in front of 450 delegates of hill leaders from all the hill areas of Assam, that the hill people would better learn the Assamese language. A negative reaction came from Williamson A. Sangma who desired Assam to be a composite state, and opposed the imposition of the Assamese language on the hill people. Bawihchhuaka, a Mizo Union Party delegate also opposed the imposition of Assamese on the hill people.⁴⁴ In a meeting of all the Chief

42. Idem.

43. Mathur. Ibid., p. 9.

44. S. Chaube. Hill Politics in North East India, Calcutta, Orient Longman, 1973, p. 73.

Executive Members of all the District Councils of Assam convened by himself, Williamson Sangma cited a resolution of the Asom Jatiya Mahasobha, taken shortly before, to the effect that the areas opposed to Assamese as State Language should be severed from Assam. He cited this in order to justify a demand for Hill State.⁴⁵ A deputation of hill leaders expressed their opinion to Prime Minister Nehru when he visited Shillong on August 28, 1955, to the effect that imposition of Assamese was undesirable for the hill people.⁴⁶ In spite of all these oppositions, the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee passed a resolution on April 22, 1960, demanding immediate introduction of Assamese State Language Bill which was complied with by the Assam Government immediately. The Eastern India Tribals Union (EITU) which was also joined by the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) vehemently opposed the move.⁴⁷ The All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) meeting in July 1960 demanded the dropping of the Language Bill.⁴⁸ The third meeting of the APHLC in November 1960 at Haflong viewed the passage of the Assamese Official

45. Ibid., p. 111.

46. Ibid., p. 114.

47. Ibid., p. 118.

48. Ibid., p. 120.

Language Bill as "a clear proof of unfair attitude and firm determination of the Assamese community to avail themselves of undue advantages and thereby enhance their domination over the hills people"⁴⁹

Throughout all these developments, the Mizo leaders actively participated in the hill leaders' opposition to the Assamese Official Language move. This move, therefore, indirectly reinforced the regional sentiment of the Mizos, for they soon realised that so long as they continued to remain under a linguistically dominant group, their linguistic identity and all other identities were at stake.

During the Janata rule at the centre, in 1979, the proposal to have a compulsory paper of any Indian major language found in the Eighth Schedule in the competitive examinations conducted by the UPSC agitated the Mizos. When President Sanjeeva Reddy visited Aizawl, the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Mizo Students Association, demonstrated their opposition to the proposal by wearing black cloths, standing in lines all along the road from the 'gateway' to Aizawl town and turning their backs to the President as soon as his motorcade passed by them. T.C. Kapmawia, the

⁴⁹. Ibid., p. 122.

then President of the MZP told the President of India in a short interview that if the proposal was not dropped it would have serious consequences in Mizoram. The President of India showed an appearance of being annoyed by such threatening remarks. But, it appeared that being a shrewd politician, he could see the harm that could be done to the Union by such imposition of language on the weaker sections. It was learnt that he later showed sympathy to the non-Hindi speaking people and he publicly demonstrated this on certain occasion.

The Mizoram (UT) Assembly passed the Mizoram Official Language Act, 1974, which received the President's assent on 17.2.1975. By this Act, Mizo Language was made the Official Language of Mizoram with a room for the use of English in official purposes where required.⁵⁰ Regional sentiment with linguistic overtones was seen in the Mizo Union Party's "Aims and Objectives."⁵¹ In 1947, D. Ronghaka issued a pamphlet "Zoram Independent" in which he spelt out the reasons why Mizoram should become independent from India, wherein he gave the following argument: "The fact

50. Government of Mizoram, Law and Judicial Department's Compilation of Acts passed by the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, Vol. I, p. 84.

51. Mizo Union Party Constitution (original) 1946, p. 1. (We are indebted to Mr. R. Vanlawma for making the copy available to us).

that we speak one language is itself a good reason why we should strive for independence."⁵²

Efforts are being put in to popularise Hindi in Mizoram through formal and non-formal methods of education. Besides providing regular simple courses at the elementary level of formal education, propagation of Hindi is made a Wing in the Education Department of Mizoram and there is an postgraduate level Hindi Training Institute at Aizawl. There is also a special Hindi Lesson Programme through the All India Radio, Aizawl Station for 30 minutes duration in a week. Hindi film songs and devotional songs take altogether 4 hours 56 minutes in a week at the AIR Aizawl Station. In spite of these, Hindi speaking is not very popular among Mizos saving its use in a broken form for business purposes with non-Mizo speaking people. Mizos still have anti-pathy for Hindi while they over-respect English. Language, as a factor of Mizo regionalism is rated very low by our respondents. Only 10.12 percent give it as a reason for Mizo regionalism.⁵³ The Mizos are gradually realising the advantage of learning Hindi. But, it will take some more decades for them to use it popularly and to speak or write it with ease. Meanwhile, the Hindi

52. R. Samuelson. Love Mizoram, Imphal, Goodwill Press, 1985, p. 44.

53. See Table IV in Appendix A.

propagation programme may be augmented with proper care and patience. Any show of chauvinism and/or attempt to impose it on them may unnecessarily bring about unwanted reaction.

6. Economic Factor

Mathur has proposed a theory that regionalism based on the economic factor alone is less potent if it fails to evoke primordial loyalties, as seen in the experience of Telenganna regionalism.⁵⁴ This may lead one to think that economic factor is absent or less strong in Mizo regionalism for it is a case of regionalism of great potency. On the other hand, there is an opinion held by some scholars that economic factor is mainly responsible for Mizo regionalism that the best means of tackling with it is economic measures.⁵⁵ It is, therefore, imperative on our part to examine the question how far economic factor has been contributive to Mizo regionalism?

One fact that cannot escape from the eye of any scholar on Mizos is that the British administration of the Hills had done a little to the economic uplift of the people.

54. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India" in Ramakant (ed), Op.cit., pp. 19-20.

55. B.B. Goswami & Mukherjee. "The Mizo Political Movement" in Tribal Movements in India, K.S. Singh (ed), New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1982, p. 148.

It is true that McCall, one British Superintendent of the Lushai Hills entertained certain ideas of improving the economic conditions of the Mizo people. But, his progressive ideas were fruitless mainly because of lack of financial support in the absence of political commitment. Ray has aptly commented that "Policy formulation towards development administration remained pious wish during the British rule."⁵⁶ So, when the British left Lushai Hills their economy remained primitive and static.⁵⁷ The precarious conditions of the economy acted as a constraint on Mizo political aspirations and it was mainly because of this constraint that they dared not opt for independent existence. The Mizos were aware that their primitive and village based economy of subsistence would be inadequate and too fragile for the changed situation. The British administration had not prepared them for independent economy. We, therefore, contend in the light of these facts that it was economic constraint which prevented the Mizos from opting for independent polity and it was the same economic consideration that induced them to prefer joining India through the province of Assam. This is evident from

56. A. Ray. Op.cit., p. 187.

57. Ibid., pp. 183-5. (This part of his work deals with Mizo economy during the British rule).

the memorandum submitted by the Mizo Union Party on April 22, 1947, to His Majesty's Government and the Government of India and the Constituent Assembly through the Bordoloi Sub-Advisory Committee wherein they demanded, inter alia, that "special financial provision" be made "by the Centre from year to year until such time as the Mizos shall assert that they are able to maintain their territorial integrity and self-determination without this financial provision."⁵⁸ This would go to suggest that while being compelled to join India, they had strong reservations about their regional sentiments. It further suggests that the Mizos had high hopes of economic progress by joining Indian Union. But, before economic measures could gain momentum, the Mizo economy deteriorated further. The Assam Government appointed a Committee to enquire into the effects of partition on the border districts and to suggest remedies. The Committee submitted its recommendations in January, 1951.⁵⁹ However, the well-intended comprehensive development programme recommended by the Committee for the Mizo District could not materialise. Ray gives 'financial difficulties', 'organisational problems' and 'lack of

58. A.K. Nag. The Mizo Dilemma, Calcutta, Tribal Mirror Publications, 1984, p. 24.

59. A. Ray. Op. cit., p. 182.

trained personnel who would like to go into the interior', as reasons for the non-implementation of the Committee's recommendations.⁶⁰ This appears to be genuine but in view of the provisions of Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution for special financial assistance to the Government of Assam for expenditure in the hill districts, the claim that it was due to 'lack of funds' appears to be weak.⁶¹ Whatever be the reasons for its non-implementation, this was taken by the Mizos as an instance of the lack of interest on the part of the Government of Assam in launching massive drive for the economic uplift of the deprived Mizo people.

The financial assistance in the form of grants-in-aid for Mizo Hills and the expenditure of the same for the years 1947-48 and 1948-49 showed an average excess of expenditure over receipts to be Rs. 10,43,231/-.⁶² The gulf between the receipts and expenditures kept on widening as the years went by. Therefore, right from the initial stage, Mizo Hills economy was a dependent one. There was no provision for direct financial assistance from the Central Government to the District Councils. This provincial dependency in economy partly belied the Mizo hopes

60. Ibid., p. 189.

61. Ibid., p. 106.

62. Ibid., p. 107.

for economic upgradation by joining India. And it provided a lever for the provincial government to manipulate economic power so as to reduce the dependent districts to the status of beggars. The Assam Government was, therefore, directly responsible for the economic development or otherwise of Mizo Hills District. In October, 1952, when Prime Minister Nehru visited north-eastern region, the District Councils of the hill areas requested him to make additional funds available to them so that they could take up the functions of the District Councils envisaged in the Constitution. The Prime Minister immediately made an ad-hoc grant of Rs. 10 lakhs for all the District Councils out of which Rs. 2.25 lakhs (22.5 percent) was given to Lushai Hills.⁶³

A study of the Report submitted by S.C. Barve, Joint Secretary in the Finance Ministry, who visited the autonomous districts in May 1953 reveals the following points: (a) That the state government had to expand its administration as the District Councils had no adequate resources to take up functions entrusted to them; (b) that there was a need for contact between the State Government and the District Councils at a level higher than the Deputy

63. Ibid., p. 96.

Commissioner; (c) that subject to satisfactory performance on the part of the District Councils, the Government of Assam should make grants for administrative expenses in the Districts.⁶⁴

The subsequent history of the financial relations between the Government of Assam and Mizo District Council and the development process in the District, however, brought about a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of both. The general features of the District Council period under Assam in the context of developmental progress may be summed up thus:⁶⁵

- (1) The resources of the District Council did not match its heavy responsibilities, and, whatever resources the District had, were not adequately exploited, as confirmed by the finding of the Vaghaiwalla Committee in 1959.⁶⁶
- (2) The taxation system was not effective.
- (3) There was an administrative gap between the State Government and the District Council leaving ample scope for disharmony and misunderstanding. The appoint-

64. Ibid., pp. 97-9.

65. A. Ray. Op.cit. Chapters 5 and 8 for a detailed study of these features.

66. Ibid., p. 101.

ment of a Commissioner for Hill Areas did not help much because his headquarters was at Shillong and the District Leaders could not maintain close contact with him.

- (4) The District Council general staff was too big and uneconomical. The revenue staff was too small to be effective. This necessitated spending of development grants on general administration. It was found that the local revenue had to be spent on establishment and general administration, leaving nothing for the developmental works.
- (5) The grants-in-aid received by the District Council was more than double the revenue receipts from local sources.
- (6) It was a dependent economy lacking in development drives.

For all these reasons, the development schemes in Mizo District could not yield tangible and far-reaching results. The District Council Leaders blamed the Assam Government for the failure of the programmes. The Assam Government blamed the District Council for poor implementation of the programmes and for low exploitation of local resources.

Apart from this disharmony and lack of co-operation between the Government of Assam and the Mizo District Council, the real cause of the economic lag in Mizo Hills after Independence was the inherent constraints on both the Assam Government and the District Council. On the part of the Assam Government, it was constraints of geography, remoteness and lack of manpower which acted as a handicap for accelerating the development process. It was a psychological handicap on the part of the Mizo District Council. The District Council leaders who were now sitting on the seats of power had been the ones who had taught the people not to pay taxes or tributes to the chiefs. It was by capitalising on the "unbearable taxes" paid to the chiefs that they could replace the traditional elites. Thus, they were politically hampered to start the drive for exploitation of local resources, because the people considered any such move as a revival of the unwanted system of chief's rule, which very mentality was the product of the politics of their leaders who were now in the District Council. Moreover, the economy of Mizo Hills having been so dependent, the local leaders were not thinking in terms of self-sufficiency in resources. This mentality has not been erased even till today. This psycho-social handicap of Mizos in relation to economic self-sufficiency has always been the reason for their inability to assert themselves politically.

To make the matter worse, a large-scale famine occurred in Mizo District following a "MAU TAM" (death of bamboos) in 1959. Before they die to produce new generation of their species the "mau tak" a species of bamboo which grow in plenty in Mizo Hills bear flowers and then seeds. The scientific name of this species of bamboo is known to be "melocanna rambueoides". The theory is that when rats eat the seeds of the bamboo, their fertility increases with a result that their number increases suddenly. After eating up the bamboo seeds, they turn to the paddy fields which have been ripe enough for harvest. "The bamboo fruit is much relished by the rats. The fruit acts as a fertility pill to the female rats. The rats thus eat away all the crops. The rat menace increases to such an extent that it requires an army to destroy them."⁶⁷

Anticipating the famine caused by such rat havoc, the Mizo District Council issued passes for the cultivation of flat lands of the 'Phaisen area' bordering Cachar District to encourage Mizo cultivation of paddy there as a preventive measure, for it was known that rat menace used to be less serious on paddy of flat land cultivation. But, the Forest Department of Assam in Cachar objected to the

67. J.D. Baveja. The Land Where the Bamboo Flowers, Gauhati, Assam Publication Board, 1970, p. 63.

cultivation of paddy in the area. Eleven Mizo farmers were arrested by an order of the Hailakandhi court. Ch. Chhunga and Lalsawia, then Presidents of the Mizo Union and the Eastern India Tribals Union respectively, issued a joint pamphlet condemning the order of the Hailakandhi court. In spite of subsequent attempts, the cultivation on that area could not be continued because the Deputy Commissioner of the Mizo District himself was in the way of the move, perhaps because he wanted to avert law and order problem. It was said that the Assam Government shifted on its own the boundary between Cachar and Mizo District far into the Mizo territory. The repeated warnings and appeals made by the District Council for the taking of precautionary measures were not properly heeded to by the Assam Government who were reluctant to accept the theory that such a large-scale famine would occur, based on the simple belief that the population of rats increases when the bamboo bears flowers. It was only after the famine did break out and Williamson Sangma visited Mizo Hills as Tribal Areas Minister that the Assam Government was convinced that there was a large-scale famine in the hills and relief measures were taken.

Even after the relief measures were taken, the attitude of the Assam authorities was that they would not like to channel the measures through the District Council alone. Part of them were channelled through the Deputy Commissioner. Chaliha also, eager to bypass and humiliate the Mizo Union leaders, who were running the District Council patronised the Mizo National Famine Front and "relief turned out to be a salient form of patronage in the famine-stricken hills."⁶⁸ Nag comments thus,

Cases of starvation deaths officially reported by the District Council were denied by the Assam Government. Discontentment grew bigger and bigger in the minds of the people ... they felt that the Government did not pay much attention nor did they attach so much importance to the District Council as expected Against this background,.... the Mizo National Famine Front transformed itself into the Mizo National Front and raised the demand for Sovereign Independence of Greater Mizoram.⁶⁹

Nibedon observes the situation in the following words,

The Mizo Union sent an SOS and then a delegation to the plains for expert advise(sic). The Assam Government sent an entomologist who camped for a couple of nights at Aizawl finding no evidence whatsoever to connect the increase in the rat-population to that of the flowering of the bamboo groves What the Assam Government could

68. S. Chaube. Op.cit., pp. 164-5.

69. A.K. Nag. "The Ups and Downs of Mizo Politics", in North Eastern Affairs, Shillong, October-December Issue, 1972.

have done and never did was to take some kind of normal precautionary measures. The Chief Executive Member and his colleagues wanted an immediate supply of rice to be stocked in the interiors, knowing full well that at the height of the crisis they would not be able to move the foodgrains to the interiors for lack of proper roads. The Assam administration, in its typically slow and indifferent manner, had not grasped the situation.⁷⁰

The Mizos felt humiliated when the Assam Government showed them a very indifferent attitude in their time of greatest need. They felt hurt by the fact that they were treated thus in spite of their earlier support to the Greater Assam Movement in the face of the Greater Bengal Movement. Capitalising on this general discontent, the MNF which was originally patronised by Chaliha Government of Assam to minimize the popular Mizo Union or perhaps to apply the 'divide and rule' policy among Mizos, grew to size and ultimately launched the Mizo Independence Movement. Chaliha's attempt to minimize the Mizo Union and to bypass the Mizo District Council thus boomeranged on him and he had to lament later that Laldenga had betrayed him. However, the deeper fact was that Mizos had not at all shed off their regional sentiment and the administration of the District by the District Council and the Assam Government made

70. N. Nibedon. Mizoram - The Dagger Brigade, New Delhi, Lancers Publishers, 1980, pp. 34-5.

the soil too fertile for the culmination of their regional sentiment into an independence movement under the leadership of the MNF party.

These developments in Mizoram over a period of two decades would compel us to contend that the economic factor, which induced the Mizos to join India turned out to be the reason for their dislike for Assam and also India. Such estrangement on economic ground reinforced Mizo regionalism in great measure.

With the upgradation of Mizoram to Union Territory and now to a full-fledged state with special provisions, the Central financial assistance directly comes in unprecedented amount. The economic development process though hampered by the MNF underground movement and the counter measures, has gained momentum resulting in the building of the economic infrastructure. The Mizos never face the hardship they had had during the District Council period. An attempt is made in Chapter Five to examine whether this liberal and comprehensive economic policy of the Central Government for the development of Mizoram has any positive impact in the political orientation of the Mizos, that is, whether the economic improvement helps the people feel more Indian. A tentative observation, however, may be that in

view of the low percentage of our respondents giving economic factor as a reason for Mizo regionalism,⁷¹ the impact of this drive may not be as effective as desired in the context of integration of Mizos with the rest of Indian Union.

7. Geographical Conditions

One may not have to give too many arguments to support the fact that geography is a strong factor in moulding the habits and political orientation of the people. Mathur considers the sharp difference in life-style between the hills people and the plains people and the occurrences of tensions between them as a 'general tendency' all over the world, and that the hill tribes of North East India are no exception to this.⁷² The impact or influence of geography and topography on culture and civilization can take shape in different ways.⁷³ The physical barriers in the hill areas are so great that small areas witness the flourishing of autonomous regions. As a corollary of secluded living and social heterogeneity, the people, especially of the hills, could maintain a spirit of independence. The

71. See Table IV in Appendix A.

72. P.C. Mathur. "Regionalism in India", in Ramakant (ed) Op.cit., p. 15.

73. M.L. Sharma. "Elite Conflicts, Regionalism and the Compatibility Crisis: A Study of the autonomy movements in North East India", in Ramakant (ed). Ibid., pp. 56-8.

bounty of fauna and flora helps the people develop straight-forwardness bereft of much artfulness which goes with developed civilisations. Topography, the hill terrains and deep river basins prove to be constraints on means of transport and communication rendering it difficult for a regional economy to develop. Inter-elite and inter-mass co-operations were impossible in the independent village system.

All these factors are too immensely present in Mizoram. The perpetuation of the British administrative boundaries left Mizoram in such a location where approximately 70 percent of its boundaries are international, yet, with many of the Mizo kinsmen living immediately across such boundary lines. This has made Mizoram geo-politically strategic and internationally susceptible and sensitive. The meeting of the Burma-Mizoram and the Bangladesh-Mizoram border lines at the south-end of Mizoram has made it possible for rebel groups in the region to meet with ease. In this way, Mizoram is too favourable for the rise of regionalism and secessionist movement. Had it not been so, the MNF movement may have been an impossibility. When viewed in the context of geography and demographic regionalisation, it appears more logical to redraw the international and state boundaries around the present Mizoram so as to

put all Mizo ethnic groups under one administration within the Indian Union because the ethnic affinity of Mizos with those groups immediately across the borders may always render the border areas vulnerable possibly having adverse effects on the Mizoram economy and politics directly and on the Indian politics as a whole indirectly. The Mizo people on all sides across the Mizoram borders are now looking toward Mizoram for leadership and with certain amount of envy, as they have so many socio-economic problems under the administrations of their respective areas.

These conditions and circumstances, unless given a reasonable adjustment and solution to, may condition Mizo regional sentiment and a new stage of regionalist movement may develop in due course in the form of the so-called "Greater Mizoram" giving rise to inter-state as well as international tensions. It is time, therefore, to think of a logical course of action so as to integrate the Mizos fully with Indian Union on the one hand, and to fulfill their socio-political aspirations on the other before some unwanted forces have taken the advantage of the strategic importance of Mizoram and the demographic conditions of the region. If the consciousness of and concern for these are lacking in the circles of policy-making machinery, and unless a positive course is followed, Mizos may

be tempted to launch a new movement which perhaps will be infused with new ideological orientation.

8. Elite Conflicts

Regionalism, studied as an expression of competitions and struggle for power among the elites of the region will be a novel approach to the problem, especially in relation to the North Eastern Region. Such approach is, however, necessary not only as an academic exercise but also because it is likely to be rewarding "particularly in the context of the North Eastern region where history has been a witness to the continued hold of a distinct elite strata over isolated and small territories."⁷⁴ Sharma proposes thus,

"... irrespective of the perspective on or dimensionalities of regionalism, it may commonly be understood as a form of elite conflict at certain levels. In that sense regionalism is not something which is irrational and impulsive, but it is a cover or a plank through which the elites compete and fight for power It is noted that mass of the people may be hypnotized by talk of emotive issues; but this is cunningly raised as an ideological plank by a group of elite to generate mass pressures and control levers of power." ⁷⁵

It is claimed that the Committee on National Integration constituted by the Government of India offers a similar acknowledgement thus, "What often appears as a conflict

74. Ibid., p. 51.

75. Ibid., p. 50.

between different castes is at bottom only a struggle among the educated people for obtaining jobs and political power."⁷⁶

Our analysis of Mizo regionalism will not be complete unless some attempt is made to examine its base from this approach. It is pointed out earlier that in the Mizo traditional system, the independent chiefs, the elders, the 'zalen' and 'ramhual' and the village blacksmith were the elites, the bulk of the villagers constituting the traditional masses. In that system, co-operation among the inter-village elites was constrained by the socio-geographical handicap, but, within the village system, there was a very limited circulation of elites and the elite composition remain static. In extreme case, there was a possibility of a villager deserting his chief and migrating to an acceptable/accepting chief of another village. Otherwise, inter-village mobility in the form of migration was limited. When certain chief's family expanded, some form of inter-village chiefs' co-operation developed. The chief of Village 'A' may instruct the chief of Village 'B' not to accept any of his villagers intending to migrate to his village and the

76. N.S. Gupta. "Unity in Diversity: A Clue to National Integration" in M.R. Sinha (ed.), Integration in India, Bombay, Asian Studies Press, 1971, p. 18.

latter will oblige because such act will deter his own villagers from attempting to migrate. This form of elite co-operation existed only among few friendly chiefs and had no significance on the whole situation of Lushai Hills. When the British came, the traditional privileges and power of the chiefs were considerably reduced and the traditional elite co-operation which had emerged in its rudimentary form suffered a setback.

The British administration, the spread of Christianity and education set the process of modernization going and as a result a new educated Mizo elites began to emerge. The emergent elites soon became a potent force. They enjoyed greater advantage in terms of co-operation and interaction than the traditional elites because they were more educated. They soon formed a political party (Mizo Union) by which they started a political movement which ultimately brought about the end of chiefship, the traditional elitism. The emergent elites adopted pro-Indian stance and could impress upon the people that the traditional elites were pro-British and hence reactionary to any move for modernization. Talking highly of the autonomous status under the province of Assam, they exploited chiefs - commoners antagonism and soon occupied seats of

political power. But, when they realised that the Assam Government, whom they had been looking to for their own sustenance, became unappreciative of the workings of the Mizo District Council which they were running, the emergent elites then joined the 'Hill State' movement in the early fifties. Again, the hill state movement also did not very well suit their attempt to hold power because such movement was too broadbased and their power equation with the other hill leaders was poor. They then switched over to the policy of Mizoram State.

Meanwhile, the traditional elites became resilient and found a new forum in the Mizo National Council and then in United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) and then again in the Eastern India Tribals Union (EITU). to re-assert themselves in the new situation. They propounded 'Crown Colony' and then 'Join Burma' and then again 'Hill State' movements. The struggle for power between the old and the new elites was so sharp that in the beginning of the second half of the fifties, the Mizo politics was divided into two main streams. The emergent elites' hold on the masses, however, was so strong, being cemented by the active backing of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, that the resilient traditional elites and their supporters could not make any tangible achievement in their interest.

Those who did not remain in politics soon found well-placed government jobs for themselves. Those who remained in active politics were artful enough to take advantage of the new situations that even when they left politics, they found themselves in economically sound positions. But, the traditional elites soon receded into the background.

A new elite class again emerged, whose members were drawn from all sides. It is this new elite class which spearheaded the independence movement through the MNF party. It is in this case that "hypnotization of the masses by talk of emotive issues ... to generate pressures and control levers of power" is too evident. Those who led the rebel movement in the beginning appealing to the emotion of the masses are now comfortably holding power under the Constitution of India which they had once sought to boycott. This is a case of tactful adjustment of one's policy and programme in order to hold power by any means than being a case of volte face on the part of the third group of Mizo elites.

The Mizo elites are now divided into two main poles. One group want to completely identify with the Indian Union through any acceptable all-India level party, especially the one that holds power at the Centre. The other group

wishes to maintain some degree of autonomy through regional party while remaining within the Union. Attempt is being made from certain quarters to pave the way for the emergence of the fourth elite class in the form of a new regional party tinged with certain leftist ideology.

The regionalist elites, having come to power once by exploiting the regional sentiment of the people, often take the side of the Central Powers when their regionalist stance is going to estrange them from their central masters, thus betraying their regional support base. This would, however, create a fresh opportunity for the emergence of a new elite group or for the revival of the old one by appealing to the same regional sentiment of the masses.

Conclusion

Mizo regionalism has drawn sustenance from different sources and not from only one or two factors. Whatever be the measure of contribution of each of these factors, Mizo regionalism remains a strong force. History is a witness also to the fact that whatever regional party that comes up in Mizoram, it cannot take a strong stand in opposition

to the Central Power.⁷⁷ It is also seen that while they want to maintain regional autonomy in terms of political power and socio-cultural factors, the Mizos always try to draw as much economic advantage of being in Indian Union as possible, because of their inherent economic backwardness. In order to deal with this type of regionalism, therefore, it is necessary we have a comprehensive policy handled with patience and due recognition of the factors that involve, as a result of which we may expect Mizoram to become a model state for others to emulate.

77. It has recently been reported that the MNF will maintain 'Strict Neutrality' in its relation with the Congress (I) and the Opposition parties at the national level. See The Assam Tribune, May 2, 1987, p. 4, Cols. 7 & 8.

CHAPTER - IV

CHAPTER - IVPOLITICAL PARTIES AND REGIONALISM

Approaches to the study, and concepts of political parties, have been undergoing gradual change from the 'traditional method' of their study before the Second World War. The traditional approach was guided by questions relating to the life histories of the parties, persons who matter in the party's movement, basic views about political society, programmes and interaction of parties in a country and electoral battles fought.¹ Ostrogorski and Robert Michels. are the more well-known among writers who applied this method. With the publication of Maurice Duverger's Les partis politiques in 1951, Neumann's article "Toward Comparative Study of Political Parties" in 1956, and a number of works on political parties after the Second World War, there has been a breakthrough in the approach to the study and in the understanding about political parties. The latest approaches to the study of political parties are concerned more with the process of public policy-making through the parties. One important

1. Frederick C. Engelmann. "A Critique of Recent Writings on Political Parties", in Eckstein and Apter (ed.) Comparative Politics: A Reader, New York, Free Press, 1963, p. 379.

characteristic of the new trend in the approach to the study of political parties is that there is no more a dichotomy between party and government in the twentieth century parliamentary party system. Cabinet, parliamentary party, electoral organisation, make up the political party.²

With the change in approach came the change in the meaning and functions of political parties as well as in the nature and determinants of party systems. Party is no more conceived of simply as a body of men united for promoting national interest on some agreed principles, as Burke would like us to understand it. Recent writers like Dean, Schumann, Neumann, La Palombara, Myron Weiner and Jean Blondel emphasise such aspects which concern with specialisation, partnership, durability, power-orientation and public policy-making process, while defining the nature of political party. As to their functions, parties are more and more conceived of as uniting, simplifying and stabilising political process, always struggling for power, providing a link between the government and the people, ever increasing the scope of political activity

2. Ibid., p. 383.

and widening popular participation, presenting issues and setting value goals for the society, serving as broker of ideas, always leading in the task of political modernisation and performing various social welfare functions. Likewise, the determinants of party-system and party-structure also increase with the growing importance of parties. These determinants vary in category from being historical to socio-economical and ideological. Such factors as religion, race, sub-nationalism, linguistic chauvinism, caste, attractive leader, dissidence, confederation of like-minded organisations, etc. have become relevant in the determination of the structure of parties and the development of party-systems. Parties and party system are now studied not only from Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" or Duverger's "natural dualism" but also as "Clientele-oriented stratarchies."³

Within this broad framework of the conceptualisation of political parties, an attempt is made in this chapter to analyse the bases, natures, programmes, functions and movements of Mizo political parties with a view to identify

3. Samuel J. Eldersveld's Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1964, and Nageshwar Prasad's Ideology and Organisation in Indian Politics - A Study of Political Parties at the Grass-Roots, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1980, where the new approaches are applied.

where and how Mizo regionalism has governed their orientation and how the parties have been trying to strike a compromise between the constant factor of Mizo regionalism and the demands of the task of building an integrated Indian Nation. This chapter, therefore, may throw some light as to which type of parties are likely to hold the mass-support in Mizoram, and which will be the best link between the regionalist Mizo masses and the nationalist Indians.

In the course of our research work under the title Parties and Politics in Mizoram: A Study of the Development of a Regional Party System under the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for a degree of Master of Philosophy, we have identified as many as 24 political parties (including factions) and 5 party alliances having been in existence in Mizoram. However, out of this great number of parties, only a few have been able to emerge and remain for some time as major parties in terms of following and electoral achievements. Others have come but gone out of existence or merged with bigger parties. Among the major ones, only the Indian National Congress is popular in Mizoram as an all-India level party; Mizo Union (M.U.), United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO), Mizo National Front (MNF)

and People's Conference (PC) are popular in their respective periods as Regional parties. In this chapter, we will deal only with these five major parties.

1. The Mizo Union, the pro-Congress Regional Party and Mizo Regionalism

The Mizo Union (MU) was the first Mizo political party founded on April 9, 1946. The principal objectives of the party were to achieve a rightful status for the Mizos; to develop better understanding between chiefs and commoners; to unify the common people; general uplift of the Mizo people; to become the democratic representative and spokesman for the whole of Mizo people; and to popularise Mizo language.⁴ These objectives well sum up the socio-political conditions that brought the party into existence. Though open to all Mizo-chiefs and commoners, it became popular only among the commoners, because of its basic but unofficial anti-chiefs orientation.⁵ The hold of the party on Mizo people was so strong that it could capture and maintain power throughout the District Council period except for a short interregnum during 1970-71, when the Congress party could form a shaky 'government'

4. The original Constitution of the Mizo Union, 1946, p.1. We are indebted to Mr. R. Vanlawma for making its copy available.

5. V.V. Rao. A Century of Tribal Politics, New Delhi, S. Chand & Co., 1976 (First Ed.), p. 495.

of the District Council by a small margin of seats, the MU being the opposition party. When Mizoram was made a Union Territory, the first Assembly Elections were held in April 1972 in which the Mizo Union again came to power capturing 21 seats in the 30 elective seats of the Mizoram (UT) Legislative Assembly.

The party at first had all the hues of the political figures among the commoners Mizo within its fold. The chiefs were having their own forums in the Chiefs' Council and the District Conference, through which they tried to perpetuate their rule by advocating a 'Crown Colony' for the Mizos after the British had left. In the Mizo Union party also, the original leadership was more inclined to this aspiration. But, they were soon replaced by the pro-Indian leadership who capitalised on the commoners' anti-chiefs fervour. The Mizo Union Movement since then became an anti-chiefs-pro-India-regionalist movement. Those who advocated 'Crown Colony' or 'Mizo Independence' had no place in the party, thus paving a way for the formation of a second party to pursue the anti-India inclination.

The future of the Mizos, according to the leadership of the Mizo Union, lies with the Indian Union. They held a strong opinion that the welfare and modernization of

Mizos would be achieved best within Indian Union. In its first general Assembly on September 24, 1946 at Kulikawn, Aizawl, the party resolved that in the event of India attaining independence, the Lushai Hills must be included within the province of Assam. The Assembly was opposed to the idea of the Lushai Hills being treated as an Excluded Area. It wished to be represented in the Assam Assembly adequately. "At the same time ... no legislation of the provincial Legislative Assembly should apply to the Lushai Hills automatically. The internal affairs of Lushai Hills should be managed by its own legislature."⁶ The Assembly also resolved that all the contiguous areas occupied by the Mizos should be united under one administration. These demands were confirmed by the second conference of the MU at Lakhipur, Cachar District on November 21, 1946. This conference was attended by representatives of Mizos in Cachar, Manipur and Lushai Hills. Some Congressmen from Cachar also attended. While confirming the previous resolutions, the conference demanded the widest possible autonomy for Mizoram and that the Mizos should be represented in the Constituent Assembly.⁷ This demand of representation

6. Ibid., p. 496.

7. Ibid., p. 497.

was communicated to the President of the Constituent Assembly on January 3, 1947, with a warning that if Mizos were not included in the Constituent Assembly, the Mizo Union would frame a separate constitution for the Mizos. "They also said that they would decide whether they should be under the British protection for the time being, or form an independent state or join the Chin Hills in Burma and form a separate province within Burma."⁸

In pursuance to these resolutions, the party submitted a lengthy memorandum to His Majesty's Government, the Government of India, and the Constituent Assembly through the Bordoloi Committee⁹ in which two top MU leaders were co-opted members. They made the following points in the memorandum:¹⁰

- (a) Mizos are a family of numerous tribes spreading over Lushai Hills, Manipur, Cachar, Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma.
- (b) The creation of Lushai Hills comprising only Luseis, a Mizo tribe, was effected for the British administrative convenience, leaving other Mizo tribes outside it.

8. Ibid., p. 500.

9. Explained in Chapter Two.

10. We are indebted to Padma Sri Hrangaia for making the copy of the memorandum available. The memorandum was approved by the party on April 22, 1947, and signed by Mr. Khawtinkhuma, President.

Quoting various authorities like Shakespeare, Stevenson, Liangkhaia, Shaw, Kingdanward and Kim of the Statesman, they maintained that the Mizos within Lushai Hills and without it had strong solidarity.

- (c) The Mizos were distinct from the plains people as well as from the Nagas and Manipuris.
- (d) Migrating to their present habitats from the east, the Mizo villages lay within the areas covered by the border of the present Falam Sub-Division in Burma in the east.
- (e) The area occupied by Mizo tribes was as big as 15,993 square miles and the population was about 328,400.¹¹
- (f) It is, therefore, imperative that His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and the Constituent Assembly do the "just and proper thing" and grant the Mizos their "just demand" for Territorial Unity and Solidarity.
- (g) The Mizos were never subjugated by the Maharajas of Manipur, Tripura, Chittagong and Cachar. When the British annexed their land, they became loyal to the British, as proved by their willing participation on their side during the Two World Wars, Abhor Expedition and Haukip rebellion.

11. The total population of Lushai Hills alone according to 1941 Census was 1,52,786. See Table XIX in Appendix A. These figures, therefore, suggest that Mizos outside Lushai Hills were greater in number than those inside it.

- (h) The Mizos had efficient system of administration and discipline as a distinct group governed by their traditional laws, customs and organizations.
- (i) Mizos had never been under the Indian Government and never had any connection with the politics of the various groups of Indian Dominion. So, they could not be thrown on a common platform with the rest of India, because their ways were too different from those of others.
- (j) It is, therefore, important to the highest degree that the Mizos be given self-determination in its fullest form.
- (k) On account of all the problems and its strategical location, lack of developmental facilities, it is all the more imperative that Mizoram be given special financial provision by the Centre while allowing them their territorial integrity "as anything short of this will be detrimental to their upbringing."
- (l) The District shall join Assam through legislature with adequate representation and be also eligible to the provincial services with due reservations of posts at the same time retaining her territorial integrity and self-determination; as otherwise, thrown among forty crores of Indian, the 3,28,400 Mizos with their unique system of life will be wiped out of existence.

With these points, the MU demanded (i) Territorial Unity and Solidarity of the whole Mizo population to be known henceforth as MIZO and MIZORAM for Lushai and Lushai Hills District retaining the sole proprietary rights over the land. (ii) Full self-determination within the province of Assam with a National Council having the supreme legislative authority and an Executive Body and a Judiciary within the District, the composition and functions of which will be prescribed by rules. Any concurrent subjects in which the district may be connected with the Autonomous province of Assam or India as a whole shall be by negotiations with the National Council which will be set up according to the wishes of the general public, any legislation may be applied to the District only with the sanction of the National Council with any modification. (iii) Special Financial provision by the Centre from year to year until such time as the Mizos shall assert that they are able to maintain their traditional integrity and self determination without this financial provision.

The memorandum was concluded with the following words: All the above items shall be subject to revision according to the future trends of events even to the extent of seceding after ten years. For this end, it is to be understood

that the democratic system of Government in its purest form shall at the very outset be introduced. A 'Draft Constitution of Mizoram'¹² was also submitted along with the memorandum in line with the demands expressed in the memorandum.

It will be seen from these that the Mizo Union party, founded on the primordial loyalties minus chiefship, laid the foundation for moderate regionalism or an integrationist form of regional politics in Mizoram. Such considerations as economic constraint, regional autonomy in legislation and administration, preservation of distinct ethnico-cultural identity, historical independence, geographical isolation, linguistic distinctness are present in ample measures in the sentiment of the Mizo Union party. It is also evident that the Mizo Union's option to join India through Assam was not without conditions. They reserved the possibility of opting out again after ten years, if the future trends did not seem to favour the fulfilment of their aspirations.

The party took the reins of power in the autonomous District Council of the Lushai Hills, which was changed to

12. We are indebted to Padma Sri Hrangaia for making its copy available to us.

Mizo Hills in 1954. While they could foster some sort of Mizo Unification within the Mizo Hills, the Mizo Union leaders soon forgot about some of their demands, Unification of all Mizo groups within and without the then Lushai Hills, for instance. The party was gradually more occupied with internal administration and struggle for power, and it suffered major split in 1956. It did not perform very well on the developmental front. It put an end to traditional chiefship and introduced an elective system of Village Council in 1954. When the "ten year period" elapsed, it did not care to renew the question of determining the political future of the Mizos. Instead, true to its original pro-India stand, it became highly instrumental in the hands of the Assam Government and the Government of India in their attempts to check the secessionist movement of the Mizo National Front (MNF).

Though it was a regional party, it soon joined the Assam Congress Legislature party at the state level in 1952.¹³ It parted company with the Congress party following sharp differences on the famine (1959-60) relief and Assamese official language issues since 1960.¹⁴ It then joined

13. R. Vanlawma. Ka Ram leh Kei (My Country and I) Aizawl, Zalen Printing House, 1972 (Second Impression), p. 177.

14. Amit Kumar Nag. The Mizo Dilemma, Silchar, Tribal Mirror Publications, 1984, p. 27.

the Hill State Movement with other hill district parties for some time. The leadership, however, soon became disinterested in the movement and at the party's general Assembly held during March 8-10, 1963, it was resolved to fight for Mizoram state.¹⁵ The party's active pursuit of this objective made it a counter-force against the MNF's secessionist movement resulting in serious antagonism between them.

That the Mizo Union party, at least its leadership, was regional in form but pro-India and pro-Congress in practice was evident on many occasions.¹⁶ It appears to us that the Indian National Congress also did not bother to form its unit in Mizoram for a long time because the integrationist pro-Congress Mizo Union party was there. Mr. A. Thanglura, the first and the last Mizo Cabinet Minister in the Government of Assam and the founder of Congress party in Mizoram, could say that Mr. Ch. Saprawnga, the most tenacious and prominent leader of the party "appeared to be ready to follow the Congress party" from the very

15. R. Vanlawma, Op.cit., p. 205.

16. The Independence of India was enthusiastically welcomed by the Mizo Unionists. In December 1948 - January 1949, the Mizo Union launched a mass demonstration against the last British Superintendent L.L. Peters.

beginning.¹⁷ On one occasion in 1964 at Vaphai village, while on their campaign tours for the Assam MLA by-election, it is reported by A. Thanglura that Ch. Saprawnga was saying then in public to the effect that:

It is not proper for us to scorn the Congress party. It is not only the oldest party but the one which successfully fought for Indian Independence. Our only contention is whether it is time to form its unit here in Mizoram. If you do not want to cast your votes for our MU candidate, you better vote for the Congress candidate than for MNF candidate.¹⁸

This statement of Ch. Saprawnga confirms the pro-Congress stance, at least of the leadership, of the Mizo Union. The Congress party was formed in Mizoram on August 10, 1961, under the leadership of A. Thanglura.¹⁹ But, the Government of Assam and Government of India put more trust on the Mizo Union than on the Mizoram Congress because the latter was considered to be pro-MNF. After a loss of power at the last District Council election in 1970 by a small margin, the party assumed power for the last time in the first Mizoram (UT) Assembly Elections in 1972. It completely merged itself with the Congress on January 12, 1974.²⁰

17. A. Thanglura, Zoram Politic Lumlet Dan, Aizawl, Thakthing Bazar Press, 1983, p. 151.

18. Ibid., p. 190.

19. Ibid., p. 161.

20. Chaltuakhuma, Political History of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1981, p. 120.

At first, the merger was not very popular especially in the villages, and the leaders had to take lot of pains to convince the villagers about the "advantage" of the merger. Some leaders of the erstwhile Mizo Union tried to revive the party. But, their attempts yielded no practical result and the party went out of existence after a 27 year period of popularity.

The merger of such a popular and important regional party with the Indian National Congress is explained away by the leaders of the erstwhile Mizo Union as a move to obliterate the feeling of antagonism between the chiefs and their descendants and many ex-MNF men on the one hand and the Mizo Unionists on the other. It is also said that it was time for the Mizos to broaden their political vision to the extent of aspiring for Ministership at the Centre through the national party. Another argument is that as the Central Government could not repose full confidence in any regional party, it was thought better to merge the Mizo Union in the Congress party in order to win the confidence of the Central Government and thereby to speed up the process of negotiation for peaceful settlement of the secessionist problem. These arguments appear to be reasonable on certain grounds. But, one may

observe that had the Mizo Union waited till the next Assembly Elections which were due in 1978, they were likely to concede power to the pro-MNF Congress party which was gaining popularity day by day. So, the merger was of certain advantage to the leaders for they could continue to be in power for some years more, by retaining their ministerships and sharing some with the 'original' Congressmen. But, the later course of events paved a way for the rise of another regional party in the People's Conference, perhaps much contrary to the expectation of the Merger Congress leaders.

2. The United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) and Mizo Regionalism

It has been pointed out that at the beginning, all the shades of public opinion were within the Mizo Union, but, those who had the idea of having Mizo political future away from the Indian Union soon became unacceptable in the Mizo Union party. Meanwhile the commoners-chiefs antagonism developed into an extreme form of enmity. The factional group of the Mizo Union adopted the name of the Mizo Union Council and talked of Mizo Independence, since April 1947.²¹ The Mizo Union was practically a commoners' party and the chiefs did not join it. Some leading citizens then felt that a new party was necessary in order to

21. R. Vanlawma, Op.cit., p. 129.

forge a forum wherein commoners and chiefs could be united. The result was the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO). It came into existence under the leadership of Lalbiakthanga and Rev. Zairema on July 5, 1947. It attracted the chiefs, the dissatisfied Mizo Unionists and those who disliked the pro-India anti-chief anti-British stance of the Mizo Union. So, the party was essentially in opposition to the Mizo Union and it was formed with a view to provide an alternative to the first Mizo political party.

The main objectives of the UMFO were:²²

- (1) In looking for a country with which to identify ourselves we should seek one we admire and which can give us some benefits.
- (2) We must promote a true democracy where the people can choose their own leaders; we must try hard to avoid any taint of fascism.
- (3) We must make our country as strong as possible so that we need not be dependent on other countries.
- (4) We must seek to improve, in creative ways, our present culture.

22. Ramchuani Sena Samuelson (Mrs.), Love Mizoram, Imphal, Goodwil Press, 1985 (First Impression), p. 54.

- (5) We must seek for better communication and understanding between the people who rule and those who are ruled.
- (6) We must develop the best and most efficient ways of administering ourselves.
- (7) We insist on freedom of speech and of the press.
- (8) We insist on freedom of religion.

Thus, the party was at first open to joining any country. But, it bided time to observe as to the desirability of joining any country or to remain independent or a British colony. When its President Lalbiakthanga joined a Government post, Lalmawia, an ex-Burmese Army Officer became its president. Under Lalmawia's leadership, the party resolved that it would be to the greatest advantage of Mizos to join Burma. The reasons given for this view were that (a) Burma being smaller than India, the Mizos might have a larger voice in affairs generally; (b) Mizo participation in public affairs may have greater scope in Burma; (c) Mizos are very close to the Burmese ethnically;²³ (d) Mizos would have greater autonomy in Burma; (e) It was said that the Draft Constitution of Burma had a provision for the possibility of opting out of Burma by

23. Ibid., p. 55.

any of the hills-people after ten years.²⁴

The 'join Burma' policy could not gain popularity on account of the fact that Mizoram had legally become part of India. The party then dropped the policy and functioned within the Indian Constitution. It captured only the joint constituency of Lunglei and Aizawl townships out of 18 constituencies in the 1952 District Council Elections and failed to return any candidate in the Assembly Elections of the same year. It polled 18 percent and 31 percent of votes in the District Council and Assembly Elections respectively, the rest being bagged by the Mizo Union.²⁵ The UMFO party almost captured power by winning in 8 constituencies in the 1957 District Council Elections and the two members from Pawi-Lakher Region giving their support to it.²⁶ It also bagged two of the three MLA seats of Mizo District. In terms of votes polled by the parties, it became nearly equal to the Mizo Union. It polled 43 percent of votes against the Mizo Union's 50 percent in the District Council Elections; 46 percent against the MU's 46 percent in the Assembly Elections, the remaining

24. Lalchungnunga, Parties and Politics in Mizoram: A Study of the Development of a Regional Party System (unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation) JNU, 1982, p. 80.

25. See Table XII in Appendix A.

26. The elective seats of the District Council had been increased to 22.

percentages going to the MU factional group.²⁷ The possible reasons for the UMFO's ascendancy in 1957 were:

- (i) It had dropped its 'join Burma' policy and adopted 'Hill State' policy since 1954.
- (ii) The split of the Mizo Union party in 1956 over the question of leadership turned in the UMFO's favour.
- (iii) The MU leaders who were running the District Council had displeased many people.
- (iv) The MU had lost its original fervour which was inspired by anti-chiefs feeling.

Having lost by a small margin in the 1957 District Council Elections, the UMFO and the Mizo Union (Right Wing), as the Mizo Union faction was then known, merged into Eastern India Tribals Union (EITU) on October 2, 1957,²⁸ to support the 'Hill State' movement. With the gradual popularity of the 'Mizo State' policy of the Mizo Union and with the formation of the MNF and the growing popularity of the Mizo Independence movement, the Hill State movement became unpopular and the EITU also receded into the background.

27. See Table XIII in Appendix A.

28. R. Vanlawma, Op.cit., p. 188.

The UMFO was a regional party representing largely the resilient traditional elites and the anti-Mizo Union leaders which even attempted to let Mizos join Burma instead of India but failed to do so due to unfavourable circumstances. In terms of its regionalistic base, it was no much different from the Mizo Union. But, in terms of orientation and direction of movement, it was just the opposite of the Mizo Union. In a way, it was the second version of the Mizo regionalism. The factors of regional autonomy and self-assertion were highly present in its formation and movement.

3. The Secessionist Mizo National Front

The "ten-year" period of the "experimentation" of association with the Indian Union through the state of Assam was well over and the conditions brought about by the "future trends of events" were too fertile for the rise and growth of secessionist feelings among the Mizos. The Mizo Union's expectation that the lot of the Mizos would be best when Lushai Hills was made an autonomous district under Assam had been belied by the Assam Government's general attitude and particularly during the famine of 1959-60. The general feeling of the people was against the District Council for its incapability of handling real situations, and against the Government of Assam for

its "step-motherly treatment" and against the whole of India because they held a general opinion that India could not be different from Assam, though the Mizos had not had any direct relations with the Central Government. Vanlawma says that many Mizos had been nurturing a separatist feeling since a long time but kept it undercurrent. Some politically conscious Mizos had formed social organisations on an implicit separatist sentiment - the Mizo Cultural Society (1959) and the Mizo National Famine Front (1960) were such organisations. The MNF was the manifestation of the sentiment in an organised form with political overtones.²⁹ The Mizo National Famine Front was soon converted into a political party as Mizo National Front on October 22, 1961. Thus one may observe that while being a product of the regionalist sentiment reinforced by a number of societal factors, the secessionist movement in the form of MNF was immediately caused by the 'Mautam' famine in Mizoram. It will be a far-fetched argument, however, if one thinks that the famine was the 'only' cause of the Mizo Independence movement, for such a serious development cannot be caused just by a passing event like the 'Mautam' famine. The discontentment of a large section of the Mizo

29. Ibid., p. 193-98.

population had roots deeper than in the famine conditions. "Fear of losing ethnico-cultural identity",³⁰ and "lack of civilisational pull and poor interaction of the plains-men with the hill-people",³¹ and feeling of frustration among certain sections of the Mizo people, were significant factors for the rise of the MNF.

When the MNF came into existence, it drew following from among the members (or ex-members) of the erstwhile UMFO/EITU and Mizoram Congress parties. In other words, it attracted all those who had strong dislike for the Mizo Union. The Mizo Union was not much affected.³² In fact, the Mizo Union stood alone as a party in opposition to the MNF movement. This may compel one to observe that the Mizo Union was more pro-India and more Congress than the Mizoram Congress party itself. One may also find here that there can be different forms of regionalism - a moderate form as the Mizo Union and an extreme one as the MNF. The MNF movement was joined, besides those mentioned, by neutral

30. Nirmal Nibedon, North-East India - The Ethnic Explosion, New Delhi, Lancers Publishers, 1981, p. 38.

31. B.B. Goswami, Mizo Unrest: A Study in Politicization of Culture, Aalekh, 1979, p. 84.
See also S.M. Dubey. "Inter-Ethnic Alliance" in Tribal Movements in India, K. S. Singh (ed), New Delhi, Manohar, 1982, p. 16 (Vol. 1).

32. Chaltuakhuma, Op.cit., p. 99.

who by nature were regionalist. Many ex-servicemen, educated people, students and professionals joined the movement with some peculiar enthusiasm. The party, in other words, just appeal to the emotion of the large part of the Mizo people. Those who actively participated in its armed movement belonged to the age group of 20-35 years.

According to Dr. V. V. Rao,³³ "the MNF was able to enlist the tacit 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 Second Battalion of the Assam Regiment in 1964, the presence of a large number of discontented ex-chiefs and unemployed youth, the readiness of the Pakistan Government to help the MNF, Chaliha's patronage of the MNF in order to weaken the Mizo Union, the growing number of juvenile delinquents, and the Assamese language issue. He understands the MNF movement as a popular movement rather than being a stray incident of lawlessness perpetrated by a few sections of Mizo people. He writes, "the number of persons that participated in the revolt was some thousands, and not a few as was stated in the press."

33. V.V. Rao, Op.cit., p. 504ff.

Dr. Animesh Ray also gives a long list of conjectures and opinions about the MNF's uprising in his book, Mizoram, Dynamics of Change, Calcutta, Pearl Publishers, 1982, pp. 156ff.

While the reasons for the rise of the MNF given by Dr. V.V. Rao are generally true, one should not have the impression that the MNF was a mere collection of unwanted and jobless people and delinquent youths. Many successful Government servants and promising youths and students left their careers and joined the movement. It is also a fact that the "spirit of Mizo Independence" haunted the minds of many Mizos, and the MNF party clearly enjoyed the admiration of various sections of the Mizo people. For youngmen, it was shameful not to be an MNF volunteer. The old people, whose memories of the tales about their forefathers' lives in Burma were ever fresh, and whose minds were always longing for reunification with their brethren across the borders, gave approving support to the movement. Such was the wave of the MNF when it emerged in the Mizo political scene. The disbandment of the Mizo dominated Second Battalion of the Assam Regiment in 1964 was also originally caused by the mishandling of the situation arising out of the Mizo discontent on the question of the type of items served to them as army ration supply. The Mizos were forced to change their food habits overnight, instead of patiently waiting for them to adjust themselves. It was a simple question of rice or wheat. The Mizos, who had been rice eaters since time immemorial were given

'chappati' for a number of days at a stretch, giving them no option to eat rice or 'chappati'. One can observe, therefore, that the Mizos felt humiliated and unaccepted on all aspects of life - political, socio-cultural and government services.

The original aims and objectives of MNF, according to a booklet published by the party were:³⁴

- (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.
- (3) Safeguard of the Christian Religion.

The regionalism of the MNF, therefore, was fundamentally based on ethnic, political, socio-economic and religious factors.

In regard to the first objective, the party understood the past life of the Mizos as politically independent. The Mizo freedom was lost when "foreign rule" was imposed by the British. Mizo Independence was the only way to do away with the foreign domination. Re-unification of

34. MNF Pawl Thiltumte Hrilhfiahna, (An Explanation of the MNF's Aims and Objectives) November 16, 1972, p.1.

all Mizos in different parts of India, Burma and the then East Pakistan would be a step towards the attainment of Mizo Independence.

The socio-economic problems of the Mizos were, according to the MNF, due to the "foreign infiltration" and so long as the "foreign yoke" was on their shoulders, there would be no socio-economic liberation for the Mizos.

The party regarded the Mizos fortunate for having found the "only true God" through Christianity spread by the British missionaries, in the midst of "idol worship". It considered the Buddhism of Burma and the Islamism of Pakistan as unsuitable and undesirable for the Mizos. It took Indian Secularism as a "tricky way of Hinduisation."

By spreading such propaganda effectively, the MNF could win the support of the Mizo people.

The MNF contested the Assembly by-elections in the two of the three Mizo District Constituencies in 1963 and won in both by a comfortable majority of votes. In the same year, it captured 145 village councils out of 411 in the elections in Aizawl subdivision.³⁵ The party at first professed non-violence, Laldenga wrote thus,

35. C. Nunthara, The Politics of the Mizo Hills, (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis) Delhi University, 1980, p.138.

The Mizo people are religious-minded and peace-loving. They love peace in as much as they need it Though known as martial race, Mizo nation commits itself to a policy of non-violence, not to resort to violence for their liberation They have witnessed and clearly seen the result of violence and its futility in Kashmir and in Nagaland. They do not want such things to happen in Mizoram: Mizoram being landlocked and taking into consideration its supply routes and economic conditions, the leaders know that military victory over India is not possible and they hope that the problem would well be solved through negotiations.³⁶

Such being the position of the MNF, one can question why they took up arms and rebelled?

The MNF's taking to arms has at least three versions. 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. Even before they attacked various security posts and government installations, it was an open secret that the MNF was collecting arms and training its volunteers in their use. The MNF

36. Laldenga, Mizoram Marches Towards Freedom, published by the "Government of Mizoram" (MNF), recent cyclostyled copy, p. 25.

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. When the Security Forces were almost forced to surrender, the Indian Air Force came to their rescue. The main market area of Aizawl was in flame after heavy strafing from the IAF Hunter jet fighters. The MNF and all its subsidiary organisations were declared unlawful under Rule 32 of Defence of India Rules, 1962, and the MNF and its shadow "Government of Mizoram" and the "Mizo National Army" which were organised on the American model had to go underground and begin operating its guerilla warfare from across the international borders.

The MNF justified their armed movement by saying that all their formal pleadings for the solution of Mizo problem with the Assam and Indian leaders and commissions had not only been unheeded but also reciprocated with callous and indifferent attitudes in most cases: One of their pamphlets contained the following words:

All the attempts to effect peaceful negotiation and settlement on the principle of fairness have become futile. The fate of the Mizo people has now been clear. The intention of India is to apprehend all the leaders who work for freedom, and to suppress

the people in order to discourage them so that they dare not speak about freedom. Therefore, the only way that remains for national liberation is to declare independence and form Mizoram Government on our own. 37

Laldenga wrote thus,

Blind with insatiable thirst of territorial ambition and maddened by the feeling of big power chauvinism, the Indian leaders in colossal disregard of human rights and dignity sent their troops into Mizoram to suppress the political rights of the people in the month of February 1966. 38

The MNF was not, therefore, wanting in finding grounds for their armed insurrection. The events that followed the MNF's declaration of Mizoram Independence cannot be dealt with in this thesis.³⁹ The 'counterstrikes' and the various measures were so severe that it would take a long time for the Mizos to forget their sufferings and loss during the 20 year period of their history wherein they had to live between the 'Hammer' (the Indian Security Forces) and the 'anvil' (the MNF). One thing that one can observe, however, is that Mizo problem, being a political problem, could not be solved militarily. It was through a prolonged and chequered process of political negotiations

37. Mizoram Politics Chanchin, a pamphlet published by the MNF, December 29, 1973, p. 52.

38. Laldenga, Op.cit., p. 32.

39. Nirmal Nibedon's book. Mizoram, the Dagger Brigade, contains some of the main events.

that a Peace Accord could be signed between the Government of India and the MNF in a form of Memorandum of Settlement on June 30, 1986.

Mizo regionalism developed into an extreme form with the MNF movement. Their demands were not simply autonomy or financial provisions, but complete secession from the Indian Union. To the MNF, Mizoram was not just a regional entity but a 'national' polity. They conceived of Mizo as a "nation" and attempted to vindicate "Mizo nationalism", by appealing to the ethnic, socio-cultural, historical, political and religious sentiments of the people. The movement suffered a set back on the fall of East Pakistan, their main foreign base. Now, the party, having signed the Memorandum of Settlement, have dropped its original aims and objectives so as to make itself acceptable to the Government of India. The 'new' MNF is now comfortably occupying the seats of power in the new State of Mizoram. Time will tell how meaningful is the role of the MNF in the process of the socio-economic development of Mizoram and in serving the interests of the Mizos while integrating them with the 'mainstream' of the national life. The present leadership appears to be serious in working for the socio-economic uplift of the people, so as to catch up with other hill states thus recouping the loss suffered during the 20 years of its underground movement.

The greatest challenge for the MNF party now could be how to fulfill the Mizo people's expectations of it and aspirations for socio-economic reconstruction. The liberal financial support from the Central Government may be utilised for the acceleration of the speed of socio-economic development. But, what Mizos have to learn is how to become more and more self-sufficient. It is everybody's question whether the MNF, which has even attempted to form an independent Mizoram, will be effective enough in bringing about the real healing of the wounds suffered by the Mizos. The aspirations of the Mizos are still high. 53.87 percent of our respondents still desire to have an Independent Greater Mizoram, while 29.50 percent are satisfied with a state in Indian Union with special provisions.⁴⁰ The moral support given to the party even when it went underground was so clear as borne out by the success of any overground party blessed by the MNF. It will be counter-productive for the party if it fails the Mizo people who have all along been giving it moral support.⁴¹

4. The People's Conference - A Party Regional in Character but National in Outlook.

The Mizo Union, the dominant regional party in overground politics merged itself into the Congress Party in

40. See Table III in Appendix A.

41. Biswanath Ghosh, "Laldenga taking an uphill task" Amrita Bazar Patrika, Thursday, May 7, 1987, p. 8.

January 1974 and the Merger Congress had been running the Mizoram U.T. ministry for one year and two months. But, it made a poor performance, and the expectation that the socio-political conditions would improve if the Mizoram Government was run by the same party as that holds power at the Centre, was belied. The Mizo people had the impression that the Merger Congress ministry was no better than the Mizo Union ministry. The formal merger of the two parties was not followed by an emotional solidarity. The Mizo Union group and the 'original' Congressmen continued to have different mentalities. There was also an internal power-struggle between the two groups. People in the villages who had completely identified themselves with the Mizo Union for years did not find it easy to become Congressmen overnight. The pro-MNF people who had rallied round the Congress party were neither very enthusiastic about having the anti-MNF Mizo Unionists in their midst. So the merger was practically unworkable, whatever be the intentions of the leaders of the two parties in having them merged.

In the midst of these conditions, the MNF underground movement still going on and the sufferings of innocent people at the hands of the atrocious military being beyond description, the people were yearning for effective

leadership in order to ameliorate their untold sufferings. Since the dominant regional party (MU) had become a national party and the MNF was still underground, there was a vacuum in the regionalist politics of Mizoram. There were talks of founding a new regional party everywhere. Meanwhile, Brig. Thenphunga Sailo had retired from the Indian Army and formed a Human Rights Committee, and as the president of the committee, submitted a strong memorandum to Prime Minister, India 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 of a concentration camp. The Security Forces have tried to intimidate the public with all manners of atrocities and ill-treatment. However, this strong arm 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. 42

Being a retired Brigadier of the Indian Army with good service record, the Mizo people looked up to T. Sailo to deliver them from their sufferings under the strong-arm policy. With the co-operation from a new educated elite group, a joint invitation was widely circulated on March 18, 1985, for holding a conference of the general people to

42. Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the Human Rights Committee, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1974, p.2.

discuss the prevalent political conditions of Mizoram. The conference was held at Aizawl on April 16-17, 1975, in which 882 representatives of 192 villages and towns participated.⁴³ Most of the speeches were from the representatives of villages. On the second day, April 17, 1975, a unanimous resolution was taken to form a new regional party. It was given a tentative name of "People's Conference", which was later approved by the first General Conference of the party. Brig. T. Sailo was unanimously elected president of the party.

The people wanted to form a 'regional' party particularly for the following reasons of the undesirability of either the Congress or Mizo Union.

- (1) There was no special advantage as people generally believe in having a Congress government in Mizoram as was evident from the performance of the Merger Congress Ministry in the spheres of law and order, economic development and political solution to Mizo problem.⁴⁴
- (2) The membership and organisational set up of the Congress were not in tune with Mizo mentality and practices. They were undemocratic.

43. Message No. 2 of People's Conference, dt. 22-4-1975.

44. Ibid.

- (3) In the Congress party, the Mizoram Pradesh Committee does not have full authority in party affairs e.g. in making party candidates for elections, and there is greater scope for in-fighting within the party. Even the Chief Minister and other ministers have to be the choice of the party High Command at New Delhi.
- (4) The Mizo Union had outlived its utility. Mizos were economically at a much lower level than their fellow hill-people in the North-East India because of the poor performance of the Mizo Union on the economic front.
- (5) The moral degeneration of Mizos came with the politicising within the dominance of the Mizo Union.
- (6) Inter-party antagonism was too much because of the Mizo Union.

There were many who would not join Mizo Union at any cost.⁴⁵

The inevitable outcome of all these considerations was a new regional party formed by the people themselves and led by effective leaders. The People's Conference under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo was just the type of the regional party the people were yearning for. Another plus point was that people had the impression that it was having

45. People's Conference's Message No. 3, dated 21.5.1975.

a friendly relationship with the Underground MNF. Brig. T. Sailo's son was still in the 'Mizo National Army'. A leadership which could assert itself and boldly speak against the army atrocities and maintain good relations with the underground MNF enjoyed all the advantages to come up during those days.

The party put down its aims and objectives thus,⁴⁶

- (1) The party will endeavour to prepare grounds for the 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 interests of the people and Mizoram shall be the guiding principles with over-riding priority and precedence over those of the party.
- (5) The party will work for speedy economic advancement with special emphasis on rural development.
- (6) The party will uphold the aims and objects of the Human Rights Committee.

46. People's Conference Party Constitution, Aizawl, Lianchungi Book Stores, October 22, 1976, p. 3. These aims and objectives were retained when the Constitution was amended in 1981.

These aims and objectives depict the nature and orientation of the PC as a strictly regional party, founded on the ethnico-cultural base. Two points of its difference from other regional parties were that it put down in black and white its interest in the peaceful solution of Mizo problem, and that it respected human rights. It began to popularise itself and soon drew following in all parts of Mizoram excepting the Chakma areas. Its rapid rise caused the jealousy of the Merger Congress and seven PC leaders including Brig. T. Sailo were soon arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency, on June 3, 1976 and were released in May 1977.⁴⁷

While the seven leaders were still in jail the party contested the Lok Sabha Elections in March 1977 and its candidate defeated his Congress rival by polling 52.93 percent of votes. The Congress polled 37.70 percent, the Mizo Union (who did not accept the 1974 merger) polled 8.47 percent and Independents 1.48 percent.⁴⁸ It won the 1978 (May) Assembly Elections by an overwhelming majority of 23 seats out of 30.⁴⁹ The party suffered a major split

47. PC GHQS. Letter No. PC.25/75/3656-3660 dated Aizawl 20th July, 1976, and Order No. III-14025/4/76-NE, Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, North Eastern Division, New Delhi, 5th March, 1977.

48. See Table XVII in Appendix A.

49. See Table XVIII in Appendix A.

in October 1978 when 8 PC MLAs withdrew their support from the Chief Minister Brig. T. Sailo. They contented that he had gone astray from the party policy No. 1, that is, "to prepare grounds for peaceful settlement of Mizo political problems." The Speaker of the Assembly himself was trying to form an alternative government of the P.C. When the situation was very uncertain, Prime Minister Morarji Desai visited Aizawl and Mizoram was soon put under President's rule. The rebel MLAs claimed they were still People's Conference party. Others called them as PC(B). According to Sailo loyalists, the split was only due to the personal ambitions of the rebel MLAs. They were dissatisfied because they were not included in the ministry. Sailo's group were called by others as PC(A). A fresh Assembly election was held in April 1979 in which Brig. T. Sailo's group (PC A) came up with a reduced majority, bagging 18 out of 30 constituencies.⁵⁰ In 1982, by-elections were held in four constituencies on account of the resignation of PC(B) MLAs. According to them, the resignation was to strengthen the hands of Laldenga in his bargain with the Government of India. Mr. Lalsawia (then Rajya Sabha member) told the scholar at New Delhi that the resignation would make it possible for the PC(B) to test the strength of PC(A).⁵¹

50. See Table XVIII in Appendix A.

51. Mr. Lalsawia and Dr. Rothuama, though MPs elected on undivided PC tickets, joined the PC(B) group.

Sailo loyalists PC(A) took three and the fourth went to a 'Mizo Union' candidate with the support of the PC(A). The Sailo group then became free of the faction problem. Losing hope, the PC(B) converted itself into Mizo Convention in the same year. Sailo's People's Conference Government became stable once more. But, with the growing popularity of the party, the rift between T. Sailo and Laldenga which began sometime after the PC won the 1978 Assembly Elections by an overwhelming majority became wider. It is known that Brig. Sailo himself used to be invited to participate in some of the talks between the Government of India and the MNF at the beginning. It could well be that Laldenga and T. Sailo had differences in regards to the modalities of settlement of peace in Mizoram. Anti-Sailo groups charge that Sailo made a Volte face and turned against the MNF all on a sudden. Pro-Sailo groups say that Laldenga is by nature intolerant of any rival and he was making attempts to dislocate Sailo by any means. One point that the PC always make clear in public was that it could not understand why the MNF continued killings after having undertaken that it will seek settlement within the framework of Indian Constitution. The rift between Sailo and Laldenga became so wide and deep that in 1978 a large chunk of the MNF came over-ground and joined Sailo's PC party. It remains everybody's

guess whether all these developments, between the PC and the MNF in general and between Sailo and Laldenga in particular, were due to Sailo's plan to finish Laldenga so that he could not hold any power after the settlement of peace, or were all these the consequences of Laldenga's clever tactics to dislocate Sailo before he could come overground, in order to make his way to power safe and easy. One thing that remains very clear in Mizo politics, however, is that any leader or party which has opposed the underground MNF stands a poor chance of winning elections. In the 1984 Assembly Elections, the Congress party bagged 19 out of 30 elective seats polling 40 percent of votes, the PC could win only in 8 constituencies. The victory of the Congress was not necessarily because of people's deliberate support to it as a national party but because the leaders promised that they would step down from power when peace had been concluded between the Government of India and the MNF. The Congress candidate for the Lok Sabha Election was elected unopposed. In the first Election to the full-fledged Mizoram State Legislative Assembly of 40 members, held in February 1987, the PC got only 3 candidates returned, one of them soon defected to MNF and became a Minister of State in Laldenga's ministry. One may, therefore, suggest that the regionalist Mizos always give support to the MNF and

the division of the regionalist camp into two big groups would always result in the ascendancy of the Congress party. If the regionalist camp can be solidly brought within the fold of a big regional party, the Congress has no chance in Mizoram.

The stand of the People's Conference on the question of regionalism is explained by Brig. Sailo himself thus,

... the Mizo people are deeply wedded 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 People's Conference party has a positive 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 pledged full co-operation with the ruling party both inside and outside Parliament in their pursuit of the principle of secular democracy based on respect for human rights and the protection of the interests of the tribal groups and other backward classes and religious minority. This last election (1979) is a victory of regional party over all-India party.⁵²

He explains the "regional in character but national in outlook" concept at another place thus,

52. Public Speech delivered by Brig. T. Sailo at Assam Rifles Parade Ground, Aizawl, on May 5, 1979, published by PC General Headquarters.

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 concern us intimately because we are a part of the same country. Secondly, and vice-versa, national leaders in Delhi, looking at things from an overall 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.⁵³

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 centralisation reinforced by one party dominance.

The People's Conference takes up various issues during its hold of power. On the economic front, it starts the process of meeting what it calls Six Basic Needs such as food, drinking water, road, transportation, power and rural development.⁵⁴ It takes the question of "Assimilation" very seriously. Drawing examples from the experience of Tripuris and Cacharis, the party tries hard to educate the public

53. Brig. T. Sailo, in his opening address to the convention of North Eastern Hill Areas Regional Parties (NEHARP) at Shillong on May 19, 1977.

54. Brig. T. Sailo, Speeches and Writings, Aizawl Mizoram Government Press, 1981, p. 50.

about the danger of being assimilated by larger groups. It speaks of assimilation as having physical (demographic), economic, cultural and social dimensions. It takes a lot of pain to make the Mizos more conscious of this problem and urges them to be watchful about it. The party takes the infiltration of Bangladeshi Chakmas into Mizoram seriously. Brig. Sailo wrote a memorandum on this to the Prime Minister of India on June 14, 1982, wherein he pointed out⁵⁵ that "the Mizo people" can perhaps reconcile themselves to the idea of accepting those Chakmas who came into Mizoram in the 40s and 50s but are greatly exercised about those who came into Mizoram in the 60s and 70s. The party took some measures in pushing back illegal infiltrators and in preventing further infiltration of foreigners into Mizoram. It even talked of issuing identity cards to Mizoram Chakmas.⁵⁶ The party also took up the questions of Mizoram-Cachar boundary and Inner Line reserves and appointed a study group for these.⁵⁷ While settlement of peace between the Government of India and the MNF was still pending, the PC demanded special status for Mizoram with constitutional

55. Ibid., p. 115.

56. PC Office Bearer's Meeting on 9-12-75. Resolution No. 4.

57. PC Central Working Committee Meetings of March 26, 1976 (Res. No.1) February 7, 1979 (Res. No. 3) and February 9, 1979 - Res. No. 1 (ii).

safeguards to Mizos and Mizoram in terms of ownership and transfer of land, socio-cultural protection and economic provisions.

Now, the PC party has conceded power to the Congress and become a minority party in terms of seats in the Legislative Assembly. It has only two sitting members in a house of 40 and is busy 'reviewing' its poor performance in the Assembly Elections 1987. It has therefore, been submerged by the 'MNF wave', whether this will be just for a while or for good is everybody's question. This development may give us an opinion that no two strong regional leaderships can co-exist in the Mizoram politics, and if they are divided equally, the national party will come up.

5. The Indian National Congress (Mizoram) and Regionalism

Among the All-India parties, only the Congress has been able to establish some hold in Mizoram. This is mainly because of its secularistic liberalism which permits adjustment of different forces within its fold. Admitting that "regional ideology is too appealing to the people", the party thinks that "regionalism is a passport to secessionism."⁵⁸ "Regionalism gives birth to communalism and communalism in its extreme form breeds separatism", so contends the

58. Write-up issued by Mr. Lalsangzuala, General Secretary, Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (I), dated July 19, 1980.

party and warns that if the forces of regionalism which "erode the national unity" are not destroyed, "a time may come when the whole North Eastern Region may plunge into a predicament where the centre and state leaders would become helpless". It holds regional parties responsible for fanning up communal tensions in the region. The concept of "regional in character but national in outlook" is dismissed as one "that does not stand scrutiny", for "no one can have an outlook bigger than his character". A compromise of "regional in character" and "national in outlook" has been, the party says, attempted, but without success, from the platform of the Mizo Union which, as the Congress leaders would say, was a "well-disciplined regional party". Its merger into the Congress party in 1974 is therefore justified. The leaders of the Congress party hope to fulfill their commitment to bring the Mizo people into the 'mainstream' of national life through the party. However, the party does not favour assimilation of Mizos and total obliteration of regional identity. It would even speak of "safeguarding the special and distinctive interests and aspirations of the Mizo people. "The Mizoram Congress is said to have a constitution of its own by which it has a "functional autonomy".⁵⁹ It has even been in alliance with

59. A leaflet issued by the Mizoram Congress(I) under Memo No. MCC. 6/83/pt. dated Aizawl, December 5, 1983.

third (regional) parties on some occasions. But, it would not co-operate with regional parties beyond a point where it would stand to lose its all-India character.

The Mizoram Congress was formed, as already pointed out, on August 10, 1961. According to A. Thanglura, its founder in Mizoram, the attempt to popularise the Congress party among Mizos in those days was something like "trying to sell human excreta" and like "trying to get a bird-lime stick on the trunk of a plantain",⁶⁰ because it was by nature opposed to Mizo Union and MNF movements. But, after sometime, the ex-MNF (or MNF returnees) and pro-MNF people began to join the Congress. Though Congress in form, the party was looked upon as 'overground MNF' because of its policy of peaceful settlement of Mizo problem and its attempt to act as a mediator between the Government of India and the underground MNF. It captured majority of seats in the District Council Election of 1970 by a small margin of one over the Mizo Union.⁶¹ and formed a very shaky 'government' in the last Mizo District Council. It swallowed the Mizo Union in a merger in 1974 and was in the opposition to Sailo's PC Government during 1978-83. In the

60. A. Thanglura, *Op.cit.*, p. 172. "Ek zawrh ang chauh a ni", p. 178, "Changela sawi bel ang chauh a ni". These are Mizo phrases to say that the act does not look hopeful of success.

61. See Table XVI in Appendix A.

1984 Assembly Elections, it bagged 19 out of 30 elective seats, thus turning the table on the PC.⁶² The Congress victory in the 1984 Elections was nothing but a result of its pledge to the people that it would finalise the negotiation for peace between the Government of India and the MNF and with the finalisation, would step down from power in favour of the MNF. This pledge was so appealing to the Mizos because they remembered Mrs. India Gandhi's remark earlier that if Mizoram Government was of the Congress, she could have directed it to step-down any moment the MNF would come overground. The people wanted to try them on this promise. When the Government of India and MNF came to the conclusion of the negotiation, the Congress Ministry could share power with the MNF, the Chief Minister stepping down to Deputy Chief Ministership and three other ministers being replaced by MNF-men. The Congress captured 13 constituencies in the 1987 State Assembly Elections, polling 33 percent of votes against the 24 seats and 37 percent of votes taken by the MNF. It is interesting to note that all the Congress ministers who had vacated their seats in favour of the MNF got re-elected and all those who remained in the coalition Government (except Mr. Lalthanhawla who remained as Dy. Chief Minister) lost in the 1987 Elections.

62. See Table XVIII in Appendix A.

One may observe from this fate of the Mizoram Congress that Mizos have been all along regionalist-minded. They put the Congress party up simply because they wanted to try their genuineness in their promise to step down in favour of the MNF. This promise was productive in the politics of the day because Brig. T. Sailo's ministry was, as it appeared to the general public, unlikely to hand over power to Laldenga's MNF. Even the Congress Ministry's yielding to the MNF was not a smooth process. It happened after the party's Lok Sabha M.P. Mr. Lalduhawma pressed for the finalisation of peace talks even to the extent of leaving power-seats for Laldenga and as a consequence he had to leave the party with one MLA and some followers. The various attempts of the Congress to penetrate the regionalistic politics of Mizoram have so far yielded no permanent results. It is also a fact that the members of the Congress party cannot go beyond a certain point where they would lose their Mizoness.

Conclusion:

We have asked our respondents to indicate their opinion about the reasons for the strength of the parties in their respective periods of popularity according to the following responses: (1) Policy, (2) Leadership, (3) Members,

(4) Central Support, (5) Circumstances, (6) Money, (7) Church support. Their opinion vary from party to party. The factors in order of importance as considered by the respondents are as follows:⁶³

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| (1) Mizo Union | - Circumstances, policy, members, leadership, Church support, Central Support. (No respondent gives 'money' as a factor). |
| (2) People's Conference | - Leadership, policy, church, circumstances, members, money, central support. |
| (3) MNF | - Policy, leadership, members, circumstances & church (No respondent gives 'Central Support' and 'money' as factors). |
| (4) Congress | - Central Support, money, policy, members, leadership & circumstances, church. |

The factor of 'policy' takes the first place only in the case of the MNF, second place in MU and PC, third place in the Congress. 'Leadership' occupies first in PC, second

63. See Tables VIII(a), VIII(b), VIII(c) & VIII(d) in Appendix A. UMFO is left out as our respondents could not give much attention to it.

place in MNF, fourth place in MU and fifth place in Congress. 'Central Support' and 'money power' take particularly high places in the case of the Congress. 'Church Support' is at the lower side except in the case of PC, and it has the very last place in the Congress.

These would suggest that in Mizoram politics, a party which is most likely to enjoy mass support is such type which has a policy acceptable to the regionalist Mizos, possessing effective leadership and conscious members, enjoying some church support and favourable socio-political circumstances. It may also be seen that 'central support' and 'money power' do not matter much in winning the support of the general masses as elsewhere in North-Eastern Region.

CHAPTER - V

CHAPTER - VMIZO REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL INTEGRATIONApproaches to the Question

Opinions differ on the question of Regionalism taken into the context of national integration, and methods or approaches adopted to resolve the issues arising out of these two questions vary from country to country. While the Russian attempt to solve regional problems by a strategy based on three ingredients viz. recognition of linguistic and cultural autonomy; a new liberating faith in the shape of Marxism-Leninism; and an unlimited force which is the final arbiter in all matters, has achieved some partial result in national-integration, Pakistan's attempt to evolve a unified Pakistani nation on Islamism has so far been unsuccessful.¹ In the Indian context, one group of thinkers who may be identified as the "assimilationist" group generally view regionalism as a threat to national unity and are bent on advocating the eradication of all the manifestations of regional forces by all means. A critical look at the approach adopted by the National Integration Council would reveal that the Council is not completely free from this bias. It may well be due to this bias compounded by its

1. Prem Bhasin, Politics: National and International, New Delhi, Associated Publishing House, 1970, p. 171 ff.

formalistic nature and its intermittent functioning that the National Integration Council's recommendations and appeals have not been successful in real terms. On the other hand, there are a few sections of extremist type who would not mind complete disintegration of the Indian sub-continent on the basis of self-determination by each and every "nationality". Confusion over the solution of the questions of regionalism and national integration is further confounded by the varied understandings of the terms, "nation", "nationalism" and "nation-state". When the western concept and definition of "nation" are not applicable to "Indian nation" in its strict sense, a search is on for the re-definition and conceptualisation of the term in the Indian context. The oft-repeated slogan of "nation-building" betrays the fact that there was no Indian nation in the western sense of the term. Otherwise, there would have been no need to "build" the "Indian nation". The "nation-building" process has, therefore, been initiated which in other words can be taken as an on-going search for a common identity of the heterogeneous Indian society. While no sensible Indian citizen will deny the necessity of this process, it will be highly productive if one takes into account the realities of the factors involved in the process. We should also not lose patience if the requisite national consensus on this

question eludes us for sometime more, for the complexity of the whole question is so great, as Mathur observes, thus,²

The case of India and its South Asian neighbours (presents) an inadequacy of any monofactor test of nationhood because in each of these states a variety of infrastructural determinants of nationhood (viz) race, religion, language, castes, class and tribes, inter-permeate, overlap and cut across each other making it impossible for any of these states to approximate to the ideal of a 'perfect' nation-state characterised by 'one-religion, one language, one country.' In the absence of any consensual formula for nation-building, neither the Marxian nor the Euro-American strategy of 'national integration' seems to suit the requirements of countries like India but whose past traditions of non-political integration are no longer regarded as relevant even by those who draw their imagination from the "glorious" era of small-scale political systems. India's quest for nation-hood, therefore, represents a deep-seated urge for political innovation combining tradition as well as modernity but, as yet, the requisite consensus seems to be elusive.

The process of "combining tradition with modernity", therefore, constitutes the principle of nation-building. In this process, a middle-of-the-road approach which may be called an "integrationist approach" may be advocated as the most likely to yield positive results. Such an approach is well explained by Mohan Lal Sharma in the following words:

2. P.C. Mathur, "Theory and Practice of National Integration" in Satish Chandra et. al (ed.), Regionalism and National Integration, Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1976, p. 169 (Words within parenthesis mine).

To conclude the review of various perspectives on and approaches to the problems of national integration and regional identity, one may say that there is nothing at theoretical or empirical level which necessarily justifies a dichotomous view of the two and holding of them as inherently incompatible. A country of the size of India needs to have better appreciation of regional cultures. Of course the point cannot be carried too far and a danger point has to be avoided. Yet, it can be said that accommodationist rather than assimilationist perspective may better help to avoid lot of stresses on nation-building by providing for development as well as harnessing of regional identities. Finally, it needs to be understood that regionalism symbolises certain power drives in a given community and is not just an irrational outburst of primordial loyalties.³

Shiva K. Gupta advocates the same "accommodationist" approach when he writes:

A country need not be inhabited by only one set of people. It can be populated by several races or ethnicities, speaking different languages and having different cultural situations. To the extent that they do, their fates are linked. It is also possible for the same person to belong to more than one 'people'. A Scotsman is a Scot and a Britisher: or just as a black militant American belongs to both the black people and the American people. Multiple loyalties are thus not rare occurrences, and may remain compatible indefinitely. The feeling of patriotism and 'national interest' can unite people of different languages, different ethnic groups, different regions, and different backgrounds to serve the

3. Mohan Lal Sharma, "Elite Conflicts, Regionalism and the Compatibility Crisis: A Study of the Autonomy Movements in North East India" in Ramakant (ed.) Regionalism in South Asia, Jaipur, Aalekh Publishers, 1983, p. 54.

'interests' of the country. Here we have to remember that by 'interests' we mean both a distribution of attention and expectation of reward.⁴

1. Seminar on Regionalism and National Integration

The attempts of the National Integration Council in the form of resolutions and appeals notwithstanding, the questions of regionalism and national integration have occupied the minds of academics. A four-day Seminar on Regionalism and National Integration was organised, at the instance of the National Integration Council, by the University of Rajasthan during January 25-28, 1970. The Seminar took up various issues of the question in seven sessions.⁵ The issues taken up included: (1) Economic Growth and Regionalism, (2) Social Factors and Regionalism, (3) Politics of Regionalism, (4) Youth, Universities and National Integration, and (5) Regionalism and Ideology.

On this occasion, a great number of points were raised and far-sighted and learned observations were made by the participants. It is not possible to incorporate all those points and observations in this thesis. However, some of the thoughts shared by the participants which are of relevance to this thesis may be noted.

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4. Shiva K. Gupta, "Multi-Ethnicity and the problem of National Integration" in A.D. Pant & Gupta (ed.) Multi Ethnicity and National Integration, Allahabad, Vohra Publishers, 1985, p.23.
5. P. C. Mathur, "Regionalism and National Integration in India" in Satish Chandra, et.al. (ed.), Op.cit., pp. 172-202.

Prof. M.V. Mathur suggested in his Inaugural Address, inter alia, the following measures in order to better the conditions, thus,⁶

- (1) Professionalization of planning agencies at the state level;
- (2) Strengthening of inter-state grass-roots institutions at the district level;
- (3) Conferment of constitutional status on the Planning Commission;
- (4) Establishment of Inter-State Council under Article 263 of the Constitution;
- (5) Inter-State exchange and pooling of economic expertise and planning machinery;
- (6) Education in the language which will satisfy the educated youth enabling them to earn their living in a decent fashion, with a warning that imposition of any language on anybody would only create problem;
- (7) An all-round ceiling on economic resources;
- (8) Special attention be given to the weakest sections.

Prof. P. L. Bhatnagar in his welcome speech expressed the need of first accepting the "three axioms" of national

6. Satish Chandra, Ibid., pp. 212-220.

integration, which are:⁷ Our country is a country of diversity; All have to work peacefully in an atmosphere of cordiality; The problems of integration and disintegration have to be tackled on a psychological level.

Some significant points were raised by Prof. V. V. John in his valedictory speech.⁸ Referring to Indianisation, he pointed out that the smallest minority in India are Indians; that we may speak a hundred languages and be a nation. He thought that it would be more fruitful if we go back to 1949 and learn the intents of the noble principles of equality, fraternity, etc. enshrined in the Preamble, than trying to find a new basis for national intergration. Comparing the nation as an affiliating University wherein a student can have a deep love for his college and yet also identification with the University, he contends that "it is possible for a man to be very loyal to local tradition and to the village in which he was born yet carry national pride also at some level of his consciousness." He proposed also that "we need not feel very uncomfortable that we should accept these regional manifestations because they do not militate against or work against the concept of national unity." He agreed with the saying that truly .

7. Ibid., pp. 210-11.

8. Ibid., pp. 221-7.

religious people do not fight with each other, and in the same way, he thought that true patriots will not fight on the ground of nationalism. Referring to the question of Students' Unrest, he opined that enhanced opportunities for interaction and excursion among students would help a lot in inculcating the spirit of integration in their minds. He also made an adverse observation about Universities on their role-playing in national integration, by commenting that 'if the universities cannot hold together and their faculties are jealous of each other and trying to outsmart each other can we wonder that the country is falling into pieces because, ultimately, the greatest sensibility in the country ought to reside in the University campus, and we look for it there in vain for the moment.' He desired that there should be mutual concern for each other among the component states and hunger should have no state borders, meaning thereby that if one state suffers from scarcity of food the other state which is bountiful in food must help.

Prof. Satish Chandra made the following remarks in his welcome address:⁹

That National Integration is a continuing process in which all sections of society have to be involved; that the inevitability of the concept of region in a country of India's size is generally accepted; that while the situation being so, the principle of self-determination cannot be applied in India in the manner in which it was applied

9. Ibid., pp. 206-9.

in some other parts of the world because we cannot forget the designs of imperialistic powers; that the problem of devising proper safeguards for linguistic and other minorities in regard to their educational and other rights is an important aspect; that caution may be applied regarding states reorganisation; and that the growth of parochialism among the youth in educational institutions be examined.

2. Measures and Strategies for Combating Regionalism

Besides the significant observations and remarks made by the eminent professors, the seminarists suggested, inter alia, the following measures and strategies for combating the problem of regional loyalties which impeded the process of nation -building, thus,

- (1) Ideological polarisation of politics in relation to the problems of caste and tribe loyalties vis-a-vis the nation; and non-caste non-regional approach to political issues.¹⁰
- (2) Inclusion of scientific values by making use of scientific advancement as an aggressive instrument to disrupt outmoded social organisations like caste and tribe and to create non-regional loyalties.¹¹

10. P.C. Mathur, Op.cit., p. 183,

11. Ibid., p. 184.

- (3) Recognition of Regional Elite than opposing their emergence in the name of National Integration.¹²
- (4) Nationalization of Regional Sentiments by extending the sense of regional unity to the national level by creating apertures for entry into regions and thereby establishing cross-cutting inter-regional relationships.¹³
- (5) Protection of Tribal Interests by preserving their identity and doing away with the historical injustices done to them.¹⁴
- (6) Optimum national planning with built-in regional plans (Dr. Nurula).¹⁵
- (7) Drawing of a distinction between acceptable regionalism and harmful regionalism.¹⁶
- (8) The Universities must shed their intellectualistic Image and provide a forum for active encounter with modernity and rationality for young students who have just stepped out of the range of family socialization and have already formed parochial prejudices. (Dr. S.C. Shukla).¹⁷

12. Idem.

13. Ibid., pp. 184-85.

14. Ibid., p. 185.

15. Ibid., p. 189.

16. Ibid., p. 191

17. Ibid., p. 195.

- (9) The Universities should provide facilities for self-expression by students through creative activities like drama, dance, music, writing, etc. (Sri Uma Shankar Gaur).¹⁸
- (10) Mass media be properly utilised to broadcast the message of national integration (Sri Ishwar Modi).¹⁹

Besides these suggestions, the Seminarists were generally of the opinion that while formation of more and smaller states was generally acceptable as educational and cultural units, no barriers should be imposed on inter-state movement of capital goods and skills and that the whole of the country should be regarded as a market common to all units. They were also all agreed that "Indianization" was a biased and dangerous concept. On the issue of "Sons of the Soil", the seminarists appeared to be able to accept the practice of regional preferences in employment policies but cautious about the elite of backward areas championing reactionary ideologies and displacing all-India elite in the name of distributive justice and disrupting the process of modernization and development for the sake of regional employment preferences.²⁰

18. Idem.

19. Ibid., p. 196.

20. Ibid., p. 201-2.

3. Models, Processes and Means of National Integration

According to Rajni Kothari,²¹ the two distinct advantages we have learnt from the partition of the Indian sub-continent were: (i) that we have learnt "to place a very high value on unity and order, on the need at all costs to preserve Central authority, and on the political necessity to hold the country and its diverse elements together", (ii) that the Indian elite has been made "highly sensitive to the elements of statecraft, and what it takes to preserve political autonomy and dominance." New nations of Asia and Africa "inherited a unified national territory essentially as a readymade package from their colonial predecessors" but "this unity turned out to be not only precarious but highly deceptive." The national leaders within a few years of independence of those countries became victims of the "illusion of dominance" and were "insensitive to the issues of authority and consensus." In the case of India, "it is in respect to more clustered identities that political demands emanating from ethnic divisions create greater threats to national unity." Dismissing the doctrine that single language is essential for national identity as "hardly relevant to the Indian case", and analysing the transformation of states-reorganisation through policies

21. Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1982 (Reprinted), p. 320 ff.

on the basis of linguistic considerations Kothari thinks that with the growth of regional standard languages, English and Hindi are likely to survive together in India "most probably for all time to come." On the question of regionalism and national integration, he does not see the situation as the pessimists' speculation of dangerous alternatives of either "Balkanization" or "authoritarian rule." He wants others to "recognize that both the assertion of a regional identity and its assimilation into a larger national identity have been essentially political-coalitional processes." Advocating "suppression" of excessive regionalism, he suggests a "long-term secular development" to provide the "ultimate answer" and short-term policies of vigilance and accommodation, not only on the part of the Government, but also on the part of political parties and organised groups in educational and cultural fields." Bringing out the need to consider, in the process of states-reorganisation, factors other than language, such as size, cohesion, effective administration, efficient Centre-State relationships, and the possibility of having single party governments, he favours creation of more smaller states than retaining too big states like UP, MP and AP.

Concluding his analysis of Democracy and National Integration, he pertinently observes:

... there seems to be no easy approach to the development of a manifest and categorical "national identity" ... the Indian identity will continue to evolve in the form of a complex network of relationships rather than a unit relationship. In the crystallization of this network the political center is playing a crucial role. The "cost" of such a model of integration is the likelihood of an increasingly issue-oriented polity as it passes from its low-mobilization quiescent phase to one of political activation, institutional dispersal, and decentralization. With this, the "loads" on the system are likely to grow and the very capabilities that have been generated so remarkably in such a short time will be put to severe test ... a country as vast and pluralistic as India can be effectively united only through a participant and accommodative model of politics. (It is impossible to rule India from New Delhi). A concomitant of such a model is the autonomous and creative role of politics, and its penetration all the way to the social infrastructure.²²

Thus, Kothari's model of national integration is one which permits regional assertions within the federal framework. It can be taken as a proposition of a rule over India in its varied regions the authority for such rule itself emanating from the regions themselves through the process of 'national consensus' directed towards the evolution of a 'national identity'.

Prem Bhasin,²³ approaching from the "economic" angle, contends that "regional imbalances and disparities have been

22. Ibid., p. 337.

23. Prem Bhasin, Op.cit., p. 171 ff.

recognised to be actual and potential disruptors of the integrity of a nation-state." He rules out the possibility of the Russian model of national unity in India as we do not have the "total force to compel unity" as in USSR. He thinks that attempt to achieve national unity on religious basis, which is very tempting to the protagonists of Hindi-Hindu-Hindusthan, has been demonstrated as a futile attempt in the case of Pakistan. Malaysian case is said to be the proof of the fact that national unity and cohesion cannot be safeguarded or built by an alliance of basically communal parties. "Indian experience testifies to the fact that mere appeals to nationalism are of not much use in the circumstances that face us." He advocates, therefore, economic measures to strengthen the Indian national unity because, "the needs of economic development have visibly cut across all of them." Though he realises the fact that economic development, by itself, is no panacea, as is proved in the case of Italy, where the peasant South defies all solution in spite of industrialisation of the area, Prem Bhasin suggests the narrowing down of the economic disparities among regions and removal of the regional imbalances to help build national unity. Urges and aspirations, though not the direct outcome of economic frustration as they are of sub-national consciousness, such consciousness is thought to be

fortified by frustration generated by economic backwardness. He concludes his chapter on "Way to National Integration" with the following words: "Patience, tact and understanding will be necessary to tackle such problems. Emphasis will have to be on harmonizing such urges with emerging nationalism, and not on suppressing them."²⁴

(a) Education

The UNESCO declaration says that "wars begin in the minds of men." In the same way, "communal jealousies, rivalries and prejudices leading to inter-communal tensions and riots, also begin in the minds of men."²⁵ Despite our attempts to impart liberal, secular, socialistic and democratic education and thus evolve a process of modernization, the general people in India are still socio-psychologically embedded to superstitions and communal prejudices. The best means of tackling this problem may be found not in political authority, nor in mere legislation but in education which must begin from childhood and continue till death. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas suggests the following for making use of education as a means of national integration.

24. Ibid., p. 177.

25. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, "Education and National Integration", in Radhey Mohan (ed.), Composite Culture and Indian Society, (Vol. 1), New Delhi, Dr. Zakis Hussain Educational and Cultural Foundation, p. 79.

- (1) Children in the Kindergarten stage must be able to sing national songs in chorus. Such songs should be often broadcast through children's programmes on TV and Radio. Stories and plays taught to the pupils must be towards inculcation in their minds equal respects for all religions and religious leaders.
- (2) At the level of older children history should be taught in its re-interpreted form so as to avoid stress on communal conflicts accounts.
- (3) While schools should refrain from teaching religious lessons, ethics should be taught in the school.
- (4) Humanism, secularism and socialism must be the foundation of life-long adult education.
- (5) Various tools of education such as drama, dancing, puppetry etc. should be tuned to national programmes.
- (6) Writers should write more about national ideals and goals and films must take up more of characters to foster emotional integration of the nation.
- (7) Defence forces must be secularised. Such naming of regiments like Sikh Regiment, Jat Regiment should be done away with.
- (8) Government servants and officers must be often required to undergo Refresher Courses on such themes which will reinforce their awareness of the need of national unity.

These are valuable suggestions. They seem to be promising if they are implemented scientifically and impartially, not manipulating them to the advantage of certain sections and to the disadvantage of certain other groups. It is well to remember that for a minority group 'the built-in mechanism of self-defence' is so strong that even 'secular approach' is often taken by them as a way of inculcating dominant religious culture. One may also argue in favour of the doing away of the 'religious bias' of the Constitution as found in the instance of the provisions and implications of Article 25. The religious bias of the executive authorities is also clearly evident in the case of Arunachal Pradesh where Ramakrishna Mission is allowed free access while other religions are discouraged to establish educational and religious institutions in the name of preserving the indigenous culture and traditions. It may be necessary we conduct an objective and critical examination of the so-called Freedom of Religions Laws and Anti-Conversion Laws passed by some States, to see whether or not they are directly or indirectly against the contents and intents of the teachings of certain religions in India. The infamous Tyagi Bill on Freedom of Religion was vehemently opposed by Indian Christians during the Janata rule.

This is not to argue against secularisation of education and the making use of education as a means of national integration, but a caution against its misuse which may do more harm than is done otherwise.

Another way by which education can be a means of national integration, especially in Mizo case, is the formulation of policies of educational development and administration in such a way that the local genius, howsoever small it may be, is exploited and the educational advancement be brought about to cater to the needs of the region. Enhancement of facilities and opportunities for higher education in a comprehensive manner is necessary in order to integrate the Mizos through education. In this respect, the NEHU also may have to revise its policy of enhancement of opportunities for University Education in Mizoram so as to make wider local participation and enrolment possible in the development of its campus at Aizawl. The Mizos occupy a very high place in India in terms of literacy. Yet, high percentage of literacy alone will not do much to national integration in the absence of ample scope for higher education. While the need for special emphasis on the development of Technical/Science Education is not disputed, concern may also be had for the creation of greater opportunities for the pursuit of higher education in Social Sciences through

which we can expect greater regional participation. Development in Science and Technical Educations alone do not guarantee national integration as found in the case of Manipur, where Scientists and technician-specialists dominate the generalists so far as number is concerned. There should also be a scope for training in general lines through which greater number can land on administrative hierarchy. The decreasing number of Mizos entering into IAS and other All-India and Central Services during the last five (or so) years may be taken as a reflection of the low competitive capabilities of Mizo youths which is indirectly caused by lack of adequate opportunities for higher education in Mizoram.

(b) Language

We are all aware that linguistic differentiation has been the cause of social and communal tensions, riots and clashes resulting in the creation of a number of linguistic states and districts. The problem of evolving a national language has been occupying the minds of Indian leaders and no fruitful formula has been invented so far. The three-language formula was honoured "more in the breach than in the observance."²⁶ Tamil Nadu adopted two-language formula

26. C. Subramaniam, "Integration Through Language", Indian Express, New Delhi, February 17/1986, p. 8.

and Hindi-speaking states silently adopted two-language formula, Hindi and English. Even while there was no open declaration for the adoption of two-language formula, the practice was always on this formula, regional language and English in non-Hindi speaking areas, Hindi and English in Hindi-speaking states. No Hindi speaking state is bothered to popularise any other Indian language and no non-Hindi state is willing to popularise Hindi. Such being the condition, achievement of national integration by means of language is a far cry.

C. Subramaniam thinks that the reason for the failure of the three-language formula is that the student has to master three scripts - Devnagiri script for Hindi, Roman script for English and a regional script for the regional language which is a very difficult task. He believes that if this problem of scripts is objectively solved, we may be nearer to bringing about national integration by means of language. He proposes, for this purpose, the use of both Devnagiri and Roman scripts in Hindi as an official language thus,

Where do we go from here with regard to our language problem? Any attempt to make Hindi the sole language of Union administration is bound to be met with resistance from the non-Hindi speaking people and even threaten the integrity of India. Wisdom lies in trying to

evolve a formula which will have an all-India acceptance. If Hindi as official language is permitted to use both Devnagiri and Roman scripts, its acceptance by all sections of the population would become easier. Hindi as regional language will continue to be written in Devnagiri.²⁷

He gives a number of points to justify the argument, thus:

Roman script offers no problem in typing, printing, teleprinting, telegraphy and computers; it is used almost all over the world; it is easy to read; it was accepted by a committee set up by Maulana Azad soon after Independence, and by many authorities including Humayun Kabir. He argues that if his proposals to have Hindi written in both Devnagiri and Roman scripts as official language of the Union, to have English as a second official language, "it is possible that a simple, spoken Hindi, akin to what Gandhiji called Hindustani may evolve as an all-India lingua franca, a communication link between the masses of the people throughout India."

This proposal is very attractive especially to the Mizos who write even their own language in Roman script. To them, Devnagiri script is so unfamiliar that they are not keen on learning it, They are quite fast in picking up Hindi on the spoken aspect. But, when an average Mizo is asked to read the Hindi word which he uses in talking, he will be at a loss. The political prejudice apart, the Mizos'

27. C. Subramaniam, "Roman as Second Script", Indian Express, February 18, 1986, p. 8.

apathy to learning Hindi is mainly because of their unfamiliarity with the Devnagiri script. Mizo youth commonly joke about Devnagiri scripts as "the scripts of the imp" meaning thereby that they are as difficult to read as some natural script-like marks on some leaves in the forest. If Hindi is learnt by Roman scripts Mizos will be more receptive to its use. This will help develop socialization with Hindi-speaking people to the consequence that integration will be strengthened. It will open greater scope for them to learn Hindi songs (especially Christian songs) through the singing of which they will feel more and more attached to the Hindi-speaking and other regional-language groups of India. In this form, Hindi in particular and language in general, which has been a factor of alienation and disintegration can turn out to be a factor for national integration and mutual interaction.

(c) Mass-media and Travels

M.V. Kamath, dismissing the 'faulty' conception of 'integration' as 'uniformity', and emphasizing the 'beauty' and 'humanity' of being 'different' from one another, contends that in spite of the formal talks about the need of national integration, integration is very much there among Indian people as a result of the informal process of integration through mass-media, travels and students exchange.

"We do not realise it" he says, "but there is more integration at more levels than we are aware of."²⁸ He would see the evidences in various aspects - uniformity in the style of wearing sarees, popular use of Salvar-Khameez in schools and colleges, etc. "The idli sambhar and masala-dosai culture has invaded north of the Vindhya as the tandoori chicken had come from north to south." Travel has brought more people together in unheard of ways. "At one time films linked the country and Saigal or Pankaj Mullick's songs were heard or sung in the south with few people understanding the words. Words did not matter, it was the melody that counted most. The film industry in that sense has done more to integrate India than anything that officialdom could have conjured up." "Does anyone really care whether Rekha is a South Indian?" He asks. On the role of TV he has to say that Doordarshan is a powerful medium for national integration, because "when six hundred million people watch the same show, smile at the same joke, cry at the same tragedy, then they are automatically integrated whether they speak Malayalam, Kashmiri, Dongri or Konkani at home." He, therefore, argues,

28. M.V. Mamath, "A Farce Called National Integration", The Sunday Sentinel, Guwahati, February 16, 1986, p. 2.

The truth is that we have always been integrated Let us not strain too much to further national integration. It is there and has always been there. We have only to recognise it even while accepting the differences among us. The differences make us human and interesting.

He thinks that too much talk about integration unknowingly suggests that we are not integrated.

If some of the views held by M.V. Kamath are not totally acceptable, the stress he makes on the importance and contribution of the mass-media towards national integration is relevant. It is likely that the 'informal methods' of national integration are yielding greater results than the big talks and recommendations through the formal approaches.

Besides education, language, mass-media and travels, national integration may be achieved through other means such as cultural exchange, music festivals, games and sports, students' excursions, exchange and participation in common programmes through various organisations like NCC, NSS, Scouts and Guides Movements, educational meets, etc.

4. Impact of National Integration Programmes

The Government of Mizoram have organised National Integration programmes in various forms. The Deputy

Commissioner of each district acting as the Chairman of the programme committee for his district. A committee on national integration programme used to be formed consisting of prominent citizens, Government officers, teachers and voluntary organisation leaders. National Integration weeks are observed during which wide publication of articles on the subject written by eminent writers is made, seminars are held and talks are broadcast through the AIR.

We have made a survey among 800 respondents who are divided into 14 sectional groups according to their occupations, to get some information about their attitudes towards such programmes letting them indicate whether their realisation of the importance of national integration is enhanced or not. We categorised the respondents into "indifferent" and "appreciative" groups on the basis of their responses. Our findings are given against serial numbers 10 and 11 in Table X in Appendix A. Of the 800 respondents 61.50 percent are indifferent towards national integration programmes. The responses given by this group are "meaningless programme", or "I am not aware of such programme", or "I don't care" or "I rarely attend such programme". Those who give the response "I realise more the importance of Indian national integration by attending such programmes" are categorised as "appreciative" group.

31.25 percent of our respondents belong to this category. The percentage of "indifferent group" is highest among farmers of Thenzawl village and very high among High School Students and College Teachers. While the high percentage of such group among farmers of Thenzawl village can be understood because they are away from the capital. But, its being so high among High School students and College Teachers is rather surprising. While teachers may be held responsible to a great extent in the case of High School Students, the indifference of College Teachers towards national integration programme looks unseemly. Being an educated elite group, it should be expected of them to take the lead in making people aware of the importance and benefits of national integration. The reason for the apparent indifference of college teachers may, however, be due to the lack of skill on the part of the organisers of such programmes in getting them involved. The percentage of the "appreciative" group is high among Government Clerical Staff, High School Teachers and Middle School Teachers. While it is high among High School Teachers it is low among High School Students. This suggests that the Teachers themselves are interested but they fail in making their students interested. On the whole, it is evident that Mizo people are not very much interested in such programmes. The reason behind all these may be lack of keen interest on the part of the organisers of the programmes.

5. Impact of Films, TV and AIR

It can be seen from Table X that a high percentage (70%) of our respondents give preference to English film over Hindi Film. The reason for this may be looked for in the generally western influenced culture and mentality of Mizos. It is known that in terms of moral lesson, Hindi films are far better than English films. But, the morals of the Hindi films are generally not part of the Mizo culture and they, therefore, are not capable of appreciating the morals. Whereas, in regard to the English film, the setting is usually sophisticated which appeals to Mizo taste. Another factor may possibly be that the 'acting standard' is higher in English films than in Hindi films, at least in the estimation of the Mizos. One aspect of the films which makes them interesting and appealing is that of romance. In this regard too, Hindi art of romancing has less parallel or similarity to the Mizo art than the English art does. For instance, lovers courting each other with songs running around in the jungle in the midst of grown-up trees is not the style of Mizo courtship. It may also be noted that while 55.62% do not admire Hindi film characters, a low 28% admire them.

In regards to TV also, the differential appreciation between Hindi films and English films is reflected.

Bangladesh TV programmes being much clearer, because of the wide international coverage and more telecast of English features than by Doordarshan, more Mizos regard Bangladesh TV programme as better than Indian TV programme, (52% for Bangladesh TV against only 17.37% for Indian TV). Preference to Bangladesh TV programme is not necessarily due to the Mizo's respect or love for Bengali or Bangladeshi culture. It is mainly because of the good variety of features.

One may, therefore, suggest that in order to make TV effectively instrumental in integrating Mizos, the on-going construction of the Transmitting Station at Aizawl be completed soon. If there is a TV station at Aizawl, Mizos can have programmes of their own. This will distract them from Bangladesh TV. Besides, the Doordarshan programmes may be so arranged to inculcate more and more of the spirit of national unity taking into account the most convenient time for the TV audience at various regions of the country. The interesting Sunday forenoon programmes cannot be very meaningful to Mizos because they clash with their most important religious programme of Sunday School which is normally had between 10 and 11 A.M. every Sunday. Featuring of different Indian landscapes, historical and famous places, different life-

styles and occupations, industrial feats and other educative scenes through the Delhi Doordarshan programmes; and wide coverage of international events including sports event may go a long way in attracting Mizo youth towards Indian milieu. The Coverage of Mizos and Mizoram by national-papers should be widened and improved in order to let Mizos feel attached to India. Their names and their towns should always be correctly written in the papers and magazines.

Whether the broadcast of Hindi Songs through the AIR programmes is meant to acculturise the non-Hindi speaking people or just to provide for the listening pleasure of Hindi speaking people in the region, Hindi film and devotional songs take altogether 4 hours and 56 minutes of the AIR Aizawl station programmes in a week, that is approximately 10% of the total duration of the programmes, while the number of Hindus in Mizoram is only 7.14%,²⁹ many of whom are Nepali speaking people who have been residing in Mizoram for a long time. Assuming that it is not just for the listening pleasure of a small minority of Mizoram population but rather for the purpose of demonstrating the "Indian" character of the AIR, the attitudes of Mizos to the place given to Hindi

29. See Table XXII in Appendix A.

songs to that proportion in the AIR programme will be interesting. And if such attitudes can be ascertained, it may reflect the negative or positive impact of such programme on the Mizos. Though we have not conducted a thorough and deep penetrating survey on this aspect, Response No. 9 shown in Table X in **Appendix A** suggests that the impact is more negative than positive. The response "I do not like Hindi devotional music/songs from AIR" is not a ready-made answer provided for the respondents but their own mention of their dislike about AIR Aizawl station programme. 47.37% of our respondents make their own mention of this. This would suggest that Mizos generally have anti-Hindi attitudes even in the area of music and songs. M.V. Kamath's contention that it is not the word but the melody which matters³⁰ does not seem to carry much validity in the case of the Mizos' appreciation of Hindi music. They are generally still negative to Hindi in spite of the 'melody'.

5. National Anthem and Mizos

Recently, controversies developed over the question whether a person can be compelled to sing the Indian National Anthem, arising out of the refusal to sing it

30. M.V. Kamath, Op.cit.

on the part of some students in a certain school who belonged to the Jehovah Witness Sect. The controversies were so high that the question was brought to the highest court of appeal in the country. The question did not even end there and there were talks of legislation to the effect that no Indian citizen could opt not to sing the National Anthem. Because of this, it has been considered relevant to examine the Mizo attitude towards it. The National Anthem is, in every country, a symbol of unity and the Government is serious about its singing. Therefore, attitude to one's national anthem could be an indication of the extent or degree of one's self-identification with the nation. On this premise, we have found that a high percentage (76.25%) of Mizos cannot sing it heartily while only 11.12 percent can sing it heartily.³¹ While this fact would suggest that it is because of the regional sentiment that Mizos cannot sing the National Anthem from their hearts, it could partly be due to other factors like unfamiliarity with the words, meanings and tune. In order to let the Mizos be more familiar with its meaning, wide publicity of a good translation of the Anthem is suggested. But, one thing that we have to note is that when Mizos fully know the contents of the National Anthem,

31. See Table X (contd.) in Appendix A. Response Nos. 12 & 13.

they may be, unexpectedly, more negative towards it because they will find out that it does not at all include Mizoram (or the whole of North-East India) in 'Bharat'. This realisation may alienate the Mizo further from India. Therefore, if we are to consider the National Anthem as a symbol of our Indian nationhood, and, if we are going to insist on the singing of it by all the Indians in proper spirit to demonstrate our loyalty to the nation, we may have to render its revised version so as to make mention of at least all the major regions of India.

7. Impact of Economic Measures

The economic condition of Mizoram during the District Council period has been analysed in Chapter Three of this thesis. It may, however, be relevant to note again here that the Mizo economy during the period (1947-1972) was "dependent" on the generosity of the Assam Government, and there was no adequate exploitation of local resources. Over and above these, the MNF movement and the unwise counter-measures considerably checked the pace of the economic process. Mizoram has direct share of the national plan allocations only from the Fifth Five Year Plan, and when it became a Union Territory in January 1972, the process of building the infrastructure

had to be started from the scratch. The question of political settlement still pending, the building of the infrastructure had to be carried out in an atmosphere of uncertain conditions. It can be observed, therefore, that National Planning has not really been smoothly related to the conditions of Mizoram. The few attempts at geological survey have so far not fructified fully. Local resources remain scanty. It was recently reported that, of the Mizoram Annual budget of Rs. 220 crore for the financial year 1987-88 expected revenue from the state's resources constitutes only Rs. 7 crore, that is 3.18%.³² Agriculture and Industry are, at present, too insignificant to contribute much to the development. On the Agricultural Sector the 'jhumming' system, the reduced soil fertility cycle, the constraints of topography render the efforts unproductive. Rice is the staple food of Mizos, but, 70% of the state's requirement of rice has to be imported from outside. The need to purchase annually 40,000 metric tonnes of rice from the Food Corporation of India costs Rs. 65 lakhs for the stocking and Rs. 1.25 crore for transportation to the interior.³³ To produce the remaining

32. Bishwanath Gosh, "Laldenga facing an uphill task", Amrita Bazar Patrika, May 7, 1987, p. 8.

33. Mizoram Finance Minister, Shri Lalhmingthanga's paper "Socio-Economic condition of Mizoram Union Territory in a Nutshell and suggestion for Improvement", in Seminar on Strategy for Planned Economic Development of Mizoram, organised by DIPH & T, Mizoram, at Aizawl Club, September 26, 1980, p. 16.

30% of the requirement of rice, 73.11% of the Main Workers are involved.³⁴ Only a small 2.15% of the Main Workers are involved in small scale household industries.³⁵ Only Rs. 15.10 crore was invested for the economic development of Mizoram during the first four plans (i.e. 1951-1974). From this small investment, the Seventh Plan allocation has come upto Rs. 465.68 crore.³⁶ The Fifth and Sixth Plan allocations for Mizoram were Rs. 48.73 crore and Rs. 150 crore respectively. But, such remarkable jumps in plan allocation has not brought about the desired results. The building of the economic infrastructure has to be continued in a scientific manner. Some positive achievements have been made, yet, Mizoram is still lagging behind its sister-states in the North East. There are many incomplete long-term projects which cannot be left uncompleted. Realistic assessment of the impact of the economic drives, therefore, is not practically possible at this juncture. Meanwhile, the state's annual requirement keeps on increasing. The per capita government

34. See Table XX in Appendix A. The figure is obtained by putting 'cultivators' and 'Agricultural Labourers' together.

35. Ibid.

36. Mizoram Finance Minister Shri Sainghaka, "Planning for Economic Development of Mizoram" in MIZORAM, News Magazine, Aizawl, DIPR & T, Mizoram, ISSUE No. 3, 1985, p. 38.

spending in Mizoram towards the close of 1980-81 financial year was Rs. 1707.77 while the per capita local revenue receipts, for the same period, was only Rs. 6.40.³⁷ The picture at present may be a little better on account of the increased amount of local revenue receipts after the enforcement of the Mizoram Excise Act and Rules from the last financial year. However, Mizoram Economy continues to be largely dependent on Central grants.

If the economic lag of Mizoram is phenomenal, the Central Planning Commission's attempts to effect massive reconstruction of Mizoram economy are equally noteworthy. Our interest in this thesis is in the question whether these economic measures have helped the Mizos to feel more attached to the Union or not. Does the economic improvement affect the Mizo political orientation? If it does, in which direction and how far? Addressing these questions to ourselves, we have tried to get some information by means of a sample survey. As through and detailed economic survey is neither possible nor necessary for this thesis, we have tried to see how many of the Mizo people have and how many have not received Government financial aids. From there, we

37. Mizoram Finance Minister Shri Lalhmingthanga's Speech on April 10, 1981, on the occasion of the PC Party's General Assembly.

proceed to the collection of opinions on the question whether economic improvement helps national integration. This exercise is necessary to study whether Mizo Regionalism and regional Economic disparity have correlations. If Mizo Regionalism is caused by economic discontent alone, there should be a departure from regionalist sentiment proportionate to the level of their economic improvement.

While 27.37% of our respondents state that they have received financial help of any type from the Government, 64.12% state that they have not.³⁸ The percentage of recipients is highest among college students. This could be because of the Post-Matric Tribal Scholarships. The percentage of non-recipients is highest, surprisingly, among the farmers. This suggests that the main thrust of the economic drive does not go to the section which deserves it most. No wonder, therefore, that the impact of the economic measures cannot be much meaningful. As evident in terms of Responses 16 and 17 in Table Ten, 20.62 percent hold the opinion that economic improvement helps national integration while to 60.74% of them, "Economic improvement does not help national integration". This will compel us to conclude that Mizo regionalism is not caused by economic factor alone, and that the on-going economic process is not a panacea for Mizo problems.

38. See Table X (Responses 14 and 15) in Appendix A.

8. Impact of Education

It has been pointed out elsewhere that Education can be a good means of national integration and that Mizoram ranks very high in literacy (59.88%). The high literacy is mainly due to the educational process started by Christian missionaries towards the close of the nineteenth century. At present, Mizoram has 1,081 educational institutions including one NEHU Campus, 12 colleges and a few technical institutes. There are 4,158 teachers for 1,30,497 students (one teacher to 31.38 students).³⁹ The Mizos' fascination for the pursuit of learning is so high that there are many places where the local residents voluntarily construct school buildings by a community work. Villages and towns compete in having educational institutions and the government has had to uphold stern order against proliferation of schools and colleges. The desire to modernise is very great among the Mizos. It is, therefore, imperative to assess the impact of educational process on Mizo towards national integration. For this purpose, we have asked the respondents to select any of the three responses that:

- (i) progress in education helps national integration,
- (ii) progress in education does not help national integration, and
- (iii) progress in education has a reverse effect

39. See Table XXIV in Appendix A.

on national integration - meaning thereby that the greater the educational achievement the more alienated the Mizo becomes. Only 13.62% think that it helps. 50.50% state it does not help. To 26.62%, progress in education has reverse effect on national integration. An explanation of these may be sought in the pattern of the educational organisation in Mizoram. There is lack of facilities for technical education and higher education. Literacy alone does not take the people outside the frame of the regional language. Interaction of Mizo youth with people outside the state through education is very limited. That is why educational process has not made much positive impact on the Mizo political orientation. The deficiency may be made good by opening up more avenues of technical and higher learning with due recognition of the importance of local/regional involvement in the process of education. It is through this process that more and more Mizo educated elite will come into contact with other Indians, the possible end-result of which will be higher degree of emotional national integration and mutual attachment.

Conclusion

The problem of integrating regionalist Mizos has to be tackled through multi-purpose programmes. One or two channels are not sufficient to make meaningful impact.

The economic measures seem to be so far not very fruitful because along with them come the "unwanted outsiders" to provide the needed manpower. The same is true about educational process. These processes may be so carried out as to suit the local sentiment and genius. Improvement of the conditions of mass-media process is a must, with a purposeful planning to give adequate coverage of the culture of the region and to make them channels for national integration and inter-communication. While imposition of Hindi in its pure form will be counter-productive, its popularisation in Roman script may go a long way to achieve national integration objectives. In all these, patience and tact will be really needed. In the words of Brig. T. Sailo, "The answer lies in an imaginative effort. The way to the hearts of the Mizo people lies in thorough understanding of their mentality, genuine sympathy for their aspirations and a search for their identity and the building up of mutual trust."⁴⁰

40. Brig. T. Sailo, Speeches and Writings, published by the Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1983 (Second Edition), See back cover.

CHAPTER - VI

CHAPTER - VICONCLUSION

The foregoing study of Mizo Regionalism and the analysis of its bases, forms and impact, have brought us to certain conclusions. This chapter contains a brief summary of the major findings and conclusions of the study.

The Mizos had historical experiences independent of the great civilizations and movements in India, and were, therefore, historically isolated from the rest of the country. Mizo regionalism takes roots in these independent historical experiences. The British administration of the Mizo Hills on the principle of 'protective discrimination' protracted the Mizo isolation from the socio-political processes of other parts of the dominion. When Mizo Hills was made a part of the Indian Union, the Mizos were not quite prepared to live within the same system with the plains Indians.

Regionalism is a multi-faceted concept. It originates from a number of causes and flourishes on the sustenance provided by the chain-reaction of many factors like economic disparity, ethnico-cultural identity, linguistic chauvinism, political aspirations, geographical

conditions and psycho-social differences. Such being the case, the phenomenon of regionalism cannot be analysed within a mono-factorial paradigm.

Culture and tradition constitute the strongest factor of Mizo Regionalism. The acculturation process is pointing towards westernization than to Indianization. This is because of the readiness and receptivity of the Mizos to western culture due to the influence implanted in their society through British Administration, western education and spread of Christianity. Any lifestyle which is of western culture is quickly picked up by the Mizos while they find it hard to copy the lifestyle of the dominant Indian culture. The westernized Mizo culture is an established fact, and any attempt to impose Hindu culture is likely to be responded with sharp reaction.

The fear of losing ethnic identity is a strong component of Mizo regionalism. Their sense of being small as a group in the midst of the vast sea of strong cultures makes them repulsive to any process which they think would make it possible for dominant cultures to have inroads into their society. They want to maintain their distinct identity in order to survive as an ethnic group in India. The fear of being 'assimilated' is so strong

that they make a number of demands for constitutional safeguards to maintain and protect their unique customs and traditions. It is because of this fear-psychosis that they continue to maintain a negative attitude towards the plains people. It is out of the same fear that they look at some progressive measures suggested for Mizoram with reservation and scepticism.

Christianity has been, no doubt, a strong modernizing factor among the Mizos. The politicization of Mizo Christians with a strong emphasis on their religious difference from the dominant religious groups in India has brought a bad name to Christianity in the minds of other Indians so much so that at some point of time, Christianity was considered to be the main cause of secessionist movements in India. But, on close observation, it will be seen that Christianity in its pure form does not necessarily foster regionalism or secessionism, but, its communalization or territorialization with ulterior political motive has been largely responsible for such movement. If religion can really be separated from politics, this problem will be there no more. Politicization on the basis of religious fanaticism has been always responsible, not only in the case of Christianity in Mizoram, but also in the cases of Hinduism and Islamism, etc., for

communal antagonism and tensions, sometimes escalating into riots. The Mizo Church never encourages people to rise in revolt. Rather, it was the Church's intervention in Mizo politics which paved the way for the settlement of Mizo problem within the Indian Constitution.

'Mizoneess' defined in terms of certain social norms stands in counter-position to 'Indianness' which is perceived as something alien to Mizo society. This gives rise to psycho-social prejudices against the plains Indians who are sharply different in their attitudes and orientations from the Mizos. In other words, the plain-hearted and straightforward Mizos cannot easily adjust themselves with the complex social milieu of India.

Language plays a secondary role in the political regionalism of Mizos. The ahomization process was responded by the Mizos with negative reaction, it immediately stirred the Mizos against the dominance of the Assamese. The popularisation of Hindi in Mizoram cannot be considered as successful. It will take some time for the Mizos to shed their antipathy towards Hindi. Meanwhile, imposition of the language on them and making it compulsory in public service and other examinations will only be counter-productive as it will increase the Mizo antipathy towards Hindi.

The economic factor has been responsible for Mizo regionalism only to a limited extent. Hence, the belief that the adoption and enhancement of development programmes in Mizoram will be a panacea for all the socio-political and economic ills in the state has a partial validity about Mizo problems. The massive economic development programmes for Mizoram have so far benefitted only a few sections of the Mizo people and a few adventurous business men elsewhere in India and the big farmers of Punjab and Haryana. The economic measures cannot be really meaningful in the absence of regional infrastructure and local means of production, suited to the genius of the people.*

The geopolitically strategic location of Mizoram fosters and sustains regionalism. Approximately 70% of Mizoram boundaries is international. The injustice done to them during the British period in regards to the demarcation of the political boundary of Mizoram, if not righted soon, may gradually become another factor for fresh Mizo movements which can involve inter-state as well as international relations.

*Dr. Manmohan Singh, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, Inaugural Address delivered at the National Seminar on Institutional Economics and the North-Eastern Region's Economy, NEHU, Shillong, on 5th June, 1987.

Regionalism can also be viewed as an expression of elite struggle and competition for political power, first between the traditional elites (the chiefs) and the emergent elites. In terms of political orientations, the modern Mizo elite can be categorised as extreme-regionalist, moderate regionalist and opportunist-regionalist.

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." Regional sentiment is so strong that even the all-India party in Mizoram cannot really have a national outlook in order to maintain a support base among the Mizos. Therefore, 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 the one hand and the compulsions of maintaining cordial relations with the centre which operates through the one-party dominance system, on the other. The movements of the 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.

The Mizos are not yet fully integrated with the Indian Union. They still have unfulfilled aspirations. They have not fully realised the benefits of being part of the Indian Union in terms of national as well as international politics. The impact of the economic measures, education and the mass-media towards the integration of the Mizos with the Union is still limited; and even negative in some areas. The success of the on-going process of national integration depends, in the Mizo case, on a strategy handled with great skill and genuine concern for the welfare of the Mizos and for the safety of their ethnico-cultural identity. To allow the exercise of the federal control on the State of Mizoram by leaders without knowledge of political and socio-cultural realities and by political fanatics will only be counter-productive. In this respect, the democratic political approach which takes into account historical and socio-cultural realities of Mizoram is most likely to be successful. The demographic and the militaristic approaches will only invite sharp reaction and they will further alienate the Mizos. The political method as pointed out above will need to be supplemented by economic and educational development processes.

Given a proper and workable method, secularistic openminded national leadership, and an accommodative spirit on the part of the dominant groups, the Mizos can well be fully integrated with the Union, and Mizoram, which had challenged the very foundation of the sovereignty of the Indian Union for quite sometime may turn out to be the most loyal and faithful border sentinel state of India.

In the present study, the following hypotheses have been found to be valid: First, Independent history breeds regionalism. Secondly, regionalism is a defence mechanism operating within an ethno-culturally minority and homogeneous group. Thirdly, linguistic chauvinism of a dominant group reinforces regionalism in a smaller group. Fourthly, geography conditions political orientation. Fifthly, regional sentiment is dominant in Mizo political orientation.

The following hypotheses are found to be partially valid: First, Christianity fosters regionalism. Secondly, Economic disparity is a base of regionalism. Thirdly, social communication gap creates a situation for the rise of regional forces. Fourthly, Economic development helps national integration. Fifthly, the mass-media have integrating impact on the Mizos. Sixthly, regionalism is an expression of regional competition.

On the basis of these findings, the following measures are suggested for keeping the Mizos integrated with the Indian Union and maintaining smooth relations between the Centre and Mizoram.

1. The general policy towards the Mizos must be guided by the accommodative spirit and a genuine concern for the safety of their ethnico-cultural identity.
2. The approach to their socio-economic uplift should be through multi-dimensional and multi-purpose programmes. While attempting to improve their economic conditions, it should be carefully seen whether the schemes will have adverse effects on their social equilibrium.
3. In regard to religion in Mizoram, the most practical policy will be the one which permits complete freedom of pursuit of one's religion. In order to accelerate the process of integrating Mizo Christians, other Indian Christians also may have important contributions to make. If other Indian Christians can show the way how it is possible to be genuine Christians and loyal citizens of India at the same time, and if they are ready to take some pains to better their understanding about the Mizo Christians through mutual interaction, participation and accommodation in religious activities at the national and international levels, these will go a

long way in making the Mizos feel more Indian. In other words, the process of national integration should begin between the Mizo Christians and other Indian Christians.

4. Improvement of means of physical and social communication systems will bring the Mizos closer to other regions of the country, helping thereby the process of integrating them with other groups.
5. The development programmes and administration and the political control system must always be in the hands of capable, highly responsible and committed leadership.

If these measures are taken up and the principles followed with genuine sincerity, the Mizos may become loyal Indian citizens and Mizoram, as a peaceful state of the Union, may add to the beauty that is India and contribute to national development in various spheres.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX - A

Table - I: Responses about past political developments

Section	Respondents were asked to give any number of the given responses															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)	
<u>No. of respondents</u>	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
1. Mizos were not prepared to decide their political future during British transfer of power to India.	18	60	16	39	82	35	21	31	31	35	11	36	41	38	494	61.75
2. Mizo aspiration was not duly represented then.	16	46	31	26	39	11	19	26	30	36	15	40	31	27	393	49.12
3. Mizo Union Party's representation of Mizo case was in keeping with the most popular aspiration of the time.	5	15	-	10	29	-	10	19	5	4	12	11	-	55	135	16.87
4. It would have been better if Mizoram remained a British colony.	21	41	5	30	60	20	16	26	17	35	22	36	16	14	353	44.12
5. It would have been worse if Mizoram remained a British colony.	-	19	4	19	29	5	15	11	14	14	-	-	14	4	148	18.50
6. Joining Burma would have been better.	-	-	6	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	11	1.37
7. It was better we didn't join Burma.	40	40	19	50	98	29	26	29	24	29	19	34	26	37	500	62.50

(Contd.)

Table - I (Contd.)

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
Responses																
8. It would have been better if Mizos became independent	29	56	29	41	30	19	31	11	31	18	14	41	25	38	413	51.62
9. Joining India was a blunder.	5	29	4	36	28	20	19	14	25	34	9	25	14	26	288	36.00
10. Joining India was right.	20	21	9	5	9	18	-	9	4	9	11	-	4	5	124	15.50
11. Abolition of Mizo chiefship (1954) was right.	19	30	36	44	90	31	20	28	26	10	21	34	21	38	448	56.00
12. Abolition of Mizo chiefship was wrong.	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	14	-	4	-	4	88	11.00
13. Abolition of chiefship was right but 1954 was too early.	4	41	-	11	10	11	4	15	5	9	9	21	15	7	162	20.25

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawpui village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High school Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - II: About the Mizo National Front Movement.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
Responses																
1. MNF's declaration of Mizoram Independence was wrong.	-	11	5	4	4	5	5	14	4	15	4	11	6	88	11.00	
2. MNF's declaration of Mizoram Independence was justifiable in many respects.	24	66	46	41	61	36	11	16	29	31	10	41	21	27	460	57.50
3. Peace Negotiation between the Govt. of Indian and the MNF is good.	26	71	30	40	71	46	26	50	41	46	31	49	46	23	596	74.50
4. Deadlocks to GOI-MNF talks were due to:																
i) Govt. of India.	26	35	46	20	70	21	14	31	11	25	26	41	10	38	414	51.75
ii) Laldenga	-	9	4	-	-	4	5	14	-	10	-	-	5	11	62	7.75
iii) Government of Mizoram	15	54	40	45	20	46	31	15	40	31	24	21	31	14	427	53.37
iv) Division of MNF Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1.00

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High school Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Junior Govt. Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - III: Political Status Desired for Mizoram.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. Independent Greater Mizoram.	26	41	36	24	42	22	36	4	44	25	31	40	31	29	431	53.87
2. Independent present Mizoram.	9	5	-	9	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	26	3.25
3. Indian state with special provisions.	14	46	14	8	34	21	13	31	-	14	18	4	5	17	236	29.50
4. Ordinary State	-	-	-	4	-	7	-	3	6	6	-	4	4	3	27	3.37
5. Union Territory	-	4	-	3	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	2.87
6. Protectorate	-	2	-	-	11	-	-	9	-	4	-	6	10	1	43	5.37

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpur Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village
 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff,
 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals,
 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers,
 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - IV: Factors responsible for Mizo Regionalism.

Section	No. of Respondents														Total	Total (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Responses	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
1. Historical independence	11	31	21	5	11	16	9	11	41	20	22	17	-	11	226	28.25
2. Ethnicity	17	24	24	21	21	-	-	-	31	14	12	11	26	24	262	32.75
3. Language	14	5	6	-	9	-	-	-	18	7	11	-	7	4	81	10.12
4. Culture & Traditions	31	34	11	-	52	11	16	32	26	27	16	26	11	8	301	37.62
5. Psychology	27	-	5	-	-	12	11	4	15	11	17	9	10	-	121	15.12
6. Lifestyle	22	4	-	-	-	-	4	5	24	9	11	7	-	-	86	10.75
7. Economic deprivation	15	-	6	-	11	4	-	-	14	6	-	-	4	3	63	7.87
8. Religion	19	21	4	16	-	6	7	6	26	21	14	5	6	-	151	18.87
9. Inherent dislike for outsiders	4	6	-	17	-	-	6	7	6	6	-	-	7	-	59	7.37
10. Aspiration for political identity	8	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	11	5	6	6	5	2	56	7.00

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. **Businessmen**, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle school Teachers, 13. High school Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - V: Being a Christian and an Indian Citizen.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)	
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. They are incompatible	-	14	5	11	-	13	4	-	11	3	5	7	-	4	77	9.62
2. Christianity alienates Mizos from India	-	6	-	-	-	4	4	-	4	6	-	-	-	7	31	3.87
3. Christianity heightens feeling as Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.00
4. I have no problem in being a Christian and an Indian	21	61	36	4	61	21	27	41	5	27	31	14	31	33	413	51.62
5. Mizoram Independence will better safeguard Mizo Christianity	29	19	9	35	39	12	15	9	30	14	14	29	19	6	279	34.87

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - VI: Attitude Towards Vais*

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)	
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. No. of Vais in Mizoram too large	35	46	44	26	72	44	33	27	39	35	44	34	40	23	541	67.62
2. No. of Vais in Mizoram should always be below 5% of Mizos	37	60	40	36	62	34	41	36	45	46	45	35	40	30	587	73.37
3. We cannot do without Vais	11	10	-	-	10	11	6	10	-	10	4	14	4	-	90	11.25
4. All the Vais are bad for Mizos	6	11	5	6	12	-	7	5	-	5	-	4	8	7	76	9.50
5. All the Vais are not bad for Mizos	10	66	41	21	70	36	27	36	26	31	31	20	24	35	474	59.25
6. Vais are far better than Mizos	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.00
7. Vais should be allowed to trade in Mizoram	-	14	-	-	10	-	6	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	38	4.75

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpui, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

*Vai is a term used by Mizos in general reference to other Indians, of plain areas in particular.

Table - VI (Contd.)

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800
<u>Responses</u>															
8. Vais should not be allowed to trade in Mizoram	16	15	41	20	22	16	15	11	31	19	11	10	24	26	277 34.62
9. Trade Licence may be given to them restrictedly	21	51	11	10	51	20	14	27	24	9	24	25	14	4	305 38.12
10. Vais should not hold lands in Mizoram	11	46	41	35	69	31	44	42	46	45	24	35	34	43	546 68.25
11. Vais may hold lands in Mizoram	11	11	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	40 5.00
12. No objection to Mizo girl marrying a Vai	10	14	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	4	-	-	4	8	54 6.75
13. Objection to Mizo girl marrying Vai	36	52	49	24	71	36	27	16	41	30	31	40	34	36	523 63.37

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village
 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff,
 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals,
 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers,
 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - VII: Preference Between Regional Party and All-India Party

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
Preference																
1. Regional Party	21	54	42	19	70	25	29	34	35	31	22	36	34	38	490	61.25
2. All-India Party	16	30	8	29	28	20	20	15	10	18	12	14	13	12	245	30.62
	No responses from 65															8.13

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - VIII(a): Reasons for strength of Parties - Mizo Union.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. Policy	5	34	24	10	11	10	16	34	-	17	25	26	9	27	247	31.00
2. Leadership	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	16	-	5	18	11	76	9.50
3. Memoers	-	21	-	11	10	4	6	4	9	10	4	16	-	14	109	13.62
4. Central support	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.50
5. Circumstances	16	24	14	9	40	20	11	5	18	18	16	14	9	29	249	31.12
6. Money	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.00
7. Church	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	19	2.37

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - VIII(b): Reasons for strength of Parties - People's Conference.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800
<u>Responses</u>															
1. Policy	4	15	41	14	11	-	11	16	5	14	-	21	20	26	198 24.75
2. Leadership	15	19	50	26	21	21	36	41	21	21	16	32	26	39	384 48.00
3. Members	9	4	-	-	9	9	4	10	5	15	-	9	4	7	85 10.62
4. Central Support	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	9	6	-	4	24 3.00
5. Circumstances	11	18	4	11	9	10	4	6	5	10	5	4	10	5	112 14.00
6. Money	-	-	-	9	9	4	-	-	6	5	6	-	-	4	43 5.37
7. Church	4	11	5	-	-	17	16	9	11	26	-	5	6	16	126 15.75

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpui, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - VIII(c): Reasons for strength of Parties - Mizo National Front*

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)	
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
Responses																
1. Policy	26	45	50	21	49	21	26	30	42	26	17	50	31	38	472	59.00
2. Leadership	11	31	5	20	38	10	16	16	-	15	-	14	-	8	185	23.12
3. Members	5	5	-	18	30	19	5	15	-	-	9	4	-	12	122	15.25
4. Central support	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.00
5. Circumstances	-	4	25	11	-	-	4	24	-	.6	5	5	10	7	101	12.62
6. Money	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.00
7. Church	-	4	-	24	18	-	-	-	-	4	-	6	-	-	56	7.00

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

*This assessment of the MNF Party did not cover its success in the State Assembly Election (1987).

Table - VIII(d): Reasons for strength of Parties - The Indian National Congress.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. Policy	-	11	41	4	21	11	10	21	-	-	4	15	16	8	162	20.25
2. Leadership	-	4	4	-	-	9	-	4	14	11	-	-	-	-	46	5.75
3. Members	-	10	-	4	-	4	-	6	15	14	-	-	-	7	60	7.50
4. Central Support	-	31	41	36	41	70	46	46	40	40	36	35	31	42	581	72.62
5. Circumstances	4	19	-	5	-	-	-	-	4	9	5	-	-	-	46	5.75
6. Money	18	34	26	31	29	37	19	36	36	29	16	29	14	30	384	48.00
7. Church	4	9	-	4	-	4	6	-	11	-	-	-	4	-	42	5.25

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawmpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High school Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary school Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - IX: Influence of Underground Mizo National Front on Constitutional Elections.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	(%)
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. Evident in all elections	31	32	11	4	11	10	25	10	21	20	16	5	6	4	201	25.12
2. Evident in most elections	-	16	9	26	11	15	14	25	20	19	4	20	4	23	184	23.00
3. Evident in some elections	11	19	29	16	30	21	11	14	5	4	5	6	21	15	207	25.87
4. Evident in few Elections	-	-	-	-	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	11	-	47	5.87
5. Evident in none of elections	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	4	4	23	2.87

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village, 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff, 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals, 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers, 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - X: Impact of mass-media, economic and educational progress on Mizo toward national integration.

Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total (%)	
No. of Respondents	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
<u>Responses</u>																
1. Prefer Hindi Film	-	10	-	5	11	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	34	4.25
2. Prefer English Film	21	39	6	41	82	31	45	47	48	41	31	47	40	43	562	70.25
3. Indian TV Programme is better	-	25	-	9	19	-	16	5	5	16	5	10	18	11	139	17.37
4. Bangladesh TV Programme is better	11	6	11	39	72	32	31	31	41	31	16	32	32	31	416	52.00
5. Do not admire Hindi characters in film	22	26	36	36	41	27	31	36	31	34	31	41	21	32	445	55.62
6. Admire Hindi characters in film	4	27	6	14	50	21	14	14	16	6	11	6	24	11	224	28.00
7. Coverage of Mizoram by national papers is good	-	8	-	16	10	-	-	15	-	5	-	6	4	7	71	8.87
8. Coverage of Mizoram by national papers poor	26	40	45	31	75	45	37	31	45	44	22	43	44	33	561	70.12
9* Do not like Hindi devotional music from AIR	25	21	6	16	81	27	26	27	26	25	11	21	36	31	379	47.37
10. Indifferent towards national integration programmes	30	65	45	40	50	36	17	27	34	31	22	30	25	40	492	61.50
11. Appreciate national integration programmes	15	30	5	11	35	10	30	18	15	15	14	20	24	8	250	31.25

Contd.

*Response No. 9 is not a ready made answer provided to the respondent but an expression mentioned by them among the various items of All India Radio (Aizawl Station) programme which they do not like.

Table - X (Contd.)

Section	No. of Respondents														Total (%)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
<u>Responses</u>	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	800	
12. National Anthem- cannot sing it heartily	21	66	41	51	81	50	41	42	35	44	21	45	34	38	610	76.25
13. National Anthem - can sing it heartily	5	10	6	-	18	-	-	-	11	6	7	5	14	7	89	11.12
14. Govt. financial help - have received	4	25	6	-	50	11	20	18	9	24	16	14	11	11	219	27.37
15. Govt. financial help - have never received	31	75	43	41	50	38	28	28	38	21	21	32	36	31	513	64.12
16. Economic improvement helps national integration	6	11	11	11	31	-	4	25	6	10	-	6	21	23	165	20.62
17. Economic improvement does not help national integration	21	56	31	26	65	41	36	25	41	40	16	43	22	23	486	60.74
18. Progress in education helps national integration	16	14	-	-	28	-	5	18	5	5	-	-	10	8	109	13.62
19. Progress in education does help national integration	15	54	36	21	40	36	31	24	34	14	17	31	25	26	404	50.50
20. Progress in education has reverse effect on national integration	9	26	7	28	30	14	9	6	9	31	-	17	15	12	213	26.62

Section: 1. Labourers, 2. Farmers of Kawnpui Village, 3. Farmers of Thenzawl Village
 4. High School Students, 5. College Students, 6. Govt. Fourth Grade Staff,
 7. Govt. Clerical Staff, 8. Govt. Junior Officers, 9. Professionals,
 10. Businessmen, 11. Primary School Teachers, 12. Middle School Teachers,
 13. High School Teachers, 14. College Teachers.

Table - XI: A Comparative Study of Votes Polled and Seats Captured by Regional Parties and National Parties in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly Elections.

Year of Election	1972		1978		1979		1982		1984		1987		Remarks
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	
Regional Parties	49	70	43	77	55	73	66	73	56	30	64	68	The number of Regional Parties vary over the years.
National Parties	32	20	37	17	37	23	34	23	40	67	33	33	Only Congress is prominent
Independents	18	10	15	6	8	4	-	4	4	3	3	3	Independent candidates unpopular

(a) = Percentage of votes polled by the parties to the total valid votes

(b) = Percentage of seats captured in the Assembly. Total number of seats was 30 till 1984 election. It was raised to 40 since 1987 election as Mizoram had attained full statehood.

Notes: 1. 1979 election was a mid-term election necessitated by the resignation of the People's Conference ministry as a consequence of major split of the party.

2. 1982 Election was a by-election in four constituencies on account of the resignation of four MLAs of the People's Conference (B).

- Source: 1. Report on Gen. Election to the Mizoram U.T. Legislative Assembly, 1972, Election Dept. Mizoram.
 2. Gen. Election (Mizoram Assembly) Results, 1978, Information Centre, PIB, GOI, Aizawl.
 3. Mizoram U.T. Results - Election to the Legislative Assembly, 1979, Information Centre, PIB, GOI, Aizawl.
 4. 1982 by-election to Mizoram Legislative Assembly, Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram.
 5. 1984 Election Result, compiled by T.Lalmachhuana and J. Lalhangliana.
 6. Party-wise position of votes polled in the Gen. Election to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, 1987, compiled by the Mizoram Election Office, Aizawl.

Table - XII: Votes polled and percentages thereof, by the two parties in the 1952 District Council and Assembly Elections.

Year: 1952

Party	District Council	Assembly
Mizo Union	30,672 (76)	29,108 (69)
UMFO	7,532 (18)	9,069 (31)
Total	38,204 (94)	38,177 (100)

Source: Chaltuahkhuma, Political History of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1981, pp. 77-8.

Table - XIII: Votes polled by parties in 1957 Elections (with percentage)

Year: 1957

Party	District Council	Assembly
Mizo Union	20,511 (50)	19,771 (46)
U M F O	18,069 (43)	19,954 (46)
Mizo Union (Faction)	2,933 (7)	3,872 (8)
Total	41,513 (100)	43,597 (100)

Source: Chaltuahkhuma, Op.cit., pp. 89-90.

Table - XIV: Comparative positions of parties in 1952 and 1957 elections.

(Figures indicate percentage of votes polled by the party)

Party	District Council			Assembly		
	1952	1957	Difference	1952	1957	Difference
Mizo Union	76	50	-26	69	46	-23
U M F O	18	43	+25	31	46	+15

Table - XV: District Council and Assembly Elections 1962.

Year: 1962

Party	District Council (Aizawl sub-Divn. only)*	Assembly
Mizo Union	25,078 (50)	21,653 (47)
Eastern India Tribal Union	14,338 (29)	14,934 (32)
Congress	6,492 (11)	9,789 (21)
Mizo National Front	1,186 (2)	did not contest
Independents	2,588 (5)	Nil
Total	49,683 (97)	46,376 (100)

*Of the 7 constituencies of Lunglei Sub-Divn, 3 were taken by MU, the other 4 were for the Pawi-Lakher region. Figures for these areas are not available.

Source: Chaltuahkhuma, Op.cit., pp. 100-2.

Table - XVI: District Council Election, 1970.

Year: 1970

Party	No. of seats captured
Mizo Union	9 (41)
Congress	10 (45.4)
Independents	3 (13.6)

Source: R. Vanlawma, Ka Ram Leh Kei, p. 266.Table - XVII: Elections to the Lok Sabha.

Years: 1977, 1980, 1984.

Party	1977	1980	1984
1. People's Conference	52.93	42.00	Candidate rejected
2. Congress	37.70	n.a.	Elected unopposed
3. Mizo Union	8.47	n.a.	Not contested.
4. Independents	1.48	n.a.	n.a.
5. Steering Committee*	n.a.	58.00	n.a.

*It was an alliance of all opposition parties.

n.a. = not arise.

Source: 1. Gen. Elections to the Lok Sabha 1977, Mizoram, A Statistical Report, Chief Electoral Officer, Aizawl.

2. Gen. Election to the L.S., 1980, Mizoram, CEO, Aizawl.

Table - XVIII: Mizoram Assembly Elections: 1972, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1984, 1987.

Party	1972		1978		1979 ⁴		1982 ⁴		1984		1987	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1. Indian National Congress	6	31	4	22	5	24	-	34	19	40	13	33
2. Mizo Union	21	36	-	7	-	8	1	10	-	4	-	-
3. People's Conference	n.a.	n.a.	23	39	18	33	3	36	8	37	3	24
4. Mizo Labour Party	-	14	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Socialist Party	-	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Janata	n.a.	n.a.	1	15	2	13	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Mizo Democratic Front	n.a.	n.a.	-	2	-	6	*	*	*	*	*	*
8. People's Conference (B)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4	14	*	*	*	*	*	*
9. Mizo Convention	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	13	*	*
10. Mizo Peace Forum	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	3	*	*
11. Mizo National Front	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	24	37
12. Mizo National Union	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	3
13. Independents	3	18	2	15	1	8	-	21	1	4	-	3

(a) = No. of seats captured in the Assembly. (b) = Percentage of votes polled.
n.a. = Not arise. * stands for 'ceased to exist'

≠ 1979 was a year in which mid-term general elections were held. It was necessitated by the withdrawal of support by 8 PC MLAs and the subsequent promulgation of President's rule in 1978.

1982 was a year in which by-elections were held in four constituencies after 4 PC(B) MLAs resigned.

Source: Election Results published by various agencies of the Govt. of Mizoram, Government of India and Independent agencies.

Table - XIX: Decadal Variation in Mizoram Population Since 1901.

Year	Decade Variation			Percentage Decade Variation
	2	3	4	
1901	82,434	-	-	-
1911	91,204	+ 8,770		+ 10.64
1921	98,406	+ 7,202		+ 7.90
1931	1,24,404	+ 25,998		+ 26.42
1941	1,52,786	+ 28,382		+ 22.81
1951	1,96,202	+ 43,416		+ 28.42
1961	2,66,063	+ 69,861		+ 35.61
1971	3,32,390	+ 66,327		+ 24.93
1981	4,93,757	+161,367		+ 48.55

Source: Census of India 1981, Series 31-Mizoram, Part IIA
General Population Tables, p. 26.

Table - XX: Classification of Main Workers* (Occupationwise).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total Main workers and % of the total population		Cultivators & their % to total main workers	Agri. labourers & their % to marginal workers	Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards, etc.	Mining & Quarrying	Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing, Repairs	Constructing	Trade & Commerce	Transport, Storage, Communications	Others
URBAN	40,433	8,303	2,938	613	122	3,022	2,312	3,960	1,227	17,938
RURAL	165,631	137,252	2,183	900	18	1,410	3,406	1,547	594	18,332
Total	206,064	145,555	5,121	1,513	140	4,432	5,718	5,507	1,821	36,270
	(41.73)	(70.63)	(2.48)	(0.73)	(0.07)	(2.15)	(2.77)	(2.67)	(0.88)	(17.60)

Source: Census of India 1981, series-31 Mizoram, General Economics Tables and Social and Cultural Tables, pp. 32-42.

*Main Workers are those who are engaged 183 days or more in the occupation during the preceding year of the Census. Those who are engaged in any occupation less than this number of days are termed either as Marginal Workers and/or non-workers, as the case may be.

Table - XXI: Major Communities in Mizoram on the basis of Mother Tongue as in the year 1971.

Mother Tongue	No. of persons Using	Percentage to the total population
1. Lushai/Mizo	251,136	75.55
2. Chakma	23,236	6.99
3. Lakher	11,625	3.50
4. Pawi	10,320	3.10
5. Reang	9,828	2.96
6. Hindi	5,224	1.57
7. Gorkhali/Nepali	4,557	1.37
8. Hmar	4,524	1.36
9. Paite	3,220	0.97
10. Bengali	1,819	0.55
11. Malayalam	1,383	0.42

Source: Census 1971 Mizoram (Census Handbook, Director of Census Operations, Assam, p. 155-7.

Note: Only those whose number of persons using the Mother Tongue is over 1000 are shown here. The figures for 1981 on the basis of Mother Tongue cannot be shown as the Census Operations have categorically left out this aspect.

Table - XXII: Six Major Religions in Mizoram.

Category	1971	1981	% of increase
1. Population of Mizoram	332,390	493,757	48.55
2. Christians	286,141(86.08)	413,840(83.81)	44.63
3. Buddhists	22,647(6.81)	40,429(8.19)	78.52
4. Hindus	21,229(6.39)	25,245(7.14)	66.02
5. Muslims	1,882(0.57)	2,205(0.45)	17.16
6. Sikhs	427(0.13)	421(0.09)	- 1.41
7. Jains	3()	11()	266.67

Source: Census of India 1981, Series-31, Mizoram (paper i of 1985), Household population by religion of household, Director of Census Operations, Mizoram, p. vii.

Notes: 'Buddhists' are mainly Chakma Speaking people, and 'Muslims' are mainly Bengali speaking people coming to Mizoram from Cachar District and Karimganj area of Assam.

Table - XXIII: Area and Production of Principal Crops.

Sl. No.	Name of Crop	Area in hect.	Production in quintals
1	2	3	4
1.	Paddy	64,100	299,800
2.	Maize	5,090	40,000
3.	Potato	877	85,160
4.	Sugarcane (in gur)	3,100	124,000
5.	Pulses	320	900
6.	Vegetables	985	18,028

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Mizoram, 1981,
 Directorate of Economics and Statistics,
 Government of Mizoram, pp. 118-9.

APPENDIX - B1. LALDENGA'S SPEECH AS THE CHIEF MNF NEGOTIATOR FOR PEACE*

Occasion: His Visit to Mizoram after 15 years of MNF underground movement.

Place: Zemabawk Helipad, Aizawl.

Date: August 26, 1981.

He (God) out of love and fondest endearment made Mizo Nation.¹ He gave us this land and laid its boundaries. This Zoram² rightly is a gift we received from God for our habitation and sustenance. Let us, therefore, remind ourselves that this land of ours is our greatest heritage from God ... (Commenting on the Talks with the Government of India, he went on saying). It appears in general that something like the Nagaland government can be worked out. Yet, we do not feel that therein will be the survival and security of our nation ... Our proposals to the reaching of settlement are not for the greatness of Zoram in order that it may hold its head over that of others. They are to the effect that we can be part of the secular, socialist and democratic India contentedly. They are not made out of a mind for isolating Zoram. Rather, they are made so that we may participate in it with true peace of mind. We, a small stock of Zofa³ cannot at all become part of millions of Indian people, unless we first put our feet on a firm and even ground. For we may become a lost nation swept away by the cultural waves of other people. Therefore, I feel it is a high time that the Government of India and the people become aware with us that we are seeking for a safeguard that our nation may grow and develop along with our participation in their system.

*These are excerpts from the speech, which was originally given in Mizo. Its English rendering is given by the author. Its original text was published by Chhantlang Publication Board.

1. Laldenga used the term 'hnam' in Mizo which can be translated as 'nation', 'tribe', 'clan' and 'people', of which 'nation' is the most common term used in the MNF vocabulary.
2. 'Zoram' is a short form of 'Mizoram'.
3. 'Zofa' is a term applied to refer to all Mizo people, sometimes 'Zofate', meaning literally 'the children of Zo or Zoram'.

2. LALDENGA'S SPEECH AFTER THE SIGNING OF MIZO ACCORD - EXCERPTS

Occasion: A big public rally to celebrate the coming of peace.

Place: The Assam Rifles Parade Ground, Aizawl.

Date: July 5, 1986.

First, I would like to speak briefly about the Peace Accord. We do not say this Accord is the most laudable thing. It is neither our highest wish nor the greatest gift of Indian Government. But, when we put our heads together with our friends in today's India, Mizoram and our neighbouring countries, we do not know anything better which we can make

I want you very much to understand clearly that this Accord is not something like a fruit which is borne by our efforts to be our portion, but only a ground where we have to begin. Setting our feet on an even ground from this Peace Accord, we the people of Mizoram will rule our land, and then proceed forward. Therefore, this Accord is only the first step

Our first task is social reformation. It is a time we the people become owners of the land, neither worshipping the rich people nor offering prayers to the wealthy. It is a sorry affair that all the governments that have come into existence since the British time turned out to be oppressive governments. In the New Mizoram, therefore, we will put the government as the servant of the people to serve the people. They will not rule over us.

... Now, Mizoram is known all over the world. Our Peace Accord is published everywhere, from America, from Australia and from Britain. That we are known by the world is because we are Mizo. The world knows us because of Mizo Nation and because of those who have strived to build up Mizo Nation. It is neither because of those who try to build up Chinese Nation nor those who work for the Indian Nation. Do not forget even once that God made us to be Mizo Nation in order that this nation may stand up and become honourable.

Translation into English done by the author. Here also, 'hnam' is translated as 'nation'. The full text was published and circulated by the HUNTHAR, a local daily, as a Supplement.

... Let us all know, therefore, that this Nation can do things and it can stand on its own. So, we do not have any need of looking for people from other nations to lead our nation. God gives us people from among ourselves to lead Mizo Nation. Therefore, let the one to lead this nation be a Mizo always.

3. LALDENGA'S SPEECH WHILE HE WAS AN MNF-CONGRESS (I)
COALITION CHIEF MINISTER - EXCERPTS

Occasion: Farewell Meeting for Mizo National Army Personnel.

Place: Remna Run (Peace Camp), Luangmual, Aizawl.

Date: October 4, 1986.

... In every village I have visited, people, young and old, children and adults, have given me a very warm welcome. The reason for that is this: They know we are sincere and genuinely concerned about our land; that we really work for our land; that many of us have laid down our lives in its service; that we are continuing to work. They want to see this genuine sincerity.

... We are not cheaters, nor play-actors. They know we are not teaching them falsehood. This attracts them. They do not come just to see our faces, though good looking as we are. You must take home this genuine sincerity. You joined the Mizo National Army because you were sincere, even to the extent of dying. You must take home that genuine sincerity undiluted by anything.

... It is only this genuine sincerity that will save our land. It is the only reason for hope. Do not forget it. This is what they like most to see.... We do not allow your sincerity to be muddied by drinks, girls, corruption and laziness. Let your genuineness be shown to Mizoram. This will bring them together.... What Mizoram needs is this genuine sincerity.... Many of our youngmen, our elders, our brothers, our leaders have laid down their lives. They did not pretend to be dead. They actually died FOR OUR LAND.

Translation from Mizo done by the author. The full text was issued by the Publicity Department, MNF General Headquarters, Aizawl, Mizoram.

... Let us tread on the path of our Martyrs, for we don't have any other way. There is no way except this, for our Land. But, we are now going without resort to violence. We will proceed on, holding our Peace Accord. Forward we will go. Nobody can obstruct us. Let your heart not forget that we are leading our land.

... Do not forget that it is in your hand even now. We are the leaders and the ones responsible for Zoram. The prosperity of Zoram is on our shoulders. We do not have another way, because of our brothers' blood... Mizoram will never be honoured if people take another way, belittling all the sufferings we have gone through during the last twenty years.

... If our land does not honour those sufferings, Mizoram will never be honoured at any time. Nobody will respect it. If the deaths and sufferings of people for the last twenty years are not honoured and are not strong factors in the election, though I am not a prophet, yet I tell you, THIS LAND WILL NEVER STAND UP AGAIN, for nobody will again suffer for it.... Who will suffer again for those who despise sufferings?

APPENDIX - C

1. EXCERPTS FROM BRIG. T. SAILO'S OPENING ADDRESS, AS A
CONVENER OF THE CONVENTION OF NORTH EAST HILL AREAS
REGIONAL PARTIES

Place: Shillong

Date: May 19, 1977.

I wish to reiterate that each of our states needs to have a regional party due to our peculiar problems and upto a certain point of time. Further more, the last Lok Sabha election has amply shown that our people are deeply wedded to the concept of regional party in our respective states. However, I also wish to point out and am sure you will all agree with me, that ours is a party regional in character but with a positive national outlook. At this stage, 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 matters of national importance. This will not be the right attitude because main events at national level also concern us intimately because we are a part of the same country. Secondly, and vice-versa, national leaders in Delhi, looking at things from an overall 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.

Taken from the full text of the speech.

2. EXCERPTS FROM THE MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF MIZORAM TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA IN 1974
ON
CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONSHIP IN MIZORAM
AS
SEEN BY BRIG. T. SAILO

During the years 1966-73 when I was serving in the Indian Army, many instances of atrocities, misbehaviour of the Security Forces towards the people of Mizoram came to my notice through local newspapers, public conversation and through private letters. In short, the image of the Indian Army has reached its bottom so far as the general public in Mizoram are concerned. This has personally affected me and caused agony to my feelings because of the fact that I am basically a Mizo and at the same time I have been a soldier of the Indian Army for over thirty years. Mizo is in my blood and the Indian Army is in my flesh and bones. During 1966-67 and whenever there had been an opportunity I had spoken to the senior officers of the Army involved in the Military operations in Mizoram about the image of the Indian Army which has gone down tremendously in the public eyes.

On my retirement from the Army in 1974 I decided to come to Mizoram and see things for myself. In the course of my meetings with the various sections of the people the same sorry tales of the excesses committed by the Security Forces on the general population of Mizoram have been repeated time and again during conversation, through newspapers and again in private letters. I find the people in general utterly disgusted with the Indian soldiers. They are bitter to the extreme towards the Security Forces. In almost all the villages, what the villagers see and know of India is the Security Forces antagonised against and alienated from India. To a villager an Indian soldier is India. He has not seen India except this Indian soldier. Therefore, who represent India to the people of Mizoram but the Security Forces?

What an irony of fate that has come about in Mizoram. I remember before 1966 the Mizo people respected and admired the soldiers. Hundreds of young Mizos wanted to join the Indian Army. Today, the position has been reversed altogether.

As a matter of fact even today a few odd cases either of individual soldiers or of Regiments, who have behaved well are talked about with respect. As an example, a battalion of 3rd Gurkha operating in South Mizoram in 1967, 1968, 1969 are still remembered and talked about with respect and appreciation. People mentioned with pleasure and eagerness some individual officers who have done their duties correctly. If there is an encounter between the Security Forces and the MNF and if the latter suffered serious casualties, the local public understand that and talk no more about it. However, they cannot help talking about atrocities and ill-treatment inflicted on the innocent public.

Let us say there is an encounter at point X five miles from village A. After the encounter the Security Forces either burn down village A or beat up the male members of that village or the first group of civilians whom the security Forces meet after the encounter at point X. What a logic. What would you achieve by this type of reprisal? It only generates bitterness and hatred. This instance can be multiplied by the scores. It had happened so many times. In many an encounter or ambush the Security Forces have hardly been able to punish or arrest the real MNF soldiers. But almost invariably they have punished the innocent public nearest to the place of encounter/ambush.

The Security Forces have also grossly abused the special power given to them, namely, arresting a person on suspicion. In many cases they would wrongfully detain such persons for long period of time and torture them. Sometimes they use this method as a weapon of intimidation. If a villager reports to higher civil authorities against the wrong-doing of the Security Forces in his village the latter will arrest him as being suspected of being an MNF sympathiser and threaten him with dire consequences.

Another instances of bitterness against the Security Forces is occasioned by their utter disrespect to the church congregation. The Security Forces suspect some MNF or their agents as being present in the church congregation on a Sunday. They would come and drive the congregation out of the church in a most vulgar manner and herd them together in the open ground outside for a long periods in spite of rain or sunshine. What a cruel and foolish way of doing things.

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 adopted in the years 1966-67, namely, wholesale evacuation of villages to the so-called grouping centres, reminiscent of a concentration camp. The Security Forces have tried to intimidate the public with all manners of atrocities and ill-treatment. However, this strong-arm method has not brought about any solution. On the contrary, it has driven the solution even further away. It has only engendered bitterness and hatred against the Security Forces and consequently, India. If, on the other hand, the soldiers had done their duties correctly the political situation in Mizoram would have been different today. If a Mizo, who has nothing to do with the MNF, speaks the truth and talks about the atrocities and excesses of the Security Forces, he is regarded as an MNF sympathiser and taken as suspect by the Civil authorities and the Indian Army here in Mizoram. This cannot be called wisdom.

I feel that I have a role to play towards restoring goodwill, mutual understanding and co-operation between the Security Forces and the Mizo Public. With the help of friends the Human Rights Committee has been organised towards this end.

The Human Rights Committee has started on a programme of public education as to where the soldier's duty lies and how the public should co-operate within the bounds of law. The Human Rights Committee will also encourage the villagers to report truthfully without exaggeration, any incident of misbehaviour of the Security Forces to the highest authorities in India. In sum, the Human Rights Committee wish that the public of India should be taken into confidence so that they should know the true state of affairs in Mizoram.

Human Rights Committee had collected about 36 concrete cases showing details of atrocities/misbehaviours committed by the Security Forces. These cases are attached as annexure-1 - 36. These are concrete cases giving specific dates, time of occurrence, the names of the culprits, the names of the victims and their addresses. They can be verified on the ground in a matter of one month by an impartial team of inquiry.

It is submitted that these 36 annexures represent only a fraction of several hundreds of cases which had happened since 1966. An impartial team can come and verify these thirty cases. They will then report back to the Prime Minister of India who will then realise that the remaining several hundreds are bound to be correct. The obvious conclusion is that the senior Army Officers in command of troops operating in Mizoram since 1966 have let down their Prime Minister and the people of India.

The Human Rights Committee therefore, had recommended to the Prime Minister of India that a Judicial Commission of inquiry consisting of retired High Court Judges should be instituted to verify the truth contained in these 36 annexures. Giving suitable transport to move about it will not take more than one month to complete the task of verification. They are all concrete cases. Or else, a Parliamentary delegation including Opposition MPs can be entrusted with the task of verification.

Prior to submission of this paper to the Prime Minister of India, Human Rights Committee had considered three possible alternatives, namely:

1. to submit this paper to the Prime Minister of India.
- OR
2. to submit this report to all MPS.
- OR
3. to submit this report to prominent citizens of India.

After due consideration, the Human Rights Committee decided to submit this paper to the Prime Minister of India because we have full confidence in her and we are hopeful that she will take steps to reveal the truths contained in the annexures by instituting an impartial enquiry as suggested above.

It is a well known fact that the Indian people, in particular their leaders have been the champion of Human Rights both at home and abroad and in various international forums. We are, therefore, confident the Prime Minister will surely see that the Human Rights of the Mizo people so far suppressed are upheld with due regard to our constitutional propriety thereby restoring the rule of Law which has been absent all these eight long years in Mizoram.

3. BRIG. T. SAILO'S SPEECH ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION BILL

Occasion: Public Meeting at Aizawl in Protest of
Freedom of Religion Bill.

Date: May 11, 1979

1. India is one of the greatest democratic countries in the world. India is a secular state. The Constitution of India guarantees by Article 25(1) freedom to profess, practise and propagate the religion of one's choice. This is one of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed to all the citizens of India enshrined in the Constitution of our country. It is unfortunate however, that the spirit behind the constitutional safeguard is being gradually eroded due to pressure from shortsighted fanatics and those who have vested interests. The unfortunate development after Nehru-Shastri era have caused anxiety among the people of Mizoram and Christians all over the country.

2. The Backward and Tribal peoples of this country are genuinely agitated and concerned about the calculated manner by which they are being harassed and slyly alienated in the name of integration. Started with the infamous Niyogi Committee report in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, then to the notorious Arunachal Bill - and now with the O.P. Tyagi's "Freedom of Religion Bill" being introduced to the Parliament the Christians in this country cannot but feel that there is a calculated effort to alienate the Christians, and other minority religious groups from the mainstream of the national life and make them second class citizens in this country of their own. Many experts are also of the opinion that legislations with such vicious motives are a violation of the Fundamental Rights enshrined in Article 25(1) of the Constitution of India as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. I would therefore, urge upon the Centre to reconsider the entire matter relating to religion and freedom of worship enshrined in the Constitution and also to take a note of apprehension of the people of Mizoram, the members of all the scheduled Tribes and the Christian Community in the country and cause the Freedom of Religion Bill now before the Parliament to be withdrawn.

4. The Freedom of Religion Bill now before Parliament cannot, but be construed as to having such ulterior motives as to harass and create difficulties for the Christians in particular and for other minority religious groups in general. A careful scrutiny of Mr. O.P. Tyagi's Bill reveals that normal religious lives of individual Christians and functioning of Christian Organisations will no longer be possible if the bill was passed and enacted as intended. The law of the land under Indian Penal Code has sufficient provisions to take care of those religious organisations and institutions who have acted in violation of the existing laws of the land. Why is it necessary now to introduce such thing as "Freedom of Religion Bill?" All Indian citizens have the right of their political beliefs without state interference. Their equally important right to believe in and belong to the religion of their choice should not be threatened directly or indirectly. I do hope and believe that the Govt. of India will listen sympathetically to the prayers of millions of Christians in the country and withdraw the Bill now being introduced by Mr. O.P. Tyagi in the Parliament. I would also further appeal that the religious freedom of the citizens, especially the minority community are not being denied directly or indirectly at any time in the country.

4. BRIG. T. SAILO'S REACTION TO 'QUIT MIZORAM' NOTICE
ISSUED BY THE UNDERGROUND MNF TO NON-MIZOS IN MIZORAM
 (BROADCAST BY AIR, AIZAWL ON JUNE 4, 1979)

In June 1978, when People's Conference Party formed a Ministry it took a pledge to work and bring about achieving these two objectives from the day we assumed office. However, a few disgruntled P.C. MLAs unfortunately withdrew their support and the Ministry had to go out of office before our cherished goals were achieved. We have once again come to power with popular mandate and with redoubled vigour and determination to achieve lasting peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, at this juncture, some misguided elements have issued a notice under the caption 'Non-Mizos to quit Mizoram before 1st July 1979' threatening them with dire consequences if they fail to do so. This is politically motivated by self-centered motive and is to prevent peace and prosperity from coming to Mizoram and therefore

is not in the interest of Mizoram. I strongly disapprove of such threat to a section of our society from any quarter. Any lawless activities will be firmly dealt with. Security measures are being tightened to meet any eventualities and to maintain law and order. No one can be allowed to disturb peace which is the long cherished desire of our people. I may sound a note of warning to those who either out of mischief or for imaginary political gains indulge in rumour mongering and false propaganda. This is not in our interest. I appeal to you all in Mizoram. It is the duty of all right-thinking people to ensure the safety of their non-Mizo brethren.

It is unfortunate that in a territory where the majority of the population belongs to the Christian faith there are elements who preach violence and hatred. No Christian having true faith in God will allow such a rancour to prevail.

Because of the notice under the caption mentioned above, Peace, which has been prevailing in Mizoram for the last two years is likely to be disturbed. In the event of disturbances breaking out again in Mizoram, the authors of the "Quit Mizoram" notice are solely responsible. I therefore, earnestly appeal to them to reconsider and desist from their contemplated action. These they should surely do if they have love for the Mizo people.

5. BRIG. T. SAILO'S LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER MRS. INDIRA GANDHI ON THE PROBLEMS OF CHAKMA INFLUX IN MIZORAM, JUNE 14, 1982

Dear Respected Prime Minister,

You will perhaps recall that during the height of agitation by the Assam students on foreign national issue you called all the Chief Ministers of the North Eastern States/Union Territories for discussion with you at your office in Delhi. This was some time towards the end of March 1980. During the course of the meeting you asked us, the Chief Ministers, whether we also had the problem of foreign national issue. I replied to you that we did have a very live problem of foreign national issue in Mizoram,

namely the influx of Chakmas from Bangladesh and the infiltration of Nepalese from Nepal. I further said that this problem greatly exercised the minds of the Mizo public as a whole. I also added that since you had so much problems on your hand then, I and my colleagues would try our best to persuade our people from launching an agitation on the issue of foreign nationals for the time being. By and large, we have succeeded in persuading our people from the idea of agitation but the issue is a very live problem to our people who expect us to take up the issue through negotiations as early as possible.

2. I am now writing this letter to you on the issue of the influx of Chakmas of Bangladesh into Mizoram.

3. The Chakmas are Buddhist tribals from Chittagong Hilltracts of Bangladesh. Chakma hilltracts directly borders Mizoram. The Chakma population is of the order of 6 - 8 lakhs (population of Mizoram today is about 4 lakhs).

4. During the British days that is, before 1947, Chakmas used to apply for permission to settle in villages bordering the then East Bengal (now Bangladesh). The British Government used to sparingly grant permission to the Chakma applicants to settle in the Mizo villages with a clear stipulation that they were the subjects of the hereditary chieftains of the villages. The total number of Chakmas permitted to settle in the Mizo villages upto 1947 was round about 3,000 approximately. After 1947, due to various reasons, there was a certain amount of relaxation or slackness in watching the entry of Chakmas into Mizoram on the border. In other words, the Chakmas kept on infiltrating into Mizoram over the years and Mizoram Government were, to put it bluntly, negligent in that no real check was made.

5. 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 a strip of land of the territory of Mizoram along the border has been made into a Chakma district, to accommodate foreign national. This is entirely wrong action on the part of the then authorities. And in course of time, more and more Chakmas infiltrated into Mizoram. The 1981 Census will possibly give a figure of 20,000 - 30,000 Chakmas as opposed to the 2 or 3 thousand odd Chakmas granted permission to settle in Mizo villages prior to 1947. This situation is ominous.

6. Recently, Government of India had realised the possible consequences as a result of uncontrolled influx of Chakmas into Mizoram and have shown great attention to the local feelings and sentiments of the people of Mizoram in this regard by giving suitable direction to detect and push back any Chakmas who cross over to Mizoram. A fairly substantial number had been pushed back. The Government of India had directed that the Army units deployed in Mizoram for insurgency duty should be made responsible for detecting and pushing back of Chakmas infiltrators. One BSF Battalion under the operational control of the Army is deployed along the border and is entrusted with the task of detecting and pushing back Chakma infiltrators.

7. The Security Forces deployed on the border are successful, though not entirely, in detecting and pushing back Chakma infiltrators. What the people of Mizoram are exercised and agitated about is the question of Chakma infiltrators in the recent past, say the last 10-20 years. Our people can perhaps reconcile themselves to the idea of accepting those Chakmas who came into Mizoram in the '40s and '50s but are greatly exercised about those who came into Mizoram in the 60s and 70s. Here lies the main issue.

8. Our people do not easily take to agitation but the fact is that they are greatly exercised about this issue.

9. I shall be grateful if you can have this matter examined at the appropriate level of the appropriate Ministry. I and my colleagues desire to meet you on this issue after you have got the matter thoroughly examined.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- BRIG. T. SAILO

Smt. Indira Gandhi
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

APPENDIX - DMIZORAM ACCORD - 1986

(Full Text)

MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENTPREAMBLE

1. Government of India have all along been making earnest effort to bring about an end to the disturbed condition in Mizoram and to restore peace and harmony.
2. Toward this ends, initiative was taken by the late Prime Minister Smti Indira Gandhi on the acceptance by Shri Laldenga on behalf of the Mizo National Front (MNF) of the two conditions, namely, cessation of violence by MNF and to hold talks within the framework of the constitutions. A series of discussions were held with Shri Laldenga. Settlement on various issues reached during the course of talks is incorporated in the following paragraphs.

RESTORATION OF NORMALCY

3.1 With a view to restoring peace and Normalcy in Mizoram the MNF Party, on their part undertake within the agreed time-frame, to bring out all underground personnel of the MNF with their arms, ammunitions, and equipments, to ensure their return to civil life, to abjure violence and generally in help in the process of restoration of normalcy. The modalities of bringing out all underground personnel and the deposit of arms, ammunitions and equipments will be as worked out. The implementation of the foregoing will be under the supervision of the Central Government.

3.2 The MNF party will take immediate steps to amend its articles of Association so as to make them conform to the provision of Law.

3.3 The Central Government will take steps for the settlement and rehabilitation of underground after considering the scheme proposed in this regard by the Government of Mizoram.

3.4 The MNF will not undertake to extend any support to the Tripura/Tripura National Volunteer (TNV) Peoples Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and any other such group by way of training, supply of arms or providing protection or in any other matters.

LEGAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER STEPS

4.1 With a view satisfying the desires and aspirations of all sections of the people of Mizoram, the Government will initiate measures to confer Statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram subject to the other stipulation contained in this memorandum of Settlement.

4.2 To give effect to the above, the necessary Legislative and administrative measures will be undertaken, including those for the enactment of Bills for the amendment of the constitution and other laws for the conferment of Statehood as aforesaid, to come into effect on a date to be notified by the Central Government.

4.3 The amendment aforesaid shall provide, among other things, for the following.

I. The territory of Mizoram shall consist of the territory specified in section 6 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

II. Notwithstanding anything contained in the constitution, no Act of Parliament in respect of (a) Religion or Social practices of the Mizos, (b) Mizo customary Law or procedure, (c) administration of Civil and Criminal Justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary Law, (d) 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.

III. Article 170 Clause (1) shall, in relation to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, have effect as if for the word 'sixty' the word 'forty' has been substituted.

5. Soon after the Bill of Conferment of Statehood becomes Law, and when the President is satisfied that normalcy has returned and that conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections to the Legislative Assembly will be initiated.

6. . (a) The Central will transfer resource to the new Government keeping in view the change in Status from a Union Territory to a State and will include resources to cover the revenue gap for the year. (b) Central assistance for Plan will be fixed taking note of any residuary gap in resources so as to sustain the approved Plan outlay and the pattern of assistance will be as in the case of Special category State.

7. Border trade in locally produced or grown agricultural commodities could be allowed under a scheme to be formulated by the Central Government, subject to international arrangement with neighbouring Countries.

8. The Innerline Regulation, as now in force in Mizoram, will not be amended or repealed without consulting the State Government.

OTHER MATTERS

9. The rights and privileges of the minorities in Mizoram as envisaged in the constitution, shall continue to be preserved and protected and their social and economic advancement shall be ensured.

10. Steps will be taken by the Government of Mizoram at the earliest to review and codify the existing customs, practices, law or other usages relating to the matters specified in Clauses (a) to (b) of para 4.3 (II) of the memorandum, keeping in view that an individual Mizo may prefer to be governed by Acts of Parliament dealing with such matters and which are of general application.

11. The question of Unification of Mizo inhabited areas of other States to form one administrative unit was raised by the MNF delegation. It was pointed out to them, on

behalf of the Government of India, that Article 3 of the constitution of India describes the procedure in this regard but that the Government cannot make any commitment in this respect.

12. It was also pointed out on behalf of the Government that as soon as Mizoram becomes a State:

- (i) The Provisions of Part XVII of the Provision of the constitution will apply and the State will be at liberty to adopt any one or more language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the State.
- (ii) It is open to the State to move for the establishment of the separate University in the State in accordance with the prescribed procedure.
- (iii) In the light of the Prime Minister's Statement at the Joint Conference of the Chief Justices, Chief Minister and Law Ministers held at New Delhi on 31st Aug. 1985 Mizoram will be entitled to have a High Court of its own if it so wishes.

13. (a) It was noted that there is already a scheme in force for payment of exgratia amount to heirs/dependants of persons who were killed during disturbances in 1966 and thereafter in the Union Territory of Mizoram. Arrangement will be made to expeditiously disburse payment to those eligible persons who have already applied but who had not been made such payment so far.

(b) It was noted that consequence on verification done by a joint team of officers, the Government of India had already made arrangement for payment of compensation in respect of damage to crop; building destroyed/damaged during the action in Mizoram, and rented charges of building and land occupied by security force. There may, however, be some claim which were referred and verified by the above team but is not yet settled expeditiously. Arrangement will also be made for payment of pending claim of rented charges or land/building occupied by the security force.

Sd/-LALDENGA
on behalf of
Mizo National
Front

Sd/- R.D.PRADHAN
Home Secretary
Government of
India

Sd/- LALKHAMA
Chief Secretary
Government of
Mizoram

Dated: 30th June 1986. Place: New Delhi.

Source: Mizo Arsi Press, Aizawl, Mizoram.

APPENDIX - EPOLITICAL PARTIES OF MIZORAMA. National Parties

- 1) Congress (1961)
- 2) Socialist Party of India (1971)
- 3) Janata (1977)
- 4) Communist Party of India (1979)

B. Major Regional Parties

- 1) Mizo Union (1946)
- 2) United Mizo Freedom Organisation (1947)
- 3) Mizo National Front (1961)
- 4) People's Conference (1975)

C. Minor Regional Parties

- 1) Mizo Integration Party (1971)
- 2) Mizo National Union (1971)
- 3) Mizo Labour Party (1972)
- 4) Mizo People's Party (1974)
- 5) Mizo Democratic Front (1976)
- 6) Mizo Convention (1982)
- 7) Mizo Peace Forum (1984)

D. Factional Parties

- 1) Mizo Union Council (1947)
- 2) Mizo Union Right Wing (1956)
- 3) People's Conference (B) (1978)

E. Communal Parties

- 1) Tribal Union (Pawi and Lakher combined) (1948)
- 2) Mara Freedom Party (only Lakher or Mara) (1963)
- 3) Chin National Union (only Pawi) (1963)
- 4) Paite National Council (only Paite) (1962)
- 5) Chin National Front (only Pawi) (1965)
- 6) United Pang People's Party (Pang and Kin tribes) (1974)

F. Party Alliances

- 1) Eastern India Tribal Union (1957)
- 2) All Party Hills Leaders' Conference (1961)
- 3) United Mizo Parliamentary Party (1970)
- 4) Mizo Integration Council (1973)
- 5) Steering Committee (1979)

APPENDIX - FCHRONOLOGY OF POLITICAL EVENTS

- 1891 : British Annexation of Mizo Hills.
- 1935 : Young Lushai Association formed.
- 1946 (Apr. 9) : Mizo Union Party formed.
(Sept.) : First Mizo Union Assembly held.
- 1947 (March) : First split in the Mizo Union.
(April) : Advisory Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly visited Aizawl; A.Z. Phizo visited Mizoram.
(July) : United Mizo Freedom Organisation formed.
- 1948 (April) : District Advisory Council Election held.
(Dec.) : Mizo Union Civil Disobedient Demonstrations.
- 1952 (Feb.) : District Council given to the Mizos; First General Elections (MP, MLA, D/C) held.
(March) : Mizo Union MLAs joined Assam Congress Parliamentary Party.
(April) : Nehru visited Aizawl; Lushai Hills Village Council Bill passed.
- 1954 (April) : 'Lushai Hills' changed to 'Mizo Hills'.
(August) : Chieftainship abolished; First Village Council Election held.
- 1957 (February) : Second General Elections held.
(Oct.) : United Mizo Freedom Organisation and Mizo Union (Right Wing) merged into Eastern India Tribal Union.

- 1959 : Bamboo flowered; Mizo Cultural Society and Mizo National Famine Front formed.
- 1960 : Capt. W.A. Sangma, then Assam Minister for Tribal Areas Development, visited Mizoram; Third Village Council Election held.
- 1961 : Assamese Official Language Bill passed; All Party Hills Leaders' Conference formed; Mizo District Congress formed.
- (Oct.) : Mizo National Front formed.
- 1962 (Feb.) : Third General Elections held.
- (Oct.) : Mass resignation of Tribal MLAs.
- 1963 : Fourth Village Council Elections: MLA bye-Election held; Mizo Union began to think in terms of Mizo State.
- 1964 : MLA bye-Election on R. Thanhliira's resignation.
- (April) : MNF leaders met Home Minister G.L. Nanda.
- 1965 (April) : Saprawnga resigned from Chief Executive Membership of Mizo District Council to demonstrate his disapproval of the party's threat of direct action against the Assam Government.
- (Oct.) : MNF leaders met Prime Minister L.B. Shastri.
- 1966 (Jan.) : MNF leaders appeared before Tarlok Singh, Member of Planning Commission.
- (Feb) : MNF leaders met Assam Governor Vishnu Sahay and also appeared before Pata-skar Commission.
- (March 1) : Laldenga declared 'Independence of Mizoram'.
- (Mar. 2&3) : Parliamentary Debates on calling attention motion on trouble in Mizoram.

- 1967 (Feb.) : Grouping of Villages started;
MP and MLA Election held.
- 1970 (April) : District Council Election (which had
been postponed) held.
- 1971 (Jan.) : Mizo Union-Congress (H) alliance success-
fully moved no-confidence motion against
Congress (D) Executive Committee of the
District Council.
- (March) : Congress (H) CEM resigned under threat
of no-confidence motion; Mizo Union-
Congress(D) alliance put Mizo Union
candidate in the post of CEM; Thangridem
a Socialist Party candidate contested
parliamentary bye-election but lost.
- : Fifth Village Council Election held.
- (Sept.) : Mizo Union General Assembly divided over
the issue of 'Union Territory or State.'
- 1972 (Jan.) : Mizoram declared as a Union Territory by
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Aizawl.
- (April) : First Mizoram Assembly Election held.
- 1973 (March) : Socialist Party and Mizo Labour Party
merged into Congress.
- (May) : Some Mizo leaders visited Manipur at the
request of the Mizo Integration Council;
Mizo Union leaders took the decision of
merging the party into Congress.
- 1974 (Jan.) : Merger of Mizo Union and Congress
announced.
- (March) : Lieutenant-Governor S.P. Mukherjee
wounded by MNF snipers.
- (June) : Human Rights Committee of Mizoram formed
by Brig. Thenphunga Sailo.

- 1975 (Jan.) : Inspector General of Police G.H. Arya and one DIG and one SP killed by MNF.
- (April) : People's Conference Party formed under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo.
- 1976 (April) : Mizo Democratic Front formed.
- (May) : Six leaders of the Mizo Democratic Front arrested under Maintenance of Internal Security Act.
- (June) : Seven leaders of People's Conference Party arrested under the same Act.
- 1977 (Feb.) : Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Aizawl.
- (March) : People's Conference swept the Lok Sabha Election in Mizoram.
- (May) : The First Mizoram Legislative Assembly dissolved (its due term having come to an end) and President's Rule imposed; Mizoram Janata Party formed.
- 1978 (May) : Election to the Second Mizoram Assembly held (People's Conference won majority); Joint meeting of all opposition parties held with an objective of lodging complaints on the last election.
- (Oct.) : Ruling People's Conference Party split; House dissolved, Second President's Rule imposed.
- 1979 (April) : Mid-Term Assembly Election held; People's Conference again won majority.
- (June) : PWD-SDO R.C. Chaudhury killed by MNF. Joint meeting of all opposition parties held. Steering Committee formed by the opposition parties.

- 1980 (Jan.) : Steering Committee's candidate defeated ruling party's candidate in the mid-term Lok Sabha elections.
- (July) : Central Government and Laldenga announced cessation of operation.
- (Oct.) : People's Conference started asking for full-fledged statehood for Mizoram.
- (Nov.) : Congress withdrew from Steering Committee
- 1981 (March) : Laldenga proceeded to MNF Headquarters via Aizawl after 15 years of absence from Aizawl and 9 years of absence from MNF headquarters.
- (Aug.) : Four People's Conference (B) MLAs resigned "to strengthen the hands of Laldenga in his negotiations with the Central Government."
- 1982 (April) : Mizo Convention formed with a merger of the People's Conference (B), The Mizoram Janata and the Mizo Democratic Front. Laldenga left India as the talks on MNF problem were called off and MNF declared unlawful by the Central Government.
- 1986 (June 30) : Memorandum of Settlement (popularly known as Mizo Accord) signed.
- 1987 (Feb. 16) : General Assembly Elections held to form the first Mizoram State Legislative Assembly of 40 members.
- 1987 (Feb. 20) : Mizoram became the 23rd State of India.
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