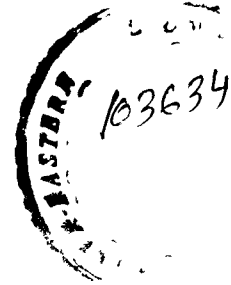


**REGIONAL COUNCIL IN MIZORAM:
A CASE STUDY OF PAWI-LAKHER
REGIONAL COUNCIL
(1952-1972)**

(ABSTRACT)



BY

**R. HMINGTHANZUALA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

TO

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG 793 022**

2002

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(ABSTRACT)

Introduction

Mizoram, is one of the States in North East India. It is surrounded by Tripura and Bangladesh in the West, Myanmar in the East and South, Manipur and Assam in the North. The Pawis and the Lakhers inhabited the southern part of Mizoram.

According to the 2001 Census, the population of Pawis of Lawngtlai District and Lakhers of Saiha District are 73,050 and 60,823 respectively, out of the State total population of 8,91,058. Though the two tribes are concentrated mainly in their own respective area, they are also to be found in other parts of the state.

The present study, in brief, traces the origin of the Pawis and Lakhers, their traditional administration under the chiefs of the villages and the political developments that took place till the time of the formation of the Autonomous District Councils for the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas.

The Pawis and the Lakhers have their own distinct culture, customs and traditions which still play an important role in their social, economic and political life. The Pawis and the Lakhers had the office of the traditional chiefs, who enjoyed like other chiefs, certain privileges.

The present study attempts to investigate the changes that took place in the administrative set up of the Pawis and the Lakhers right from the village traditional administration to the Regional Council and upto the time of the formation of the Autonomous District Councils. The political movements that took place in the whole of Mizo Hills or the present Mizoram are also taken into consideration to help understand the specific political developments among the Pawis and Lakhers. This study also examines the factors leading to the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1953, its composition, functions and workings. Moreover, the study also analyses how far the political movements among the Mizos had also their impact on the political life of the Pawis and Lakhers. This study further tries to examine and analyze the factors responsible for the demand of the introduction of the Autonomous District Councils among the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas.

Objectives of the Study

The first objective of the study is to trace and analyze the factors which led to the introduction of the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution, and the role of the elected representatives in the Autonomous District Council in Mizoram. Secondly, the study analyzes the constitutional structure of the Sixth Schedule, its powers and functions in general with particular reference to the creation of District Council and Regional Council in Lushai Hills District. Thirdly, the study also assesses and examines the power, functions, and working of the Regional Council among the Pawis and Lakhers. Fourthly, the study tries to discuss and analyze the composition, working and role of the Executive Committees of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. A critical

analysis of the Acts, Rules and Regulations passed and enacted by the Lushai Hills District Council as well as the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council also finds its place in the study. Lastly, the study examines and analyzes the factors responsible for the trifurcation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the creation of Autonomous District Councils for the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas keeping in view of the political changes in the whole of Mizoram from a District to a Union Territory in 1972.

Methodology

The data for this study have been collected both from Primary and Secondary sources. The primary sources include Official Records, Documents, Acts, Rules, Regulations passed by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, interviews with political leaders, Members of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, Chief Executive Members, Executive Members, party functionaries, officials of the District Council and Regional Council, School teachers and other knowledgeable persons.

The Secondary sources are drawn from published and unpublished documents, articles, seminar proceedings written both in English and local language and other printed materials, journals, newspapers, mimeographs, etc.

Survey of Literature

So far as the topic under study is concerned, there are some books which have been written on the history of political administration in Mizoram, like V. V. Rao's *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India*; A. N. Ray's *Mizoram Dynamic of Change*; R. N. Prasad's

Government and Politics in Mizoram, R. Vanlawma's *Ka Ram leh Kei (My Country and I)* (in Mizo); Chaltuahkhuma's *Political History of Mizoram* (in Mizo); and others. But these books treated the case of the Pawis and Lakhers in a very general way while discussing about Mizo politics. The present study therefore aims to delve into the political history and administration of the Pawis and the Lakhers by devoting more exclusively on those political issues which have not been studied in detail by others.

Chapterization

The study has been divided into five chapters:

- Chapter I - Local-Self Government, Concept and Issues in the context of Mizo Society.
- Chapter II - Emergence of Social Forces and the Creation of Regional Council in Mizoram (including Powers, Functions and Working of the Council).
- Chapter III - Politics of Executive Committee Formation in the Regional Council.
- Chapter IV - Analysis of the Factors leading to the Trifurcation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.
- Chapter V - Conclusion.

Chapter I

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to examine the concepts and issues relating to Local-Self Government.

The modern State is vast in extent and its functions have become so complex that it is not possible for a single organization to deal efficiently with all its numerous activities. Decentralization of power is therefore needed for administrative convenience and efficiency on some rational basis. Hence, smaller units of administration at the local level have been established. These smaller units of administration are called Local Government or Local-Self Government. Such units of local government are created mainly for administrative convenience in local areas with limited powers. The institution of Local-Self Government is one of the backbones of democracy as it provides a sense of civic duties and responsibilities among the local residents.

In this chapter, we also discuss about the British administration and its impact on the Mizos in general as well as the Pawis and Lakhers in particular. The role and functions of the British Superintendent are also discussed so as to assess and analyze the administration under his control. The formation and role of the Mizo Union also finds its place in our discussion as this political party was responsible in bringing about many political changes among the Mizos in general and the Pawis and Lakhers in particular. The powers and functions of the Autonomous District Council introduced in Mizo Hills in 1952, are also discussed.

Chapter II

The second chapter studies and examines those factors responsible for the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The Pawis and Lakhers were not happy to be under the domination of the Lushais (Mizos) who are the major tribes. As the Pawis and Lakhers are

minorities, they foresee the dangers of being marginalized by the Mizos even in administrative matters under the former Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council. They therefore demanded a separate administrative set up for themselves outside the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council. Their demand was granted in the form of the Regional Council which was set up in 1953, known as the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

This Council was formed on the basis of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Its powers and functions are clearly laid down by the concerned Schedule. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, as per the provisions of the Sixth Schedule framed a number of Acts, Rules, Regulations etc. pertaining to the customs, traditions, usages etc. of the Pawis and Lakhers and how to protect and safeguard them. An attempt has been made in this chapter to analyze those Acts, Rules etc. which have been passed and enacted by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council from time to time.

Chapter III

This chapter mainly deals with the politics of Executive Committee formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The internal differences between the Pawis and Lakhers remain unsolved during the time of the Council and these problems keep on lingering till the time when the Council had to be dissolved.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council suffered a number of problems from the very beginning. Even before the first general election which was scheduled in the early part of 1953, discontentment arose among the

Pawis and Lakhers over the allotment of seats to be contested. B. W. Roy, the Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) of Lunglei had to be brought in to settle the matter which he did by allotting which seats to be contested by which community. Thereafter, elections were held and the members were elected and nominated to the newly formed Regional Council.

On April 23rd 1953, Shri Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam, inaugurated the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council at Lunglei. Though the Council has both the elected and nominated members, they could not form the Executive Committee due to the absence of any person from among the members of the Council who can man the affairs of the Council. To save the situation, two government officials from the Assam Government were deputed to run the administration for one year. After one year, a Chairman was elected and he also conducted the elections to the offices of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and Executive Members of the Council.

The second term of the Council started in 1958 after the election of the members. During this time also misunderstanding and conflict arose as to the holding of executive posts of the Council. The Lakhers demanded the fulfillment of the earlier agreement they had with the Pawis in which key executive posts be given to them. The Pawis did not agree to that. The Lakhers boycotted the meeting as a mark of protest. Meanwhile, the Pawis and Chakmas participated in the Chairman's election. However, subsequently good sense prevailed between the two, and both agreed to work together in order to run the Council's administration smoothly.

The third term of the Council began in 1964. It may be mentioned that the Lakhers boycotted the election to the Council as a mark of protest against the Pawis whom they charged of not respecting the earlier agreement of understanding especially in terms of seats adjustment and formation of the Executive Committee.

During this period, another political development took place among the Lakhers. They formed a political party among themselves known as 'Mara Freedom Party' in 1963. The main objective of this political party was to have a separate Mara (Lakher) Autonomous District Council in order to bring the integration and unity of all the Mara (Lakher) people. Subsequently, the Lakhers formed a separate Interim Council parallel to the Regional Council to serve their interests. This chapter also discusses about the policies, programmes, aims and objectives of the Mara Freedom Party as well as the working of the Mara Interim Council. By this time, another minority community, that is, the Chakmas, played an important role in the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The Pawis received the support of the Chakmas in the working and functioning of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. However, the working and functioning of the Council in its third term was greatly hampered due to the problems of insurgency in the entire Mizo Hills.

The Lakhers later realized that their prolonged boycott of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was not a positive attitude. They therefore decided to participate in the fourth term of the Council. This time the Lakhers contested the election under the banner of the Mara Freedom Party and three out of four candidates won uncontested.

This Executive Committee was the last to head the United Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. It remained in office till the time of the formation of the three Autonomous District Councils for the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas after the trifurcation of the then United Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1972.

Chapter IV

An attempt has been made in this chapter to have a systematic analysis of the factors responsible for the trifurcation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council could not function smoothly due to inherent political differences and clashes of interests between the Pawis and the Lakhers. The difficulties and problems that arose right from the beginning kept on lingering within and outside the Regional Council.

The basic problem which created disunity in the Council was over the issue of holding the Chief Executive Member's post by the Pawis for two terms of the Council consecutively against the agreement made between the two tribes to share the post term by term. In the mean time, the Chakmas also regarded themselves as being neglected by both the Pawis and Lakhers under the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Hence, unity among the three tribes was not in sight any more. The only alternative left was to trifurcate the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council so that the three tribes may have their own separate administrative set up to safeguard their interests.

In this chapter, the factors considered to be responsible for the trifurcation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council are discussed. The factors responsible for the trifurcation may be broadly mentioned as –

- (a) The conflict over holding of executive, political and official key posts in the Council.
- (b) Official language to be used by the Council.
- (c) Medium of instructions in the Primary Schools.
- (d) Differences in customs, culture, etc. among the three tribes.
- (e) Formation of ethnic-base political party and the Mara Interim Regional Council.

Besides these, there are other problems like sharing of benefits out of grants and other financial schemes allotted to the Council meant to be distributed among the three communities – the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas.

Chapter V

This chapter sums up the major findings of the study. It has been found that:

1. The Pawis, Lakhers and the Chakmas were much influenced by the political developments that took place among the Lushais (Mizos). They were, however, not satisfied with the treatment meted out to them by the Mizos especially after the formation of the then Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council in 1952.

2. In order to safeguard their economic, social and political interests, initially the Pawis and Lakhers demanded some kind of political autonomy to be granted to them under the Constitution of India.
3. The fear of being politically marginalized by the Mizos gave rise to the political demands made by the Pawis and Lakhers. As a result, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was granted to them in 1953 under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
4. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council started functioning in 1953. Elections were held to elect the members of the Council. But it was found that right from the beginning there was no mutual understanding between the Pawis and Lakhers. This was because of the internal fighting and clash of interests especially in cases of sharing of political and executive posts of the Council like the offices of Chairman, Chief Executive Member, Executive Members etc. This, therefore tremendously affected the working and functioning of the Council from time to time.
5. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council during its tenure has been able to pass and enact a number of Acts, Rules and Regulations from time to time. These Acts, Rules and Regulations relate to such important administrative affairs of the Council as well as matters pertaining to the welfare of the people within the jurisdiction of the Council. Some of these Acts, Rules and Regulations which have been passed relate to the Constitution of the Council, Procedure and Conduct of Business, Social Customs and Practices, Revenue

Assessment, Administration of Justice, etc. to mention a few of them.

6. Another finding is the role played by the Chakma community. This community was to some extent, happy to be initially under the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Later on, they also put forward their demands for political autonomy so as to serve and safeguard their interests. The result of their persistent demand for separate administrative set up led to the trifurcation of the then United Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. They were also granted a separate Autonomous District Council of their own in 1972, along with the Pawis and Lakhers.

At the end, it may be concluded that the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council did satisfy the political aspirations of the people initially but not in the long run. The subsequent political movements show that the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas wanted something more in terms of autonomy. Having experienced, the working and functioning of the Regional Council and its failure to fulfill their political demands, they went ahead in demanding greater autonomy in the form of the Autonomous District Council. They succeeded in getting that too. The latest trend is again to demand more autonomy in the form of a Union Territory. However, this aspect is beyond the purview of the present ~~study~~ *Study*.

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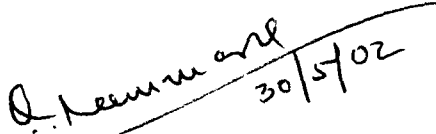
I would like to place on record my special thanks to my wife, J. Larikhumi, my sons and daughters, for their support, patience, understanding and prayer which has given me the needed strength and courage in completing this work.

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SHILLONG

THE 30th MAY 2002


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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Mizoram is situated in the extreme corner of the Indian Union. It extends between Latitude 21°56' N – 24°31' N and Longitude 92°16' E – 93°26' E.¹ It is at present bounded by Assam and Manipur States in the North, Myanmar in the East and South and Bangladesh and Tripura in the West. It occupies an area of 21,081 sq.km. with a population of 8,91,058 as per 2001 Census.² The land is covered with a hilly terrain which runs in north-south direction interspersed by deep gorges in which the rivers flow from the high hills to the Bay of Bengal in the south. The land as a whole has a temperate climatic condition. This climatic condition is reflected on the economic and social life of the Mizos. The State of Mizoram has at present eight districts, Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Lawngtlai, Serchhip, Champhai, Mahmit and Kolasib with three Autonomous District Councils, namely, Lakher (now Mara) Autonomous District Council, Pawi (now Lai) Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council. These three Autonomous District Councils were formed in 1972 under the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act of 1971.

The density of population being 32.71 per Sq.km. is one of the lowest among the Indian States. The land is very rich in forest resources with an area being 7,127.22 Sq.km. accounts for about 3% of the total

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1. Pachuau, Rintluanga, *Geography of Mizoram*, (R.T. Enterprize, Aizawl, 1994), p. xiii.
 2. *Census of India 2001*, Series 16 – Mizoram.

area. Due to the practice of shifting cultivation, the forests have been destroyed on a large scale every year. However, the Government of Mizoram has put a very strong effort having a policy of afforestation by using a new land use policy within the State, the result of which has led to a great extent in reducing the continuation of the earlier practice.

Mizoram is one of the poorest States in India. The main reason may be due to lack of communication and transportation. Moreover, the natural resources are not yet scientifically exploited due to lack of manpower with technical knowhow and interest in the matter locally. Hence, 95% of the Mizos entirely depend on the public distribution system run by the State Government.³ The economy of Mizoram is backward and under-develop both in respect of agriculture and industry. The fact is that its natural resources have not yet been properly exploited and utilized. High rate of growth of population, primitive agricultural practices and virtual absence of industrial enterprises have together created the problem of unemployment in a massive scale in the State. Hence, the State Government finds it difficult to provide this growing population with adequate employment opportunities. To this may be added the social and political factors that retard the economic growth. Mention may also be made in this connection on the educational system prevalent in Mizoram. The system of education is not production oriented and has no link with the reality of social and economic condition of the Mizos nor do they receive any professional guidance which can provide them with employment opportunities.

3. Mizoram Bureau and Statistics, *Report on Socio-Economic Review 1979-80*.

The People

The history of the origin and migration of the Mizos to their present habitat is shrouded in mystery.⁴ It is therefore extremely difficult to give an authentic accounts of the Mizos as there were very little written records. The myths whichever available provide some source material of the people. In fact, there is almost no written record to trace the past history of the Mizos regarding their original home, from where and when they really migrated to their present land. According to K. Zawla, the Mizo migration to the present habitat began in 1463.⁵ It is learnt from a Mizo legend that these people came from the East, that is, the Chin Hills in Burma (now Myanmar) and proceeded to the Chindwin belt in about 996 A.D. They lived there barely about two hundred years. Then a cruel chief ruled over them which caused them to flee away from him. Also, a great famine overran the country causing the death of thousands of people. Another source mentioned that they migrated from Khampat into two groups; one group proceeded towards the south whereas the other towards the north and entered the present Mizoram.⁶

One of the Mizo legends tells that their forefathers came out of Chhinlung (closed stone). In modern scientific age, it is very hard to believe the content of the legend. But recently some contemporary Mizo historians interpret the legend by quoting the songs which depicted that

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4. Prasad, R. N. *Government and Politics in Mizoram 1947-86*, (Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987), p. 3.
 5. Zawla, K. *Mizo Pipute leh an thlahte Chanchin* (in Mizo), (H.A. Press, Aizawl, 1981), p. 15.
 6. Thanga, L.B. *The Mizos: A Study in Racial Personality*, (United Publisher, Gauhati, 1978), p. 3.

they once stayed at the place called Chhinlung and left it. The song goes:

Ka siengna Sin-lung hmingthang,
Ka Nu ram, Ka Pa ram ngai;
Chawngzil ang kokir thei chang-sien,
Ka Nu ram, Ka Pa ram ngai.

(In English):
My Mother land famous Sinlung,
Home of my ancestors;
Could it be called back like Changsil,
Home of my own Ancestors.⁷

Further, according to Lalbiakthanga,⁸ it is not disputed that the Mizos came from the East that their original home was in Mekong Valley and they belong to the Mongoloid stock, which was incorporated by many, including the statement made by an old Burmese priest at Mandalay. According to him the Ancestors of the Mizos came from Shanghai most probably in the 10th Century. Further, in support of the fact that the Mizos belong to a Mongoloid stock, T. H. Lewin, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tract statement may be quoted:

The general physique of the Hill tribes is strongly Mongoloid. They are as a rule short in stature ... Their faces are broad, the nose, eyes narrow and set obliquely in the head, high cheek-bones and no beard or moustach.⁹

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7. Sangkima, *Mizo Society and Social Change (1890-1947)*, (Spectrum Publication, Gauhati, 1992), p. 2.
 8. Thanga, L. B. *Op.cit.*, p. 3.
 9. Lewin, T. H. *The Wild Race of South East Asia*, (W. H. Allen & Co., London), p. 48.

Prior to the advent of the British in the then Mizo Hills, the Mizo society was administered by its village chief known as '*Lal*'. Mizo is a generic term used to include all the tribes and sub-tribes living today in Mizoram. Among them, the Lushais, the Lakhers, the Pawis, the Paihtes, the Hmars, the Fanais are the most prominent.¹⁰ Though each tribe is distinct in itself, they possessed more or similar such socio-political institutions of which chiefship is one. Chiefship was a kind of village rule, in which customary laws became the main instruments used to decide disputes. The chief was all in all and most of them were despotic ruler-administrators.

The Pawis and Lakhers too had the office of the chief. Though their chief has a council of elders to assist him, the chief was not bound by any legal precedence to consult these elders in making decisions. They were therefore autocratic ruler in the sense that they ruled arbitrarily over their subjects having final authority to decide upon. There were no other authorities in the village to check the arbitrary rule of the chief. There was no *Zawlbuk* (Bachelor's dormitory) among the Lakhers and the Pawis. The Lakher chiefship was hereditary and the eldest son succeeded the father,¹¹ whereas the youngest son was the successor of the chiefship among the Lushais.

10. Nath, K. P. *The Mizo Chief: His Role in Village Administration* (Mimeograph).

11. Parry, N. E. *The Lakhers*, (Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1976), p. 248.

The Pawis and Lakhers inhabited the southern part of the present day Mizoram, having an international boundary with Myanmar towards the south and east, Lunglei District towards the North and Chakma inhabited area towards the west.

The history of the origin and migration of the Pawi or Lais to their present habitat is shrouded in mystery. There is no authentic record about them as no systematic research has been conducted so far. From whatever record that is available from different writers who have had different opinions of the origin of Pawis/Lai, it is mostly accepted that the Pawis/Lais belong to the Mongoloid stock and are believed to have migrated into their present habitat from Central China *via* Hakha in Burma (Myanmar).

Pawi or Lai

Formerly, the term '*Pawi*' was not used; rather the term '*Lai*' was preferred. How and when the term '*Pawi*' came into usage is not exactly known. However, the term '*Pawi*' came to be used more and more popularly that other people came to consider the '*Pawis*' as one of the tribes of Mizoram. Moreover, when a District Council was set up in the concerned area, it was given the name '*Pawi District Council*'. However, the people under the jurisdiction of this Council claimed that they were '*Lai*' and not '*Pawi*'. They asserted that the term '*Pawi*' was purely a creation of the Lushais. Some writers even say that '*Pawis* and *Lais*' are two separate and distinct tribes. They themselves could not ascertain properly how the term '*Lai*' came into use and how they become '*Lais*'. On this matter, there are various opinions. It may be deduced from the

various opinions given about the *Pawis* or *Lais* that it is a difficult task to ascertain the origin of the terminology '*Lai*'. However, it is important to note that *Lai* villages, *Laitlang* (hill), *Lairam* (land of the *Lais*) have been used popularly thus establishing the fact that the *Lai* people exist as a distinct group of people. Also, it is an accomplished fact that even the British, during the incursion of the '*Vai*' (meaning the plains people) knew about the *Pawis* or *Lais*.

It may also be stated that those who reside within the jurisdiction of the present Pawi Autonomous District Council call themselves *Lai*. However the term '*Pawi*' had been a popular and of common usage, practiced even by the Government of Mizoram so that the term '*Pawi*' has more or less to stay in use.

It is generally accepted that the Pawis belong to the Mongoloid stock of the Tibeto-Burman group and that this group had a common origin. However, due to migration, various groups dispersed into different directions and areas and as such even their dialects became different. However, the Pawis do not have any specific origin worth mentioning.

Rev. Liangkhaia, in his book, *Mizo Chan Chin*, states that, the Hauhulh and the Hlawn-cheu tribes were descended from Hringluma. Some elders, however, say that Hringlumas' descendant, Vanhnuaitlirha becomes the sun chief, Vanhmunga was the Tlaisun Falam chief, at Lungzarhtum Taihmunga and his descendants who are the descendants of Ralhnuna, chief of Thlanrawn and his son Thanchhuma Khuafo, becomes the Chinzah chief.

The Lakhers or Maras

The Lakhers or Maras are racially said to be of Mongoloid origin and they belong to the Chin sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman family. They live in some parts of the Chin Hills sub-division of Matupi, (*Matupui*) Palewa and Thlantla (*Thlantlang*) in Burma (Myanmar) and southern part of Mizoram in North East India. Most of the Lakher or Mara villages in south Mizoram (the area covered by the Lakher Autonomous District Council) are enclosed in the large band made by Beino (*Kolodyne*) river which flows down to the Bay of Bengal at Akyap.¹² Practically, the whole of Mara habitation, covers a large area of the north Arakan Yoma mountains and stretches up to the Jaw plains including some areas inhabited by the Matu tribe. In his book, *Five Years in Unknown Jungle*, R. A. Lorrain writes, "the Maraland is about the size of Wales". Here, he seems to include the area covered by his Mission field. The Maras are called by different names by different neighbouring tribes. They were formerly known as the Lakhers by their north western neighbours, the Lushais, after their popular cotton work, for which the Lakhers of those days were famous (*La* - cotton, *Kher* - spinning). The Maras were also known as the Shendu by their southern neighbours, the Khumis and the Arakanese. *Khumi* means 'people who always fight and make others restless. The Maras were given this name Shendus after their repeated raids on the Khumi land. The Maras were also known as 'Mirams' by their northern neighbours, the Hakas as it was the Hakanised form of Mara. Thus the early British writer of Arakan adopted the term

12. Azyu, Thasia T. *The Maras and Their Dialects*, (Mimeograph), 1988.

'Shendu', while the Lushais adopted Lakher to refer to the 'Maras'.¹³ N.E. Parry the well-known writer on the Lakher tribe, has compared the customs and beliefs of the Lakhers to that of the Fijians, Indonesians, Malanesians, Bodos and the Monkhmer and has opined that there was great affinity among these people. R. A. Lorrain held the opinion that Lakhers have a Malay origin.

The Lakhers are Mongoloid in origin as it is clear from their physical appearance. They also belong to the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family which is sub-divided into Tibeto-Burman and Tibeto-Himalayas. The Tibeto-Burman group is sub-divided into many groups along which the Lakhers fall into the Chin sub-group. The other Sub-Chin groups are the Mizos, the Pawis, the Kukis, the Paihtes etc. These tribes are believed to have come from China and Tibet and from where they migrated to Burma (Myanmar) settling down in the Irrawady and Chindwin valleys. From the Chindwin valley, they spread out into the various parts of the hill areas. While they occupied the Chindwin valley, the Burmese called them as the '*Chin*', and the name was recognized by the English writers who sub-divided the Chins into southern Chin and central Chin. N. E. Parry classed the Lakhers as Central Chin whereas F. K. Lehman classed them as Southern Chin.

In tracing the origin of Lakhers, a clear proof is available to show that they had indeed occupied some parts of the Chin hills and some of the Lakher groups still remain in that area. The history of the origin of

13. Azyu, Thasia T. *Op.cit.*, p. 2.

the Lakhers beyond this remained obscure except that they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group and that they came from the north, that is, China. In Mizoram, the Lakher land is bordered on the west by the Fanais and Lushais, on the east and north by the Chins and on the south by the tribes of Arakan hill tracts, Matus, Khumis and Khyengs.¹⁴ The Lakhers are further a branch of Pawis tribe of Chins and speak a language closely akin to Pawis. They are the same people as the Shendus. Tradition says that the Lakhers came from the north (China) and it is certain that they all come to their present home from different places in the Haka subdivision of the Chin hills presumably being pushed forward by the pressure from the East, in the same way as the Lushais under their Thangur chief, pushed forward into the country they now occupying.

British Administration in Lushai Land

Prior to the advent of Christianity in Mizoram, the Mizos believed in their traditional religion. They offered their offerings to appease the evil spirit. They did not consider raiding of neighbouring people and killing unknown tribes as a sin. The society honoured and respected those persons who brought human heads of their neighbouring tribes and were given high position in the society. Under the influence of such martial practices the Mizos had the habit of exploring the British Territory especially the Cachar plains of Assam on the plea that *Sap hovin kan ram tur min lak khalh a ni*, meaning 'the British are cultivating our future lands'.¹⁵ Then the Lushais, the Pawis and the Lakhers were disturbing the

14. Parry, N. E. *Op.cit.*, p. 1.

15. Vanlawma, R. *Ka Ram leh Ket (My Country and I)*, (Zoram Printing Press, Aizawl, 1972), p. 1.

tea gardens in Cachar of British territory as the presence of British people was considered to be a hindrance to their free movement in their search for fertile lands. The Lushais then raided the British area quite a good number of times.

The British initially did not take interest in administering Lushai Hills as the expenditure to be incurred would be far more than the income from the area. But the British Government was compelled by circumstances of raids or lootings of their subjects in the plains by the Mizos to come to Lushai hills to control the tribes from any further exploitation and raiding of the British area. The British Government gradually subdued the Lushai chiefs and the year 1890 was marked as the beginning of the British administration of Lushai Hills. The Lakher area was also annexed to the British territory with the defeat of the Zawngling chief in 1924.

The British Government took over the administration of the Lushai Hills in 1890. The whole Lushai Hills was divided into two units, the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills with its headquarters at Aizawl and Lunglei respectively.¹⁶ However, in 1898, following the recommendation of the Chin Lushai Conference held in 1892 at Calcutta, and proposal made by Mr. A. W. Davis, both these segments were amalgamated into one unit under the name Lushai Hills District, and it was placed under the control and administration of the British Superintendent, with his headquarters at Aizawl. Therefore, the year

16. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 37.

1898 was historically marked as the beginning of the settled administration in Lushai Hills District.

The British adopted a policy of 'leaving the tribal alone' in their internal administration. They did not want to disturb their traditional institutions and tried not to interfere in their internal affairs and administration. Though the British administration allowed the Lushai chiefs and their elders to continue with their administration, a limitations was imposed on them that they do not have powers over the cases like murder, boundary issues and appointment of the chiefs' successors and other serious cases. The British Superintendent had the power of deposing any Mizo chief for misbehaviour and also the power of appointing any new chief in recognition of the meritorious services rendered by him to the British administration. This clearly indicated the supremacy of the British Superintendent over the Lushai chiefs and his Council. This action of the British administration had shaken the hereditary system of Mizo chiefship. The Mizo chiefs were therefore compelled to submit themselves to the British Superintendent for strengthening the administration. Hence, the two autocratic rulers became like the two sides of the same coin. This autocratic rule of the combined rulers later became one of the factors leading to the creation of a political party which later became active against the traditional chiefs of the Mizos.

Christian Missionaries and Lushai Hills

Before the coming of the British missionaries in Lushai Hills, the Mizos were recognized by the outsiders as a head-hunting tribe, as the

Mizos had the habit of invading their neighbouring tribes. The people paid homage and respect to those persons who brought home the head of their enemies or human head that he win. As a result such person or persons were endowed with a special treatment by offering the first cup of wine by the chief at a ceremonial gatherings. The dead man's head was always displayed on the top of a post, posted before the chief's house meant for the same. The chief used to organize a common feast in honour of such act of bravery as it was a pride for his chiefship. In the past, the Mizos did not consider that killing of the neighbouring tribes was a sin.

The Mizos in the past believed both in the good and bad spirits. Bad spirits bring illness and disaster to the people. They have therefore to be appeased by the priests. Good spirits bring good fortune and prosperity.

As in the case of other hill areas of North East India, Christian missionaries also came to the then Lushai Hills after the British annexation of the area. Rev. F. W. Savidge and Rev. J. H. Lorrain, who were sponsored by Robert Arthington of London, entered Lushai Hills on the 11th January 1894 as Christian missionaries. The two missionaries reduced the Lushai language into a written form by using Roman script. They also prepared Lushai Grammar and Dictionary of Lushai language.

By mutual arrangement, the Baptist Mission and the Welsh Presbyterian Mission made geographical division of Lushai Hills for their respective area of Christian operation which run in accordance with the administrative division of the Government. The Presbyterian Mission worked in the North with its headquarters at Aizawl whereas the Baptist

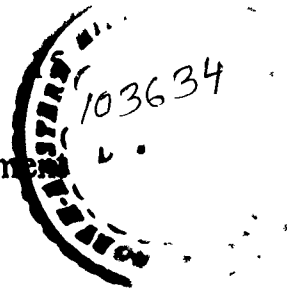
Mission society worked in the South with its headquarters at Serkawr (Lunglei). The area inhabited by the Pawis was covered under the jurisdiction of the Baptist Missionaries, whereas the Lakhers had their own separate religious administration under a separate mission called 'Lakher Pioneer Mission' which was formed in 1905 in London, by R. A. Lorrain, the younger brother of J. H. Lorrain of Baptist Mission. Rev. and Mrs. R. A. Lorrain entered the Lakher land on the 26th September 1907.¹⁷ Serkawr was the headquarters of the Mission. It was the policy of the Christian missionaries to educate both men and women for which they established a formal educational institution in their respective areas.

The opening of Schools to impart rudimentary form of education served as the most important factor in educating and developing the personality of the people. Attempts had therefore been made by the parents to send their children to have further education. Some of these students who were educated outside Mizo Hills were influenced by the national political leaders of India. They were also influenced by the democratic system of administration. Therefore, when such students came back to Mizo Hills, they were so much against the despotic and autocratic rule of the British Superintendent and the traditional chiefs.

They organized political movements and set up a political party to voice the people's aspirations. There was a strong tendency to destabilize the chiefs. The people were led to understand that any form of democracy

17. Hminga, C. L. *The Life and Witness of Churches in Mizoram*, (The Literature Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Sekawr, 1987), p. 107.

is better than the old set up under the despotic chiefs. The movement gained a tremendous momentum.



Impact of Christianity

Rev. Foxall of the Lakher Pioneer Mission remarked by saying that doing away with drinking rice beer and sacrifice to evil spirits was the greatest change that took place after the spread of Christianity in Lushai Hills. The sacrificial alters were no more to be seen. The chief's house and the *Zawlbuk*, at the heart of the village were replaced by the Church and School buildings. The Mizo society abandoned the most barbarous tradition that when a woman dies in child birth, the baby was smothered and buried with the dead body of the mother. Another impact of Christianity was the education of women which helped to raise their status in the family as well as in social life. The society also keeps on cleanliness as it is the likeness of God. The coming of Christianity affected tremendously the socio-political life of the people which resulted in an all round development.

The Bordoloi Sub-Committee

When the British Government was preparing for the transfer of power to the Indian people, the case of the minorities, tribals and Excluded Areas of Assam, was put up before the Cabinet Mission for consideration. The Mission subsequently suggested that there should be an Advisory Committee to look into the rights of the minorities, tribals and Excluded Areas. The Constituent Assembly appointed a Sub-Committee known as the North Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and

Excluded Areas Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi as its Chariman. The Committee was popularly known as Bordoloi Sub-Committee.

The Bordoloi Sub-Committee on its tour arrived at Aizawl on the 17th April 1947 to study about the Mizo people, their administrative problems and the desire to have some kind of an autonomy for their area. The Committee heard several demands from different groups of people interviewed. The common interest in general was that Lushai Hills should be given some kind of autonomy so that the people may be able to run the affairs of administration by themselves.

The Sub-Committee recommended for the administration of the hill areas based on the concept of regional autonomy in all matters affecting their customs, law of inheritance, administration of justice, land and forest.¹⁸ The Sub-Committee also made provision and recommendation for the creation of a Regional Council for the smaller tribes other than the major ones, if the tribes so desired. The provision was recommended because there were a number of tribes with distinct culture and civilization of their own.¹⁹

In course of time, political development took place in Lushai Hills leading to the formation of the Mizo Union which intensified the opposition for the continuation of the office of the chief because this political party regarded the chiefs as the local representatives of the alien

18. Ray, Animesh, *Mizoram: Dynamic of Change*, (Pearl Publication, Calcutta, 1978), p. 93.

19. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 92.

Government. The Mizo Union also decided to launch a civil disobedience movement if the Autonomous District Council was not set up before the end of November 1947. The wave of the political movement that took place in Lushai Hills also had its impact on the political life of the Lakher. They are of the knowledge about the fact that the administration under the chief in Lushai Hills would soon be replaced by the District administration after India got its Independence. The policy of the Mizo Union to obliterate the rights and privileges enjoyed by the chiefs in the Lushai Hills was much welcomed by the Lakher. The Lakher chiefs organized themselves and submitted their memoranda for having separate District administration of their own.

The Lushai Hills District Advisory Council

After the Indian Constitution came into force, the immediate constitution of the Autonomous District Council was not a possibility. The Government of Assam therefore set up the Lushai Hills District Advisory Council on the 15th April 1948, to advise the Government of Assam in matters relating to Lushai Hills District.

The Superintendent of Lushai Hills District, who convened an Advisory Council meeting took the chair to preside over the meeting. The Mizo Union did not accept that the Chairman should be selected from among the Mizo Union members on the plea that they hold majority in the Advisory Council. As a mark of protest, the Mizo Union boycotted the meeting. The United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) also boycotted the meeting on the request made by the Burmese Government if their political aim of joining Burma was still in operation.

The matters regarding the boycott of the Advisory Council meeting was put to the notice of the Assam Government. Then the Advisor to the Governor of Assam, Mr. N. K. Rustomji came to Aizawl and chaired the Advisory Council meeting. In the meeting, it was announced that each member is free to express what was the system of administration desired for their particular area. Mr. Chhohmo, the Lakher chief of Serkawr rose to his feet and said to the Governor's Advisor that the Lakher people wanted to have a Regional Council of their own to safeguard their identity. The Governor declined the appeal of the Serkawr chief on the ground that the population of the Lakhers was too small for consideration. But on the advice of the Superintendent Mr. L. L. Peters, Mr. Chhohmo on the next day again expressed his feeling and request in the form of demand. At the same time Mr. L. L. Peters explained to the advisor that the Lakhers deserved consideration as they form a distinct tribe and were entirely different from the Lushais and also occupied a compact area. The advisor then told the Lakher chief that the Lakher issue will be taken into consideration.

The Pawi leaders met the Lakher chief immediately after the meeting and suggested that the Pawis and Lakhers would be in one Regional Council as they were the bird of the same feather. The Pawis and Lakhers on the advice of L. L. Peters unitedly formed a common political party which the Superintendent himself named it as 'Tribal Union', on the line of the Mizo Union.

The Bordoloi Sub-Committee which visited Lushai Hills recommended the creation of the District Council administration for

Lushai Hills and Regional Council for the Pawis and the Lakhers. Following the recommendation, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council and Pawi-Lakher Regional Councils were set up in 1952 and 1953 respectively. The Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister of Assam, B. P. Chaliha at Aizawl on the 25th April 1952 whereas the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was inaugurated by Ch. Saprawnga, the Parliamentary Secretary of Assam Legislative Assembly at Lunglei on the 23rd April 1953.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council started functioning at Lunglei under the chairmanship of B. W. Roy, the Civil Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei who was deputed by the Government of Assam for a period of one year. The Sub-Divisional Officer took over the offices of both the Chairman and the Chief Executive Member of the Regional Council. Mr. C. Zochhum, a government servant was also deputed to assist the Sub-Divisional Officer to hold the office of the Vice Chairman of the Regional Council. No Executive Committee was formed during the deputation period of B. W. Roy, even though there were elected and nominated members of the Regional Council. This was because of the fact that the members were ignorant of the newly instituted system of administration. The Vice Chairman Mr. C. Zochhum took over the charge of Chief Executive Member but died on the 31st August 1956. The Council Secretary Mr. J. K. Khenglawt also left the Council to join a Government service. Messages and letters were sent to persons like H. Kiautuma and L. Chinzah, who were studying at Shillong to come to their native place to serve their people in the Council administration. Mr. H. Kiautuma responded the request and joined the Council as its

Secretary till his nomination was approved by the Government of Assam. The formation of a Tribal Union denotes that all the members of the Regional Council, both elected and nominated, were the members of the Tribal Union. This showed that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council started functioning without any opposition member in the house. H. Kiautuma was unanimously elected to hold the office of the Chief Executive Member after his nomination was approved by the Assam Government.

The Regional Council passed Laws, Rules and Regulations under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, which were enacted in the interest of the people in keeping with the need of the time. This helped to reduce the hardships and exploitations of the people within the region caused by certain earlier practices during the reign of the traditional chiefs, while some of these Rules and Regulations aimed at regulating and codifying the social customs and practices of the people concerned.

The Regional Council was directly financed by the Assam Government through loans and Grants-in-aid system. There was no official relation with the Lushai Hills District Council except on two matters that representatives had to be sent to the Lushai Hills District Council and the Primary Education had been kept within the purview of the Lushai Hills District Council. Hence Mizo language was introduced in the Primary Schools as a medium of instruction. This was one of the reasons for demanding separate District Council administration for the Lakhers in the subsequent years.

In examining the role and functions of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, it may be concluded that the history of the Council was full of political conflicts especially over the issue of holding important and key political and executive posts of the Council as well as over the issue of appointments in the Council office. Therefore, the existence of inter-clan problems hampered the working and functioning of the Regional Council which later led to the formation of a clan-base political party for the formation of an Interim Mara District Council.

The Lakhers considered that their fear of assimilation was not done away with the present system of administration. They still have the fear of being marginalized and discriminated due to the dominant behaviour of the Pawis during the time of the formation of an Executive Committee of the Council. The Mara Freedom Party, a clan-base political party was formed with the objective of forming a separate Mara District Council in order to bring the integration of all Mara people into a single administrative unit so as to safeguard their identity. The Lakhers therefore boycotted the 3rd term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council elections and formed an Interim Mara District Council parallel to the existing Regional Council. All the Lakher employees of the Regional Council tendered their resignation to join the newly formed Interim Council. All the Lakhers were informed to pay Tax and Revenue to the Interim Council. Village Council administration was also established in the Interim Council.

It may be mentioned that at one point of time, the Council's records and relevant papers were all lost, as its office at Saiha was on

fire. The functioning of the Council therefore needs to start afresh. New appointments had to be made to fill up the vacant posts caused by the resignations tendered by the Lakhers. Moreover, the declaration of Mizoram as a disturbed area by the Government of India, became a stumbling block in the functioning of the Council. The working and functioning of the Regional Council especially in its third term was full of problems. The Regional Council's office had to be shifted from Saiha, the former headquarters to Lunglei for security reasons. Its office was housed at Lunglei in a rented house and the sessions could not be conducted due to the disturbed situation in the entire Mizoram, the resignation of the office staff and other related problems.

The Lakher leaders decided to take part in the 4th term election of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council as a prolonged boycott of the Council might dwindle the integrity of the Lakhers. All Mara candidates contested the election under the 'Mara Freedom Party'. Three of the Lakher candidates were declared elected uncontested and the other Lakher candidate was also declared elected after defeating his rivals.

On the other hand, the Pawi leaders, after a deliberate discussion at a General Conference at Lawngtlai, decided to join the Indian National Congress. The Pawi leaders developed a rift over the selection of candidates. The two Pawi leaders Manghnuna and L. Chinzah set up separate candidates. Three candidates won the election from L. Chinzah's group whereas only one candidate won the election from Manghnuna's group.

While there was every likelihood that L. Chinzah might be in a position to lead the Council, Manghnuna wanted L. Chinzah's defeat at any rate. He therefore requested his three members to side with the Lakhers. Then the Lakhers had the chance of forming the Executive Committee for the first time. As such Mr. S. Pailei was elected to hold the office of Chairman whereas Mr. Zakhu Hlychho was elected to hold the post of Chief Executive Member. Mr. L. Chinzah's group did not participate in the election. Sapliana Vandir became the Executive Member. The Lakhers who joined the Mara Interim Council now came back to join the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

As stated earlier, the two conflicting tribes, the Pawis and the Lakhers, could not sail in the same boat for long. Mr. L. Chinzah convinced Manghnuna to topple down Zakhu's Executive Committee. L. Chinzah was partly successful in his mission. But seeing the political development within the Council, the Chairman S. Pailei tendered his resignation by handing over the charge to the Vice Chairman, Mr. Arun Kumar Dewan. The Vice Chairman presided over the session when a no confidence motion was discussed. The Lakher members tactfully spoke in their own dialect without having any regard to the fellow members. Even the Chairman could not understand what they are talking about. The Council session was therefore adjourned. The Lakhers took advantage of the prevailing situation and convinced K. Sangchhum and Sapliana to come to their side by offering them the offices of Chief Executive Member and Chairman of the Council. But the political struggle for gaining power ended with the appointment of L. Chinzah as care-taker of

the Regional Council as no political party could form the Executive Committee.

Soon after taking over the charge of care-taker, L. Chinzah handed over the charge to a new Chief Executive Member Zakhu Hlychho of the newly constituted Regional Council as political agreement was reached between L. Chinzah group and the Lakhers. This Executive Committee remained in office till the formation of the newly created Autonomous District Councils of Pawis, Lakhers and Chakma.

When the elevation of the Lushai Hills District to a Union Territory was accomplished the Parliament also passed the Bill for the formation of the three Autonomous District Councils in Lushai Hills, namely, the Pawi Autonomous District Council, the Lakher Autonomous District Council and the Chakma Autonomous District Council. Therefore, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils for the three tribes, the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas from the 2nd April 1972.

Again as per the North Eastern Areas (Re-Organization) Mizoram Adoption of Laws and Orders 1972 and the Government of Union Territory (Amendment Act) 1971, the three Regional Councils were elevated to the status of Autonomous District Councils under the same name, each for the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas, which was enforced by the Government of Mizoram Notification No. LDD.8/72/53 dated April 1972.

Chapterization

The study has been divided into five chapters:

- Chapter I : Local Self Government, Concept and Issues in the Context of Mizo Society.
- Chapter II : Emergence of Social Forces and the Creation of Regional Council in Mizoram (including Powers, Functions and Working of the Council).
- Chapter III : Politics of Executive Committee formation in the Regional Council.
- Chapter IV : Analysis of the Factors leading to the Trifurcation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.
- Chapter V : Conclusion.

CHAPTER - I

LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT: CONCEPT AND ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF MIZORAM

The term Local Government has been defined in various ways.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Local Government means:

Authority to determine and execute measures within a restricted area inside the smaller than the whole State. The variant Local – Self Government, is important for its emphasis upon the freedom of the locality to decide and act.¹

According to M.A. Muttalib and Mohd. Akbar Alikhan:

The Local Government is a representative body, representing a particular set of Local views, conditions, needs and problems, depending on the characteristics of population and the economic elements. Varying sets of local views, conditions, needs and problems, producing local variants, are the spring of local freedom that give expression to local opinion, and the aggregate of local opinion, by and large form public opinion.²

The essence of Local Government therefore stands for a Government which is formed and dissolved by the local citizens and the area of activity like Village, District, Country, Municipality or Cantonment, etc. In more elaborate terms the Local Government is the unit of the whole governmental structure of a political system which is formed democratically for the local needs. The term local, essentially stands for a

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1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 14, (Printed in USA, 1973), p. 178.
 2. Muttalib, M.A. and Akbar, Alikhan Mohd. *Theory of Local Government*, (Sterling Publisher Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1982), p. 6.

particular place, region or part of a province. It is local because its activity, responsibility and formation is local.³

In every State the work of government is concentrated in the capital in which the legislature meets and forms the head of the executive to direct the administration. The modern territorial State is vast in extent and its functions have become so complex that it is not possible for a single governmental organization to deal efficiently with all its activities. To this effect David Robertson rightly stated that, Local Government is a system of administration for small political units, towns, countries and rural district, for example. It operates within a governmental framework and unlike a federal system, the powers of the local government are usually delegated by the National or Central Government.⁴ Coordination of the work of various agencies in the field should be made in the field itself because central coordination means delays, jealousies and jurisdictional disputes.⁵ Therefore, the need for decentralization emerges. Centralization means the distribution of governmental powers and responsibilities between the centre and other local bodies in which the State functions are divided for administrative convenience on some rational basis. A decentralized administration, therefore, must be developed as far as possible, the active participation of the people themselves. Their cooperation and not mere compliance is essential. The

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3. Rout, B.C. and Singh, K.S. *A Text Book of Local Government and Administration*, (New Book Centre, New Delhi, 1984), p. 4.
 4. Robertson, David. *Dictionary of Modern Politics*, (Europa Publication Ltd., London, 1985), p. 191.
 5. Sharma, M. P. *Public Administration and Practice*, (Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1979), p. 123.

service of State and local agencies supplementing and stimulating but not duplicating their staff or equipment should be utilized.⁶ It is a movement from centre to the local units, the assumption being that the people belonging to a particular locality can best know and appreciate their needs. It therefore functions as an instrument of civic self-education.⁷ Hence every State has established smaller units of administration in the local areas. These smaller or local units of administration are called Local Government or Local Self-Government, because they imply the management of local affairs generally by the representatives of the local people. Thus Local Governments are institutions for administration of smaller areas by the local people.⁸

The Local Self-Government is a statutory body. Members of this body are duly elected by the residents of a particular area or locality. It vitally affects the residents of a given area and does not concern the community as a whole, for example, the water supply of a town, the clearing and lighting of streets, maintenance of a proper drainage system and construction of roads, parks and playgrounds etc. which are placed in the State list of the Indian Constitution in the distribution of powers between the States and the Centre. The Local Government is thus independent of the State Government as the State Government has no administrative jurisdiction within the local area in respect of matters

6. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

7. Nigam, S. R. *Local Government*, (S. Chand & Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1975), p. 2.

8. Chakravarty, A.N. *Studies in Local Self-Government*, (New Book Stall, Gauhati, 1967), p. 1.

entrusted to the Local Government. It is a part of the whole Government of the country and independent in its own sphere of activities. It derives its being from a portion of the same electorate from which the State Legislature derives its authority. But the local authorities are the creation of the State Legislature. In support of this statement, it is necessary to quote John J. Clarke, who opines that:

Local Government is that part of the Government of a Nation or State which deals mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of the particular district, or place together with those matters which Parliament has deemed it desirable should be administered by Local authorities, subordinate to the Central government.⁹

The Local Government is a contrivance by which the people of the locality are made to participate more closely in some of the functions of the State particularly bearing upon the local area. At this stage, it may be better to state how Prof. Jenks opined that a country of strong Local Government may be slow to move, and blundering in its methods but it will be a country of steady progress, and of political stability and honesty.¹⁰ The Local Government is created mainly for administrative convenience in local areas. They are, therefore established to have a very limited power with regard to making bye-law, regulating and also controlling their own affairs within limits laid down by the statute which brings them into existence. Their existence depends so long as they

9. Clarke, J. J. *The Local Government of the United Kingdom*, (London, 1948), p. 1.

10. Jenks, Edward. *An Outline of English Local Government*, (London, Methuen & Co., 1925, Sixth Edition), p. 9

function in accordance with the term laid by the State Government and is superceded by the same authority if they fail to move within the sphere demarcated to it by the State authority. Hence, they cannot do many things without the explicit sanction of the State Government. What distinguished them from the Central or State Government is not the size of the area or of the population, but partly the constitutional positions and partly the nature of the functions they are called upon to perform.¹¹ The Local Government therefore, in other words, is educative in perhaps a higher degree, at least contingently, than any other part of Government.¹²

Local Self-Government: Basic to Democracy

The Local Self-Government is basic to democratic institution. Bryce says that the best School of democracy and the best guarantee for its success, is the practice of Local Self-Government.¹³ In fact, democracy cannot thrive without local self-government, and it is the backbone of democracy. Democracy requires participation of every citizen in the administrative set up, and it can be possible only through the institution of Local Self-Government. The local assemblies of citizens, says A. De Tocqueville, constitute the strength of free peoples. Town meetings are to liberty what Primary Schools are to Science; they bring it within the people's reach. They teach men how to use and enjoy it. A nation may establish a system of free Government but without the

11. Chakravarty, A. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 3.

12. Laski, Harold, J. *A Grammar of Politics*, (S. Chand & Co. Ltd., New Delhi, 1979), p. 413.

13. Bryce, James. *Modern Democracies*, (New York, Macmillan, 1921), p. 133.

spirit of municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty.¹⁴ The institution of Local Government is educative in perhaps a higher degree than any other part of Government. It cultivates a sense of civic duties and responsibilities a develop among the citizens a corporate spirit of common interest.¹⁵

Secondly, it applies local knowledge to local problems. It is true that only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. Laski, in support of this statement says that, we cannot realize the full benefit of a democratic government unless we begin by the admission that all problems are not central problems, and that the result of problems not central in their incidence require decision at the place, and by the person, where and by whom the incidence is most deeply felt.¹⁶ Local knowledge brings about a closer assimilation of administrative activities for there is a consciousness of common purposes and common needs. All the members of the local authorities are believed to be well acquainted with local problems.¹⁷

Thirdly, there is a much popular control in local self-government since the local authorities are in close contact with the people, local administration conforms to current standard of public opinion. Finner says that the local authorities supervise, direct and control over lives.

14. Lipman, V. D. *The Local Government of the United Kingdom Areas 1934-1945*, (Oxford, 1949), p. 1.

15. Laski, Harold J. *Op.cit.*, p. 413.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

17. Rao, V. V. and Hazarika, Niru. *Local Self-Government in India*, (S. Chand & Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1979), p. 13.

They provide for all citizens a common minimum of health, education, welfare services, roads, peace and security of environment.¹⁸

Fourthly, if democracy at National and State level is to survive, it is absolutely necessary that its foundation at local level is to be strengthened. The local government units should be given more powers. They should have more financial resources so that they may do more things for the amenities of the people. The central control should also be relaxed. Fairs, wrestling competition, folk dances and such other things should be arranged to arouse public interest, which is so important for the proper functioning of local institutions which are the foundation stones of democracy in the country.¹⁹

Fifthly, Local Self-Government lightens the burden of Administration. It aims at division of governmental functions which lighten the central government in administering the whole country. The central government being overloaded becomes incompetent and inefficient unless assisted by the local government. Local Self-Government is therefore essential for efficiency and responsibility.

Sixthly, the significance of the local government imparting self-education is sensational happening. It is the place of experimentation where social, economic, political, religion, cultural forces tend and finally give a self-direction which could be in the best interest of all national powers are signalled by the experimentation of Local

18. Finner, H. *English Local Government*, (London, 1950), p. 2.

19. Nigam, S. R. *Op.cit.*, p. 4.

Government. It is the Local Government which touches every one from near. The fact cannot be undermined that the local bodies spread a particular atmosphere in which people's consciousness towards their rights, duties, liberties aroused.²⁰

Contrary to the above points, the Local Government was sometime alleged to weaken the authority of the central, that it cannot provide satisfactory service because of the limited resources that local politics plaques its administration and destroys the seamless web of homogeneous life of the local community, that is unable to solicit public cooperation and that it is inefficient and ineffective on the whole.

Secondly, there is no justification for thinking that there is a reciprocal dependence of democracy on Local Government. Democracy does not cease to exist where there is no Local Government. Historically, it is the other way, that State Government exists first and then Local Government was brought into existence by the State Government.

Thirdly, the two terms, Local Government and Democracy are contradictory. Democracy creates everywhere a social whole, a community which is harmonious subject to law. Local Government on the other hand brings into existence differentiation, individualization and separation. It brings into existence a number of local representative institutions within a national representative system. It generates the struggle for powers between the local and central government and a

20. Rout, B.C. and Singh, K.S. *Op.cit.*, p. 6.

struggle for cultural, economic and linguistic regionalism. The national interest was usually overlooked and imparted instructions how to defend local interests and promote parochialism.

Lastly, mention should also be made of the weaknesses which arise from Local Government. Local Government may degenerate into a narrow-minded, selfish and ignorant institution. Because of its small size, it may not attract competent and public spirited persons and so, it becomes sluggish and inefficient.²¹ J. S. Mill was also of the opinion that the greatest imperfection of popular local institutions, and the chief cause of the failure which has often attended them, is the low calibre of the men by whom they are almost always carried on.²²

Chiefship and Local Government: The Origin

The local Mizo historians are of the opinion that according to the oral tradition the Lushai people, while they were living at Seipui in Burma (now Myanmar) fought a war with Paihte clan. The Lushai captured Chhuahlawma, grandson of Sihsing of Paihte. Chhuahlawma was adopted and got married. He got a son whose name was Zahmuaka then married to Lawileri with whom he begot seven sons, Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga and Rokhuma, whereas the seventh son died in infancy.²³

21. Maheshwari, S. R. *Local Government in India*, (Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 1999, Ninth edition), p. 8.

22. Mill, J. S. *Representative Government*, (London, Everyman's Library Edition, 1957), p. 351.

23. Sangkima. *Mizo Society and Social Change*, (Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1992), p. 35.

In ancient and traditional Mizo society, person or persons who were naturally stout and physically strong led the party while raiding other clans in expanding their dominion by subduing the members of the other weaker society. It is therefore no wonder, that the weaker society made a request to the stronger families to come to the rescue or to provide a leader to protect them from plunderings and raidings. Following this, the Hnamte clan on the death of Chhanpiala presumably, the leader of Hnamte, approached the Lushai clan at Seipui to send some one to become their chief. No one accepted the request. Then they contacted Zahmuaka. Zahmuaka was said to have accepted the offer upon the insistence of his wife Lawileri. He (Zahmuaka) then migrated with all his family members to Khawrua and Tlangkhua villages where his six sons also became chiefs over the different villages. One of the sons of Zahmuaka, Thangur by name, the descendant of Sailova, due to his skill in war and wisdom of governing the people, gradually established chiefship in every nook and corner and became the well known and recognized chief clan throughout the entire Lushai Hills till the advent of the British. This gives us the idea of the origin of the office of the traditional chief among the Lushais or Mizos, which is traditional or one way it may also be said to be the origin of a sort of local governance among the people.

Prior to the coming of the British, each Lushai village was independent and enjoyed its autonomy under the autocratic and despotic chief, although on a miniature scale. Justice was to be dispensed by the chief and in trial of cases he took the help of his *Upas* (Elders) who were mostly appointed at his discretion. Whenever a case was tried by the

chief and his *Upas*, the chief was entitled to a remuneration known as '*Salam*'.* The party losing the case had also to pay a fine of Rs. 40/- to the winning party. The usual course of the utilization of *Salam* was to arrange a feast for the chief and *Upas* as and when the total amount collected was considered sufficient for incurring necessary expenditure. In the governance of the village, even though the chief was theoretically the fountain head of all powers in matter of disputes and deliberations which concerned the welfare of the village in its day-to-day existence, the chief had by custom to consult the *Upas* and could not normally ignore the consensus of opinion arrived at. The actual effective control of the chief depended very much on his personal character. A strong chief had the *Upa's* consent to his decision, while a weak one would go by the decisions of the *Upas* even if he himself felt differently.²⁴

The next stage of administration begins when the British annexed the then Lushai Hills in 1890 A.D. The British knew the efficiency and effectiveness of the local chiefs in administering their villages. They allowed the chiefs to remain as heads of the local or traditional administration with certain limitations. The chief was diverted by the British of ownership of land, and his power over life and death of his subjects. The ownership of land was vested in the district administration; petty cases were tried by the chiefs and his council. However, major or

* *Salam* - A fine paid to the chief and elders of a village for settling a case, generally five rupees or a pig of that value. The chief and elders prepared feast with that fine and taken together.

24. Chatterji, N. *The Mizo Chief and his Administration*, (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram), p. 4.

Serious cases were referred to the Superintendent of the District. Thus, there was a dual administrative systems in Lushai Hills, one under the chief with lesser power, and the other under the British Superintendent who enjoyed an upper hand over that of the traditional chiefs. Many traditional powers and functions as well as privileges enjoyed earlier by the chiefs were either curtailed or taken away by the British.

When the Lushai Hills was annexed by the British in 1890 A.D., the entire area was divided into two administrative wings, that is the Northern Lushai Hills which became part of Assam and the South Lushai Hills which was placed as part of Bengal. In 1898, these two separate administrative areas were amalgamated into one single administrative unit known as 'the Lushai Hills', and put under the Assam Province where the entire administration was entrusted to the British Superintendent. The year also marked the beginning of a settled administration. Accordingly, the Government of Assam by proclamation appointed Major J. Shakespear to be the first Superintendent of Lushai Hills.²⁵

The Lushai Hills remained one of the Districts of Assam, firstly as a Scheduled District under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874. The Chin Hills Regulation which was enacted in 1896 imposed restriction on the movements of outsiders into North and South Lushai Hills. But the Chin Lushai Hills Conference of 1898 combined the two parts, North and

25. Sangkima. *Op.cit.*, p. 79.

South Lushai Hills into a District.²⁶ The Lushai Hills was again declared as a Backward Area under the Government of India Act 1919. This means that no Act of the Assam Province was to be extended to the District without the approval of the Governor-in-Council. Again, under the Government of India Act, 1935, Lushai Hills was declared as an "Excluded Area" which means that the Provincial Ministry of Assam was not responsible for the administration of Lushai Hills as there was no person to represent Lushai Hills in the Assam Provincial Legislative Council.²⁷

Under the British, the Lushai Hills administration was indirectly vested in the hands of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, but directly the Superintendent was an overall administrative head of the District. The Superintendent with his assistants upheld the powers over the chiefs. He could change the boundaries of the village chiefs with a power to create new chief and dismiss another. The highest Court was in his hand. All heinous crimes, violent death, etc., should be reported to him directly by the concerned chief. He was also empowered to punish the chiefs and the elders and to depose them for misconduct. The Superintendent had the power to levy tributes and exact labour. Only the internal village administration was left in the hands of the chiefs. The people of Lushai

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26. Rao, V. V., Thansanga, H. and Hazarika, Niru. *A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India*, (Vol. III), (S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1976), p. 6.
 27. Thansanga, H. "Landmark Study in State Public Administration of Mizoram", in *Landmark: A Study of Public Administration in Mizoram*, Prasad, R. N. and Agarwal, A. K. (Eds.), (Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl), p. 230.

Hills now had to serve two despotic rulers, the British Superintendent and the traditional chiefs.

Though the British Government strictly forbade the establishment of any form of political activities in Lushai Hills, the politically conscious Mizos were compelled by the political circumstances which bound them to find out ways and means to express their political aspirations. The outbreak of the Second World War became one of the factors for changing the political situation. The fact was that the Government has to seek the support of the chiefs in their war efforts. In order to win over the chiefs and the people, the authorities had to change their policies and relax the political restrictions which had been imposed earlier. As a result, the first political party that ever existed in Mizoram was established in 1946 under the name 'Mizo Commoners Union'. Thus a new era dawned in the political history of the Mizos. The Mizos aspired something better than that along with the freedom of India from british regime. The Mizo people would also be freed from the arbitrary rule of the chiefs as well as the obnoxious dues levied on them and that they would be relieved from the notorious coolie labour. All these circumstances helped the people to be actively involved in the changing political situation. The active pressure of the people led to the birth of another political party known as "Mizo Union" on the 11th April 1946,²⁸ by renaming the old 'Mizo Commoners Union'. The reason for changing the name of the political party from Commoners' Union to 'Mizo Union', was that, some of the chiefs with the virtue of their foresight saw and felt

28. Sangkima. *Op.cit.*, p. 138.

that their position and power would not be the same in future as and when they found they were excluded from the 'Commoners' Union'. To wipe away such assumptions, the same Commoners' Union was changed into 'Mizo Union'.²⁹

In 1945, the Government of Assam contemplated the introduction of Local Self-Government institution in the then Lushai Hills. P. F. Adam, who was entrusted with this responsibility recognized the existence of many sub-tribes or distinct tribes in the Lushai Hills and therefore, recommended the establishment of a Sub-tribal Council for the existing sub-tribes. The Bordoloi Sub-Committee, which visited Lushai Hills to look into the possible future pattern of Administration in the Lushai Hills, also recognized the existence of various distinct tribes and thus recommended the creation of the District Council administration for Lushai Hills and Regional Council for the Pawi and the Lakher people. The Mizo Hills Autonomous District Council and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council were set up under Articles 244 (2) and 275(ii) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in 1952 and 1953 respectively. The first general elections to the Mizo District Council, on the basis of adult franchise was held in February, 1952.³⁰ The Mizo Autonomous District Council was inaugurated, after the election, by the then Chief Minister of Assam, B. P. Chaliha, on the 25th April 1952, whereas the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was inaugurated at Lunglei

29. Vanlawma, R. *Ka Ram leh Kei (My Country and I)*, (Zalen Publishing House, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 1989), p. 137.

30. Thansanga, H. *Op.cit.*, p. 103.

by Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary, Government of Assam. Members of the first Mizo Autonomous District Council were:

Circle No.	Name	Political Party
	Aijal	
I	Thanhlira	Mizo Union
II	Vanlalbuka	Mizo Union
III	Lalbuaia	Mizo Union
IV	Hrangkhuma	Mizo Union
V	Lalsawia	Mizo Union
VI	Hrangaia	Mizo Union
VII	Chaltuahkhuma	Mizo Union
	Aijal Town	
	Pachhunga	Zalen
VIII	P. Saitawna	Mizo Union
IX	Rotluanga	Mizo Union
X	F. Sangkunga	Mizo Union
XI	R. B. Chawnga	Mizo Union
	Lungleh	
XII	Papuia	Mizo Union
XIV	Ch. Saprawnga	Mizo Union
XV	Khuaimawnga	Tribal Union
XVI	Vako	Tribal Union
XVII	Tuikhurliana	Mizo Union
	Nominated Members	
1.	Sainghinga	Babutlang Aijal
2.	Dr. Rosiama	Lakhipur Cachar Dist.
3.	Taikhuma	Pukpui
4.	Lalthawvenga	Sailam Lal
5.	Lalziki, B.A.	Lunglei

Elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly for the three seats from Lushai Hills District were also held on the 5th April, 1953. The following members were elected and they all belonged to the same Regional Political Party, that is, the Mizo Union.

Sl. No.	Name	Political Party	Village	Constituency
1.	Thanhlira	Mizo Union	Thakthing Aizawl	Aijal East Constituency
2.	Ch. Saprawnga	Mizo Union	Theiriat	Aijal West Constituency
3.	R. Dengthuama	Mizo Union	Pukpui	Lungleh Constituency ³¹

The District Council was vested with wide range of powers including authority to make laws on various subjects for the whole District.³² Under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution, the Autonomous District Council and Regional Council, shall have powers for their respective jurisdiction to make laws, regulating legislature, Executive, Financial etc. Under paragraph 3(1) of the Sixth Schedule, the Council has the Legislative power to make laws on the allotment, occupation or use, or the setting apart of land, other than any land which is a reserved forest for the purpose of agriculture, or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purpose in the interest of the inhabitants of any village or town, management of unreserved

31. Chaltuahkhuma. *Political History of Mizoram* (in Mizo), (Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 1994), p. 79.

32. *The Constitution of India (Sixth Schedule)*, Paragraph 3.

Forest, the use of any canal or water course for agriculture purposes, regulation of the practice of jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation, establishment of Village Councils and town committees and matters relating to their constitution, powers and functions; appointment or succession of chiefs or headman, inheritance of property, marriage, divorce and social customs. The District Council has also the powers to control money lending and trading by non-tribals within the District. All laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect (Paragraph 3(3)).

With regard to the administration of justice in Autonomous District and Autonomous Region, under paragraph 4 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Regional Council and District Council may constitute Village Councils or Courts within their respective jurisdiction for the trial of suits and cases (except certain categories of cases mentioned in Schedule) between the parties all of whom belong to the Scheduled Tribes. The Regional Council and the District Council shall exercise powers of a Court of appeal in respect of all suits and cases triable by a Village Council or Court. The High Court shall have an exercise jurisdiction over suits and cases specified by the Governor from time to time. Para 5 of the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution provides for conferment of powers under the code of civil procedure 1908, the code of criminal procedure 1898 on the Regional and District Council and on Courts and Officers for the trial of suits, cases and offences.

Para 6 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides the powers to the District Council for an Autonomous District, to construct or manage Primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads and waterways in the District and may, with the previous approval of Governor, make for the regulation and control thereof and in particular, may prescribe the language and the manner in which Primary School Education shall be imparted in the District.

The Governor may, with the consent of any District Council, entrust either conditionally or unconditionally to the Council or to its Officers functions in relation to agriculture, animal husbandry, community project, cooperative societies, social welfare, village planning or any other matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

Para 7 provides that the District Council and the Regional Council were entrusted with the responsibility to constitute the Council funds and frame Rules for their management with the approval of the Governor.

Para 8 empowers the Regional and District Council to assess and collect revenue, levy and collect taxes on lands, buildings, shops, entry of goods into market and tolls on persons, residents, within their respective jurisdiction. Besides, the District Council shall have the power to levy and collect all or any of the following taxes on:

- (a) Taxes on professions, trades, callings and employment.
- (b) Taxes on animals, vehicles and boats.

- (c) Taxes on the entry of goods into a market for sale therein, and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries, and
- (d) Taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads.

The Council also derived their income from grants-in-aid, loans and advances, etc., from the Government of Assam. In addition to these loans and advances, grants were given to the Council for their administration and certain purposes such as for the development of Roads and Communications, Rural Health and Sanitation, maintenance of elementary schools, tribal culture etc.

The Council may make regulations to provide for the levy and collection of any of the taxes as already indicated and every such regulation shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

Para 9 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides the authority to the Autonomous District Council to grant licenses or leases for the purpose of prospecting for or extraction of minerals:

- (1) Such share of royalty accruing each year from licenses or leases for the purpose of prospecting for or the extraction of minerals granted by (the Government of the State) in respect of any area within an Autonomous District as may be agreed upon between (the Government of the State) and the District Council of such District shall be made over to that District Council.

- (2) If any dispute arises as to the share of such royalties to be made over to a District Council, it shall be referred to the Governor for determination and the amount determined by the Governor in his discretion shall be deemed to be the amount payable under sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph to the District Council and the decision of the Governor shall be final.

Para 10 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides the power to District Council to make regulations for the control of money lending, trading by non-tribals – the District Council of an Autonomous District may make regulations for the regulation and control money lending or trading within the District by persons other than Scheduled Tribes residents in the District.

Para 10(d) prescribes that no person who is not a member of the Scheduled Tribes resident in the District shall carry on wholesale or retail business in any commodity except under a license issued in that behalf by the District. Provided that no regulations may be made under this paragraph unless they are passed by a majority of not less than three-fourth of the total membership of the District Council.

Provided further that it shall not be competent under any such regulations to refuse the grant of a licence to a money lender or a trader who has been carrying on business within the District since before the time of making of such regulations.

All regulations made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith and until assented to by the Governor of Assam shall have no effect.

The members of the Mizo Autonomous District Council in its first session in 1952, entertained an indifferent attitude towards the Lushai chiefs and expressed their views in favour of the abolition of the office of the chiefs in Mizoram. After having a deliberative discussion on the feasibility of such a move, the Bill called the 'Lushai Hills (Chiefship Abolition) Bill 1952', was passed by the District Council which would become effective from the 1st January 1953. The Act known as 'Lushai Hills Chiefship Abolition Act 1952' was valid only within the jurisdiction of the District Council.³³

According to this Act, the existing office of the Chiefs as on the 25th April 1952, were to be abolished and their rights of receiving gift, according to the Lushai customs were also abrogated. The chiefs were allowed to function as rightful chief until another administrative body is formed to function in their place. They were further to function along the line of directions given by the Mizo Autonomous District Council.

The Act provided for compensation to be received by the chiefs. The amount of paddy to be paid by the people is fixed as follows. That the chief who is having less than hundred houses was entitled to receive three tins of paddy from each household. But the chief who is having

33. *The Lushai Hills (Chiefship Abolition) Act, 1952, Chapter I, Sec. 3.*

more than hundred houses was entitled to get only two tins of paddy from each household.³⁴ The chiefs were entitled to receive this compensation only during their life time or within a stipulated time of ten years or whichever is earlier.

In course of time, the District Council, the Deputy Commissioner of Lushai Hills and the Government of Assam, in view of the prevailing economic, social and political conditions, came into one agreement that it would be politically advantageous on their part to terminate chiefship in Mizoram with a handsome compensation to be given to the chiefs. In pursuance of this agreement, the Government of Assam passed a Bill which later became an Act known as 'the Assam Lushai Hills District, Acquisition of Chief's Rights' Act, 1954, (the Assam Act XXI of 1954). The Act mainly dealt with the compensation to be given to the terminated chiefs and the settlement of their lands. Finally, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council and the Pawi and Lakher Regional Council were constituted as local bodies by replacing the traditional system of chiefship and named them as Village Councils by Lushai Hills District (Village Council) Act 1953 and the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Village Council) Act 1954, respectively. The chiefs had to relinquish their chiefship and their actual abolition came into effect on the 1st April 1955. With this, the offices of 259 chiefs and *Upas* (elders) were abolished in Lushai Hills and 50 chiefs were also abolished in Pawi-Lakher area with effect from the 15th April 1956 respectively.

34. *The Lushai Hills (Chiefship Abolition) Act, 1952*, Chapter 2, Sec. 6(a)

The District Council authority paid compensation to *Upas* for the loss of their former position. Those elders residing in Aizawl and Lunglei town were allotted stalls and garden sites and those residing at their villages were totally exempted from voluntary works. Exemption from taxes, other than house tax and the selection of best choice of a jhuming site has also been extended. The Mizos were now freed from their bondage enforced earlier by their chiefs and can enjoy their independent lives, wherein Gandhiji's dream of bringing democracy down to every village and making every citizens a responsible participants in it, was reflected in the Lushai land. Thus, with the formation of the Autonomous District Council, the whole administrative set up changed enabling the people to participate in the formation of the Executive Committee through adult franchise. The first outcome of the new constitutional arrangement was the enactment of the Lushai Hills District Council Act, 1953 (The Lushai Hills act, No. V of 1953).³⁵

According to the Village Council Act, and as amended from time to time, the number of members to be elected to the Village Council varies between four to five, on the basis of the number of houses in that particular village. One-fourth of the total members are nominated by the Autonomous District Council. But the number of nominated members does not exceed three. Members are elected for a period of three years. The Autonomous District Council has the discretion to abolish or to reorganize Village Councils and to decide their number of members. The Executive Body of a Village Council shall consist of the following:

35. Sangkima. *Op.cit.*, p. 177.

- (1) President
- (2) Vice-President
- (3) Secretary.

While the President and Vice-President are elected from among the elected members of the Village Council, the Secretary is appointed and dismissed by the Autonomous District Council on the recommendation of the Council's President. The Secretary participates in the discussion of the Village Council meeting but does not have the right to cast his vote. He keeps all the records of the Village Council and published notices and orders of the Village Council from time to time.

The first District Council elections in Lushai Hills were held on the 7th June, 1954, and the first Village Council was constituted on the 16th August, 1954. As such all the powers of the Mizo Chiefs were transferred to the Village Councils. The people got what they had been looking for since 1946.³⁶

Members of the Village Council were remunerated. In 1967, the rate of remuneration paid to the members of the executive body and other members of the Village Council under the Mizo autonomous District Council was:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. | President | - | Rs. 20 per month. |
| 2. | Vice-President | - | Rs. 15 per month. |

36. Thanhranga, H.C. *Village Council in Mizoram*, (Lengchhawn Press Aizawl, 1994), p. 2.

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|---|--|
| 3. | Members | - | Rs. 10 per month. |
| 4. | Secretary | - | Rs. 20 was paid per month as his remuneration. ³⁷ |

In examining the powers vested in the autonomy of Village Council as the Local Government in Mizoram, it is found that it is highly restricted by the Governmental interference.³⁸

37. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

38. Satpathy, R. K. "Local Government in Mizoram Some Observation" in *Land Marks: A Study of Public Administration in Mizoram*, Prasad, R. N. and Agarwal, A.K. (Eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 358.

CHAPTER - II

EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL FORCES AND THE CREATION OF REGIONAL COUNCIL IN MIZORAM (INCLUDING POWER, FUNCTIONS AND WORKING OF THE COUNCIL)

Brief Account

The Pawi-Lakher area wherein the Pawis and Lakhers are living, is located to the southern and south-eastern corner of Mizoram. The land of their habitation is contiguous wherein a Kolodyne (*Boinu* in Mara) river flows across dividing the entire area into two parts. Towards the North, the Pawi area is bordered by Lunglei and Kolodyne or Maraland towards the South. There are several villages inhabited by the Pawis beyond the Kolodyne river. The Lakher land is bordered by an international boundary of Burma (Myanmar) towards the South.

The Pawis and Lakhers are treated by the Mizos as sub-tribes in Mizoram. They speak different dialects and having a slight different culture, customs and usages from that of the Mizos. To this, the Pawi traditional usages were very much akin to Mizo than Lakher. In spite of their distinct ethnicity, they are said to have migrated along with the Lushais from China and belonging to the same Mongoloid stock of the same ancestors. They all are therefore recognized as belonging to the general Mizo society, though they do have their own distinct customs, cultures, traditions and other traditional practices. Many writers and scholars termed the Pawis and Lakhers as 'Animist' or 'evil worshippers'. But in the real sense of the term, modern scholars agree that the Pawis and Lakhers do not really worship the evil spirits though animals were sacrificed first to appease the evil spirits. Therefore, they may be called in another sense as 'evil appeasers'.

Villages of Pawis and Lakhers are generally built on the top of the hills, most probably for health and security reasons. Each village was independently administered by its chief, who was assisted by the elders appointed by the chief himself at his own discretion. The chief and his Council were responsible for the life and death of the villagers. The past history of the Pawis and Lakhers was the history full of raids and inter-village feuds over the neighbouring clans. They were known as war-like tribes. N. E. Parry in his book, *The Lakhers*, recorded that for many years the Lakhers seemed to have been a thorn in the side of the authority in the Chittagong and Arakan, and were regarded as a powerful and war-like nation.¹ The first Lakher raid that we know of was on a Khumi village called Hlengkreing, where 30 to 40 people were killed and 38 women and children were claimed into slavery.²

The system of chiefship among the Lakhers and Pawis was rather autocratic, forceful and anti-democratic. Though the chief was assisted by the elders in running the administration, he was not bound by any legal precedence to consult those elders while making decisions. There was no *Zawlbuk* (Bachelors' dormitory), a social institution which played an important role in the administration of Lushai chiefs in checking the chief from becoming more autocratic and despotic. There are different clans among the Lakhers having their respective traditional chief. Chiefship among the Lakhers and Pawis was hereditary; the eldest son

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1. Parry, N. E. *The Lakhers*, (Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, Reprinted, 1976), p. 5.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

being the legal successor to his father, soon after his death. The powers, functions and positions of the chiefs of various clans of the Pawis and Lakhers are more or less the same.

The Lakhers and Pawis, though they are not unified tribes, enjoyed full independence within their own respective villages. A village chief was the sole authority over the subjects, who was also empowered with pronouncing death sentences over the former. In order to ensure peace and show their bravery, they used to attack and kill people of their neighbouring villages irrespective of men and women. If they were defeated they were taken captives and if victorious during such raids, they brought home captives, wealth etc. Such was the society that insecurity and turmoil gripped the minds of the people.

The chiefs collected taxes of different kinds like paddy, meat, bee etc. from the villagers. The chief enjoyed a number of privileges within the jurisdiction of his village. But the situation had been changed by the British after they took over the administration of the land. The Zawngling chief, who was the last to submit his chiefship to the British Government in 1924, marked the beginning of the British rule in Lakher land. The Pawi area was annexed earlier to the British territory. The British rule in the area therefore relieved the tribes from fear of raids and insecurity of life due to highhandedness of authoritarian rule of the chiefs. The British ruler left the local administration to their respective traditional chiefs by keeping control over them to become despotic and tyrant.

Consolidation of British Administration

In 1869, the first Lushai expedition took place, and also in 1871 two British columns entered the Lushai Hills whose expedition dealt with the Lushais. In 1888, a raiding party under the leadership of Hausata (Pawi), the chief of Lungtian, murdered Lt. J. F. Stewart of the 1st Leinster Regiment, when in charge of a survey party, at a place only 18 miles from Rangamati near the Saichal Range.³ This outrage was the immediate cause of the Chin Lushai expedition of 1888-1889.

Initially, the British Government was not interested in taking over the administration of Lushai Hills. They did not want to involve themselves in the tribal areas on the ground that they could not gain anything by interfering with the internal administration of the Lushais. The British knew that this area would be only a burden to them economically. Had not the Lushais disturbed the functioning of the tea gardens in Cachar and Sylhet, which were under the British ownership and raided the villages which led to desertion of the villages by the people and caused loss of revenue to the Government, the British probably would have never gone into Lushai Hills for occupation of the territory.⁴

The year 1890 marked a significant landmark in the history of the Mizos for that year was the beginning of an English administration in

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3. Reid, Robert. *The Lushai Hills*, (Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, Reprinted, 1979), p. 1.
 4. Ray, Animesh. *Mizoram: Dynamic of Change*, (Pearl Publishers, Calcutta, 1978), p. 15.

Lushai Hills.⁵ They established their political domination over the Mizos by the establishment of an administrative centre at Aizawl. During the sixty years reign of the British in Mizoram, many changes had been introduced into the Mizo society by transforming it from a primitive character to a modern civilized society. This chapter attempts to make a detail study of the factors and forces that were responsible in bringing about such transformation in the historical and political perspectives of the British administration over that of the former Lushai Hills.

The British Government first created the post of Political Officer to be posted in Lushai Hills who would be responsible for establishing political influence and control over the Lushai chiefs and induced them to submit to the British rule. He was also at the same time directed not to interfere with the internal administration of the Lushai chiefs excepting that of punishing of the chiefs who were responsible in conducting raids over the British Government, its subjects and properties. Therefore the British administration was responsible in checking and reducing the severity of feuds and notorious practice of head hunting which was the order of the day before the British came into contact with the Mizos.

The Christian missionaries entered Mizoram in 1894 and first introduced formal education among the Mizos in order to help the spreading of Christianity. This initiative taken by the Christian missionaries was no less significant in the process of the social

5. Hminga, C. L. *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, (The Literature Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawr, Lunglei, 1987), p. 7.

transformation of the Mizo society. The traditional social institution like the *Zawlbuk*, and other traditional practices like *Bawihship*, festivals, sacrifices and other animistic religious beliefs gradually disappeared in the Mizo society after their acceptance of Christianity. The idea of the continuation of the *Zawlbuk* as a social institution was however vehemently opposed by the people who were converted to Christianity because they considered it as an obstacle to their progress.

It is necessary to study why and how such an important social institution, like the *Zawlbuk*, has completely gone out of existence today. One may say that the advent of Christianity into Lushai Hills was one of the sole factors which led to the profound changes in the social and political life of the Mizos. Secondly, in pre-Christian days, Mizo men got together at the *Zawlbuk*, to take part in wrestling bouts, to chat informally with friends or strangers and to plan for hunting or raiding expeditions, etc. But after they had become Christians they gave up all such activities and the church became the common meeting place, where they praise God and listen to the message and Christian instructions.⁶ Thirdly, the introduction of formal education through the establishment of schools brought into play a strong resistance to the *Zawlbuk* way of living. Parents began to resist sending their young boys to the *Zawlbuk* as prevailing previously on the plea that the home provided a better place for study than the *Zawlbuk*.⁷ Fourthly, the Church Pastors and

6. Hminga, C. L. *Op.cit.*, p. 290.

7. Chatterji, N. *Zawlbuk as a Social Institution in the Mizo Society*, (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1975), p. 30.

teachers, who constituted the most potent forces for the upliftment of the Mizo people, started to mould public opinion, more than any one else, against the old ways of life, centred as they were in the *Zawlbuk* system.⁸

Lastly, it was felt that the practice of young men staying away from the family in the *Zawlbuk* resulted in economic instability and the disruption of the filial ties with the parents. Away from the family the young men could be led astray and undermined the Christian teachings. Also a married young men used to visit their wives at home during the dark of the night and then go back to the *Zawlbuk*. Sometimes, other men would impersonate the husband who was expected and sleep with the wife without her knowing it. One would suppose that the wives were not always innocent of this opportunity for adultery.⁹

Politically, the autocratic and despotic chieftain administration was diluted by the administration of the British Superintendent, who held supremacy over the chiefs. Economically changes also took place in the Mizo society that instead of barter system, cash becomes the medium of exchange. Also dresses of both men and women were gradually westernized. Illegal issues were found in the present society which was seldom seen in the past Mizo society. Monogamy was the prevailing system among the Mizos, but the chiefs kept concubines. The practice of

8. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

9. Kipgen, Mangkhosat. *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, (Mizo Theological Conference, Aizawl, Mizoram, Assam Printing Works Pvt. Ltd., Jorhat, 1996), p. 177.

polygamy declined. Also the spread of education engendered the rise of a wife's position in the family.

In course of time the office of the chief among the Mizos became hereditary. This hereditary system had also been changed after the British occupation of Lushai Hills. Even the Government employees were appointed as chiefs in place of those chiefs who were deposed by the British Superintendent. This appointment has been done in recognition of the meritorious service rendered by them to the British administration.¹⁰ The complicated procedure of administration implemented in the plains was not adopted in Lushai Hills. The British administration introduced in the area was rather simple and direct. But the people had to serve two autocratic rulers, the British Superintendent and the traditional Mizo chiefs. There was not a single agent which could voice the people's aspirations and grievances.

Backward area under the Act of 1919

The Government of India Act, 1919, empowered the Governor General-in-Council to declare any territory in British India to be a Backward Area. Accordingly, the Scheduled Area of Lushai Hills District declared under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874, was again declared as a Backward Area on the 3rd January 1921, as per Government of India Act, 1919, under section 52A.

10. Sangkima. *Mizo Society and Social Change*, (Spectrum Publication, Gauhati, 1992), p. 34.

Declared Lushai Hills as an Excluded Area

Following the Simon Commission's Report, the hill areas of Assam were divided into two categories namely, Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas. The Lushai Hills became an Excluded Area as per Section 92 of the Government of India Act, 1935. The term 'Excluded' implies that Lushai Hills is outside the legislative responsibilities of Parliament for its administration. The administration was entrusted to His Excellency, the Viceroy as the Crown representative to administer the Lushai Hills.¹¹ The British Government therefore did not want to immediately introduce any form of local government among the Mizos. Instead, they wanted the area to be kept away from the popular rule and under strict control of the Governor and his political agent.

In Lushai Hills, therefore, the Superintendent was the real authority combining in himself the offices of Governor, Chief Minister and Judge of Judicial Courts. The Mizo chiefs had power in the villages administration. Thus the Superintendent and the Mizo chief ruled over the Mizos as virtual dictators.¹² There was no other political agency which was allowed to exist to voice the people's aspiration till March, 1946.

11. McCall, A.G. *The Lushai Chrysalis*, (Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. (Reprinted), 1977), p. 238.

12. Prasad, R. N. and Agarwal, A. K. *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*, (Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 1991), p. 4.

Factors Leading to the Creation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in Mizoram

The annexation of Lushai Hills by the British Government was accomplished when the last *Zawngling* (*Zyhno* in Mara) chief was subdued in 1924. The Pawis and Lakhers who formed a minority communities in Lushai Hills were pinned up to the Lushai Hills since then. The area was administered by the British Government from Lungleh sub-division while the traditional chiefs who were still in existence had a very limited powers and functions. The British officials were empowered even to dismissing the traditional chiefs. They introduced new laws, rules and issued new orders, which governed the whole of the Lushai Hills District.

Previously, that is, before the British annexation of Lushai Hills, the chiefs were the absolute owners of land. But under the British Government it reserved the right to take away a part or whole of the land whenever required for governmental purposes. The land could also be taken away from the chiefs as a measure of punishment whenever they violated or in any way disobeyed the Government orders. Hence the status of chiefs was lowered and were now made to appear as agents who solely depended on the mercy of the British.¹³

Consequent upon the annexation of Maraland in 1924, the homeland of the Lakhers was partitioned into two parts for the administrative convenience. One part was annexed to the East Bengal

13. Sangkima. *Op.cit.*, p. 118.

province and included in the Lushai Hills District, while the major portion was attached to Burma (Myanmar). Those Lakhers who were the inhabitants of the area fell within Lushai Hills District could not, from the beginning, feel at home to be in the midst of Lushai by thinking that there was an inherent and deep rooted difference in their traditions, culture and the language they speak. Also as they formed only a minority community within the Lushai Hills District, they developed the feeling that they are inferior and dominated by the Lushais in all walks of life. This sort of feeling, grew stronger among the members of the younger generation. They looked around and found that there was a gap that existed between the Lakhers and Lushai. The situation that prevailed at that time made these young men very unhappy. Hence, social awakening gripped the minds of the elite members of the Lakher society.

The following factors may be analyzed as social forces responsible for the creation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in Pawi and Lakher areas of Lushai Hills District.

Education

The Christian missionaries entered the Mara land in 1907. The Missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. R. A. Lorrain reduced the Mara language into a written language in 1908, that is, only after one year of their stay among the Lakhers. This written language in Roman script, was approved and accepted by the committee of all the different chiefs of Lakher clans in 1913. The younger generation discerned that the wide gap in the social position of the Lakher and Lushai societies lay in education. In fact, during this period, there were many Lushai boys holding jobs in

Government offices in Aijal and Lungleh, whereas they find no one among the Lakhers to have received any formal education even at the Primary School level. The backwardness of the Lakhers was basically because of the absence of any formal educational institutions in their areas. During this period, there were only two middle Schools in the entire Lushai Hills District; one in the North and another one in the South, managed by the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches respectively. A number of Primary Schools were established in Lushai Hills District whereas not a single Primary School was found in Lakher areas till 1947. However, the only School established by the Lakher Pioneer Mission at Serkawr was not an educational institution in the true sense of the term. The Lakher boys and girls were simply taught how to read the Bible and how to sing the Hymns. Hence the Lakhers lived in adverse circumstances.¹⁴ They were extremely unhappy with their social status.

Language

There were several distinct clans among the Lakher tribes who speak their own dialects different from each other. But all the clans can converse freely and understand easily each other even among themselves in their respective dialects. But to the Lushai people, the Lakher dialect is like a foreign language which could not be understood except those words which are akin to the Lushai language.

However, the Lakhers who were living within the Lushai Hills District, and enjoying the same administrative machinery found it

14. Hlychho, Valua. *The Maras Before Their Present Home*, (Mimeograph), p. 3.

difficult to lead an adjust a better social and economical life along with the Lushais. Difference of language and dialects created a great gulf between the two societies and cannot at times live together with one another. Hence, the Lakher people being in a minority could not feel at home in the midst of the Lushais. Access to the means of civilization is limited for the backward people like the Lakhers and therefore could not find a proper place in the midst of those surrounding them who are more advanced and civilized.

Economic Crisis

In their struggle for survival, most of the Lakher people have to engage themselves as daily wage labourers at Lungleh and Aijal. They also earned their living by transporting goods through head loads from Aijal to Lungleh. It was very difficult for them to get suitable works due to lack of understanding of the Lushai language and *vice versa*. They also felt that the Lushais being in majority and more advanced socially and economically, looked down upon them as more backward people. The Lakhers used to hold the night at the out skirt of the village near water point mostly at Saptuikawn at Rahsiveng village of Lungleh. During this period the Pawis and Lakhers unitedly set up a company shop at Lungleh *Bazar*. Pawi and Lakher sellers were engaged. All the Pawis and Lakhers were instructed not to purchase materials from other shops other than the company's. The idea of forming such a company may be treated as one of the factors for the initial beginning of expression which later on led to the demand for the creation of a separate Hill District administration. Pawi version is quoted as saying:

The Sailo chief would not rule over us even though the English leave us for their homeland, we shall safeguard our identity.¹⁵

Social Force

There were great differences in the social life of the Lushais and Lakhers. The Lakhers claimed that they were conservative and reserve especially in matter of sex. The Lushais were open, frank and rough. Illegal issues were very rarely found in the Lakher society, may be, due to the high marriage price; divorce case was also very rare among the Lakhers. There was a fixed rate of marriage price according to which clan the girl belongs. Different items of marriage price should be paid generally in terms of kind. *Zawlbuk* (Bachelors' Dormitory) as a social institution was not established in the Lakher society. The Lakher people claimed that there was no likeness between the Lakher and the Lushais in their customs, traditions and usages.

In addition to the above factors, the Lakhers felt that they were dominated and marginalized by the Lushais in all spheres of life. Few Lakher students were despised and oppressed severely in the classrooms not only by the Lushai students but also the teachers treated them in a dawdling fashion. Generally, speaking the Lakhers hesitated to speak the Mizo language.

15. Hengmanga, Z. *Ka vahvaihpu Ram leh Hnam* (in Mizo), (Pawi Autonomous District Council, 1988), p. 13.

Political Factor

The Lakhers, from the very beginning, had the feeling of being treated as foreigners by the Lushais due to the difference of language, social custom and usages. But the thirst for political development and proper education led them to stride forward in arousing political consciousness among their own people. Few Lakher leaders were convinced and felt of their miserable conditions amidst the general Lushai society. This led them to think of having a separate administrative arrangement for the Lakher Hills to relieve them from the dominance of the Lushais. They were of the opinion that the Lakhers were oppressively administered by the British under the influence of the Lushais. In fact, the Lushai people have not much to do with the internal affairs of the Lakhers as the two were quite different from each other socially, politically and economically. This sentiment found its expression in the minds of several Lakhers since 1943.

The demand put forward by the Lakhers for a separate administrative set up can be properly understood from the following report of the visit of Bowman, who was an ICS Officer. A. I. Bowman, who was the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei as well as the Superintendent, paid a visit to Serkawr village in 1945. He made an inspection of the records of the Village Court. A. I. Bowman was extremely surprised to see that all judgement records had been written in Lushai language.¹⁶ He enquired from the chief why all those records had

16. Zachono, R. T. "The Maras Towards Autonomy", in *Autonomy Movements in Mizoram*, Prasadn, R. N. (ed.), (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1994), p. 139.

been written in Lushai language and not in Lakher. A. I. Bowman was informed that the Lakher dialect was not officially recognized. However, the chief was informed to record the Court judgement in Lakher dialect in future. Taking the advantage of the favourable moment, the Serkawr chief placed his political demand before Bowman that the Lakher people deserved much to be under a separate administration just as the Lushais had been earlier. Mr. Bowman took notice of the demand made by the chief. Also the Officer had a good understanding of the political status of the Lakhers as he was earlier stationed at Tuipang village during the Second World War as a military captain. Mr. Bowman seemed to have been impressed upon the reply of Chhohmo, the Chief of Serkawr, and advised him to demand for a better political status for the Lakhers.

The political aspiration of a few Lakher people was aroused by the advice given by A. I. Bowman encouraging them to have a further discussion on the issue of having a separate Hill District administration for the betterment of their future, and the immediate needs for the preservation of their own culture, customs and usages. Subsequently, Chhohmo, (Chhunhmunga in Lushai) the chief of Serkawr village initiated and convened the Lakher Chiefs' Conference at Serkawr to have a threadbare discussion on this important issue.

The Conference, after having deliberated and discusses the issue before them, they unanimously adopted a resolution, demanding a separate Lakher Hills District administration. The following Lakher chiefs were present in the Conference of 1945 at Serkawr:

1. Chhohmo (L) Chief of Serkawr village.
2. Kolo Chief of Zawngling village.
3. Pachi Chief of Chapui village.
4. Laiko Chief of Tuisih village.
5. Hnicho Chief of Laki village.
6. Siatu Chief of Amobyu village.
7. Lakhai Chief of Lawngban village.
8. Laiki Chief of Tawngkawlawng village.
9. Viala Chief of Ainak village.
10. Ngochho Chief of Kaisih village.
11. Rany Chief of Theiva village.
12. Ryutha Chief of Vahia village.
13. Ngolua Chief of Saiha village.
14. Lailo Chief of Tuisumpui village.
15. Thidaw Chief of Rawmibawk village.
16. Tlaikao Chief of Phalhrang village.
17. Zahia Chief of Paithar village.
18. Iahmo Chief of Chhualung village.
19. Hrachho Chief of Tuipang village.
20. Nolo Chief of Chakhang village.
21. Sakhei Chief of Mualbu village.
22. Laihmo Chief of Tuithumhnar village.
23. Zaha Chief of Bungtlang village.

The Conference of the Lakher chiefs mentioned above after a detailed discussion of the issue before them, decided to draft a Memorandum addressed to the Additional Superintendent, South Lushai

Hills Lunglei. In brief, the following are the main points included in the Memorandum, submitted on the 4th January, 1945. (Text of the Memorandum is given in Appendix I).

In the Memorandum, it was stated that the Lakhers were divided into three sections who formed minorities among other tribes with whom they are living and remained as neglected tribes. It was further stated that the Lakhers occupy a vast area of land, about 150 miles in length and 130 miles in width. They therefore through this Memorandum expressed earnestly their desire of having a separate Lakher District in which the Lakher dialect should be used as an official language. The officer so appointed should also be well-versed with the Lakher dialect. There was also a demand for setting up of schools among the Lakhers to provide them with educational facilities.¹⁷

The political activities of the Lakher chiefs aroused the young men who are so keen and enthusiastic to the effect that they would be free from the traditional chief's rule as well as the autocratic rule of the British Superintendent. The Commoners, during this period were absolutely tired of rendering frequent community services for the benefit of the chiefs. The Superintendent as well as his subordinates had the habit of collecting eggs and fowls while performing official duties in the interior villages. They also used to demand goat or even pigs for preparing a feast. No villagers dared to raise their voice against such demands. Another important issue that made the people anxious of

17. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 140.

having a separate District administration was the abolition of forced labour (coolie). This forced labour (coolie) was really a burden to the people as a whole as this service was to be rendered to the British officers and sepoys. Every household has to render at least ten times such services every year. Each service lasted at least two to three weeks or occasionally continued even for two months or more, depending upon the tour programmes of the British officers and sepoys. This order of the Superintendent made them to feel that they were suppressed and treated not as human beings when employed to carry the luggages and other essential requirements of the British officials. Each bundle was about 50-60 kgs of weight. One bundle was shared by two men and for each bundle the British paid the coolies an amount of 50 (fifty) paise only which is to be divided into two.¹⁸ Such was the society wherein the oppressed and oppressor lived.

The politically conscious people energetically initiated and encouraged the chiefs to pursue their Memorandum. They again prepared another Memorandum to this effect for the second time. The Memorandum was submitted to the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei on the 3rd November, 1945, by the Lakher chief. In brief the following are the main points included in the Memorandum. (Text of the Memorandum is given in Appendix – II).

The Memorandum was in the form of a reminder of the previous one since no reply was received from the authority to that effect. The

18. Chalthuakhuma. *Political History of Mizoram, 1920-80*, (in Mizo), (R. D. Press, Electric Veng, Aizawl, 1981), p. 13.

main points of this Memorandum was that the Lakher people wanted to have the unification of all the Lakhers and creating a Lakher Hill District with an English officer to administer over them by using Lakher dialect as an official communication in all administrative matters.

During these years (1945-1947), serious political developments took place in Lushai Hills District. The Superintendent of Lushai Hills District, A. R. Mc Donald issued an order allowing the Commoners to elect their representatives to the chief *durbar*.^{*} Every circle would be represented by one elected member. Also the Superintendent issued an order prohibiting any further practice of forced labour (coolie) without getting prior permission from him. The Superintendent himself, Buchhawna, ADC (Additional Deputy Commissioner) and Sainghinga, a Political Officer, were granted permission to collect eggs and fowls from the villagers. Other government officials as well as the chiefs were not allowed to do the same.¹⁹ This order significantly proved the fact that the grievances of the Commoners were partly redressed and made them to feel that the Superintendent was in their favours.

The changing political developments that took place in the Lushai Hills had also their impact on the thinking of the Lakhers. Certain leaders among Lakhers were stirred up and made them to submit another Memorandum as a form of a reminder of the previous demands which had not received any response or action as prompt as the people expected

* 'Chief *durbar*' means chief conference.

19. Chaltuakhuma. *Op.cit.*, p. 19.

them to be taken. The chiefs of the Lakhers then assembled at Serkawr on November, 1945, and took a consensus decision to submit the Memorandum. Another Memorandum was submitted for the third time to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, Aizawl in December 1945. In brief, the following are the main points included in the Memorandum. (The text of the Memorandum is given in Appendix – III).

This Memorandum contained the earlier demands made for creating a Lakher Hill District with the appointment of an English officer to administer them. It was further stated that the Lakhers desired to be under the control of either Burma (Myanmar) or the Crown Colony. However, the Lakhers do not want to be kept under the purview of the Lushai Hills District.

It is important to refer again to the political developments that took place among the Lushais and the impact of the same on the Lakhers. A. R. McDonald, Superintendent of Lushai Hills, fixed the date for an election to the District Conference on the 14th January 1946.²⁰ This system which was called by A. N. Ray as 'Circle system' was introduced by the British administrators in India, in 1901.²¹ According to this system, every circle is to be represented by two members; one representative from among the chiefs and another from among the Commoners. Both the parties were allowed to elect 20 (twenty) members as their own representatives. The object of the introduction of the circle system was to

20. Liangkhai. *Mizo Chanchin* (in Mizo), (Mizo Academy of Letters, Aizawl, 1938), p. 126.

21. Ray, Animesh. *Op.cit.*, p. 25.

introduce an exercise for a more efficient control over the chiefs and creating mutual understanding between the two sections of the society. Name of the elected Chiefs and Commoners with the name of the village they come from and the number of circle represented is shown below.²²

Number of Circles represented by elected Chiefs and Commoners

Circle No.	Name of Chiefs	Village	Name of Commoners	Village
Aijal Circle				
I	Lalsailova	Kelsih	Dr. Dahrawka	Chhingaveng
II	Khawkunga	Bukpui	Kapthianga	Chaltlang
III(a)	Lamhia	Hmuizawl	Thangzika	Sawlung
III (b)	Lalindia	Khawruhlian	Khenkhama	Phuaibuang
IV(a)	Awksarala	Phullen	Ranga	Saitual
IV(b)	Lalzidinga	Ngopa	Vaitlaia	Khawdungsei
V	Vanhnuaitanga	Kelkang	Manliana	Zotlang
VI	Suakhnuna	Lungpho	Lalchhawzova	Chalrang
VII	Tlangianch-huma	Hualtu	Liantudaia (Circle Interpreter)	Baktawng
VIII	Saihnuna	Mualcheng	P. Saitawna	N. Vanlaiphai
IX	Lalthawvenga	Sailam	Lalzuia	Sialsuk
X	Ngurchhina	Khawrihnim	Lalbuiaia	Lunglung
XI	Lalbuanga	Tukkalh	Zahhia (Pastor)	Tukkalh
Lunglei Circle				
XII	Lalthangdula	Buarpui	Rokawnga	Vanhne
XIII	Lalbuana	Thingsai	Khuanga (Pastor)	Thiltlang
XIV	Taikhuma	Pukpui	R. Dengthuama	Pukpui

22. Chaltuakhuma. *Op.cit.*, pp. 84-85.

Circle No.	Name of Chiefs	Village	Name of Commoners	Village
XV	Thangkunga	Lungtian	Aithura	Muallianpui
XVI	Aichhuma	Tawipui	Ch. Saprawnga	Theiriat
XVII	Suakhnuna	Sirte	Rohmingliana	Tlabung
XVIII	Chhunhmunga	Serkawr	Laithuama	Tuipang

A new class of educated elite among the Lushais came up under the sponsorship of the Christian missionaries, who became affluent and later on became a new privileged class. This elite group of the society became more and more critical of the existence and continuation of the traditional chiefs. There was a strong tendency among the people to destabilize the chiefs. This idea also had its base on the fact that the Superintendent of Lushai Hills at that time seemed to be in favour of the Commoners. This was revealed in his activities of forming a conference which its membership should consist both the chiefs and commoners by which the Commoners would have the same representative as that of the chiefs. This practice would not be possible in the traditional system as the Commoners can never have seats along with the chiefs at an equal status. The Superintendent however, made it possible under his initiative.

The Young Lushai Association (YLA) was founded in 1935 in the same line of YMCA which was founded in other parts of the world. The YLA had a British Missionary as its President and the Church elders among the Lushais as its Secretaries. When an YLA Conference was convened, the agenda submitted to be discussed was consciously politicized. Here, the item was 'how to deal with the thick gloomy forest

of the tribes’.* The conference did not have a smooth sailing due to certain problems. The Chairman, a missionary left his seat in protest against what he termed as beyond the purview of YLA. The Chairman seat was resumed by Rev. Chhuahkhama and the item was dropped on the ground that it was deeply politicized. Even though the meeting ended with no resolution passed, still it held an important place in the political history of Mizoram and this political consciousness inspired the birth of political parties in Lushai Hills in the subsequent period.

More and more serious political development took place among the Lushais in the subsequent years. As a result of such developments, the Lakhers were also very much affected especially in rousing their political consciousness and strengthening their demands for a separate District administration for themselves.

The young and educated political aspirants among the Lushais took up the issue of political development seriously by expressing their views on the issue of hectic political activities that had taken place in Assam and Bengal, ill-feelings between the chiefs and the commoners as well as developmental activities adopted by the English administration following the changed situation in Lushai Hills. The necessity to form a political

* ‘Thick, gloomy forest’ denotes – Plants and trees grow so densely that sunlight cannot penetrate there so that there cannot be any healthy living both psychologically and physically leading to sickness of the people. In the same way the group is dark in their dealings for the welfare of the people. Since it is dark they could not make any healthy schemes paving for the welfare of the people.

Party compelled them to entrust an important assignment to Pu. R. Vanlawma to contact the Superintendent on the 9th April 1946, and handed over the necessary papers relating to party formation with hesitation due to the indifferent attitude shown earlier to the leaders. Unexpectedly, the Superintendent was so winsome and gave him permission for the same. That day was the date of establishing the first ever formed political party in Mizo Hills.²³ It was R. Vanlawma who proposed the name of the party as 'Mizo Common People's Union'. However, the name was changed into 'Mizo Commoner's Union' on the line as proposed by Samuel Davis, a Christian Missionary working among the Lushais.²⁴ But later, the inclusion of the word 'Commoners' was rejected by the traditional chiefs for they could never regard themselves as commoners. Thus, in order to include all Lushai clans, the name of the party was again changed into 'Mizo Union'.²⁵ The Mizo chiefs however did not join the newly formed political party even after the change of the name because they were of the opinion that the main objective of the Mizo Union was to abolish the office of the chief and his administration following the introduction of a democratic pattern of administration among the people. On the 25th May 1946, the first party conference was held wherein, the following persons were elected to hold the different offices of the Party.²⁶

23. Vanlawma, R. *Ka Ram leh Kei* (in Mizo), (Zalen Publishing House, Aizawl, 1989), p. 134.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

25. Hluna, J. V. *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, (Mizo History Association, Aizawl, 1985), pp. 65-66.

26. Chaltuakhuma. *Op.cit.*, p. 23.

1. President : Mr. Pachhunga
2. Vice-President : Mr. Lalhema
3. General Secretary : Mr. R. Vanlawma
4. Treasurer : Mr. Thanga
5. Finance Secretary : Mr. Lalhmingthanga

The Lushais since 1940 aspired for something better. They did not want to be labelled as backward people and did not want to be swamped by the people from the plains.²⁷ The Lushais as a whole were totally against the continuation of autocratic rule of the traditional chiefs as they were regarded as the local representatives of the alien Government. The formation of the Mizo Union intensified the hatred for the chiefs and the people were led to believe that any form of democracy is better than the old set up under the despotic chief.²⁸

The leaders of the Mizo Union launched an agitation to arouse the feelings and sentiments of the people against the chiefs. The people were asked not to pay any customary dues to the chiefs. Songs were composed and sung widely throughout the land which mainly conveyed the idea that the people were tired of the arbitrary rule of the existing chiefs. The Mizo Union was their only hope to relieve them from the clutches of the traditional chiefs. The situation in Lushai Hills soon became tense. Almost all the people, except a handful of the supporters of the chiefs began to disobey the order of the chiefs. The villagers turned restless and

27. Rao, V. Venkata. *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India, 1874-1974*, (S. Chand and Co., New Delhi, 1976), p. 160.

28. Hluna, J. V. *Op.cit.*, p. 66.

started attacking the chiefs' houses and stoned them. In some cases the houses of the chiefs were demolished and burnt. The chiefs were compelled to take up arms in defending themselves and their properties against the agitated people.²⁹ The agitation spread all over Lushai Hills like a burning fire. Later, a problem arose among the leaders of the Mizo Union. One group desired to be within India and appreciated some kind of an autonomy under the Autonomous District Council for the Lushai Hills. The other group wanted to be out of India and upheld their own Independence. In the long run, the former group won the ground. In July, 1947, Khawtinkhuma and Ch. Saprawnga, in the committee at Shillong signed an agreement to be within India.³⁰

The wave of the political movement that took place in Lushai Hills also had its effects on the Lakher areas. The Lakher people heard about the movements and activities conducted against the arbitrary chiefs by the Mizo Union. They were also of the knowledge about the fact that the chiefs' administration in Lushai Hills would soon be replaced by the District administration after India got its Independence. The Mizo Union leader, Ch. Saprawnga, made his political tour in the Lakher areas. He visited Tuipang and Serkawr villages inviting the Lakhers to join the Mizo Union saying that the present despotic administration under the chiefs would be abolished immediately after India's Independence and in its place an Autonomous District Council will be set up on democratic principle, safeguarding the rights, traditions, customs and culture of the

29. Sangkima. *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

30. Hlychho, V. *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

people in Lushai Hills. He encouraged them to keep abreast with the march of time. The policy of the Mizo Union to obliterate the rights and privileges enjoyed by the chiefs in the Lushai Hills was much welcomed in the Lakher areas. The Commoners entertained a great desire to do away with the system and office of the chiefs in the Pawi and Lakher areas, because some of the Lakher chiefs applied the oppressive measures in the system of administering their people. The Commoners were so much anxious to see that the chiefs give up their offices, rights and privileges. However, the people can do nothing because the supremacy of the chiefs over the Commoners still reign as they were strongly supported, recognized and safeguarded by the British administration. Hence, the chiefs in the Lakher area were still powerful and influential over the common people till 1954. No agitated activities against the chiefs were found in the Lakher area. It is interesting to state here that though the Lakher chiefs were still willing to retain their rights and privileges, a sense of uncertainty and apprehension about their future gripped the minds of the chiefs as the date of India's Independence was drawing near. Having experienced of what happened to the traditional chiefs among the Lushais due to the movement spearheaded by the Mizo Union the Lakher chiefs immediately organized themselves to meet the uncertain future of their continuation in the office. The first thing they did to safeguard their offices was to submit another memorandum to put pressure on the British administration for obtaining their demands. The fourth memorandum was again submitted to his Excellency, the Governor of Assam on the 7th July, 1947. The following are the main points included in the memorandum. (The text of the memorandum is given in Appendix – IV).

The memorandum was a reminder of the petition which was earlier submitted on the 7th April, 1947. It was stated in the memorandum that the Lakher people desired the unification of all the Lakhers who are living in south Lushai Hills, Chin Hills of Burma (now Myanmar) and Arakan Hill Tracts and to place them under a separate district administration. The Lakhers expressed their desire even to join Burma if the demand is not considered in their favour and refused to accept placing them under the administrative control of the Lushais. It was further added that the Lakhers have no desire of joining the Mizo Union, a political party.

As stated earlier, the leaders of the Mizo Union visited the Lakher areas and tried to influence the Lakher people with regard to the obliteration of the rights and privileges of the chiefs. In spite of the fervent attempt made by the Mizo Union, no unit of the party could be established among the Lakhers due to their refusal to have anything in common with the Lushais.

The situation was quite different in the case of the Pawis. The Pawis willingly accepted the Mizo Union, which encouraged and enabled the Union's leaders to establish the party units in almost every villages occupied by the Pawis. Membership fees were also paid by the Pawis. However, in some villages in the Pawi areas, the Commoners opposed payment of customary taxes and tributes to the chiefs, and putting the chiefs in an awkward position due to the adverse attitude and activities of the Commoners against them. Some of the active Commoners suffered

whipping at the order of the Superintendent of Lushai Hills during his tour of the area.³¹

From the early part of the 1940s, there was a common sentiment among the Lakhers especially the traditional elites that the Lakhers should have a separate district administration of their own. Also the few young educated Lakhers were influenced by the political activities of the Mizo Union in the struggle against the arbitrary rule of the despotic traditional Lushai chiefs.

The Christian missionaries as well as the European officials excited the Lakhers to think over their future political status. Understanding of the fact that this is the right time for a minority community like the Lakhers to decide their future political aspirations and as cited earlier, they took the initiative by way of submitting memoranda several times to have a separate administrative machinery. They are not willing to be administered by the Lushais as according to them they are foreigners to each other.

During this time, A. I. Bowman ICS sent a private letter from Shillong to R. A. Lorrain (English Missionary, Serkawr) after he left Lushai Hills in 1946. In the letter, Mr. Bowman said that he met the Governor of Assam telling him all about the distinctiveness of the Lakher tribes, who are having different dialects from that of the Lushais. The Lakhers also had an inspiration for a separate political administration.

31. Interview with Mr. Pakhai, Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, on the 17th February, 1997, at Saiha.

Mr. R. A. Lorrain communicated the contents of the letter to Mr. Chhohmo, the Lakher chief, Serkawr, with an advice to put more pressure on the Government for the formation of a separate district administration meant for the Lakher areas.

In confirmation of the above letter, we were told by Mr. Mokia, a Middle School teacher (Pensioner) on the 24th August, 1998, that he himself witnessed the actual happening when R. A. Lorrain translated the letter of A. I. Bowman. Discussion was held among the members present saying that this is the right time to put more pressure on the Government to find out suitable ways and means before the Constitution introduced a new system of administration of justice especially for Lushai Hills.³²

The British Government was preparing for the transfer of power to the Indian people, in the fulfillment of their promise that in the event of India's help to the British Government in the Second World War, the British Government would grant Independence to India. While putting up the case of the Minorities, Tribals and Excluded Areas of Assam, the Cabinet Mission subsequently suggested that there should be an advisory committee on the rights of the Citizens, Minorities, Tribals and Excluded Areas. Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that an influential committee should be set up to make proposals for the administration of the tribal areas. The Constituent Assembly, therefore, set up an advisory committee in terms

32. Interview with Mr. Mokia, a Middle School teacher (Pensioner) on the 24th August 1998, at Saiha.

of the Cabinet statement of the 24th January 1947.³³ This committee again appointed a sub-committee known as the North Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi, as its Chairman. The Sub-Committee co-opted two members from each of the Hill District they visited.

Bordoloi Sub-Committee

The Advisory Committee, which was set up by the Constituent Assembly of India, appointed a Sub-Committee known as the North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam, as its Chairman. The Committee was later known as Bordoloi Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee consisting of Rupnath Brahma, A. V. Thakhar, B. N. Rao, the constitutional Advisor to the Constituent Assembly and Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, the Khasi leader and Minister of Assam and member of the Constituent Assembly.³⁴ They arrived in the Lushai Hills on the 17th April, 1947, to study and enquire about the Mizo people, their administrative problems and their desire to have autonomy for their areas. The co-opted members were Mr. Ch. Saprawnga and Mr. Khawtinkhuma, both from Mizo Hills and members of the Mizo Union. They interviewed the political leaders, Church leaders, chiefs, ex-servicemen, Women Union and Newspapers Editors and other knowledgeable persons.

33. Rao, V. Venkata, Thansanga, H. and Hazarika, Niru (Eds.). *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India, Volume III, Mizoram*, (S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1976), p. 40.

The Sub-Committee heard various conflicting demands. A section under the leadership of R. Vanlawma demanded self-rule, whereas Ch. Saprawnga's group demanded Autonomous District Council within the Indian Union. It is to be noted that the Mizo Union split into two at the time when the Bordoloi Sub-Committee visited Mizoram. Another group demanded self-determination under Burma (now Myanmar). The common interest in general was that Mizoram should have as much autonomy as possible.

The Sub-Committee carefully studied the prevailing administrative set up in Lushai Hills particularly in the perspective of preservation and safeguarding the tribal way of life and at the same time making it possible for the tribal people to participate fully in the political life and administration of the state along with the rest of the people. The Sub-Committee's findings led it to state that the tribal people were sensitive about their lands, forests, system of justice and they should also have full freedom in respect of their own manners, customs, inheritance, social organizations and village administration without affecting the unity of the State of Assam and uniformity in broad policy.

The Sub-Committee recommended for the administration of the Hill Areas based on the concept of regional autonomy in all matters affecting their customs, law of inheritance, administration of justice, lands, forests etc.³⁵ The Sub-Committee also made provision and recommendation for the creation of a Regional Council for the smaller

35. Ray, Animesh. *Op.cit.*, p. 93.

tribes other than the major ones in an Autonomous District, if the tribes so desired. The provision was recommended because there were a number of tribes with distinct culture and civilization of their own.³⁶

According to Mr. R. T. Zachono (a prominent Mara politician and an ex-MLA of Mizoram and an Executive Committee member for three terms), the provision for creation of a Regional Council was recommended by the Bordoloi Sub-Committee in consequent upon the Memoranda submitted by the Lakher chiefs several times as stated in the foregoing paragraphs. According to R. T. Zachono, the Memoranda submitted jointly by the Lakher chiefs many times before, did not go like smoke as the Bordoloi Sub-Committee might have, probably, been convinced with the chiefs' demands. For the solution of the problems of the south Lushai Hills, the Sub-Committee recommended creation of a Regional Council.³⁷

During the course of time the political consciousness that led to arouse the sense of separateness among the Pawis and the Lakhers from the Mizos became more serious. They were afraid of assimilation by the Lushais. In this context, the 'Pawi-Lakher Company'* was formed in

36. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 92.

37. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, pp. 142-143.

* 'Pawi-Lakher Company'. Around the year 1946, a few Maras and Pawis, staying at Lungleh, joined together to establish an identity and ethnic awareness of their group. So they jointly started a business centre by the name 'Company', whereby it was made imperative that all Maras and Pawis should buy commodities only from this shop.

Lunglei by the Pawi-Lakher employees in the office of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei, in 1947. The Company was the first organization that was set up to serve jointly the interest of the Lakhers and the Pawis.³⁸

United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO)

The United Mizo Freedom Organization was formed on the 20th July 1947.³⁹ The party functioned under the Presidentship of Mr. Lalbiakthanga. It was the second Regional political party that existed in Lushai Hills. Mr. Lalbiakthanga soon left the party as he was called to join a government job. He was replaced by Mr. Lalmawia as the President of the party. Mr. Chhunbura was the General Secretary while Mr. Lalrinliana was the Treasurer. The party was formed as a reaction to the extreme activities of Mizo Union.⁴⁰ The party gains support mostly from the Lushai chiefs. As a party, instead of professing the obliteration of chiefship, it was rather in favour of joining Burma (Myanmar). The party also got support from the Lakhers because majority of their fellow clansmen were living in Burma. During our interview with Mr. R. Vanlawma at Zalen Cabin, Republic Veng Aizawl, on the 25th June 1998, we were informed by him that Mr. Lalmawia, the President UMFO was the sole person responsible for the creation of Pawi-Lakher Regional

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38. Royte, Romawia. *The Lakher Autonomous District Council (1972-1982): A Study*. M. Phil Dissertation (Unpublished), 1992, NEHU, p. 58.
39. Chaltuahkhuma. *Op.cit.*, p. 43.
40. Saprawnga, Ch. *Ka Zin Kawng* (in Mizo), (Synod Press, Aizawl, 1990), p. 154.

Council within Lushai Hills.⁴¹ Further, it was Mr. Lalmawia, who took the responsibility in bringing the Pawis and Lakhers under the proposed Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.⁴² Mr. Lalmawia sought the support of the Lakhers and Pawis during the District Council elections in Lushai Hills in which he was the candidate of the UMFO. The Lakhers regarded the policy of the Mizo Union as adverse to their political aspiration whereas the UMFO was liberal. They therefore decided to extend full support to this political party.

In Lushai Hills there was a gradual political development. The President of the Mizo Union, North and South Lushai Hills (Aizawl and Lunglei) were informed to attend the Constituent Assembly Advisory Sub-Committee meeting, Government of Assam, which was scheduled to be held on the 4th July, 1948, at Shillong, as co-opted members. In the meeting, the representatives of the Mizo Union submitted their demand and proposal regarding: (1) Mizo District Council Rule (Draft Regulation), (2) To ratify and confirm the Chin Hills Regulation, 1880.⁴³

The Mizo Union passed several resolutions to keep pace with the aspirations of the masses as a whole. But these resolutions had nothing to do with the existing dual administration, under the chiefs and the Superintendent. Then in its meeting held on the 1st October 1947, the Mizo Union decided to launch a civil disobedience movement if the

41. Interview with Mr. R. Vanlawma, at his Zalen Cabin, Republic Veng, Aizawl, on the 25th June, 1995.

42. Vanlawma, R. *Op.cit.*, p. 203.

43. Chaltuahkhuma. *Op.cit.*, p. 59.

Autonomous District Council was not set up before the end of November 1947. The representatives from Lushai Hills proceeded to Shillong in three different groups to put pressure on the issue of forming an Advisory Council for Lushai Hills. The party consists of the following persons representing their own groups as shown hereunder:

Sl. No.	Mizo Union	U.M.F.O.	British Government representatives
1.	Mr. Thanhlira President	Mr. Lalmawia President	Mr L.L. Peter Commissioner of Lushai Hills
2.	Mr. Bawichhuaka Secretary	Mr. Pachhunga	Mr. Lalsailova of Kelsih (Chief)
3.	Mr.R. Dengthuama	Mr. Hmingliana	Ch. Ngura of Durtlang (Chief)
4.	Mr. Ch. Saprawnga	Mr. R. Zuala	Mr. Awksarala of Phullen (Chief)
5.	Mr. Vanchhunga		

The meeting was held on the 10th November, 1947, wherein, Mr. Bordoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam, Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, Minister, and G.E.D Walker (Advisor to the Governor), were the representatives of the Assam Government, decided that the Advisory Council of Lushai Hills will be constituted with the following members representing different groups.

1. 10 (ten) seats for the Chiefs.
2. 20 (twenty) seats for the Commoners.

3. 3 (three) seats, that is, 2 men and 1 woman for Aizawl Town.
4. 2 (two) seats, that is, 1 man and 1 woman for Lunglei Town.⁴⁴

Dates for election of the members of Advisory Council was fixed as under vide Notification No. 12524/G/ of 7-1-1948.⁴⁵ Date fixed for the election of the Chief's representative was the 23rd March, 1948, whereas the 15th April, 1948, was fixed for the election of the Commoners' representative. Casting of votes will be done in between 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. for both two groups. This order has been issued vide the agreement made between the Lushai Chiefs and the Commoners at the conference held in the residence of the Governor of Assam, Shillong, on the 10th November, 1947. There will be 35 seats altogether. The election will be conducted as per Assam Election Book, 1940.⁴⁶

Chin Association

As stated earlier, though units of Mizo Union and United Mizo Freedom Organization were formed in almost all the Pawi villages, but not a single ethnic-base political party was established in the area. The 1941 Census revealed the necessity of forming a political party to voice the aspiration of the Pawis because 'Pawi tribe' was not included in the list of the Sixth Schedule tribes whereas Lusei, Ralte, Hmar and Lakher were recognized as Scheduled Tribes in the Lushai Hills District.⁴⁷ Due

44. Chaltuahkhuma. *Op.cit.*, p. 61.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

47. Hengmanga, Z. *Op.cit.*, p. 11.

to the above issue a conference of the Pawis was convened and scheduled to be held at Lungpher on the 3rd January, 1947. Each Pawi village was expected to send three representatives. The conference was attended by thirty members and form a clan-base political party called 'Chin Association'. Mr. Z. Hengmanga was elected as the President of the party. He was further selected to contest the Lushai District Advisory Council as he did not affiliate himself neither with the Mizo Union nor United Mizo Freedom Organization. This was necessary as he was to represent the Pawi community. He was to contest the elections as the candidate of the Association.

The Lushai District Advisory Council

After the Indian Constitution came into force, the immediate constitution of the Autonomous District Councils was not a possibility. Therefore, the Government of Assam set up Advisory Councils in five of the six Hill Districts of Assam including the Lushai Hills District. Though the Advisory Council had no statutory basis, they were treated as provincial District Councils.⁴⁸ The District Advisory Council in the Lushai Hills was formed on the 15th April, 1948, to advise the Government of Assam in matters relating to the Lushai Hills. In the Advisory Council, the Commoners had more representatives than the chiefs.⁴⁹

48. Rao, V. Venkata. *Op.cit.*, p. 195.

49. Thanghuama, J. *Mizoram Quavadis (Part I)*, (in Mizo), (Aizawl, 1982), p. 16

Elections were held as per the programme scheduled earlier for the two groups. In the elections the Mizo Union won a thumping majority. Two urban seats of Aizawl were won by UMFO while the other two seats in the South Lushai Hills were won by the Pawi and the Lakher candidates namely Mr. Z. Hengmanga and Mr. Vako representing Sangau and Zawngling respectively. The detail results of the elected members from among the Chiefs and Commoners (both Northern and Southern Circles) are given in Appendix – V.

To this Advisory Council, Z. Hengmanga was elected to represent Pawi Commoners from Circle – XV; Vako was elected to represent the Lakher Commoners from Circle – XVII and Chhohmo (Chhunhmunga, in Mizo) chief of Serkawr was elected to represent the chiefs of Circles – XV and XVII, representing both the Pawi and Lakher chiefs. This Advisory Council was formed after the liquidation of the body of the representatives elected in 1946. It is to be noted here that the representatives of the Pawis and Lakhers Commoners were drawn for the first time into the political affairs at the formation of the Advisory Council. In both the Lakher and Pawi areas before the Advisory Council was constituted, no commoners had any voice in the political affairs, as they did not have any chance before to represent their area or people.⁵⁰

The Superintendent of Lushai Hills, Mr. L. L. Peters convened the Advisory Council meeting on the 16th August, 1948. Mr. L.L. Peters chaired the meeting. But the Mizo Union did not accept Mr. L. L. Peters

50. Hlychho Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 10.

to be the Chairman. They demanded that the chairman should be selected from among the Mizo Union members on the plea that they hold the majority in the Council. As a mark of protest, the Mizo Union boycotted the meeting. The UMFO also boycotted the meeting on the request made by the Burmese Government if their political aim of joining Burma was still in operation. The matters had been put to the notice of the Assam Government regarding the boycott of the Council meeting both by the Mizo Union and the United Mizo Freedom Organization.

Visit of N. K. Rustomji

The advisor to the Governor of Assam Shri N. K. Rustomji, made his official visit to Lushai Hills on the issue of Advisory Council. Elected members of the Lushai Hills District Advisory Council flocked together under the chairmanship of Rustomji. In the meeting, it was announced that every member was free to express what was the system of administration each desired for their particular concerned area. Chhohmo, chief of Serkawr rose to his feet and told the advisor that the Lakher people wished to be under a Regional Council within an independent India. It may be stated that Chhohmo had met L. L. Peters in his bungalow the day before the meeting of the Advisory Council was held and told him that the Lakhers are a distinct tribe quite different from the Lushais. The Lakhers needed a separate administration. He further made an appeal to the Superintendent that his demand may please be communicated on his behalf to the advisor. The chief of Serkawr Mr. Chhohmo was well acquainted with L.L. Peters since the day L. L. Peters was the Sub-divisional Officer, Lunglei. L. L. Peters then advised Mr.

Mr. Chhohmo to express his feeling on the next day before the advisor in the meeting of the Advisory Council.

Accordingly, Mr. Chhohmo expressed his feeling and requested in the form of demand for having a separate administration under a Regional Council. At the first instance, the Advisor declined the demand on the ground that the Lakher population was too small for consideration. At this juncture, Mr. L. L. Peters explained to the Advisor that the Lakhers deserved a sympathetic consideration for a Regional Council as they were a distinct tribe and quite different from the Lushais, who were occupying a compact area in the extreme south of Lushai Hills. The Advisor was then convinced by the Superintendent. The Serkawr chief was informed by the Advisor that the case of the Lakhers would be taken into consideration. He further told Chhohmo that whatever he said to him had been all noted down in his book.⁵¹

After the meeting of the Advisory Council, Mr. Z. Hengmanga, the Pawi leader, thanked Chhohmo for what he had expressed before the advisor. He (Hengmanga) therefore, suggested that the Pawis and Lakhers would be under one Regional Council as the two tribes were the birds of the same feather. Neither Hengmanga nor Mr. Vako said or expressed any opinion in the meeting. The reason being that the two represented the Commoners who were not given any importance in the purview of the British administration. Only the chiefs were officially recognized by the British. Mr. Chhohmo was fortunately well acquainted

51. Hlychho Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 11.

with the Superintendent as he was also at the same time a leading chief in the areas of the Pawis and Lakhers.⁵²

In support of this statement, we were told by Mr. S. Mokia (Pensioner, a Middle School teacher, Saiha) that he translated the letter of L. L. Peters to Mr. Chhohmo in 1947 and the former encouraged the latter to put more pressure on the Government for having separate administration from Lushai Hills and this is the right time to move the Government for the same.⁵³ Mr. Mylai Hlychho, Ex-Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council informed that taking the advantage of the Mizo Union boycott of the Advisory Council meeting, Mr. Chhohmo had a free and lengthy time to put his demand before the advisor to the Governor of Assam, during the Advisory Council meeting for setting up of a separate and Regional Council administration from the Lushai District Council.⁵⁴ Mr. Zavai, MDC of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, also told us that the Lakhers were lucky enough to have European Civil officers like A. I. Bowman, L. L. Peters and even R. A. Lorrain, a Christian missionary, who enlightened the tribes in the field of religion and towards the advancement in political status.⁵⁵

52. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

53. Interview with Mr. S. Mokia (a Pensioner, Middle School teacher) on the 21st August, 1998, at Saiha.

54. Interview with Mr. Mylai Hlychho (Ex-Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and President of Mara Freedom Party) on the 24th June 1998, at Aizawl.

55. Interview with Mr. Zavai, Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on the 2nd April, 1998, at Serkawr.

Tribal Union

The Superintendent of Lushai Hills District Mr. L. L. Peters requested Mr. Chhohmo to form a political party at the earliest in order that the Lakhers in their culture, customs and interest in particular could be safeguarded. Mr. Peters further suggested the name of the party be 'Tribal Union' in the same line as that of the Mizo Union in the Lushai Hills, to enable it to contest elections under the democratic system of governance. Therefore, the Lakhers and Pawis (Maras and Lais) unitedly set up a political party called Tribal Union on the 25th November 1948, during a conference convened at Lawngtlai. The elected office bearers are as follows.⁵⁶

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | President | - | Z. Hengmanga (Pawi) |
| 2. | Vice-President | - | Thatchianga (Pawi) |
| 3. | Secretary | - | Zavaia (Lakher) |
| 4. | Treasurer | - | Vako (Lakher) |
| 5. | Finance Secretary | - | K. L. Pakhai (Lakher) |

In course of time, L. L. Peters the last European Superintendent left Lushai Hills in 1949. He was succeeded by S. N. Barkataki, who was the first Indian Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. While performing his official tour, he received a warm welcome and entertainment from Mr. Chhohmo, chief of Serkawr and other people of the area. Mr. Chhohmo, being the member of the Advisory Council made use of the visit and his meeting with the new Superintendent to place and review the demand for

56. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 144.

an early implementation of the setting up of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

Pawi-Lakher Regional Advisory Council, 1953

Since the Tribal Union was established by the joint conference of Pawis and Lakhers it had clear objectives to pressurize both the Government of Assam and India to form a Regional Council for the Pawi and Lakher people under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.⁵⁷ The Tribal Union was successful in realizing its demand. Aslo Mr. Barkataki, whose good office was influenced by Chhohmo, the Serkawr chief, took prompt action on the interest and cause of the Lakher and Pawi tribes. On the 23rd April 1953, an Autonomous Regional Council called 'Pawi-Lakher Regional Council', was created in the Pawi-Lakher region of the South Mizoram.⁵⁸ The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council as provided under Sub-Paragraph (2) of Paragraph 1 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, was constituted by the Government of Assam vide Notification No. TAD/R/10/50 dated 31st July 1951. Further, the Government of Assam as per powers conferred under sub-paragraph (6) of Paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule, also enacted Rules called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Constitution of the Regional Council) Rules, 1952, to constitute the first Council which was notified vide No. TAD/R/3/52/15 of the 20th

57. Rao, V. Venkata, Thansanga, H. and Hazarika, Niru. *Op.cit.*, p. 154.

58. Chaube, S. K. *Hill Politics in North East India*, (Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi, 1973), p. 96.

May, 1952.⁵⁹ With a view to framing the first constitution for the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Regional Council, an Advisory Council was constituted by the Government of Assam, under the chairmanship of B. W. Roy, the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lungleh, with the following members:

1. B. W. Roy - Chairman
2. Z. Hengmanga - Sangau
3. Khuaimawnga - Vawmbuk
4. Vako - Zawngling
5. Mangsaia - Chawnhu
6. Chhohmo - Serkawr
7. Thangkiphlei - Ngharum
8. Anonda - Sumsilui
9. C. Zochhum - Accountant (SDO's office, Lunglei).

Here, the members of the Advisory Council were seven in numbers,⁶⁰ excluding two officials that is, the Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) Lunglei and an Accountant.

In the early part of 1952, the Tribal Union Assembly was convened at Lawngtlai where delegates of Pawi, Lakher, Tlanglau etc., came together to discuss about the candidates to be set up for the ensuing elections to the Regional Council. The Assembly, after having a deliberate discussion, unanimously resolved that any member who is

59. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 117.

60. Hengmanga, Z. *Op.cit.*, p. 41.

Interested to contest the elections as an Independent candidate may do so, and those elected members would be regarded as the Tribal Union members. In order to file their nominations, all the aspirant candidates went to Lunglei in the early part of 1953. At Lunglei, discontentment started among the Lakhers and Pawis over the distribution of seats. B. W. Roy, the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei, settled the disputes in which a consensus was arrived that the Lakhers would get 3 elected seats plus 2 nominated seats, while the Pawis would get 4 elected seats plus 1 nominated seat. The remaining 2 elected seats would be allotted to the other two sub-tribes, the Tuikuks and Tlanglaus.

Election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was held in the early part of the year 1953. The following were the elected members of the first term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

1. Zavaia of Serkawr. Elected, Mara.
2. Khaido of Zawngling. Elected, Mara.
3. K. L. Pakhai of Saiha. Elected, Mara.
4. Z. Hengmanga of Sangau. Elected, Pawi.
5. Tialupa of Bualpui. Elected, Pawi.
6. Tanmanga of Sangau. Elected, Pawi.
7. Tumhulha of Ngengpui Tlang. Elected, Pawi.
8. Thangkiphei of Ngharum. Elected, Tlanglau.
9. Sangluaia of Mampui. Elected, Tuikuk.

Nominated Members:

1. Chhalie of Serkawr. Nominated, Mara.
2. Chhohmo of Serkawr. Nominated, Mara.

3. C. Zochhuma of Bualpui (Ng). Nominated, Pawi.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was inaugurated by Mr. Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary of Assam Government on the 23rd April 1953, at Lunglei. He handed over a sum of Rs. 1,000/- as an inaugural gift, with which a community feast was prepared at the Sub-Divisional Bungalow, Lunglei.⁶¹

Powers, Functions and Working of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

Under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Regional Council and District Council has been entrusted with vast powers. Under Paragraph 3(1) of the Sixth Schedule, the Regional Council/District Council has the power to make laws with respect to:

- (a) The allotment, occupation or use, or setting apart of land, other than any land which is a reserved forest, for the purposes of agricultural purposes or for any other purposes likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town.

Provided that nothing in such laws shall prevent the compulsory acquisition of any land, whether occupied or unoccupied, for public purposes in accordance with the law for the time being in force authorizing acquisition.

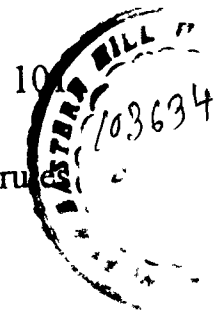
61. Interview with Mr. Zavai (Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council) on the 2nd April, 1998, at Serkawr.

- (b) The maintenance of any forest not being reserved forest.
- (c) The use of any canal or water course for the purpose of agriculture.
- (d) The regulation of the practice of jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation.
- (e) The establishment of village or town committee or councils and their powers.
- (f) Any other matter relating to village or town administration, including village or town police and public health and sanitation.
- (g) The appointment or succession of chiefs or headmen.
- (h) The inheritance of property.
- (i) Marriage and divorce.
- (j) Social customs.

(2) In this Paragraph, a reserved forest means any area which is a reserved forest under the Assam Forest Regulation 1891, or under any other law for the time being in force in the area in question.

(3) All laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

Paragraph 4(1) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution provides that the District Council may constitute Village Councils or Courts for the trial of suits and cases between the parties all of whom belong to scheduled Tribes and may appoint suitable persons to be members of such Village Councils or presiding officers of such Courts, and may also appoint such officers as may be necessary for the administration of laws made under paragraph 3 of this Schedule under Paragraph 4(4) of the Sixth Schedule, a Regional Council or District Council, as the case may



be, may with the previous approval of the Governor make rules regulating:

- (a) The Constitution of Village Councils and Courts and the powers to be exercised by them under this Paragraph;
- (b) The procedure to be followed by Village Council or Courts in the trial of suits and cases under sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph;
- (c) The procedure to be followed by the Regional or District Council or any Court constituted by such Council in appeals and other proceedings under sub-paragraph (2) of this paragraph;
- (d) The enforcement of decision and orders of such Councils and Courts;
- (e) All other ancillary matters for the carrying out of the provisions of sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) of this paragraph.

Paragraph 5 provides for conferment of powers under the Court of Civil Procedure 1908, the code of criminal procedure 1898 on the Regional and District Councils and on Courts and Officers for the trial of suits, cases and offences.

As per paragraph 6(1) the District Council for an Autonomous District may establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads, road transport and water ways in the District and may, with the previous approval of the governor, make regulations for the regulation and control thereof and in particular may prescribe the language and the manner in which Primary Education shall be imparted in the Primary Schools in the District.

(2) The Governor may, with the consent of any District Council, entrust either conditionally or unconditionally to that Council or to its Officers functions in relation to agriculture, animal husbandry, community projects, cooperative societies, social welfare, village planning or any other matter to which the executive power of the state extends.

According to paragraph 7 of the Sixth Schedule, the District Council as entrusted with the responsibility to constitute a District Fund and frame rules for its management in consultation with the Governor.

Under Paragraph 8, (1) the Regional Council for an Autonomous region in respect of all lands within such region and the District Council for an Autonomous District in respect of all lands within the District except those which are in the areas under the authority of Regional Councils, if any, within the District, shall have the power to assess and collect revenue in respect of such lands in accordance with the principles for the time being followed by the Government of the state in assessing lands for the purpose of land revenue in the state generally.

(2) The Regional Council for an Autonomous region and the District Council for an Autonomous District in respect of all areas in the District except those which are under the authority of Regional Councils, if any, within the District, shall have power to levy and collect taxes on lands and buildings, and tolls on persons resident within such areas.

(3) The District Council for an Autonomous District shall have the power to levy and collect all or any of the following taxes within such District, that is to say –

- (a) Taxes on professions, trades, callings and employment;
- (b) Taxes on animals, Vehicles and Boats;
- (c) Taxes on the entry of goods into a market for sale therein, and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries, and
- (d) Taxes for the maintenance of Schools, Dispensaries or Roads.

(4) A Regional Council or District Council as the case may be, may make regulations to provide for the levy and collection of any of the taxes specified in sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) of this paragraph and every such regulation shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and, until assented to by him shall have no effect.

Under Paragraph 10 (1) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, the District Council of an Autonomous District may make regulations for the regulation and control of money lending or trading within the District by persons other than Scheduled Tribes resident in the District.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such regulations may –

- (a) Prescribe that no one except the holder of a licence issued in that behalf shall carry on the business of money-lending;
- (b) Prescribe the maximum rate of interest which may be charged or be recovered by a money lender;

- (c) Provide for the maintenance of accounts by money-lenders and for the inspection of such amounts by Officers appoint in that behalf by the District Council.
- (d) Prescribe that no person who is not a member of the scheduled tribes resident in the District shall carry on wholesale or retail business in any commodity except under a licence issued in that behalf by the District Council.

Provided that no regulations may be made under this paragraph unless they are passed by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the total membership of the District Council.

Provided further that it shall not be competent under any such regulations to refuse the grant of a licence to a money-lender or a trader who has been carrying on business within the District since before the time of the making of such regulations.

(3) All regulations made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

Function and Working of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council which was formally inaugurated on the 23rd April, 1953, was entrusted with extensive powers of Legislative, Executive, Financial and Judicial functions. The purpose of entrusting these powers and functions was mainly to bring about development in the village life of the tribal society in the field of their tribal Culture, Customs, Health, Sanitation, Agriculture, Economic, Inter

Village Communications and whereas Primary Education was left with the District Council Administration. Vide paragraph 6(1) of the Six Schedule to the Constitution of India. It is, therefore, necessary to examine whether the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council enjoys such power and functions on the subjects assigned to it by the Sixth Schedule. An attempt is also made here to examine how far the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council has really implemented those acts, Rules and Regulations passed from time to time within its life time of 20 years of its existence, for the socio-economic development of the Pawi and Lakher people, particularly those living within the jurisdiction of the Council.

The composition of the Regional Council was not fully democratic. As per the provision of the Sixth Schedule, one-fourth of the strength of the Regional Council was to be filled up by nominated members, mainly meant to represent the minorities in the society within the jurisdiction of the Council. Contrary to this, there were no nominated members, within the whole term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, who represented or nominated to represent the minority tribes within the region. But nominations were made from among the Lakher and Pawi tribes only. During the first term of election, nominated seats as well as elected seats were actually distributed among the two tribes that is the Lakhers would get 3 elected plus 2 nominated seats and Pawis could get 4 elected plus 1 nominated seat.⁶² But in the second general elections to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council the strength of the elected member was increased from 9 to 10 and the strength of nominated seats was reduced from 3 to 2. Of

62. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 147.

the elected seats, 4 seats plus 1 nominated seat were allotted each to the Pawis and Lakhers, 1 seat each to the Tlanglau, a sub-tribe of Pawis and Tuikuk, a sub-tribe of Chakma.⁶³

The provision of nominated seats was against the democratic principles as the same was made through favouritism of the elected members. It was suggested that reservation of seats may be made for the minority communities within the jurisdiction of the Council by abolishing nominated seats.

The first election to the Regional Council was held and conducted with the principle of free and fair election. But strangely enough, due to lack of knowledge and experience, the elected members did not form any Executive Committee of the Council even after the completion of the Election process. The Government of Assam, with a view to running the Administration deputed B. W. Roy, SDO (Civil) Lunglei to act as the Chairman as well as the Chief Executive Member of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Shri Zochhum, another Government servant was also deputed to hold the Office of Vice Chairman of the Council for a period of one year.

In the first two elections (in 1953 and 1957) of the Regional Council, candidates were allowed to contest the elections independently. But every elected member should affiliate himself to the Tribal Union. However, the same practice did not work for the fourth election to the

63. Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Constitution and Conduct of Business) of the Regional Council (Amendment) Act, 1957.

Council as the candidates from among the Lakhers contested the election on an ethnic clan-base political party known as 'Mara Freedom Party', which was set up in April, 1962.

The Mara Freedom Party

Consequent upon the alleged failure of the Pawis in keeping their agreement with the Maras to share between them during the different terms of the Council, in holding the posts of Chief Executive Member and Executive Members. Also they are to maintain an equal ratio between the two tribes while making official appointments. Then the Mara organized and set up a clan-base political party to move the Government of Assam for having a separate Mara Autonomous District Council exclusive of the Pawis and Chakma. The Lakhers then boycotted the third Pawi-Lakher Regional Council election and set up an interim Mara District Council which functioned parallel to the existing Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The party known as the 'Mara Freedom Party' was willingly joined by the Lakhers tendering their resignation from the existing Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, and worked voluntarily in the interim District Council for the cause of their tribe. The main aims and objectives of the party were to create a separate Autonomous District Council meant for the Mara tribes only. The Lakhers contested the fourth Pawi-Lakher Regional Council from the Mara Freedom Party unitedly and all the Lakhers won the election.

The Lakher people boycotted the third Regional Council election due to the fact that they were not given their choice of occupying key posts in the Council and the staff were not equally recruited with the

Pawis. As a result they formed a clan-base political party whose main aim was to secure a separate Autonomous District Council for the Lakhers to be known as Mara Autonomous District Council. The Lakhers also boycotted the Village Council elections and at the same time they set up an interim Village Council within the Lakher inhabiting areas. All the staff of the Council belonging to the Lakher community resigned and instead decided to work for the interim Council even without any salary. What followed in the later political development was the Mara Freedom Party submitted a Memorandum to the Governor of Assam demanding the creation of a separate Mara Autonomous District Council.

According to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (Procedure and Conduct of Business) Rules, 1953, framed and enacted by the Council, the session of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was to be summoned once in two months. The same was amended as once in every three months in 1954, which was again amended as once in six months in 1963 by the same authority.⁶⁴ Contrary to the procedure and conduct of business and Rules, the session had been summoned at an irregular intervals frequently. Irregularity of the Council sessions was clearly noticed during the third term of the Council due to two reasons. The first irregularity of the session took place due to the boycott of the Council's elections and formation of the interim Mara Autonomous Council. The second cause was the insurgency problem that affected the entire Lushai Hills District including its southern part. Thirdly, it may also be stated that the Council's office was located at Lunglei on a rented house,

64. Prasad, R. N. Op.cit., p. 152.

whereas its Chief Executive Member was physically stationed at Shillong as he was also an elected member of the Legislative Assembly of Assam. The entire work and functions of the Council were therefore greatly affected.

All the Laws, Rules and Regulations enacted by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule were in keeping with the need of the people. Some of the Acts helped to reduce the hardships and exploitation of the people within the region caused by certain earlier practices during the reign of the traditional chiefs while some aimed at regulating and codifying the social customs and practices. Rules for the administration of justice, Village Council Act, and Rules for the elections to the Village Council, while others were meant for the levy and collection of taxes and revenues. In fact, all the Rules, Laws and Regulations made by the Regional Council were administered and executed by the Executive Committee headed by the Chief Executive Member through their properly appointed officers.

Constitution of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council Rules and Procedure, conduct of business made and passed by the Council were also amended from time to time to keep pace with the growing needs of the people as a whole.

The first Act passed and enacted by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1953 was the Reduction of *Fathang* (a due payable to a chief by a cultivator, in kind, or in cash. If paid in kind, that is in terms of paddy, and if any one did not have sufficient paddy to pay the due in

kind, he can pay Rs. 2 instead).⁶⁵ In accordance with this Act, *Fathang* was reduced from the date of the commencement of the Act from a maximum of six tins to a maximum of three tins of paddy per annum, if paid in kind, and from Rupees two to Rupee one per annum if paid in cash. This has a reference to Pawi-Lakher Regional Council Reduction of *Fathang* Act, 1953.

The social customs and practice Act, 1953, was passed and enacted by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council by which the traditional payment of *Sachhiah* (hunting dues of a chief consisting of the left foreleg of a wild animal shot or trapped by anybody payable to him according to the prevailing customs). *Thirdeng sa* (the hunting dues of *Thirdeng* consisting of the spine and three ribs of any wild animals shot or trapped by anybody payable to him according to the prevailing customs). *Khamkhuai* (Bees found in precipices and claimed by certain persons, particularly chiefs, as their own at the expense of all other persons in the village according to prevailing customs). The custom of payment of *Sachhiah* and *Thirdeng sa* and the custom of *Khamkhuai* shall be abolished with effect from such date as the Regional Council may by Notification in the Assam Gazette, appoint in this behalf.

The social customs and practice Act, 1954 was passed and enacted by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. According to this Act, *Lukhawng*, *Hmaithlam* and marriage price and *Hlawn* were abolished.

65. Parry, N. E. *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*, (Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. On behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram (Reprinted), 1976), p. 12.

- (1) '*Lukhawng*' means customary dues payable on the death of a person.
- (2) '*Hmaithlam*' means a customary payment by the husband of a woman as demanded by the parents of the woman who has left her husband on account of his ill treatment, for her restoration to the husband.
- (3) '*Hlawn*' means materials paid by the parents to a girl at the time of marriage. It was also called *Bungraw Chhawn*.

The custom of payment of *Lukhawng*, *Hmaithlam* or any sort and marriage price payable on the death of either the husband or the wife shall be abolished with effect from the date of commencement of this Act.

The practice of taking back of *Hlawn*, payable on the death of a woman by her parents or his legal descendants shall also be abolished with effect from the same date.

1. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council passed an Act to repeal the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Regional (Social, Customs and Practice) (Repealing) Act, 1959. It was enacted in the Tenth year of India's Republic Day.
2. The Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Social, Custom and Practice) Acts, 1953 and 1954 were later on repealed.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council passed an Act called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Social, Custom and Practice) Act,

1960. According to this, *Salam** may be paid in kind or in cash. When payment is made in kind it should be a pig not smaller than three *sum* but when payment is made in cash, Rs. 10 (ten) may be accepted in lieu of it. *Sum* is used for measuring the size of animal. One *sum* is equal to about 5 inches in length.

The democratic and progressive changes of the customs and social practices of the Pawis and Lakhers with a view to establishing social equality, brought about by the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Regional Council are really worth praising and also appreciated by the commoners of the tribes. The Mizo Autonomous District Council passed a resolution for the abolition of impressed labour on the 13th January, 1953. The Government of Assam also had done away with the practice of coolie accordingly. Moreover in consequence upon the enactment of the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act on the 28th June 1954, the autocratic traditional institution of chief among the Pawis and Lakhers was finally abolished with effect from the 15th April 1956, within the jurisdiction of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council passed an Act called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Forest) Act, 1954. According to this Act, the Regional Council may constitute any forest land at the disposal of the Regional Council Forest Reserve in the manner hereinafter prescribed.

* *Salam* – A fine payable to a chief and elders who have tried a case. This was paid by the losing party.

- (1) Whenever it is proposed to constitute any Regional Council Forest Reserve, the area shall be first inspected by the Chief Executive member or his representative, and if he is satisfied that the constitution of such forest reserve is justified he shall cause notice to be published and circulate in the region:
 - (a) Specifying as clearly as possible, the situation and limits of such land.
 - (b) Declaring that it is proposed to constitute such land a forest reserve.
 - (c) Inviting objection, if any.

When all the objections, if any, have been disposed of, the Chief Executive Member shall cause to be published a final notice specifying the final boundaries of the areas to be constituted into a forest reserve and on such publication the said area shall become Regional Council Forest Reserve.

Any persons doing anything in contravention of the provision of the Forest reserve rules shall be punishable with a fine not exceeding Rs. 50/- or a fine according to the amount of damage caused. The Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Forest) Act, 1954, was amended in 1957 and in 1961 vide the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Forest) (Amendment) Act, 1957 and 1961.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council framed the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Revenue Assessment) Regulation, 1954, as provided in the paragraph 11 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of

India, and enacted on the 20th March, 1954. Under the regulation, all the taxes and tolls which the Regional Council is competent to levy under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 8 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and which have hitherto been levied by the Government of Assam by or under the provisions of any law or laws for the time being in force shall be levied in accordance with the same rates for the time being followed by the Government of Assam and shall be collected by the Deputy Commissioner and other agencies of the Government of Assam. The taxes and tolls so collected shall be credited to the Regional Fund of the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region constituted under sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 7 of the said Sixth Schedule.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (Revenue Assessment) Regulation, 1956, was passed and enacted on the 11th September 1956. Under this Regulation, Taxes on land and buildings have been assessed and collected.

- (i) All lands under wet cultivation shall be assessed to a Tax of Rs. 18 (eighteen) per bigha per year.
- (ii) Every permanent '*Huan*' (garden in English) which is or which may be required to be registered under any law in force shall be assessed to a tax of Rs. 18 (eighteen) per bigha per year.
- (iii) All other permanent '*Huan*' shall be assessed at the rate to be fixed by the Regional Council.
- (iv) Buildings in every house, other than those belonging to the State Government and the Regional Council and such other

building which the Executive Committee may, by order, exempt shall be assessed to annual tax at the rate varying from Rs. 2 (two) to Rs. 10 (ten) for each building.

- (v) Every stall shop building shall be assessed to a tax of Rs. 5 (five) per year.

Tolls on Persons

A toll on every person residing in the Region shall be levied as follows:

- (a) From person having wet cultivation producing paddy or having shifting jhum cultivation, four tins of paddy per year.
- (b) From every house holder who does not produce paddy or does not resort to jhuming – Rs. 2 (two) per year.

Ramhual

The maximum number of *Ramhual** permissible in a village where desired is specified below according to the number of houses it contains:

For a village below 30 houses	- 2 Ramhuals
For a village between 31-50 houses	- 3 Ramhuals
For a village between 51-70 houses	- 4 Ramhuals
For a village between 71-90 houses	- 5 Ramhuals
For a village between 91 and above	- 6 Ramhuals

* Ramhual – means person or persons, who advised the chief where jhum should be cut each year, and are allowed first choice of field to cultivate.

The maximum and minimum Regional *Buchhun* payable by a *Ramhual* shall be sixteen and four tins of paddy respectively per year over and above the toll on persons levied mentioned above (a) and (b).

The selection of the jhums for *Ramhual* shall be in the order of the amount of bids offered by them and accepted by the Village Council or the Executive Committee as the case may be.

Any person who plants the under mentioned crops for sale along the rivers within the areas of the Regional Council Forest Reserve shall be assessed to a tax as noted below against each:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Tobacco 10 fathoms square each | - Re. 1. 0 anas |
| 2. | Mustard 10 fathoms square each | - Rs. 0. 8 anas |
| 3. | Cotton 10 fathoms square each | - Rs. 0. 8 anas |
| 4. | Sesamum 10 fathoms square each | - Rs. 0. 4 anas |
| 5. | Chillie 10 fathoms square each | - Rs. 0 4 anas |

Penalty

In default of payment of any tax levied by this Regulation or under this Regulation within the period prescribed by the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall have powers to attach, for the realization of such dues, sufficient properties of the defaulters and sell such attached properties or any portion of it by public auction after serving a notice for such sale on the defaulter and in the locality, in the period of such notice being not less than fifteen days. The Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Revenue Assessment) Regulation had been amended in 1958 and in 1959.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council has no power to establish and manage Primary School. The administration of Primary School of the Pawi-Lakher Region had been taken up by the Mizo District Council from the 1st August 1961.⁶⁶ So, the minor group under the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council's jurisdiction did not enjoy the privilege to read and write in their own dialects. This was one of the grievances of the Lakhers and the Chakmas of the Pawi-Lakher region against the Mizo District Council as the medium of instruction in Primary School was in Mizo language as introduced by the Mizo Hills District Council. This was also one of the factors that compelled the minor groups to demand a separate Autonomous District Council.

Under paragraph 4 (1) of the Sixth Schedule, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council passed the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous region (Administration of Justice) Rules, 1954 and enacted on the 1st Marh, 1954. Under this Rule, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council set up two tier courts of judicial administration, that is, the Village Court at the village level and Regional Council Court for the whole region located at Saiha. Under this Rule, the Regional Council framed and constitute the formation, composition, terms, and the membership of the District Council. The Village Council Court and the Regional Council Court had original and appellate jurisdiction controlling the administration of justice in the region. It was evident from the list of the judicial officers appointed by the Regional Council that all were untrained and had only general academic qualifications. These officers did not have legal

66. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 152.

Qualifications. Such appointments were made against the principle of judicial administration. This action on the part of the Council brought its greatest drawback in the field of judicial administration.

The Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Village Councils) Act, 1954, was passed by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and enacted on the 24th September 1954. Accordingly, the Village Council will compose of members according to the number of houses it contains as specified below:

For village below 30 houses	- 3 members
For village between 31-60 houses	- 5 members
For village between 61-100 houses	- 6 members
For village between 101-150 houses	- 7 members
For village between 151-200 houses	- 8 members
For village between 201 and above houses	- 9 members

A member of the Village Council should belong to the Scheduled tribes and attained 25 years of age. He must not have an unsound mind and convicted by the Court of Law. The duration of the Village Council term was three years. One-third or nearest one-third to be specified number of members shall be nominated by the Regional Council and two-thirds or nearest two-thirds shall be elected by the adult members of the village concerned on the basis of adult franchise. The President and Vice-President of the Village Council shall be elected by the members from amongst themselves by a majority of votes. The Regional Council on the advice of the President of the Village Council concerned shall

appoint or dismiss a *Kiran* (meaning a village writer) but the *Kiran* shall not be a member of the Village Council.

The Village Council shall allot a particular region or area within the boundary of each village for jhum for each particular year and the distribution of jhum plots shall be done in accordance with the laws framed by the Regional Council under Paragraph 3(1)(d) of the Sixth Schedule. This Act had been amended twice, in 1954 and in 1961.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 23 of the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Village Council) Act, 1954, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council framed the Election to Village Council Rules and enacted on the 18th February 1955. The system of election to the Village Council was more or less the same with the election procedure of the Regional Council.

In accordance with paragraph 11 of the Sixth Schedule, the Pawi-Lakher Region (Jhum) Regulation, 1956, had been passed and enacted on the 6th November 1956, by the Regional Council. After the commencement of this Regulation, distribution of jhums shall be done by the Village Council within its own jurisdiction by means of draw of lots.

- (i) The Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Inheritance of Property) Act, 1959, was passed and enacted by the Regional Council on the 15th June 1959. Under this Act, the competence of Testator means, every person of sound mind not below the age of 18 years, may dispose of will his or her property which she or he could alienate during her or his

life. Where there is no will, such property shall devolve in accordance with the customary laws for the time being in force in the region.

- (ii) A will is liable to be revoked or altered by the maker of it at any time when he is competent to dispose of his property by will.

Procedure and Condition

- (i) If any person leaves more than one will, the one bearing the latest date shall be deemed to be final.
- (ii) The testator of a will may or may not disclose the contents of the will to the witness or legatee.
- (iii) The testator shall execute the will only when he is of sound mind.
- (iv) A will shall be taken to have effect from the death of the testator.

Witness

- (i) A witness to a will shall be of sound mind, and no person below the age of 21 and who is not of sound mind shall be competent to be a witness to the execution of a will.
- (ii) The execution of a will shall be in the presence of not less than two witnesses.

Attestation

- (i) The testator of a will must give his or her signature in the presence of the witnesses. If, however, he or she is unable to write, the left or the right thumb impression respectively must be given.

- (ii) Each witness to a will must give his or her signature or thumb impression, as the case may be, in the presence of the other witness.

Jurisdiction of the Council Court

The Regional Council Court shall have jurisdiction in granting and revoking probate in all cases.

Grant of Probate

The Regional Council Court shall have the like powers and authority in relation to the granting of probate and all matters connected therewith, as are by law vested in it in relation to any civil suit or proceeding pending therein.

The Regional Council has also powers to make laws on agricultural lands. Therefore, it passed and enacted an Act on 28th November 1960, on the subject called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Agricultural Land) Act. According to this Act, the Executive Committee and the Village Council are authorized to allot the vacant lands for the purpose of gardening or cultivation within their jurisdiction. Such allotment shall be made by issue of permit or pass in which the location and the area shall be clearly and specifically defined.

In pursuance of paragraph 11 of the Sixth Schedule, the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous region (Land and Revenue) Act, 1960, was passed by the Council which was enacted on the 14th March 1961. After the abolition of chiefship in 1954, the ownership of land was transferred from the chiefs to the District or Regional Council. Under this act no

person shall acquire by length of possession or otherwise any right over land disposed of allotted or occupied before the commencement of the Act, unless such land had been recorded and registered either in the Deputy Commissioner's office or Regional Council's office.

The Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Marriage and Divorce) Act, 1960, was passed and enacted on the 9th May 1961, by the Regional Council. Under this Act, each Village Council shall maintain a Register of marriage and divorce performed within its jurisdiction. Every bridegroom shall have to pay a Registration fee of Rs. 5 (five) to the Regional Council failing which suits and cases relating to marriage and divorce filed by any interested party shall not be entertained in any of the Court of the Regional Council. The executive Committee was also authorized to make rules to regulate any matter connected with marriage and divorce in accordance with the existing customary laws.

The Regional Council passed an Act called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (*Hnatlang*) Act, 1962. (*Hnatlang* means communal labour in which every one is expected to take part) which was enacted on the 23rd August, 1963. Under this Act, the Village Council shall have the power to enforce *Hnatlang*, within its jurisdiction whenever occasion demands for the interest of the village community as a whole. No discrimination shall be made on grounds of religion, race, caste or class or any of them. The President of a Village Council shall cause to be announced in the village the proposal of holding *Hnatlang* appointing the date and time. Any person who does not comply with the order of *Hnatlang* shall be liable to *run* ('*run*' means customary fine imposed by a

Village Council for refusal to physically attend in the village *Hnatlang*), either in cash or in kind not exceeding Rs. 4 (four) per *Hnatlang* or has obtained commutation under section 4.

The Village Council has the power to exempt any person or persons from *hmatlang* on grounds of illness or on reasonable reasons at its own direction. No person who is of 60 years of age or above compelled to do any *Hnatlang* and any person below 15 years shall not be allowed to represent in the *Hnatlang*.

In analysis of the powers, functions and workings of the Regional Council, though it was expected to uplift the tribal communities, in the domain of their culture, custom, agriculture, health and sanitation, and economic development, it was found that there are many drawbacks in its working towards the fulfillment and implementation of the Acts, Rules and Regulations passed and enacted by the Council from time to time.

In the field of Education, the Pawi-Lakher Council has no power to impart Primary Education. Therefore, the Pawis and Lakhers are deprived of the privileges to read and write in their own dialects. They have to study and use the Mizo language in the Primary schools run by the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council or the Baptist Mission, Serkawn. This practice of learning even at the primary school level through the language which they are not well versed or understood properly, has a tremendous effect on their educational prospect and development.

The Council also suffered a setback in the field of administration. The judicial department of the Council could not function effectively due to lack of judicial manpower and expert. Most of the staff were unqualified and had no knowledge of judicial matters. They were mostly having only general academic qualifications, including that of the Court President and recorders. Therefore, decisions were not always made judiciously. Not only the judicial department, but also most of the Council's staff were below the required qualifications of the posts held. Most of the clerks including Upper Division Clerks (UDC) were under-matriculate while most of the officers were matriculate except very few of them.

Distribution of Council posts between the two tribes was greatly imbalanced. A Lakher Officer could hardly be found among the Council's staff except one Lower Division Clerk (LDC) till the second term of the Council. All key posts in the Council Office including Executive were held by the Pawis.⁶⁷

The Council also suffered in terms of language communication problem in which it could not decide the issue of what language to be used in the session as well as in the Council's office communication for maintaining office files, etc. Majority of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council members cannot fluently deliver their speeches in Mizo language while they were in session. Also the Council staff find it difficult to

67. Interview with Mr. Mylai Hlychho, Ex-Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on the 24th June 1998, at Saiha.

maintain office records, files in Mizo language as they are also not fluent with the same.⁶⁸

Regarding the management of the Council's funds, the income and expenditure statement of the Council's accounts are not properly maintained. They hardly maintained stock and store Registers. In such a state of affairs financial irregularities might have been committed by the Council in its functions. This state of affair had brought immense irregularity in the functioning of the Council from time to time.

Chiefship was replaced by the institution of Village Council in almost every village within the region. The principle of democracy was not fully followed in the formation of the Village Councils. Instead, former village chiefs and elders were generally requested to form a Village Council and carry out its functions on voluntary basis. Members were not paid either in cash or kind but were given the first, second or third choice for selection of lands for their cultivation.

The abolition of chiefship was a great blunder as the people enjoyed complete freedom in the sense that they could leave the chief's village whenever they found the chief was too despotic and escape from the harsh treatment meted out by the chief. If a chief continued to rule but with a limited power as they did under British, it would have been better because the chiefs had a traditionally deeper sense of oneness with the people and the land than the elected members of the Council. The

68. *Ibid.*

Executive Committee of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council ordered for transfer of administrative powers from the traditional chiefs to the local bodies duly constituted under the Village Council. The original letter was cited below: No. RCF-9/55/329 of 18th August 1955, in exercise of the powers conferred by para 3(e) of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the Executive Committee of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council hereby declared that all the powers of administration of the chiefs within the jurisdiction of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council shall stand transferred to the Village Council w.e.f. the 16th September 1955, which is the date appointed for the first meeting of Village Council constituted in accordance with rule 4 of Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Administration of Justice) Rules, 1954.⁶⁹

69. CB-12 Political – 118. Mizoram State Archives Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.

CHAPTER - III

POLITICS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORMATION IN THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was first constituted under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 1 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in April 1953, vide the Government of Assam Notification No. TAD/R/10/50 of 31st July 1951. With a view to framing the first constitution for the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Regional Council, an Advisory Council was constituted by the Government of Assam under the Chairmanship of the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei, Mr. B. W. Roy, with the following members:

1. Vako of Zawngling
2. Khuaimawnga of Vawmbuk
3. Mangsaia of Chawnhu
4. Hengmanga of Sangau
5. Thangkiphei of Ngharum
6. Anondo Chakma of Sumsilui.¹

Subsequently, the Government of Assam as per the power conferred under sub-paragraph (6) of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule, framed the first constitution of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council as notified by a Notification No. TAD/R/3/52/15 of 20th May 1952, followed by a territorial constituency election to the said Council. The

1. Hlychho, Valua. *The Maras Before Their Present Home* (Mimeograph), p. 16.

total number of members at the first instance was 12 (twelve) of which 9 (nine) were elected and 3 (three) were nominated.

In the early part of 1952, the Tribal Union Assembly was convened at Lawngtlai where a large number of Lakhers, Pawis and Tlanglaus, came together to discuss about the setting up of candidates for the ensuing election to the Regional Council. The Assembly unanimously resolved that any member may contest the election as an independent candidate and those elected members would be regarded as the Tribal Union members.² All the aspirant candidates went to Lunglei in the early part of 1953. At Lunglei a discontentment among the Lakhers and Pawis started over the allotment of seats to be contested. B. W. Roy, SDO (Civil) Lunglei finally settled the disputes that the Lakhers would get 3 (three) elected seats and 2 (two) nominated seats whereas the Pawis would get 4 (four) elected seats and 1 (one) nominated seat. One elected seat each was given to Tlanglau and Tuikuk.³

The following were the members both elected and nominated in the first term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council:

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2. Prasad, R. N. *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, (Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987), p. 117.
 3. Zachono, R. T. "The Maras Towards Autonomy" in *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram*, Prasad R. N. (Ed.), (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1994), p. 147.

Sl. No.	Names of Elected Members	Village	Constituency	Tribe
1.	Zavaia	Serkawr	Serkawr	Lakher
2.	Khaido	Zawngling	Laki	Lakher
3.	K. L. Pakhai	Saiha	Saiha	Lakher
4.	Z. Hengmanga	Sangau	Sangau	Pawi
5.	C. Tialupa	Bualpui (Ng)	Bualpui (Ng)	Pawi
6.	C. Tanmanga	Sangau	Lawngtlai	Pawi
7.	Tunhulh	Ngengpuitlang	Tuithumhnar	Pawi
8.	Thangkiphlei	Ngharum	Ngharum	Tlanglau
9.	F. Sangluaia	Mampui	Jognasury	Tuikuk

Sl. No.	Names of Nominated Members	Village	Constituency	Tribe
1.	Chhalie	Serkawr	-	Lakher
2.	Chhohmo	Serkawr	-	Lakher
3.	C. Zochhuma	Bualpui (Ng)	-	Pawi ⁴

On April, 23rd 1952, Shri Ch. Saprawnga the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam inaugurated the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council at Lunglei.⁵ Though the Regional Council has both the elected and nominated members, they could not form the Executive Committee due to lack of educationally qualified persons having the idea of self-governing institutions. Hence, the Government of Assam deputed two Government officials Mr. B. W. Roy, SDO (Civil), Lunglei and C. Zochhuma, a government servant, to run the administration of the Regional Council for a period of one year with effect from the 23rd April, 1953. B. W. Roy held the post of Chairman and Chief Executive

4. Royte Robert Romawia. The Lakher Autonomous Council, 1972-82: A Study. M. Phil Dissertation. NEHU, 1992 (Unpublished), p. 62.

5. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 147.

Member, whereas C. Zochhuma was nominated to hold the post of Vice-Chairman. Both of them remained in their office till the 22nd April 1954.⁶ Members were so much at a ~~lost~~ what to do with the newly instituted system of constitutional institution. Hence, all the official works of the Regional Council rest wholly in the hands of B. W. Roy, who was assisted by C. Zochhuma, the Vice Chairman. No Executive Member was appointed during the tenure of B. W. Roy. Since the Council did not have its own building, its office was housed at the building donated by Sorab Uddin Khan, in memory of his father. Mr. Thuamluaia was engaged as a session Secretary with a salary of Rs. 250/- per month and Council Members were given Rs. 5/- of travelling allowance. No session allowance was given to the Members.⁷

After one year of deputation, the Chairman of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council convened a Council session which was held on the 24th April, 1954. During the session, Mr. Z. Hengmanga was elected Chairman of the Council. B. W. Roy handed over the charge of Chairman to him immediately. Mr. Z. Hengmanga then took the charge and conducted the election for the post of Chief Executive Member. Mr. C. Zochhuma was unanimously elected as the Chief Executive Member of the Council and took the charge from B. W. Roy.

6. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 118.

7. Interview with Mr. Zavaia, Executive Member, Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on the 2nd April 1998, at his residence at Serkawr.

During the session, Mr. Chalia, who was a nominated member expired. Mr. Sakia of Phalhrang was nominated in his place. After getting the approval from the Government of Assam, Mr. Sakia was recommended to hold the post of Executive Member. The member of the Council entitled a monthly salary as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) | The Chairman | - Rs. 120.00 |
| (2) | The Chief Executive Member | - Rs. 300.00 |
| (3) | The Executive Member | - Rs. 120.00 |
| (4) | The Member of District Council | - Rs. 100.00 ⁸ |

The temporary headquarters of the Council at Lunglei was shifted to Saiha on 25th September 1955, where the session was held at a Primary School building at the beginning. It is interesting to note that Mr. C. Zochhum, the Chief Executive Member of the Council played a peculiar role in the work and functioning of the Council. He took the liberty of keeping and carrying the Council's files with him wherever he went. For this act, he was nicknamed by the people as the "Box Officer".

Mr. C. Zochhum, the Chief Executive Member of the Council died on the 31st August 1956. He was succeeded by Mr. Sakia, Executive Member who functioned as Chief Executive Member, in addition to his own duty. The Council's Secretary, Mr. J. K. Khenglawt was invited to hold the Chief Executive Member's post. But he refused to accept the offer on the ground that he is going to join a Government service. Messages and letters were sent to persons like H. Kiautuma and

8. Interview with Mr. Zavaia, *op.cit.*

L. Chinzah who were studying at Shillong to come to their native place to serve their people in the Council's administration.

Mr. H. Kiautuma responded to the invitation. He then joined the Council, first as its Secretary till his nomination was approved by the Government of Assam. He was then elected as the Chief Executive Member unanimously and took over the charge of the Chief Executive Member with effect from the 15th January 1957. Mr. Sakia also continued in his post as Executive Member. But misunderstanding between the Chief Executive Member and the Executive Member began to surface. Mr. Sakia was asked to tender his resignation. Accordingly, Mr. K. L. Pakhai was appointed to hold the post of Executive Member in lieu of Mr. Sakia who resigned due to difference of opinion and not having a cordial relationship with his colleagues. Thus Mr. Z. Hengmanga, the Chairman, Mr. H. Kiautuma, the Chief Executive Member and Mr. K. L. Pakhai, the Executive Member remained in office till the end of the first term of the Regional Council. The post of Vice-Chairman was not filled up after Mr. C. Zochhuma took over charge of the office of the Chief Executive Member. The Council members were busy with the works in framing Rules and Regulations mostly on customary laws of the land. Development works which were worthwhile mentioning were not properly attended to during this term. Grants received from the Assam Government during the first term of the Council were mostly utilized in meeting the office expenses and staff salaries, etc. There were hardly any developmental works undertaken by the Council for the benefit of the people within its jurisdiction.

The following is the list of the holders of different offices of the first term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and period of the offices held by them.

Sl. No.	Name	Post	Period
1.	B. W. Roy	Chairman and Chief Executive Member	23-4-53 to 22-4-54
2.	C. Zochhum	Vice-Chairman	23-4-53 to 22-4-54
3.	C. Zochhum	Chief Executive Member (CEM)	23-4-54 to 31-8-56 (died)
4.	Sakia	Chief Executive Member (CEM)	1-9-56 to 14-1-57
5.	H. Kiautuma	Chief Executive Member (CEM)	15-1-57 to 30-4-58
6.	Sakia	Executive Member (EM)	1-6-54 to 7-7-57
7.	K. L. Pakhai	Executive Member (EM)	8-7-57 to 23-4-58
8.	Z. Hengmanga	Chairman	24-4-54 to 30-4-58. ⁹

Note: CEM = Chief Executive Member
EM = Executive Member

9 Royte, Robert, Romawia. *Op.cit.*, p. 63.

Just before the expiry of the first term of the Council, a resolution was passed to increase the number of elected seats by one seat while reducing the number of nominated seats from three to two.¹⁰ So, another constituency was added to the existing constituencies making the total number of constituencies to ten.

Second Term of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

Gradual development took place in the working and functioning of the Regional Council. The temporary office had been shifted from Lunglei to Saiha as its headquarters. Construction of the Council's office was also in progress at Saiha.

The Government of Assam took a step for conducting the election for the second term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in February, 1958.¹¹ In this election no candidate contested the election under the banner of Tribal Union; each candidate contested the election independently. All the elected candidates were to join the Tribal Union Party. It is to be noted that, in this election the Tribal Union Committee agreed to give special consideration to the two educated persons by vacating two constituencies, namely Bualpui (Ng) and Tuithumhnar in favour of Mr. L. Chinzah and H. Kiautuma respectively. Both of them were declared elected uncontested. The following candidates were declared elected to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in its second term.¹²

10. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 148.

11. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 119.

12. Hengmanga, Z. *Ka Valvaihpui Ram leh Inam* (in Mizo), (Pawi District Council, Lawngtlai, 1998), p. 68.

1.	H. Kiautuma	Elected	Pawi
2.	Z. Hengmanga	Elected	Pawi
3.	L. Chinzah	Elected	Pawi
4.	Tlunghleia	Elected	Pawi
5.	Zavaia	Elected	Lakher
6.	Chhohmo	Elected	Lakher
7.	Mylai Hlychho	Elected	Lakher
8.	Vako of Tuisih	Elected	Lakher
9.	Sangluaia	Elected	Tuikuk
10.	Atul Chandra	Elected	Chakma
11.	C. Tanmanga	Nominated	Pawi
12.	Sakia	Nominated	Lakher

As mentioned earlier, the number of the elected seats was increased from 9 to 10 members, whereas the number of nominated seats was decreased from 3 to 2. Of the elected seats, four seats were allotted each to Pawi and Lakher, one seat to Tlanglau, whereas another seat was allotted to the other two tribes, Tuikuk and Chakma.

After the election result was declared, the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei, convened a meeting of the elected members at Lunglei to elect the Chairman and Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. It is very interesting to state here that the elected Members from among the Maras put forward their demand for implementation of the agreement made between the Pawis and Lakhers, soon after the creation of the Regional Council, that the post of Chief Executive Member (CEM) and Executive Member (EM) should be

shared term by term between the two tribes. It was also verbally agreed that the number of Pawis and Lakhers employed in the Council office should always be equal in the years to come.¹³

On the basis of this agreement the Lakhers put forward their demand that the office of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) should be held by one of the elected Members from among the Lakhers whereas the post of Executive Member (EM) would be held by any one of the elected Members from among the Pawis.¹⁴ The Pawis do not submit willingly to the demand of the Lakhers saying that the agreement was not passed at the Council session and therefore, could not be strictly adhered to in politics.¹⁵ As the Pawis did not agree to the demand of the Lakhers, the latter went out of the meeting. After the Lakhers boycotted the meeting, only the Pawis and Chakmas participated in the Chairman's election of the Council. Mr. L. Chinzah was elected as Chairman unanimously on the 1st August 1958.¹⁶ But after sometime, the Lakhers and the Pawis elected members settled their differences and come to the conclusion that Mr. H. Kiautuma be elected as the Chief Executive Member (CEM), while Mr. Mylai Hlychho was offered the office of the Executive Member (EM). Mr. Mylai Hlychho, however declined the post at the first instance. Later he changed his mind by accepting the offer and continued

13. Interview with Mr. Mylai Hlychho, Ex-Executive Member of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 16th March 1998, at Saiha.

14. Notlia, Laicho. *Political History of Mara* (in Mara). (VEE-EL Printing Press, Saiha, 1989), pp. 17, 18.

15. Interview with Mr. Zavaia, Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 2nd April 1998, at Serkawr.

16. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 149.

till the end of the term.¹⁷ After the internal agreement, Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah tendered his resignation to join a new post as Judicial Officer in the Council, while Mr. F. Sangluaia was elected to hold the post of Chairman in place of Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah in 1959.

After the Chief Executive Member took over his office, he distributed the portfolios to the Members of the Executive Committee including, the Secretary of the Council. The Chief Executive Member (CEM) took over the charge of General Administration and Finance, whereas the Executive Member (EM) was in charge of revenue, issue of House Pass and Development, etc. The Secretary was also given executive power like office administration, customary laws, etc. He also combined the work of Secretary, both Executive and Legislative.¹⁸ During this time, the Council was mostly concentrated on the work of framing of customary laws, Rules and Regulations of the Council under the instruction and directions given by the Assam Government.

The Regional Council was directly financed by the Assam Government through loans and grants-in-aid system. Correspondences were made directly to the Secretary, Tribal Development, Government of Assam with copies to the Deputy Commissioner, Lushai Hills District, Aizawl. There was no official relation with the Lushai Hills District administration except on two matters, that is, that the representatives had to be sent to the District Council, Lushai Hills and the Primary Education

17. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 149.

18. Interview with Mr. R. T. Hnialum, Secretary of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 22nd February 1999, at Lawngtlai.

had been kept within the purview of the Lushai Hills District Council. Salaries were drawn by the staff generally at the interval of three or four months, usually on instalment basis.

Though the Council had no recruitment rules, appointments were made mostly on merit basis. We were informed by Mr. R. T. Hnialum (Retired Council Secretary, 1962-1996), that generally the Lakhers cannot compete with the Pawi candidates due to their lack of educational qualifications as no such educational institutions were present in their areas. But as the Regional Council was meant to serve the two tribes, the Pawis were also recruited basing on the ratio of the tribes employed in the Council not considering strictly of their educational qualifications. Mr. Tintlunga further disclosed that the executive power given to him as Secretary was snatched away by the Chief Executive Member (CEM) who held the office during the third term of the Council, in 1965.

Regarding developmental works, the Executive Committee agreed to spare some amount of funds received from the Assam Government for such works. These works are mainly meant for construction of inter village footpaths, bridges and maintenance of water points in the villages, etc. Later, the Executive Committee concentrated on the construction of playgrounds, public fields in some villages. Boats were also provided with boatmen to cross the rivers where construction of bridges over such rivers was beyond the capacity of the Regional Council.¹⁹ Hence, it may be said that most of the Acts, Rules, Regulations passed and enacted by

19. Interview with Mr. Z. Hengmanga, Ex-Chairman of PLRC on the 22nd February 1999, at Lawngtlai.

the Regional Council took place during the first and second terms of the Council, that is, between 1953-1963,²⁰ in order to carry out the Legislative, Executive, Financial and Judicial functions of the Council.

In 1963, a year before the third general elections to the Council were to be held, a sense of uncertainty and apprehension about the political future gripped the minds of the Lakhers. They recalled the past years, when they themselves submitted Memoranda demanding the creation of a separate administration for the Lakhers and then later joined by the Pawis towards the formation of a Regional Council. As mentioned in their memoranda, the Lakhers were confined to themselves, endeavoured for safeguarding their customs, culture, language and their distinct identity. However, as they entered into a new world system of administration under a democratic principle, their objective was to bring development for the people and the land through political autonomy. But in view of their experience during the first two terms of the working of the Regional Council especially in the formation of the Executive Committee and the problems that arose thereafter, they felt an insecure position to continue their partnership with the Pawis who were educationally more advanced and politically aggressive. The Lakhers also alleged that the Pawis have broken their agreement in the formation of the Executive Committee of the Council. In the first term, Mr. C. Zochhum (a Pawi) was unanimously elected as Chief Executive Member with the understanding that the next Chief Executive Member would be

20. Interview with Mr. Hniartura on the 8th March, 1999, at Lai District Council Office, Lawngtlai.

from among the Lakhers. But all these aspirations went in vain. Even in filling the official posts of the Council, all responsible posts were held by the Pawis. Only one LDC, Mr. K. Paichho, was among the Lakhers holding the posts of LDC in the Council office. There are no Lakhers working in the Council office holding any post above that of LDC. In 1962, a 'tug of war' between the antagonistic groups on the issue of appointment of Council Secretary took place. Both the Lakhers and the Pawis put up their own qualified candidates like Mr. L. Mark and Mr. R. Tintlunga respectively as both these persons were graduates. Mr. H. Kiautuma, being the Chief Executive Member of the Council who also belonged to the Pawi community, issued an appointment order in favour of Mr. R. Tintlunga without taking the consent of Mr. Mylai Hlychho, the lone Executive Member. In this issue, Mr. Mylai informed us that if the Chief Executive Member (Mr. H. Kiautuma) made an appointment in favour of him (Mr. Mylai), clashes between the two would not arise.²¹ In short, the Lakhers were hoodwinked. Deviation of the Pawi elected members from agreement harnessed suspicion and fear in the minds of the Lakhers. The Lakhers thought that the key posts of the Council would be shared equally and staff would be equally recruited. The Lakhers then strongly felt that they must keep themselves aloof from the Pawis and must fight further for the survival of their tribes in view of the stiff resistance to any kind of good understanding with the Pawis.

21. Interview with Mr. Mylai Hlychho, Ex-Executive Member of PLRC on the 16th March 1998, at Saiha.

(PLRC means the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.)

The Lakhers tried to cultivate and mobilize their own people when the leaders toured the length and breadth of their area to revitalize unity and made a concerted effort with determination to have a separate administrative arrangement for themselves. They subsequently convened a general conference at Saiha in 1963. A large number of Lakhers met together and unanimously resolved to set up a new regional political party to be called "Mara Freedom Party". The Committee was constituted with Mr. Valua Hlychho as its first President, Mr. Hiphei Chozah, Vice-President, Mr. Mylai Hlychho the Secretary and Mr. N. Nyuhra, the Treasurer.²²

Factors leading to the Formation of Mara Freedom Party (April 1963)

The following may be considered to be the main factors for the formation of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) in April, 1963. Since the idea of forming the same started in 1962, the actual formation of the party took place in April 1963. There were several conferences and meetings held in different villages on the same issue even in 1962.

1. Failure of Agreement

Soon after the creation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, an agreement was reached between the two tribes to the effect that the post of Chairman, Chief Executive Member and Executive Member should be shared between them during the different terms of the Council. In the first term of the Council, the Chairman and Chief Executive Member's

22 Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 150.

posts were held by the Pawi members. But during the second term of the Council, the Pawis refused to vacate the posts in favour of the Lakhers, breaching the agreement made between the two tribes. Hence the Chief Executive Member and Chairman posts were again held by the Pawis. The same situation took place in the third term of the Council.

2. Unequal Share in the Number of Employees

In the agreement it was said that the number of Pawis and Lakhers to be employed in the office of the Council would be made equal as far as practicable. Contrary to this, there was only one Lakher working as LDC, one circle assistant and few grade – IV staff. Not a single Lakher was recruited at officer's level. All important and responsible posts were held by the Pawis. This led to ill feelings between the two communities.

3. Appointment of Secretary

When the then Secretary Mr. C. Kaisanga resigned from the post, both the Pawis and Lakhers put up their own qualified candidates like Mr. R. Tintlunga and Mr. L. Mark respectively. The Chief Executive Member issued an appointment order in favour of Mr. Tintlunga (Pawi) without any consultation with Mr. Mylai Hlychho, the lone Executive Member of the Council. No test for selection was conducted. The Lakhers took it seriously and regarded it as a despised action to bring down the honour and respect of the whole tribe.

4. Medium of Instructions

In all Primary Schools within the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council area the medium of instruction was in Mizo language which majority of the Lakhers could not understand while at the same time the Pawi

students could speak and write in Mizo language. Hence, the Lakhers felt it necessary to have the medium of instruction for the Lakher students in their own dialect as the percentage of pass of the Lakher students was very poor in the existing medium of instruction.

5. Official Language

The question of what language should be used as an official language, became a burning question and issue. Most of the elected Council Members especially the Lakhers, did not understand either the Mizo or Pawi language. The Pawi elected members could understand Mizo but not the Lakhers. At the same time, the Pawis due to the support of the Tuikuk, Tlanglau and Chakma members formed majority in the Council. Hence, the language problem became one of the factors leading to the demand for a separate administrative set up for the Lakhers. They have realized that if they continue to accept the prevailing medium of instruction and official language, it would be to their disadvantage only. They cannot compete with the Pawis in many respects due to the lack of understanding of the Mizos language. To get rid of the problem, they were of the opinion that a separate administrative arrangement particularly meant for the Lakhers would be of great help politically and otherwise.

6. Enactment

Regarding enactment of law and order, the question arose as to whose customs, traditions, culture, etc. of the two tribes should be used officially. The Lakhers claimed that the demand for the setting up of the Regional Council originated from their side as the traditional chiefs of

the Lakhers who submitted memoranda in 1945 made a fervent demand for a separate administration from the Lushai Hills. The Lakhers after considering all these things are not satisfied with their present position in the Regional Council. Their fear of assimilation was not done away with the present system of administration. Even after the setting up of the separate Regional Council, they still have the fear of being marginalized and discriminated due to the dominant behaviour applied by the Pawis especially at the time of the formation of the Executive Committee of the Council. Though the Lakhers claimed that they had taken the initiative in demanding and bringing the separate Council for both the tribes, the subsequent developments were not in their favour due to the indifferent attitude of the Pawis towards them.

The main objective of the Mara Freedom Party was to have a separate Mara Autonomous District Council in order to bring the integration of all Mara people into a single administrative unit so that they would be able to develop themselves according to their own genius and local interests. The party also aimed at maintaining, safeguarding and promoting the Lakher customary law, culture and dialect. Further, the party was committed to introduce the Lakher dialect as the official language of the District Council as well as a medium of instruction in the Primary Schools within the Council's jurisdiction.

The Mara Freedom Party, in its general conference held at Zawngling on the 19th and 20th of January 1963, resolved to submit a memorandum to the Governor of Assam. The Memorandum was signed by Mr. Valua Hlychho, President, Mr. Mylai Hlychho, the General

Secretary, Mr. Hiphai Chozah, the Vice-President and Mr. Leipo Notliah an active member of the party. The Memorandum contained the demand of the Lakhers for an Autonomous District Council separately meant for the tribe.²³ The Memorandum was submitted to Mr. B. P. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam at Shillong personally by Mr. Valua Hlychho and Mr. Leipo. The delegates entreated that the Chief Minister of Assam may please reply the Lakhers in writing regarding their demand for a separate Council. The Chief Minister gave them a written statement, stating that the Government of Assam would look into the demand and study more about the Lakher tribe. The Assam Government sent copies of the Memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner Lushai Hills District and Chief Executive Member of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council asking them to give their comments on the points raised in the Memorandum.²⁴

In order to study and analyze the problems of the Lakhers in connection with their political demand, Mr. A. C. Ray, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl came to Saiha. He met the leaders of the Mara Freedom Party and discussed with them matters relating to their political problems. The discussion took about an hour. The Lakher leaders had a feeling that they had been able to properly impress upon the officer concerned during the discussion. On receiving a copy of the Memorandum, the Chief Executive Member of PLRC Mr. H. Kiautuma tried his best to disprove the points given in the Memorandum. He gave a

23. Zachono, R. T. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

24. Hlychho, Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 20.

comment to the extent that the Lakhers and the Pawis were of the same tribe and thus the two tribes should not be placed in a separate Regional Council. His attention was to thwart an effort of the Lakhers in their demand for political autonomy and governance.²⁵

As resolved by the Mara Freedom Party's General Conference held at Zawngling, the party's movement should be non cooperation but on the line of non-violence because since the beginning the party always pressed the importance of regional politics and encouraged the entire community to unite as one man till they achieve the status of a separate Autonomous District Council for the Lakhers, exclusive that of the Pawis and the Chakmas. The reaction of the Lakhers came in the form of boycotting the third PLRC election in 1964 as already resolved in the party's General Conference, to show that they did not like to go along with the Pawis under one common Regional Council and expressed that the Lakhers desired that they should be administered under a separate District Council exclusive that of the Pawis and the Chakmas.

The third General Election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was held in 1964. The following were the elected and nominated members. Official posts held by them were also listed against each name:

1. Shri Lalchunga Chinzah, Chief Executive Member, 27-4-64 to 15-7-70 (Elected).
2. Shri K. Rohnuna, Executive Member, 1-12-64 to 15-7-70 (Nominated).

25. Hlychho, Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 20.

3. Shri H. Tanmanga, Chairman, 15-4-64 to 31-4-70 (Elected).
4. Shri Bualthiauva, Member, (Elected).
5. Shri Laltuma, Member, (Elected).
6. Shri Langaia, Member, (Nominated).
7. Shri Atul Chandra, Chakma, Member, (Nominated).²⁶

The election results of 1964, clearly revealed that the Tribal Union of the Pawis and Lakhers do not maintain discipline over its members. Most of its members contested against each other independently. Hence the two eminent Pawi politicians, Mr. L. Chinzah and Mr. H. Kiautuma contested the election to the Council in 1964 from the same constituency opposing each other in the election. Mr. H. Kiautuma lost to Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah. During the meeting of the elected members, they elected Mr. H. Tanmanga as the Chairman of the Council by unanimous vote on the 15th April 1964. Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah was elected Chief Executive Member on the 27th August 1964, by unanimous vote, Mr. K. Rohnuna was also elected Executive Member on 1st December 1964. All of them belong to the Pawi community and remained in office till the next election held in 1970.²⁷

The Lakher leaders are of the opinion that, following the boycott of the election to the Regional Council, an effective step has to be taken up in order to expedite their demand. Consequently in 1966 an interim Mara District Council was established in parallel to the existing P. L. Regional

26. Hnialum, R. T. PLRC, Secretary (1962-1972)'s personal record.

27. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 121.

Council which was run by the Pawis alone. The interim Mara District Council performed the functions almost the same and parallel to that of the Autonomous District Council by way of collecting taxes and fees of all kinds and took up the functions of the Village Councils and Courts within the Lakher areas. In place of a subordinate Court a 'Tribunal' was established. Minor cases were tried by the Village Council Courts and major cases were decided by the Tribunal. The cases tried by the Tribunal and Village Court were disposed of in an amicable way, and not by the rules of law.²⁸

It may further be stated that all the P. L. Regional staff belonging to the Lakher community left the Council and joined the interim District Council receiving only honorarium payment. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council laws and regulations were considered mere scraps of paper and were being flouted in the Lakher area despite all attempts made by Mr. L. Chinzah, Chief Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council to bring political unity in the region.²⁹ The interim Mara District Council, issued house-pass, garden-pass etc. when all these activities were in progress, the matter was reported to the Assam Government by the Chief Executive Member against such activities of the Lakher leaders relating to non-payment of taxes and fees by the people to the PLRC and non-cooperation of the Lakhers in the administration by virtue of the formation of a parallel Mara District Council. The Chief Executive Member appealed to the Deputy Commissioner to take severe action

28. Vlychho, Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 22.

29. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 152.

against the Mara Freedom Party leaders. The Chief Executive Member seemed to have issued an order to the Police at Saiha instructing them to arrest all the active members of the party. Notwithstanding the orders, the people stood firm in their ground. None of them flinched from their stand. They were unyielding to the circumstances.³⁰

What developed during the same time was the need that the Council's office be shifted to Lawngtlai and Bualpui (Ng). It may be mentioned here that the Council's records and relevant papers were all lost as its office at Saiha was on fire. The functioning of the Council therefore, needs to be started afresh. New appointments have to be made to fill up the vacant posts caused by the resignation tendered by the Lakhers.

Moreover, the outbreak of Mizo National Front (MNF) insurgency, which took place in Lushai District with effect from the 28th February, 1966, caused enormous problems not only on official matters but also physical hardship. Mizo National Front underground Government issued an order to close down all the government offices; the outcome of which was to paralyze the functioning and working of government machinery. Not only offices, but also all educational institutions were to be closed down. Hence, it was necessary to shift the Council's office again from an interior place to any of the urban area where Security Forces were available. Therefore, the Council's office had to be shifted to Lunglei and housed its office in a rented building.

30. Hlychho, Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 23.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the Chief Executive Member of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council Mr. L. Chinzah contested the election to the Assam Legislative Assembly and won. He, being an MLA, had to change his headquarters and shifted to Shillong and looked after the functioning of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council from Shillong. It is to be noted here that, the office of the said District Council was at Lunglei, (previously spelled as Lungleh), outside the concerned area of the people for whom the Regional Council was constituted under the provision of the Sixth Schedule.

Following the serious activities undertaken by the Mizo National Front, the whole of Mizoram was declared a 'disturbed area', by the Government of India; supply of foodstuffs was greatly hampered by the Mizo National Front movement. The same was done through air dropping of foodstuff at different places like Lawngtlai, Bualpui (Ng) and Saiha within the PLRC area. Though air dropping was done by the Central Government, still the Council's staff who were mostly dispersed and stationed at different villages had to face a number of problems in terms of getting food and other essential items.

It may be concluded that the political differences between the Lakhers and the Pawis hampered the working and functioning of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. More problems were added due to the outbreak of Mizo National Front insurgency activities since 1966 in the whole of Mizo Hills. Also, in the absence of the Chief Executive Member who stayed at Shillong, far away from the Council's headquarters, the

Regional Council was headless and leaderless, neither functioning nor breaking totally.

General Elections of the 4th Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, 1970

In 1969, when the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council election was about to be held in 1970, the Mara leaders deliberately discussed as to whether they will continue their boycott of the election or participate. They finally decided to take part in the election and thought it wise to continue their demand for having a separate Autonomous District Council with power in their disposal as the prolonged boycott of the Council might dwindle the integrity of the Lakher people in their movement. The Lakher people therefore, abandoned their non-cooperation movement and prepared to face the ensuing election within the party was processed enthusiastically with a mind of capturing power by holding the key posts in the Council. It may be noted that there was no other political party in the Lakher area except the Mara Freedom Party. Therefore, the party, due to its ethnic-base structure had consensus opinion on the issue of putting up of the candidates to all the four constituencies within the Mara area.

On the other hand, the Pawi leaders convened a general conference at Lawngtlai on the 17th January 1970, wherein, they decided to join the Indian National Congress.³¹ Hence, both the two tribes left the Tribal Union and contested the election under two political parties, the Mara Freedom Party and the Indian National Congress. The election was held

31. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 124.

on the 23rd April 1970, the same date on which the P. L. Regional Council was inaugurated by Mr. Ch. Saprawnga at Lunglei.³² In the election, three Lakhers won the election uncontested. But in the Tuipang constituency, Mr. S. Pailei of the Mara Freedom Party was contested by Mr. Sailuaia Pawi as Independent. Mr. Sailuaia lost to Mr. Pailei. Hence, the Lakhers won the seats in all the four constituencies within the Lakher area.

On the other hand, the Pawis who joined the Indian National Congress developed a rift among themselves especially between Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah and Mr. Manghnuna, on the issue of the selection of the candidates. They therefore, set up separate candidates to contest the election. Three candidates, Mr. L. Chinzah, Mr. Lalchema and Mr. Ukmang Zathang won the election from Mr. L. Chinzah's group. Mr. Sapliana Vandır was the lone elected candidate from Mr. Manghnuna's group. From the Chakma area, Atul Chandra Chakma and Arun Kumar Dewan were elected on the Congress party. Atul Chandra Chakma joined Mr. Lalchunga's group whereas Mr. Arun Kumar Dewan joined Mr. Manghnuna's group. Mr. K. Sangchhuma, nominated from the Pawi area sided with Mr. Manghnuna. Mr. Zavai was also nominated from Lakher area. The following were the elected members of the 4th term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, 1970:

32. Interview with Mr. S. Pailei, Ex-Chairman, PLRC, 1970, on the 9th March 1999, at Saiha.

Sl. No.	Name	Nominated or Elected	Tribe belonged	Political party affiliated
1.	Zakhu Hlychho	Elected	Mara	Mara Freedom Party
2.	S. Pailei	Elected	Mara	Mara Freedom Party
3.	S. Hlato	Elected	Mara	Mara Freedom Party
4.	K. Khosa	Elected	Mara	Mara Freedom Party
5.	L. Chinzah	Elected	Pawi	Congress (INC)
6.	U. Zathang	Elected	Pawi	Congress (INC)
7.	Lalchema	Elected	Pawi	Congress (INC)
8.	Saplina Vandir	Elected	Tlanglau	Congress (INC)
9.	Atul Chandra Chakma	Elected	Chakma	Congress (INC)
10.	Arun Kumar Dewan	Elected	Chakma	Congress (INC)
11.	Zavaia	Nominated	Mara	Mara Freedom Party
12.	K. Sangchhuma	Nominated	Pawi	Congress (INC)

The rift within the Congress Party, especially between Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah and Mr. Manghnuna was due to personal reason. This personality clash, interrupted the course of formation of the Executive Committee. It was worth noting that there was every likelihood that Mr. L. Chinzah might be in a position to lead the Council by his bargaining capacity whereas Mr. Manghnuna's prospect was completely bleak.³³ So, Mr. Manghnuna requested his three colleagues, Mr. Sapliana, Mr. K. Sangchhuma and Mr. Arun Kumar Dewan, to side with the Lakhers in the election of the Chairman and Chief Executive Member Mr. Manghnuna wanted Chinzah's defeat at any rate. The Lakher elected members therefore, took advantage of the infighting in the Congress. The Lakhers with the support of Mr. Manghnuna's group captured the majority, having a strength of eight members in the Council whereas Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah got only four supporters. Then, the elected members of the Council met on 15th July 1970, at the Government High School,

33. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 125.

Lunglei to elect the Chairman and Chief Executive Member of the Council. The meeting was presided over by the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei and elected Mr. S. Pailei as Chairman of the Council. Then Mr. Zakhu Hlychho was elected as Chief Executive Member. The Chinzah group did not participate in the election. Mr. Zakhu Hlychho selected Mr. Sapliana Vandir as his Committee colleague on the 16th July 1970. Now, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council staff who joined the interim Mara District Council rejoined their formal jobs in the Regional Council.

It was the first term that Mr. Zakhu Hlychho, a Mara leader was elected to head the Regional Council. While Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah's faction left no stone unturned in finding out the way to head the Council. The drama was interesting in one side, but humiliating and shameful for the tribe on the other.³⁴ After a short period of time, Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah, an eminent politician continued his role to gain the confidence and support of Mr. Manghnuna's group so as to form a Committee wherein the Pawi should be the leader of the House. Then the Pawi members decided to topple Zakhu's committee and tabled a vote of no confidence. Mr. S. Pailei then tendered his resignation from the Chairmanship and Mr. Arun Kumar Dewan, Deputy Chairman conducted the session when a no confidence motion was discussed. Mr. S. Pailei delivered his speeches in Zawnghling version, Mr. S. Hiato used Hautheng version and Mr. Zakhu speech was in Tlosai version.³⁵ Then it was said that every member spoke his own dialect without having any regard to

34. Zachono, R. T. *Op.cit.*, p. 154.

35. Interview with Mr. S. Pailei, Ex-Chairman, PLRC on 9th March 1999, at Saiha.

his fellow members. Even the Chairman Mr. Arun Kumar Dewan could not understand what they were talking about. Thus there was no alternative left to the Chairman except to adjourn the session. The Lakher politicians played their role by using divide and rule policy. They convinced Mr. K. Sangchhum and Mr. Sapliana to come to their side by offering them the offices of Chairman and Chief Executive Member respectively. As a result Mr. K. Sangchhum was elected Chairman. But before conducting the Chief Executive Member's election he changes his mind and tried to prorogue the session. The Lakher got irritated and put forward pressure on Mr. K. Sangchhum to resign from the chairmanship.³⁶ He, understanding the Lakher political atmosphere, subsequently submitted his resignation.

The situation became crucial because there was no individual member or group of political party who could be able to form an Executive Committee due to political tug of war with an open rift between the two contesting groups, the Pawis and the Lakhers. There was a deadlock in the Regional Council administration due to the failure of forming the new Executive Committee within forty eight hours immediately from the dismissal of the outgoing Executive Committee of the Regional Council vide Rules prescribed by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Then the Governor of Assam in accordance with the Constitution of the Regional Council, appointed Mr. Lalchunga

36. Notlia, Laicho. *Political History of Mara* (in Lakher), (Vee-el Printing Press, Saiha, 1989), p. 36.

Chinzah as a care-taker to look after the executive functioning of the Council.

The Government of Assam made investigations a number of times into the points of the Memorandum submitted by the Lakhers to have a separate administrative machinery through their agencies. Since the beginning of 1964, the Government officers like SDO Lunglei, Assistant and Deputy Commissioner of Lushai Hills and even a commission was set up and deputed to examine the cause of the Lakhers' demand. The state Government still kept everything in abeyance. Hence the Lakher delegates approached the Union Government in October, 1971. In this year the three tribes of the Regional Council also sent their delegates to Delhi. The following persons represented their respective tribes like Mr. Zakhu Hlychho, Mr. Mylai Hlychho and Mr. S. Hiato from among the Lakhers. The following persons like Mr. Manghnuna, Mr. Saplina, and Mr. K. Sangchhum represented the Pawi community, whereas Atul Chandra Chakma represented the Chakma demand. Here, it may not be out of place to mention that, in analyzing the political history of the three tribes, we are of the opinion that the Lakher people were advanced and pioneered in the political life of the three tribes since the beginning towards the creation of the Regional Council in 1953. During the life time of the Regional Council, the Lakher people boycotted the election in 1964 by forming a new political party to put pressure on their demand for having a separate District Council. They even went to the extent of formation of an interim Lakher District Council which run parallel to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. (Appendix VI).

The Lakhers once again in December 1971, sent Mr. A. B. Roma and Mr. Chhohmo (an Ex-Chief of Lakher) to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister of India. The delegates were fortunate enough to have an access to the Home Secretary because of the pre-arrangement made by the Commissioner Mr. S. J. Das. The delegates had a free time to tell the Home Secretary that the Lakhers were entirely different from the Mizos and Pawis and they could not be placed under one political umbrella. The Lakhers wanted to be set free from being dominated and assimilated by the Pawis. Hence the Lakhers should be placed and administered separately from the Mizos and Pawis. The Home Secretary consoled the two delegates by telling them that:

Though you are not successful now in your demand, do not get disappointed. You will have to persist in your demand. Repeated representation is required in democracy.³⁷

The Pawis and Lakhers underwent a worthwhile development in their political struggle for having a better status. Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah took over charge as care-taker of the Council on the 10th January 1972, which he handed over the charge to the new Chief Executive Member of the newly formed Executive Committee of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Mr. Zakhu Hlychho as there was an agreement between the Chinzah faction and the Lakher elected members. According to the agreement the Executive Committee was formed with the following members:

37. Hlychho, Valua. *Op.cit.*, p. 31.

1. Mr. Zakhu Illychho, Chief Executive Member (CEM), Lakher, 17-3-72 to 1-4-72.
2. Mr. L. Chinzah, Chairman, Pawi, 15-3-72 to 1-4-72.
3. Mr. S. Pailei, Executive Member, Lakher, 17-3-72 to 1-4-72.
4. Mr. U. Zathang, Executive Member, Pawi, 17-3-72 to 1-4-72.
5. Mr. Atul Chandra Dewan, Deputy Chairman, Chakma, 17-3-72 to 1-4-72.

This Executive Committee remained in office till the time of the formation of the three separate Autonomous District Councils, that is, the Lakher Autonomous District Council, the Pawi Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council in 1972 and the above members were the last to head the United Pawi-Lakher Regional Council's Executive Committee. When the formation of Mizo Hills to a Union Territory was accomplished, the Central Government also prepared and passed a Bill for the formation of the three separate Regional Councils in Mizoram for the Lakhers, the Pawis and the Chakmas. Further the three Regional Councils are again upgraded to that of the Autonomous District Councils. The whole of Lushai Hills was therefore, elevated to the political status of a Union Territory in accordance with para 6 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, and the Government of the Union Territory (Amendment) Act, 1971. The former Mizo Hills Autonomous District Council was abolished after Mizoram became a Union Territory in 1972.

In consequent upon the formation of Mizoram into a Union Territory, paragraph 20 B of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of

India was amended in 1971 by which the difference of power between the Regional and District Council was abolished which was incorporated in the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971. Consequently, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was then trifurcated into three Regional Councils³⁸ for the three tribes, namely, the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas from the 2nd April 1972, vide Notification No. (Administrator of Mizoram) No. CCMP. 3/72/70-77 of 1st April 1972, called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region – Reorganization Order 1972). This was followed by the Regional Council Rules, 1972, issued by the Administrator of Mizoram under No. CCMP/3/72/78-79 of 2nd April 1972.

As per the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Mizoram, adoption of laws and orders, 1972, and the Government of Union Territory (Amendment Act, 1971) the three Regional Councils were elevated to the status of the District Councils such as the Pawi Autonomous District Council, the Lakher Autonomous District Council and the Chakma Autonomous District Council, with a view to grant them more autonomy in managing their own affairs. This was enforced by the Government of Mizoram, vide Notification No. LDD-8/72/53 dated April, 1972.

38. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 130.

CHAPTER - IV

ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS LEADING TO THE TRIFURCATION OF PAWI-LAKHER REGIONAL COUNCIL IN 1972

In fulfillment of the recommendations of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee on one hand and the persistent demand for more regional autonomy on the other by the people of Mizo Hills, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was created in 1952 along with such other Autonomous District Councils in certain other hill districts of the then composite State of Assam. It is also to be noted that the formation of the Lushai Hills Autonomous District council was followed with the setting up of a separate Regional Council for the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas in 1953. Such a Regional Council was first demanded by the Lakhers when a memorandum was submitted in 1945. The memorandum was signed by the twenty three Lakher Chiefs. Several other memoranda had also been submitted from time to time by the Lakhers for a separate administration from Lushai Hills. Prior to that, in 1948, the Pawis joined hands with the Maras in demanding a separate administrative unit which came into force as Pawi-Lakher Regional Council as provided under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph – I of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.¹ Further, the Government of Assam as per powers conferred under sub-paragraph (6) of paragraph – 2 of the Sixth Schedule enacted Rules called the Pawi-Lakhers Autonomous Region constitution of the Regional Council Rules, 1952, to constitute the first Council.²

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1. Government of Assam Notification No. TAD/R/10/50 of 31st July, 1951.
 2. Government of Assam Notification No. TAD/R/52/15 of 20th May, 1952.

Subsequently, the first constitution of the Regional Council was framed followed by a territorial constituency elections to the said Council. The total number of members at the first instance were 12 (twelve) of which 9 (nine) were elected and 3 (three) were to be nominated. The strength of the territorial constituencies had subsequently been changed in which out of 12 (twelve) members, 10 (ten) were elected and 2 (two) were to be nominated.

It is important to mention here that the Tlanglau, Tuikuk and Chakma importuned to the Pawi and Lakher leaders to include their tribes within the jurisdiction of the Regional Council Administration. When the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas expressed their willingness to be within the same Council, this was then submitted to the Government of Assam as demanded. Thus the three tribes were included within the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.³ The Regional Council which comprised of three different tribes, having different interests, customs and dialects was inaugurated by Mr. Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary of Assam, at Lunglei on the 23rd April, 1953.⁴

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council after its inauguration started functioning smoothly but for a brief period only. Thus in the subsequent years it displayed the history of clashes, hatred, chaos and internal political conflicts among the tribes who had earlier agreed to come

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3. Interview with Mr. Hengmanga, Z. Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on the 6th April 1998, at Lawngtlai.
 4. Interview with Mr. Zavaia, Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on the 2nd April 1998, at Serkawr.

together under one roof. From 1953 onwards, discontentment started among the Pawis and Lakhers over the distribution of seats during the elections to the Regional Council. The conflict was a serious one which seemed that the Pawis and Lakhers would not be able to settle the matter amicably if left to themselves. The matter therefore needed the intervention of the Assam Government officials to bring an amicable settlement between the two. Mr. B. W. Roy, the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei, was brought into the picture to settle the dispute which resulted in the arrangement that the Lakhers would get 3 (three) elected seats plus 2 (two) nominated seats, whereas the Pawis would get 4 (four) elected seats plus 1 (one) nominated seat.⁵ Tlanglau and Tuikuk got one seat each in the first election to the Regional Council. Therefore one might say that as the years passed by this Regional Council developed into a number of rifts and disunity between the Pawis and the Lakhers which appeared that the two may not be able to reconcile under the same Council. Due to disunity and clash of interests between the two tribes, the trifurcation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in the long run appeared to be imminent.⁶

As stated above, the difficulties and problems that arose kept on lingering within and outside the Council. The main problem which created disunity among the leaders of Lakhers and Pawis was on the issue

5. Zachono, R. T. "The Maras Towards Autonomy" in *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram*, Prasad, R.N. (ed.), (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1994), pp. 146, 147.

6. Prasad, R. N. *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, (Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987), p. 123.

of holding or sharing of higher posts in the Council.⁷ Later, because of the clash of interests and the split, it led to the disintegration of the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union, which the two tribes earlier agreed to unitedly formed. The clash of interests and internal conflicts became more intense and the unity between the two was not insight anymore. As the three -- the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas could no longer pull themselves together under the same Regional Council, it was then realized that the only alternative left would be to effect the division of the Council into three different Councils so as to meet their respective political aspirations. This became effective with effect from the 2nd April 1972, when the trifurcation took place as per the Government's Notification.⁸

The following factors may be stated and analyzed to have been responsible for the trifurcation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1972.

1. Conflict over holding of posts in Council. In between the Pawi and Lakher tribes, each tribe claimed to be the forerunner of the said Regional Council with a view to getting the lion's share of key posts in the administration. In the beginning, just to avoid confusion and disagreement, both the tribes had entered into a 'verbal agreement' in which each tribe would share the Chief

7. Interview with Mr. K. Paichho, Lower Divisional Assistant during the 2nd term of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, on the 5th December 1988, at Saiha.

8. Government of Assam Notification No. CCMP-3/72/70-77 of 1st April 1972. (The Pawi-Lakher Region Reorganization Order 1972).

Executive Member's post alternatively. Further it was also agreed that if the Chief Executive Member was from the Pawis, the office of the Executive Member must be from the Lakhers and *vice versa*.⁹ As such the first Chief Executive Member was from among the Pawis and the first Executive Member was from the Lakhers. Disagreement again came up when the Chief Executive Member was elected from among the Pawis for the second term after the second general elections to the Regional Council. The Lakhers were denied to hold the Chief Executive Member's post. This added fuel to the fire. The vacant post of the Council's Secretary was offered to the Pawis though a Lakher candidate who was a graduate was available then. Low grade posts like chowkidar, peons were also offered to the Lakhers. The highest post held by the Lakher was a Lower Division Assistant (LDA), whereas the higher administrative posts were held by the Pawis.¹⁰

2. Language problem: Since the higher posts both political and administrative were held by the Pawis, they enjoyed more powers and authority to a large extent in the domain of decision making. It was decided that irrespective of one's linkage to its own tribe, the Mizo language should be used as an official language of the Council for mutual communication. The Lakhers feared that by

9. Interview with Mr. Mylai Hlychho, Ex-Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, at Aizawl.

10. Interview with Mr. K. Paichho, the LDA of the 2nd term Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, at Saiha.

accepting Mizo as an official language, it would affect their identity, culture, customs and dialect. Hence the Lakhers objected to this idea of Mizo being an official language and were not ready to accept the proposal. This led to the demand of a separate Council of their own in order to preserve, safeguard and promote their dialect, culture, customs, etc.¹¹

The Council members from among the Lakhers found it difficult to use the Mizo language as they could neither understand it fully nor express themselves precisely. They lost interest in attending the Council's sessions. Because of the language problem they therefore felt the urgent need and the necessity to have a separate Council specifically for the Lakhers so as to enable them to meet their political aspirations.

3. Cultural conflict: The two groups, the Pawis and Lakhers were again in discord. The dilemma arose as to whose custom and tradition should be accommodated or incorporated in the constitutional framework of the Regional Council. Thus in certain areas both had common views but differ in others. For the implementation of Rules, Laws and Regulations, the constitutional framework was important for settling the dispute within one group. Controversies always arise at the time of making judgement orders in the Council's court.¹²

11. Interview with Mr. R. T. Hnialum, the then Secretary of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, on the 15th February 1999, at Lawngtlai.

12. Interview with Mr. H. Tholua, Court President of Mara Autonomous District Council on 12th March 1998, at Saiha.

4. Medium of Instructions in Schools: The then Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council, instructed the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council to use the Mizo language in all the Schools as the medium of instruction irrespective of the region where it is to be taught within the jurisdiction of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

As stated in the foregoing paragraph, the issue regarding language created many other problems subsequently within the jurisdiction of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The school students especially among the Lakhers faced tremendous problems with the medium of instruction in their schools. It may also be noted that the Lakhers in general are not well-versed with the Mizo language, so also the students in particular. Due to this reason, the pass percentage of students studying in various schools in the Lakher area was miserably poor as the Mizo language is totally new to them.¹³ They have to learn it in a hard way and this affected their studies every year. This problem was also taken by the Lakhers as one of the political issues to support their fervent demand for a separate Council of their own. If such a demand was granted, they were of the opinion that they will be educationally better by introducing or making use of their own language at least at the Primary School level as a medium of instructions. It may also be pointed out that the Pawis or Pawis' students did not find it difficult to cope with the existing medium of instructions.

13. Interview with Mr. S. Mokia, Middle School Teacher (Retired), on the 26th October 1998, at Saiha.

5. Documentary records in Mizo: Mr. A. I. Bowman, ICS, the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei, in his visit to the Lakher areas, was surprised to see that all the existing documents were in Mizo language. He advised the Lakher chiefs to record the documents thereafter in Lakher language. Such an advice helped in one way in politically sowing the seeds of a separation in Lakher areas initially in the form of a Sub-Division. This idea of a separate Sub-Division which was then lying dormant in the minds of the Lakhers suddenly gained momentum and rejuvenated politically. This was also one of the factors which strengthened their demand for political autonomy of their own tribe and delink them from the Pawis.
6. Formation of Mara Freedom Party: Since the Lakhers considered that they were neglected and did not get anything as per their expectations in the previous two terms of the Council, they therefore decided to boycott the third elections of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, to express their discontentment. They submitted several memoranda to the Assam Government and repeatedly sent their representatives to put pressure on the authority to meet their demands. In spite of all these memoranda and representations, there were no visible positive signal from the Assam Government. Because of such political developments, the Lakhers decided to form a political party known as Mara Freedom Party in order to exert additional pressure on the Government. Besides, they also formed the interim Mara District Council, parallel to that of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. It was framed and structured in

such a way as to perform all functions of administration equivalent to that of the Regional Council. It collected taxes and fees of all kinds and took up the functions of the Village Councils and Courts.¹⁴ The employees of the interim Regional Council received only honorarium according to the posts held by them. The Mara Freedom Party also issued directives to all the Lakhers to pay all taxes to the Interim District Council and not to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. They also set up Interim Village Councils to run the village administration in the Lakher inhabited areas.

While this political development was going on among the Lakhers, Mr. L. Chinzah, the Chief Executive Member of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, reported the matter to the Assam Government.¹⁵ Accordingly, the Assam Government directed the Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl, to investigate the matter. The Deputy Commissioner actually came to Saiha for investigation and on that basis he submitted a detailed report to the Assam Government. On the basis of the report of the Deputy Commissioner, the Assam Government considered the matter in favour of the Lakhers.¹⁶ The outcome of the consideration made by the Assam Government strengthened the demand of the Lakher to have a separate District Council of their own.

14. Interview with Mr. R. T. Hnialum, the then Secretary of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 15th February 1999, at Lawngtlai.

15. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 122.

16. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 123.

7. Chakma case: The Chakma tribe, a part of the erstwhile Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, was also becoming by this time, politically aware of their position, and taking a leaf from the other two tribes, submitted memoranda to the Government of Assam for a separate Council of their own. It may be mentioned that Mr. A. C. Ray, the then Deputy Commissioner of Lushai Hills and Mr. S. Das, the then Commissioner of Cachar and Lushai Hills District had a sympathetic feeling on the demand of the Chakmas, considering their uniqueness both in terms of language and religion and inculcated them with the idea of demanding a separate Council to look after their own affairs.¹⁷ A Chakma leader Mr. Atul Chandra submitted a memorandum demanding separate District council to the Joint Secretary i/c Development of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, while he was accompanying the three leaders both from among the Lakhers and Pawis, who met the central authority, in connection with their future political status for the upgradation of Mizoram into a Union Territory was eminent in 1971.

8. Ethnic Distinction: By examining the political activities of both the tribes (that is, the Lakhers and Pawis) it can be clearly seen that there was political instability in the working and functioning of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. From the very beginning of the Council, there were disagreements on the issue of distribution of

17. Interview with Mr. S. Pailei, Ex-Chairman of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on the 7th November 1998, at Saiha.

seats between the Pawis and the Lakhers in the newly established Regional Council. Also a clan-base distribution of political posts at the higher levels between the two tribes later proved to be a failure on the ground that it was not passed in the session. The Pawis being more educated and commanding a majority in the House with the support of the Chakmas, Tlanglaus and Tuikuks, were holding responsible posts in the Executive Committee as well as in the administrative offices both in the first and second terms of the Regional Council. The Lakher leaders as well as the elite group among them did not feel at home with the Pawis. They, on the contrary, regarded themselves oppressed and suppressed by the Pawis in the field of economic, politics and social spheres.

From the points mentioned above, it may be understood that the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas are quite different from each other ethnically. They are different from one another in their dialects, culture, custom and traditions. The Pawis and Lakhers, have of course, believed in the same religion, whereas the Chakmas had an entirely different religious belief that is, Buddhism. Viewing in the line of each tribe, it may be noted that each has a strong case to have their own Council to preserve and promote their culture, dialect and all other related affairs.

It may not be out of place to mention here that Mr. Mylai Hlychho, a Lakher leader, Secretary of the Mara Freedom Party, and an Executive Member of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, set out for New Delhi in February 1970, to pursue the memorandum submitted for the creation of a separate Lakher District Council. Mr. Mylai Hlychho strongly pleaded

the cause of the Lakhers and urged the Union Home Minister to expedite matters for the creation of an Autonomous District Council for the Lakher tribe as it was a necessity for the political and economic development of the tribe. In course of time, the Home Minister responded that the Government knew all about the problems of the Lakhers and assured him that the Government had been working in favour of the tribe. Mylai Hlychho with great hesitation requested the Minister to give him a written statement that promised District council for the Lakhers. The Minister kept silent pondering over the request. He then took up a two-page printed paper and handed it over to Mr. Mylai Hlychho asking him to go through the paper. It was a Parliament Bill which was recently passed during the session of the Lok Sabha. The gist of the paper was as follows.

There shall be three Regional Councils in Mizoram for the Lakhers, the Pawis and the Chakmas, and the three Regional Councils shall be upgraded each to an Autonomous District Council.¹⁸

Consequent upon this letter, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was then trifurcated into three Regional Councils for the three tribes on and from the 2nd April 1972, after amending paragraph 20 B of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India for this purpose in 1971, which was also incorporated in the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, along with the Government of Union Territory (Amendment) Act,

18. Hlychho, Valua. *The Maras Before Their Present Home* (Mimeograph), p. 3.

1971.¹⁹ The Administrator of Mizoram as per the provision, issued an order called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous region (Reorganization) Order 1972, vide Notification No. CCMP. 3/72/70-77 of the 1st April 1972. Therefore, the Pawi Autonomous Region, the Lakher Autonomous Region and the Chakma Autonomous region were created and constituted under Section 4(1) of Pawi-Lakher Autonomous region (Reorganization) Order 1972, in order to enable these tribes to develop their customs, culture, tradition and dialects according to their own genius and ability.²⁰

Under the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous (Reorganization) Order 1972, the administrator of Mizoram framed Rules regarding the constitution of the three Regional Councils. Accordingly, the Lakher Regional Council was constituted with its headquarters at Saiha (vide No. CCMP-3/72/89 of the 2nd April 1972). The Lakher Regional Council consisted of six members, of whom four shall be the members who, having been elected to the Regional Council for the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, were continuing as such immediately before the commencement of the Order No. CCMP-3/72/70-77 of 1st April, 1972. The remaining two members were to be nominated by the administrator of Mizoram. The following were the members of the Lakher Regional Council:

1.	Zakhu Hlychho	Care taker	Elected
2.	S. Hiato	Executive Member	Elected
3.	S. Pailei	Executive Member	Elected

19. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 130.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

4.	K. Khosa	Chairman	Elected
5.	Zavai	Member	Nominated
6.	Leipo	Member	Nominated

The care taker was made on appointment.

Similarly, the Pawi Regional Council was also constituted by the Administrator of Mizoram on the 2nd April 1972, vide Notification No. CCMP-3/72/90 of 2nd April 1972, with its headquarters at Lawngtlai, with the strength of six members. Of the six, four members who were already elected members of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council continued to be members of the Pawi Regional Council. The Administrator of Mizoram nominated two members. The following were the members of the Pawi Regional Council:

1.	Lalchunga Chinzah	Care taker	Elected
2.	Ukmang Zathang	Executive Member	Elected
3.	Arun Kumar Dewan	Executive Member	Elected
4.	Sangchema	Chairman	Elected
5.	Lalchema	Member	Nominated
6.	K. Sangchhum	Member	Nominated. ²¹

The Administrator of Mizoram, also constituted the Chakma Regional Council vide Notification No. CCMP-3/72/80 of the 2nd April 1972, with a strength of six members, with headquarters at Borapansury.

21. Hnialum, R.T. *Road to Pawi Autonomous District Council*, Executive Secretary, Pawi District Council, p. 8.

Two members, Mr. Atul Chandra Chakma and Mr. Arun Kumar Dewan, who were elected members of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council continued their membership. The Administrator of Mizoram nominated four members to the Chakma Regional Council. The following were the members of the Chakma Regional Council:

1.	Atul Chandra Chakma	Care taker	Elected
2.	Arun Kumar Dewan	Executive Member	Elected
3.	Gunadhar Chakma	Member	Nominated
4.	Mauradhai Chakma	Member	Nominated
5.	Saitya Chakma	Member	Nominated
6.	Ananda Kumar	Member	Nominated

(The care taker was appointed vide Letter No. CCMP-3/72/85 of 2nd April 1972).

In accordance with the North Eastern (Reorganization) Mizoram adaptation of Law and Order, 1972, and the Government of Union Territory (Amendment Act) 1971, the three Regional Councils, that is, the Lakher, Pawi and Chakma, were upgraded to the status of an Autonomous District Council, that is, the Lakher Autonomous District Council, the Pawi Autonomous District Council and the Chakma Autonomous District Council, each of them to have more autonomy in the discharge of executive functions in the management of their own affairs. (This order had been issued vide Government of Mizoram Notification No. LDD-8/72/53 of the 29th April 1972).²²

22. Prasad, R. N. *Op.cit.*, p. 131.

All the elected and nominated members of the Regional Councils would continue to be the members of their respective Autonomous District Council until the District Councils were duly constituted under the Rules. Further, Mr. Lalchunga Chinzah, Mr. Zakhu Hlychho, and Mr. Atul chandra Chakma were appointed by the Administrator of Mizoram as the care taker Chief Executive Members of the Pawi District Council, Lakher District Council and the Chakma District Council respectively for the discharge of their respective Executive Committee vide sub-para (2) of paragraph 4 of the Mizo Hills District Council (Miscellaneous provisions) Order, 1972.

Smaller groups can be said to have their own distinct identity in every tribal society especially in North East India. In the same way, the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas are treated as minority communities in Lushai Hills District who initially and unitedly, because of their minority status were granted under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to have their own Regional Council in 1953, to enable them to preserve, protect and safeguard their customs, traditions and usages under the provisions enshrined in the said Schedule of the Constitution of India. The constitution-makers felt the need to provide such kind of an autonomy to the smaller communities as enshrined in the provision of the Indian Constitution itself.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council started functioning in 1953 under the administrative guidance of the Assam government officials in its initial stage in framing and structuring the constitutions and regulations of the Council. Discontentment, however, started among the

tribes under the Council over the distribution of seats. It was seen that each tribe sought to preserve and improve their socio-economic status by trying to raise their clan-base demands for protection. These clan-base demands however had their own after-effect leading to disunity and even ill-feelings against each other, politically and otherwise. The Lakhers regarded themselves as being suppressed by the Pawis who formed the majority in the Council with the support of the Chakmas. The Pawis were alleged to have broken the verbal agreement they had earlier with the Lakhers regarding the holding of the Chief Executive Member post. The earlier agreements according to the Lakhers were not respected by the Pawis which made the former to have a feeling of being suppressed and neglected by the former. This itself gave rise to a number of other knotty political issues and problems in the subsequent years of the functioning of the Regional Council.

The unresolved political issues and problems led the Lakhers to form a clan-base political party and boycotted the third term Pawi-Lakher Regional Council elections. The political situation became more intense which made the Lakhers even to form an interim Council, named the Mara District Council, parallel to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The Pawis who formed majority in the third term of the Regional Council as the result of the elections opposed the political activities initiated by the Lakhers blaming them to be responsible in causing the tension between the Lakhers and the Pawis.

The Chakmas were the least to suffer due to the political instability of the Regional Council. They had the feeling of political alienation due

to their own distinctiveness in the field of their religious belief and the language they speak. The Pawis also could not fully satisfy the political demands and aspirations of the Chakmas and felt that the two also would not be able to work under the same Council. This episode led to the demand for a separate District Council by the Chakmas to protect their customs, culture, traditions, etc., as they felt that if they continue to be with the Pawis this may not be possible.

The subsequent political developments showed that the three tribes under the same Regional Council would no longer be able to pull themselves together due to their serious different interests. Each of the tribe then submitted their own Memorandum demanding a separate Autonomous District Council of their own to provide them opportunities to work and administer by themselves for their own political and socio-economic interests and to develop themselves in their respective areas.

Since the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated in 1972 into Pawi, Lakher and Chakma Autonomous District Councils, the long pending internal fight and controversies may no longer be in existence. All the three tribes were endowed with constitutional provisions under the Sixth Schedule to formulate Rules, Laws and Regulations to protect, promote and safeguard their respective customs, traditions and usages. Such controversial issues which antagonized the two tribes over the holding of higher political and official posts may no longer be there, it was thought. After every election to the Council, the elected members of each District Council will elect their respective leaders to be their Chief Executive Member, Chairman and executive Members in accordance

with the Rules prescribed in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

The language problem over which a crucial debate was held during the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council may not take place again. Each District Council will introduce their own language as a medium of instructions and also use it for official purposes. Officials and important documents will also be recorded in their own language. Disputes of different kinds may also be settled down by the Council Courts according to their respective customary laws if such cases are within the purview of the District Council. There will be no further question over whose customary laws will be used for settling certain disputes as it was during the time of the united Pawi-Lakher Regional Council before it was trifurcated.

It may be stated that there are as many problems and difficulties as there are tribes under the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council at the time of discussing the bills when placed before the session of the Council. While a bill may be fully entertained by one member who belongs to one tribe but due to the existence of contradicting interests among the tribes, that very bill may not be accepted by the other member(s) belonging to another tribe(s) for certain reasons. Sometimes because of this kind of indifferent attitudes towards each other, it caused a lot of political wrangling and internal fighting between the Pawis and Lakhers. Many bills which were introduced and discussed in the Council could not be accepted and passed because such bills become an apple of discord. To clarify the above statement, the Lakhers regarded themselves as being

neglected and oppressed by the combined strength of the Pawis and Chakmas towards decision making on certain important issues. The Pawis were alleged by the Lakhers to have exclusively enjoyed the opportunity of holding official posts in the Council office and political high posts as well.

It is also interesting to note that the Lakhers boycotted the third term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council elections as a mark of protest against the existing united Regional Council. They even went ahead in the formation of an interim Mara District Council, parallel to the existing Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Such kind of political problems caused deadlock and no open discussion of the bill was possible. To save the conflicting situation, it was therefore, felt especially by the Lakhers that the existing Regional Council must be done away with and in its place, the Lakhers should be given their own Autonomous District Council. If that political consideration is granted to them, the Lakhers may by themselves make necessary appointments of different posts of different offices to favour their own tribe as far as practicable. A clan-base politicization will no more be experienced in the newly established Autonomous District Councils because there will be no place for separatist tendency as the District Council itself is created to cater the needs of each tribe to safeguard and preserve their own identity in accordance with their customs and traditions.

There were no developmental works worthwhile mentioning which were undertaken during the long 20 years of the working and functioning of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, excepting in framing and enacting

some of the Rules and Acts, which are of common interest to the three tribes, namely, the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas. Moreover, the members of the Regional Council concentrated their attention to their own tribes' interests without considering and giving much importance to the well-being of the others in the Regional Council. This is mainly because of the fact that the responsible members who were the representatives of different tribes lack that feeling of attachment to the Regional Council. Most of the time, there was only conflicting situation in the Council. The conflicting situation hastened the process of not only bifurcating the Regional Council but trifurcating it to give a chance to all the three tribes to run the administration by themselves. The trifurcation brought a peaceful atmosphere: Relationship between the Pawis and Lakhers improved as each one of them now has to look after their own Autonomous District Council. The granting of autonomy to the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas with a District Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution resulted in an enormous developments in the field of education, social, economic and political life of each of the tribe. Students from each of the District Council area can now study in the Schools set up by the Autonomous District Council in their own language as a medium of instructions. Hundreds of students from each District Council area enrolled themselves in different colleges due to the progress that has taken place. The working and functioning of the three Autonomous District Councils brought about advantages in different aspects of life to the societies in general and the tribes in particular. The socio-political and economic life of the tribes have improved a lot. The social development fostered the economic life of the people and the society as a whole. The Council members of each tribe work hard to

bring about developmental schemes, plans to working conditions and facilitate the people with all available resources through the District Councils.

The last but not the least, was the political consciousness of the people by taking part in the political processes through the Autonomous District Councils. Regional political parties were formed and organized to contest in the District Council elections held from time to time. Political parties contested the elections with the aim of capturing political power, in the District Council as well as to implement their parties' policies and programmes. The political behaviour of the political leaders of the District Councils exhibited their consciousness by keeping in touch with state politics in particular, as well as national politics in general. Following this, the three tribes under study have been able to produce political leaders who held the responsible posts of Ministers in the State Government and representing the State of Mizoram in the Rajya Sabha.

After settling down in their own Autonomous District Councils, the three tribes – the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas have really benefited politically under their respective District Council. Their recent political consciousness has given rise to another political venture with higher status. Having experienced their separate attempts to improve themselves, socially, politically and economically under the three District Councils, they now want to come together once again. They therefore recently formed a common Front and submitted unitedly their Memoranda to the Central authorities demanding a higher status, that is, a Union Territory for all the three tribes within Mizoram.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

Mizoram or the then Lushai Hills is inhabited by the Mizos as well as the other sub-tribes of the Mizos. The north and central parts of Mizoram are inhabited by the Mizos whereas the south-eastern part, bordering Burma (Myanmar) is inhabited by the Pawis and the Lakhers. The Chakmas inhabited the south-western part of Mizoram.

Prior to the coming of the Christian Missionaries to the present day Mizoram, the Mizos, the Pawis, the Lakhers and Chakmas believed in their own traditional religion. Like other tribal communities in North-East India, Mizos also performed sacrifices to appease the evil spirits especially during the time of illness. When the Christian missionaries set up their mission fields among these people, most of them were converted into Christianity. The percentage of Christians in Mizoram today is 85% according to the Census figures of 2001.

In the pre-British period, the Mizos, the Pawis and the Lakhers did not have a systematic administration. They were administered by the traditional chiefs and their Council of Elders. The traditional chiefs ruled over their own people autocratically. This is one of the reasons why in the subsequent years, the Mizos themselves are so much against the continuation of the office of the chief. They therefore, demanded for the abolition of the same.

At the same time, the history of the Mizos, Pawis and Lakhers was the history of raids and inter-village feuds. The chief of each village was responsible for the life and death of his people. Each chief ruled within

his own territorial jurisdiction consisting of one or more villages. The system of chiefship was rather autocratic, forceful and anti-democratic. It may be mentioned that a social institution like the *Zawlbuk* prevailed only among the Mizos and not among the Pawis and Lakhers.

The Zawngling chief, who was the last to submit his chiefship to the British Government in 1924 marked the beginning of the British rule in Lakher land. The Pawi and Mizo areas were annexed earlier in 1890, which marked the beginning of British rule in Lushai Hills. The British rule in the areas relieved the tribes from fear of raids and insecurity of mind due to the autocratic rule of the chiefs.

The Christian missionaries entered Lushai Hills in 1894 and first introduced formal education in order to help the spread of Christianity. The Mizos were receptive of the Christian teaching, following their conversion to Christianity. The social institutions like the *Zawlbuk* and other traditional social and religious practices were no more to be seen in the society as such practices were vehemently opposed by the converted Mizos. Politically, the British supremacy diluted the autocratic administration of the chiefs among the Mizos, Pawis and Lakhers. Also, the spread of education improved the social status of women in the family and the society. The hereditary system of chiefship had been changed after the British took over the administration of Lushai Hills. The British Government employees were also appointed as chiefs in place of those traditional chiefs who were deposed by the British Superintendent. This appointment had been done mostly in recognition of the meritorious services rendered by them to the British administration.

In Lushai Hills therefore, the British Superintendent was the real authority combining in himself the Legislative, Executive and Judicial powers. There was no other political agency to voice the people's aspiration till 1946.

When the Lushai Hills was annexed by the British in 1890, the entire area was divided into two administrative units, that is, the Northern Lushai Hills, which became part of Assam and the Southern Lushai Hills was administratively placed as a part of Bengal. But due to political development that took place in the area, these two separate administrative units were amalgamated into one single unit in 1898, known as the 'Lushai Hills District'. The Lushai Hills District was put under the Assam Province whereas the entire administration was entrusted to the British Superintendent. Therefore the year 1898 marked the beginning of a settled administration in Lushai Hills. Subsequently, the Lushai Hills was placed as a Scheduled District under the Scheduled Districts Act of 1874. As per the Government of India Act 1919, the Governor General-in-Council was empowered to declare any territory in British India, to be a backward area. Accordingly, the Lushai Hills District was declared as a 'Backward Area' on the 3rd January 1921 vide Government of India Act 1919 under Sec. 52 A. Again, under the Government of India Act 1935, Lushai Hills District was declared as an 'Excluded Area', which means that the Provincial Ministry of Assam was not responsible for the administration of Lushai Hills District. Under the Act, no representative was sent from the Lushai Hills District to the Assam Provincial Legislative Council.

Though the British Government strictly forbade the formation of any form of political activity in Lushai Hills District, the Mizos, having been educated, later became politically conscious and demanded popular form of governance. The first thing they did was to oppose the continuation of the office of the traditional chiefs. In the mean time, the first political party called 'Mizo Union' was established and formed on the 11th April 1946, to voice the people's aspirations through democratic means.

The Bordoloi Sub-Committee visited Lushai Hills to study and examine the political aspirations of the Mizos and their desire for future system of administration. The Sub-Committee interviewed different groups of people, especially those that may be said to belong to an elite class of the society. The Sub-Committee heard different views and opinions from the groups interviewed. The common interest in general was that the Mizo people should be given some kind of autonomy to enable them to run the administration by themselves. The Sub-Committee carefully studied the prevailing administrative set up in Lushai Hills particularly in the perspective of preservation and safeguarding the tribal way of life. The Sub-Committee recommended the introduction of an administration for the Hill areas based on the concept of regional autonomy in all matters affecting especially their customs, law of inheritance and administration of justice. The Sub-Committee further made a provision and recommendation for the creation of a Regional Council for the smaller tribes. Following the recommendation of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was created under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution

of India in 1952 and a Regional Council for the Pawis and Lakhers was also set up in 1953.

The District Council was vested with wide range of powers including the authority to make laws on various subjects for the whole District. The members of the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council in its first session passed a bill called the Lushai Hills (chiefship abolition) Bill 1952, and slated to become effective from the 1st January 1953. The Act would be valid only within the jurisdiction of the Lushai Hill Autonomous District Council. The chiefs had to relinquish their offices and the actual abolition came into effect on the 1st April 1955. With this as many as 259 chiefs were abolished in the Lushai Hills and 50 other chiefs were also abolished in the Pawi-Lakher areas with effect from the 15th April 1956. Thus, with the formation of the Autonomous District Council, the whole administrative set up was changed enabling the people to participate in the elections to the Autonomous District Council and the elected members participated in the formation of the Executive Committee. The Lushai Hills Village Council Act 1953 (The Lushai Hills Act No. V of 1953) was enacted. The powers of the Mizo chiefs were transferred to the Village Council. Members of the Villages were duly elected by the people and they were also remunerated.

The Pawis and the Lakhers who inhabited the southern part of Lushai Hills demanded an administrative exclusion from the then Lushai Hills District mainly because of the fear of assimilation by the Mizos. The Lakher chiefs, submitted several Memoranda in 1945 to 1946 for having a separate administrative set up of their own. Those Memoranda

were submitted to the Government of Assam as well as to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. At the same time, the Lakhers developed the feeling that they are inferior to the Lushais in all walks of life and felt that they were dominated by them in their struggle for survival.

The wave of the political movements that took place in Lushai Hills had its impact on the Lakhers too. The Lakhers were aware of the political movements led by the Mizo Union for the abolition of the existing traditional Mizo chiefs. They also came to know that the existing traditional chiefship would be replaced by the newly instituted system of District Council administration under the Indian Constitution. Also the Lakhers knew about the recommendations of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee for the creation of a Regional Council for the Pawis and the Lakhers, as they were treated as minority communities within the Lushai Hills. The Lakher chiefs, as stated earlier submitted several memoranda to the Government of Assam to have their own administrative set up to safeguard their identity and interests.

The formation of the first political party, the Mizo Union in Mizo Hills, and the passing of the Assam-Lushai Hills District (Acquisition) of Chiefs' Rights Act 1954, which was responsible to the abolition of the office of the traditional chiefs among the Mizos and the introduction of the Autonomous District Council for the majority Mizos, these political developments had greatly affected the minds and thoughts of the other minority communities like the Pawis, the Lakhers and the Chakmas. In particular, the Pawis and Lakhers had the taste of constituted institution introduced among them through the formation of the Pawi-Lakher

Regional Council in 1953 under the Sixth schedule to the Constitution of India.

Through the constitutional institution under the umbrella of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the two communities had the opportunity and experience to run the administration within the jurisdiction of the said Council by themselves. Initially, they did not, of course, know even the art of self-administration. Therefore, they could not start the working of the Regional Council all by themselves. The Assam Government had to come to their rescue by deputing its officials to conduct the affairs of the Regional Council at the initial stage. It may be noted that government officials deputed to assist the Regional Council went even to the extent of holding the top legislative and executive posts of the Council like the Chief Executive Member, Chairman and Vice-Chairman. This initiative taken by the Assam Government produced positive results as far as framing of Acts, Rules, Regulations and other related legislative matters are concerned.

On the other hand, it was seen that during the one year's deputation period of the government officials, no Executive Committee was formed. In this connection, no member of the Regional Council insisted upon the Chairman to conduct an election for the formation of the same. An accurate answer to this effect could not be presented here because even the members of the Regional Council could not tell us while conducting interviews with them, the reason of not forming such a Committee. However, it is suffice to mention that the Council members at that time were happy and satisfied with the state of affairs under the

administration of those government officials as they themselves did not have the idea of running the Council's administration. They were therefore contended with whatever arrangement made by the State of Assam.

Secondly, it may also be due to the fact that the deputed government officials foresaw the problems that may arise between the Pawis and the Lakhers, if such a Committee was formed, over the issue of holding the top political and executive posts in the Council's Committee. There was the precedence of disputes that arose on the issue of distribution of seats between the two tribes on the eve of the first term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. However, in the subsequent years the Regional Council, after the formation of its Executive Committee passed Laws, Rules and Regulations by majority votes to effect the safeguarding of their identity and the preservation of their tribal way of life.

The Council suffered problem on the actual enactment of these laws, rules and regulations due to the indifferent attitude towards the other tribes in the Regional Council. Also a clan-base politicization of certain issues included in the Acts, Rules, etc., created hostile tendencies towards the other groups in the Council. Following this, the first agreement made between the Pawis and Lakhers to share the two top political and executive posts during the different terms of the Council proved to be a failure. Therefore, we may conclude that egoism, nepotism and favouritism were the guiding factors and nature of the administrative set up of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, which later led the Lakhers

to form a clan-base political party. The formation of the party resulted in the creation of a separate District Council basically meant to serve the interests of the Lakhers alone.

Regarding the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, according to the provision of the Sixth Schedule, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council will be constituted with the strength of 12 members, consisted of 9 elected members and 3 nominated members. It may also be stated that one-fourth of the Council members be filled in by nominated members who were to represent the minority groups in the society within the jurisdiction of the Council. In spite of the fact that there are minority tribes within the Council's jurisdiction, still no minority representative was considered to fill in the nominated seats. Instead the seats were distributed between the two tribes, the Pawis and Lakhers. In this respect, one may suggest for the abolition of the provision of nominated seats and create reservation seats for the minorities so that their interests may be safeguarded better.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, as per the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, was equipped with Legislative, Executive and Judicial powers with a view to facilitating the Council to bring positive changes and developments irrespective of all communities including that of minority groups within the jurisdiction of the Council. However, there are laws and rules passed and enacted by the Council which may serve the people directly in an advantageous manner. For example, the Paiw-Lakher Autonomous Region (Social Customs and Practices) Act, 1954, provided for the abolition of certain social and

practices made during the reign of the traditional chiefs. Those payments turned out to be a burden economically and had no importance socially. Moreover, the abolition of the other kinds of payments made earlier to the traditional chiefs significantly helped the people in relieving their hardship and exploitation by the chiefs. The people were not only relieved by the Acts passed by the Council from time to time from payment of taxes either in kind or cash to the chiefs but also provided a sense of belonging and ownership of forests and lands with all of their produces.

The Regional Council also passed and enacted Rules to collect taxes and tolls. The taxes so collected formed part of the Council's fund and revenue. The rates were fixed for different items which were clearly specified in the Acts. The collection of taxes enhanced the income of the Council which was in turn spent to meet the developmental needs of the people.

The two tier systems of judicial administration, the village court and the Council court were set up to look into the cases of disputes, try them and dispense justice where tribals are involved as well as to decide on matters of administration of justice. It was also the duty of the court to formulate and frame laws, rules and regulations from time to time. Moreover, the Court President, judicial officers and Recorders were expected to undergo training on legal practices so as to gain experience on judicial matters in order to enable them to provide essential services to the people. Such Council's officials are also expected to have the knowledge about the customs, traditions and usages of the concerned

tribes within the jurisdiction of the Regional Council. But unfortunately, not a single staff underwent such necessary training. The result was a great setback in the Council's administrative set up especially in the area of the administration of justice.

A close examination and analysis of the functioning of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council during the period of this study shows that many laws, rules and regulations were passed and enacted by the Council from time to time. Such laws, rules and regulations dealt mostly by way of changing and codifying the customs, practices and usages practiced in the past. The various Acts passed from time to time tried to bring in social change and adjustment of the tribes concerned with the emerging constitutional processes that arise in a parliamentary democratic system of governance of the country at large and bring in these minority communities closer to the liberal democratic practices. New laws and rules were also formulated to keep abreast with the changing system of administration.

Having stated that, it was however found that the Council proved to be a failure in the actual implementation of those rules, regulations and acts. For example, though the Council passed a Regulation for the assessment of revenue in 1954 with which the Regional Council had the power to levy taxes and tolls, and the collection thereof has to be credited to the Council's fund, the same was not properly maintained as required under the Rules. Secondly, the Council's office did not maintain any marriage or divorce Register as per the Marriage and Divorce Act of 1960. In making assessment of the Council Fund, the statement of

accounts relating to income and expenditure was not properly maintained. Hence, the Council's accounts could not be audited to ascertain if there was any misappropriation of public money.

Last but not the least, the Council staff who were appointed from among the Pawis and Lakhers did not show any sense of ownership of their Regional Council. A sense of responsibility for the improvement in the management of the Regional Council was lacking among the Council's staff. Hence, discontentments and misunderstandings between the two tribes always broke out even on the issue of small matters. Due to such interval conflicts it was therefore impossible for the two tribes to remain under one common administrative set up and the case for creating a separate Autonomous District Council was considered.

The major findings of this study may be summed up as follows:

1. The Pawis, Lakhers and the Chakmas were much influenced by the political developments that took place among the Lushais (Mizos). They were, however, not satisfied with the treatment meted out to them by the Mizos especially after the formation of the then Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council in 1952.
2. In order to safeguard their economic, social and political interests, initially the Pawis and Lakhers demanded some kind of political autonomy to be granted to them under the Constitution of India.
3. The fear of being politically marginalized by the Mizos gave rise to the political demands made by the Pawis and Lakhers. As a result, the

Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was granted to them in 1953 under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

4. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council started functioning in 1953. Elections were held to elect the members of the Council. But it was found that right from the beginning there was no mutual understanding between the Pawis and Lakher. This was because of the internal fightings and clash of interests especially in cases of sharing of political and executive posts of the Council like the offices of Chairman, Chief Executive Member, Executive Members etc. This, therefore, tremendously affected the working and functioning of the Council from time to time.

5. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council during its tenure has been able to pass and enact a number of Acts, Rules and Regulations from time to time. These Acts, Rules and Regulations relate to such important administrative affairs of the Council as well as matters pertaining to the welfare of the people within the jurisdiction of the Council. Some of these Acts, Rules and Regulations which have been passed relate to the Constitution of the Council, Procedure and Conduct of Business, Social Customs and Practices, Revenue Assessment, Administration of Justice, etc. to mention a few of them.

6. Another finding is the role played by the Chakma community. This community was to some extent, happy to be initially under the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Later on, they also put forward their demands for political autonomy so as to serve and safeguard their interests. The result of their persistent demand for separate administrative set up led to the trifurcation of the then United Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. They

were also granted a separate Autonomous District Council of their own in 1972, along with the Pawis and Lakhers.

At the end, it may be concluded that the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council did satisfy the political aspirations of the people initially but not in the long run. The subsequent political movements show that the Pawis, Lakhers and Chakmas wanted something more in terms of autonomy. Having experienced, the working and functioning of the Regional Council and its failure to fulfill their political demands, they went ahead in demanding greater autonomy in the form of the Autonomous District Council. They succeeded in getting that too. The latest trend is again to demand more autonomy in the form of a Union Territory. However, this aspect is beyond the purview of the present study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX – I

Copy of the Memorandum to the Additional Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, Lungleh, dated the Serkawr, the 4th January 1945, from Shri Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr, on behalf of the Lakher Chiefs:

We are very hopeful that you will please consider this word that we ask you. We, the Lakher tribe, who for a long time were unsophisticated and ignorant and knowing nothing, to you, our Mother and Father, the British Government we make our petition. Now that we know the wisdom and good news concerning other tribes we are very desirous to also state our wants. The Lakher Tribe is divided into three sections and is amongst other tribes, in the Lushai Hills one section, in the Chin Hills one section and in the Arakan Hill Tracts there is also one section, therefore that we may show as a distinct tribe please make us a separate district of the Lakher Hills and in that have an officer who shall rule us in the Lakher language is what we want. The situation of the Lakher tribe is as far as the Sekul Chhua in the Arakan Hill Tracts and in the Chin Hills as far as Hnaring, and in the Lushai Hills as far as Cheural and down to Diltlang. In this we probably have about 150 miles in length from North to South and about 130 miles in width. What we desire most is to have a Lakher District with an officer and for him to use the Lakher Books (language). Then, as before the war came on we asked our ruler for schools amongst the Lakhers in the more important places.

We ask that this petition of all the Lakher Chiefs shall be reported to the Governor of Assam with all possible power.

The Chiefs:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>
1.	Chhohmo	Saikao	13.	Ngolua	Siaha
2.	Kolo	Zyhno	14.	Lailo	Tisopi
3.	Rachi	Chapi	15.	Thidaw	Rawmibawk
4.	Hnicho	Laki	16.	Tlaikao	Thialhra
5.	Laiko	Tisi	17.	Zahia	Paitha
6.	Siatu	Amobyu	18.	Iahmo	Chhaolo
7.	Iakhai	Lobo	19.	Hrachho	Tipa
8.	Lailo	Tokalo	20.	Nolo	Satly
9.	Ngochho	Kiasi	21.	Sakhei	Muabu
10.	Vialo	Iana	22.	Laimo	Tithohnaw
11.	Rany	Theiva	23.	Zaha	Botal
12.	Ryutha	Vahia			

APPENDIX – II

Copy of the letter to the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lungleh, dated the Serkawr, the 3rd November 1945 from Shri Chhomo, Chief of Serkawr, on behalf of the Lakher Chiefs.

Up to now we have received no answer to the words that we wrote to the Governor of Assam, that is why we are asking again. What we want most is for all the Lakher country to be in one and to be made into the Lakher Hills District and for one English Officer to rule us in the Lakher language, this is what we want more than anything else. We very much desire your answer quickly and we shall be very thankful.

APPENDIX – III

Copy of the Memorandum to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Aijal, dated the Serkawr, December 1945, from the Lakher Chiefs.

As we have been demanding so many times, Government may be pleased to give us Lakher Hills District, and also one English Officer may be appointed to conduct our administration. This is what we want most. We would like to be under either the Burma Government or the Crown Colony. We want that the Lakhers should have a separate District. We pray you that Lakhers should be placed under one separate District Administration, but not under the Lushai Hills District.

The Chiefs:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>
1.	Chhomo	Saikao	11.	Lailo	Tekalo
2.	Zahia	Paitha	12.	Dyutha	Vahia
3.	Siatu	Amobyu	13.	Ngochho	Kiasi
4.	Laihnao	Saiha	14.	Hramchhuma	Tipa
5.	Rany	Theiva	15.	Zaha	Botla
6.	Lailo	Tisopi	16.	Sakhci	Muabu
7.	Laiko	Tisi	17.	Rachi	Chapi
8.	Kalo	Zyhno	18.	Nolo	Chakho
9.	Saidu	Pala	19.	Iahmo	Chhaolo
10.	Hnicho	Laki	20.	Lenghmunga	Tuithumhna

APPENDIX – IV

Copy of the Memorandum to His Excellency, Governor of Assam, Shillong, dated the Serkawr, the 7th July, 1947, from Shri Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr, on behalf of the Lakher Chiefs:

As the Lakher Chiefs and commons have not yet received any reply to the petition No. 8 dated 7.4.47 we herewith respectfully request that you will consider this our petition. This is the third petition upon which we have done so.

We desire that all the Lakhers in the South Lushai Hills, and in the Chin Hills of Burma and also in the Arakan Hill Tracts be made into one district coming under/one jurisdiction.

If this is not at all possible, then we Lakhers in the South Lushai Hills ask that we and our country be given over to Burma so that we shall all be one there. We have no desire to join in with the Mizo Union nor do we wish to be under the rule of the Lushais.

We respectfully request your Excellency to let us have an answer as soon as possible.

APPENDIX - V

MEMBERS OF THE LUSHAI DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

NORTHERN LUSHAI HILLS

Sl. No.	Names	Village	Chief
1.	Lalsailova	Kelsih	Chief
2.	Khenkunga	Bukpui	Chief
3.	C. Ngura	Durtlang	Chief
4.	Lalbuanga	Tukkalth	Chief
5.	Lalthawvenga	Sailam	Chief
6.	Awk ^h asarala	Phullen	Chief

COMMONERS

Sl. No.	Names	Village
1.	R. Thanhkira, B.A.	Thakthing (Aizawl)
2.	Vanlalbuka	Sihphir
3.	Zadailova	Ratu
4.	Khelhnuna	Vanbawng
5.	Vaithlaia	Khawdungsei
6.	H. Khuma	Bara Bazar (Aizawl)
7.	Pasena, Pastor	Chalrang
8.	Chaltuakhuma	Baktawng
9.	P. Saitawna	N. Vanlaiphai
10.	Hrangaia	Thakthing
11.	R. B. Chhawna	Tuahzawl
12.	Chhawngghnuaia	Kulikawn
13.	Chhunbura	Rabung
14.	Chhuahkhuma, Pastor	Aizawl Town Representative
15.	Lalmawia	Aizawl Town Representative
16.	Sangpuii, B.A.	Women Representative

SOUTHERN LUSHAI HILLS

Sl. No.	Names	Village	Chiefs
1.	Taikhuma	Pukpui	Chiefs
2.	Lalbuana	Thingsai	Chief
3.	Chhomo (Chhunhmunga in Mizo)	Serkawr	Chief
4.	Lianmana	Mamte	Chief

COMMONERS

Sl. No.	Names	Village
1.	Ch. Saprawnga	Theiriat
2.	R. Dengthuama	Pukpui
3.	Khungliana	Lungchem
4.	H. Vanthuama	Zotlang
5.	Tuikhurliana	Chawngte
6.	Z. Hengmanga	Sangau
7.	Vako	Zawngling
8.	Lalchungnunga	Lunglei Town Representative
9.	K. Remthangi	Women Representative

APPENDIX – VI

HOLDER OF CHAIRMAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE MEMBER, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY OF PAWI-LAKHER REGIONAL COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN

1.	B. W. Roy, SDO, Lunglei	23.4.53 – 22.4.54
2.	Z. Hengmanga	24.4.54 – 30.4.58
3.	L. Chinzah, B.A.	1.8.58 - 7.12.58
4.	F. Sangluaia	3.3.59 - 14.4.64
5.	H. Tanmanga	15.4.64 – 30.4.70
6.	S. Pailei	15.7.70 – 15.11.71
7.	K. Sangchhum, B.A.	8.12.71 - 11.12.71
8.	L. Chinzah, B.A.	15.3.72 - 1.4.72

VICE/DY. CHAIRMAN

1.	C. Zochhum	23.4.53 22.4.54
2.	Atul Chandra Dewan	1971

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MEMBER

1.	B.W. Roy, SDO Lunglei	23.4.53 – 22.4.54
2.	C. Zochhum	23.4.54 – 31.8.56
3.	H. Kiautum, B.A.	13.1.57 - 24.4.64
4.	L. Chinzah, B.A.	27.4.64 – 15.7.70
5.	Zakhu Hlychho, B.A.	16.7.70 – 9.12.71
6.	L. Chinzah, B.A. (Appointment)	10.1.72 – 16.3.72
7.	Zakhu Hlychho, B.A.	17.3.72 - 1.4.72

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

1.	Sakia	1.6.54 – 7.7.57
2.	K. I. Pakhai	8.7.57 – 23.4.58
3.	Mylai Hlyehho	28.7.58 – 26.4.64
4.	K. Rohnuna, B.A.	1.12.64 – 15.7.70
5.	Saplina, B.A.	16.7.70 – 13.11.71
6.	S. Pailei	17.3.72 – 1.4.72
7.	U. Zathang, B.A.	17.3.72 – 1.4.72

SECRETARY

1.	Thuamluaia, B.A.	23.4.53-8.8.53 (Part time)
2.	J. K. Khenglawt, B.A.	9.8.53 – 21.9.55
3.	H. Kiautuma, B.A.	11.10.56 – 12.1.57
4.	C. Kaisanga, B.A.	26.3.57 – 31.12.61
5.	Robert T. Hnialum, B.A.	12.1.62 – 1.4.72 (Retired)

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Hniatura, UDC, Pawi autonomous District Council on 8.3.1999 at Lawngtlai.

K. Pakhai, Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 17.2.1997 at Saiha.

K. Paichho, LDC of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 3.3.98 at Saiha.

L. Chinzah, Ex-Chief Executive Member, Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, on 23.2.99 at Lawngtlai.

Mylai Hlychho, Ex-Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 24.6.98 at Aizawl.

R. Vanlawma, First Secretary of Mizo Union, on 25.6.95 at Aizawl.

R. T. Hnialum, Secretary, Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 22.2.99 at Lawngtlai.

S. Pailei, Ex-Chairman, Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 9.3.99 at Saiha.

S. Hiato, Ex-Executive Member, Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 7.3.99 at Saiha.

S. Mokia, Middle School Teacher (Pensioner) on 24.8.1998 at Saiha.

Z. Hengmanga, Ex-Chairman, Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 22.2.98 at Lawngtlai.

Zavaia, Ex-Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 2.4.98 at Serkawr.

Zakhu Hlychho, Ex-Chief Executive Member of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on 12.3.98 at Saiha.

H. Tholua, Court President, Mara Autonomous District Council on the 12th March 1998 at Saiha.

J. Nyuhra, Education Officer, Mara Autonomous District Council on the 14th May 1998 at Saiha.

L. C. Hlychho, Legislative Secretary, Mara Autonomous District Council on the 24th June 1998 at Saiha.

Laicho Notlia, Ex-Executive Member, Lakher Autonomous District Council on 18th July 1997 at Saiha.

Mangsaia, Middle School Teacher (Pensioner) on 3rd July 1996 at Saiha.

Mangkama, Ex-Member of Lakher Autonomous District Council on 3rd July 1997 at Saiha.

Beiha, Executive Secretary, Lakher Autonomous District Council on 14th May 1998 at Saiha.

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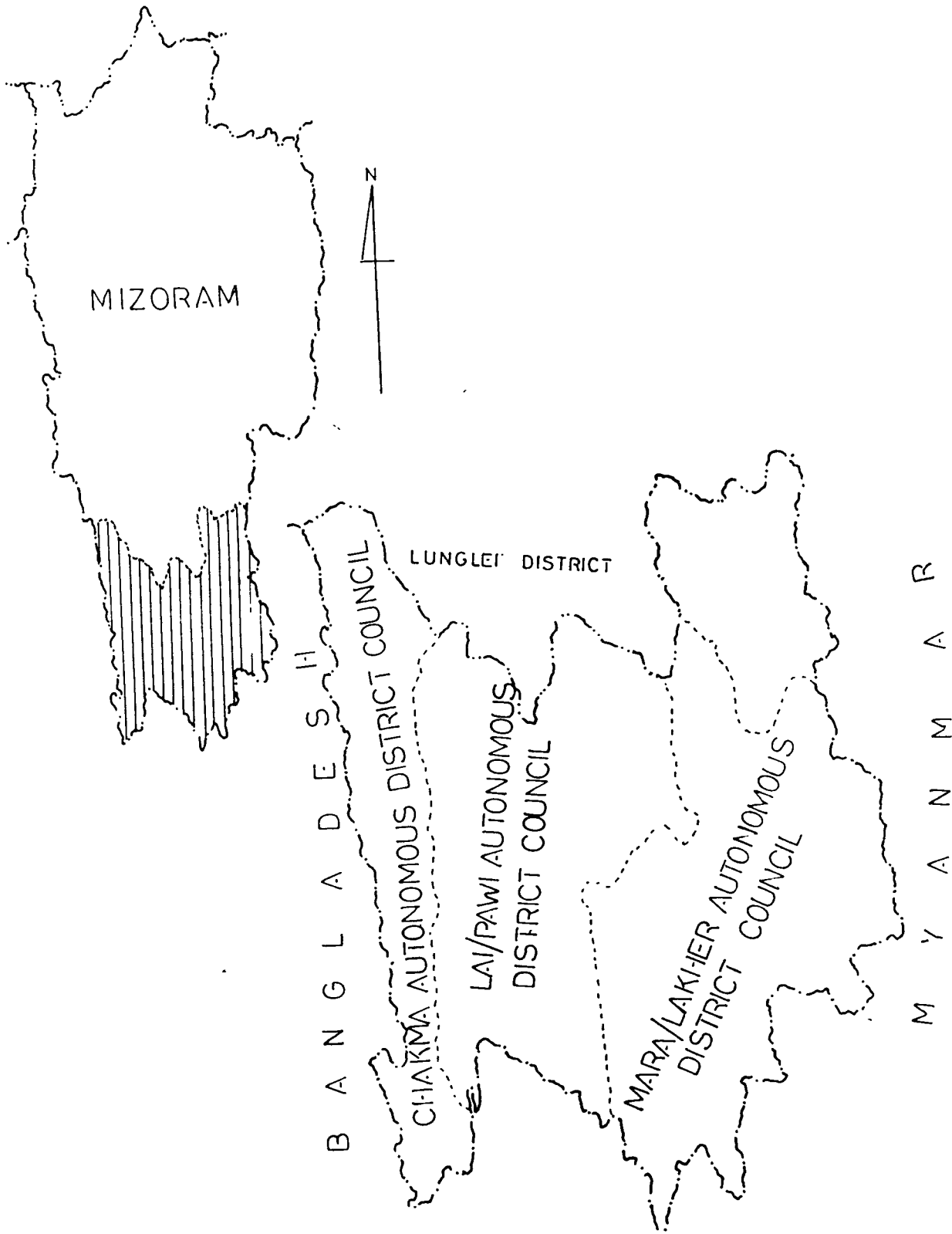
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