

Political Development:  
The Role of Political Parties in Siaha District (2000-2017)

M. Phil.

Dissertation

Submitted by

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that H. Lalremruatthiama, a bonafide research scholar having enrolment No. MZU/MPhil/417 of 22-05-2017 attached to the Department of Political Science has completed his work for the degree in Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) under my supervision and guidance on a research topic entitled, **Political Development: The Role of Political Parties in Siaha District (2000-2017)**, for the award of Master of Philosophy in Mizoram University, Aizawl. I certify that the topic and contents of the dissertation submitted by him did not form bias and has not been submitted by him or by anyone to any other University for any award.

Place: Aizawl

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Date:

Supervisor

## Chapter: I

### Introduction

#### I.1. Introduction

Every country has some kind of political system and it is different from country to country. As there are different cultures and identities, there are also different political systems and the development of each country depends largely upon the effectiveness of the political system. In other words, the level of political development is determined by the political system. The older texts used such terms as 'government', 'nation', or 'state' to describe what is call a political system. Political system includes not only governmental institutions such as legislature, court and administrative agencies but includes all structures in their political aspects and all the interactions which affect the use or threat of use of legitimate physical coercion.<sup>1</sup>

#### I.2. Meaning of political development

The term political development is a vast and complex one, so there cannot be universal definition of political development because political system of a country is also different from one another. The origin of the term political development can be traced back to 1950's after the Second World War when a large number of American political scientists attempted to study the political dynamics of the newly emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America with the process of decolonisation. Huge amount of statistical and quantitative data on the social, political, economic and demographic aspects of these nations were collected to analyse their attitudes, values

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<sup>1</sup>Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr.(1966). *Comparative Politics: A Development Approach*. New Delhi: Amerind Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd. Pp: 16 & 18.

and behaviour pattern.<sup>2</sup> The term political development is defined by different scholars according to their own context and thus differs from one another. It is sometimes generally link with social, economic and psychological studies but all these led to the misery of the term. Lucian Pye, Samuel P. Huntington, Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Kenneth Organski and Myron Weiner are some of the earlier scholars who defined the concept of political development. Some of the definitions of political development can be studied as follows:-

Lucian Pye defines political development as the suppression of all irrationalities, emotionalism and widely contending forces, in favour of coldly efficient, intelligent and farsighted management of public affairs. It also focuses upon the establishment of legal institution.<sup>3</sup>

Almond and Powell defines political development as increased differentiation and specialization of political structure and the increase secularization of political culture.<sup>4</sup>

Samuel P. Huntington defines political development as institutionalisation of political organisations and procedures to meet the challenges posed by modernisation.<sup>5</sup>

Abramo Fimo Kenneth Organski defines political development in terms of increasing government efficiency in mobilising human and material resources towards rational ends.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Nirmala. *What is political development? Examine various crisis as identified by Lucian Pye*. Retrieved from <http://www.preservearticles.com/2012031427216.html>. Accessed on date: 28.10.2016.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian Pye. (1966). *Aspects of Political Development*. New Delhi: Amerind Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd. P: 15.

<sup>4</sup> Almond and Powell. Op.cit. P: 105.

<sup>5</sup> Jajati Keshari Patnaik. (1998). *Political Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: A Theoretical Study*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Manipur University. P: 1.

Political development tries to understand the origin and evolution of political institutions and their current position. Political institutions include the rules and procedures of evolution, political parties, decision making by the governing organisation (executive, legislature and judiciary) and civil society.<sup>7</sup>

Gunnar Myrdal regards political development as a movement upwards of a whole system of interdependent conditions as a complex process in which economic growth is only one of the several categories casually relevant conditions.<sup>8</sup>

It can be argued from the above definitions that the term political development does not confine to a single aspect. It involves changes in a society which may be economical or political aspect towards the process of modernity. Therefore, many scholars are of the view that mobilisation and political development are of the same thing and used it interchangeably. Thus, they equalise political development with that of industrialisation, economic growth and societal change as there are no consensus agreement on the definition of the term. Even though there is no universally acceptable definition of political development many scholars define it as integration, modernisation, and stability of political system, political orientation and diffusion of political structure. The study of the above definitions indicates that political changes along with values are an important process towards political development. So, Almond and Powell study developmental process of the political system through structural differentiation, subsystem autonomy and secularisation.<sup>9</sup> In another word, political development can be classified into two categories. In the broader process,

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<sup>6</sup> Shakti Pradayani Jena. (2010). *Political Development in Hungary, 1990-2006*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Jawaharlal Nehru University. P: 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. P: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Gunnar Myrdal(1970). *The Challenges of Poverty*. London, cited in Khangjrakpam Gourachandra Singh. *Political Development in Manipur (1984-2002)*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, 2006, Manipur University, p:6.

<sup>9</sup> Almond and Powell. Op.cit. pp:300.

political development has been viewed in terms of the capacity of the political system to define and implement collective goals, resolve the issues by which it is confronted and adapt to a series of crisis involved in the modern polity; and in narrower sense it implies systematic change i.e., alterations of a relatively fundamental nature in the functioning of the political system.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Gabriel Almond and Powell were of the view that non-political development must be related to political development.<sup>11</sup>

### I.2.1. Concept of political development

The theories propounded by Lucian Pye, Gabriel Almond and Powell are studied in order to have a better understanding on the concept of political development.

Lucian Pye, after the critical evaluation of various definitions of political development given by different scholars, deduced political development into three characteristic features as equality, capacity and differentiation.

- 1) By equality, he means participation of the people in the political activities that may be in a democratic or totalitarian system of government. Laws should be universalistic in nature and all people rich or poor, high or low should submit to the same dictates of law; and that recruitment should be based on achievement of performance so that people are inducted into public office through merit and competence.<sup>12</sup>
- 2) Capacity relates to the outputs of a political system and is closely associated with governmental performance and the conditions associated with such performance. It is the sheer magnitude, scope and scale of governmental

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<sup>10</sup>C.A. Perumal. Op.cit. Pp:1-2.

<sup>11</sup>Almond and Powell. Op.cit. Pp:220

<sup>12</sup> Lucian Pye. Op.cit. Pp: 45&46.

performance along with effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of public policy.<sup>13</sup>

- 3) Differentiation points to specialisation of roles within the political structure. There is thus equal division of labour with limited and distinct functions for office and agencies and it involves integration of complex structure and process.<sup>14</sup>

In the same way, Almond and Powell studied the concept of political development where they stated that the events which lead to political development may occur from international environment, internal political situation or change and from political elites within the political system where they want to increase their resources so as to enjoy the power. They put their view regarding the concept of political development as state-building, national-building, participation and distribution.<sup>15</sup>

- 1) State-building is the process that arises out of a threat to the survival of the political system from intra and extra societal change. They are of the opinion that state-building is associated with significant increase in the (regulative and extractive capabilities)<sup>16</sup> of the political system, with the development of the centralised and penetrative bureaucracy related with the increase in these capacities, and with the development of attitudes of obedience and compliance to the population which are associated with the emergence of such

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. P:47.

<sup>15</sup> Almond and Powell. Op.cit. Pp: 35-37.

<sup>16</sup> Regulative capability indicates the capacity of the system to exercise control over the behavior of individuals and groups while extractive capability means the capability to extract resources from the people which includes material and human resources.

bureaucracy.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it connotes to an integration of people with the state and penetration of a state into the masses.

- 2) Nation-building is closely associated with state-building but differed in the sense that it goes beyond the state where the later is limited by geographical boundary while the former is not. Nation-building refers to the process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribe or village to the larger political system.
- 3) Participation refers to the process whereby the people or citizens through some form of political infrastructure- political parties, groups, cliques and factions tries to operate and participate in the decision making process of a political system. Ultimately political participation of different groups leads to political development.
- 4) Distribution, also known as welfare, refers to the situation in which political participation further leads to the demands that the resources or values should be distributed equally to all sections of the society without any discrimination.

#### I.2.2. The process of political development in Siaha District

The political development in Siaha District is studied keeping in mind the above concept of political development.

The process of political development in Siaha District largely took place during the 1960's. The district lies in the southernmost part of Mizoram. Majority of the population who live in this district are known as 'Maras' but were known and recorded as 'Lakhers' or 'Shendoos' by the British. However the term Lakher was never accepted by the people and always regarded themselves as Mara. In this respect,

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<sup>17</sup> Almond and Powell. Op.cit. Pp: 35&36.



NE Perry wrote ‘the Lakhers, or, to be more correct, the Maras, Lakher being merely the name by which they are known to the Lusheis’<sup>18</sup>. In contrast to their claim the term Lakher was officially recorded but the term Lakher in Lakher Autonomous District Council was changed into Mara in 1989 as per amendment of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.<sup>19</sup> The Maras used to enjoy their own autonomy through chieftainship before the arrival of the British. The whole area of Siaha District was put under the British control since 1924.<sup>20</sup> With the effort of Mr and Mrs Lorrain, the white missionaries they began to have their own script and alphabet, which was believed to be one of the factors for obtaining the Regional Council.

The people become politically conscious even before independence due to the influences of the white missionaries. So, on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1945 a meeting of Mara chiefs along with some Lai chiefs under Circle number XVI<sup>21</sup> was held at Saikao under the leadership of Chhohmo Hlychho, Chief of Saikao, and passed a resolution for submission of memorandum by stating ‘we want the Lakhers should have a separate district administration, but not under the Lushai Hills’.<sup>22</sup> After a long period of time Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was created which was trifurcated again into three Regional Councils on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1972 and the three Regional Councils were subsequently upgraded to Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972.<sup>23</sup> The first regional party, Mara Freedom Party (MFP), was formed in 1963 which later on merged into Congress party. Another regional party known as

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<sup>18</sup>N.E. Perry.(1932). *The Lakhers*. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited. P:1.

<sup>19</sup>ZakhuHlychho.(2009). *Mara-teTobul*.Aizawl: ZakhuHlychho. P:213.

<sup>20</sup>LaichoNotlia. (1989). *MararahPolitics(A Political History of Maraland)*. Siaha: LaichoNotlia. P:4.

<sup>21</sup>JangkhongamDoungel. (2015). *Lai Chieftainship and its Impact in Politics*. Delhi: Balaji Publications. P:213

<sup>22</sup>V. Lalchhawna. (2014). *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram (with special reference to Maraland)*.Aizawl: V. Lalchhawna. Pp:62-63.

<sup>23</sup>Jangkhongam Doungel. (2010). *Evolution of District Council Autonomy in Mizoram: A Case study of the Lai Autonomous District Council*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. Pp:69-70.

Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) was formed in 1996 keeping in mind the sentiments of the people and aimed to achieve Union Territory for the Maras, however, the MDF also merged with the BJP 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

### I.3. Review of Literature

Almond and Powell in their work on *Comparative Politics: A Development Approach* (1966) state that political development cannot be developed if people are not inclined towards the political system. They are of the view that in studying the concept of political development, the history of political system should be first analysed and assessment can be made from that analysis. The developmental approach of the political system is characterised by structural differentiation, subsystem autonomy and secularisation. This work also touches on the importance of leaders, communication, political parties and capabilities of the political system. They state that all the developmental process in the society to a great extent effect political system and thus non-political development programmes must be related to political development programmes.

Lucian Pye in his work on the *Aspects of Political Development* (1986) deals exclusively with the term political development from the theoretical perspective. He is of the view that theoretical framework must be built so as to give a clear idea about the terms. So, he studies many definitions given by different scholars and concludes his definition of development as equality, capacity and differentiation. He also studies six crises which every political system of a society faces. His work gave a handful insight to the concept of political development.

Laicho Notlia in his work on *Mararah Politics (A Political History of Maraland)* (1989) discusses about the political situation of Maraland<sup>24</sup> since Indian independence and it slightly touches the background before independence. The author traces the political history of Maraland where the Maras became politically conscious and states about the meeting of Mara Chiefs to demand for district in 1945. As a result, the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) was formed. The PLTU achieved Regional Council known as Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) and the trifurcation of the PLRC led to the birth of Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) in 1972. After the formation of the MADC, different political parties sprang up in Maraland and corruption also become rampant. The author also touches exclusively upon the formations of different political parties like Congress, Janata Party, Peoples' Conference Party, and how this devalue the political system in the area. Political leaders aspire to have status rather than work for the betterment of the district, he added.

RN Prasad and AK Agarwal in *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram* (1982) study about the political, administrative and economic development of Mizoram by classifying the book into two parts, while part one deals with the political aspects of development the later part deals with the economic aspects of development. This book contains in brief the mode of administration in Mizoram during the British period for its comparative analysis from the post British period. The book briefly touches upon the insurgency movement of Mizoram by the Mizo National Front under the leadership of Laldenga and how they came over ground, and it also states about the regional parties of Mizoram. The work mainly focuses on the

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<sup>24</sup>The word Maraland is not officially recognize, it is used by the Mara people to show that they are distinct from the other Mizo tribe and are having their own autonomy. As the author himself use Maraland it will be referred to as Maraland rather than Siaha district.

electoral process, voting behaviour and governance of Mizoram from the first Legislative Assembly i.e., 1972 to the sixth Legislative Assembly of 1989. From their study on the election procedure from the above, they pointed out that socio- economic development were not given due prominence by the political leaders. Even elections were also mired by family or clan connections as well as party affiliation but not upon the interest of the state. Due to this short-sightedness of the leaders and the people, Mizoram remain one of the backward state and is doing imperatively low in terms of economic development compare to other states of her neighbours.

*Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989: A study with special reference to political parties in Mizoram (2001)* by K.M. Zakhuma is a comprehensive work which covers a wide area of political development in Mizoram during and after the British period. The author highlights the administration of Mizoram during the British period for analysis of the administrative, constitutional and political development of the area. Thus the book deals with the autonomy movement by the hill people in the North east India. The author also touches upon the Bordoloi committee and the main focus of this work is on political parties that have been formed in the state by analysing their root cause and their works.

In his work on *Political Development in Manipur 1919- 1949(2005)* S.M.A.W. Chisti attempts an analytical and comprehensive study of the political history of Manipur by focusing on social and political movements in the area. A brief history of monarchy i.e., the start of the monarch and their struggle for power which led to Burmese annexation of the kingdom and ultimately the intervention of the British is analysed briefly. The book made a detail analysis from the British period when the Kukis of Manipur led the insurgency protesting the labour corps demanded by the British to assist them in the First World War. The author also deals with the

agitation of Naga dominated area in Manipur by the Nagas under the leadership of Jadonang and Gaidinliu to overthrow the British rule and established Naga raj or Naga kingdom. The women bazar agitation of 1939 which broke up due to scarcity of rice as the government failed to check the flow of rice to other state are also studied by the author. This book also traces how the king of Manipur at first refuse to integrate the state within Indian union which was incorporated by the British through the Government of India, Act 1935. It also states how the Maharaja of Manipur agreed to merge with India after the assertion by Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India.

In his work on *Mara-te Tobul (Origin of the Maras)*(2009) Zakhu Hlychho covers a wide angle of political development in Siaha district. The author studies the culture and customs of Mara, and the origin of the Mara on the basis of accounts given by different authors mostly the English writers. The area inhabited by Mara tribe was the last to be subjugated by the British in Lushai hills. After the British consolidated their power the administration was carried on indirectly by the British through the chiefs. The English missionaries transformed the society through the process of education and the Mara began to be politically conscious, as such they even demanded for district council on the eve of India independence by submitting memoranda to the British administrators. The political movement within the Pawi-LakherRegional Council (PLRC) by the Mara tribe for separate administration apart from Lai tribe are also dealt with exclusively. The author, himself, was the first from Mara tribe to be the first Chief Executive Member in the PLRC during the fourth term, so he gives a clear picture of internal schism within the Regional Council and agitation for district council by the Mara tribe.

*Ka Vahvaihpui Ram leh Hnam (the land and nation, I wander with) (2009)*, an autobiography written by Z. Hengmnga, contains a valuable source of information about the origin of Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram. In this work, the author traces on how the southernmost region of Mizoram i.e., Pawi and Lakher tribes began to aspire to achieve a regional council on their own and how they fight for that purpose. It traces the background and creation of Pawi- Lakher Company at Lunglei, the formation of Pawi- Lakher Tribal Union, their meetings with high officials and how the Mizo Union and the United Mizo Freedom Organisation were opposed to them by persuading them not to proceed further with their demand. The author touches upon the elections of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the first four general elections of Lai Autonomous District Council.

In his work *Evolution of District Council Autonomy in Mizoram (2010)* Jangkhongam Doungel made an in-depth study upon the genesis of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India that trace the historical background of such constitutional provision of northeast India, the then undivided Assam. In this work the author focuses mainly upon the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) by incorporating the history of the Lai people and how they began to settle to their present location by analysing the viewpoints of different scholars. The political awakening of Lai people, election process, functions and workings of the LADC, administrative setup of the LADC and the impact on socio-economic development, and political parties within the area are studied exclusively. Apart from this, the author traces upon the evolution of district council in the Lushai hills and how the three Autonomous District Councils evolved from the erstwhile Pawi- Lakher Regional Council. This book provides rich information about the administrative and political development of Mizoram.

In his work on *Political problems of Mizoram: A Study of ethnic politics with special reference to the Hmar People's Movement(2011)* Lalsiamhnuna studies the autonomy movement by the sub-tribes in Mizoram like Lai, Mara, Chakma and Hmar. The author traces the history and origin of the Hmars and political awakening of the people. The major movement for autonomy was started by Hmar People's Convention (HPC), a communal political party, form in 1986 within the ambit of the Indian constitution. It leads to the creation of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) with a minimal political power. Due to this some leaders aspire to have Hmar Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

*Autonomy Movement in Mizoram (with special movement in Maraland) (2014)* is the book written by V. Lalchhawna mostly from his personal experience in the then Pawi- Lakher Regional Council now the Autonomous District Councils of Mara and Lai. First the author traces the history of Mara and Lai tribes and he goes on studying about the Mizo District Council, Pawi- Lakher Regional Council(PLRC), insurgency led by Mizo National Front, Union Territory of Mizoram and the up gradation to full-fledge statehood, and the trifurcation of the PLRC in to three Autonomous District Councils – their evolutions and formations. In this work, the author studies exclusively on political activities in the present Siaha district, the formation of different political parties, their workings and the electoral behaviour of the people. The changes in attitude of the political leaders towards toward their works after the attaining of Mara Autonomous District Council are a stumbling block for progress and development apart from political and administrative development. In the last part of the book the author also highlight some of the prominent political leaders from Siaha District.

*Mara Lôsôhpa: Valua Hlychho (Valua Hlychho: The Mara's Jewel) (2015)* edited by Nohro Hmoko is a compilation of articles written by Valua Hlychho. It consists of two parts which is divided into Mara and English section. This book contains the coming of missionaries in the area and of how the Maras began to be aware of their ethnic identity and how they take steps toward the preservation of the same in light of the Christian missionaries. It also contains the origins of civil society organization like Mara Thyutlia Py (Young Mara Association), Krista Thyutlia Py (Young Christian Association) and Krizypa No Py (Christian Mother's Association) in Mara community of Siaha District of which Valua Hlychho was one of the founding members. This book also highlights how Valua Hlychho was involved in the formation of the Mara Freedom Party and his work for the promotion of education in Siaha District which ultimately leads to political consciousness and ultimately to development in economic, social and political aspects.

One of the remarkable articles on the study of political development is the work done by Karl Von Vorys in his *Towards a Concept of Political Development*. The author discusses about the concept of political development by identifying the political ingredients of the process which will lead to ending political system in the newly independent nations. The political systems of these newly independent nations are unstable due to prevalence of traditional small scale societies and chronic economic disequilibrium. At these there is no capacity for social and economic change. The new nations will have to develop this capacity through steady and balance increments in their capacities of coercion and persuasion.

Myron Weiner in his '*Political Integration and Political development*' discusses about the effect of political integration on political development. The problem faced by every political system, especially the developing nations, is that of



integration. The integration problems face by new nations should be viewed as part of historical process of development through which western political system has gone as well. He goes on to say that it was during the transitional phase of political development that the problems of integration become most acute.

The above articles and books have dealt with different topics and issues regarding political development. The topic is quite vast one and covers different angles. Since there are not many sources available with respect to Siaha District on its political development, it is hoped that relevant and useful materials could be taped out through this research. The assessment of this work will focus on the political development of Siaha District.

#### I.4. Statement of the Problem:

The political consciousness of the people inspires the Maras to have their own self-administration. The meeting of the Chiefs of Circle Number XVI held at Saikao in 1945 was the first manifestation of political consciousness of the people. After a long period of time the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) was formed as a political party in 1963. As a result of the effort of political leaders and support of the people, the area is placed under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

After the creation of the MADDC, many political parties sprang up. These parties aspire to obtain more political autonomy of which the Maraland Democratic Front stands for Union Territory and Indian National Congress advocates Direct Finance to get mass support and largely depend upon the Central and State Government for funds. The elections that were fought over the years were largely based on the policy of Sixth Schedule amendment and the enhancement of more political power and thereby inculcating in the minds of the people about the positive

aspects of this policy which later on lead to political awareness. On the other hand people largely consider their family relationship with the candidates rather than the policy of the parties during elections.

#### I.5. Objectives:

1. To study the factors responsible for the emergence of political parties in Siaha District.
2. To analyse the roles of political parties in Siaha District.
3. To study and assess the electoral politics of the MADC elections from 2000 to 2017.

#### I.6. Research Questions:

1. What are the reasons for the emergence of political parties in Siaha District?
2. What are the roles of political parties in political development in Siaha District?
3. What is the relationship between voting behaviour and level of political awareness of the people of Siaha District?

#### I.7. Methodology:

The research is based on historical, descriptive, comparative and analytical method. Data collection is done through primary as well as secondary sources. Primary sources consist of observation, questionnaire and interview method. As the Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) elections from 2000-2017 were touched, observation and questionnaire method were used to observed the peoples' attitude and how far they integrate within the political system in the eleventh term of the MADC general election. Observation method consists of participant and non-participant

method. In the meantime, questionnaires were distributed at Chakhei village and Council Vaih of Siaha town in the month of May and June, 2017 respectively to study and assess the relationship between voting behaviour and political awareness of the people. For this 200 questionnaires were distributed, 100 papers each at the two selected areas, where 92 respondents were from Chakhei village and 52 were from Council colony in Siaha town and a comparative study of the two was made. As far as the interview method is concerned unstructured interview method was used. On the other hand, secondary sources consist of party constitutions, and election manifestos of different political parties, memorandum of political parties, books, internet sources and newspapers.

#### I.8. Scope of the study:

The study focuses upon political development in Siaha district from the year 2000 to 2017. The time scale of 2000-2017 is used so as to make a comparative study on the level of the relationship between political awareness and voting behaviour of the people. The eleventh term of the MADC general election was conducted in May 2017 and the researcher expect to tap the first hand information on political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District by touching upon the MADC election of 2017. The study traces the history of political development in the area since the colonial period and it tries to assess a better understanding and the clear conception on the emergence of political parties. It also analyses the electoral behaviour and political socialisation of the people and touched upon the role played by political parties in creating political awareness on the people and ultimately on political development of the district.

## I.9. Chapterisation:

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the research work and include in brief the meaning of political development and the process of political development in Siahha District. It also highlights review of literature, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, research methodology and scope of the study.

### Chapter 2: Profile of the Maras

This chapter discusses the history of Mara: their origin, migration to their present settlement from the Chin Hills in Myanmar, the generic name of Mara, their relations with the British, Mara polity and evolution of the Mara Autonomous District Council after the British left India. It also highlight in brief about the geographical profile of Siahha District.

### Chapter 3: Political Parties

This chapter examines the theoretical perspective of political parties like meaning, emergence, characteristics and role of political parties in a political system. It also discusses the four political parties in Siahha District such as the Maraland Democratic Party, the Indian National Congress, the Mizo National Front District Headquarter and the Bharatya Janata Party in detail. The research focussed on the emergence and growth of the parties, their objectives, organisational structure and the role played by the parties in Siahha District.

#### Chapter 4: Electoral Politics

This chapter contains in brief the background of electoral system of India. It also discusses the various types of election campaign in Siaha District during the election times such as house to house campaign, flag flying contest, public meeting, personal contact, printed materials and mass media. The study of the MADC elections from 2000-2017 was made along with the election manifestos of political parties during the eleventh term of the MADC election. Voting behaviour of the people was studied by analysing the questionnaire distributed in the months of May and June, 2017 at Chakhei village and Council Vaih of Siaha town.

#### Chapter 5: Conclusion

The concluding chapter recapitulates the main arguments of the research work and assess the findings of the research work.

## **Chapter: II**

### **Profile of the Maras**

#### **II. 1. Introduction**

Every community or society is made up of some distinct groups of people living together in a confined territory. This people may or may not profess to have the same ethnic, cultural or linguistic background. It is from this perception of distinctiveness that people are categorized as belonging to a particular sect, or in case of India a tribe or sub-tribe, of a community. It is evident that the best form of classifying a community is through language. It is languages which binds and divides people; it is true that intimation is high on people who speak the same language. It is from this perspective of linguistic differentiation that the Maras of Siaha District within the state of Mizoram are propagating they are a distinct tribe, different from Lusei tribe though they are from the same Zo-ethnic stock.

The Maras, like any other tribes in North East India, are divided by international boundaries between India and Myanmar. Hence, they become different nations in the eyes of the law which is not acceptable to the Maras. Whatever the boundary may have done to them they continue to intermingle. They could not accept that they now belong to two different countries. As per the provision of the constitution of India, the Maras feel that they could not live together under one administration now. However, they hope to be placed under the same administration in future. They now classify themselves as India Mara and Myanmar Mara. The present research focuses only upon the Maras in India.

The Maras are one of the tribal groups in India inhabiting the south eastern corner of Mizoram called Siaha District. They are the people who have their own language which is quite different from Lusei or Duhlian language. In spite of their difference they are one of the Zo-ethnic groups and have close cultural affinity with the Chin-Kuki tribes with whom they are placed together as belonging to Tibeto-Burman stock, and are clubbed together along with other tribes like Lusei, Hmar, Paite, etc. under the term Mizo. The Mara tribe can be classified into five groups as Chapi, Hawthai, Tlosâi, Vyutu and Zyhno groups. All these sub-tribes have their own dialect which differ slightly from one another but are intelligible and can communicate easily among them.

## II. 2. Geography of Siaha District:

The area, inhabited by Mara tribe within India called Siaha District or for political administrative purpose the Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) in the state of Mizoram lies in loop of the Kolodyne (Beinô) river, geographically situated between the latitude 22°.07' and 22°.38' North and between the longitude 92°.55' and 93°.10' East. It is situated in the southern part of Mizoram and the length of the area from north to south is 277kms and the width from east to west is 121kms which in total covers 1445 sq.kms. As per the MADC census record of 2011, there are 49 villages including the capital town Siaha.<sup>1</sup> The area is covered by hill ranges. The hill ranges are steep and the gorges are narrow and deep. The hill ranges in the western slopes are generally steep and full of precipices whereas the hill ranges in the east are somewhat gentler. The average height of hills in the east is 6000ft, whereas the average height of the hills in the west is 3000ft. The highest peak in the district is

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<sup>1</sup> K. Zohra.(2013). *The Maras: Indigenous Tradition and Folk Culture*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. Pp:2 & 190-192

mount Maumae (Mawmâ tlah) which is 6675ft<sup>2</sup> from the sea level and is located in the eastern part of the district. It is about 60kms from the capital town Siaha. Most of the high mountains in the district are located in southeast and east. The highest mountain is mount Maumae, other high mountains are Tliatlu tlah with 6402ft. followed by Kahri tlah with 6170ft. from the seal level and are located in south-eastern part of the district, while Phusa tlah and Mawhro tlah are located in the eastern and southern part of the land measuring 6006ft. and 5954ft. respectively.<sup>3</sup>

The largest lake called Pala (Palak) in Mizoram is also located on the southwestern part of Siaha District. The length of Pala is 870 meters and 700 meters in width which is about 105kms from the capital town Siaha.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the district also has number of rivers, namely, Beinô, Tisih, Salyu, Ka-ao and Satly. The longest and most important river of the district is the Beinô (Kolodyne) river. It starts from Myanmar and cuts through the area by demarcating the boundary line between Siaha District and Lawngtla District as well as that of east and west Mara of India and Myanmar, and flows to Myanmar again. The river is rich in sand dust and is good fishing ground.

The area is covered by a large area of forests. The forests can be classified into three types as tropical and evergreen with dense tall trees, tropical semi-evergreen with deciduous species and mountain sub-tropical. The forests are rich in different species of commercial timbers. Some of the common commercial timbers are *michelia*, *champaca*, *terminalia*, *orbara*, *arlocapus*, *chaoplash*, *qoercus serrata* and

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<sup>2</sup> Zakhu Hlychho.(2006). *The Hundred years of Maraland*. Aizawl: JR Construction. P:20.

<sup>3</sup> John Hamlet Hlychho. (2009). *The Maras: Head-hunters to Soul-hunters*. Delhi: ISPCK. Appendix 1. Table 1.

<sup>4</sup> Lalmachhuana Zofa.(2015). *Mara Khawtlangnun Chancin Vol.7: Saiha District*. Aizawl: Lalmachhuana Zofa. P:101.



*longerstromi flas reginas.*<sup>5</sup> Large area of forests has been cut down due to age old practice of *Jhum* cultivation which greatly affects the balance of ecological system.

The climate in the district is very pleasant; it is neither too hot nor too cold. The temperature ranges from 15°C to 33°C. As is with the Mizoram state there are three seasons in the area such as warm or spring, rainy or monsoon and cold or winter seasons. The summer season starts from March and last till first half of May. This season is the hottest in the district and is characterized by bright sunshine and clear blue sky. The second season i.e., rainy or monsoon season mostly starts from second half of May and last till late October. This is the longest season of all where most of the rainfall is witnessed. During these period violent cyclonic storms often comes from the southwest district.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, the cold or winter season begins from November and last till February. The clear blue skies in this season enhance the enchanting view of the district.

### II. 3. Origin of the Maras and waves of migration:

The origin of the Maras is shrouded in mystery in the absence of standard historical documentation and archaeological sources. It is certain that their migration history is through the Chin Hills of Myanmar. However, this does not mean the Chin Hills is their original home as there is no proof to substantiate this. Though nothing definite is known about their original home, their ancestral home appears to have been somewhere in southern China. They then migrated via Tibet entering the hills of northern Myanmar and settle down for sometime in the Chin Hills. The farthest knowledge of their origin they can trace is 'Chhinlung', as with all other Zo-ethnic group, which is believed to be in the southern part of China. The Chhinlung theory

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<sup>5</sup> John Hamlet Hlychho. *The Maras: Head-hunters to Soul-hunters*. Op-cit. Pp:36 & 37.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. P:40.

has been handed down from generations to generations orally as myth. According to this story the ancestors of Mara came out of a hole below the earth<sup>7</sup> which is quite similar to other Chin-Kuki tribes. This points to the fact that the ancestors of Mara and other Chin groups could be of the same origin. One of the accepted views is that the ancestors of Mara tribe generally formed themselves as a separate tribe after they broke off from Thatla/Thlantlang areas in the Chin Hills.<sup>8</sup> From there, some of the Maras moved towards south-west and inhabited the south-eastern corner of Mizoram, the then Lushai hills, south of Hakha-subdivision of the Chin Hills and the extreme north of Arakan hill tracts. The Maras were known and recorded as Lakher and Shendoos or Shendus.

### II. 3.1. Lakher:

The term Lakher is a tribal name of the Maras commonly known to the Lusei. The term is purely a Lusei word where *La* means *cotton* and *Kher* means *Pluck*, which, when combined means *plucking of cottons*. The story of how this term came into being, as has been told, is that a Lusei man on his visit to the Mara areas saw that a Mara woman was plucking cotton and not aware of the tribe he encountered, he thus named the Maras as Lakhers.<sup>9</sup> The term, however, was not acceptable to them as the pronunciation itself sounds alien and the expression itself foreign to them. RA Lorrain says, “Lakher is not a correct name for Mara people. It is both foreign in pronunciation and spelling to the whole language. Their true name and the name they called themselves is *Mara*, but they are known as Lakher.”<sup>10</sup> In this respect NE Perry also writes that ‘the correct name of the Lakhers is Mara, Lakher is merely the name

<sup>7</sup>NE Perry. (2016). *The Lakhers*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. P:4.

<sup>8</sup> K. Robin. (2016). *The Maras History, Polity and Identity*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. P:6.

<sup>9</sup> K. Zohra. *The Maras: Indigenous Tradition and Folk culture*. Op.cit. P:9.

<sup>10</sup> R.A. Lorrain. (1988). *Five Years in Unknown Jungle*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. (Original work published in 1912). P:88.

by which they are known to the Lusei.’<sup>11</sup> Thus it is clearly visible that the term Lakher is just an ascribe name given to them by their brethren Lusei, who were at that time ignorant of their tribe.

### II. 3.2. Shendus or Shendoos:

The term Shendus or Shendoos was used interchangeably by the British. The word Shendus appear variably as Samtu, Shendoo, Shindu, etc. It was used as a common generic term to designate the Maras inhabiting the erstwhile south Lushai Hills and the northern Arakkan Hill tracts. The word Shendus was closely related with the words *Heuma* and *Lakher* which are used to designate the whole of Mara tribe. It is asserted that the term Shendus or Shendoo was a corrupted form of Khumi word *Samtu*. The term Samtu is a combination of ‘Sam’ means hair and ‘Tu’ means knot which literally means *hair knot*.<sup>12</sup> In the early days Khumi tribes were frequently encountered by Mara warriors. They were raid and plundered by the Maras incessantly and as the identity of their raiders was not known to them they were in dilemma. It was in these instances that they began to call them Samtu as they knot their hairs at the top of their forehead which was placed in a corrupted form by the British officers like SR Tickell and TH Lewin in their records respectively.

### II. 3.3. Migration:

It is known from historical studies that human history was ruled by the theme of *might is right*. To that extent they keep on raiding, plundering and ransacking their neighbouring tribes without any substantial reason to justify, but to show off their might and to be recognized as warrior which the society considered in high esteem. It was due to this reason that ancestors of Mara tribe kept on moving from one place to

<sup>11</sup> N.E. Perry. *The Lakhers*. Op.cit. P:1.

<sup>12</sup> K. Zohra. *The Maras: Indigenous Traditions and Folk Culture*. P:10.

another as they could not bear the brunt of their mighty neighbours, apart from searching new fertile land.

The Maras also raided amongst themselves as they were not living under the rule of one king; instead, every village was their own kingdom under their own chiefs. The notorious head-hunting was practised widely. This head-hunting was highly regarded as a qualification of valour, having passed from stage of adolescence to maturity, and it was also considered as a real mark of maturity.<sup>13</sup> It was the burden of this nature that led them to have a chief to guide and protect them. The exact time of the practised of chieftainship was not known. It was believed that they began to have a *chief* from their settlement in the Chin Hills. It was during this period that Tlô sai group of Mara tribe first began to have chief to be their protector; the case of JJ Rousseau *Social Contract Theory* holds well in this respect. They appointed Iakhai Hlychho of Tlangrua village to be their chief. As he was not strong enough to rule another chief Laichi Hlychho from Thangzang village was appointed with his consent.<sup>14</sup> As the story of Mara ancestors largely confined around their stay in the Chin Hills, K. Zohra, Associate Professor in History of Government Saiha College, categorically states that *the Mara tradition does not go beyond their settlement in the Chin Hills of upper Burma.*<sup>15</sup>

The Maras were semi-nomadic tribe and they moved successively in search of fertile land. They came to their present settlement from the Chin Hills in Myanmar crossing the Kolodyne river. The appropriate date of their arrival at their present settlement in Mizoram could not be later than 15<sup>th</sup> Century or beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. P:149.

<sup>14</sup> C. Haôko. (2008). *Mara History: The History of Mara in India and Myanmar*. Yangon: C. Hokaô. P:110.

<sup>15</sup> K. Zohra. (2009). The Origin of the Maras and their Migration with reference to their Chin Hills settlement. In K. Robin. (Ed.). *Chin History, Culture and Identity*. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors. P:118.

Century.<sup>16</sup> They started to migrate in groups probably 30 years interval<sup>17</sup> and made their present settlement as their permanent home.

The first group to migrate was Tlôsaïs of Siaha and Saikao under the leadership of Laichi Hlycho, even though Iakhai Hlychho was also a chief he did not lead the group.<sup>18</sup> It is argued that Tlôsaï group originated from a place called Leisaih between Leita (Leitak) and Zophei (Zaphai) in northern Myanmar. From Leisaih they moved to Saro, thence to Chakhei (Chakhang) and cross the Kolodyne (Beinô) river. After crossing the Kolodyne river, they first settled at a place called Phusâ between Iana (Ainak) and Siata, thence to Khûpi on the Tisi river, Theiri and from that to Bykhih (Beukhi). At Bykhih the Siaha and the Saikao Tlôsaïs separated their ways. The former occupying various sites in neighbouring areas of Bykhih ending up at their present settlement of Siaha, they were descendents of Laichi Hlychho and were classified as Khichha Hlychho.<sup>19</sup> The latter group moved successively to various places like Khaocheitla (Khuangchawi tlang), Zobukhi (Zongbukhi), Kihlo (Kihlong) and eventually settled at Saikao.<sup>20</sup>

The Hawthais were the second groups to migrate. They originated at a place called Chira whence they moved to Saro and crossed the Kolodyne river. After crossing the Kolodyne river they first settled at Siata, Paimi, Noaotla thence to Tisi, which is their main village. No-aotla, Chhaolo and Lôbô, or as the Lushai calls them Niawhtlang, Chhualung and Lungbun are the Hawthai villages.<sup>21</sup> Nohro clans were the chiefs of Hawthai groups.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P:120.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with A. Thasia at his residence, Vaihpi, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> C. Haokô. *Mara History: The History of Mara in India and Myanmar*. Op.cit. P:110.

<sup>20</sup> NE Perry. *The Lakhers*. Op.cit. P:2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

The third groups to migrate were the Zyhnos. They originate from a place called Hnaro (Hnarang) in Hakha whence they crossed the Kolodyne and settled on a high range called Kahri tla. They moved in succession on the banks of the Tisi river and settled at their present settlement. The fourth groups to migrate were the Chapis, they originate from Thatla/Thlantlang in Hakha sub-division. Their first chief was Mahlie. He moved from Thatla to Ngiaphia of the present Myanmar area, crossed the Kolodyne river and settle at Chapi village their present abode. Chozahs are the chief of Chapi groups.<sup>22</sup>

The fifth and the last to make the journey were the Vyutu groups. Their migration to their present settlement was of recent origin compared to other Maras. They came from *Vytu* village in Chin hills.<sup>23</sup> Thence, they settled at Siata and Iana after crossing the Kolodyne river. Dr. K. Robin of Mizoram University, History department, records that they may be classed between Lai<sup>24</sup> and Mara.<sup>25</sup> These groups are more Mara than Lai both in language and customs, and regards themselves as Mara.

#### II. 4. The generic name of Mara:

Most scholars, politicians and researchers from the Mara tribe accept '*Mara*' as the most common and inclusive name for the tribe though there may be diverse dialects. Hence, the nomenclature *Mara* can be best suited to describe the people of this area. The theories about the origin of the term Mara can be studied as under.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> John Hamlet Hlychho. *The Maras: Head-hunters to Soul-Hunters*. Op-cit. P:30.

<sup>24</sup> Lais are a group of people living in the southern part of Mizoram having Autonomous District Council under Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

<sup>25</sup> K. Robin. *The History of Mara, Identity and Polity*. P:7.

#### II. 4.1. He he ei Ma Rah:

The first and the most accepted theory regarding the origin of the term Mara according to oral tradition is that the etymology Mara is derived from *He he ei Ma Rah* which means ‘This is our land.’ In the earlier days there was always a claim of words for the lands that was acquired or ruled by the Maras by stating that *He he ei Ma Rah* to proclaim the land. Hence this habitual claim over land became a name for the whole tribe.<sup>26</sup> This verbal proclamation of land was widely practised in those earlier days but there was no written record to substantiate their claim.

#### II. 4.2. Marau:

It is believed that in earlier days Mara tribe used to live in the surrounding areas of Mt. Marau or Marau tlang which was in the Chin Hills and were considered as Marau tribe. After they resided in those surroundings for long time they migrate to westward direction. The story of about their settlement at Marau tlang and their movement from those directions were inscribed in younger generations. The term Marau tribe was later on known as Mara.<sup>27</sup>

#### II. 4.3. Mirang:

Some scholars believe that the term Mara originated from Mirang. Their argument is that long before the Mara tribe settled in their present settlement, the Mirang tribe first settled in the area. Due to some external aggression and want for better fertile land they gradually moved to the Arakkan hill tracts of which they now

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<sup>26</sup> John Hamlet Hlychho. *The Maras: Head-hunters to Soul-hunters*. P:24.

<sup>27</sup> Chawngkhuma Chawngthu. (2005). *Mara Khawtlang Nun*. Aizawl: Chawngkhuma Chawngthu. P:107.

occupy. After the Maras settle in this place they were assumed to be the Mirang tribe which in course of time transferred itself in to Mara.<sup>28</sup>

#### II. 4.4. Dreamland:

This connotation comes from the combination of two words where ‘Ma’ means ‘dreams’ and ‘Râh’ means ‘land’ which when, placed together in a word comes Mara, it literally means ‘dreamland. The ancestors of Mara tribe were semi-nomadic people. They moved successively from one place to another in search of better place to have better production. This search for fertile land continues to inscribe in them and so that thirst urge them to move forward. The reason for coining the term Mara is that when Mara ancestors came to their present settlement they dreamt of their land to be a land of prestige, fertile and rich to which comes the term Mara.<sup>29</sup>

#### II. 4.5. Ma and Rah:

According to this theory the term Mara is a combination of two words *Ma* means disown or leaving and *Rah* means land. The two words when put together literally mean ‘disowning one’s own land or migrating to another land.’<sup>30</sup> This holds true to some extent as the Mara ancestors were semi-nomadic people who migrate from one place to another in search of fertile land and security.

#### II. 5. British relation with Mara:

There were no much written records of the Maras made by the British. The first written statement about them was made in 1841 by lieutenant Phayre. In his work, he listed 13 Tseindus clans where mention of Lungkhes was made, which was

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Zakhu Hlychho. *The Hundred Years of Maraland*. Op.cit. P:8.

<sup>30</sup> John Hamlet Hlychho. *The Maras: Head-huters to Soul-hunters*. P:25.



considered to be a branch of Mara clans who formally established villages on the western slopes of the Mephurutung hills locally known as *Raitla*.<sup>31</sup> Another writer Lieutenant T. Latter in his 'A Note on some hill tribes on Kolodyne river also mentioned about Shendoos who caused them lots of trouble by interfering in their administered areas. In his records he also mentioned that these tribes were never encountered by them and known to them only by the devastations they cause to those tribes that paid them tributes.<sup>32</sup> Another British political officer Capt. TH Lewin recorded in his work that Shendoos occupy the north east and east of the blue mountain.<sup>33</sup>

The first account of the Maras as a separate tribe seems to have been founded in Captain SR Tickell's work 'Notes on Heuma or Shendoos'. He says that the Shendoos though well known and reputed in the Arracan hills have never been met by the Europeans in Arracan until 1850. Two spies met him at a village near the Kolodyne river and the Heuma or Heima he was referring to was the name of Mara village in north Arracan known to the Luseis as Vaki.<sup>34</sup> The first raid by the Mara tribe on Khumi village called Hlengkrenng was recorded by the British in 1838 when 34 people were killed and 38 women and children were taken captives. Since then the Maras attacked British administered area time to time.

The ultimate aim of British was to colonize India and reap the profit as much as they could. It was for this very reason that they were not interested in subjugating the hill tribes of North-East India even though they were thorns to the British for many years. The atrocities committed by them, hill tribes of Assam, upon the British

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<sup>31</sup> K. Zohra. *The Maras: Indigenous Traditions and Folkculture*. Op.cit. P:9.

<sup>32</sup> N.E. Perry. *The Lakhers*. Op.cit. P:6.

<sup>33</sup> T.H. Lewin. (2004). *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. (Original work published in 1869). P:158.

<sup>34</sup> N.E. Perry. *The Lakhers*. Op.cit. P:6.

subjects compelled the British empire to take action. If this impudent task was not carried out then their dependent subjects would be embolden by the unadministered tribals which would be a bane for their securities. Having no other alternatives, they conducted the first Lushai expedition of 1871-1872 but the areas occupied by Mara tribes were left untouched; NE Perry says the Mara inhabited area was not touched because of the difficulty in reaching the area as the Kolodyne river stood in their way which make it difficult for them to pass through. The first Lushai expedition had yielded no result, the raid stopped for a moment but that was just a brief period of halt and taken as a time for reinforcement. In 1888 scout party of Lieutenant John Steward of the Leinster Regiment along with small party was sent to the hill area of Assam to survey the area. They were unfortunately ambushed by Hausata, chief of Lungtian and the white officers were beheaded.<sup>35</sup> Since the atrocities committed by the hill tribes would not cease they then thought it best to have another expedition and this time their aim was to place the hill tribes under their control.

The Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1888-1889 was carried out by the British to punish chief Hausata and to place the hill areas under their administrative control. The expedition was successfully carried out and it ultimately led to the occupation of the Chin and Lushai areas. As a result of this expedition some of the Mara villages were brought under the British rule. In 1891 Colonel Shakespeare visited Saikao village and then went to Siaha village, thus the two Tlô sai villages were brought under the British authority and were placed under the south Lushai hills to be under the administrative control of Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Every village was ruled by a chief and they did not depend on another village for administrative purposes, nevertheless the chiefs of unadministered areas were not bound to obey the orders of

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. P:10.

the mighty British. The Zyhno groups, who were not under the British authority, in 1906 raided a British village called Paitha or Paithar and carried off some runaway slaves, so an expedition was then prepared. In 1907 a team of Colonel Cole and Colonel Loch went to Zyhno village and fined 20 guns for their raid of Paitha in 1906, after that there was no official visit to the area till 1918. No punitive measures could stop the Zyhnos from continued raid and they raided an Arakan village of Tybu in 1917. In retaliation, the Lialais of the Chin Hills, friends of Tybu village, raided a hamlet of Zyhno village. Therefore independent villages were punished by the Superintendent of Lushai hills. In 1922 a meeting was held at Baw between the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chin Hills and the North Arakan Hill where the boundaries of the three districts were laid down and villages in the independent area were divided among them.<sup>36</sup> As a result of this meeting, in 1924 Zyhno village was brought under the control of the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. Hence the entire Mara village in the Lushai Hills was put under the control of British from 1924.

The British followed the policy of minimum interference to let chiefs continue their rule but some of the powers of the chiefs were taken away. The chiefs no longer had authority to expel their villagers according to their wish and they could no longer seize properties of the villagers when they shifted their loyalty to another chief. Even in deciding cases their powers were restricted because serious cases were to be decided by the British officers. Consequently the people breathed freely because the position in which they live under the despotic chief was checked. In spite of all this, the chiefs and the people were not adamant to the freedom they enjoy which was the result of British rule; so, they enjoyed the new environment which was quite different

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Pp:10-12.

from their earlier days. This fact was made clear by the confession of Zyhno chief, Tevô to NE Perry, the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills. He admitted that the British rule gave them peace where they could enjoy beer parties without wits end, can sleep freely without sentries and can travel freely without having to watch over their shoulders from time to time.<sup>37</sup> British rule therefore removed fear, implant a sense of security and enabled the people to make most of their simple pleasures.

The visit of Mr. and Mrs. Lorrain, white missionaries since 1907 to the Mara area also brought massive change in their behaviour and outlook which ultimately transformed socio-economic structure of the people. Mara language was reduced to writing from 1908 and a school called Lakherland School<sup>38</sup> was opened and the people learn to read and write in Mara language. The school registered more students year after year which greatly helped in bringing them to civilization. It would not be out of place to say that the Maras were formally made into tribe of separate entity by the white missionaries from the formation of Lakher Pioneer Mission in London in 1905.

## II. 6. Mara polity:

The administration of Mara village was similar to the Greek city states. Each village was an independent entity, having sovereignty within their boundaries and was sufficient economically. How and when they began to have an organized life was not known with the absence of any written records to made justification. Even though their wants may be simple and scarce they were not entirely without any forms of administration. The polity of Mara society can be analyzed as under:-

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. P:13.

<sup>38</sup> Zakhu Hlychho. *The Hundred Years of Maraland*. Op.cit. P:132.

## II. 6.1. Abei:

Abei or chief was head of a village. The chief had absolute power of control over his villages and the villagers had to obey their chief without question. Any villagers who refused to obey the command of a chief were either expelled from village or debarred from jhum cultivation.<sup>39</sup> The Maras's chieftainship was hereditary; the system of inheritance succession was primogeniture i.e., the eldest son succeeds a father.<sup>40</sup> The main duty of a chief was to protect his people against external aggression or from the menace of wild animals. In times of famine or distress the villagers can approach the chief and ask for his help that must be repaid failing which would lead to becoming chief's slaves. In protection and service rendered to the people by the chief the people were required to pay him in kind. These can be stated as follow:-

1. Sabai or paddy tax was to be paid by the villagers to the chief in recognition of his service every year. The amount, however, differed from village to village but mostly one basket of paddy per year.
2. Sahaw or animal tax was to be paid to the chief by the villagers' irrespective of where he shot or trap. The amount was mostly hind or foreleg of animal.
3. There was also another kind of tax called 'rah paw'. It was a kind of fees paid to the chief for using his land. In those days the chief used to acquire or have a plot of land in another village, say through marriage i.e., dowry, than the giver's chief had no authority over that land anymore and if the land was to be

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<sup>39</sup> NE Perry. *The Lakher*. Op.cit. p:275.

<sup>40</sup> John Hamlet. *The Maras: Headhunters to Soul Hunters*. Op-cit. P:281.

cultivated by him or his villagers than ‘rah paw’ had to be paid; there was no fixed amount but paid as per agreement.<sup>41</sup>

4. The chiefs also received a pot of ‘sahma’ or rice beer every year and the people must also render him certain services and come to his aid when called upon.

## II. 6.2. Abei-macha:

They were also known as village elders or councillors. Village elders were selected by the chiefs mostly from the noble clans to advise and assisted him in ruling the village. Sometimes the chief also appointed commoners to be elders. In administering the village the chief was not bound by the advice of his elders. The elders along with chief acted as jurists to administer justice to the people when approach upon, when the matter could not be settled amicably, by the involved parties. In this case litigators have to supply *sahma* or rice beer and nicotine water or ‘karaoti’ to the jurists failing which the chief-in-council could not try any case.<sup>42</sup> As supplement to their service the elders receive a share in meat called ‘Vaopia’ which was paid by the loser whenever a case was decided.

## II. 6.3. Theithaipa:

This was called ‘Priest’ in English. NE Perry writes that the Maras did not have a priest or theithaipa<sup>43</sup> as sacrifices was mostly done by the householder. But in case of community sacrifice like ‘Khahrô’, the post of village priest was made but it was not a permanent post. He was appointed by a chief from the noble clans whose family for generations was not shrouded by what the Mara tribe considered as *Ana*

<sup>41</sup> Interview with C. Thahe in Aizawl, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> K. Zohra. *The Maras: Indigenous Tradition and Folk Culture*. P:142.

<sup>43</sup> NE Perry. *Op.cit.* P:270.

(unclean) and those who were proficient in speech.<sup>44</sup> Khahrô sacrifice was usually performed by the villagers jointly every year. It was a ritual sacrifice done to appease the most powerful and malevolent spirit who was known as Khasô, which mostly dwell in certain high and precipitous mountains or hill rocks, rivers, pool, etc. By appeasing the evil spirit they hope to have good crops, good health, good fertility, large amount of domestic animals, wealth and prosperity.<sup>45</sup>

#### II. 6.4. Syudaipa:

One of the designated posts within the Mara polity was a blacksmith or 'syudaipa'. If a village had no blacksmith they would have to fetch someone who has the skill from another village or brought their tools to be mended in a village where blacksmith resides. Thus, it would not be much of an exaggeration to say that a blacksmith look after all the tools in a village. To commemorate their services the villagers paid 'sabai' every year, the amount differed from village to village, while some paid one basket of paddy there were some that paid up to 4 baskets of paddy and also received 'sahaw' or hind of animals shot or trap by the villagers.<sup>46</sup>

#### II. 6.5. Tlâ-awpâ:

'Tlâ-awpâ' or villager crier acted as the hand of a chief in giving information to the villagers. He was selected by the chief usually a man with a loud and clear voice. The village-crier would roam around the village and cried out-loud message of the chief whenever called upon to do so. During the British period they were exempted from coolie by the British Indian government.

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<sup>44</sup> C. Thahe. Op.cit.

<sup>45</sup> K. Zohra. *The Maras: Indigenous, Tradition and Folkculture*. Op.cit. P:105.

<sup>46</sup> NE Perry. *The Lakhers*. Op.cit. Pp: 278-283.

### II. 6.6. Khireipa:

The village writer or 'Khireipa' was the post created by the British Indian government after subjugating the Maras inhabited area. The village writer, as the name itself suggests, keep records of the village. He wrote all letters for the chief and act as his clerk. He was also exempted from certain due by the chief and coolie from the government.

### II. 6.7. Machhie Pho:

As it was the same in all society, commoners or 'machhie pho' constitute majority of the population. They were required to absolutely obey the chief and if they fail it can be quite devastating. It was due to this dire consequence of disobeying the chief they silently bear the brunt of despotic rulers, even though there were some benevolent chief who show kindness upon his citizens. On the other hand, the success or richness of the chief depends upon the number of villagers i.e., commoners so some chiefs tried to absorbed as much as possible by acting mildly towards his citizens. To these chiefs the commoners also remained loyal absolutely.

### II. 6.8. Sei:

Sei or slaves constituted the lowest rank in Mara polity. The system of slavery practised among the Mara tribe was undoubtedly appropriate more closely to what is generally connoted by the term slavery than did the 'bawi' system of Luseis.<sup>47</sup> Slaves could be sold and purchased as they had no right over their body because they belong to their owner. In Mara society slaves could be owned by chiefs, nobles and anyone who made captive in war. In fact, the most ordinary way of acquiring slave was by

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. P:248.



captive in war and it could also be acquired by other means as well. Slaves could be acquired in the following manners:-

1. Those capture in war.
2. Those who were born slaves or inborn slaves.
3. Those who were brought or ransomed out of debt.
4. Taking refuge to the chief's house for murder.
5. If a chief or noble man brought up an orphan belonging to another clan the orphan became slave of the owner.
6. Anyone caught stealing from chief or noble man.
7. If anyone kill one of chief's slave.

There were two types of slaves- 'sei' and 'saiza.'<sup>48</sup> The former were the one who lived in chief's house and they did all the household works of their owner. The later types of slaves were the ones who live in their own house; they were more or less independent and were higher in terms of status than 'sei' but lower than commoners or machhie pho. On the whole slaves were not treated badly was how NE Perry recorded the status of slaves among Mara tribe. There were cordial relations between the chiefs and the slaves.

## II. 7. Evolution of Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC):

The Maras were aware of their political situation due to the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Lorrain, the white missionaries. It was due to their sheer efforts in improving the socio-economic conditions of the Maras through education that the outlook of the people changed. They, the Maras, began to explore the world outside their territory and became to aware of the conditions of their neighbouring tribes in whose mists

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. P:245.

they live. It was in these conditions that their desire for separate administration to be ruled and administered on their own developed. The only thing that needs to be done was to light the spark by adding fuel to the fire. The spark was lit by Capt. A.I. Bowman, Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, Lunglei. In 1944 Bowman visited Saikao and inspected village records and was surprised to see that it was done in Lusei language and so he advised Mr. Chhômho to demand better status for the Maras.<sup>49</sup>

The advice of by Bowman left a remarkable impact on Chhômho, chief of Saikao, and he organized a meeting of Chiefs under Circle No. XVI in January, 1945. The meeting was attended by 23 chiefs representing the length and breadth of the Maras inhabited territory. The meeting deliberated upon the political future of Mara people and decided to bring to the British authorities about their political situation and aspirations by submitting memorandum. Ultimately, a memorandum was submitted on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1945 to the Additional Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, Lunglei. They again submitted another memorandum in December, 1945 to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. Irrespective of their high regard for positive response from the authorities they unfortunately got no response from the Government of Assam. In similar to their earlier demand for separate district another memorandum was sent directly to the Governor of Assam, Shillong on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 bypassing the administrators of the Lushai hills.<sup>50</sup> These show that they were adamant to have separate administration and would waste no time.

The demand for separate administration, Lakher District, made by the Maras, even before Indian Independence, was due to their feeling of difference from the

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<sup>49</sup> K. Robin. *The Maras History, Polity and Identity*. P:15.

<sup>50</sup> Memorandum submitted by the Mara Freedom Party in June, 1965 to the Chairman of Commission for Hill Areas of Assam. Pp: 10-11.

dominant Lusei tribe mainly on language differences. Their main arguments was that the Maras were different from the Luseis so they need separate district and could not be included in Lushai Hills. Their argument for Lakher District was that they feel as a minority tribe if a separate administration was not given to them, they would be assimilated by the larger and dominant tribe i.e., Lusei.

At the dawn of Indian independence, the educated Lusei tribe gave a hearty thought about the political future of the Lushai hills. To these measures Mizo Union was formed on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1946 and likewise United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 respectively. The former party propagated for sticking with Indian Union while the later stood for joining Burma when the British left India. It was during this period that Bordoloi Committee visited Aizawl in April, 1947. The committee met various leaders of the Mizos but the Maras were not represented in the meeting. The committee submitted its report to shri. Vallabhai Petel, Chairman of Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minority, etc. on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 and the provision for Regional Council was included in its report. The Advisory Committee discussed the matter on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1947 and 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1948; with slight amendments the Advisory Committee forward the same to Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly (CA), on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1948. The Constituent Assembly considered the matter on 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1949 and adopted a draft constitution by incorporating it under Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Constitution of India.<sup>51</sup> After the submission of the report by the committee it was pertinent that District Council would be given to the Lushai hills, thus the election for

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<sup>51</sup> Vijay Hansaria.(2016).(4<sup>th</sup> edition). *Justice B.L. Hansaria's, Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India*. Gurgaon: Universal Law Publishing. Pp:7-8.

Lushai hills Advisory Council was held on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1948<sup>52</sup> to which Z. Hengmanga and Vakô from Lai and Mara tribes were elected.

The first meeting of the Lushai Hills Advisory Council was held on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1948 but was boycotted by the Mizo Union. In early 1949 the Government of Assam sent NK Rustomjee, Advisor to the Governor of Assam on Tribal affairs to asses and diffused the political situation in Mizoram. On hearing the imminent visit of Rustomjee, Vakô and Hengmanga drafted a letter demanding for Regional Council.<sup>53</sup> The meeting was boycotted by UMFO for some reason, both Hengmanga and Vakô too walked out as well after submitting the letter.<sup>54</sup> Taking advantage of the situation Chhôhmo, chief of Saikao, pleaded to the Advisor to give the Mara<sup>55</sup> (Lakher) tribe a Regional Council which was translated to English by LL Peters, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, and the Superintendent also appealed on Chhôhmo's behalf.<sup>56</sup> The Advisor then conveyed to Chhôhmo that the matter would be considered. In the course of the meeting, the Superintendent of Lushai hills advised Chhôhmo to form a political party to strengthen their demand for Regional Council. This was conveyed to Vakô and Hengmanga, they immediately met the Superintendent and was given permission to form a party called Tribal Union.<sup>57</sup> It should be remembered that both Mara and Lai tribes had been living in close affinity for generations and would always regards themselves brothers. Thus, it is not surprising to see that Vako and Hengmanga walk hand in hand in the course of their demand for Regional Council.

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<sup>52</sup> R. Thanhlira.(2012). *Mizoram leh Kei*. Aizawl: Lian Sangluri. P:55.

<sup>53</sup> Z. Hengmanga.(1988). *Ka Vahvaihpui Ram leh Hnam*. Aizawl: Sangtleimi. P:9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. P:10.

<sup>55</sup> The term Mara and Lai is used instead of Lakher or Pawi as it is considered as a derogatory term by both the tribe.

<sup>56</sup> Nohro Hmoko. (2015). *Mara Lôsohpa: Valua Hlychho*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. P:109.

<sup>57</sup> Z. Hengmanga.(1987). *Lai Hnam Tobul*. Lawngtlai: Art and Culture Department, LADC. P:61.

On hearing this, the Mizo Union leaders persuaded them not to form a party and instead integrate themselves with them, to this they replied that they would first talk to their leaders in Lunglei.<sup>58</sup> The permission to form a party was conveyed to Mara and Lai leaders once they reached Lunglei. On 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 Pawi-Lakher convention was held at Lawngtlai and formed a political party called Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU). Election for the post of office bearers were held and elected the following persons:<sup>59</sup>

President- Hengmanga,  
Vice-President- Hengluaia,  
General Secretary- Padara,  
Assistant- Zavai and  
Treasurer- Zahia.

#### II. 7.1. Inauguration of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC)

Under the leadership of the PLTU and in collaboration with Chhôhmo, chief of Saikao, demand for the PLRC was made intensively. Therefore, the Governor of Assam created Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) within the geographical area of Lushai Hills in exercise of his power conferred under Paragraph 1 sub-paragraph (2) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India vide letter No. TAD/R/10/50 Dt. 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1951.<sup>60</sup> With a view to framing the first constitution for the PLRC, the Governor of Assam constituted an Advisory Council under the chairmanship of Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), Lunglei shri. B.W. Roy with the following members- Vakô of Zyhno, Khuaimawnga of Vawmbuk, Mangsaia of Chawnhu, Hengmanga of Sangau, Thangkiplei of Ngharum and Anondo Chakma of Sumsilui.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Z. Hengmanga. *Ka Vahvaihpi Ram leh Hnam*. Opcit. Pp:11-12.

<sup>59</sup> Z. Hengmanga. *Lai Hnam Tobul*. Opcit. P:63.

<sup>60</sup> Jangkhongam Doungei.(2016). (Ed.) *The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council*. In *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. P:38.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

The first election for the PLRC was held in April, 1953<sup>62</sup> for 9 seats. The PLRC was officially inaugurated by Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam, at Lunglei on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1953 after the first general election. Due to scarce or want of experience person to lead the council, Lunglei SDO ran the administration till the election for the posts of Chairman and Chief Executive Member (CEM) was held in April 1954 where Hengmanga and C. Zochhuma were elected for the said posts respectively. Due to the untimely demise of Zochhuma in August 1956, Sakia, then executive member, acted as the CEM till H. Kiautuma was elected as CEM in January, 1957.<sup>63</sup> It was during the first term that headquarter of the PLRC was transferred from Lunglei to Siaha in 1955.<sup>64</sup>

The second general election for the PLRC was held in April, 1958<sup>65</sup> for 10 seats. In May, L. Chinzah was elected as the Chairman but the post for CEM was elected in July, 1958. The reason for so many gaps between the election for the chairman and the CEM posts was due to the demand raised by the Mara leaders to hold the CEM post by citing their verbal agreement in 1948 where it was agreed that the post of CEM would be shared on a rotational basis<sup>66</sup> but the demand was denied. With the support of Tlanglau and Chakma communities, Lai tribe managed to have an upper hand and H. Kiautuma was accordingly elected as the CEM. Having no other options but to concede Mylai Hlychho became the executive member. This was the starting point of political dissension from Mara leaders, as the seed was sown there is no turning point. Towards this end, Mara convention was held in September, 1963 and formed the first regional political party called Mara Freedom Party (MFP). The

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<sup>62</sup> T. Chalngingluaia.(2001). *LADC Hun Inthlak Dan: 1953-2000*. Aizawl: Mizoram Publication Board. P:8.

<sup>63</sup> T. Chalngingluaia. Op.cit. Pp:12-13.

<sup>64</sup> Jangkhongam Dounel. Op.cit. P:39.

<sup>65</sup> T. Chalngingluaia. Op.cit. P:14.

<sup>66</sup> Gladys Paw.(2007). *Marapa Rah, Hro, Nôcha nata Khisana Alaichadaina*. Siaha: Mylai Hlychho. P:20.

third general election for the PLRC could not be held in time due to Chinese aggression in 1962 and so election was conducted only in April, 1964.<sup>67</sup> However the election was boycotted by the council. The fourth and the last election of the PLRC could not be held in time due to insurgency movement launched by the Mizo National Front. Therefore, the election was conducted only in July, 1970<sup>68</sup> and with the support of Sapliana Vandir of Congress (M) or Manghnuna group, the Maras for the first time held the posts of CEM and Chairman of the PLRC. The council was toppled down before long in November, 1971 as Sapliana Vandir withdrew his support, Zakhu Hlychho was then elected again as the CEM from March, 1972 till it was trifurcated into three Regional Councils of Chakma, Lakher and Pawi in 1972.

#### II. 7.2. Autonomy movement by Mara Freedom Party:

The second term of the PLRC saw political dissension and disunity within the council between the tribes. It was after the second general election of PLRC, Mara leaders reiterated that the CEM post should be given to them as per their verbal agreement at Lawngtlai in Pawi-Lakher convention in 1949. The appeal went unheeded; with this discontentment looms large and want for separate council became topic of the day. In order to intensify their movement the Mara convention was held at Zyhno village in September, 1963 under the chairmanship of Valua Hlychho. The main topic of this convention was a formation of political party and demand for Mara District Council. Accordingly, the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) was formed on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1963. Election for the office bearers were held and elected the following members<sup>69</sup>:-

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<sup>67</sup> T. Chalngingluaia. Op.cit. P:17.

<sup>68</sup> T. Chalngingluaia. Op.cit. P:19.

<sup>69</sup> V. Lalchawna.(2014). *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram (with special reference to Maraland)*. Aizawl: V. Lalchawna. Pp:104-106.

Valua Hlychho as President,  
 Hiphei as Vice-President,  
 Mylai Hlychho as General Assembly,  
 V. Lalchhawna as Assistant Secretary,  
 Chiahmo as Treasurer and  
 Chhobi as Finance Secretary.

The MFP leaders toured the length and breadth of Siaha District and mobilized the people culturally and politically for any eventuality while forming units in every village with headquarter at Siaha. All the Maras joined hands unconditionally in this party. The waves of Mara nationalism spread across the entire area in no time and it was expected that all the people should come aboard. It is likely that if any one dissent from the party policy they would be considered as *nations' enemy*.<sup>70</sup>

The aim and objective of the party was to fight for Mara District Council (MDC) within the ambit of the constitution without arms; to maintain, safeguard and promote the Mara identity, customary laws, culture and traditions; and to introduce Mara language as the official language of the District Council and to impart Mara language as medium of instruction in primary and middle schools. The first MFP general assembly was held on 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1963 at Zyhno village where a resolution was passed to boycott the general election of the PLRC that was scheduled for the following year. Therefore the MFP boycotted the third term of PLRC general election.

The main objective of the party was for the creation of Mara District Council (MDC). As a result in the MFP general assembly at Zyhno in December, 1963 the party resolved that delegates should be deputed at once to the Governor of Assam to demand for the creation of Mara District Council.<sup>71</sup> Therefore delegates of four members comprising of Valua Hlychho, President of MFP; Mylai Hlychho, General

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<sup>70</sup> K. Robin. *The Maras History, Polity and Identity*. P:25.

<sup>71</sup> Memorandum submitted by MFP in January 1964 to the Governor of Assam.



Secretary; C. Hiphei, Vice-President and N. Leipo, active member were sent to Shillong in January, 1964 and submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Assam; they also met BP Chaliha, the then Assam Chief Minister, in his office.<sup>72</sup> They placed a demand for the Mara District Council so that the Maras could preserve their identity and be ruled by their own tradition and custom. These steps further develop political disunity between the two tribes to which the only step was the creation of a council separately for both the tribes. Another memorandum was submitted again to Shri. Pataskar, Chairman of the Commission for Hill Areas of Assam on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1965 by N. Leipo, President of the MFP and Mylai Hlychho, General Secretary of the MFP placing the same demand and also present *The Lakhers* written by NE Perry to the Chairman for his references about the Maras.<sup>73</sup>

The political situation became tense since both the Maras and the Lais could not find political solution to mend the rift. It was at this stage the fifth general assembly of the MFP was held at Saikao for two days i.e., 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1965 and passed resolutions to boycott the PLRC and decided to take a drastic step by making the Regional Council non-functional by declaring and gave to themselves Mara District Council also known Interim District Council from 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1965.<sup>74</sup> In this meeting numbers of resolutions were passed to take steps for attainment of District Council, these resolutions were as follows.<sup>75</sup>

1. All the Maras employed in the PLRC should resign.
2. Interim District Council should be established to look after the affairs of the Maras.

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<sup>72</sup> Zakhu Hlychho. *The Hundred Years of Maraland*. Op.cit. P:173.

<sup>73</sup> Gladys Paw. *Marapa Rah, Hro, Nôcha nata Khihsana Alaichadaina*. P:31.

<sup>74</sup> Memorandum submitted by Mara Freedom Party to the Chairman of the Commission for Hill Areas of Assam in June, 1965. P:1.

<sup>75</sup> K. Robin. *The Maras: History, Polity and Identity*. P:26.

3. Land tax or any other tax should be paid to the said council instead of the PLRC.
4. All cases whether it is civilian or criminal in the area pertaining to the Maras should be referred henceforth to the said Council rather than Pawi-Lakher Regional Court.
5. Any connections between the village council and the PLRC should be stop.

Towards this end, Interim District Council (IDC) was formed and all the power and functions of the PLRC was also taken over. The call made by the leaders was responded whole-heartedly by the people and immediately all the 13 Mara staffs of the PLRC resigned from their posts forthwith.<sup>76</sup> They were absorbed into the new Interim District Council, taxes were collected and all cases and disputes were tried by the IDC. Political situation within the PLRC was reported to the Government of Assam by L. Chinzah, the then Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the PLRC. To study and assessed the political turmoil Shri. K. Saighal, the then Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl, was sent to the area; on seeing that the decision was fully supported by the people, he returned without taking any action against the leaders.<sup>77</sup>

After the resolution was made to boycott the PLRC one incident happened at Tipa 'V' which scale up the tension. The incident started between Hriekhai of Mara tribe and Tialtuma Chinzah of Lai tribe on the issue of land for jhum cultivation where Hriekhai was struck by Tialtuma, considered to be a minor injury; on hearing this incident a large number of men from Tipa and the surrounding villages gathered at Tipa 'V' and hold political procession<sup>78</sup> for the first time by raising slogans like

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<sup>76</sup> V. Lalchhawna. *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram with Special Reference to Maraland*. Pp:112-113.

<sup>77</sup> Gladys Paw. *Marapa Rah, Hro, Nha nata Khihsana Alaichdaina*. P:29.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Pp:110-111

“We want Mara District Council.....let the PLRC be dissolved.”<sup>79</sup> In desperate time and desperate measures little things do much trouble. Another political procession was held again at Siaha in the same year raising the same slogans by marching the town of Siaha to show their intention clear on the stand of the people.<sup>80</sup>

It was during this political turmoil and after the formation of the Interim District Council and all Mara staffs in the PLRC resigned from their respective posts the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council Court and the PLRC office was burnt by some people at night simultaneously. While the court was burnt to ashes, the PLRC office was partially burnt and the miscreants were unsuccessful in the attempt. This political turmoil in the area was at its highest peak in 1965 and for some reasons Lai youths from Vawmbuk and its surrounding area gathered at New Siaha which was then called Model Vaih (colony). This almost turned into large scale incidence but was timely diffused by the leaders.<sup>81</sup> The political relationship between the two tribes were at its weakest point, but their estranged relationship and the ongoing politics in the PLRC area was clouded by a political movement launched by the Mizo National Front (MNF) from March, 1966. Due to this factor and the boycott of the PLRC by the Mara tribe, the office of PLRC was shifted from Siaha to Lawngtlai in 1966. The shifting of office was welcome by Mara people because they thought that the PLRC was within their hands now and thus no remorse was heard. The office of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) was also shifted to Lunglei in the same year. As the insurgency movement would not permit, the movement of the MFP also came to halt for a brief period of time.

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<sup>79</sup> Zakhu Hlychho. *The Hundred Years of Maraland*. P:164.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Sacho Hlychho an active member of MFP Volunteer, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2017.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with N. Sahu an active member of MFP Volunteer, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2017.

With the self-style declaration of independence by the MNF insurgents, the erstwhile Mizo District Council was declared as disturbed area by the Government of India. Indian armies were ambushed frequently by MNF whenever the opportunity arises which caused great damage to the army personnel. In retaliation an order for grouping of villages was made by the Government of India on behalf of its army to drive out the MNF insurgents from their hideouts. On hearing this order Mylai Hlychho and Rev. T. Laikai, then Secretary of Lakher Independent Evangelical Church of Maraland, went to Shillong and met BP Chaliha, the then Assam Chief Minister, to appraise him of about the Maras stand with regard to the MNF insurgency; they went on to clarify that none of the youths from Mara enrolled in Mizo National Army and that their demand for Mara District Council was within the ambit of the Indian constitution. The meeting was successful; hence, no case of village grouping was heard in the area.<sup>82</sup>

It was during this period of intense political turmoil that rumours about Mara people asking for large amount of rifles at Tipa from the Assam Regiment and the capture of Bawileia an MNF underground at Kiasie village by the Indian army was heard by the MNF insurgents in 1968. To this effect MNF K. Battalion under the leadership of Captain Chuaudinga was sent to make enquiries and take necessary actions. The team on learning that rumours about asking of rifles were false went to Kiasie; the locals appraised the team that Bawileia was captured on his own accord, thus no unwanted incidence happened in this trip.<sup>83</sup> Both the MFP and the MNF launched political movement accordingly but no unwanted or major incidence happened between them due to moral support given to the later by the former, except

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with Rev. T. Laikai at his residence, Vaihipi, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2017.

<sup>83</sup> V. Lalchawna. *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram with Special reference to Maraland*. Pp:115-116. See also, *The Hundred Years of Maraland* by Zakhu Hlychho. P:176.

a case in Kiasie village where the MNF beat up two locals who they thought were responsible for the capture of their hidden rifles by the army.

At the backdrop of this political scenario, with the efforts of the MFP leaders, the office of the ADC was then retransferred from Lunglei in 1969 with NP Singh as Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) and Central Reserve Police Force were also stationed in the same year.<sup>84</sup> This major development was a sign for some improvement in the PLRC area. In the same year the MFP general assembly was held at Siaha village where Zakhu Hlychho and S. Hiato were asked by the leaders to resign from their job, which they obliged instantly. Both were given some woks in the Interim District Council after it was revived in 1970.

The Government of Assam announced that the fourth term general election to the PLRC was to be conducted in July, 1970. It was in this background that the MFP organized general assembly at Tisi before the election was conducted. They unanimously come to the conclusion that election would be contested by them as they felt that boycotting of the PLRC would not solve any problem. Instead they thought it would be best if a demand for district council was made from within the council. To this effect they contested the election and held the posts of CEM and Chairman for the first time. Since then the office of the PLRC was retransferred to Siaha on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1970.<sup>85</sup> The proposal to upgrade the Mizo District Council was heard by the PLRC leaders. As a result, in September, 1971 three delegates each from Mara and Lai, and one Chakma went to Delhi. They met Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India on 10<sup>th</sup> September as well as Pimputkar, Secretary, Union Territory, Government of India. It was in this period that delegates from Lai and Mara could no

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<sup>84</sup> Zakhu Hlychho. *The Hundred Years of Maraland*. P:163.

<sup>85</sup> Zakhu Hlychho. (2009). *Marate Tobul*. Aizawl: Zakhu Hlychho. P:187.

longer stand as one, the later delegates could not agree to less than a separate district council. In order to boost their struggle for the MDC, Chhômho Hlychho, former chief of Saikao, and AB Roma went to Delhi as delegates of the MPF in November, 1971 to meet the Prime Minister. They met the PM on 25<sup>th</sup> Nov. and also met Pimputkar, Secretary, Union Territory, Government of India and Prabhu, Joint Secretary on 26<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>86</sup> They were convinced that the matter would be considered. The positive response received from the Central Ministers brought a sense of easiness.

The difference of opinion led to a political tussle in the PLRC. On 13<sup>th</sup> Nov.1971, no confidence motion was moved in the house to remove the incumbent CEM, Zakhu Hlychho. For some reason S. Pailei, Chairman of the PLRC, resigned from his post and Arun Kumar Dewan, Deputy Chairman, who acted as Chairman of the house too resigned accordingly as he could not speak Duhlian language which led to uproar in the house. As per the provision of the Government of Assam, the election for Chairman was conducted on 08<sup>th</sup> November, 1971 and accordingly K. Sangchhuma was elected. The following day when a session was convened, no confidence motion was brought in the house and the CEM was removed. Since there were two groups within Lai community of Congress (M) and (L) the former being Manghnuna group and the later L. Chinzah group, no unanimous decision could be made to form the government. To this end, the PLRC was kept under suspended animation under the rule of Administrator. Then the Governor of Assam appointed L. Chinzah to act as caretaker. After sometime, a political solution was arrived whereby L. Chinzah was elected as the Chairman and Zakhu Hlychho was re-elected as the

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with AB Roma at his residence, College Vaih, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.

CEM. Both led the government with effect from 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1972 till it was trifurcated in to three Regional Councils.

After the Mizo District Council was upgraded to Union Territory as provided by Paragraph 6 of the North-Eastern (Re-organization) Act, 1971 there was also provision to create Autonomous Regions by amending the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Accordingly, in exercise of the power conferred by Paragraph 1 sub-paragraph (3) clause (a) of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Administrator of Mizoram made the Pawi-Lakher Region (Re-organization) Order, 1972 Vide No. CCMPI 3/72-77 dated: 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1972.<sup>87</sup> By this order, Chakma Regional Council, Lakher Regional Council and Pawi Regional Council were created by trifurcating the PLRC on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1972. These three Regional Councils were then upgraded to full-fledge Autonomous District Councils with effect from 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972 as provided by Paragraph 20(B) of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and thus Lakher Autonomous District Council (LADC) was created. The name Lakher was not acceptable to the people of Mara; as such they demand the name Mara to be inducted instead of Lakher in the LADC. As a result, under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India (Amendment) Act, 1988 of Indian Parliament (67 of 1988) and by notification No. DCA/E/154/8/40, the LADC was changed to Mara Autonomous District Council in 1988.<sup>88</sup>

## II.8. Conclusion

The origin of the Maras is shrouded in mystery due to scarce materials and the absence of documented history. The earliest point to where they can trace their history was handed down orally about their origination from a 'cave' called Chhinlung,

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<sup>87</sup> Jangkhongam Doungel. *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. P:43.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* P:78.

which was believed to be somewhere in southern China. The Maras belong to the Mongoloid stock of Tibeto- Burman race. They lived side by side with their hill tribes men and are considered as Central Chin by K. Zohra. He also states that the tradition of Mara history does not go beyond the Chin Hills. This point to fact that the ancestors of Lai and Mara are more or less the same.

From their settlement in Chin Hills the Maras began to form as a separate identity and began to have their own chiefs. Irrespective of this nature both the tribes continue to live in close affinity by intermixing with each other like intermarriage between them apart from having close social customs. They also live together the same political administration after India independence. However, due to the difference in language and political misunderstanding there emerges sense of separation from one another which results having their own separate administration.

The Maras always considered themselves to be distinct from their brethren Lushai tribes and demanded to the British authorities as well as to the Indian authorities before and after India's independence to exclude them from the political administration of Lusei. It was apprehended that they would be assimilated and their identity would be lost if no steps were taken for them. Therefore the Government of India conceded to their demand by amending the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and formed an Autonomous District Council for the Maras.

The Maras are Zo-ethnic group living in south-eastern part of Mizoram having their own administration under the sixth schedule to the Constitution of India called the Mara Autonomous District Council.



## Chapter- III

### Political Parties

#### III. 1. Introduction

Political parties and democracy have close relation and indispensable connection. They go hand in hand. They are complementary to each other and interlink, where none could exist without the support of others. Democracy is unworkable without political parties and the later cannot grow without the former.<sup>1</sup> It is the parties that mould and shape the minds of the people which later on lead to political participation of the people as a result of political awareness. Moreover, political parties also exist in a nondemocratic country of authoritarian and totalitarian countries as well. It has a deep root in modern political system and it will be impossible to visualise a healthy polity without political parties. Therefore, KN Kumar in his work on 'Political parties in India' states that party constitutes the life line of modern politics.<sup>2</sup>

#### III. 1.1. Emergence of political parties

Political parties are of recent origin that developed in the stage of world political history. Maurice Duverger states that there were no political parties in the modern sense of the word in any country before 1850 except in the USA.<sup>3</sup> In the ancient time, political parties of today did not exist but that does not mean absence of political power and the fight for it by some groups. In fact there were monarchs and

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<sup>1</sup> Khangjrakpam Gourachandra Singh. (2006). *Political Development in Manipur (1984-2002)*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. P: 38.

<sup>2</sup> KN Kumar. (1990). *Political Parties in India: Their Ideology and Organization*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications. P:1.

<sup>3</sup> Ayangbam Shyamkishor. (2012). *Party System in Manipur*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing Housing. P: 5.

priestly clans who enjoyed authority and control the masses as was with kings in England, Maharaja in India and Chiefs in Mizoram, the then Lushai hills. Political power was exercised as divine rights by a chosen few and the notion of politicisation of masses was rule out or did not arise at all.

It is only with the dawn of rationalism and the industrial revolution in Europe that saw vast societal change in over a short period of time, which greatly affect the pace of political power and political organisation. As a result people were beginning to be aware of their political status and thus political participation had increased manifold. This led to the rise of organised groups and parties arose to articulate their demand and champion their cause. It is in these organised groups that modern political parties had their origin.<sup>4</sup>

The creation and emergence of political parties is a continuous process. The emergence of political parties is a useful institutional idea for political development. Towards this end, Joseph Lapalombara and Myron Weiner suggest three theories on the emergence and origin of political parties; firstly, institutional parties that focus on the relationship between early parliaments and the emergence of parties; secondly, historical situation theories that focus on the historical crisis or tasks where systems have encountered when parties have developed and thirdly, developmental theories that relate parties to the broader process of modernisation. Meanwhile, Maurice Duverger emphasises on the parliamentary and extra parliamentary origin of parties as the members felt the need of groups to act in concert.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> VM Sirsikar and L Fernandes. (1984). *Indian Political Parties*. New Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan. Pp: 1&2.

<sup>5</sup> Ayangbam Shyamkishor. *Party System in Manipur*. Op.cit. Pp:5-7.

In developed countries political parties emerged largely from parliaments but that may not be the case with developing countries. Developing countries were subject to foreign rule and suppression within their own countries as such a feeling of nationalism and the desire to free themselves from foreign control led to the birth of political parties like Indian National Congress and African National Congress in India and South Africa respectively. In this respect Ayangbam Shyamkishor firmly states that a political party has its roots in the omni-present struggle for power within and among human communities.<sup>6</sup>

### III. 1.2. Meaning of political party

A political party is a group of likeminded citizens coming together as an organized body having more or less the same approach on the political problems of local, national and international, and professes to address the issue unanimously under an agreed leadership to get the supports of the masses so as to capture legitimate control over the government of a country through election. In other words, a political party is a group of people who profess on working together and stand united on certain principles or ideology so as to secure political power by forming government under the mandate of people. The chief aim of a party is to capture and secure power through constitutional means and make its own policies and programmes prevail while surpassing other parties. Many scholars have defined political parties in different context to suits their environments. Some of the definitions propounded by different scholars are given as follows:-

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. P:2.

Edmund Burke defines political party as ‘a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some political principles in which they agreed.’<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Gilchrist is of the view that political parties are organized groups of citizens who profess to share the same political views and who by acting as a political unit try to control the government. The chief aim of a party is to make its own opinion and policy prevail.<sup>8</sup>

According to Dr. Leacock, “Political party is more or less organized group of citizens who act together as a political unit. They share or profess to share the same opinion in public questions and by exercising their voting power towards a common and seek to obtain control of government.”<sup>9</sup>

For Coleman and Rosebarg, political party is an association formally organized with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and/or maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition or electoral competition with other similar associations, over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective sovereign state.<sup>10</sup>

RM MacIver says that political party is an association organized in support of some principles or policy which by constitutional means it endeavours to make the determinants of government.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. P: 3.

<sup>10</sup> BC Smith. (2003). (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P:136.

<sup>11</sup> Ayangbam Syamkishor. Op.cit. P: 3.

According to Joseph La Palombara, “A political party is a formal organization whose self-conscious primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office persons who will control, alone or in coalition, the machinery of government.”<sup>12</sup>

According to McKean, “A party is as an organized group of the electorate that seeks to direct some policies and furnish the personnel of the government.”<sup>13</sup>

Neumann defines political party as the articulate organization of society’s active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of government power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views.<sup>14</sup>

VM Sirsikar and L. Fernandez defines political party as an identifiable group of members of a national society who organize themselves on a stable basis with the purpose of acquiring, retaining and exercising power within that society in order to secure what they perceive to be the goods of that society, and who endeavours to that end the support of as large a section of that same society as is possible.<sup>15</sup>

Max Weber says that parties live in a house of power. Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social power that is to say toward influencing communal action no matter what its content may be.<sup>16</sup>

By analyzing the above definitions given by different scholars it can be articulated that scholars, more or less, agreed on what constitute the most essential feature of political party, even though they held different and diverse view. It can be

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> VM Sirsikar and L. Fernandez. (1984). *Indian Political Parties*. New Delhi: Meenakshi Publication. P:8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. P:8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. P:10.

<sup>16</sup> Richard S. Katz. (2008). *Political Parties*. In Daniele Caramani. *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P: 295.

assessed from the above definitions that political party is an association or organization of the likeminded citizens/people of a state who profess to share the same political view or opinion and debate their policies on the same tone under the agreed principles or objectives that seek to absorb support of the masses by selling their own policies and programmes thereby gaining power and control the government. In short political party is an organized body with voluntary membership whose concerted energy is employed in the pursuit of political power.

### III. 1.3. Characteristic of political parties

Political party cannot and does not exist in vacuum and thus need some basic feature to characterize its own existence. Some of the characteristics of political parties can be studied as follow:-

#### 1) People forming a party should agree on certain principles:

Political party is a group of people coming together and agreed on professing the same ideology thereby maintaining unity and coherence among the members. Without co-operation on certain principles a party will not be stable but collapse eventually. This does not, however, mean that divergent views altogether are not accepted but that of creating atmosphere for members to raise their voice for the betterment of a party while keeping the ideology of the party intact. In India many political parties split due to none adherence to certain principles laid down by the party like Indian National Congress split into ruling Congress or Congress (I) and organizational Congress or Congress (O), and All India Dravidra Munnetra Khazagham was formed from Dravidra Munnetra Khazagham etc. To have a strong and efficient performance base

structure a party must agree on certain principles failing which the image of the party will be tarnished.

2) Party must be well organized:

One of the foremost important aspects in forming a political party is to have a well organized structure without which no parties could prevail. If a party care not to implement this structure than power usurp is imminent. The crisis in Samajwadi party of Uttar Pradesh, for example, in early 2017 was due to difference of opinion by party leaders between Akhiles Yadav and his father Mulayam Singh Yadav on certain principles that in turn led to poor performance of the party in the state assembly election. A party needs to be well organized and maintain hierarchical structure in its organization. It should not depend so much on the leader but maintain a balance so that after the demise of a charismatic leader a party continues.

3) Parties must seek to achieve their goal through constitutional methods:

Political parties are bound by constitutional norms of a country. No political parties could aim to achieve or derive their power outside the constitution as they are bound by laws of the land. Parties have close relation with the people and the extra curricula activities of party could jeopardize and affect unity of a society or state as the messages of parties percolate down to the masses in quick succession. The political history of Mizoram had shown the consequences when parties tried to achieve their goals outside the purview of the constitution in the insurgency movement spearheaded by the Mizo National Front. Therefore parties should try to attain their goals through constitutional means. In this respect Anthony Downs has rightly states that ‘a political party is a coalition of men seeking to control the governing apparatus

by legal means. By legal means, we mean either duly constituted or legitimate influence'.<sup>17</sup>

4) Parties seek to capture political power:

The main aim of political parties is to capture power and form the government through election. This political power can boost their electoral performance some way or the other as can be seen from the electoral performances of the Congress party in Sialha District during the MADC general elections of 2012 and 2017 where the party kept on increasing its seats from 15 to 17 with an increase of two seats. It was an opinion held by the people that a ruling party would easily form the government during the election period 'when asked who will form a government.' It was the party in power that control and influence the peoples' mind which later on increase their mass base. In other words, every political party tries to capture power and this exercise of political power through electoral performance could increase the party's support base.

5) Mass support base:

The success or failure of a party largely depends upon the number of supports it receives from the people as a party with mass support base is liable to be stronger than a party with restricted support. Therefore the leaders of the parties must endeavour and struggle for maximizing their base of popular support. In other words party requires the mobilization of mass support since political party acts as an absorber by inducing the voters to their side by selling their policies.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



- 6) Members of a political party must have faith in the top leadership since party is build by unity and cohesion.

### III. 1.4. Role of political party

Political parties play an important role in political development of a state. To commemorate and give acknowledgment on the role played by political parties Robert C. Bone in his work on *Action and Organization: An introduction to contemporary Political Science* categorically states that the absence or suppression of parties is regarded as a mark of political backwardness or of retrogression in political development.<sup>18</sup> Some of the role played by political parties in political development of a state can be studied as under:-

#### 1) Formulate public policies:

Formulation of public policies is by and large the first and foremost role played by political parties. During election period parties publicise their policies to the public and it is from their policies that citizens began to integrate with a party. In other words, parties offer policies that voters can either choose to buy or not to buy, once elected they seek re-election through policies appealing to large segments of the electorate.

#### 2) Impart of political education:

The aim of a party is to capture political power. To achieve that goal it is imperative that they arouse the feeling of voters. As a result parties emphasize on what they would and would not do and also criticise their opponents by highlighting their defects. Thus political parties provide political

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<sup>18</sup> Ayangbam Shyamkishor. (2012). *Party System in Manipur*. Guwahati: Akansha Publishing House. P:1.

education to the masses and by educating the masses political parties arouse their spirit and prompt the masses to take active interest in public affairs.

3) Political socialization:

Political socialisation is the process through which an individual develops political values, beliefs and attitudes towards the political system. It is parties that play the most important role in this respect. Subsequently political parties have been active in integrating new citizens into the political system. The assumption lies in the fact that new citizens, especially younger generations, come to political consciousness due to the activities of political parties.

4) Run the government and form opposition:

Political parties are representatives of the people in a democratic form of government. Normally parties that have large number of supports are the one that form the government as authority is derived legitimately from the people through election. Meanwhile the opposition comprises of parties that receive less supports and could not go on head to head with the ruling party in terms of votes in the election. Therefore political parties play the role of conductor of the government as well as critics of the government.

5) Link between the people and the government:

Political parties act as a link between the people and the government. With a large number of populations it is impossible for the people to involve directly in the administration of a country and so the roles of parties get intensified. Towards this end, parties act as an effective institution that links social force and ideologies to governmental institutions and serve as a link between the government and public opinion. It is an essential instrument

designed to solve the problem of mobilizing the new masses of voters into the political community. Hence it is the parties that disseminate information to the people. In other words, parties provide the bridge between people and the government.

6) Make working of parliamentary government possible:

Political parties are indispensable to democracy, both are like two sides of the same coin and it is impossible to think of parliamentary form of government without political parties. As a matter of fact, Bryce says political parties are inevitable, no free large country has been without them. None has shown how representative government could be worked without them.

7) Make contesting of election easy:

Contesting election is one of the primary tasks of political parties to control the administrative machinery of a state. In order to accomplish their goal, parties try to win over the voters and give message about the importance of electoral participation indirectly. Meanwhile a disorganized electorate might have brought chaos in the administration. Babbling of tongues might have reduced democracy into a mere farce. Through political parties the electorates are properly organized and are enabled to fight elections, moreover poor candidates also find it easy to try their luck if they get a party ticket and the entire support of the party machinery.

India is a democratic country whereby the people elect their leaders for a fixed period of time. To enable the principles of democratic norms reality, political parties play an important role. It is parties that educate the masses about a representative form of government by trying to get votes in their favour during and after election and

are the influencers of the political process as parties go on deliberating the poor performance of their opponents.

Since the formation of Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 political parties began to develop in India. After independence many political parties sprang up in India and parties in India can be categorised as national and regional parties. As the name itself suggest the former is broader in its outlook and stands for the nation as a whole while the later subscribe to sentiments of the regions and are narrower in outlook compare to the former. At the initial stage of Indian independence the Congress party dominate the scene both in the centre as well as the state. The condition however changed since 1967 when regional parties came to light and formed governments in their respective states. Thereafter the role of regional parties or the influence of states gets intensified and the states say in national politics too widen.

As India is made up of different cultures and races the framers of the constitution opted for the federal form of government so that development could reach down to the grass-root level. It is in this respect Siahya District is placed under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India called Mara Autonomous District Council having large amount of autonomy. The council function as miniature of a state government. The administration of the council is divided into legislative, executive and judiciary like the Indian political structure. As representatives of the council are elected by the people political parties emerged since 1949 called Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union by the Mara and the Lai tribe, when they were then placed under the same administration of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. With the formation of the MADC in 1972 many political parties sprang up and their role too got intensified. To

have a proper and clearer view on the emergence and role played by parties in the district, four political parties are studied in this research work.

### III. 2. Maraland Democratic Front (MDF)

The Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) was one of the regional political parties in India. It was formed in 1996 by some of the educated and politically conscious minded people of Siaha District to fight for the cause of Mara people. Since inception of the party, it strives to fight for more autonomy i.e., Union Territory (UT) for the MADC area. The MDF advocated separate identity for the Mara tribe and tried to achieve more autonomy for the Maras. It fails no time in showing distinctiveness of the Maras be it culture or language as was evident from their *memoranda* submitted to the Union Government from time to time to demand Union Territory for the Maras.<sup>19</sup>

#### III. 2.1. Emergence and growth of the MDF:

As culture is a design for people to live together with fellow human beings, environment around them provides relationship on physical, social, and political aspects. People speaking the same language tend to have close connection. In this respect, the Maras feel alienated from their brethren Lusei tribe due to communication barriers and demanded for separate administration so that they can administer themselves by preserving their language and customary laws. It was perceived that their culture has been encroached upon by the Lusei tribe and afraid that a distinction of Mara tribe is eminent which compelled them to demand for more autonomy. In another respect the feeling of discontentment about the workings of the MADC looms large among some sections of the people. Some of the politically conscious minded people regard it high time to initiate necessary changes to correct the wrong set-up of

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<sup>19</sup> Memoranda submitted by the Maraland Democratic Front to the Government of India in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2015.

the political system. In other words, the working of the MADC was felt inadequate by some sections of the people. These gave rise to want of correcting the council from inside and it arouse a feeling of nationalism among the politically conscious people.

In this connection some politically conscious leaders, such as, PP Thawla, M. Laikaw, N. Beikhai and Vakho Hnaihly met at Tlanzauva's house, Siaha Vaihpi, on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1995. The leaders discussed the political situation of Mara people and they made a proposal for the formation of Democratic Reform Committee (DRC). To pursue the proposal, another meeting was then held at C. Vahlo's house, New Colony, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1995 and formed the Democratic Reform Committee. The Democratic Reform Committee was formed to make the Mara people aware of their political situation and the ultimate aim was Maraland Union Territory (UT) and PP Thawla was elected as the President of the committee. They toured the length and breadth of Siaha District immediately and propagated the positive impact of Union Territory. Therefore a questionnaire was distributed to 150 educated people– Maraland chata Union Territory hia a dâih haw? (Do you think it's time to demand Union Territory for Maraland?). To this 87.3% of the respondents overwhelmingly replied 'Yes'. These gave them encouragement and boost their morale to form a regional party in the district.<sup>20</sup>

As majority of the respondents think it's time to demand Union Territory, the Democratic Reform Committee was not enough, there was a need to form political party and a convention was subsequently called. The convention was held on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1996 at H.C. Vahnua's house in Siaha Vaihpi at 10:30 AM. The convention was presided over by PP Thawla and 80 members were present. It was ultimately

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Vakho Hnaihly, founding member of MDF, at party office, New Colony, 03<sup>rd</sup> August, 2017.

agreed to form a regional party solely for the cause of Mara people and the ultimate aim would be to obtain Union Territory for Maraland. Many names were proposed for the name of the party and the proposal of K. Chhôtua of New Laty of Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) was accepted by the members.<sup>21</sup> On this very day election for office bearers was held and elected the following members:-

PP Thawla as President;  
 HC Vahnua as Vice-President;  
 HC Chhiesa as Treasurer;  
 Secretaries: M. Laikaw, MH Tiabi and Vakho Hnaily.

The MDF party maintained it firmly that Siaha District is within the Indian Union and the pace of development can reach down to the grassroots level only by maintaining close relation with the Indian Union. It tried to achieve its goal by peaceful means under the ambit of the Indian Constitution. It had its Preamble as:-

*We, the people of Maraland, trusting in the Lord Almighty God and with confidence and faith in the principles of Democracy Secularism and Socialism do hereby resolved to establish within the frame work of the Indian Constitution, a full fledge autonomous Government of our own.*

### III. 2.2. Aims and Objectives:<sup>22</sup>

The aims and objectives of the Maraland Democratic Front can be studied as follows:-

- I. It shall bear faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of Socialism, Secularism and Democracy and would uphold the Sovereignty, Unity and Integrity of India.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *The Constitution of Maraland Democratic Front*. Article- I, 1996. Pp:1&2.

- II. To have Union Territory for the Mara people under the ambit of the Constitution of India.
- III. No discrimination shall be made on the basis only of creed, caste or religion in matters of appointment whereby having a true and clean government.
- IV. Amalgamation of Mara inhabiting areas under a single government.
- V. To utilize fully natural resources of Maraland and the skills of its people for self-sufficiency.
- VI. Reformation of the society by eradicating the social evils from Maraland.
- VII. To give priority to the well being for Maraland political, social and economic development without discrimination.

### III. 2.3. Organizational structure of Maraland Democratic Front:

The organizational structure of the MDF was hierarchical in nature as is the case with other parties. At the top of the organizational structure was the High Command or Headquarter Office Bearers headed by President consisting of 26 members of which 4 members i.e., President, Senior Vice-President, Vice-President and Treasurer were elected while one Finance Secretary, and not more than 8 General Secretaries and 8 Secretaries along with 5 Consultants members were appointed and portfolios were distributed as well by the President in consultation with the elected office bearers. Apart from that the president had the power to appoint 5 general executive committee members. Thus the president enjoyed an extensive power and had the power to summon and prorogue General Assembly.<sup>23</sup> Since the formation of the party, there were only two presidents, namely, PP Thawla from 1996 to 2007 and

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<sup>23</sup> *The Constitution of Maraland Democratic Front.*



M. Laikaw since 2007 and he continued to hold the post till the party was dissolved and merged to Bharatya Janata Party on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

The General Assembly, comprising of all members of the party, was the highest decision making body, all of the other bodies have to implement the decision made by the assembly. The constitution laid down that the General Assembly should be organized once a year. It was during the assembly that 4 elected headquarter office bearers and 25 general headquarter executive committee members were elected from members of the party. Apart from the above mention posts there were 4 committees and auditors to strengthen the party. They can be studied as follows:-<sup>24</sup>

I. General Headquarter Executive Members:

It consisted of office bearers and organizers of general headquarter, the existing president of general headquarter, frontal organizations and of sub-headquarter and blocks; 25 members elected by the general assembly; 5 members appointed by the president of the party; the sitting Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Members of District Council (MDC) of the party and ex. MPs, ex. MLAs, and ex. MDCs remaining in the party. This was the second highest decision making body of the party after the General Assembly and was headed by the President. The President enjoyed certain powers and functions as

- a. The President had the power in matters relating to party elections, liquidation of the party and alteration of the name of the party.
- b. The President appointed the returning officers and assistant returning officers for any elections.

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<sup>24</sup> *The Constitution of Maraland Democratic Front.*

- c. It had the power to set up sub-committees and power to dissolve the same.
- d. To make rules and regulations of the party.
- e. In raising funds and appointing of auditors.
- f. The President prepared election manifesto, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, etc.
- g. It appointed more than 4 organizers of the general headquarter.
- h. The President may create sub-headquarters, blocks and units.
- i. It had the power to punished members of the party in case of violation of party code and procedure by laying down party discipline.
- j. May constitute an organization and liquidate the same.
- k. May extent or shorten the term of the party if necessary.
- l. May summoned or prorogued Special Assembly should necessity arise.

## II. Nomination Committee:

The committee consisted of a Chairman and seven other members elected by the General Headquarter Executive Committee. The President acted as ex-officio chairman of the committee. The committee elected candidates for the election of MP, MLA and MDC.

## III. Political Affairs Committee:

The committee looked after political aspects of the district. All affairs of the party i.e., their administration and future course of action were deliberated upon by this committee. In this respect the decision to merge with Bharatya Janata Party was first taken into account by the committee and submitted its report to General Headquarter Executive Committee. It advised and made recommendation to the President in regard to the needs of the party.

The committee was headed by the President of the party known as chairman and consist of seven other members.

IV. Finance Committee:

The committee was headed by the President of the party along with a secretary who was Finance Secretary of the party and 5 other members appointed by the General Headquarter Executive Committee. The task of the committee was to raise funds because funds are the lifeline of every party and party without funds are usually degraded.

V. Auditors:

Checks and balance of the party is needed in order to be efficient and transparent. The party can increase its support base with the proper utilisation of funds and can also improve its electoral performance. In order to audit financial accounts of the party, not more than two auditors were appointed by the General Headquarter Executive Committee. There was no obligation that auditors should necessarily be a member of the party, so anyone could be appointed for the post even from outside the party.<sup>25</sup>

The party had 4 blocks and 2 frontal organizations like Maraland Democratic Women Front (MDWF) and Maraland Democratic Youth Front (MDYF) and units in almost every villages of the district. These blocks, units and frontal organizations have their own office bearers in relation to that of the General Headquarter and power and functions in their respective jurisdiction in correspondence with the General Headquarter. The term of the office the General Headquarter was 3 years while it was 2 years for blocks, units and frontal organizations.

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<sup>25</sup> Vakho Hnaihly. Op.cit.

### III. 2.4. Function of the Party:

Right after its formation, the MDF pursued its policy wholeheartedly by submitting a memorandum to HD Deve Gowda, the then Prime Minister of India, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1996 demanding Union Territory for Mara people. In subsequent years memoranda were submitted to the Government of India by apprising them that the Maras were indeed a distinct tribe having their own culture and customs. To respect and uphold the custom, culture and traits of each and every tribe is the process of the nature wherein lies the beauty and the strength of it. The Constitution of India guarantees protection of minorities by incorporating it in Fundamental Rights; Article 29 (1) says that *any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same*. The Indian leaders were clearly aware of the situation of the country and take step in this respect. Inclusiveness is the main issue as India is aptly called as sub-continent due to its diverse culture. On the other hand the notion of assimilation cowed down the ethnic minorities leading them to form regional parties, henceforth, the apprehension of cultural assimilation led to guarantees of protection for the interest of minorities. In other words, the strength of India lies in its unity in diversity whereby every community and tribes could propagate and promote their own traits. It is in this respect the MDF alleged that the tribe is being assimilated by the dominant Lusei tribe in every respect. As such, the MDF intensified their demand for Union Territory for the Maras. The latest memorandum was submitted on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 to Rajnath Singh, Union Home Minister, in New Delhi by M. Laikaw, President of the MDF and S. Lalremrthanga, General Secretary.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Memorandum submitted by Maraland Democratic Front to the Union Home Minister in 2015.

The MDF contested in all the MADC general election either with an alliance partner or of its own since inception of the party. To be precise it contested the MADC general election on its own without any pre-poll alliance in 2005 as they were confident of people's support and reject the proposal by Mizo National Front to have an alliance.<sup>27</sup> It managed to win 7 seats out of the entire seats it contested and no party obtained majority. As there was no political party to form the government of their own, United Legislature Party was formed by the MDF, the INC and the lone independent candidate N. Viakhu by forming the government with Viakhu as the CEM. However, Viakhu joined the MNF after 6 months and he advised the nominated members to resign. After that, new nominated Member District Council was appointed by the Governor through his recommendation and it was opposed tooth and nail by the opposition parties. After that political procession and total bandh were organized by the MDF and the INC on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 respectively, and again office picketing was had on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 to show their displeasure.<sup>28</sup> Since the agitations were redundant, they made petition to the Guwahati High Court<sup>29</sup> which proved effective. The bold move by the opposition parties created political awareness among the people.

The MDF managed to form the government twice in the fifth and the seventh term of the MADC with PP. Thawla, M. Laikaw and S. Pailei as Chief Executive Members (CEM) respectively with the support of other parties for a brief period of time. Among the three, S. Pailei became the longest serving CEM from 2003 till the MADC general election in 2005.

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<sup>27</sup> Based on interview with Vakho Hnaihly, founding member, on date: 03.08.2017 at MDF office, New Colony.

<sup>28</sup> MADC Pachhana Rai He Ahy Hria Aw (Who will step up to reform MADC). *Maraland Ao* (Weekly newspaper in vernacular language). Vol. III Issue No. 6 Dated: 06.12.2005.

<sup>29</sup> PP. Thawla. (2012). *Na Pina Rah Lâ Kua Heih Teh*. Siaha: PP. Thawla. P:27.

In all the elections each candidate fought the battle as per the need of the constituency without common agenda except that of Union Territory. The party wasted no time in inculcating differences of the Mara with the Lusei tribe and the necessity of achieving Union Territory for socio-economic development of the Maras. Though election was contested in alliance with other parties, there was no restriction in raising identity issue and demand for Union Territory.

The mal-administration of the council in matters relating to recruitment of staffs i.e., the case of nepotism, favouritism, and power abuse by political leaders instead of selecting an able and efficient candidate was highly dissented by the party. Narrow-mindedness in the recruitment process leads to corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency in running the administration of the council. This practice proves nothing but decay of civilization as Jawaharlal Nehru rightly states *a civilization decays much more from inner failure than from external attack*<sup>30</sup>. To do away with the decade old practice it proposed to amend the Recruitment Rules where ever possible and set up Recruitment Board, so as to make the recruitment process transparent thereby candidates are selected on merit list basis.

Having Autonomous District Council can be stated as a miniature of State administration. All the functions of State Governments as well as that of the Government of Indian are entrusted as it have different organs of the government like Legislative, Executive and Judiciary on its own. Though it framed and regulated its own laws, the council is subjected to the provision of the State Government as financial aids from the Central Government pass through the State Government and the laws passed by the council need to be assented by the state Governor. Moreover

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<sup>30</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru. (2008). *Discovery of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Indian Ltd. (First published in 1946).

the ruling parties in the council were banking over the state government one way or the other. Thereafter the ruling party of INC in the council passed MADC Control, Conduct and Business, etc Rules, 2011 and MADC Village Council Amendment Act, 2011 in the House at monsoon session in August, 2011; giving the power to control and supervise elections in the District Council area to Mizoram State Election Commission. This move was criticized vehemently by the MDF and the MNF leaders even before the bill was moved in the House. In a press meet on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 M. Laikaw, the President of MDF, criticized the move by stating that the council than run by the INC are pawn of the State Government and warned that this would amount to degradation of District Council's autonomy as it curb Legislative power of the council.<sup>31</sup> Similar view was echoed in a joint press meet held by the MNF and the MDF on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 where they implied that the INC party had sold the councils' autonomy and went to the extent of rebuking the INC party as the enemy of the nation.<sup>32</sup> The matter was highly debated by individuals and organizations too. Due to impartation of the issue by opposition parties the masses began to be aware of the political happening of the day.

With the merger of MDF to the Bhataya Janata Party on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 in Siaha at Mara Thyutlia Py (MTP) hall<sup>33</sup> the party stand dissolved and thus the regional party in Siaha District lived for 21 years.

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<sup>31</sup> Siaha Thuthar Lakhawmtute Kawmna Press Club-ah neih a ni (Press Meet was held at Siaha Press Club). Retrieved from <https://saihaerald.wordpress.com/page/25/>. Retrieved on date: 30.08.2017.

<sup>32</sup> MDF & MNF Coordination Committee in CCB Rule Siamthatna Bill Pass Tak Duhlohna Public Meeting an Buatsaih. Hnam Phantsantu ah Congress Hruaitute an Puh. Retrieved from <https://saihaerald.wordpress.com/page/25/> Retrieved on Date: 30.08.2017.

<sup>33</sup> BJP-ah MDF an inchnung lut (MDF merged into BJP). *Vanglaini Mizo Daily* (daily Mizo newspaper in Mizoram). Vol. XXXII Issue No. 248. Date: 26.10.2017.

### III. 3. Indian National Congress (INC)

The Indian National Congress is the oldest political party in India and was formed in 1885 under the chairmanship of AO Hume to safeguard the interest of the British nationals. It is described by one Indian scholar as *safety valve*, the intention behind this was not for the love of Indians but for continuation of the British rule in India so that the revolution of 1857 did not happen again. Whatever the intention be, it was greatly benefitted by the Indians as it became an organized group for the Indians: most of the Indian intellectuals flock around the party and represented the cause of Indians to the British authority by highlighting devastations and humiliation faced by the people. At the initial stage it worked more as an organization than party and confined more on intellectual classes excluding majority of the populations. With the entry of Mahatma Gandhi into politics its' face and outlook changed completely; it was no more of few oriented individuals but that of the masses, and opposed the colonialist where ever they could for the interest of the citizens. Even though there were other parties, they were all absorbed in the Congress. In other words, the Congress party was the mother of all parties as its outlook was vast and integrates all ideological differences.

The Congress party is one of the dominant national political parties and had formed government in the centre for most of India's political history after independence. As it is the party that fought for political freedom, it has mass support base. Many people flock around the party due to the intense struggle and sacrifice made by its leaders during the course of national movement. The party also suffered from the sickness of Indian polity and likewise split of the party occurred many times. After the split in 1969 Congress (I) or Congress of Indira Gandhi group emerge, which form the basis of the present Congress party.



At this period Indian political scene was occupied mainly by the Congress party since there were no individual leaders to challenge the prolific leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. The Congress party formed the government in the central as well as the states except Kerala. The congress party was at the helm power in Assam state since independence of India. In contrast to the state politics, Mizo District Council was occupied by a regional base party called the Mizo Union. Due to this divergence of political scenario between state and district, it would not be out of place to say that, the Assam Government was reluctant to heed the advice of the Mizo leaders about the potentiality of famine or bamboo flowering, which in local language was called *Mautam*. In order to exert more political influence and have a better sense of integration with the mainland political system, shri. A. Thanglura formed the Congress party in Aizawl, Mizoram on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1961.

### III. 3.1. Emergence and Growth of the INC in Siaha District

The political situation of Mizoram, the then Mizo District Council, was tense and the condition was so harsh for civilians due to an insurgency movement led by Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga (L) from 1966. To retaliate the self-proclamation of independence and the killing of its armed personnel, the Government of India with all its strength and might came down heavily upon the insurgents and citizens alike.

The complex situation halted normal proceedings of life and civilians were under a watchful eye of the Indian army. In the meantime, Mizo District Council upgraded to the status of Union Territory in April, 1972 and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils of Chakma, Lai and Mara which were then upgraded automatically to Autonomous District Councils on

29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972. To form the new government the first general election for Mizoram Legislative Assembly was held in 1972. In this election the MFP did not field any candidate but proposed that the winner would be declared as the party candidate. This step was taken as there was no unanimity on who to give party's ticket because three individuals were eying for the seat. Therefore Mylai Hlychho, former General-Secretary of Mara Freedom Party, formed the Congress party known as Mara District Congress Committee (MDCC) in Siaha District at Saikao village in 1972. Mylai also asserted that the Indian National Congress cared for the welfare of the minority tribes and created Autonomous District Council for the Maras under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. As such, the Maras can administer themselves by preserving and promoting Mara identity and for better integration with the mainstream political system.<sup>34</sup> However, the INC was confined only to some specific areas and it did not get mass support base. The reason for this can be clarified under the following points:-

- 1) Indifference of the people towards the Congress party as they consider it as closely align with what they called *Viah*- referred to as mainland Indians.
- 2) Religious sentiments deferred them to act in contrary to the fact as they associate Congress party with Hindu.
- 3) The prevailing condition in Mizoram would not permit the party to increase because of the MNF. Even though the impact of it was minimal it still act as hurdle.
- 4) The wave of Mara nationalism still swept the air and the people considered outside influence as necessary evil and messing with Mara identity.
- 5) Dependence of the people in Mara Freedom Party was strong and unbreakable.

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Mylai Hlychho at his residence, New Colony, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.

Against all odds the party could hold its ground by establishing units in one or two villages. At this juncture it was the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) that formed the government in the MADC. The situation of political scenario changed in 1973 when rumours of the Mizo Union party contemplating to merge with the INC were heard. The MFP leaders considered options and came to the conclusion that it would be better for them to join a national party as they were of the opinion that by this step preferences would be shown to them be it political or economic aspects and thus the decision to merger with the Congress party was passed in the MFP general assembly at Tisi village in 1974. Shortly after thte Mizo Union merger with the Congress in 1974, the MFP too followed suit in March 1974.<sup>35</sup> Thenceforth the first regional political party in the district died a natural death. The people who, obediently flow to the tune of leaders, were opposed to Congress party at the initial stage but were in line with the leaders having no option and began to accept the party. As Siaha District is economically and politically weak, it depends wholly upon the Central and the State Governments to support it. The same leaders and people who merged with the Congress party again unilaterally merged to Janata Party in 1978 when it formed the government at the centre after Lok Sabha election of 1977, but they again returned back to the Congress in 1980. The best case scenario for them was to align with the party whoever forms government at the centre. Although the party change its colour thrice in short span of time, the performance of Mara District Congress improve with time and later on became the most successful or outstanding political party in Siaha District based on its electoral performance in the MADC.

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<sup>35</sup> V. Lalchawna. (2014). *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram with Special Reference to Maraland*. Aizawl: V. Lalchawna. P:144.

After the merger of the MFP into the Congress, the first President of the MDCC was HC Siato.<sup>36</sup> The Presidents of the MDCC before 1988 cannot be shown due to non-availability of records, as such, the list can be shown only since 1988.

Table No. III. 1. Incumbency of Mara District Congress Committee Presidents

S/No.	Name	Tenure
1	S. Pailei	1988-1990
2	NG. Silla	1990-1995
3	Laicho Notlia	1995-2000
4	S. Hiato	2000-2003
5	C. Hiphei	2004-2007
6	NG. Silla	2007-2010
7	RT. Zachono	2011-2014
8	S. Hiato	2014-

### III. 3.2. Aims and Objectives of the INC in Siaha District

Siaha District has its own political autonomy to uphold the customs, culture and tradition of Mara people under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India as incorporated in Article 244 (2). Accordingly the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) permitted the MDCC to have its own constitution for *Functional Autonomy* but the provisions and conditions shall be under the scrutiny of the MPCC. Subsequently the constitution of the MDCC came into

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Laicho Notlia, former president of the MDCC and the first elected Chairman of United Lai, Mara, Chakma Congress Committee at his residence, ECM Vaih, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

effect on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1992 at the 11<sup>th</sup> general assembly of the MDCC.<sup>37</sup> Being a broad based party, it upholds and promotes the view of its unmatched and profound leader Jawaharlal Nehru where he argued that *if each group functions successfully within its own framework, then society as a whole work harmoniously*<sup>38</sup>, thereby making it realize the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi for village administration within the party.

The Mara District Congress Committee has its aims and objectives as stipulated in the following points.<sup>39</sup>

1. To respect and abide by the Constitution of India.
2. Take steps for the preservation and promotion of Mara identity, land, language, culture and tradition.
3. To give priority to the indigenous tribe.
4. Moral reformation of the people towards the attitude of manual labour for developmental process.
5. Community development whereby instilling righteousness and values among the people.
6. To instil a sense of values- cultural and morale upon younger generations and sustainable development.
7. To work for the preservation of dignity and societal development of women.
8. To work in congruence with any non-governmental organizations that works to safeguard and uplift Mara language, land, clan, culture and tradition.
9. To take steps for the enlargement of autonomy.
10. Take initiative for youth development.
11. Social development and reformation of the society.

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<sup>37</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee. P:1.

<sup>38</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru. Op.cit.

<sup>39</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.

12. Welfare of senior citizens and setting up of care centre.
13. To work for child protection and setting up a care centre.
14. To work for educational reforms so that the people can walk in pace with the changing world.
15. To preserve natural resources and take initiative for its utilization in Maraland.

### III. 3.3. Organizational structure of the INC

The MDCC headquarter is located at the capital town of Siaha. It has 3 blocks at Tipa, Siaha and Phura, and units in every village. With the prior approval of the Executive Committee headed by the President, frontal organizations can be formed which again need to be rectified and approved by the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC).<sup>40</sup>

The General Assembly is the highest decision making body which meet once a year after obtaining permission from the MPCC. Its decision are binding upon the members and can be only be over-ruled by this body, however, in case of emergency the executive committee has the power to annul it which is then required to be approved in the first assembly. The Congress party of Siaha District is headed by the President. He is elected by the General Assembly for a term of three years, and beneath him there are Vice-President and Treasurer who are also elected by the assembly. They are known as elected office bearers. All works of the party are supervised and conducted by the party President. In the assembly 25 members are elected by the party to assist the elected office bearers.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.

<sup>41</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.

Though the General Assembly is the highest authoritative body, the real powers and functions are vested in the Executive Committee members headed by the President. The President can appoint 5 General Secretaries and 10 Secretaries from 25 members elected in the assembly; 5 co-opted members and senior advisors each; not more than 5 special invitees; Chef Organizers, Deputy Chief Organizers and not more than 5 Organizers; and not more than 3 members for legal cell chairman and media chairman, in consultation with the elected office bearers. Hence, the executive committee is the real body that wields power. The Executive Committee is headed by president and consists of the following members:-<sup>42</sup>

1. MDCC President, Vice- President, Treasurer and Working President/ Senior Vice- President, if appoint by the president.
2. 25 executive members elected by the assembly.
3. Congress Members of District Council (MDC), Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and Member of Parliament (MP).
4. Congress ex-MP, Ex-MLA, Ex-MDC and former presidents of the party who still remain in the party.
5. Senior Advisors, co-opted members, chief organizers, dy. Chief organizers, media chairman and legal cell chairman, and president/chairman of ad-hoc committee if appoint by the President.
6. District frontal presidents and block presidents.

The committee acts as a right hand of the party. The committee called and decide matters to be discussed in the assembly. It implements all judgments, declarations and resolutions made by the assembly. In other words, all woks of the

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<sup>42</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.

party are co-ordinated, supervised and controlled by the committee. In a nutshell, the success of the party largely depends upon the Executive Committee members.

The success of a party depends upon mass support bases because the target and goal of every political party is to form government legitimately i.e., through peoples' mandate in the election. It is at this instance that political parties are following the patterns of decentralization to grass-root levels. In order to have better co-ordination and influence it divides the party into three blocks and units in every village. To this extent frontal organizations are formed to be the eyes and ears of the party in every possible manner. There are thus 6 frontal organizations, which are as follows:-<sup>43</sup>

1. Mara District Youth Congress Committee.
2. Mara District Mahila Congress.
3. National Student Union of India of Mara District.
4. Mara District Congress Drivers Welfare Department.
5. Mara District Congress Macha (senior) Wing.
6. Congress ex-Servicemen Association.

The organizational structure is formed based on the patterns of All India Congress Committee after taking approval from the MPCC. It can also have blocks and units if necessary, and has all the powers and functions equivalent to the district headquarter in their own jurisdiction.

The term of the MDCC General Headquarter is three years but can be prolonged or shortened by the MPCC while that of blocks, units and frontal organizations are of two years. The blocks, units and frontal organisations are

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<sup>43</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.



exclusively under the control of the MDCC and cannot be dissolved by the MPCC on its own will.<sup>44</sup>

There are two committees in MDCC. It can be studied as follows:-<sup>45</sup>

1. Nomination Committee:

Nomination Committee consists of 8 members of which the MDCC President and Congress legislative party members are ex-officio members and the remaining members are elected by the Executive Committee members from within the party. The committee is headed by the MDCC president who is designated as Chairman. Its work is to nominate candidates for the MDC and the MLA election from the district. It also considers and prepares the election manifesto for MDC election. The decision made by the committee is final and must be incorporated.

2. Political Affairs Committee:

The members of Public Affairs Committee are appointed by the President in consultation with the executive members if consider necessary. The appointed members should not be more than seven.

### III. 3.4. Functions of the INC

People of Siahya District are inclined towards the INC and voted to power in most of the MADC general elections. Since the merger of the MFP to the Congress in 1974, the MDCC managed to get mandate of the people and formed the government till 2000 except when Janata party and People's Conference (PC) were in power for a brief period of time. In the years between 2000 and 2007 the party went through

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<sup>44</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.

<sup>45</sup> Constitution of the Mara District Congress Committee.

rough patch, however that change since the seventh term of the MADC election conducted in 2007 wherein from that term Congress party dominate the political scene by wielding power continuously. It seems that people cannot get over with the Congress; the assumption can be made from 11<sup>th</sup> term of the MADC election held in 2017 wherein out of 25 seats contested 17 seats were won by the party, the landslide victory shows people's confidence in the party. Rival parties could neither match nor dither its mass support base.

One of the aspirants of political parties in Siah District is for enlargement of autonomy be it Union Territory (UT) or autonomy enhancement under the provision of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. The MDCC is no exemption to it. Steps had been taken up since 1980 towards this and a memorandum was submitted to Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1980 by leaders of the Congress party in three Autonomous District Councils. The memorandum demand on Nehru Plan of 99% autonomy and a notion of direct finance was made under point no. 9 as stated under:<sup>46</sup>

*The District Council should prepare their annual budget for running their respective District Councils as well as for other district level officers within their own areas and to the tribal department for scrutiny. The department after scrutinizing would directly take the budget of the District Councils to the central Government for sanction.*

The term *Direct Finance* was first mention in the conference of Chakma, Lai and Mara leaders on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 1988 and passed a resolution on allotment of fund and

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<sup>46</sup> Representation submitted to Prime Minister of India by leaders of minority tribes in Mizoram.

*direct funding* by the Centre to the District Councils.<sup>47</sup> The leaders of Mara Congress submitted a memorandum on their own for the first time on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1986 to demand for an amendment of the Sixth Schedule thereby giving more autonomy to the MADC and demand that the district shall have full control over grant-in-aids given under Article 275 and revenue of Tribal areas.<sup>48</sup> Among the leaders, Union Territory was the ultimate aim but no demand for this was made by their own due to an apprehension that it would be unfavourable for them as it will lead to misunderstanding with the dominant Lusei tribe.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, the party took an active part in the demand for Chhimituipui Union Territory under the banner of United Lai, Mara, Chakma Congress Committee (ULMCCC) which was formed on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1996. The demand for amendment of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and direct finance was intensified further and the same was highlighted in the election manifesto of 2017 for 11<sup>th</sup> term of the MADC general election.

After coming to power in the eleventh term of the MADC election the Congress party implement its poll promises of the MADC Model Students' Scholarship. The scholarship is meant to provide financial assistance to a bright and intelligent students within a range of class V –VIII i.e., middle school, by giving cash incentives of Rs. 500 a month but does not cover students studying in private institutions, thus it is only meant for students belonging to government institutions. Rules stipulate that to be eligible for examination a student must attend at least 75

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<sup>47</sup> Laicho Notlia. Op.cit.

<sup>48</sup> Memorandum to the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India by leaders of Mara Congress.

<sup>49</sup> Laicho Notlia. Op.cit.

percentage of class and must hold grade 'B' in previous examination.<sup>50</sup> The motive behind is to impart a sense of competitive mind among students.

Since the creation of the MADC, it is the Congress party that clings onto power for most of the period. In this respect, the party wants to have greater autonomy for the district as the contention for this is that the state Government is misusing its power from time to time by not giving funds to the council. As a result amendment for sixth schedule and provision for direct funding is being pursued and the impartation of political education in this respect give political awareness upon the people.

#### III. 4. Mizo National Front District Headquarter, Siaha.

It was reported, and handed down from generation to generation, among the Mizos that Mautam or famine (bamboo flowering) happened at an interval of 50 years. It was predicted that the famine would again occur in 1959 then leaders of Mizo District Council met the Assam Government many times apprising them of the eventuality. The Assam Government took them for granted and did not heed to the cry of the Mizo leaders. As a result, the people were in dire needs of food when the famine occurred. Therefore, Laldenga (L) formed Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) to fight for the cause of his people who were lagging in anguish over hunger. When the famine was over, 8 members consisting of some people who were involved in the MNFF and others formed the Mizo National Front (MNF) in the residence of Laldenga at Tuikhuahtang, Aizawl on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1961. It should be, however, noted that the MNF was not the conversion of the MNFF.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> MADC Model Students' Scholarship Siekhei N'awpa Dâh (Constitution). Publish by School Education Department, MADC Siaha, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> C. Hermana. (1999). *Zoram Politics Thli Tleh Dan. Vol.-1*. Aizawl: C. Hermana. Pp: 65-74.

### III. 4.1. Emergence and growth of Mizo National Front District Headquarter, Siaha

The wave of Laldenga was spreading far and wide in Mizoram then Mizo hills District Council. Shri. V. Lalchhawna on being interviewed stated that he was influenced by Laldenga and formed the MNF party in Siaha District in 1964 at Tipa 'V' in the then Pawi-Lakher Regional.<sup>52</sup> However the party could not increase its membership due to the wave of Mara nationalism and had to confine only to some specific areas.

With the signing of peace agreement by the MNF and the Indian Government in 1986, all the insurgent groups were backed to normal life. Its revolutionary organization called Mizo National Army was disbanded and the MNF became one of the regional parties in India. Thus all the former outfits were laid off. The party was re-organized or re-structured with the returned of the insurgents' outfit into normal life and successively formed units, division and blocks in every nook and corner of Mizoram.

Toward this end, the MNF Siaha Division was formed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 at Chalsanga's house, New Colony under the superintendence of Chawngzuala, ex-Minister of MNF underground with headquarter at Siaha. For the time being, to carry on the works of the party in the district, an ad-hoc office bearers were appointed with R. Zoramthanga as President, A. Rongura as Vice-President and J. Thangvunga as Treasurer, apart from appointing 6 secretaries. Dr. Thangvuana was appointed as Divisional Secretary to look after the division for supervision and coordination.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with V. Lalchhawna at his residence, ECM Vaih, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Chalsanga at Residence on New Colony, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

The first election for office bearers of the MNF Siaha Division was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1986 under the chairmanship of Chawngzuala and elected the followings persons to head the division:-<sup>54</sup>

President-	Chalsanga,
Vice-President-	V. Lalchhawna,
Treasurer-	A. Rongura,
Division Secretary-	Dr. Thangvuana Hnialum.

As per the provision of the MNF party, the Division was upgraded to ‘District Headquarter’ in 1998 during the tenure of Lalringa as President of Siaha Division. All the office bearers of the then Division continue to hold their post unhindered. Since then it is known as MNF District Headquarter, Siaha.<sup>55</sup>

The District Headquarter of MNF does not have programmes of their own as they are not authorized by the party headquarter of Mizoram.<sup>56</sup> They therefore subscribe to the policies and programmes laid down by the General Headquarter. As a result, the MADC elections were contested by each candidate based on the context of their constituencies and as per convenience.

### III. 4.2. Organizational structure of the MNF District Headquarter, Siaha

The organizational structure of the MNF District Headquarter of Siaha is similar to that of the General Headquarter in Aizawl and thus has all the authority in the area. The MNF District Headquarter has three blocks and units in most of villages; it also has frontal organizations like Mizo National Youth Fronts, Mizo National Women Fronts and Ex-Mizo National Army. The District Headquarter organizes General Conference or special conference once in a year with the prior approval of the General Headquarter. The General Conference is the highest decision making body in

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<sup>54</sup> Chalsanga. Op.cit.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with S. Lianbuanga, General- Secretary i/c Administration at party office, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with N. Viakhu, President of Siaha MNF at party office, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

the area and election for President, Vice-president and Treasurer along with 30 executive committee members are held.<sup>57</sup>

Below the General Conference is the District Headquarter Executive Committee that comprises of office bearers like President, Vice-president, Treasurer, eight (8) advisors, four (4) general secretaries and ten (10) secretaries; thirty (30) standing executive committee members; twelve (12) joint-secretaries; chief organizers and chief receptionist; national council member residing within the jurisdiction of District Headquarter; five (5) members appointed by the President of District Headquarter; frontal president, vice-president and treasurer, and block elected office bearers. The District Headquarter Executive Committee is headed by the President. The committee have the authority to co-ordinate, supervise and control the party; to implement party's policies and programmes laid out by general headquarter; create or dissolve units or groups as well as committee or sub-committee; appoint auditors to audit finance of the party and to summon District Headquarter conference, set agendas for the same and work towards the implementation of the resolution passed by the conference. Hence all the responsibilities of the party are vested in District Headquarter Executive Committee.<sup>58</sup>

The President is appointed for a fixed period of time i.e., one year; however, there is no fixed schedule for re-appointment. He shoulders the responsibilities of the party and success or failure of the party largely depends upon him. Thus taking in view the role played by the President in the administration of the party name of the Presidents and their tenure are listed in a chronological order in the following table.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> S. Lianbuanga. Op.cit.

<sup>58</sup> Constitution of the MNF, 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Incumbency table of the MNF District Headquarter, Siaha from the party office.

Table No. III. 2. Incumbency Presidents of MNF District Headquarters: Siaha.

S/No.	Name	Tenure
1	R. Zoramthanga	25.10.1986- 29.11.1986 (Ad-hoc)
2	Chalsanga	29.11.1986- 10.12.1987
3	Zakhu Hlychho	10.12.1987- 31.12.1988
4	Lalringa	01.01.1988- 15.04.1990
5	Valua Hlychho	15.04.1990- 10.09.1994
6	Lalringa	10.09.1994- 11.09.2002
7	K. Chiahlo	11.09.2002- 09.01.2003 (Ad-hoc)
8	L. Khaichyu	09.01.2003- 03.05.2004
9	HC Lalmalsawma Zasai	03.05.2004- 02.05.2006
10	KT Rokhaw	03.05.2006- 12.06.2007
11	Laicho Notlia	03.06.2007- 20.10.2008
12	HC Lalmawsawma Zasai	20.10.2008- 18.04.2016
13	N. Viakhu	18.04.2016- Present

### III. 4.3. Function of MNF District Headquarter, Siaha.

Since the year 2000 the party formed government twice for a short period of time without completing the term. After the declaration of the result of the fifth term of the MADC general election, PP Thawla of the MDF party was elected as the CEM with the support of MNF party but was ousted in November the same year after no-confidence was moved. Thereafter the MNF government was formed with the support of the INC, even though their numbers were relatively low compare to the later, with IP Junior as the CEM from 13<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2000 to 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2003. Again in the sixth term of



the MADC the party again formed the government when N. Viakhu with his post as the CEM defected to the MNF, which was dissolved in March, 2007.

The MADC (Constitution, Conduct of Business, etc.) Rules, 2002 was passed during the tenure of IP Junior as CEM which deal comprehensively with how the administration of the MADC should be carried out. There was a proposal for Pala lake, Laty and Lôhawka and its surroundings to be made as wildlife sanctuary. But the move was vehemently opposed by Mara Chanô Py (Mara Women Association) who went to the extent of picketing Council office on 11<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2001. Therefore the proposal was thwarted by the government.

The Mizo National Front District Headquarter, since only a tributary, cannot act in contrary to the general headquarter and has to abide by rules frame the same. All the policies and programmes laid down by general headquarter is binding on the District Headquarter and the later has to see to it that they are being implemented from time to time.

### III. 5. Bharatya Janata Party In Siaha District

The Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) is one of the national political parties in India. Its origin lies in Bharatya Jana Sangh, popularly known as Jana Sangh, founded in 1951 by Syama Prasad Mookerjee to counter the dominance of Congress Party, having close affinity with the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).<sup>60</sup> Due to the declaration of *National emergency* in 1975 by Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, the opposition parties joined hand and formed Janata Party in 1977. The party won Lok Sabha election in 1977 and formed the Government; but,

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<sup>60</sup> Bharatya Janata Party. Retrieved from [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatya\\_Janata\\_Party](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatya_Janata_Party).  
reterived on date:27.08.2017.

was dissolved in 1980 due to some differences within the party. As a result, the BJP was formed in February 1980 by breaking up from the Janata Party over the issue of the RSS. All of the proponents of Jana Sangh ideology left the Janata Party and formed the BJP.<sup>61</sup> The party increases its electoral performance thereby becoming the largest party to win the Lok Sabha seat in 1996, but not in a majority to form the government. It however formed the government for just 13 days. After the general election of 1998, the party and its coalition parties, known as National Democratic Alliance (NDA), formed Government under the Prime Ministership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee for a year. Following the general election of 12<sup>th</sup> term Lok Sabha in 1999 the NDA again formed the Government with AB Vajpayee as the Prime Minister and completed its term.

### III. 5.1. Emergence and Growth of the BJP in Siaha District

With the formation of the BJP Government at the centre a group of individuals decided to form the party in the district. So the BJP was formed at K.L. Mahei's residence, Meisavaih in early 1997 under the superintendence of Chawngzika Rieng, the then Vice- President of Bharatya Janata Party, Mizoram Pradesh. The founding members were K.L. Mehei, C. Hlychho, Lalbuia, F. Thangchhuaha, B. Ngokhaw and Zahlo Hlychho among others; KL Mahei on being interviewed asserted that not less than 30 members were present.<sup>62</sup> The first president was K.L. Mahei and he continued to hold this post till his defection to the MNF in 2005.

One of the reasons that could be attributed for the formation of the BJP was to have more autonomy for the district as they saw the prospect for the BJP to rule the

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<sup>61</sup> Sitakanta Mishra. (2011). *Role of Political Parties in Formulating India's Nuclear weapons Policy: A Comparative Study of Indian National Congress, Bharatya Janata Party and Communist Party of India-Marxist*. Unpublish Ph.D. Thesis. Jawaharlal Nehru University.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with KL. Mahei at his residence, Meisavaih, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017.

country. If the party was then formed in the district, they were of the opinion, then the district would be given preference and have more political weight in their demand for more autonomy.<sup>63</sup>

Due to the defection of the President, KL Mahei, to MNF in 2005 the party appointed Zahlo Hlychho as President, VL Zuala as Vice-President and Nade Hlychho as Treasurer, and send letter vide No. BJP/MD/Of/2005-2006 to the president of BJP Mizoram Pradesh, Aizawl to approve and appoint the dignitaries which were counter-signed by Kenneth Beisua, General Secretary of BJP. The election for office bearers was held in the same year and elected the following persons: President- HC Zahlo, Vice President- N. Zubili and Treasurer- Nade Hlychho as per the office registrar vide No. MD.BJP/No-3/AD/2005/1. No major work was done to commemorate the formation of the party. As a result majority of the people were not aware of the party at the earlier stage.

The situation went a drastic change with the formation of the BJP Government in the Union with Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India. The party was revived in 2014 by A. Chatua and friends where he became the President from November 2014 with that the party opened office from February 2015. The foundation structure for the party was firmly laid by Chatua. The party began to increase its members with time and L. Chhiesa was appointed as the President from January 2017.<sup>64</sup> Under the leadership of L. Chhiesa the party field candidates in six constituencies in the eleventh term of election. Since the formation of BJP in Siaha District there have been four (4) Presidents to date which can be listed in a chronological orders: KL Mahei, Zahlo Hlychho, A. Chatua and L. Chhiesa.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with A. Chatua at his residence, ECM Vaih, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

### III. 5.2. Aims and objectives of BJP

The Bharatya Janata Party has the following aim and objectives.<sup>65</sup>

- 1) To rouse and give awareness to the people about the intention of the BJP by focusing on the issue that the party is not against Christianity but secular in outlook.
- 2) Preservation and promotion of Mara culture and identity.
- 3) To work for the preservation and development of the indigenous people by upholding the Indian Constitution whereby every community would have the chance to preserve themselves.
- 4) To fight for more autonomy so that more financial allotment shall be given to the district this then could be utilized for the promotion and preservation of Mara culture. In this respect the first and foremost target is for Union Territory, theoretically, but as this is a complex process demand shall be made for the upgrade of Autonomous District Council to Autonomous Council. In order to achieve this demand linguistic difference should be the basis.<sup>66</sup>
- 5) As per the provision of Sixth Schedule under Paragraph 6, the medium of instruction at primary school shall be made in Mara within the district.
- 6) To take step shall on economic development by developing agriculture, horticulture, road and electricity.
- 7) To act towards the proper implementation of central schemes.

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<sup>65</sup> Interview with L. Chhiesa, President of the BJP at party office, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> A. Chatua. Op.cit.

### III. 5.3. Function of the party

The BJP had a meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1998 and passed a resolution to hold joint meeting of the three Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) i.e., Lai, Chakma and Mara at Siaha on 25<sup>th</sup> June to discuss about the common problems faced by each one of them and the future state of the party. Letters to this effect was sent to the ADCs BJP presidents effectively vide letter No. BJP-4/MD/ORGN-98/2(S) dated 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1998. The proposed agendas set for the meeting was (a) a party candidate for Member of Legislative Assembly from Chhimtuipui District, (b) loan board in Chhimtuipui District, (c) problems faced by each district and (d) to discuss the structure and guidelines for the Chhimtuipui District BJP party.

A joint meeting was held at KL Mahei's residence as per the resolution on the proposed date. The meeting was attended by the following members:- KL Mahei, Mara District BJP President; F. Thangchhuaha, Vice- President of Mara District; C. Hlychho, General Secretary of Mara District; C. John, Vice- President of Lai District and Liandingi consultant of Lai District. Apart from these no major work was performed by the party.

Due to the perception of the people towards the BJP it could not garner mass support. As a result, to gain the support of the people the party tries to inculcate in the mind of the people that the BJP is not against any religion let alone Christianity but is very secular in outlook. The party want the people to recognise that it tries to uphold the Indian constitutional provision of secularism and do away with the stigma against the party. In order to change the attitude of the people they put this aspect as one of their objectives. Though the performance of BJP is minimal and few in its

membership it is expected that with the merger of MDF into the party members are expected to rise as MDF itself is one of the dominant party in the district.

### III.6. Conclusion

In modern political system the role of political parties get intensified with each passing time as it is the parties that act as an anchor of a government. It is a party that provides and recruit new leaders and has close relation with the people. Through thick and thins, it is the parties that relate itself with the masses and act as a pacifier and guardian of the people. Since the representation of the people is not possible without political parties and parties cannot function without citizens' support so both are closely related. Therefore it is the political parties that mould and shape the attitude of the people towards the political system.

## Chapter: IV

### Electoral Politics

#### IV. 1. Introduction:

India is a democratic country whereby people elect their leaders for a fixed period of time. This gives the citizens a chance to raise their voice and take part in the administration of the country by exercising their inalienable rights i.e., vote. This right to vote gives the citizens a sense of inclusiveness and thus enhances peoples' attitude towards the political system.

Election and democracy go hand in hand. They are like two sides of the same coin in which none could exist without the other; hence, they complement each other. If democracy means 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' as defined by Abraham Lincoln then the phrase 'government by the people' becomes all the more important. It signifies that a government belongs to the people as they are chosen and guided by the people. The government emanates from the people in the sense that it derives its legitimacy from the people and that the Government is responsible to the people.<sup>1</sup> In other words, a democratic system certifies that people are the objects of the government because political power or authority is obtained from the people through election. The outline of the statement makes it clear that people are the centre of every democratic form of government. Therefore a government can be formed only due to the mandate of the people, so, the sole purpose of government is for the cause of the people.

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<sup>1</sup> Oinam Kulabidhu Singh. (1999). *Electoral Politics in Manipur (1980-1995)*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Manipur University. P:9.

#### IV. 2. Background of electoral system in India:

The roots of electoral system in India can be traced back to the time of British period with the passage of Indian Council Act in 1892.<sup>2</sup> The Act introduced elective elements in the Council *on the basis of recommendations*.<sup>3</sup> This was amended and provision for indirect election was made by the Indian Council Act of 1909 also known as Morley- Minto Reforms Acts. The Act divided the electorates into three kinds of constituencies:-<sup>4</sup>

- a) General electorate: comprised of non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Council;
- b) Class electorate: includes landlords and Muslims constituencies from the provinces; and
- c) Special electorate: represented two seats from Chamber of Commerce from Bengal and Bombay provinces.

Some changes were then made by the Government of India Act of 1919 which introduced direct election but universal adult franchise was not granted. It granted limited franchise on the basis of property and education but the masses were left out of the voting rights. The situation did not improve even under the Government of India Act of 1935. The universal adult suffrage and the right to vote was still limited, the property qualification continued to be the main basis for franchise as was in the previous Act. Thus, the Government of India Act, 1935 did not bring any further electoral reform and it was the same.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. P:13.

<sup>3</sup> Gaikhamsin Riamei. (2008). *A Study of Electoral Politics in Tamenglong District, Manipur, 1990-2002*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Manipur University. P:176.

<sup>4</sup> Oinam Kulabidhu Singh. Op.cit. P:13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Pp: 14-15.



The Indian leaders had been demanding for independence for many years. Towards this end, a resolution was adopted for complete independence at Congress meet also known as Lahore session in December, 1929. After the Lahore session, formation of Constituent Assembly (CA) became one of the demands by the nationalist leaders.<sup>6</sup> The Indians demand for Constituent Assembly was finally approved by the British Parliament in the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1946. As per the Cabinet Mission Plan the Constituent Assembly was to be formed consisting of 381 members who were representing all the provinces and Indian states, they were to frame the constitution for Union of India. Therefore, the Constituent Assembly was indirectly elected by some 20-40% of adult population of the then British India and started working on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1946. With the formation of a separate Constituent Assembly for Pakistan, it had 324 members, of which 232 were from the provinces under the British administration in November, 1948.<sup>7</sup>

In course of deliberation, members of the Constituent Assembly pointed out that the universal adult franchise should be treated as Fundamental Rights of the citizens. Consequently on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1947 the Fundamental Rights sub-committee discussed the matter and recommended that election should be free, secrete and periodic. Further, the universal adult franchise must be guaranteed by the new constitution of India and election and its affairs should be managed by an independent commission. The matters highlight the need for institutional body to look after the elections and thus were incorporated within the Constitution of India. As a result a

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<sup>6</sup> Gaikhamsin Riamei. Op.cit. P:180.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. P:182.

constituent body to look after the elections of the country was incorporated in Article 324 of the Constitution of India.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, Article 324 (1) states that the superintendence, direction and control for the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to the Parliament and to the Legislature of every state and of election to the office of President, Vice- President under the Constitution of India shall be vested in the Election Commission of India.<sup>9</sup>

The Constitution of India under article 324 (2) states that the Election Commission shall consists of Chief Election Commissioner and such other Election Commissioner as the President of India may from time to time fixed. Thus, the Election Commission of India could be a single or multi-member body.<sup>10</sup>

#### IV. 2.1. Election machinery at the state level:

India is a vast country with large number of people whereby it is impossible for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct and supervise all elections within the country. Towards this end, the election machinery at the state level consists of Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) who is selected by the Election Commission of India out of the panel of names provided by a state government. The ECI, however, has no branch of its own in any part of the country to regulate the elections. It has to depend upon the CEO of the state government, who function under the control of the State Government. He is usually from the rank of senior secretary. He is the kingpin of the whole machinery of the state. The law does not specify on whether the CEO should be a whole time officer or part time. As a result he attends to the election works in

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<sup>8</sup> Oinam Kulabidhu Singh. Op.cit. P: 16.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. P: 19.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Pp: 21-22.

addition to his administrative work. In this respect the ECI in 1957 suggested for the creation of Deputy Chief Electoral Officer (Dy. CEO) in the state when CEO in the states was part time officer. The recommendation was implemented before the third general in 1962 and that all states and Union Territory, except Dadra and Nagar Haveli, are assisted by at least one whole time officer designated as either Joint Deputy or Assistant Secretary.<sup>11</sup> The administrative structure of CEO varies from state to state depending upon the size of the state and the volume of work involved.

#### IV. 2.2. Election machinery at the district level:

As per the provision of section 13-AA of the Representation of People Act, 1950, election work in the district is entrusted to an officer known as District Election Officer (DEO). He is nominated or designated by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Government who shall be an officer of Government. He shall co-ordinate and supervises all works in the district relating to the preparation and revision of electoral rolls for all election in the area within his jurisdiction. He is required to perform all such powers and functions as entrusted to him by the Election Commission or Chief Electoral Officer.<sup>12</sup>

#### IV. 3. Election campaign:

The dissemination of policies and programmes of political parties are conveyed to the public through election campaign. This is the most effective way of educating the people and thereby absorbing them, which later on have an impact in voting behaviour of the people as well as raising political awareness among the people. In other words, election campaigns arouse voters' curiosity, identify issues of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Pp: 26-27.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Pp: 27-28.

debate, spread information, mobilize voters to the system, facilitate voters' choice and perform an educative function. Exposure to campaign leads to high scores of political information, political efficacy and participation in campaign.<sup>13</sup>

Election campaign is a kind of strategy that involves two ways process where the contesting parties and candidates tries to pull down their opponents through different means by highlighting their defects. In the mean time, they publicise their policies or show off their positive character as best as they could to show that they are far better than their opponents to lead and represent them in running an administration of a country. The ultimate aim is to win voters' confidence.

In election campaigns the issues are articulated by party leaders and they are the stuff in terms of which a democratic political campaign is rationalized in both senses.<sup>14</sup> There are different kinds of election campaigns. Some of the commonly used election campaign in Siaha District during the Mara Autonomous District Council general elections can be stated in the following manner:

- a) House to house campaign.
  - b) Flag flying contest.
  - c) Public meeting.
  - d) Personal contact.
  - e) Printed materials.
  - f) Mass media
- a). House to house campaign:

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<sup>13</sup> Khangjrapam Gourachandra Singh. (2006). *Political Development in Manipur (1984-2002)*. Unpublish Ph.D. Thesis. P:156.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

This is the most widely used method to elucidate voters. It is also known as door to door campaign. It is considered as a very effective technique for eliciting voters especially seasonal and junior politicians against veterans. In this method, candidates and party workers visit the electorates at their houses and asked for their precious votes and *sometimes give them false promises.*<sup>15</sup> It is evident that politicians visited the electorates more than once to make sure that they would vote them. This method of campaign has a great influence among the voters as it involves direct contact between the candidates and the electorates. It also clears the doubts of the voters. The significance of this method is that it can change voters' decisions.

b). Flag flying contest:

During election period each and every candidate made his/her own flag so that the electorates would recognised them. The active members of political parties also put flags on their shops and house tops to give a clear signal that they belong to such and such party. It is understood that the house where flag hoisting ceremony is done by a particular party other party workers may not enter into the house for canvassing.<sup>16</sup> Flags are also hoisted on the street corners as well as on their vehicles by party or candidate supporters.

c). Public meeting:

Public meeting is a forceful technique. It is organized by party workers as well as by civil society organizations like Mara Student Organization (MSO) and Mara Thyutlia Py (MTP). The meetings organized by party workers are usually attended by party supporters while others are not inclined to attend it. On the other hand, a

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. P:157.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P:158.

meeting organized by the MSO and the MTP are attended by both the supporters as they are mostly joint platforms for the leaders where they can publicise their programmes and policies to the public. In public meeting the candidates and party workers express their ideologies, aims and objectives, etc to influence the voters. This is more or less successful in its own sphere as the people learn about the parties, their political situation and the weight of their votes.

d). Personal contact:

This is a case where the electorates came into contact with the leaders. It is the most forceful techniques of election campaign. It is more effective than any other techniques as it gives personal touch campaigning. Due to the size of the constituencies, limited resources in terms of time and money at the disposal of candidates and difficulties of communication it is not possible to make use of this technique on a wide scale. Through personal contact, the electorate could be convinced by the leaders' personal character or promises; hence, an electorate could change his stand regarding the decision to vote.

e). Printed materials:

Printed materials like election manifestos, pamphlets, posters, small flags and newspapers play another important tool of eliciting voters by the candidates. Election manifestos were for the first time issued in the MADC election of 2017. It bears the promises of what they would do if elected to form the government. It is from these manifestos many came to be aware of the policies and programmes laid out by the political parties. Pamphlets were also issued to make known to the public about the stand of their parties. Posters bearing the pictures of candidates along with the election symbol of candidates and message asking for votes are often hung on the

wall. The sole purpose of these is to familiarize voters with the candidates. Small flays were also distributed among the public. This would then be hoisted in vehicles of the supporters as well as their habitation. Last but not the least is newspapers. They play an important role in circulating the parties and candidates stand on certain issues. So, newspaper acts as the medium of interaction between the public and politicians.

f). Mass media:

Advancement in science and technology has brought about massive changes in electoral politics of the district. It has brought the politicians closer to the people. Due to the development and advancement in mass media voters could see, listen, read and hear about the promises made by candidates at the comfort of their house easily. They can made judgment about the personalities of the candidates without having direct interaction with them. In spite of the least advancement in mass media in the district political parties and candidates made use of this tool to a wide extent and accordingly appeal to the voters.

IV. 4. Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) elections:

Siaha District has its own separate administration under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India known as the MADC. Election for the MADC was initially conducted by the District Council Affairs department under the Government of Mizoram and later i.e., from 2012 by the State Election Commission of Mizoram. The MADC elections were held at an interval of five years except for 2007 where the House had to be dissolved untimely due to internal political disturbances. The electoral performance of political parties in the MADC general election of 2000, 2005, 2007, 2012 and 2017 are studied to give a better view on the political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District.

#### IV. 4.1. MADC election 2000

The seventh term of the MADC general election had its own significance as a regional party called Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) contested the election for the first time. In this election there were 4 political parties apart from 7 independent candidates, none of the political parties put up candidates in all the constituencies. Four of the political parties were Indian National Congress (INC), Mizo National Front (MNF), Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) and Mizoram People's Conference (MPC). The INC contested in 18 constituencies, the MNF in 14 constituencies, the MDF in 12 constituencies and the MPC in 6 constituencies. In all there were 57 contestants fighting for the 19 seats of the MADC.<sup>17</sup>

In this election no election manifestos were issued by any parties and that each candidate was in the election battle based on the needs of his/her constituencies. However, both the INC and the MDF propagated Direct Finance and Union Territory for the district and the Maras respectively. There was no clear and direct policy for the socio-economic development and modernization of the agricultural sector of the district. Thus the election battle was fought mainly on the local issue.<sup>18</sup>

As per the notification, election was conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2000. Total number of electorates was 25,837 of which 12,839 were males and 12,998 were females. Total number of votes polled was 21,760 votes. There were 21,608 valid votes and 152 invalid votes; and thus the percentage of voters turn-out was 84.22%.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Government of Mizoram, District Council Affairs Department, Result of the MADC general election, 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with K. Hrahmo, Executive Member i/c Education at Council office, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Mizoram. Op.cit.



There were 19 constituencies with 62 polling stations. The number of candidates in a constituency ranges from 2 to 5. The highest number of candidates in a constituency was Council Colony (vaih) with 5 contestants.<sup>20</sup>

The seventh term of the MADC general election result was declared on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2000. The following table shows the number of seats contest, won and votes obtained by political parties.<sup>21</sup>

Table No. IV. 1. Party- wise performance in MADC election, 2000

S/No.	Parties	Seats Contest	Seats Won	Votes Obtain	Percentage of Votes Obtain
1	MDF	12	8	5619	25.82%
2	INC	18	7	8527	39.19%
3	MNF	14	3	6251	28.73%
4	IND	7	1	861	3.96%
5	MPC	6	0	362	1.66%

Source: Government of Mizoram, DCA Department, Result of MADC election.

From the above table it can be seen that the MDF secured the highest number of seats with 8 seats, followed by the INC with 7 seats then the MNF with 3 seats and one independent candidate won the election. The MPC could not manage to win any seat. No political parties had majority to form the government and it was a hung council. Though the MDF had the highest number of seats, it was short with 2 more seats to form the government. It can also be seen from the above table that the INC

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

with 8527 obtained the highest number of votes which was 39.19% from all the votes cast. They were followed by the MNF obtaining 6251 votes with a percentage of 28.73%. In spite of being lower than both the INC and the MNF in obtaining percentage of votes with 25.82% to 5619 numbers of votes, the MDF secured the highest number of seats. Independent candidates in all, even though not a party, polled 861 votes with 3.96% therefore securing votes more than the MPC which obtained only 362 votes with 1.66% of all votes polled in the election.

Among the constituencies New Siahia had the highest number of electorates numbering 2024 while Chapi had the lowest number with 752 voters. The percentage wise votes poll differed from constituency to constituency. It is in this respect a study of votes polled in constituencies was studied by highlighting the highest and lowest percentage. The highest percentage of voter turn-out in a constituency was Tisi where 95.01% of the electorates used their franchise while the lowest vote turn-out percentage was Council vaih of Siahia town which was 66.67%.<sup>22</sup>

The success of a candidate in terms of winning the heart of voters depended upon their sincerity as well as their base. To this extent the numbers of votes polled by each candidate differed. While N. Viakhu of the MNF from Council vaih constituency of Siahia town secured the highest percentage of votes with 59.82% while H.C. Lalthansanga, an independent candidate, from the same constituency obtained a single vote becoming the lowest of all. The elected members along with their constituencies and parties are shown in the following table.<sup>23</sup>

Table No. IV. 2. Elected members of MADC

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

S/No.	Name of winners	Constituencies	Parties
1	R.T. Zachono	Amotlah	INC
2	V. Vanhupa	No-aotlah	INC
3	L. Khaichyu	Chhaolo	IND
4	S. Khipo	Tisi	INC
5	K. Hrahmo	Chakhei	INC
6	C. Vadu	Zyhno	MDF
7	F.C. Zase	Chapi	INC
8	S. Pailei	Laki	MDF
9	M. Laikaw	Tokalo	MDF
10	C. Vahlo	Phura	MDF
11	I.P. Junior	Saikao	MNF
12	P.P. Thawla	Tipa	MDF
13	N. Zakhai	Amobyu	INC
14	H.C. Chhiesa	Meisavaih	MDF
15	K. Chiama	Siaha Vaihpi	MDF
16	Nohro Hmoko	New Colony	INC
17	N. Viakhu	Council Vaih	MNF
18	Lengduna	New Siaha	MNF
19	S. Vadyu	Siahatlah	MDF

Source: Government of Mizoram, DCA Department, Result of MADC election.

#### IV. 4.2. MADC election, 2005

The eight term of the MADC general election was held on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2005.

This election was contested by 3 political parties along with 10 independent

candidates. The total numbers of contestants were 68. The number of elected seats also increased from 19 to 22 during the term. There were 64 polling stations. There were two female candidates from Phura and Tipa-II constituencies namely K. Nadaw and N. Naphie from the MNF party.<sup>24</sup> As was a case with the previous term of election political parties were in the election fray based upon the needs of a constituency<sup>25</sup> rather than socio-economic development of the district as a whole.

There were 29,301 numbers of electorates which saw an increase of 3464 from the previous term. Of all the eligible voters 24,541 voters used their franchise of which 24,338 votes were valid and 197 were invalid. Thus the total number of votes polled was 24,541 which were 87.75%.<sup>26</sup>

The result for the eight term of the MADC general election was declared on 21<sup>st</sup> April. To have a better view of the electoral performance of the parties the following table was laid out.<sup>27</sup>

Table No. IV. 3. Party wise performance of MADC election, 2005

S/No.	Parties	Seats contest	Seats won	Votes Obtain	Percentage of Votes obtain
1	MNF	21	10	8497	34.62%
2	MDF	19	7	6546	26.67%
3	INC	18	4	6471	26.37%
4	IND	10	1	2422	9.87%

Source: Government of Mizoram, The Mizoram Gazette, Result of MADC election

<sup>24</sup> Government of Mizoram, The Mizoram Gazette, Result of the MADC general election, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2005

<sup>25</sup> K. Hrahmo. Op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> Government of Mizoram. Op.cit.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

The above table shows a comprehensive view of how the people responded to the call of parties by casting their votes. In other words, the electoral performances of parties are showed in the table. The MNF party won 10 seats out of it 21 seats contested, followed by the MDF with 7 seats from 19 seats contested, the INC managed to secured 4 seats from 18 seats filled in the election and one independent candidate won the peoples' consent to lead the council. As such, the MNF obtained the highest number of votes polled with 8497 or 34.62% followed by the MDF with 6546 or 26.67% of all the votes, the INC was placed in third place by obtaining 6471 votes with 26.37 % and combine of all the independent candidates votes amount to 2422 which is 9.87% of all the votes polled.

Each and every candidate tried hard to win the heart of the electors to which they spent lots of their time to garner the support of the people in their own constituencies. Consequently some candidates obtained large number of votes while others did not farewell in the election. Keeping this in mind the electoral performance of candidates as well as the gaps in voters turnout of a constituencies are studies mainly with the difference between the highest and the lowest votes received are highlighted. Among the candidates N.L. Hmunsanga of the MNF party from No-ao tlah constituency received the highest percentage of votes with 64.86% of all the votes share in a constituency while H. Lalchhuana of the MDF party from Rawmibawk (Amotlah) constituency obtained the lowest votes with 2 or 0.23% of the votes polled.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

The highest percentage of votes polled in a constituency was Council Colony with 94.36% of voters turn-out while New Siaha constituency recorded the lowest voters turn-out with 65.81%.<sup>29</sup>

From the result declared it can be seen that no party had the majority to form the government. Towards this end, the United Legislature Party was formed by the INC, the MDF and the lone independent candidate. Accordingly, coalition government was formed with an independent candidate, N. Viakhu, as the Chief Executive Member.<sup>30</sup> The elected members along with their parties and constituencies are shown in the following table.<sup>31</sup>

Table No. IV. 4. Elected members of MADC general election of 2005

S/No.	Names	Constituencies	Parties
1	M. Laikaw	Tokalo	MDF
2	K. Rahi	Laki	MNF
3	F.C. Rehmo	Chapi	MNF
4	K. Hrahmo	Chakhei	INC
5	Beisa Kathei	Phura	MDF
6	S. Lalremthanga	Tipa-I	MDF
7	C. Vahlo	Tipa-II	MDF
8	C. Vadu	Zyhno	MDF
9	S. Khipo	Tisi	INC
10	L. Khaichyu	Siata	MNF
11	M.H. Tiabi	Chhaolo	MDF

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with N. Viakhu at MNF party office, Vaihpi, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

<sup>31</sup> Government of Mizoram. Op.cit.

12	N.L. Hmungsanga	No-aotla	MNF
13	I.P. Junior	Saikao	MNF
14	L.C. Hlychho	Amobyu	MNF
15	N. Viakhu	Council Vaih	IND
16	Lengduna	New Siaha	MNF
17	V. Sangvuana	Siahatla	MNF
18	K. Beisa	Siaha Vaihpi	INC
19	V.VB. Byhna	New Colony	MDF
20	Nahlo Solo	College Vaih	MNF
21	H. Sahlo	Meisavaih	INC
22	H.C. Lalmalsawma Zasai	Rawmibawk	MNF

Source: Government of Mizoram, The Mizoram Gazette, Result of MADC election

#### IV. 4.3. MADC election 2007

The ninth term of the MADC election was conducted in 2007 earlier than the normal period due to the dissolution of the previous term which was mired by political instability within the council. In the previous term no single party had the majority to form government. So the United Legislature Party was formed by the INC, the MDF and the lone independent candidate on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2005. The United Legislature Party government was formed with N. Viakhu as the Chief Executive Member (CEM). After sometime, N. Viakhu defected to the MNF which was greatly dissent by the INC and the MDF and made petition to the High Court.<sup>32</sup> An independent elected member in the District Council, without the support of any political party, is liable to be disqualified if he /she join any political party after such

<sup>32</sup> PP Thawla. (2012). *Na Pina Rah la Kua Heih Teh*. Aizawl: PP Thawla. P:26.

election under Rule 12 (5)(b) of the Mara Autonomous District Council (Constitution, Conduct of Business, etc.) Rule, 2002.<sup>33</sup> The tenth Schedule to the Constitution of India under Paragraph 2 Sub-paragraph 2 also provides for the disqualification of an independent elected member in the House if he/she joins any party after the election. As such the council was dissolved earlier than the normal term.<sup>34</sup> Therefore the date for the ninth term of the MADC election was fixed for 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2007.

In the ninth term election of the MADC, there were 22 constituencies with 64 polling stations. There were 4 political parties namely the MNF, MDF, INC and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) along with independent candidates. Both the INC and the MDF had pre-poll alliance and contested the election as co-ordination while the BJP and the MNF contested the election on their own.

There were no political parties to contest in all the constituencies. The MNF filled its candidates in 20 constituencies thereby becoming the largest to contest from the parties, co-ordination of INC and MDF contested in 22 seats with a seat sharing pattern of 10 and 12 seats respectively, there was one BJP candidate and 12 independents candidates in the electoral fray. In all, there were 55 contestants. There was one female candidate, N. Naphie, from Tipa-II constituency.<sup>35</sup>

The total number of electorates was 31,730 which saw an increase of 2,429 from 2005. As many as 27,580 voters used their franchise. Total number of valid votes polled was 27,358 whereas the number of invalid votes was 222. Thus, 86.92% of the electorates cast their votes.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Mara Autonomous District Council. (2016). *A Compilation of Acts, Rules and Regulation. Volume-1*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. P: 14.

<sup>34</sup> Constitution of India. Retrieved from <https://play.google.com>store>. Accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Government of Mizoram, DCA Department, Result of the MADC general election, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2007

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



The result for the ninth term of the MADC election was declared on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2007. The following table shows the number of seats contested by political parties along with their constituencies and parties.<sup>37</sup>

Table No. IV. 5. Party -wise performance in MADC election, 2007.

S/No	Parties	Seat Contest	Seat Won	Votes Obtain	Percentage of Votes Obtain
1	INC	10	8	6678	24.21%
2	MNF	20	7	11042	40.04%
3	MDF	12	7	6740	24.44%
4	BJP	1	0	3	0.01%
5	IND	12	0	2889	10.47%

Source: Government of Mizoram, DCA Department, Result of MADC election

The above table shows the electoral performance of political parties and independent candidates thereby indirectly showing peoples' response. The INC, as a single party, won the highest number of seats numbering 8, the MDF too managed to win 7 seats having the same seats with the MNF. Others like the BJP and independents did not manage to win any seat. The combine seats of the INC and the MDF were 15 and thus formed the government. The highest number of votes polled went to the MNF which was 11,042 votes with 40.04%, the MDF followed by obtaining 6740 votes with 24.44% then the MNF obtained 6678 votes which amount to 24.21%, independent candidates in all managed to get 2889 votes which was 10.47% and the lone BJP candidate got only 3 votes.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

The electoral performance of constituency differs from one another. Taking this in account, Amotlah constituency recorded the highest number of voters turn-out with 93.54% while New Colony with 71.64% recorded the lowest number of votes polled. Among the candidates V.VB. Byhna of MDF party from New Colony constituency received the highest percentage of votes-polled which is 63.41%. On the other hand, Sakho Chozah an independent candidate from Chakhei constituency got not even get a single vote! Of all the candidates, four candidates forfeit deposits. The co-ordination of MDF and INC formed the government with S. Khipo from Tisi constituency as the Chief Executive Member and S. Vadyu as the Chairman. The elected members along with their constituencies and parties are shown in the following table.<sup>38</sup>

Table No. IV. 6. Elected members of MADC general election, 2007

S/No	Name	Constituencies	Parties
1	M. Laikaw	Tokalo	MDF
2	K. Chhuabei	Laki	INC
3	F.C. Zase	Chapi	INC
4	K. Hrahmo	Chakhei	INC
5	Beisa Kathie	Phura	MDF
6	S. Lalremthanga	Tipa-I	MDF
7	N. Naphie	Tipa-II	MNF
8	B. Tusa	Zyhno	MDF
9	S. Khipo	Tisi	INC
10	L. Khaichyu	Siata	MNF

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

11	M.H. Tiabi	Chhaolo	MDF
12	N. Lalhmunsanga	No-aotla	MNF
13	I.P. Junior	Saikao	MNF
14	L.C. Hlychho	Amobyu	MNF
15	K.H. Beihlo	Council Vaih	INC
16	Lengduna	New Siaha	MNF
17	S. Vadyu	Siahatlah	MDF
18	K. Beisa	Siaha Vaihpi	INC
19	V.VB. Byhna	New Colony	MDF
20	V. Vanhupa	College Vaih	INC
21	H. Sahlo	Meisavaih	INC
22	H.C. Lalmalsawma Zasai	Amotlah	MNF

Source: Government of Mizoram, DCA Department, Result of MADC election

#### IV. 4.4. MADC Election 2012

The tenth term of the MADC general election was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2012. The number of elected seats was increased from 22 to 25 by adding 3 more to the existing seats. Thus, there were 25 constituencies with 67 polling stations. The notable feature of this election was that for the first time in the history of the MADC election Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was used. Therefore, there was no record of invalid votes in the election. Another notable feature of this election was that for the first time the State Election Commission of Mizoram conducted the election.<sup>39</sup>

Total number of voters in the district was 32,898 which saw an increase of 1168 voters from the previous election. There were 15,875 male voters and 17,023

<sup>39</sup> Government of Mizoram, State Election Commission, Result of the MADC general election, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2012

female voters. Siaha East-II constituency had the highest number of voters with a total number of voters was 2211 while Tokalo constituency with a total number of voters at 921 was the lowest.<sup>40</sup>

There were 4 political parties and independent candidates in the election fray. The MNF and the MDF had pre-poll alliance and contested election as co-ordination thereby sharing seats of 12/12 and thus the election was fought in 3 ways. During the process of filling nomination paper, 81 persons filled the nomination of which 16 persons withdrawn and there were 65 candidates. The INC fielded largest number of candidates in 24 constituencies, the co-ordination of the MDF and the MNF with equal number of seats i.e., 12 each and Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) also polled in 3 constituencies. There were 15 independent candidates. The number of candidates in constituencies differed from constituency to constituency from 2 to 5 contestants, where Chakhei constituency had the highest number with 5 candidates. There was one female candidate, Nghakmawii of MNF party from Tipa-II constituency.<sup>41</sup>

The result of the tenth term of the MADC election was declared on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Though the EVM was used, ballot paper was not ruled out. The number of votes retrieved from the EVM was 28,499 and from postal ballot were 219. Thus, the total number of votes cast was 28,688 which are 87.12% of all the votes polled. The number of seats contests, won and votes by the parties can be shown in the following table.<sup>42</sup>

Table No. IV. 7. Party wise performance in the election of 2012

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

S/No	Parties	Seats Contest	Seats Won	Votes Obtain	Percentage of Votes Obtain
1	INC	24	15	13660	47.65%
2	MDF	12	5	6450	22.50%
3	MNF	12	3	5548	19.35%
4	IND	15	2	2849	9.94%
5	ZNP	3	0	161	0.56%

Source: Government of Mizoram, SEC, Result of MADC election

The above table shows the electoral performance of the parties. For the first time i.e., from 2000 to 2012, a party, INC secured 15 seats which was more than required to form the government in the council. This can be attributed to the fact that people are weary of coalition government where the government changed from time to time. For this they voted the INC to power as the Government of Mizoram was also formed by the INC. They were followed by the MDF, the MNF and the IND with 5, 3 and 2 seats respectively. The ZNP party could not managed to win a single seat. The highest number of votes polled also went to the INC with 13,660 or 47.65% followed by the MDF with 6450 or 22.50%, the MNF obtained 5548 votes which amounts to 19.35% and the ZNP with 161 or 0.56% of the votes polled was the lowest to received votes among the political parties. The combined number votes obtained by independent candidates were 2849 which is 9.94% of the votes polled.

One way of determining political awareness of the people is by making an assessment based on the voters turn out in the elections. Voters turn-out in constituencies differ from one another. Amotlah constituency with a record of 95.90% voters turn-out was the highest among the constituencies while Chakhei constituency

had the lowest turn-out with 68.63%. As there's a wide difference between the percentages of voters who exercise their franchise, there was also a gap between the votes received by each candidates. In this respect, the difference between the highest and the lowest votes receiver among the candidates is highlighted. While N. Zakhai of the INC party from Amobyu constituency polled the highest percentage of votes recording 62.50% among the candidates and C. Chhobi an independent candidate from Chapi constituency obtained only 3 votes thereby becoming the lowest votes receiver. The elected leaders along with their constituencies and parties are shown in the following table.<sup>43</sup>

Table No. IV. 8. Elected members of MADC general election, 2012

S/No	Name	Constituencies	Parties
1	J. Rawna	Tokalo	MDF
2	K. Pawhnie	Phura	INC
3	K. Chhuabei	Vahia	INC
4	B. Pasia	Laki	MDF
5	L. Prisila	Zyhno	INC
6	F.C. Rehmo	Chapi	MNF
7	K. Hrahmo	Chakhei	INC
8	L.C. Apaw	Siata	IND
9	Tiahlei Syuhlo	Tisi	IND
10	F.C. Lawmkima	Tipa-I	INC
11	Hiphei	Tipa-II	INC
12	Beirahmo Syhly	Latawh	INC

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

13	I.P. Junior	Saikao	INC
14	N. Zakhai	Amobyu	INC
15	R.T. Zachono	Amotlah	INC
16	F. Hrangchunga	No-aotla	INC
17	M.H. Tiahbi	Chhaolo	INC
18	Nahlo Solo	Siaha North-I	MNF
19	C. Lawbei	Siaha North-II	MDF
20	V.VB. Byhna	Siaha South-I	INC
21	K.H. Beihlo	Siaha South-II	INC
22	K. Snagtlunga	Siaha East-I	MNF
23	L.C. Chakhai	Siaha East-II	INC
24	K. Chياما	Siaha West-I	MDF
25	Pakhu Hlychho	Siaha West-II	MDF

Source: Government of Mizoram, SEC, Result of MADC election

In 2014 an election for Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Mizoram was held. Shri. Hiphei, Chairman of the MADC, of the INC party from Tipa-II MADC constituency too contested in the election and was elected from Palak MLA constituency. He became MLA and bye- election for Tipa-II MADC constituency was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. There were two contestants namely K. Siakhai of the INC and C. Vahlo an independent candidate. Total numbers of electorates in the constituency was 1126 of which 934 voters used their franchise. K. Siakhai obtained 556 votes while C. Vahlo got 378 votes. The former defeated his opponent by margin of 178 votes.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Government of Mizoram, State Election Commission, Result of the MADC bye election, 2014

#### IV. 4.5. MADC election 2017

The tenth term of the MADC headed by R.T. Zachono went smoothly and finishes its term of five years period in time. The date for the eleventh general election of the MADC was announced by Harleen Kaur, Deputy Commissioner of Sialha District, in March 2017 and fixed the date for election to be conducted on 4<sup>th</sup> May. The following are the guidelines for the important dates for members who aspire to contest in the election:-

Last date of filing nomination paper: 19<sup>th</sup> April;

Scrutiny of nomination paper: 20<sup>th</sup> April;

Date of withdrawal for members: 21<sup>st</sup> April.

At the stipulated time 73 members filed a nomination paper but 3 members from independent had withdrawn their paper. As a result, 70 candidates contested the election. This election had two important aspects. Firstly, for the first time in the history of the MADC general election none of the above (NOTA) feature was used. It gives the citizens a wide chance to show their dismay on the candidates by pressing on NOTA button, thereby giving message indirectly to the leaders that they want an alternative and that none of them are fit enough to be elected. Secondly, political parties issued election manifestos for the first time. In the manifestos they highlighted the points to be fulfilled by their parties if given a chance to form government. These gave political education among the people to a great extent. Hence, the eleventh term of the MADC election was peculiar in its own sense.

All the candidates in the election tried hard to win the hearts of the voters by campaigning tirelessly. The main contending parties were the INC and Co-ordination



of the MDF and the MNF. It was widely believed that the Co-ordination would form the government. This apprehension made the INC leaders in Aizawl nervous; so many of the Ministers in Government of Mizoram toured the length and breadth of Siahla District and some even stayed till the polling date in some areas of the district. Likewise, the MNF central leaders from Mizoram did the same for the Co-ordination by highlighting the defects of the Congress ministry. Election campaign was widened and extended by each and every candidate by countering and criticizing their opponents as well as highlighting what they would do for the development of the constituency apart from distributing election manifestos.

In all, there were 4 political parties and independent candidates in the election. The INC contested in all the constituencies the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) contested in 6 constituencies, co-ordination of the MNF and the MDF contested in 25 constituencies sharing seats with 12 seats for the MNF and 13 for the MDF and there were 14 independent candidates. Thus the total number of candidates was 70 members. There were two female candidates namely K. Nadaw an MDF candidate from Phura constituency and an independent candidate Nghakmawii from Tipa-II constituency.<sup>45</sup>

The number of electorates was 37,255 of which 17,968 were male voters and 19,287 female voters. The number of female voters surpassed that of male voters by 1319 votes. In the course of five years i.e., from 2012 to 2017 the number of electorates increased from 32,898 to 37,255 with an increasing number of 4357. There were 25 constituencies and 80 polling stations.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Government of Mizoram, State Election Commission, Result of the MADC general election, 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2017

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

The result for the 11<sup>th</sup> term of the MADC election was declared on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. The total number of voters to exercise their franchise was 31,386 of which 349 votes were from postal ballot and one postal ballot was invalid. Of all the votes 208 votes went to NOTA. The percentage of voters turn-out in the election was 85.45%. The number of seats contested, won and the number and percentage of votes obtained by the parties are shown in the following table.<sup>47</sup>

Table No. IV. 9. Party wise performance in general election of MADC, 2017.

S/No	Parties	Seats Contest	Seat Won	Votes Obtain	Percentage of Votes Obtain
1	INC	25	17	14736	46.29%
2	MNF	12	5	6877	21.60%
3	MDF	13	2	6518	20.47%
4	IND	14	1	3147	9.89%
5	BJP	6	0	349	1.10%

Source: Government of Mizoram, SEC, Result of MADC election

It can be seen from the above table that the INC won a whooping majority of 17 seats by obtaining 14,736 votes with a percentage of 46.29%. The co-ordination of the MNF and the MDF won 7 seats, 5 seats by the former and 2 seats by the later respectively; in combine they obtained 13,395 votes. Taking account as an individual party, the MNF won 5 seats by getting 6877 or 21.60% of votes while the MDF secured 2 seats with 6518 votes amounting to 20.47% of all the votes polled. On the other hand, independent candidates get 3147 votes which is 9.89% obtaining more votes than the BJP of 349 votes amounting to 1.10% of all the votes polled. There was

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

no party that can match the electoral performance of the INC. Therefore, the INC party with a clear cut majority won the peoples' mandate.

People vote a candidate whom they wish to be their representatives. People's decision on voting a particular candidate may be different but the votes determined the peoples' choice. Hence, the electoral performance of candidates differed from person to person. It is in this respect that the electoral performance of candidates is assessed by highlighting the highest and the lowest votes' receiver. K. Chhuabei of Vahia constituency received the highest votes with 58.48%. On the other hand, P.S. Ngohra an independent candidate from Amotlah constituency polled the lowest votes with 11 votes only. Among the contestants 5 candidates lost their deposit. It is essential to highlight the percentage of people turn-out to vote in the election to show the level of peoples' participation in the process of running the administration of the Council. The highest voters turn-out among the constituency was Amotlah with 95.04% while Siaha East-I recorded the lowest voter turn-out with 74.41%.The following table shows the elected leaders along with their parties and constituencies.<sup>48</sup>

Table No. IV. 10. Elected members of MADC general election, 2017

S/No.	Names	Constituencies	Parties
1	K.L. Bana	Tokalo	IND
2	K. Pawhnie	Phura	INC
3	K. Chhuabei	Vahia	INC
4	T. Seido	Laki	INC
5	L. Prisila	Zyhno	INC
6	F.C. Rehmo	Chapi	MNF

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

7	K. Hrahmo	Chakhei	INC
8	L. Khaichyu	Siata	MNF
9	Tiahlei Syuhlo	Tisi	INC
10	F. Lawmkima	Tipa-I	INC
11	K. Siakhai	Tipa-II	INC
12	Beirahmo Syhly	Laty	INC
13	B. Luaha	Saikao	MDF
14	N. Zakhai	Amobyu	INC
15	H.C. Lalmalsawma Zasai	Amohtlah	MNF
16	Lalrosanga	No-aotlah	MNF
17	M.H. Tiabi	Chhaolo	INC
18	Ng. Silla	Siaha North-I	INC
19	V. Vanhupa	Siaha North-II	INC
20	V.VB. Byhna	Siaha South-I	INC
21	K.H. Beihlo	Siaha South-II	INC
22	H. Hrangchuanga	Siaha East-I	INC
23	H.C. Biakcheuva	Siaha East-II	MNF
24	K. Chiama	Siaha West-I	MDF
25	H. Sahlo	Siaha West-II	INC

Source: Government of Mizoram, SEC, Result of MADC election

#### IV. 5. Election Manifestoes

As already highlighted, the parties for the first time issued election manifestos.

The BJP and the INC issued their own manifestos while co-ordination of the MDF

and the MNF issued the manifesto jointly. The election manifestos issued by the parties could be studied as follows:

#### IV. 5.1. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP):<sup>49</sup>

The party had slogan of Generation, Reformation, Preservation and Self-sufficiency called as GRPS. Some of the points highlighted in the manifestos are:-

- 1) Changes to be made in the MADC rules:
  - a) Administration:
    - i) To review the staff welfare.
    - ii) To review service and promotions rules.
    - iii) Good governance and creation of websites for every department.
    - iv) To abolish VIP culture.
  - b) To change the education system and form Mara Public Board Commission.
- 2) To reform the Sixth Schedule through constitutional amendment so that more powers could be given to the Autonomous District Councils.
- 3) To work for the development of power and electricity, agriculture and horticulture, and greater water supply scheme.
- 4) To develop Information and Technology (IT).
- 5) To work for the preservation of Mara Art and Culture and Customary law.
- 6) To enforce total prohibition of drugs and alcohol within the district.
- 7) Take initiative for the development of transport and communication in the area.
- 8) Utilization of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- 9) About Act East Policy and maximum utilization by the people.
- 10) To establish Youth Development Commission:

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<sup>49</sup> BJP, *Election Manifesto 2017*, Siaha: Siaha District BJP.

- a) Work in the field of skill development.
- b) Development and modernization of sports like boxing, football, etc.

11) Self- sufficiency:

- a) Permanent job or settlement and promotion of labour.
- b) Provide assistance for entrepreneurship development of youths.

12) Free corruption and barred politicians from working as contractor and no Contract for politician.

13) Women empowerment in society as well as politics.

IV. 5.2. Indian National Congress (INC):<sup>50</sup>

The party had preamble as “The party pledge to have people friendly government especially for the development and upliftment of the socio-economically disadvantage groups of the society as well as our motherland.” Based on this preamble they draft their manifesto which can be highlighted as follows:

1) Political:

- a) To form stable government and take initiative for the passage of the Sixth Schedule amendment bill, and upgrade of the MADC to Mara Autonomous Territorial Council.
- b) To demand for direct funding by amending Article 280 of the Indian constitution.

2) Administrative Reforms:

- a) To form effective, transparent and accountable government. If and when require to amendment the existing acts, rules and regulations as well as change the administrative structure.

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<sup>50</sup> Mara District Congress Committee. *Election Manifesto 2017*. Siaha: Mara District Committee.

- b) In order to have *Financial Discipline* the government shall work on grant-in-aid rules and financial rules, etc. To this measure allocations of business rules and transaction of business rules shall be implemented.
- 3) Economics:
- a) In order to enhance the agricultural production land survey shall be conducted so as to be self-sufficient.
  - b) To monitor New Economic Development Policy (NEDP), flagship programme of Mizoram Government.
  - c) To work for the creation of *Food Processing Unit* to have better market mechanization.
  - d) To make project proposal so that *Agriculture Research Centre* could be established in Phura.
  - e) Promotion and development of wet rice cultivation (leilet), hill- terrace cultivation, minor irrigation and agriculture link- road.
  - f) To promote animal husbandry, fisheries and small scale industries in Maraland.
  - g) To ensure that greater water supply scheme is completed in time and to expand the scheme to the needy rural areas.
- 4) Human Resource Development:
- a) Promote quality education.
  - b) To take initiative for the reinstatement of science department at Government Siaha College.
  - c) To provide incentive to those who clear National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) from Mara community.

- d) To make provision for MDC Model Scholarship and provide monthly stipend to meritorious candidates.
  - e) To set up student hostels in Shillong and New Delhi.
  - f) To take initiatives so that large number of Mara youths can enter the civil services be it central or state, and by continuing to provide incentives.
- 5) Social:
- a) To widen the scope of old age pension scheme.
  - b) Coordinating with the churches and NGO's in the fight against drugs.
  - c) To continue grant-in-aid given to the differently-able persons.
  - d) To work for the upliftment and preservation of women's dignity.
  - e) Promotion of cooperation and brotherhood among east and west Maras.
- 6) Sports and Youth Affairs:
- a) To work in close affinity with various discipline of Sports Associations and provide incentive to medal awardees in state, national and international levels.
  - b) Development of youths in sports and give more power to Sports and Youth Affairs.
- 7) Art and Culture:
- a) For the promotion of Mara literature, budget of Board of Publication, Art and Culture Department will be increased.
  - b) Cultural exchange programme shall be organized to promote Mara culture.
  - c) To work for the preservation of Mara cultural heritage.
  - d) To take initiative for patent rights for Mara cultural dress.
- 8) Miscellaneous:
- a) To submit memorandum to the central government so that Act East Policy is passing through Maraland.



- b) Construction of inland waterways connection from Lomasu to Kaochao and Slyutlana to Miepu.
- c) To ensure that airport is build in Laty.
- d) Enact service rules for the MADC staff so as to have service security. To provides means so that the staff can avail loans from banks or other financial institutions.
- e) To initiate for more financial allocation from central government.
- f) To establish the MADC Employee Cooperative Bank Limited.

#### IV. 5.3. Co-ordination (MDF & MNF):<sup>51</sup>

On the cover page of the manifesto commitment is made. The commitment stands as ‘to build more inclusive, efficient and accountable government.’ Their main points run as follows:

##### 1) Preservation and Enlargement of Autonomy:

Priority shall be on the exclusion of the MDC and the village council authority from the ambit of the State Election Commission (SEC) and State Finance Commission (SFC), and amendment of CCB Rules, V/C Act, elections to V/C Rules by making proposal in sixth schedule amendment bill.

##### 2) MADC Administration:

- a. To form good and transparent government.
- b. To form Administrative Reforms Committee (ARC) for the purpose of auditing the MADC administration, financial management, planning system, V/C administration, town administration, etc.

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<sup>51</sup> Co-ordination (MDF & MNF), *Election Manifesto 2017*, Siaha: Co-ordination Committee.

- c. Formation of Recruitment Board for better and transparency of recruitment in MADC.
- d. Preservation and development of the nation through Art and Culture Department.
- e. To form Boundary Commission and work for the proper administration of V/C and Government (State, Central and MADC) lands.
- f. Education Reform Committee for reformation of the education system.
- g. Give prominence to Sports and Youth Affairs, and Rescue works.
- h. Information and Technology- promotion and development.
- i. To works efficiently for the construction of Mara house in New Delhi.
- j. Better cooperation with NGO and Churches in the fight against the menace of drugs.
- k. To form a committee to curb corruption.
- l. To abolish giving contract work to the members of Mara District Council, Executive Member and Chief Executive Member.
- m. Keeping in mind on financial mismanagement austerity measures shall be taken to this effect.
- n. To review the trading regulations and amend whenever applicable.

### 3) Development Programme:

- a. To make provision for land based agriculture in conjunction with the climatic condition.
- b. To take initiative for the formation of small scale industries and cottage industry.
- c. To take initiative for the development of electricity, PHE, agriculture and allied activities, etc. through solar energy.

- d. To have better road communication.
- e. To make project for revenue enhancement.
- f. Life Insurance and Health Care scheme in the district.

#### IV. 5.4. Common Points:

- 1) To have good governance, efficient and transparent government.
- 2) Sixth schedule amendment.
- 3) To work in co-ordination with Churches and NGOs.
- 4) Promotion and preservation of Mara literature, art and culture, and customary laws.
- 5) Skill development for the youths.
- 6) Educational reforms so as to have quality education.
- 7) Self-sufficiency for the District by focusing on the upliftment of labour workers.
- 8) To work for the development of Information Technology sector.

#### IV. 5.5. Observation:

From studying the election manifestos of the parties it can be assessed that a feeling of losing Mara identity is creeping in the minds of the people, so, they want to conserve the same by giving importance to the promotion and preservation of Mara literature, art and culture, and customary laws. In the sphere of socio-economic development there are no comprehensive policies. Instead of focusing on agriculture and infrastructure development of the district, the parties emphasize more on central funds. In other words, for the socio-economic development of the district, they rely more on outside support rather than the production from within. It is in this sphere of

dependence on the central fund that political parties give wide importance to the Sixth Schedule amendment and widen political autonomy.

#### IV. 6. Voting Behaviour:

Voting behaviour is the way in which people tend to vote and walk in close relation with political awareness. In democracy, the real political drama of the political parties is best manifested in election. Election offers a chance to the people to participate in the formation of government. In other words, vote is an individual expression of choice in the making of group decision. People use their franchise on a particular candidate based, more or less, upon their perception towards the candidate.

Voting behaviour pertains to the action or inaction of the citizens in respect of their participation in the election that take place for members of their local, regional or national governments. The behaviour results either in support for political candidates or parties from the voting process.<sup>52</sup> The notion of voting behaviour implies the studying of voter's preference, alternative, programmes, ideology, etc. on which elections are fought. Among other things, it helps to arrive at a decision on which officials are chosen to run the government and the multiplicity of parties that voters have to choose from the polls. Therefore, voting behaviour lies at the heart of democratic process and are an expression of popular will.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore it can be concluded that voting behaviour lies at the heart of democratic political system. It helps in assessing and defining what are the process that leads people to vote and what motivates them to vote for a particular candidate or

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<sup>52</sup> Stephen Rule. *Voting Behaviour*. Accessed from <https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007>. accessed on date: 13.08.2017.

<sup>53</sup> *Meaning of Voting Behaviour*. Accessed from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/politics/meaning-of-voting-behaviour-politics-essay.php>. accessed on date: 13.08.2017.

party. In other words, voting behaviour involves a study of human political behaviour in the context of voting in elections.

In order to assess the relationship between voting behaviour and political awareness of the people in Siaha District questionnaire was distributed at Chakhei village and Council Vaih (Colony) of Siaha District in the months of May and June, 2017 with the same questions to know the level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people. The questionnaire was based on the just concluded MADC general election of 2017. In all 200 papers, 100 each to Chakhei village and Council colony were distributed of which 92 respondents were from Chakhei village and 52 from Council Vaih and a comparative study of the two can be made as follows.

To have a better understanding of the peoples' attitude towards the election i.e., political awareness of the people a question was asked on whether they thought about the election even before the date was fixed by the Election Commission. To this question 82.60% of the respondents replied 'Yes' while 17.39% replied 'No' from Chakhei village. On the other hand, at Council colony 73.08% replied 'Yes' and 26.93% as 'No'. The response given by the people made it clear that people are active towards the electoral process. Hence, the level of political awareness is high. The following figures represent the answer given by the respondents from the two areas.

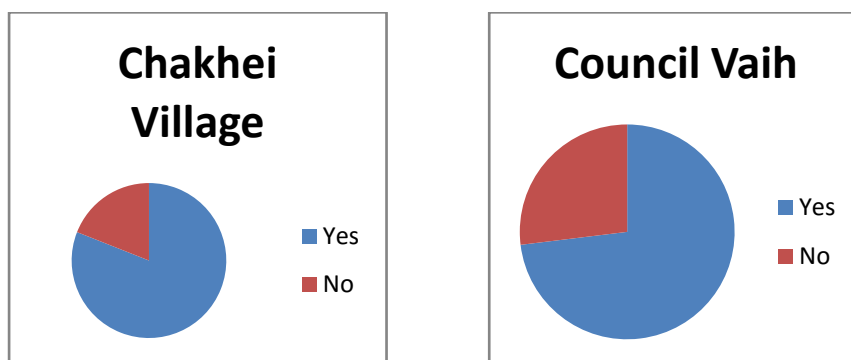


Fig.1. Comparison of voting awareness of Chakhei village and Council colony.

Election is the period of time where each and every voter has the power to change the government. It is during this period that they have the authority to bring down the inefficient leaders and choose an alternative. Therefore, a question regarding the independency of youths in making their own decision was asked. Respondents from Chakhei village with 33.69% replied 'Yes', 56.52% as 'No' and 9.75% could not made up their mind i.e., 'Don't Know'. On the other hand, the situation on Council Vaih is different where 71.16% of the respondents replied 'Yes' and 28.84% as 'No'.

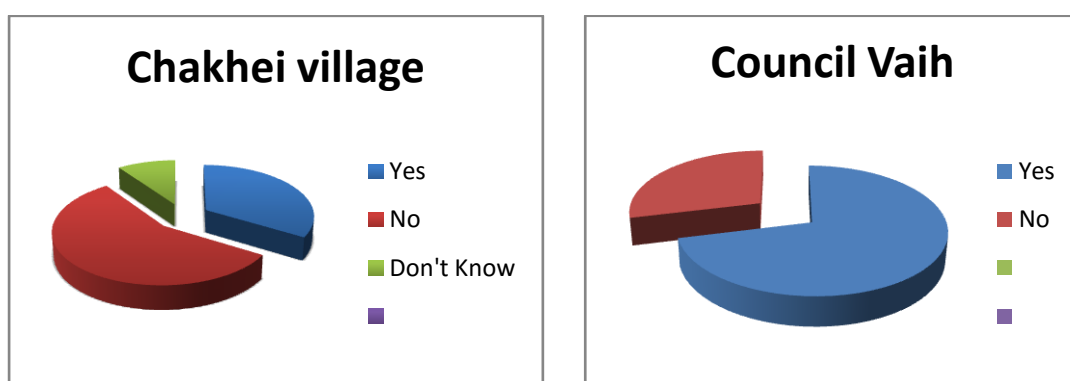


Fig.2. Independence of youths in making their decision in the election.

The above figure shows a sharp contrast between Chakhei village and Council Vaih. The former being rural area, the youths tends to vote on the advice of other person be it family or friends. But in the later as being semi-urban area the youth are more independent in making their decision with regards to exercising their votes.

In the MADC general election of 2017 political parties had for the first time issued election manifestos which contains their policies and programmes. These are the promises made if they are voted to form the government. To analyze the voting behaviour of the people a question on whether parties policies and programmes are

key to winning voters confidence. The reply from both the areas is quite unsatisfactory. It can be represented in the figure as under.

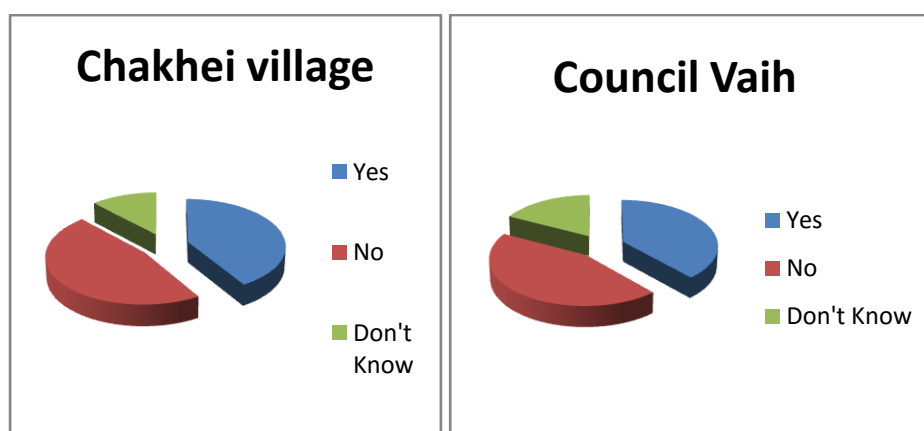


Fig.3. Party policies and programmes are key to winning voters confidence.

The above figure shows the attitude of the people in matters relating to vote. From Chakhei village 41.30% replied as 'Yes', 46.74% and 11.96% as 'No' and 'Don't Know' respectively. Similar to that 38.46%, 44.23% and 17.31% of the respondents from Council Vaih replied as 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't Know' respectively. On the other hand, when asked about the awareness of the policies and programmes laid down by the political parties 75% replied 'Yes' and 25% as 'No' from Chakhei village; in Council Vaih 76.92% said 'Yes' and mere 23.08% as 'No'. In spite of the awareness of the policies and programmes laid down by the parties people did not considered as an important element to vote! The figures on awareness of the people on policies and programmes laid down by the parties are shown as under.

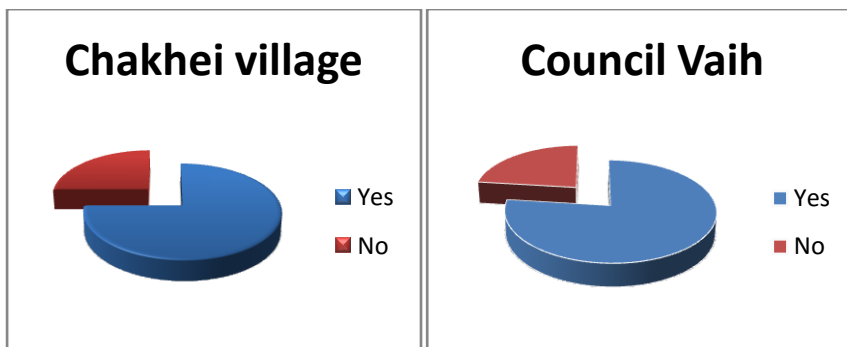


Fig.4. Awareness of the people on policies and programmes laid down by the parties.

Family and clan linkage play an important role in the electoral process. During the election, house-to-house campaign was the popularly used method to garner votes. In that process candidates or parties used to ask for votes based on family and clan relationship. To determine the level of how these factors play a crucial role a question was asked on if they are of the opinion that clan and family relationship are the backbone of electoral politics. A whopping majority of respondents replied ‘Yes’ with 57.61% and 48.08% from Chakhei village and Council Vaih while 40.22% and 40.39% answered as ‘No’, and 2.17% and 11.53% of the respondents couldn’t made up their mind.

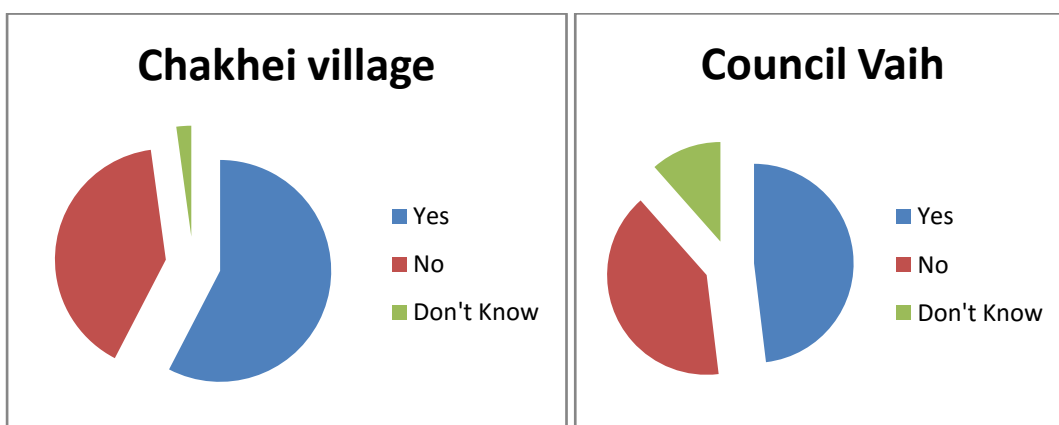


Fig.5. Clan and family relationship are the backbone of electoral politics.



In another instance, to have better conception of voting behaviour of the people a question on what influence them to vote for a particular candidate was asked. Among the respondents from Chakhei village 47.83% cast their vote based on family relationship constituting the highest place, party loyalty constitute second place with 33.70%, election campaign is in the third place with 16.30% and money factor is considered the least importance with just 2.17% of the respondents gave prominent place to it. On the other hand, party loyalty constitute the highest place with 55.77% among the respondents from Council Vaih followed by family relationship and election campaign with the same percentage of 21.16%, and only one of the respondent considered money factor as the reason for voting a candidate. Comparative analysis of Chakhei village and Council Vaih on the factors that influence them to vote can be shown as under:-

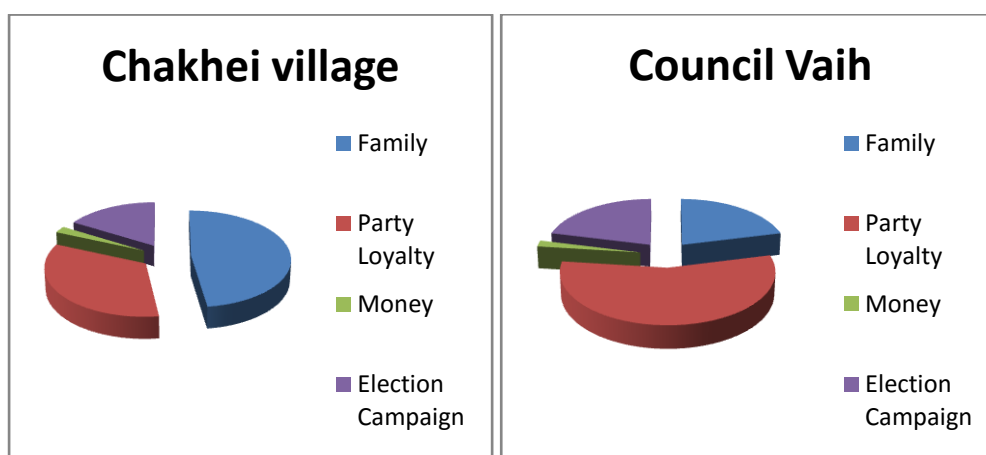


Fig.6. Factors that influence to vote for particular candidate.

From the above statements it can be asserted that people are highly aware of the prevailing political situation. However, voting behaviour of the people is rather traditional considering to the high level of political awareness. Instead of voting based on the policies and programmes of the parties they tend to observe more on family relationship and party loyalty. On one occasion the researcher came across an

individual who is greatly loyal to the party where he stated that he would vote the party's 'candidate even if it's a pig'!

#### IV.7. Conclusion

The study of the MADC general elections from 2000-2017 gives a comprehensive view of the peoples' attitude towards the political system. It can be gauged from the high percentage of voters turn-out in the elections that the people are ready to take part in the formation of government which indirectly shows the high level of political participation. Irrespective of this nature women are considered to be less inferior and are not given much chance to participate in the election. In general, political awareness of the people is high but when considered in term of voting behaviour it is quite traditional as the people tend to give votes to candidate or parties based upon family relationship, party loyalty and not upon the overall development of the district. Although many candidates contested elections as independent candidates the winning candidates for the MADC general elections stand as members of political parties and polls suggested that people tends to vote for a party rather than a particular candidate.

## Chapter: V

### Conclusion

#### V. 1. Concluding remark

Siaha District, which is in the south-eastern part of Mizoram, lies in the loop of the Kolodyne (Beinô) river. The length of the district from north to south is 277kms and the width from east to west is 121kms which in total covers 1445 sq.kms. Siaha town is the administrative headquarter of the district and is the third largest town in Mizoram. As per the MADC census record of 2011, there are 49 villages including the capital town Siaha. According to 2011 census Siaha District has a total population of 56,574.

The Maras are the dominant group in the district. The origin of Mara history is lost in obscurity with the absence of standard historical documentation. Most of their histories prior to their settlement in the Chin Hills of Myanmar were handed down orally from generation to generations as myths. It is believed and accepted by scholars that the Maras originated from the southern part of China and from there they migrated via Tibet entering the hills of northern Myanmar and settled down for sometime in the Chin Hills and from the Chin Hills they entered to their present settlement in 1600s. They periodically migrated south ward due to strong pressure from their superior neighbouring tribes and in search of a fertile land.

When did the Maras began to have an organised life and formed as separate identity could not be clearly laid down due to the absence of historical documentation. But it is apparent that they began to have a *chief* since their settlement in the Chin Hills and crossed the Beinô river. Due to incessant raid upon the British administered

territory by the hill tribes, some of the areas occupied by Mara tribe were put under south Lushai hills from 1891 under the control of British empire. It was only in 1924 that all the areas occupied by the Mara chiefs were brought under the British control. The British rule had massive impact on the socio-political administration of the Maras.

Political awareness in Siaha District started even before Indian independence. In fact it would not be out of place to say that it started in 1907 with the coming of Mr. and Mrs. Lorrain, the white missionaries. They worked tirelessly to put Mara language in a written format and it was after their stay in the area that Mara alphabet was placed in Roman script in March 1908. School for the Maras was opened for the first time in 1908 as well and the Maras were taught the art to read and write. Some of the people began to comprehend their political stand but it was largely concealed due to their backwardness be it social, economic or political aspects. There was no capable individual to lead and rise to a new height as there was no proper political mobilisation and they were politically weak. In other words, all that was required for the political situation to burst out and lit the spark was left to the British political officer.

It was in 1944 that Capt. A.I. Bowman, Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, visited Saikao and put the political dimension to a new height which was never known before. On inspecting village records Shri. Bowman came to realise that the entire village recording was done in Lusei language but not in Mara. Bowman enquired to the matter and advised Chief Chhômho to demand a better status for the Maras. Shri. Chhômho then called for the chiefs meet in 1945 and passed a resolution to demand Lakher District outside the ambit of Lushai Hills District so that the Maras could preserve and promote their own identities and customary laws. As a result the

first memorandum was submitted to the Additional Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, Lunglei on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1945 in which the demand for Lakher District was submitted. They again submitted another memorandum in December, 1945 to the Superintendent of Lushai hills. They would not be disheartened even though no positive and conclusive results were shown. Instead they were positive that their political demand would one day be realised. Hence they were resilient in their demand and therefore submitted another memorandum directly to the Governor of Assam, Shillong on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 bypassing the administrators of the Lushai hills.

On the eve of independence Bordoloi Committee visited the hill tribes of Assam and came to Aizawl in April 1947 to study the political stand of the hill tribes by meeting various leaders. The committee submitted its report to shri. Vallabhai Petel, Chairman of Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minority, etc. on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 which was then forwarded to the president of the Constituent Assembly on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1948 and after much deliberation in the month of September 1949 the draft resolution was adopted and incorporated in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India under Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1). The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India under paragraph 2 sub-paragraph 2 made provision for the formation of Regional Council if there are sub-tribe in a Council.

Before the passing of Bordoloi Committee report, the election for Lushai hills Advisory Council was held on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1948 to which Z. Hengmanga and Vakô from Lai and Mara tribes were elected. Due to the difference of opinion with LL Peters, Superintendent of Lushai Hills, the first meeting of Advisory Council was boycotted by the Mizo Union while United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) boycotted as it favour joining Burma. Therefore, the Government of Assam sent NK Rustomjee, Advisor to the Governor of Assam on Tribal affairs to solve the vexed

boycott issue. Taking advantage of the situation Hengmanga and Vako submitted a letter demanding for Regional Council and walked out of the meeting. Meanwhile, Chhômho also pressurise the same to Rustomjee where he was told that the matter would be considered. In order to strengthen their demand LL Peter advised Chhômho to form a party and the message was relayed instantly to Vakô and Hengmanga. As a result Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) was formed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 at Lawngtlai by the combination of Mara and Lai tribe. In April 1953 Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) was formally inaugurated and thus the two tribes live together under the same roof.

The first term of the PLRC worked well but political dissension was evident from the second term of the council as they say pre-conceive notion of ideas leads to indifference, which was widely prevalent in the council. The Maras demanded for better status in the administrative hierarchy of the council as they were placed second position due to their educational backwardness compared to Lai tribe. Taking this to an upper level the first regional party in the now Siaha District then PLRC called Mara Freedom Party (MFP) was formed on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1963 at Zyhno village under the chairmanship of Valua Hlychho. MFP then aroused the feeling of the people by incorporating all villages except No-aotlah and Tipa-V where Lai people were in dominant towards the cause of political autonomy. All of the Mara people big and small, young and old came together and united under this banner and gave a required support to party leaders. The movement for autonomy got intensified with the peoples' whole-hearted support. With an ardent support of people and tireless effort made by the MFP leaders in petitioning the Government of India, the PLRC was trifurcated into three Autonomous District Councils and thus Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) was created in April 1972.

## V. 2. Findings:

The findings are divided into three categories to have a clear conception about the research work. These three categories are stated as: (1) reason for the emergence of political parties, (2) role played by political parties in Siaha District and (3) the electoral politics of the MADC election from 2000-2017 to study the relationship between the level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District.

### V.2.1. Emergence of political parties:

To study the reasons for the emergence of political parties a political history of Siaha District was studied and highlighted. Right after the formation of the MADC, the Congress party was formed in the district by Mylai Hlychho, former general-secretary of MFP, at Saikaô village in 1972. He formed by stating that it was the Congress party that gave Autonomous District Council to the Maras and corroborate it as the only party that truly cared for the well-being and development of minority tribes like the Maras. In other words, he clarified this step for the formation of the party as a show of appreciation to the Congress party for its indomitable role in the process of political development of Siaha District. Another factor that can be attributed to the formation of the party, as asserted by two politicians on being interviewed, was due to a political discontentment wherein a political party's command had not been honoured by an individual member harbouring political ambition as he was not given a party ticket to contest in the first general election of the Member of Legislative Assembly in 1972.

The party could not generate mass support at the initial stage due to the pre-conceived ideas about mainland Indians by the people and the wave of the MFP along

with Mara nationalism swept the whole district. So at the initial stage it confined at some specific areas. However there was a sweeping change in the district because the Mizo Union was contemplating about merging to the INC. The Mizo Union accordingly merged into congress party in the month of February 1974. As such the MFP too merged to the Congress party in March the same year. When Janata Party came to power at the Centre in 1977 it merged, but again back to the Congress in 1980 due to the fall of Janata Party at the Centre. It then became the most stable party in the district by sitting at the helm of the council for most of the period.

As was handed down from generations, bamboo flowering or famine known as *Mautam* in vernacular language of Mizoram occurred in 1959. The Government of Assam failed to handle the situation in an efficient measure and people were lagging in dire need of basic amenities. In the midst of these circumstances, Laldenga (L) formed Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) and relief work was carried out by the MNFF. Then, some likeminded persons under the leadership of Laldenga formed the Mizo National Front (MNF) in October, 1961. However, it should be noted that MNF was not the conversion of the MNFF. Of course, some MNFF leaders participated but it was not a total conversion. The wave of Laldenga was spreading far and wide in Mizoram, the then Mizo District Council. As a result, the MNF party in Siaha District then Pawi-Lakher Regional area, was formed in 1964 by V. Lalchhawna at Tipa 'V' as he was inspired and influenced by the oratory skills of Laldenga and he wanted to boost co-operation between the Mara and their brethren Lusei language speaking tribe, commonly referred to as Mizo. Due to political disturbances, the MNF was dissolved and was transformed into insurgent organisation from a political party. It was revived as Siaha Division of MNF party on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 at Chalsanga's house, New Colony under the superintendence of shri. Chawngzuala, ex-Minister of



MNF underground, with Siaha as the Division headquarter and R. Zoramthanga acted as the first president.

The Maras were a sensitive tribe. After the MFP was dissolved in 1974, there was no political party that had its origin in the district. Some individuals would not be content with the present political set-up and wanted more political power i.e., political autonomy for the MADC and were not happy with the way power was being exercised by the political leaders as they alleged that recruitment in the council were not at par with the condition and so wanted to change the face of the council. In this connection some politically conscious leaders, namely, PP Thawla, M. Laikaw, N. Beikhai and Vakho Hnaihly met at Tlanzauva's house, Siaha Vaihpi, on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1995. The leaders discussed the political situation of Mara people and made a proposal for the formation of Democratic Reform Committee (DRC). To pursue the proposal, another meeting was held again at C. Vahlo's house, New Colony, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1995 and formed Democratic Reform Committee. The DRC was formed to make the Mara people aware of their political situation and the ultimate was Maraland Union Territory (UT) and PP Thawla was elected as the President of the committee. They toured the length and breadth of Siaha District immediately and propagated the positive impact of Union Territory. Therefore questionnaire was distributed to 150 educated people– Maraland chata UT hia a daih haw? (Do you think it's time to demand UT for Maraland?). To this 87.3% of the respondents overwhelmingly replied 'Yes'. These gave them encouragement and boost their morale to formed regional party in the district.

As majority of the respondents think it's time to demand Union Territory, the Democratic Reform Committee was not enough, there was a need to form political party so a convention was held on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1996 at H.C. Vahnua's house in Siaha

Vaihpi at 10:30 AM. The convention was presided over by PP Thawla and 80 members were present in the convention. It was agreed to form a regional party solely for the cause of Mara people and the ultimate aim would be to obtain Maraland Union Territory. Among the names proposed, the name of Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) was accepted which was then proposed by K. Chhôtua of New Laty.

Another national political party that exist in Siaha District apart from the Indian National Congress is the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP). The reason for the formation of the party was to obtain more autonomy for the district as they saw a prospect for the BJP to form the government at the Centre. Therefore, the BJP was formed at K.L. Mahei's house, Meisavaih in early 1997 under the superintendence of Chawngzika Riang, the then Vice- President of Bharatya Janata Party, Mizoram Pradesh. The founding members were K.L. Mehei, C. Hlychho, Lalbuia, F. Thangchhuaha, B. Ngokhaw and Zahlo Hlychho among others. The first president was K.L. Mahei and he continued to hold this post till his defection to MNF in 2005.

The reason for the emergence of political parties in Siaha District can be summarised in the following points:

1. Notion of difference from other tribes living within Mizoram.
2. To preserve, protect and maintain Mara language, culture and tradition.
3. Discontentment with the political context and to fight for more political autonomy.
4. Discontentment wherein a political party's command had not been honoured by an individual member harbouring political ambition.
5. Influence of a charismatic leader.

6. To build up cooperation between Mara and Lusei language speaking people commonly referred to as Mizo tribes.
7. To reason with the mainstream or mainland political system.

#### V.2.2. Role played by political parties in political development

Political parties are the life line of modern democracy, they play a huge role in the formation and development of a state. The absence or suppression of political parties is regarded as political backwardness. Political parties act as liver of modern political system. One of the most important roles played by political parties in the district is the formulation of public policies in order to strengthen mass support because without citizens support no party could survive let alone function. Since the days of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council parties i.e., the MFP formulate their policy for political autonomy so that the Maras could administere themselves. Even after the creation of *Autonomous District Council*, parties in the district still invigorate for enhancement of political power. They publicise their propaganda to the public that for the betterment and prosperous development of the council more power should be given to them. All the parties are united in this respect though their method and propaganda differ a bit. It was the MDF party that propagate for Union Territory (UT) for the Maras, since its formation it ultimately take course on this step by submitting memoranda to the central government by stating that Maras are not sub-tribe of Mizo but a tribe in equal term with that of Mizo. The party could not agree on less than UT for the Maras. It had always been their top agenda even if pre-poll electoral alliance was made with other parties. On the other hand other parties like the Congress, the MNF and the BJP are in support of Sixth Schedule amendment though they are less vigour in their policy they propagated for this step by elaborating that it would enhance autonomy. The Congress party, meanwhile, polarised direct finance to woo

voters to their side. All parties gave this point for more political autonomy in their election manifestos during the eleventh term of the MADC election and agreed on the principle of more political power for Siaha District.

Political parties act as link between the people and the government. It is a party that associate itself with the people and try to outsmart their opponents by highlighting their defect while increasing their prospects. In this respect rapport is built in active engagement with the people. It was during the Congress rule that the council passed the MADC Control, Conduct and Business, etc Rules, 2011 and MADC Village Council Amendment Act, 2011 in the House at monsoon session in August, 2011. The Act gave the power to control and supervise elections in the council to Mizoram State Election Commission. This moved was criticized vehemently by the MDF and the MNF leaders even before the bill was moved in the House. In a press meet on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 M. Laikaw, president of MDF, criticize the move by stating that the council than rule by INC are pawn of the state government and warned that this would amount to degradation of District Council's autonomy as it curbed the Legislative power of the council. Similar view was echoed in a joint press meet held by the parties on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 where they implied that INC party had sold the council autonomy and went to the extent of rebuking the INC as enemy of the nation. On the other hand the ruling Congress party, during the eleventh term of the MADC criticised the MDF and the MNF and argued that they side with BJP party who had banned cow slaughter and argumentatively urge the voters to desist from them. They also made to the point that this course infringe upon their customs and should not be accepted by the people. Meanwhile co-ordination of the MDF and the MNF were also criticising the government for the over staff of the council. These push and pull method create political awareness on the citizens. The parties imparted

political education on the people. In a nutshell the role of political parties in political development can be summarised as:

1. Impart of political education.
2. Act as a link between the people and the government.
3. Formulate public policy thereby raising political awareness.

### V.2.3. Electoral politics and the MADC election

There is no single measuring rod to determine the level of political development as the concept itself is vast and covers a wide dimension. Therefore, different scholars equalise it with democracy, modernisation, westernisation, nation-building, state-building and institutions. It is in this respect the electoral politics of the MADC general elections from 2000-2017 were studied to analysed a relationship between the level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District. For this purpose the same questionnaire was distributed at Chakhei village and Council Vaih of Siaha town in May and June, 2017 respectively and a comparative analysis was made to have deeper understanding on the subject.

Based on the data collected from these questionnaires it is noticeable that people are aware of their political situation. When asked on whether they ever think about election even before an election date was fixed by the Election Commission of India, the response was highly reasonable as 82.60% of the respondents from Chakhei village and 73.08% from Council Vaih have thought about it. This can also be stated from the fact that peoples' participation was also high as the level of voting percentage during the prescribed period saw a high percentage of voters turn out which was over 80% in all the elections. Even the lowest percentage was 84.22% in the year 2000. This figure shows that the people subscribe to their electoral politics

and are inclined to participate in running the administration of the government and thus the level of participation was high.

In making a comparison to the selected areas concerning the decision on whom to vote or which party to support by youth, youth voters from Chakhei village rely more on outside influence rather than their own thinking which indicates that voters are being influenced by family and close peers. It indicates that 33.69% of respondents of the questionnaires stated that they did not take decision by themselves in choosing for whom to vote in election. On the other hand, the situation on Council Vaih was different where 71.16% of the respondents make decision on their own.

People were well aware of the policies and programmes laid down by parties during the eleventh term of the MADC general election as election manifestos were issued for the first time by parties where more than 70% of respondents from both the selected areas stated that they were aware of it. However in casting their votes, they tend to rely more on other factors rather than the policies and programmes of the party because the respondents did not think that party's policies and programmes were the key to winning voters confidence. When asked whether they think party policies and programmes are the key to winning voters confidence 41.30% replied as 'Yes', 46.74% and 11.96% as 'No' and 'Don't Know' respectively from Chakhei village. Similar to that 38.46%, 44.23% and 17.31% of the respondents from Council Vaih replied as 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't Know' respectively. Instead of considering on the policies and programmes laid down by the parties, they give prominence to family relationship and party loyalty. The researcher on observing the election event of 2017 found out that people were playing politics based on family and clan relationship and they predict their share of votes based on this factor. Meanwhile they made reservation based on party loyalty too. One of an interviewee even clearly said that he

would vote for a party even if it's a pig! Irrespective of the influence of family and clan relationship along with party loyalty, money too plays an important component in determining the voters' decision. The researcher also came across people asking money from political leaders in exchange to vote a party's candidate! On one occasion youths from one locality were professing that they would not vote for a candidate because that candidate was not able to give them money they asked for.

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that though the level of political awareness is high when considered in term of voting behaviour it is quite traditional as the people tend to give votes to a candidate or parties based upon family relationship, party loyalty and individual satisfaction rather than an overall development of the district.

The level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people based on electoral politics can be summarised as follows:

1. Political awareness and participation in regard to casting of votes in election is high.
2. People did not care much about the policies and programmes laid down by parties during casting vote.
3. Voting behaviour of the people is conditioned by family and clan relationship along with party loyalty.

## ABBREVIATIONS:

ADC	Autonomous District Council
ADC	Additional Deputy Commissioner
ARC	Administrative Reforms Commission
BJP	Bharatya Janata Party
CA	Constituent Assembly
CEM	Chief Executive Committee
ECI	Election Commission of India
IDC	Interim District Council
INC	Indian National Congress
LADC	Lakher Autonomous District Council
LADC	Lai Autonomous District Council
MADC	Mara Autonomous District Council
MDC	Member of District Council
MDCC	Mara District Congress Committee
MDF	Maraland Democratic Front
MFP	Mara Freedom Party
MNF	Mizo National Front
MPCC	Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MU	Mizo Union
PLRC	Pawi-Lakher Regional Council
PLTU	Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union
UMFO	United Mizo Freedom Organisation



## Declaration

I, H. Lalremruatthiama, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form bias of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science.

(Signature)

(Head)

(Supervisor)

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Abstract

Political Development:  
The Role of Political Parties in Siaha District (2000-2017)

M. Phil.

Dissertation

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## Introduction:

Every country has some kind of political system and it is not necessarily homogenous even within a country also. As there are different cultures and identities, there are also different political systems and the development of each country depends largely upon the effectiveness of their political system.

The origin of the term political development can be traced back to 1950's after the Second World War when a large number of American political scientists attempted to study political dynamics of the newly emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America with the process of decolonisation. Huge amount of statistical and quantitative data on the social, political, economic and demographic aspects of these nations were collected to analyse their attitudes, values and behaviour pattern. Many scholars defined in their own terms to suit their conditions. Some of the scholars relate political development with that of modernity and change of political system.

The process of political development in Siaha District started with the advent of Mr. and Mrs. Lorrain, the white missionaries. They transformed the life of the Maras and brought them to civilisation. As a result, the people began to be aware of their political situation and demanded for separate administration since 1945 and the demand continues in the form of Sixth Schedule amendment and Union Territory.

## Statement of the Problem:

The political consciousness of the people inspires the Maras to have their own self-administration. The meeting of the Chiefs of Circle Number XVI held at Saikao in 1945 was the first manifestation of political consciousness of the people. After a long period of time, the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) was formed as a political party in 1963. As a result of the effort of political leaders and support of the people, the area is placed under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

After the creation of the MADDC, many political parties sprang up. These parties aspire to obtain more political autonomy of which the Maraland Democratic Front stands for Union Territory and Indian National Congress advocates Direct Finance to get mass support and largely depend upon the Central and State Government for funds. The elections that were fought over the years were largely based on the policy of Sixth Schedule amendment and the enhancement of more political power and thereby inculcating in the minds of the people



about the positive aspects of this policy which later on lead to political awareness. On the other, hand people largely consider their family relationship with the candidates rather than the policy of the parties during elections.

Objectives:

1. To study the factors responsible for the emergence of political parties in Siaha District.
2. To analyse the roles of political parties in Siaha District.
3. To study and assess the electoral politics of the MADC elections from 2000 to 2017.

Research Questions:

1. What are the reasons for the emergence of political parties in Siaha District?
2. What are the roles of political parties in political development in Siaha District?
3. What is the relationship between voting behaviour and level of political awareness of the people of Siaha District?

Methodology:

The research was based on historical, descriptive and analytical method. Data collection is done through primary as well as secondary sources. Primary sources consist of observation, questionnaire and interview method. As the Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) elections from 2000-2017 were touched, observation and questionnaire method were used to observe the peoples' attitude and how far they integrate within the political system in the eleventh MADC general election. Observation method consists of participant and non-participant method. In the meantime, questionnaires were distributed at Chakhei village and Council Vaih of Siaha town in the months of May and June, 2017 respectively to study and assess the relationship between voting behaviour and political awareness of the people. For this a questionnaire was distributed, 100 papers each at the two selected areas, where 92 respondents were from Chakhei village and 52 were from Council Vaih in Siaha town and a comparative study of the two was made. As far as the interview method is concerned, unstructured interview method was used. On the other hand, secondary sources consist of party constitutions, and election manifestos of different political parties, memorandum of political parties, books, internet source and newspapers.

## Scope of the study:

The study focuses upon political development in Siaha district from the year 2000 to 2017. The time scale of 2000-2017 is used so as to make a comparative study on the level of the relationship between political awareness and voting behaviour of the people. The eleventh term of the MADC general election was conducted in May 2017 and the researcher expect to tap the first hand information on political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District by touching upon the MADC election of 2017. The study traces the history of political development in the area since the colonial period and it tries to assess a better understanding and the clear conception on the emergence of political parties. It also analyses the electoral behaviour and political socialisation of the people and touched upon the role played by political parties in creating political awareness on the people and ultimately on political development of the district.

## Chapterisation:

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the propose study and include in brief the meaning and concept of political development and the process of political development in Siaha District. It also highlights the review of literature, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, research methodology and scope of the study.

### Chapter 2: Profile of the Maras

This chapter discusses about the history of Mara: their origin, migration to their present settlement from the Chin Hills in Myanmar, the generic name of Mara, their relations with the British, Mara polity and evolution of Mara Autonomous District Council after the British left India. It also highlight in brief about the geographical profile of Siaha District.

### Chapter 3: Political Parties

This chapter examines the theoretical perspective of political parties like meaning, emergence, characteristics and role of political parties in a political system. It also discusses about the four political parties in Siaha District, namely, the Maraland Democratic Party, the Indian National Congress, the Mizo National Front District Headquarter and the Bharatya Janata Party in detail. The reasons for the emergence and growth of the parties, their objectives, organisational structure and the role played by the parties in Siaha District.

## Chapter 4: Electoral Politics

This chapter contains in brief the background of electoral system of India. It also discusses on the various types of election campaign in Siaha District during the election times like house to house campaign, flag flying contest, public meeting, personal contact, printed materials and mass media. The study of the MADC elections from 2000-2017 was made along with election manifestos of political parties during the eleventh term of the MADC election. Voting behaviour of the people was studied by analysing the questionnaire distributed in the month of May and June at Chakhei village and Council colony of Siaha town.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The concluding chapter recapitulates the main arguments of the research work and assess the findings of the research work. It also contains some suggestions.

### Findings:

The findings are divided into three categories to have a clear conception about the research work. These three categories are stated as: (1) reason for the emergence of political parties, (2) role played by political parties in Siaha District and (3) the electoral politics of the MADC election from 2000-2017 to study the relationship between the level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District.

### Emergence of political parties:

To study the reasons for the emergence of political parties a political history of Siaha District was studied and highlighted. Right after the formation of the MADC, the Congress party was formed in the district by Mylai Hlychho, former general-secretary of MFP, at Saikaô village in 1972. He formed the Congress party and clarified it was the Congress party that gave Autonomous District Council to the Maras and corroborate it as the only party that truly cared for the well-being and development of minority tribes like the Maras on being interviewed. In other words, he clarified this step for the formation of the party as a show of appreciation to the Congress party for its indomitable role in the process of political development of Siaha District. Another factor that can be attributed to the formation of the party, as asserted by two politicians on being interviewed, was due to a political discontentment wherein a political party's command had not been honoured by an individual

member harbouring political ambition as he was not given a party ticket to contest in the first general election of the Member of Legislative Assembly in 1972.

The party could not generate mass support at the initial stage due to the pre-conceived ideas about mainland Indians by the people and the wave of the MFP along with Mara nationalism swept the whole district. So at the initial stage it confined at some specific areas. However there was a sweeping change in the district because the Mizo Union was contemplating about merging to the INC. The Mizo Union accordingly merged into congress party in the month of February 1974. As such the MFP too merged to the Congress party in March the same year. When Janata Party came to power at the Centre in 1977 it merged, but again back to the Congress in 1980 due to the fall of Janata Party at the Centre. It then became the most stable party in the district by sitting at the helm of the council for most of the period.

As was handed down from generations, bamboo flowering or famine known as *Mautam* in vernacular language of Mizoram occurred in 1959. The Government of Assam failed to handle the situation in an efficient measure and people were lagging in dire need of basic amenities. In the midst of these circumstances, Laldenga (L) formed Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) and relief work was carried out by the MNFF. Then, MNFF and some likeminded persons under the leadership of Laldenga formed the Mizo National Front (MNF) in October, 1961. However, it should be noted that the MNF was not the conversion of the MNFF. Of course, some MNFF leaders participated but it was not a total conversion. The wave of Laldenga was spreading far and wide in Mizoram, the then Mizo District Council. As a result, the MNF party in Siaha District then Pawi-Lakher Regional area, was formed in 1964 by V. Lalchhawna at Tipa 'V' as he was inspired and influenced by the oratory skills of Laldenga and he also wanted to boost co-operation between the Mara and their brethren Lusei language speaking tribe, commonly referred to as Mizo. Due to political disturbances, the MNF was dissolved and was transformed into insurgent organisation from a political party. It was revived as Siaha Division of MNF party on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 at Chalsanga's house, New Colony under the superintendence of shri. Chawngzuala, ex-Minister of MNF underground, with Siaha as the Division headquarter and R. Zoramthanga acted as the first president.

The Maras were a sensitive tribe. After the MFP was dissolved in 1974, there was no political party that had its origin in the district. Some individuals would not be content with

the present political set-up and wanted more political power i.e., political autonomy for the MADC and were not happy with the way power was being exercised by the political leaders as they alleged that recruitment in the council were not at par with the condition and so wanted to change the face of the council. In this connection some politically conscious leaders, namely, PP Thawla, M. Laikaw, N. Beikhai and Vakho Hnaihly met at Tlanzauva's house, Siaha Vaihpi, on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1995. The leaders discussed the political situation of Mara people and made a proposal for the formation of Democratic Reform Committee (DRC). To pursue the proposal, another meeting was held again at C. Vahlo's house, New Colony, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1995 and formed Democratic Reform Committee. The DRC was formed to make the Mara people aware of their political situation and the ultimate was Maraland Union Territory (UT) and PP Thawla was elected as the President of the committee. They toured the length and breadth of Siaha District immediately and propagated the positive impact of Union Territory. Therefore questionnaire was distributed to 150 educated people– Maraland chata UT hia a daih haw? (Do you think it's time to demand UT for Maraland?). To this 87.3% of the respondents overwhelmingly replied 'Yes'. These gave them encouragement and boost their morale to formed regional party in the district.

As majority of the respondents think it's time to demand Union Territory, the Democratic Reform Committee was not enough, there was a need to form political party so a convention was held on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1996 at H.C. Vahnua's house in Siaha Vaihpi at 10:30 AM. The convention was presided over by PP Thawla and 80 members were present in the convention. It was agreed to form a regional party solely for the cause of Mara people and the ultimate aim would be to obtain Maraland Union Territory. Among the names proposed, the name of Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) was accepted which was then proposed by K. Chhôtua of New Laty.

Another national political party that exist in Siaha District apart from the Indian National Congress is the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP). The reason for the formation of the party was to obtain more autonomy for the district as they saw a prospect for the BJP to form the government at the Centre. Therefore, the BJP was formed at K.L. Mahei's house, Meisavaih in early 1997 under the superintendence of Chawngzika Riang, the then Vice-President of Bharatya Janata Party, Mizoram Pradesh. The founding members were K.L. Mehei, C. Hlychho, Lalbuia, F. Thangchhuaha, B. Ngokhaw and Zahlo Hlychho among others. The first president was K.L. Mahei and he continued to hold this post till his defection to MNF in 2005.

The reason for the emergence of political parties in Siaha District can be summarised in the following points:

1. Notion of difference from other tribes living within Mizoram.
2. To preserve, protect and maintain Mara language, culture and tradition.
3. Discontentment with the political context and to fight for more political autonomy.
4. Discontentment wherein a political party's command had not been honoured by an individual member harbouring political ambition.
5. Influence of a charismatic leader.
6. To build up cooperation between Mara and Lusei language speaking people commonly referred to as Mizo tribes.
7. To reason with the mainstream or mainland political system.

#### Role played by political parties in political development

Political parties are the life line of modern democracy, they play a huge role in the formation and development of a state. The absence or suppression of political parties is regarded as political backwardness. Political parties act as liver of modern political system. One of the most important roles played by political parties in the district is the formulation of public policies in order to strengthen mass support because without citizens support no party could survive let alone function. Since the days of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council parties i.e., the MFP formulate their policy for political autonomy so that the Maras could administere themselves. Even after the creation of *Autonomous District Council*, parties in the district still invigorate for enhancement of political power. They publicise their propaganda to the public that for the betterment and prosperous development of the council more power should be given to them. All the parties are united in this respect though their method and propaganda differ a bit. It was the MDF party that propagate for Union Territory (UT) for the Maras, since its formation it ultimately take course on this step by submitting memoranda to the central government by stating that Maras are not sub-tribe of Mizo but a tribe in equal term with that of Mizo. The party could not agree on less than UT for the Maras. It had always been their top agenda even if pre-poll electoral alliance was made with other parties. On the other hand other parties like the Congress, the MNF and the BJP are in support of Sixth Schedule amendment though they are less vigour in their policy they propagated for this step by elaborating that it would enhance autonomy. The Congress party, meanwhile, polarised direct finance to woo voters to their side. All parties gave this point for more political

autonomy in their election manifestos during the eleventh term of the MADC election and agreed on the principle of more political power for Siaha District.

Political parties act as link between the people and the government. It is a party that associate itself with the people and try to outsmart their opponents by highlighting their defect while increasing their prospects. In this respect rapport is built in active engagement with the people. It was during the Congress rule that the council passed the MADC Control, Conduct and Business, etc Rules, 2011 and MADC Village Council Amendment Act, 2011 in the House at monsoon session in August, 2011. The Act gave the power to control and supervise elections in the council to Mizoram State Election Commission. This move was criticized vehemently by the MDF and the MNF leaders even before the bill was moved in the House. In a press meet on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 M. Laikaw, president of MDF, criticize the move by stating that the council than rule by INC are pawn of the state government and warned that this would amount to degradation of District Council's autonomy as it curbed the Legislative power of the council. Similar view was echoed in a joint press meet held by the parties on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 where they implied that INC party had sold the council autonomy and went to the extent of rebuking the INC as enemy of the nation. On the other hand the ruling Congress party, during the eleventh term of the MADC criticised the MDF and the MNF and argued that they side with BJP party who had banned cow slaughter and argumentatively urge the voters to desist from them. They also made to the point that this course infringe upon their customs and should not be accepted by the people. Meanwhile co-ordination of the MDF and the MNF were also criticising the government for the over staff of the council. These push and pull method create political awareness on the citizens. The parties imparted political education on the people. In a nutshell the role of political parties in political development can be summarised as:

1. Impart of political education.
2. Act as a link between the people and the government.
3. Formulate public policy thereby raising political awareness.

#### Electoral politics and the MADC election

There is no single measuring rod to determine the level of political development as the concept itself is vast and covers a wide dimension. Therefore, different scholars equalise it with democracy, modernisation, westernisation, nation-building, state-building and institutions. It is in this respect the electoral politics of the MADC general elections from

2000-2017 were studied to analyse a relationship between the level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people in Siaha District. For this purpose the same questionnaire was distributed at Chakhei village and Council Vaih of Siaha town in May and June, 2017 respectively and a comparative analysis was made to have deeper understanding on the subject.

Based on the data collected from these questionnaires it is noticeable that people are aware of their political situation. When asked on whether they ever think about election even before an election date was fixed by the Election Commission of India, the response was highly reasonable as 82.60% of the respondents from Chakhei village and 73.08% from Council Vaih have thought about it. This can also be stated from the fact that peoples' participation was also high as the level of voting percentage during the prescribed period saw a high percentage of voters turn out which was over 80% in all the elections. Even the lowest percentage was 84.22% in the year 2000. This figure shows that the people subscribe to their electoral politics and were inclined to participate in running the administration of the government and thus the level of participation was high.

In making a comparison to the selected areas concerning the decision on whom to vote or which party to support by youth, youth voters from Chakhei village rely more on outside influence rather than their own thinking which indicates that voters are being influenced by family and close peers. It indicates that 33.69% of respondents of the questionnaires stated that they did not take decision by themselves in choosing for whom to vote in election. On the other hand, the situation on Council Vaih was different where 71.16% of the respondents make decision on their own.

People were well aware of the policies and programmes laid down by parties during the eleventh term of the MADC general election as election manifestos were issued for the first time by parties where more than 70% of respondents from both the selected areas stated that they were aware of it. However in casting their votes, they tend to rely more on other factors rather than the policies and programmes of the party because the respondents did not think that party's policies and programmes were the key to winning voters confidence. When asked whether they think party policies and programmes are the key to winning voters confidence 41.30% replied as 'Yes', 46.74% and 11.96% as 'No' and 'Don't Know' respectively from Chakhei village. Similar to that 38.46%, 44.23% and 17.31% of the respondents from Council Vaih replied as 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't Know' respectively.



Instead of considering on the policies and programmes laid down by the parties, they give prominence to family relationship and party loyalty. The researcher on observing the election event of 2017 found out that people were playing politics based on family and clan relationship and they predict their share of votes based on this factor. Meanwhile they made reservation based on party loyalty too. One of an interviewee even clearly said that he would vote for a party even if it's a pig! Irrespective of the influence of family and clan relationship along with party loyalty, money too plays an important component in determining the voters' decision. The researcher also came across people asking money from political leaders in exchange to vote a party's candidate! On one occasion youths from one locality were professing that they would not vote for a candidate because that candidate was not able to give them money they asked for.

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that though the level of political awareness is high when considered in term of voting behaviour it is quite traditional as the people tend to give votes to a candidate or parties based upon family relationship, party loyalty and individual satisfaction rather than an overall development of the district.

The level of political awareness and voting behaviour of the people based on electoral politics can be summarised as follows:

1. Political awareness and participation in regard to casting of votes in election is high.
2. People did not care much about the policies and programmes laid down by parties during casting vote.
3. Voting behaviour of the people is conditioned by family and clan relationship along with party loyalty.

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