

**DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MANIPUR: A STUDY OF THE  
CHANDEL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Degree of Master of Philosophy

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## DECLARATION

I, Ashish Thesongti Monsang, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the result of the work done by me and that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or anybody else, and that this work has not been submitted by me for any other degree in other University or Institute.

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### **ABBREVIATIONS**

ADC	Autonomous District Council
AMFA	All Manipur Football Association
ATSUM	All Tribal Students Union Manipur
DSA	District Sports Association
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNPO	Chandel Naga Chief Association
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
HAC	Hill Areas Committee
MDC	Members of District Council
MHU	Manipur Hill Union
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
NCAC	Naga Chief Association Chandel
NSUC	Naga Student Union Chandel
MACA	Maha Area Chief Association

SDCM  
Manipur

Sixth Schedule Demand Committee of



## **CHAPTER - 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

During the last part of the colonial rule in India the British felt the necessity for evolving a separate administrative mechanism for the tribals of the north-east India. Again, a unique constitutional arrangement was made for them by the Constituent Assembly of India. It was propelled by their autonomy demand for self-governance besides safeguarding their culture, identity, land, customs and traditions. Consequently, Autonomous District Council (ADC) was incorporated under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India [Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1)]. It is exclusively for the tribal groups who were formerly under the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas of undivided Assam. Presently, the ADCs under the Sixth Schedule exist in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. The ADCs provided an opportunity to the tribals of the northeast India to govern themselves based on their culture and tradition. It not only gives training on local self-government to the hill people of the region but also brings economic development in these areas.

A similar kind of administrative arrangement was made for the hill areas of Manipur. It is not under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, though the ideas and the pattern takes from it. During the colonial period the administration of hills and valley were separated.

During the time Manipur was a princely state. The hill areas of Manipur were not included under the excluded and partially excluded areas (undivided Assam). It was out of the purview of the Government of India Act, 1935. There are significant numbers of tribals' population in Manipur, but their inhabited areas are not designated as 'tribal area' under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. It can be pointed out here that when the debate for the Sixth Schedule in the Constituent Assembly was going on Manipur was not a part of the Indian Dominion. Manipur merged with Union of India on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1949. When Manipur merged with India, the hill areas were neither put in Sixth Schedule nor in Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Nevertheless, the tribals of Manipur are provided with certain autonomy to govern themselves through an Act of Parliament known as the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. Accordingly, six Autonomous District Councils were instituted in the hill areas of Manipur. They are namely Tengnoupal ADC (now Chandel ADC), Sadar Hill ADC, Manipur East ADC (now Ukhul ADC), Manipur North ADC (now Senapati ADC), Manipur West ADC (now Tamenglong ADC), and Manipur South ADC (now Churachandpur ADC). It was instituted on the pattern of the Sixth Schedule for the administration of hill areas of Manipur. In fact, it was introduced with the sole purpose of giving self-governance to the tribal people of Manipur. A similar kind of administration was already in place in Assam,

Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura under the Sixth Schedule. In Sixth Schedule areas it is governed by themselves according to their custom and tradition to safeguard their land, culture, and tradition. There is a huge difference between Autonomous District Councils instituted in Manipur and that of the ADCs under Sixth Schedule in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. ADC in Manipur is a statutory body under state government and on the other hand, ADC under the sixth schedule is a constitutional body which draws its power directly from the Constitution itself. In the case of District Councils in Manipur, it was devoid of such powers as bestowed in the Sixth Schedule areas. The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 provides neither legislative nor judicial powers to the district councils, except executive and financial powers under the state government.<sup>1</sup>

Elections to the district councils conducted smoothly until the people in the hill areas realised the problem inherent in the Act. The District Council elections were conducted uninterruptedly from 1973 to 1988. The District Councils, however, remained under suspension from 1989 to 2010 due to demand for Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur. The hill people come to realise that the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 was futile and did not fulfil the aspirations of the hill people. Consequently, the Hill Areas Committee (HAC)<sup>2</sup> adopted a resolution that the elections to ADCs will

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<sup>1</sup> Rajendra Kshetri. (2006). *District Councils in Manipur: Formation and Functioning*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House. P. 42

<sup>2</sup>It was set up under Article 371C of the Indian Constitution by the Government of Manipur.

not be held until and unless the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India is extended to hill areas of Manipur. As a result, ADCs were not function for almost two decades (1989-2010). During the time, the state government came up with the Third Amendment to the Principle Act in 2008 as a response to the demand made by the people of the hills. The Third Amendment Act increased the number of membership and functions of the councils; however the hill people were still unsatisfied and continued their demands. However, District Council election based on the third amendment was held in 2010 with stiff opposition from various communities settle in the hills of Manipur. District Council governments were formed but could not function properly in some parts of hill areas due to protest against the election coupled with the demand for Sixth Schedule. Subsequently, the members of the ADCs work temporarily from Imphal (the state capital), not from their district headquarters.

Despite the opposition, these district councils managed to complete their tenure (2010-2015). Thereafter, the District Council elections were held again in June 2015. It was considered to be an improvement over the previous ADCs election of 2010. During the elections, people witnessed unnatural enthusiasm among political parties like Naga People's Front (NPF) and BJP where they debuted for the first time in ADCs election. In a democratic country like India, political parties are part and parcel of the electoral system.

They have their programme and manifesto which differs from each other. On the other hand, they also enlighten the electorates concerning about their social, economic, and political issues.

The Government of Manipur is doing their best to function the ADCs smoothly so that development can take place in the hill areas of Manipur. They amended the provision of the ADCs from time to time to provide good governance in the hill areas. As of now, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 has been amended four times. The fourth Amendment (of 2011) has been made to prevent the emergence of unstable government in district councils with regards to no-confidence motions against the Chairman of ADCs. However, the conditions of the ADCs in Manipur remained the same even after the fourth amendment. At the same time, ADCs in Manipur keep on urging the state government for proper devolution of powers as envisaged in the Act. In September 2014 members of the district council from Manipur staged a protest in New Delhi demanding the devolution of the powers and functions to the councils.<sup>3</sup> Again in February 2018, a memorandum was forwarded to the Chief Minister of Manipur by a conglomerate of chairman from four ADCs. Among others, their grievances

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<sup>3</sup>*Manipur Autonomous District Council to protest in Delhi.* Eastern Mirror. Dated 04/09/2014 (Daily publish in Nagaland) Retrieved from [www.easternmirrornagaland.com](http://www.easternmirrornagaland.com) on February 15, 2020

include devoid of budgetary provision, planning and sustainable development at the grass-root level in the hill areas.<sup>4</sup>

The District Councils in the hill areas of Manipur are not functioning properly. In other words, local self-government in the hill areas of Manipur is not healthy even after 40 years of its existence (as the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act was passed in 1971). These ADCs are meant for the hill people to govern themselves as per their traditional way of life. Local self-government is a government at the local level which is responsible for bringing various socio-economic developments at the grass-root level. It can be noted here that whether the hill areas are administered under the Sixth Schedule or not, they should be allowed to function properly and effectively. The state government should take the necessary steps to make the ADCs functional as per the Act in toto. It can be remembered here that the sole purpose of providing ADCs is that of socio-economic and cultural development in the hills areas. Most of the funds allocated for development purposes, however, are being spent on administrative expenses like purchase of vehicles etc. far more than their requirements and left a little fund for welfare and development measures.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ADCs demand 'actual' devolution of powers. Dated 01/02/2018, retrieved from [www.e-poa.net](http://www.e-poa.net) on February 19, 2020

<sup>5</sup>Rajendra Kshetri. (2006). *District Councils in Manipur: Formation and Functioning*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House

## 1.1. Concept of Local Self-Governance

The term local government has been defined differently by various scholars. However, the core features or principles attached with it remained the same. Local self-government implies the decentralisation of powers so that the elected bodies may function independently with authority and resources to bring about economic development and social justice.<sup>6</sup> According to Lord Bryce a renowned political writer, opines that “The best school for democracy and the best guarantee for its success is the practice of local self-government.”<sup>7</sup> The essence of local government required the devolution of powers from the above (higher authority), so that, locally elected government efficiently utilizes the devolved powers from the above.

The term ‘local self-government’ is not defined by the Constitution of India. The terms ‘local government’ and ‘local self-government’ has been used interchangeably. The institution of Panchayats and Municipal Corporations are regarded as institutions of self-government in India. The Constitution defines the panchayats and the municipalities as institutions of ‘self’ government and has given a framework for fresh legislative action by the states.<sup>8</sup> Panchayat is the rural local government. Similarly, Municipal Corporations is operating as local government for urban areas. Panchayati Raj

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<sup>6</sup> Biswajit Mohapatra. (2013). Local Self-Governance and People’s Empowerment: Challenges and Perspectives. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Volume LXI, No. 4, October-December

<sup>7</sup> E. Asirvatham. (1955). The Role of Local Self-Government in a Democracy. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July-September, Pp. 185-189 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42742819>

<sup>8</sup> T. N. Srivastava. (2002). Local ‘Self’ Government and the Constitution. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 30, July-August, Pp. 3190-3198 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4412421>

system deals with grassroots democracy in rural areas whereas Nagar Palika systems deal with grass-root democracy in urban areas.<sup>9</sup> In the north-east region Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule for tribals are in force. However, there are few states in the northeast region which adopted Panchayat Raj System under the Part IX of Indian Constitution.

## **1.2. Local Government in India**

### **1.2.1. Panchayat and Municipal Corporations**

In the Indian context, Panchayat and Municipalities are considered as ‘institutions of self-government’. Panchayat system instituted for rural areas. On the other hand, local governments in the urban areas are the Municipalities. Both these institutions of local government are common in India except in few states. It constitutes as the third tier of the government.

Initially, these institutions do not have the Constitutional mandate or protection. They were under the article 40 of the Directives Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution. It implies that they are non-enforceable. However, the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 gives Constitutional recognition to local self-government in India. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment 1993 signifies the decentralisation of powers to local government. The Panchatyati Raj system is operating in most parts of

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<sup>9</sup> Jangkhogam Dounge. (2013). An Analysis of Urban Local Self Government in the Sixth Schedule Area of Mizoram. *Journal of North East India Studies*, Volume 3(2), Jul-Dec, Pp. 35-47



India except in few states like Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram and in the hills areas of Manipur and all union territories except Delhi.

### **1.2.2. Autonomous District Councils in North-east India**

The tribals of northeast region have been treated differently from the rest of the country in lieu of their distinct identity and culture. Most part of the tribal regions do not adopt the panchayat raj system as local self-government. Autonomous District Councils as an institution of local self-government is prevailing in the tribal areas of this region. This tribal areas were formerly belongs to 'excluded areas and partially excluded areas' under the Government of India Act, 1935. Special treatment was meted out to protect them from the exploitation of the neighbouring plainmen. Accordingly, in consonance with the Cabinet Mission plan a sub-committee of the Constituent Assembly of India was set up. It was named as the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee. The committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi to devise an administrative mechanism for the tribal people of north-east India. The Bordoloi Committee studied carefully the then existing administrative set up in the hill areas of North East India with a view to setting up of an autonomous body for the administration of the hill areas. It recommended an administrative body based on the concept of regional autonomy in all matters relating to customs, laws of

inheritance, administration of justice, land, forest etc.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the Bordoloi Committee suggested for an Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India for the tribals.

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India facilitates the tribals of undivided Assam to govern themselves through constitutional body and to initiate necessary steps for preservation and protection of their ethnic identity, custom, culture and tradition and development works under the provision of the Sixth Schedule.<sup>11</sup> The basic aim of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution is to provide a distinct political and administrative structure for the hill areas of Northeast India, so that the tribal communities, lacking outside exposure and having little political consciousness, are not exploited by the more advanced neighbouring people of the plains.<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, the tribals regions which are formerly under the excluded and partially excluded areas are provided Autonomous District Council and Regional Council.

In Assam there are three Autonomous District Councils under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. They are (a) Bodoland Territorial Council (b) Karbi Anglong Autonomous council and (c)

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Tuolor. (2013). Autonomous District Council in North East India with special reference to the North Cachar Hills Autonomous District Council of Assam: A Historical Analysis. *International Journal of Advancement in Research & Technology*, Volume 2, Issue 8, August

<sup>11</sup> Jangkhongam Doungel. (2018). Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule: Distinctiveness and Dissimilarities with other Councils. *Contemporary Social Scientist*, Vol. X-1

<sup>12</sup> Nani Bath. (2020). MARDC's autonomy demand and its likely international ramifications. The Arunachal Times. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2020/08/10/mardcs-autonomy-demand-and-its-international-ramifications/%famp>

North Cachar Hills Autonomous Councils (also known as Dima Hasao Autonomous Council). Besides, there are several councils in Assam which are instituted by the state government to quell the autonomy demands of various ethnic groups. Since, these councils are created by the state legislation it has no constitutional protection like the ADCs under the sixth schedule. The tribals of Assam are provided with two different types of Autonomous Councils. The first one is Statutory Councils constituted through the Act of state legislation and another is Territorial Councils provided under the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India. Some of the statutory councils in Assam are Rabha Autonomous Council, Mising Autonomous Council, Tiwa Autonomous Council, Deori Autonomous Council, Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council and Thengal Kachari Autonomous Council etc. These councils are provided to different tribals groups to fulfil their demand for autonomy by the Assam government. In Meghalaya there are three Autonomous District Councils under the provision of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. They are (a) Khasi Autonomous District Council (b) Jantia Autonomous District Council and (b) Garo Autonomous District Council. In Mizoram there are three Autonomous District Councils as per the provision of the Sixth Schedule. They are (a) Chakma Autonomous District Council (b) Lai Autonomous District Council and (c) Mara Autonomous District Council. Tripura has only one Autonomous District Council - the

Tripura Tribal Areas District Council. Autonomous District Council was extended to Tripura through the 49<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1984.

### **1.3. Profile of Manipur**

Manipur is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse state of India. It is one of the seven sisters of north-eastern states. It is located in the extreme corner of north-eastern region of India, bordering Myanmar (erstwhile Burma). It has a total population of 28, 55,794 according to 2011 Census of India.<sup>13</sup> The total land area of Manipur is 22,327 square kilometres. There are three main ethnic groups namely Meitei, Kuki and Naga settle in the state. Geographically, the state is divided into two - the Valley and the Hills areas. Numerically, the Meitei are the single largest community in the state. They are mainly confined in the central valley part of the state along with the Pangals/ Muslim, surrounded by the entire hills region. They constitute about 64.6 per cent of the state's total population. Besides, there are significant numbers of migrant from other part of India. They are mainly engaged in business and others related activities. The valley portions constitute about 10 per cent of the total state geographical area. On the other hand, 90 per cent of the geographical area of the state is occupied by the hill people. The hills which engulfed the valley portion consist of various ethnic groups of Kukis and Nagas. Presently,

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/manipur.html>

there are 34 recognized scheduled tribes communities in the state.<sup>14</sup> The hills people account for about 35.4 per cent of the state's population according to Census of India 2011.

#### **1.4. Hill Administration during Colonial Period**

Manipur was an independent Kingdom till the British conquered the state in 1891. The interaction of the tribals of Manipur and the British began after the British victory in the Anglo-Manipuri war, 1891. The hill areas were administered by the Political Agent assisted by a subordinate officer known as the President of the Manipur State Durbar.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the administration of the valley was under the Maharaja of Manipur. The British Political Agent was responsible for looking after the affairs of the hills people. The arrival of British marked significant changes in the administration of the hill areas. The British divide the administration of the hill areas from the valley areas. This dual system of administration was strongly opposed by the Raja of Manipur.

The British introduced new fiscal measures in the hill areas in the form of house tax. The House Tax rate was rupees 3 per household. They never involved themselves in the actual administration of the hill areas. The accumulation of the new house taxes was entrusted to the chief or the head of

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<sup>14</sup> Thangkhohal Hoakip. (2016). Spurn thy neighbour: The politics of indigeneity in Manipur. *Studies In Indian Politics*, 4(2), Pp. 178-190

<sup>15</sup> Gangmumei Kamei. (2011). *Colonial Policy and Practice in Manipur*. Retrieved from <http://kanglaonline.com>

the villages. The chief or the head of the village while acting as an agent of the British administration simultaneously look after the law and order and administered justice as per the customary laws in the hills areas. The house tax imposed by the British becomes heavy burden for the hill people. The British does not interfered much into the tribals affairs by maintaining administrative autonomy in day to day administration of the hill areas of Manipur.

The hill areas were divided into sub-divisions for the administrative convenience. They were Mao, Ukhrul, Tamenglong, Tengnoupal and Churachandpur sub-divisions. These sub-divisions were administered through *Lambus* under the charge of Political Agent. During the early period of British rule of Manipur (1891-1906), the administration of the hill tribes was looked after by the Political Agent with the help of the *Lambus*.<sup>16</sup> Later in 1906, Manipur State Durbar was established. The Durbar consists of the Maharaja of Manipur and one British officer (usually an I.C.S). The jurisdiction of the Maharaja of Manipur was only the Valley portion whereas, the hill areas were continued to administered indirectly by the Political agent till 1919 in the name of the Durbar, headed by the Maharaja.

During the time, the British pressed the hill people into service as part of the imperial army's labour corps. The Kuki refused, leading to the Kuki-Rebellion of 1917 to 1919. After the Kuki-Rebellion of 1917-1919 the state

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<sup>16</sup> Gangmumei Kamei. (2013). *A History of Modern Manipur (1826-2000) A Study of Feudalism, Colonialism and Democracy*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House

was divided into four sub-divisions – one with headquarters at Imphal and three in the hills under a Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) each, Viz., for the Southwest, inhabited by Kukis with headquarters at Churanchandpur under B.C. Gasper; for the Northwest area, inhabited by Kukis, Kabui Nagas and Kacha Nagas with headquarters at Tamenglong under William Shaw; and Northern area, inhabited by Tankhul Nagas and Kukis with headquarters at Ukhrul under L.L. Peter.<sup>17</sup> Later on the sub-division was again brought into two parts viz., south hill and north hill sub-division. This arrangement was also found dissatisfactory and was abolished and divided the hill areas into three sub-divisions, Sadar, Ukhrul and Tamenglong.<sup>18</sup>

When the British left the Indian sub-continent, Manipur become a Constitutional Monarch. The British handed over the administration of the hill areas in the hands of the Maharaja of Manipur. Thus, the valley and the hills were brought together under one administration for short duration. During the period the Maharaja of Manipur passed two legislations namely, the Manipur State Hill People (Administration) Regulation Act, 1947 and the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947. These two legislations were the outcomes of the prevailing political aspirations among the people both in the hills and the valley. The Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 was applicable for the entire state of Manipur including the hill areas. With the departure of British the

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<sup>17</sup> As Cited by Thangkholal Haokip. (2017). Dereliction of Duties or the Politics of 'Political Quadrangle'? The Governor, Hill Areas Committee and Upsurge in the Hills of Manipur. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 63(3), September

<sup>18</sup> Ngalengnam Ng. (2011). *Politics of Manipur (1972-2001)*. New Delhi: Maxford Books

administration of the hill areas was placed under the hands of Maharaja in Council. However, it was not applicable concerning the matters which are reserved for the authority of the hills areas as per the Manipur State Hill People's Regulation Act, 1947. The administration of the state was carried out in the name of the Maharaja till 1949 when Manipur merged with the Union of India on October 15, 1949.<sup>19</sup> On 21<sup>st</sup> September 1949 the Maharaja of Manipur Bodhchandra Singh signed the 'Merger Agreement' with the Union of India. Subsequently Manipur merged with India and became the Part C State of the Indian Republic.

### **1.5. Administration of Hill Areas after Manipur merged with India**

After Manipur merged with the Indian Union, new laws for the hill areas of Manipur were passed. The Parliament of India passed the Manipur Village Authority (Hill Areas) Act 1956, which eventually came into force in 1957. This Act overlapped the earlier Manipur State Hill People (Administration) Regulation Act, 1947 which regulates the hill areas through the provision of village authority. The Act changes the internal administration of the hill areas. The Manipur Village Authority (Hill Areas) Act unlike the Act of 1947 established the number of members of a village authority on the basis of the number of tax-paying houses.<sup>20</sup> However, the Act was strongly

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<sup>19</sup> As cited by Chinkholian Guite. (1999). *Politico-Economic Development of the Tribals of Manipur*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.

<sup>20</sup> George T. Haokip. (2020). Governance and Tribal Questions: A study of Hill Administration in Manipur. *Alochana Chakra Journal*, Volume IX, Issue V, May, Pp. 125-132



resisted by the tribal people of Manipur for whom it was intended. For instance, the Kukis of Manipur defied the Act on the pretext of intruding into their traditional chieftainships rights. They hold that it takes away the traditional powers of the Chief who is the head of the village. Owing to the opposition by the tribals the said Act cannot be implemented successfully in Manipur.<sup>21</sup>

### **Hill Areas Committee**

The Hill Areas Committee is a body constituted primarily for the hill areas of Manipur. They consist of all the elected members of the Manipur legislative assembly from the hill areas. Earlier, it functions as Hill Standing Committee when Manipur was a Union Territory. Manipur was upgraded to the status of a full-fledged state in 1972. Subsequently, the tribals of Manipur are provided with a special constitutional provision under the Articles 371(C) of the Constitution of India. Thus, the Hill Standing Committee which existed before the statehood was replaced by the Hill Areas Committee by the 27<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1971. The section I of the Article says that:

“Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the President may, by order made with respect to the State of Manipur, provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the State consisting of members of that Assembly elected from the Hill

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

Areas of that State, for the modification to be made in the rules of business of the Government and in the rules of procedure of the Legislative Assembly of the State and for any special responsibility of the Governor in order to secure the proper functioning of such committee.”<sup>22</sup>

Also section 2 of the same Articles states that,

“The Governor shall annually or whenever so required by the President, make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Hill Areas in the State of Manipur and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the State as to the administration of the said areas.”<sup>23</sup>

In compliance with the Article 371 C of the Constitution of India the President of India V.V. Giri passed the ordinance The Manipur Legislative Assembly (Hill Areas Committee) Order, 1972. Accordingly, the Hill Areas Committee was constituted comprising of all the elected members of legislative assembly of Manipur from the hill areas. This Committee looks after the people in the hill areas of Manipur to safeguard their socio-economic interest and promote them.

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<sup>22</sup> Thongkholal Haokip. (2017). Dereliction of Duties of the Politics of ‘Political Quadragle’? The Governor, Hill Areas Committee and Upsurge in the Hills of Manipur. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 63(3), September

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

## 1.6. Evolution of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur

The genesis of Autonomous District Council in Manipur can be traced back in the 1960s, when it was still a Union Territory. There are two different notions as far as the development of the District Council in the hill areas of Manipur is concerned. One notion believes that it was not the demand but natural up gradation that was taken up simultaneously with the preparation for the inauguration of statehood of Manipur in December 1971.<sup>24</sup> Another notion speculates that there was a demand for separate hills administration towards the achievement of Manipur Statehood status. This movement for separate administration was spearheaded by hill leaders under the Manipur Hill Union (MHU). The leader of the MHU submitted memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi urging for separate administration of the hill areas.<sup>25</sup> The two notions seem to be conflicts each other with regard to the origin and development of District Council in Manipur. But the hill and the valley has been administered separately even before the introduction of District Council. Therefore, the provision of District Council in the hill areas of Manipur was the continuation of the pre-independence administrative structure.

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<sup>24</sup> Elangbam Ashakiran Chanu. (2020). Evolution of Autonomous District Council in Manipur: An Exploration to its Structural and Functional Loopholes. *Studies in Indian Place Names*, Vol-40, Issue No. 56, March, Pp- 1292-1301

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

The Autonomous District Councils came into being in Manipur after the Manipur (Hills Areas) District Council Act was passed by the Parliament of India on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1971. During the time, Manipur was elevated into a full-fledged state in 1972. Subsequently, Manipur State Legislative Assembly enacted the Manipur (Hills Areas) District Council Rules 1972 which provide for the establishment of six ADCs in hills areas of Manipur. Thus, the district councils in Manipur were established with the combined effort of central and state government for the hills areas populated by diverse tribal communities. The six Autonomous District Councils established under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 were

- (1) Manipur North Autonomous District Council (present Senapati ADC)
- (2) Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council
- (3) Manipur East Autonomous District Council (present Ukhrul ADC)
- (4) Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council (present Chandel ADC)
- (5) Manipur South Autonomous District Council (present Churanchandpur (ADC) and
- (6) Manipur West Autonomous District Council (present Tamenglong ADC).

The first elections to the District Councils were conducted in 1973. The District Councils have been functioning with limited power and autonomy since its inception. The District Council in Manipur is a council without autonomy in the true sense of the term. It has no legislative as well as judicial powers to function as independent institution of self-government. They have no power to legislate any laws concerning the hill areas. Even the financials power was not up to the council's expectation. The District Council often faced with financials irregularities from the state government. Consequently, the demand of the Sixth Schedule gained momentum in the entire hill areas of Manipur since the early 1980s.<sup>26</sup>

### **1.7. Review of literature**

Ashok Kumar Ray and H. Kamkhenthang (1997) in their essay *District Councils in Manipur vis-à-vis the sixth schedule and a note on Draft on Modality* made a comparative analysis of the functions and powers of an Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule and that of District Council in Manipur. They observed that Sixth Schedule may not be the proper instrument for the hill people in Manipur. In 1992, the Cabinet considered for the extension of the Sixth Schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. As a result, Sixth Schedule Demand Committee Manipur (SDCM) demanded the

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<sup>26</sup> Op.cit, Rajendra Kshetri, p. 22

extension of the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur with necessary modifications in the schedule.

In his paper entitled *The Sixth Schedule – A Case for Manipur Hills* by Ashok Kumar Ray (1997), analyse the forms of autonomy pursued by different tribals group in the northeast India. The paper describes the shortcomings of the sixth schedule as a perfect form of autonomy operated in few tribals' state of northeast. He state that, it became as a step for furtherance of greater autonomy for different tribal groups. He concluded that, Sixth Schedule could not be the best form of autonomy for the hill areas of Manipur. It may act as a further step to claim for more autonomy and became an ethnic division as in Assam.

*Autonomous Councils in Northeast India: Theory and Practice* is a paper by David Stuligross (1999). The paper analysed the tribal policy of integrationist followed by Indian government to address the culturally diverse tribals of north-east of India. Eventually, Autonomous District Councils was instituted as a respond to this diversity through the provisions of Sixth Schedule. The paper argues that the institution of Autonomous District Councils is not an engine of economic development for the tribals of north-east India. The purpose of sixth schedule is to bring the tribals of north-east India into the fold of Indian political system and not economic development. This paper studies the functioning of Khasi Autonomous District Council of

Meghalaya and found out that the institution of ADC has less impact on social and political dimension too. He also argued that ADC is relevant even though the institution albeit it's little impact on the economic, social and political areas.

*Traditional self-governing institutions of the hill tribes of Manipur from an economic perspective* by Amar Yumnam (2002) discussed the traditional self-governing institutions of the hill tribes of Manipur from an economic perspective. He asserted that the traditional self-governing institution prevailing among the two communities (Kuki and Nagas) was primarily established to serve the communities. These institutions try to ensure the continuation of life and property through a system of guiding principles, organisational structure and governing procedures. They are not designed for fostering change and transformation. Another fundamental orientation was the creation and maintenance of strong bondage within the village. He also opines that the problem before the traditional institutions is that they are not being allowed to enjoy the fate of death as antiquated forms of governance and facilitate the emergence of better forms. The traditional institutions become convenient institutions for conveying and imposing the wishes of groups who have wielded the power to prevail their wishes over others.

The book *District Councils in Manipur Formation and Functioning* by Rajendra Kshetri (2006) is an unprecedented work on District Councils in

Manipur. He stated that the existing Act failed to meet the aspirations of the people in the hills. Besides, he also highlighted the weakness of the District Councils regarding its power and the non-commitment on the part of the members of the District Councils towards development programme. The author described elaborately the traditional policy of the then Meitei kingdom towards the Hill tribes and, the administration of the Hill Areas before, during and after the colonial rule.

*Identity and Governance; Demand for Sixth Schedule in Manipur* is an article by Sekholal Kom (2010). He discussed about the ethnic mobilisation among the various group in Manipur on the process of governance. He argued that the dominance of the majority over the minority resulted in the form of autonomy movement by tribal communities for self-governance. The demand for the extension of the Sixth Schedule has been thoroughly examined, besides assessing the district councils of Manipur. He concluded that autonomy movement is closely related to conflict of interest on ethnic line which stems from resistance to autonomy by one group.

Vanhangpui Khobung (2012) in his article *Local Self-Governing Institutions of the Tribal in North-East India: A Study of the Village Authority/Council* examines the local self-governing institutions existing in the form of village authority/councils in three northeast states namely Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland. He also briefly, highlighted the nature of powers and



functions enjoyed by the chiefs among the Kuki-Chin-Mizo and Naga groups during the pre-independence period. He discusses various Legislative Acts introduced in northeast which recognise the village authority/council. He also analyse about the importance the Village Authority/Council in implementing various policies of government at the grass-root level.

In the article *Local Self Governance in India: A study of Autonomous District Council in Manipur and Mizoram* by S. Shokhothang Haokip (2013) study on the system of local self-government institution prevailing in two states of north east region of India. He compares the ADCs in Manipur and Mizoram. The study found that in the case of ADCs in Manipur there are insufficient legislative and judicial powers, but only a few limited administrative powers, unlike the ADCs in Mizoram which drew its power directly from the Constitution of India per se. He attributed the suspension of ADCs election in Manipur during 1988-2010, due to inadequate power and functions entrusted to the District Councils. Finally it paved the way for demanding for inclusion of the entire hill areas of Manipur under the framework of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

In the study *Autonomous District Councils and Tribal Development in North East India: A Critical Analysis* by Robert Tuolor (2013) examined the working of Autonomous District Councils in Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The study found out that the working of these councils is in a dismal

condition. It failed to realise its goal in terms of delivering socio-economic development since its formation, regardless of huge powers and functions endowed in the provisions of Sixth Schedule. He argued that ADC provided under the Sixth Schedule aims at granting autonomy to the tribal community of north east India. It was considered as the harbinger of socio-economic development. However, negligence related to development will prevail unless the obstacles within it are not removed.

*“The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils elections 2011 The Social Unrest”* is an essay by Ng. Ngalengnam (2014). It provides an overview of the formation of district councils in the hill areas of Manipur by The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971. The author examines various provisions of the principal Act and powers of the district councils. He argues that the boycott of the elections of District Councils during 1984-2010 was due to the weakness of the Act. The article also discusses the amendment made on the principal Act. The dissatisfaction of the people culminated in social unrest and boycott of the District Councils elections under the new amendment. Besides, various tribal-based organisations demanded the extension of the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur.

The article *From opposition to acquiescence: The 2015 District Council Elections in Manipur* by Kham Khan Suan Hausing is about how tribal communities came to terms with state government and held District

Council election in 2015. Prior to this, tribal communities of Manipur opposed to hold ADC elections by demanding for Sixth Schedule. He also discusses the significance of the entry of Naga People's Front (NPF) in District Council's election 2015 supported by the United Naga Council (UNC) and NSCN-IM, as the demand for the sixth schedule is seen as hurdles to the greater Nagalim. Besides, he also attributed the obstacles of the sixth schedule in Manipur due to opposition from valley people, contrasting interest between the Hill Areas Committee (HAC) and SSDCM, Kuki-Naga and Kuki-Zomi ethnic conflict. The author also analyse the localisation of politics along ethnic line among tribal community in 2015 District Councils election.

In the article *District Councils in Manipur and demand for extension of Sixth Schedule* by Chungkhosei Baite (2016) discusses the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur. He examined the shortcoming inherent within the District Councils with regard to power enjoyed by them in the administration of the Hill Areas. He also analyses its weaknesses and the need to extend the Sixth Schedule in the Hill Areas of Manipur.

In the *Working of the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur: The challenges ahead* by Lunthang Hangshing (2016) asserted that ADCs are mechanism instituted by centre to address the distinct tribal practices in north east India. Under the colonial regime, various regulations have been enacted for administering a distinct ethnic group of north east India. He also

mentioned the historical differences that exist between the sixth schedule areas and hill areas of Manipur. According to the author, District Councils provided under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 never met the aspiration of the hill areas of Manipur even after several amendments have been made. Thus, he argued that various communities opposed the present Act and demanded the extension of the Sixth Schedule in the Hill Areas of Manipur.

In his article *Autonomy Demands in the Hill Areas of Manipur: Issues and Challenges* Seikhogin Haokip (2016) discussed about various issues and challenges concerning autonomy demands in the hill areas of Manipur. He opined that competing for identity, land, and territorials' claims between the Nagas and Kuki, coupled with the demand for "Greater Nagalim" and "Kuki State" are some of the factors impeding the autonomy demands. Other factors which stand in way to autonomy demands are "territorial integrity" and "Free Manipur" as asserted by dominant valley people. He also argued that the stand taken by the Government of India and state government to maintain the integrity of Manipur remained as one of the major hurdles to the demands of autonomy in the hill areas of Manipur. Subsequently, the above factors become a major hindrance for granting Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur.

In the article *Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule: Distinctiveness and Dissimilarities with other Councils* by Jangkhogam Doungel (2018) differentiate the ADCs under the provisions of Sixth Schedule with the others Councils constituted through the Acts of the state legislature. He opined that ADCs provided under Sixth Schedule are the result of the autonomy demand by the tribal communities to protect and preserve their identity and ethnicity. These ADCs formed under Sixth Schedule are Constitutional bodies and are equipped with executive, legislative, and judicial power. But, the District Councils created by the state legislature in the north east region of India are distinct from the Councils established under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Therefore, these two different Councils cannot be compared.

*Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council and Peoples' Responses* is an article by Joseph Riamei (2016). He opined that, the hill people were not satisfied with the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 so they suspended the election of the council. According to him, the hill people boycotted the 2010 ADC elections because their demand was never met. The 2008 amendment does not devolve any kind of powers in the true sense of the term. Therefore, the hill people led by various tribal based organisations demanded more autonomy and extension of the sixth schedule to the hill areas.

L. Lam Khan Piang (2019) in his article *Institutional Exclusion of the Hill Tribes in Manipur: Demand for Protection under the Sixth Schedule* seeks to explain the problem facing the hill tribes of Manipur from institutional exclusion point of view. For instance, the institutional exclusion is evident from overshadowed of Hill Areas Committee (HAC) in dealing with matters that fall under schedule matter. He asserted that the omission of the hill areas of Manipur out of the sixth schedule as a historical factor. However, he argued that, denial of the extension of the sixth schedule to Manipur as an institutional exclusion of the hill areas of Manipur by the state government.

*Autonomy and Autonomous District Councils in the study of Tiwa Autonomous Council* is an article by Bhaskar Kumar Kakati (2019). This paper studied about the nature of autonomy provided through the Tiwa Autonomous Council in Assam. The demand for autonomy by the Tiwa community (Lalung) for preserving their identity and culture culminated in the formation of Tiwa Autonomous District Council. It was constituted through the Act of Assam state legislature. But on the ground, Tiwa Autonomous Council failed to devolve true autonomy and could not function independently as per the provision of the Act. As a result, this community further agitated again for up gradation of Tiwa Autonomous Council to Sixth Schedule status under the Constitution of India. He found out that, an Autonomous District Council constituted either under the sixth schedule or through state legislature could not improve the socio-economic conditions of the tribal communities.

However, the tribal community immensely able to enjoy the autonomy granted under the provisions of the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India.

Elangbam Ashakiran Chanu (2020) in her paper *Evolution of Autonomous District Council in Manipur: An Exploration to Its Structural and Functional Loopholes* explored the problems and issues deep-rooted within the District Council in Manipur. She argued that autonomy or self-rule is one of the vital elements among the tribal communities, since time immemorial. They failed to realize the actual autonomy under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. Thus, they demand for inclusion of district council within the framework of sixth schedule of the Constitution of India. But, the state government could not accommodate their demand as per their wishes. So, ultimately they shifted their common demand of sixth schedule to their own separate demands. Thus, different tribals group of the state began to assert their own respective demands. Among others, their demand includes alternative arrangement, Kuki homeland and Zeliangrong own state etc., by different ethnic groups of Manipur.

The above review of literature shows that there are research works in the areas of the Autonomous District Council in Manipur. The existing literature mainly focused on the nature of District Councils in Manipur. Most of these scholars do not study specifically for a particular District Council. Moreover, previous studies do not explore the working relationship between

the District Council and the village authority at the local level. Therefore, the scholar studies in the working of Chandel Autonomous District Council so that it can fill up the research gap.

### **1.8. Statement of the Problem**

Autonomous District Councils in the hill areas of Manipur has failed to satisfy the aspirations of the hill people since its inception. It is seen from the persistent demand for devolution of powers in the hill areas. This is basically due to the unambiguous nature of power and autonomy given to the ADC under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971. They are devoid of legislative and judicial powers, with meagre executive powers. The ADC in Manipur is powerless as compared to its counterparts under the Sixth Schedule areas. Though, it managed to function from 1973 to 1989. In the early seventies, Hill Areas Committee (HAC) which consists of all the elected members of the Legislative Assembly has taken a strong resolution for boycotting elections in the hill areas. Thereafter, it remained dysfunctional for more than two decades owing to the demand for more autonomy in the form of the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas. During the non-functional period (1989-2010), development activities were stalled. Thus, tribal people were deprived of development funds allotted under the ADC for various developmental projects during the time.



The demand for the extension of the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur was headed by the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee (SDCM) along with the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur (ATSUM). Besides, several other tribal organisations also joined the movement and raised the same demand. The demand for Sixth Schedule is yet to be achieved though it began since the early 1970s. In response, the state government has amended the Principal Act four times. It revived the District Council's elections 2010 by following the 2008 amendment. However, the 2010 District council elections were held with protests and strikes by the people of the hill areas. Consequently, the District Council could not function from their district head-quarter (in the hill areas) particularly in Naga inhabited areas.

The hill areas of Manipur came under the administration of Autonomous District Council through the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 at the district level. The tribals of Manipur are also accorded special Constitutional protection under the Article 371 (C) of the Constitution of India. Accordingly, the Manipur Legislative Assembly (Hill Areas Committee) Order, 1972 constituted Hill Areas Committee (HAC) for the tribals of Manipur. All the elected members of legislative assembly (MLAs) from the hill areas are members of the HAC. They are primarily instituted for safeguarding the interest of the hill areas and their welfare in the legislative assembly.

Local institution in the form of village authority has been in practiced in hills of Manipur since 1947. This village authority under the Manipur State Hill People's Regulation Act, 1947 is the continuation of the tribals' indigenous local institution which has been in practiced since time immemorial. Later, with the dawn of independence, it was replaced by the Village Authority Act 1956 after the merger of Manipur into the Union of India. The institution of chieftainship was prevailing among the Kukis of Manipur, which is hereditary in nature. 'Housa' (chieftainship) is the oldest form of tribal administration known to have stood the test of time which is still functioning among the Kuki tribes of Manipur.<sup>27</sup>

It can be noted here that district councils work with village authority (local body) at the grass-root level for implementation of various programmes and schemes for development. In every village, there is a local village authority headed by a village chief/chairman who looks after the village day to day affairs. They are very prominent and respectable body in the village. One of the functions of the village authority is to look after their village affairs. Village authority occupied a very important role in socio-economic development at the grass-root level. In fact, they entrusted with the task of selection and identification of the beneficiaries in the village for any scheme

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<sup>27</sup> Khaikhohauh Gangte, Mangcha Touthang & Easwaran Kanagaraj. (2014). Kuki traditional institutions and development: Role of village chiefs in Manipur. *Social Work Journal (BI-ANNUAL)*, 5 (2), July-December, Pp. 46-65

from both central and state government. They are the one who actually implement the central scheme like MGNREGA in their respective village.

Although, the District Council has been in existence for almost 45 years, it is alleged that no significant developmental work has been taken up at the grass-root level. It seems District Council as local government has lesser impact as far as the development of the hill areas is concerned. It is therefore study by the scholar to understand the functions and working of the ADC in Manipur in general and Chandel Autonomous District Council in particular.

### **1.9. Delimitations of the Study**

The study focuses on the working of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur in general and Chandel District in particular. The research work examines the performances and implications of ADCs as an agent of development in the Hill Areas of Manipur concerning mainly the Chandel district. It analyses the relationship between the ADCs and the Village Authority at the grass-root level in delivering a wide range of socio-economic development. Besides, the study also includes the problems and prospects of ADCs in the hill areas of Manipur as local self-government in general and particularly the Chandel ADC. The study covers 10 years—from 2010 till 2020—due to the dysfunctional of the District Councils from 1989 to 2010.

### **1.10. Objectives of the study**

There are three objectives of the study. They are as follows:

1. To study the powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur.
2. To analyse the roles of Autonomous District Councils as an agent of socio-economic development in the hills of Manipur in general and Chandel District in particular.
3. To examine the problems and prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council.

### **1.11. Research Questions**

The study has three research questions. They are as follows:

1. What are the powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur?
2. What are the contributions (in the area of socio-economic development) of ADC in Chandel districts of Manipur?
3. What are the challenges and prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council?

### **1.12. Methodology**

The research work is descriptive and analytical in nature. The study uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected through

interview and observation method. Interview was conducted to the members of the Chandel District Councils and the chairman of various village authorities. Besides, various leaders of social organisations such as Village Chief Association, Chandel Naga People Organisation (CNPO) and Chandel Student Union, etc. were also interviewed to understand their perspective on the working of Chandel Autonomous District Council. Moreover, five villages were chosen to study the functioning of the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The five villages were selected through purposive sampling from the tribes of (Anal, Chothe, Monsang, Moyon and Lamkang) inhabited in the Chandel district. The largest village of the five tribes in the district were chosen for the study. The rationale for choosing the largest village is to examine the socio-economic implications of ADC in such villages. Besides, primary sources also include government reports and relevant documents from the district council and state government as well. Secondary sources comprise of books, journals, articles, magazine and newspaper etc.

### **1.13. Chapterization**

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction.**

The first chapter examines the concept of local self-government institutions prevailing in India in general and north east India in particular. This chapter also highlights the hill administration during the colonial period and post-independence period. This chapter also includes review of literature,

statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and research methodology etc.

## **Chapter 2: Autonomous District Council in Manipur.**

The second chapter studies the powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur. It also briefly highlighted the introduction of laws during pre-independence and post-independence of India in the hill areas.

## **Chapter 3: Roles of Autonomous District Councils in Socio-Economic activities.**

The third chapter extensively discuss about the roles of ADCs in socio-economic development activities in Chandel district of Manipur. It also analyse the role of ADC in the formulation and implementation of socio-economic development programmes and schemes in Chandel district. It also examines the role played by ADC during the pandemic brought by the novel coronavirus (Covid-19).

## **Chapter 4: Problems and prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council.**

The fourth chapter discusses the problems and prospects of Autonomous District Council of Manipur in general and Chandel Autonomous District Council in particular. It also includes the demand for more power and autonomy by ADC in Manipur and the response of the state government. This

Chapter also includes the demand of Sixth Schedule under the Indian Constitution.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion:**

The concluding chapter summarised the study. It includes the findings of the work.

## **CHAPTER – 2**

### **AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL IN MANIPUR**

The second chapter studies the Autonomous District Council (ADC) in Manipur. There are six ADCs in Manipur. The aim of the ADC in Manipur is to provide local self-governance in the hill areas of Manipur.

#### **2.1. Traditional Political System in the Hill Areas of Manipur**

The tribals of Manipur had their own political system (traditional political system) before the advent of modern democracy. Every tribal group has their own traditional administrative system. None of the traditional institutions were akin to one another. The Naga and the Kukis are two different ethnic groups in Manipur. These two ethnic groups possessed their own age-old political system different from each other. The tribal traditional administrative systems are based on their tradition, culture and customary laws. Each tribe governed themselves according to their customary laws. Generally, in pre-colonial times the tribal group were living in their own village. The village is a social and political unit in the tribal administration. Also, the colonial selfdom interrupted into the internal affairs of the tribal groups. The interference which was very significant was in the form of house tax which imposed after their arrival.

The traditional political systems of the Nagas were democratic in nature. As a result, the colonial writers described the system as “small



republic”.<sup>28</sup> “The Naga village enjoys the characteristic of sovereignty equated with Greek “city state” which was a dominion of its own in complete form of parliamentary democracy”.<sup>29</sup> The elements of democratic principle were found in most of the governance system of the Naga tribes of Manipur. On the other hand, chieftainship is prevailing among the Kuki-Chin tribes of Manipur. The Chief of the Kukis is known by the name ‘*Housa*’. The Kukis chieftainship system is hereditary. He is considered to be possessed all the powers with himself. Administrations of justice, enforcement of executive functions, maintenance of social practices and customary law, including religious performances are the areas of village administration under the chieftainship and his Council of Ministers.<sup>30</sup> Among the Kukis the system of chieftainship is still prevailing even now and it is the basis of the governance at the village.

Among the tribal of Manipur there are some minority and lesser known tribes. Some of them are Anal, Chothe, Lamkang, Maring, Moyon, Monsang and Tarao who belongs to Naga tribes. These tribes are mostly inhabited in the southern part of the Manipur in Chandel District. They are defined by their distinct culture and traditions. These tribal groups have their own traditional institution in the past which are at present eroded with the emergence of

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<sup>28</sup> Gangmumei Kamei (2015). A History of Modern Manipur (1826-2000). The Emerging Democracy (1947-2000) Volume III. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House

<sup>29</sup> Raoping Ngupani. (2010). Socio cultural and political among the Tribes of Manipur. Unpublished Ph.D thesis submitted to Manipur University, P. 130 <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/39654>

<sup>30</sup> Kuki International Forum (2010).Priyadarshni M. Gangte on Evolution of Kuki Chieftainship Through Customary Laws- Its Modern Conceptuality. Retrieved from <http://kukiforum.com/2010/12/evolution-of-kuki>

modern democratic system in the post-independence period. Their traditional Village Council system was replaced by village authority with the change of time. However, these tribal groups still retained and preserved the ethos and characteristic of the traditional Village Council system.

## **2.2. Pre-Merger Period**

The erstwhile princely state of Manipur becomes a constitutional monarch when the British left Indian sub-continent on August 1947. During the time, two laws were enacted – the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the Manipur State Hill People’s Regulation Act, 1947. The former was applicable for the entire state whereas, the latter was enacted only for the hill areas. As per the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 there was a council of ministers and the executive power of the state was vested upon them. The Manipur Assembly under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 had 53 seats and the hill areas were given 18 seats. Thus, under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 the elected ministers from the hill areas were responsible for the welfare of the hill areas.

### **2.2.1 Manipur State Hill People (Administration) Regulation Act, 1947**

The Manipur State Hill People (Administration) Regulation Act, 1947 introduced village authority to administer the village in the hill areas of Manipur. According to the Act, the responsibility for the administration in the hill areas was vested in the Maharaja in Council and exercised in accordance

with the Constitution of the State and the provision of the Regulation as amended from time to time.<sup>31</sup> It also established village authority to administer the villages in the hills. The village authority was constituted on the basis of the number of tax-paying houses. Thus, a village authority was formed in the hill areas having 20 and above tax-paying houses. The village authority comprised of the chief of the village and members nominated by him in accordance with the traditional customary laws of the concerned village. The traditional village council system of the tribal continued and the administration of hill areas was given to the village authority. Besides the village authority, the Regulation Act of 1947 provides for the formation of Circle Authority. The circle authority exists above the village authority. The village authority and the circle authority so formed have to be officially recognised by the Sub-Divisional Officers (SDOs).

In every Circle there was a Circle Authority. The Circle Authorities were elected by the village authority from within the circle areas. It consists of one Circle Officer and five members elected from the village authority itself. In each sub-division there was a Sub-Divisional Officer who exercises the general executive control over the local authorities in the sub-division under the orders of the Ministers in charge of hill administration.<sup>32</sup> The Circle Authorities were responsible for the administration of lower and upper

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<sup>31</sup> The Manipur Hill Sate People's (Administration) Regulation Act, 1947, Section 3

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, Section 8

primary school, the construction and maintenance of all bridle paths and bridges other than Iron Bridge, together with the construction and maintenance of all public buildings of Katcha or Semi-Katcha type, maintenance of Pucca buildings within the circle. At the village level village authority court dispenses all kind of disputes and cases. At the higher level there was a court of Circle Authority, the Hill Bench at Imphal and the Chief Court of Manipur. The three tier judicial administrative system was in forced until it was abolished in 1955. The regulation Act of 1947 remained in hill region until the introduction of the Manipur Village Authority (Hill Areas) Act 1956.

### **2.3. Post-Merger Period**

#### **2.3.1. The Manipur Village Authorities (Hill Areas) Act, 1956**

The Maharaja of Manipur signed the Merger Agreement on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1949 and the state eventually merged into the Union of India on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1949. After the merger of Manipur with the Union of India, the Indian parliament passed the Manipur Village Authorities (Hill Areas) Act, 1956. It replaced the Manipur State Hill People's Regulation Act, 1947. However, this Act was identical to the Regulation Act of 1947 enacted by the state government. It was intended only for the regulation of the tribal people of Manipur. The Act covered the entire hill areas of the Union Territory of Manipur. The Manipur State Hill People's (Administration) Regulation Act, 1947 provide for the establishment of village authority on the basis of tax-

paying houses. However, the Manipur Village Authority (in the hill areas) introduced a system of number of village authority. Under the new Act of 1956 the number of village authority was set at certain criteria. It also brought a system of the election of the village authority by the villagers. The election of the village authority was based on adult suffrage, where the eligible persons from the village have the right to cast the vote and who has attained the age of 21 years.<sup>33</sup>

According to the Act, in every village which constituted the village authority, the chief or the Khulakpa of the village shall act as the Ex-Officio of that village. However, if there is no chief or Khulakpa in that village the members of the village authority of the village elected the chairman from amongst themselves. The Act set the tenure of the village authority for three years. Later the term of the village authority was extended to five years by the Village Authority (in the hill) Amendment Act, 1984. As per the Act the village authority remained under the control of the sub-divisional magistrate within its jurisdiction, but subject to the general superintendence and control of the Deputy Commissioner.

The Act was contrary to the earlier Regulation of 1947, which authorised the village chief (Khulakpa) to elect the village authority in accordance with the traditional practiced. Thus, the Act of 1956 discarded the aged-old practiced of clan wise representation in the composition of village

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<sup>33</sup> Section (7). The Manipur (Village Authority in the Hill Areas) Act, 1956

council. The number of village authority recommended by the Manipur Village Authority (in Hill Areas) Act, 1956 were given below in the table;

**Table 2.1: Number of members of Village Authority under the Manipur Village (Hill Areas) Act, 1956**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Number of Tax –Paying House</b>	<b>Number of Village Authority</b>
1	20 to 60 Houses	5
2	61 to 100 Houses	7
3	101 to 150 Houses	10
4	150 and above Houses	12

Source: Sanga, R. (2012). The Manipur Village Authority (in the Hill Areas) Act, 1956<sup>34</sup>

### **2.3.2. Power and Functions of Village Authority**

The powers and functions of the Village Authority as per the Manipur Village Authority (In the Hill Areas) Act, 1956 are given below;<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Sanga, R. (2012). The Manipur Village Authority (in the Hill Areas) Act, 1956, paper presented at the two day Mega Tribal Seminar, Tribal Research Institute, Imphal

<sup>35</sup> V.S. Shoulounii Pou. (2014). Local Government and its Evolution in Manipur Naga Tribal Hills. *A journal of the All India Institute of Local Self-Government* (Local Government Quarterly). Volume LXXXIV, No 2, April-June, Pp. 44- 55

1. To maintain law and order to the best of its ability. Thereby, it can exercise the powers and duties conferred on the police by or under the police Act 1861 provided that the Village Authorities shall not be deemed to be a police officer;
2. They can arrest a suspected accused person;
3. The Village Authority can arrest any person who is a vagrant or has committed a heinous offence; any person who obstructs the functioning of the Village Authority under this Act and any person who has escaped or attempts to escape from lawful custody, without any order or warrant from a magistrate;
4. The Village Authority shall also inform immediately to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate in every unnatural, suspicious or sudden death, all dispute which are likely to lead to a riot or serious affray:
5. The Village Authority is subjected to supply any information which any police officer, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner require from them; and
6. The Review of development works and report in respect thereof to the concerned Block Development Officer (BDO) and looking after the overall functioning of government schools including absenteeism of its staff.

In addition to the power and function mentioned above, the village authority has the judicial role also. The Deputy Commissioner shall notify

in the official gazette the appointment of two or more members of the village authority to be the village court during their term of office as members of the village authority. All the provisions of the Act were never implemented except the tenure of Village Authority from three to five years. The Village Authority under the chairmanship of the Village Chief used to decide all kinds of cases brought before them by the villagers.<sup>36</sup>

#### **2.4. Power and Functions of Autonomous District Council**

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971, instituted six Autonomous District Councils in the hills of Manipur. They are (i) Manipur North ADC (now Senapati ADC), (ii) Sadar Hills ADC (iii) Manipur East ADC (now Ukhrul ADC) (iv) Tengnoupal ADC (now Chandel ADC) (v) Manipur South ADC (now Churachandpur ADC) and, (vi) Manipur West ADC (now Tamenglong ADC). They were set up for the purpose of providing self-governance to the hill areas of Manipur. The Act envisages numerous power and functions to be exercised by the district councils. However, in reality the power given under the provisions of the Act remained only on paper. Thus, suitably describes as toothless District Councils. It can be considered as ‘a bone without flesh.’<sup>37</sup> It has neither legislative nor judicial power. It provided only financial power in a very limited way. So, the fiscal powers were not enjoyed in a satisfactory way. The only source of income for

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<sup>36</sup> *Op.cit.* Chinkholian Guite

<sup>37</sup> Chungkhosei Baite. (2016). District council in Manipur and demand for extension of sixth schedule. *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, Volume 4, Issue 1, February.



the district council is grant-in-aid from the government. The tribals alleged that owing to the irregular flow of funds from the state government proper development could not be ushered in the hills areas of Manipur.

The problems inherent within the District Council were detected right after its commencement. The District Council in Manipur conducted its first election in 1973 and began to function in the same year. It took no time to realise the limitations of the powers and functions of the District Council in Manipur.<sup>38</sup> In 1973 the Manipur Hill Union and Kuki National Assembly stated that though the conferment of district autonomy opened up a new chapter in the political history of the tribes of Manipur, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 failed to fulfil the aspirations of the tribal people and hence demanded a greater autonomy by amending the said act.<sup>39</sup> The demand for sixth schedule was supplemented by the Hill Areas Committee (HAC) formed under the Article 371 C of the Constitution of India in their meeting resolution taken in the year 1978. The election of the District Councils were put on hold during 1989-2010 as a part of their demand for Sixth Schedule. Thus, the District Council remained non-functional for about two decades until the ADC elections in 2010. During this period administration of the District Council was taken over by the state government. Since then, the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur (ATSUM) and Sixth

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<sup>38</sup> Ashok Ray Kumar.(1997). The Sixth Schedule- A Case for Manipur Hills. In *L.S, Gassah (ed). Autonomous District Councils*. New Delhi: Omsons Publications. P. 261

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*,

Schedule Demand Committee Manipur (SDCM) asserted the rights of the tribal in Manipur. They demanded the Constitutional rights of tribal under the framework of the Constitution of India.

The election to the District Council was held in May 2010, after a gap of about two decades. It was held on the basis of the Third Amendment of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 2008. The Third Amendment increases the members of the council from 18 to 24 and added some new subjects. The Third Amendment was not welcome by the tribal people of Manipur because they felt that it does not increase the power of the District Council. The state government failed to address the demand of the tribal people. It vested the power to conduct District Council elections under the supervision of the State Election Commission. At the same time, the State Election Commission announced the schedule of ADC election under the direction of state government in two phases. The notification was published in the Gazette of Manipur on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2010 and 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2010 respectively.<sup>40</sup> The tribal strongly resisted the notification for the elections by the State Election Commission, and demanded for resignation of all the elected members of legislative assembly (MLAs) from the hill areas. It created a social unrest during the time in the hill areas of Manipur. The state government without addressing the issues, it conducted the elections as per the

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<sup>40</sup> Ng, Ngalengam. (2014). 'The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Elections 2011: The Social Unrest' in Ayangbam Shyamkishor (ed). Engaging Failed State Political Social and Economic Issues of Contemporary Manipur. New Delhi: Mittal Publication. P. 105

notification of the State Election Commission. Most of the constituencies' seats were filled and declared uncontested. The tribal declared the election as null and void. They continued their agitation by non-cooperating with the state government. After the election the District Council could not work and function from the hills areas barring Kuki dominated district. The district councils from the Naga areas started functioning at Imphal. The District Councils however managed to complete their tenure. Subsequently, another election for the District Council was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 in a single phased. This election was very different from the previous one as there is no social unrest and agitation from the tribals. This election mark the dawn of new era in the hill areas of Manipur as far as the District Council is concerned. Various political parties were participated in the election which includes both the regional and national parties. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Naga People's Front (NPF) were the two new parties contested in the council election. The ADC elections of 2015 can be considered as a new form of politics in the hill areas of Manipur in the sense that elections were held peacefully. Earlier, the tribal (both the Naga and the Kuki) vehemently opposed the holding of election based on the 2008 Amendment. They have changed their political perspectives and vision. They are now aspiring for Greater Nagalim/Nagaland by the Nagas and Kuki homeland by the Kuki.

Kham Khan Suan Hausing aptly describes the 2015 District Council elections as ‘from opposition to acquiescence’.<sup>41</sup>

## **2.5. Constitution of District Councils**

In the second chapter sections (3) of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971 provides for the establishment of the District Council in Manipur. They are as follows,

- (1) As soon as may be after the commencement of this Act, the Administrator shall caused all the Hill areas be divided into not more than six autonomous districts.
- (2) The Administrator may, by order notified in the Official Gazette:
  - (a) declare that any area in any autonomous district which is, or is intended to be, included within the limits of any municipality, cantonment or town committee shall cease to be part of such autonomous district:
  - (b) increase the area of any autonomous district:
  - (c) diminish the area of any autonomous district:
  - (d) unite two or more autonomous districts or parts thereof as so to form one autonomous district:
  - (e) define the boundaries of any autonomous district;
  - (f) alter the name of any autonomous district.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Kham Khan Suan Hausing . (2015). From Opposition to Acquiescence: The 2015 District Council Elections in Manipur. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. L Nos. 46 & 47, November

## **2.6. The subjects under the Autonomous District Council**

Originally, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 conferred 17 functions to the Autonomous District Councils. It has been increased from 17 to 26 by the Third Amendment Act, 2008. The following subjects are entrusted to control and administered by the district council. They are as follows;

- (i) The maintenance and management of such property, movable and immovable, and institutions as may be transferred to the Council by the Governor;
- (ii) The construction, repair and maintenance of such of the roads, bridges, channels and buildings as may be transferred to that Council by the Governor;
- (iii) The establishment, maintenance and management of schools up to class VIII;
- (iv) The establishment, maintenance and management of medical dispensaries and Primary Health Sub-Centres;
- (v) The establishment and maintenance of cattle pounds including such function under the Cattle-trespass Act, 1871 as may be transferred to that Council by the Governor;

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<sup>42</sup> Section 2 of The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971

- (vi) The establishment, maintenance and management of markets and fairs and the construction, repair and maintenance of all buildings connected therewith;
- (vii) Water supply and sanitation schemes;
- (viii) The construction, repair and maintenance of embankments and the supply, storage and control of water for agricultural purposes including minor irrigation schemes;
- (ix) The preservation, reclamation and conservation of soils;
- (x) Animal husbandry and veterinary dispensaries;
- (xi) Management of such ferries as may be entrusted to the charge of that Council by the Governor;
- (xii) The initiation, inspection and control of relief works;
- (xiii) The allotment, occupation or use, or the setting apart of land, other than land acquired for any public purpose or land which is a reserved forest, for the purpose of agricultural or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purpose or for any other purposes likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village or town situated within the Autonomous District for which that Council is constituted;
- (xiv) The management of any forest not being a reserved forest, minor forest produce including fuel and fodder;

- (xv) The regulation of the practice of Jhum or other form of shifting cultivation;
- (xvi) Fisheries;
- (xvii) Co-operatives;
- (xviii) Sports and youth affairs;
- (xix) Adult and non-formal education;
- (xx) Horticulture and floriculture;
- (xxi) Rural housing and schemes under rural development including tribal development;
- (xxii) Khadi and village industries and cottage industries;
- (xxiii) Small scale industries;
- (xxiv) Non-conventional energy sources;
- (xxv) Library and culture activities;
- (xxvi) Any other matter which the Governor may, in consultation with the Hill Areas Committee, entrust to the District Council in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, community development, social and tribal welfare, village planning or any other matter.”<sup>43</sup>

The power and functions of the District Councils may be elaborated under the following heading;

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<sup>43</sup> Government of Manipur (2008). *The Manipur(Hill Areas) District Councils (Third Amendment) Act*, Manipur Gazette Extraordinary, Published by Authority

### **(a) Legislative Powers**

As stated earlier, District Council has been entrusted with enormous powers and functions by an Act of 1971. But they are devoid of legislative power. Unlike, in Sixth Schedule they have no powers to legislate any laws concerning their own matters. The District Councils of Manipur possessed only recommendatory powers as far as the legislative functions are concerned. They only have the power to recommend on the scheduled matters concerning appointment or succession of chiefs, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, and also social customs, etc.<sup>44</sup>

### **(b) Executive Powers**

The executive powers of the District Councils are given in the Section 29 of the Act. They are maintenance and management of such property, moveable and immovable, and institutions, the construction, repair and maintenance of such of the roads, bridges, channels and buildings, as may be entrusted to that Council by the Governor, the establishment, maintenance and management of schools up to class VIII, the establishment, maintenance and management of medical dispensaries and Primary Health Sub-Centres, establishment, maintenance and management such as Cattle, ponds under the Cattle-Trespass Act, 1871 as may be entrust to the Council by the Governor,

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<sup>44</sup> Chungkhosei Baite. (2016). District Councils in Manipur and Demand for Extension of Sixth Schedule. *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, Vol. 4, issues 1, February



the establishment, maintenance and management of markets and fairs and the construction, repair and maintenance of all buildings, water supply and sanitation, the Construction, repair and maintenance of embankments and the supply, storage and control of water for agricultural purposes including minor irrigation schemes, the preservation, reclamations and conservations of soils, animal husbandry, veterinary dispensaries, and management of such ferries as may be assigned to the Council by the Governor, the initiation, inspection, and control of relief works, the allotment, occupation or use, or the setting apart of land, other than land acquired for any public purpose or land which is a reserved forest, for the purpose of agricultural or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes or for any other purposes likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village or town situated within the autonomous District for which the Council is constituted, the management of any forest not being a reserved forest, minor forest produce including fuel and fodder, the regulation of the practice of Jhum or other form of shifting cultivation, fisheries, co-operatives, sports and youth affairs, adult and non-formal education, horticulture and floriculture, rural housing and schemes under the rural development including tribal development, khadi & village industries and cottage industries, small scale industries, non-conventional energy sources, library and culture activities, any other matter which the Governor may, in consultation with the Hill Areas Committee, entrust to the

District Council in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, community development, social and tribal welfare, village planning or any other matter.<sup>45</sup>

### **(c) Financial Powers**

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 empowered the District Councils with financial powers. They are empowered to levy taxes on professions, trades, and employment; taxes on animals, vehicles (other than mechanically propelled vehicles) and boats; taxes on entry of goods into a market for sale there in and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries; taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads; and any other tax falling under List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution which the Legislature of the Union territory of Manipur may, by law, empower the District Council to levy.<sup>46</sup> Also Section 34 of the Act authorizes the District Council to fix and levy (a) school fees; and (b) fees for the use of, or benefits derived from, any of the works done or services rendered under section 29 of the Act of 1971. The District Councils also has the power to remit or reduce any fee or exempt any person or class or persons from liability.<sup>47</sup>

The Act of 1971 confers fiscal powers upon the District Councils but there is no financial autonomy. As a matter of fact the District Council is regarded as a council without autonomy. The flow of funds from the state

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<sup>45</sup> Section (29) of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils (Third Amendment 2008) Act, Manipur. Gazette Extraordinary, Published by Authority

<sup>46</sup> *Op.cit*, Ng. Ngalengam. P. 101

<sup>47</sup> *Op.cit* Chungkhosei Baite

government is also sometimes irregular. The Act of 1971 confers financial powers upon the district councils in a very limited form. The grant-in-aids from the state government is considered to be the only source of financial income for the District Council in Manipur. They are unable to mobilize all the sources of income as prescribed under the Act. And the power of the District Councils to levy taxes has to get the prior approval of the State Finance Department which is a tiresome process and a futile activity.<sup>48</sup>

#### **(d) Judicial Powers**

The Act of 1971 does not provide any judicial power to the district council of Manipur. It implies that District Council have no role to play in judicial matters concerning the hills areas. The lack of judicial powers is also one of the factors for demanding Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur. In exercise of the powers conferred under the District Council Act of 1971, the Manipur Government also adapted the District Council Rules of 1972 entrusting certain powers of the District Council through which the village authorities can be called upon to their attention.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, Section 98 of the rules authorized the District Council where they can call for any information from village authorities except on judicial matters as and when

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<sup>48</sup> Elangbam Ashakiran Chanu. (2020). Evolution of Autonomous District Council in Manipur: An Exploration to its Structural and Functional Loopholes. *Studies in Indian Place Names*, Vol-40, Issue 56, March, Pp. 1292-1301

<sup>49</sup> V.S. Sholounii Pou. (2014). Local Government and Its Evolution in Manipur Naga Tribal Hills. *Local Government Quarterly*, April-June

they consider necessary.<sup>50</sup> But the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 and even the subsequent amendment do not confer any judicial or quasi-judicial power to the District Council.

## **2.7. Composition of Autonomous District Councils**

The members of the District Council in Manipur include elected and nominated members. Initially, the strength of the District Council in Manipur comprised of 20 members; 18 members were elected and two members were nominated by the administrator of the state. The Third Amendment Act of 2008 increased the strength of the elected members from 18 to 24. In addition, the Governor of the state is empowered to nominate not exceeding two members to each district council. The nominated members of the district council have to be a person not holding any post in the office of profit under the service of government (not government employees). The tenure of the office of a member is five years. The members of district council has to be elected by every eligible persons based on adult suffrage from their respective territorial constituencies. The Governor of Manipur framed the Manipur Autonomous District Council (Election of Members) Rules, 1972 for the purpose of the election to the District Council.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Riamei. (2016). Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council and Peoples' Responses. *Journal of Tribal Intellectual Collective India*. Vol. 3, Issues 3, No. 3 June

## **2.8. Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

Every District Council constituted in Manipur consists of Chairman and Vice-Chairman. They are elected by the members of the District Council from among themselves. If the post of Chairman and Vice-Chairman lies vacant, the councils may choose another member for the said post. According to the section 23 of the Act, the administrator of the state shall nominate the first Chairman who shall hold office for a period not exceeding one year. The Chairman of the Council is the whole-time functionary and he is entitled to such salary or allowances as may be fixed by the administrator. He is an administrative head of the District Council and presides over the meeting of the Council. Also, the Chairman can be removed from his office by a resolution passed by not less than two-third of the members of the council in a meeting convened for the reason.<sup>52</sup>

## **2.9. The District Council Fund**

The District Council have their own fund in the form of Council Fund. All the expense of the District Council should be borne out of the council fund.

## **2.10. The District Council Budget**

The preparation of the council budget is done by the Chief Executive Officer of the District Council. He is to prepare (for each financial year

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<sup>52</sup> Section 23 of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971

beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> April) an estimate of income and expenditure of the council in a prescribed form in consultation with the officer of the council in-charge of the concerned department.<sup>53</sup>

### **2.11. Conduct of Business**

A District Council shall conduct its business in such manner and in accordance with such procedure as may be prescribed.<sup>54</sup>

### **2.12. Relation between the District Council and State Administrator**

The District Council of Manipur came under the control of the state administration through the district administrator (Deputy Commissioner) in the process of its functioning. As per the section 46 of the Act, each Chairman of a District Council is obliged to furnish to the Deputy Commissioner a copy of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council and such other information as the Deputy Commissioner may require. The District Council also require the consent and direction of the Deputy Commissioner with regard to subjects, curricula, text books, and standard of teaching and schools which are administered wholly or partly by the District Council. The Deputy Commissioner has the authority to withstand the execution of any resolution, if the resolution or order of the District Council is likely to lead to a breach of

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<sup>53</sup> Rajendra Kshetri. (2006). *District Councils in Manipur: Formation and Functioning*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, P. 20.

<sup>54</sup> Section 30 of The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971

peace or cause annoyance or injury to the public or any class or body of person.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Section 46 of The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971

## **CHAPTER - 3**

### **ROLE OF CHANDEL ADC IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS**

The third chapter studies the working and functioning of the Chandel Autonomous District Council. There are various activities undertaken up by the Chandel Autonomous District Council. Some departments like the Agriculture, Education, Medical, Public Works and Veterinary department, etc. are working under the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The Chandel Autonomous District Council implemented various socio-economic welfare schemes to enhance the socio-economic life of the people in Chandel district.

#### **3.1. Profile of Chandel District**

Chandel is one of the hill districts of Manipur (formerly known as Tengnoupal District). It came into being on May 13, 1974. It remained as a Tengnoupal sub-division of Central District of Manipur, until it was shifted to Chandel. On 9 December, 2016 when the state government divided the existing district on administrative convenience Tengnoupal become a new district. Now, Chandel district has 3 sub-division namely, (1) Chandel sub-division (b) Chakpikarong sub-division and (c) Khengjoy sub-division. The Chandel district has a geographical area of 2,100 square kilometres. It lies in the south-eastern part of the state bordering Myanmar. The district is 64 km



far away from the Imphal, the state capital. The Chandel district is bounded by Ukhrul district in the east, Churachandpur district on the south-west and on the north by Thoubal district.

The district is predominantly inhabited by the Kukis and Nagas. They are Anal, Lamkang, Kuki, Moyon, Monsang, Chothe, Thadou, Paite, Maring, Zou, etc. It has about 264 villages within the district.<sup>56</sup> There are 24 Constituencies of Autonomous District Council in Chandel District. They are (i) Khoibu (ii) Machi (iii) Langol (iv) Kangoi (v) Rilram (vi) Sita (vii) Aimol Tampak (viii) Komlathabi (ix) Purum (x) Aihang (xi) Pantha (xii) District Headquarters (xiii) Vomku (xiv) Sibong (xv) Morech-A (xvi) Moreh-B (xvii) Moreh-C (xviii) Sonjang (xix) Chakpikarong (xx) Wangkhira (xxi) Toupokpi (xxii) Sugnu Hill Area (xxiii) Sajik Tampak and, (xxiv) Tolbung. The office of the Chandel Autonomous District Council is located at Monsang Pantha village in Chandel District headquarter.

### **3.2. Chandel Autonomous District Council**

Initially, the Chandel Autonomous District Council was known as Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council. Chandel was one of the subdivisions of Tengnoupal district prior to the reorganisation of district in 1969. Again, the name of the entire district has changed under the Extra Ordinary Manipur Gazette Notification No.174 August, 1983. The name of the district

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<sup>56</sup> <https://chandel.nic.in>

is given according to the name of the district headquarter. As a result, Tengnoupal district become Chandel district by virtue of Chandel being the district headquarter. The Chandel Autonomous District Council was constituted under the provision of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. The first election of the Chandel Autonomous District Council was held on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1973. The Council started functioning from 1<sup>st</sup> August 1973. The first term of the Chandel Autonomous District Council lasted for five years (1973-1978). And the 2<sup>nd</sup> election of the Chandel Autonomous District Council was conducted in 1978. During the time, the Chandel Autonomous District Council was suspended during 1978 to 1979. The Third and last Chandel Autonomous District Council Election was held in 1984 before the suspension of the Council in 1989. The functioning of Chandel Autonomous District Council discontinued since 1988, owing to the Sixth Schedule demand in the hill areas of Manipur. The Chandel Autonomous District Council was officially suspended by the State Government in 1988 vide order No. CHA/44/88 dated 17 October 1988.<sup>57</sup> Thus, it remained suspended from 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1988 to until 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.

During the time, the entire administration of the District Council was taken over by the District Administrator (Deputy Commissioner). In other words, all the six Autonomous District Councils in the hill districts of

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<sup>57</sup> Rajendra Kshetri. (2006). *District Councils in Manipur: Formation and Functioning*. New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House. P. 34

Manipur remained dysfunctional from last part of 1988 till mid-2010. However, it resume from 2010 after the conduct of election based on the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council (Third Amendment) Act 2008. The elected members of the district councils (MDCs) could not work and function from their respective headquarters due to strong protest by the hill people. As a result the elected members of the District Council temporarily started functioning at Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal.<sup>58</sup> Despite the strong opposition by the various tribals civil society organisations the Autonomous District Councils could managed to complete successfully its five year term from 2010-2015. Thereafter the fifth election of the Autonomous District Council was held successfully in 2015 unlike the previous election of 2010. This election brought a new era in the history of the District Council in Manipur as far as the hill districts were concerned. And it also resumes the democratic local governance in the hill districts of Manipur after two decades of dysfunctional of District Councils in the hill districts of Manipur.

The Chandel Autonomous District Council has the following sub-divisions namely,

1. Chandel Sub-Division.
2. Chakpikarong Sub-Division

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<sup>58</sup> Ng. Ngalengam. (2014). The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Elections 2011. The social Unrest in Ayangbam Syamkishore (ed) 'Engaging *The Failed State political Social and Economic Issues of Contemporary Manipur*'. New Delhi, Mittal Publications. P. 107

3. Khengjoy Sub-Division
4. Machi Sub-Division
5. Moreh Sub-Division and
6. Tengenoupal Sub-Division

Tengenoupal was a sub-division of Chandel District before it was upgraded into full-fledged district on December 9, 2016. The Chandel District was bifurcated into two districts – Chandel and Tengenoupal on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016.<sup>59</sup> Eventually, the two sub-divisions, Machi and Moreh come under the Tengenoupal District after the bifurcation of Chandel district for administrative convenience. At present the Chandel district has three sub-divisions namely Chandel sub-division, Chakpikarong sub-division and Khengjoy sub-division. However, as of now there is no separate Autonomous District Council for Tengenoupal District. The newly bifurcated districts from existing districts are yet to grant separate Autonomous District Councils. As a result, the Demand Committee on Creation of Autonomous District Councils was formed by newly created districts on 15 January, 2021<sup>60</sup>. This Demand Committee started pressuring the state government to create separate Autonomous District Council for the newly formed districts.

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<sup>59</sup> Manipur Cabinet decides formation of 7 new District. Times of India. Retrieved from <https://m.timesofindia.com/good-governance/manipur>

<sup>60</sup> Create ADCs in newly created districts: Committee. The Sangai Express. Retrieved from <https://www.thesangaiexpress.com/Encyc/2021/2/6/By-Our-Staff-ReporterImphal-Feb-6-The-Demand-Committee-on-creation-of-Autonomous-District-Councils-Pherzawl-Kamjong-Noney-Tengenoupal-Has-Urged-the-State-Government-not-to-conduct-ADC-electio.html>

### **3.3. Working of Chandel Autonomous District Council**

The administration of the Chandel Autonomous District Council has been carried out from the Headquarter and look after the following departments' viz., Agriculture, Education, Medical, Public Works and Veterinary department etc. Generally, the District Councils in Manipur are working under the Hill Commissioner (Tribal Affairs and Hills Department) at the Secretariat level. It can be noted here that the head of the administration in the District Council is the Chairman. District Council are allowed to form several committees for administering the district. For instance, there are Planning Committee, Finance Committee, etc for carrying out the council administration effectively. These committees are instituted every year and the members hold the post for one year. The members of the committee are chosen from the elected members of the district council from various constituencies of the district.

However, the Third Amendment Act of 2008 introduced an Executive Committee to be formed in each District Council. The Executive Committee comprised of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman including the five others members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be Ex-Officio of the said executive committee as per the new amendment. The other five members of the executive committee are to be nominated by the Chairman from the council members itself. All the five members are nominated from within the

ruling party of the District Council. However, in some other District Councils members from other parties not only from the ruling party are also represented in the Executive Committee. The nominated members of the Executive Committee also cease to hold such office on the removal or resignation of the Chairman of the council.<sup>61</sup> According to the Act, all the administrative functions of the District Councils are to be vested in the hands of Executive Committee. The Chairman as an ex-officio chairman of the Executive Committee can exercise administrative powers only in those areas that have been entrusted by a resolution of the Executive Committee or by the resolution of the Council unless it has been specifically entrusted by law.<sup>62</sup> It means the Chairman requires the consent of Executive Committee of the Council before exercising any administrative powers in the matters of finance, policy formulation, and selection of any beneficiaries for awarding scheme etc.

In a day to day administration of the Council, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) performs the normal administration with the assistance of a number of executive officers such as, One Medical Officer, One Assistant Engineer, One Deputy Inspector of schools, One Agriculture Officer and One Accounts Officer for each district.<sup>63</sup> The executive officers consist of

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<sup>61</sup> V.S. Sholounii Pou. (2015). *Local Government in Manipur*. New Delhi: Mittal Publication. P. 65

<sup>62</sup> Section 27 (A) Clause (3). The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils (Third Amendment) Act, 2008. Government of Manipur, Department.

<sup>63</sup> Chinkholian Guite. (1999). *Politico-Economic Development of the Tribals of Manipur*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.

specialists who are expert in their respective field. For instance, the Medical Department is headed by a Medical officer who is a specialized official in his area while the Public Works Department is headed by an Assistant Engineer.<sup>64</sup> The Chief Executive Officer has to be from the state civil servants and she/he is appointed by the Governor of the state. Besides, there is also one Additional Chief Executive Officer who assists the Chief Executive Officer in the day today administration of the District Council.

The District Council fully depend on the fund allocation from the state government through State Plan (State Finance Commission) and the Central Government with regard to financial matter. Currently, the District Councils in Manipur are financed through 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission and 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission of Central Government. The fund allocated through the state and the central financial commission is mainly for various developmental works at the grass root level. On the other hand, the salaries or honorariums of the employees working under the District Council are separately arranged from the state budget. This includes the honorarium of the elected members of the district councils (MDC). Every year Revised Estimate and Budget Estimate are submitted twice in a year for the employees of Autonomous District Councils and members of the district councils to the Tribal Affairs and Hills Department. The budget will be

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<sup>64</sup> S. Hohoi. (2018). *Decentralisation of power in the hills Districts of Manipur a comparative study of the Sadar Hills and Churanchanpur District Councils*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis submitted to Manipur University, P. 43 <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/254642>

approved by the state cabinet and release accordingly to the respective council. The council is also empowered to generate their own source of revenue. However, they totally depend upon the fund released from the grant-in-aid from the state government. Under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971, the Governor of Manipur had framed “The Manipur Grant-in-aid to Autonomous District Councils Rules, 1981” to govern extension of grant-in-aid to the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur.<sup>65</sup>

At present, there is no separate budget for each Autonomous District Councils in Manipur. During the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, the ADCs received an amount of Rs. 142.91 crore for the six ADCs for the period of 2010 to 2015.<sup>66</sup> It was an additional fund for executing various developmental works in the hill areas. Under the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, the Central government has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 1,437,700,000 to the ADCs in the hill districts of Manipur for 2017-2018. However, the Movement for People’s Rights Forum, Manipur (MNRFM) has alleged that Autonomous District Councils in Manipur misappropriate and wrongfully utilising the Central government funds.<sup>67</sup> Out of 143 Crores 77 lakhs, an amount of Rs. 15, 26, 83,740 has been sanctioned for Chandel ADC. All

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<sup>65</sup> *Op.cit.* S.Hohoi

<sup>66</sup> ADC Chairman submit ‘plan budget’ to PMO. The Sangai Express, 20 April, 2016.

<sup>67</sup> Forum alleges ADCs for misappropriating Central government fund. Imphal Free Press 6 March, 2021. Retrieved from <https://ifp.co.in/5914/forum-alleges-adcs-for-misappropriating-central-government-fund>



Tribal Students Union Manipur has also alleged that, on August 18, 2020 a sum of Rs. 25, 70, 9096 was sanctioned under the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission. But there are no developmental steps worth mentioning taken up by the ADCs of Manipur.<sup>68</sup>

**Table 1: The 5<sup>th</sup> ADC Election 2015**

<b>Part y</b>	<b>Ukhr ul</b>	<b>Senapa ti</b>	<b>Tamenglo ng</b>	<b>Churanchand pur</b>	<b>Chand el</b>	<b>Sada r Hill</b>	<b>Tot al</b>
INC	2	1	10	5	<b>11</b>	17	<b>46</b>
BJP	1	8	5	1	<b>2</b>	1	<b>18</b>
NPF	17	11	8	0	<b>5</b>	2	<b>43</b>
IND	4	4	1	18	<b>6</b>	1	<b>34</b>

Source: ADC Election Final Result, e-pao.net.<sup>69</sup>

The election to the 5<sup>th</sup> Autonomous District Council was held in a single phased on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2015. The results of the 2015 Autonomous District Council was declared on 11 June, 2015. Congress emerged as the single largest party which capture about 46 seats out of 144 total seats in the state.

<sup>68</sup> ADC funds not benefitting people, says ATSUM. Imphal Free Press 14 November, 2020. Retrieved from <https://m.daily.in/news/india/english/imphal+free+press+new-epaper-impfrp/adc+funds-not+benefitting+people+says+atsum-newsid-n229373868?listname=topicsList&index=0&topicIndex=0&mode=pwa>

<sup>69</sup> ADC election final results 2015, E-Poa 12-06-2015. Retrieved from [http://e-poa.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news\\_section.Top\\_Stories\\_2015.ADC\\_Election\\_Final\\_Results\\_2015\\_20150611](http://e-poa.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news_section.Top_Stories_2015.ADC_Election_Final_Results_2015_20150611)

In Chandel district also the Congress party capture 11 seats in the council election and emerged victory in the electoral battle.

Presently, the Chandel ADC is under the Democratic Alliance of Chandel (DAC). The alliance consists of 18 BJP and 3 NPF together formed the ruling party. The remaining 3 NNP and 2 Independent candidates formed the opposition party.

The government of Manipur has created six department namely; (a) Education Department (b) Agriculture Department (c) Medical Department (d) Veterinary Department (e) Public Works Department (f) Forest Department (Now functioning only in Senapati ADC, other ADCs had reverted to parent Department by Government order), to be looked after by the ADC. All these departments are headed by one head of the department (HOD) under the supervision of the chief executive officer (CEO).

### **3.4. Department under the Chandel Autonomous District Council**

#### **3.4.1. Education Department**

The largest department under the Chandel Autonomous District Council is the education department. The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 entrusted to the District Council for the establishment, maintenance and management of primary schools. The 1971 Act also empowered the District Council to manage overall functioning of primary

schools with regards to its construction and renovation of the institutions as well. The District Council followed the same syllabus as prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education Manipur (BOSEM) from nursery to Class-VIII standard.

During the initial period of the Council, the Government of Manipur has transferred 130 primary schools to the Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council (before it was changed into Chandel ADC) along with 325 teachers, 9 Schools Mothers and 6 schools Chowkidars (caretaker).<sup>70</sup> However, when the District Council was under suspension the state government took over the primary schools. The state government again entrusted the management of primary schools to the District Council after the 2010 ADC elections.

During the time, there were around 129 primary schools within the Chandel district. After the 2010 ADC election 50 new primary schools were established under the Chandel District Council. Eventually, the overall strength of the primary schools in Chandel district rose to 179. Before the creation of new primary schools the existing 129 schools were functioning by deputing five to six teachers against the government sanction post numbering seven teachers per primary schools. In the newly established primary schools the number of teachers' deputed per primary schools was change from two to three teachers. However, the newly established primary

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<sup>70</sup> Souvenir (2015). Autonomous District Council, Chandel. Published by Chandel Autonomous District Council.

schools are yet to be approved by the state government. Therefore, as of now these 50 primary schools remained unrecognised. These primary schools are just in the nature of proposal to the state government by the members of the district council right after the ADC election in 2010. Thus, the total number of both the primary and junior high schools under the Chandel Autonomous District Council remained same. Among the 129 primary schools 19 are upgraded to Junior High Schools. In 2010 the state government recruited 525 primary teachers.

At present, there are 906 primary teachers including the Headmasters and Headmistress. There is one Inspector of School who is overall in-charge of supervising the functioning of the schools under the council. Besides, there are three Deputy Inspector of schools and eight Assistant Inspectors of Schools who are appointed to assist the Inspector of schools in overseeing the functioning of the schools. In order to maintain good quality and smooth functioning of the primary schools the Inspector of School (DI) sometime visited to different primary schools. On many occasion, the Inspector of School found that many teachers were absent including Headmasters/Headmistress during the inspection. Those absentees are served explanation call by the Inspector of School.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with the Daina Moyon ADC primary teacher on 6 April, 2021

The Chandel ADC organised one day block level teachers' workshop in the month of October/November 2014 with experiences resource persons to infuse new educational skills amongst the teachers in the district. The District Council sanctioned an amount of Rs. 2,40,000/- for 6 Blocks i.e. Rs. 40,000/- per block for organizing the workshop.

**Table No: 3.2 One Day Block Level Teacher's Workshop**

SL. No.	Name of Block	Date of Workshop	No. of resource person
1	Moreh	21/10/2014	2
2	Khenjoy	29/10/2014	2
3	Chakpikarong	31/10/2104	2
4	Chandel	07/11/2014	2
5	Tegnoupal	08/11/2014	2
6	Machi	10/11.2014	2

Similarly, a One Day Headmasters Workshop was organised at Chandel District Headquarter on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2014. It was organised to make the headmasters/headmistress strong and effective in the management of schools. There are significant numbers of primary teachers who are not equipped with essential training certificate i.e. Diploma in Elementary Education (D.EL.Ed). During the year 2014-2015 around 120 untrained primary

teachers were selected for two year diploma in elementary education. These 120 untrained primary teachers were given two year training course on Diploma in Elementary Education at IGNOU Open Distance Learning Mode at Liwa Changning Higher Secondary and DIET Centre, Chandel.

The Chandel ADC tried their best to empower the quality of education in the Chandel district. Apart from organising workshop for the teachers and headmasters, digital cameras were distributed to the Assistant Inspector of Schools to efficiently supervise the functioning of primary schools. The Assistants Inspectors of schools are advised to capture the photo of students along with the teachers and Headmaster/Headmistress in the school premises during their inspection. These systems check the functioning of schools in general and ensured the improvement of the attendance of teachers and headmaster in particular. All the Assistants Inspectors of schools are directed to submit the report of inspections along with students and teachers photograph taken on inspection day. This system is followed with effective from 2013-2014 academic sessions and continues till date.

**Table No: 3.3. Block-wise number of Primary Schools and Juniors High Schools in Chandel District under the Chandel Autonomous District Council**

<b>SL. NO.</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>No. of Primary Schools</b>	<b>No. Junior High Schools</b>
1	Chandel	46	5
2	Khengjoy	15	2
3	Chakpikarong	18	3
4	Machi	15	3
5	Tengnoupal	15	3
6	Moreh	2	2
Sub-Total		111	18

Source: Data collected from Rehanshing, Deputy Inspector of School, Chandel ADC<sup>72</sup>

The total number of student enrolled in the academic session 2013-2014 was 8,166. The enrolment numbers of boys and girls were 4,117 and 4,049 respectively. According to the Annual Report of the District Council a total numbers of 7,909 students were admitted for the session 2014-2015. Out of the total number, the number of boys and girls are 3,667 and 4,242

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<sup>72</sup> Data collected from Rehanshing Deputy Inspector of School, Chandel ADC on 23/01/2021

respectively. And the total number of students' enrolment for the academic session 2019 to 2020 is 3,242. Out of the 3.242, the numbers of boys and girls are 1,628 and 1614 respectively. The students' enrolment for the academic session 2020-2021 is 4,633. The number of boys and girls is 2,279 and 2,354 respectively.<sup>73</sup>

**Table 3.4: Block-wise Number of new primary schools established in 2011 by Chandel ADC**

<b>SL No.</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>No. of New Primary Schools</b>
1	Chandel	11
2	Chakpikarong	5
3	Khenjoy	5
4	Machi	6
5	Tengnoupal	7
6	Moreh	16
Total		50

<sup>73</sup> Data collected from Rehanshing Deputy Inspector of School, Chandel ADC on 27/07/2021



## **Assessment of Primary Schools under Chandel Autonomous District Council**

The following schools are selected namely, Lambung Village Junior High School and Old Wangparal village primary School in order to appraise the functioning and management of schools run by the Chandel Autonomous District Council. Both of them two are located within the Chandel Sub-Division.

### **(1) Lambung Junior High Scholl, Lambung Village.**



Image: Lambung Junior High School, Lambung Village, Chandel district.

Source: Photo taken by Ts. Holyson

Lambung village Junior High School is under the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The Lambung village is situated at the outskirts of the Chandel town bazaar and is approximately 2 kilometres away from it. Initially, it has up-to class 6 standards. But, it was later upgraded to junior high school i.e. up to class 8 standard. The total students' enrolment from Nursery to Class –VIII for the year 2019-2020 was 109. The number of boys and girls are 40 and 69 respectively.<sup>74</sup> The registered students are mostly from the village itself and nearby villages. Most of the enrolled students belong to average income family who cannot afford to send their children to private school. The numbers of teachers deputed to this primary school from district council are 12 including the headmaster. However, these appointed teachers from the District Council seldom visit the primary school.<sup>75</sup> Instead the junior high school is being run and managed by the Village Authority in collaboration with the Church Authority of the village. These two local bodies appointed the School Board to look after the proper functioning of the primary school. The school has three buildings including the staff office. Besides, it has also one toilet each for boys and girls.

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<sup>74</sup> Data collected from Elius Anal, Headmaster of Lambung Junior High School on 10/10/2020.

<sup>75</sup> Interviewed with D.Y. Alam village chairman of Lambung village on 24-09-2020

**(2). Purum Khunou Primary School, Old Wangparal Village.**



Image 1: Front view of Purum Khunou Primary School, Old Wangparal Village.

Photo taken by Ts. Holyson



Image 2: Right side view

Old Wangparal village is one of the villages inhabited by the Chothe tribe in Chandel district. The village primary school i.e. Purum Khunou Primary School was established in the year 1951. Earlier, this primary school was under the state government. But it came under the jurisdiction of district council after it was introduced in the hill districts. The Purum Khunou primary school have up to Class -V standard. It has only one small school building and one toilet each for boys and girls. The total number of students' enrolment for the Academic session of 2019-2020 is 15 only. No student is enrolled in nursery class. There are five teachers deputed in the primary school including the headmasters/headmistress.<sup>76</sup> This shows that there is no demand for the school. People do not send their children in the primary school. In other words, the Purum Khunou primary school is not a good school that is why only 15 students enrolled in the academic session 2019-2020.

### **3.4.2. Agriculture Department**

Agriculture department constitute one of the most important departments under the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The department is headed by an Agriculture Officer (AO). The total numbers of sanctioned post in the agriculture department are six including the HOD which is the Agriculture Officer. There are 2 (two) Assistant Agriculture

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<sup>76</sup> Data collected from Daina Moyon, Headmistress of Purum Khullen Primary School, ADC Chandel on 06/04/2021

officer (AAO) below the Agriculture Officer (AO). In addition, there are two Field Assistant (FA) working under the Assistant Agriculture Officer (AAO) to help in carrying out various related agricultural work at the ground level. At the bottom of the department there is one grade IV post called Chainman. Thus, the agriculture department has six posts/staffs which is headed by an Agriculture Officer. The working of the agriculture department is supervised by the Agriculture Officer. The agriculture department performed various activities related to agricultural work in the villages which come under the jurisdiction of Chandel Autonomous District Council.<sup>77</sup>

Most of the people in Chandel district engage in agricultural works. Agriculture is not the prefer choice, but most section of the population involve in the agricultural activities for their sustenance. Agriculture is backbone of the economy in Chandel district. It is one of the most predominant occupations in the country. Being a hilly region, large section of the people in Chandel District practiced shifting cultivation (slash and burnt). Besides, some people in the semi-plain region practiced terrace cultivation. Forest is also one of the important sources of livelihood for some section of the population in the district. From the forest various sources are being extracted ranging from edible food products like bamboo shoot, herbs, fruits, plants leaves, firewood, charcoal and timbers etc.

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with the Mrs. Roni Roel Assistant Agriculture Officer(AAO), Chandel ADC on 23/01/2021

The Chandel district is endowed with favourable agricultural climate. However, it is lagging behind in productivity and failed to produce enough food grains and vegetables for the people. Chandel being revenue District of Manipur, the larger responsibility lies with the district administration under the state government. But, it failed to address as per the requirement of the needy farmers. The agriculture department under the Chandel Autonomous District Council has taken up progressive activities in the field of agriculture even though with less power and budget at their disposal. The activities taken by the department include plantation programme such as banana, ginger, turmeric, tree beans, sugarcane, lemon, hatkora, and tapioca etc. Apart from this, the department also conducted plant health camp training on various occasion to impart the farmers on improving the quality of plantation. The farmers were also provided with hybrid seeds, sprayers, pesticides and insecticides etc.<sup>78</sup>

Some of the importance schemes and programme implemented by the agriculture department under the State Plan to the Chandel ADC are given below in yearly wise<sup>79</sup>;

**(1). 2010-2011**

(i). Maize cultivation programme to around 46 beneficiaries.

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with the Mrs. Roni Roel Assistant Agriculture Officer, Chandel ADC on 23/01/2021

<sup>79</sup> *Op.cit*, Souvenir.

(ii). Assistance to small and marginal farmers 2 beneficiaries.

(iii). Allocation of planting material such Banana, Gauva, Litchi, Lemon, Bhindi, Bringjal, Bean, Chilly (hybrid) and King chilly were distributed to 46 beneficiaries.

**(2). 2011-2012**

(i). Planting material of Guava (Thailand Variety) to 2 beneficiaries.

(ii). Bee hive/Queen excluder sheet under Horticulture Mission for North East (HMNE) programme to 20 beneficiaries.

(iii). Cultivation of Tree Bean and King Chilly under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme (RKVY) to 10 beneficiaries for ensuring holistic development of agricultural and allied services.

(iv). Planting material under MM-11- of Horticulture Mission for North East (HMNE) programme to over 31 beneficiaries for different items such as Banana, Guava, Litchi, Lemon, Grapes, Papaya, Walnut and Passion fruits etc.

**(3). 2012-2013**

(i). Physical programme for Maize Development- One Day Training for farmers to over 50 selected beneficiaries.

(ii) Farmers Training Programme on winter vegetable cultivation under HMNE to over 50 selected beneficiaries.

(iii). Assistance to Pisciculturists Scheme under state plan to 6 selected beneficiaries.

(iv). Assistance to small and marginal farmers to 5 selected beneficiaries.

**(4). 2013-2014**

(i). Assistance to small and marginal farmers under state plan to over 12 numbers of beneficiaries

(ii). Assistance to Pisciculturists scheme to over 20 selected beneficiaries.

**(5) 2014-2015**

(i). Assistance to small and marginal farmers to over 12 selected beneficiaries.

**(6) 2016-2017**

(i). Allocation of organic inputs to over 30 beneficiaries

(a) VT Rich Butter

(b) Rich Focus



(c) Rich Kelvin

**(7) 2018-2019**

(i). Plantations of Banana, Ginger, Turmeric, Hatkora, Tree bean, Sugarcane, lemon and Tapiocas etc. to over 20 beneficiaries.

**(8) 2019-2020**

(i). Assistance to Pisciculturists scheme to over 20 beneficiaries.

(ii). Assistance to small and marginal farmers to over 12 beneficiaries for increasing agricultural productions. This is provided from the Horticulture and Soil Conservation Government of Manipur under the devolution of power.

The above information shows that agriculture department is assisting to the needy farmers in the form of training, providing materials for agriculture, horticulture and fishing, etc. But the numbers of beneficiaries are very less. The agriculture should train to the entire needy farmer in the district and assist them in whatever possible way. So that, the Chandel district will be prosperous and self-sufficient district.

**3.4.3. Veterinary Department**

The veterinary department of Chandel Autonomous District Council is working under the supervision of the District Veterinary Officer. There are

eight veterinary dispensaries under Chandel Autonomous District Council. The department has been delivering various services through these dispensaries/centres which are located at different places in the district. The veterinary department has manifold functions to perform in the villages' which falls under the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The department is headed by one Veterinary Officer who is the head of the department (HOD). Under the veterinary officer (VO) there are several veterinary field assistant and veterinary attendees. The VO with the assistance of other staffs and officials are manning the department.

**Table No: 3.5. Total strength of the staff in veterinary department**

<b>Sl No.</b>	<b>Name of Post</b>	<b>Approved Sanction Post</b>	<b>Existing Post</b>	<b>Vacant Post</b>
1	Vety. Officer	1	1	Nil
2	Vety. Field Assistant	8	3	5
3	Vety. Attendees	9	5	4
	Total	18	9	9

Source: Data collected from Dr. M. Shyamachoron Singh District Veterinary Officer, Chandel ADC<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Data collected from Dr. M. Shyamachoron Singh District Veterinary Officer, Chandel ADC on 23/01/2021

The above table shows that there are only nine employees working under the veterinary department against 18 sanctioned posts. The nine employees under the veterinary department are rendering various services to the grass root level.

Some of the important activities taken up by the department include vaccination of livestock to prevent from various contagious diseases. The vaccination drives are taken up by the Veterinary Officer (VO) from time to time with the help of field assistants from the dispensaries. The vaccination of livestock related to the diseases such as Rabies, Swine Flu, FMD (foot mouth disease) and HSBQ (haemorrhagic septicaemia and blackquarter) etc. The department delivered these services on various occasion but not uniformly to entire district. In addition, the veterinary department also distributed free livestock medicines of various diseases through concerned veterinary dispensaries.<sup>81</sup>

Some of the importance activities undertaken by the department are as follows;<sup>82</sup>

- (i) Under the Rural backyard poultry farming scheme for the year 2013-2014 about 3000 numbers of low input technology birds were distributed to over 100 beneficiaries in Chandel District by

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with the Dr. M. Shyamachoron Singh District Veterinary Officer, Chandel ADC on 23/01/2021.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*

the veterinary department under the sponsorship of Directorate of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Services, Government of Manipur.

- (ii) A free vaccination programme was conducted by the seven dispensaries and veterinary mobile team led by Veterinary Officer (VO) under the 1<sup>st</sup> instalment of 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Award for the year 2011-2012. In the programme 5900 livestock were given free vaccination to protect from various contagious diseases like HSBQ, FMD, Swine Flu and Rabies.
- (iii) In 2015, an emergency vaccination programme was conducted by the veterinary mobile team led by Veterinary Officer (VO) along with his subordinate staff especially in Chakpikarong Block in the neighbouring villages of Churachandpur district where Rabies Epidemic occur. It affected the people and some people die due to the epidemic. In the vaccination campaign about 1826 numbers of dogs were vaccinated and issue vaccination certificates for the safety of the owners as well as the dogs. The decision for the vaccination programme was taken in an emergency executive meeting of Autonomous District Council, Chandel held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015.

The concerned veterinary officer suggested for opening of more numbers of veterinary dispensary in the district to assist more to the needy people. Further, he also suggested for upgrading or increasing the strength of the staffs in the department. Due to lack of sufficient staff members it becomes heavy burden on the staff to carry out the work. Lack of sufficient fund becomes one of the reasons which put constraint on the functioning of the department.<sup>83</sup>

#### **3.4.4. Public Works Department**

Public Works Department is also one of the important departments under the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The primary function of the Public Works Department is related to repairing work and constructions. The public works department under Chandel Autonomous District Council has Executive Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Section Officers and Road Mohorror to function the department smoothly. The Public works Department has undertaken enormous works mostly related with the constructions and repairing work. During the year 2019-2020 the department has taken up repairing work of 43 primary schools under the 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Finance Commission allotted a sum of Rs. 1,03,72,817/- for the repairing of 43 primary schools and Junior higher schools located at different places under the education department in the

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*

Chandel ADC. Also, during the same year and under the 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission the PWD undertook the work of rooftop rain water harvesting and check dam amounting to 1,55,59,228/-. Around 49 villages from different block were covered under this rain water harvesting and check dam work. Under the same 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission an amount of 1,55,59,228/- rupees was awarded for construction of waiting shed, improvement of internal village road (IVR), and shingling of road etc.<sup>84</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission awarded an amount of Rs. 3,91,21,886/- for the year 2018-2019 through an order No. 19/3/2018-Hills dated 22-01-2019. The 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission Awarded the PWD to undertaken the following work items;

1. Improvement of playground for 9 selected villages.
2. Repairing of 16 primary schools and 1 junior high school located at different places.
3. Repairing of 2 dispensaries and one guest house at Moreh Block.
4. Extension of class 1 room, construction of toilet, schools fencing of Khungpham primary school
5. Improvement of inter village roads (IVR) at 27 different village locations.
6. Banana plantation to 20 selected villages.

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<sup>84</sup> Data collected from N. Yaikul Singh (Assistant Engineer) in-charge of the public work and department Chandel ADC on 23 January, 2021.

7. Chilli plantation to 22 selected villages.
8. Solid waste management of Chandel, Chakpikarong and Moreh block.
9. Purchased of benches, desks, white board and marker pen etc.<sup>85</sup>

Some major works and schemes undertaken by the PWD during the year 2010 to 2015 were as follows;

(i). During the period of 2010-2011, the department has distributed 450 numbers of polythene water tank of 500 litres capacity and 76 numbers of 1000 litres capacity to the beneficiaries of remote areas of Chandel District through the concerned MDCs out of the fund released by the state government under the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Award for the year 2010-2011.

(ii). Government of Manipur released fund under the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Award as 1<sup>st</sup> Instalment of General Basic Grant & Special Area Performance grant for the year 2011-2012. Out of the released fund various works such as construction of water reservoir tank, rain water harvesting, and low cost toilet, purchase of veterinary and medical medicines had been executed.

(iii). The department also constructed 5 (five) Model Primary School building viz., Saivon P/S, Singtam P/S, T. Bongmol P/S, Maipi P/S and

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*

Langol P/S under the Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources Scheme of Central government (NLCPR) for the 2012-2013 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase.

(iv). The department also constructed five primary school teacher's barrack quarter under the SPA (Special Assistance Plan) for the year 2012-2013. And constructed 8 (eight) primary school teacher's barrack quarter under the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of SPA during the year 2014-2015.

(V) Construction of suspension bridge under S.I.D.F (DoNER) for the year 2013-2014.

#### **3.4.5. Medical Department**

The Medical department has been functioning under the Chandel Autonomous District Council since its inception. One medical officer is deputed to the council designated as Medical Officer (MO). The medical officer is the overall in-charge of the medical department under the council. The department has the following post namely Pharmacists, Laboratory Technician, Auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM), General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) and Medical attendant. As of now, there are 4 (four) dispensaries under the Chandel Autonomous District Council. These dispensaries are located at different places namely; Japhou Bazaar dispensary (Chandel headquarters), Lamlong Khullen dispensary (Machi Sub-Division), Khangbarol dispensary (Khenjoy Sub-Division) and Khullen Khialet dispensary (Chakpi Karong Sub-Division). Presently, there are 11 staffs



including medical officer (MO) working under the medical department of the Chandel district council. There are around 14 lying vacant staff posts of different position under the medical department. The vacant staff post includes 1 ANM/GNM, 1 pharmacist, 4 Laboratory technicians, 3 medical attendants, 1 ambulance driver and 4 Chawkidar etc.<sup>86</sup>

Since, the resumption of the council from 2010, the medical department has delivering a service to the general public. However, the council's dispensary doesn't avail advanced facilities like operation and surgery. It provides merely the basic medical needs to the local people like medicines of free of cost. The Medical Officer administered the patient once or twice in a week free of charge. And the Chandel district council has four medical ambulances. In some occasion the council's ambulance are used by local people in times of needs<sup>87</sup>. Also, in several occasion the council under the medical department organized free health camp at different location. During the health camp the medical officer examined several patients and distributed medicine free of cost.

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<sup>86</sup> *Op. cit*, Souvenir

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Aquilin Wanglar, (Caretaker of Chandel ADC office) from Monsang Pantha Village on 9 July 2021.

### **3.5. District Council during Covid-19 pandemic/ Activities taken up during the Covid-19 pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought untold existential crisis worldwide. It also ruined the world economy at large. The impact of Covid-19 has manifold and effected in different sector viz., education, economy, agriculture etc. At the national level, it brought unprecedented sufferings to general public life. The problems of Covid-19 do not discriminate between the have and have not. Globally, the disease claims so many lives. Also, in India the death toll is very high. As of 4 July 2021, the death toll in India from Covid-19 is 4, 02,005.<sup>88</sup>

The pandemic has bought untold misery in the normal life of the people. It created chaos and innumerable suffering on the daily lives of the people due the vulnerability of the contraction of the Covid-19 disease. The pandemic made the government both at the centre and the state level to impose lockdown as a precautionary measure to contain its spread. This lockdown has a negative impact on the lives of the people. The lockdown restricted movement of people. As a result, people face a lot of difficulties to get essential items during the lockdown because market and shop are closed.

During the pandemic created by the Covid-19, the role of the Chandel Autonomous District Council is not very significant. The Chandel District

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<sup>88</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-live-july-4-2021-updates/article35130132.ece/amp>

has around 264 villages which have to be looked after by the district council. During the Covid-19 pandemic the general public had faces various kinds of difficulties especially in accessing commodities from the market due to the lockdown. It became harder for the needy people who earn their livelihood through daily wages. During the pandemic earning of money become a problem due to lockdown. This type of crisis is a great opportunity for the district council to help people in terms of monetary or material items. The Autonomous District Councils was instituted primarily for the local governance and to promote the welfare of the community. However, any such kind of help from the district council was not visible. But there are only few instances like material relief/commodities items being distributed in few villages by the district council. The members of the district council distributed rice, potatoes, etc in their respective constituency. It may be mentioned here that, the relief materials rendered by the members of the district council (MDCs) does not covered all the villages fall under their respective constituencies. The assistance provided by the members of the district council was from their own pockets. The Chandel Autonomous District Council as a local government has never taken such relief work during the pandemic.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with the Th. Ngamtin Chief of Liwa Sarie Village, Chandel District on 04/09/2020.

### **3.6. Important works taken up by the Chandel ADC during the period from 2010-2015**

#### **Village Recognition under Chandel District**

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council (Third Amendment) Act, 2008 added new Section 29(A). The Section 29 (A) of the Act empowered the District Council to recognize the newly established village in the hill areas of the state. As a result, the Chandel Autonomous District Council recognised 13 villages during the 12<sup>th</sup> Council House Sitting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014. They are as follows,

#### Under Chandel Sub-Division

- (a) Khuilairam Village
- (b) Khungpgam Village

#### Under Machi Sub-Division

- (a) Chingkhan Yonyer Village
- (b) Samsok Village
- (c) Marshimkhu Village
- (d) Chaanram Village

#### Under Tengnoupal Sub-Division

- (a) Aimol Bethal Village

- (b) Bethel Village
- (c) Khokandang Village
- (d) Khomayai Khothar Village

Under Moreh Sub-Division

- (a) Lk. Kotlen Village
- (b) Langkhogching (B) Village
- (c) JH. Vajaang Village

Again, the Chandel District Council in its 13<sup>th</sup> Council House Sitting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015 recognised eight more villages. They are namely as under,

- (a) Vangkhei Village (Machi Sub-Division)
- (b) Maringthel Village (Machi Sub-Division)
- (c) Lamrinkhuw Village (Tengnoupal Sub-Division)
- (d) Phunthakhuw Village (Tengnoupal Sub-Division)
- (e) Kandong Village (Tengnoupal Sub-Division)
- (f) Chavaankhu Village (Tengnoupal Sub-Division)
- (g) Sumkhu Village (Tengnoupal Sub-Division) and
- (h) Sunnyam Village (Tengnoupal Sub-Division)

### **3.7. Sports and Youth Affairs**

The sports and youth affair is one of the important subjects enumerated under the Manipur (hill areas) District Council Act. It was not included in the earlier principal Act of Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971, but included under the Third Amendment of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 2008. As a part of game and sports, the District Sports Association (DSA) Chandel organised the super league, first division and second division men's football tournament under the banner of Autonomous District Council. The Chandel District Sports Association (DSA) annually organised men's football tournament in collaboration with the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The DSA tournament is one of the most popular football league tournaments in the Chandel district. In DSA football tournament various youth clubs from within the district participated. The Chandel district organised the Autonomous District Council, Chandel Trophy – Super and First Division Football League for the year 2021 from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 19 February, 2021. The scholar observed that, during the ADC Chandel Trophy around eleven best team of the district participated and competes for the ADC Chandel Trophy 2021. The Chandel ADC has donated 3 lakhs for this tournament.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Data collected from Th. Joyshing, General Secretary of District Sports Association (DSA) Chandel on 18 February, 2021.

### **3.8. Assessment of the Chandel Autonomous District Council**

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 was introduced to implement various social and welfare schemes to augment the socio-economic life of the tribal people. However, the impact of Autonomous District Council on the tribals' lives is yet to be satisfactory. The District Councils are entrusted with 26 administrative subjects under the provisions of the District Council Act. Different development activities can be taken up in the village as per the Act. It includes rural housing schemes, library and cultures, community development, social and tribal welfare and village planning etc. However, welfare schemes could not properly implemented in the village due to limited funds with the council. The district council has five major department namely agriculture, education, medical, public works and veterinary. All the work of the council is carried out through these departments. For example, constructions of drain, bridges, canals, culverts, buildings, repairing of any institutions like primary schools are done by the public and work department. Similarly, every work or scheme is implemented by the related department.

Education department is considered as one of the most important department and also the largest department under the Chandel district council. In education department there are 179 schools including primary and junior high schools. There are some schools which are non-functional but

their teachers are getting salary regularly. At the same time, there are also schools functioning properly like private run school. Some of the primary schools are in a pathetic condition. Most parents do not prefer their children to admit to the council school due to lack of infrastructure such as school building, toilets, unqualified teacher etc.<sup>91</sup>

Public works department primarily engaged in the constructions related work. The department has carried out various constructions of building, inter-village roads, culverts, drain, repairing of primary schools, and construction of teachers barrack quarters, suspension bridges etc. All the works are carried out through various financial packages under State Finance Commission and Central Finance Commission. But, people expected more from the department.

The achievement of the agriculture department under the Chandel district council is not very impressive. However, it has managed to implement some schemes and programmes. Some of the major activities undertaken by the department include maize cultivation programme, assistance to small and marginal farmers and allocation of planting material during the past years. But, the available schemes and programme could not covered sizeable number of people. Only few people are able to avail the schemes from the agriculture department under the Chandel district council.

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with the D.Y. Alam Chief of Lambung Village, Chandel District on 24/09/2020



The veterinary department has carried out many activities including vaccination drive through its dispensaries (numbering seven) located at different places. Over the years, the department has conducted many vaccinations drive against various contagious diseases like HSBQ, FM, Swine Flu and Rabies. It provided few scheme like rural backyard poultry farming to selected beneficiaries. The department also initiated emergency vaccination campaign in the event of Rabies epidemic in the past, under the supervision of Veterinary Officer (VO). Due to lack of staffs coupled with the less number of dispensaries centre the department could not able to render proper services to the masses. There are few dispensaries without proper infrastructural building. In addition to its, lack of sufficient funds becomes one of the main problems in order to initiate any kind of work under the department.<sup>92</sup>

From the above it can be concluded that, the aim and objectives for the establishment of District Council in the hill areas could not achieve. The members of the District Council seldom enquired about the needs and problems of the villages which fall under their constituency. Moreover, common people are not aware of the purpose of the district council. This could be attributed due to lack of involvement of the District Council in the field of development in the villages. The common masses become familiar

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with the Dr. M. Shymachon Singh District Veterinary Officer Chandel ADC on 23/01/2021.

only during elections of the District Councils. They become very vague with regard to the functions and roles of the District Council. Most of the common people aware only the centrally sponsored schemes like NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), which was later renamed as ‘Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act’ 2005 (MGNREGA). The common people mostly benefitted from the centrally sponsored scheme than from the District Council. Under the MGNREGA schemes every household in rural India is provided work for 100 days. This scheme is successfully implemented in every village. Various development activities are initiated in the Village through this scheme. It includes construction of inter-village roads, canals, ponds, wells etc., within the village locality. This centrally sponsored scheme is executed and implemented by the chairman/village chief/secretary of each respective village.

## **CHAPTER-4**

### **PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF CHANDEL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The fourth chapter studies the problems and prospects of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur in general and Chandel District in particular. It examines the demand for inclusion of District Council of Manipur under the ambit of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India and its challenges in Manipur. It discusses the responses of the state government to the demand for autonomy which is more rigour and intense under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 amended in 2010.

#### **4.1. Origin of Sixth Schedule Demand in Manipur**

The Autonomous District Councils in Manipur was established by an Act of Parliament known as the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. Accordingly six Autonomous District Councils were set up in Manipur. It was established so that the tribal from the hill areas administered and governed themselves through their elected representatives. The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971 had enumerated enormous subjects and functions to bring proper socio-economic development in the hill districts. Initially, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 enumerated on 17 subjects to be implemented by the elected members of district councils. These subjects includes maintenance and management of property (movable

and immovable) institutions the construction, repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, channels and buildings, the establishment, maintenance and management of primary schools, dispensaries, cattle, ponds, market and fairs and the construction, repair and maintenance of all buildings and embankments, the supply, storage and control of water for agricultural purposes, the initiation, inspection and control of relief works, the preservation and reclamation of soil, the preservation of animal diseases, public health and sanitation, and the management of ferries as assigned to them by the administrator. However, in reality the councils are unable to take up all these subjects because there is no power with them or autonomy under the Manipur (Hill areas) District Council Act. Instead, of empowering the council with necessary autonomy, the state government increases the subjects and functions of the council. The District Council has been remained under the subservient of the state government and as such it is part of the state since its formation.<sup>93</sup>

The Autonomous District Councils in Manipur have been functioning under the provisions of the Act of 1971 by constituting the Councils in the hill districts. However, the principal Act of 1971 does not empowered the District Councils with legislative and judicial powers like their counterparts in sixth schedule areas. The powers of district council of Manipur are restricted only to executive and financial power. The limited powers with the District Councils

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<sup>93</sup> Chungkhosei Baite. (2016). District Councils in Manipur and Demand for Extension of Sixth Schedule. *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, February

along with the dearth of autonomy under the Act of 1971, the councils cannot initiate for any fruitful development in the hill districts. The first election of the District Councils of Manipur was held in 1973 and started functioning the council till it was suspended from 1989.

The institution of the Autonomous District Councils came into being in Manipur as a local self-government but it has apparently failed to meet the aspirations of the hill tribals of Manipur<sup>94</sup>. As a matter of fact, the Autonomous District Council of Manipur was instituted based on the model of ADC under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India but the powers and function are incomparable. The District Councils of Manipur are not constitutional bodies. On the other hand, the Autonomous District Councils in the Sixth Schedule areas are constitutional bodies. They have legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers. Their powers and functions come from the provisions of the article 244(2) and 275(1) of the Indian constitution. Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule areas have the rights to legislate their own laws for the welfare of their community. But the District Council of Manipur was drafted and enacted by the state government. Besides, the Act of 1971 does not confer legislative and judicial powers too. As a result, the District Council cannot introduce any laws in the area of agriculture, forest conservation, water management and other matters for the

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<sup>94</sup> Ng, Ngalengam. (2014). The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Elections 2011. The Social Unrest in Ayangbam Shyamkishore (ed) '*Engaging the Failed State Political Social and Economic Issues of Contemporary Manipur*'. New Delhi, Mittal Publications. P.107

welfare of the community. On judicial matter, all the cases are looked after by the District Court, which implies that the power remained with the state government. Though, the financial power are given the council cannot generate its own revenue. They remained dependent on the funds released from the state government on the financial matter. Even the proposed budget of the council is not allocated as per the council proposal<sup>95</sup>. And sometimes the fund flowed from the state government is also irregular which led to strain relationship between the council and the state government. In order to initiate and implement various developmental activities proper financial allocation becomes very important. Thus, the councils remained helpless due to lack of proper financial allocation and irregular fund from the state government.

The Autonomous District Councils of Manipur are similar to Statutory Autonomous Councils in Assam. These councils are not covered under the purview of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. They are not constitutional bodies. They are statutory bodies created by their respective state government. The tribals who are left out of the Sixth Schedule provision are provided a lesser autonomy under the state legislative Act. Thus, the Statutory Autonomous Councils and District Councils in Assam and Manipur cannot be compared with the councils under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Some tribals of the northeast India are neither included in the Sixth Schedule nor in the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Tongsin Willingson member of the district council (MDC) on 20/07/2020

They started demanding for protection under the Constitutional provision. Some of the ethnic groups are provided with lesser autonomy under the state legislative Act due to rigorous demands. Since it is the created by the state legislative Act, the state government have large scope to control and interfere in their affairs. But, the state government has no absolute power to interfere in the functioning of the councils created under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Besides, these councils do not come under the jurisdiction of the state government except in the financial relation where the central government released grant-in-aid or funds through the state government. However, the ADC constituted under the Sixth Schedule is neither absolutely under the control of the state government nor it is a part of the state, but it is ‘a state within a state’ under the Constitution.<sup>96</sup>

The root causes for demanding Sixth Schedule in Manipur was not stemmed only from the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. The demand was started after the implementation of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 in 1973. The problems and limitations of the District Council Act came into light during the functioning of its first term from 1973 to 1978. There was demand for Sixth Schedule in Manipur before the formation of District Councils. In the late 1960s the demand for statehood (full-fledged statehood of Manipur) was in progress. During the same time, the hill people also become more conscious for greater autonomy to govern

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<sup>96</sup> *Op cit*, Chungkhosei Baite

themselves for which a Committee was formed in 1969 headed by N. Gouzagin and Thangkhanlal as President and Secretary respectively.<sup>97</sup> The Committee forwarded a memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India for bringing the hill areas of Manipur under the framework of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in 1970. Instead of granting the Sixth Schedule under the Constitution of India, the Central Government recommended to the Manipur Government to draft a bill for District Councils in the state.<sup>98</sup>

There is another view regarding the introduction of the Autonomous District Council in the hill district of Manipur under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. This view believed that, introduction of the District Council was taken up together while discussing for granting of statehood of Manipur in 1971. It argued that the introduction of the Autonomous District Councils was not the result of demand by the hill tribals of Manipur, but the natural up gradation that was taken up simultaneously with the preparation for the statehood of Manipur in 1971.<sup>99</sup> In the past even during the British rule, there was a separate administrative system between the valley and the hills in Manipur. The separate administrative system continued even after the independence of India. Similarly, while Manipur was upgraded from the status of Union Territory to a full-fledged state, the Government of

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<sup>97</sup> V.S. Shoulounii Pou. (2015). *Local Government in Manipur*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Elangbam Ashakiran Chanu. (2020). Evolution of Autonomous District Council in Manipur: An Exploration to its Structural and Functional Loopholes. *Studies in Indian Place Names*. Vol-40, Issues-56, March



India considered maintaining status quo regarding the local self-government in the hills and the plains of Manipur. During the preparation for granting statehood in December 1971, the then Chief Secretary of Manipur was advised by R.K. Kohli the then Lt. Governor of Manipur to prepare for the establishment of Autonomous District Councils for the hills of Manipur. After Manipur attained its statehood the District Councils came into being by holding elections in 1973. It means that Autonomous District Councils in Manipur was not because of any demand but an administrative evolution for the benefit of the hill people. It was also an essential arrangement for the overall development of the hill areas of Manipur.<sup>100</sup>

The demand for sixth schedule could be averted if the actual powers like legislative, executive and judicial power and functions envisaged in the Act are devolved properly. The Act does not empower the District Councils to legislate any law related to forest and land preservation, agriculture, protection of their property and cultural rights concerning their own affairs. Instead, the district councils are given only the powers related to appointment or succession of chiefs, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, and social customs etc. All these powers are only in the nature of recommendatory power to the state government.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Section 29 (2). The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils (Third Amendment) Act, 2008

The tribals felt dissatisfaction with the working of the council as per the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. As a result, the demand for Sixth Schedule was intensified by forming the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee Manipur (SDCM) jointly by the Naga and the Kuki in late 1980s. In course of time the All Tribals Student Union of Manipur (ATSUM) also become active in pressuring the government for inclusion of hill areas of Manipur under the ambit of the provision of the Sixth Schedule. The demand for Sixth Schedule is outcome of the state government failure to devolve proper power under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 to the ADC.

The demand for the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India has been voiced as early as in 1974. It was first raised by Hill Areas Committee (HAC) which comprised of all elected members of legislative assembly from the hill areas of the state. The HAC passed the resolution that all the district councils in Manipur should be brought under the sixth schedule to the constitution of India. Later, the HAC resolution was reiterated by the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee (SSDCM). Thus, the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee, Manipur and the All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) who represented the tribal communities became the main bodies for demanding the extension of the sixth schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. The demand for the sixth schedule is justified on the ground that the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 failed to empower legislative and

judicial powers to the councils. Further, the tribals felt dissatisfaction with the working and functioning of the district councils, since its formation from 1971. According to the demand made by SSDCM, the functioning of the Autonomous District Councils of Manipur is plagued by many problems including the non-delegation of specified powers and functions.<sup>102</sup> The failures of the state government to fulfil the tribals' demands paved the way for the tribals to declare under the auspices of SSDCM that, "No Sixth Schedule, No Council Elections".<sup>103</sup> Under such circumstances, for the first time the state government after realising the weakness of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 brought amendments in 1975. However, the amendment turns out to be minor changes related to Section (23) of the principal Act. The amendment could not bring substantial changes from the original Act and failed to persuade the aspirations of the tribals' community. Subsequently, the tribal leaders led by the SSDCM and the ATSUM boycotted the elections of the district council in the hill areas. Thus, the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur remained dysfunctional from 1989 to until 2010 elections. During the period the tribal communities launched different forms of democratic agitations by imposing bandhs and strikes in the National Highway.

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<sup>102</sup>Elangbam Ashakiran Chanu. (2020). Evolution of Autonomous District Council in Manipur: An Exploration to its Structural and Functional Loopholes. *Studies in Indian Place Names*. Vol-40, Issues-56, March

<sup>103</sup> L. Lam Khan Piang. (2019). Institutional Exclusion of the Hill Tribes in Manipur: Demand for Protection under the Sixth Schedule. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. LIV, No. 15 April

## 4.2. The State Response

The state government considered the demand of sixth schedule for the first time in May 1991, which is in tune with the demand of the HAC. This recognition came with cabinet resolutions passed during the Chief Ministership of R K Ranbir Singh (1991), R K Dorendra Singh (1992), and R K Radhabinod Kojam (2001). However, the resolutions passed were subject to “certain local adjustment and amendments” by the state government. The state government required to initiate necessary process with regard to the conferment of sixth schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. The then chief minister in his letter to the then Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, clarified the rider “local amendments and adjustments” should be as follows: (i) manner of bearing additional expenditure following the extension of Sixth Schedule, (ii) the necessity or otherwise, of repealing the existing central and state enactments operating in the hill areas, and (iii) what type of Sixth Schedule to be applied.<sup>104</sup> However, the process of initiating the extension of the Sixth Schedule stuck somewhere on the way. In the first instance, the recommendation of the state government does not reached the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). As a result, the demand for extension of the Sixth Schedule to the hill areas went unfruitful. This implies that, the state government does not pursue for the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of

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<sup>104</sup> L Lam Khan Piang. (2019). Institutional Exclusion of the Hill Tribes in Manipur: Demand for Protection under the Sixth Schedule. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. LIV, No. 15, April 13

Manipur. In retaliation the tribal resumed their agitation and intensified the protest more rigorously. Further, the state government was forced to send recommendation to the central government on 17 August 1992. However, there was no concrete response either from the central or the state government. The case for the extension of the sixth schedule came into consideration only when the HAC repeated their stand and, passed the resolution in March 2000 and also owing to the continuous pressure from the SSDCM. This led the state cabinet to recommend again to the central government with the contentious rider on 21 March 2001 and conveyed it to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on 4 April 2001.<sup>105</sup> Subsequently, L k Advani, the then Deputy Prime Minister of India, wrote a letter to O Ibohi Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur, dated 7 April 2003. According to the letter,

Government of Manipur had recommended to the Ministry of Home Affairs on April 7, 2001 that the State Government had no objection to the extension of the Sixth Schedule provisions in the Hill District of Manipur with certain local adjustment and amendments. The Ministry had sought details from the State Government regarding local adjustments and amendments to be made. The State Government had reported in April 2002 that the matter was under active consideration of the State Cabinet and the Manipur Hill Areas Committee of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. However, details of the local

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

adjustments and amendments to be made, while conferring Sixth Schedule status to these Councils, are yet to be received from the State Government.<sup>106</sup>

Despite the assurance from the Central Government for the conferment of Sixth Schedule, the state government does not take up the necessary steps to pave the way for providing Sixth Schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. Also, the state government earlier made a pronouncement for the extension of the Sixth Schedule without any objection. But in reality the state government has not taken up any positive step. It is the state government who sent the recommendation to the central government on behalf of the tribals of Manipur. Then the Central Government asked the state government to provide necessary requirement. For instance, it was the State Government under the pressure of HAC which recommended for the extension of Sixth Schedule to the hill areas of Manipur with “local adjustments and amendments”. The resolution with rider (with certain local adjustment) became one of the pretexts to delay the extension of the Sixth Schedule.<sup>107</sup>

The UF ministry led by R.K. Ranbir Singh held a meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1991 and recommended for the extension of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in the hill areas. The main objective was to enable the tribal people a greater participation in the administrative and development of

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Kham Khan Suan Hausing. (2015). From Opposition to Acquiescence: The 2015 District Council Elections in Manipur. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. NOS 46 & 47, November

the hill areas, removing the developmental lag between the hills and the valley and making proper growth of the institutions in such a way as to bring in a better, durable and harmonious relations between the people of the hills and valley and hence bringing all of them to the national political, cultural, social and economic mainstream.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, there are some reports from various committees and commissions which take into cognizance the extension of Sixth Schedule to the hill areas of Manipur. These includes the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation's Task Force on Panchayati Raj (1996-1999), the National Commission to Review the Working of Constitution, 2002 and the expert committee on "Planning in the Sixth Schedule Areas and Those Areas Not Covered by Part IX and Part IX-A, 2006" which recommended for the extension of the Sixth Schedule to the hill areas of Manipur.<sup>109</sup> In another government report of MPS and experts (1994) had bemoaned the fact that these areas had been excluded from the Fifth and Sixth Schedule under the Constitution of India.<sup>110</sup>

The importance for the Sixth Schedule was realised by the tribals leaders when the nature of autonomy bestowed under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act become illusive. It may be mentioned here that the demand for the Sixth Schedule in Manipur was the result of the concerted

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<sup>108</sup> Ashok Ray Kumar. (1997). The Sixth Schedule – A Case for Manipur Hills. In *L.S. Gassah (ed). Autonomous District Councils*. New Delhi: Omsons Publications

<sup>109</sup> Kham Kham Suan Hausing. (2015). From Opposition to Acquiescence: The 2015 District Council Elections in Manipur. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. No. 46 & 47, November 21

<sup>110</sup> Bela Bhatia. (2010). Justice Denied to Tribals in the Hill Districts of Manipur. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 45, No. 31 (July 31-August 6) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20764362> accessed on 30-09-2019

effort by the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee Manipur – a Sub Committee of the HAC of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. The Sixth Schedule Demand Committee Manipur prepared a Draft on Modality of the Sixth Schedule based on the neighbouring states like Mizoram, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.<sup>111</sup> It was the Cabinet decision taken on 17 August, 1992 that Sixth Schedule could be extended to the hill areas of Manipur. On the basis of the Cabinet decision which favours the extension of the Sixth Schedule to the hill areas of Manipur, the members of the SSDCM prepared a Draft on Modality and forwarded to the Parliament of India for conferment of Sixth Schedule provisions to the hill areas of Manipur with necessary amendments.<sup>112</sup> But the hill areas of Manipur are yet to be included under the ambit of the Sixth Schedule. The state government has been not taken up any course of action from regarding “local amendments and adjustment”. Once again, the case for the extension of the sixth schedule came up in 18 March 2015 in Rajya Sabha during the questions and answers session. The Ministry of Home Affairs answered the question as follows,

“The government of Manipur has not sent details of the rider local adjustment and amendments/revised proposal in this regard so far. The Rajya Sabha secretariat had conveyed that the reply has been treated as an assurance. So, to fulfil the assurance, reply of the government of

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<sup>111</sup> *Op cit.* Ashok Ray Kumar

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* P. 262



Manipur to the Ministry's letters dated 21 Sept and Oct, 2001 is required."<sup>113</sup>

Despite, the assurance from the Central Government through Ministry of Home Affairs the state government is silent on the issue of Sixth Schedule. Besides, the state government has been reminded several times by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the same matter. As L Lam Kham Piang put it, "the act of not cooperating with Government of India by the Government of Manipur shows the blatant institutional exclusion and marginalisation of the hill tribes".<sup>114</sup>

So far, the government of Manipur amended the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 for four times. These amendments come after series of agitations propelled by the tribals' leader. The first amendment happened in the year 1975 when the Section (23) of the Principal act was amended. The first amendment to the Act envisaged on the removal of the Chairman of the District Council by the Government. The reason should be recorded in writing upon passing of a resolution by the District Council by a simple majority of the total membership of the council. However, this amendment brought nothing significance to the tribals' communities. As a result, the tribal leaders have to take the democratic course of agitation against the state government.

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<sup>113</sup> *Op.cit*, L Lam Khan Piang

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*

Again, the Manipur Legislative Assembly came up with another amendment to please the tribals' communities in 2000. This amendment is said to be an improvement over the earlier one and for the first time the word 'Autonomous' was used in the name of the council. It changed the name of the District Councils into Autonomous District Councils same as in the Sixth Schedule areas. It confers more powers to the members of district councils and also contains some elements of the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India. However, the state government never brought this amendment into force. Later, amendment was repealed by the Manipur Legislative Assembly. As a replacement, Manipur Legislative Assembly introduced another new amendment in 2006. This 2006 amendment was made while the Secular Progressive Front (SPF) government under the Chief Ministership of Shri. O. Ibobi Singh. The (Second Amendment) Act of 2006 was passed and enforced the Act. The Act inserted sub-section (1A) in Section 29 (1) thereby conferring power on the ADC to notify any areas in the District Council as urban areas for the purpose of formulation of development plan and inserted Section 44A in the Act of 1971 providing therein that no land situated within the ADC shall be allotted, transferred, leased by the Deputy Commissioner, other than for public purpose except with a resolution passed by the ADC at its meeting by a majority of not less the two-third of its members.

The passing of the Second Amendment Act 2006 of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 does not meet the aspiration of the hill tribes of Manipur. Also, the elections cannot be initiated even after the amendment was passed to resume the functioning of the District Councils. The Second Amendment also failed to bring the tribals' communities into the path of democratic governance. So, the state government presented the Third Amendment Bill in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur in March 2008 to conduct elections to the district councils of Manipur. It was alleged that the state government presented the bill without consultations and deliberations with the tribal leaders. It was mentioned that the cabinet had not consulted the Hill Areas Committee (HAC) during the drafting of the amendment. The HAC was constituted under the Article 371 C to safeguard the interest of the hill people of Manipur. However, the Third Amendment comes into force with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Besides, some irregularities were also pointed out while preparing the Third Amendment Act of 2008. For instance,

(i) The State Assembly constituted an extra constitutional body called the Select Committee to work on [the Principal Bill 2008] introduced by the HAC. Three of the five members...are not elected from the Hill Areas of the state. (ii) Many clauses in the report of the Select Committee...were found in bad taste. [It] wanted to delete the word

“Autonomous” from the title...[replace] ‘Self Government’ [with] “Local Self Governance”, “Tribals” [with] “People of the Hill Areas”<sup>115</sup>

The (Third Amendment) Act of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 2008 does not contain any sort of autonomy and also does not give legislative, judicial and financial powers to the District Councils. The Third Amendment Act of 2008 increased the membership of the District Councils from 18 to 24, entrusting the District Council elections to the State Election Commission , constitution of Executive Committee and addition of new nine list of subject/functions like fisheries, co-operative, sports and youth affairs, adult and non-formal education, horticulture and floriculture, rural housing and scheme under rural development including tribal development, khadi and village industries and cottage industries, small scale industries, non-conventional energy sources, library and cultural activities and power to recommend to the State for recognition of villages subject to the resolution passed by a simple majority of the District Council.

The Government of Manipur started preparation for the holding of elections to the District Councils based on the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council (Third Amendment) Act, 2008 against the wishes of the tribals’ communities in 2010. Although, the Third Amendment brought some changes from the original Act of 1971, it failed to satisfy the tribals’ communities.

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*

Some of the main grievances against the Third Amendment Act of 2008 are as follows;

- (a) Section 29(1) (xiii) – it empowers the District Council to occupy and sell/allot land from the villages.
- (b) Section 29(1) (xiv) – it declares that the district council can manage any forest not being reserved.
- (c) Section 29(2) (a) – empower District Councils to recommend to the State Government for appointment or succession of chief/chairman without the knowledge or approval of the concerned village.
- (d) Section 29(2) (b) – District Council can issue orders by its own volition in matters and divorce and control or regulate of customs and tradition.
- (e) Section 26(3) – the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to suspend any resolution of the District Council if he/she thinks it to be improper or contravenes rules.
- (f) Section 47 of the Act empowers the Deputy Commissioner to recommend suspension of the District Council if he/she thinks the Council has violated rules. In short, the Manipur District Council is kept under the whims and mercy of the DC in spite of the fact that

the District Councils are constituted by the elected representatives of the people.<sup>116</sup>

The Government of Manipur brought the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council (Third Amendment) Act, 2008 into force on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2008. The state government decided to hold elections for the District Councils in 2010. On the other hand, the tribals' were not willing to hold the elections based on the Third Amendment Act of 2008. Their demand was that until and unless their ideas are incorporated in the new amendment, elections will not protect the rights and interest of the tribal people in Manipur. But the state government notified for conducting elections to the councils on May 2010. The elections were held in two phase on 26<sup>th</sup> May and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 despite strong resistance from the tribal communities. The state government successfully conducted the elections. The elections were conducted after a gap of two decades, but the status and the powers of the Autonomous District Councils were remained more or less the same. The third amendment which tries to empower the tribals' turns out to be another starting point of autonomy movement in the hill areas of Manipur. The day when the state government announced the elections to the District Councils, several tribals' organisations like United Naga Council (UNC), Tribal Youth Council Manipur, All Naga Students' Union Manipur, and Kuki Students organisation came together and unanimously oppose the holding of elections in the hill districts. When the

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<sup>116</sup> *Op cit*, V.S. Sholounii Pou, P. 139

State Election Commission announced the date of elections the tribals of Manipur under the auspices of Manipur Tribal Joint Action Committee and All tribal Union Manipur declared the day as 'Black-Day' in the history of the tribal of Manipur. The tribals' civil organisations accused the state government for imposition of elections without the consent of the tribals' communities. The District Councils election was declared by the tribals' communities as null and void.<sup>117</sup> They demanded that, elections to the District Councils should be held under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Subsequently, the tribal organisation also declared bandh in the hill districts and imposed economic blockade along the National Highway 39 disturbing the normal lives of the people. The protest was very intense especially in the Naga hill districts. The elected members of the district councils were not allowed to stay in their respective headquarters. As a result, the elected councillors of the district councils started working from Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal city with full security from the state government.<sup>118</sup> This implies that the elections of the district councils were not democratic and also not for the welfare of the tribals' communities.

The tribals' communities resume their agitations against the state government. Several tribals' civil organisations imposed bandhs and economic blockade in the state from time to time. The United Naga Council (UNC) one

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<sup>117</sup> Joseph Riamei. (2016). Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council and Peoples' Responses. *Journal of Tribal Intellectual Collective India*. Vol. 3, Issues 3, No. 3, June, pp. 21-30, retrieved from [www.ticijournals.org](http://www.ticijournals.org) on 06/01/2020

<sup>118</sup> *Op cit*, Ng. Ngalengam. P. 107

of the apex civil bodies of the Nagas even declared severance of political relation with the state government. It was the UNC that disallowed the functioning of district councils in the Nagas districts as a part of their opposition against the state government. In July 2010, the UNC held a Naga People's Convention in Senapati district. During the convention the Naga leaders resolved to demand 'Alternative Arrangement' outside the government of Manipur, from the centre government.<sup>119</sup>

In due course of time, there is a changed of political scenario in Manipur. Though, the demand of the tribal people is not granted as per their wishes, the District Councils remained functioning till today. But the members of the district councils demanded for the devolution of powers to the District Councils from time to time. Again, the elections to the district councils were held in 2015. This election was very different from the earlier one. Unlike the previous elections of 2010, there was no resistance from the tribals' communities for holding 2015 councils elections. Now, the District Councils in the hill district has been functioning after the 2015 June elections. The tribals' communities in Manipur have changed their earlier stand with regard to the inclusion of the hill areas under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. However, the issues of the devolution of power to the District Councils remained unfulfilled and the members of the District

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<sup>119</sup> Sushil Kumar Sharma. (2017). The Complexities of Tribal Land Rights and Conflict in Manipur: Issues and Recommendations. *Vivekananda International Foundation*. Vol. VIII, Issue June



Councils raised this matter to the state government from time to time. In addition, the district councils were not empowered enough to exercise all the powers and functions enumerated in the Act. With regard to this, one of the Chairman of the District Council stated that,

“The increase of Department from 17 to 26 is just a namesake. I called the District Council a percentage District Council because only a few percentages are given to District Council and the large percentage are taken by the state government. For example, according to the amendment of 2008, Horticulture Department has come under the District Council but in practice only 20% of the fund was given to the District Council and the rest 80% is taken by the state government. Same for the Agriculture, only 54.5% is given to the District Council where it should have given hundred per cent.”<sup>120</sup>

The issue for the devolution of power to the grass-root democratic institution of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur is not a recent phenomenon. Besides, the problem of District Councils is also not only limited to allocation of greater power. The concept of autonomy occupied a very significant aspect as far as the tribal of Manipur is concerned. It is the idea of autonomy which induced the tribal communities to demand for the extension of the sixth schedule to the Constitution of India. However, the

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<sup>120</sup> *Op.cit*, Joseph Riamei.

problem of district councils remained unchanged, notwithstanding the amendment after amendment. In 2011, the state government brought the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council (Fourth Amendment) Bill in the Manipur Legislative Assembly to amend principal Act of 1971. But the Amendment failed to pass due to fierce resistance from the tribal communities for failing to provide legislative, judicial and financial powers under the proposed amendment. However, in 2018 the state government brought again an amendment to the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 by enacting the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils (Fourth Amendment) Act, 2018. The changes brought by the Fourth Amendments in the original Act are as follows;

- (i) The first amendment allowed the nominated members of the council to vote.
- (ii) The second amendment provided that no motion for resolution for removal of the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman shall be brought against the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman within a period of one year from the date of assumption of office.
- (iii) The third amendment provided that if a motion for no confidence is defeated, no motion for such resolution shall be

brought within a period of one year from the date of such defeat of the motion.<sup>121</sup>

It is functioning fully under the subservient of the state government and acts as its agent for implementing developmental work. The state government control all the legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers.

#### **4.3. Problems of Chandel Autonomous District Council**

Autonomous District Council has been functioning in the Chandel district since its inception in 1973. The District Council is considered to be one of the important mechanisms for local governance in the district. It is entrusted with several administrative subjects to manage and deliver service to the people. In fact, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 bestowed enormous functions to the council. The state government also enlarged the functions of the council from initial 17 to 26 subjects through amendment. As a matter of fact, the district council is supposed to engage continuously in developmental activities in the district. However, the council of Manipur are not empowered enough to legislate any law concerning the local matters. Actually, they are instituted as a local administrative body on the pattern of the council operating in the sixth schedule areas with lesser power and autonomy. The power and function of the District Council emanated all from the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971.

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<sup>121</sup> [www.legitiquest.com/case/shri-namsinrei-panmei-and-others-v-state-of-manipur-and-others/1bc6a5](http://www.legitiquest.com/case/shri-namsinrei-panmei-and-others-v-state-of-manipur-and-others/1bc6a5)

Chandel District consists mostly of agrarian population apart from some government employees. It is underdeveloped district in terms of socio-economic and infrastructural areas. There are large sections of people settling in the remote hilly areas. These sections of people require proper infrastructural connectivity and many more. For instance, sizeable numbers of villages are located in a far flung remote area without all weathered road. The responsibility lies with local government body like district council to address the problem. However, there is a shortage of money to initiate any matter of developmental activities. The state government have to allocate sufficient fund to the council for any developmental activities. As of now, the council could not address such issues due to financial constraint.

The District Council has enormous responsibility as per the provision of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. But in reality most of the functions just remained on the paper. The council could not initiate most of the functions and subjects enlisted in the Act except few. There are five departments namely Agriculture, Education, Public and Works, Medical and Veterinary department entrusted to the ADC. Education is the largest department amongst the council department. However, the achievement of the education department is not very impressive. Most of the council's primary schools remained non-functional. The scholar observed during the field work that, there are some schools which are not functioning at all. Some of the primary schools are existed just for namesake. The schools building are in a

very pathetic condition. It lacks infrastructure like toilet, recreational tools for games and sports, school compound, school building etc. Owing to this reason most of the parents do not prefer to send their children to the council schools. Besides, there are few primary schools with a students' intake of 40 to 50, but could not properly maintain quality of education. Most of the time, the teachers are irregular. They seldom attend their schools. In addition, the salaries of the council's teachers are not regular.<sup>122</sup>

Another problem of the District Council is that the councillors' seldom visited any of their constituencies for developmental purpose. They will only visit the villages which fall within their constituency before the election of the council. They will approach the common people with attractive election manifestos. But, after the election if elected they do not take much interest in the local developmental affairs citing lack of money from the state government. The general masses are unaware of the actual council's role in the district. And nobody raised any questions like what is the purpose of the council in the district. Common people are only aware of the council's election and not the purpose of the District Council. There are many civil organisations in the district that can be helpful in enlightening the common people regarding the purpose and the role to be played by the District Council in bringing development within the district.

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<sup>122</sup> Interview with Elius Anal Headmaster of Lambung Junior High School on 10/10/2020.

After the council's election of 2010, the councillors were boycotted by the civil organisations from working and functioning specially within the Nagas districts. Subsequently, the Chandel district council also function from Imphal from 2010 to 2015. During this period council's work were done from the Khuman Lampak sports complex for temporary period. Even the elected Councillors were provided residence quarters with security personnel at Imphal. All the department of the Councils carried out their daily office work from the Imphal. It was only after the councils' election of 2015, that the councils are allowed to resume their work from their respective headquarters.

Lack of transparency and accountability is another major problem in the functioning of the Autonomous District Council in the hill districts. With regard to this, three activists from the Senapati district has been threatened by the two faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) for filling application and sought details of expenditure by the District Council in the state through Right To Information (RTI) to the chief executive officer of Senapati ADC.<sup>123</sup> The three RTI activists were seeking information relating to the implementation of various developmental works from the former ADC members during 2015 to 2021. Another activist was also abducted and threatened by the NSCN-IM for the same reason. He was treated with inhuman manner and imposed hefty fined of Rupees 700,000 for not

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<sup>123</sup> Manipur: NSCN (IM) action against RTI activists resented, May 18, 2021, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/manipur-nscnim-action-against-rti-activists-resented/article34587260>.

withdrawing the RTI.<sup>124</sup> This is against the principle of democratic society. The militant outfit took away the liberty of people to have the knowledge of the functioning of the ADC. The involvement of NSCN-IM in this matter revealed a very suspicious linked with the ADC in the matter of financial issues. Also, the NSCN-IM brutal action against their own people tarnished their own image as Naga political leaders.

The overall performance of the council is so minimal. Every department under the district council are more or less similar. However, public and work department has undertaken several works mostly related to construction of new building, drain, canals, repairing of building etc. All these works were undertaken through the financial allocation from the 3rd State Finance Commission and 14<sup>th</sup> Central Finance Commission. These funds were primarily diverted to the construction and repairing of institutions under the council's only. All kinds of work are executed and implemented through the department concerned. Some department such as agriculture, education, medical and veterinary has performed their work as normal. But the performances and activities of some department like agriculture, medical and veterinary seems so limited. Over the years, department like agriculture and veterinary has implemented and executed very limited works. For instance, the work and activities undertaken by veterinary department includes such as vaccination programmes of domestic animals and conducting of awareness

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*

programmes. These activities are undertaken occasionally. The department does not engage continuously in such activities over the year. Similarly, the department of agriculture has also executed and implemented only few activities in a year. Moreover, the implemented schemes do not cover sufficient number of beneficiaries within the district.

#### **4.4. Prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council**

##### **4.4.1. Education**

Education is very important to improve the quality of human resources. It imparts new skill and knowledge to the people. It increases the mental and physical strength of the people particularly the young ones. Education is an essential requirement in the lives of a person. It is also one of the instruments of social change. So, it is very important to provide quality education to the people of Chandel district. According to census 2011, the literacy rate of the Chandel district is 70.85 per cent. The literacy rate of male and female is 77.98 and 63.26 percent respectively.<sup>125</sup> It means the male literacy rate is higher than the female. There are eight government high schools in Chandel district. Besides, there are also numbers of private schools including government aided private schools. Under the Chandel ADC there are 179 schools including primary and junior high schools. It is exclusively under the management of the ADC. However, in terms of performances the private

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<sup>125</sup> <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/378-chandel.html>



schools edged over the government schools. As a result, parents send their children mostly in the private schools.

The ADC needs to revitalise their education management system to improve the quality of education in Chandel district. Proper infrastructure of the schools is very essential. However, good infrastructure alone will not enhance their educational performance. The ADC teachers are not regularly attending their school. The department should try to resolve the problem of irregular teachers at the earliest. The students' enrolment in most primary school is very less as compared to private schools. The functioning of the school should be maintained for whole academic year regardless of the students' enrolment. The ADC should try to collaborate with the local village authority to increase the students' enrolment. They should also approach the local village authority to encourage the parents to enrol their children in the ADC school. Since most of the primary schools are located in the villages seeking the cooperation from the village authority will be a good approach to improve the functioning of schools. There are a lot of scopes to improve the quality of school education in Chandel district. The Chandel ADC should focus on the improvement of the primary school. If the primary schools are good then every parent will send their children to primary school manage by the ADC. It will save some money which they are paying to the private school as tuition fee.

#### **4.4.2. Game and Sports**

Games and sports stimulate the physical and mental growth of a child. They are also very important for overall development of students. They enhanced the physical, mental and social well-being of a person and provide the spirit of competition that drives them to give extra effort. Game and sports is one of the subjects of the Autonomous District Council provided by the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. It introduces to promote the spirit of sports among youth of the hill areas. Youths are mostly involved in the field of games and sports as compared to the older people. Football, Basketball and Volley Ball are some of the favourite sports of the youth in the district.

The District Sports Association (DSA) is one of the important governing body of football in Chandel district. It is affiliated to the All Manipur Football Association (AMFA) a governing body of football in Manipur. The District Sports Association looks after the matter relating to football at grass root level in the district. Each year DSA organised football league in the district to select the best team to participate at the state level football league. As a part of their function, the ADC collaborated with the DSA in organising the football league tournament in the district. Every youth

clubs in the district are allowed to participate in the DSA sports. The Chandel ADC has sponsored about 3 lakhs in cash for the tournament prizes.<sup>126</sup>

The ADC can expand their role and function with regard to games and sports in the district. There are lots of prospects in the field of games and sports in the district. The youth are very talented and many of them are interested to play football, volleyball, basketball, etc. Football is the favourite sports of the youth in the Chandel district.

#### **4.4.3. Agriculture and Horticulture**

Agriculture is one of the primary occupations of the people of Chandel district. Chandel being the hilly areas terrace cultivation and Jhuming or shifting cultivation is widely practiced. Rice is the staple food of the people and they produced rice and different varieties of vegetables. Maize, potatoes, chilly, beans, cucumber, tomatoes, ginger, turmeric and different kind of vegetables are produced by the farmer. Agricultural products are sale in the women market in the Chandel town bazaar. It is mainly produced for self-sustenance and the surplus is sale. Many people depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Chandel district is also favourable place for development of horticulture. There is a scope for plantation of varieties of fruits in the district.

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<sup>126</sup> Interview with Th. Joyshing, General Secretary District Sports Association (DSA) Chandel district on 18/02/2021

The soil is fertile for production of guava, banana, pineapple, lemon, papaya, pomegranate, mango, peaches and plum etc. Fruits production can generate good amount of income. The ADC should come forward and train the farmers to cultivate the right fruits in their farm.

Agriculture and horticulture are important subjects of the district council under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. The agriculture department of Chandel ADC has ample scope to promote and develop agriculture and horticulture to generate more income of the farmer. Schemes available under the department can be properly utilised for the welfare of the community. They can provide training to the farmers for better productions of crops.

#### **4.4.4. Cattle Farming**

A cattle rearing is very common in the Chandel district. Most of the farmers have cows and buffaloes. It is commonly used in agricultural activities for ploughing the field. Besides, a cattle rearing gives us a lot of benefits. A dairy product is one of the important benefits that people can derive from it. Farmers can earn a substantial amount of income from the dairy products. There is a high demand of milk in the market. However, the production of milk cannot meet the demand in the Chandel district. In addition, the excreta and urine of the cattle is also of the important ingredient which can be used as manure in the farming. Instead of depending on chemical fertilizer the excreta

of the cattle can be very helpful in organic farming. Another important benefit of rearing cattle is meat. And there is high demand in the market for daily consumption. It is one of the important sources of income generation.

The animal husbandry is one of the functions incorporated under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 for the district council. The district council has a large scope to promote and encourage cattle rearing in the district. They can encourage the farmers by way of providing training on rearing of cattle for milk and other purposes. In this way, encouraging the cattle rearing and dairy production can bring about white revolution at the district level and in turn at the state level.

#### **4.4.5. Medical facilities**

The Medical facilities play a very significant role in improving the health of the people. To achieve this, health infrastructure is very crucial. In Chandel district there is only one hospital which provides health care to the people. Apart from the district hospital, there are only three primary health centres (PHC) in the district. It provides basic health services to the local people. However, these facilities cannot meet the entire district. There are only four dispensaries under the management of the Chandel Autonomous District Council. It means that, there is a need to set up more dispensaries in order to make health facilities more accessible to the people. Public health is one of the important functions entrusted to the district council under the Manipur (Hill

Areas) District Council Act, 1971. The District Council has a large scope to open up health facilities like dispensaries or the primary health centres in the remote hill areas of the district. There are large numbers of people settling in the far-flung remote areas.

## **CHAPTER - 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

The northeast India is one of the most diversified regions in the country. It is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions of India. During the British colonial regime this region was kept aloof from the mainstream Indian politics by following the policy of least interference towards the tribals' communities. The British has followed a policy not to interfere into the internal affairs of the tribes of north eastern region of India. As a matter of fact, they classified the tribal inhabited region (erstwhile Assam) into 'Excluded area and Partially Excluded area' through the Government of India Act of 1935. Earlier, the region was known as 'Schedule District' by the Scheduled District Act, of 1894 and 'Backward Tract' by the Government of India Act, 1919.

The tribal communities of the region practice a different custom, tradition and self-governance system which differs from the rest of the country. The British administrators wanted to protect and preserve the culture and tradition of the tribals. Consequently, before they left the sub-continent, the British suggested a kind of local self-government which would suits to the tribals to govern themselves according to their own way of life. The Constituent Assembly of India obliged the suggestion and directed to form an Advisory Committee to look into the tribal affairs. In fact, the Constituent

Assembly of India set up an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas in 1947. The Advisory Committee further appointed a Sub-Committee known as North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee under the chairmanship of the then premier of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi. This Committee conducted an extensive study across the northeast tribal inhabited areas. After a long deliberation they came up with the concept of District Council for the tribal inhabited area. Finally, the Sixth Schedule provision was approved and incorporated in the Constitution of India for the tribal of the north-eastern region. The provision of the Sixth Schedule is inserted in the Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Constitution of India. Thus, under the Sixth Schedule provision the tribal of the northeast were allowed to establish Autonomous District Council and Regional Council.

During the British era, Manipur was a princely State. When the British left the sub-continent, Manipur became an independent country and she merged with Indian Union on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1949. The Bordoloi Committee was discussing and drafting the provisions for safeguarding the interests of various tribes within Assam in the late 1940s. During the same time, the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the Manipur Hill Peoples' (Administrative) Regulation Act, 1947 were also drafted in Manipur, for the valley and the hill areas respectively. In other words, Manipur was yet to be a



part of the Union of India while drafting the Sixth Schedule was in progress.<sup>127</sup>

At that time, the hill areas of Manipur was neither considered to institute local self-government under the Sixth Schedule nor under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, the Tribals of Manipur was accorded with different legislative Act of the state in 1971. It was the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971, which was enacted by the Parliament of India on the basis of the Autonomous District Council prevailing in the areas of the Sixth Schedule.

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 was passed by the Parliament of India on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1971. It was enacted and passed before Manipur become a full-fledged state. With the passage of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971, the Act divided the hill districts into five Autonomous District Councils (later Senapati district was divided into two – Senapati and Sadar Hill). When Manipur attained its statehood in 1972, the Government of Manipur immediately adopted the Central Act by issuing the Manipur (Adaptation of Laws) Order, 1972 and in exercise of the power confer in him under the Section 3 of the Act, the then Governor of Manipur vide Notification dated 14.02.1972 initially constituted 6 (six) Autonomous District Councils. They are as follows,

(1) Manipur North ADC (now Senapati ADC)

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<sup>127</sup> L. Lam Khan Piang. (2019). Institutional Exclusion of the Hill Tribes in Manipur: Demand for Protection under the Sixth Schedule. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. LIV No 15, April

(2) Sadar Hills ADC

(3) Manipur East ADC (now Ukhrul ADC)

(4) Tengnoupal ADC (now Chandel ADC)

(5) Manipur South ADC (now Churanchandpur ADC) and finally

(6) Manipur West ADC (now Tamenglong ADC)

The first election to the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur was held in the year 1973. Subsequently, the first local government was instituted in the hill areas of Manipur. The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 was introduced for the tribals' of Manipur, who are mainly concentrated in the hilly areas of the state. The Act was enacted to safeguard the unique culture and tradition of the tribal people and well-being of the community by initiating various socio-economic development measures at the grass-root level. It is a kind of decentralisation of power, wherein the local administration of the specific area is entrusted to the local body. Autonomous District Council as a local self-government is supposed to look after the welfare of the tribals' of the hill areas of Manipur. Therefore, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 entrusted as many as 26 functions to be exercised for the development of the hill districts. In every Autonomous District Councils, there are 18 members, elected on the basis of adult suffrage. Besides, the administrator of the state is allowed to nominate two members.

The District Councils remained functioning un-interrupted during 1973 to 1989. However, since its inception from 1973, the District Councils cannot able to run and functions efficiently as per the wishes of the hill people. The District Councils is believed to be introduced to bring faster economic development in the hill districts through their elected members of the district council (MDCs). Besides, it is conceptualised on the line with the Autonomous District Councils operating under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. But the district council of Manipur is not under the ambit of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. It is quite different with their counterparts under the Sixth Schedule region. The tribals' of Manipur are also neither included under the framework of Fifth Schedule nor Sixth Schedule. Those councils under the provision of the Sixth Schedule have legislative, executive, judiciary and financial power. In the case of Manipur the district councils possessed only executive and financial power. The financial power is also in a limited way. Besides, it is unable to generate sources of income. The primary source of income for the councils comes from the grant-in-aid from the Government. It can be mentioned here that, the Autonomous District Councils are directly under the supervision of the state government. They are never empowered in the true sense of the term. According to Ashok Kumar and Kamkhenthang asserted that,

“It (the Manipur Hill Areas District Act, 1971) was a package deal for the entire hill areas of Manipur. This Act was typical. It did not come

under the purview of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. In two fundamental aspects, the District Council of Manipur differed from that under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. (i) unlike the State of Assam, Mizoram and Meghalaya, no area was declared as 'Tribal Areas' in Manipur; (ii) the District Councils of Manipur did not form a part of the Sixth Schedule and were in line with the territorial councils with some executive powers to deal with the matters of local importance of the tribal people."<sup>128</sup>

The problems and loopholes inherent within the council came into light after the completion of the first term in 1978. The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 failed to meet the expectation of the tribal people. In course of time, the tribal leaders started demanding more power and autonomy in the form of Sixth Schedule. It was the Hill Area Committee's (HAC) resolution passed in 1974 which propelled the demand for Sixth Schedule provision in Manipur. Later, Sixth Schedule Demand Committee Manipur (SDCM) and All Tribal Students' Union Manipur (ATSUM) joint the movement. The demand for the extension of the Sixth Schedule gained momentum when memorandums after memorandum were submitted by various tribal organizations/groups to the Chief Minister, Union Home

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<sup>128</sup> H Kamkhenthang. (1997). District Council in Manipur vis-à-vis the Sixth Schedule and a Note on Draft on Modality' in L.S. Gassah (ed). *Autonomous District Council*, New Delhi: Omson Publication

Minister and the Prime Minister from the 1980s onwards.<sup>129</sup> However, the issues of Sixth Schedule demand fell on the deaf ears. The suspension of the district councils by the tribal organizations started with Sadar Hills on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1988, Chandel on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1989, Senapati on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1989, Churachandpur and Tamenglong on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1990, and Ukhrul on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1990.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, the District Councils of Manipur remained suspended for two decades from 1989 to 2009.

The state government responded the demand of the tribal through various amendments of the Act of 1971, but could not satisfy them. So far, Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971 has been amended for fourth times in 1975, 2006, 2008 and 2018. Some of the amendments include increasing the strength of the membership of the council and functions/subjects from 17 to 26. However, the demand for the sixth Schedule is yet to be achieved due to several factors and challenges. Autonomous District Councils is revived again after a gap of almost two decades in 2010 by holding elections. The elections were conducted based on the 2008 Amendment Act with strong opposition from the tribal communities. The tribal stiffly opposed the 2008 Amendment Act over the manner in which the bill being passed and non-fulfilment of their demands. They alleged that state government does not properly consult the

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<sup>129</sup> Rajendra Kshetri. (2006) *District Councils in Manipur: Formation and Functioning*. New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House.

<sup>130</sup> Elangbam Ashakiran Chanu. (2020). Evolution of Autonomous District Council in Manipur: An Exploration to Its Structural and Functional Loopholes. *Studies in Indian Place Names*, Vol- 40, Issue-March

leaders of the tribal and also without proper deliberations the said bill was passed in a hasty manner. They also boycotted the working of the councils from the district headquarters, especially in the Naga's areas. Despite opposition from the tribals, the District Councils managed to complete their tenure of five years (2010-2015).

The fifth elections to the District Councils of Manipur were held in 2015. Unlike the previous elections it went on smoothly without any resistance from the people. The tribal communities realized that the importance of District Councils and no longer opposed in holding of the elections. Since, the 2015 elections the district councils have been functioning in all the hill districts of Manipur. But it doesn't mean that their demand and aspirations is being fulfilled. The elected members of the councils (MDCs) raised the issues of proper devolution of power from time to time, to the councils as being in the Act. The demand for Sixth Schedule becomes no longer relevant in the context of tribal community due to different ethnic identity aspirations. Though, both the State Government and Central Government have given their assurance for the hill areas of Manipur with 'certain local amendments and adjustment' it has myriad problems while. The two main ethnic communities, the Nagas and Kukis have their own political aspirations. For instance, the Nagas has long unresolved political talks with the centre under the NSCN (I-M) on the integration of all the Nagas inhabited areas (Greater Nagalim) in the northeast region. The demand for the Sixth Schedule is increasingly seen as a possible

distraction from, if not a stumbling block to the “greater Nagalim” project.<sup>131</sup> The entry of the Naga People’s Front (NPF) in the 2015 District Council elections was very significant. Besides, the Kukis and Nagas have different opinions over the number of District Councils in Manipur. While the Kukis are in favour of continuing with the already existing six ADCs namely, Ukhrul, Tamenglong, Chandel, Senapati, Sadar Hills and Churachandpur; the Nagas proposed a single ADC consisting of all the hill districts; or alternatively, two ADCs, one consisting of the four Naga- dominated hill districts and the other constituted by the Kukis-dominated Churachandpur district; or five ADCs corresponding to the existing five hill districts, excluding the putative Sadar Hills.<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, Kukis also has their political aspirations in the form of separate Kuki Homeland. These exclusive ethnic demands impede the common goal of achieving the Sixth Schedule in Manipur. Another stumbling block with regard to the demand of Sixth Schedule is the question of the integrity of Manipur. The variety of demands asserted by the Nagas and Kukis in the form Greater Nagalim and Kuki Homeland and their common demand of Sixth Schedule threatened the integrity of Manipur. Their demands have been stiffly opposed by several valley based organizations in the name of protecting the state’s territorial integrity.

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<sup>131</sup> Kham Khan Suan Hausing.(2015). From Opposition to Acquiescence: The 2015 District Council Elections in Manipur. *Political and Economic Weekly*. Vol. L, NOS 46 & 47, November 21

<sup>132</sup> As cited by Seikhogin Haokip. (2016). Autonomy Demands in the Hill Areas of Manipur: Issues and Challenges. *Journal of North East India Studies*, Vol. 6(2), Pp. 28-50

Coming to the working of various departments, the agriculture department under the Chandel Autonomous District Council has taken up progressive activities in the field of agriculture. The activities taken up by the department include plantation programme such as banana, ginger, turmeric, tree beans, sugarcane, lemon, hatkora, and tapioca etc. Apart from this, the department also conducted plant health camp training on various occasions to impart the farmers on improving the quality of plantation. The farmers were also provided with hybrid seeds, sprayers, pesticides and insecticides etc. On an average, every year 20 to 30 beneficiaries are selected from the district and provided various schemes under the agriculture, horticulture and allied services from the state plan. This includes assistance to small and marginal farmers, maize cultivation programme, allocation of planting materials, and assistance under the Pisciculturists scheme etc. However, the numbers of beneficiaries are very limited.

Education department is considered as one of the most important department and also the largest department under the Chandel District Council. In education department there are 179 schools including primary and junior high schools. There are bunches of schools which are non-functional. However, there is appointed teachers and headmasters who get salary without teaching. And there also few schools that are functioning well like other private schools. Some of the primary schools are in a pathetic condition. Most parents do not prefer their children to admit to the council school due to lack



of infrastructure such school building, toilets, well qualified teachers etc. It implies that there is no demand for the schools managed by the Chandel Autonomous District Council.

Some of the important activities taken up by the veterinary department include vaccination of livestock to prevent from various contagious diseases. The vaccination drives are taken up by the Veterinary Officer (VO) from time to time with the help of field assistants from the dispensaries. The vaccination of livestock related to the diseases such as Rabies, Swine Flu, FMD (foot mouth disease) and HSBQ (haemorrhagic septicaemia and blackquarter) etc. The department delivered these services on various occasion but not uniformly to entire district. In addition, the veterinary department also distributed free livestock medicines of various diseases through concerned veterinary dispensaries.

The medical department has been catering a service to the general public through the existing four dispensaries. However, the council's dispensary doesn't available advanced facilities in operation and surgery. It provides merely the basic ailment medical needs to the local people like medicines in free of cost. The Medical Officer (MO) administered the patient once or twice in a week. And the Chandel District Council has 4 (four) medical ambulances. In some occasion the council's ambulance was used by local people in times of need. Also, in several occasion the council under the medical department

organized free health camp at different location. During the health camp the medical officer examined several patients and distributed medicine free of cost.

Public works department is primarily engaged in constructions of building, inter-village roads, culverts, drain, repairing of primary schools, and construction of teachers barrack quarters, suspension bridges etc. All the works are carried out through various financial packages under State Finance Commission and Central Finance Commission.

## **FINDINGS**

1. Autonomous District Council as a local government does not act as a real engine of development in the hill areas of Manipur. Owing to the absence of greater power and autonomy, the District Councils are unable to legislate any law concerning the welfare of the tribal communities.
2. The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971 has been amended for fourth times till date. These amendments do not enhanced the powers of the District Councils in the field of legislative, executive, financial and judiciary. Even after the fourth amendment the members of the district councils (MDCs) continued to urge for devolution of power to the Council. Absence of real autonomy and power under the Act become hindrances for the Autonomous District Councils to play as an important local body for welfare of the tribal community.

3. Autonomous District Council has various functions/subjects to be executed and administered, but in reality they cannot fully exercise as per their wishes. They are not given legislative and judicial power. As a matter of fact, they remained under the subservient of the state government while implementing and executing any sort of schemes/programmes. The devolution of power envisaged under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 are yet to be practiced. This made the district council a mere implementing agent of the state government. They cannot autonomously undertake any sorts of schemes and programmes in their own.
4. The financial power is very limited. For instance, the District Council totally depend upon the grant-in-aid from the government. They are not empowered enough to mobilise and generate income. The District Councils are entrusted the power to levy taxes on various items enlisted under the Act of 1971 and any other taxes falling under List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. However, the District Council has to get the approval of the State Finance Department to exercise the taxation power which is a complex process. The shortage of financial resources becomes one of the main impediments in running the various departments under the council. The allocated budget for the development purpose under the Non-Plan is also not even sufficient for the

implementation of the work. In addition, the fund flow is also very irregular.

5. In the area of development the District Council is control over by the district administration. In fact, District Council does not have real executive and financial powers besides legislative and judiciary. The framing of rules and regulation, any developmental works done by the council have to be approved by the district administration. Thus, in actual practiced the district administration exercised all the important executive, legislative, financial and judiciary matters over the district council.
6. The schemes and programmes which are available under the District Council are not sufficient for the common masses and failed to include all the needy people in the district. Only few beneficiaries are benefitted from the schemes, which are also selected by the respective members of the council (MDC) based on nepotism and preference.
7. The funds allocated both from the central and state government does not benefit the common people. ADC does not properly utilise the fund for the developmental purpose. Instead, they urged for more power and financial to the state government. There is no transparency and accountability with regard to the utilisation of the funds coming from the Central government and state government.

The Autonomous District Council has been functioning for four decades from 1973 till date. However, there is no positive influence in the lives of the hill people. The impact of the District Council on the socio-economic, political, and cultural life of the people is very insignificant. It is established to bring overall development, but in Chandel district there is no socio-economic development worth-mentioning. In fact, the District Councils of Manipur do not have legislative and judicial power. They are given executive and financial power only. As a result, they demanded that the District Council of Manipur should be under the ambit of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. However, there are several factors inhibiting the Sixth Schedule demand in Manipur. As of now, there is no more Sixth Schedule demand in Manipur by the hill people. Besides, member of the district councils (MDCs) has alleged that they are not empowered enough to exercise all the 26 administrative functions as prescribed by the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. It is because of the lack of power and autonomy that the hill people were demanding the upgrading of the District Councils through Sixth Schedule.

The District Councils of Manipur have alleged that there is no financial power. They further articulated that the District Councils has not been empowered enough to mobilise all sources of income. According to the Act of 1971, they are authorize to levy taxes on items such as taxes on professions, trades and employment, on animals, vehicles, goods entry into market for sale and any other tax falling under the list II of the Seventh Schedule of the

Constitution. However, it is found that there are many loopholes in the process of taxations which do not reached the coffer of the council. It is considered to be one of the important sources of income for the district council. Grant-in-aid from the state government is the primary sources of income. In addition, the Central government also granting fund to the District Council as an additional fund under the Finance Commission in terms of development purpose in the hill areas. For instance, during the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission all the six ADCs of the Manipur received an amount of Rs. 142.91 crore for the period of 2010 to 2015. However, it is alleged that the district councils has not properly utilised the fund for the development purpose. Besides, there is no transparency with regard to the utilisation of fund by the District Councils.

From the above, it can be concluded that the people of Chandel district are yet to get the benefits from the District Council. There are no development activities undertaken in the villages. It means that, District Council as a local government do not uplift the socio-economic development in the Chandel district. The council failed to take up development activities under the District Council to improve the lives of the people. The District Council needs to utilise the fund effectively, efficiently and transparently to accelerate development in the hill areas in general and Chandel district in particular.

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6. D.Y. Alam, Village Chairman Lambung Village Chandel District. (Dated 24/09/2020)
7. Elius Anal, Lambung Junior High School Primary Teacher ADC Chandel. (Dated 10/10/2020)
8. M.K. Rungtung, Chief of Old Wangparal Village, Chandel district. (Dated 20/01/2021)
9. M. Shyamchoron Singh, District Veterinary Officer ADC Chandel. (Dated 23/01/2021)

10. Ng. Maipakgam, Chief of Japhou Village, Chandel district. (Dated 22/07/2020)
11. N. Yaikul Singh, Assistant Engineer, Public Work Department ADC Chandel. (Dated 23/01/2021)
12. Paote, Chief of Chothe Lungleh Village, Chandel District. (Dated 12/09/2020)
13. Prem Dilbung, Chief of P. Ralringkhu Village, Chandel District. (Dated 15/01/2021)
14. Rehanshing, Deputy Inspector of School, Chandel ADC. (Dated 27/07/2021)
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**ABSTRACT**

**DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MANIPUR: A STUDY OF THE  
CHANDEL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Degree of Master of Philosophy

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**ASBTRACT**

The north-eastern states of India comprised of diverse ethnic groups. It includes the states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. During the British colonial rule, this region came under the undivided Assam, except Manipur. Given the diversity of the region, the outgoing British directed the Constituent Assembly of India for setting up of an Advisory Committee to recommend for the suitable form of administrative system for the tribals' community. It culminated into the formation of the 'North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee under the chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi in 1947. The Bordoloi Committee is of the view that, the tribals of Assam who are historically and culturally different from other parts of India, should be allowed to promote and regulate their own way of life. Finally, the Sixth Schedule provision was emerged for the tribals who are formerly belongs to 'Excluded Area and Partially Excluded Area'. It was incorporated under the Articles 244(2) and 275(1) in Part X of the Constitution of India. Under the Sixth Schedule provision, states like Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura were allowed to have Autonomous District Council and Regional Council.

After the British conquest of Manipur in 1891, the valley and hill areas were brought together. However, the colonial government separately administered the valley and the hills region. And the hill areas came under the direct control of the British Political Agent. With the end of British suzerainty in India administrative changes sprang up in the state. The signing of the Standstill Agreement and The Instrument of Accession both on the same day on 11 August 1947, and the Merger Agreement on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1949 brought Manipur into the part of Union of India. The Manipur State Hill People (Administration) Regulation, 1947 was in place in the hill areas, during the short period of Constitutional Monarchy in the state under the Maharaja of Manipur. However, it was replaced with the Manipur Village Authorities (Hill Areas) Act, 1956 by the parliament after the independence of India.

On the eve of the grant of the statehood to the Union Territory of Manipur, the parliament of India passed the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 for the hill areas. It was introduced for the purpose of bringing welfare and development in the hill areas. With the attainment of statehood in 1972, the state government implemented the Act of 1971. Based on the Act of 1971, six Autonomous District Councils were instituted in the hill areas. They are (i) Manipur North ADC (now Senapati ADC), (ii) Sadar Hills ADC (iii) Manipur East ADC (now Ukhrul ADC) (iv) Tengnoupal ADC (now Chandel ADC) (v) Manipur South ADC (now Churachandpur ADC) and, (vi) Manipur West

ADC (now Tamenglong ADC). The Act provided 26 administrative functions to be exercised by the members of the district council (MDC). There are 24 members in each ADC and two members are nominated by the Governor of the state. The Autonomous District Council in the state of Manipur is of a different type. It is not under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

The first elections of the District Council were held in 1973. But it remained dysfunctional for two decades from 1989 to 2010. The tribals alleged that the District Council are not empowered enough with powers. As a result, they demanded the District Council to bring under the purview of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. In fact, the District Councils of Manipur are modelled after the ADCs created by Sixth Schedule in the states like Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. However, in case of Manipur it was created by the state government having similar structure with the ADCs in the Sixth Schedule areas. As mentioned earlier, the Bordoloi Committee recommended the Sixth Schedule provision for the areas formerly belongs to the 'Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas' of undivided Assam. However, the Manipur is not the part of Assam and also it was a native state during the British colonial period.

In order to resume the functioning of District Council in the hill areas, the state government amended the Act of 1971 in 2008. Based on the

amendment the elections were scheduled to conduct in mid of 2010. However, the tribal leaders asserted that the amendment does not empower the District Council with enough legislative, executive, financial and judicial power. In spite of protest, the elections were held and the District Council continued to resume functioning against the tribal leaders. In the meantime, the tribals dis-cooperated with the elected members of the council and disallowed to function especially in the Naga inhabited districts. Against this backdrop, the District Council elections were held in June 2015. These elections are considered as the most keenly contested elections in the history of the District Council in Manipur. It is now functioning in the hill areas. However, the issues of proper devolution of power were raised by the members of the council from time to time.

### **1.9. Statement of the Problem**

Autonomous District Councils in the hill areas of Manipur has failed to satisfy the aspirations of the hill people since its inception. It is seen from the persistent demand for devolution of powers in the hill areas. This is basically due to the unambiguous nature of power and autonomy given to the ADC under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971. They are devoid of legislative and judicial powers, with meagre executive powers. ADC in Manipur is powerless as compared to its counterparts under the Sixth Schedule areas. Though, it managed to function from 1973 to 1989. In the early



seventies, Hill Areas Committee (HAC) which consists of all the elected members of the Legislative Assembly has taken a strong resolution for boycotting elections in the hill areas. Thereafter, it remained dysfunctional for more than two decades owing to the demand for more autonomy in the form of the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas. During the non-functional period (1989-2010), development activities were stalled. Thus, tribal people were deprived of development funds allotted under the ADC for various developmental projects during the time.

The demand for the extension of the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas of Manipur was headed by the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee (SDCM) along with the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur (ATSUM). Besides, several other tribal organisations also joined the movement and raised the same demand. The demand for Sixth Schedule is yet to be achieved though it began since the early 1970s. In response, the state government has amended the Principal Act several times. It revived the District Council's elections 2010 by following the 2008 amendment. However, the 2010 elections were held with protests and strikes by the people of the hill areas. Consequently, the District Council could not function from their district head-quarter (in the hill areas) particularly in Naga inhabited areas. As the Sixth Schedule provision to the Constitution of India is not yet extended in the hill areas of Manipur, District Councils also have no much power with regard to issues for preservation of the land, custom and culture of the tribals, as such;

chieftainship and village authority are still the relevant instruments for protection of the tribals of Manipur.

Presently, the whole hill areas of Manipur came under the administration of Autonomous District Council through the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 at the district level. The tribals of Manipur are also accorded special Constitutional protection under the Article 371 (C) of the Constitution of India. Accordingly, the Manipur Legislative Assembly (Hill Areas Committee) Order, 1972 constituted Hill Areas Committee (HAC) for the tribals of Manipur. It exclusively consists of all the elected members of legislative assembly (MLAs) from the hill areas. They are primarily instituted for safeguarding the interest of the hill areas and their welfare in the legislative assembly.

Local institution in the form of village authority has been in practiced in hills of Manipur since 1947. This village authority under the Manipur State Hill People's Regulation Act, 1947 is the continuation of the tribals' indigenous local institution which has been in practiced since time immemorial. Later, with the dawn of independence, it was replaced by the Village Authority Act 1956 after the merger of Manipur into the Union of India. The institution of chieftainship was prevailing among the Kukis of Manipur, which is hereditary in nature. 'Housa' (chieftainship) is the oldest

form of tribal administration known to have stood the test of time which is still functions among the Kuki tribes of Manipur.

It can be noted here that District Councils work with village authority (local bodies) at the grass-root level for implementation of various programme and schemes for development. In every hill villages, there are local village authorities headed by the village chief/chairman who looks after the village day to day affairs. They are very prominent and respectable body in the village. One of the functions of the village authority is to look after their village affairs. Village authority occupied a very important role in socio-economic development at the grass-root level. In fact, they entrusted with the task of selection and identification of the beneficiaries in the village for any schemes from both central and state government. They are the one who actually implement the central scheme like MGNREGA in their respective villages.

Although, the District Council has been in existing for almost 45 years, it is alleged that no significant developmental work has been taken up at the grass-root level. It seems District Council as local government has lesser impact as far as the development of the hill areas is concerned. It is therefore proposed to study the Chandel Autonomous District Council to understand the functions and working of the ADC in Manipur.

### **1.10. Scope of the Study**

The study focused on the working of the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur in general and Chandel district in particular. The research work examined the performances and implications of ADCs as an agent of development in the hill areas of Manipur concerning mainly the Chandel district. It also analysed the relationship between the ADCs and the Village Authority at the grass-root level in delivering a wide range of socio-economic development. Besides, the study also includes the problems and prospects of ADCs in the hill areas of Manipur as local self-government in general and particularly the Chandel ADC. The study covered 10 years—from 2010 till 2020—due to the dysfunctional of the district councils from 1989 to 2010.

### **1.11. Objectives**

1. To study the powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur.
2. To analyse the roles of Autonomous District Councils as an agent of socio-economic development in the hills of Manipur in general and Chandel District in particular.
3. To examine the problems and prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council

### **11.12. Research Questions**

1. What are the powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur?
2. What are the contributions (in the area of socio-economic development) of ADC in Chandel districts of Manipur?
3. What are the challenges and prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council?

### **11.13. Research Methodology**

The Methodology for the research is based on descriptive and analytical. Both primary and secondary data were used to study the research. The primary data is collected through interview and observation method. Interview was conducted to the members of the Chandel District Councils and the chairman of various village authorities. Besides, various leaders of social organisations such as Village Chief Association, Chandel Naga People Organisation (CNPO) and Chandel Student Union, etc. were also interviewed to understand their perspective on the working of Chandel Autonomous District Council. Moreover, five villages were chosen to study the functioning of the Chandel Autonomous District Council. The five villages were selected through purposive sampling from the tribes of (Anal, Chothe, Monsang, Moyon and Lamkang) inhabited in the Chandel district. The largest village of the five tribes in the district was chosen for the study. The rationale for choosing the largest village is to examine the socio-economic implications of

ADC in such villages. Besides, primary sources also include such as government reports and relevant documents from the district council and state government as well. Secondary sources comprise of books, journals, articles, magazines and newspaper etc.

#### **11.14. Chapterization of the Study**

##### **Chapter 1: Introduction.**

The first chapter examines the concept of local self-government institutions prevailing in India in general and north east India in particular. This chapter also highlights the hill administration during the colonial period and post-independence period. This chapter also include a profile of Chandel district, review of literature, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and research methodology etc.

##### **Chapter 2: Autonomous District Council in Manipur.**

Chapter two studies the powers and functions of Autonomous District Councils in Manipur. It also briefly highlighted the introduction of laws during pre-independence and post-independence of India in the hill areas.

##### **Chapter 3: Roles of Autonomous District Councils in Socio-Economic activities.**

The third chapter extensively discuss about the roles of ADCs in socio-economic development activities in Chandel district of Manipur. It also

analyse the role of ADC in the formulation and implementation of socio-economic development programmes and schemes in Chandel district. It also examines the role played by ADC during the pandemic brought by the novel coronavirus (Covid-19).

#### **Chapter 4: Problems and prospects of Chandel Autonomous District Council.**

The fourth chapter discusses the problems and prospects of Autonomous District Council of Manipur in general and Chandel Autonomous District Council in particular. It also includes the demand for more power and autonomy by ADC in Manipur and the response of the state government. This Chapter also includes the demand of Sixth Schedule under the Indian Constitution.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusion:**

The concluding chapter summarised the study. It includes the findings of the work.

#### **Summary and Findings**

The north-eastern part of India is one of the most diversified regions in the country. The region is inhabited by homogenous group of people with mutually exclusive social and cultural system. During the British colonial regime this part of region was kept aloof from the mainstream country by

following the policy of least interference towards the tribals' community. The British has no inclined to interfere into the internal affairs of the tribes of north east region. As a matter of fact, they classified the tribal inhabited region (erstwhile Assam) into 'Excluded area and Partially Excluded area' through the Government of India Act of 1935. Earlier, this region was known as 'Schedule District' by the Scheduled District Act, of 1984 and 'Backward Tract' by the Government of India Act, 1919.

The tribal communities of the region practice a different custom, tradition and self-governance system which differs from the rest of the country. The British administrators wanted to protect and preserve the culture and tradition of the tribals. Consequently, before they left the sub-continent, the British suggested a kind of local self-government which would suits to the tribals to govern themselves according to their own way of life. The Constituent Assembly of India obliged the suggestion and directed to form an Advisory Committee to look into the tribal affairs. In fact, the Constituent Assembly of India set up an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas in 1947. The Advisory Committee further appointed a Sub-Committee known as North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee under the chairmanship of the then premier of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi. This Committee conducted an extensive studied across the northeast tribal inhabited areas. After a long deliberation they come up with the concept of District Council for the tribal



inhabited area. Finally, the Sixth Schedule provision was approved and incorporated in the Constitution of India for the tribal of the north-eastern region. The provision of the Sixth Schedule is inserted in the Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Constitution of India. Thus, under the Sixth Schedule provision the tribal of the northeast were allowed to establish Autonomous District Council and Regional Council.

During the British era, Manipur was a princely State. When the British left the sub-continent, Manipur become an independent country and she merged with Indian Union on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1949. The Bordoloi Committee was discussing and drafting the provisions for safeguarding the interests of various tribes within Assam in the late 1940s. During the same time, the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the Manipur Hill Peoples' (Administrative) Regulation Act, 1947 was also drafting in Manipur, for the valley and the hill areas respectively. In other words, Manipur was yet to be a part of the Union of India while drafting the Sixth Schedule was in progress. At that time, the hill areas of Manipur was neither considered to institute local self-government under the Sixth Schedule nor under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, the Tribals of Manipur was accorded with different legislative Act of the state in 1971. It was the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971, which was enacted by the Parliament of India on the basis of the Autonomous District Council prevailing in the areas of the Sixth Schedule.

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 was passed by the parliament of India on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1971. It was enacted and passed before Manipur become a full-fledged state. Following the attainment of statehood Manipur in 1972, the state government established six Autonomous District Councils based on the Act of 1971. They are (i) Manipur North ADC (now Senapati ADC) (ii) Sadar Hills ADC (iii) Manipur East ADC (now Ukhrul ADC) (iv) Tengnoupal ADC (now Chandel ADC) (v) Manipur South ADC (now Churanchandpur ADC) and finally (vi) Manipur West ADC (now Tamenglong ADC). Initially, as per the Act of 1971 there are 20 members including two nominated members in the district council of Manipur. But it was increased to 24, besides two nominated members by an amendment in 2008. In order to bring welfare and community development in the hill areas, the members of the district councils are entrusted with 26 administrative functions. The first elections to the district council were held in 1973. Subsequently, district councils as a local self-governance came in being in the hill areas of Manipur.

After functioning for short while, it comes under suspension for about two decades from 1989 to 2010. The tribals alleged that, the District Councils were not adequately given powers and functions as envisages under the Act of 1971. They are provided with executive and financial powers. However, they do not have legislative and judicial powers as in Sixth Schedule areas, although the District Councils of Manipur are pattern after it. As a result, the

tribals started demanding that the District Councils be brought under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Subsequently, Sixth Schedule Demand Committee Manipur (SSDCM) and All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) become instrumental in demanding Sixth Schedule in Manipur. However, they cannot achieve their demands. The District Councils remained dysfunctional for almost two decades. In order to revive, the state government amended the Act of 1971 in 2008. Accordingly, the elections to the six District Councils were held in 2010, amidst the resistance from the tribals' community. Owing to the social boycott, some of the District Council cannot function in the hill districts especially in the Naga inhabited hill areas. Against this backdrop, the District Council's elections were held in 2015. The tribals enthusiastically cooperated in the elections with overwhelming voter's participation unlike the previous elections. The 2015 elections mark the beginning of new era in the history of District Council in Manipur.

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 was introduced basically for implementing various socio-economic developments in the hill areas of Manipur. For this, the district council are empowered with 26 administrative functions under the Act of 1971. The Chandel Autonomous District Council is functioning through five departments namely, Agriculture, Education, Medical, Public Works and Veterinary department etc. It is mainly working through the above mentioned department. However, the study found that the District Council is not so much effective in bringing socio-economic

development in the district. All the department under the Chandel Autonomous district are more or less same as far as their performances is concerned. However, some department are performing well up to some good level. The study reveals that the development activities undertaken by the council relate to constructions of inter-village roads, bridges, culverts, terraces, irrigation, constructions and renovation of primary schools, dispensaries of veterinary and health departments. The constructions of work are mainly undertaken through public works department of the council.

The District Council in Manipur has no separate budget. It implies that funds and grant-in-aid are coming from the central and state government for all the District Councils of Manipur. The budget of the District Councils is allocated from the Tribals and Hill Affairs department under the Government of Manipur. Grant-in-aid is included under the budget of the Councils. The main sources of funds of the District Council of Manipur are from the state and central government. Besides the budget from the state, the District Council of Manipur received funds from the central government through Finance Commission. Currently, the District Councils of Manipur are receiving funds from the 15<sup>th</sup> Central Finance Commission and 3<sup>rd</sup> State Finance Commission. It comes as an additional fund for undertaking various development works in the hill areas of Manipur. The funds from the Central and the State Finance Commission are not included under the council budget.

Coming to the working of various departments, the agriculture department under the Chandel Autonomous District Council has taken up progressive activities in the field of agriculture. The activities taken up by the department include plantation programme such as banana, ginger, turmeric, tree beans, sugarcane, lemon, hatkora, and tapioca etc. Apart from this, the department also conducted plant health camp training on various occasion to impart the farmers on improving the quality of plantation. The farmers were also provided with hybrid seeds, sprayers, pesticides and insecticides etc. On an average, every year 20 to 30 beneficiaries are selected from the district and provided various schemes under the agriculture, horticulture and allied services from the state plan. This includes assistance to small and marginal farmers, maize cultivation programme, allocation of planting materials, and assistance under the Pisciculturists scheme etc. However, the numbers of beneficiaries are very limited.

Education department is considered as one of the most important department and also the largest department under the Chandel District Council. In education department there are 179 schools including primary and junior high schools. There are bunches of schools which are non-functional. However, there is appointed teachers and headmasters who get salary without teaching. And there also few schools that are functioning well like other private schools. Some of the primary schools are in a pathetic condition. Most parents do not prefer their children to admit to the council school due to lack

of infrastructure such school building, toilets, well qualified teachers etc. It implies that there is no demand for the schools managed by the Chandel Autonomous District Council.

Some of the important activities taken up by the veterinary department include vaccination of livestock to prevent from various contagious diseases. The vaccination drives are taken up by the Veterinary Officer (VO) from time to time with the help of field assistants from the dispensaries. The vaccination of livestock related to the diseases such as Rabies, Swine Flu, FMD (foot mouth disease) and HSBQ (haemorrhagic septicaemia and blackquarter) etc. The department delivered these services on various occasion but not uniformly to entire district. In addition, the veterinary department also distributed free livestock medicines of various diseases through concerned veterinary dispensaries. Due to lack of staffs and limited dispensaries the department cannot cover sufficient number of villages. So increasing the number of staffs and dispensaries will better in delivering services to the people.

The medical department has been catering a service to the general public through the existing four dispensaries. However, the council's dispensary doesn't available advanced facilities in operation and surgery. It provides merely the basic ailment medical needs to the local people like medicines of free of cost. The Medical Officer (MO) administered the patient once or twice in a week free of charge. And the Chandel District Council has 4

(four) medical ambulances. In some occasion the council's ambulance was used by local people in times of need. Also, in several occasion the council under the medical department organized free health camp at different location. During the health camp the medical officer examined several patients and distributed medicine free of cost.

Public works department primarily engaged in constructions of building, inter-village roads, culverts, drain, repairing of primary schools, and construction of teachers barrack quarters, suspension bridges etc. All the works are carried out through various financial packages under State Finance Commission and Central Finance Commission.

The District Council in the hill areas of Manipur has been functioning already for about four decades. It was established primarily to bring development in the hill areas. For this purpose, the District Councils are provided 26 administrative subjects by the Act of 1971. However, in Chandel district this is not the case. The members of the district councils (MDCs) alleged that there is no decentralisation of powers from the state government. Owing to this, they urged the state government for the devolution of powers from time to time. In fact, they are given only executive and financial power. They also claimed about the lack of financial power which implies the shortage of fund with the council. The District Council depended funds totally from the state government. Grant-in-aid is main sources of income for them.

Apart from this, they received additional fund from the Central government for taking up developmental works in the hill areas. For instance, during the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission all the six ADCs of the Manipur received an amount of Rs. 142.91 crore for the period of 2010 to 2015. However, it is alleged that the District Councils has not properly utilised the fund for the development purpose. Besides, there is no transparency with regard to the utilisation of fund by the District Councils.

From the above, it can be concluded that the people of Chandel district are yet to get the benefits from the District Council. There are no development activities undertaken in the villages. It means that, District Council as a local government do not uplift the socio-economic development in the Chandel district. The council failed to take up development activities under the District Council to improve the lives of the people. The District Council needs to utilise the fund effectively, efficiently and transparently to accelerate development in the hill areas in general and Chandel district in particular.



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