

**ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY:
A STUDY OF MIZO IDENTITY FORMATION**

BY

Lalmalsawma Khiangte
Department of Political Science
Supervisor: Prof. J.K. Patnaik

Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Political Science of Mizoram University, Aizawl

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A STUDY OF MIZO IDENTITY FORMATION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY: A STUDY OF MIZO IDENTITY FORMATION” submitted by LALMALSAWMA KHIANGTE for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY is carried out under my supervision and guidance. The thesis, submitted by him has not formed the basis of the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as a dissertation or thesis in any university. I also certify that the thesis represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

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

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Dated: 14th November 2022

(LALMALSAWMA KHIANGTE)

Place: Aizawl.

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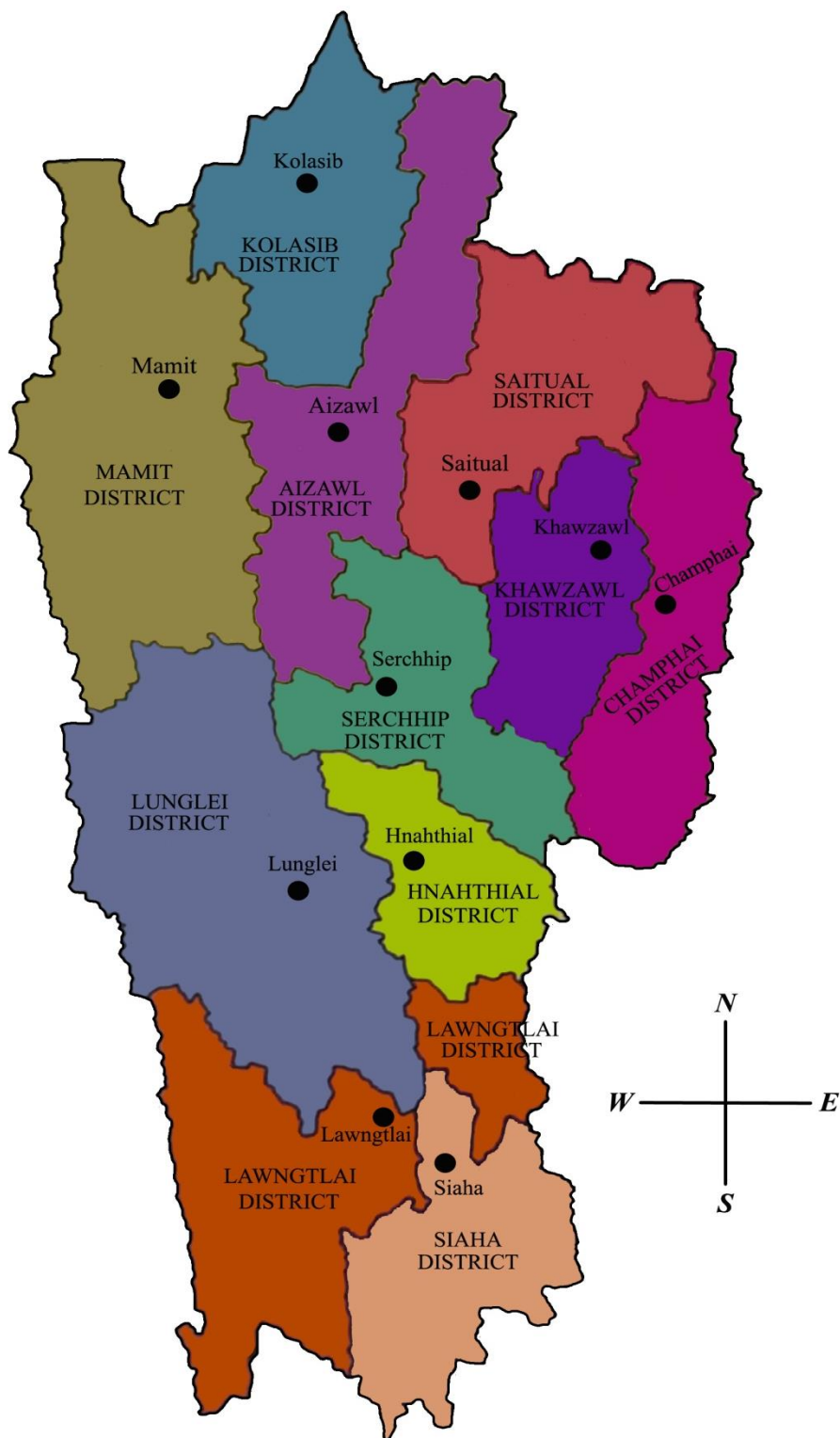
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	: Autonomous District Council.
APHLC	: All Party Hill Leaders Conference
BCM	: Baptist Church of Mizoram
CCI (M)	: Congregational Church of India (Maraland).
CEM	: Chief Executive Member
EBCC	: Evangelical Baptist Convention Church
ECM	: Evangelical Church of Maraland
EFCI	: Evangelical Free Church of India
HNC	: Hmar National Congress
HNU	: Hmar National Union
HPC	: Hmar People's Convention
HPC (D)	: Hmar People's Convention (Democratic)
HSA	: Hmar Students' Association
HYA	: Hmar Youth Association
ICI	: Independent Church of India
ICM	: Independent Church of Maraland
IKK	: Isua Krista Kohhran (Church of Jesus Christ)
INC	: Indian National Congress
LADC	: Lai Autonomous District Council
LIEC	: Lakher Independent Evangelical Church
LIKBK	: Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran
LPM	: Lakher Pioneer Mission
LPP	: Lairam People Party
LSA	: Lai Students' Association
MADC	: Mara Autonomous District Council
MBSA	: Mizoram Bawm Students' Association
MDC	: Member of District Council
MDF	: Maraland Democratic Front
MFP	: Mara Freedom Party
MLA	: Member of Legislative Assembly

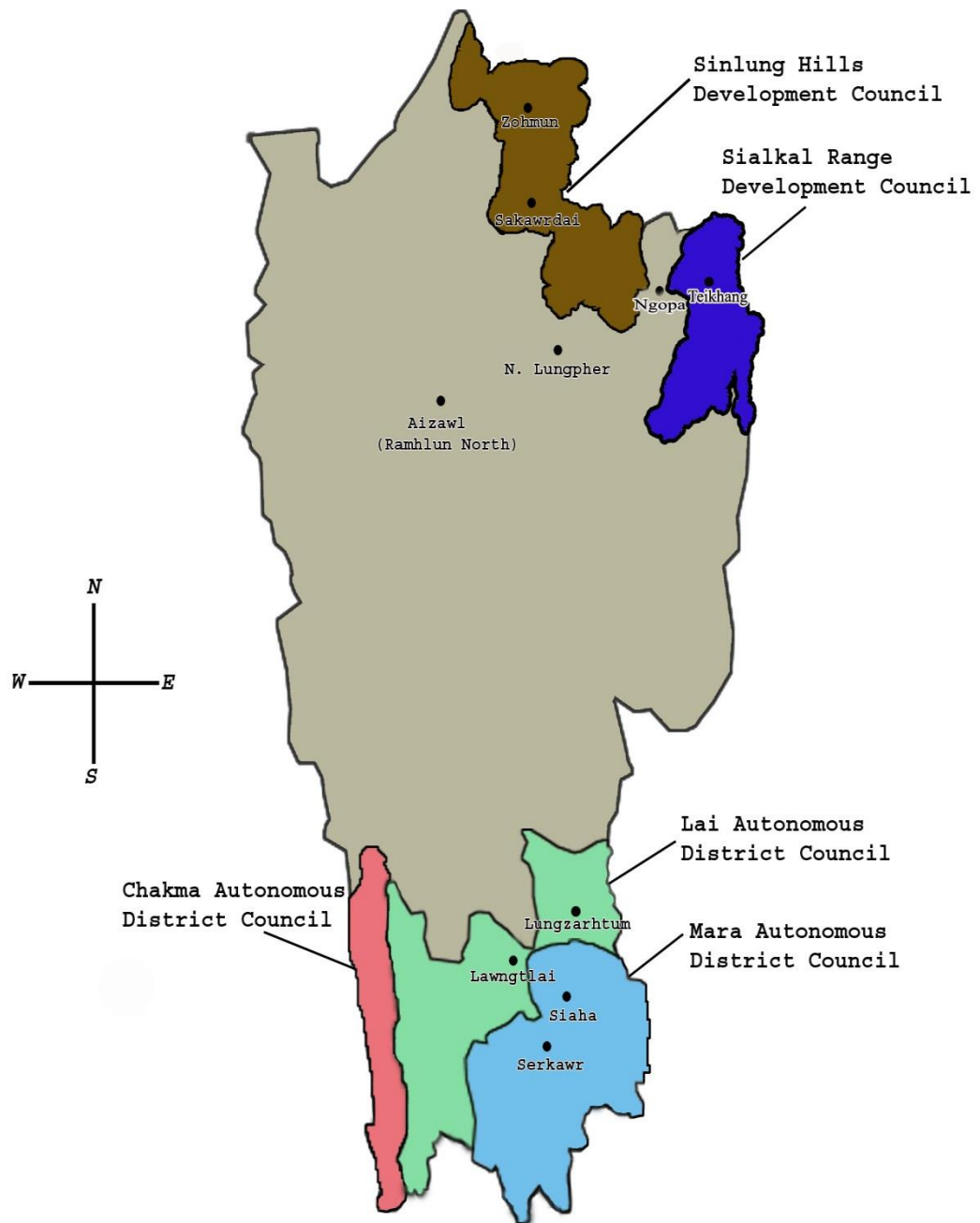
MNF	: Mizo National Front
MSO	: Mara Students' Organisation
MSU	: Mizo Students Union
MTP	: Mara Thyutlia Py
MZP	: Mizo Zirlai Pawl
NEIGM	: The North East India General Mission
NGO	: Non-Government Organization.
PLRC	: Pawi– Lakher Regional Council
PLSA	: Pawi- Lakher Student's Association
PLTU	: Pawi- Lakher Tribal Union
PNC	: Paite National Council
PTC	: Paite Tribe Council
PZP	: Pang Zirlai Pawl
SHC	: Sinlung Hills Council
SHDC	: Sinlung Hills Development Council
SRDC	: Sialkal Range Development Council
SSP	: Siamsin Pawlpi
ST	: Scheduled Tribe
UPC	: United Pentecostal Church
UPP	: United Peoples Party
UT	: Union Territory
YLA	: Young Lai Association
YMA	: Young Mizo Association
YPA	: Young Paite Association
ZBC	: Zomi Baptist Church
ZOFEST	: ZoFestival
ZORO	: Zo-Reunification Organisation
ZPM	: Zoram People's Movement

Map of Mizoram showing area of various Districts and District Capitals



**This map is not drawn to scale*

Map of Mizoram showing surveyed areas



* This Map is not drawn to scale

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND CONCEPTS

Not very long ago, many social theorists held the view that the process of modernization would gradually weaken loyalty based on primordial ties and eventually wipe out the significance of ethnic identity. However, recent developments have shown that politics of identity-based on ethnicity and nationality still play a vital role in the existence, reformation, and consolidation of the state structure. Ethnic conflicts between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in Bosnia, between Sinhalese and Tamilian in Sri Lanka, and between Hutus and Tutsi in Rwanda, have resulted in the loss of many precious lives and properties. The world also confronts the political assertiveness of ethnic groups like Basques and Catalans in Spain, the Bretons and the Corsicans in France, the Walloons and the Flemish in Belgium, the African-Americans in the United States, and the French-speaking Quebecois in Canada.¹

Movements launched based on ethnic identity sometimes even challenge the territorial integrity of existing states as many communities within the states have claimed that they constitute a nation and demand a sovereign state for themselves. These empirical realities reveal the relevance of ethnic and national identity in the modernized world and renew scholars' interest in the study of ethnicity and nationality formation. Certain scholars like Halpern, Berger, Deutsch, Geertz, Connor, etc even propounded theories linking the resurgence of ethnicity with the process of modernization itself.²

¹ Urmila Phadnis and Rajat Ganguly, *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia*, (New Delhi, Sage, 2001), 15-18.

² Ibid, 38-43.

For a culturally plural state like India, composed of several nationalities and ethnic groups, it is somehow natural to witness the emergence and persistence of various ethno-nationalist movements in different parts of the country like Kashmir, Punjab, and the North-Eastern states. The process of development of national consciousness, the nature of aspirations and demands of the people, and the intensity of their movements differ from one nationality and ethnic group to another depending on particular historical, cultural, and economic contexts in which they develop. While some communities demand the expulsion of migrants from other linguistic states who come to work in their region, we also see some communities demanding sovereign status in the name of the self-determination of nations.³

The North-Eastern region of India has been witnessing a series of popular movements for the preservation of one's distinct ethnic identity and nationality. Identity movements in North- India have their distinct features since the region is inhabited by several ethnic groups and nationalities that are at different stages of development. Most of these communities, especially those in the hill areas, had little contact with the Indian subcontinent till the British occupation of their land. During the Indian freedom movement also, only a small portion of the population joined the movement. They were integrated into the independent Indian Union – some willingly and some rather reluctantly. The process of modernization that started during the colonial period gave birth to a modern educated elite who played an important role in inculcating identity consciousness among their community and mobilizing them in pursuit of certain demands which are mainly presented as the interest of the whole community.

In the case of those ethnic groups, which have already developed into nationalities, this self-assertion is usually the result of their aspiration for a greater share of power in the operation of the state, and their struggles are targeted against the centripetal character of the Indian State. But in the case of those ethnic groups emerging as nationalities, their self-assertion is the result of a newfound identity

³ TK Oommen, *State and Society in India*, (New Delhi, Sage.1990) 32.

consciousness. Therefore, their movements are targeted not only against centralized India but also against the domineering role of other dominant nationalities or ethnic groups in the region.⁴ These nationality and ethnic assertions have changed and they still have the potential to change the political map of North-East India. The political future of the northeast considerably depends on the distinct processes of development of ethnicity and nationality and the complex process of interaction that takes place among different ethnic groups and nationalities in the region.

Therefore, understanding the nature of ethnic identities and the process of nationality formation is essential to understanding the grassroots reality and numerous social and political movements in North East India because ethnic-nationality has been an underlying principle in the formation of states in the region since the 1960s. For this reason, a detailed and systematic study of ethnic identity and its role in nationality formation becomes a very important subject of study. The above-mentioned points induced the researcher to study the interplay of ethnicity and nationality formation within the context of Mizo identity in Mizoram.

Statement of the problem

Mizoram, one of the states of North East India, covers an area of 21,087 square kilometers with a population of 1,091,014 persons. It is flanked by Bangladesh and Tripura in the west, Myanmar in the east and south, Assam and Manipur in the north. The State of Mizoram is divided into eleven administrative districts and there are three Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) namely, Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council, and Chakma Autonomous District Council. These ADCs are constituted under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.⁵ Apart from these three ADCs, the Government of Mizoram has lately set up

⁴ Kr, Chandan, "The Bodo Movement," in *Political Dynamics of North East India*. Ed. Girin Phukon (New Delhi, South Asian Publishers, 2000), 128.

⁵ Government of Mizoram, *Mizoram at a glance*, [.https://mizoram.gov.in/page/know-mizoram](https://mizoram.gov.in/page/know-mizoram). Accessed on 6th November 2020.

two development councils- Sinlung Hills Council⁶ and Sialkal Range Development Council⁷ in the Hmar and Paite dominated areas respectively. Except for a few communities like the Chakma, Reang, Nepali, etc., who are essentially distinct from the Chin-Kuki-Lushai family,⁸ other communities like Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Paite, Lai and Mara, etc. who share the common myth of origin and are culturally closely related are generally grouped under the generic name 'Mizo'.⁹ Even though each tribe has its language, the languages are closely related and the majority of the people speak the Mizo language.¹⁰ Among the Mizo tribes - Hmar, Lai, Lusei, Mara, Paite, and Ralte are considered numerically large tribes within Mizoram, while numerous smaller tribes are living side by side with the large tribes. The Hmar tribe consisted of 16 clans, The Lai composed of around 9 clans. The Lusei are divided into 11 clans and the Mara comprised of 17 clans. There are 11 clans among the Paite while the Ralte are divided into four clans.¹¹ Apart from sharing a common myth of origin and cultural relatedness, these communities are bound together by one more chord of being predominantly Christian. As Christians constitute 87.16% percentage of the whole population¹², being a Mizo becomes more or less synonymous with

⁶ Gazette of Mizoram, *The Sinlung Hills Council Act, 2018* VOL – XLVII, Issue No. 367, Dated 5.7.2018.

⁷ Government of Mizoram, *Manual of Sialkal Range Development Council* vide order no No.B.12012/1/2019-GAD, Dated 28.7. 2020

⁸ The term Chin- Kuki- Lushai is interchangeable used with other terms like *Mizo*, *Zo-fa*, *Zo hnahthlak*, *Chhinlung chhuak* or *Zo* ethnic group as they all refers to common ethnicity.

⁹ C. Nunthara, *Mizoram: Society and Polity* (New Delhi: Indus, 1996), 25-35.

¹⁰ There is contestation on the question of whether one of the official languages of Mizoram called as Mizo language is same or different from Lusei language. It is undeniable that Mizo language is significantly influenced by Lusei language. There is also argument that Lusei language is only one of the Mizo languages as other tribes languages are also Mizo language as they are all Mizo. While accepting the many issues related with Mizo language, considering the purpose of the study which necessitated tribe wise classification, Mizo language is interchangeable used with Lusei language unless specifically mentioned.

¹¹ B Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin* , (Aizawl, RTM Press, 2001), 75-136.

¹² Census of India Report 2011, <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/state/15-mizoram.>, Accessed on 25th May 2021

Christianity. The Mizo elite marks difference between the Mizo groups and non - Mizo groups.¹³

Regarding the territorial composition of the tribes, the Lusei and Ralte are concentrated in the northern part of Mizoram, the Paite are mainly concentrated in the north-eastern part of Mizoram, specifically in the Sialkal Range and in Champhai district, adjacent to Myanmar. The Hmar are found dispersed in northern areas of Mizoram but concentrated in the Sinlung Hills Council area. The majority of the Lai live within the Lai Autonomous District Council and the majority of the Mara community dwells within the Mara Autonomous District Council.¹⁴

The communities inhabiting Mizoram were nomadic communities before the British annexation of their land. Despite the existence of the generic term 'Mizo' and the Lusei language gradually developing as a link language among different Kuki-Chin-Lushai tribes, there seem to be no strong feeling of common identity consciousness among these communities at the time of the British arrival. In the absence of centralized authority and a profound sense of unity among them, one hardly finds any recorded history of the united resistance struggle against the British.¹⁵ When the British occupied the region, they found that more than sixty chiefs governed the land, and each village was ruled by a chief who wielded enormous powers within his jurisdiction.¹⁶

¹³ The Mizo elite clearly excluded those communities inhabiting Mizoram like Nepali, Chakma, Reang etc. in their discussion on Mizo identity, since they are ethnically different from the Chin-Kuki-Lushai group.

¹⁴ SK Bhattacharyya, "Population Heterogeneity and Ethnic Identity in Mizoram", in *Nationality, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity in North East India*, Ed B. Pakem (New Delhi, Omsons, 1990), 303

¹⁵ AG Mc Call, *Lushai Chrysalis* (Aizawl, TRI, 1977), 29

¹⁶ Vanlalringa Bawitlung, *Chieftainship and the process of State Formation in Mizo Society* (Shillong: Department of History, NEHU, 1996), 76.

After the area was formally incorporated within British India, the Superintendent demarcated the boundaries of each chief and imposed common rule over the whole of Lushai Hills. The Christian missionaries, who arrived shortly after the British occupation, developed Lusei script in 1898, and with the introduction of the modern system of education with the Lusei language as the medium of instruction; the Lusei language became more and more popular and was later recognized as an official language as Mizo language in 1974.¹⁷ The process of modernization and Christianity paved the way for the emergence of a new elite in the society, who are mostly constituted of those who received education from the schools run by the missionaries and are Christian. The modern educated elite successfully challenged the traditional elite composed mainly of the chief clan and the traditional religious elite. The emerging modern educated elite, who are composed of different tribes, made efforts to unite these different communities together by invoking a larger identity that is Mizo. The renaming of Young Lushai Association to Young Mizo Association, of the Lushai Hills District Council to Mizo District, can be seen as a conscious effort on the part of the modern elite to bring together all-composite tribes under one common generic name 'Mizo'.

The new modern Mizo elite formed the first political party within the area, the Mizo Commoners Union (later changed to Mizo Union) in 1946.¹⁸ The Mizo Union party, which governed the Mizo District and UT of Mizoram, strove to unite all Mizo inhabiting in Assam, Manipur, and Tripura into a single political unit and also strove for autonomy, preservation of ethnic identity, safeguarding and promoting culture, customs, languages, and economy of the Mizo. The Mizo Union movement received widespread support within and outside Mizoram; hence many a time, the Mizo Union Conference was held outside Mizoram like Lakhimpur, Halflong, etc.

¹⁷ The Mizoram Gazette *Mizoram Official Language Act, 1974*. Aizawl, Vol. 4, Issue No. 14, Dated 4th April, 1975.

¹⁸ R Vanlawma, *Ka ram leh Kei* (Aizawl, Self-published, 1972), 86-90.

The Mizo National Front (MNF) since its inception made efforts to unite the Chin-Kuki-Lushai community by asserting the commonality and distinctiveness of the Mizo nation against ‘Indians’ and other non-Mizo communities. After leading an insurgent movement for independence against the Indian State for two decades, MNF signed an accord with the Indian State on 30th June 1986 which subsequently led to the creation of the state of Mizoram within the Union of India.¹⁹ Although the MNF movement could not realize its goal of forming a sovereign state for the Mizo, it succeeded in strengthening ethnic solidarity and propagating the idea of distinct nationhood among the Mizo. Political movements of the Mizo Union and MNF, coupled with other factors like economic development, the emergence of modern political and administrative set-ups, growth of modern education, development of language and literature, etc., led to the development of consciousness among the Mizo as a distinct nationality.

However, the continuing process of Mizo nationality formation has generated apprehensions and uneasiness, particularly among non-Lusei tribes who felt that the Lusei and its allied tribes dominate Mizo society and monopolize economic, political, and social power in their hands. The elite that emerged within these tribes began to promote ethnic consciousness at their tribe levels and launched movements to counteract the assumed dominant status of the Lusei. The Mara and Lai demand for autonomy resulted in the formation of Pawi – Lakher Regional Council in 1951 which subsequently led to the formation of Lai Autonomous District Council and Mara Autonomous District Council in 1971.²⁰ Not satisfied with the Autonomous District Council, certain Lai and Mara political leaders joined hands with the Chakma and demanded the creation of a separate UT of their own.²¹ The Paite Tribe Council has demanded Autonomous Council for the Paite dominated areas for more

¹⁹ *Memorandum of Settlement (Mizoram Accord)*, New Delhi, June 30, 1986.

²⁰ Jangkhongam Dounel and Steffi Beingiachhiezi, “Autonomy Movement of the Pawi and Lakher” in *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in North East India*, ed, Jagdish K Patnaik et al., (Meerut, Balaji, 2018) 421-431.

²¹ Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the United Lai, Mara and Chakma UT demand Committee, Mizoram for the *Creation of a Union territory*, submitted on 29th July 2000.

than two decades which resulted in the formation of the Sialkal Range Development Council.²² The Hmar People Convention took to arms for the constitution of the Hmar Autonomous Council covering all the Hmar-dominated areas.²³ These developments pose real challenges to the Mizo elite, who seek to build the Mizo nationality based on the ethnic solidarity of the people.

Hence, the twin processes of group identity formation are witnessed in Mizoram. While the Mizo elite attempted to bring the entire cognate group under the banner of Mizo identity by stressing the cultural similarity of the groups and shared common myth of origin, the tribe-based elite the distinctive identity of their tribe. The Mizo elite while wooing all the *Chhinlung chhuak*²⁴ rejected certain communities inhabiting Mizoram like the Chakma, Reang, etc. within the ambit of Mizo since they used ethnicity as the boundary marker of differentiating Mizo against non-Mizo.

At the operational level, the Mizo identity is linked, maybe overstressed, with certain markers like -Christianity, the Lusei language (officially called as Mizo language), the territory of Mizoram, and the common myth of origin. Relating Mizo identity with these objective markers led to a strong chance of disregard or alienating those tribes who are not fluent in the Mizo language (although the Mizo elite, time and again claimed that Mizo language revolved around Lusei language, along with a place for another language, which together will pave for the further development of Mizo Language) and communities inhabiting outside the political territory of Mizoram from the ambit of Mizo nationality. As there is no numerically significant non-Christian group among the people, whom they want to embrace within the Mizo

²² Lalmalsawma Khiangte and JK Patnaik, "The Paite Movement for Autonomy in Mizoram" , *Contemporary Social Scientist*, MZU, Vol :X-1 Summer 2018,13-17.

²³ SN Singh, "Hmar Autonomy Movement" in *Autonomy Movements in Mizoram* ed. RN Prasad (New Delhi, Vikas, 1994), 123-130.

²⁴ The related terms used with *Chhinlung chhuak* is, *Zo fate* or *Zo hnahthlak* which implies blood relationship. The Chhinlung myth has its tribe variance some tribe called it as *Sinlung*, *Khul*, *Khurpui* etc but the idea of common origin is not contested.

Nationality, till now Mizo nationality markers are hardly contested from the religious side and no tribes seriously contested the idea of common origin and cultural similarity.

The emergence and sustenance of smaller tribe-based identities like Hmar, Paite, Lai, and Mara have the potential to destabilize the process of Mizo nationality formation. The two processes of identity formation, a pan Mizo identity which attempts to integrate all the cognate tribes and particular tribe identity assertion are seen and the interface of the two processes will have a significant implication on the future of Mizo nationality. To be able to understand the prospective political developments in Mizoram, it is necessary to examine the process of Mizo Nationality formation along with the social and political forces that affect the process. The study of interactions between tribe-based identity and the Mizo nationality will throw light on the political future of Mizoram in general and of the Mizo in particular. Hence, the scholar felt the need to undertake a study on the ethnic identities of communities belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Lushai group and its interaction with Mizo nationality formation in an objective and systematic manner, to understand the complex and distinct process of nationality formation, not only in Mizoram but also for groups in other areas of North-East, inhabited by communities with changing identities and conflicting interests.

Exploring the concepts

Perhaps the central difficulty in the study of ethnicity and nationality is the problem of finding agreed definitions on the key concepts. Theoretically, concepts are employed in social science as the basis of measurement, which helps in classification and comparison. However, in many instances, concepts tend to create confusion as scholars articulate their definition suited to their empirical situation and they are influenced by the context and space of their study, which may vary according to the difference of time and place. Different ways of defining the concepts indeed make the perspective broader, but the lack of consensus among scholars about the very basic meaning of concepts makes things confusing for the readers and makes objective investigation of diverse societies difficult. Despite this

problem, certain concepts which are crucial for the present study may be attempted for the study.

Tribe and tribe recognition in India

Sociologists, as well as anthropologists, have failed to agree on what constitutes a tribe. They conceptualize tribe differently according to the context of their study. The term 'tribe' as a social category has its root in Anglo-Saxon literature. Initially the term, 'primitive tribes' was in use in social anthropology as a small unit of the community, which are considered as outside of the civilization.²⁵ L.H.Morgan identified three major stages of society's progress in the uni-linear evolutionary process from primitive to modern - Savagery, Barbarism, and Civilization. These stages are marked by technological progress; from inventions of fire, bow, and potter in a savage era to the domestication of animal, agriculture, and metalworking in the barbarian era to the alphabet and writing in the civilization era. Fried Morton also identified an evolution stage from hunters, tribesmen, peasants, and the state.

The evolutionary approach of studying society mainly viewed society from a western perspective by identifying tribe as a historical development towards civilization. Civilization was defined as being alike with the western society towards which other societies must evolve. The approach related tribal society with the concepts of primitiveness, uncivilized, savage, profane, tradition, and unscientific while civilization is related to being cultured, educated, modern, scientific and open society. This approach was widely used by colonial ethnographers while refereeing communities in their colonies. Hence tribe is generally referred to as a self-contained community living at the stage of subsistence economy (aloof from civilization) and based on kinship or principles of consanguinity.²⁶

²⁵ L.H, Morgan, *Ancient Society* (Cambridge, Belknap Press, 1977) 12- 13. As cited by Alex Akhup, *Identity and Ethnicity of Komrem People of Manipur: A Specific Focus on Kom Tribe*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, School of Social Sciences, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai, 2012. 40.

²⁶ A.B.M. Mafeje, 'Tribalism,' in *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, ed. Joel Krieger (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 918-920.

In India, the early ethnographical works on 'tribal' were mainly done by colonial officers and missionaries. They followed colonial anthropological depiction of the tribe as people who are outside 'civilization'. Their study was mainly for administration and religion rather than the study of the tribe per se. These studies generated baseline data for colonial as well as independent Indian administration.²⁷ Mainly based on colonial studies, certain groups, who are considered as 'backward', became recognized as tribal. There seems to be no concrete feature adopted to designate a social group as a scheduled tribe; rather the prerogative of the administration prevails. Hence tribes in India are more politico-administrative units than of a social category.²⁸ Andre Beteille rightly observed, "The problem in India was to identify rather than define tribes, and scientific or theoretical considerations were never allowed to displace administrative or political ones.... This is not to say that those engaged in drawing up lists of Indian tribes did not have their conception of the tribe, but those conceptions were neither clearly formulated nor systematically applied".²⁹

There is an inherent problem in conceptualizing tribe in the context of North-East India. Different groups are living together while similar groups are dispersed in different states and most of the Scheduled Tribes in North-East India are no longer primitive. Citing Mizo community as an example, the colonial categorization of Mizo as an isolated and pre-modern community may be true during the British annexation of their land, but, the Mizo has developed significantly during and after the colonial period, they have become one of the most literate and economically developed communities. Hence, the anthropological definition of the tribe as being isolated from civilization and being primitive could not be readily applied in the

²⁷ Alex Akhup, *Identity and Ethnicity of Komrem People of Manipur: A Specific Focus on Kom Tribe*, 46.

²⁸ Asielie Pusa, *Politics in Naga Society-The Inter-Tribal Relations* (Unpublished Ph. D thesis, Department of Political Science, NEHU, 1996)13.

²⁹ Andre Beteille, "The concept of tribe with special reference to India", *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 27, No. 2. (1986) 299

context of the Mizo society. At the same time, the constitutional definition of the tribe (using inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list) does not reflect the reality of the context, since inclusion and exclusion as the tribe was not based on certain qualifications, rather based on political or administrative consideration. Hence the same tribe may be scheduled tribe in one state but not in another State.

Apart from the general conceptual problems mentioned above, there are also specific problems with the Scheduled Tribe list of Mizoram which contains the following tribes.³⁰

1. Chakma
2. Dimasa (Kachari)
3. Garo
4. Hajong
5. Hmar
6. Khasi and Jaintia (including Khasi Synteng or Pnar, War, Bhoi, or Lyngngam)
7. Any Kuki Tribes
8. Lakher
9. Man (Tai speaking)
10. Any Mizo (Lushai) tribes
11. Mikir
12. Any Naga tribes
13. Pawi
14. Synteng

³⁰ The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956 and as inserted by Act 81 of 1971.

Observing the above-Scheduled Tribe list of Mizoram reveals certain incoherence as well as academic and practical problems to applying legal classification of the Scheduled Tribe list as a tool of investigation and analysis in the context of the present study.

First, due to the lack of clearly specified ground or criteria for recognition as a scheduled tribe, the Scheduled Tribe list cannot be used as a viable option for the categorization of communities. Certain communities/ groups are recognized as a scheduled tribe, at the same time other communities who are more or less in the same condition are not. For instance, Hmar is a recognized tribe, but the Ralte communities, who have separate languages of their own and are numerically one of the major communities of Mizoram, are not recognized as a tribe. This problem which emerges out of the lack of clear criteria for recognition renders the efficacy of the ST list as a useful tool for investigation and analysis.

Secondly, the scheduled tribe list creates an overlapping identity for recognized tribes. Some tribes are recognized in two ways, both as a Mizo and their particular tribe. This dual recognition legally divides the same community over their identification. Even though a person may have multiple identities and one's own professional identity and religious identity may coexist, it is confusing and rather problematic to negotiate this dual identity as being a member of two recognized tribes at the same time. For example, a significant number of the Hmar community identifies themselves as Mizo while others may prefer to identify themselves as the Hmar tribe. This dual recognition has the potential to divide the same community. There is a problem of identification of the people along with tribe basis due to this dual recognition.

The third point is related to the second. Mizo is a nomenclature of culturally related tribes, including Hmar, Pawi (Lai), etc. Recognizing Mizo as a separate tribe with its constituent tribes in the same list creates a categorization problem. If a combination of many tribes constitutes Mizo, then, is it possible that one tribe and the culmination of tribes are of the same status? Can the larger identity formed by different tribes be of the same status as one of the constituent units?

Fourthly, list number 10 not only recognized Mizo as a tribe, which creates a problem as discussed in the above point. The more crucial problem lies with linking Lushai with Mizo by putting Lushai within the bracket which is presented as if Mizo and Lushai are equivalent. It is often interpreted by many non-Lusei tribes that Lusei is an anglicized form of the Lusei tribe, hence, only the Lusei tribe are legally recognized as Mizo, and non-Lusei are debarred from identifying themselves as Mizo. From a historical perspective, Lusei, Lushai, and Mizo are related but have different identities.³¹ Lusei is one tribe; Lushai is imposed identity by the British which was loosely used to refer to diverse communities living within their administered area they called as Lushai Hills, who mainly speak Lusei language. Mizo is a larger identity consisting not only of the Lusei tribe or Lusei speakers but all cognate tribes within and outside Mizoram.

Considering the above-highlighted problems, it is imperative to amend the existing ST list of Mizoram to rectify the errors of categorization handed down from the colonial ruler, who lacked proper historical and social knowledge. Due to the above-highlighted limitations of conceptualizing the term ‘Tribe’, both as an anthropological sense of being a primitive and legal sense of inclusion in the ST list, the present study employs the term ‘tribe’ to refer to the pre-colonial period local concept of *hnam*.³² In pre-colonial society, the largest social category is *hnam*, which is divided into several *chi* or clan. For, illustration purposes, Lusei *hnam* consists of eleven clans like Hnamte, Chhangte, Hrahsel, Chhakchhuak, etc. Instead of going into intricacies of little difference among the *sakhua* of each *hnam*,³³ it may suffice to mention that each *hnam* has a separate *Sakhua*³⁴ or a *hnam* of a person is determined by the *sakhua* of a person. A person can change his *hnam* by adopting the *sakhua* of

³¹ Detail discussion on the relationship of Lusei, Luhsai and Mizo identity is done in chapter II.

³² In traditional Mizo society, ‘hnam’ is the largest social category followed by ‘chi’ and the family is the smallest social unit.

³³ There are certain variations among the Lusei clans, but they are usually clubbed together under the Lusei *sakhua*, the same is true of other tribes also.

³⁴ The term *Sakhua* can be translated as religion, but in the traditional Mizo society, it implies more than a religious belief system. Changing of the *sakhua* through *saphun* system implies changing of the tribe.

the *hnam* he wishes to join through the *saphun* system.³⁵ But, the subsequent use of the same term *hnam* to refer to nationality identity during the latter part of colonial time and in the post-colonial period creates confusion, which compels the researcher to use the term 'tribe' to refer to those social categories called *hnam* like Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Lai, Mara, etc. the term clan will be used to refer to the subdivision of tribe called *chi*.

Ethnic identity

The ethnic group in question usually argues for the distinctive ethnic identity of the group as natural and undeniable. However, there seem to be different views among scholars about this contention. To a large degree, scholars, taking their stand on the nature and role of ethnic identity in group formation, can be broadly divided into two camps: primordialist and constructivist.

The primordialist claims that ethnic identity is a natural or given phenomenon. Every person carries with him through life 'attachments' derived from a place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language and social practices that are 'natural, for him, spiritual in character and that provide a basis for easy affinity with other people from the same background. These attachments constitute the givens of the human condition and are rooted in the non-rational foundations of personality.

Clifford Geertz has emphasized the importance of cultural 'givens' like assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion, and custom for making up a set of primordial boundaries, which cannot be passed easily.³⁶ Understood in this sense, individuals are born with and acquire subjective consciousness of a group's identity with members of the same group based on certain common objective attributes like language, race, religion, customs, tradition, food, dress, music, etc. These objective

³⁵ For details on *sakhua* and *Saphun* system kindly refer Vanlalremruata Tonson and Lalmalsawma Khiangte, "Changing Significance of 'Hnam' and 'Saphun' System in Mizo Society" published in *Mizo Studies*, MZU, Vol. IX no 3, July- September (2020). 391-408.

³⁶ Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution", in *Old Societies and New States*, ed, C. Geertz, (New York, Free Press, 1963),109-110

attributes make up the boundaries of the group which differentiates 'Us' from 'Them'. Socio-biologist like Berghe proposed a more radical primordialism that regards genetic reproductive capacity as the basis, not only of families but also for its possibility to politically mobilize on a huge scale, with greater ease and rapidity, in relation with any other group and association.³⁷

While many primordialists give vital importance to certain objective cultural markers, which they consider are the base of any ethnic identity, some scholars also stress the importance of the subjective aspect of self-and group-related feelings of identity distinctiveness and its recognition by others as crucial determinants of ethnic identity selection and its persistence. Anthony D Smith combines the objective and subjective aspects by listing out six bases of ethnic identity as distinct group name, a shared belief of common ancestry and descent, historical memory among group members, a shared culture, an attachment to a specific territory or homeland or a sense of common solidarity.³⁸ Summing up the above, ethnic identity from the primordialist idea is a subjectively held sense of shared identity based on some objective cultural marker that is natural and fixed.

The Constructivists stress the socially constructed nature of ethnic identity and the people's ability to select some or a particular marker from a variety of cultural heritage to forge group identities. According to them, one cannot claim the existence of a set of given facts that have no social source because all concepts that make up any kind of group identity are socially constructed. They contended that ethnic or national identity is the process that is embedded in human actions and choice, rather than biologically given ideas whose meaning is dictated by nature.

Keyes makes a distinction between genetic descent and social descent; social descent is a process of kin selection through which human beings seek to create solidarity with those whom they regard as being of the same people, and genetic

³⁷ Van den Berghe, 'Ethnicity and the Socio-biology Debate' in *Theories of Ethnic and Race Relations* eds J. Rex and D. Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 256.

³⁸ A D Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1986) 24-31.

descent consists of biological characteristics transmitted through genetic inheritance. He opines that it is the cultural construction of social descent that forms ethnic identity by determining the cultural characteristics that are used to decide who does or does not belong to the group, and there is no invariable pattern as to which cultural characteristics will be seized upon as emblematic of their ethnic identity.³⁹ For Daniel Bell, "Ethnicity is best understood as a strategic choice by individuals who, in other circumstances would choose other group members as a means of gaining some power and privilege....It is the salience, not the persona which has to be the axial line for an explanation. The attachment to ethnicity may flush or fade very quickly depending on political and economic circumstances".⁴⁰

Realizing the limitations of both approaches, many scholars felt the need to put the two approaches together by recognizing the importance of the pre-existing culture or ethnic ties in the formation of an ethnic group. TK Oomen posited that the dichotomy between the primordialist and the constructivist is false by asserting that "The labels (European and Hindu) stuck. Because they struck a familiar cord, fulfilled an emotional need, and provided a shorthand device to communicate certain aspects shared alike by all the people under reference. Thus, some of the constructed identities become acceptable precisely because they contain a primordial element, which is construed as 'sacred' by the collected concerned"⁴¹.

Paul Brass argues for the modernity of ethnicity and nationalism and holds the view that they are social and political creations of the elite, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and economic

³⁹ As cited in Urmila Phadnis and Rajat Ganguly, *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia* (New Delhi, Sage, 2001) 5.

⁴⁰ D. Bell, 'Ethnicity and Social Change', In: *Ethnicity. Theory and Experience*, eds, N. Glazer, and D. Moynihan (London: Harvard University Press, 1975) 171.

⁴¹ TK Oomen, *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity*. (Cambridge: Polity Press. 1999),38

advantage for their groups as well as for themselves.⁴² He argues that the elite are constrained by the belief and values of the group they seek to mobilize.

The reality of South Asia reveals the social construction of ethnic identity, because of the horizontal and vertical differentiation that exists among the ethnic groups. Vertical differentiation refers to the hierarchical rankings given to different objective attributes that are differently stressed by the groups at different times in asserting their separate identity, for example; the ethnic group may stress on language than other cultural markers like food or descent. Horizontal differentiation refers to identity distinction where that is made by an ethnic group where multiple identities co-exist adjacently.⁴³ When the ethnic group differentiates themselves based on belief in common ancestry, the social reality of the belief that binds the people together rather than the historical reality of common ancestry is important for the group. Therefore ethnic membership *per se* does not necessarily result in ethnic group formation but only provides the resources that may, under the right circumstances, be mobilized into a group by appropriate political action.

The constructionist argues that to create internal cohesion among the group against other groups, the elite utilizes the socio-political situation and may present one or more objective markers as symbolic markers of the ethnic identity of the group. Hence, myths of common origin, heroes, language, and other cultural markers derived symbolic importance. The emergence of subjective 'Us' feeling based on these cultural markers or the joining together of the objective and subjective aspects which led to the formation of collective identity is the most important part. The presence of a certain cultural marker by itself does not necessarily lead to the formation of an ethnic group or the transformation of the ethnic group to a nationality. The emergence and persistence of the group's collective identity greatly depend upon the basis on which the identity is constructed. The elite cannot form a group out of nothing, but rather utilize the available resources as the basis of people mobilization.

⁴² Paul R Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 8.

⁴³ Urmila Phadnis and Rajat Ganguly, *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia*, 25-26.

The primordialists generally failed to explain ethnic change and the changing intensity of ethnic attachment across situations and over time. The constructivists are criticized for neglecting the ethnic nature of the organization and for failing to explain the mass passions evoked by cultural attributes and ethnic durability. Both approaches have validity and contribute to understanding ethnic identity. It may be wrong to take the extreme primordialist view and conceive cultural markers as integrally connected with the process and being of ethnic identity or take the extreme constructivist position to disregard the importance of cultural attributes for the ethnic groups as if they can be constructed out of nothing. There seems to be no radical difference between the two approaches and a clear dichotomy between the primordialist and constructionist approaches is incorrect and impossible because the only answer to the question of why some identities stuck and the other did not can be answered only by saying that the constructed identities become acceptable precisely because they contain a primordial element. Hence, the present study argues for the relevance of both approaches and will attempt to highlight the reality of both cultural attributes and constructed nature of ethnic identity while discussing the Mizo identity formation in the subsequent chapters.

Nation / Nationality

In the modern world of ‘nation-states’, the concept, nation, and nationality are highly contested and debatable terms. The question of its existence or formation and the role of ethnicity is attempted to answer by scholars in a variety of ways. While there seems to be agreement about the need to differentiate a nation from another collective identity like class, region, race, etc. scholars are contesting about the nature and role of ethnicity in national identity formation and the balance between subjective and objective elements of it, and the relationship between state and nation.

Anthony D Smith mentions four theories or approaches toward the role of ethnicity in the emergence of the nation- Primordialism, Perennialism, Modernism, and Ethno-Symbolism. Primordialism emerged from the belief of the assumption that nations were seen as the natural and primordial divisions of humanity, and nationalism was thought to be ubiquitous and universal. For the primordialist, the

key to the nature, power, and incidence of nations and nationalism lies in the rootedness of kinship, ethnicity, and the genetic bases of human existence⁴⁴. The perennialists hold that nations (if not nationalism) have existed throughout recorded history, but are not a part of the natural order. An older generation of historians, many of them influenced by an organic version of nationalism tended to see nations everywhere in the historical record, from ancient Egypt and Babylonians to the modern French and British, and to explain the history of humanity in terms of national alignments and conflicts.⁴⁵ The modernists hold that nations and nationalism are essentially phenomena of the nineteenth and early twentieth century before that nations and nationalism were largely unknown and that economic and political developments which had been so conducive to their formation and proliferation are now, at the end of the millennium, beginning to render them obsolete.⁴⁶

Smith has provided one of the staunchest critiques of modernism for his focus on ethnic persistence. His approach, known as Ethnosymbolism, tries to bridge the gap: to overcome the dichotomy between Perennialism and Modernism. Ethnosymbolism underlines the continuity between premodern and modern forms of social cohesion, without overlooking the changes brought about by modernity. The persisting features in the formation and continuity of national identities are myths, memories, values, traditions, and symbols. Myths of ethnic descent, particularly myths of 'ethnic chosenness', lie at its core.⁴⁷

Nation in its original Latin *nasci* conveys the idea of a common blood relationship. Hence the cultural aspect, rather than the political dimension was the focus. It was introduced into the English language in the late thirteenth century with the primary implication of a blood-related group. However, the emergence of modern

⁴⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-4.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 29.

⁴⁷ Daniele Conversi, "Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach" in *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism*, ed. Athena S. Leoussi and Steven Grosby, (Edinburg, Edinburg University Press, 2007,) 21.

popular sovereign states after the French Revolution significantly alter the connotation of the nation. In the early seventeenth century, the nation was being used more or less synonymous with 'citizenship' to describe the inhabitants of the modern emerging state, regardless of that population's ethnonational composition. Following the maxim, one state for one nation, the emerging 'nation-state' tries to combine the cultural and political aspects of the nation. Thus, it came to be believed that it is not only natural for a nation to have a sovereign state of its own, but a necessary condition to protect and maintain its cultural identity. Therefore, the nation is often defined as a community of sentiments that would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; a community that normally tends to produce a state of its own. This statist's ways of conceptualization mark the presence of a sovereign state as a differentiating measure between a nation and other collective groups like an ethnic group.

However, the actual reality of the contemporary world reveals the lack of co-terminality between states and nations. Despite project homogenization followed by the states, only twelve states of the world can be justifiably be described as a nation-state,⁴⁸ defined as a sovereign state inhabited by people belonging to one cultural group. Therefore, the concept of the nation-state, a combination of both the political and cultural aspects of a nation does not seem to provide a useful analytical tool for studying societies in the post-colonial countries in Africa and Asia whose territory are arbitrarily drawn by the colonial masters without considering the cultural homogeneity of the people.

Addressing this reality, many scholars felt the need to differentiate between state and nation. Classical Marxist scholars usually subscribe to Stalin's definition that 'a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed based on a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. Stalin's definition appears apolitical as it assumes

⁴⁸ Walker Connor, 'A Nation is a Nation is a State, is an ethnic group, is a...' as cited in *Oxford Readers: Nationalism* eds John Hutchinson and Anthony D Smith (Oxford, Oxford University Press, reprint 2012) 39.

that a nation exists not because of its political agenda, but it possesses the elements of a nation. However, Connor rejects the statist's definition of nation and defines nation as a community of descent, which however can be distinguishable from the ethnic community by its degree of self-consciousness.⁴⁹ For some scholars, subjective consciousness is the most vital factor for the existence and persistence of a nation, and they view a nation as an 'Imagined community'.⁵⁰ One of the most important factors for the existence of a nation seems to be the existence of subjective collective consciousness as a nation or in other words, nationalism precedes a nation. The elite may employ either political or cultural means to mobilize the people for creating a collective self-consciousness depending upon the situation. Therefore, a nation can be created in various ways and from a variety of bases and circumstances. The two commonest bases are a territorial state or political community and a community of culture, nationalism binds the people together.

A nation can be understood in two senses, a political or civic sense and ethnic or cultural. A civic nation comes into existence when the population of a given territory perceives itself to be a nation and equates citizenship with nationality. The ethnic or cultural nation is not based upon common political values, law, and citizenship, but the spirit of the cultural community based upon common descent, language, religion, customs, and history. These two ways of understanding nation can be explained in regard to the differences in the historical development of the ethno-political relationship. While the idea of civic nation was developed in France and England and later spread to Latin America, Australia, and other European countries, the idea of ethnic nation was developed in continental Europe, Africa, and Asia in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.

⁴⁹ Walker Connor, 'A Nation is a Nation is a State, is an ethnic group, is a...' as cited in *Oxford Readers: Nationalism* eds John Hutchinson and Anthony D Smith (Oxford, Oxford University Press, reprint 2012) 45-46..

⁵⁰ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, (New Delhi, Rawat, reprint 2015) 5-7.

The idea of the nation as a political entity reflects the reality of European countries which is difficult to apply in the context of Africa and Asia where multi-ethnic groups and nationalities are found within one state. Multiple cultural communities claim themselves as a nation and at the same time, only a few of them have a state of their own. Hence, a concept of neither nation-state nor a civic nation seems to be appropriate for the study of this nationality without states, since the basis of their nationality formation is on the culture. The most practicable way of conceptualization for study seems to be making a differentiation between a nation as a cultural entity and a political entity. So, for studying a cultural 'nation without states' like Mizo, who have a self-consciousness as a distinct nation, we can follow Guibernau's definition of a nation as a self-conscious human community with a common culture, clearly demarcated territory, having a common past, and a common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself.⁵¹

Ethnicity and Nationality: AD Smith views on Ethno- symbolism and Paul R Brass Elite competition theory

Apart from the problem relating to lack of consensus regarding the conceptualization of ethnicity and nationality, there is a contextual problem or problem of the applicability of the western concepts, particularly in the context of Asia or Africa, due to cultural and political differences. What is appropriate in the context of Europe and the new worlds are drastically different, there may be no marginalization of indigenous people or natives by European settlers in the aftermath of colonialism, but group dispersion using boundary demarcation. Anthony D Smith rightly argues, "The principles of territorial statehood and ethnic culture so rarely coincide in Africa and Asia, the chance of forging genuine 'political communities such as the West has been fortunate to enjoy are greatly reduced. However, many African intelligentsia may be committed to the ideal of the territorial nation, the dilemmas of creating a political community in such unpropitious circumstance are daunting".⁵²

⁵¹ Monsterrat Guibernau, 'Nations without States: Political Communities in a Global Age', in *Michigan Journal of International Law*. (Vol 25. Issue 4. 2004) 1252.

⁵² Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, 2nd edition. (London: Duckworth, 1983), 126

The purpose of the present study is not an attempt to engage in the theoretical debate or to arrive at conclusion regarding the correct conceptualization of ethnicity and nationality formation. The study would rather rely on the insights of scholars to understand and analyze the role of ethnic identity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and perpetuation of Mizoization⁵³. Considering the impossibility to highlight and apply all the important approaches or theories relating to ethnicity and nationality formation, the present study would mainly focus on AD Smith's views on Ethno- symbolism and Paul R Brass Elite competition theory. Hence, a summary of their main ideas is highlighted.

AD Smith's views on Ethno- symbolism

Ethno-symbolism, according to Anthony D Smith is an attempt to understand the 'inner world' of ethnicity and nationalism through an analysis of symbolic elements and subjective dimensions.⁵⁴ Smith focused on the role of ethnies (ethnic communities) in the formation of nations and argues that the cultural elements of symbol, myth, memory, value, ritual, and tradition are crucial to an analysis of ethnicity, nations, and nationalism highlighting three main reasons.⁵⁵

1. Various combinations of cultural elements have played, and continue to play, a vital role in shaping social structures and cultures, defining and legitimating the relations of different sectors, groups, and institutions within a community. By these means, they have ensured a degree of common consciousness, if not cohesion, even in periods of crisis and rapid change, and even when some of

⁵³ The term 'Mizoization/ Mizoisation' is used to refer to the whole process of, both objective and subjective aspect, which culminates to identify oneself as Mizo and perceived by the group as such. For details on the concept of "Mizoization", see Jagadish K. Patnaik, "Mizo Identity and Indianisation: A Case of Conflict Transformation in Mizoram", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, October 2017.

⁵⁴ AD, Smith, *Ethnic Symbolism*, (New York, Rutledge, 2009), 23

⁵⁵ Ibid, 24

the preceding myths, symbols, and traditions have been amended or rejected, as occurred during the French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions.

2. These same cultural elements have endowed each community with a distinctive symbolic repertoire in terms of language, religion, customs, and institutions, which helps to differentiate it from other analogous communities in the eyes of both its members and outsiders, and they have raised the profile of the community and sharpened its social boundary and its opposition to outsiders, as much as the boundary has continued to define the community and divide 'us' from 'them'.
3. Shared values, memories, rituals, and traditions have helped to ensure a sense of continuity with past generations of the community – a sentiment greatly enhanced by the widespread acceptance of collective symbols such as the flag, anthem, or national holiday whose meanings may change over time but whose forms remain relatively fixed. Such symbols are particularly important in the rites and ceremonies of public culture, which help to create and sustain communal bonds and a sense of national identity.

Unlike many scholars who view ethnicity as conceptually and historically opposed to the idea of the nation due to the confinement of their analysis of ethnicity to ethnic minority groups within an existing political state, Smith regards various networks of ethnic ties as the single most important factor in the rise and persistence of nations and nationalisms. He identifies three levels of ethnic ties- ethnic category, ethnic association, and ethnic communities. In the case of the ethnic categories, the population is designated by outsiders as a distinctive category based on one or more cultural markers, usually language, customs, or religion, and its members have no known myth of ancestry and little or no sense of solidarity. They may or may not have a self-designating name or the name may not be recognized by all the other defined members. At the ethnic association level, a more active level of ethnic membership may develop and give rise to a network of mutual relations between the members. In ethnic communities or ethnies, the community, at least, the upper strata possesses a sense of solidarity, and the members developed self-consciousness as a group based on the myth of ancestry, common culture, etc. Smith defines ethnic

community or ethnie as ‘a named and self-defined human community whose members possess a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of a common culture, including a link with a territory, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the upper strata.’⁵⁶ Smith defines nation as named and self-defining communities whose members cultivate shared symbols, myths, memories, values, and traditions, inhabit and are attached to a historic territory or homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standards laws. Here, Smith combines the process of ethnogenesis such as naming, boundary definition, the myth of origin, etc. with other social and political processes like territory, shared culture and standard laws, etc.⁵⁷

Smith acknowledges the pivotal role of intellectuals and intelligentsia in the emergence and survival of the nation. According to him, intellectuals are the creators, inventors, producers, and analysts of ideas. They mostly act as ‘chroniclers’ of the ethnic past, elaborating those memories which can link the modern nation back to its ‘golden age. Intellectuals do not necessarily belong to a particular class with a specific high culture. Intelligentsia or professionals are a group of individuals exposed to some form of superior education. Just like the intellectuals, the intelligentsia are not class-specific rather a social category. They have the will and inclination as well as the power and capacity to apply and disseminate the ideas produced by the intellectuals. They, therefore, play a crucial role in the success of nationalist movements.’⁵⁸

Paul R Brass: Elite competition

Paul R. Brass’s theory of Elite competition falls within the instrumentalist view of ethnic identity formation. He argues that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena, inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state. They are not ‘givens’ but social and political constructions by the elite, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the culture of the groups

⁵⁶ AD, Smith, *Ethnic Symbolism*, 27

⁵⁷ Ibid, 49-51.

⁵⁸ Conversi, *Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach*. 22.

they wish to represent to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves.⁵⁹

Brass sees ethnic identity formation as a process created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities. He does not, however, discard the cultural forms, values, and practices of a distinctive ethnic group as unimportant. Rather, he argues that the elite, while making use of the ethnic group attributes, are constrained by the belief and values that exist within the group that limits the kinds of appeals they can make. But, at the same time, the processes by which the elite mobilize ethnic identities simplifies those belief and values, distorts them, and select those which are politically useful rather than central to the belief system of the group.⁶⁰ Brass defines the elite as influential subgroups within ethnic groups and classes by following Lasswell's definition of the elite as 'those who get the most of what there is to get' .⁶¹

Brass argues that the rise of ethnic identity and its transformation into nationalism arises under specific circumstances and the assumption that ethnic identity is dynamic and the role of the elite is of critical importance in the study of the formation and perpetuation of ethnic identity.⁶² He defines ethnicity as "a sense of ethnic identity which consists of the subjective, symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people...of any aspect of culture in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups".⁶³ An ethnic group, according to Brass is a subjectively self-conscious community that establishes criteria for inclusion into and exclusion from the group and claim status and recognition either as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism – Theory and Comparison*, (New Delhi, Sage 1991) 8.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 16-17.

⁶¹ Harold D Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York, Meridian, 1958) 13.

⁶² Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism – Theory and Comparison*, 13-14.

⁶³ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 19.

Brass identifies three levels of ethnic-based groups: ethnic category, ethnic community, and nation or nationality. He defines the ethnic category as any group of people dissimilar from other peoples in terms of objective cultural criteria and containing within its membership, either in principle or in practice, the elements for a complete division of labor and for reproduction. When an ethnic group uses cultural symbols for creating internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups, the group has become a subjectively self-conscious ethnic community. When the ethnic community puts forward a demand for a major say for the group in the political system or control over a piece of territory within the country, it implies that the ethnic group aspires to national status and recognition. In so far as it succeeds by its own effort in achieving any one of these goals either within the existing state or in a state of its own, the ethnic community has become a nationality or a nation. Brass views nation or nationality as a particular type of ethnic community or, rather, as an ethnic community politicized, with recognized group rights in the political system.⁶⁵

Brass argues that nationality can be created in two processes. The first process relates to the transformation of an ethnic group in a multiethnic state into a self-conscious political entity. The second process is through the amalgamation of diverse groups and the formation of an inter-ethnic, composite, or homogeneous national culture through the agency of the modern state. There is a similarity of the two processes, as in both cases, it attempted to transform otherwise objective characteristic differences between peoples into subjective and symbolic meanings and to increase the number of attributes and symbolic referents to emphasize their internal similarities and distinguish them from other groups.⁶⁶

Brass defines the process of transformation of an ethnic group into nationality as a process intensifying the subjective meanings of a multiplicity of symbols and of striving to achieve multi-symbol congruence among the group of people defined initially by one or more central symbols. In the movement to create greater internal

⁶⁵ Ibid, 19-20.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 20.

cohesion and to press their ethnic demands more effectively, the elite increasingly stresses the variety of ways in which the members of the groups are similar to each other and collectively different from other groups. This effort inevitably involves either the loss of potential adherents or the need to persuade or coerce group members to change their language, religion, behavior, or dress. While going through this process, the nationality created out of an ethnic group becomes a different social formation from the initial group.⁶⁷

Contextualizing the Concepts

Examining the different ways of conceptualization reveals that scholars are influenced to a very great extent by the nature of the societies they studied and the disciplinary orientations. Many of the concepts used by the western liberal and Marxist scholars are mostly developed in the context of the experiences of the western developed countries and the studies made of mainland India, though helpful, are not fully applicable to understand the complexity of ethnicity and nationality formation in a north-eastern state like Mizoram. In the context of North-East India, it is difficult to draw a sharp line demarcating the area of ethnic group and nationality since the processes of ethnic mobilization and nationality mobilization are in operation simultaneously. In Mizoram also, the MNF, while claiming the distinct national identity of the Mizo, uses the ethnic and cultural identity of the group as a resource for mobilizing the people in socio-political spheres.

On the relationship between ethnic identity and nationality formation, the most crucial part is the role of ethnicity in the emergence and persistence of an ethnic-based nationality. Ethnic-based nationality, as a historically evolved entity, presupposes that it has gone through several phases of transformation. Hence, it is pertinent to study group formation and its transformation, the role of relevant factors like culture, elite, etc. How a subjective consciousness has emerged out of cultural markers seems to be the relevant point, since cultural markers by themselves do not create a group.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 20-21.

The elite fabricated group identity based on certain objective markers and utilizes it for the furtherance of their interest. The elite are however constrained by the socio-political-economic situation in their selection of the markers and process of people mobilization. It was the process of modernization, particularly, modern education that influenced ethnic self-consciousness. As the masses began to read (and write) books about their own culture, the modern educated elite found a strong resource in "the culture" and they manipulate and use self-consciously in political action. They appeal to the nostalgia of the masses, invoking the virtues of a hazy past, based on which, made a demand for a collective right, either for autonomy or even for sovereign statehood. The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for the elite in competition for political power and economic advantage. The symbols used to create a political identity can be shifted to adjust to political circumstances. Distinguishing features do not by themselves automatically and necessarily lead to the emergence of subjective consciousness. It emerges when the elite highlight one or more of these cultural or objective markers to make the group self-consciousness as a distinct group, apart from 'other' and draw mass support in the pursuance of certain demands, skillfully posed as the group's national demand. An ethnic group may be defined as a politicized cultural group united by certain objective attributes and exhibiting strong psychological sentiment of belonging to the group against others. A single tribe or a group of tribes join together and may form an ethnic group. They exist in competition with other similar groups for obtaining certain benefits within the political system. The emergence of ethnic groups presupposes that the community has already been influenced to an extent by the process of modernization.

Following Brass's arguments, we can argue that ethnic consciousness at a given stage of historical development translates itself into a desire for self-determination and leads to the mobilization of the community either for political autonomy or for sovereignty, and then the ethnic group is considered to have emerged as a nationality. This subjective consciousness of a community as belonging to a distinct nationality does not develop in a vacuum. It emerges at a particular stage of historical development, which coincides with the development of capitalism and

the emergence of modern social and political institutions. The emerging elite of the community, who themselves are the product of modernization, play a vital role in arousing nationality consciousness.

For the categorization of the group under study, the thesis argues that the Mizo nationality is composed of different tribes (*Hnam*) who shared myths of origin like Lusei, Hmar, Mara, Paite, Lai, etc. Each tribe is again divided into several clans (*Chi*). For example, Lusei tribe consist of eleven clans like Pachuau, Chhangte, Hauhnar, Hrahse, Tochhawng, Vanchhawng, Chhakchhuak, Chawngte and chief clans like Sailo, Tangluah etc. Mention may be made here that, though the Sailo and other chief clans of Zahmuaka descendants are originally Paite tribe, they are inducted as Lusei through the Saphun system.⁶⁸

Review of literature

The study of ethnicity and nationality has attracted the attention of scholars, therefore, there are numerous literature on issues relating to the topic of the research. Due to the limitation of space, only a few representative academic works which constitute the main source of arguments of the present study are reviewed. The academic study of ethnicity owes much to the insights of **Fredrik Barth**. In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969), Barth argues that ethnic boundary defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses. He focuses on the importance of ethnic boundary and the interface and interaction between groups that gave rise to identities and hence parted with anthropological notions of cultures as bounded entities, and ethnicity as primordial bonds. **Max Weber**, in his article *The origin of Ethnic Groups* (1978), argues that ethnic membership differs from kinship group for being a presumed identity and ethnic membership does not constitute a group, rather facilitates group formation. **Benedict Anderson**, in his book, *Imagined Communities* (1983) describes a nation as an imagined political community. 'Imagined' because citizens who never meet each other consider themselves as being part of a 'political community, and imagined as both inherently limited and

⁶⁸ B Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin* (Aizawl, RTM Press, 2001) 107-111.

sovereign. **John Hutchinson** and **Anthony D Smith** contribute a lot to the study of ethnicity and nationalism for their edited work on *Oxford Readers: Nationalism* (1994) and *Oxford Readers: Ethnicity* (1996). The two books present a collection of works done by scholars like Ernest Renan, Joseph Stalin, Walker Connor, Eric Hobsbawm, Clifford Geertz, Pierre Van Den Berghe, Walker Connor, etc. The books are useful to understand the main themes and perspectives on ethnicity and nationalism in different parts of the world. **Anthony D Smith's** works *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986), *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (1999), *Ethnic Symbolis* (2009) argue that though nationalism is a modern phenomenon, it has premodern origins and all nations have dominant 'ethnic cores'. His approach, Ethnoscymbolism, seeks to enter the "inner world" of members of a community in terms of cultural elements of that world: myth, memory, value, tradition, and symbol to study of nation, It emphasizes the ethnic bases of many modern nations while privileging the cultural and symbolic dimensions of ethnic communities and nation.

Paul R Brass, in his book, *Ethnicity, and Nationalism* (1991) presents a distinctive theory concerning the origins of ethnic identity and modern nationalism. He argues that the process of ethnic identity formation and its transformation into nationalism is reversible due to elite competition and internal division and contradiction. In his book *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity* (1999) **TK Oommen** aims to develop a new analysis of the interface of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity. He conceives ethnicity as a product of disengagement between territory and culture, and nation as a product of a fusion of territory and language. *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (first published in 1994) by Thomas **Hylland Eriksen** is a very insightful book for providing an anthropological perspective on the subject. He defines ethnicity as an aspect of social relations between persons who consider themselves as essentially distinctive from members of other groups of whom they are aware and with whom they enter into a relationship.

Going to the context of South Asia, India, and North-East India, **Urmila Phadnis** and **Rajat Ganguly's** book *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia* (2001) is a useful book for providing a comparative appraisal of the dynamics of ethnic identities and movements in the south Asian region comprising India,

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. *Ethnicity and Polity in South Asia* (2002) edited by **Girin Phukon** contains chapters contributed by 18 scholars discussing the various aspects of ethnic issues and problems like - Nation building process, ethnic nationalism, ethnic conflict, the interface of language policy, and ethnic assertion, etc which has a deep impact in North -East India and South Asian countries. **TK Oommen** in his book, *State and Society in India* (1990) characterizes the Indian polity as constituting a large number of 'nations' and 'ethnies'. He asserts that most of the conflicts in India are the result of erroneous conceptualizations arising out of misplaced polarities that juxtapose nation and state, political nationalism, and cultural nationalism. In *Ethnicity in India* (1994) **Ajit K Danda** perceives ethnicity given pluricultural realities, as a strategy of interest alliance. The nature of exposition of ethnicity under the circumstance depends to a major extent on the kind of stimulus, received by an individual or a group at a given point in time. As most of the ethnic groups and nationalities in India are recognized as Scheduled tribes, the concept of the tribe becomes important. **Andre Beteille's** 'The concept of the tribe with special reference to India', published in the European Journal of Sociology (1986) validly argues that the problem of tribe identification in India emerges because they are identified based on administrative and political considerations, rather than proper scientific and theoretical consideration. In his book, *State, Society, and Tribes* (2008), Virginius **Xaxa** argues that a tribe is a whole society with its language, territory, culture, etc. hence, they should be compared with other societies, not with another form of collective identity like caste. He also stresses that the terms of reference for the study of tribes in India should be the same term used by the tribal people to identify themselves.

Many significant works have been done on the topic relating to the Mizo and historical, socio-economic, political development in Mizoram which can be classified into – writings in English and the local language. The pioneering writings are mainly done by the colonial administrators includes - *Chin-Lushai Land* (1893) by **Robert Reid.**, *The Lushei Kuki Clans* (1912) by **J Shakespear**), *The Lakhers* (1931) by **N.E. Parry**, and *Lushai Chrysalis* (1949) by **AG McCall**. These pioneering writings mainly reflect the political administration of the area, history, and culture of

the people based on their personal records and observation. While their work is appreciated for being an informative and detailed recording of the historical events, the lack of in-depth knowledge about the people led them to commit certain contextual and interpretative errors. *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National integration* (1994) by **Lalchungnunga** examines the origin and dimension of politics of regionalism in Mizoram in the context of national integration. **C Nunthara's** book, *Mizoram: Society and Polity* (1996) present the interplay of society and polity in the context of ethnic identity consolidation in Mizoram and demand for separation by the MNF. *In Postcolonial Mizo Politics 1947-1998* (1999), **Chitta Ranjan Nag** highlights the origin and role of the 'Mizo middle class' in the evolution of administration that has taken place in the Mizo territory. *Ethnic Identity and Christianity* (2002) by **Lalsangkima Pachuau** examines the relation between Christian churches and the development of the ethno-political secessionist movement in Mizoram. *A Modern History of Mizoram* (2004) edited by Sangkima gives the socio-economic and political history of the Mizo. **Joy L.K. Pachuau's** book *Being Mizo: Identity and Belonging in North East India* (2014) seeks to understand the formation of Mizo identity from a historical anthropological perspective. The book explains how religion and social practice impinge Mizo identity construction. *Autonomy Movements and Politics of regionalism in North East India* (2018) edited by **J. K. Patnaik, J. Doungel, and A. Shyamkishor** contains a collection of articles by several scholars which provide new insights to autonomy and regionalism politics with particular reference to Mizoram. Among the writings in the local language, mention must be made of the first book of Mizo history written by the local, *Mizo Chanchin* (1938) by **Liangkhaia** and the most comprehensive and detailed Mizo history written by **B Lalthangliana**, *India, Burma & Bangladesh –a Mizo Chanchin* (2001).

The above survey of the literature reveals that although there are several related works, there are no significant published works that examine the process of Mizo nationality formation in the light of the persisting ethnic identities among the tribes living in Mizoram. The ideas of the western scholars developed in the context of the experiences of the developed countries and the studies made on nationality formation

in mainland India are not fully applicable to understanding the complexity of ethnicity and nationality formation in a northeastern state like Mizoram. Therefore, it becomes necessary to undertake a study on ethnicity and nationality formation among the Mizo in Mizoram by focusing on the role of the elite in identity formation, assertion, and mobilization among the Mizo.

The objective of the study

The study has identified the following objectives:

1. To locate the material structures and social forces that influenced the construction of Mizo nationality.
2. To examine the nature of ethnic identities emerging among non-Lusei Mizo communities in Mizoram and study their effects on the process of development of Mizo nationality formation.
3. To study how the people belonging to different Zo ethnic groups inhabiting Mizoram identify themselves and react to the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation.
4. To examine whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation.

Hypotheses

The study was conducted with the following hypotheses:

1. The emergence of Mizo nationality impinges on the larger ethnic identity.
2. Ethnicity and nationality formation are concomitant with respect to Mizo identity.
3. The material structure and social forces emanating from the elite competition provide the base for the construction of the superstructure of Mizo nationality.

Methodology and collection of data

The thesis has adopted a descriptive method with a historical-analytical approach. To study the emergence of ethnic group identity, a historical approach has been used while empirical data are collected for investigating the nationality formation process. The theses employ both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources mainly include - records, documents, and publications by the

government, civil societies. The unstructured interview was conducted with political leaders, intelligentsia, and leaders of NGOs and prominent citizens, who have been playing important roles in the construction of nationality / ethnic identities in Mizoram. Apart from interviews with elite groups, a survey was conducted to understand the views of the general people. The secondary source includes relevant books and articles, unpublished theses, pamphlets, newspaper reports, constitutions of civil societies, etc.

To understand the perception and views of the general people towards self-perception on ethnic identity and the Mizo nationality formation process, a survey was conducted through a structured interview method using a multi-stage sampling method. Urban localities and villages dominantly inhabited by different Zo ethnic tribes were identified and purposively selected. Aizawl and surrounding areas represent Lusei and mixed tribes who seem to readily accept Mizo identity. The Hmar communities dominate in and around Saikawrdai, the headquarters of Sinlung Hills Council. The villages around Ngoma, the Civil Sub Division headquarters, are inhabited by Paite communities. The Lai Autonomous District Council area, with Lawngtlai as the headquarters of LADC, is dominated Lai community. Saiha and the surrounding villages of the Mara Autonomous District council are mainly inhabited by the Mara community. Based on these dominated areas, one urban locality and one village were again purposively selected considering the tribe concentration in the locality/village.

Ramhlun North locality within Aizawl city and North Lungpher village represent the urban and rural Aizawl area while Sakawrdai and Zohmun represent urban and rural Hmar respectively. As there was no Paite dominated locality in the notified town of Mizoram, the Vengthar locality of Ngopa, where the Paite are comparatively significant was taken to represent urban Paite, and Teikhang village was selected to represent the Paite tribe in the rural area. Lawngtlai Council locality and Lungzarhtum village represent the Lai urban and rural respondents. Saiha Vengpui and Serkawr village represent the Mara urban and rural populations respectively.

The total sample size is limited to 300. In each village/town locality, thirty respondents are selected through systematic sampling based on the electoral roll. Using the electoral roll has its advantage for the selection of sampling units since the electoral roll contains only adult individuals who are permanent residents of the area and the individuals are listed in a proper sequence with each individual having separate numbers. The first respondent was randomly selected from the electoral roll and the next respondent was identified using systematic or interval sampling method. The total number of voters in the electoral roll was divided by the number of samples to be collected in the locality, ie 30. For example, if there are 400 persons in the electoral roll of the locality, the total number of voters in the locality, ie 400 is divided by 30 with the result of 13. So, the next respondent was identified by jumping to every 13th person in the electoral roll. The response of the survey, which was conducted in 2016 and 2017, was analyzed by using SPSS and cross-tabled to examine how the respondents, belonging to different tribes, and living in different areas within Mizoram identify themselves and view the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation.

Limitations of the survey results

The survey is constrained by two main limitations, which impinge on the reliability and accuracy of the survey results. First and foremost, in certain areas, a structured interview needs to be conducted with the help of a translator, which resulted in a chance of miscommunication between the researcher and respondents. Secondly, in some parts of the scheduled question, there is a possibility that the respondents may not have well knowledge of the subject of the questions to arrive at the technically correct answer, but the views expressed by the respondent, however ill-informed they may be, still count in as social reality since the intention of the survey is the views of the respondent. Considering these limitations, the researcher does not claim for 100% reliability of the survey results but stands for the accuracy of the survey result to a great extent.

Chapter outline of the Thesis

Chapter I: **Introduction, Context, and Concepts** introduce the problem investigated in the study by discussing the context and conceptual framework to understand the nature and dynamics of ethnic groups and nationalities in Mizoram. The chapter also contains a review of the literature, the methodology adopted the method of data collection along and the objective and hypotheses of the research.

Chapter II: **Construction of Mizo Nationality** studies the emergence of Mizo nationality in the background of political and social changes taking place in Mizoram. The chapter stresses the prominent role played by the modern elite, who are mostly Christian and receive a formal education, for the formation and perpetuation of Mizo nationality.

Chapter III: **Contesting Mizo Nationality** examines, in general, the nature of identity assertions of certain tribes, particularly, non-Lusei tribes in Mizoram who have been fighting for autonomy and their tribe identity preservation against the assumed or real threat of maintaining their distinct identity in the face of the process of Mizoization. Emphasis is given to the perceptions and the roles of the tribe-based civil societies, which are dictated by the emerging elite among these communities.

Chapter IV: **Subjective Consciousness and Mizo Nationality Formation: An Empirical Analysis** focuses on the attitudes and subjective views of the general masses of the people towards their ethnic identity as well as Mizo identity. The perception of the masses is collected through a survey. The chapter presents the survey results in terms of frequency as well as cross-tabulation to ascertain whether regional differences among the respondents are witnessed or not.

Chapter V: **Findings and Conclusion** summarize the main arguments of the study and provide an explorative analysis of the dynamics and challenges of the Mizo nationality formation process by highlighting the core area of contestation in the process of the interface of tribe identity and Mizo identity.

CHAPTER II

CONSTRUCTION OF MIZO NATIONALITY

Mizo nationality formation is closely connected with the history of social evolution, administrative structuring, restructuring, and the emergence of new social forces. The traditional society was drastically changed by the forces of modernization brought about by the British occupation of the land and the subsequent mass-scale conversion to Christianity. The decline of the traditional elite in the face of the modernization process and the absence of powerful feudal classes paved the way for the emerging educated elite to occupy a hegemonic position in society. With the lack of capital base and numerical strength, the educated elite used cultural identity as a means of mass mobilization to pursue their interest.¹

Mizo nationality formation is a modern phenomenon deriving its roots in past history. The emergence of Mizo as a political identity can be traced back to the occupation of the land by the British in the 19th century and the subsequent establishment of the Mizo District Council in 1954. To clearly understand the process of Mizo nationality formation and the forces that play part in that process, it is pertinent to unravel some historical events and transformations of the society that influence the process of Mizo nationality formation. The chapter stresses the prominent role played by the modern elite who are mostly Christian and received a formal education, for the formation and perpetuation of Mizo nationality.

Mizoram: Land and the people

Mizoram, one of the States of the Indian Union, is located between 21°.58' N to 24°.35' N Latitude and 92°.15' E to 93°.29' E Longitude covering a geographical area of 21,081 square kilometers. It is bounded on its three sides by international borders-on the

¹ AK Baruah, "Communities and Democracy: A Northeast Indian Perspective", *North East India Studies*, (NEIDS, Volume 1, Issue no 1.(2005): 24.

east and south by Myanmar and on the west by Bangladesh. Its only contiguous boundary with the rest of India constitutes only one-fourth of its border.² Mizoram is previously known as Lushai Hills and Lushai Hills District during the colonial period and the initial years of India's independence. The name of the district was changed to Mizo Hills District in 1954 by the Act of Parliament.³ It was elevated to the status of Union Territory in 1972 and subsequently, attained statehood on February 20, 1986.⁴

Census of India report 2011 shows that Mizoram is inhabited by a population of 1,097,206, comprising of 555,339 males and 541,867 which implies that 50.61% are male and 49.38% are female. The literacy rate of the population stands at 91.33%. Out of the total population of Mizoram, 52.11% are living in urban areas while 47.89% of them reside in rural areas. As many as 91.51 % of the total population belongs to Scheduled Tribes, while 87.16% profess themselves as Christian.⁵ Mizo language, which is mainly derived from the Lusei dialect, is the official and common language of the state. As shown in Table 2.1, the Mizo language is the mother language of the majority in the state.

Table 2.1 Mizoram: Mother language		
Sl. no	Name of Language	% of speakers
1	Mizo (Lusei)	73.16%
2	Mara	3.82%
3	Lai	2.61%
4	Paite	2.02%
5	Hmar	1.64%

Source: Census of India report 2011. Mizoram: Mother Language.

² Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Aizawl, 2006, p xv.

³ The Lushai Hills District (Change of name) Act, 1954 act no. 18 of 1954. Dated 29th April, 1954.

⁴ North-Eastern Area (Reorganization) Act, 1986, (53rd Amendment).

⁵ Census of India 2011 report. <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/mizoram.html>. Accessed on 1st June 2021.

Except for certain numerically small communities like Chakma, Punjabi, Nepali, Khasi, etc. who settled down after the British occupation and who are ethnically distinct from the Kuki-Chin-Lusei group are clubbed together under the generic name ‘Mizo’⁶ due to shared belief in a common origin and their cultural relatedness. The Mizo elite challenges the legal definition of Mizo as any Lushai tribe⁷. They argue that Lushai is an imposed name by the British seemingly derived from Lusei, which is only one tribe of the composite Mizo nationality. They attempt to construct a broader Mizo identity to replace Lushai identity which does not provide enough space for the non-Sailo subjects and non-Lusei speakers. For them, all tribes and clans inhabiting the entire perimeter of the present Mizoram and some parts of the neighboring states of Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, who have a cultural affinity for having a common origin, belong to Mizo nationality.⁸ Hence, in the context of Mizoram, the six major tribes – Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Mara, Pawi (Lai) and Paite, and several minor tribes like – Khawlhing, Khiantge, Chawngthu, Chawhte, Ngente, Renthlei, Tlau, Pautu, Rawite, Zawngte, Vangchhia, Punte, and any other cognate tribes are put under the generic name ‘Mizo’.

An attempt at constructing a broader Mizo identity receives acceptance as well as a challenge. As the first group of elite who inculcated Mizo identity is mostly drawn from the Sailo subjects of the Ralte, Hmar, Lusei, and some minor tribes; generally speaking, those who were under the Sailo chieftainship seem to accept Mizo identity readily. Certain major tribes, mostly outside the Sailo rule, have some reservations

⁶ Certain tribes have some contestation of them being included under the term ‘Mizo’, the details of which is addressed in the next chapter.

⁷ The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956 and as inserted by Act 81 of 1971

⁸ All the tribes whom the Mizo elite claim as Mizo ethnic tribes trace their origin to a mythical cave. Some group may call it as *Chhinlung*, *Sinlung* or *Khul* etc. This common myth of origin is not seriously contested so far by any group/ tribe in spite difference in regards to the name of the cave and assumed location of it.

toward Mizo identity formation and rather assert their own tribe identity. At the same time and interestingly, some groups of the Lusei tribe, who are considered as propagators of Mizo identity, at least initially, prefer to retain Lushai identity than of Mizo as they oppose the move to replace Lushai Hills District by Mizo District, citing the reason for the proposal as the outcome of envy and malicious feelings against the Lusei.⁹

With political, social, and economic power in their hand, the Mizo elite's effort for the construction of Mizo identity, encompassing the diverse tribes could be considered as successful, since the majority of the people identify themselves as Mizo within a short span of years. The process of Mizo identity formation had developed strongly in post-independent India when the Mizo Union, the party which stood for the consolidation of Mizo nationality, dominated the political scenario of Mizoram for around two decades. The process of Mizo nationality formation was further strengthened by the MNF movement which led to the formation of the state of Mizoram. But parallel to this success story of nationality formation, certain groups challenge and view the Mizo nationality formation process as against their particular interest. The interface of these two processes is a part and parcel of the research investigation and will be studied more thoroughly in the subsequent chapters.

Problem of nomenclature: Kuki-Chin-Lushai

The people inhabiting the present Mizoram and adjoining areas are known and called by various names like Kuki, Chin, and Lushai, etc. The outsider's imposition of different names for the same group of people can be understandable given the absence of the common name of the people in the pre-colonial time. However, the existence and use of different terms to refer to the same people indeed causes considerable confusion which necessitated some clarification.

⁹ Letter submitted by the Lushai Federation to the chief Minister of Assam, Mizoram State Archive Gb-83 and G 1013. For details, see appendix no-III.

Kuki is said to be a Bengali word meaning ‘wild man’¹⁰, the British appear to have picked up the word from the Bengali and then applied it to hill people living in the North-West of Burma and North-East of India, who have social and cultural affinities. After the Expedition of 1871-72, Edgar, the then Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, officially used ‘Lushai’ in place of ‘Kuki’.¹¹ Presently, out of the numerous tribes known by this name, only a small section in Manipur retains Kuki as their nomenclature and was constitutionally recognized as such.

The origin of the word ‘Chin’ is not clearly known. Carey and Tuck are of the opinion that it is a Burmese corruption of the Chinese word ‘Jin’ or ‘Yen’ meaning ‘man’¹². B Lalthangliana opines that the name derives because the people used to carry bamboo baskets (‘Chin’ in Burmese language means ‘Man with bamboo basket’)¹³. This confusion regarding the origin and meaning of the term does not hide the fact that this term is a name by which people living in the Northern Chin, comprising of nearly all the people of Haka, Falam, Tiddim (Now a part of Myanmar), and the Lushai and the Lakhers of Assam were known by outsider at least for some time. Now, it is used mainly for the people living in the Chin State of Myanmar.

The word “Luchye” a variant of Lushai occurs in a report of 1853 by Colonel Lister, who conducted the first major operation in northern Mizoram in 1850.¹⁴ The origin of the word ‘Lushai’ appears to be the English transliteration of the word ‘Lusei’. Lusei-speaking groups, mainly under the Sailo chiefs were the first group of people the British expedition encountered. Hence, they seem to apply the term “Lushai’ to refer to all inhabitants of their administered area, as if all of the people belong to a homogenous Lusei tribe or Lusei-speaking group. They also call the area Lushai Hills. J Shakespear

¹⁰ Sangkima, *Mizos: Society and Social Change*, (Gauhati, United Publishers, 1992), 6-11

¹¹ Ibid, 6-11.

¹² Bertam S Carey and HN Tuck, *The Chin Hills Vol I*, (Calcutta FIRMA KLM, ,1976 reprint) 3.

¹³ B Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, (Aizawl RTM press, 2001)759.

¹⁴ Alexander Mackenzie, *The North- East Frontier of India*, (Delhi, Mittal,1979 Reprint) 292.

admitted this mistake when he says, “Lushai is our way of spelling the word; the proper way to spell the word...is Lushei (Lusei)”.¹⁵

Commenting on the above points, Sangkima wrote “...following the Bengali identification, the English called the Mizo, whom they found in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as ‘Kuki’. Following the Burmese who called the Mizos as ‘Chin’, the English too called the Mizo living in Burma as ‘Chin’. The English called the Mizos of the erstwhile Lushai Hills District ‘Lushai’ after the 1871-72 expedition”.¹⁶

Considering the dominance of Sailo chiefs and Lusei language coupled with the lack of understanding of the people by the British, the British presumption that all the Lusei-speaking people are Lusei tribe and their adoption of ‘Lushai’ (an Anglicized form of Lusei) as a common name for all the people inhabiting their administered area can be understandable. It was only after their close contact and further exploration of the region that the British realized Lusei is only one tribe among the diverse tribes inhabiting the land and the people refer themselves collectively as Zo or Mizo.¹⁷ Even though some sections of the group accept and develop an identity based on these imposed names, the natives never call themselves by these names in the pre-colonial time.

In the face of these outsiders’ imposed names, the first group of the modern educated elite of the society were curious about their ethnic origin and identity. Rev Liangkhaia wrote the first native version of Mizo history in 1926 in response to Thuama, who organized a Mizo History written competition carrying a cash prize of Rs 50.¹⁸ Vanchhunga wrote the reason for his tracing the Mizo history was the lamentation of the people’s inability to trace their origin and who they are. He began his search for the root

¹⁵ J Shakeaspere, *Lushei-kuki Clan*, (London, Macmillan and Co, 1912), Introduction XIII.

¹⁶ Sangkima, *Mizo: Society and Social Change*, United Publishers, Gauhati, 1992, p 9

¹⁷ J Shakeaspere, *Lushei-kuki Clan*, Introduction XIV.

¹⁸ Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, Preface.

of the Mizo as early as 1901.¹⁹ The native scholars asserted that all the people hitherto known by outsiders as Kuki, Chin, and Lushai are one group, and they, in reality, are Mizo.

It is difficult to trace back the exact time when the particular word ‘Mizo’ was first used to designate the people. K Zawla argues that the people already call themselves as Mizo during their inhabitation in Thantlang of present Myanmar.²⁰ But in the absence of strong evidence supporting the above contention in the folktales and songs, it may be difficult to accept as a historical fact. However, folk literature reveals that the word ‘Zo’ was already a popular word by around 1750, as there are many villages with the name Zo like Zotlang, Zokhua, etc.²¹ It can be presumed without any hesitation that the word Zo or Mizo was already in existence in pre-colonial time. The colonial records, and writings of the British and natives in the early period of colonization revealed that the people already called themselves Zo or Mizo in the initial years of occupation. T.H. Lewin’s book published in 1874 was named “Progress Colloquial Exercise in Lushai Dialect ‘DZO’ or Kuki Language”.²² The oldest found copy of the handwritten newsletter in 1895 was named “*Mizo Chanchin Laisuih*”.²³ The Government newsletter published in 1902 was titled as “*Mizo leh Vai chanchin*” in which the natives used the particular word “we the Mizo”.

The first group of elite of the society, upon more interaction with the outside world, particularly after they participation in the world wars which greatly broadened their vision, began reconstructing their history and started propagating their identity as Mizo, by stressing their distinctness from the plain people as well as the relatedness of all the Children of *Chhinlung*. The term, Mizo was becoming popularly used as a

¹⁹ Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh a vela hnam dangte chanchin*, (Aizawl, Department of Arts and Culture, 1994 Reprint), preface

²⁰ K Zawla, *Mizo pi pute leh an thlahte chanchin*, (Aizawl, Samuel Press, 6th edition, 1993) 9.

²¹ B Lalthangliana, *Mizo chanchin*, 761.

²² Ibid, 762.

²³ Ibid, 550

nomenclature of the people during colonial rule. So, the existence of significant others enables the broader Mizo identity to emerge against or as distinct from other groups like *Sap*, *vai*, and *Kawl*. The Mizo, as a distinct group identity, has slowly developed in the hands of the elite who contest names like Chin- Kuki- Lushai for being foreign words and imposed nature as well as its exclusiveness to accommodate the composite tribes. So Mizo as a political identity emerged in the colonial time transcending tribe's affiliations and was cemented with the change of Lushai Hills to Mizo District in 1954.²⁴

The above discussion regarding the nomenclature of the people reveals certain points.

First, a common name is absent for all the tribes at the time of British occupation of the land. Even though the diverse tribes have the common myth of origin, common history of migration as well as closely related language, their nomadic life, loose political system, and geographical barrier along with other factors hindered the evolution of cohesive identity among them.

Second, even if one agrees with the contention that the particular word Mizo was in use at least sometime before the arrival of the British and it is not newly constructed in the post-colonial time, the fact remains that the existence of the term and the occasional reference to that does not mean that there exist cohesive identity based on that term and the people developed strong consciousness of that identity. The absence of any unified struggle against the British invasion negates the existence of a cohesive Mizo identity, while the process for that may be on.

Third, in the pre-colonial time, imposed names like Kuki- Chin or Lushai names are not used by the people to refer to themselves. They knew and called themselves by some other names. Certain groups accepted and developed an identity based on the imposed names in the post-colonial period, like Kuki and Chin.

²⁴ *The Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954.*

Fourth, Lusei, Lushai, and Mizo identities are related, yet a distinct identity in terms of their composition. Lusei consists of 11 clans - Pachuau, Chhangte, Chawngte, Chuaungo, Chuauhang, Chhakchhuak, Hnauhnar, Hrahsel, Tochhawng, Vanchhawng and Chief clans like Sailo, Chenkual etc. (Zohmuaka descendents).²⁵ The term Lushai is an incorrect transliteration of Lusei, but the British used it mainly as nomenclature for different tribes who are under the Sailo chiefs who mainly speak the Lusei language.²⁶ Mizo is composed of all tribes within and outside Mizoram, who are commonly called *Zo hnakthlak*, *Zo fate*, *Chhinlungchhuak*, etc., all of these terms relate to common origin and same ethnicity.²⁷

The pre-colonial socio-political setting

The early history of the people before their interaction with the British was rather unclear due to the absence of script on the part of the natives and lack of contact with other communities; however, all-composite tribes of Mizo nationality trace their common origin to a place called *Chhinlung*, the name of the place varies not only among the tribes but also within sub-tribes. The common origin theory stood as one of the foundations of Mizo nationality, as its relevance lies in the people's strong belief of being one group that binds them emotionally together. A Lusei version says that all tribes come out from the cave called *Chhinlung* and as the people were streaming out, the Ralte tribe came out chattering noisily that the guard of the entrance shut the opening of a Stone-shutter thinking too many people had come out. According to Parry, the Mara version of origin stated that "Men all came out of a hole below the earth. As the founder of each Mara group came out of the earth he called out his name. Tlongsai called out, "I am Tlongsai"; Zeuhang called out, "I am Zeuhang"... Accordingly, God thought that a very large number of Maras had come out and stopped the way. When the

²⁵ Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin* (Aizawl, LTL Publication, 5th edition 2002) 24-26

²⁶ J., Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*. (London. Macmillan, 1912) Introduction, XIII-XIV.

²⁷ *Zo fate* means descendent of *Zo*, *Zo hnakthlak* means *Zo* family, *Chhinlung chhuak* means those originated from *Chhinlung*.

Lusheis came out of the hole, however, only the first one to come out called out, “I am Lushei,” and all the rest came out silently. God only hearing one man announce his arrival, thought that only one Lushei had come out, and gave them a much longer time, during which Lusheis were pouring out of the hole in great numbers. It is for this reason that Lusheis to this day are more numerous than Maras”.²⁸

According to tradition, all the tribes that came out of *Chhinlung* started their migration westward until they inhabited their present habitation. No one knows the exact place of that cave nor are they sure that it is actually a cave. The old Kuki tribes like Chawte, Kom, Vaiphei called this place *Khurpui*. Thahdo tribes mention that their place of origin is *Khul*. The Hmar call this place *Sinlung*. Regardless of the difference in regards to name and place, the myth of *Chhinlung* is still strong in that it acts as a bond that binds the related tribes together. So, even though it could not be historically validated, *Chhinlung* enjoy a very important place in the people’s history and beliefs. So the Mizo elite consciously uses the common myth of common origin as the basis of Mizo nationality. Even some groups, who are somewhat hesitant to identify themselves as Mizo, do not seriously contest common origin. In many instances, *Chhinlung chhuak* meaning ‘those who come out of Chhinlung’ or ‘Children of Chhinlung’ was used as synonymous with being Mizo. Therefore the Mizo elite also often highlighted this myth of common origin in their appeal to the people in the process of constructing a broader Mizo identity.

Their history of migration from Chhinlung to the Shan state is rather vague and more of an assumption. But their movement from Shan State to the Chin Hills, their settlement in an area between rivers Run and Tiau on the present Indo- Myanmar Border, and their inhibition of the present Mizoram is supported by oral tradition and folktales. It was at the time of their settlements in the area between Run and Tiau that each major tribe had its separate existence in a general way side by side with another tribe. Inter and intragroup conflict became a common phenomenon. Weaker tribes had

²⁸ NE Parry, *The Lakhers* (New Delhi, Omsons 1988 Reprint), 4.

either to migrate westward or make an alliance with strong tribes. So some tribes like the Bawmzos, Miris, Pangs, Fenngo, Thahdo, etc had to migrate away and they became the earliest inhabitants of Mizoram. Liangkhaia placed the probable date for this at around 1540.²⁹ This kind of inter and intra-tribe rivalry asks for a brave leader who will be able to lead the group in times of conflict with other groups, hence, the institution of chieftainship has emerged. A brave man who stood out among the people to lead the people are selected as chief. But their role as a leader was more or less situational and leadership was not inheritable. Eventually, the Hnamte clan of the Lusei tribe invited Zahmuaka to be their chief. The initially hesitant Zahmuaka became the first chief over the Lusei tribe and his six sons- Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga, and Rohuma became chiefs in different Lusei villages and all the six names have become the clan names of the descendent of each of them. Even though they are not originally Lusei,³⁰ they occupied first-rank Lusei status due to being chief clans. The Sailo chiefs, who derived their clan name from Sailova the grandson of Zahmuaka, became more and more powerful after subduing other chief clans. Other Lusei clans submitted themselves to the Sailo rule and other tribes also become the subjects of the Sailo chiefs. Even though some non-Lusei tribes like the Ralte, Pawi, and Lakher have their chiefs; the Sailo chiefs were dominating the major portion of the territory. Other chiefs are peripheral in comparison to the Sailo rule.³¹ The emergence of chieftainship, especially the dominating role of the Sailo chief was an important event that greatly determined people's identity formation in the post-colonial time.

²⁹ Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, Khuma Printing Press, Aizawl, 1976, p35.

³⁰ The forefather of Zahmuaka is considered a Thahdo tribe. See R Vanlawma, *Ka ram leh Kei*, Zoram Printing Press, Aizawl 1972, p 6. There are other writers who said Zahmuaka was the descendent of Paite tribe. The fact remains that they are not originally Lusei.

³¹ Lalrinmawia, 'The Lusei Chiefs under the British rule' *Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, Third Session, Imphal, 1982, p 137.

The socio-cultural, economic, and political life of the traditional Mizo society was closely intertwined. The society mainly revolved around the village which was under the supreme rule of the chief who possessed supreme authority. The chief rules over the village with the help of officials appointed by him. So the chief and his council of elders and priests formed an elite group in the traditional society. The chief had final authority over all matters pertaining to the village except purely religious/ rituals which was the area of the priest. Each tribe had its own *Sakhua* (generally translates as religion) and a priest to conduct their particular tribe rituals. There was a distinct identification of a tribe with a particular *Sakhua*.³² However, a person could change his tribe by performing religious rituals officiated by the priest of the tribe he wishes to incorporate into by performing a religious process called *Saphun*.³³ Apart from the tribe's priest, there was a village priest who performed rituals on behalf of the village. Even though these priests did not involve directly in the everyday administration of the village, they enjoyed a respectable position in the society and thus formed a part of the elite at the village level.

The chief generally appointed a powerful and influential person in the village as *Upa* (council of elders). The Sailo chiefs usually appoint one person from the Lusei tribe as *khawnbawl upa* (chief elder), he was careful enough to see to it that the different tribes inhabiting the village have their men in the council. This was done with the idea of drawing the loyalty of his subjects composed of different tribes.³⁴ The number of *Upa* and their tenure was the prerogative of the chief. Even though the chief enjoyed supreme power, customs and traditions, as well as expediency, greatly circumscribed the chief's authority. The popularity of the chief, among the people, largely depended on the elders while his power depended upon the loyalty and allegiance of the people. So the

³² For details on *Saphun* system see, Vanlalremruata Tonson and Lalmalsawma Khiangte, "Changing Significance of 'Hnam' and 'Saphun' System in Mizo Society", *Mizo Studies*, Vol. IX No. 3 July - September 2020, Pp.391-402

³³ *Saphun* literally means change of *Sa* or change of religion, which necessarily means change of the tribe.

³⁴ C Nunthara, *Mizo: Society and Polity*, 70.

chief hardly took authoritative action without considering the advice of his *Upa* and he need to follow tradition and customs. The situation is depicted by Shakespeare when he wrote, “The chief held rather an anomalous position, normally he was a despot... but in reality, his power was very much circumscribed, and his subject could so easily transfer their allegiance to some rival chiefs, who would probably be willing; for consideration to champion the cause of his last recruit, that every ruler had to use tact as well as force. The amount of power he wielded depended almost entirely on the personal influence of the chief. A strong ruler, who governed mainly according to custom, could do almost anything without losing his followers, but a weak man who tried petty tyrannies soon found himself a king without any subject”.³⁵

The number of subjects not only determined the wealth of the chief but also his strength in war as there was no regular army. So the Sailo chiefs were cautious in exercising their power and were usually benevolent ruler over their subjects. In their desire to rule over large subjects, they employ diplomatic of wooing over enemy’s subjects to join their side and in some instances, they also invaded villages and brought the subjugated enemies to their village to become their subjects. Lallula invaded the Ralte tribe inhabited village at Lenchau and forcefully brought the people in his village to become his subjects.³⁶ The Sailo chiefs consolidated and enlarged their power and soon ruled over most of the tribes of the region. Inter mixing of different tribes in a village was quite common, particularly under the Sailo chieftainship.

After they crossed the Tiau River and began their settlements in the present Mizoram, the Sailo felt a need to organize themselves in one powerful group to oppose other chiefs and consolidate their power. Consequent upon this, about seven Sailo chiefs formed a confederation in Selesih comprising of around seven thousand houses under Pu

³⁵ J Shakespeare, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*. (London. Macmillan, 1912), 45.

³⁶ Liangkhaia, *Mizo chanchin*. 91.

Kawlha.³⁷ The Selesih confederation could not last long due to the scarcity of land for cultivation and everyday needs like water etc. But the Selesih confederation paved the way for the Sailo chief's dominance as other groups were threatened by a united and strong Sailo in Selesih and choose to migrate away rather than challenge the joint force of the Sailo. The Sailo chiefs then occupied the vast tract of land left unoccupied due to the migration of other groups. So among the myriad of related tribes and clans, common customs and tradition did emanate from this confederation. People's identity before the British time was greatly determined by the Selesih confederation. Some tribes like Hualngo, who are essentially a Lusei, but who are not a part of this confederation, were often given secondary status in Lusei society. R Vanlawma considers Selesih as the beginning of the emergence of Mizoram as this confederation paved the way for the Sailo dominance as well as the emergence of common customs and traditions.³⁸

Analyzing the pre-colonial social and political setting reveals certain processes which are crucial to understanding Mizo nationality formation. First, the duality of cooperation and conflict among the Sailo chiefs influenced people's collective consciousness. Second, disintegration, dynamics, and diversity were the way of life.

The pre-colonial situation under the Sailo rule was marked by the duality of cooperation and conflict. The Sailo chiefs cooperated against their common enemy, yet at the same time fought against each other. They brought about the gradual development of common customs and language among the diverse tribes within their rule. Common language and culture led to the emergence of certain consciousness as being related. But at the same time, the people identified themselves first and foremost with their village or their chief. In many instances, their village was in conflict with their neighboring village ruled by other Sailo chiefs.³⁹ Intra conflicts, frequent changes of village sites, and lack

³⁷ B Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, 212. Lalthangliana added that the exact figure of household may not be 7000 and the period may be between 1740-1750.

³⁸ R Vanlawma, *Ka ram leh Kei*, 9-10.

³⁹ J, Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*. 8.

of significant 'others' debarred any kind of stable cohesive identity consciousness as pan Sailo subjects to come up.

The political and social life was marked by - disintegration, diversity, and dynamics. They practiced confederation rather than unitary as a political structure, social diversity against uniformity, and flexible identity in place of rigid identification. The Sailo chiefs, instead of attempting to expand their rule over many villages and formed a unified kingdom, each son are given a village to rule over as an independent chief rather than being the agent of their father. Hence a confederation of independent villages was formed.⁴⁰ Within the village, the chief did not expect social and cultural uniformity; rather tribe diversity of the people was recognized. The chief usually appointed a council of elders from different tribes. Each tribe practices their *sakhua* and speaks their tribe language. There were instances where the Sailo chief used the language of the majority tribe within his village over his language.⁴¹ The people's identity mainly revolved around their chief, village, and tribe. KC Lalvunga wrote "Our ancestors, even our parents hardly raise the question of which village the people belong. Rather, whose chief they belong to".⁴² This is obvious due to frequent changing of the village site. Even the British faced this problem and their attempt to the description of the area and people were usually ended up with a reference to the name of the chiefs. The people could change their chief by migrating to another village⁴³ and people could easily change their tribe by means of the *saphun* system. So, their social and political structure was marked by disintegration, diversity, and dynamics. In the post-colonial time, the modern Mizo elite, who are influenced by western concepts of national identity, attempted to form a homogenous and uniform Mizo identity to fit in with the western reality. This attempt of

⁴⁰ Ibid, 43.

⁴¹ Ibid,140. Shakespear wrote, "In some Sailo chiefs' villages there are so many Ralte that the chief himself speaks their dialect, and though Lushai is understood little else but Ralte is heard in the village".

⁴² KC Lalvunga, *Politics Ramri thar*, Pamphets (Aizawl, published by him, 1991), 2-3.

⁴³ J, Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*. 45.

homogenization did not seem to fit properly in society which was marked by segmentation, fluid, and malleable identity.

British administration and modernization

The British considered Mizoram as the land inhabited by savage people who knew only raids and plunder. The claim of land seemed to be the main reason for conflict between the British and the native chiefs. The British argued that they acted in defense of their subject against the tribal who was in the habit of raiding and killing the tea workers. But for the natives, tea planters encroach upon their land and they are retaliating against the intrusion of their land. As Woodthorpe comments, “ The tea-gardens, which were originally confined to the northern part of the (Cachar) district, have of late years been sweeping further and further south, as enterprising individuals have been found to take grants from Government for the cultivation of the tea plant”.⁴⁴ The earliest British record of a raid conducted by the chiefs from the present Mizoram took place in 1826, when some traders, who had penetrated the hills to collect bamboo and timber, were attacked and killed near Chhimluang (Dhalleswari River) partly due to the failure of the traders to pay safety price to the chief in whose area they conducted the work. A chief named Bunt⁴⁵ was held responsible for the act. The Magistrate of Sylhet said that the massacres by “Kookies” happened ‘in what was alleged to be British territory’. This allegation shows that the territory was claimed by assumption.

Unlike the plain areas which the British had occupied with the motive of exploitation to get the economic benefit for themselves, the British were not very eager to occupy the Lushai Hills as they knew well that it would not bring any economic benefit. But, as the punitive expedition to teach the chiefs not to invite the wrath of the British might had not brought the expected result, the Government of Bengal, Assam, and Burma felt a need to send a joint military expedition with the objective to punish the

⁴⁴ RVG. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872*, (Calcutta, Firma KLM, 1978 reprint), 8.

⁴⁵ Scholars felt that the name of the chief here refer is none other than Bengkhuaia.

tribes that raided the British territory, to subjugate the neutral tribes, to explore the unknown part of the country between Burma and Chittagong and to establish semi-permanent posts to ensure complete pacification and reorganization of British power. This expedition, known as the 'Chin- Lushai expedition of 1889-90' marked the final occupation of the hills by the British.⁴⁶ Consequent to the Government of Assam proposal for the permanent occupation, the land was divided into two administrative units: The North Lushai Hills was made a part of the Chief commissionership of Assam with Aizawl as the headquarters and the South Lushai Hills was attached to Bengal with the headquarters at Lunglei. The two administrative divisions were amalgamated into one district called Lushai Hills District in 1891 with Capt. Shakespeare as the first Superintendent. The Superintendent, apart from being the executive head of the District, also possesses extra-judicial powers including power over police jurisdiction.

The British permanent settlement and setting up of an administrative institution did not instantly bring peace and tranquility to the region. Both the western and eastern chiefs rose against the British for imposing tax and other tributes. However, by 1896, the final subjugation of the hills was declared by Porteous. in his dispatch to Chief Commissioner, he wrote, "With the close of operations of Kairuma it may, I think, be safely prophesied that the long series of Lushai expedition has now ended...There is not in the Lushai Hills any unexplored 'Hinter-land'...to give possible future trouble".⁴⁷ With the formal inclusion of the Mara area (called as Zongling area) previously under loose political control, under the existing Lushai Hills District in 1931-32, the territorial control of the whole present Mizoram was completed.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Sangkima, *Mizos: Society and Social Change*, 72-74.

⁴⁷ Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (Aizawl Tribal Research Institute, 1978 Reprint), 34-35.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 65.

The British administration was significant for bringing the commencement of the modernization process. The British administration followed a policy of less intervention in the affairs of the village and recognized the chief as the administrator of the village. But the imposition of certain policies like 'Land Settlement Act of 1898-99'⁴⁹ and other policies of the government brought the traditional chiefs under the direct control of the Superintendent as they were to perform their power within the limit stipulated by the government. Consequently, each chief was allocated a particular area within which he and his people could move about. The government also possessed a right to regulate the succession of the deceased chiefs, the right to partition of the existing village or formation of a new village, to determine the boundaries of lands occupied by chiefs, and to settle disputes between them regarding such lands. The Superintendent also enjoyed the right to punish chiefs and to depose them for misconduct subject to the approval of the Chief Commissioner. The chiefs were stripped of their traditional power and were become mere agents of the government.⁵⁰ The demarcation of each chief's jurisdiction curtailed frequent migration or change of village site. The people began to accept and be conscious of the fact that they were the subject of the British. The establishment of the political boundary of Lushai Hills District and the replacements of people's loyalty from their chiefs to the British government was of critical importance for the emergence of Mizo as a political identity and as a distinct nationality.

Christianity and education

Peace and tranquility brought about by the British administration opened the way for the Christian missionaries to enter and start their evangelization work. Rev William Williams, a missionary in Khasi and Jaintia Hills, was the first Christian missionary who set foot in Mizoram.⁵¹ He reported the situation of Lushai hills and the Welsh

⁴⁹ Robert Reid, 61.

⁵⁰ Sangkima, *Mizos: Society and Social Change*, 79-80.

⁵¹ Rev William Williams visit was in 1981.

Presbyterian Mission Board agreed to send a missionary. But, before the Welsh Missionaries were deputed, two Arthington Aborigines Missionaries, Rev JH Lorain and FW Savidge arrived at Sairang near Aizawl on 11 January 1894.⁵² Upon learning that the tribes had no script of their own, the two missionaries introduced the Lusei language into written form and translated some books of the Bible and hymns. As the Arthington Aborigines Missionaries were assigned to work in another area, they handed over the mission work to Rev DE Jones, a Welsh Presbyterian Missionary, who arrived on 10 September 1897. While the Welsh Missionaries were engaged mainly in the Northern area, the Baptist Missionary Society began working in the Southern area with headquarters at Serkawn near Lunglei. Lorain Fox and his wife also began Lakher-Pioneer Mission in 1907 covering the Lakher (Mara) inhabited area.

The whole Mizoram thus falls under the operation of three pioneer missions; without developing any serious discord among them. For the early Christians, denominational differences did not come in the way of their harmonious fellowship as followers of Christ. The unity of the early Christians is evident from DE Jones's words, "Christians in the North and South were on good terms with each other as we (missionaries) were, their fathers in their faith. When a Christian in one area moved to another area, he was given a letter of transfer and was assured of a welcome in his new home. We even used to send each other's presbyteries".⁵³ The demarcation of the area of operation among the three mission churches and the subsequent emergence of particular tribe-based churches have a deep influence on identity formation and assertion. As Christianity developed, many other denominations like Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, United Pentecostal Church, and some indigenous churches had also sprung up in Mizoram.

⁵²Churches in Mizoram observed this day as Gospel arrival Day.

⁵³ As quoted by Rev H Vanlalauva in 'Towards Unity and cooperation in the Churches' in *Mizo Theological Association Series no 3* (Aizawl, MTA,) 64-65.

The primary aim of the missionary's work was to preach the gospel, convert the natives into Christianity, and then build a church. For the realization of this primary purpose, they opened schools and hospitals, and their welfare works earned respect from the people. The people lovingly called these missionaries *Zosap* which may mean being both a Whiteman and a Mizo. The first native Christians, Khuma and Khara were baptized on 25th June 1899. By 1903, there were around 160 Christians in the Lushai Hills.⁵⁴ The early Christians were so eager to spread the Gospel that, apart from sharing their new faith with their fellow villagers, they even sent *Tirhkoh* (Evangelist) with their expenses.⁵⁵ The first native Pastor, Chhuahkhama, was ordained in 1913. By 1951, around 80% of the total population professed themselves being Christian.⁵⁶ So, the Lushai Hills District became one of the areas in which Christianity grew rapidly. Within a short period, being Mizo becomes more or less synonymous with being a Christian. Being a Christian-dominated state; the church in Mizoram becomes more than a spiritual or religious institution, but also the focal point of socio-cultural activities. The skillful utilization of schools by the Missionaries, for inculcating Christianity to the first group of modern educated elite resulted in Christianity being an essential part of Mizo identity.

Formal education was introduced by the British in 1893 when they opened a school for the children of sepoy serving in Mizoram. However, the three schools in Aizawl, Lunglei, and Tlabung were not opened for the natives. These Hindi Medium Schools, therefore, did not have a significant impact upon the natives. The Arthington Missionaries opened what can be called the first school for the natives on 1st April 1894 with two students, namely - Suaka and Thangphunga. They were later on joined by

⁵⁴ *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Laisuih*, Monthly Journal published by the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, Aizawl, June 1903.

⁵⁵ The first three Tirhkoh- Dokhama, Phaisama, Vanchhunga were sponsored in 1903 with the monthly wages of Rs 3.

⁵⁶ KL Rokhuma, *Mizoram Zirrna a Mission leh Kohhran Rawngbawlina (Role of the Mission and Church in Mizoram Education)* (Aizawl : Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1988) 202

three more students. The first five students were all adults and they could read and write within a very short time. But, due to the engagement of the missionaries with their translation work, the school was closed after some time.⁵⁷ After taking up mission work from the Arthington Mission, Rev D E Jones, A Welsh Presbyterian Missionary, reopened the School on 28th February 1898. The first textbook used in the school *Mizo Zir Tir Bu* (Mizo premier) was mostly confined to the art of writing reading and Christian teachings.⁵⁸ Upon the instruction of the Commissioner of Assam, all the government schools were put under the supervision of the Mission in 1903. Rev E Rowlands was appointed as an Honorary Inspector of Schools.⁵⁹ The people's response to education was overwhelming and many schools were set up both in the urban and rural areas. The census of 1901 reported that as many as 761 Mizo were literates. By 1903, there existed 15 schools within the Welsh Mission area, out of which 9 were in villages.⁶⁰

The first Lower Primary Examination was conducted in June 1903 11 students out of the 19 candidates passed the exam. In the next year, 29 candidates appeared for the examination and 23 candidates were successful. Upper Primary School was also opened in 1904. While there were 2 Middle British Schools (Upper Primary) and 15 Lower Primary Schools with the total students' enrolment of 799 in 1908-09, within the

⁵⁷ B Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, 551-552.

⁵⁸ *Mizo Zir Tir Bu*, printed at the Assam Secretariat printing office. Shiilong, 1899.

⁵⁹ Sangkima, *Mizos: Society and Social Change*, 88.

⁶⁰ *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* (A Monthly Magazine of The Government), October, 1903.

Name of Schools in Aizawl :

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1) Boy's ME School | 2) Thakthing | 3) Hriangmual |
| 4) Rahsiveng | 5) Mirawngveng | 6) Maubawk. |

Name of Schools in Villages:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|-------------|
| 1) Kahndaih (Phullen) | 2) Maite | 3) Phulpui |
| 4) Khawrihnim | 5) Biate | 6) Lungtan |
| 7) Khawreng | 8) Ngopa | 9) Zukbual. |

next twenty years, the number of Lower Primary Schools increased to 144 with the total number of students of 3642. There were 5 Middle British Schools with one Middle Vernacular School, and the number of Primary schools increased to 221.⁶¹ While schools up to the Middle level were set up in every corner of the District, the people's hope for having a High School was delayed for so many years due to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the authorities. The demand for High School was started by some people as early as 1926, but their demand was turned down. After a great effort, the persistence of the people bore fruit as the first High School in the District was opened at Aizawl on 23 February 1944 with 56 students.⁶² The first batch appeared for the Matriculation examination in 1948 and out of the total 25 examiners, 17 students came out successful.

As the missionaries had vast control over the school curriculum, they put a prominent place in Biblical teaching in addition to other branches of elementary education. School teachers were carefully selected from early Christians and they were expected to perform the twin role of inculcating education and working for the growth of the church. A day in a school, therefore, began with Bible reading, praying, and hymn singing. A teacher, excommunicated by the Church necessarily invited to lose one's job.⁶³ This process continued till the establishment of the Mizo District Council in 1952. So, Schools became a place where the newly emergent educated elite in the society were indoctrinated with Christian teaching and it, therefore, was not surprising that the spread of education goes together with Christianity. Mizo society comes to be firmly revolved around Christianity and the church and Christianity have become one of the most important Mizo identity markers.

⁶¹Lalrinmawia, "British policy to the Education of the Lushais up to 1947," *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. 1. (1982):27.

⁶² Ibid, 27.

⁶³ *Primary Teacher work Manual*, Honorary Inspector of Schools North Lushai Hills, 1948.

Table 2.2 Percentage growth of Christian population and literacy rate in Mizoram.			
Year	Total population	Christian %	Literacy %
1901	82,434	0.92	NA
1911	91,204	2.77	4.41
1921	98,406	28.17	6.28
1931	124,404	47.52	10.54
1941	152,786	64.21	19.50
1951	196,202	80.31	31.13
1961	266,063	86.64	44.00
1971	332,390	86.09	53.79

Source: Compiled by the scholar based on Census Reports.

Even though it does not seem to be the official intention of the Missions to involve in the Mizo identity formation process, the historic juncture of their interaction with the people makes their role in the construction of Mizo identity significant. The use of the Lusei language by the missionaries in the schools and church activities makes the Lusei language a common language of all the tribes, except the Mara. The Lakher Pioneer Mission worked solely in the Lakher-dominated area and developed the Tlosai dialect, among around eight distinct dialects, as a common language for all the Lakher. The Lakher Pioneer Mission established a Church that was solely for the Lakher and worship was conducted in the Tlosai language. Had it not been for this Lakher Pioneer Mission, there was a strong possibility that all the tribes in Mizoram speak the present Mizo language. Some Missionaries like Zosaphara lend their hand in propagating Mizo identity and he composed a song “*Mizo kan nih lawm ilang in*” (Let us be happy for being a Mizo) in 1903. When Christmas was celebrated for the second time in 1904, a part of the celebration included a singing competition among the natives to sing this song.⁶⁴ The song was included in the textbook of Middle Reader II in 1909.

⁶⁴Mizo leh Vai chanchin lehkhabu, February, 1905, 12.

Emergence of the modern educated elite

The traditional society can be broadly divided into two groups- the elite and the commoners, the chief along with his council of elders and priests are the elite group while the majority of the population were commoners. These small groups of people support each other and dictate society till they are overthrown by the forces of modernization. In Mizoram, the process of modernization brought about by the colonial administration and modern system of education coupled with the mass conversion to Christianity led to the emergence of a new group of elite, mostly consisted of educated Christians. These newly emergent modern elite contest against the traditional elite and eventually overthrow the traditional elite.

As mentioned above, the British administration curtailed the traditional authority of the chiefs and reduced them to agents of the colonial master. To exercise more efficient control over the chiefs and strengthen the administrator's grip over the territory, the 'Circle system of Administration' was introduced. The whole District was divided into 18 circles with each Circle placed under a Circle interpreter who served as a channel of communication between the chiefs and the people on the one hand, and the Superintendent on the other.⁶⁵ In addition to Circle Interpreter, each village Chiefs was directed to appoint *Khawchhiar* (Village recorder) to maintain vital statistics of the village and to send reports and letters on behalf of the chiefs in the case of an illiterate chief. The creation of village writers was an addition to the indigenous village officials.

So, in spite of recognizing the office of chieftainship, the creation of modern officials like Circle interpreters and *khawchhiar* led to the beginning of the challenging role of the educated elite against the chiefs. The British policy of recognizing chieftainship suffered a blow in the face of the modernization process they initiated. The modern elite, who equipped themselves with modern education and a broad outlook,

⁶⁵ Lalrintluanga, *The emergence of Political Elite in Mizoram*, M. Phil Dissertation submitted to Department of Political Science NEHU, Shillong, 1988. 124-125.

were the clear favorite to enjoy a dominant position in a newly emerging political setup. Taking advantage of the space provided by the new political setup, the modern elite, organized themselves and mobilized the people for the realization of their dreams which was different from the agenda of the traditional elite.

Apart from the changes brought about by British Administrators, perhaps, a stronger and more effective force responsible for the emergence and prominence of the new Mizo elite seems to be the introduction of Christianity and the modern system of education by the missionaries. The government was not so much concerned as long as the people did not break the law and gave almost a free hand to the Missionaries to shape and guide the life of the people. The administrator relied heavily upon the church as an agency of education and other social transformation. The Missionaries utilized this opportunity to implant new concepts and new categories of living and bringing new values and institutions in the society. Thus, the whole social, cultural and political movements of the people was guided by the missionaries.⁶⁶

The traditional elite, especially the chiefs, were generally attached closely to the traditional practices. They at least initially, opposed Christianity and were not enthusiastic of sending their children to schools. The commoners considered schools as an opportunity to get a better position by getting a salaried job; hence, the main impact of education fell upon the ordinary people. The common people who received education had access to salaried jobs under the mission as a pastor, evangelist or teacher in the schools and a small section of them got job under the government. The British administration and the Church produce a new group of elite hitherto unknown in the traditional society who have a close connection with the Church. The newly emerged modern elite who took shape of Mizo identity consisted mainly of the employee of the

⁶⁶ Ibid, 148.

Church and those employed by the government were also subjects, spiritually, to the Church.⁶⁷

The emergence of the modern elite brought a struggle between the traditional elite and the modern elite for control over the society. The priests were the first to suffer the onslaught of modernization when the people put more trust in taking medicine than offering traditional rituals and the people's conversion to Christianity in a large scale sealed their fate. They were forced to become commoners in the society. By putting Lushai Hills under an "Excluded Area" where no Act of the Government may be applied, the British Government could protect the office of the chiefs and council of elders, for some time, against the onslaught of the new elite. But the final whistle for their withdrawal was blown with the integration of the Hills as a part of Independent India. The triumph of the new elite over the traditional elite was witnessed with the abolition of the office of chieftainship in 1954.⁶⁸

The new elite who had sprung up during the colonial period were mostly drawn from the Sailo subjects, since the modernization process touched them earlier than other groups for inhabiting in the area where both the government and the Church first operated. The first group of new modern elite during the colonial period, therefore, mainly composed of Lusei speaking group, who received education in the mission schools and were affiliated to the Church. Even though they are drawn from diverse tribes, Christianity binds them together and one's identity as a tribe was no longer relevant and important, thus inter tribe rivalry for dominance within the new elite group was not witnessed.⁶⁹ These small groups of elite dominated the entire society, in many

⁶⁷ AG Mc Call, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 216.

⁶⁸ Assam Act XXI of 1954, *The Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act 1954*.

⁶⁹ Joy Pachuau, *The Creation of Mizo Identity: From colonial to post-colonial times*, Unpublished M Phil Dissertation submitted to Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, 2005, 66.

instances, leadership in the church, civil bodies and political parties were interconnected of each other.⁷⁰

The erosion of the relevance of particular tribe identity by Christianity, sense of unity as a Christian, being a subject of a British urbanization, emergence of Lusei language as a common language, more and more interaction among the people at economic, social and political level prepares the soil on which the elite cultivate the Mizo identity. The new elite seek for a new social milieu on which they can assert themselves. They seek a new identity distinct from the village based identity they earlier had – simple as a subject of the chief or British. They reconstruct the history and mobilize the people for a broader Mizo identity. Through literature and social communication, the new elite forcefully assert the close relations and commonality of the people, yet, so distinct from others especially the plain people. The elite infuse the comparative numerical, economic and political strength of the plain people and depict them as a rival who could easily assimilate them unless they stand together under the nomenclature of Mizo. So the Mizo identity which developed during the colonial period can be observed as the twin work of new educated Lusei speaking elite and outcome of the historical process. The Mizo elite do not create a new identity of their own; rather they consciously select some markers as the basis of Mizo identity, which are derived from or as given by the past.

The belief in common origin, common culture and speaking common language under the Sailo chief do not bring cohesiveness at the broader level due to occasional conflict among the Sailo chiefs themselves and that the idea of ‘us’ could not transcend the village as ‘others’ are their neighboring village having the same tradition, custom and speaking the same language. Therefore, in the pre-colonial time there did exist two levels of people’s identity consciousness. Consciousness of being related on the basis of myths of origin, having common culture and speaking same language and as subjects of

⁷⁰ The first native ordained minister, Rev Chhuahkhama was among the first councilors of the Mizo Union as well as first committee members of the YMA.

dominant Sailo chiefs was gradually developing at one level. But, the peoples first and foremost loyalty was towards their respective villages and people's identity was village based. These processes clearly explain the lack of united resistance on the part of the chiefs against the British and the absence of a clear common nomenclature of the people.

Considering the dominance of Sailo rule and Lusei language, it is understandable that the British considered all the Lusei speaking people as belonging to Lusei tribe and adopted 'Lushai' an Anglicized form of Lusei as a common name for all the people inhabiting the area. After more interaction with the people, the British realized their mistakes and realized that even the Sailo subjects were composed of many tribes and the people refer themselves collectively as Zo or Mizo.⁷¹ The modern elite of the society, upon reconstructing their past history and with more interaction with the outside world, develop a subjective consciousness of their distinctness from the plain and Europeans as well as the relatedness of all the 'Children of Chhinlung'. The idea of distinct identity was gradually developing and the word, Mizo was becoming popularly used as a common nomenclature of the people during the colonial rule. Their close contact with other groups like *Sap*, *Vai* and *Kawl* enabled the emergence of broader Mizo identity against or as distinct from them. Among these others, the concept of *Vai* seem more important in the construction of Mizo identity.⁷² The Mizo identity, which had crystallized in the pre and early part of colonial time, was formulated and re formulated in the hands of the elite who seek for a broader identity to replace the existed identity like Lushai identity which could not encompass the non Lusei speakers. So Mizo as a political identity emerged in the colonial time transcending tribe's affiliations during the colonial time and was cemented with the change of Lushai Hills to Mizo District.⁷³

⁷¹ J Shakeaspere, *Lushei-kuki Clan*, 44

⁷² The origin of *Vai* is rather unclear. Some felt that it came out of Hindi Bhai, meaning brother. But the modern use of *Vai* does reflect non tribal living in the plain, as Mizo never call other hill tribal as *vai*.

⁷³ Joy Pachuau, *The Creation of Mizo Identity*, 67.

Even at the time consciousness as a Mizo was gradually developing, the people in the Lushai Hills were officially designated as Lushai. The early organizations which come up during and under the initiatives of the British usually bear the word Lushai. In 1924, the first students association called Lushai Students Association was formed by Mizo students of Kolkata, Gauhati and Shillong.⁷⁴ The Young Lushai Association, which became one of the oldest and most influential organizations in Mizoram, was formed in 1935 under the aegis of the Missionaries after the Young Welsh Association.⁷⁵ Out of the first five office bearers, three posts were occupied by the Missionaries. In conformity with the new wave of consciousness as a Mizo, The Mizo students of Shillong formed a new Association named Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Union) in 1935.⁷⁶ The name of the Young Lushai Association was also changed into Young Mizo Association in 1946.⁷⁷ These processes clearly reflect the growing rejection of Lushai identity and consciousness and assertion as Mizo.

The newly emerging modern elite consciously mobilize the people based on distinct Mizo identity and define Mizo in the broadest sense to include all the related tribes in and outside the then Mizo District. As a small group with a common background of education, Christianity, and Lusei language, chances of intragroup conflicts were minimized and they have effective control over nearly all the important institutions of the society.⁷⁸ As such, the spiritual, economic, political, and social life of the society was gradually controlled by them and there exist a close relation and cooperation among the Church, NGOs, and political party at the time of India's independence.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ <https://www.mzpmizoram.com/p/brief-history-of-mzp.html> accessed on 15th June 2021.

⁷⁵ *Annual Report 1999-2000*. (Aizawl, Central YMA, 2000), 1.

⁷⁶ <https://www.mzpmizoram.com/p/brief-history-of-mzp.html> accessed on 15th June 2021.

⁷⁷ C Vanlallawma, *YMA History 1935-1995* (Aizawl, CYMA, 1998) 33.

⁷⁸ See the tribe division of the first group of Mizo elite in appendix no

⁷⁹ The KristianTlangau, A monthly journal published by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church has a separate column for YMA till the time YMA has a magazine of its own.

Agencies of Mizo identity propagation

After consolidating their position, the Mizo elite began to utilize different agencies under their control including- Government organs (District council, UT, and State), Political party, NGOs, Church, and mass media for propagating Mizo identity directly or indirectly. The Mizo political elite⁸⁰ makes use of the government institution for Mizo identity propagation through textbooks, particularly of the Mizo subject which is compulsory at the elementary level, the insistence of knowledge of Mizo language to join government service, etc. Among Mizo political parties, the Mizo Union and Mizo National Front dominated the political scene of Mizoram and they spearheaded the Mizo movement for autonomy which led to the formation of the State of Mizoram. The Young Mizo Association⁸¹ and Mizo Zirlai Pawl are the most influential associations which directly and sternly propagate and work for the protection of Mizo identity. The two big denominations founded by the pioneer missionaries- Mizoram Presbyterian Church and Baptist Church of Mizoram also indirectly play their part by popularizing the Mizo language and propagating the need for unification as Mizo through church teaching.⁸² As one useful way of connection and mobilization of the common masses is through mass media, the Mizo elite also utilized the mass media which is an effective tool of mass communication due to the high literacy percentage of the people.

To understand the role of the Mizo elite in propagating Mizo identity through their agencies, the role and activities of Mizo Union, MNF, YMA, and MZP will be briefly highlighted. The first political party of Mizoram, the Mizo Union was formed on 9th April 1946. The term Mizo was purposively selected for the name of the party, with the

⁸⁰ See the tribe wise composition of elected representatives of Mizoram in appendix.

⁸¹ YMA have 446623 adult members as per Vanglaini report dated 15th June 2021.

⁸² In 2011 census, the total population of Mizoram is around 10 lakhs, of which around 6 lakhs are members of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church of Mizoram have around 1 lakh members.

hope that by replacing Lushai with Mizo, all ‘Children of Chhinlung, who do not identify themselves as Lushai may be accommodated.’⁸³ Apart from some chiefs, the majority of the common people enthusiastically welcome the Mizo Union and within no time it emerges as a strong political organization not only within the Lushai hills but also in North Cachar of Assam and Manipur as well. The party strove for the protection of the cultural identity as well as the integrity of all Mizo. The first General Assembly of the union in 1946 resolved for territorial integration of all the Mizo inhabited areas of Lushai Hills, Manipur, Tripura, Cachar areas of Assam, Chin Hills of present Myanmar, Chittagong Hill Tracts of present Bangladesh into one political unit. The policy of the Union for integration received a warm response, particularly in Cachar and Manipur where the units of the party were set up. The first General Assembly outside Lushai hills was held on 21st November 1946 at Lakhimpur in Cachar Hills of Assam.⁸⁴

The Mizo Union, right from its inception asserted the distinct identity of the Mizo. In its first General Assembly held at Aizawl in 1946 and the Mizo conference held under the initiatives of the Mizo Union in the same year at Lakhimpur (Cachar), the Mizo Union passed a resolution to uphold and protect the cultural identity of the Mizo. In pursuance of these resolutions, the Mizo Union submitted a memorandum to the British government and Constituent Assembly through the Advisory Sub- Committee in 1947, claiming to represent the wish of all the Mizo in Lushai Hills, Manipur, Cachar, Tripura, and Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the memorandum, the Mizo Union claimed that certain terms which were used to denote them like Kuki and Lushai were imposed names by outsiders and therefore were not unaccepted by the people. Lusei, from which the British coined Lushai is nothing but one tribe the big Mizo groups composed of many but closely related tribes like- Lusei, Hmar, Ralte, Paite, Zo, Darlawng, Kawm, Pawi (Lai), Thado, Chiru, Aimoul, Khawi, Anal, Puram, Tikhup, Vaiphei, Lakher (Mara), Langrawng, Chawrai, Bawng, baite, Mualthuam, Kaihphe, Pangkhua, Tlanglau, Bawmzo,

⁸³ R Vanlawma, *My Country and I*, (Aizawl, Zoram printing Press, 1972) 80-81.

⁸⁴ Rosiem Pudaite, *Indian National Struggle for Freedom and Its Impact on the Mizo movement 1935-1953*. (Imphal, Self published)89.

Hrangkhawl, Miria, Dawn, Kumi, Khiangte, Khiang, Tlau, Pautu, Pawite, Vangchhia, Zawngte, Fanai, Pangte, Khawlhling, Changthu, Vanchiau, Chawhte, Ngente, Renthlei, Hnamte etc. Consequent upon this claim, the Mizo Union asked for the territorial unity and solidarity of the whole 'Mizo population' to be known henceforth as Mizo and Mizoram for Lushai and Lushai Hills.⁸⁵

Due to the British policy of political exclusion of the area, the Mizo were politically at loss in the modern system of governance. When the Advisory sub Committee visited Aizawl at the dawn of Indian independence to appraise the wish of the people, the elite themselves were divided in regard to the best course for the Mizo. In spite of the diverse and even somewhat conflicting ideas, the central issue they all seem to agree from the points highlighted in the meeting was that they are afraid of assimilation by the plain people and wish to have autonomy of their own.⁸⁶ During the first decades after India independence, the Mizo Union dominated District politics. In the first election held in 1952, the Mizo Union won 23 out of 24 seats. It succeeded in persuading the Assam government to change the name of the District from 'Lushai Hills' to 'Mizo Hills in 1954'.⁸⁷

When the Assam government imposed Assamese as the official language by enacting the Assam Official Language Bill in 1961, the Mizo Union as well as other Hill tribes considered the enactment as a threat to their existence as a distinct cultural entity as well as against their political interest. In response to this, various parties in the Hills areas of Assam decided to form All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) to fight for the formation of Eastern Hill State composed of all Hill districts within the then state of Assam. Mizo Union was a part of APHLC at the beginning, but after realizing its

⁸⁵ Memorandum submitted to His Majesty's Government and Its constituents Assembly through the Advisory Sub – Committee by Mizo Union in 1947.

⁸⁶ Ch. Saprawnga, *Ka Zin Kawng* (Aizawl: Lalkungi, 1990) 136-146.

⁸⁷ The Lushai Hills District (Change of name) Act, 1954 act no. 18 of 1954 Dated 29th April, 1954.

own contradictions with other hill communities in Assam, the Mizo Union disassociated from the movement and began demanding a separate state for the Mizo.⁸⁸

The Assam government's language policy and under development of the Mizo District invited unhappiness of the people. This general unhappiness was intensified by the famine that hit the District in 1958. The Mizo National Front skillfully utilized the resentment and anger of the people against the Assam government for its failure to deliver prompt relief during the famine. The MNF successfully combined cultural, political and religious activism in their propaganda for secessionism. They propagated the separate nation concept which the Mizo union had highlighted earlier and considered the action of the Mizo Union for joining India as the political immaturity, ignorance and lack of consciousness of their fate which led the Mizo people to the misguided choice of integration with India.⁸⁹ The MNF stressed upon the identity of the Mizo as a nation, distinct and separate from that of India and at the same time, highlight the sameness of all tribes who are culturally related. The MNF defined Mizo as a blanket term for all the tribes of Chin-Kuki- Lushai group, within and outside Mizo District. Some of the tribal heroes of the region were eulogized and battalions were named after them. Alongside such selective tribal symbolism, Christianity and its values were also harnessed. The party's plea to safeguard Christianity amid the rising nationalism of 'Hindu India' touched the people who were predominantly Christian and won the moral support of many Church leaders.⁹⁰

They projected and perceived plain people as intruders and exploiters, state government of Assam and the Union government were depicted as symbolic of such reference group's against whom the distinct identity of the Mizo needed to be protected. The MNF stated that despite close contact and association with India since independence

⁸⁸ S.K. Chaube, *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, (Hyderabad, Orient Longman, Reprint 1999) 131-145, 179.

⁸⁹ B.B Goswami, *The Mizo Unrest* (Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers, 1979) 149.

⁹⁰ Ch. Saprawnga, *Ka Zinkawng* 195

the “Mizo people had not been able to feel at home with Indian or in India...They do not, therefore, feel Indian. They refused to occupy a place within India as they consider it to be unworthy of their national dignity and harmful to the interest of their posterity...The only aspiration and political cry is the creation of Mizoram free and sovereign state to govern herself to work out her own destiny ...”⁹¹ The MNF declared independence from India on 1st March 1966 and resorted to arms so as to protect the Mizo land, nationality, cultural distinctiveness and religion against ‘the selfish design of (of) assimilation and Hindu indoctrination’.⁹²

Due to many reasons, one being the pressure of the church leaders, Laldenga agreed to start a talk within the constitution of India in 1971. The political developments after this talk till 30th June 1986, when MNF signed an accord with the Indian State which subsequently led to the creation of the state of Mizoram were a long and slow way towards peace. The formation of a separate State of Mizoram cemented the existence of Mizo as a distinct nationality. Even though the MNF could not realize its goal of forming a sovereign state for the Mizo, it succeeded in strengthening ethnic solidarity and propagating the idea among the Mizo that they belong to a distinct nationality. The MNF movement is therefore regarded as both a product of identity negotiations as well as an instrument through which identity was formed.⁹³

After the attainment of a separate state of Mizoram, the torch of the Mizo identity movement has been gradually shifted from political to social issue, the YMA and MZP have taken up the role of main agencies of Mizo identity propagation.⁹⁴ However, the two organizations adopted dissimilar models in their organizational structure and

⁹¹ Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the Mizo National Front Headquarters on October 30, 1965.

⁹² Text of the MNF Declaration of Independence, Dated 1.3.1966.

⁹³ Joy Pachuau, *The Creation of Mizo Identity: From colonial to post-colonial times*, 68.

⁹⁴ The thesis would leave out the contribution of Zo Reunification Organisation(ZORO) for their stress point of reference for reunification do not directly refer to Mizo identity per se.

drastically different approaches in their attempt to maintain the perpetuation of Mizo nationality.

When the YMA was formed in 1935, it functioned more like a cultural society.⁹⁵ During its initial years, the YMA mainly engaged in inculcating Mizo and Christian values as well as promotion of Mizo culture. During 1946-1948, the YMA, in collaboration with the Church, initiated a famous *Chanchintha dak* programme. Bible and other Christian literatures written in Mizo language were sent to the Chin Hills of Myanmar with the intention to preach the Gospel and popularize Mizo language in the region.⁹⁶

As time passes, YMA has grown into the biggest association in Mizoram in terms of number of members, area of operation and influence.⁹⁷ The influence of YMA in the contemporary Mizo society is so profound that being a member of YMA and being Mizo is often considered as more or less synonymous. Regarding organizational structure, there are branches at the locality/ village level, a number of branches formed Group, Sub headquarters for a number of Groups, at the apex there is Central YMA with its headquarters located at Aizawl. Any person can become a member of YMA by paying a membership fee to the Branch by fulfilling either of the two conditions- adult Mizo who agree to fulfill the objectives of YMA or those accepted by the Branch Executive committee to become YMA member.⁹⁸ This 2nd clause can be seen as a mechanism of incorporation since the society usually accepts those who are accepted by the YMA as its member.

⁹⁵ The objectives of YMA are:

- 1) Useful occupation of leisure time
- 2) All round development of Mizoram
- 3) Promotion of good Christian life.

⁹⁶ C Vanlallawma, *YMA History 1935-1995*, 5

⁹⁷ YMA have 446623 adult members and 881 branches within and outside Mizoram as per Vanglaini newspaper report 15th June 2021.

⁹⁸ YMA constitution (Aizawl, CYMA, 2015) 8.

Apart from responding to the need of the society in daily basis, the YMA used to declare their theme or area of concentration for the year called *Kum Puan*. For 17 years (1998- 2019), the YMA declared *Ram leh Hnam humhalh* (roughly translated as protection of the Mizoram and Mizo nation) as its theme.⁹⁹ During these years cultural, economic and political development of the Mizo as a group was enlisted as a must for the protection of the Mizo identity against the threat of assimilation by bigger nationality and threat of disintegration by the assertion of separate tribe identities. The YMA General Conference in 2006 and 2016 passed a resolution that initiative should be taken towards the integration of Mizo/ Zofa tribes. 2012 General Conference passed a resolution that measures should be taken to stop tribe-based activities that threaten the unity and integration of Mizo society and Mizoram.¹⁰⁰

In pursuance of *Kum Puan* and Conference resolutions, the YMA took several steps, a few initiatives taken by the YMA may be highlighted to illustrate its role in the propagation of Mizo identity. Following the initiative of the YMA, the Gangte tribe of Manipur and Darlong tribe of Tripura joined YMA in 1999 and 2000 respectively. In 2003, Joint Conference of Manipur Group YMA and Hmar Youth Association was held at Churachandpur. The Central YMA had joint meeting with leaders of tribe-based youth Associations ‘who are within the Mizo community but do not Join YMA’ like Young Lai Association and Mara Thyutlia Py (Mara Youth Association) in 1998, 2004, 2016.¹⁰¹ The YMA, through its various platforms like a speech at the Conferences, and articles published in YMA magazine campaign against the narrow interpretation of Mizo as well as the narrow-mindedness of the Lusei (Mizo) speaking people who behave as if Mizo belongs only to them which alienate tribe language users. Through the efforts of the YMA, gradual change is seen; any perceptive observer can recognize the gradual

⁹⁹ Malsawmliana, *YMA History 1996-2019*, (Aizawl, CYMA, 2019) 43.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 85-86.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 89-91.

acceptance of non-Lusei (Mizo) speaking groups.¹⁰² Though the YMA does not frame its official view/policy towards Mizo identity, closer scrutiny of YMA activities reveals that as the organizational structure is centralized, the YMA is leaning towards the creation of a ‘homogenous Mizo identity’ which contradicts particular tribe identity. Due to a lack of official stance in the issues of integration, a change of leadership at the Central YMA determines YMA relationship with those tribes who propagate their tribe identity. While the role of YMA in maintaining Mizo Identity is supported by those who identify themselves as Mizo, at the same time, there are instances when YMA alienates the tribes whom they claimed as a part of Mizo community.

After the Lushai Association which was formed in 1926 ceased to exist, the Mizo students in Shillong formed Lushai Students Association in 27th October 1935. The name of the Association was changed to Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association) in September 1946. The MZP promotes Mizo culture and literature through various ways – by publishing newsletter, by organizing *Hla Kutpui* (Literature Festival) and forming a committee on Mizo vernacular etc. The Government of Mizoram banned the MZP in 1982, which was revoked after three years. However, during these three banned years, several students’ associations have come up for different purposes and the MZP became nearly nonfunctional. Feeling the need to have apex student’s body at the Mizoram level, seven student organizations joined together and revived MZP in 1993.¹⁰³ The leaders of tribe-based organizations, particularly; Hmar Students’ Association, Mara Students’ Organization, Lai Students’ Association and Siamsin Pawlpi played a crucial role for the revival of the MZP in 1993.¹⁰⁴ The active participation of tribe-based organizations for the revival of MZP leads to the adoption of a federal structure and the

¹⁰² Even till the beginning of 1990’s, mass of the Lusei speaking population especially in and around Aizawl generally do not whole heartedly accept non Lusei speaker as Mizo. However, one can witness a gradual trend of acceptance of non Lusei language speakers.

¹⁰³ About Mizo Zirlai Pawl, <https://www.mzpmizoram.com/p/about-us.html>. Accessed on 18th June 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Lalmuanpuia Punte, “Zirlai Pawl a ka thil tawn te” (My experience in Students Organizations), *MZP Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, (Aizawl, MZP, 2010) 41-41.

adoption of a favorable stance towards tribe identity within and outside the organization. The MZP has a theme 'Mizo students for the land and the nation' and their objectives include, fighting for the rights of Mizo nation and students, to protect Mizo nation against assimilation and unification of Zo ethnic groups under one administration.¹⁰⁵ In the same year, the MZP special assembly amended the constitution which stipulated the federal council as an organizational structure with affiliation rules for Mizo tribe-based organizations. Presently, eight tribe-based student organizations are affiliated with the MZP. The President and General Secretary of the affiliated tribe organizations became ex officio members in the MZP Executive Committee.¹⁰⁶

The MZP declared 'Mizo unification' as its theme during 1993-1995 and 'protection of land and nation' during 1995-1998. In pursuance of the declared theme, the first ZOFEST was organized at Churachanpur of Manipur in 2002 with the theme of the festival as 'we are brother and sister'. ZOFEST is more than cultural interaction; it is the platform where the theme of integration is propagated. ZOFEST was a huge success by building good understanding and relationships among the Zo ethnic tribes. The success of the first ZOFEST inspires MZP to conduct another ZOFEST on a regular basis.¹⁰⁷ The federal structure of MZP provides a good platform to pursue the integration movement. The MZP pursued the Mizo integration movement in a rather different approach from the YMA. MZP put integration before Mizo identity, hence they

¹⁰⁵ MZP Constitution, (Aizawl, MZP, 1993), 3-8.

¹⁰⁶ Name of the affiliated Students Organizations under MZP are:

1. Hmar Students Association (HSA)
2. Lai Students' Association (LSA)
3. Mizoram Bawm Students' Association (MBSA)
4. Pang zirlai Pawl (PZP)
5. Mara Students' Organization (MSO)
6. Ranglong Students' Union (RSU)
7. Thado-Kuki Students' Union (TKSU)
8. Siamsinpawipi. (SSPP)

¹⁰⁷ VL, Krosshnezhova, "ZOFEST Report", *ZOFEST 2009 Souvenir*, (Aizawl, MZP, 2009) 13-18.

used more of the terms like *Chhinlung chhuak*, *Zofa* and *Zo hnahtlak* than that of Mizo. The official stand of the MZP is that all Zo ethnic tribes are Mizo and hence Lusei language (officially called Mizo language) is nothing but one of the Mizo languages. Hence, any Zo ethnic tribe language is a Mizo language.¹⁰⁸ The MZP also always attempts to maintain a cordial relationship with tribe-based organizations and does not attempt to subsume them or set up its branch in the area where tribe-based students association are operating. The MZP relies on that tribe-based students organization to take up the matter concerning MZP in their area of operation rather than directly take up the matter in its hand. The MZP approach seems to accommodate the tribes who assert their distinct tribe identity better than the YMA.

Being Mizo and Mizo nationality

While highlighting the crucial role of the elite in the selection of identity markers, the limitation imposed by history, social forces and political structure needs to be considered. The inclusiveness or exclusiveness of any collective identity is determined by the markers selected through which identity is propounded. Hence, the selected attributes or markers greatly determine the formation as well as the perpetuation of Mizo nationality formation. Without arguing that they are the only identity attributes, we may highlight the four main issues or markers on the basis of which the contemporary discourse on Mizo identity mainly revolves around- common myth of origin, language, Christianity and territory.

Common myth of origin: The ideas of common origin, in spite of its mythical nature, still act as the binding force of the whole group, as all tribes accept that they are of the same origin. The Mizo elite found this as the ingredient that provides a basis for construction of a broader Mizo identity. Mizo was defined as a common name for those tribes who trace their origin to this mythical cave called *Chhinlung*. As the inhabited area of the people who believe in common origin transcends the existing state and

¹⁰⁸ Vanlaltana, President MZP, Telephone interview conducted by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 6th June 2021.

international boundaries, the Mizo elite stress upon the dream of integration which receives the backup of major influential organizations and even the State government seems to be sympathetic to this movement.¹⁰⁹ While there seems to be an agreement in regards to unification in principle, the elite are divided in regards to the mechanism for the realization and the extent of demand for territorial integration. Zo-Reunification Movement (ZORO) was quite vocal in its demand for territorial unity and it succeeded in getting the written support of major political parties of Mizoram and student organizations that they will pursue the policy of fighting for the unification of all Mizo under one political administration.¹¹⁰ While the common origin is the least contested and most inclusive Mizo identity marker, its transcendence of state and international boundary creates a problem of its own.

Mizo language: In the traditional society, a person's tribe identity can be identified through physical appearance, like the Lusei tie their hair at the back of their head while the Lai tie at their forehead. But in the post-colonial Mizo society, where the people began wearing the same western clothes, eat more or less same food and professing the same religion, it become very difficult to differentiate one tribe from another through appearance. Hence, language becomes the most noticeable cultural attribute or objective identity marker. The Mizo elite were mostly drawn from the Sailo subjects who speak Lusei language; the Lusei language has an edge over other languages. Hence, the official language of the State, Mizo language is mainly derived from Lusei language, which is also called as *Duhlian* language. Therefore, fluentness of Lusei language becomes an important objective marker of Mizo identity. Certain tribes, therefore, feel alienated for not being fluent in Lusei language. Encountered by this language issue, the Mizo elite now began to argue that Lusei is not the only Mizo

¹⁰⁹ Textbooks prepared by MBSE contain articles and songs which argue in the same way. See *Mizo awmzia* (Meaning of Mizo) Chapter 13, Class VIII Mizo textbook, 23-24

¹¹⁰ The resolution for territorial integration prepared by ZORO was signed by representatives of MZP, MSU, Bharatia Janata Party, Janata Dal United, Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee, Mizoram People's Conference, Zoram Nationalist Party in 2002 at Aizawl.

language; all the languages spoken by different tribes of the Mizo are Mizo language. But still, fluency of Lusei language is considered by many people as the criteria as being Mizo.¹¹¹ So, the Lusei language, which stood as an integrative force binding diverse tribes together under Lushai identity is now found wanting for the construction of a broader Mizo identity comprising of different tribes that speak a distinct language of their own.

Christianity: The missionaries were successful not only in converting the people to Christianity; they also put Christianity as a core of the emerging Mizo identity. Christianity provides a suitable ground for mobilization for all the tribes included in the Mizo group since all of them are Christian. Mizo identity and Christianity are closely intertwined that one could not participate in the Mizo society without involving oneself in Christian rites. For instance, when there is a death in the locality, apart from the formal funeral service which is conducted by the Church, Youth Associations like YMA/ YLA/ MTP used to conduct condolence activities that mainly involve singing of Christian songs. The non-Christians are odd out, if not entirely excluded from partaking in the activities of the Mizo society. There are a small section of Mizo communities, who consider themselves as the lost tribes of Israel and are converted Jews are not cordially accommodated by a large section of the Mizo nationality.¹¹² While Christianity is a commonly acceptable attribute, the issues of the emergence and role of tribe-based Christian churches in the postcolonial period becomes critical and debated issue.

¹¹¹ See chapter 4. As shown in table 4.19 as many as 5.7% of the respondents link Mizo identity with Lusei speakers. One respondent who identified herself as Mizo elaborated that even though she is a Hmar tribe, she accepts only Mizo language speaker as Mizo even if their tribe may be same as she.

¹¹² Some people outspokenly states that those who consider themselves as Israel are not Mizo and therefore they do not belong to Mizoram. They are also ridiculed for believing that they are the lost tribes of Israel by referring them as 'Double Lost Tribe' by being lost from Israel and Mizo. See *Shout Box*, Vartian weekly news Magazine Vol III Issue 35, Sept 04-10, 2005, Aizawl.

Territory: One of the most frequently heard terms in the discourse of Mizo identity is '*Ram leh Hnam*', which literally means protection of the land/territory and nationality. The implication of the combination of the two terms together conveys that there can be no nationality without territory and vice versa. In Mizo understanding, the two terms 'ram' and 'hnam' cannot be separated and one cannot survive without the other. There are two main ways in which territory is discussed – the political boundary of the state of Mizoram and the territory occupied by the Zo ethnic group of India (Assam, Manipur, and Tripura), Bangladesh and Myanmar. In spite of the dream of territorial integration of all Zo ethnic group inhabited areas, the Mizo identity is clearly limited by the existing political boundary of Mizoram. There are two issues where territoriality is significant. Among the same tribe, those who inhabited the territory of Mizoram are more likely to identify as Mizo while their counterpart outside Mizoram may not. Another process of territoriality is that the tribes within their dominated area may assert their tribe identity while their fellow tribesmen outside their dominated area identify themselves first and foremost as Mizo.¹¹³

The social boundary Mizo identity is in the process of negotiation, and the discussion on the highlighted objective markers reveals the complexities and challenges of Mizo nationality. The myth of origin seems to be commonly accepted, but, the fact that the community who believed in common origin are trans-border tribes create complication of its own. The political dynamics of neighboring states, Myanmar and Bangladesh have a direct influence on Mizoram, particularly on the identity assertion of tribes who have a majority of their community living outside Mizoram. Within Mizoram, there is a challenge to negotiate between certain tribes who have a reservation to identify themselves as Mizo due to the fear of losing their distinct tribe identity and those who identify themselves as Mizo but overstress on one or two ethnic markers which exclude those tribe who wish to maintain their tribe identity, thereby alienating

¹¹³ As in the case of the Hmar tribe, while the Hmar Peoples Convention propagate the distinctiveness of Hmar from Mizo, a significant number of Hmar tribes jealously propagate Mizo identity. The same happen with other tribes also.

those tribes whom the Mizo elite are propagating hard to include within the fold of Mizo nationality. The Mizo elite may need to contemplate whether the markers so selected are inclusive or exclusive, particularly their approach toward language issues, which is the most noticeable and most contested issue among the markers mentioned above. The question of whether the Mizo identity accommodates tribe identity without destroying the distinctiveness of the tribe identity. In other words, whether the Mizo elite could propagate an inclusive Mizo identity that accommodates both Mizo identity and tribe identity and coexist together is of critical challenge that greatly determines the future perpetuation of Mizo nationality.

CHAPTER III

CONTESTING MIZO NATIONALITY

An ethnic community is a self-conscious political entity that uses certain aspects of cultural attributes as a basis to form subjective consciousness by differentiating itself from other communities. The socially relevant features, not the cultural differences that are ‘actually there’ is important in the process of group identity formation.¹ Any group of people, which uses cultural symbols to create internal cohesion and to differentiate themselves from others, is a subjectively self-conscious political community.²

Within the ethnic community there are individuals or group of individuals, refer to as the elite, who organize and provide leadership to the community hence, play a considerable role in the identity politics of the community.³ The elite frequently pursues their agenda through different organizations they have formed and provide leadership. For this reason, the emergence of the modern elite in society is usually followed by the formation of different organizations. These ethnic organizations reinforce community solidarity either through the ethnic goals they pursue or through the homogeneity of the ethnic membership. Besides the efficient pursuit of collective interests, ethnic organizations also serve as one important marker of the group with its homogeneous membership.⁴ The ethnic elite often makes use of ethnic-based organizations to generate political consciousness among

¹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*, (London, Pluto press, 1995).as quoted in S Thianlalmuan Ngaihte, “The Role of Ethnic Elite in Community Formation: The Case of Paite” in *International Journal of South Asian Studies*, (January – June 2010),165.

² Paul R Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1991, 19.

³ S Thianlalmuan Ngaihte, “The Role of Ethnic Elite in Community Formation: The Case of Paite” in *International Journal of South Asian Studies*, (January – June 2010),165.

⁴ Benjamin B Ringer and Elinor R Lawless, ‘The We-They Character of Race and Ethnicity’, in Harry Goulbourne (ed.), *Race and Ethnicity*, Routledge, London, Vol. 1, 2001, 49-73.

the community and through them propagate and articulate the interests and values depicted as essential for the survival of the community.

Considering the above points, this chapter will examine in general the nature of identity assertions of certain non- Lusei tribes who have been fighting for autonomy and protection of their particular tribe identity against the assumed or real threat of maintaining their distinct identity in the face of the process of Mizoization. Among the major tribes of Mizoram, the Hmar, Paite Lai and Mara are vocal in their demand for autonomy and assertion of their tribe identity. Hence, this chapter will mainly focus on the descriptive presentation of the role and perception of the tribe-based elite and their movements for autonomy among the four tribes.

Hmar: Armed movement for autonomy

The Hmar is one of the indigenous and major tribes of Mizoram. The Hmar refer to their original home as *Sinlung* from which they migrated due to unfavorable circumstances and a hostile environment. The Hmar are mainly concentrated in the northern part of Mizoram and the southwest part of Manipur which is contiguous to each other. They are also spread over the northeastern part Cachar hills of Assam, on the eastern and southern borders of the North Cachar Hills of Assam, and the eastern part of Tripura adjacent to Mizoram.⁵ In Mizoram, they are mainly concentrated in the northern part consisting of around 50 villages and towns, and a significant number of them are found in almost all parts of Mizoram, including the state capital, Aizawl itself.⁶

There are diverse ideas regarding the origin of the term *Hmar*. Some people presume that the term *Hmar* is derived from its literal meaning ‘North’, meaning people living in the northern side as their concentrated area is the northern side of Mizoram. Another claimed that it is derived from a particular word *Hmarh* which

⁵ Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, (Guwahati, Bhabani, 2013), 67.

⁶ Vanrammawi Inbuon, *The Hmars of Mizoram: Socio-Cultural History from Pre-colonial Period to 1972*, (Ph.D. Thesis submitted to Department of History and Ethnography, MZU, 2020).13.

means knotting one's hair in the nape or back of the head. According to the Hmar oral tradition, their progenitor 'Manmasi' has two sons- Hrumsawm and Tukbeksawm. The descendants of Hrumsawm like the Lai tribe, used to knot their hair on their forehead while the descendants of Tukbeksawm used to knot their hair on the nape or back of the head; hence the descendants of Tukbeksawm are called as *Hmarh*. But the problem with this contention is that the Lusei, Paite and Kuki are also included in the Tukbeksawm group with regard to their style of knotting hair. Another theory link Hmar with the Burmese word *Hmarh* which means prosperous or fruitful.⁷

There are different views regarding the number of sub-tribes and subdivisions of the Hmar tribe. Hrangchhuana, mentioned 26 Hmar clans⁸ while Thangluaia⁹ and Laldotluanga¹⁰ listed 24 clans, Hrilrokhum includes as many as 33 clans which are- Zote, Vangsia, Hmar-Vaipheis. Tlau, Thiek, Sakechep, Sak-um, Rawite, Pautu, Pang, Ngurte, Ngente, Lungiau, Leiri, Lawitlang, Khuolhring, Khiengte, Khelte, Khawbung, Kawm, Hmar-Lusei(Hualngo), Hrangkhawl, Faihriem, Darlong, Darngawn-Pakhuang, Chothe, Chiru, Chawte, Chawngthu, Changsan, Biete, Bawm, Aimol.¹¹ A brief look at the clan list of Hmar tribe reveals that many of the clans included as a part of Hmar like Khiangte, Chawngthu, Khawlhring and others claimed themselves as separate tribe depending on the place of their inhabitation.

Till today, a number of places or villages in Mizoram like -Biate, Zote, Khawzawl, Khawbung, etc. bear the names of the Hmar clans who had inhabited the area in the past.¹² This signifies that the Hmar have migrated to Manipur and other

⁷ Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, 67-70

⁸ HB, Hrangchhuana, Hmar Chanchin (Hmar History), (Aizawl, Published by Hmar Student Association, 1987) 4-10.

⁹ H Thangluaia, *Mizo Kan Ni*, (Aizawl, LoisBet, 2012 Reprint) 84-95.

¹⁰ Laldotluanga, *The Quest for The Past*, (Aizawl, Lengchhawn Press, 2011) 31-35.

¹¹ Ibid, 4-24.

¹² K Zawla, *Mizo Pi pute leh an thlah te Chanchin*, (Aizawl, Samuel Press, 1993 6th Edition), 152-153.

areas through Mizoram in four main batches.¹³ The first batch left Mizoram around the 15th century, the second batch by around the 18th century, and the third and the fourth batch just before the British occupation of Mizoram. While the majority of Hmar had migrated to Manipur and other areas, a number of them settled at the present Mizoram mainly under the Sailo chiefs and some of them like Saizahawla earned the Sailo chiefs favor due to their heroic acts.¹⁴

As the Hmar are living in the area near the headquarters of the British administration and the Christian mission, many of them are the early beneficiaries of the modernization. As many of the Hmar received modern education, they were among the first group of Mizo modern elite in Mizoram. One of the first two native Christians, Khuma belongs to a Hmar tribe. One of the first businessmen in Mizoram Dohnuna, the first elected president of Mizo Union Pachhunga, H.K Bawihchhuaka first councilors of Mizo Union all belongs to the Hmar tribe. As the early elite among the Hmar tribes mostly adopted Lusei language, they do not show interest in the development of their particular tribe, rather they assert Mizo identity as a common nomenclature for different Zo-ethnic tribes, including their own tribe. Hence, many persons belonging to the Hmar tribe play a prominent role in the emergence and propagation of the Mizo identity.¹⁵

The arrival of Christianity and formal education in a Hmar-speaking area was a significant event that transformed the Hmar society. Upon the invitation of Senvon chief, Watkin R. Roberts visited Senvon of the present Manipur from Aizawl in 1910 which eventually led to the formation of Thado-Kuki Pioneer Mission. As the Mission began to encompass different tribes, the name of the mission was changed to The North East India General Mission (NEIGM) in 1924. As the Lusei language was commonly used in imparting Christianity and education, the early Hmar Christians

¹³ Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, 132-137.

¹⁴ K Zawla, *Mizo Pipla e leh an thlah te Chanchin*, 263.

¹⁵ Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, 189-191.

used Lusei language for conducting church service.¹⁶ When the mission in Manipur was put under the American Baptist Church, Watkin R. Roberts, who belonged to Welsh Presbyterian Church, had to abandon the NEIG Mission. In protest to the dismissal of Roberts, the Hmar tribe moved out of NEIGM and formed the Independent Church of India (ICI) in 1930 which happened to be the main Hmar tribe-based church until the Evangelical Free Church of India was established in 1972.¹⁷ The two foremost Churches among the Hmar – ICI and EFCI played a significant role in the dynamics of Hmar identity movement for popularizing Hmar language by using Hmar language in services and activities of the Church.¹⁸ The ICI has its headquarters at Churachandpur of Manipur while the EFCI headquarters is located at Shillong, the state capital of Meghalaya. In spite of the fact that the leaders of the two churches claimed that they are not specifically Hmar tribe church, non-Hmar usually refer them as Hmar tribe-based churches for their use of Hmar language for church service and the fact that their members dominantly belongs to Hmar tribe. At present, ICI has 14 Presbyteries, out of which the three presbyteries – Aizawl, Sakawrdai and Tuivai are in Mizoram.¹⁹ The EFCI has five administrative districts in Mizoram- Lunglei, Aizawl, Kolasib, Khawlien and Sakawrdai districts respectively.²⁰ In the context of Mizoram, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church seem to have the largest number of members among the Hmar tribe in Mizoram as a whole and among the Hmar speakers of Mizoram also.²¹

¹⁶ Lal Dena, *In Search of Identity: Hmars of North-East India*, (New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House, 2008) 81.

¹⁷ *Historical background of EFCI*. <http://efci.org.in/about/historical-background/>, Accessed on 28th July 2021.

¹⁸ Chalsung Sungte, *Autonomy Movement of the Hmars in Mizoram*. (Ph.D.Thesis, Department of Political Science, NEHU, 2017) 64-65.

¹⁹ Rev. V Ramchuailo Varte, Presbytery Secretary, ICI Aizawl Presbytery, interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 10th April, 2018.

²⁰ Rev. Lalmunsang F Tusing, Presbytery Superintendent, EFCI Aizawl Presbytery, interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 4th April, 2018.

²¹ Dorrosanga, Ex President, HSA and present Member of Planning Board, Sinlung Hills Council. Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 28th June 2021.

The advent of Christianity in and around Senvon of the present Manipur was followed by the establishment of Christian missionary runs schools. The introduction of modern education paved the way for the emergence of a modern educated elite among the Hmar tribes. The newly emergent educated elite formed a number of associations with the intention of integrating the Hmar tribe and preserving its culture among whom the Hmar Youth Association and Hmar Students' Association are prominent among the Hmar in Manipur.

Interestingly, the Hmar Youth Association, which is considered the most influential Hmar organization in Manipur, does not make in road in Mizoram as the Hmar in Mizoram prefers to join Young Mizo Association as the HYA has its headquarters in Manipur. With the exception of one incidence when the HPC (D) issued an order on 17th April 2012, for the dissolution of YMA branches within their demand area in retaliation of the Central YMA president's speech regarding not favouring the upgradation of Sinlung Hills Development Council to an autonomous District Council,²² there was no serious confrontation between HPC or HPC (D) and YMA during the Hmar movement for autonomy. That HPC (D) order was also followed by only 17 branches of Tuisualral Group YMA and the YMA branches are formed again after the standoff was over.²³

One of the most noticeable Hmar organizations operating in Mizoram is the Hmar Students' Association. The HSA was formed twenty-nine years after the advent of Christianity in the Hmar areas of Manipur at Imphal in 1939 to serve the welfare of the Hmar students and to bring an integrative feeling among the Hmar community in general. The association has a motto "Work, Share, Assist, Lead and Serve the Nation". The General headquarters is located at Churachandpur, Manipur and there are Joint Headquarters in Churachandpur, Hmarram(Tipaimuk), Imphal, Vangai and Jiribam in Manipur; Aizawl, Kolasib and Sinlung Hills in Mizoram;

²² HPC(D) in YMA Branch dissolve, <https://www.virthli.in/2012/04/hpc-d-in-yma-branch-dissolve.html> Accessed on 28th June 2021.

²³ Chalsung Sungte, *Autonomy Movement of the Hmars in Mizoram*.164.

Barak Valley, NC Hills and Karbi Anglong, Guwahati in Assam, Shillong in Meghalaya and Delhi.²⁴ The constitution of HSA does not specifically impose being a Hmar tribe as any of the qualifications to become a member of HSA.²⁵ There are some non-Hmars, who enroll themselves as member of the HSA and even become leaders of the Association.

In 1935, the Hmar of Manipur formed the Hmar Association to preserve the Hmar customs, tradition, language, culture, and identity. But when the Mizo union was formed in Mizoram, the Hmar Association collaborated with the Mizo Union and the Mizo Union set up branches among the Hmar tribe. The Hmar people enthusiastically joined the Mizo Union movement mainly on the ground of their expectation to merge the Hmar-inhabited areas of Manipur and some part of Cachar district of Assam to form the Mizo Hills District. They boycotted the Manipur Government and rejected the proposal for the formation of the Hmar Regional Council.²⁶ But, when the Mizo Union leaders accepted the Lushai Hills District excluding the Hmar areas of Assam and Manipur, the Hmar people felt let down and started to propagate Hmar identity.

Soon after the Mizo Union accepted the Lushai Hills District excluding the Hmar of Manipur and Assam, Rochunga Pudaite formed the Hmar National Congress in 1954 to maintain the unity and identity of the Hmar people. But as many Hmar still affiliated themselves with Mizo Union, the existence of two political parties among the same tribe created certain problems. So, the Hmar Assembly was convened at Senvon in 1959 and the Assembly resolved to form the Hmar National Union.²⁷ In 1968 the HNU submitted memorandum to the Prime Minister demanding the constitution of the Hmar Autonomous Hill District comprising the Hmar-

²⁴ About HSA, <https://hmarstudents.org>. Accessed on 28th June 2021.

²⁵ Constitution of Hmar students' Association (Churachanpur, Hmar Students' Association: General headquarters, 2007) Chapter 1 Article 4.

²⁶ Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, 192-197.

²⁷ Ibid, 208-209.

inhabited areas of Assam, Manipur and Mizo Hills. The Hmar movement for identity assertion and political demands in Manipur has a direct influence on Mizoram.

Before the emergence of HNU, the first Hmar political party in Mizoram called 'Hmar Fenngo Federation' was formed in 1954 by some prominent citizens of Aizawl belonging to the Hmar tribe. But the party was put to an end as per the request of the Mizo Union. The HNU had taken up their movement for the constitution of Hmar District composing Hmar-dominated areas of Manipur, Assam, Mizoram and Tripura. Branches of HNU were formed in Hmar-dominated villages like Sakawrdai, Vaitin, Khawpuar, Palsang, Tinghmun and Mauchar in the early 1960s.²⁸ Just after the establishment of HNU blocks and branches in Mizoram, the Young Hmar Association (YHA) was also formed at Sakawrdai. Within a short period of time, many branches of YHA have been established in the Hmar-dominated villages. However, as the MNF appealed to the Hmar leaders not to fight for a separate tribe-based movement while MNF are fighting for territorial integration of all Mizo inhabited areas into one administrative unit, the HNU and YHA ceased to function following the appellation of the MNF.²⁹

Many persons from the Hmar tribe, inside and outside Mizoram joined the MNF movement with the hope of integration of all the 'Mizo' as the Hmar living outside Mizoram are also in favour of political integration. At the same time, Mizo-speaking Hmar in Mizoram are relatively not much interested in Hmar tribe-based politics as compared to the Hmar-speaking groups in Manipur and Assam. There are instances when there was a gap between the Hmar speaking group in and outside Mizoram and the Mizo speaking group of Hmar in Mizoram. In fact, majority of the Mizo-speaking Hmar in Mizoram were very much influenced by the Mizo nationalism that they did not care much about Hmar as a separate identity. Most of them identify themselves as one of the tribes under the nomenclature of Mizo and they called themselves Hmar-Mizo. On the other hand, the Hmar outside Mizoram

²⁸ Chalsung Sungte, *Autonomy Movement of the Hmars in Mizoram*.50.

²⁹ Ibid. 52.

usually consider Hmar as a distinct identity separate from Mizo. There seems to exist mixed feelings regarding the designation of Hmar within the Hmar of Mizoram. There is a tendency for some people to call themselves Hmar while others identify themselves as Mizo.³⁰

The MNF signed Mizo Accord in 1986, by which ended their movement for territorial unification of Mizo inhabited areas by accepting the same boundary of the erstwhile Union Territory of Mizoram excluding all the Mizo inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam and Tripura. The Hmar have been disappointed once again as the Mizo Peace Accord of 1986 failed to address the integration of Hmar-inhabited areas in other parts of Northeast states. They feel neglected for their contribution and opine that the signing of the Mizo Peace Accord brought nothing for the socio-political benefit of their tribe. They started to openly denounce the policy of Greater Mizoram and started the Hmar tribe movement in the late 1980s in Mizoram.³¹

Hence, soon after the signing of the Mizo Accord, some persons of the Hmar tribe held a meeting at Aizawl and formed Mizoram Hmar Association on 3rd July 1986. The Association organized Conference at Vaitin village regarding “Hmar Political Future”. The delegates of the conference opine on the need to change the name of the association as it would not be suitable for the association to engage itself in the political problems of the Hmar in Mizoram. Hence, the Hmar conference held at Sakawrdai on 22nd December 1986 decided to convert Mizoram Hmar Association to a political party called the Hmar People’s Convention (HPC).³² The objectives of the HPC included – striving for a separate political setup to safeguard Hmar culture and communal identity, adopting peaceful means in its political movement, applying a socialistic pattern of administration and maintaining justice in the pursuit of moral and human rights.³³

³⁰ Ibid, 66-67.

³¹ Ibid, 75-76.

³² Ibid, 79.

³³ Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, 212.

The HPC took up the earlier demand of the Hmar National Congress and Hmar National Union by demanding the setting up of an Autonomous District Council for the Hmar-dominated areas of North East India under the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India. However, the party executive body held on 23rd May 1987, resolved to confine their demand to the creation of Hmar Autonomous District Council in the Hmar-dominated area in the northern part of Mizoram.³⁴ The HPC contested the Mizoram State Assembly elections in 1987 by putting up three candidates to contest in three constituencies within their demand area, but none of them become elected.³⁵

In pursuance of their demand for the constitution of Autonomous District Council for the Hmar in Mizoram, the HPC submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 17th March 1987. The reply to their memorandum came from the Home Ministry, Government of India in 1988 in the form of a letter that request the Government of Mizoram to provide facilities for imparting education to the Hmar children up to the primary level in the mother tongue, without paying attention to the main demand for the creation of an Autonomous District. The HPC leaders submitted a memorandum and discussed their demand with Laldenga, Chief Minister of Mizoram on 20th June 1988, but the MNF ministry collapsed before the matter could be taken up. When HPC leaders met Lalthanhawla, Chief Minister of Mizoram in 1989, the Chief Minister promised them that their demand would be discussed and a formal talk would be conducted. Upon learning that their demand was not discussed in the two successive cabinet meetings, the HPC organized 24-hour Bandh on 28th March 1989 at Sailutar along the line of Aizawl-Tipaimukh Road. What was expected to be a peaceful bandh turns violent after Mizoram police attempt to disperse the HPC volunteers. With the eruption of violence, the HPC resorted to arms for the pursuance of their demand.³⁶

³⁴ Chalsung Sungte, *Autonomy Movement of the Hmars in Mizoram*.81.

³⁵ Ibid, 80.

³⁶ Vanlalliena, Pulamte, "Political Movements of the Hmars in Mizoram : A historical Study", Mizoram University Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences Vol IV Issue 1, June 2018,31.

As the HPC went underground to press their demand, the first gunshot of a series of encounters that had followed was fired on 16th May 1989 at Moniarkhal. As per the official record, a total of 46 persons were killed and 66 injured in the various encounters between HPC and Mizoram police.³⁷ The negotiation process has started on 31st July 1990 and on 27th July 1994 Memorandum of Settlement was signed between HPC and the Government of Mizoram. Following the Memorandum of Settlement, the HPC surrendered its arms and Sinlung Hills Development Council was formed.

Some volunteers of HPC who did not surrender their arms due to dissatisfaction with the implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement formed Hmar People Convention Democratic (HPC D) under the leadership of Lalhmingthanga Sanate in 1995. The HPC (D) demands for the creation of an Autonomous District Council consisting of Hmar-inhabited areas in Mizoram, Manipur, and Assam and also demands the involvement of the Government of India towards the implementation of Memorandum of Settlement signed by the HPC and Government of Mizoram. In 2nd April 2018, the Government of Mizoram and HPC (D) of H Zosangbera faction signed a Memorandum of Settlement.³⁸ In pursuance of the Memorandum, a statutory body named Sinlung Hills Council was constituted through an Act of the State Legislature comprising of 14 members headed by Chief Executive Member and Sakawrdai as the headquarters of the Council.³⁹ The Council has administrative autonomy to carry out development works in 31 villages spreading across three Assembly constituencies namely- Chalfilh, Tuivawl and Serlui.⁴⁰ In the 1st General Election to Sinlung Hills Council, held on 5th November,

³⁷ Ibid, 32.

³⁸ *Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of Mizoram and Hmar People's Convention (Democratic)* signed on 2nd April 2018.

³⁹ The Mizoram Gazette, *The Sinlung Hills Council Act, 2018*, (No. 6 of 2018) , VOL - XLVII Aizawl, Thursday 5.7.2018 Asadha 14, S.E. 1940, Issue No. 367

⁴⁰ *Government of Mizoram Notification regarding Area of Sinlung Hills Council.*

<https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/sinlung-hills-council-chungchanga-hriattirna>, Accessed on 27th June 2021.

2019, the MNF and HPC alliance bagged 10 seats in the 12-member Council, both HPC and MNF won 5 seats each while the remaining 2 seats are won by the joint candidate of ZPM and Congress, and an independent candidate.⁴¹

The Hmar identity movement encounters a number of problems. The territorial division by state boundary has very deep consequences for Hmar identity. As Manipur is where the majority of the Hmar tribe lives, many of the Hmar political and social movements originated from Manipur and the headquarters of most of the significant civil societies like the Independent Church of India, Hmar Students Association, and Hmar Youth Associations are also located in Manipur. It is obvious that Hmar of Manipur exerts great influence upon the Hmar of Mizoram, particularly among the Hmar-speaking group. However, certain practical problems caused the Hmar in Mizoram to fully join the Hmar of Manipur as there are situational and agenda differences between Hmar of Manipur and Mizoram.

The Hmar in Mizoram are divided on the basis of the language used, which mainly correlate with the area of inhabitation. The Hmar, particularly those living outside the Sinlung Hills District Council speak Mizo language and identify first and foremost as Mizo. In actuality, the Hmar in and around Aizawl were deeply responsible for the emergence of the Mizo nationality. Those who propagate for Hmar identity mainly come from Hmar speaking group. The difference in perception towards Mizo identity is also witnessed between the members of 'Hmar based Church like EFCI and ICI, which conduct their service in Hmar language and those churches which are pan Mizoram churches like PCI, UPC etc.

The HPC movement is the lone armed movement for autonomy among the Zo ethnic groups of Mizoram. The confrontation between the HPC and Mizoram police which resulted in the loss of lives on both sides do not bring much societal problem

⁴¹ "Mizoram: MNF-HPC combine sweeps Sinlung Hills Council Polls"

<https://www.eastmojo.com/news/2019/11/08/mizoram-mnf-hpc-combine-sweeps-sinlung-hills-council-polls/#bypass-sw>, Accessed on 30th July 2021.

along tribe lines. The main reason seems to be that there is a close relationship between Hmar tribe and other tribes. In fact, there are many Hmar who are pivotal in the Mizo nationality formation process and its propagation. Hence the Mizo leaders and people largely saw HPC movement as a movement of the disgruntled groups among the Hmar tribe rather than the Hmar as a whole. The existence of a significant number of Hmar who identify as Mizo first and foremost and the establishment of YMA rather than Hmar Youth Association in the Hmar-speaking dominated area greatly diffuse the situation.

Paite: Internal division and segmented identity

The Paite is one of the major indigenous tribes of Mizoram consisting of around 11 clans, namely Vuite (Guite), Ngaihte, Teizang, Sukte, Sizang (Thaute), Khuano, Saizang, Vaiphei, Baite, Gangte, and Zo.⁴² There are about 10 Paite dialects of which Dapzar and Teizang constitute the major spoken dialects. Hence, the Paite in Mizoram are generally divided into two language groups – Dapzar and Teizang. The Dapzar groups entered Mizoram during the first half of the 17th century AD and are mainly concentrated in and around Sialkal range consisting of villages like NE Khawdungsei, Kawlbem, Vaikhawtlang, Khawkawn, Chiahpui, Mimbung, Teikhang and Selam. The Teizang group entered Mizoram by the late 1930s and are presently concentrated in the eastern corner of Mizoram adjacent to Myanmar inhabiting villages like- Vapar, Murlen, Ngur, Lailiphai, Ngaizawl, Leisenzo and Sesih.⁴³

The Census of Lushai Hills conducted by the British has recorded the population of the Paite tribe in Mizoram as 2,870 in 1901 and 10,460 in 1921. But in the subsequent census operations, Paite was not found in such records as 'Paite' until the 2011 Census which recorded the number of Paite in Mizoram as 23,183 of which 17,878 are living in rural areas while 5305 are living in urban areas.⁴⁴ Census of India 2001 recorded that there are 64100 Paite speakers in India, of which the

⁴² B Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, 118.

⁴³ Tribal research Institute, *Paite in Mizoram*, 2011 reprint, TBI, Aizawl, 1-10

⁴⁴ *Scheduled Tribe Population*, Census of India Report 2011.

majority are living in Manipur. The number of Paite speakers in Mizoram is 14367, which is about 22% of Paite speakers in India.⁴⁵ Mention must be made here that there are a number of Paite who speak Mizo language rather than Paite language.

The Paite movement for autonomy in Mizoram is deeply influenced and dictated by the Paite in Manipur. The early Paite organization in India like Siamsin Pawlpi (formerly known as Paite Students Association) formed in 1947, Paite National Council (Renamed as Paite Tribe Council in 2003) in 1949, Paite Literature Society in 1950 and Young Paite Association in 1953 are all founded in Manipur. Hence, the General Headquarters of these organizations are located in Manipur. The Paite National Council or Paite Tribe Council is the most politically vocal among these organizations and it would not be wrong to call it as the political wing of the Paite.⁴⁶

During 1947-48, the Paite of Sialkal range (the northeastern part of Mizoram where the Paite are in majority) nominally formed the 'Paite Federation'. But due to a lack of proper organization, competent leadership and undoubtedly due to the influence of stronger movements like the Mizo Union, the Federation did not survive for long.⁴⁷ On 17th -19th October, 1963 a special Assembly of the Paite people was convened under the initiative of the Paite National Council of Manipur at Selam village. The Assembly resolved to form Paite National Council (PNC) in Mizoram with the objective of unifying all the Paite community in Mizoram. At the time of its emergence, the PNC of Mizoram has no direct intention of joining PNC of Manipur.⁴⁸ The emergency Block Conference of Sialkal Block PNC held at Teikhang in 12-13 March 1964 resolved that all members of Paite tribe should contribute funds

⁴⁵ *Distribution of the 100 Non - Scheduled Languages*, Census of India 2001.

⁴⁶ S. Thianlalmuan Ngaihte, *Elite Identity and Politics in Manipur*, 46.

⁴⁷ Orestes Rosanga. "Revisiting the Paite Movement for Regional Council in Mizoram" in *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in North East India*, ed, Patnaik, J.K, J. Dounge and A. Shyamkishor, (Meerut, Balaji, 2018) 435.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 437-438.

to the PNC and ban all other political parties except PNC.⁴⁹ But, mainly due to the opposition of the MNF, the PNC became virtually defunct during the MNF movement for independence.

When the MNF underground movement for independence ended with the signing of the Mizoram Peace Accord in 1986, the environment of peace emboldened the Paite leaders to revive their movement. Some Paite leaders in Sialkal range and Aizawl had discussed the need to revive the Paite organization and movement for autonomy. In their third meeting held on 17th July 1990, they formed an Adhoc Body of Paite Federation. They also resolved to convene the Assembly of the Paite at Mimbung on 12th Oct. 1990 so as to get the approval of the Paite people and elect the Paite Federation executive members. At the same time, PNC headquarters Manipur had set up PNC unit at Mimbung and convened Paite Assembly on 20th February 1991. Hence, two Paite organizations, Paite Federation having headquarters at Aizawl without a unit and PNC having a unit without headquarters in Mizoram emerged.⁵⁰

As decided by the joint meeting of the PNC headquarters Manipur and Paite Federation of Mizoram, North East India Paite Nam Khawmpi Lian (Paite Assembly for North East India) was convened on 6-8 March 1991. The Assembly passed certain resolutions including- Unification of all Paite organizations under Paite National Council, the formation of PNC unit in all Paite inhabited areas and the demand for Sialkal Range Autonomous District Council.⁵¹

In spite of having its own headquarter and constitution, the objectives of the Mizoram PNC were more or less similar to the objectives of Manipur PNC. The PNC of Manipur, subscribed to the idea that the Paite together with other cognate Zo tribes form the 'Zo Nation' and after getting Tribe recognition in Manipur,

⁴⁹ Lalmalsawma Khiangte and J.K Patnaik, "The Paite Movement for Autonomy in Mizoram" in *Contemporary Social Scientist*, (MZU, Vol X-1, summer 2018) 14.

⁵⁰ Muana Hangsing, Ex-President Paite Tribe Council, Interviewed on 6th March 2018.

⁵¹ Lalmalsawma Khiangte and J.K Patnaik, "The Paite Movement for Autonomy in Mizoram" 14.

rechristened itself as Paite Tribe Council in 2003.⁵² Following the PNC of Manipur, the PNC of Mizoram also changed its name to Paite Tribe Council in 2004 and shifted its headquarters from Aizawl to Teikhang.⁵³

The Paite leaders raised their demand for autonomy by submitting of memorandum to the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of Assam. As there were no positive responses from either of the governments, the PNC of Mizoram convened a Special Assembly at Selam Village from 2nd August to 3rd August 1965. The Assembly resolved to boycott Mizo District Council by means of refusing to pay house tax and district council fund. Members of the Village council within the area are also ordered to resign.⁵⁴ The call for boycott seemed to receive a mixed response as the report of Political Assistant and ADC Champhai stated that village council members near Champhai were not enthusiastic about resignation and the leaders of PNC in Mizoram had taken a cue from the leaders of PNC Manipur.⁵⁵ But the PNC and their movement for autonomy become a standstill due to the MNF declaration of Independence in 1966 as the situation did not allow for asserting a particular tribe identity not to mention raising political demands.

As per the resolution of North East India Paite Nam Khawmpi Lian (Paite Assembly for North East India), Paite National Council Mizoram was reconstituted with 1991 with Aizawl as the headquarters. The PNC dictated the Paite in their dominated areas resign from their existing party and form PNC units in their respective villages with the hope that PNC could emerge as a strong political party. But, the PNC candidate Paul TK Dawnga contested the election to Member of Parliament General Elections (Lok Sabha) held on 23.5.1991 as independent and lost by securing only 4159 votes cast in his favour, however, H.Zathuama, the President of PNC, who contested as an independent candidate was elected from

⁵² S Thianlalmuan S Ngaihte, *Elite, Identity and Politics in Manipur*, (Delhi, Mittal, 2015) 166.

⁵³ Muana Hangsing, interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiantge on 6th March 2018.

⁵⁴ *Declaration to boycott of the Mizo District Council* by the PNC Dated 5th August. 1965, Selam.

⁵⁵ *Report of Political Assistant and ADC Champhai to Deputy Commissioner Mizo District* Dated 11th October 1965.

Ngopa constituency in the 3rd Mizoram MLA election held on 30th November 1993, securing 54.36% of total votes polled. In the next MLA elections, Dalngova of PNC leaders contested from Ngopa constituency as independent candidate and lost the election securing 18.02% of the votes polled.⁵⁶ During these years of PNC dabbling in electoral politics, it managed to form Village Council only in limited villages, mostly within Sialkal Range like- Mimbung, Hrainghmun, Teikhang, Kawlbem, Selam, Vaikhawtlang and NE Khawdungsei etc. The PNC eventually repealed their resolution of not allowing other political parties to function within their demand area on 30th June 2000.⁵⁷

Taking a cue from the way the Government of Mizoram handled the Hmar People's Convention armed struggle for Hmar Autonomous District Council which ended in 1994 with the formation of Sinlung Hills Development Council, the PNC 4th Assembly held at Vaikhawtlang in April 1995 resolved to accept the offer made by Congress ministry for the formation of Paite Area Development Council in principle and submitted the charter of demands. But the Congress party was replaced by the MNF ministry in 1998 and the offer made by the Congress ministry was put on hold. On the eve of the Mizoram MLA election 2008, the PNC made an electoral alliance with the Congress party with the condition that Sialkal Tlangdung Development council would be formed if come into power. Following the pre-election promise, the Paite Tribe Council (PNC was renamed as Paite Tribe council on 18th June 2004) has submitted a memorandum for the constitution of SRDC and a special economic package.⁵⁸

Eventually, Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board was set up in 2012 consisting of six villages within Sialkal Range- Mimbung, Hrianghmun, Teikhang, Kawlbem, Selam and Vaikhawtlang with Mimbung as headquarters of the Board. Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board was changed to Sialkal Range Development

56 Vanlalhraia, *Mizoram MLA leh MP inthlan result*, (Aizawl, Lengchawn Presss, 2004) 133.

57 Muana Hangsing, interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 6th March 2018.

58 Lalmalsawma Khiangte and J.K Patnaik, "The Paite Movement for Autonomy in Mizoram" *Contemporary Social Scientist*, (MZU, Vol X-1, Summer 2018) 15-16.

Council and Pu Lalthanhawla, the Chief Minister of Mizoram inaugurated the Council on 20th January 2015. However, the PTC found the existing structure and the power and function of SRDC unsatisfactory. They submitted the Draft Sialkal Range Development Council Act to the Government of Mizoram for its approval in 2017.⁵⁹

The Draft Sialkal Range Development Council Act dealt with three main issues. Firstly, it seeks to expand the territory of the Council to include-Mimbung, Hrianghmun, Teikhang,Kawlbem, Selam, Vaikhawtlang, Khuangphah, Ngur, Vapar,Hnahlan, Tualcheng, Murlen,Leisenzo, Zokhawthar, Sesih, Ngaizawl, Lungphunlian,NE Khawdungsei, Khawkawn, Chiahpui, Daido, NE Tlangnuam, Vanbawng, Suangpuilawn and North Khawlek. Secondly, empowering the council through the mandate of the people. The Draft proposed for setting up of General Council consisting of 30 members, of whom 25 are to be elected and the constitution of an Executive Council consisting of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and three Executive Members to be elected by the General Council amongst themselves. Thirdly, increase the power and functions of the council by means of giving power to:

- 1) Prepare and execute short and long-term development plans/projects.
- 2) Supervision and monitoring of projects taken by the Government of Mizoram within the Council area.
- 3) Issue administrative approval of proposal and selection of executing agency.
- 4) Levy and collect fees for the service rendered by it
- 5) Create and fill up group C and D posts.

In short, the draft act seeks a kind of Autonomous District Council for the Paite-dominated areas by means of expansion of the existing Sialkal Range Development Council. Till now, the government of Mizoram has not rejected nor accepted the draft Act.

⁵⁹ *Memorandum for Upgradation of SRDC* submitted to Chief Minister of Mizoram by PTC on 18th February 2017.

The Paite movement for autonomy is mainly based on the issue of relative deprivation of the Paite inhabited area and protection of their identity. Raising their demands without resorting to violent means is noteworthy and their wish for the development and protection of their identity is nothing but natural. The above study reveals three main interrelated issues that have a deep significance on the whole process of Paite identity assertion and their movement.

The Paite in Mizoram are dispersed and their dominant area is limited to around 12 villages. Territorially, they are divided by urban towns like Ngopa, Champhai, Khawzawl and their adjoining areas where the Paite are in minority. There is also a gap between the Paite in Leisenzo and nearby villages, who are leaning towards their brethren in Myanmar while the Paite in Sialkal range and adjoining areas are leaning towards Manipur. Hence the PNC/PTC movement is limited to Sialkal and adjoining areas which weakened the movement to a great extent.

The Paite movement in Mizoram is to a large extent influenced by the Paite in Manipur. In the initial times, the Manipur PNC leaders took the initiative of drafting and submitting memorandums. Even though the PNC of Mizoram has a separate constitution and headquarters, the fact remains that they are functioning under the shadow of PTC General Headquarters of Manipur since the PTC General Headquarters has the power to deliberate the constitution of the PTC of Mizoram and intervenes when the PTC of Mizoram face serious internal problems.⁶⁰ These realities of outside state influence seem to cause apprehension on the part of the political leaders as well as the elite of Mizoram.

The Paite movement is weakened by internal conflict over position and influence of the political party. The PTC attempt to wield more political bargaining power through election has proved more or less futile. While, the formation of SRDC

⁶⁰ PTC General Assembly <https://www.imphaltimes.com/news/item/1188-ptc-general-assembly> dated Imphal 17th October 2014. Accessed on 23rd May 2018.

could be considered as the achievement of the Paite, the main political goal of the PTC - up gradation of SRDC so as to make it function as an autonomous council, is still a distant dream.

Lai: A search for Identity

The Lai is one of the major tribes of Mizoram. The Pawi (Lai) Union Central Headquarters listed 840 sub-tribes and clans under the Lai tribes, including - Aihniar Aineh, Bawitlung, Chawnglut, Chinzah, Darlawng, Fanai, Hlawncheu, Hlawnhhing, Hnialum, Kawlni, Khawlhing, Khenglawt, Sailung, Sohnel, Thlauthang, Tlau, Vanchhawng, Vuangtu, Vantawl, Zahau, Zathang, Zinghlawng.⁶¹ The Census of India 2011 report shows that there are 51406 Pawi in Mizoram and 28624 of them speak the Lai language.⁶² The Lai are called by different names such as Pawi in Mizoram, Chin in Myanmar, and Shendus in Bangladesh. It should be noted that a significant number sub-tribes like Fanai, Bawitlung, who cling to their earlier name Pawi/Pawih, usually claimed themselves as a separate tribe, different from Lai and the majority of them did not join the PLTU movement for setting up of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.⁶³ Even though the Lai are living in almost all areas of Mizoram, the Lai Autonomous District Council, with Lawngtlai as the headquarters, is a Lai-dominated area.

In the pre-colonial period, the Lai chiefs ruled over a significant area of the present Mizoram without being influenced by the Sailo chiefs and they even regarded themselves as more powerful than the Sailo chiefs because of the backing

⁶¹ Circular issued by Pawi (Lai) Union Central Headquarters, Aizawl dated 29th February 1996 as quoted in Jangkhongam Dounel, "Evolution of the Lai Autonomous District Council" in *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*, ed. Jangkhongam Dounel (Guwahati, Spectrum, 2016), 75.

⁶² Census of India report 2011. There is a problem of identifying the number of Lai as the Census report recognized Pawi which includes those who identify themselves as Pawi but not as Lai and those who identify themselves as Lai. Among those who identify themselves as Lai, a significant number of them do not speak Lai language.

⁶³ Prof. Vanlalringa Bawitlung, interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiantge on 24th July 2020.

of the Lai chiefs of Chin Hills of present Myanmar. Similar to the other tribes of Mizoram, the Lai society was transformed significantly by the modernization process during the colonial period, particularly, the modern system of governance under British rule and Christianity. When the Welsh Presbyterian Mission and Baptist Mission demarcated their operating area, the Lai-dominated area was under the Baptist mission. The Baptist Mission with its headquarters at Lunglei, begun converting the Lai people to Christianity and hence Baptist Church of Mizoram was the main church in the area until the formation of LIKBK. The Baptist Church of Mizoram conducted service in Lusei language which resulted in the spreading of Lusei language among the Lai tribes and many of the Lai tribes in and around Lawngtlai began to speak Lusei language while Lai villages beyond Chintuipui river retain Lai language.

On the eve of India's independence, some government employees in Lunglei felt the need to form political organization to raise political demands for the Pawi (Lai) and Lakher (Mara). Hence, Z Hengmang resigned from their government job and founded Chin Association in 1947 and he was subsequently elected as member of Lushai Hills Advisory Council in 1948 to represent the Lai tribe. Z Hengmang and Vako, members of the Lushai Hills Advisory Council representing Mara, convened an Assembly of representatives of all villages within Pawi-Lakher region at Lawngtlai on 25th October 1949. The Assembly formed the Pawi- Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) and Z Hengmang was elected as the president.⁶⁴ The PLTU pursued the demand for the formation of Regional Council for the Pawi and Lakher under the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India. Eventually, the Government of Assam constituted Pawi- Lakher Regional Council which was officially inaugurated on 23rd April 1953. In 1972, the Pawi Lakher regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils – Pawi Regional Council with Lawngtlai as the headquarters, the

⁶⁴ Jangkhongam Dounel, "Evolution and Functioning of the Lai Autonomous District Council" in Jangkhongam Dounel edited, *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*, (Delhi, Spectrum, 2016), 76.

headquarters of Lakher Regional Council located at Siaha and Chakma Regional Council at Bonapansury.⁶⁵

Following the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972, the Mizo District Council was abolished and the three Regional Councils were upgraded to Autonomous District Councils. As demanded by the Lai, the name of the Pawi Autonomous District Council was changed to Lai Autonomous District Council by the Parliament of India under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1998.⁶⁶ The LADC covers 95 Village Councils and 6 sub-villages consisting of 20215 households with 95705 populations and its headquarters is located at Lawngtlai.⁶⁷ The LADC area is divided by Chhimtuipui River which has more than geographical importance for the Lai tribe. The term *Tuichhak* meaning east of the river and *Tuithlang* which signify the west side of the river is frequently used by the local. The significance of this geographical division lies in the fact that the *Tuichhak* area retains Lai language while the majority of the *Tuithlang* area speaks Lusei language.⁶⁸ The Lai identity revival movement in the form of the formation Young Lai Association and LIKBK begins in the *Tuichhak* area.

Interestingly, while the demand of the Pawi- Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) led to the creation of Pawi- Lakher Regional Council, the PLTU becomes weakened by internal conflict between Lai and Mara. The Mara felt that the PLRC was dominated by the Lai and they formed Mara tribe-based party called Mara Freedom Party in 1963. The Lai also formed their own tribe-based party named Chin National Front in 1965⁶⁹, the formation of these two tribe-based parties led to the natural death of the

⁶⁵ Ibid,77.

⁶⁶ Ibid,78.

⁶⁷ *Population List of Villages/ locality under LADC 2019-2021*, Local Administration Department LADC vide Notification number V.11012/1/2019-LADC/LAD dated 9th October 2019.

⁶⁸ JH Lalrindika, General Secretary CYLA, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 10th July 2021.

⁶⁹ S.K.Chaube, *Electoral Politics in North East India*, (Madras, Universal Press, 1985) 29-30, 38.

PLTU.⁷⁰ Since then, a number of Lai tribe-based political parties like Lairam Congress, Lai National Union and Lairam People Party have emerged but they failed to make any significant political impact. The political scenario of the LADC is dominated by national and state parties, mainly the party that formed a ministry at the state level. Since the Election Commission of India disqualified Lairam People Party due to lack of participation in the political field and lack of members on 20th January 2017, there is no Lai tribe-based political party at present.⁷¹ In the General Election of Lai Autonomous District Council held in 2020, three political parties- MNF, INC and BJP and some independents candidates contest the election, and the ruling party of Mizoram, the MNF won 20 seats out of the available 25 seats.⁷²

It was only after the emergence of Pawi- Lakher Regional Council that most of the Lai civil societies are formed. The oldest Lai civil society called as Lai Students' Association traces its origin to the Regional Students Association which was formed on 23rd April 1958.⁷³ In spite of being a member of Mizo Zirlai Pawl, the Lai and Mara students at Shillong from the Pawi- Lakher Regional Council felt the need to form an association of their own to address their particular problems. They formed Regional Students Association with two objectives- To forge better understanding, and cooperation among the students from the PLRC and to promote culture and sports.⁷⁴ Initially, the headquarters of the association was at Lunglei, but the

⁷⁰ Jangkhongam DOUNGEL and RT Hnialum, "The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council" in *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*, ed. Jangkhongam DOUNGEL (Guwahati, Spectrum, 2016), 40.

⁷¹ United News of India "ECI disqualifies two political parties in Mizoram" dated 20th January 2020., <http://www.uniindia.com/eci-disqualifies-two-political-parties-in-mizoram/other/news/755602.html>. Accessed on 13th July 2021.

⁷² State Election Commission, *Party Wise Result*, <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/party-wise-ge-to-ladc-2020>, Accessed on 13th July 2021.

⁷³ LSA Raising Day message by Lai students' Association General Headquarters, <https://www.facebook.com/Lai-Students-Association-General-Headquarters-Lawngtlai-291450884825731>. Accessed on 3rd July 2021.

⁷⁴ R Tintlunga Hnialum, "LSA Tobul leh a indinchhoh dan", *LSA Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, (Aizawl, LV Arts, 2008) 1-2.

headquarters was shifted to Lawngtlai in 1962. The name of the association was also changed to Pawi- Lakher Student's Association (PLSA) in 1968. After the Mara move away from the PLSA and formed the Mara Students' Organisation, the name of the association was changed to Lai Students' Association in 1975.⁷⁵ As per the resolution adopted at LSA General Assembly 2005, Lawngtlai became the General headquarters of LSA. Under the General Headquarters, there is one Headquarter at Siaha, one Joint Headquarter at Aizawl, and five Sub Headquarters at Shillong, Sangau, Bualpui Ng, Chawngte P and Bungtlang South. The Objectives of LSA⁷⁶ include- Preservation of Lai culture and language, working for the development of *Lairam* and *Laifa*,⁷⁷ protecting the freedom and rights of the *Laifa* and Protection of *Lairam* and *Lai Hnam* against assimilation, and exploitation of natural resources and environments.

Article 8 of the LSA constitution allows any student belonging to the Lai tribe and non-Lai tribe, even non students to become a member. The same constitution also provided that even government employees (with the exception of those working under LADC) could be elected as an office bearers of LSA.⁷⁸ Hence a number of non-Lai became an active members and even become a leader of the LSA in the past. But there is a proposal to debar non-Lai from becoming LSA office bearers provided the next General Conference of LSA resolved in favour of the agenda.⁷⁹

Apart from its role in the development of education and the welfare of its members, the LSA also played an active role as a pressure group for the realization of its objectives involving matters relating to Lai identity. The Association promotes Lai language and culture in diverse ways and even sent a delegation to the

⁷⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁶ Constitution of Lai Students' Association, (Lawngtlai, LSA Gen. Headquarters, 2013) Article 3

⁷⁷ The term *Lairam* means Land of the Lai which mainly signifies area of Lai Autonomous District Council and *Laifa* means Lai people or Lai community.

⁷⁸ Constitution of Lai Students' Association, (Lawngtlai, LSA Gen. headquarters, 2013) Article 22 .

⁷⁹ Eric Vanhmingchhuana, General Secretary, LSA, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 9th July 2021.

Government of India for the up gradupgradation existing LADC to Union Territory.⁸⁰ In a recent incident, when Manghmuna CEM of LADC, who is from the Mizo National Front party mentioned that Lai is one of the Mizo tribe, the LSA issued a press release that vehemently opposed Manghmuna's statement citing that the constitution of India(ST) order 1951, listed both Mizo and Pawih (which means, Lai) are listed separately as a distinct tribe. They demand Manghmuna to issue a public apology and revert his stance and delete his statement from the LADC House record.⁸¹

The beginning of the formation of Lai tribe-based Church could be traced to Bualpui (Ng) a Lai-speaking village. The Bualpui (Ng) church of BCM felt the need to form a separate Church for the Lai to prove their distinct tribe identity and formally declared their severance from the Baptist Church of Mizoram on 25th August 1969.⁸² The nearby Lai-speaking villages like Lungzarhtum, Vawmbuk, Lungpher, Lungtian join the initiative of the Bualpui (Ng) which led to the formation of Isua Krista Kohhran (Church of Jesus Christ) on 23rd May 1970.⁸³ The formation of IKK in the *Tuichhak* area has its repercussion in the *Tuithlang* area as Pawi Ram Baptist Kohhran was formed at Lawngtlai on 7th January 1982.⁸⁴ In November 1999, the Special Joint Assembly of Isua Krista Kohhran and Pawi Ram Baptist Kohhran, held at New Siaha decided to merge the two churches together and formed Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran (LIKBK).⁸⁵

⁸⁰ General Secretary LSA report, *LSA Golden Jubilee Souvenir*,(Aizawl, LV Arts, 2008) xii.

⁸¹ *Lai Hnam Chhanna* Press release issued by General Headquarters, Lai Students' Association dated 1st April 2021.

⁸² Rev. Sangliankhuma Chinzah, *Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran lo din dan*, (TM, Aizawl, 2019), 35-36.

⁸³ Ibid, 38

⁸⁴ Ibid, 109-111.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 156-157.

The operation area of LIKBK is mainly confined within LADC area, outside the LADC area they have Churches in Siaha, Aizawl, Shillong and Delhi, where the members are mainly students from LADC area. The LIKBK has 118 churches and 2 preaching stations with 30692 members belonging to 5855 families.⁸⁶ Conforming to the basis of its emergence, the LIKBK took a keen interest in propagating Lai distinct identity by popularizing Lai cultural dress and language. It observed Saturday night of its Assembly as Lai night by conducting the service in the Lai language and by wearing Lai traditional dress. The church also decided to maintain its church office file in Lai language. The LIKBK also develop strong relations with their brethren in Myanmar and different parts of the world who identify themselves as Chin. The Lai Bible used in the service is also in Hakha dialect published by Bible Society of Myanmar. The LIKBK leaders felt that their hosting of the International Chin Christian Youth Conference at Lawngtlai in 2017 greatly popularized the Lai language among Lusei-speaking Lai youths, particularly within the LIKBK.⁸⁷

In spite of its late formation, the Young Lai Association becomes the largest and most influential association within LADC. Before the formation of YLA, there are a number of YMA branches within the LADC area and in villages where there are no YMA branches, youth organizations for a particular village like Sangau *Nula leh Tlangval Pawl* has existed.⁸⁸ The need to form one youth organization for the whole Lai tribe was felt and R Zathang submitted a proposal for the formation of Young Lai Association to the *Sangau Nula leh Tlangval Pawl*. The General Meeting of the *Sangau Nula leh Tlangval Pawl* accepted the proposal and elected the first Office Bearers of YLA with V.Vanthawng, the President of the association as the

⁸⁶ LIKBK Assembly Bu, (Lawngtlai, LIKBK, 2021), 67.

⁸⁷ Rev C Lalawmpuia, LIKBK Aizawl Pastor, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 4th April 2018.

⁸⁸ ‘Sangau Nula leh Tlangval pawl’ means Youth Association of Sangau. Sangau is one of the villages among others where village based youth organizations has existed before the formation of YLA. Mention may be made that Sangau is located in the “Tuichhak area”.

first President of YLA in 23rd September 1974.⁸⁹ From Sangau, the YLA has spread to different corners of LADC area. The already existed YMA branches and village based organizations dissolved their organization and joined the YLA. Initially Sangau was designated as the Headquarters of YLA, but with the expansion of YLA, it was later shifted to Lawngtlai. Presently, there are as many as 115 branches under the Central Young Lai Association.⁹⁰

As there are a significant number of non-Lai tribes residing within the LADC area, the constitution of YLA provided that any Lai/Mizo who is above 16 years of age and who agrees to the objectives of YLA can enroll as a member of YLA. Hence there are number of YLA members who are non Lai and several non Lai even become office bearers at the Branch level.⁹¹ The YLA has three objectives - to uphold Christian values, to protect culture and identity, to work together for the development of the land and tribe. The YLA engaged itself in a number of ways for the preservation and promotion of Lai culture by means of organizing Lai cultural dance competition, song composition competition in Lai language, promotion of Lai cultural dress, construction of Lai typical village etc. The YLA also took initiative for the introduction of Lai language in the schools under LADC, use of Lai language in the LADC offices as well as wearing of Lai dress in the offices under LADC.⁹²

There are crucial interwoven issues that confront the Lai identity formulation and its propagation. The contemporary Lai identity dialogue mainly revolves around the boundary of LADC. The Pawi are presumed to be numerically the largest tribe in Mizoram. But certain clans /tribe like Fanai, Bawitlung etc align themselves with the Mizo Union movement and hence choose to stay out of the PLTU movement for Regional Council. After the formation of the LADC, the Lai identity movement then mainly revolved around the geographical area of LADC leaving the majority of the

⁸⁹ JH Lalrindika, General Secretary CYLA, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 10th July 2021.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ *Young Lai Association Constitution*, PDF Version (Lawngtlai, CYLA, 2018) 16.

⁹² JH Lalrindika, General Secretary CYLA, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 10th July 2021.

Pawi outside the Lai identity movement. This confinement of Lai identity within the LADC area shrinks the numerically dominant Pawi (Lai) group into a minority community. The issue of Lai identity influences the politics of LADC and the financial and administrative power of LADC also influenced the way Lai identity is formulated and propagated. The danger of losing autonomy by means of scrapping the Autonomous District Council is frequently highlighted by the elite in their propagation of the need to preserve Lai identity.

The importance of the geographical division of the LADC area by *Chhimtuipui* River is evident. The YLA and LIKBK church originated from the *Tuichhak* area where Lai language is maintained, while majority of the Lai in and around Lawngtlai town, called as *Tuithlang* area do not speak Lai language. The attempt to revive Lai language through government intervention and civil societies brought some fruits. But at the same time overstressing of fluentness of Lai language as Lai identity markers could alienate non-Lai speakers which could pose a problem for the perpetuation of Lai identity movement.

The interface of the church, politics and identity movement is clearly evident. Comparatively speaking, the LIKBK Church stressed more on the distinctiveness of Lai identity more than other Churches like BCM or Presbyterian Church since the reason for the formation of LIKBK has its root in the wish to assert Lai identity. The role of the church in LADC politics is evidently seen through the selection of candidates for MDC and MLA for constituencies within the area. The overzealous projection of one particular Church as the keeper of identity has the potential to destabilize the Lai identity formation process itself in the long run by inculcating inter-church conflict among the same tribe.

The Lai community is marked by internal division. The Lai elite failed to bring the Fanai clans/tribe within their ambit and the contemporary Lai community is divided along Church as well as Lai speakers and non-Lai speakers. Regarding self-identification, some group's view that the Mizo identity and Lai identity are inherently conflicting while some section of the community view Mizo identity and

Lai identity could coexist together, and there are certain groups who cherished the Chin identity. The interplay of these internal divisions poses a challenge to the Lai identity and how the Lai elite address this division would greatly determine the perpetuation of Lai identity.

The Mara: Isolation and consolidation of identity

Formerly known as Lakher, Shendu, Miram etc. the Mara tribes consists of five main language groups like - Zyhno, Hawthai, Tlosai, Chapi and Vyhtu. They are concentrated in the Mara Autonomous District Council which is located in southern tip of Mizoram. The MADC area covers 1445 square km which is inhabited by 12,615 households. Out of the total population MADC which consists of 64,829 persons, as many as 53,929 are Mara, which is around 83% of the total population.⁹³ Though nothing definite is known about their original home, they appear to inhabit their present area in the latter part of the 17th century. The Mara-occupied area is encircled by the Kolodyne (Beino) river, this natural barrier helps the Mara to maintain their language and culture. When Mara inhabited area was annexed and brought under British rule, it was partitioned for administrative convenience- some areas are put under the Lushai Hills of Assam province while a major portion went to Myanmar. As a result, a smaller portion of the Mara inhabitant area remained within the union of India.

The Mara shared myth of origin with the Chin- Kuki- Lushai group but with a slightly different version. The Mara-inhabited area was annexed later than other tribes of Mizoram. The whole Mara-occupied area was annexed by the British after the annexation of Zyhno area as late as 1924. A Christian missionary named Rev Reginald Arthur Lorrain and his wife arrived in the Mara area in 1907 and they founded Lakher Pioneer Mission to preach Christianity to the Mara.⁹⁴ The formation

⁹³ *Abstract of Village wise household Survey – 2015 Under MADC* conducted by MADC as on 30th September 2015.

⁹⁴ K Robin, *The Maras: History, Polity and Identity* (Siaha, Mara Autonomous District Council, 2016) 14.

of a Mission specifically for the Mara tribe has significant consequences for the Mara Identity and identity politics of Mizoram as a whole. The missionaries reduced Tlosai dialect of Mara language into writing form in 1908 which led the Tlosai dialect to become the modern Mara language.⁹⁵ Apart from converting the Mara to Christianity, the Christian Missionaries shaped and educated the Mara through the introduction of modern education which in turn led to the emergence of an educated elite among the people.

By 1910, the Lakher Pioneer missionaries had their first Mara Christian, named Thytu. By 1915, the number of Christians has increased to 24. In 1916, the first Christian Church was constructed at Serkawr (Local name is Saikao) Mission compound and the early Mara Christians named their church Lakher church for more than 50 years until the name of the Church was changed to Lakher Independent Evangelical Church (LIEC) in 1960.⁹⁶ The growing consciousness as Mara led to the changing of LIEC to Mara Independent Evangelical Church in 1967 but after a short period, the name of the church was changed to Independent Church of Maraland (ICM) to accommodate non-Mara within the church. In 1989, the Assembly again changed its name to Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM).⁹⁷ After the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council, Siaha becomes the headquarters of the MADC and many church leaders felt necessary to change the Headquarters of the Church to Siaha for the further development of the Church. The decision of the Assembly to shift the headquarters of the Church to Siaha have deep consequences as those who are in favour of keeping Serkawr as the Headquarters choose to retain their old name Independent Church of Maraland and break away from ECM.⁹⁸ ECM has become the largest Church in the MADC area with 46136 members, belonging to

⁹⁵ Zakhu Hlychho, *Marate Tobul*, (Aizawl, JP Offset, 2011 Reprint) 189.

⁹⁶ Zakhu Hlychho, *Mara Ram Evangelical Kohhran leh a dintute*, (Aizawl, JP Offset, 2007) 40-45.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 55-57.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 62-63.

8230 households and there are 90 local churches.⁹⁹ As the headquarters of PLRC and Siaha District, a significant number of non-Mara have settled in the area, and hence other Christian denominations like PCI, BCM, UPC, and others also sprung up within the MADC area. The ECM also has as many as 12 Churches where service is conducted in the Mizo language¹⁰⁰ and the report of the Church and newsletter are also published both in Mara and Mizo languages.

It is no wonder that the Mara political movement began from Saikao, the headquarters of the Lakher Pioneer Mission. Chhohmo Hlychho, the chief of Saikao, convened a conference of Mara chiefs to deliberate on the political future of the Mara people in 1945 which was attended by 23 chiefs among whom are four Lai chiefs. The participation of Lai chiefs in the Mara Chiefs conference is due to the reasons that their villages are located within Circle no 16 and the ethnical relatedness of the Lai and Mara.¹⁰¹ It may be appropriate here to mention that there are many common clans among the Mara and Lai like -Hlawunchhing and Hlychho, Chinzah and Chozah, Bunghai and Bohia, Hnialum and Hnaihly etc.¹⁰² The meeting adopted a resolution for submission of a memorandum to the Governor of Assam through the Additional Superintendent, South Lushai hills, Lunglei arguing that the Mara tribe are divided into Chin Hills, Lushai Hills and Arakan Hill Tracts and demanding a separate district for the Mara. This Memorandum was followed by other memorandums demanding the separate administrative set up for the Mara.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Statistical Handbook 2021 (Siaha, Evangelical Church of Maraland, 2021), 1. As per Abstract of Village wise household Survey – 2015 Under MADC , there are 12,615 households and total population of 64,829 persons.

¹⁰⁰ The ECM Local Churches which conducts service in Mizo language within MADC area are- Bethel ,Edenthlar, Gilgal, New Siaha, Immanuel, Bethlehem, Council Vaih, Salem, Tipa beivaih, No-aotlah, Kaochao and Salemthar.

¹⁰¹ Jangkhongam DOUNGEL and Steffi Beingiachhiezi, “ Autonomy Movement of the Pawi and Lakher” in in *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in North East India* ,(ed) Patnaik, J.K , J. DOUNGEL and A. Shyamkishor (Meerut, Balaji, 2018) 424.

¹⁰² Interview with C. Lawbei, Mara politician, by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 18th July 2021.

¹⁰³ K Robin, *The Maras: History, Polity and Identity* 15-17.

When the Government of Assam set up Advisory Council, Vako of Zawngling and Chhohmo Hlychho of Saikao represented the Mara tribe as commoners and chief respectively. When Rustomji, Adviser to the Governor of Assam visited Lushai Hills, Lai and Mara submitted a memorandum demanding Regional Council for them. To pursue their demand, the Pawi- Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) was formed in 1948.¹⁰⁴ The PLTU's relentless efforts resulted in the constitution of Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Regional Council and the Regional Council was inaugurated on 23rd April 1953.¹⁰⁵ But a tussle between the Mara and Lai soon emerged within the Regional Council particularly over the post of CEM. The Mara began to feel that Regional Council was dominated by the Lai and they decided to move away from the Pawi- Lakher Tribal Union by forming a separate political party of their own.

The Mara leaders called Mara convention at Zyhno village and formed Mara Freedom Party in 1963 with Valua Hlychho as the first President.¹⁰⁶ The aim of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) was to fight for a new administrative set up for the Mara. The MFP mobilized the people culturally and politically and they submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Assam demanding the setting up of a separate District Council for the Mara. The MFP called for a boycott of PL Regional Council on 5th February 1965 by means of forming the Interim District Council and dictated the Mara people to resign from jobs under PL Regional Council, pay land and other taxes to the Interim District Council, to stop any connection between Village Councils and PL Regional Council. But due to the MNF movement for independence in 1966, the MFP movement for a separate District Council became a standstill.¹⁰⁷

However, the MFP participated in the fourth general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council which was held in 1970, as they thought that it would be easier to pursue their demands if they were in power. At the same time, the Lai leaders joined the Indian National Congress Party, but, there are two factions- L.

¹⁰⁴ Steffi C Beingiachhiezi, *Mara Autonomous District Council, Evolution and Development*. (M.Phil. Dissertation submitted to Department of Political Science, MZU, 2015), 57.

¹⁰⁵ K Robin, *The Maras: History, Polity and Identity* 15-1718-19.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 25.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 25-27.

Chinzah group and F. Manghnuna group within the Congress party. The election to the PLRC on 23rd April 1970 witnessed a party-wise contest for the first time. With the support of Manghnuna group, the MFP managed to form a government with Zakhu Hlychho became the first Mara CEM of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.¹⁰⁸

When the Pawi and Lakher leaders heard about the proposal for the elevation of the Mizo District Council to Union Territory of Mizoram, they decided to demand Union Territory for themselves as well. The delegates of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council met the Prime Minister of India, but Indira Gandhi told them about her inability to meet their demand and instructed them to meet the Union Home Minister. The Union Home Minister informed the delegates that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council would be upgraded to the status of Autonomous District Council. The delegates of Mara, Lai and Chakma then began to demand a separate Autonomous District of their own.¹⁰⁹ The demand of the MFP for the formation of a separate District Council for the Mara became a reality when the Mizo District Council was elevated to the Union Territory of Mizoram on 21st January, 1972 and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma Regional Council. The Lakher Regional Council was elevated to a full-fledged Autonomous District Council on 29th April, 1972 with its headquarters at Siaha.¹¹⁰

In the first general election to MADC held on 17th December 1972, the MFP won 8 seats out of the total 9 seats. However, before the completion of its first term, the Mara Freedom Party merged with India National Congress in 1975 which ended Mara tribe-based party for some years.¹¹¹ In 1986, United Peoples Party was formed by certain Mara leaders who felt disgruntled as the Mizo Peace Accord of 1986 did not provide any special provision for the upliftment of their tribe. The UPP put

¹⁰⁸ Steffi C Beingiachhiezi, *Mara Autonomous District Council,: Evolution and Development*, 70

¹⁰⁹ Ibid , 72.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 73-74.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 86-87

formation as separate UT for Mara as its political agenda, but the UPP soon ended without having electoral success.¹¹²

After a lapse of ten years, a new Mara-based party, the Maraland Democratic Front was formed on 25th January 1996 with PP Thawla as the President. The party put the formation of separate UT covering the existing MADC area which they called as Maraland as its main political agenda.¹¹³ In the Seventh election to MADC helinon 2000, the newly formed MDF won 8 seats out of the total 19 seats and became the party with a largest elected MDC. As there was no single majority party to form the government, a coalition government was formed by MDF and MNF with PP. Thawla as Chief Executive Member.¹¹⁴ In the 2003 Mizoram MLA elections, PP Thawla was elected from Tuipang constituency to become the first MLA and first Minister of State elected on the ticket of Mara tribe -based Party.¹¹⁵ In the elections to MADC held in 2005 the MDF captured 7 seats and formed a coalition government with INC \as an independent member. In the ninth MADC elections of 2007 out of 22seats, INC won 8 seats, MDF won 7 seats and MNF won 7 seats. Initially, MDF and INC formed a coalition government, but it was voted out on 2008 by elected members from MDF and MNF to form a new executive body. In the Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections 2008, PP Thawla won MLA seat from MDF again for the second term. However, the MDF began to decline since the MADC elections of 2012 in which it won only 5 seats out of 25 seats.¹¹⁶ With the

¹¹² Interview with C. Lawbei, Former General Secretary of United Peoples Party by Lalmalsawma Khiantge on 18th July 2021.

¹¹³ Interview with C. Lawbei, Former General Secretary of United Peoples Party by Lalmalsawma Khiantge on 18th July 2021.

¹¹⁴ Steffi C Beingiachhiezi, *Mara Autonomous District Council,: Evolution and Development*, 94-95.

¹¹⁵ Elections Results of Mizoram Assembly Elections, <https://www.elections.in/mizoram/assembly-constituencies/2003-election-results.html>. Accessed on 18th July 2021.

¹¹⁶ Steffi C Beingiachhiezi, *Mara Autonomous District Council,: Evolution and Development*, 96-100.

merger of Maraland Democratic Front party with BJP in 2017, there is no Mara tribe-based political Party presently operating in MADC area.¹¹⁷

Way back in 1953, few Mara students in Shillong felt it necessary to form a separate organization for the Mara youths in line with Mizo Young Association to preserve, uplift and promote Mara culture and tradition. As such the present largest and most influential NGO within the MADC area, the Mara Thyutlia Py (MTP)¹¹⁸ was formed on 9th October 1954 at Shillong with V Hlychho as the first President.¹¹⁹ The Association allowed anyone who wished for the betterment of the Mara society, tribe and identity, as well as willing to help and uplift the destitute, to become a member. The objective of the MTP included- reaching out to those in need and providing support, protecting and promoting Mara Identity, dialect and culture, promoting unity and integration among the Mara community, inculcating and build up the Christian way of life etc.¹²⁰

As a nonpolitical organization with a motto “To help and to stand together in the service of those in need”,¹²¹ the MTP has been working for helping anybody in need of help within its area of operation, irrespective of tribe consideration. To achieve its aims and objectives relating to the upliftment of the Mara society, the MTP organized many programs or festivals for the promotion and protection of the Mara culture. As per the resolution adopted at the 2019 MTP General Conference, the MTP declared “Protection of Mara tribe and language” as the theme or stress area of the MTP. The Association passed a resolution, submit memorandums, verbal

¹¹⁷ “BJP, MDF merge ahead of 2018 Mizoram assembly polls”

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/bjp-mdf-merge-ahead-of-2018-mizoram-assembly-polls/articleshow/61226862> . Accessed on 18th July 2021.

¹¹⁸ Literal meaning of Mara Thyutlia Py is Mara Youth Association.

¹¹⁹ Mylai Hlychho, Co-founder and First General Secretary of MTP, interviewed by Steffi C Beingiachhiezi on behalf of Lalmalsawma Kiangte on 13/07/2021.

¹²⁰ Mara Thyutlia Py : Constitution and Rules (2016), 1

¹²¹ Ibid, 1

petition to MADC to use Mara language as a means of communication within MADC office.¹²²

While the Pawi (Lai) and Lakher (Mara) students were under the Regional Students Association, the Mara students at Shillong felt that a need for the formation of a separate Mara students organization for better cooperation among them since the Mara have separate dialect, culture, tradition and custom. Hence, Mara Students' Organisation (MSO) was formed on 4th November, 1965 at Shillong with S Hiato as the first President.¹²³ The motto of MSO reads, "For God and Maraland" and its objectives include- To preserve Mara vernacular and take steps for the introduction of education in Mara vernacular from primary to University level, to lead Maraland in the road of development, to protect and promote Mara tribe and promote unity amongst the Mara tribe, to protect and promote Mara literatures etc.¹²⁴ Membership is open to- anyone who has completed his/ her education whether employed (government service) or unemployed, Mara student from primary to University level, and anyone who obeys and complies with the MSO Constitution.¹²⁵ The headquarters of MSO was shifted to Siaha in 1980 and presently, there are two Joint Headquarters at Aizawl and Delhi, two Sub Headquarters at Shillong and Bangalore.¹²⁶

The MSO considers the preservation of Mara language as one of the most important factors for the preservation and protection of Mara identity since many Mara within the MADC area do not speak Mara language. This has caused concern and the MSO felt that Mara language should be preserved and promoted within the household and use as a means of communication among themselves. The MSO

¹²² Pakhaw Chozah, General Secretary Central MTP, interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 20th July 2021.

¹²³ AB. Roma, First Vice President MSO interviewed by Steffi C Beingiachhiezi on behalf of Lalmalsawma Kiangte on 1st July, 2021.

¹²⁴ *Mara Students Organisation: Constitution* (Siaha, MSO, Revised, 2019) 6- 8.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 11

¹²⁶ Judson KT. Zephatha, General Secretary MSO, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 20th July 2021.

headquarters always use Mara dialect as a primary means of communication for the circulation of information apart from certain occasions where the issues it deals with demand for English or Mizo. The General Conference of MSO passed a resolution that demands should be made to MADC that all MDC and MADC Staff should be elected and appointed only among those who speak the language.¹²⁷ The MSO also passed a resolution that demanded the MADC to make Mara language a medium of instruction in primary and middle school, if not possible for all subjects, at least Science and Mathematics.¹²⁸

The Mara are one of the most compact and isolated tribe. The big *Chhingtupui* River which encircled the Mara inhabited area makes the area geographically isolated and makes the inhabited area of the Mara compact than other tribes in Mizoram. It was only on 16th May 2000 that the *Chhingtupui* Bridge which connects MADC area to other parts of Mizoram was completed. As mentioned previously the Lai villages which retain Lai language are located within the land encircled by the *Chhingtupui* River. This geographical isolation provides a favorable position to the Mara to maintain their distinct language and culture and only a tiny section of the Mara does not speak Mara language.¹²⁹

Apart from the geographical compactness, the formation of a separate Christian mission specifically for the Mara helps in maintaining social compactness. Unlike other tribes of Mizoram, who are under the Welsh Presbyterian or Baptist missionaries, the Lakher Pioneer Mission concentrates only on Mara tribe and this provides relative social cohesiveness within the group as the majority of the Mara tribe belongs to Mara tribe based Churches, namely ECM and CCI(M). There are no significant other groups in the area with the exception of small groups who migrated

¹²⁷ Ch. Beikhochhi, President MSO General Headquarters, interviewed by Steffi C Beingiachhiezi on behalf of Lalmalsawma Kiangte on 13th July, 2021

¹²⁸ Resolution No. 12 of Minute of Special Assembly-2015, Mara Students' Organization.

¹²⁹ Census of India 2011 showed that there are 42855 Mara in Mizoram, of which the mother language of 38177 persons is Mara. Which signify that the Mother language of 89.04% of Mara tribes is Mara language.

to the area due to Siaha being the district administrative headquarters of the then Chhimtuipui district which was changed to Siaha district and also being headquarters of Pawi- Lakher Regional Council until the trifurcation of the Regional council to three ADCs.

The main discourse on Mara identity revolves around area-based politics of MADC. The issue of Mara identity vis-a-vis Mizo identity is not largely debated as the contestation was mainly with the nearest neighbor Lai tribe, with whom they contested for power during the PLRC era. In spite of the social closeness of the two tribes, in the sense of the presence of common clans among the two tribes, at the political level, the common clans also took the position that they are under different political set up of their own hence politically a different tribe now. As the Mara are a compact tribe having autonomy of their own, the issue of Mara identity protection is more of political rhetoric than real social and cultural concerns.

Analyzing tribe identity propagation and assertion

The study of tribe-based identity movements reveals that there are certain crucial factors that influence tribe identity and their movements. Though each tribe identity movement has its own peculiarity, a general assessment of issues and context on which tribe identity assertion and perpetuation mainly operates may be attempted.

1. Cross-boundary identity: The inhabited areas of the studied tribes transcend state boundaries and some even cross international boundaries. Due to this reason, their movement in Mizoram cannot be understood in isolation as the politics of their tribesman outside Mizoram has a deep impact on their identity movement in Mizoram. The majority of Hmar are living outside Mizoram and the Hmar concentrated areas in Mizoram lie contiguous to Manipur and Assam. The Paite have their brethren in Manipur and Myanmar. The Lai and Mara have their tribesmen living in Myanmar. The Mara leaders claimed that half of the Mara tribes are living in Myanmar.¹³⁰ The tribes in Mizoram maintain connections with their

¹³⁰ Interview with C. Lawbei, Ex MDC by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 18th July 2021.

brethren beyond state and international borders at the personal level as well as organizational level. Apart from a visit of relatives, the civil societies maintain their ties by means of attending each other conferences and organizing joint programmes. The student associations of Hmar and Paite have their General Headquarters located in Manipur. The Lai Church used Lai Bible published in Myanmar and maintains ties with the Chin of Myanmar in a number of ways. The influences from outside Mizoram need to be recognized so as to understand tribe identity and their movements in Mizoram.

2. Belief in common origin: In spite of tribe variation regarding the name and location of the original place of origin, the belief of common origin is not seriously contested. The acceptance of common origin stood as the force that binds the diverse tribes together. The studied tribes have an advantage over other tribes like Chakma, Reang etc who do not share a common origin, as they could negotiate as a member of a larger Mizo identity due to the common origin and as a distinct tribe. P.P. Thawla, leader of the Mara Democratic Front, argued for the need to maintain the brotherhood of tribes against attempts to the unification of tribes.¹³¹ The perpetuation of tribe identity depends on how the tribe elite negotiates between the accepted common origin and their tribe's distinctiveness in their propagation of tribe identity.

3. Demand for political or administrative power: The tribe-based elite realize that they are at a disadvantage position to compete with the 'Mizo' elite; hence they demand political autonomy where they could enjoy political and financial power. They employ ethnicity as a mechanism for deriving the support of their tribesmen by stressing their tribe distinctiveness with the goal of getting power by means of having autonomy of their own. Among the studied tribes, two tribes, namely Mara and Lai have Autonomous District Councils of their own and the other two, Paite and Hmar also dream of having ADC of their own, though settled with the development council as of now. The demand for autonomy on a tribe basis is suspiciously viewed by the

¹³¹ P.P. Thawla, "Hnam Inpumkhatna nge hnam in unauna" Vanglai Article published on 15th August 2007.

‘Mizo’ elite as a particular tribe identity assertion goes against their attempt to build a larger Mizo identity encompassing different tribes under one umbrella.

4.Tribe Recognition and Scheduled tribe List: One of the most frequently heard arguments put forward by the tribe-based elite is that the Constitution of India recognizes their tribe as a separate tribe by being included in the Scheduled Tribe list. The next argument which follows this ST list is that as their tribe is listed in the same list as that of Mizo, even if they accept themselves as being a Mizo subjectively, constitutionally their tribe could not be incorporated under the Mizo in the strict sense of the list, since one recognized tribe could not be subsumed under another recognized tribe. The third argument raised in the discourse on particular tribe identity is that under the Scheduled tribe list of Mizoram, Mizo is equated with Lushai which implies that only those who are Lusei or Lushai could become Mizo in a strict sense of the list. These arguments reflect the contentious nature of the Scheduled Tribe List of Mizoram and its role in the identity politics of Mizoram.

5.Language: The most noticeable cultural marker in Mizoram is the language used by the person or fluency in speaking a particular language. In the traditional society, the tribe of a person can be identified by physical appearance in the sense of dress and the way of knotting their hair. For instance, the Lusei, Hmar, Paite etc knot their hair on the back of their head while the Pawi or Lai and Mara knot at their forehead.¹³² But with the mass conversion to Christianity and the influence of modernization, all tribes wear the same modern clothes and they no longer tie their hair in a particular way. Hence, the language a person used becomes important in group differentiation since it becomes the most identifiable cultural marker. The Hmar, Paite and Lai are divided into the speakers of their own tribe language and those who used Lusei language. Among the Mara also, there are divisions between who use Tlosai dialect, those who are not fluent in Tlosai dialect and those who use Lusei language. The particular importance given by the tribe elite regarding fluency of their particular tribe language for job recruitment or attempt to revive

¹³² Hrilrokhum Thiek, *History of the Hmars in North East India*, 68 and NE Parry, *The Lakhers*, 33

their own tribe language within their inhabited area and the issue of Lusei language vis-a-vis tribe language should be understood from this perspective.

6. Interlinking of social and political elite: There is close interlinking of the social and political elite in the studied tribes. Particularly, the first groups of the educated elite are responsible for the formation of social organizations as well as political parties. There are instances where social leaders become popular and hence elected to political posts due to their popularity with the people for being the leader of social organization like the Church, students and youth associations. A gaze at the social and political leaders of the studied tribes reveals the close interlink of social and political elite. Majority of the political elite have background of being leaders of social organizations. To name a few- S Hiato was the founder president of Mara Students' Organisation and the Chief Executive Member of Mara Autonomous District Council, former CEM of LADC C. Ngunlianchunga is a Church elder of LIKBK church, Muana Hangsing was a leader of Paite students association (SSPP) as well as leader of Paite Tribe Council, former Hmar Students Association leader Lalvenhima Hmar becomes a member of Sinlung Hills Council.

7. Myth of tribe homogeneity: The elite of the group usually present their group as homogeneous group which is different from other groups and depict themselves as the unanimous voice of the group they represent. But the reality is that all groups are heterogeneous within and there are always diverse views and perceptions. The same is true of the studied tribes. The divisions of Paite tribe among those who identify first and foremost as a Mizo, Paite of Siakal range that interacts with Paite of Manipur and Paite in and around Leisenzo who interact with their brethren of Myanmar is evident. Hmar speakers group and Mizo speaking groups among the Hmar, Mizo speaking Lai and Lai speaking Lai, among the Mara also there are Tlosai speaking group and those who speak dialect other than Tlosai. The division along Church affiliation is also evident in all studied tribes.

8. Poor electoral performance or instability of tribe-based political parties:

Another striking feature is the poor electoral performance or instability of tribe-based political parties. The National party and State party have to nominate candidates belonging to the dominant tribe in the constituency, but the tribe-based parties themselves have rather poor electoral performance. The Paite National Council (renamed as Paite Tribe council) and HPC had their supported candidates elected in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly Elections only once, while the MDF candidate was elected twice. The Lai tribe-based party failed to get their candidate elected as MLA. Even in their own Council area, the tribe-based parties frequently made alliances with either the National party or the State party. The tribe-based parties who manage to form a government within their Council also found merged to the National party within a short span of time. The lack of strong tribe-based parties put the civil societies at the forefront of tribe identity assertion even at the political level.

9. Territorial issues: The territoriality of particular tribe identity formation and propagation is quite visible on two main grounds. First, as trans-border tribes, it is natural that social and political influence by their brethren from outside the border is evident. For instance, certain churches and other social organizations have their headquarters outside Mizoram however; the political reality of international and state boundaries determines the level of identity assertion and political demands of these tribes. The tribe elite has to negotiate within the practical reality of existing political boundaries. Second, the main focus of the tribe identity movements is limited to the existing Autonomous District Council or demand areas in the sense of aspiration to gain better political or administrative setup and more financial power and the attempt for more social control within their respective areas on the part of the social organizations.

10. Contextuality of Mizo identification: The self-understanding as a group relating to Mizo identity is of crucial importance for the present study. The descriptive presentation of the tribe-based elite reflects that the main concern of the tribe-based elite relates to the survival and development of their own tribes not

necessarily for or against Mizo identity per se. The assertion of tribe identity should not be interpreted as a total rejection of Mizo identity or any other larger identity. The acceptance or rejection of being Mizo largely depends upon the particular context or situation. For instance, the HPC, during its armed movement for the Hmar tribe allows the YMA branches to function within their demand areas. The acceptance of Mizo identity largely depends upon the inclusiveness or exclusiveness way of interpreting or setting the boundary of Mizo identity. But the fact of the matter is that the studied tribes opposed any attempt to build a homogenous Mizo identity which necessarily demands the erosion of their distinct tribe identity.

CHAPTER IV

SUBJECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND MIZO NATIONALITY FORMATION:

AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Ethnic community formation involves the differentiation of the group against 'other', hence, the selection of objective markers like language, culture, myth of common origin etc coupled with the subjective consciousness of belonging to the community on the basis of objective markers is of crucial importance. This chapter mainly focuses on the subjective attitude of the people towards Mizo nationality vis-a-vis own tribe identity. To examine how general masses belonging to different tribes inhabiting both urban and rural areas identify themselves and react to the process of Mizo nationality formation, survey was conducted through structured interview by means of multi-stage sampling method. Considering the main focus of the survey, five town localities and five villages dominantly inhabited by the studied tribes are identified and purposively selected.

Aizawl and surrounding areas represent Lusei and 'other tribes' who normally identify themselves as Mizo over and above their own tribe identity. The Hmar tribes are dominated in and around Saikawrdai, the headquarters of Sinlung Hills Council. The Ngopa town and villages nearby are the concentrated area of Paite tribe. Sialkal Range Development Council, which was constituted for Ppaite-dominated village falls under the Ngopa Civil Sub division. The Lai Autonomous District Council area, with Lawngtlai as the headquarters is dominated Lai tribe. Siaha and surrounding villages within Mara Autonomous District council are mainly inhabited by the Mara tribe.

One urban locality and one village were purposively selected to represent each tribe's concentrated areas. Ramhlun North locality of Aizawl city and Lungpher North (henceforth will be referred to as Lungpher) village of Saitual district represent the Lusei

and other tribes¹ dominated area while Sakawrdai and Zohmun represent urban and rural area dominated by Hmar. As there are no Paite dominated towns, Vengthar locality of Ngopa, where the Paite are comparatively significant was taken to represent urban Paite area and Teikhang village was selected to represent the Paite community in the rural area. Lawngtlai Council locality and Lungzarhtum village represent the urban and rural respondents of Lai tribe. Siaha Vengpui and Serkawr village represent the Mara tribe of urban and rural population respectively.

The total sample size is limited to 300. From each rural and urban locality, thirty respondents are selected through systematic sampling on the basis of electoral roll. Using of electoral roll has its advantage for the selection of sampling unit since electoral roll contains only adult individuals who are permanent residents of the area and each individual is listed in a proper sequence having a separate number. For the selection of sampling unit, systematic or interval sampling method is used. First respondent is randomly selected and the next respondent is identified and then every nth person after that. The total number of voters in the electoral roll is divided by the number of sample to be collected in the locality, ie 30. For example, if there are 400 persons in the electoral roll of the locality, the total number of voters in the locality, ie 400 is divided by 30 with the result of 13. So, the next respondent is identified by jumping to every 13th person in the electoral roll.

Survey was conducted during 2016 and 2017. The data collected was analyzed by using SPSS tools to examine how the respondents, belonging to different tribes, living in different areas within Mizoram identify themselves and view the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation. To further identify different perceptions among the respondents, cross-tabulation of different variables is also done and the result is presented in a table form.

¹ For the purpose of survey result analysis, those tribes other than Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Lai and Mara are clubbed together under the category of 'Other tribes'. The particular word 'Other tribes' used in the survey does not correspond to other chapters where the same term is used in a more general way.

Background of the surveyed area

With the functioning of three new districts of Hnahthial, Khawzawl and Saitual in 2019,² there are 11 administrative districts in Mizoram and there are three Autonomous District Councils namely- Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council. Apart from the three ADCs there are two development councils - Sialkal Range Development Council and Sinlung Hills Council. There are 704 villages in Mizoram³ and 25 notified towns in Mizoram including the newly notified Ngopa town.⁴

Ramhlun North of Aizawl is one among the 83 local councils/ localities under Aizawl Municipal Council which administers the state capital of Mizoram since 2010. Within Aizawl city, there are 293,416 persons, including 12,155 Hindu, 4,464 Muslims and 1,334 Buddhist. 98.36% of the population are literate.⁵ As a state capital, it is obvious that Aizawl is the headquarters of most of the Mizo civil societies like Young Mizo Association, Mizo Zirlai pawl and Mizoram Presbyterian Church etc. Likewise, many tribe-based civil societies, like SSPP (Paite Students Association), HSA (Hmar Students Association), Hmar Inpui (Hmar Supreme House), Lai Students' Association, Mara Students' Organisation are operating in the city. Tribe based churches like LIKBK (Lai), ECM (Mara), EFCI (Hmar) ICI (Hmar) EBCC (Paite) and ZBC (Paite) have their own office / churches in Aizawl to cater to their community inhabiting the city.

² General Administration Department, Government of Mizoram, Notification no A. 60011/20/2019-GAD, dated 9th August, 2019

³ https://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2-vol2/data_files/Mizoram. Accessed on 12, July 2021.

⁴ Ngopa, Kawrthah and West Phaileng are added to notified towns list vide Government of Mizoram, UD & PA Department order no B 11014/1/2018 –UD&PA dated 28th December 2020.

⁵ <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/city/185-aizawl.html>. Accessed on 1st May 2021.

Lungpher is around 20 kms away from Saitual, the headquarters of the newly established Saitual District. The village is inhabited by 857 persons comprising of 170 households.⁶ It is accessible by motor and state level newspapers, cable network service and mobile internet connectivity are available. But there is no hospital, police outpost or commercial banks. There are two primary schools, one middle school and one high school.⁷ Lungpher is inhabited by Lusei speaking mixed tribes. There are no tribe -based churches or tribe based NGO operating in the village.

Ngopa town is a Civil Sub Division within Champhai District. The town is resided by 945 families consisting of 2155 persons and the literacy percentage of the town is 95.91%.⁸ The town is inhabited by mixed tribes, mostly speaking Lusei language. The Ngopa Vengthar locality was purposively selected for being where the Paite are relatively concentrated.⁹ During the pilot survey, the researcher was informed that many immigrants mostly from Manipur have settled down at Vengthar locality, particularly after 2000. Since these immigrants mostly speak Paite language, the local leaders seem to presume that they are all Paite tribes. The researcher was also informed that in 2015 an attempt was made to form a unit of Paite Tribe Council and Paite tribe based Church at Vengthar area, which was withdrawn as per the request of the two YMA branches of Ngopa Town.¹⁰ The Ngopa Village Council (2000- 2003 term) also issued an order against formation of any new Church at Ngopa, including tribe based Churches.¹¹ The use of Paite language and attempt to form Paite organization and Church reveals

⁶ <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/271270-n-lungpher-mizoram.html>. Accessed on 1st May 2021.

⁷ Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2-18, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 89-90.

⁸ <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/271297-ngopa-mizoram.html>. accessed on 1st May 2021.

⁹ Vengthar literally means new locality.

¹⁰ Lalngilneia, Asst. Secretary, ChhimVeng Branch, Ngopa, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 30th May 2017.

¹¹ F Zothansanga, VCP, Ngopa, Interviewed by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on 30th May 2017.

that Vengthar is the only locality where the Paite are in a significant number. However, during the survey, it was shown that immigrants who speak Paite language do not necessarily belong to Paite tribe; rather many of them belong to Kuki – Thahdo and Hmar tribes.

Teikhang, the headquarters of Paite Tribe Council is around 42 kms from Ngopa and located within Ngopa Block of Champhai District. With 325 families, the village has a population of 1744 of whom 87.35% are literate. Post office, Sub centre and schools up to high school level are accessible. Both state level newspapers and cable networks are available while Police outpost and banks do not exist in the village.¹²YMA is the largest civil society in the village while, Paite Tribe Council, SSPP¹³ are also operating. Evangelical Baptist Convention Church, which is considered as Paite tribe-based church is the largest church in the village. The Zomi Baptist Church (Paite - Teddim dialect-based church) and Mizoram Presbyterian Church are also present in the village.

Sakawrdai, the Headquarters of Sinlung Hills Council is around 160 kms away from Aizawl and located in Darlawn Block of Aizawl District. It is inhabited by 553 families with a population of 3432. Post Office, Community Health Centre, schools up to Higher Secondary level and Police Outpost are located. State level newspaper and cable network services are also available.¹⁴The local cable operator relay programme is provided by cable operator of Aizawl and does not broadcast a dedicated Hmar language channel. Both Hmar and Lusei languages are used for daily communication. As there is no separate Hmar youth organization, the Young Mizo Association is the largest association in Sakawrdai. The Hmar tribe- based Church; Independent Church of

¹² Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2-18, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 94-95.

¹³ Siamsin Pawlpi (Paite Students Association).

¹⁴ Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2-18, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 68-69.

India, is the largest denominations in the town followed by Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

Zohmun is 12kms away from Sakawrdai. It is a Hmar dominated village inhabited by 255 families with a population of 1399 and a literacy rate of 93.45%.¹⁵ The village has Sub Centre and schools up to Higher Secondary level. There are no commercial banks, police out post and cable network service while state level newspaper is available for subscription.¹⁶ Apart from Hmar Students Association, there is no other tribe -based organization in the village and the YMA is the largest organization in the village. Mizoram Presbyterian Church is the largest denomination followed by UPC (NEI) and Salvation Army. There is no tribe -based Church in the village and both Lusei and Hmar language is used for daily communication.

Lawngtlai, the headquarters of Lawngtlai District and Lai Autonomous District Council is inhabited by 20,830 person's belongings to 3,910 households.¹⁷ All government facilities are available in the town including Government College. Even though Lawngtlai is Lai dominated town, there are a significant number of non Lai population in the town and majority of the population, including the Lai community, use Mizo language for daily communication. Lawngtlai town is divided into 10 localities or Village Councils among which Lawngtlai Council Veng is one the oldest locality, predominantly inhabited by Lai tribe. Apart from being administrative headquarters, Lawngtlai is the headquarters of Lai tribe based civil societies like Young Lai Association, Lai Students' Association and Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran, hence Mizo based NGO like YMA and MZP do not have branches in the town. The two

¹⁵ <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/271188-zohmun-mizoram.html>. Accessed on 6th May 2021.

¹⁶ Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2-18, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 68-69.

¹⁷ <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/801518-lawngtlai-mizoram.html> Accessed on 1st May 2021.

cable network services in the town, apart from relaying cable programme from Aizawl, also broadcast dedicated Lai channel.

Lungzarhtum is inhabited by 793 persons living in 171 households with a literacy percentage of 87.26%.¹⁸ Lungzarhtum which falls under the Sangau Block of Lawngtlai District is among the few villages where Lai language is used both at the household and village level. However, most of the respondents can be communicated with Lusei language. There is no Post Office, Police outpost and banks in the village. No state level newspapers reach the village while cable network and mobile internet connectivity is available. Health Sub Centre is located and schools up to Higher Secondary level are established in the village.¹⁹ Young Lai Association is the main NGO in the Village and Young Mizo Association does not have a branch in the Village. Majority of the population belongs to Lai based Church ie LIKBK and IKK.

Siaha, the Headquarters of both Siaha District and Mara Autonomous District Council has a population of 25,110 living in 4,607 households with a literacy rate of 95.10 %, which is higher than state rate of 91.33 %.²⁰ As administrative headquarters, all government facilities are available in the town including Government College. Even though Siaha is a Mara dominated town, there are significant numbers of non-Mara population. Majority of the population could be communicated with Lusei language, and Lusei language is used as second language for daily communication. There is a number of Evangelical Church of Maraland which conducts service in Mizo language. Siaha is also the headquarters of Mara tribe based civil societies like Mara Thyutlia Py, Mara Students' Organisation etc and Evangelical Church of Maraland, the largest

¹⁸ <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/271773-lungzarhtum-mizoram.html>. Accessed on 1st May 2021.

¹⁹ Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2-18, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 186-187.

²⁰ <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/801519-Siaha-mizoram.html>. Accessed on 1st May 2021.

denomination within Mara Autonomous District Council while Mizo based NGO, the YMA also has branches in this town. There are two cable network providers in the town, the New Skylink Vision relay Cable programme from Aizawl and also run two channels in Mara language. There are 17 localities within Siaha town, among which Vengpui²¹ is one of the oldest and largest localities which is predominantly inhabited by Mara tribe.

Serkawr locally called as Saikao, is a village in Tuipang Block in Siaha District. It is located 52 Kms away from Siaha. Census of India 2011 recorded that there are 258 households in the village with a population of 977 and a literacy rate of 86.96%.²² The village is famous for being the place where Christianity was started in Maraland by the Lakher Pioneer Mission. It is the headquarters of Congregational Church of India (Maraland). Health Centre, Police outpost, Post Office, bank and state level newspaper are not available in the village while there are schools up to High School level and cable network services are accessible.²³ Serkawr is Mara concentrated village and some respondents could not be communicated with properly in Lusei language. Most of the population belongs to Congregational Church of India (Maraland). There are no Mizo based civil societies operating in the village.

Analyzing Survey results in frequency

Structured interview format is divided into three parts. The first part which is reflected in Table 4.1 to 4.9 deals with personal information. The second part is shown in Table 4.10 to 4.15 which reflect the respondents' views on particular tribe related questions. The third portion mainly concerns with the respondents' attitude towards the process of Mizoisation process and its related matters, which is highlighted in table 4.16 to 4.18. Personal information is used for frequency and cross tabulation purpose.

²¹ *Vengpui* can be literally translated as main locality.

²² <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/271787-serkawr-mizoram.html>. accessed on 1st May 2021.

²³ Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2-18, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram 238-239.

Mention must be made here that respondents are selected on the basis of electoral roll, all respondents are above the age of 18 and permanent residents of the locality/village.

Table 4.1 shows the sex of the respondent. Even though it is not the primary concern to select respondents on the basis of sex, the final sample reveals that 49.3% of the respondents are female which goes in parallel with sex ratio of Mizoram, which is 976 females per thousand males, which means that 49.38 percent of the population of Mizoram is female.²⁴ This parallel of Mizoram sex percentage and sample selected percentage may reflect the accuracy of sample selection method.

Table 4.1: Sex of the respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	148	49.3%
Male	152	50.7%
Total	300	100%

One of the concerns of the research relates to the interface of tribe identification and Mizoisation process hence the tribe of the respondents is identified. During the survey, the researcher witnessed the reality of conceptual problems regarding tribe which is highlighted in the previous chapter. When the respondents were asked to mention their tribe which needs to be translated in Mizo language as *hnam*, many of the respondents are confused as the term *hnam* is used to refer to nationality, tribe and sub tribe alike. Instead of mentioning the name of their tribe, which is the intention of the question, many respondents answer their *hnam* as Mizo which is a nationality, while some others mention the name of their clan or sub clan. The multiplicity of self-identification creates certain problems but at the same time makes the study interesting. For example, those who differently mention their *hnam* as Mizo, Ralte, Kawlani are in

²⁴<https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/mizoram.html>. Accessed on 6th May 2021.

actuality Ralte tribe who identify themselves as Mizo and belong to one Ralte clan called Kawlni. The scholar upon further interaction enters their ‘hnam’ on the basis of their tribe.

There is another issue of conflicting claims, some groups are claimed by certain tribes as a sub tribe or one clan of their tribe but the group in question claim themselves as separate tribe. Example may be cited as Khawlhiring and Khiangte, the Hmar claim that they are the sub tribe of Hmar, but Lusei speaking Khawlhiring and Khiangte usually claim themselves as separate tribe. The Fanai and Bawihlung usually called themselves as Pawih and do not consider themselves as Lai. Considering the above point, the tribe of the respondents is recorded as per their self-identification. Those who mention their ‘hnam’ as Mizo or clan are classified according to their tribe, which they provide after the explanation of the intention of the question. Those who prefer to identify themselves as separate tribe are put under the category of ‘other tribes’ as reflected in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Tribe distribution of respondents.		
Tribe	Frequency	Percent
Mara	54	18%
Lai	63	21%
Hmar	74	24.7%
Paite	29	9.7%
Lusei	26	8.7%
Others	54	18%
Total	300	100%

Table 4.2 reveals that even though 30 samples were taken from each locality, many of the surveyed localities are inhabited by mixed tribes. The reason for small number of Paite respondents is that in Vengthar locality of Ngopa, all Paite speaking communities do not belong to Paite tribe. The same happens with Lusei, there are many tribes which adopt Lusei customs and speak Lusei language as they are under the Sailo

chief, but they are not Lusei tribe. The high percentage of ‘Other tribes’ also reveal that there are numerically large tribes who identify themselves as Mizo, as in the case of the Ralte.

Table 4.3 highlights the educational qualification of the respondents. Majority of the respondents passed at least elementary level and only a small percentage of the respondents do not have any formal education.

Table 4.3: Educational qualification of respondents.		
Level	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	21	7%
Elementary	146	48.7%
HSSLC	106	35.3%
Graduate & above	27	9%
Total	300	100%

Table 4.4 reflects the occupation of the respondents. Majority of the rural population of Mizoram who are engaged in agricultural activities are identified as cultivators. Those who are working under central government, state government and Councils are put together under Government employee. Self-employed are those who run business of their own. Others include students, pensioners and all others who are not cultivators, govt. employee or self-employed.

Table 4.4: Occupation of respondents		
Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Cultivator	120	40%
Govt. employee	38	12.7%
Self employed	45	15%
Others	97	32.3%
Total	300	100

As a Christian dominated state, the influence of the Church is felt not only at a personal spiritual level but also in social and political life as well. As argued in the previous chapter, Christianity reduces the importance of tribe by replacing traditional *Sakhua*, which is based on tribe. There are two processes which relate tribe- based churches and tribe identity-the emergence of tribe based churches has provided platform for articulation of tribe identity and the tribe identity consciousness also leads to the formation of tribe based denominations.

For the purpose of the study, Churches are categorized into two- Mainstream and Tribe based. By mainstream, those denominations who do not relate themselves to any particular tribe and are operating in different parts of Mizoram like Roman Catholic, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram, salvation Army, United Pentecostal Church etc. There are Churches which may or may not proclaim to themselves to be tribe -based Churches, but their members mainly belong to a specific tribe and they usually use or popularize the use of their tribe language in Church service and activities. Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI) and Independent Church of India (ICI) members belong mainly to Hmar community; the members of Evangelical Baptist Congregation Church (EBCC) and Zomi Baptist Church (ZBC) are mainly Paite. Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM) and Congregational Church of India (Maraland) are considered as Mara church. Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran (LIKBK) and Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK) are mainly identified as Lai centered denominations. Table 4.5 highlights that 42.3 % of the respondents are affiliated to tribe based church.

Table 4.5: Church affiliation of respondents.		
Type of church	Frequency	Percent
Mainstream	173	57.7%
Tribe based	127	42.3%
Total	300	100%

Language is more than means of communication; it is one of the most noticeable objective markers of ethnic identity in Mizoram. Table 4.6 and table 4.7 deal with respondents' background with regards to language. By mother language, it is meant the first language or language spoken in the family during childhood, not necessarily the language spoken by the mother. Respondents are asked whether their mother language is Mizo or their own tribe language, as many as 64% of the respondents used Mizo as a mother language.

Table 4.6: Mother language of respondents.		
Mother language	Frequency	Percent
Mizo	108	36%
Tribe	192	64%
Total	300	100%

Considering the frequency of inter-tribe marriage in Mizoram, Table number 4.7 relates to language used or spoken in the family at the time of survey. Mixed implies that households which use both Lusei and tribe language in the family and they constitute 10.7% of the respondents. The table also reflects that around 49 % of the respondents use their tribe language in their family.

Table 4.7: Language used by the respondent's family.		
Language	Frequency	Percent
Mizo	121	40.3%
Tribe	147	49%
Mixed	32	10.7%
Total	300	100%

Civil societies are divided into two categories- Mizo based and tribe based. Mizo based organizations like Young Mizo Association, Mizo Zirlai Pawl, Mizo Hmeichhe Insawihkhawm Pawl, Zoram Upa Pawl etc have their headquarters at Aizawl and they have branches in nearly all parts of Mizoram. These Mizo based organizations propagate Mizo identity either directly and indirectly. In the Lai and Mara Autonomous area, tribe-based organizations like Young Lai Association, Lai Students' Association. Mara Thyutlia Py and Mara Students' Organisation are the main organizations. Though there are youth organizations in Manipur, the Paite and Hmar joined YMA rather than their own tribe youth organization. The Paite and Hmar have their own students' organizations namely, SSPP and HSA. The students organizations, be it Mizo Zirlai Pawl, Lai Students Association, Mara Students Organisation, Siamsin Pawlpi and Hmar students Association, do not follow formal membership enrollment hence their reports do not show the exact number of their members.

In table no 4.8, it can be seen that 15.3% of the respondents do not enroll themselves in any organization, 53.3% of them are member of any one of the Mizo based associations, while 31.3% are member of tribe based associations.

Table 4.8: Respondent's membership in civil society		
Membership	Frequency	Percent
No membership	46	15.3%
Mizo based	160	53.3%
Tribe based	94	31.3%
Total	300	100%

Respondents are also asked to name any three historical figures of Mizoram they are familiar with and admired. This question intends to reveal how far the popularization of 'Mizo heroes' through textbooks and civil societies, particularly the YMA, has been inculcated in the masses. The YMA frequently divides their branches into sections

bearing the name of the ‘Mizo heroes’. As shown in table 4.9, as many as 92.7% of the respondent mentioned ‘Mizo heroes’. Those who select a mixture of Mizo heroes and of their tribe constitute 17% while 7% of the respondents mentioned heroes of their own tribe.

Table 4.9: Historical figures known and admired by the respondents.		
Historical figures	Frequency	Percent
No response	15	5%
Mizo	278	92.7%
Mixed	5	1.7%
Own tribe only	2	0.7%
Total	300	100%

Response relating to views on certain issues concerning particular tribe is reflected in table 4.10 to 4.15. In this particular part, no response is high, as many respondents (mostly among those who could be said as ‘Mizoised’)²⁵ mention that they do not think in term of their own particular tribe.

Table 4.10 reflects views on inter tribe marriage among the *Zohnahthlak* group. It is interesting to mention that when the questions regarding their views on inter tribe marriage was posed in Mizo or their tribe languages to what do you think of marriage with ‘*hnamdang*’? Most of the respondents, before answering the question mention that it will depend on who do the question meant by *hnamdang*.²⁶ Most of them elaborate that they are not in favour if it is between their tribe and other communities who are not

²⁵ The term Mizoised is used to refer to those tribes who accepted Mizo as their nomenclature.

²⁶ *Hnamdang* means different *hnam* or different community.

Zo-ethnic group. As many as 79.3% of the respondent are in favour of inter tribe marriage among the Zo ethnic group.

Table 4.10: Views on Inter tribe marriage among Zo-ethnic group.		
	Frequency	Percent
Good	238	79.3%
Bad	22	7.3%
Not sure	40	13.3%
Total	300	100%

Table 4.11 shows the respondents level of comfortability, when they are in parts of Mizoram where other tribes who speak their own language are numerically dominant. As many as 68% of the respondents mention that they are very comfortable while 25% respondents cited that they never visit area where other tribes' language speakers are in majority and hence could not provide their view.

Table 4.11: Level of comfort ability when in other tribes speaking dominated area.		
	Frequency	Percent
No response	75	25%
Very comfortable	204	68%
Not so comfortable	21	7%
Not Comfortable	0	0%
Total	300	100%

As highlighted in table 4.12, a very smaller number of respondents, numbering only 6.7%, pick tribe consideration as the most important factor influencing their voting behavior. Personality of the candidate stand out as the most important factor influencing

voting behavior for 50.3% of the respondent, followed by party consideration which constitutes 34.3%.

Table 4.12: Factors influencing voting behavior.		
	Frequency	Percent
No response	2	.7%
Tribe	20	6.7%
Region	17	5.7%
Church	4	1.3%
Party	103	34.3%
Personality Candidate	151	50.3%
Others	3	1%
Total	300	100%

Relative deprivation and discrimination of their tribe are often cited by the tribe elite as the cause of their demand for autonomy. But, interestingly, as depicted in table 4.13, majority of the respondents do not consider that their tribe is being discriminated and neglected as compared to other tribes. Those who feel discriminated and neglected constitute only 16% of the respondents.

Table 4.13: Views on whether the respondent's tribe is being discriminated and neglected.		
	Frequency	Percent
No response	1	0.3%
Yes	48	16%
No	247	82.3%
Not sure	4	1.3%
Total	300	100%

On the question of issues of concern for the development of their own tribe, a very high percentage of respondents did not give a response on the pretext that the question is not applicable as they do not think in terms of particular tribe. Among those who provide an answer, income generation and infrastructure development stand out as their main concern rather than protection of tribe identity or more political representation from their tribe. In other words, as reflected in table 4.14, common people are more concerned about matters related to their personal livelihood and economic development than particular tribe identity protection.

Table 4.14: Issues of concern for the tribe.		
	Frequency	Percent
No response	115	38.3%
Protection of tribe identity	9	3%
Income generation	100	33.3%
More political representation	13	4.3%
Infrastructure development	61	20.3%
Others	2	0.7%
Total	300	100

There are a number of tribe-based associations, mainly operating in the areas where the tribes are concentrated. Among these tribe-based associations, Mara Thyutlia Py, Mara Students' Organisation (Mara), Young Lai Association, Lai Students' Association (Lai), Siamsin Pawlpi (Paite Students Association), Hmar Students Association (Hmar) are prominent. These tribe-based organizations are mainly working for the welfare and protection of the interest of their particular tribe. As reflected in table no 4.15, the majority of the respondents are of the view that they are necessary for their own tribe while 15% claim that these particular tribe-based NGOs play divisive

role among the *Zohnahtlak* group by propagating their own tribe interest. A significant percent of the respondents choose to be neutral on this question.

Table 4.15: Views on tribe based civil societies.		
	Frequency	Percent
No idea	50	16.7%
Divisive role	45	15%
Necessary for their own tribe	203	67.7%
Little impact	2	0.7%
Total	300	100%

There is mixed view regarding the necessity of formation of separate Autonomous councils for particular tribes. As highlighted in table 4.16, the three answers have more or less same respondents in frequency. No responses or no idea constitutes 33.3 % while 31.7 % believe separate administrative set up is necessary for the tribe concern. 35 % of the respondents think it unnecessary.

Table 4.16: Whether ADC/ Regional Council necessary for minority tribes or not.		
	Frequency	Percent
No Idea	100	33.3%
Yes	95	31.7%
No	105	35%
Total	300	100%

Third part of the structured interview deals with the attitude of the respondents towards Mizoisation and its related issues. The responses is reflected in table 4.17 to 4.19. In Mizoram, YMA MZP, MHIP and MUP are the four prominent organizations. These associations, as their name implies, propagate and work for the protection of Mizo

identity. Hence, they are vocal in raising issues relating to Mizo identity and they propagate Mizo as an umbrella term to refer to all the tribes of the Zohnahthlak group. These associations have a deep influence over the policy of state government since they are big in terms of members. As displayed in table 4.17, a very high percentage of the respondents view the activities of these associations as inclusive and work for the interest of all tribes of Mizoram.

Table 4.17: Whether Mizo based Civil Societies like YMA, MZP etc works for the interests of all tribes of Mizoram or not.		
	Frequency	Percent
No response	1	0.3%
Yes	254	84.7%
No	15	5%
Not sure	30	10%
Total	300	100%

Table no 4.18 relates to the hypothetical question of whether the respondent would accept, if the Government of Mizoram issues an order for compulsory learning of Mizo language. Majority of the respondent accept, while 13.7% would oppose the move. The high percent of acceptance of Mizo language among the Tribe language speakers shows that Mizo is becoming a common language among the studied tribes.

Table 4.18: Views on compulsory learning of Mizo language.		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	235	78.3%
No	41	13.7%
No idea	24	8%
Total	300	100%

When asked about subjective views on who constitute Mizo, majority of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak*²⁷ which literally means those who share common myth of origin from *Chhinlung* as Mizo. This reveals that there is no real contestation among the studied tribes about common origin and Mizo as a common name for them receive wide acceptance as all studied tribes are of *Chhinlung chhuak*. There are also certain numbers of persons who relate Mizo identity with territory of Mizoram or Lusei language.

Table 4.19: Who do you consider as Mizo		
	Frequency	Percent
No response	5	1.7%
Inhabitants of Mizoram	34	11.3%
All Chhinlung chhuak	234	78%
Only Lusei tribe	8	2.7%
Speakers Mizo language	17	5.7%
Who identify themselves as Mizo	2	0.7%
Total	300	100%

Analyzing regional differences through cross tabulation

Cross tabulation is done to ascertain whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, survey area is purposively selected considering the tribe concentrated area. From Aizawl area, Ramhlun North and Lungpher are selected to represent dominated area of Lusei and its allied tribes, Ngopa

²⁷Those *Chhinlung chhuak* are also called as *Zohnahthlak*, *Zofa*, Chin- Kuki- Mizo group, or Zo ethnic group. Those communities who accept the common myth of origin from *Chhinlung/Sinlung/ Khul* are usually called by these terms.

Vengthar and Teikhang represent the Paite tribe concentrated region. To represent Hmar dominated region, Sakawrdai and Zohmun are purposively selected. In the Lai dominated region, LawngtlaiVengpui and Lungzarhtum are selected. The Siaha Vengpui and Serkawr are taken as Mara dominated region. Aizawl, Sakawrdai, Ngopa, Lawngtlai and Siaha represent urban areas while Lungpher, Teikhang, Zohmun, Lungzarhtum and Serkawr represent rural areas. Hence the cross tabulation intended to reveal regional as well as urban and rural differentiation.

Table 4.20: Region wise: Tribe composition in percentage.						
Region	Mara	Lai	Hmar	Paite	Lusei	Others
Aizawl	0	6.7	16.7	3.3	40	33.3
Lungpher	0	0	20	0	3.3	76.7
Aizawl region total %	0	3.3	18.3	1.6	21.7	55
Ngopa	0	0	10	10	26.7	53.3
Teikhang	0	0	0	83.3	6.7	10
Ngopa region total %	0	0	5	46.6	16.6	31.6
Sakawrdai	0	0	100	0	0	0
Zohmun	0	0	100	0	0	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	0	0	100	0	0	0
Lawngtlai	0	96.7	0	0	0	3.3
Lungzarhtum	0	100	0	0	0	0
Lawngtlai region total %	0	98.3	0	0	0	1.6
Siaha	80	6.7	0	0	10	3.3
Serkawr	100	0	0	0	0	0
Siaha region total %	90	3.3	0	0	5	1.6
Total	18	21.0	24.7	9.7	8.7	18

Table 4.20 shows region wise distribution of different tribes. The table shows that Aizawl and its surrounding area is numerically dominated by ‘other tribes’ rather than Lusei tribe and there is a significant number of Hmar tribes who inhabit the area. The table also shows that most of the tribes of Mizoram are found in Aizawl city. The intermixing of tribes is found in Ngopa town, while Teikhang village is mainly a Paite tribe dominated area. Sakawrdai area, Lawngtlai and Siaha area can be considered as dominated by particular tribe- Hmar, Lai and Mara respectively. No significant urban and rural difference is seen with regards to tribe distribution.

Table 4.21: Region wise: Educational qualification in percentage.				
Region	No formal education	Elementary	Class XII	Graduate and above
Aizawl	0	26.6	50	23.3
Lungpher	3.3	83.3	10	3.3
Aizawl region total %	1.6	55	30	13.3
Ngopa	10	63.3	20	6.6
Teikhang	13.3	63.3	20	3.3
Ngopa region total %	11.6	63.3	20	5
Sakawrdai	10	50	40	0
Zohmun	10	43.3	46.6	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	10	46.6	43.3	0
Lawngtlai	3.3	26.6	56.6	13.3
Lungzarhtum	6.6	53.3	36.6	3.3
Lawngtlai region total %	5	40	46.6	8.3
Siaha	3.3	23.3	53.3	20
Serkawr	10	53.3	20	16.6
Siaha region total %	6.6	38.3	36.6	18.3
Total	7	48.6	35.3	9

The educational qualifications of the respondents are measured in four categories. As shown in Table no 4.21, respondents without formal education constitute 7% and Teikhang village has the highest number of them, followed by Serkawr village. 9% of the respondents have educational qualification of Graduate or above in Ramhlun North locality of Aizawl constitute highest percent. Majority of the respondents passed elementary level and they are followed by those who passed class XII. Urban and rural difference rather than regional difference is seen in educational qualification of the respondents.

Table 4.22: Region wise: Occupation in percentage.				
Region	Cultivator	Government employee	Self employed	Others
Aizawl	0	30	30	40
Lungpher	83.3	10	6.6	0
Aizawl region total %	41.6	20	18.3	20
Ngopa	60	13.3	6.6	20
Teikhang	83.3	6.6	3.3	6.6
Ngopa region total %	71.6	10	5	13.3
Sakawrdai	33.3	3.3	13.3	10
Zohmun	40	0	16.6	43.3
Sawkawrdai region total %	36.6	1.6	15	46.6
Lawngtlai	20	20	16.6	43.3
Lungzarhtum	33.3	10	30	26.6
Lawngtlai region total %	26.6	15	23.3	35
Siaha	3.3	26.6	13.3	56.6
Serkawr	43.3	6.6	13.3	36.6
Siaha region total %	23.3	16.6	13.3	46.6
Total	40	12.6	15	32.3

Regarding the occupation of the respondents, the percentage of cultivators is highest in Ngopa region and lowest in Siaha region. While 20% of respondents from Aizawl region are government employees, just 1.6% of the respondents belonging to Sakawrdai region have jobs under the government. Percentage of self-employed is significantly low in Ngopa region where they constitute only 5%. Table 4.22 reflects that rural - urban difference is much more significant than regional difference for instance, percentage of cultivators is 0% in Ramhlun North of Aizawl city while it is 83.3% in Lungpher village which is within Aizawl region.

Table 4.23: Region wise: church affiliation in percentage.		
Region	Mainstream Churches	Tribe based churches
Aizawl	100	0
Lungpher	100	0
Aizawl region total %	100	0
Ngopa	100	0
Teikhang	40	60
Ngopa region total %	70	30
Sakawrdai	63.3	36.7
Zohmun	96.7	3.3
Sawkawrdai region total %	80	20
Lawngtlai	40	60
Lungzarhtum	30	70
Lawngtlai region total %	35	65
Siaha	6.7	93.3
Serkawr	0	100
Siaha region total %	3.3	96.6
Total	57.7	42.3

Region wise cross tabulation regarding church affiliation is shown in Table 4.23. As seen in the table, with the exception of Serkawr, mainstream Churches of Mizoram have a significant number of members in all regions of Mizoram. The tribe based churches are mainly concentrated in their tribes dominated area. There are a number of tribe based churches in Aizawl, but none of the respondents belonging to Lai, Hmar and Paite in Aizawl are a member of the tribe based Church. In the Hmar dominated area the mainstream Church are in a majority, with 63% of the respondents in Sakawrdai, the headquarters of Sinlung Hills Council, belonging to mainstream Church. Comparatively, high percentage of affiliation to tribe based Church is witnessed in the Siaha area where the percentage is as high as 96.6%.

Table 4.24: Region wise: Mother language in percentage.		
Region	Mizo/Lusei	Tribe
Aizawl	93.3	6.6
Lungpher	100	0
Aizawl region total %	96.6	3.3
Ngopa	70	30
Teikhang	10	90
Ngopa region total %	40	60
Sakawrdai	0	100
Zohmun	0	100
Sawkawrdai region total %	0	100
Lawngtlai	66.6	33.3
Lungzarhtum	0	100
Lawngtlai region total %	33.3	66.6
Siaha	20	80
Serkawr	0	100
Siaha region total %	10	90
Total	36	64

Mother language of respondents in region wise is depicted in Table 4.24. The percentage of respondents who use Mizo as a mother language is high in Aizawl, Lungpher and Ngopa and Lawngtlai region while there are no respondents with Lusei as a mother language in Sakawrdai, Zohmun, Lungzarhtum and Serkawr. The respondent whose mother language is of tribe language is highest in Sakawrdai region with 100%, followed by Siaha region with 90%. Interestingly, none of the respondents in Lungpher village of Aizawl area use their tribe language as mother language while 6.6% of the respondents in Ramhlun North of Aizawl use tribe language as mother language.

Table 4.25: Region wise: Household language used in percentage.			
Region	Lusei(Mizo)	Tribe	Mixed
Aizawl	100	0	0
Lungpher	100	0	0
Aizawl region total %	100	0	0
Ngopa	83.3	6.7	10
Teikhang	0	93.3	6.7
Ngopa region total %	41.6	50	8.3
Sakawrdai	0	100	0
Zohmun	36.7	10	53.3
Sawkawrdai region total %	18.3	55	26.6
Lawngtlai	80	0	20
Lungzarhtum	0	96.7	3.3
Lawngtlai region total %	40	48.3	11.6
Siaha	3.3	83.3	13.3
Serkawr	0	100	0
Siaha region total %	1.6	91.6	6.6
Total	40.3%	49	10.7

Regional difference with regards to language used in the family is depicted in Table 4.25. The table shows that irrespective of tribe differentiation, all of the respondents in Aizawl region use Lusei language within the family. Vengthar locality of Ngopa town also witnesses a very high percentage of Lusei language users and interestingly, in Hmar tribe dominated village Zohmun, a significant number of respondents use Lusei language, mention must be made here that 96.7% of the respondents in Zohmun are affiliated to Mizo mainstream Church rather than Hmar tribe based Church. In Lawngtlai town, no respondent use Lai language in the family and a very high percentage of them use Lusei language instead, while 96.7% respondents from Lai dominated village Lungzarhtum use Lai language within the family. All respondents from Sakawrdai and Serkawr use their own tribe language in the family.

Table 4.26: Region wise: Membership in civil societies.			
Region	No response	Mizo	Local/Tribe
Aizawl	0	100	0
Lungpher	3.3	96.7	0
Aizawl region total %	1.6	98.3	0
Ngopa	3.3	96.7	0
Teikhang	80	20	0
Ngopa region total %	41.6	58.3	0
Sakawrdai	13.3	80	6.7
Zohmun	0	100	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	6.6	90	3.3
Lawngtlai	16.7	23.3	60
Lungzarhtum	20	10	70
Lawngtlai region total %	18.3	16.6	65
Siaha	3.3	6.7	90
Serkawr	13.3	0	86.7
Siaha region total %	8.3	3.3	88.3
Total	15.3	53.3	31.3

The respondents are asked whether they are a member of Mizo based or tribe based civil societies. The question excludes membership in a Church, since a separate entry was made on Church membership. As previously mentioned, the Lai and Mara tribes have their own youth, students, women and senior citizens organizations but Mizo based associations are also functioning within Lai and Mara dominated areas. The Hmar and Paite have their tribe based students association but join Mizo based youth, women and senior citizens organizations. Table no 4.26 shows that no respondent from Aizawl and Ngopa region is a member of tribe based civil societies and a very high percentage of the Sakawrdai region are affiliated to Mizo based organizations. In Lawngtlai and Siaha area, a high percentage of the respondents are affiliated to tribe based civil societies.

Table 4.27: Region wise: Historical figures known in percentage.				
Region	No response	Mizo	Mixed	Own tribe
Aizawl	6.7	93.3	0	0
Lungpher	3.3	96.7	0	0
Aizawl region total %	5	95	0	0
Ngopa	10	86.7	3.3	0
Teikhang	10	90	0	0
Ngopa region total %	10	88.3	1.6	0
Sakawrdai	0	100	0	0
Zohmun	0	100	0	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	0	100	0	0
Lawngtlai	0	96.7	3.3	0
Lungzarhtum	3.3	96.7	0	0
Lawngtlai region total %	1.6	96.7	1.6	0
Siaha	3.3	86.7	3.3	6.7
Serkawr	13.3	80	6.7	0
Siaha region total %	8.3	83.3	5	3.3
Total	5	92.7	1.7	0.7

The main historical narrative depicted in the textbook or broadcasted by the leading Mizo elite has a deep influence on the people's knowledge. The respondents are asked to mention any three historical figures whose name, they are familiar with. As table 4.27 highlight, a very high percentage of the respondents named only 'Mizo' historical figures and a small percentage of respondents named out their tribe historical figures. Only 6.7% of the respondents from Siaha town mention their own tribesmen only. No significant regional and rural –urban difference is seen in this particular question.

Table 4.28: Region wise: Views on Inter tribe marriage in percentage.			
Region	Good	Bad	Not sure
Aizawl	53.3	20	26.7
Lungpher	23.3	36.7	40
Aizawl region total %	38.3	28.3	33.3
Ngopa	60	16.7	23.3
Teikhang	100.	0	0
Ngopa region total %	80	8.3	11.6
Sakawrdai	90	0	10
Zohmun	96.7	0	3.3
Sawkawrdai region total %	93.3	0	3.3
Lawngtlai	96.7	0	3.3
Lungzarhtum	83.3	0	16.7
Lawngtlai region total %	90	0	10
Siaha	93.3	0	6.7
Serkawr	96.7	0	3.3
Siaha region total %	95	0	5
Total	79.3	7.3	13.3

Marriage implies more than joining of two persons; it indicates joining of two families. Hence the acceptance of having family relationship by means of marriage reflects subjective views of social acceptance. Table 4.28 reveals that while the general view seems to be that of accepting inter-tribe marriage among the Zo ethnic group. Respondents living in Aizawl region and Ngopa town have comparatively higher level of reservation, while a very high percentage of respondents from other regions view inter tribe marriage as good. Many respondents elaborate that the concern is mainly of the language used by the person rather than the tribe they belong. The survey result shows the comparative openness of regions other than Aizawl and its surrounding areas.

Table 4.29: Region wise: Level of Comfortability when in other language speaking tribe dominated area.				
Region	No response	Very comfortable	Not so Comfortable	Not Comfortable
Aizawl	60	23.3	16.6	0
Lungpher	83.3	3.3	13.3	0
Aizawl region total %	71.6	13.3	15	0
Ngopa	60	20	20	0
Teikhang	20	73.3	6.6	0
Ngopa region total %	40	46.6	13.3	0
Sakawrdai	6.6	93.3	0	0
Zohmun	0	100	0	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	3.3	96.6	0	0
Lawngtlai	0	100	0	0
Lungzarhtum	10	80	10	0
Lawngtlai region total %	5	90	5	0
Siaha	6.6	90	3.3	0
Serkawr	3.3	96.6	0	0
Siaha region total %	5	93.3	1.6	0
Total	25	68	7	0

Table 4.29 shows level of comfortability of respondents when they are in the area dominated by other tribes who speak language other than the mother language of the respondents. No response is comparatively very high in the Aizawl region and Ngopa town since most of the respondents have never been to area dominated by other language speaking tribe or tribes. Those who say they are very comfortable are also very few in respect of Aizawl region and Ngopa town as compared to Sakawrdai, Lawngtlai and Siaha region where the percentages of those who are very comfortable cross more than 90%. We could presume that Lusei speaking groups are comparative less comfortable when they are with people who speak language other than Mizo. The reason may be that most of the tribes in Mizoram can speak Lusei language while Lusei speakers generally do not speak other tribes languages.

Table 4.30: Region wise: Factors influencing voting behavior in percentage.						
Region	No response	Tribe	Region	Church	Party	Candidate's Personality
Aizawl	0	0	0	0	10	86.6
Lungpher	0	3.3	0	3.3	23.3	63.3
Aizawl region total %	0	1.6	0	1.6	16.6	75
Ngopa	0	0	0	0	40	60
Teikhang	0	0	0	0	76.6	23.3
Ngopa region total %	0	0	0	0	58.3	41.6
Sakawrdai	0	13.3	13.3	0	26.6	46.6
Zohmun	0	3.3	10	0	40	46.6
Sakawrdai region total %	0	8.3	11.6	0	33.3	46.6
Lawngtlai	0	0	6.6	0	20	73.3
Lungzarhtum	3.3	3.3	0	3.3	60	30
Lawngtlai region total %	1.6	1.6	3.3	1.6	40	51.6
Siaha	3.3	6.6	10	6.6	6.6	66.6
Serkawr	0	36.6	16.6	0	40	6.6
Siaha region total %	1.6	21.6	13.3	3.3	23.3	36.6
Total	0.6	6.6	5.6	1.3	34.3	50.3

No significant regional difference or rural urban difference is seen with respect to the factors that determine voting behavior of the respondents. Table 4.30 shows that personality of the candidate and political party affiliation mainly determine the voting behavior of respondents, irrespective of place of inhabitation. Tribe consideration as factor for casting vote in favour of a candidate is highest in Siaha region with 21.6% followed by Sakawrdai region with 11.6%, while it is 0% in Ngopa region, Aizawl city and Lawngtlai town. In connection to this result, mention must be made that so far as possible, political parties usually choose a person belonging to the dominant tribe as candidate of their party.

Table 4.31: Region wise: Views on tribe discrimination in percentage.				
Region	No response	Yes	No	No idea
Aizawl	0	3.3	96.7	0
Lungpher	0	0	100	0
Aizawl region total %	0	1.6	98.3	0
Ngopa	0	3.3	96.7	0
Teikhang	3.3	13.3	83.3	0
Ngopa region total %	1.6	8.3	90	0
Sakawrdai	0	53.3	40	6.7
Zohmun	0	56.7	40	3.3
Sawkawrdai region total %	0	55	40	5
Lawngtlai	0	0	100	0
Lungzarhtum	0	6.7	93.3	0
Lawngtlai region total %	0	3.3	96.6	0
Siaha	0	13.3	83.3	3.3
Serkawr	0	10	90	0
Siaha region total %	0	11.6	86.6	1.6
Total	0.3	16	82.3	1.3

Generally speaking, majority of the respondents do not think their tribe is particularly discriminated with the exception of Sakawrdai region where 55% of the respondents feels discriminated. The Hmar dominated area of Sakawrdai region is followed by Mara tribe concentrated area Siaha region, where 11.6% of respondents feel discriminated. The high percentage of feeling of discrimination in Hmar dominated areas of Sakawrdai region may be related with the Hmar autonomy movement which demands for the creation of Sinlung Hills Council which is yet to be realized at the time when survey was conducted.

Table 4.32: Region wise: Issues of concern for tribe in percentage.						
Region	No response	Protection of tribe identity	Income generation	More political representation	Infrastructure development	Others
Aizawl	96.6	0	0	0	3.3	0
Lungphor	100	0	0	0	0	0
Aizawl region total %	98.3	0	0	0	1.6	0
Ngopa	100	0	0	0	0	0
Teikhang	86.6	0	3.3	0	10	0
Ngopa region total %	93.3	0	1.6	0	5	0
Sakawrdai	0	10	70	6.6	13.3	
Zohmun	0	13.3	76.6	3.3	3.3	3.3
Sakawrdai region total %	0	11.6	73.3	5	8.3	1.6
Lawngtlai	0	0	56.6	6.6	36.6	0
Lungzartum	0	3.3	46.6	16.6	33.3	0
Lawngtlai region total %	0	1.6	51.6	11.6	35	0
Siaha	0	3.3	50	3.3	43.3	
Serkawr	0	0	30	6.6	60	3.3
Siaha region total %	0	1.6	40	5	51.6	1.6
Total	38.3	3	33.3	4.3	20.3	0.6

As highlighted in Table 4.32, on the question of issues of concern for the tribe, no response is very high in Aizawl and Ngopa region of Lusei and ‘other tribes’ dominated areas. It can be presumed that in these areas particular tribe consideration is low as most of the respondents identify themselves first and foremost as Mizo and do not think much in terms of their particular tribe identity. At the same time and interestingly, in other regions also income generation and infrastructural development are considered as far more important issue of concern than protection of tribe identity. No significant rural-urban difference is seen with regard to this question. For a layman, feeding the family is more important than identity politics at the personal level, but for the elite, identity concern is important for it provide a good platform for people mobilization.

Table 4.33: Region wise: Views on tribe based civil societies in percentage.				
Region	No response	Divisive	Necessary	Little impact
Aizawl	10	63.3	26.7	0
Lungpher	46.7	36.7	13.3	3.3
Aizawl region total %	28.3	50	20	1.6
Ngopa	33.3	46.7	20	0
Teikhang	43.3	3.3	53.3	0
Ngopa region total %	38.3	25	36.6	0
Sakawrdai	0	0	100	0
Zohmun	0	0	100	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	0	0	100	0
Lawngtlai	13.3	0	86.7	0
Lungzarhtum	3.3	0	96.7	0
Lawngtlai region total %	8.3	0	91.6	0
Siaha	16.7	0	80	3.3
Serkawr	0	0	100	0
Siaha region total %	8.3	0	90	1.6
Total	16.7	15.0	67.7	0.7

As mentioned in the preceding discussion, a number of tribe based civil societies are operating in their own concentrated areas. Table 4.33 clearly shows regional difference in attitudes towards tribe based civil societies. While respondents from the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ dominated areas held rather negative attitudes towards tribe based organizations, the respondents belonging to the tribe based civil societies view these organizations as necessary for the protection of the interest of their tribe. The Lusei and ‘Other tribes’ who identify themselves as Mizo generally view that the tribe based organizations divide the ‘Mizo’ along tribe lines, which is of concern for the Mizo nationality. While regional difference is evident, no significant rural –urban difference is seen in this regard.

Table 4.34: Region wise: Views on necessity of ADCs for tribes in percentage.			
Region	No response	Yes	No
Aizawl	36.7	16.7	46.7
Lungphor	63.3	13.3	23.3
Aizawl region total %	50	15	35
Ngopa	63.3	6.7	30
Teikhang	53.3	26.7	20
Ngopa region total %	41.6	16.6	25
Sakawrdai	46.7	30	23.3
Zohmun	23.3	6.7	70
Sawkawrdai region total %	35	18.3	46.6
Lawngtlai	10	46.7	43.3
Lungzarhtum	3.3	76.7	20
Lawngtlai region total %	6.6	61.6	31.6
Siaha	23.3	46.7	30
Serkawr	10	46.7	43.3
Siaha region total %	16.6	46.6	36.6
Total	33.3	31.7	35

Table 4.34 shows that there are different views between the Autonomous District Council area and non-Autonomous District Council area. No response is high in non ADC region due to lack of proper knowledge about the functioning of ADC, those who provide their views mainly consider setting up of ADC as unnecessary. The respondents from the ADC area generally view ADC as necessary. At the same time, a significant percentage of respondents from ADC area felt that setting up of ADC as unnecessary. The reason for this negative view of ADC may be due to unhappiness with the functioning of ADC or the demand for setting up of separate Union Territory for their tribe. However, this presumption is outside the result highlighted by the survey.

Table 4.35: Region wise: Views on compulsory learning of Mizo language in percentage.			
Region	Yes	No	No idea
Aizawl	83.3	13.3	3.3
Lungphor	76.7	3.3	20
Aizawl region total %	80	8.3	11.6
Ngopa	90	10	0
Teikhang	66.7	10	23.3
Ngopa region total %	78.3	10	11.6
Sakawrdai	90	0	10
Zohmun	100	0	0
Sakawrdai region total %	95	0	5
Lawngtlai	100	0	0
Lungzarhtum	23.3	60	16.7
Lawngtlai region total %	61.6	30	8.3
Siaha	86.7	6.7	6.7
Serkawr	66.7	33.3	0
Siaha region total %	76.6	20	3.3
Total	78.3	13.7	8

Presently, Mizo subject is included in the school curriculum all over Mizoram, and majority of the respondents could speak Lusei language. Hence as highlighted in Table 4.35, respondents irrespective of region and rural-urban inhabitation say that they would accept if learning Mizo is made compulsory. Interestingly, none of the respondents from Hmar concentrated area opposed compulsory learning of Mizo but there is reservation among the respondents from Aizawl area who speak none other than Mizo language.

Table 4.36: Region wise: Who constitute Mizo in percentage.						
Region	No response	Inhabitants of Mizoram	Chhinlung chhuak	Lusei tribe	Lusei speakers	Self identification
Aizawl	0	3.3	86.7	3.3	6.7	0
Lungpher	3.3	0	76.7	0	20	0
Aizawl region total %	1.6	1.6	81.6	1.6	13.3	0
Ngopa	3.3	0	73.3	0	20	3.3
Teikhang	0	23.3	70	0	3.3	3.3
Ngopa region total %	1.6	11.6	71.6	0	11.6	3.3
Sakawrdai	0	16.7	83.3	0	0	0
Zohmun	0	6.7	93.3	0	0	0
Sawkawrdai region total %	0	11.6	88.3	0	0	0
Lawngtlai	0	0	100	0	0	0
Lungzarhtum	6.7	46.7	40	6.7	0	0
Lawngtlai region total %	3.3	23.3	70	3.3	0	0
Siaha	0	3.3	90	0	6.7	0
Serkawr	3.3	13.3	66.7	16.7	0	0
Siaha region total %	1.6	8.3	78.3	8.3	3.3	0
Total	1.7	11.3	78	2.7	5.7	0.7

Table 4.36 shows respondents subjective views on who constitute Mizo. Majority of the respondents shared the view that all *Chhinlung chhuak* are Mizo. The response seems to differ from the argument often put forwarded by some tribe based elite who argue that Mizo identity is nothing but extension of Lusei identity as only a small percentage of the respondents said that Mizo consist of Lusei tribe only. But regional difference is seen in respect to linking Lusei language with Mizo identity. Aizawl region and Ngopa locality which are predominantly inhabited by Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who speak Lusei language show a comparatively exclusive view of Mizo identity by linking fluentsness in Lusei language as a marker of Mizo identity.

Regional and rural-urban wise cross-tabulation shows certain regional and rural-urban differences. Regional difference in perception of the respondents is somehow predictable due to the sample selection methods adopted, where samples are collected from each village and urban locality dominantly occupied by certain tribes. With regards to personal details, regional difference is seen in tribe composition, membership in type of Church, mother language, language use in the family, membership in civil societies while rural-urban difference is seen mainly in the educational qualification and type of occupation. In Ngopa and Lawngtlai areas, rural-urban difference is also seen in mother language and language use in the family.

With regard to respondent’s perception on particular tribe and Mizo identity related questions, no significant difference is seen apart from the fact that no response is comparatively high in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. With regard to historical figures known by the respondents, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen. Those who consider inter tribe marriage as good and who are comfortable when in area dominated by tribe language speakers are comparatively low in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. No significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen voting criteria where most of the respondents consider personality of the candidate and political party affiliation as more important criteria than tribe, with the exception of Siaha area where difference is seen in Siaha town and Serkawr village. Regional difference is witnessed

with regard to views on the role of tribe based civil societies, in Aizawl area and Ngopa town respondents have rather pessimistic view about them. Certain regional difference, particularly along ADC and non ADC area is seen with regard to the formation of separate autonomous political set up for certain tribes. Regarding compulsory learning of Mizo language, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is witnessed, except in Lawngtlai area where respondents belonging to Lungzarhtum village have a comparatively high percentage of not accepting compulsory learning of Mizo language. Again, with the exception of Lungzarhtum village, a very high percentage of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo.

Analyzing variables that influence respondents' perception

While the general trend of respondent's perception is presented in a frequency as well as regional and rural-urban wise cross tabulation, they do not adequately depict the different perceptions of the respondents and the variables that influence them. To further explore and analyze certain variables which influence personal perceptions of the respondents, cross tabulation was done on the basis of three key variables - tribe, language used in the family and Church affiliation. Tribe identity is selected since tribe identity politics and its assertion forms the basis of political demands for autonomy. Language is one of the most visible cultural markers in Mizoram; hence, fluentness in a particular language is greatly determined by the language used by the person in the family. As a Christian dominated state, Church is one of the most dominant civil societies in Mizoram. The formation of tribe based Churches increase the crucial role of Church affiliation in identity mobilization. For better understanding of the interconnection among the variables, respondent's region wise tribe distribution, tribe wise distribution of language used in the family and tribe wise distribution of Church affiliation are presented. Difference in perception of the respondents on questions relating to their particular tribe and Mizo identity along with tribe, language used and Church affiliation are presented on question wise to identify factors that influence the respondents perceptions.

For clarity purpose of the study, table 4.37 reflects tribe wise distribution of respondents. There are no respondents belonging to Lusei and other tribes from Lungzarhtum, Serkawr, Sakawrdai and Zohmun. Hmar respondents are found in five localities or villages, but they are concentrated in Sakawrdai and Zohmun. Lusei and ‘other tribes’ are mainly concentrated in Lungpher, Aizawl and Ngopa. More than 90% of the Paite respondents are from Ngopa and Teikhang. There are no Mara respondents from outside the MADC area. The table shows that each tribe has its concentrated areas.

Table 4.37: Tribe distribution in surveyed areas in percentage.										
	Aizawl	Lungpher	Ngopa	Teikhang	Sakawrdai	Zohmun	Lawngtlai	Lungzarhtum	Siaha	Serkawr
Mara	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44.4	55.5
Lai	3.1	0	0	0	0	0	46	47.6	3.1	0
Hmar	6.7	8.1	4	0	40.5	40.5	0	0	0	0
Paite	3.4	0	10.3	86.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lusei	46.1	3.8	30.7	7.6	0	0	0	0	11.5	0
Others	18.5	42.5	29.6	5.5	0	0	1.8	0	1.8	0

Language used in the family greatly determines the self-perception as well as socialization of a person, as fluency of a particular language is deeply rooted in practice. Table 4.38 is a cross tabulation of tribe identity and language used in the family. The table reflects that a high percentage of the Mara and Paite use their own tribe language within their family while most of the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ use Lusei/ Mizo language in their family. A significant number of the Lai and Hmar use Mizo language within their family. Family using mixed of Mizo and tribe language is highest among the Hmar, followed by Lusei and Lai.

Table 4.38: Tribe and Language used in the family in percentage.			
	Mizo	Tribe	Mixed
Mara	0	98.1	1.8
Lai	39.6	49.2	11.1
Hmar	32.4	44.5	22.9
Paite	6.8	89.6	3.4
Lusei	84.6	3.8	11.5
Others	88.8	5.5	5.5

There are a numbers of Churches which could be called as ‘Tribe based Churches’ due to the members mainly belong to a particular tribe. Table 4.39 reveals that while 100% of the Mara respondents belong to tribe based Church, as many as 63.4% of the Lai and 55.1% of the Paite respondents are members of mainstream Churches. It is also interesting to see that a significant percentage of the Lusei respondents affiliated themselves to ‘tribe based Churches’ since there is no Lusei based Churches operating in Mizoram. The high percentage of Hmar being members of mainstream Churches is understandable considering the territorial distribution of Hmar community as well as consolidation of Mizoram Presbyterian Church in Hmar dominated areas.

Table 4.39: Tribes and Church affiliation in percentage.		
	Mainstream	Tribe based
Mara	0%	100%
Lai	36.5%	63.4%
Hmar	83.7%	16.2%
Paite	44.8%	55.1%
Lusei	88.4%	11.5%
Others	96.2%	3.7%
Total	57.6%	42.3%

Historical figures familiar with in percentage: Respondents are asked to name any three historical figures with the primary concern to see the popularity of ‘Mizo narrative of history’. As shown in Table 4.40, Mizo based historical narratives have penetrated all tribes and all corners of Mizoram. We can say that only a small percentage of Mara tribe, who uses Mara language within their family and belonging to Mara tribe based Churches mention their own tribe heroes.

Table 4.40: Tribe wise analysis of historical figures in percentage.					
Tribes	No response	Mizo only	Mixed of Mizo and own tribe	Own tribe only	Total
Mara	9.2	81.4	5.5	3.7	100
Lai	1.5	96.8	1.5	0	100
Hmar	2.7	95.9	1.3	0	100
Paite	10.3	89.6	0	0	100
Lusei	0	100	0	0	100
Others	7.4	92.5	0	0	100
Total	5	92.6	1.6	0.6	100

We can see from table 4.41 that that small percentage of respondents who name their particular tribe historical figures belong to Mara tribe and they use tribe language within their family while the general trend is that there is no significant different responds on the basis of language spoken in the family.

Table 4.41: Language used in the family wise analysis of historical figures in percentage.					
Language Speakers	No response	Mizo only	Mixed of Mizo and own tribe	Own tribe only	Total
Mizo/ Lusei speakers	3.3	96.6	0	0	100
Tribe language speakers	6.8	89.7	2	1.3	100
Mixed language speakers	31.	90.6	6.2	0	100
Total	5	92.6	1.6	0.6	100

Table 4.42 reveals that while a significant number of respondents, irrespective of Church affiliation are more familiar with “Mizo historical figures” than their own tribe figures. Those small numbers of respondents who pick the historical figures belonging to their own tribe are affiliated to their own tribe based Churches. Those who select a mixture of ‘Mizo’ and own tribesmen are found both in the mainstream and tribe based Churches.

Table 4.42: Church affiliation wise analysis of historical figures in percentage.					
Church	No response	Mizo only	Mixed of Mizo and own tribe	Own tribe only	Total
Mainstream Church	3.4	95.3	1.1	0	100
Tribe based Church	7	88.9	2.3	1.5	100
Total	5	92.6	1.6	0.6	100

Views on inter tribe marriage among Zo-ethnic groups in percentage: Among the *Zohnahthlak* group, marriage is a joining of two families. In the pre Christian society, women who married tribe other than their own tribe join the tribe of the husband by joining the *Sakhua*²⁸ of the husband. Even in the contemporary society, women are expected to join the husband's Church and other social organisation. The survey result indicates that most of the respondents' views inter tribe marriage as good. Those who give negative reply or unsure about it mainly belongs to Lusei and other tribes who speak Lusei/ Mizo language in the family and are affiliated to mainstream Churches.

Table 4.43 shows tribe wise views on inter-tribe marriage. A very high percentage of Mara, Lai, Hmar and Paite are in favour of inter tribe marriage while only 53.8% and 42.6% of the respondents belonging to Lusei and 'other tribes' are in favour of the same. The main reason for negative view on the part of the Lusei speaking group can be assumed that they do speak languages other than Mizo while the rest of the studied tribes can communicate in Lusei language

Table 4.43: Tribe wise analysis of inter tribe marriage in percentage.					
Tribes	No response	Good	Bad	Not sure	Total
Mara	0	94.4	0	5.6	100
Lai	1.6	90.5	0	7.9	100
Hmar	2.7	87.8	1.4	8.1	100
Paite	0	96.6	0	3.4	100
Lusei	0	53.8	23.1	23.1	100
Others	1.9	42.6	27.8	27.8	100
Total	1.3	79.3	7.3	12	100

²⁸By joining the *Sakhua* of the husband, the wife could partake in the rituals of her husband tribe.

As seen in table 4.44, those who favour inter tribe marriage is lowest among the respondents who use Lusei/ Mizo as a family language. The same group has the highest percentage of negative reply and reservation about inter tribe marriage, while no respondents belonging to tribe language speakers and mixed language speakers hold negative view about inter tribe marriage.

Table 4.44: Language used in the family wise analysis of inter tribe marriage in percentage.					
Language Speakers	No response	Good	Bad	Not sure	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	1.6	59.5	18.1	20.6	100
Tribe language only	0.6	92.5	0	6.8	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	3.1	93.7	0	3.1	100
Total	1.3	79.3	7.3	12	100

Table 4.45 also reflects that those who give negative or unsure view on inter tribe marriage is comparatively high among the members of mainstream Churches than tribe based Churches. While as many as 92.1% of the respondents belonging to tribe based Churches are in favour of inter tribe marriage, only 69.9% belonging to the mainstream Churches are in favour of the same. The 'not sure' is also comparatively higher among the members of mainstream Churches with 15.6% while it is only 7% among the members of 'tribe based Churches'.

Table 4.45: Church affiliation wise analysis of inter tribe marriage in percentage.					
Church	No response	Good	Bad	Not sure	Total
Mainstream Church	1.7	69.9	12.7	15.6	100
Tribe based Church	0.7	92.1	0	7	100
Total	1.3	79.3	7.3	12	100

Level of comfortability when in other tribe speaking dominated area in percentage:

Fluentness or ability to communicate greatly determine comfortability of a person among a particular language speaking group as social communication is mainly through verbal communication. The survey result depicts that while the Mara, Lai, Hmar and Paite tribes are quite comfortable when in areas dominated by other language speaking group, but percentage of those who are very comfortable is relatively low in the case of Lusei and 'other tribes' who are mainly a Lusei speaking group. The high percentage of no response among the Lusei and other tribes is mainly due to the reason that the respondents have never been in an area where Mizo language is not used for daily communication.

Table 4.46: Tribe wise analysis of level of comfortability in percentage.					
Tribes	No Response	Very comfortable	Not so comfortable	Not Comfortable	Total
Mara	5.5	92.5	1.8	0	100
Lai	4.7	88.8	6.3	0	100
Hmar	14.8	82.4	2.7	0	100
Paite	27.5	65.5	6.8	0	100
Lusei	53.8	34.6	11.5	0	100
Others	66.6	16.6	16.6	0	100
Total	25	68	7	0	100

Table 4.47 shows that as many as 85.7% and 93.7% of the respondents who use their own tribe language or a mixture of Mizo and tribe language in their family respectively state that they are very comfortable when in an area dominated by other language speaking group. But the percentage of very comfortable is only 39.6% in the case of those who use Mizo language in their family. The obvious reason for this difference in comfortability may be that while Mizo language is commonly used as a

lingua franca in Mizoram, majority of the people in Mizoram speak Mizo language while the Lusei speaking groups are usually not communicable in other tribe's language.

Table 4.47: Language used in the family wise analysis of level of comfortability in percentage.					
Tribes	No Response	Very comfortable	Not so comfortable	Not Comfortable	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	47.9	39.6	12.3	0	100
Tribe language only	10.2	85.7	4	0	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	6.2	93.7	0	0	100
Total	25	68	7	0	100

A significant difference is seen in table 4.48, while as many as 86.6% of the respondents belonging to tribe based Churches feel very comfortable when in an area where their own tribe language is not used for communication, only 54.3% of respondents belonging to mainstream Churches are comfortable. No response is comparatively higher among the members of the mainstream Churches than among the members of tribe based Churches.

Table 4.48: Table Church affiliation wise analysis of level of comfortability in percentage.					
Church	No Response	Very comfortable	Not so comfortable	Not Comfortable	Total
Mainstream Church	36.4	54.3	9.2	0	100
Tribe based Church	9.4	86.6	3.9	0	100
Total	25	68	7	0	100

Factors influencing voting behavior in percentage: Though identity issue is frequently raised in the political platforms and presented as a political demands, majority of the respondents (irrespective of tribe, language used in the family and Church membership) do not choose tribe consideration as the main factor that influence their voting behavior. A comparatively higher percentage of voters who gives importance to tribe consideration are witnessed among the Mara tribe, tribe language user in the family and members of the ‘tribe based Churches’.

With the exception of respondents from Mara and to some extent Hmar, tribe consideration as factor that influence voting behavior is somehow negligible. Personality of the candidate and party affiliation are the two most important factors. But mention may be made here that political party usually considers the tribe of the candidate while selecting their candidates as chances of winning election is presumed to be better for a member of dominated tribe in an area where certain tribe are in concentration.

Table 4.49: Tribe wise analysis of voting criteria in percentage.								
Tribes	No response	Tribe	Region	Church	Party	Personality of the candidate	Others	Total
Mara	1.8	24	14.8	3.7	25.9	29.6	0	100
Lai	1.5	1.5	3.1	1.5	38	53.9	0	100
Hmar	0	6.7	9.4	0	32.4	51.3	0	100
Paite	0	0	0	0	72.4	27.5	0	100
Lusei	0	0	0	0	19.2	80.7	0	100
Others	0	1.8	0	1.8	27.7	62.9	5.5	100
Total	0.6	6.6	5.6	1.3	34.3	50.3	1	100

When analyzing the factors that influence voting behavior on the basis of language used in the family, as depicted in table 4.50 we can see that personality of the candidate as first criteria is comparatively higher among the Mizo language speakers and among those who use mixture of both Mizo and tribe language. Tribe consideration percentage is comparatively high among tribe language speakers in the family.

Table 4.50: Language used in the family wise analysis of voting criteria in percentage.								
Languages	No response	Tribe	Region	Church	Party	Personality of the candidate	Others	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	0	1.6	2.4	0.8	23.1	69.4	2.4	100
Tribe language only	1.3	12.2	8.8	2	42.1	33.3	0	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	0	0	3.1	0	40.6	56.2	0	100
Total	0.6	6.6	5.6	1.3	34.3	50.3	1	100

Table 4.51 highlights factors that influence voters to cast their vote in favour of the candidate on the basis of membership in the Church wise. Interestingly, among the members of tribe based Churches, only 11% of them give importance to tribe consideration while 38.5% and 37.7% of them consider party affiliation and personality of the candidate respectively. Among the members of mainstream Churches, only 3.4% gives consideration to tribe identity of the candidate while as many as 59.5% considers personality of the candidate as the main factor that influence them to cast vote in favour of a candidate.

Table 4.51: Church affiliation wise analysis of voting criteria in percentage.								
Church	No response	Tribe	Region	Church	Party	Personality of the candidate	others	Total
Mainstream Church	0.5	3.4	2.8	0.5	31.2	59.5	1.7	100
Tribe based Church	0.7	11	9.4	2.3	38.5	37.7	0	100
Total	0.6	6.6	5.6	1.3	34.3	50.3	1	100

Views on whether their tribe is being discriminated/ neglected or not in percentage:

Elite of the tribes often cite relative deprivation and discrimination as one the reasons which compel their movement for autonomy. The Mara and Lai have Autonomous District Council of their own, while the Paite and Hmar movement for autonomy has resulted in the formation of development councils in their dominated areas recently. But as reflected by Table no 4.52, majority of the respondents do not feel that their tribe is being discriminated. Those who feel discriminated mainly consist of Hmar, Paite and Mara tribe who use both Mizo and tribe language in the family and who belong to both mainstream and tribe based Churches.

As shown in table 4.52, respondents who feel discriminated is highest among the Hmar with 45.9% which is followed by Paite and Mara with 17.2% and 13% respectively. A high percentage of feeling of discrimination among the Hmar tribe can be presume to have link with HPC demand for political set up of their own, since survey was conducted during the time when the demand for the formation of Sinlung Hills Council was yet to be realized.

Table 4.52: Tribe wise analysis of tribe discrimination in percentage.					
Tribes	No Response	Yes	No	No idea	Total
Mara	0	13	85.2	1.9	100
Lai	0	3.2	96.8	0	100
Hmar	0	45.9	50	4.1	100
Paite	3.4	17.2	79.3	0	100
Lusei	0	0	100	0	100
Others	0	0	100	0	100
Total	0.3	16.	82.3	1.3	100

Table 4.53 reveals that those who use mixture of both Mizo and tribe language have higher percentage of feeling of discrimination than tribe language speakers. While the percentage of those who use both Mizo and tribe language is 37.5%, tribe language user consists of only 19.7%. Among Mizo language speakers as many as 5.7 % feel that their tribe is being discriminated.

Table 4.53: Language used in the family wise analysis of tribe discrimination in percentage.					
Languages	No Response	Yes	No	No idea	Total
Mizo language	0	5.7	93.3	0.8	100
Tribe language	0.6	19.7	77.5	2	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	0	37.5	62.5	0	100
Total	0.3	16	82.3	1.3	100

No significant difference of perception is seen on the basis of Church membership. While those who feel discriminated constitute 17.3% among the members of mainstream Churches, it is 14.1% among the members of tribe based Churches. So, we can assume that membership in a Church do not correspond with the respondents' feeling of discrimination.

Table 4.54: Church affiliation wise analysis of tribe discrimination in percentage.					
Church	No Response	Yes	No	No idea	Total
Mainstream Church	0.5	17.3	80.9	1.1	100
Tribe based Church	0	14.1	84.2	1.5	100
Total	0.3	16	82.3	1.3	100

Issues of concern for the tribe: As previously mentioned, no response is high due to high number of respondents who do not think in terms of particular tribe. Majority of the respondents consider income generation and infrastructure development as more important than protection of tribe identity or more political representation for the tribe. Those small percentage of respondents who put protection of tribe identity as primary issue mainly belong to Hmar, Mara and Lai tribes who use mixed language or tribe language in the family and belonging to both tribe based and mainstream Churches.

As highlighted in table4.55 respondents who consider protection of their tribe identity as important concern is highest among the Hmar tribe with 9.4%, followed by a negligible respondents belonging to Mara and Lai. Those who view more political representation of their tribe as important issues are highest among the Lai respondents with 11.1% followed by Mara and Hmar. No response is very high among the 'other tribes', Lusei and Paite.

Table 4.55: Tribe wise analysis of issues of concerns in percentage.							
Tribes	No response	Protection of tribe identity	Income generation	More political representation	Infrastructure development	Others	Total
Mara	0	1.8	37	5.5	53.7	1.8	100
Lai	3.1	1.5	50.7	11.1	33.3	0	100
Hmar	17.5	9.4	59.4	4	8.1	1.3	100
Paite	86.2	0	3.4	0	10.3	0	100
Lusei	88.4	0	7.6	0	3.8	0	100
Others	96.2	0	1.8	0	1.8	0	100
Total	38.3	3	0.3	4.3	20.3	0.6	100

By classifying respondents on the basis of language used in the family, it is seen that no response is very high among those who use Mizo language in the family with as many as 69.4% of them choosing not to answer this particular question. Those who prioritize protection of tribe identity is highest among the respondents who use mixture of Mizo and tribe language in the family while those who consider more political representation from their tribe as important issue is highest among those who use tribe language in the family.

Table 4.56: Language used in the family wise analysis of issues of concerns in percentage.							
Languages	No response	Protection of tribe identity	Income generation	More political representation	Infrastructure development		Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	69.4	0.8	18.1	1.6	9.9	0	100
Tribe language only	17.6	3.4	39.4	6.8	31.9	0.6	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	15.6	9.3	62.5	3.1	6.2	3.1	100
Total	38.3	3	0.3	4.3	20.3	0.6	100

No significant difference of opinion on the basis of Church affiliation is seen. No response is comparatively high among the members of mainstream Churches. Those who consider protection of tribe identity as important issue is 3.1% among the members of tribe based Churches while it is 2.8% among the member of mainstream Churches. In the case of those who view more political representation as important issue for their tribe is 5.5% from those affiliated to tribe based Churches which is not significantly higher than members of mainstream Churches which constitute 3.4%.

Table 4.57: Church affiliation wise analysis of issues of concerns in percentage.							
Languages	No response	Protection of tribe identity	Income generation	More political representation	Infrastructure development	Others	Total
Mainstream Church	57.8	2.8	26.5	3.4	8.6	0.5	100
Tribe based Church	11.8	3.1	42.5	5.5	36.2	0.7	100
Total	38.3	3	0.3	4.3	20.3	0.6	100

Views on tribe based civil societies in Mizoram: On the question of personal views on the role and significance of tribe based civil societies, no response is high among the Paite, Lusei and ‘other tribes’. Respondents who hold negative views of tribe based civil societies mainly belong to the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who speak Mizo language in the family and mainly belongs to mainstream Churches.

Table no 4.58 reflects that among the Paite tribe, the percentage of no response and those who consider them as necessary is same and a very low percentage of negative view on tribe based civil societies. A very high percentage of the respondents from the tribes who have civil societies of their own consider the existence of the tribe based civil societies as necessary. The majority of respondents belonging to Lusei and ‘other tribes’ hold rather pessimistic view about the role of tribe based civil societies while those who view them as necessary is comparatively higher among the ‘other tribes’ than Lusei tribe.

Table 4.58: Tribe wise analysis of tribe based civil societies in percentage.					
Tribes	No response	Divisive	Necessary	Little impact	Total
Mara	3.7	0	96.3	0	54
Lai	7.9	1.6	90.5	0	63
Hmar	5.4	5.4	87.8	1.4	74
Paite	48.3	3.4	48.3	0	29
Lusei	38.5	53.8	7.7	0	26
Others	27.8	46.3	24.1	1.9	54
Total	16.7	15	67.7	0.7	300

When viewed from the perspective of language used in the family, we can see that those who use tribe language or a mixed language gives positive response towards the role of tribe based civil societies, with a good percentage of Mizo speakers supporting

the same view. But most of the respondents who consider tribe based civil societies are nothing but decisive belong to those who used only Mizo language in the family.

Table 4.59: Language used in the family wise analysis of tribe based civil societies in percentage.					
Language used	No response	Divisive	Necessary	Little impact	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	25.6	35.5	38	0.8	100
Tribe language only	10.2	1.3	88.4	0	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	12.5	0	84.3	3.1	100
Total	16.7	15	67.7	0.7	100

Table 4.60 shows that there is no respondent belonging to tribe based Churches who thinks tribe based civil societies as divisive and as many as 88.9% of them feel their presence as necessary for their own tribes' interest. The members of mainstream Churches are divided as 26% of them hold negative view while as many as 52% of them think they are necessary, 20.8% of them prefer not to answer the question.

Table 4.60: Church affiliation wise analysis of tribe based civil societies in percentage.					
Church	No response	Divisive	Necessary	Little impact	Total
Mainstream Church	20.8	26	52	1.1	100
Tribe based Church	11	0	88.9	0	100
Total	16.7	15	67.7	0.7	100

Views on the necessity of Autonomous District Council: The formation of ADC for the Mara, Lai and Chakma and the demand for the same status by the Paite and Hmar is viewed rather negatively by the Mizo based civil societies, particularly the YMA. At the same time, those tribes who have ADC of their own also feel the existing political status

as inadequate to protect their distinct identity. Hence the responds towards this question reveals certain interesting answer.

As shown in table 4.61, ‘no response’ is also high as many respondents mention that they cannot provide answer since due to insufficient knowledge about the actual functioning of these ADCs. Around half of the respondents belonging to Lai and Mara tribe feel that ADCs are important for their tribe while half of the respondents from Lusei tribe think ADCs are not necessary.

Table 4.61: Tribe wise analysis of ADCs in percentage.				
Tribes	No response	Yes	No	Total
Mara	12.9	50	37	100
Lai	7.9	58.7	33.3	100
Hmar	40.5	17.5	41.8	100
Paite	48.2	27.5	24.1	100
Lusei	38.4	11.5	50	100
Others	62.9	12.9	24	100
Total	33.3	31.6	35	100

When viewed from the language used in the family perspective, we can see that tribe language speakers are comparatively more sympathetic towards the ADC than Mizo and mixed speakers. Those who feel ADC is not necessary are highest among those who use mixture of Mizo and tribe language followed by Mizo speakers. As many as 27.8% of the respondents who use tribe language in the family also have negative view about the formation of ADC for minority tribes.

Table 4.62: Language used in the family wise analysis of ADCs in percentage.				
Language used	No response	Yes	No	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	42.9	18.1	38.8	100
Tribe language only	27.2	44.8	27.8	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	25	21.8	53.1	100
Total	33.3	31.6	35	100

As seen from table 4.63 no response is high among the member of mainstream Churches. Those who support the existence of ADC is high among the member of tribe based Churches with 49.6%, while those who support the same is only 18.4% among the members of mainstream Churches. No drastic difference is seen along Church membership lines for those who view ADC as unnecessary.

Table 4.63: Church affiliation wise analysis of ADCs in percentage.				
Church	No response	Yes	No	Total
Mainstream Church	42.7	18.4	38.7	100
Tribe based Church	20.4	49.6	29.9	100
Total	33.3	31.6	35	100

Views on whether Mizo based Civil Societies: Table numbers 4.64-4.66 reflect views on Mizo based civil societies like YMA, MZP etc. The respondents are asked whether the Mizo based civil societies like YMA, MZP represent the interest of all tribes of Mizoram or not. A very high percentage of the respondents, irrespective of tribes, language used in the family and Church membership give a positive reply. Those who feel that the Mizo based civil societies do not uphold the interest of all tribes in Mizoram are mainly drawn from the non Lusei tribes who use a mixture language or tribe language in the family and mainly consisting of a member of tribe based Churches.

As seen in table 4.64, there is a consensus regarding the positive role of Mizo based civil societies among the studied tribes. Among the Paite and Lai respondents, there is no one who outrightly said that the Mizo based civil societies do not stand for all tribes, but respondents belonging to these two tribes score high percentage in the column of 'Not sure'. Among the Lusei and 'other tribes' respondents who give rather negative reply to this question consist of 3.8% and around 1.9% respectively.

Table 4.64: Tribe wise analysis of Mizo based civil societies in percentage.					
Tribes	No response	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Mara	0	79.6	7.4	13	100
Lai	1.6	81	0	17.5	100
Hmar	0	86.5	12.2	1.4	100
Paite	0	79.3	0	20.7	100
Lusei	0	96.2	3.8	0	100
Others	0	88.9	1.9	9.3	100
Total	0.3	84.7	5	10	100

Not surprisingly, as high as 93.3% of respondents belonging to Mizo language speakers feel that Mizo based civil societies uphold the interest of all tribes in Mizoram, while 20% of respondents from speakers of tribe language in the family do not support this view. 18.7% of the respondents who use mixed language in the family give a negative reply.

Table 4.65: Language used in the family wise analysis of Mizo based civil societies in percentage.					
Language used	No response	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	0	93.3	3.3	3.3	100
Tribe language only	0.6	78.2	3.4	17.6	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	0	81.2	18.7	0	100
Total	0.3	84.7	5	10	100

As depicted in table 4.66 we can see around 10% difference in opinion among the members of mainstream Churches and tribe based Churches. Among the member of mainstream Churches the percentage of respondents who view the role of Mizo based civil societies as inclusive of all tribes is 89% while it is 78.7% among the members of tribe based Churches. There is a drastic difference in the ‘Not sure’ column where only 4.6% of the respondents belonging to mainstream Churches have doubt about the question while as many as 17.3% of the respondents from tribe based Churches have reservation about the inclusive role of the Mizo based civil societies.

Table 4.66: Church affiliation wise analysis of Mizo based civil societies in percentage.					
Church	No response	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Mainstream Church	0.5	89	5.7	4.6	173
Tribe based Church	0	78.7	3.9	17.3	127
Total	0.3	84.7	5	10	300

Views on compulsory learning of Mizo language: On the tentative question of whether the respondents would accept if the Government of Mizoram issues an order for compulsory learning of Mizo language for all persons in Mizoram, a very high percentage of the respondents say that they would accept. Those who have problem with compulsory learning of Mizo language are seen among all studied tribes, including

Lusei. From the language spoken in the family wise, we can see that those use tribe language in the family are more likely to have reservation than those who use Mizo language in the family. Members of tribe based Churches have comparatively higher percentage of those who reject the idea of compulsory learning of Mizo language than members of mainstream Churches.

Table 4.67 reveals that that most of the respondents do not have problem even if learning of Mizo is made compulsory. The lowest percentage of support is seen among the Lai tribes with 63.4% followed by Paite tribes with 68.9%. Those who opposed are highest among the Lai tribes followed by Mara tribes with 28.5% and 22.2% respectively. Interestingly, respondents who oppose are lowest among the Hmar tribe which is followed by ‘other tribes’ and Lusei tribe. Those who have no idea are comparatively high among the Paite tribes. Interestingly, 7.6% of the respondents from the Lusei tribe oppose the idea.

Table 4.67: Tribe wise analysis of compulsory Mizo in percentage.				
	Yes	No	No idea	Total
Mara	74	22.2	3.7	100
Lai	63.4	28.5	7.9	100
Hmar	89.1	4	6.7	100
Paite	68.9	10.3	20.6	100
Lusei	88.4	7.6	3.8	100
Others	85.1	5.5	9.2	100
Total	78.3	13.6	8	100

It can be presumed that a person is most comfortable with the language used in the family, hence those who oppose the compulsory learning of Mizo language is relatively high among those who use their own language in within the family. Those who do not have clear idea about the issue are also high among the tribe language user. But 5.4% of Mizo language user and 6.2% of those who use a mixture of Mizo and tribe language oppose the idea of compulsory learning of Mizo language.

Table 4.68: Language used in the family wise analysis of compulsory Mizo in percentage.				
Language used	Yes	No	No idea	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	88.4	5.7	5.7	100
Tribe language only	66.6	21.7	11.5	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	93.7	6.2	0	100
Total	78.3	13.6	8	100

A comparative view as shown by table 4.69 clearly reflects the difference of opinion on Church affiliation wise. Respondents who accept the idea is 84.9% among the members of mainstream Churches while it is 69.2% among the member of tribe based Churches, which is more than 10% difference. There is also a wide difference on those who opposed the idea. It is 22% among members of the tribe based Church while members of mainstream Churches who oppose the view is only 7.5%, which is a significant difference.

Table 4.69: Church affiliation wise analysis of compulsory Mizo in percentage.				
Church	Yes	No	No idea	Total
Mainstream Church	84.9	7.5	7.5	100
Tribe based Church	69.2	22	8.6	100
Total	78.3	13.6	8	100

Who do you consider as Mizo: One of the main concerns of the research is to identify difference in perceptions among the respondents with regard to self-identification and views towards Mizo identity. The survey result postulates that there is a general consensus that all *Chhinlung chhuak* or Zo ethnic group are Mizo. This perception reveals that majority of the respondents, irrespective of tribe, language spoken and Church affiliation identify themselves as Mizo since all the studied tribes do not contest that they are of *Chhinlung chhuak*. A small yet relatively high percentage of respondents who define Mizo as Lusei tribe only are found among the Lai and Mara tribe who used tribe language in the family and belonging to tribe based Churches. The respondents who relate Mizo identity with only those who speak Mizo language is seen among all tribes except Lai tribes, and it is comparatively high among ‘other tribes’ mostly among who use Mizo language in the family and member of mainstream Churches.

When analyzed on the basis of tribe, table 4.70 reveals that the respondents who perceive Mizo as inhabitants of Mizoram is comparatively high among the Lai and Paite respondents while no Lusei tribe responds in this way. There are certain sections of the Mara, Lai and ‘other tribes’ who link Mizo identity with Lusei tribe. Mizo as Lusei/ Mizo language speakers is nil among the Lai while there are a small portion from all tribes who view Mizo identity in this way. Respondents who accept anyone who consider themselves as Mizo are found among the Paite and Lusei tribes.

Table 4.70: Tribe wise analysis of who are Mizo in percentage.							
Tribes	No response	inhabitants of Mizoram	All Chhinlung chhuak	Only Lusei	Only Lusei /Mizo speakers	Who identify as Mizo	Total
Mara	1.9	9.3	75.9	9.3	3.7	0	100
Lai	3.2	22.2	71.4	3.2	0	0	100
Hmar	0	9.5	87.8	0	2.7	0	100
Paite	0	20.7	72.4	0	3.4	3.4	100
Lusei	0	0	88.5	0	7.7	3.8	100
Others	3.7	3.7	72.2	1.9	18.5	0	100
Total	1.7	11.3	78	2.7	5.7	0.7	100

As seen in Table no 4.71, the perception that Mizo as inhabitants of Mizoram is comparatively high among the tribe language user. A slightly lower percentage of those who define Mizo as all *Chhinlung chhuak* is witnessed among the tribe language user than those who use both Mizo and tribe language in the family. Linking Mizo identity with speaker of Mizo language is comparatively high among who use Mizo language in the family.

Table 4.71: Language used in the family wise analysis of who are Mizo in percentage.							
Language used	No response	inhabitants of Mizoram	All Chhinlung chhuak	Only Lusei	Only Lusei /Mizo speakers	Who identify as Mizo	Total
Mizo/ Lusei language	0.8	2.4	84.2	0.8	10.7	0.8	100
Tribe language only	1.3	21	69.3	4.7	2.7	0.6	100
Mixed of Mizo and tribe	6.25	0	93.7	0	0	0	100
Total	1.7	11.3	78	2.7	5.7	0,7	100

There is no drastic difference between the members of mainstream Churches and tribe based Churches with regard to the percentage of respondents who consider Mizo as *Chhinlung chhuak*. But the view that link Mizo as Lusei tribe is comparatively higher among the member of tribe based Churches while it is nearly zero among the member of mainstream Churches. There is a significantly higher percentage among the member of mainstream Churches who define Mizo as Mizo language speakers with 8.6% while only 1.5% of the respondents from tribe based Churches subscribes to this view.

Table 4.72: Church affiliation wise analysis of who are Mizo in percentage.							
Church	No response	inhabitants of Mizoram	All Chhinlung Chhuak	Only Lusei	Only Lusei /Mizo speakers	Who identify as Mizo	Total
Mainstream Church	1.1	8	80.9	0.5	8.6	0.5	100
Tribe based Church	2.3	15.7	74	5.5	1.5	0.7	100
Total	1.7	11.3	78	2.7	5.7	0.7	100

The above analysis on the basis of the three variables shows that on the questions relating to particular tribe based related questions, ‘no responses’ are high as compare to other questions. When asked about the historical figures known by the respondents, those who name their own tribesmen are a small percentage of Mara tribe, who use Mara language within their family and belonging to Mara tribe based Churches. While majority of the respondents’ view inter tribe marriage as good, a small group who have rather negative view are mostly belongs to Lusei and other tribes who speak Lusei/ Mizo language in the family and affiliated to mainstream Churches. With regard to level of comfortability when being in other language groups dominated area, percentage of those who are very comfortable is relatively low in the case of Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who are mainly a Lusei speaking group. A comparatively higher percentage of voters who give importance to tribe consideration as voting criteria is witnessed among the Mara tribe, tribe language user in the family and members of the ‘tribe based Churches’.

While majority of the respondents do not feel that their tribe is being discriminated, those who feel discriminated mainly consist of Hmar, Paite and Mara tribe who use both Mizo and tribe language in the family and they belongs to both mainstream and tribe based Churches. No clear cut correspondence to any specific variable is seen with regard to different perception on issues of concern for the tribe, small percentage of respondents who put protection of tribe identity as primary issue mainly belongs Hmar, Mara and Lai tribes who use mixed language or tribe language in the family and belonging to both tribe based and mainstream Churches. The respondents who view the emergence and role of tribe based civil societies mainly belong to the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who speak Mizo language in the family and mainly belongs to mainstream Churches. No clear connection with the selected variables is seen in regard to the necessity of ADCs; the division is mainly seen along tribes who have ADC of their own and those who do not possess the same political set up.

On the questions related to Mizo identity, the general perception is that of wide acceptance of the process of Mizo nationality formation as well as the role of the agencies that propagate Mizo identity. The role of Mizo based civil societies are viewed positively, but those who are critical of their role are found among all studied tribes, including Lusei tribes, but their percentage is comparatively higher among tribes other than Lusei and ‘other tribes, and among tribe language speakers and members of tribe based Churches. Those who object to compulsory learning of Mizo language are seen among all studied tribes, but those who use tribe language in the family and member of ‘tribe based Churches’ are comparatively higher in percentage. While 78% of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo, a small yet relatively high percentage of respondents who define Mizo as only Lusei tribe only are found among the Lai and Mara tribes who used tribe language in the family and belonging to tribe based Churches. The respondents who relate Mizo identity with only those who speak ‘Mizo language’ are seen among all tribes except Lai tribes, and it is comparatively high among ‘other tribes’ mostly among who use Mizo language in the family and member of mainstream Churches.

The survey results reveals that the process of Mizo nationality formation has been accepted by majority of the people at least within Mizoram. Those small groups who have reservation about the process of Mizo nationality mainly belong to tribe language speakers and they normally affiliate themselves to tribe based Churches. The result also depict that those who detest tribe identity mainly belongs to Lusei and 'other tribes' who speak use Mizo language in the family and affiliated to mainstream Churches. This shows the crucial importance of language issue and the role of tribe based Churches towards tribe identity consciousness as well as for the study of Mizo identity is evident.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter highlights the main themes and arguments of the study in the form of a summary by recapturing the main issues discussed in the previous chapters and provides certain concluding remarks on the basis of research findings. The present study seeks to present the emergence of Mizo identity as a nationality in a descriptive manner as well as attempts to understand how the Mizo nationality formation is perceived by diverse tribes who are subsumed under the nomenclature of Mizo. The term Mizo is used in the present study to refer to all ethnically related tribes who are collectively called by several related terms like Chin- Kuki- Lusei, *Chhinlung chhuak*, *Zo hnahthlak* etc. The main point of the Mizo as a collective identity is the ethnic relatedness of the group against other communities inside and outside Mizoram. As the interface of the two processes of Mizo identity formation and distinct tribe identity is one of the main concerns of the study, a survey of the perception of diverse tribes towards Mizo nationality formation is done on the basis of which certain conclusion of the study is derived.

The first chapter presents a general introduction to the study, the significance and main objective of the study as well as the conceptual framework of the research investigation. The chapter argues that as ethnic identity-based assertions and movements have changed and they still have the potential to change the political map of North-East India, ethnicity and nationality formation is of crucial importance to understanding the political phenomenon of India in general and North East India in particular.

In Mizoram, the process of modernization gives birth to the modern educated elite who realize the need to construct a strong collective identity as Mizo and inculcate Mizo identity consciousness among their community. They mobilize the people in pursuit of demand for better political status, which results in the formation of the State of Mizoram which means Land of the Mizo. However, the continuing process of Mizo nationality formation has generated apprehensions and uneasiness,

particularly among certain non-Lusei tribes who apprehended that the Lusei and its allied tribes dominate Mizo society and monopolize economic, political and social power in their hands. The elite that emerged within these tribes promoted ethnic consciousness at their tribe levels and launch movements to counteract the real or assumed dominant status of the Lusei tribe and its allied tribes by linking Mizo as nothing but an extension of Lusei-based identity. These developments have posed real challenges to the Mizo elite, who seek to build Mizo nationality based on the ethnic solidarity of all tribes, including those who assert their distinct tribe identity.

While studying the Mizo nationality formation, the researcher encountered certain conceptual and contextual problems. The researcher has to put the contextual reality into consideration while applying the existing concepts which are developed on the basis of another context. Categorization of the collective identity of the studied community is problematic as the local term *Hnam* has undergone significant changes after the colonial period. The local people interchangeably used *hnam* to refer to clan, tribe and other larger collective identities like nationality as there is no separate term for these distinct collectives.

The study argues that there is a certain limitation of utilizing ‘tribe’ as a social category in the present study, due to its incongruence in the context of the study both in its anthropological sense of being a primitive and legal sense of inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list. The studied communities are categorized as Scheduled Tribes but they are not primitive societies as tribe recognition is done mainly on administrative or political purposes rather than any academic criteria. The lack of clear-cut qualifications to determine the Scheduled Tribe and the overlapping nature of recognized tribes limit the applicability of the concept for academic research. However, for the purpose of categorization study, the term ‘tribe’ is used to refer to the pre-colonial period local concept of *hnam* which is determined by the *sakhua*¹ of a person. Changing the *sakhua* implies changing the tribe.

¹ The term *Sakhua* is usually refer to as religion or belief system.

There are diverse and somehow opposing approaches regarding the nature and role of ethnic identity in group identity formation and its resultant effects on the emergence of a nationality. As the purpose of the study is neither an attempt to engage in the theoretical debate and theory building nor to arrive at a conclusion regarding the correct conceptualization of ethnicity and nationality formation, the study relies on the insights of scholars to understand and analyze the role of ethnic identity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and its perpetuation. The present study mainly derives its theoretical base from the framework of Paul R Brass Elite competition theory and AD Smith Ethno- symbolism.

Smith argues for the crucial importance of cultural elements like symbol, myth, memory, value, ritual and tradition for the analysis of ethnicity, nations and nationalism. Cultural elements have endowed each community with a distinctive symbolic repertoire, which served as a social boundary to define the 'insider' and 'outsider'. Shared values, memories, rituals and traditions have helped to ensure a sense of continuity with the past, which helps to create and sustain communal bonds and a sense of group identity.² He identifies three levels of ethnic ties- ethnic category, ethnic association and ethnic communities. In the ethnic categories, the population is designated by outsiders as a distinctive category on the basis of one or more cultural markers, usually language, customs or religion, and its members have no known myth of ancestry and little or no sense of solidarity. They may or may not have a self-designating name or the name may not be recognized by all the other defined members. In the ethnic association level, a more active level of ethnic membership may develop and give rise to a network of mutual relations between the members. In Ethnic communities or ethnies, the community, at least, the upper strata possesses a sense of solidarity, and the members developed self-consciousness as a group on the basis of myth of ancestry, common culture etc. Smith defines ethnic community or ethnie as 'a named and self-defined human community whose members possess a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of common culture, including a link with a territory, and a measure of

² AD, Smith, , *Ethnic Symbolism*, (New York, Rutledge, 2009), 24.

solidarity, at least among the upper strata.³ Smith defines nation as, named and self-defining community whose members cultivate shared symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions, inhabit and are attached to a historic territory or homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standard laws. While highlighting the cruciality of cultural elements, Smith acknowledges the role played by intellectuals and intelligentsia for the emergence and survival of the nation. He defines intellectuals as the creators, inventors, producers and analysts of ideas while the intelligentsia or professionals are a group of individuals exposed to some form of superior education. The intelligentsia have the will and inclination as well as the power and capacity to apply and disseminate the ideas produced by the intellectuals.

Paul R. Brass argues that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena, inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state. He stresses the role of the elite by arguing that ethnicity and nationalism are social and political constructions by the elite, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the culture of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves.⁴

While Brass sees ethnic identity formation as a process created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities, he does not discard the cultural forms, values and practices of a distinctive ethnic group as unimportant. Rather, he argues that the elite, while making use of the ethnic group attributes, are constrained by the beliefs and values that exist within the group limits the kind of appeals they can make. But, at the same time, the process by which the elite mobilize ethnic identities simplifies those beliefs and values,

³ AD, Smith, , *Ethnic Symbolism*, 27

⁴ Paul R, Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism – Theory and Comparison*, (New Delhi, Sage 1991), 8.

distorts them, and selects those which are politically useful rather than central to the belief system of the group.⁵

Brass identifies three levels of ethnic-based groups: 'ethnic category', 'ethnic community' and 'nation' or 'nationality'. He defines 'ethnic category' as any group of people dissimilar from other peoples in terms of objective cultural criteria and containing within its membership, either in principle or in practice, the elements for a complete division of labor and for reproduction. When an ethnic group uses cultural symbols for creating internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups, the group has become a subjectively self-conscious 'ethnic community'. When the ethnic community put forward a demand, a major say for the group in the political system or control over a piece of territory within the country, it implies that the ethnic group aspires to national status and recognition. In so far as it succeeds by its own effort in achieving any one of these goals either within the existing state or in a state of its own, the ethnic community has become a nationality or a nation. Brass views nation or nationality as a particular type of ethnic community or, rather, as an ethnic community politicized, with recognized group rights in the political system.⁶

For Brass, nationality formation can take either of the two processes. The first process relates to the transformation of an ethnic group in a multi-ethnic state into a self-conscious political entity. The second process is through the amalgamation of diverse groups and the formation of an inter-ethnic, composite or homogeneous national culture through the agency of the modern state. There is a similarity of the two processes as in both cases it attempted to transform otherwise objective characteristic differences between peoples into subjective and symbolic meanings and to increase the number of attributes and symbolic referents to emphasize their internal similarities and distinguish them from other groups.⁷

⁵ Ibid, 16-17.

⁶ Ibid, 19-20.

⁷ Ibid, 20.

From the arguments put forward by Smith and Brass, we can presume three points- one, there is no inherent dichotomy between the primordialist claim on the importance of naturally 'given' factors like cultural markers and the claim of the constructivist about the constructed nature of ethnic identity. Two, the crucial role played by the elite, or intellectuals and intelligentsia, for the emergence and survival of the nationality. Three, the need for the sound forging of objective and subjective attributes in the formation and persistence of group identity. Though the elite of the group plays a crucial role in the social construction of group identity, they are limited by the existing cultural factors. To mobilize the people effectively, the elite needs to appeal on the basis of the already existing cultural markers. When ethnic groups differentiate themselves on the basis of certain markers like belief in common ancestry, the social reality of the belief that binds the people together rather than the historical reality of common ancestry is important for the group. Therefore ethnic membership per se does not necessarily result in ethnic group formation but only provides the resources that may, under the right circumstances, be mobilized into a group by appropriate political action.

From the inference drawn from the above points, the study argues that ethnic groups are politicized cultural group united by certain objective attributes and exhibiting strong psychological sentiments of belonging to the group against others. A single tribe or a group of tribes join together and may form an ethnic group that is in competition with other similar groups for obtaining certain benefits within the larger political system. The emergence of ethnic group presupposes that the community has already been influenced to an extent by the process of modernization. When ethnic consciousness at a given stage of historical development translates itself into a desire for self-determination and leads to the mobilization of the community either for political autonomy or for sovereignty, then the ethnic group is considered to have emerged as a nationality.

Having laid down the conceptual framework for research investigation, the second chapter presents, in a historical and descriptive way, the material structures and social forces that influenced the construction of the Mizo nationality. The study

argues that Mizo nationality formation is closely connected with the history of social evolution, administrative structuring and re-structuring and the emergence of new social forces. Particular stress is given to the prominent role played by the modern elite, who are mostly Christians and received a formal education, for the formation and perpetuation of Mizo nationality. The traditional society was drastically changed by the forces of modernization mainly brought about by the British occupation of the land and the subsequent mass-scale conversion to Christianity. The decline of the traditional elite in the hands of the modernization process paved the way for the emerging educated elite to occupy a hegemonic position in society. With the lack of capital base and numerical strength, the educated elite use cultural identity as a means of mass mobilization to pursue their interest.⁸ It is contended that the Mizo nationality formation is a modern phenomenon by tracing the emergence of Mizo as a political identity to the occupation of the land by the British in the 19th century and the subsequent establishment of the Mizo District Council in 1954.

The people inhabiting the present Mizoram and adjoining areas are known and called by various names like Chin, Kuki and Lushai etc. The outsider's imposition of different names for the same group of people can be understandable in view of the absence of a common name of the people in the pre-colonial time. In the face of these outsider's imposed names, the first group of the modern educated elite of the society were curious about their ethnic origin and identity and they claimed that the natives never call themselves by these names in the pre-colonial time and they asserted that all the people hitherto known by outsiders as Kuki, Chin, Lushai are one group and they are Mizo.

The early history of the people in Mizoram, before their interaction with the British was rather unclear due to the absence of written history and minimal interaction with other communities. However, all composite tribes of Mizo nationality accept their common origin. The idea of common origin theory stands as

⁸ AK Baruah, "Communities and Democracy: A Northeast Indian Perspective", *North East India Studies*, (NEIDS, Volume 1, Issue no 1.(2005): 24.

one of the foundations of Mizo nationality, as its relevance lies in the people's strong belief of being one group that binds them emotionally together. The socio-cultural, economic and political life of the traditional Mizo society were closely intertwined. The society mainly revolves around the village which was under the supreme rule of the chief who possessed supreme authority, at least theoretically. The chief ruled over the village with the help of certain officials appointed by him. So the chief and his council of elders and priests formed an elite group in the traditional society. Each tribe had its own *Sakhua* and a priest to conduct their own particular tribe rituals. There was a distinct identification of a tribe with a particular *Sakhua*. However, a person could change his tribe by performing religious rituals officiated by the priest of the tribe he wished to incorporate into by means of *Saphun* which means change of *Sa* or tribe deity.⁹

Among the chief clans, the Sailo chiefs slowly consolidated and enlarged their power and ruled over most of the tribes of the region at the time of the British arrival. And they ruled over inter mixing of different tribes in their village, their rule became one of the foundations of Mizo identity. The pre-colonial situation under the Sailo rule was marked by the duality of cooperation and conflict. The Sailo chiefs cooperated against their common enemy but at the same time fought against each other. They brought about the gradual development of common custom and language among the diverse tribes within their rule. But at the same time, the people identified themselves first and foremost with their villages or their chief. In many instances, their village is in conflict with their neighboring village ruled by other Sailo chiefs.¹⁰ Intra conflicts, frequent changes of village sites and lack of significant 'others' debarred any kind of stable cohesive identity consciousness as pan Sailo subjects to come up.

⁹ Vanlalremruata Tonson and Lalmalsawma Khiangte, "Changing Significance of 'Hnam' and 'Saphun' System in Mizo Society", *Mizo Studies*, Vol. IX No. 3 July - September 2020, Pp.391-402

¹⁰ J, Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*. 8.

The British seemed not to be very eager to occupy the Lushai Hills as no economic benefit could be reaped by occupying the area. But, the ineffectiveness of the punitive expedition compelled them to subjugate and occupy the area. The 'Chin- Lushai expedition of 1889-90' marked the final occupation of the hills by the British.¹¹ The British administration is significant for bringing the commencement of the modernization process. The subsequent establishment of the political boundary of Lushai Hills District and the replacements of people's loyalty from their chiefs to the British government is of critical importance for the emergence of Mizo as a political identity and as a distinct nationality.

The British administrator was soon followed by the Christian Missionaries. Even though it does not seem to be the official intention of the Missions to involve closely in the identity formation process, the historic juncture of their interaction with the people makes their role in the construction of Mizo identity very significant. Within a short span of time, being Mizo becomes more or less synonymous with being a Christian. The skillful utilization of schools by the Missionaries, for inculcating Christianity to the first group of modern educated elite enabled Christianity to become an essential part of Mizo identity. The process of modernization brought about by the colonial administration and the modern system of education coupled with the mass conversion to Christianity drastically changed the society.

The emergence of a new group of a modern educated elite, mostly consisting of educated Christians has a significant change in the whole socio-cultural and political life of the people and their group identification. The first group of the modern educated elite who had sprung up during the colonial period were mostly drawn from the Sailo subjects as the modernization process touched them earlier than other groups for inhabiting the area where both the government and the Church first operates. The first group of the new modern elite during the colonial period, therefore, was mainly composed of Lusei speaking group, who received education in

¹¹ Sangkima, *Mizos: Society and Social Change*, 72-74.

the mission schools and were affiliated to the Church. Even though they are drawn from diverse tribes, Christianity binds them together and one's identity as a tribe was no longer relevant and important, thus inter tribe rivalry for dominance within the new elite group was not witnessed.¹² These small groups of elite dominate the entire society, in many instances, leadership in the Church, associations and political parties were interconnected to each other.¹³

The erosion of the relevance of a particular tribe's identity by a sense of unity as a Christian, being a subject of British, urbanization, the emergence of Lusei language as a common language, more and more interaction among the people at economic, social and political level prepares the soil on which the elite cultivate the Mizo identity. The new elite seeks for a new social milieu on which they can assert themselves. They seek a new identity distinct from the village-based identity they earlier had simply as a subject of the chief or British. They reconstruct the history and mobilize the people for a broader Mizo identity. Through literature and social communication, the new elite forcefully asserts the close relations and commonality of the people against others, especially the plain people. The elite infuses the comparative numerical, economic and political strength of the plain people and depicts them as a rival who could easily assimilate them unless they stand together under one nomenclature. So the Mizo identity which developed during the colonial period can be observed as the twin work of new educated Lusei-speaking elite and the outcome of the historical process. The Mizo elite does not create a new identity of their own; rather they consciously select some markers as the basis of Mizo identity, which is derived from or as given by the past.

¹² Joy Pachuau, *The Creation of Mizo Identity: From colonial to post-colonial times*, Unpublished M Phil Dissertation submitted to Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, 2005, 66.

¹³ The first native ordained minister, Rev Chhuahkhama was among the first councilors of the Mizo Union as well as first committee members of the YMA.

The modern elite develop a subjective consciousness of their identity and the term 'Mizo' was becoming popularly used as a common nomenclature of the people. So, the existence of significant others, enables the broader Mizo identity to emerge against or as distinct from other groups like Sap, Vai and Kawl. The Mizo as a political identity was formulated and re formulated in the hands of the elite who seek a broader identity to replace the existing identity like Lushai identity which could not encompass the non-Sailo subjects. So Mizo as a political identity emerged in the colonial time transcending the tribe's affiliations during the colonial time and was cemented with the change of Lushai Hills to Mizo District.

The newly emerging modern elite consciously mobilize the people on the basis of distinct Mizo identity and define Mizo in a broader sense so as to include all the related tribes in and outside the then Mizo District. As a small group with a common background of education, Christianity and Lusei language, chances of intra group conflicts were minimized and they have effective control over the important institutions of the society.¹⁴ As such, the spiritual, economic, political and social life of the society was gradually controlled by them and there existed a close relation and cooperation among the Church, NGOs and political party at the time of India's independence. The Mizo-based political parties like Mizo Union and Mizo National Front spearheaded the Mizo movement for autonomy which led to the formation of the State of Mizoram. At the society level, the big and influential civil societies like the Young Mizo Association, and Mizo Zirlai Pawl and Churches, particularly the two big denominations founded by the pioneer missionaries- Mizoram Presbyterian Church and Baptist Church of Mizoram, propagate Mizo identity through their own platforms and by influencing the government.

The formation of Mizo as a collective identity takes a long process of crystallization to emerge as a distinct nationality. The inclusiveness or exclusiveness of Mizo identity is determined by the markers selected by the elite as the basis of their people's mobilization. The selected attributes or markers, through which

¹⁴ See the tribe division of the Mizo elite in the appendix.

identity is propounded, greatly determine the formation as well as the future development of Mizo nationality formation. The contemporary discourse on Mizo identity mainly revolves around four issues or markers - common myth of origin, language, Christianity and territory. The Mizo identity boundary is in the process of negotiation marked by certain complexities and challenges. The myth of origin seems to be commonly accepted, but the fact that the community who believes in common origin are trans-border tribes create complication of its own. There is also a challenge to negotiate between the perpetuation of Mizo identity and maintenance of distinct tribe identity. The Mizo elite may need to contemplate the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the objective markers so selected for mobilization. The question of whether the Mizo identity accommodates tribe identity within its fold without destroying tribe identity is a critical concern for the Mizo elite.

The process of Mizo nationality formation has generated apprehensions and uneasiness among certain non-Lusei tribes who view it as detrimental to their particular tribe identity and interests. These tribe elites promote ethnic consciousness at their tribe levels and launch movements for autonomy. These developments pose a challenge to the Mizo elite, who seek to build the Mizo nationality based on the ethnic solidarity of the people belonging to Zo ethnic group inhabiting Mizoram. Hence, examining the nature of ethnic identities emerging among non-Lusei Mizo communities in Mizoram and studying their effects on the process of development of Mizo nationality formation is addressed in the third chapter.

Among the major tribes of Mizoram, the Hmar, Paite Lai and Mara are vocal in their demand for autonomy and assertion of their tribe identity. Therefore, the third chapter discusses the emergence, role and perception of tribe based elite and their movements for autonomy among these tribes. The descriptive presentation of tribe-based identity movement reveals that though each tribe identity movement has its own peculiarity, there are certain issues and contexts which influence tribe identity assertion and perpetuation of tribe identity in Mizoram.

The study identifies ten significant points for understanding tribe-based identity formation and assertion in Mizoram. The first point refers to the transborder nature of the tribe identity by arguing that all studied tribes are cross-border tribes and their movement in Mizoram cannot be understood in isolation as the politics of their brethren outside Mizoram has a deep impact on them. The second point relates to the shared idea of common origin with other Zo ethnic tribes. This idea of common origin gives the studied tribes certain advantage as they could negotiate their position both as a member of larger Mizo and as a distinct tribe. The third point argues that the tribe based elite realize they could not compete with 'Mizo' elite; hence they employ ethnicity as a mechanism for deriving the support of their tribesmen by stressing on their distinctiveness for the realization political autonomy where they could enjoy political and financial power. Fourthly, the contentious nature of Scheduled Tribe recognition in the form of inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of Mizoram is highlighted. The tribes elite in question asserts that constitutionally their tribe can not be incorporated under the Mizo as one recognized tribe can not be subsumed under Mizo which is another recognized tribe and they equate Mizo with Lushai by defining Mizo as any Lushai excludes them as they are not Lusei.

The fifth point argues that the language of a person becomes important in group differentiation since it is one of the most identifiable cultural markers. The issue relates to Mizo speakers and tribe language speakers within the same tribe. The sixth point highlights the close interlinking of the social and political elite. The first group of the educated elite are responsible for the formation of social organizations as well as political parties which is obvious as they are the pioneer in their own society. The seventh point contests the elite's claim of homogeneity of any group, including the studied tribe by highlighting persisting diverse claims and differences within the group. The eighth point discusses the poor electoral performance or instability of tribe-based political parties in the electoral politics of Mizoram. The ninth point relates to the territorial issues in two ways- the studied tribe have to negotiate between the social and political influence of their brethren outside Mizoram and the political reality of international and state boundaries. Also the

centrality of ADC area or demand area for the tribe identity movements. Lastly, the tenth point highlights that the main concern of the tribe's identity movement relates not necessarily with or against Mizo identity per se. The assertion of tribe identity should not be interpreted as a total rejection of Mizo identity or any other larger identity. They are opposed to any attempt to build a homogenous Mizo identity which necessarily demands the erosion of their distinct tribe identity.

The fourth chapter deals with the last two objectives of the study by the subjective views and reaction to the Mizo nationality formation as well as to identify whether regional and rural-urban differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness. To examine these objectives, survey is conducted through a structured interview method by means of multi-stage sampling method. Considering the main focus of the survey, five town localities and five villages dominantly inhabited by the studied tribes are identified and purposively selected.

The structured interview format is divided into three parts and the findings of the survey are presented in three ways- by means of frequency, crosstabulation on regional or rural-urban wise and crosstabulation on the basis of selected variables. The responses are first presented in a frequency manner. Personal information are mainly used for crosstabulation with other variables. The personal information reveals more or less similar representation of different tribes in the respondents, with the exception of the Lusei and Paite tribes. The majority of the respondents completed either elementary and HSSLC with a low percentage of both those who have no formal education and those who completed Graduate and above levels. Majority of the respondents are engaged in cultivation and 'Others'¹⁵ as the main occupation. As many as 57% and 53.3% of the respondents are members of the Mizo based Churches and Mizo-based civil societies, while those respondents whose mother language is Mizo are 36% and those who use only Mizo language in the family are 40.3%.

¹⁵ 'Others' here refers to any occupation other than Cultivator, Govt. employee and Self employed.

Regarding responses to questions related to particular tribe, the frequency of no response is comparatively high since a significant number of respondents do not think in terms of their own particular tribe. As many as 79% of them feels that inter-tribe marriage among the Zo ethnic group is good and 68% feels very comfortable when they are in an area where other tribes speaking groups are dominated. Only 6.7% responded that they consider the tribe of a candidate while casting their vote. A very high percentage i.e 82.3% do not feel that their tribe is being intentionally discriminated or neglected, which negates the tribe based elite propagation of their tribe being discrimination to justify their demands for autonomy. Interestingly, income generation and infrastructure development are regarded as more important issues of concern than protection of tribe identity. The survey results of the second part can be summarized in general way as, particular tribe consideration is not so significant among the respondents.

On the respondents' attitude towards the process of Mizoisation process and its related matters, the frequency of responses depict the general acceptance of Mizo identity among the diverse tribes living in different parts of Mizoram. As many as 67.7% of respondents consider tribe-based civil societies as necessary for their tribe and 84.7% view the role of Mizo-based NGOs in a positive way. But on the question of the existence or setting up of separate political set up for certain tribes, the respondents are divided, no response is 33%, those who are in favour are 31.7% while 35% of them gives negative reply. Compulsory learning of Mizo language is accepted by 78.3% of the respondents. There seems to be a general acceptance of the mizo elite definition of Mizo as any '*Chhinlung chhuak*' or Zo ethnic group with 78% of the respondents answer in support of this proposition.

To examine whether regional differences and rural-urban differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation, a region wise and rural –urban wise analysis is done through crosstabulation. The survey shows that there are certain differences in perceptions along region and urban-rural differences. Considering the fact that each town localities and villages are selected on the basis of dominated areas of a particular

tribe, the presentation of survey result in terms of region or place of inhabitation seem inadequate to reflect the real factors that determine difference in perceptions of the respondents.

Regional and rural-urban-wise cross-tabulation shows certain regional and rural-urban differences. Regional difference in the perception of the respondents is somehow predictable due to the sample selection methods adopted, where samples are collected from each village and urban locality dominantly occupied by certain tribes. With regards to personal details, regional difference is seen in tribe composition, membership in type of Church, mother language, language use in the family, membership in civil societies while rural-urban difference is seen mainly in the educational qualification and type of occupation. In Ngopa and Lawngtlai areas, rural-urban difference is also seen in mother language and language use in the family.

With regard to respondent's perceptions on particular tribe and Mizo identity related questions, no significant difference is seen apart from the fact that no response is comparatively high in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. With regard to historical figures known by the respondents, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen. Those who consider inter-tribe marriage as good and who are comfortable when in area dominated by tribe language speakers are comparatively low in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. No significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen in voting criteria where most of the respondents consider the personality of the candidate and political party affiliation as more important criteria than tribe, with the exception of Siaha area where difference is seen in Siaha town and Serkawr village. Regional difference is witnessed with regard to views on the role of tribe-based civil societies, in Aizawl area and Ngopa town respondents have rather pessimistic view about them. Certain regional difference, particularly along ADC and non ADC area is seen with regard to the formation of separate autonomous political set up for certain tribes. Regarding compulsory learning of Mizo language, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is witnessed, except in Lawngtlai

area where respondents belonging to Lungzarhtum village have a comparatively high percentage of not accepting compulsory learning of Mizo language. Again, with the exception of Lungzarhtum village, a very high percentage of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo.

The survey results depicted in frequency and region-wise fail to adequately highlight the small group of respondents who hold different perceptions and the factors that influence them. The survey results are analyzed through crosstabulation on the basis of three key variables - tribe, language used in the family and Church affiliation. The crosstabulation results show the relevance of these three variables in the subjective identification of the respondents as well as their perceptions.

Regarding questions relating to particular tribe based related questions, ‘no responses’ are high as compare to other questions. When asked about the historical figures known by the respondents, those who name their own tribesmen are a small percentage of Mara tribe, who use Mara language within their family and belonging to Mara tribe-based Churches. While majority of the respondents’ view inter tribe marriage as good, a small group who have rather negative view are mostly belong to Lusei and other tribes who speak Lusei/ Mizo language in the family and affiliated to mainstream Churches. With regard to level of comfortability when being in other language groups dominated area, percentage of those who are very comfortable is relatively low in the case of Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who are mainly a Lusei speaking group. A comparatively higher percentage of voters who give importance to tribe consideration as voting criteria is witnessed among the Mara tribe, tribe language user in the family and members of the ‘tribe-based Churches’. While majority of the respondents do not feel that their tribe is being discriminated, those who feel discriminated mainly consist of Hmar, Paite and Mara tribe who use both Mizo and tribe language in the family and they belong to both mainstream and tribe-based Churches. No clear cut correspondence to any specific variable is seen with regard to different perception on issues of concern for the tribe, small percentage of respondents who put protection of tribe identity as primary issue mainly belongs Hmar, Mara and Lai tribes who use mixed language or tribe language in the family

and belonging to both tribe based and mainstream Churches. The respondents who view the emergence and role of tribe-based civil societies mainly belong to the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who speak Mizo language in the family and mainly belong to mainstream Churches. No clear connection with the selected variables is seen in regard to the necessity of ADCs, the division is mainly seen along tribes who have ADC of their own and those who do not possess the same political set up.

On the questions related to Mizo identity, the general perception is that of wide acceptance of the process of Mizo nationality formation as well as the role of the agencies that propagate Mizo identity. The role of Mizo based civil societies are viewed positively, but those who are critical of their role are found among all studied tribes, including Lusei tribes, but their percentage is comparatively higher among tribes other than Lusei and ‘other tribes, and among tribe language speakers and members of tribe-based Churches. Those who object to compulsory learning of Mizo language are seen among all studied tribes, but those who use the tribe language in the family and are member of ‘tribe-based Churches’ are comparatively higher in percentage. While 78% of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo, a small yet relatively high percentage of respondents who define Mizo as only Lusei tribe only are found among the Lai and Mara tribes who used tribe language in the family and belonging to tribe-based Churches. The respondents who relate Mizo identity with only those who speak ‘Mizo language’ are seen among all tribes except Lai tribes, and it is comparatively high among ‘other tribes’ mostly among who use Mizo language in the family and member of mainstream Churches.

Ethnic identity is a multi-faceted phenomenon and the fact that it is dynamic and fluid makes it difficult to arrive at any concrete conclusion. The present study on Mizo identity formation also discloses its malleability and contestable nature as well as the interplay of multiple factors in its process of formation and perpetuation.

However, the study reveals the correctness of the three statements which are put forward as hypotheses of the study. First, the examination of the objective markers as well as the development of subjective consciousness of Mizo identity

shows the centrality of ethnicity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and its preservation. Hence, we can argue that the emergence of the Mizo nationality is impinged on the larger ethnic identity. Secondly, the study also highlights that while ethnicity and nationality formation process does not necessarily go together, but the study reveals that in the context of the Mizo identity we see the transformation of an ethnic group into a nationality. This stipulates that ethnicity and nationality formations are concomitant with respect to Mizo identity. Thirdly, the crucial role of the elite, particularly the modern elite who emerged during the colonial period, in the process of Mizo nationality formation, is clearly evident. After overthrowing the traditional elite, the modern Mizo elite are in competition with the tribe-based elite as well as with the elite from 'outside' the group. Hence, the dialogue as well as the contestation on Mizo identity should be viewed from the perspective of the elite competition. The study, therefore, argues that the material structure and social forces emanating from the elite competition provide the base for the construction of the super structure of Mizo nationality.

Apart from the specific conclusion with regard to the hypotheses put forward, certain general concluding remarks may be drawn by recapturing certain findings of the study already highlighted in the previous chapters.

The fluidity, malleability and cross-cutting nature of ethnic identity are clearly evident in the present study. While discussing tribe identities in the previous chapters, the claim and counterclaim of tribe/clan identities were highlighted. While in certain situations, one group may be a sub-tribe/clan of a tribe, but in another context, the same group may assert its distinctiveness as a separate tribe. For instance, both Hmar and Lai claim Khawlhing as one clan of their tribe, and some sections of them who live within the dominated area of Hmar and Lai may accept themselves as such, but the same group who live within and around Aizawl consider themselves as a separate tribe. The case of the Pawih- particularly, Fanai and Bawitlung also revealed the dynamics of group identity. While these tribes are ethnically related to the Lai, but these tribes living outside the LADC area consider themselves separate from the Lai and the Lai themselves have some reservations

about their inclusion as Lai. There are also a number of common clans among the Lai and the Mara like- Hlawnehhing and Hlychho, Chinzah and Chozah, Bungai and Bohia, Hnialum and Hnaihly etc of Lai and Mara clans respectively. Apart from these, the practice of ethnic incorporation system like *Saphun* reveal the fluidity of tribe identity. The above discussions reveal the situational nature of tribe identity and at the same time show the ethnic relatedness of all studied tribes.

The prominent role of the elite in the formation and perpetuation of ethnic identity and the crucial importance of ethnic identity for the maintenance of the elite's hegemonic position are comprehended. The elite often present themselves as the representative of their homogenous community and put forward certain demands on behalf of their community and mobilize the people towards the realization of their demands. The benefits of the realization of their demands are enjoyed by the elite by means of exercising political and financial power or control of the society through the civil societies on which they provide leadership. As clearly highlighted by the survey results, common people are concerned more about matters related to their daily needs like job opportunities and infrastructural development. Their concern with ethnic identity also mainly revolves around matters pertaining to social relationships rather than purely ethnic identity-based political issues.

While discussing the role of the elite, mention is made that the elite often justify their demands as the interest of the homogenous group they represent. But a careful examination of group identity discloses the myth of group homogeneity and the reality of heterogeneous nature of the group. For instance, tribe-based political organizations, as well as civil societies, usually depict their community as a homogeneous group. However, the present study reflects the contestation within Mizo nationality as well as within the tribes who contest the Mizo identity. The study reveals that the tribes, rather than being homogeneous, are divided along the language spoken, place of inhabitation, and attitudes towards their ethnic identity. The Hmar are divided on Hmar-speaking and Lusei speaking group as well as on the basis of area of inhabitation. The division between Dapzar group and Teizang group of the Paite is also evident. Language issue divides the Lai tribe and the Mara

encounters division at the clan level. This reality postulates that the elite need to accept the reality of diversity and address the challenge of heterogeneity by means of accommodating the differences within their structure of group identity rather than attempting to form a homogenized group.

The study also identifies the interplay of multiple factors in ethnic identity formation and assertion. The history of the people, particularly origin and migration as well as system of administration both in the pre and post-independence has a drastic influence on ethnic identity. Political-administrative changes brought about by the British administration changed the traditional society by introducing a modern system of administration which paved the way for the emergence of the modern elite. The formation of Lushai Hills District, its upgradation to the Union Territory of Mizoram and then the State of Mizoram and the setting up of ADCs for certain tribes had a direct impact on Mizo identity as well as tribe identity. The importance of territory in the form of boundary demarcation- International, State and Autonomous District Councils, to some extent, curtail the identity movement within the confine of the existing territorial boundary. The significance of geography like rivers and hills is also recognizable, particularly in the context of Lai and Mara identity, the natural boundary demarcated by *Chhimtuipui* river is of tremendous importance. The role of civil societies is duly highlighted as agencies of identity formation. While the study does not properly investigate the role of mass media and social media, their influence is evident and there is scope for further study on this aspect.

The process of nationality formation is an ongoing process, hence, the future perpetuation of Mizo nationality formation as well as maintaining its group boundary largely depends upon how the Mizo elite negotiates with the tribe identity. The challenge before the Mizo identity perpetuation depends upon whether the Mizo identity accommodates, tribe identity within its fold rather than destroying the distinctive tribe identity. In other words, it is the identity award by Mizo that provides the real challenge as well as the future course of Mizo nationality and the politics of Mizoram.

Appendix 1
STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal details:

1. Name_____
2. Sex: Male___ Female___
3. Tribe: _____
4. Educational Qualification:
No formal education Elementary Class XII Graduate or above
5. Occupation:
Cultivator___ Government employee ___ Self employed___ Others ___
6. Church: _____
7. Mother language:_____
8. Languages spoken in the family:_____

Personal preferences:

9. Are you a member of any NGOs? Yes? No .If yes, please Specify_____
10. Name any three historical figures (Chief, hero, Poet etc) of Mizoram.
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
11. Your view on inter tribe marriages among different chhinlung chhuak / Zo hnaathlak tribes of Mizoram:
No response___ Good___ Bad___ Not Sure___
12. What is your level of comfort ability when you are in the area dominated by other tribes speaking their own language within Mizoram?
No response___ Very Comfortable___ Not so comfortable___ Not comfortable
13. During election, what factor influence you most regarding your voting behavior.
1) Tribe___ 2) Region ___ 3) Religion/Church___
4) Political party___ 5) Personality of the candidate___ 6) Any other.____

Issues concerning particular tribe:

14. Do you consider that comparing to other tribe; your tribe is being discriminated and neglected in Mizoram: Yes____No_____.

15. What do you think is the main issues of concern for your tribe.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) No response | 2) Protection of tribe identity |
| 3) Income generation | 4) More political representation |
| 5) Infrastructure development | 6) Others |

16. Your view on the role of tribe based civil societies in Mizoram.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1) Divisive____ | 2) Necessary for protection of small communities____ |
| 3) Little impact____ | 4) No Idea____ |

17. Do you feel that ADC is necessary to protect the interest of minor tribes of Mizoram? Yes____ No____.No idea____

Attitudes towards Mizoisation process:

18. Do you think influential NGOs of Mizoram like YMA; MZP etc represent the interests of all tribes of Mizoram?

Yes____No____.Not sure____

19. Would you support if the government of Mizoram issue an order that all persons in Mizoram should learn Mizo language compulsorily.

Yes____ No____No idea_____.

20. According to you, who constitute Mizo?

All persons inhabiting Mizoram____ All chhinlung chhuak/ Zo hnaathlak____

Only Lusei Tribe____ Only Mizo speaking group _____

Anybody who identify themselves as Mizo____

Appendix 2

Tribe-wise distribution of Mizo leaders

Note: For the purpose of the study, Pawih and Lai are differently marked while they may be grouped together in another context. Tribe categorization is mainly based on the writing of Liangkhaia and Zatluanga.

Sl.no	Person	Designation	Place of Birth	Born and Died	Tribe
1	A Sawihlira	Educationist	Thingliana	1931-	Chawngthu
2	A Thanglura	Politician, Writer	Aizawl	1926-	Hmar
3	Buangthanga	Businessman	Hmawngzawl	1914-	Lusei
4	C Pazawna	Theologian, Social Worker	Aizawl	1929-	Lusei
5	C Rokhuma	Educationist, Writer, Social Worker	Reiek	1917-	Lusei
6	C Saizawna	Educationist	Lungmawi	1914-1993	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
7	C Thuamluaia	Writer, Politician	Luangmam	1922-	Lusei
8	Ch Chhunga	Politician& 1 st CM of Mizoram	Tlabung	1922-1988	Ralte
9	Ch Pasena	Inspector OF School, Founder YLA, Poet	Lungleng	1893-1961	Chawngthu
10	CH Saprawnga	CEM, Writer	Lunglei	1914-1989	Chhawngthu
11	Challiana	Pastor	Tlabung	1890-1969	Murray
12	Chawnga	1 st Batch LP& Teacher,Church Leader	Bualpui	1880-1963	Chawngthu
13	Chhuahkhama	Pastor	East Phaileng	1885-1949	Khawlhring
14	Chuaatera	Pastor	Aithur	1889-1960	Lusei
15	CZ HUala	Poet & Inspector of School	Vanchengpui	1903-	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
16	Dokhama	Preacher	Lungrang	1878-1916	Obscure

17	DP Thanbuka	Poet, Teacher	Hmawngkawn	1901-1974	Lusei
18	Dura Chhawngthu	Gov't Servant & Poet & Church Leader	Bualpui(Lunglei)	1900-1988	Chhawngthu
19	H Vanthuama	MU Leader, Social Worker	Theiriat	1919-	Hnamte
20	HK Bawihchhuaka	Mizo union Leader. Ex CEM	Aizawl	1912-1985	Hmar
21	Aithangpa	Poet and church leader	Kanghum	1887-1965	Ralte
22	Hrangaia	Gov't Servant & founder YLA & MU, MDC	Thenzawl	1912-1989	Ralte
23	Hrawva	Chief & Teacher	Baichi(Lunglei)	1894-1956	Khiangte
24	HS Luaia	Pastor & Journalist & Member Peace Mission	Trawipui(South)	1909-	Lusei
25	J Buana	Businessman	Lunglei	1911-1993	Lusei
26	J Malsawma	Journalist & Govt. Servant & Social Worker		1930-	Hmar
27	James Dokhuma	Politician & writer	Sialsuk	1932-2007	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
28	JF Laldailova	Writer	Aizawl	1925-1979	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
28	K Zawla	Historian, Writer	Khawkawi	1903-1994	Ralte
30	Kaphleia	Writer	Thiak	1910-1940	Lusei
31	Kawlkhuma	Founder Salvation Army	Lungtian	1890-1971	Ralte
32	KC Lalvunga	Politician & Writer & IFS	Aizawl	1929-	Khiangte
33	Khawlkungi	Gov't Servant & Novelist	Aizawl	1927-	Lusei/Hauhnar
34	Khawtinkhuma	1 st MA & Founder MU & IFAS	Tripura	1913-	Lusei
35	L Malsawmi Sailo	Social Worker	Kelsih	1919-	Lusei
36	L Thanmawii	Teacher, 1 st Mizo MLA, Writer	Aizawl	1921-	Lusei
37	Lalbiakthanga	Politician & IFAS & Church Leader & Writer	Aizawl	1922-	Lusei/Pautu
38	Lalchungnunga	Inspector of School & Social Worker	Lunglei	1919-1992	Lusei/Chhakchhuak

39	Laldenga	CM of Mizoram	Lunglei	1927-1990	Ralte
40	Lalhmingliana	IFAS	Aizawl	1918-1980	Lusei
41	Lalhmuaka	Teacher & Writer & Social Worker	Thanglailung	1912-	Lusei
42	Lalkhera	Preacher	Biahte	1903-1985	Tlau
43	Lallianzuala Sailo	Founder Adventist church& writer	Hualtu	1922-	Lusei
44	Lalmama	Poet, Social worker, Educationist	Pukzing	1901-1959	Ralte
45	Lalmawia	Army officer, Politician, Journalist	THEIRIAT (Lunglei)	1913-1991	Khiangte
46	Lalnuraiva Ralte	Pastor & Member Christian Peace Committee	Khawlailung	1927-	Ralte
47	Lalrinthanga Sailo	Army Officer & Writer	Kelsih	1918-1958	Lusei
48	Lalsawia	1 st CEM & Writer	Serkawn	1919-1944	Lusei
49	Lalsawma	Pastor & Writer & Member Citizen Committee	Sailam	1930-	Lusei/Tochhawng
50	Lalthanliana	Pastor & Journalist	Lailak	1916-	Khiangte
51	Lalthawveng	Lushai Chief Council President, member MDC	Sailam	1913-1975	Lusei
52	Lalziki Sailo	Member MDC & College Principal	Khantlang	1919-	Lusei
53	Lalzova	Poet	Lunglei	1924-1945	Lusei
54	Lalzuithanga	Writer	Aizawl	1916-1950	Lusei/Pachau
55	Lama	Poet	Lenglakawt	1887-1976	Hmar
56	Liandala	Poet & Headmaster	Thiltlang	1901-1980	Lusei
57	Liangkhaia	Historian, Theologian	Saihum	1885-1979	Khiangte
58	Makthanga	Chief & Editor Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu	Baichi	1886-1942	Khiangte
59	MC Hmingliani	Activist Women right & MDC member	Sairang	1915-	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
60	Pachhunga	Businessman, Politician, Church Leader	Lawihmun,Chhamphai	1885-1958	Hmar
61	Pakunga	Army Officer , Politician , Social Worker ,Chief	Maubawk	1900-1975	Chhawngthu

62	Patea	Poet, Preacher	Tualte	1894-1950	Lusei/Chhangte
63	Peter Thangphunga	Founder Roman Catholic	Lungtian	1889-1959	Lusei
64	PS Chhawngthu	Poet & Musician& Social Worker		1922-	Chhawngthu
65	PS Dahrawka	Vety Doctor & founder- YLA,MU and ZUP	Khumzawl	1897-1978	Huha-Pawi
66	R Buchhawna	Gov't Servant & founder YLA 1 st Pre LSA Gen Hq Aizawl	Pukpui (Lunglei Dist)	1900-1983	Khiangte
67	R Dala	Rev& Missionary		`1884-1922	Khiangte
68	R Nuchhungi	Teacher & Poet & Educationist	Ralvawng(Lunglei)	1914	Renthlei
69	R Thanghuta	Chief, Poet	Pukpui	1894-1954	Ralte
70	R Thanhkira	Politician, Writer		1917-	Ralte
71	R Vanlawma	Politician, Writer	Maubuang	1915-2007	Ralte
72	RD Leta	Writer, 1 st Matriculate	Chhingchhip	1883-1925	Khiangte
73	RK Hrang	Army Officer & IFAS	Tarpho	1914-	Renthlei
74	RL Kamlala	Teacher & Poet	Ngurlen	1902-1965	Ralte
75	Robuanga	Missionary	Thenthelh	1925-	Chawngthu
76	Rokunga	Poet, Church Leader	Aizawl	1914-1969	Hmar/Vaiphei
77	Romani	Poet	Sialsuk	1910-1972	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
78	Rosiana	Doctor, Member MDC	Chhangzawl	1907-1958	Lusei
79	Saiaithanga	Pastor, Writer	Lunghret	1872-1980	Ralte
80	Sainghinga	Govt. Servant, Founder YLA	Pukpui	1899-1990	Pautu
81	Sangliana	Educationist, Founder MAL,MP	Aizawl	1914-1989	Lusei
82	Saplana	Writer, Social Worker	Biahte	1911-	Chawngthu
83	Siamkima	Lecturer, Writer	Lungleng	1938-1992	Khawlhing

84	SR Vala	IAS	Bawngchhawm	1933-	Ralte
85	Suaka	Chief	Lunghret	1868-1953	Chawngthu
86	Telela	Political Activist	Khawrihnim	1888-1966	Lusei
87	Thanga	Govt. Servant, Church Leader, Founder YLA	Aizawl	1883-1952	Lusei
88	Thangbawnga	Evangelist	Maite	1870-1935	Khiangte
89	Thangluaia	Officer, writer, Socail Activist	Aizawl	1896-1927	Lusei
90	Thankunga	Pastor, Writer	Saza	1875-1963	Khiangte
91	Thantluanga	Doctor, Army Officer	Aizawl	1912-1987	Pautu
92	Thenphunga Sailo	Army Officer, Politician	Lunglei	1922-	Lusei
93	Vanchhunga	Pastor, Historian	Thenzawl	1875-1956	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
94	Vankhama	Founder MU, Poet	Diarkhai	1906-1970	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
95	Vanmawia	Poet, MNF Senator	Saichal	1922-1980	Lusei
96	VL Siam	Teacher, Historian	Hualngohmun	1912-1989	Ralte
97	Zairema	Theologian, Writer, Social Worker	HmunHmeltha	1917-	Khawlhing
98	Zakamlova	Founder UPC	Khawkawi	1900-1985	Khiangte
99	Zathanga	Pastor	Khawngabwk	1882-1976	Renthlei
100	Zokima	Pastor, Writer	Sailam	1928-	Lusei/Tochhawng

The tribe wise distribution is compiled by Lalmalsawma Khiangte on the basis of the book *Mizo Hnam Puipate* (Mizo prominent leaders) by C Vanlalawma where the author list out 100 Mizo elite who play significance role for the formation of Mizo Nationality during 1894-1994.

Appendix 3

Tribe-wise distribution of political leaders of Mizoram (1952-2018)

Note: For the purpose of the study, Pawih and Lai are differently marked while they may be grouped together in another context. Tribe categorization is mainly based on the writing of Liangkhaia and Zatluanga.

Sl No	Name of legislators	Year of Election	Tribe
1	Aichhinga	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1998, 2003	Lusei/ Chhakchhuak
2	Andrew H Thangliana	MLA - 2018	Hmar
3	Andrew Lalherliana	MLA - 1987, 1989, 2003	Khiangte
4	Arun Bikash	MLA - 1984	Chakma
5	A Thanglura	MLA (Assam) - 1957, MP (RS), Assam - 1962	Hmar
6	Awka	MDC - 1957	Lusei/Pachua
7	B Lalthengliana	MLA - 1998, 2003, 2008	Bawitlung/Pawih
8	B Lalchungnunga	MLA - 1979	Hmar/Betlu
9	Bawngbila	MDC - 1962	Lusei/Chhangte
10	Biakchhawna	MDC - 1957	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
11	Brig T Sailo	MLA - 1978, 1979	Lusei/Sailo
12	Bualhranga	MLA - 1979	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
13	Buddha Dhan Chakma	MLA – 2013,2018	Chakma
14	C Chawngkunga	MLA - 1972, 1978, 1979, 1993	Chawngthu
15	C Chhunbura	MDC - 1957	Chawngthu
16	C Lalmuanpuia	MLA - 2018	Lusei/ Chenkual
17	C Lalrinsanga	MLA - 1998, 2003,2018	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
18	C Lalruata	MLA - 1972	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
19	C Lalsawivunga	MLA - 2018	Lusei Chhakchhuak
20	C Ngunlianchunga	MLA – 2013,2018	Lai
21	C Pahlira	MDC - 1962	Hmar
22	C Ramhluna	MLA - 2008	Lai
23	C Sangzuala	MLA - 1998	Chawngthu

24	C Thanghluna	MLA - 1998	Lai
25	C Thanslama	MDC - 1959, 1962, 1970	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
26	C Vulluaia	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1993	Chawngthu
27	Ch Chhunga	MDC - 1959, 1970; MLA (Assam) - 1959 (by poll), 1962, 1964 (by poll); MLA - 1972	Ralte
28	Ch Saprawnga	MDC - 1952, 1957, 1962, 1970; MLA (Assam) - 1952, 1962; MLA - 1972	Chawngthu
29	Chalrosanga Ralte	MLA - 2013	Ralte
30	Chaltuahkhuma	MDC - 1957	Hmar
31	Chawngtinthanga	MLA - 2008	Hmar
32	Chawngzuala	MLA - 1987	Chawngthu
33	Chhingkawnga	MDC - 1957	Lusei/Chhehlawn
34	CL Ruala	MDC - 1970; MLA - 1978, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1993, MP (LS) - 2014	Lusei
35	C Thuamluaia	MLA (Assam) - 1957	Lusei/Chuauhang
36	Col. Lalchungnunga Sailo	MLA - 1998	Lusei
36	D Thangliana	MLA - 2003	Hmar
38	Dotinaia	MLA - 1972	Ralte
39	Dr. C Silvera	MP (LS) - 1991	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
40	Dr. H Lallungmuana	MP (LS) - 1998	Lusei/Hauhnar
41	Dr. H Thansanga	MLA - 1972, 1984, 1989	Paite
42	Dr. K Beichhua	MLA – 2013,2018	Mara
43	Dr. Keneth Chawngliana	MLA - 1978, 1979	Chawngthu
44	Dr. Lalzama	MLA - 1998, 2003	Chawngthu
45	Dr. Ngurdingliana	MLA - 2013 (by-poll), 2013	Paite
46	Dr. R Lalthangliana	MLA - 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008,2018	Ralte
47	Dr. Rosiama	MDC – 1952,1957 (Nominated)	Lusei
48	Dr. Rothuama	MP (LS) - 1977	Ralte
49	Dr. Vanlaltanpuia	MLA - 2018	Fanchun/Pawih

50	Dr. Vanlalhlana	MLA - 2018	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
51	Dr. Z R Thiamsanga	MLA - 2018	Lusei/ Hrahse
52	E Lalngchinglova	MDC - 1962	Lai
53	Ellis Saidenga	MLA - 1979	Lusei/Zadeng
54	Er Lalrinawma	MLA – 2013,2018	Paite
55	Er.H Lalziriana	MLA – 2018	Hmar
56	F Lalnunmawia	MLA - 2018	Fanai/ Pawih
57	F Lalramliana	MLA - 1984, 1987	Fanai/Pawih
58	F Lalremsiama	MLA - 1993	Fanai/Pawih
59	F Lalthanzuala	MLA - 1998, 2003	Fanai/Pawih
60	F Lalzuala	MLA - 1993	Fanai/Pawih
61	F Lawmkima	MLA - 1993	Thado/Kuki
62	F Malsawma	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1993, 1998	Fanai/Pawih
63	F Manghnuna	MLA - 1989	Lai
64	F Sangkunga	MDC - 1952	Ralte
65	F Sapa	MLA - 1989	Fanai/Pawih
66	FC Nghina	MDC - 1970	Chawngthu
67	H Biakzaua	MLA - 2018	Lai
68	H Hrangdawla	MLA - 1987	Lai/Hauhulh
69	H Khuma	MDC - 1952	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
70	H Kiautuma	MDC - 1962; MLA - 1978	Lai
71	H Lalruata	MLA - 1987, 1993	Lai/Hauhulh
72	H Lalsangzuala	MLA - 2003	Hmar
73	H Laltanpuia	MLA - 1998	Hmar
74	H Liansailova	MLA - 2003, 2008	Hmar
75	H Rammawi	MLA- 1979, 1987, 1989, 1998, 2003	Lai
76	H Rohluna	MLA - 2003, 2008, 2013	Paite
77	H Thangkima	MLA - 1993	Lai/Hauhulh

78	H Vanlalaiva	MLA - 1998, 2003	Lusei/Hauhnar
79	H Vanlalthaliana	MLA - 2003	Lai
80	H Zathuama	MLA - 1993	Paite
81	H Zothangliana	MLA - 2008, 2013	Lai
82	Hari Kristo Chakma	MDC - 1962, 1970; MLA - 1972, 1978, 1979, 1989, 1993	Chakma
83	Hengmanga	MDC - 1962	Lai
84	Hiphei	MLA - 1972, 1978, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1989, 2013, MP (RS) - 1990	Mara
85	HK Bawihchhuaka	MDC - 1962	Hmar
86	Hmingdailova Khangte	MLA - 2008, 2013	Khangte
87	Hmingliani	MDC - 1957 (nominated)	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
88	Hrangaia	MDC - 1952, 1962, 1970; MLA - 1972	Ralte
89	Hrangthanga Colney	MLA - 1993	Ralte
90	F Hrangvela	MLA - 1972	Fanai/Pawih
91	JF Manliana	MLA (Assam) - 1962 (by-poll), 1967	Hmar
92	J Kapthianga	MLA - 1978	Hmar
93	J Lalsangzuala	MLA - 1972, 1989, 1993	Hmar
94	J Lalthangliana	MLA - 1998	Lusei
95	J Lawmzuala	MLA - 1998	Lusei
96	J Ngurdawla	MLA - 1972, 1979	Pawih/Tlau
97	J Thanghuama	MDC - 1962, 1970; MLA - 1972, 1984, 1987, 1989	Hmar
98	J Thankunga	MLA - 1978, 1979	Hmar
99	JH Lianchungnunga	MLA - 1982 (by-poll)	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
100	JH Rothuama	MLA - 1978, 1978, 1989, 2008, 2013	Lai/Jahau
101	John Rotluangliana	MLA - 1993, 2008, 2013	Lusei
102	John Siamkunga	MLA - 2013	Tlau/Pawih

103	Joseph Lalhimpua	MLA - 2008, 2013	Lusei/Pachua
104	JV Hluna	MLA - 1993	Lusei
105	K Biakchungnunga	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1984	Paite
106	K Lalrinliana	MLA - 2018	Khiangte
107	K Lalrinthanga	MLA - 2008, 2013	Khawlhing
108	K Lalsanga	MLA - 1978, 1979	Khawlhing
109	K Liantlinga	MLA - 2008	Khiangte
110	K Lianzuala	MLA - 2003, 2008	Lusei/Kawilam
111	K Pachhunga	MLA - 2018	Pawih/Khenglawt
112	K Sangchhuma	MLA - 1972, 1978, 1979, 1984	Lai
113	K Sangthuama	MLA - 1998, 2003, 2013	Khawlhing
114	K Thanfianga	MLA - 1987	Lusei
115	K Thangzuala	MLA - 1998	Khiangte
116	K Thansiamia	MDC - 1970	Khawlhing
117	K Thansiami	MLA - 1984	Khiangte
118	K Vanlalaiva	MLA - 1998, 2003	Khawlhing
119	K Zahungliana	MLA - 1987	Khawlhing
120	Kaibuaia	MDC - 1957, 1962	Hmar
121	Kapoor Chand Thakuri	MLA - 1972 (nominated)	Nepali
122	KC Lalvunga	MDC - 1957	Khiangte
123	Khuaimawnga	MDC - 1952	Lai
124	KL Lianchia	MLA - 1984, 1987, 1998	Lusei
125	KL Rochama	MLA - 1972	Kawilam
126	KM Biaksailova	MLA - 1978	Khawlhing
127	Kristo Mohan	MLA - 1978	Chakma
128	KS Thanga	MLA - 2008, 2013	Mara
129	KT Khuma	MLA - 1972	Lusei/Rokhum

130	KT Rokhaw	MLA - 1993, 1998,2018	Mara
131	K Lalrinliana	MLA - 2004 (by-poll)	Khiangte
132	Lawmawma Tochhawng	MLA - 2018	Lusei
133	L Ngurchhina	MLA 1979, 1987	Ralte
134	L Piandenga	MLA - 1979	Fanai/Pawih
135	L Thanmawii	MLA - 1978, 1979	Lusei/Hauhnar
136	Lal Thanhawla	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1993, 2003, 2008, 2013	Lusei/Sailo
137	Lal Thanzara	MLA - 2008, 2013, 2015 (by poll)	Lusei/Sailo
138	Lalbiakzuala	MLA - 1993	Ralte
139	Lalbuaia	MDC - 1952, 1962, 1970, MP (RS) - 1972	Khawlhing
140	Lalchamlia	MLA - 1998, 2003, 2018	Ralte
141	Lalchana	MDC - 1962	Ralte
142	Lalchhandama Ralte	MLA - 2006 (by poll), 2018	Ralte
143	Lalchhuanthanga	MLA - 2018	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
144	Lalchunga Chinzah	MLA (Assam) - 1967	Lai/Chinzah
145	Laldenga	MLA - 1987, 1989	Ralte
146	Lalduhoma	MLA - 1998, 2003,2018. MP (LS) - 1984	Lusei
147	Lalnghenga	MLA - 1982 (by-poll)	Ralte
148	Lalhlimpuui	MLA - 1987	Hmar
149	Lalhliira	MLA - 1972, 1984	Hmar
150	Lalhming Liana	MP (RS) - 2002	Lusei Hlawndo
151	Lalhmingthanga	Nominated MLA - 1972	Hmar
152	Lalhmingthanga	MDC - 1957 (nominated), 1962	Lusei/Hnamte
153	Lalhmingthanga	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1993, 1998, 2003	Hmar
154	Lalhuthanga	MLA - 1984, 1989, 1993	Hmar
155	Lalkhama	MLA - 1993	Lusei/Chhangte

156	Lalkhawngchinga	MLA - 1987	Ralte
157	Lalkunga	MLA - 1972	Ralte
158	Lallawmsanga Zadeng	MLA - 1984	Lusei/ Zadeng
159	Lalmawia	MDC - 1957, 1962, MLA (Assam) - 1952 (by poll), MLA (Assam) - 1957	Khiangte
160	Lalnuntluanga	MDC - 1962	PawihNgente
161	Lalrawnliana	MLA - 1989	Chawngthu
162	Lalrinchhana	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2003	Ralte
163	Lalrindika Ralte	MLA-2018	Ralte
164	Lalrinliana	MDC - 1957, MLA - 1972	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
165	Lalrinliana Sailo	MLA - 2003, 2008, 2013,2018	Lusei
166	Lalrinmawia	MLA - 1988	Ralte
167	Lalrinmawia Ralte	MLA - 2008, 2013	Ralte
168	Lalrinsanga Ralte	MLA - 2018	Ralte
169	Lalrintluanga Sailo	MLA-2018	Lusei
170	Lalrinzuala	MLA - 1998	Ralte
171	Lalrobiaka	MLA - 2008, 2013	Paite
172	Lalruatkima	MLA – 2013,2018	Lusei/Tochhawng
173	Lalsanga	MDC - 1962	Ralte
174	Lalsawia	MDC - 1952, MP (RS) - 1978	Hauhnar
175	Lalsawta	MLA - 1993, 2008, 2013	Khiangte
176	Lalthankima	MDC - 1957	Lusei/Hrahse
177	Lalthankunga	MLA - 1998	Hmar
178	Lalthanliana	MLA - 2013	Paite
179	Lalthansanga	MLA - 2008	Lusei/Hauhnar
180	Lalthanzauva	MLA - 1978, 1979	Lusei/Zadeng
181	Lalthawvenga	MDC - 1952 (nominated)	Lusei
182	Lalthlenglina	MLA - 2003	Chawngthu
183	Lalziki	MDC - 1952 (Nominated)	Lusei/Sailo

184	Liansuama	MLA - 1984, 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2005	Khawlhing
185	LN Tluanga	MLA - 1998	Lusei/Chhakchhuak
186	LP Thangzika	MLA - 1993	Lusei/Pachauau
187	Lt Col Zosangzuala	MLA - 2008, 2013	Ralte
188	L Thangmawia	MLA - 2018	Paite
189	Medhia Chakma	MDC - 1952, 1957	Chakma
190	Mylai Hlychho	MDC - 1962, 1970	Mara
191	Nihar Kanti	MLA - 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	Chakma
192	Nirupam Chakma	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2008	Chakma
193	P Lalbiaka	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1993	Lusei
194	P Lalupa	MLA - 1978, 1979	Lusei
195	P Siamliana	MLA - 1987, 1989	Lusei
196	Pachhunga	MDC - 1952, 1957	Hmar
197	Papuia	MDC - 1952	Lusei/Pachauau
198	Pathala	MDC - 1952	Khawlhing
199	Pukhuma	MDC - 1970	Tlau-Bualchhuak/ Pawih
200	PB Nikhuma	MLA - 1972	Bawitlung/Pawih
201	PB Rosanga	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1998	Bawitlung/ Pawih
202	PC Bawihluanga	MLA - 1989	Lusei
203	PC Lalthanliana	MLA - 2008, 2013	Lusei
204	PC Sapnela	MDC - 1970	Lusei
205	PC Saprema	MDC - 1970	Lusei
206	PC Zoramsangliana	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1993, 2008, 2013	Lusei
207	PP Thawla	MLA - 2003, 2008	Mara
208	Ramthanmawia	MLA - 2018	Ralte
209	R Dengthuama	MLA (Assam) - 1952	Renthlei
210	R Khawpuithanga	MLA - 2003	Ralte
211	R Lalawia	MLA - 1984, 1987, 1998	Ralte
212	R Lalhuzauva	MDC - 1970	Ralte
213	R Lalrinawma	MLA - 2008, 2013	Ralte

214	R Lalziriana	MLA - 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013,2018	Ralte
215	R Romawia	MLA - 1989, 2008, 2013	Ralte
216	R Selthuama	MLA - 2008	Ralte
217	R Thangliana	MDC - 1970, MLA - 1972, 1984, 1989	Ralte
218	R Thanhkira	MDC - 1952, MLA (Assam) - 1952, 1962, MP (RS), Assam - 1952	Ralte
219	R Tlanghmingthanga	MLA - 1987, 1993, 1998, 2003	Renthlei
220	R Vanlalvena	MLA - 2013	Ralte
221	R Zoliana	MLA - 1972	Ralte
222	Ralzatawna	MDC - 1970 (nominated)	Ralte
223	Rasik Mohan Chakma	MLA - 2003	Chakma
224	RB Chawnga	MDC - 1952	Ralte
225	RD Sangkhuma	MLA - 1972	Ralte
226	RL Pianmawia	MLA - 2008, 2013	Ralte
227	RL Valla	MLA - 1993	Ralte
228	Robert Romawia Royte	MLA - 2018	Royte
229	Rochhualthanga	MDC - 1962	Hmar
230	Rochhunga Ralte	MLA - 1984	Ralte
231	Rokamlova	MLA - 1984, 1987, 1989	Ralte
232	Ronald Sapa Tlau	MP (RS) - 2014	Pawih/Tlau
233	Rosangliana	MLA - 1989	Hmar
232 4	Rotluanga	MDC - 1952	Hmar/Varte
235	RT Zachono	MLA - 1978	Mara
236	Rualchhina	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1998	Ralte
237	R Zadinga	MLA - 1982 (by-poll)	Ralte
238	S Hiato	MLA - 1987, 1989, 2003, 2008	Mara
239	S Laldingliana	MLA - 2008, 2013	Lusei
240	S Vadyu	MLA - 1979	Mara
241	Saikapthianga	MLA - 1979, 1987, 1989, 1993, 2003, 2005	Lusei

242	Sailothanga Sailo	MLA - 2003	Lusei
243	Sainghaka	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1984, 2003	Ralte
244	Sainghinga	MDC - 1952 (Nominated)	Lusei/Pautu
245	Saingura Sailo	MLA - 1987	Lusei
246	Saitawna	MDC - 1952	Fanai/ Pawih
247	Saitlawma	MLA - 1972	Lusei/Sailo
248	Sangchema	MDC - 1957, 1970	Lai
249	Sanghmingthanga Pautu	MLA - 1998	Lusei
250	Sangliana	MP (LS) - 1971	Lusei/Hauhnar
251	Saplina Vindir	MLA - 1972	Lai
252	Saptawni	MLA - 1972 (nominated)	Khiangte
253	Satio Pryo	MLA - 1972	Chakma
254	Sawia	MDC - 1962	Lusei/Chhangte
255	Sneha Kumar	MLA - 1979	Chakma
256	ST Rualyapa	MLA a- 1993	Lai
256	T Hranghluta	MLA - 1993	Lai
257	T Sangkunga	MLA - 2013	Tlau
258	Taikhuma	MDC - 1952 (Nominated)	Ralte
259	Tawnluia	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1998, 2003,2018	Lusei/ Pachuau
260	Thanchungnunga	MDC - 1970	Chawngthu
261	Thangridema	MLA - 1978	Fanai/Pawih
262	Thangsuma	MDC - 1962	Paite
263	Thankima	MLA - 1987 (by-poll)	Ralte
264	TJ Lalnuntluanga	MLA - 2018	Pawih/Tlau
265	Tlangchhunga	MLA - 1978	Lusei/ Hauhnar
266	TT Zothansanga	MLA - 2008, 2013	Pawih/Tlau
267	Tuikhurliana	MDC - 1952, 1957, 1970	Lusei/Pachuau
268	V L. Zaithanzama	MLA - 2018	NA
269	V Rosiama	MDC - 1957, 1962	Hmar

270	Vaivenga	MDC - 1970, MLA - 1972, 1984, 1989, 1993	Ralte
271	Vako	MDC - 1952	Mara
272	Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu	MLA - 2014 (by-poll)	Chawngthu
273	Vanlalbuka	MDC - 1952, 1957	Lusei/Tochhawng
274	Vanlalthana	MLA – 1998,2018	Lusei/Pachauau
275	Vanlalthuaia	MLA - 1978, MLA - 1987	Lusei/ Renthlei
276	Vanlalthana	MLA - 1987, 1989	Ralte
277	Vanlalthaka	MLA - 1984, 1987	Fanai/ Pawih
278	Vanlalthama	MLA - 2013, MP (LS) - 1999	Lusei/ Chhakchhuak
279	VL Hruaia	MDC - 1970	Paite
280	VL Tluanga	MDC - 1957	Lusei/ Pachauau
281	VL Zaithanzama	MLA - 2018	Lusei/ Chhakchhuak
282	Zairemthanga	MLA - 1978, 1979, 1984	Hmar
283	Zakhu Hlychho	MLA - 1993, 1998	Mara
284	Zalawma	MDC - 1970, MLA - 1972, 1984, 1989	Paite
285	Zalawra	MDC - 1962	Khiangte
286	ZD Sangliana	MLA - 1984	Lusei/Zadeng
287	ZH Ropua	MLA - 1998, 2003	Hmar/Jongte
288	Zodintluanga	MLA - 2003, 2008, 2013,2018	Ralte
289	Zoramthanga	MLA - 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2003,2018	Lusei
290	Zosiam Pachauau	MLA - 1984, 1987, 1989, 1993	Lusei
291	ZV Lalmawia	MDC - 1970	Lusei/Zadeng

Source: Compiled by Lalmalsawma Khiangte.

Appendix 4

Imposition of Duties on Mizo Chiefs.

Imposition of Duties on the chiefs Under the Government Notification

No. 2530 (a) Dated 25.3.1937

(Collected from A.G. McCall's *The Lushai Hills District Cover*, and letter No. 4720 G.S. dt. 7.11.1938 of J.P. Mills, I.C.S., Secretary, Govt. of Assam, to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division)

The Mizo chiefs, during the colonial rule in Mizoram, had to perform the following duties prescribed by the Government under the above Notification:

1. *Duties concerning litigation:*

- (a) All cases between the Lushais were, as far as possible, to be decided by the chiefs according to Lushai customs.
- (b) Cases between the parties in the same village should be heard by the chief and *Upas* of the villages, and a clear roder with a brief statement should be recorded in the Village Register and signed in the Village Case Order Book by the chief or *Khawchhiar*.
- (c) An order passed by a chief should be entered in the Village Order Book at the time of the decision of the case.
- (d) Neighbouring chiefs should make every endeavour to sit together as a bench to decide any dispute between the villagers. Petitions filed by individuals to Officers should be referred back to the two chiefs concerned for original disposal when the parties resided in the adjacent villages.

(e) All appeals against Panchayats and chiefs' orders should ordinarily be heard by the Superintendent as he was the final authority in the District.

(f) Any petition to the Superintendent or his Assistants must bear the forwarding note of the petitioner's chief, who should record his opinions on the petition. This rule did not apply when the petition was not in connection with any alleged grievance against the chief himself or an order concerning a case with which the petitioner was connected.

Petitions not conforming with the requirement should usually be returned as failure to compel compliance.

chiefs were to see that they supported no frivolous or vexatious petition.

2. chiefs were held responsible for control of their respective villages in every way.
3. It was the personal duty of a chief to know his villagers intimately, understand their lives, their difficulties as also to encourage them to raise their standard of living in all possible ways.
4. chiefs were responsible for allotment of cultivable lands among their subjects and also for taking those measures which were necessary to ensure that a chief's villagers would be able to support themselves.
5. chiefs were supposed to dispose of litigation in accordance with the District Rules for the disposal of Civil and Criminal cases; a chief was responsible to maintain a copy of the District Rules in his own language in such a way that he could thoroughly understand his responsibilities and the rights of litigants.
6. A chief was responsible for supervising the works of his *Khawchhiar* and that all the books and records required by the District Standing Orders for observance were maintained by the *Khawchhiar*.
7. A chief was responsible for control of all matters which his *Khawchhiar* did on his behalf.

8. A chief had to comply with all District Standing Orders which had been communicated to him, copies of such orders had to be kept properly filed for ready reference by himself or his *Khawchhiar*.
9. A chief was responsible for maintenance of inter-village paths and communications through his *ram* throughout the year except in cases of difficulties beyond his control due to calamitous floods or slips.
10. chiefs must sign the concerned House Tax Assessment Registers prepared by the Circle Interpreters in token that he admitted this as complete and accurate.
11. chiefs and Headmen were to report to the Superintendent or his Assistants all epidemics, heinous crimes, violent deaths and serious accidents, if occurred, within their respective jurisdictions. In case of any death involving suspicion that it was the result of foul play, the concerned chief, without any further delay, had to send the body to the Headquarters for a post mortem examination accompanied by a detailed report. Where a death was caused by an accident unaccompanied by any suspicion of foul play, the body would be allowed to be buried as usual.
12. It was the duty of a chief to see that his *Khawchhiar* maintained the list of all gun holder of the village(s) under his control. Any variation in this regard must be reported by the chief to the Superintendent or his Assistants.
13. chiefs outside the Surcharge Areas were to report the presence of any foreigner within their respective jurisdictions, no matter whether the person stayed a night or a few hours with the exception of those who obtained a valid pass from the Superintendent or his Assistants.
14. chiefs were not allowed to levy *Dawvankaina* any more. A chief was, however, at liberty to stop the sale of foodstuff of his village apprehending general shortage but with an intimation to the Headquarters.
15. chiefs must not raise subscriptions from their villagers to build corrugated iron roofed house. The villagers must,

however, according to customs, build for the chief a large Lushai house and repair it free of cost.

If a chief wished to erect a corrugated iron roofed house, he must pay for iron, screws etc. himself. The villagers in that case would erect it and make the dap, posts etc. according to custom. The chief, in turn, would feed the villagers engaged in building the house.

16. If a chief wanted his villagers to help him in other private works, he would invite them in the usual way according to custom. But it was not obligatory on the part of the villagers to render such services for the chief. However, there was a Mizo custom called *Inpui* which meant every person should help each other and also the chief. The custom was still in practice even during colonial rule. Villagers would do all that they could help each other including the chief.
17. *Duties and restrictions imposed on the chiefs in the realisation of Fathang:*
 - (a) The maximum rate at which chiefs might levy *Fathang* from ordinary villagers was fixed at six snowflake kerosine oil tins of unwinnowed paddy.
 - (b) No *Fathang* could be levied on cotton cultivation if the cultivator had a rice *jhum* capable of supporting him. But if a cultivator had no rice *jhum*, the chief could levy *Fathang* on cotton also.
 - (c) No chief could allow an outsider to cultivate cotton within his land.
 - (d) Any one who was not cultivating due to sufficient foodstuff stored in his possession must pay *Fathang* at the usual rate of Rs. 2 on demand.
18. chiefs were to see that the incidence of impressment fell evenly on the villagers and on none more than others.
19. chiefs were responsible for maintenance of *Zawlbuk* in proper way.
20. It was the Government's desire that the Mizo chiefs should do all in their power to support all welfare committee schemes.

21. With a view to assisting the people of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) to develop their indigenous genius along sound and sincere lines and to afford some measures of protection against disintegration, the following Village Code would have to be read out and explained by the chief to all the villagers assembled in presence of all village leaders once every month:

- “(a) We desire to maintain a wholesome respect for all that is best in our indigenous culture which bears the stamp of the learned experiences of our brave forefathers over the time immemorial.
- (b) We desire to inspire in our people an ambition to maintain a true sense of proportion as to what wants and desires are reasonable in relation to our natural resources and industry.
- (c) We desire to maintain strict loyalty to our chief in all things lawful and in all his efforts on behalf of the welfare of the people, in return of which they will serve the interests of his people so that he may continue to rule.
- (d) We desire to inculcate into one and all that we should display the same loyalty to our whole village community as we desire to practise towards our own families.
- (e) We desire to integrate into our village lives, within the indigenous frame work of our social system, what modern science and knowledge have discovered for strengthening and safeguarding our characters, and health, home, crops, industry, and possessions.
- (g) We desire to seek all useful channels for greater use of our leisure time so that by our industry we may bring advantages to our families and our village, and that we may relieve our women folk of some of the harder works, that we may spare them in the hope and belief that they will in their turn take increased trouble in rearing finer children and making better food, clothes and happier and more united homes.

- (h) We desire to unite all in contesting our common tendency to be *mi hlem hle hile* retaining just pride in the sincere achievement of all manly and courageous feats especially those undertaken for the protection of our community as well as in the industrious successes of our wives and families in their homes and in their schools.
- (i) Those of us who are Christians agree to recognise that we should bow to the authority of those who introduced us to Christianity and that we shall be disloyal to them if we do not submit to the discipline.
- (j) We desire to inculcate into all our community the need for self-control and the avoidance of all excesses. We desire further to inculcate a true spirit of willing service and discipline into the young men who are the nation of the future, recognising that without our such proper and temperate discipline we can not hope to be of any use to our clans, our families, or to our employers, or even to the faith which we may profess."

Source: Chitta Ranjan Nag, *Post Colonial Mizo Politics 1947-1998*, Page 152-157

Appendix 5

Memorandum submitted by Mizo Union.

MEMORUNDUM SUBMITTED TO HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND ITS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY THROUGH THE ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE.

MIZO MEMORUNDUM : Memorandum of the case of Mizo people for the fight of territory within the province of Assam in free India submitted to His Majesty's Government and the Government of India and its constituent Assembly through the Advisory Sub-Committee for Assam and fully excluded areas and partially excluded areas.

Pursuant to the resolution passed by the General Assembly of the Mizo Union at Aijal in September 1946 Subsequently supposed by the Mizo conference at Lakhipur (Cachar) in Novembdr 1946 this memorandum prepared by the Mizo Union and supported by the Mizos outside the Lushai Hills - Manipur State, Cachar, Tripura and the Chittagong Hill Tracts etc.

The memorandum seeks to represent the case of Mizo people for territorial unity and integrity of the whole Mizo population and full self determination within the province of Assam for the realisation of which an appeal is made to His Majesty's Government, the Government of India its constituent assembly to make a special financial provision from year to year for a period of ten years or until such time as the Mizo shall assert that they can maintain their self-determination without this financial provision.

THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND

The Mizos are a numerous family of tribes, closely knitted together by common tradition, custom, culture, mode of living, language and rites. They are spread over a wide area extending far beyond Manipur State, Cachar, Tripura State, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma contiguous with the boundaries of the present Lushai Hills District which was carved out arbitrarily for administrative purposes.

The Mizo people have been known under different names. They were wrongly identified as Kukies during the time of Lord Warren Hastings when Administrator of Chittagong sought help of the British against the Kuki raiders, and it continued to be applied to the whole group until 1871 when it was supplanted by the term Lushai as a result of the active and prominent part taken by the Lushai, Sub-tribes of Mizo race, against the British Expedition. Known as the First Lushai Expedition. The present Lushai Hills District was thus carved out of the Mizo land for administrative convenience and the Mizo people living within the District came to be known as Lushais while the other Mizos left out of the Lushai Hills district and annexed to the surrounding districts, continued to be known as Kuki without their consent. However, the solidarity of the Mizo people as a race and a district block is testified by the names of places, mountains, and ranges on the Lushai Hills, Cachar, Manipur, Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Burma, known and called after the names of them. Shakespear, Stevenson, Liangkhaia, Shaw, Kingdonward and Kim of the States-

man are some of the authorities on this.

The Mizos have nothing in common with the plains nor with the Naga or Manipur etc. They are a distinct block. The areas now under their occupation are mostly hilly except the eastern portion of Cachar district extending to the Barial range in the north Cachar Hills. Wherever they go and wherever they are, they carry with them their primitive customs, culture and mode of living in its purest origin, always calling and identifying themselves as Mizo.

The nomenclature of the word 'KUKI' was and is ever known to the Mizos, it was a name merely given to them by the neighbouring foreigners.

Again, it was wrong that the word Lushai should be used as covering all the Mizo tribes since it is misrendering of the Lushai, only a sub-tribe of the Mizo race. Hence though, perhaps not originally intended it has created a division. Only the word 'Mizo' stand for the whole group of them all. Lusei Hmar, Ralte, Paite, Zo, Darlawng, Kawm, Pawi, Thado, Chiru, Aimoul, Khawi, Anal, Puram, Tikhup, Vaiphei, Lakher, Langrawng, Chawrai, Bawng, Baite, Mualthuam, Kaihpe, Pangkhua, Tlanglau, Bawmzo, Hrangkhawl, Miria, Dawn, Kumi, Khiangte, Khiang, Tlau, Pautu, Pawite, Vangchhia, Zawngte, Fanai, Pangte, Khawlhing, Chawngthu, Vanchiau, Chawhte, Ngente, Renthlei, Hnamte etc. all closely related to one another culturally, socially, economically, and physically thus forming a district ethnical units.

TRADITION and ORIGIN

Traditionally Mizos claim their descent from Sinlung, a mythical rock north of the Shan State. Migration by tribal group seems to have taken place about the beginning of the 5th century, halting at several locations for longer or lesser periods through Shan State. Chindwin Valley and Chin Hills until they finally came to settle in their present occupied areas and the Villages claimed by the various Mizo tribes, wherever their present habitat may be, their original homes are either within or close to the border of the present Falam Sub-Division.

THE MIZO POPULATION :

- a) The Mizo people in the Lushai Hills alone number 1,46,900 with an area of 8,143 square miles according to the census of 1941.
- b) The Mizo people of Manipur State contiguous to the Lushai Hills again comes to about 70,000 with an area of about 3500 square miles.
- c) The Mizo in the Cachar District contiguous to the Lushai Hills number about 9,000 with an area of about 300 square miles.
- d) In Tripura State contiguous to the Lushai Hills, the Mizo again number approximately 7,000 with an area of 250 square miles.

e) In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, contiguous to the Lushai Hills, the Mizo population is generally approximated to be about 15,000 with an area of about 3,000 square miles.

f) In the Chin Hills (Burma) also contiguous to the Lushai Hills, who are now commonly known and termed as the Chins, number not less than 90,000 with an area of about 3,800 square miles occupied by them.

The total Mizo population of the contiguous areas thus comes roughly to 3,38,400 and the areas about 18,993 square miles. It is a great injustice that the Mizos having one and the same culture, speaking one and the same language, professing one and the same religion, and knit together by common customs and traditions should have been called and known by different names and thrown among different people with their homeland sliced out and given to other.

The whole contiguous area of the Mizo population, as detailed above occupies the middle and the most important portion of India's Eastern Frontiers. It is therefore, more imperative that His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and its Constituent Assembly should do the just and proper thing and grant the Mizos their just demand for **TERRITORIAL UNITY AND SOLIDARITY**.

MIZO HISTORY AND BRITISH CONNECTION

The Mizo people were independent, each Village forming an independent unit, and this country was never subjugated by the Maharajas of Manipur, Tripura and Chittagong nor by the Kacharis. However, there had been frontier clashes between the Mizos and the neighbouring people which ultimately brought the British to the scene in 1871. The Mizo country was subsequently annexed to the British territory in 1890, when a little less than half the country was carved out for the Mizo people and named Lushai Hills while the rest have been parcelled out to the adjoining districts. Since then Mizo have remained loyal, friendly and peaceful. At the time, whenever the British needed help as World War I, Abhor Expedition, Houkip Rebellion and World War II, the willing services of the Mizo people were readily available.

The Mizos have an efficient systems of administration and discipline. Being a district block they retain to a considerable degree their ancient and traditional laws and customs and organisations beginning from Village under the guidance of the chief and the elders, while young and old have their respective leaders in all walks of life.

Except in Cachar, the Mizo people are excluded from the Government of India's Act and the areas inhabited by them are kept as a special responsibility of the Governor of the province in his capacity as the Crown Representative and the Legislature have no influence whatsoever. In other words, the Mizo have never been under the

Indian Government and never had any connection with the policies and Politics of the various groups of Indian opinion.

Now that the British are quitting these Mizos who have never been under the Indian Government and whose ways are all different from others, cannot be thrown on a common platform with the rest of India. It is therefore, important to the highest degree that the Mizos be given self-determination in its fullest form.

THE PRESENT GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

As stated in the foregoing paragraphs, the Mizo areas are mostly excluded. The political officer is supreme in every respect. The education is mostly carried on by the Christian Missionary groups. The general communication of the country is extremely hilly without good roads and the people poor and simple, primitive and divided into tribes and clans. The highest education is mostly derived from outside the district but in mass literacy the Mizo people is highest in Assam. The peoples are mostly intelligent and as such given equal terms they always outshine their fellow-workers of other community in the fields and at home They are born a strategist. Their greatest shortcoming is lack of finances as a result of their trade and commerce and limited scope open for them. Their areas stretch from north to south, parallel with the Burma border line for defence along the eastern border of India.

This being the background, it is all the most imperative that the Mizoram be given special financial provision

by the central from year to year while allowing them their territorial integrity as anything short of this will be detrimental to their upbringing. In other words, the centre shall grant financial provision from year to year for the purpose of development of the country while the district shall join autonomous Assam through legislature with adequate representation and be also eligible to the Provincial service with due reservations at the same time retaining their territorial integrity and self-determination; as otherwise thrown among forty crores of Indian the 3,38,400 Mizos with their unique systems of life will be wiped out of existence.

OUR CASE

In the light of the facts stated in the foregoing paragraphs and in view of geographical position and the strategical importance of the Mizoram for the defence of India and taking into consideration the unique characteristics of Mizo Polity and compact block of Mizo land this Memorandum is placed with the authority for.....

1. Territorial unity and solidarity of whole Mizo population to be known henceforth as Mizo and Mizoram for Lushai and Lushai Hills District retaining the sole proprietary right over the land.

2. Full self-determination with the province of Assam:
 - a) With the National Council having the supreme legislative authority and executive body and judiciary within the district the composition and function of which will be prescribed by rules.
 - b) Any concurrent subjects in which the district may be connected with the autonomous province of Assam or

India as a Whole shall be by negotiation with the national Councils which will be set up according to wishes of the general public, any legislation may be applied to the district only with sanction of the national Council with any modification.

c) Special financial provision by the centre from year to year until such time as the Mizo shall assert that they are able to maintain their territorial integrity and self-determination without this financial provision.

All above items shall be subject to revision according to the future trend of events to the extent of seceding after ten years.

For this end it is to be understood that the democratic system of Government in its purest form shall at the every outset be introduced. Passed and approved by the Mizo Union representatives conferences at Aijal Lushai Hills, Assam on 22nd April 1947.

Sd/- KHAWTINKHUMA
President,

Sd/- VANTHUAMA
General Secretary,
The Mizo Union, Aijal,
Lushai Hills, Assam.

26.4.1947.

Source: C. Chawngkunga, *Important Documents of Mizoram* (Aizawl: Art & Culture Department, 1998), 305-313.

Appendix 6

MEMORUNDUM SUBMITTED TO
THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA
BY THE MIZO NATIONAL FRONT GENERAL
HEADQUARTERS : AIZAWL, MIZORAM
ON THE 30TH OF OCTOBER, 1965.

This Memorandum seeks to represent the case of the Mizo people for freedom and independence for the right of territorial unity and solidarity and for realisation of which a fervent appeal is submitted to the Government of India.

The Mizos, from time immemorial lived in complete independence without foreign interference. Chiefs of different clans ruled over separate hills and valleys with supreme authority and their administration were very much like that of the Greek City State of the past.

Their territory or any part thereof had never been conquered or subjugated by their putes and frontier clashes with their neighbouring states. However, there had been border disputes and frontier clashes with their neighbouring people which ultimately brought the British Government to the scene in 1844. The Mizo country was subsequently brought under the British political Control in December 1895 when a little more than half the country was arbitrarily carved out and named Lushai Hills (now Mizo District) and the rest of their land was parcelled out of their hands to the adjoining pool for the sole purpose of administrative convenience without obtaining their will or consent. Scattered as they are divided the Mizo people are inseparably knit-

ted together by their strong bond of tradition, custom, culture, language, social life and religion wherever they are. The Mizos stood as a separate nation even before the advent of the British Government having a nationality distinct and separate from that of India.

In a nut-shell, they are a distinct nation, created, moulded and nurtured by God and nature.

When British India was given status by promulgation of the Constitution Act of 1935 the British Government having fully realised the distinct and separate nationality of Mizo people decided that they should be excluded from the purview of the new Constitution and they were accordingly classed as an 'EXCLUDED AREA' in terms of the Government Order 1936. Their land was then kept under the special responsibility of the Governor general-in-Council in his capacity of the Crown representative, and the legislature of the British India had no influence whatsoever.

In other words the Mizos had never been under the Indian Government and never had any connection with the politics and the policies, of the various groups of Indian opinion. When India was in the threshold of independence the relation of the Mizos with the British Government and also with the British India were fully realised by the Indian National Congress Leaders. Their top leader and spokesman Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru released a press statement on the 19th August 1946 and stated: "The Tribal areas are defined as being those along the frontier of India which are neither part of India, nor of Burma, nor of any Indian state, nor of any foreign power." He further stated, "The

Important Documents of Mizoram

areas subsidised and the Governor General's relation with the inhabitants are regulated by sanads, customs or usage. In the matter of internal administration the areas are largely left to themselves" Expressing the view of the Indian National Congress he continue "Although the tribal areas are technically under the sovereignty of his Majesty's Government, their status, when a new Constitution comes into force in India, will be different from that of Aden over which the Governor-General no longer has executive authority. Owing to their inaccessibility and their importance to India in its defence strategy, their retention as British possession is most unlikely. One view is that with the end of sovereignty in India the new GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (i.e. Independent Government of India) will enter into the same relations with the tribal areas as the Governor-General maintains now, unless the people of these areas choose to seek integration with India"

From the foregoing statement made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Constitution Act of 1935, it is quite clear that the British Government left the Mizo Nation free and Independent with the right to decide their future political destiny,

Due solely to their Political immaturity, ignorance, and lack of consciousness of their fate, representatives of the Mizo Union, the largest political organisation at that time and fifty accredited Mizo Leaders representing all political organisations including representatives of religious denominations and social organisation that were existing, submitted their demand and choose integration with free India imposing condition

Important Documents of Mizoram

interalia, "THAT THE LUSHAI HILLS WILL BE ALLOWED TO OPT OUT OF INDIA UNION WHEN THEY WISH TO DO SO SUBJECT TO MINIMUM PERIOD OF TEN YEARS,"

The political immaturity and ignorance which lead the Mizo people to the misguided choice of integration with India was direct result of the banning by the British Government of any kind of political organisation till April 1946 within Mizo land which was declared a political area.

During fifteen years of close contact and Association with India, the Mizo people had not been able to feel at home with Indian or India, nor have they been able to feel that their joys and sorrows have really ever been shared by India. They do not, therefore, feel Indian. Being created a seperated nation they cannot go against the nature to cross the barriers of nationality. They refuse to occupy a place within India as they consider it to be unworthy of their national dignity and harmful to the interest of their prosperity. Nationalism and Patriotism inspired by the political conciousness has now reached its maturity and to cry for political self-determination is the only wish and aspiration of the peoples, neplus ultra, the only final and perfect embodiment of social living for them, The only aspiration and political cry is the creation of Mizoram, a free and sovereign state to Govern herself to work out her own destiny and to formulate her own foreign policy.

To them independence is not even a problem or subject of controversy, there cannot be dispute over the subject nor could there be any difference of opinion in the

Important Documents of Mizoram

matter. It is only a recognition of human rights and to let others live in the dignity to human person.

While the present world is strongly committed to freedom and self determination of all nations, large or small and to promotion of fundamental human rights wedded to that principle taking initiative for and championing the cause of Afro-Asian countries, even before the World Body, particularly deploring domination and colonisation of the weaker nations by the stronger, old or new, and advocating peaceful co-existence settlement of international dispute of any kind through the medium of non-violence and in condemning weapons that can destroy the world and in general wishing of good will towards mankind the Mizo people firmly believe that the Government of India and their leaders will remain true to their policy and that they shall take into practice what they advocate blessing the Mizo people with their aspiration for freedom and independence per principle that no one is good enough to govern another man without that man's consent.

Though known as head-hunters and a martial race, the Mizos commit themselves to a policy of non-violence in their struggle and have no intention of employing any other mean to achieve political demand. If on the other hand the Government of India brings exploitive and suppressive measures into operation, employing military might against the Mizo people as in the case of the Nagas which God forbid it would be equally erroneous and futile for both the parties a soul cannot be destroyed by weapons.

Important Documents of Mizoram

For this it is in good will and understanding that the Mizo Nation voices her rightful and legitimate claim of full self determination through this memorandum. The Government of India, in their turn and in conformity with the unchallengable truth expressed and resolved among the text of HUMAN RIGHTS by the United Nations in its august Assembly that in order to maintain peace and tranquility among mankind every nation may of rightable free and independent, shall set Mlizo nation free to work out her own destiny to the formulate her own internal and external policies and shall accept and recognise her political independent. Would it not be a selfish motive and design of India and would it not amount to an act of offence against humanity if the Government of India claim the Mizoram as a part of their territory and try to retain her as their possession against the national will of the Mizo people simply because their land is important for India's defence strategy.

Whether the Mizo Nation should shed her tears in joy to establish firm and lasting friendship with India in war and in peace or in sorrow and in anger, is up to Government of India to decide.

S.Lianzuala
General Secretary

Laldenga President
Mizo National Front

30th Oct. 1965.

Source: C. Chawngkunga, *Important Documents of Mizoram* (Aizawl: Art & Culture Department, 1998), 314-319.

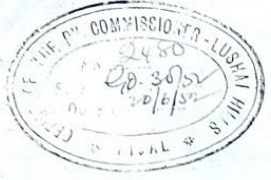
Appendix 7

Letter submitted by Lushai federation to the Chief Minister of Assam regarding Mizo Union intention to change Lushai District to Mizo District.

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To



The Chief Minister, Government of Assam.
The Secretary to the Govt. of Assam for Tribal Areas.
The Chairman, District Council, Lushai Hills. *Through*
Mizo union, President.

Sir,

Having seen in the papers that Pu R. Thanhlira, while he was an M.L.A., made a speech in the State Assembly proposing to change the name of the Lushai Hills District to that of Mizo Ram and having heard that the Lushai Hills District Council newly formed, intends to take up this matter in the first sitting to be held on 23-6-1952. The Lushai Federation, official representatives of the Lushais of the Lushai Hills District, cannot remain silent and have therefore drawn up this memorandum of protest for your information and considerations:-

That, the fact that the district was and is the land of the Lushais and that it is correctly named was pointed out to you in the memorandum of the Federation dated the 9th/15th September, 1948, by quoting figures from Census figures of 1931; in which year there was analysis of the different tribes inhabiting the district in figures. This fact is unmistakably supported by earlier records made by the well-known historian, Major J. SHAKESPEAR, in his notes on 'Lushai Tribal & Family Names' published in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. LXVII. Part III No. 2 of 1898, copy of which is enclosed.

Genesis of the movement to change the name of the District
Like all other conquered people, the Lushais of the district resented being subdued and naturally slower in adapting themselves in the new environments than some of the tribes living amongst them. These people cunningly introduced the word 'Mizo' which has no distinctive affinity or existence. It was loosely applied to the inhabitants of the district and the inhabitants of the surrounding districts. During the political upheavals of the district which preceded the War, these people, with a view to gaining popularity preached to the ignorant villagers that re-alignment of the boundaries of the districts and provinces are going to be made on the

lines of affinity and that if we call ourselves 'Mizo' and our land 'Mizo Ram' ,all those portions of the land now occupied by the Kukis and Allied tribes who understand Lushai language will be added to the District in which case the district will become a large State. The portions of other districts referred to by them are :-

- (a) The entire hill portion of the Manipur State,
- (b) parts of Cachar, mainly Lakhimpur Circle extending to and embracing North Cachar Hills,
- (c) parts of Chittagong hill tracts , and
- (d) portions of the Chin Hills.

Without realising how much promises will materialise, the ignorant and the illiterate~~s~~ villagers who composed the major political party then passed the resolutions for the change of the name of the district. Since then about 3-4 years have passed, but none of the people inhabiting those areas seem to have the slightest inclination or made any attempt for inclusion to the district. The facts of such propaganda are supported by ^{a few} extracts from many of the Weekly Papers in Lushai edited by an erstwhile leader, H.K.Bawichhuaka, who is a non-Lushai and an inhabitant of Cachar in Lakhimpur Circle.

What the word 'Mizo' means ?

Mi = men, Zo = highland; Mizo therefore, means an inhabitant of highland. The original home of the Lushais, in ages goneby, are somewhere in the Chin Hills and the Lushais have distinct affinity with the Chins. It is a historical fact that the Lushais, being lesser in number than the Chins, had to make way and live in their present land - the Lushai Hills. The altitude of the district of the Chin Hills is, on the whole, higher than the Lushai Hills, and the inhabitants have distinctive affinity with the Lushais. Should we then call them 'MIZOS' and would they like being called by that Name ? Not at all !!

Language:- The language spoken by the Lushais is by far the most popular among all the hill tribes of the Indo-Burma Border. It has no rival not only within the district, but also in the adjoining districts , as a common language. Lushai literatures, both religious and educational have found their way to all these parts.

What benefit, material or otherwise, will the district or the people on the whole, derive by changing the ~~name~~ name of the district, its inhabitants or its language? It is doubtful even if the sponsors of the change would be able to give an answer to the above. It is purely an outcome of envy and malicious feelings. The district has passed through internal troubles for the last 5-6 years. The people feel tired of it and ardently hope that with the inauguration of the District Council, they will have better government and be a turning point in their history when progress in internal reforms as well as materials will be achieved. But if this matter is pushed ahead on by the District Council and other interested persons, the majority community are not going to accept it silently. The long cherished peace and prosperity may, therefore, not materialise but bring in internal feuds and hatreds resulting in material loss to all concerned.

The Federation therefore, earnestly prays to the members of the District Council, other Political Leaders and the Government of Assam not to take up this matter at this juncture for the benefit of the district and its inhabitants, and also requests for a reference to their Memorandum of the 9th/15th September 1948 in this connection.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/- Thanglula
~~Chairman~~, President, 19.6.52

Sd/- Varkhams
Secretary,

LUSHAI FEDERATION.

Dated Aijal,
the 13th June 1952.
19th

Copy forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner
Lushai Hills for information.

Thanglula 19.6.52.
President
Lushai Federation.

Source: Mizoram State Archives, G-1013, GB-83.

Appendix 8

Memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister of Assam by Mara Freedom Party.

Memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister of Assam, Shillong by the Mara Freedom Party, on the 28th August, 1964 as a sequel to the Memorandum submitted to the Governor of Assam, Shillong on the 28th January, 1964.

To

Shri B.P. Chaliha,
Chief Minister of Assam, Shillong.

Sir,

On behalf of the Maras we, the undersigned, have the honour to submit herewith the following Memorandum with an extract of the resolution passed at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Mara Freedom Party held at Theiva from the 9th to the 10th April, 1964 as a sequel to the Memorandum submitted to the Governor of Assam, Shillong on the 28th January, 1964 for the favour of your kind and immediate consideration.

M E M O R A N D U M

(1) Under the British rule, the Mara (Lakher) land became a part of Lushai Hills District (Now Mizo District) with effect from 1924. For nearly thirty years, the Maras remained in the Lushai Hills District Administration. However, the Maras never felt at home with the Lushais (now Mizo) who never looked upon them as their fellow-tribesmen. Such sentiment was due to our difference in our customs, traditions and languages. This sheer distinction made us impossible to be with them under one administration. There was then a common feeling among the Maras that they should be away from the Lushai Hills District with a separate administration of their own. Then in 1945 practical demand for a separate Lakher Hills District Administration was made to the British Governor of Assam through the then Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District.

(2) After the Independence in 1948 the same claim was again made to the Government of India in the Lushai Hills District Advisory Council through our representative. There the Maras expressed their long cherished desire—the desire for the Lakher Hills District Administration separated from the Lushai Hills District as the Maras, being another type of tribe, could not be placed among the Lushais. With their demand the Mara kept on going since then. As a result, the present Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was ultimately born in 1953 under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Our Poi brethren came along with us in the last part of our political struggle. Thus the P-L Regional Council came into existence due to the Mara tribe, being recognised as one of the Scheduled Tribes of India. Hence the said Regional Council was given to the Maras, not to the Pois, as the latter was not officially known at the time when the sanction of this Regional Council was officially announced.

(3) The desire behind the demand was that the Maras might exist peacefully among others as a free and mature tribe in India being constitutionally safeguarded from the domination of the Lushais. With this hope, the P-L Regional Council was gladly accepted then. On the contrary, the Maras are not safeguarded under this Council. The Council guarantees no free existence of the Mara tribe as it does not protect the Maras from the possibility of submergence into the Lushai tribe. To the Maras the Council has no significance. Hence, the Maras can no longer accept today the present Regional Council as the preserver and promoter of the Maras and their own culture.

25/8/64
H. H. K. No. 3/64

(cont...2)

(4) Apart from the limit of the powers of the aforesaid Council to safeguard the Maras from being dominated by the Mizos the Maras can be still dominated by the Pois within the P-L Regional Council. The Maras have now been overgrown by the Pois who were then parasites on the Maras. They are now in a position to submerge the Maras into their Poi tribe. The tendency to dominate the Maras is quite evident in their acts in the past and the present. Now the Maras feel that they cannot go together with the Pois under one Council. Submergence of the Maras into the Pois is certain if they are planned together with the Pois as today under one Council. Hence, the Maras desire to free themselves from the yoke of the Pois by having a separate District Council.

(5) Neither the Mizos nor the Pois are happy with our demand for a separate Mara District Council. Both are standing in the way of our political demand, each with a view of its own. They are working as best they can against the demand though they know well that our demand is justified. Simply they do not like to see the Maras demanding for a separate District Council. All this indicates clearly their inward intention or desire to submerge the Maras into their own tribe. In fact, the Maras will certainly be extinct in case they are still left with the Pois under the same Council. The intention of the Pois to overlord the Maras cannot be overlooked. So, the Maras dare not go another five years hence with the Pois under one Council. A separate District Council is, hence, indispensable for the Maras for the preservation of their own tribe and for the development of their own way of life.

(6) The Maras have demanded a separate District Council as they are now aware of the fact that their tribe is on the verge of submergence into the Mizos or the Pois. But the Government have turned a deaf ear to this humble demand. In our first approach we were promised of fullest consideration to our demand under the letter No. TAD/R/39/63 of 1.2.64. The letter states as follows - "..... I am also to add that the points raised in the Memorandum are receiving the fullest and careful consideration of Government and a further communication in this regard will be forwarded to you in due course". They seem to have been influenced by the views and opinions of the Mizos and the Pois who have been ever trying to liquidate the unity of the Maras. It now appears that the Government have a mind to group the Maras and the Pois in one Council whether the former like or unlike. This will, of course, be a palatable one to the Pois, but a worm-wood to the Maras. The Maras can never be with the Pois under one Council owing to our difference in customs and language. What will have been said about our tribal distinction are real and true; they are not slips of tongue. Our distinction in traditions, customs and language cannot be doubted. Due to these differences, the demand for a separate District Council has been made known to the Government.

(7) In the course of our political demand, the Pois do not sit idle. They are doing whatever they can against the Maras and their unity. They go everywhere in the Mara areas and sow seeds of all sorts of misunderstanding among the Maras in order to make loose the unity of the Maras. The staff and the officers of the P-L Regional Council, too play evils of politics with a view to undermining our political party. They do all these not because they want to do good to us, but because they want us for their political prey.

(cont... 3)

(8) A resolution passed at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Party held at Theiva from the 9th to the 10th April, 1964 runs as follows - "The Maras desire to preserve our Mara Tribe, not dominated by any other tribes. As such, a separate District Council has been demanded to the Government. The boycotting policy followed by the Mara Freedom Party on the P-L Regional Council Election shall be continued until the demand for a separate Mara District Council is satisfactorily considered by the Government. ~~Now~~ demand the same once again, the President and the General Secretary should be sent to the Assam Chief Minister as early as possible after this Assembly. And the question of boycott on the Village Councils and the Village Council Courts will be decided by the Special Assembly to be convened for the purpose in accordance with the nature of the reply made to our representatives by the Government. It is clear that the Village Councils and the Village Council Courts of the P-L Region (within the Mara-inhabiting areas) will be boycotted provided that a separate District Council is not going to be given to the Maras today. The Maras will not go to cooperate with the existing P-L Regional Council to show their unwillingness to go along with the Pois under our Regional or District Council. We, the Maras would prefer their natural independence they once enjoyed in time of yore to a Council with the Pois.

and
ui.

(9) The Maras should be considered in their own right, but not in the opinions of other tribes like the Mizos and the Pois who never wish us to exist and grow like them. The demand for a separate Council has been made in our waking conscious mind. It is not a mere talk in our dream; nor a mere ~~xxxix~~ play of politics for a amusement. Our case is serious and the demand is earnest. The Maras must be protected by the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution. Otherwise the Indian Independence will lose its significance in so far as the Mara Tribe is concerned. Under the existing P-L Regional Council the Maras are not free as they have been ever under the threat of the Pois' domination. Hence, ~~the~~ the Maras demand once again a separate District Council so that under this Council we may have an opportunity to preserve our Mara tribal identity and to develop ourselves among others according to our own genius and customs. We demand such an opportunity for we are considered ourselves to be the Citizens of Free India.

W. J. J. J.
14/9/64
(1) President,
Mara Freedom Party.

view

M. H. L. L.
(2) General Secretary 14/9/64
Mara Freedom Party.

Copy to:-

1. Governor of Assam, Shillong.
2. Commissioner for Hills, Shillong.
3. Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District Aijal.
4. Sub-Divisional Officer, South Mizo District, Lungleh.
5. A.D.C., Poi-Lakher Region, Saiha.

Appendix 9

**MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO
HIS EXCELLENCY SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN
PRESIDENT OF INDIA**

**BY THE PAITE NATIONAL COUNCIL, MIZORAM
DEMANDING FOR THE CREATION OF
SIALKAL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL
IN MIZORAM STATE**

Your Excellency,

In pursuance of the resolution adopted in the Conference of Paite Tribes in North East India held on March 6-9, 1991 at Mimbung village, Mizoram State and in continuation of the Memorandum submitted by Paite Federation for Paite Regional Council in Sialkal Range, Mizoram to Shri Barkataki, the first Indian Deputy Commissioner of the Mizo District (then Lushai Hills) and to Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India while visited Aizawl in 1953; and again the reiterated demand since October, 1963 through the initiative of the Paite National Council, Manipur, this brief Memorandum is hereby submitted to Your Excellency for creation of SIALKAL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL to safeguard the distinct custom, culture, language, way of life and other interest of the backward tribal communities of the area and also to promote their welfare with faster pace.

POSITION OF PAITES IN MIZORAM :

We, the Paites are the original inhabitants of Mizoram (formerly Lushai Hills) under the greater Assam State since 1700 A.D.. We are now one of

(2)

the most prominent and major tribes in Mizoram. We are living in 24 compact villages in and around Sialkal Range with a population of 25,000 approximately besides living together with other tribes in 100 more villages in Mizoram. The geographical area occupied by smaller tribes including Paites is about 2000 Sq. Km. which is fit for creation of a new district council to meet the aspiration of weaker section of the stated area.

The first Census of Mizoram (then Lushai Hills) in 1901 has recorded that there were 2,870 Paites in Mizoram. In 1921 Census there were 10,460. But in the subsequent Census operations Paite was not found in such census record. This injustice done to us is quite difficult to understand. At present, if Census is made correctly, Paite population will be not less than 50,000 in Mizoram State.

DISTINCT CULTURE AND LANGUAGE :

The Paites are socially, linguistically and culturally distinct from the other tribes in Mizoram as proved by the Language tables of the General Census Reports to the minor District Councils in Assam for 1951, 1961 and 1971. Major Shakespeare, the first Superintendent of Lushai Hills said that "Paite language is unintelligible to Lushai (Mizo)" in 1901 census. He also recorded that "the Paites have distinct culture and custom". Another conspicuous evidence on the existence of Paite in Mizoram is revealed by a record and data of Paite language specimen found in Volume III Part III of the Linguistic survey of India compiled and edited by G.A. Grierson were taken from Lushai Hills (Mizoram) in 1904. Moreover,

(3)

a book called "Paite in Mizoram" published by the Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram and Mizo History written by K. Zawla and Rev Liangkhaia have also clearly revealed that the Paites of Mizoram are distinct from other tribes in Mizoram state.

PATASKAR COMMISSION REMARK ON RE-ORGANIZATION OF HILL AREAS :

The essentiality for creation of a separate District for more backward tribes in the proposed area "Sialkal Range" is supported by the remark made by the Commission headed by Shri H.V. Pataskar in connection with re-organization of hill area of Assam in 1965 66 which run thus:

"The dissatisfaction of the small tribe is most marked in the Mizo and North Cachar Hills district and is from them that a large number of representations were received by us. We, therefore, give below a brief description of these tribes, their grievances and allegation made by them. In the Mizo district this number of smaller tribes is relatively large. The Lushai, composed of the Ralte, Lushai and Hmar clans, constitute the dominant tribes in that district. The smaller tribes are the Paites in the North East, the Pawis and Lakhers (Maras) in the South East and the Chakmas in the South West. Most of them have a number of sub tribes also. The smaller tribes live in remote area which has led to their being isolated from the main stream of the socio-economic life of the district".

(4)

DEMAND FOR CREATION OF DISTRICT COUNCIL :

In order to safeguard the legitimate interests, such as custom, culture and tradition of the Paites and other tribes, and to achieve faster socio-economic development of the proposed area a DISTRICT COUNCIL having the same "Autonomy" and "Status" with the existing Chakma/Pawi/Lakher Autonomous District Councils should be created in SIALKAL RANGE which is predominantly inhabited by the Paites and other small tribes and is situated in a compact geographical area under the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India which have guaranteed Special Provision and Protection for the backward and minority communities in India. If smaller ethnic groups like the Pawis or the Lakhers or the Chakmas in Mizoram were allowed to enjoy the privilege of having Autonomous District Council of their own, we find no valid reason or any logic to deny the same democratic institution for the Paite community and other minority communities in the North East of Mizoram State. As mentioned earlier, the Paite community is one of the major tribes in Mizoram, who have been practising distinct custom, culture and tradition possessing separate identity and language from time immemorial. The proposed map of Sialkal Autonomous District Council is enclosed herewith.

Further, we would like to emphasize that the creation of SIALKAL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL in SIALKAL RANGE will strengthen the solidarity and integrity of Mizoram State while fulfilling the socio-economic and political aspirations of the ethnic groups of the demand area.

(5)

We, therefore, approach Your Excellency and the Government of India kindly to consider our demand and take up legislative measures to create a SIALKAL AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL to give us adequate protection so as to enable us to develop ourselves according to our own genius and culture.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/—

(H. ZATHUAM)

President,

Paite National Council, Mizoram.

Dated, Mimbung,
The 11th March, 1991.

Sd/—

(K. VUNGZAMUAN)

General Secretary,

Paite National Council, Mizoram.

Copy endorsed to :

1. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
 2. The Hon'ble Home Minister of India.
 3. His Excellency, The Governor of Mizoram.
 4. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Mizoram.
 5. The Hon'ble Home Minister of Mizoram.
 6. All Hon'ble MLAs of Mizoram.
- for kind information and favourable action.*

Sd/—

(K. VUNGZAMUAN)

General Secretary,

Paite National Council, Mizoram

Source: Personal copy of LalmalsawmaKhiangte.

Appendix 10

Memorandum of Settlement between Government of Mizoram and HPCD)

**MEMORANDUM OF
SETTLEMENT

BETWEEN

THE GOVERNMENT OF
MIZORAM

AND

HMAR PEOPLE'S CONVENTION
(DEMOCRATIC)**

**AIZAWL
2nd April, 2018**

1 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The Government of Mizoram has been making earnest efforts to bring about an amicable solution to the problems arising out of the demands of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic).
- 1.2 Towards this end, an Initiative was taken by the Government of Mizoram and a series of Peace Talks were held with the Leaders of Hmar People's Convention (Democratic). Settlement on various issues reached during the course of the Talks are incorporated in the following paragraphs.

2 OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 The main objective of the Memorandum of Settlement is to give enhanced autonomy in the manner of Administration within the frame work agreed upon by both parties, in the sphere of socio-economic, political and cultural development of the people under the jurisdiction of the Sinlung Hills Council. In terms of the aforesaid objective, the Sinlung Hills Development Council is thus envisaged to be rechristened as the Sinlung Hills Council by an Act of State Legislature.
- 2.2 The Government shall consult and give due regard to the views of the Sinlung Hills Council before any law is made and implemented in the Council Area on the following subjects, namely —
 - (1) The religious and social practices of the people living in the Council Area.
 - (2) The customary laws and procedures of the Hmar Community.

3 RESTORATION OF NORMALCY

- 3.1 With a view to restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram, the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) on their part agree to undertake, within the agreed time-frame, all necessary steps to end all underground activities, to bring out all underground personnel of the Hmar People Convention (Democratic) with their arms, ammunition and equipments to ensure their return to civil life, to abjure violence and help in the process of restoration of normalcy. The modalities of bringing out all underground personnel will be worked out. The implementation of the foregoing provisions will be under the supervision of the Government of Mizoram.

- 3.2 The Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) shall take immediate steps to amend, as may be necessary, its Articles of Association/Constitution so as to make them conform to the provisions of Law.
- 3.3 The Government of Mizoram will take steps for relief/rehabilitation of all Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) underground personnel hailing from the State of Mizoram coming over ground and an ex-gratia/rehabilitation scheme will be implemented by the State Government from its own resources or by exploring avenues for availing the rehabilitation package from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Rewards shall also be given for surrendered arms and ammunitions by the Government of Mizoram, at the scale to be prescribed.
- 3.4 The Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) undertake not to extend any support to any insurgent groups by supply of arms or providing protection or in any other manner. It shall also endeavor to fully implement all provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding in order to bring about a lasting peace in the Sinlung Hill Council area.

4 ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

- 4.1 With a view to bringing about a greater degree of socio-economic, political and cultural development of the people in the north and north eastern parts of Mizoram comprising an area of the existing Sinlung Hills Development Council, as notified by the Government of Mizoram an authority in the name of Sinlung Hills Council shall be established by an act of State Legislature.
- 4.2 A separate fund shall be set up for the Council to which shall be credited receipt from the State Government and other sources and from which disbursement shall be made in connection with the affairs of the Council and implementation of developmental scheme within the area of the Council.

5 COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

- 5.1 The Sinlung Hills Council shall consist of 14 (fourteen) members of which 12 (twelve) shall be directly elected and 2 (two) shall be nominated by the Government in consultation with the Sinlung Hills Council and thus comprises of -
 - (1) 1 (one) member to be Chief Executive Member.
 - (2) 1 (one) member to be the Chairman.
 - (3) 1 (one) member to be the Deputy Chairman.
 - (4) 4 (four) Executive Members.

- [5] 5 (five) Members.
- [6] 2 (two) nominated Members.

- 5.2 The constitution and composition of the Council shall be as enumerated below, which may be amended as agreed upon by both parties by an Act of Legislature.
- 5.3 The Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare Sakawrdal or any other place within the Council Area to be the Headquarters of the Council.
- 5.4 There shall be a Secretariat for the Sinlung Hills Council at the headquarters of the Council headed by a Secretary to be posted by the Government of Mizoram in consultation with the Chief Executive Member.

6 POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

- 6.1 The powers and functions of the Council will be as indicated below:-
 - (1) to formulate plan and schemes for Sinlung Hills Council area, set priorities and determine plan, policies and thrust areas and forward the proposed plan to the State Government for approval.
 - (2) to formulate, execute and implement Sinlung Hills Council area plan, out of the outlay earmarked as discretionary and incentive fund/separately earmarked to meet the local aspirations.
 - (3) to examine all plan proposals under normal State Plan, CSS and other funding agencies within the Council area and forwarding the same to the State Government.
 - (4) to review and monitor all Sinlung Hills Council area plan and projects under State Plan, CSS and other Central Assistance.
 - (5) to have power and liberty to draw up developmental projects-and schemes considered necessary for the Council area for onward submission to the Central Government or any other funding agencies through the State Government and pursue the same.
 - (6) to have the power to prepare its own budget stating the specific head for expenditure which shall be approved by the State Government.
 - (7) to be the Site Allotment Advisory Board within Sinlung Hills Council Area.
 - (8) to have the power to perform such other duties as the Government, may by rules, made in this behalf.

7 OTHER MATTERS

- 7.1 On fulfillment of the stipulations contained in Para 4.1 no member of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) now coming over ground shall be prosecuted for offences committed in connection with underground activities. Investigation of all cases registered in Mizoram which are in progress currently against Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) personnel shall be dropped forthwith and those convicted of any such offence shall also be granted remission of sentences.
- 7.2 The Government of Mizoram shall take steps to give enhanced authority to the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) immediately after the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) and in furtherance, the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between the Government of Mizoram & the Hmar People Convention (HPC) on 27th July, 1994 shall stand superseded.



(H. ZOSANGBERA)

Chairman,
Hmar People's Convention (Democratic)



(ARVIND RAY)
Chief Secretary,
Government of Mizoram.

Place : Aizawl
Dated: 2nd April, 2018

Source: Personal copy of LalmalsawmaKhangte.

Appendix 11

Manual of Sialkal Range Development Council.

GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

NOTIFICATION

Dated Aizawl, the 28th July, 2020

No.B.12012/1/2019-GAD/Pt : The Governor of Mizoram is pleased to notify the Manual of Sialkal Range Development Council for general information as below:-

Introduction :

Sialkal range occupies the north-eastern part of Mizoram within Saitual District and Champhai District, bordering Myanmar to the east and the state of Manipur to the north. The area comprises of the following villages – Mimbung, Teikhang, Hriangmun and Kawlbem under Ngopa RD Block of Saitual District which falls under 21 – Lengteng Assembly Constituency and Selam, Vaikhawtlang under Champhai RD Block of Champhai District under 23 – Champhai North Assembly Constituency respectively. The area is backward. There is utmost need to stress upon development schemes and programmes within this particular area so as to keep the area abreast of the progress of state in general.

In order to address the needs of development and usher in a new era of progress and prosperity in the area, the Government of Mizoram decided to create a new developmental machinery which is the first of its kind in the region- “**Sialkal Range Development Council**”.

1. Composition :

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| a. Chairman | : | Sitting Local MLA (21-Lengteng ST) AC . |
| b. Vice Chairman | : | VCP of area on rotation. |
| c. Members | : | All VCP of the area. |
| d. Member Secretary | : | SDC (C) Ngopa |
| e. Joint Secretary | : | BDO, Ngopa. |
| f. Members | : | 1) Sitting MLA (23-Champhai North ST) AC,
2) VCP, Mimbung Village.
3) VCP, Kawlbem Villang
4) VCP, Hriangmun Village.
5) VCP, Selam Village.
6) VCP, Teikhang Village
7) VCP, Vaikhawtlang Village. |

2. **Term of Office** : 2 years.

3. **Frequency of Meeting** : The Council shall meet at least once in six months.

4. **Jurisdiction** : Sialkal range comprising the following :-

a. Mimbung
b. Hriangmun
c. Teikhang
d. Kawlbem
e. Selam
f. Vaikhawtlang

5. **Headquarters** : Mimbung
6. **Aims and Objective** : Socio-Economic Development of Sialkal Range
7. **Power and Functions** :
 - a. The Council will formulate developmental works/projects within the allotted fund each year, and execute the works through existing government implementing agencies or through contractors work agencies selected after observing codal formalities. In case work is executed through contractor work agencies, a reliable technical support mechanism shall be arranged not only for the preparation of estimate but also for verification and supervision & monitoring of the work during execution to ensure that the work executed on the ground is commensurate with the payments being made to the contractor work agencies. CPWD manual. *An illustrative list of permissible work is at Annexure – I.*
 - b. The Council shall utilize the allotted fund, release to the Council, for creation of durable assets for public purposes. The ownership of such assets created would vest in the Government. The sale/transfer/disposal of assets created out of this fund shall not be undertaken without prior permission from the Government.
 - c. The Council shall be allotted fund for Office expenses such as office stationary etc. and remuneration under a separate head. The Council shall submit its requirement of funds, accordingly.
 - d. In case of high material components an advance of up to 50% of the sanctioned amount may be released as first installment to the government implementing agency and the second/final installment shall be released on production of utilization certificate on the first installment duly certified by the concerned as in Annexure – II.
 - e. The Council should display a signboard at the work site bearing name of the Council, name of work, sanctioned amount, actual expenditure and the date of completion of work as on Annexure – III.
 - f. The Council shall monitor and review different developmental projects/works under-taken by different agencies under the government within its jurisdiction.
 - g. The Council shall endeavor to promote public participation and cooperation in development Programmes and expand local community efforts in the area.
 - h. The Vice Chairman and other members of Sialkal Range Development Council shall be entitled to receive sitting allowances of Rs. 500/- per day per sitting for 3 (three) days and re-imbursement of actual sumo/Bus fare (on production of Tickets).
 - i. The Council shall prepare short term and long term plans for development and advancement within its area of jurisdiction and submit to the state Planning Council.
 - j. Monitoring and inspection of works executed by the Council shall be conducted by such person/official or agency as may be authorized by the Government.
 - k. The accounts of the Council shall be audited by such person or authority and at such intervals as prescribed by the government. Further, the accounts shall also be liable to be audited under the authority of CAG.

8. **Conduct of Business** :For taking any decisions administrative or financial or otherwise, the matter shall be brought before the Council in the form of Agenda. The Agenda shall be circulated to all the members in advance by the secretary after obtaining the approval of the Chairman along with the details of the date, time and venue of the Council meeting. In its meeting, the Council shall take decision by consensus. If consensus is not possible, the decision shall be taken by majority of the member present and voting. Two thirds of the total members of the Council shall form the quorum. In case of tie during a voting, the Chairman shall have right to exercise a casting vote. All the decision taken by the Council shall be recorded in the form of minutes of the meeting and shall be conveyed by the Secretary under his seal and signature.
9. **Subsequent constitution** :Dissolution and reconstitution of the Council is subject to approval and official Notification of the Government of Mizoram.

Sd/- J.C.RAMTHANGA

Addl.Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram
General Administration Department

Memo No.B.12012/1/2020-GAD/Pt

: Dated Aizawl, the 28th July, 2020.

Copy to:-

- 1) Secretary to Hon'ble Governor of Mizoram.
- 2) P.S to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mizoram
- 3) P.S to Dy Chief Minister, Mizoram
- 4) P.S to Speaker/Ministers/Deputy Speaker/ Ministers of State/ Govt. Dy Chief Whip/Vice Chairman, State Planning Board, Mizoram
- 5) The Chairman, Sialkal Range Development Council
- 6) Sr. P.P.S to Chief Secretary, Mizoram.
- 7) All Administrative Departments.
- 8) All Heads of Departments.
- 9) Secretary MPSC/MSIC/SEC/Lokayukta, Mizoram
- 10) Deputy Commissioner, Champhai District, Champhai.
- 11) Development Officer, Sialkal Range Development Council, Mizoram
- 12) Chief Controller of Accounts, Accounts & Treasuries, Mizoram
- 13) Accountant General, Mizoram.
- 14) Controller of Printing & Stationeries, Mizoram with 6 (six) spare copies for publication in Mizoram Gazette Extra Ordinary.
- 15) Members concerned
- 16) Web Manager, GAD
- 17) Guard File.



(ST.LALVENSANGI)

Under Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram
General Administration Department

Source: Personal copy of Lalmalsawma Khiangte.

Appendix 12

Ramhlun North, Aizawl.



Lungpher.



Ngopa.



Teikhang



Sakawrdai.



Zohmun.



Lawngtlai.



Lungzarhtum.



Siaha.



Serkawr.



Lakher Pioneer Mission Bungalow constructed by RA Lorrain in 1914-1915 at Serkawr.



CCI (M) Church at Serkawr.



View of Siaha from Lungzarhtum road.



ECM Headquarters at Siaha.



House in avillage adorned with skull of animals.



Old memorial stone.



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ABSTRACT

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY:

A STUDY OF MIZO IDENTITY FORMATION

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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The thesis seeks to present the emergence of Mizo identity as a nationality in a historical-analytical manner as well as attempt to understand how the Mizo nationality formation is perceived by diverse tribes who are subsumed under the nomenclature of Mizo. The term Mizo is used in the study to refer to all ethnically related tribes who are collectively called by several related terms like Chin- Kuki- Lusei, Chhinlung chhuak, Zo hnahtlak etc. The stressed point of the Mizo as a collective identity is the ethnic relatedness of the group against other communities, inside and outside Mizoram. As the main concern of the study is on the interface of the two processes - Mizo identity formation and tribe identity, the survey of the perceptions of diverse tribes towards Mizo nationality formation was conducted, based on which certain conclusion of the study has derived.

Objectives of the study

The study has identified the following objectives:

1. To locate the material structures and social forces that influenced the construction of Mizo nationality.
2. To examine the nature of ethnic identities emerging among non-Lusei Mizo communities in Mizoram and study their effects on the process of development of Mizo nationality formation.
3. To study how the people belonging to different Zo ethnic groups inhabiting Mizoram identify themselves and react to the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation.
4. To examine whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation.

Hypotheses

The study was conducted with the following hypotheses:

- 1.The emergence of Mizo nationality has impinged on the larger ethnic identity.
- 2.Ethnicity and nationality formation are concomitant with respect to Mizo identity.
- 3.The material structure and social forces emanating from the elite competition provide the base for the construction of the super structure of Mizo nationality.

Methodology and collection of data

The thesis has adopted a descriptive method with a historical-analytical approach. To study the emergence of ethnic group identity, historical approach has been used while empirical data are collected for investigating the nationality formation process. The theses employ both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources mainly include - records, documents, publications by the government, and civil societies. The unstructured interview was conducted with political leaders, intelligentsia, leaders of NGOs, and prominent citizens, who have been playing important roles in the construction of nationality / ethnic identities in Mizoram. Apart from the interview of the elite group, a survey was conducted to understand the views of the masses of the people. The secondary source includes relevant books, articles, unpublished theses, pamphlets, newspaper reports, constitutions of civil societies, etc.

To understand the perception and views of the general people towards self-perception on ethnic identity and Mizo nationality formation process, the survey was conducted through a structured interview method utilizing a multi-stage sampling method. Urban localities and villages dominantly inhabited by different Zo ethnic tribes were identified and purposively selected. Aizawl and surrounding areas represent Lusei and mixed tribes who seem to readily accept Mizo identity. The Hmar communities dominate in and around Saikawrdai, the headquarters of Sinlung Hills Council. The villages around Ngopa, the Civil Sub Division headquarters, are inhabited by Paite communities. The Lai Autonomous District Council area, with Lawngtlai as the headquarters of LADC is dominated Lai community. Siaha and the surrounding villages of Mara Autonomous District council are mainly inhabited by the Mara community. Based on these dominant areas, one urban locality and one village were again purposively selected considering the tribe concentration in the locality/village.

Ramhlun North locality within Aizawl city and North Lungpher village represent the urban and rural Aizawl area while Sakawrdai and Zohmun represent urban and rural Hmar respectively. As there are no Paite-dominated localities in the

notified town of Mizoram, Vengthar locality of Ngopa, where the Paite are comparatively significant was taken to represent urban Paite and Teikhang village was selected to represent the Paite tribe in the rural area. Lawngtlai Council locality and Lungzarhtum village represent the Lai urban and rural respondents. Saiha Vengpui and Serkawr village represent the Mara urban and rural populations respectively.

The total sample size is limited to 300. In each village/town locality, thirty respondents are selected through systematic sampling based on the electoral roll. Using the electoral roll has its advantage for the selection of sampling units since the electoral roll contains only adult individuals who are permanent residents of the area and the individuals are listed in a proper sequence with each individual having separate numbers. The first respondent was randomly selected from the electoral roll and the next respondent was identified utilizing systematic or interval sampling method. The total number of voters in the electoral roll was divided by the number of samples to be collected in the locality, ie 30. For example, if there are 400 persons in the electoral roll of the locality, the total number of voters in the locality, ie 400 is divided by 30 with the result of 13. So, the next respondent was identified by jumping to every 13th person in the electoral roll. The response to the survey, which was conducted in 2016 and 2017, was analyzed by using SPSS and cross-tabled to examine how the respondents, belonging to different tribes and living in different areas within Mizoram identify themselves and view the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation.

Limitations of the survey results:

The survey is constrained by two main limitations, which impinge on the reliability and accuracy of the survey results. First and foremost, in certain areas, structured interviews need to be conducted with the help of a translator, which resulted in a chance of miscommunication between the researcher and respondents. Secondly, in some parts of the scheduled question, there is a possibility that the respondents may not have well knowledge about the subject of the questions to arrive at the technically correct answer, but the views expressed by the respondent,

however ill-informed they may be, still counted in as social reality since the intention of the survey was the views of the respondent. Considering these limitations, the researcher does not claim for 100% reliability of the survey results but stood for the accuracy of the survey result to a great extent.

Chapter outline of the Thesis.

Chapter I: Introduction, Context and Concepts:

The first chapter presents a general introduction to the study, the significance, main objectives, and hypotheses, and also laid down the conceptual framework of the research investigation. The chapter argues that ethnic identity-based assertions and movements have changed and they still have the potential to change the political map of North-East India. Therefore, a study of ethnicity and nationality formation is of crucial importance to understand the political phenomenon of India in general and North-East India in particular.

In Mizoram, the process of modernization gave birth to a modern educated elite who realized the need to construct a strong collective identity as Mizo and inculcate Mizo identity consciousness among their community. They mobilized the people in pursuit of demand for better political status, which resulted in the formation of the State of Mizoram which means Land of the Mizo. However, the continuing process of Mizo nationality formation has generated apprehensions and uneasiness, particularly among certain non-Lusei tribes who apprehended that the Lusei and its allied tribes dominate Mizo society and monopolize economic, political, and social power in their hands. The elite that emerged within these tribes promoted ethnic consciousness at their tribe levels and launched movements to counteract the real or assumed dominant status of the Lusei tribe and its allied tribes by linking Mizo as nothing but an extension of Lusei-based identity. These developments have posed real challenges to the Mizo elite, who seek to build Mizo nationality based on the ethnic solidarity of all tribes, including those who assert their distinct tribe identity.

While studying the Mizo nationality formation, the researcher encountered certain conceptual and contextual problems. The researcher has to put the contextual reality into consideration while applying the existing concepts which are developed in another context. Categorization of the collective identity of the studied community is problematic as the local term for social category *Hnam* has undergone significant change after the colonial period. The local people interchangeably used *hnam* to refer to clan, tribe, and other larger collective identities like nationality, due to the lack of a separate term for these distinct categories.

The study argues that there are certain limitations of utilizing ‘tribe’ as a social category due to its incongruence in the context of the study both in its anthropological sense of being a primitive and legal sense of inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list. The studied communities are categorized as Scheduled Tribes but they are not primitive societies as tribe recognition is done mainly for administrative or political purposes rather than any academic criteria. The lack of clear-cut qualifications to determine the Scheduled Tribe and the overlapping nature of recognized tribes limited the applicability of the concept for academic research. However, for the purpose of the categorization study, the term ‘tribe’ is used to refer to the pre-colonial period local concept of *hnam* which was determined by the *sakhua* of a person. Changing the *sakhua* implies changing the tribe.

There are diverse and somehow opposing approaches regarding the nature and role of ethnic identity in group identity formation and its resultant effects on the emergence of a nationality. As the purpose of the study is neither an attempt to engage in the theoretical debate and theory building nor to arrive at a conclusion regarding the correct conceptualization of ethnicity and nationality formation, the study relies on the insights of scholars to understand and analyze the role of ethnic identity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and its perpetuation. The study mainly derived its theoretical base from the framework of Paul R Brass Elite competition and AD Smith Ethno- symbolism.

From the arguments put forward by Smith and Brass, we presumed three points-one, there is no inherent dichotomy between the primordialist claim on the importance of naturally 'given' factors like cultural markers and the claim of the constructivist about the constructed nature of ethnic identity. Two, the crucial role played by the elite, or intellectuals and intelligentsia, for the emergence and survival of the nationality. Three, the need for the sound forging of objective and subjective attributes in the formation and persistence of group identity. Though the elite plays a crucial role in the social construction of group identity, they are limited by the existing cultural factors. To mobilize the people effectively, the elite needs to appeal on the basis of the already existing cultural markers. When the ethnic group differentiates themselves on the basis of certain markers like belief in common ancestry, the social reality of the belief that binds the people together rather than the historical reality of common ancestry is important for the group.

From the inference drawn from the above points, the study argues that ethnic groups are politicized cultural groups united by certain objective attributes and exhibiting strong psychological sentiments of belonging to the group against others. A single tribe or a group of tribes joined together may form an ethnic group that is in competition with other similar groups for obtaining certain benefits within the larger political system. The emergence of ethnic groups presupposes that the community has already been influenced to an extent by the process of modernization. When ethnic consciousness at a given stage of historical development translates itself into a desire for self-determination and leads to the mobilization of the community either for political autonomy or for sovereignty, and then the ethnic group is considered to have emerged as a nationality.

Chapter II: **Construction of Mizo Nationality** studies the emergence of Mizo nationality in the background of political and social changes taking place in Mizoram. The chapter argues that Mizo nationality formation is closely connected with the history of social evolution, administrative structuring and re-structuring, and the emergence of new social forces. Particular stress is given to the prominent role played by the modern elite, who are mostly Christian and received a formal

education, for the formation and perpetuation of the Mizo nationality. The traditional society was drastically changed by the forces of modernization mainly brought about by the British occupation of the land and the subsequent mass-scale conversion to Christianity. The decline of the traditional elite in the hands of the modernization process paved the way for the emerging educated elite to occupy a hegemonic position in society. With the lack of capital base and numerical strength, the educated elite use cultural identity as a means of mass mobilization to pursue their interest. It is contended that the Mizo nationality formation is a modern phenomenon by tracing the emergence of Mizo as a political identity to the occupation of the land by the British in the 19th century and the subsequent establishment of the Mizo District Council in 1954.

The people inhabiting the present Mizoram and adjoining areas are known and called by various names like Kuki, Chin and Lushai etc. In the face of these outsiders'-imposed names, the first group of modern educated claimed that the natives never call themselves by these names in the pre-colonial time and they asserted that all the people hitherto known by outsiders as Chin-Kuki- Lushai are one group and they are Mizo. The early history of the people in Mizoram, before their interaction with the British, was rather unclear due to the absence of written history and minimal interaction with other communities. However, all composite tribes of Mizo nationality accept their common origin. The idea of common origin theory stood as one of the foundations of Mizo nationality, as its relevance lies in the people's strong belief in being one group that binds them emotionally together. The socio-cultural, economic, and political life of the traditional Mizo society was closely intertwined and mainly revolves around the village which was under the supreme rule of the chief who possess supreme authority, at least theoretically. The chief rules over the village with the help of certain officials appointed by him. So the chiefs and his council of elders and priests form an elite group in the traditional society. Each tribe has its own *Sakhua* and there was a distinct identity of a tribe with a particular *Sakhua*. However, a person could change his tribe by performing religious rituals officiated by the priest of the tribe he wishes to incorporate into by means of *Saphun* which means a change of *Sa* or tribe deity.

Among the chief clans, the Sailo chiefs slowly consolidate and enlarge their power and ruled over most of the tribes at the time of the British arrival. As the Sailo chiefs ruled over intermixing of different tribes in their village, their rule become one of the foundations of Mizo identity. The pre-colonial situation under the Sailo rule was marked by the duality of cooperation and conflict. The Sailo chiefs cooperate against their common enemy but at the same time fight against each other. They brought about the gradual development of common customs and language among the diverse tribes within their rule. Intra conflicts, frequent changes of village sites and lack of significant 'others' debarred any kind of stable cohesive identity consciousness as pan Sailo subjects come up.

The 'Chin- Lushai expedition of 1889-90' marked the final occupation of the hills by the British. The British administration is significant for bringing the commencement of the modernization process. The subsequent establishment of the political boundary of Lushai Hills District and the replacements of people's loyalty from their chiefs to the British government is of critical importance for the emergence of Mizo as a political identity and as a distinct nationality.

Even though it does not seem to be the official intention of the Missions to involve closely in the identity formation process, the historic juncture on their interaction with the people makes their role in the construction of Mizo identity very significant. Within a short span of time, being Mizo becomes more or less synonymous with being a Christian. The skillful utilization of schools by the missionaries, for inculcating Christianity to the first group of modern educated elite enabled Christianity to become an essential part of Mizo identity. The process of modernization brought about by the colonial administration and the modern system of education coupled with the mass conversion to Christianity drastically changed society.

The emergence of a new group of modern educated elite mostly consisting of educated Christians has a significant change in the whole socio-cultural and political life of the people and their group identification. The first group of the modern

educated elite who had sprung up during the colonial period were mostly drawn from the Sailo subjects as the modernization process touches them earlier than other groups for inhabiting the area where both the government and the church first operates. The first group of the new modern elite during the colonial period, therefore, was mainly composed of the Lusei-speaking group, who received education in the mission schools and were affiliated with the church. Even though they are drawn from diverse tribes, Christianity binds them together and one's identity as a tribe was no longer relevant and important, thus inter tribe rivalry for dominance within the new elite group was not witnessed. These small groups of elites dominate the entire society, in many instances, leadership in the church, associations, and political parties were interconnected with each other.

The newly emerging modern elite consciously mobilize the people on the bases of a distinct Mizo identity and define Mizo in the broadest sense so as to include all the related tribes in and outside the then Mizo District. As a small group with a common background of education, Christianity, and the Lusei language, chances of intra-group conflicts were minimized and they have effective control over the important institutions of the society. As such, the spiritual, economic, political and social life of the society was gradually controlled by them and there exists a close relation and cooperation among the church, NGOs and political parties at the time of India's independence. The Mizo-based political parties like Mizo Union and Mizo National Front spearheaded the Mizo movement for autonomy which led to the formation of the State of Mizoram. At the society level, the big and influential civil societies like Young Mizo Association, Mizo Zirlai Pawl and Churches, particularly the two big denominations founded by the pioneer missionaries- Mizoram Presbyterian Church and Baptist Church of Mizoram, propagate Mizo identity through their own platforms and by influencing the government.

The formation of Mizo as a collective identity took a long process of crystallization to emerge as a distinct nationality. The inclusiveness or exclusiveness of Mizo identity is determined by the markers selected by the elite as the basis of their people's mobilization. The selected attributes or markers, through which

identity is propounded, greatly determine the formation as well as the future development of Mizo nationality formation. The contemporary discourse on Mizo identity mainly revolves around four issues or markers - common myth of origin, language, Christianity, and territory. The Mizo identity boundary is in the process of negotiation marked by certain complexities and challenges. The myth of origin seems to be commonly accepted, but the fact that the community who believe in common origin are trans-border tribes creates complications of its own. There is also a challenge to negotiate between the perpetuation of Mizo identity and the maintenance of distinct tribe identity. The Mizo elite may need to contemplate the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the objective markers so selected for mobilization. The question of whether the Mizo identity accommodates tribe identity within its fold without destroying tribe identity is a critical concern for the perpetuation of Mizo nationality.

Chapter III: **Contesting Mizo Nationality**, examines in general the nature of identity assertions of certain tribes, particularly, non-Lusei tribes in Mizoram who have been fighting for autonomy and their own tribe identity preservation against the assumed or real threat of maintaining their distinct identity in the face of the process of Mizoization. Emphasis is given to the perceptions and the roles of the tribe-based civil societies, which are dictated by the emerging elite among these communities.

Among the major tribes of Mizoram, the Hmar, Paite Lai and Mara are vocal in their demand for autonomy and assertion of their tribe identity. Therefore, the chapter discusses the emergence, role, and perception of the tribe-based elite and their movements for autonomy among these tribes. The descriptive presentation of the tribe-based identity movement reveals that though each tribe identity movement has its own peculiarity, there are certain issues and contexts which influence tribe identity assertion and perpetuation of tribe identity in Mizoram.

The study identified ten significant points for understanding tribe-based identity assertion in Mizoram. The first point refers to the trans-border nature of the tribe identity by arguing that all studied tribes are cross-border tribes and their

movement in Mizoram cannot be understood in isolation as the politics of their brethren outside Mizoram has a deep impact on them. The second point relates to the shared idea of common origin with other Zo ethnic tribes. This idea of common origin gives the studied tribes certain advantages as they could negotiate their position both as a member of larger Mizo and as distinct tribe. The third point argues that the tribe-based elite realizes they could not compete with 'Mizo' elite; hence they employ ethnicity as a mechanism for deriving the support of their tribesmen by stressing their distinctiveness for the realization of political autonomy where they could enjoy political and financial power. Fourthly, the contentious nature of Scheduled Tribe recognition in the form of inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of Mizoram is highlighted. The tribe's elites in question asserted that constitutionally their tribe could not be incorporated under the Mizo as one recognized tribe could not be subsumed under Mizo which is another recognized tribe and the equation Mizo with Lushai by defining Mizo as any Lushai exclude them as they are not Lusei.

The fifth point argues that the language of a person becomes important in group differentiation since it is one of the most identifiable cultural markers. The issue relates to Mizo speakers and tribe language speakers within the same tribe. The six points highlight the close interlinking of the social and political elite. The first groups of educated elites are responsible for the formation of social organizations as well as political parties which is obvious as they are the pioneer in their own society. The seventh point contest the elite claim of homogeneity of any group, including the studied tribe by highlighting persisting diverse claim and differences within the group. The eighth point discussed the poor electoral performance or instability of tribe-based political parties in the electoral politics of Mizoram. The ninth point relates to the territorial issues in two ways- the studied tribe have to negotiate between the social and political influence of their brethren from outside Mizoram and the political reality of international and state boundaries as well as the centrality of ADC area or demand area. Lastly, the tenth point highlight that the main concern of the tribe's identity movement relates not necessarily with for or against Mizo identity per se. The assertion of tribe identity should not be interpreted as a total

rejection of Mizo identity or any other larger identity. They are opposed to any attempt to build a homogenous Mizo identity which necessarily demands the erosion of their distinct tribe identity.

Chapter IV: Subjective Consciousness and Mizo Nationality Formation: An Empirical Analysis. The chapter deals with the last two objectives of the study by examining the subjective views and reactions to the process of Mizo nationality formation as well as identifying whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness. The survey was conducted through a structured interview method by means of a multi-stage sampling method. Considering the main focus of the survey, five town localities and five villages dominantly inhabited by the studied tribes are identified and purposively selected. The total sample size was limited to 300. From each rural and urban locality, thirty respondents are selected through systematic sampling based on the electoral roll. The Structured interview format is divided into three parts. The first part deals with personal information. The second part relates to respondents' views on their particular tribe-related questions and the third part mainly relates to the respondent's attitude towards the process of Mizoisation process and its related matters.

Regarding questions relating to particular tribe concerns, no response is comparatively high since a significant number of respondents do not think in terms of their own particular tribe. 79% of them feel that inter-tribe marriage among the Zo ethnic group is good and 68% feel very comfortable when they are in an area where other tribe-speaking groups are dominated. Only 6.7% responded that they consider the tribe of a candidate while casting their vote. A very high percentage i.e. 82.3% do not feel that their tribe is being intentionally discriminated against or neglected, which negates the tribe-based elite propagation of r tribe being discriminated as the basis of their movement for autonomy. Interestingly, income generation and infrastructure development are regarded as more important issues of concern than the protection of tribe identity. As many as 67.7% of respondents consider tribe-based civil societies as necessary for their tribe and as many as 84.7% view the role of Mizo-based NGOs in a positive way. But on the question of the existence or setting

up of a separate tribe-based political setup, the respondents are divided, no response is 33%, those who are in favour 31.7% while 35% of them give a negative reply. Compulsory learning of the Mizo language is accepted by 78.3% of the respondents. There seems to be a general acceptance of the Mizo elite definition of Mizo as any 'Chhinlung chhuak' or Zo ethnic group as 78% of the respondents answer in support of this argument.

To examine whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation, region-wise and rural-urban-wise analysis were done through crosstabulation. The survey result shows that there are certain differences in perceptions along areas of inhabitation. But since the fact that each town's localities and villages are selected on the basis of dominant areas of a particular tribe, the presentation of survey result in terms of region or place of inhabitation seem inadequate to reflect the real factors that determine a difference in perceptions of the respondents.

Regional and rural-urban-wise cross-tabulation shows certain regional and rural-urban differences. Regional difference in the perception of the respondents is somehow predictable due to the sample selection methods adopted, where samples are collected from each village and urban locality dominantly occupied by certain tribes. With regards to personal details, the regional difference is seen in tribe composition, membership in a type of Church, mother language, language use in the family, and membership in civil societies while the rural-urban difference is seen mainly in the educational qualification and type of occupation. In Ngopa and Lawngtlai areas, the rural-urban difference is also seen in the mother language and language use in the family.

With regard to respondents' perceptions of particular tribes and Mizo identity-related questions, no significant difference is seen apart from the fact that no response is comparatively high in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. With regard to historical figures known by the respondents, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen. Those who consider inter-tribe marriage as good and who are

comfortable when in an area dominated by tribe language speakers are comparatively low in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. No significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen in voting criteria where most of the respondents consider the personality of the candidate and political party affiliation as more important criteria than tribe, with the exception of the Siaha area where difference is seen in Saiha town and Serkawr village. The regional difference is witnessed with regard to views on the role of tribe-based civil societies, in the Aizawl area and Ngopa town respondents have a rather pessimistic view of them. Certain regional difference, particularly along ADC and the non-ADC area is seen with regard to the formation of separate autonomous political setup for certain tribes. Regarding compulsory learning of the Mizo language, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is witnessed, except in the Lawngtlai area where respondents belonging to Lungzarhtum village have a comparatively high percentage of not accepting compulsory learning of Mizo language. Again, with the exception of Lungzarhtum village, a very high percentage of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo.

The survey results depicted in frequency and region-wise fail to adequately highlight the small group of respondents who hold different perceptions and the factors that influence them. The survey results are analyzed through crosstabulation on the basis of three key variables - tribe, language used in the family and Church affiliation. The cross-table results show the relevance of these three variables in the subjective identification of the respondents as well as their perceptions.

Regarding questions relating to particular tribes based related questions, 'no responses' are high as compared to other questions. When asked about the historical figures known by the respondents, those who name their own tribesmen are a small percentage of the Mara tribe, who use Mara language within their family and belong to Mara tribe-based Churches. While a majority of the respondents view inter tribe marriage as good, a small group who have a rather negative view are mostly belong to Lusei and other tribes who speak Lusei/ Mizo language in the family and affiliated with mainstream Churches. With regard to the level of comfortability when being in

other language groups dominated areas, the percentage of those who are very comfortable is relatively low in the case of Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who are mainly a Lusei-speaking group. A comparatively higher percentage of voters who give importance to tribe consideration as voting criteria is witnessed among the Mara tribe, tribe language users in the family, and members of the ‘tribe-based Churches’. While the majority of the respondents do not feel that their tribe is being discriminated against, those who feel discriminated against mainly consist of Hmar, Paite, and Mara tribe who use both Mizo and tribe language in the family and they belong to both mainstream and tribe-based Churches. No clear-cut correspondence to any specific variable is seen with regard to different perception on issues of concern for the tribe, small percentage of respondents who put protection of tribe identity as the primary issue mainly belongs Hmar, Mara and Lai tribes who use mixed language or tribe language in the family and belonging to both tribe based and mainstream Churches. The respondents who view the emergence and role of tribe-based civil societies mainly belong to the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who speak Mizo language in the family and mainly belong to mainstream Churches. No clear connection with the selected variables is seen in regard to the necessity of ADCs, the division is mainly seen along tribes who have ADC of their own and those who do not possess the same political setup.

On the questions related to Mizo identity, the general perception is that of the wide acceptance of the process of Mizo nationality formation as well as the role of the agencies that propagate Mizo identity. The role of Mizo-based civil societies are viewed positively, but those who are critical of their role are found among all studied tribes, including Lusei tribes, but their percentage is comparatively higher among tribes other than Lusei and ‘other tribes’, and among tribe language speakers and members of tribe-based Churches. Those who object to compulsory learning of Mizo language are seen among all studied tribes, but those who use the tribe language in the family and are a member of ‘tribe-based Churches’ are comparatively higher in percentage. While 78% of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo, a small yet relatively high percentage of respondents who define Mizo as only Lusei tribe only are found among the Lai and Mara tribes who used tribe language in the family and

belonging to tribe-based Churches. The respondents who relate Mizo identity with only those who speak 'Mizo language' are seen among all tribes except Lai tribes, and it is comparatively high among 'other tribes' mostly among those who use Mizo language in the family and member of mainstream Churches.

Chapter V: **Findings and Conclusion** summarize the main arguments of the study and provide an analysis of the dynamics and challenges of Mizo nationality formation process. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of hypotheses put forward and by providing general concluding remarks on the basis of the study.

The study reveals the correctness of the three statements which are put forward as hypotheses of the study. First, the examination of the objective markers as well as the development of subjective consciousness of Mizo identity shows the centrality of ethnicity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and its preservation. Hence, we can argue that the emergence of the Mizo nationality is impinged on the larger ethnic identity. Secondly, the study also highlights that while ethnicity and nationality formation process does not necessarily go together, the study reveals that in the context of the Mizo identity we see the transformation of an ethnic group into a nationality. This stipulates that ethnicity and nationality formations are concomitant with respect to Mizo identity. Thirdly, the crucial role of the elite, particularly the modern elite who emerged during the colonial period, in the process of Mizo nationality formation, is clearly evident. After overthrowing the traditional elite, the modern Mizo elites are in competition with the tribe-based elite as well as with the elite from 'outside' the group. Hence, the dialogue as well as the contestation of Mizo identity should be viewed from the perspective of the elite competition. The study, therefore, argues that the material structure and social forces emanating from the elite competition provide the base for the construction of the superstructure of the Mizo nationality.

Apart from the specific conclusion with regard to the hypotheses put forward, certain general concluding remarks may be drawn by recapturing certain findings of the study already highlighted in the previous chapters.

The fluidity and malleable well as cross-cutting nature of ethnic identity is clearly evident in the present study. While discussing tribe identities in the previous chapters, the claim and counterclaim of tribe/clan identities were highlighted. While in a certain situation, one group may be a sub-tribe/clan of a tribe, but in another context, the same group may assert its distinctiveness as a separate tribe. For instance, both Hmar and Lai claim Khawlhring as one clan of their tribe, and some sections of them who live within the dominated area of Hmar and Lai may accept themselves as such, but the same group who live within and around Aizawl consider themselves as a separate tribe. The case of the Pawih- particularly, Fanai and Bawitlung also revealed the dynamics of group identity. While these tribes are ethnically related to the Lai, these tribes living outside the LADC area consider themselves separate from the Lai, and the Lai themselves have some reservations about their inclusion as their tribe. There are also a number of common clans among the Lai and the Mara like- Hlawhching and Hlychho, Chinzah and Chozah, Bunghai and Bohia, Hnialum and Hnaihly, etc of Lai and Mara clans respectively. Apart from these, the practice of ethnic incorporation system like *Saphun* reveals the fluidity of tribe identity. The above discussions reveal the situational nature of tribe identity and at the same time show the ethnic relatedness of all studied tribes.

The prominent role of the elite in the formation and perpetuation of ethnic identity and the crucial importance of ethnic identity for the maintenance of the elite's hegemonic position is comprehended. The elite often presents themselves as the representative of their homogenous community and put forward certain demands on behalf of their community and mobilize the people towards the realization of their demands. The benefits of the realization of their demands are enjoyed by the elite by means of exercising political and financial power or control of the society through the civil societies on which they provide leadership. As clearly highlighted by the survey results, common people are concerned more about matters related to their daily needs like job opportunities and infrastructural development. Their concern with ethnic identity also mainly revolves around matters pertaining to social relationships rather than purely ethnic identity-based political issues.

While discussing the role of the elite, mention is made that the elite often justify their demands as the interest of the homogenous group they represent. But a careful examination of group identity discloses the myth of group homogeneity and the reality of the heterogeneous nature of the group. For instance, the Mizo Union, MNF, and tribe-based political organizations as well as civil societies usually depict their community as a homogeneous group. However, the present study reflects the contestation within the Mizo nationality as well as within the tribes who contest the Mizo identity. The study reveals that the tribes, rather than being homogeneous, are divided along the language spoken, place of inhabitation, and attitudes towards their ethnic identity. The Hmar are divided into Hmar-speaking and Lusei-speaking group as well as on the basis of area of inhabitation. The division between Dapzar group and Teizang group of the Paite is also evident. Language issue divides the Lai tribe and the Mara encounters division at the clan level. This reality postulates that the elite need to accept the reality of diversity and address the challenge put forward by heterogeneity by means of accommodating the differences within their structure of group identity rather than attempting to form a homogenized group.

The study also identifies the interplay of multiple factors in ethnic identity formation and assertion. The history of the people, particularly origin and migration as well as a system of administration both in the pre- and post-independence has a drastic influence on ethnic identity. Political-administrative changes brought about by the British administration changed the traditional society by introducing a modern system of administration which paved the way for the emergence of the modern elite. The formation of Lushai Hills District, its upgradation to Union Territory of Mizoram and then the State of Mizoram, and the setting up of ADCs for certain tribes had a direct impact on Mizo identity as well as tribe identity. The importance of territory in the form of boundary demarcation- International, State, and Autonomous District Councils, to some extent, curtail the identity movement within the confine of the existing territorial boundary. The significance of geographical factors like rivers and hills is also recognizable, particularly in the context of Lai and Mara identity, the natural boundary demarcated by *Chhimtuipui* river is of tremendous importance. The role of civil societies is duly highlighted as agencies of

identity formation. While the study does not properly investigate the role of mass media and social media, their influence is evident and there is scope for further study on this aspect.

The process of nationality formation is an ongoing process, hence, the future perpetuation of Mizo nationality formation as well as maintaining its group boundary largely depends upon how the Mizo elite negotiates with the tribe identity. The challenge before the Mizo identity perpetuation depends upon whether the Mizo identity accommodates, tribe identity within its fold rather than destroying the distinctive tribe identity. In other words, it is the identity award by Mizo that provides the real challenge as well as the future course of Mizo nationality and the politics of Mizoram.

ABSTRACT

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY:

A STUDY OF MIZO IDENTITY FORMATION

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY:
A STUDY OF MIZO IDENTITY FORMATION**

BY

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Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of
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The thesis seeks to present the emergence of Mizo identity as a nationality in a historical-analytical manner as well as attempt to understand how the Mizo nationality formation is perceived by diverse tribes who are subsumed under the nomenclature of Mizo. The term Mizo is used in the study to refer to all ethnically related tribes who are collectively called by several related terms like Chin- Kuki- Lusei, Chhinlung chhuak, Zo hnahtlak etc. The stressed point of the Mizo as a collective identity is the ethnic relatedness of the group against other communities, inside and outside Mizoram. As the main concern of the study is on the interface of the two processes - Mizo identity formation and tribe identity, the survey of the perceptions of diverse tribes towards Mizo nationality formation was conducted, based on which certain conclusion of the study has derived.

Objectives of the study

The study has identified the following objectives:

1. To locate the material structures and social forces that influenced the construction of Mizo nationality.
2. To examine the nature of ethnic identities emerging among non-Lusei Mizo communities in Mizoram and study their effects on the process of development of Mizo nationality formation.
3. To study how the people belonging to different Zo ethnic groups inhabiting Mizoram identify themselves and react to the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation.
4. To examine whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation.

Hypotheses

The study was conducted with the following hypotheses:

1. The emergence of Mizo nationality has impinged on the larger ethnic identity.
2. Ethnicity and nationality formation are concomitant with respect to Mizo identity.
3. The material structure and social forces emanating from the elite competition provide the base for the construction of the super structure of Mizo nationality.

Methodology and collection of data

The thesis has adopted a descriptive method with a historical-analytical approach. To study the emergence of ethnic group identity, historical approach has been used while empirical data are collected for investigating the nationality formation process. The theses employ both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources mainly include - records, documents, publications by the government, and civil societies. The unstructured interview was conducted with political leaders, intelligentsia, leaders of NGOs, and prominent citizens, who have been playing important roles in the construction of nationality / ethnic identities in Mizoram. Apart from the interview of the elite group, a survey was conducted to understand the views of the masses of the people. The secondary source includes relevant books, articles, unpublished theses, pamphlets, newspaper reports, constitutions of civil societies, etc.

To understand the perception and views of the general people towards self-perception on ethnic identity and Mizo nationality formation process, the survey was conducted through a structured interview method utilizing a multi-stage sampling method. Urban localities and villages dominantly inhabited by different Zo ethnic tribes were identified and purposively selected. Aizawl and surrounding areas represent Lusei and mixed tribes who seem to readily accept Mizo identity. The Hmar communities dominate in and around Saikawrdai, the headquarters of Sinlung Hills Council. The villages around Ngopa, the Civil Sub Division headquarters, are inhabited by Paite communities. The Lai Autonomous District Council area, with Lawngtlai as the headquarters of LADC is dominated Lai community. Siaha and the surrounding villages of Mara Autonomous District council are mainly inhabited by the Mara community. Based on these dominant areas, one urban locality and one village were again purposively selected considering the tribe concentration in the locality/village.

Ramhlun North locality within Aizawl city and North Lungpher village represent the urban and rural Aizawl area while Sakawrdai and Zohmun represent urban and rural Hmar respectively. As there are no Paite-dominated localities in the

notified town of Mizoram, Vengthar locality of Ngopa, where the Paite are comparatively significant was taken to represent urban Paite and Teikhang village was selected to represent the Paite tribe in the rural area. Lawngtlai Council locality and Lungzarhtum village represent the Lai urban and rural respondents. Saiha Vengpui and Serkawr village represent the Mara urban and rural populations respectively.

The total sample size is limited to 300. In each village/town locality, thirty respondents are selected through systematic sampling based on the electoral roll. Using the electoral roll has its advantage for the selection of sampling units since the electoral roll contains only adult individuals who are permanent residents of the area and the individuals are listed in a proper sequence with each individual having separate numbers. The first respondent was randomly selected from the electoral roll and the next respondent was identified utilizing systematic or interval sampling method. The total number of voters in the electoral roll was divided by the number of samples to be collected in the locality, ie 30. For example, if there are 400 persons in the electoral roll of the locality, the total number of voters in the locality, ie 400 is divided by 30 with the result of 13. So, the next respondent was identified by jumping to every 13th person in the electoral roll. The response to the survey, which was conducted in 2016 and 2017, was analyzed by using SPSS and cross-tabled to examine how the respondents, belonging to different tribes and living in different areas within Mizoram identify themselves and view the ongoing process of Mizo nationality formation.

Limitations of the survey results:

The survey is constrained by two main limitations, which impinge on the reliability and accuracy of the survey results. First and foremost, in certain areas, structured interviews need to be conducted with the help of a translator, which resulted in a chance of miscommunication between the researcher and respondents. Secondly, in some parts of the scheduled question, there is a possibility that the respondents may not have well knowledge about the subject of the questions to arrive at the technically correct answer, but the views expressed by the respondent,

however ill-informed they may be, still counted in as social reality since the intention of the survey was the views of the respondent. Considering these limitations, the researcher does not claim for 100% reliability of the survey results but stood for the accuracy of the survey result to a great extent.

Chapter outline of the Thesis.

Chapter I: Introduction, Context and Concepts:

The first chapter presents a general introduction to the study, the significance, main objectives, and hypotheses, and also laid down the conceptual framework of the research investigation. The chapter argues that ethnic identity-based assertions and movements have changed and they still have the potential to change the political map of North-East India. Therefore, a study of ethnicity and nationality formation is of crucial importance to understand the political phenomenon of India in general and North-East India in particular.

In Mizoram, the process of modernization gave birth to a modern educated elite who realized the need to construct a strong collective identity as Mizo and inculcate Mizo identity consciousness among their community. They mobilized the people in pursuit of demand for better political status, which resulted in the formation of the State of Mizoram which means Land of the Mizo. However, the continuing process of Mizo nationality formation has generated apprehensions and uneasiness, particularly among certain non-Lusei tribes who apprehended that the Lusei and its allied tribes dominate Mizo society and monopolize economic, political, and social power in their hands. The elite that emerged within these tribes promoted ethnic consciousness at their tribe levels and launched movements to counteract the real or assumed dominant status of the Lusei tribe and its allied tribes by linking Mizo as nothing but an extension of Lusei-based identity. These developments have posed real challenges to the Mizo elite, who seek to build Mizo nationality based on the ethnic solidarity of all tribes, including those who assert their distinct tribe identity.

While studying the Mizo nationality formation, the researcher encountered certain conceptual and contextual problems. The researcher has to put the contextual reality into consideration while applying the existing concepts which are developed in another context. Categorization of the collective identity of the studied community is problematic as the local term for social category *Hnam* has undergone significant change after the colonial period. The local people interchangeably used *hnam* to refer to clan, tribe, and other larger collective identities like nationality, due to the lack of a separate term for these distinct categories.

The study argues that there are certain limitations of utilizing ‘tribe’ as a social category due to its incongruence in the context of the study both in its anthropological sense of being a primitive and legal sense of inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list. The studied communities are categorized as Scheduled Tribes but they are not primitive societies as tribe recognition is done mainly for administrative or political purposes rather than any academic criteria. The lack of clear-cut qualifications to determine the Scheduled Tribe and the overlapping nature of recognized tribes limited the applicability of the concept for academic research. However, for the purpose of the categorization study, the term ‘tribe’ is used to refer to the pre-colonial period local concept of *hnam* which was determined by the *sakhua* of a person. Changing the *sakhua* implies changing the tribe.

There are diverse and somehow opposing approaches regarding the nature and role of ethnic identity in group identity formation and its resultant effects on the emergence of a nationality. As the purpose of the study is neither an attempt to engage in the theoretical debate and theory building nor to arrive at a conclusion regarding the correct conceptualization of ethnicity and nationality formation, the study relies on the insights of scholars to understand and analyze the role of ethnic identity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and its perpetuation. The study mainly derived its theoretical base from the framework of Paul R Brass Elite competition and AD Smith Ethno- symbolism.

From the arguments put forward by Smith and Brass, we presumed three points-one, there is no inherent dichotomy between the primordialist claim on the importance of naturally 'given' factors like cultural markers and the claim of the constructivist about the constructed nature of ethnic identity. Two, the crucial role played by the elite, or intellectuals and intelligentsia, for the emergence and survival of the nationality. Three, the need for the sound forging of objective and subjective attributes in the formation and persistence of group identity. Though the elite plays a crucial role in the social construction of group identity, they are limited by the existing cultural factors. To mobilize the people effectively, the elite needs to appeal on the basis of the already existing cultural markers. When the ethnic group differentiates themselves on the basis of certain markers like belief in common ancestry, the social reality of the belief that binds the people together rather than the historical reality of common ancestry is important for the group.

From the inference drawn from the above points, the study argues that ethnic groups are politicized cultural groups united by certain objective attributes and exhibiting strong psychological sentiments of belonging to the group against others. A single tribe or a group of tribes joined together may form an ethnic group that is in competition with other similar groups for obtaining certain benefits within the larger political system. The emergence of ethnic groups presupposes that the community has already been influenced to an extent by the process of modernization. When ethnic consciousness at a given stage of historical development translates itself into a desire for self-determination and leads to the mobilization of the community either for political autonomy or for sovereignty, and then the ethnic group is considered to have emerged as a nationality.

Chapter II: **Construction of Mizo Nationality** studies the emergence of Mizo nationality in the background of political and social changes taking place in Mizoram. The chapter argues that Mizo nationality formation is closely connected with the history of social evolution, administrative structuring and re-structuring, and the emergence of new social forces. Particular stress is given to the prominent role played by the modern elite, who are mostly Christian and received a formal

education, for the formation and perpetuation of the Mizo nationality. The traditional society was drastically changed by the forces of modernization mainly brought about by the British occupation of the land and the subsequent mass-scale conversion to Christianity. The decline of the traditional elite in the hands of the modernization process paved the way for the emerging educated elite to occupy a hegemonic position in society. With the lack of capital base and numerical strength, the educated elite use cultural identity as a means of mass mobilization to pursue their interest. It is contended that the Mizo nationality formation is a modern phenomenon by tracing the emergence of Mizo as a political identity to the occupation of the land by the British in the 19th century and the subsequent establishment of the Mizo District Council in 1954.

The people inhabiting the present Mizoram and adjoining areas are known and called by various names like Kuki, Chin and Lushai etc. In the face of these outsiders'-imposed names, the first group of modern educated claimed that the natives never call themselves by these names in the pre-colonial time and they asserted that all the people hitherto known by outsiders as Chin-Kuki- Lushai are one group and they are Mizo. The early history of the people in Mizoram, before their interaction with the British, was rather unclear due to the absence of written history and minimal interaction with other communities. However, all composite tribes of Mizo nationality accept their common origin. The idea of common origin theory stood as one of the foundations of Mizo nationality, as its relevance lies in the people's strong belief in being one group that binds them emotionally together. The socio-cultural, economic, and political life of the traditional Mizo society was closely intertwined and mainly revolves around the village which was under the supreme rule of the chief who possess supreme authority, at least theoretically. The chief rules over the village with the help of certain officials appointed by him. So the chiefs and his council of elders and priests form an elite group in the traditional society. Each tribe has its own *Sakhua* and there was a distinct identity of a tribe with a particular *Sakhua*. However, a person could change his tribe by performing religious rituals officiated by the priest of the tribe he wishes to incorporate into by means of *Saphun* which means a change of *Sa* or tribe deity.

Among the chief clans, the Sailo chiefs slowly consolidate and enlarge their power and ruled over most of the tribes at the time of the British arrival. As the Sailo chiefs ruled over intermixing of different tribes in their village, their rule become one of the foundations of Mizo identity. The pre-colonial situation under the Sailo rule was marked by the duality of cooperation and conflict. The Sailo chiefs cooperate against their common enemy but at the same time fight against each other. They brought about the gradual development of common customs and language among the diverse tribes within their rule. Intra conflicts, frequent changes of village sites and lack of significant 'others' debarred any kind of stable cohesive identity consciousness as pan Sailo subjects come up.

The 'Chin- Lushai expedition of 1889-90' marked the final occupation of the hills by the British. The British administration is significant for bringing the commencement of the modernization process. The subsequent establishment of the political boundary of Lushai Hills District and the replacements of people's loyalty from their chiefs to the British government is of critical importance for the emergence of Mizo as a political identity and as a distinct nationality.

Even though it does not seem to be the official intention of the Missions to involve closely in the identity formation process, the historic juncture on their interaction with the people makes their role in the construction of Mizo identity very significant. Within a short span of time, being Mizo becomes more or less synonymous with being a Christian. The skillful utilization of schools by the missionaries, for inculcating Christianity to the first group of modern educated elite enabled Christianity to become an essential part of Mizo identity. The process of modernization brought about by the colonial administration and the modern system of education coupled with the mass conversion to Christianity drastically changed society.

The emergence of a new group of modern educated elite mostly consisting of educated Christians has a significant change in the whole socio-cultural and political life of the people and their group identification. The first group of the modern

educated elite who had sprung up during the colonial period were mostly drawn from the Sailo subjects as the modernization process touches them earlier than other groups for inhabiting the area where both the government and the church first operates. The first group of the new modern elite during the colonial period, therefore, was mainly composed of the Lusei-speaking group, who received education in the mission schools and were affiliated with the church. Even though they are drawn from diverse tribes, Christianity binds them together and one's identity as a tribe was no longer relevant and important, thus inter tribe rivalry for dominance within the new elite group was not witnessed. These small groups of elites dominate the entire society, in many instances, leadership in the church, associations, and political parties were interconnected with each other.

The newly emerging modern elite consciously mobilize the people on the bases of a distinct Mizo identity and define Mizo in the broadest sense so as to include all the related tribes in and outside the then Mizo District. As a small group with a common background of education, Christianity, and the Lusei language, chances of intra-group conflicts were minimized and they have effective control over the important institutions of the society. As such, the spiritual, economic, political and social life of the society was gradually controlled by them and there exists a close relation and cooperation among the church, NGOs and political parties at the time of India's independence. The Mizo-based political parties like Mizo Union and Mizo National Front spearheaded the Mizo movement for autonomy which led to the formation of the State of Mizoram. At the society level, the big and influential civil societies like Young Mizo Association, Mizo Zirlai Pawl and Churches, particularly the two big denominations founded by the pioneer missionaries- Mizoram Presbyterian Church and Baptist Church of Mizoram, propagate Mizo identity through their own platforms and by influencing the government.

The formation of Mizo as a collective identity took a long process of crystallization to emerge as a distinct nationality. The inclusiveness or exclusiveness of Mizo identity is determined by the markers selected by the elite as the basis of their people's mobilization. The selected attributes or markers, through which

identity is propounded, greatly determine the formation as well as the future development of Mizo nationality formation. The contemporary discourse on Mizo identity mainly revolves around four issues or markers - common myth of origin, language, Christianity, and territory. The Mizo identity boundary is in the process of negotiation marked by certain complexities and challenges. The myth of origin seems to be commonly accepted, but the fact that the community who believe in common origin are trans-border tribes creates complications of its own. There is also a challenge to negotiate between the perpetuation of Mizo identity and the maintenance of distinct tribe identity. The Mizo elite may need to contemplate the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the objective markers so selected for mobilization. The question of whether the Mizo identity accommodates tribe identity within its fold without destroying tribe identity is a critical concern for the perpetuation of Mizo nationality.

Chapter III: **Contesting Mizo Nationality**, examines in general the nature of identity assertions of certain tribes, particularly, non-Lusei tribes in Mizoram who have been fighting for autonomy and their own tribe identity preservation against the assumed or real threat of maintaining their distinct identity in the face of the process of Mizoization. Emphasis is given to the perceptions and the roles of the tribe-based civil societies, which are dictated by the emerging elite among these communities.

Among the major tribes of Mizoram, the Hmar, Paite Lai and Mara are vocal in their demand for autonomy and assertion of their tribe identity. Therefore, the chapter discusses the emergence, role, and perception of the tribe-based elite and their movements for autonomy among these tribes. The descriptive presentation of the tribe-based identity movement reveals that though each tribe identity movement has its own peculiarity, there are certain issues and contexts which influence tribe identity assertion and perpetuation of tribe identity in Mizoram.

The study identified ten significant points for understanding tribe-based identity assertion in Mizoram. The first point refers to the trans-border nature of the tribe identity by arguing that all studied tribes are cross-border tribes and their

movement in Mizoram cannot be understood in isolation as the politics of their brethren outside Mizoram has a deep impact on them. The second point relates to the shared idea of common origin with other Zo ethnic tribes. This idea of common origin gives the studied tribes certain advantages as they could negotiate their position both as a member of larger Mizo and as distinct tribe. The third point argues that the tribe-based elite realizes they could not compete with 'Mizo' elite; hence they employ ethnicity as a mechanism for deriving the support of their tribesmen by stressing their distinctiveness for the realization of political autonomy where they could enjoy political and financial power. Fourthly, the contentious nature of Scheduled Tribe recognition in the form of inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of Mizoram is highlighted. The tribe's elites in question asserted that constitutionally their tribe could not be incorporated under the Mizo as one recognized tribe could not be subsumed under Mizo which is another recognized tribe and the equation Mizo with Lushai by defining Mizo as any Lushai exclude them as they are not Lusei.

The fifth point argues that the language of a person becomes important in group differentiation since it is one of the most identifiable cultural markers. The issue relates to Mizo speakers and tribe language speakers within the same tribe. The six points highlight the close interlinking of the social and political elite. The first groups of educated elites are responsible for the formation of social organizations as well as political parties which is obvious as they are the pioneer in their own society. The seventh point contest the elite claim of homogeneity of any group, including the studied tribe by highlighting persisting diverse claim and differences within the group. The eighth point discussed the poor electoral performance or instability of tribe-based political parties in the electoral politics of Mizoram. The ninth point relates to the territorial issues in two ways- the studied tribe have to negotiate between the social and political influence of their brethren from outside Mizoram and the political reality of international and state boundaries as well as the centrality of ADC area or demand area. Lastly, the tenth point highlight that the main concern of the tribe's identity movement relates not necessarily with for or against Mizo identity per se. The assertion of tribe identity should not be interpreted as a total

rejection of Mizo identity or any other larger identity. They are opposed to any attempt to build a homogenous Mizo identity which necessarily demands the erosion of their distinct tribe identity.

Chapter IV: Subjective Consciousness and Mizo Nationality Formation: An Empirical Analysis. The chapter deals with the last two objectives of the study by examining the subjective views and reactions to the process of Mizo nationality formation as well as identifying whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness. The survey was conducted through a structured interview method by means of a multi-stage sampling method. Considering the main focus of the survey, five town localities and five villages dominantly inhabited by the studied tribes are identified and purposively selected. The total sample size was limited to 300. From each rural and urban locality, thirty respondents are selected through systematic sampling based on the electoral roll. The Structured interview format is divided into three parts. The first part deals with personal information. The second part relates to respondents' views on their particular tribe-related questions and the third part mainly relates to the respondent's attitude towards the process of Mizoisation process and its related matters.

Regarding questions relating to particular tribe concerns, no response is comparatively high since a significant number of respondents do not think in terms of their own particular tribe. 79% of them feel that inter-tribe marriage among the Zo ethnic group is good and 68% feel very comfortable when they are in an area where other tribe-speaking groups are dominated. Only 6.7% responded that they consider the tribe of a candidate while casting their vote. A very high percentage i.e. 82.3% do not feel that their tribe is being intentionally discriminated against or neglected, which negates the tribe-based elite propagation of r tribe being discriminated as the basis of their movement for autonomy. Interestingly, income generation and infrastructure development are regarded as more important issues of concern than the protection of tribe identity. As many as 67.7% of respondents consider tribe-based civil societies as necessary for their tribe and as many as 84.7% view the role of Mizo-based NGOs in a positive way. But on the question of the existence or setting

up of a separate tribe-based political setup, the respondents are divided, no response is 33%, those who are in favour 31.7% while 35% of them give a negative reply. Compulsory learning of the Mizo language is accepted by 78.3% of the respondents. There seems to be a general acceptance of the Mizo elite definition of Mizo as any 'Chhinlung chhuak' or Zo ethnic group as 78% of the respondents answer in support of this argument.

To examine whether regional differences affect the people's ethnic consciousness and influence their attitudes towards the Mizo nationality formation, region-wise and rural-urban-wise analysis were done through crosstabulation. The survey result shows that there are certain differences in perceptions along areas of inhabitation. But since the fact that each town's localities and villages are selected on the basis of dominant areas of a particular tribe, the presentation of survey result in terms of region or place of inhabitation seem inadequate to reflect the real factors that determine a difference in perceptions of the respondents.

Regional and rural-urban-wise cross-tabulation shows certain regional and rural-urban differences. Regional difference in the perception of the respondents is somehow predictable due to the sample selection methods adopted, where samples are collected from each village and urban locality dominantly occupied by certain tribes. With regards to personal details, the regional difference is seen in tribe composition, membership in a type of Church, mother language, language use in the family, and membership in civil societies while the rural-urban difference is seen mainly in the educational qualification and type of occupation. In Ngopa and Lawngtlai areas, the rural-urban difference is also seen in the mother language and language use in the family.

With regard to respondents' perceptions of particular tribes and Mizo identity-related questions, no significant difference is seen apart from the fact that no response is comparatively high in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. With regard to historical figures known by the respondents, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen. Those who consider inter-tribe marriage as good and who are

comfortable when in an area dominated by tribe language speakers are comparatively low in Aizawl area and Ngopa town. No significant regional and rural-urban difference is seen in voting criteria where most of the respondents consider the personality of the candidate and political party affiliation as more important criteria than tribe, with the exception of the Siaha area where difference is seen in Saiha town and Serkawr village. The regional difference is witnessed with regard to views on the role of tribe-based civil societies, in the Aizawl area and Ngopa town respondents have a rather pessimistic view of them. Certain regional difference, particularly along ADC and the non-ADC area is seen with regard to the formation of separate autonomous political setup for certain tribes. Regarding compulsory learning of the Mizo language, no significant regional and rural-urban difference is witnessed, except in the Lawngtlai area where respondents belonging to Lungzarhtum village have a comparatively high percentage of not accepting compulsory learning of Mizo language. Again, with the exception of Lungzarhtum village, a very high percentage of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo.

The survey results depicted in frequency and region-wise fail to adequately highlight the small group of respondents who hold different perceptions and the factors that influence them. The survey results are analyzed through crosstabulation on the basis of three key variables - tribe, language used in the family and Church affiliation. The cross-table results show the relevance of these three variables in the subjective identification of the respondents as well as their perceptions.

Regarding questions relating to particular tribes based related questions, 'no responses' are high as compared to other questions. When asked about the historical figures known by the respondents, those who name their own tribesmen are a small percentage of the Mara tribe, who use Mara language within their family and belong to Mara tribe-based Churches. While a majority of the respondents view inter tribe marriage as good, a small group who have a rather negative view are mostly belong to Lusei and other tribes who speak Lusei/ Mizo language in the family and affiliated with mainstream Churches. With regard to the level of comfortability when being in

other language groups dominated areas, the percentage of those who are very comfortable is relatively low in the case of Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who are mainly a Lusei-speaking group. A comparatively higher percentage of voters who give importance to tribe consideration as voting criteria is witnessed among the Mara tribe, tribe language users in the family, and members of the ‘tribe-based Churches’. While the majority of the respondents do not feel that their tribe is being discriminated against, those who feel discriminated against mainly consist of Hmar, Paite, and Mara tribe who use both Mizo and tribe language in the family and they belong to both mainstream and tribe-based Churches. No clear-cut correspondence to any specific variable is seen with regard to different perception on issues of concern for the tribe, small percentage of respondents who put protection of tribe identity as the primary issue mainly belongs Hmar, Mara and Lai tribes who use mixed language or tribe language in the family and belonging to both tribe based and mainstream Churches. The respondents who view the emergence and role of tribe-based civil societies mainly belong to the Lusei and ‘other tribes’ who speak Mizo language in the family and mainly belong to mainstream Churches. No clear connection with the selected variables is seen in regard to the necessity of ADCs, the division is mainly seen along tribes who have ADC of their own and those who do not possess the same political setup.

On the questions related to Mizo identity, the general perception is that of the wide acceptance of the process of Mizo nationality formation as well as the role of the agencies that propagate Mizo identity. The role of Mizo-based civil societies are viewed positively, but those who are critical of their role are found among all studied tribes, including Lusei tribes, but their percentage is comparatively higher among tribes other than Lusei and ‘other tribes’, and among tribe language speakers and members of tribe-based Churches. Those who object to compulsory learning of Mizo language are seen among all studied tribes, but those who use the tribe language in the family and are a member of ‘tribe-based Churches’ are comparatively higher in percentage. While 78% of the respondents consider all *Chhinlung chhuak* as Mizo, a small yet relatively high percentage of respondents who define Mizo as only Lusei tribe only are found among the Lai and Mara tribes who used tribe language in the family and

belonging to tribe-based Churches. The respondents who relate Mizo identity with only those who speak 'Mizo language' are seen among all tribes except Lai tribes, and it is comparatively high among 'other tribes' mostly among those who use Mizo language in the family and member of mainstream Churches.

Chapter V: **Findings and Conclusion** summarize the main arguments of the study and provide an analysis of the dynamics and challenges of Mizo nationality formation process. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of hypotheses put forward and by providing general concluding remarks on the basis of the study.

The study reveals the correctness of the three statements which are put forward as hypotheses of the study. First, the examination of the objective markers as well as the development of subjective consciousness of Mizo identity shows the centrality of ethnicity in the process of Mizo nationality formation and its preservation. Hence, we can argue that the emergence of the Mizo nationality is impinged on the larger ethnic identity. Secondly, the study also highlights that while ethnicity and nationality formation process does not necessarily go together, the study reveals that in the context of the Mizo identity we see the transformation of an ethnic group into a nationality. This stipulates that ethnicity and nationality formations are concomitant with respect to Mizo identity. Thirdly, the crucial role of the elite, particularly the modern elite who emerged during the colonial period, in the process of Mizo nationality formation, is clearly evident. After overthrowing the traditional elite, the modern Mizo elites are in competition with the tribe-based elite as well as with the elite from 'outside' the group. Hence, the dialogue as well as the contestation of Mizo identity should be viewed from the perspective of the elite competition. The study, therefore, argues that the material structure and social forces emanating from the elite competition provide the base for the construction of the superstructure of the Mizo nationality.

Apart from the specific conclusion with regard to the hypotheses put forward, certain general concluding remarks may be drawn by recapturing certain findings of the study already highlighted in the previous chapters.

The fluidity and malleable well as cross-cutting nature of ethnic identity is clearly evident in the present study. While discussing tribe identities in the previous chapters, the claim and counterclaim of tribe/clan identities were highlighted. While in a certain situation, one group may be a sub-tribe/clan of a tribe, but in another context, the same group may assert its distinctiveness as a separate tribe. For instance, both Hmar and Lai claim Khawlhing as one clan of their tribe, and some sections of them who live within the dominated area of Hmar and Lai may accept themselves as such, but the same group who live within and around Aizawl consider themselves as a separate tribe. The case of the Pawih- particularly, Fanai and Bawitlung also revealed the dynamics of group identity. While these tribes are ethnically related to the Lai, these tribes living outside the LADC area consider themselves separate from the Lai, and the Lai themselves have some reservations about their inclusion as their tribe. There are also a number of common clans among the Lai and the Mara like- Hlawhching and Hlychho, Chinzah and Chozah, Bunghai and Bohia, Hnialum and Hnaihly, etc of Lai and Mara clans respectively. Apart from these, the practice of ethnic incorporation system like *Saphun* reveals the fluidity of tribe identity. The above discussions reveal the situational nature of tribe identity and at the same time show the ethnic relatedness of all studied tribes.

The prominent role of the elite in the formation and perpetuation of ethnic identity and the crucial importance of ethnic identity for the maintenance of the elite's hegemonic position is comprehended. The elite often presents themselves as the representative of their homogenous community and put forward certain demands on behalf of their community and mobilize the people towards the realization of their demands. The benefits of the realization of their demands are enjoyed by the elite by means of exercising political and financial power or control of the society through the civil societies on which they provide leadership. As clearly highlighted by the survey results, common people are concerned more about matters related to their daily needs like job opportunities and infrastructural development. Their concern with ethnic identity also mainly revolves around matters pertaining to social relationships rather than purely ethnic identity-based political issues.

While discussing the role of the elite, mention is made that the elite often justify their demands as the interest of the homogenous group they represent. But a careful examination of group identity discloses the myth of group homogeneity and the reality of the heterogeneous nature of the group. For instance, the Mizo Union, MNF, and tribe-based political organizations as well as civil societies usually depict their community as a homogeneous group. However, the present study reflects the contestation within the Mizo nationality as well as within the tribes who contest the Mizo identity. The study reveals that the tribes, rather than being homogeneous, are divided along the language spoken, place of inhabitation, and attitudes towards their ethnic identity. The Hmar are divided into Hmar-speaking and Lusei-speaking group as well as on the basis of area of inhabitation. The division between Dapzar group and Teizang group of the Paite is also evident. Language issue divides the Lai tribe and the Mara encounters division at the clan level. This reality postulates that the elite need to accept the reality of diversity and address the challenge put forward by heterogeneity by means of accommodating the differences within their structure of group identity rather than attempting to form a homogenized group.

The study also identifies the interplay of multiple factors in ethnic identity formation and assertion. The history of the people, particularly origin and migration as well as a system of administration both in the pre- and post-independence has a drastic influence on ethnic identity. Political-administrative changes brought about by the British administration changed the traditional society by introducing a modern system of administration which paved the way for the emergence of the modern elite. The formation of Lushai Hills District, its upgradation to Union Territory of Mizoram and then the State of Mizoram, and the setting up of ADCs for certain tribes had a direct impact on Mizo identity as well as tribe identity. The importance of territory in the form of boundary demarcation- International, State, and Autonomous District Councils, to some extent, curtail the identity movement within the confine of the existing territorial boundary. The significance of geographical factors like rivers and hills is also recognizable, particularly in the context of Lai and Mara identity, the natural boundary demarcated by *Chhimtuipui* river is of tremendous importance. The role of civil societies is duly highlighted as agencies of

identity formation. While the study does not properly investigate the role of mass media and social media, their influence is evident and there is scope for further study on this aspect.

The process of nationality formation is an ongoing process, hence, the future perpetuation of Mizo nationality formation as well as maintaining its group boundary largely depends upon how the Mizo elite negotiates with the tribe identity. The challenge before the Mizo identity perpetuation depends upon whether the Mizo identity accommodates, tribe identity within its fold rather than destroying the distinctive tribe identity. In other words, it is the identity award by Mizo that provides the real challenge as well as the future course of Mizo nationality and the politics of Mizoram.