

**POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN MIZORAM: A CASE STUDY OF THE MIZO
NATIONAL FRONT PARTY**

M. Phil

DISSERTATION

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CERTIFICATE

This is to notify that R. Vanlalhmangaihsanga, a bonafide research scholar having enrollment No. MZU/M.Phil/325 of 22.04.2016 attached to the Department of Political Science has completed his work for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in Political Science under my supervision and guidance on a research topic entitled, '**Political ideologies in Mizoram: A Case Study of the Mizo National Front Party**', for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl. The work embodies a record of original investigations and no part of it has been submitted for any other degree in other universities.

On evaluation of all the formalities, I am pleased to forward the dissertation for evaluation and further necessary action.

Dated: 13th December, 2016

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DECLARATION

I, R.Vanlalmangaihsanga do hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form bases of the award of any previous degree to me or to anybody else, and that this work has not been submitted by me for any other degree in other University or Institute.

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

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(R. VANLALHMANGAIHSANGA)

ABBREVIATIONS

MNF	Mizo National Front
MU	Mizo Union
UMFO	United Mizo Freedom Organization
ZNP	Zoram Nationalist Party
PC	People's Conference
EITU	Eastern India Tribal Union
GOI	Government of India
UN	United Nation
BEFR	Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation
NLUP	New Land Used Policy
NEDA	North East Democratic Alliance
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
U.S	United States
BC	Before Christ
MIP	Mizoram Intodelh Pawl
BAFFACOS	Bamboo Flowering and Famine Combat Scheme

MNV	zof Mizoram National Volunteers
MNA	Mizo National Army
MJD	Mizoram Janata Dal
SEDP	Socio-economic Development Plan
MPC	Mizoram People Conference
MZP	Mizo Zirlai Pawl

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CHAPTER- 1

INTRODUCTION

Political ideas and ideologies can act as form of social cement, providing social groups and whole societies, with a set of unifying beliefs and values. Political ideologies have common beliefs and values. Political ideologies have commonly been associated with particular social classes-such as liberalism with the middle classes, conservatism with the landed aristocracy, socialism with the working class and so forth. These ideas reflect the life experiences, interests and aspirations of a social class and therefore help to foster a sense of belongingness and solidarity. However, idea and ideologies can also succeed in binding together divergent groups and classes within a society. In providing society with a unified political culture, political ideas help to promote order and social stability. A unifying set of political ideas and values can develop naturally within a society.¹

The French philosopher Antonie Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836) coined the term 'ideologies' in 1796. De Tracy was an aristocrat who was sympathetic to the French Revolution 1789. Antonie de Tracy held the view that the aim of ideology was to establish a solid and unquestionable method by which correct ideas could be scientifically identified for the governance of human affairs and also for the betterment of society as a whole.²

¹A.Heywood(1992). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.p.3

² R. Eccleshall, A. Finlayson, V. Geohegan, M. Kenny, M. Lloyd, I. Mackenzie and R.Wilford (1984). *Political Ideologies: An introduction*. Publishers: USA and Canada p.3

Political ideology means a system of ideas elaborated in the light of certain conceptions of what ought to be. It designates a theory of social life which approaches the fact from the point of view of an ideal and interprets them, consciously or unconsciously, to prove the corrections of its analysis and to justify that ideal. Thus, ideological construction studies the evolution in the past, evaluation at present and it also deals with the projection of certain ideals in future. Ideologies consist of programme for the future of society, the community, the nation, the state or the world, together with quasi scientific explanations of social facts. Ideologies also interpreted that the desired future state is covertly or overtly scheduled to come either logically and morally or from the point of view of natural law³. According to Raymond Aron, “ideology is a pseudo-systematic formulation of a total vision of the historical world”. Daniel Bell on the other hand considers ‘Ideology as the conversion of ideas into social levers’...’It is the commitment of the consequences of ideas. For the ideologue, truth arises in action and meaning is given to experiences by the ‘transforming moment’.⁴

Ideas not only help to describe and explain the world but they also contain norms or values that help people to form judgments. In this way, ideas serve as a guide to help people distinguished what is good or bad. Ideas do not, however, exist in a vacuum. In the complex world of politics, individuals may disagree about the importance of the meaning of ideas. It is evident that ideas are not the only source of disagreement, but people also disagree because of their interests. Competing political

³ K. Kumar(2003). *Ideology and political theory: A study with special references to the Disintegration of the Soviet Union*. Discovery Publishing House; New Delhi.p.xxi

⁴ Ibid.p.2

interests often give to political issues and people rely on institutions to resolve those differences.⁵

These are various political ideologies like liberalism, communalism, fascism, nationalism, nazism, conservatism, maoism etc. Political system of the western countries is basically influenced by liberal and democratic political ideologies. Political system of some countries in Asia and East Europe are influenced by communalism, conservatism, regionalism and Islamic ideologies. Political ideologies of nazism in Germany and communism in Russia have mobilized their people into war and starvation.

Nationalism and communalism have been at the root of major crises in the political scenario of India in the twentieth century. Nationalism was the aspiration and communalism was the disease, however both have shaped Indian politics in their own way. Some view nationalism as a unifying factor which unites people, living in different regions that have common character, tradition, and life style and food habit. Thus unity should be sufficiently strong because of the consequences of ideas.

‘Communalism’ means communal hatred and opposition of religious communities to one another. It is an ideology which emphasizes the separate identity of a religious group in relation to other groups and they often tend to promote their own interest at the expense of other groups.

⁵ S. L. Schechter, T. S. Vontz, M. S. Branson (2010); *Exploring political ideas: Concepts that shape our world*. CQ Press: Washington DC.

An inclusive definition of 'ideology' must therefore be neutral: it must reject the notion that ideologies are 'good' or 'bad', true or false or liberating or oppressive. Thus definition is based on modern social scientific concept and it treats ideology as action oriented and interrelated set of ideas which can guide or inspire political action. Basically, Ideology is the approach one takes to the role of government. To oversimplify it, there are two broad ideologies, a) it is the role of government to provide everything possible to everyone, b) the government should leave us all alone and just protect us from violence as much as possible. These two are mutually exclusive, as it is not possible to provide for the masses without taking from the wealthy by force, and it is not possible to leave people alone and still protect them from themselves or expect them to live "a godly life."

Ideology denotes a belief system. In its political connotation, it refers to a set of comprehensive belief about politics that seek to condemn or justify in existing system. Ideology plays a huge role in the functioning of political parties; and Political parties perform an important task in government. Political parties bring people together to obtain political power for control of government, develop policies favorable to their interests or the groups that support them, and organize and persuade voters to elect their candidates to office. Although political parties are involved in the operation of government at all levels, political parties themselves are not government but they form government only by the votes of the people. They influence the masses by their ideological believe and principle, because political parties have various ideologies like communism, liberalism, socialism etc to organized the party and for to achieve their political goal.

Political parties are not policymaking authority by themselves. They certainly take positions on important policy questions, especially to provide alternatives to the position of whichever party is in power. When in power, a party attempts to put its philosophy and ideas into practice through legislation. Ideology is a system of belief or core values. Every human being has a personal ideology and belief system cultivated from upbringing, experiences and reflection.

The basic purpose of political parties is to nominate candidates for public office and to get as many of them elected as possible. Once elected, these officials try to achieve the goals of their party through legislation and program initiative. Political parties want as many people involved as possible. Most members take a fairly passive role, simply voting for their party's candidates at election time. Some become more active and work as officials in the party or volunteer to persuade people to vote. In a political world, political party's ideology can play a role in shaping party policies regarding conduct, operations and even product offerings. Balancing ideology with support of the masses is a key for political parties to achieve sustained success.

Political Ideology in Mizoram

The Mizo, the original inhabitants of territories forming Mizoram, are people of strong determination in all fields of activities which could be evident from their political aims and movements. They were determined to upgrade their territorial status

and identity, and they launched various political movements⁶ to achieve their political goals through the spirit of secularist and nationalist political ideology.

The distinct scenario of their political system can be traced back to the emergence of chieftainship sometimes in the 15th century AD, when they settled in the hill tracts of Burma between the Run and the Tiau rivers bordering the present Mizoram. In the early period chieftainship was unknown to them. Social System at that time was somewhat egalitarian in nature⁷, which could be described as a type of aristocratic and socialist ideology.

Immediately after the Second World War and on the eve of Indian Independence, a new era began in the political history of the Lushai Hills because of participation of the Mizos in politics and government. The Mizo Union was formed on 9th April, 1946 and it was the first political party in Mizoram. The development of education and political enlightenment among the Mizos came with the spirit of Mizo Nationalism. The formation of Mizo National Front as a regional political party on October 22 and it function as a party on 28 October 1961 with Laldenga, Lalnunmawia and S. Lianzuala as the President, Vice-President and General Secretary respectively showed the growing political enlightenment of the Mizos. The main object of the Mizo National Front party was to make Mizoram politically free from the Indian Union and to inculcate spirit of nationalism in the mind of the Mizo people.

Political Parties in Mizoram began to grow with the rise of educated middle class. The process started on the eve of the demise of the colonial rule. A section of

⁶ C. R. Nag(1994). Post-Colonial Mizo Politics (1947-1998); Vikas Publishing House Pvt.Ltd

⁷ Ibid.p.2

people began to be conscious of their civic rights, and they began to claim for their rights too. They also became aware to preserve their identity, to protect custom and convention as well as to promote nationalism.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The influence of people of Mizoram by MNF political ideologies/principle during the insurgency period needs to be examined. This could hopefully reveal the deep relation between MNF volunteer and people of Mizoram during insurgency period.

Various regional political parties in Mizoram obviously neglected their ideological statement. They are more concerned for their party winning election in state assembly election, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Village Council and Aizawl Municipal council election than ideological commitment. They neglected their ideological apparatus during election campaign.

It needs to analyze on which area MNF political ideology relates to its policies and programmed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Andrew Heywood book, *'Political Ideologies'* (1992) examines the substantive ideas and beliefs of the major political ideologies. In this book, the author analyses ideology seriously and explores patiently. He also clarifies the different

characteristics of the classic western ideologies and the new themes and directions of recent ideological thought. This book is primarily a study of political ideologies, rather than an analysis of the nature of ideology.

The book '**Political & Economic Development of Mizoram**' (1991) written by R. N. Prasad & A. K. Agarwal is a deep study on the economic as well as political development of Mizoram. This book is a comprehensive study of different dimensions of the government and politics in Mizoram. The evolution of party politics, electoral process, assembly elections, village administration and MNF movement and its impact were highlighted in greater details. The interesting thing about this book is that it concludes with focus on impact of high public outlay on price in Aizawl based on field work investigations. This book should bring many requirements for student, government officials, NGO's, politicians who are associated with planning and development in Mizoram

The book '*Mizoram buai leh Kohhran*' (2008) written by Rev. Lalngurauva clearly mentions the role of Church during insurgency period spearheaded by Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram. The author highlights some of the roles played by Church leaders after the MNF declared Independence of Mizoram on 1st March, 1966. The book discusses how the Church leaders tried to organize peaceful environment and comforted the people in various villages who psychologically and physically disturbed due to the armed struggle between the MNF and Indian Army. The Church leaders tried to console the Mizo people with Christian spiritual belief and religious touch. They also tried to influence the MNF volunteers to stop killing and shunned sinful practice which the Bible does not allow, but it did not have immediate impact

among MNF volunteers due to their strong determination for reaching Utopia Mizo Nationalism.

The book '**Zofate Zinkawngah- Zalenna Mei a Mit Tur a Ni Lo**' (2007) written by R. Zamawia former defense minister of MNF while they fight for greater Mizoram. The author mentioned various operations taken up by the MNF to fight with the Indian army, as a defense leaders he highlights some of the role played by himself, his experience and spilt among the party leaders as they fought for independence. The book discusses the impact and damages brought by the MNF movement in Mizoram , as many villages were burnt and most of the Mizo people were caught by poverty and starvation of food. But, instead on these condition the party president Laldenga with his family was in East Pakistan with a delicious and comfortable life while the MNF volunteers fight for greater Mizoram with various difficulties and full swing war with the Indian armies. This book contains a lot of documents which were not publicized by the MNF, and the book is more useful in the future generation to understand the real issue in Mizoram during insurgency period.

'History of the Church in Mizoram' (1991) written by J. Meirion Lloyd is a brief analysis on history of Christianity in Mizoram. The author provides a detailed account of a remarkable chapter in the history of Christian mission in the world. It interprets some of the profound changes brought by Christianity in Mizo society namely the Lushai tribe. Transformation of Mizo religion to Christian religious belief was a great achievement of Christian missionary who came to in Mizoram, The writers also describes the social and religion of the Mizos.

R. N. Prasad's book '**Government and Politics in Mizoram**' (1987) attempt to highlight the problem of political institutions in Mizoram scientifically as well as to analyze the facts and to arrive at conclusions. The writer studies upon the genesis and evolution of the varying patterns of political aspiration of the Mizos and the political squabbles in the territory both constitutional and extra constitutional aspects would certainly help understanding of Indian politics and constitutional development on the one hand and Mizo politics on the other. The political parties in Mizoram which come to power must maintain practical realistic, progressive, socialistic and dynamic views to guide the course of economic growth and social development so that the rate of growth will be high and the new Mizo society will also have reasonable measure of equality.

The book, '*Mizos of North East India*' (2008) written by Laltluangliana Kiangte mentions about social life of the Mizo community which is closely linked to socialist ideology. The author reviews that Mizo village was set on the crest of the hill with the Chief's house in the best location, normally at the centre of the village and the Zawlbuk, or the bachelors' dormitory prominently located near the Chief's residence. The Zawlbuk is indeed a superb institution of the Mizo society which succeeded in building up their unique style of life. It implanted in them a deep love of freedom and a real respect for their community based social organization

C. Lalawmpuia Vanchiau book '*Rambuai Literature*' (2014) is one of the research based criticisms on Insurgency period. The book highlights several issues which occurred during insurgency era and he mentions the MNF movement for fighting Independence of Mizoram as 'Operation Starvation'. He mentions that the

starvation caused by armed struggle between the MNF and the Indian Army led to evil practices unknown in Mizo society earlier, such as prostitution, robbery etc. During insurgency period, MNF could be regarded as adopting socialist ideology because the MNF demanded rice from the villagers and expect the Village Council leaders and wealthy villagers to distribute their rice to the people whose granaries had been burnt by the Indian Army. So, distribution of rice was popular during those days. On the other hand, many extreme Mizo Christians believed that their suffering might be the sign of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they did not do any cultivation works but they realized their mistake and resumed cultivation afterward.

C. Lalchungnunga book **‘Mizoram- Politics of Regionalism and National Integration’** (1994) is a study of political development in Mizoram as well as study of regionalism and national integration in India. The book highlights conceptual view of regionalism in Indian and worldwide context with comparison of various theories. It basically mention the historical background of Mizo regionalism from the British era to District Council period in Mizoram, with the establishment of various early political parties form by the Mizos. The period covered by the book is mainly from 1946, when the first Mizo political party was formed, to 1987 when Mizoram became a full-fledged state of the Indian Union.

The essay **‘Politics of Identity in India: Some Recent Trends’** (Indian Journal of Political Science; July-Sept, 2015) written by Vidya Kumar Choudhary highlights the importance of leadership in post independent India because of the diverse culture, religion, language of the country etc. The writer praises the beauty of the

constitutional arrangement inaugurated in 1950 and its ability to encompass the demands of diversity with the spirit of unity. He continuously mentions the role of the political leadership in nation building and national consolidation. He also mentions the role of prominent leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. Rajendra Prasad who were not associated with any particular region, language or caste but they championed the moral consciousness of the nation building and national integration through ideological and political commitment. They always stood for the minority, tribal group etc. and adopted various provisions in the constitutions to uplift the backward section of the society through socialist democratic ideology

In the Article of H.C. Vanlalruata, '*Laldenga Ideology*' (MNF Souvenir, 2016), he points out Laldenga Political, Economic and Social ideological perspective. He analyzes that Laldenga was definite in Mizo nationalism because Laldenga viewed Mizo as a nation who are quite different from the Indians in their lifestyle, culture, language, religion, food habit etc. Therefore he (Laldenga) professed to fight for self-determination and independence from the Aryan and Dravidian dominated India. Laldenga Economic Policy was basically based on liberal economic policies, by which the worker can utilize his talents and improve his economic condition. So, his economic ideology prefers capitalism than Nehru socialist policy. He examines Laldenga as a democrat who strictly follows, 'Rule of Law', and he proposes to name his (Laldenga) ideology as 'Laldengaism'. The writer concludes that the former Chief Minister and MNF founder President, Laldenga was a real democrats, who put

freedom and people participation at the top of his political structure and have a strong political principle with a vision to build Mizo community as civilized society.

The essay “**Cultural Diversity, ‘Multiculturalism and Challenges in India’s North-East’**”(Indian Journal of Political Science; Oct-Dec, 2014) written by Nameirakpam Bijen Meeti examines conflict of cultural diversity and multiculturalism caused by ethnic identity. He mentions that pluralist culture does not simply leads to conflict and violence but it is non-recognition and unequal privileges which led to violence and civil war. North East India has a regime characterized by ethno-centric political movement. After India got independence, the region has barely experienced a single decade of calm political atmosphere. There are many ethnic movements for preservation and promotion of distinct identities till today. The writer concludes that through recognized values of diverse culture, safeguarding basic individual rights, creating mutual qualification between basic individual rights and group rights, forming institutional territorial autonomy and promotion of value equality can resolve conflict of multiculturalism in India, especially in the North-East.

‘**MIZORAM During 20 dark years’** (2012) book written by Chawngsailova clearly mentions the formation and organizations of MNF, and analyzes their movement and its impact. This book highlights the regional and social-political background with details information of various events in Mizoram. The book is a research based analysis on MNF movement in insurgency period till the signing of Peace accord with the Government of India. The writers also analyzes the collaboration between the MNF and various political parties, NGO’s, student and church leaders to achieve for Peace settlement in Mizoram.

‘Encountering Insurgency In North East India with Military Means: A Fall out of Nation Building Process’(Indian Journal Of Political Science; Oct-Dec, 2014) essay written by Rubul Patgiri highlights major challenges the Indian state is confronting in North-East India which led to the rise of extremist movement inspired by ethno-national consciousness. India has been grappling with the challenge of ethno-nationalism ever since its independence. Challengers from Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern states have been so serious, that the ethno-national demands have taken extremist form of movement in these three cases. The writer emphasizes the response of the Indian States to ethno-nationals demands which range from military repression to political concession and they can be broadly categorized as militaristic and politico-constitution. However, he states that the response of Indian state can be characterized as militaristic because of the unwillingness to acknowledge ethnic claims and its reliance on military means. The writer opines that various insurgent movements can be extinguished through offer of alternative interpretation of self-determination as non-domination which will ensure political, cultural and economic space for agitating group.

The essay ***‘Mizo Nationalism’*** (MNF Souvenir 2016) written by Zoramthanga, former Chief Minister of Mizoram tries to define Mizo Nationalism. He keeps his belief in the Divine Creator who purposefully creates various unique communities and it is the duty of the community to protect their ethnicity through the spirit of nationalism. It is the responsibility and right of Mizos to protect and preserve their ethnic identity and differences which God has bestowed upon them. He mentions that the present political system does not require military force to dominate and assimilate

the small community, but it is done through strong psychological warfare. In fact, many governments govern the minorities in their own strategy. He critically analyzes the role played by the Congress party in Mizoram politics and he vehemently criticizes that the distribution of money from the New Land Use Policy (NLUP) bribe the Mizo people to cast their vote which led to diminishing Mizo nationalism. He concludes his essay by stating that the people of Mizoram should inculcate the spirit of nationalism in their soul and mind for developing Mizoram through their rich natural resources which God has bestowed upon them.

‘Mizoram Hruaitute Sulhnu’, book written by Kenneth Chawngliana basically exposes the life and view of Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, former Chief Minister of Mizoram and highlights various incidents during insurgency period. The writer is a well known politician and academician, and he mentions four former Chief Minister of Mizoram such as-Ch. Chhunga as statesman; Brig. Thenphunga Sailo as administrator; Lal Thanhawla as democrat and Laldenga as orator. In this book, he mainly focuses upon the role played by Brig. Thenphunga Sailo with the establishment of his Human Rights Committee for purposely comforting the people of Mizoram for their suffering caused by insurgency. He also mentions that many Mizos were killed by the MNF volunteers because of criticizing and opposing MNF movement. He also highlights the formation and role played by People Conference Party (later change as ‘Mizoram People’s Conference Party’) for the development of Mizoram with its ideology based on democratic socialism.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the nature of MNF political Ideology.
2. To examine the influence of MNF movement towards the Mizo people.
3. To study the decline of political ideologies by various regional political parties in Mizoram.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does MNF follow a particular political ideology/principle?
2. How much MNF political ideology influences the people during insurgency era.
3. How MNF ideology played a significant role in the party manifesto/policies and programmes.
4. What are the differences between MNF political ideology and ideologies of other regional parties in Mizoram.

METHODOLOGY

The Method used for the Research includes applying historical and analytical approaches with the help of both primary and secondary sources. As for primary sources, respondents (people of the Area of study) have been interviewed on their

opinion and knowledge level of this topic. For secondary sources, various published literatures, journals, pamphlets, newspapers, books, etc., are consulted.

TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter-1: Introduction.

The first chapter will study the meaning and nature of political ideologies. It will analyse the role of Ideologies in functioning of Political Parties. It will also highlight objectives of the study, research questions, review of literature, research methodology.

Chapter-2: Political Ideologies in Mizoram.

The second chapter will discuss the nature of political ideologies in Mizoram. It will mainly focus upon the development of ideologies of regional political parties in Mizoram.

Chapter-3: Political ideology of Mizo National Front (MNF)

The third chapter will examine the political ideology of MNF and how it relates with the policies and programmes of the party.

Chapter-4: Role and impact of MNF political ideology among the youth in Mizoram during insurgency era.

The fourth chapter will analyze the role and impact of ideology of the MNF upon the youth of Mizoram during the fight for “Sovereign Independent Greater Mizoram”.

Chapter-5: Conclusion.

The last chapters will summarize the study. It will include the findings and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER- 2

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN MIZORAM

In the pre-British period, the Mizo had neither systematic political institution nor explicit system while they were moving to the west and northward from Burma settle down in the present habitat. They moved tribe wise each having its own customs which were acting as legal sanctions. Customs had later become customary laws to

decide their disputes and conflicts arising among them. But there was no such institution to interpret these customs and apply them for the decision of the disputes. Hence, apart from various circumstances such as protection of the villagers from the enemy's attack, guiding them in various walks of life and interpretation of their customs into customary laws compelled the Mizo to revive such an institution which could best meet their entire requirement. As a result, the tribe wise and clan wise chieftainship ideology came into existence.⁸

In the beginning, each village had clan wise chief who was not hereditary at all. Such chieftainship emerged from the strongest and bravest clans. The establishment of the politics of chieftainship came sometimes in the 16th century when a Mizo named Zahmuaka became Chief. Tradition states that the egalitarian system began to decline simultaneously giving rise to the politics of chieftainship which began to take place when Zahmuaka became chief for the first time.⁹ Social stability in the Mizo society was beginning from this chieftainship ideology.

All matters of internal village government are decided by the chief assisted by his council of leaders or Upas (elders). Although all power is theoretically in the hands of the chief, practically speaking he will never tie a case without consulting his Upas and as a rule three or four Upas try cases with the chief. This Upas is appointed by the chief and can be dismissed by him. The power exercised by the chief himself depends upon his personal character, but it was guided by Lusei (Lushai) custom. A chief who disregards custom and oppresses the villagers will speedily lose the bulk of

⁸ R.N.Prasad (1987).Government and politics in Mizoram.Northern Book Centre.p.8

⁹ Chitta Ranjan (1998). Mizo polity and political modernization.Vikas Publishing House pvt.Ltd.New Delhi.p. 11-12

his subjects, Lushais are accustomed to migrate freely from village to village and this custom affords a very salutary check on too arbitrary use of power. A strong chief will control practically everything while a weak chief will be almost entirely guided by his Upas. The chief deals with all cases between his villagers.

As time passed by, the number of Mizo chiefs was increased during the latter half of the 19th century because each grown-up son of a chief was given a village to rule. As a result, their land became too scarce to accommodate all the Mizo chiefs. This led to frequent raids on their neighboring areas. In traditional Mizo custom, raid had as a leader and the brave chief achieved fame also. Therefore, the districts of Cachar, Sylhet, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and princely states of Tripura and Manipur frequently suffered from the Mizo raids, for the Mizos thought that those places were their future land. In retaliation, several expeditions were sent to chastise the Mizo raiders.

The dominance of chieftainship prevailed in Mizoram until the commencement of British rule in the territory. A number of raids were conducted by the Mizo chief in neighboring areas which were under the control of the British authority. This led to a series of expedition into Lushai Hills and as a result the Lushai Hills came under the control of the British Empire in 1891 A.D. The South Lushai Hills with headquarters at Lunglei was put under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the North Lushai Hills with headquarters at Aizawl was put under the administrative jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills were amalgamated in 1891 and was known as 'the Lushai Hills District'. The British, following the policy of non-interference, did not interfere much in the

internal administration of the villages and the chiefs were largely left to themselves in maintaining internal order and internal administration. In the year 1898-99, the British introduced 'Land Settlement' for each chief's land and the jurisdiction of each chief became clearly demarcated on the basis of the decision taken by the British administration and not by the chiefs themselves. This was the only major item in which the British directly interfere in the internal administration of the chiefs.¹⁰

The Lushai Hills were excluded from the operation of the British laws, both criminal and civil procedural codes. It became 'Excluded Area' following the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935. It was excluded from the operation of the Provincial and Federal Legislations. All matters relating to internal administration were left to the chiefs who followed the traditional pattern of administration. Moreover, the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 and the Chin Hills Regulation of 1896 required the plain people a special permit to enter and stay in the hill areas. Thus, the chiefs continued to enjoy the traditional political and social status and the institution of chieftainship remained the guardian of the society.¹¹

The Lushai chiefs were thus, reduced to a subordinate position and were required to recognize the British supremacy. One of the basic objectives of indirect rule of the British was to make the local chiefs act largely as the British government wanted them to do without having to assume the entire responsibility of administration by themselves. To achieve this end, a distribution for power and responsibilities had to be arrived at among the chiefs and the British administrators.

¹⁰Padmalaya Mahapatra and Lalngaihawma Zote (July-Sept.2008).The Indian journal of political science.Vol 69.No.3.Indian political science association.p. 644

¹¹ Ibid.p. 644

The district administration was vested in the superintendent, his assistants and the chief of villages. The chief commissioner had purposely used the term superintendant as the designation of the officer in charge in the Lushai hills but made no change in his status or allowance as a member of the Assam commission.

In 1898, the British authority decided to merge the North Lushai Hills district and the South Lushai Hills into a district under the name of Lushai Hills district, a part of Assam under a superintendent. The same year also marked the beginning of settled administration in the district. Cole was the first officer in-charge of the district. Aizawl was made the district headquarters and Lunglei as the sub-divisional headquarters. Later major J. Shakespeare succeeded Cole and became the first superintendent of the unified Lushai Hills district. The Chief Commissioner of Assam published the rules for the administration of Lushai Hills with periodical modification which had been enforced for a long time. Thus, along with consolidating the administration, putting down sporadic uprisings and punishing the recalcitrant chiefs, the British government undertook road building projects, maintenance of telegraphic communications, demarcation of the boundaries of the chief's lands and policy of non-interference in the internal affairs and administration of the tribes.

During the early contacts, the British policy may be summarized as a policy of pacification except when provoked, in which retaliatory measures were adopted. The period from 1890 onwards clearly indicated a number of incidents leading to its annexation to this British territory. It was further stated in 1930 that the extreme southern part of Lushai Hills inhabited by the Lakhers was also annexed to Lushai Hills district by the British authority. In 1931 and 1932, the Zawnghlian area

previously under loose political control was included in the Lushai Hills by the Secretary of State for India

Political awareness among the Mizo started way back from the First and the Second World War, where several young Mizo went to Europe to help the British colonial regime. They came back with much awareness of political participation and administration which they practically learnt from their observation. The Christian missionary modernized the Mizos with western culture and education. Awareness in western culture and education also inculcated the Mizo to be aware of their ethnicity and regional sentiment. Finally, the Mizo people shunned their earlier religious belief of animism and were converted to Christianity. In 1925, the first Mizo political activity was initiated by Telala Ralte and friends to pave the way for the Mizo people to join politics. They approached Superintendent of Lushai Hills and organized public meetings to deliver speeches, but the British administrator did not tolerate any kind of political activity taken up by the local people in the area. They were arrested and later released after being given a stern warning. The main reason for the suppression of such political activity was that the British did not allow any political movement in the Excluded Area. Due to that, no political party existed until the dawn of independence.

With the attainment of independence by India in 1947, the Lushai Hills district administration had undergone drastic change in order to meet the desires and aspirations of the Mizo people and to safeguard their own culture and traditions. The chiefs under the jurisdiction of the British administration brought a lot of political consciousness and awakening in the district as well as influenced the educated Mizo youths politically, who never desired for the handing over of powers to the chiefs by

the British authority. Due to these political events and deep rooted political consciousness prevailing in the Lushai Hills District, the Mizo youths and commoners wanted to organize themselves into a political party. As a result, a political party called the Mizo common people's union with the permission of the superintendent was formed on the 9th April 1946 to voice the people's aspirations and various demands especially political rights and status. These were the first complete rotation to transform new political ideologies in Mizoram apart from chieftainship political system. Unfortunately, chieftainship was abolished at 1954 by the Assam Legislative Assembly and empowered the village councils to run the internal administration of the villages in Lushai Hills district. Thus ended the old era of chieftainship and began the new era of government by the people.

Development Ideologies of Important Regional Political Parties in Mizoram:

After India got independence, there was a lot of political transformation in various parts of India Union. Many political parties were formed on the basis on regional movement in different look and corner of India. As such, Mizo Union (MU) was formed under the initiative of R. Vanlawma on 9th April 1946. After that United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) was formed on 7th July 1947 under the initiative of Lalbiakthanga. It should also be noted that Lalbiakthanga was the first Mizo post graduates. However, many political parties were formed in Mizoram in post-India independent era and such parties with different objectives and ideologies depended upon the political support of local people. Objectives and Ideologies guided the party

but many political parties forgot their ideologies in the long run. It can be known from the survey that more than 24 political parties had already existed in Mizoram since Independence.

However, out of this many political parties, only few have been able to emerge and remain for some time as major parties in terms of following and electoral achievement. Others have come but gone out of existence or merged with bigger political parties. Among the major ones, only the Indian National Congress is popular in Mizoram as an all-India level party. Mizo union (MU), United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), Mizo National Front (MNF), Zoram Nationalists Party (ZNP) and People's Conference (PC) are popular and rigidly well organized in their respective periods as regional political parties. The PC party merged itself into a national party viz. Janata Dal and later on spitted as Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) but it returned to regional status as Mizoram People Conference (MPC). However it could not make much headway as expected. So, we discuss only these five regional political parties and examine their ideologies within the parties.

1) Mizo Union:

Mizo Union was the oldest political party in Mizoram and it was based upon anti-chief slogan. With regard to genesis of the Mizo Union, issues which guided the zeal for formation of political party was the political enslavement of the Mizo people at the hands of the British superintendent, spread of education and the outbreak of the second world war brought a lot of political consciousness and awakening in the

district. Therefore, the above stated issues and anti-chief feeling influenced the Mizo youths politically to organize themselves into a political party.

As a result, a political party named the Mizo common people's union to raise the Mizo's political aspiration and various demands was formed on April 9, 1946 by R.Vanlawma which was later called the Mizo commoners union and finally the Mizo Union. The principle objectives of the party were to achieve a rightful status for the Mizos, to develop better understanding between chiefs and commoners, to unify the common people, general uplift of the Mizo people, to become the democratic representative and spokesman for the whole of Mizo people and to popularize Mizo language.

The objectives of the party well sum up the socio-political conditions that brought the party into existence. Though open to all Mizo-chiefs and commoners, it became popular only among the commoners, because of its basic but unofficial anti-chiefs orientation. The hold of the party on Mizo people was so strong that it could capture and maintain power throughout the Lushai Hill district era starting from independence and the Mizo Union captured power in Mizo District Council since the Lushai Hills Advisory Council election of 1948 except for a short interregnum during 1970-71, when the congress party could form a shaky government of the District Council by a small margin of seats and the MU being the opposition party.¹² The MU could manage to form government again even in that term because of political instability. Having landslide victory in the elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly in 1972, the

¹² Lalchungnunga (1994). Mizoram politics of regionalism and national integration. Reliance publishing house, New Delhi. p.73

party formed the government and continued to maintain a separate entity till its final merger into the Indian National Congress in January 12, 1974.

The main ideology of the Mizo Union were emerging to stand on behalf of Mizo people to overthrow the tribal autocratic chieftainship system, which make a lot of burden and equalizing differences of social status in the society. It aimed at achieving the democratic system of administration for the Mizo people within the Union of India and also strived for autonomy to preserve ethnic identity, safeguard and promote culture, customs, dialects and economic pattern of the Mizos. This aspiration also carried the unification of all Mizo tribes into a single administrative area, that is to bring all lands inhabited by Mizo tribes including those of Cachar, Manipur, Tripura and Chin Hills into a unified state of Mizoram. The Mizo union movement since then became an anti-chiefs pro-Indian regionalist movement and the party leader were in good terms with the Indian National Congress. Those who advocated 'Crown colony' or 'Mizo independence' had no place in the party. The party had a convention on 10 June 1963 and passed a resolution to demand for a Mizo state that should include all Mizo-inhabited areas of Lushai Hills, Tripura, Assam and Manipur.

2) United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO):

It came into existence under the leadership of Lalbiakthanga and Rev. Zairema on July 5, 1947. UMFO played a very significant role in the development of politics in Mizoram. It was a break up fraction of Mizo Union, which was supported by the chiefs and their followers because they were hostile to the Mizo Union. The UMFO

was the first opposition party in the political process of Mizoram(former Lushai Hills) which professed to create a political consciousness and awareness among the Mizo people. Although it contested elections to the Mizo District Council and the Assam Legislative Assembly in 1952 against the Mizo Union, it failed miserably to secure even a single seat in the Mizo District Council.

The aims and ideology of the party as well was based separatism from the India union, but it does not have socio-economic based. The party also upon opposed socio-economic change at all. The idea of the party leaders was mainly to join other foreign countries especially they support to join Burma, but it was not possible because Mizoram had legally become part of India. The ideology of UMFO was to promote democratic form of government through which the masses could elect their leaders, to promote freedom of speech, press and religion. It was the first party who developed and aware the Mizo people about the separatist movement improving the Mizo culture in a protective way.

UMFO could not make much headway. The founder of the party, Lalbiakthanga, joined government service and Captain Lalmawia, the new leader merged the party to Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU). Thus, the name of UMFO erected from the political scenario of Mizoram since its merger with EITU in 1957. After that, the MU also merged itself with the Indian National Congress (INC) and political scenario of Mizoram witnessed new political development.

3) Mizo National Front(MNF):

Mizo National front was formed on 22 October and it function as a party in 28 October 1961 with the objectives of attaining independence and sovereignty for greater Mizoram. Its main ideology was to propagate and achieve Mizo nationalism, reuniting all the Mizo people living in the contiguous areas, improving the social, economic and political conditions of the Mizos, safe-guarding and promoting Christianity, planning a long term strategy for violent movement to achieve its aims and acquiring dependable source of support of some foreign countries. The tail end of the party's aim yelled out 'Mizoram for the Mizos'.

From the beginning, MNF always support non-violence activities, but due to strengthening to fight for Mizoram independence from the India Union. They started involving inviolence activities with armed revolt and counter measures.

The MNF declared Mizoram a Sovereign and Independent state with effect from the midnight of February 28- March 1, 1966 and began to attack important government installations and security camps at various places. The government of India declared Mizo district as 'Disturbed Area' under Assam Disturbed Area act of 1955, the sent military forces to counter the MNF movement in the District, apart from these act the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) special power Act of 1958 was also in force in the District.

After 20 years of insurgency, suffering and torturing of the people, the Mizoram Peace Accord(the official document entitled *Mizoram Accord, 1986, Memorandum of Settlement*) was therefore signed between the Mizo National Front and the Union Government on 30 June 1986. Signatories were Pu Laldenga from MNF, the Union

Home Secretary R.D. Pradhan on behalf of the government and Lalkhama, Chief Secretary of Mizoram. Statehood was a prerequisite of the accord so that Mizoram became a federal state of India on 20 February 1987.

4) People's Conference:

The excessive harassment of the Mizos by the security forces in Mizoram during the insurgency gave birth to a non-political organization named the 'Human Rights Committee' in Aizawl with a view to protecting the freedom of the Mizo people which had been distributed by the atrocities of the security forces. The man behind the organization was Brig. Thenphunga Sailo who subsequently formed a party with the name 'People's Conference' on 17th April 1975.

Mizoram People's Conference or PC as it is commonly known is a regional political party in Mizoram. The Party came to power on 1979 upto 1984 with Party founder and President Brig. Thenphunga Sailo as its President and to this date forms an important part of the Opposition in Mizoram and is still considered as the third biggest political party in Mizoram. MPC party during its power and on the initial years were the main political party in the then Insurgent District council of Mizoram and was the mainstay of several political movement and particularly the vision and planning of Brig. Thenphunga Sailo is to this day still the main talking points and dreams of the Mizo especially with regards to Power production, infrastructure planning and transportation. But, with the rise of Lalthanhawla led Indian National

Congress and the transformation of Mizo National Front in to Political Party results in declining of the MPC party which can be clearly seen in their electoral performance with their impacts reduced with each MLA and MP election.

The political ideology and foundation of the Mizoram People Conference is based mainly on economic sustainability. With this ideology the MPC draw out their main principles, the so called Six Basic Needs.

The three main principles of MPC are;

1. Security of our Land.
2. Security of our Mizo identity.
3. Security of our religion.

For the overall development and stability of Mizoram so as to attain economic and social stability, the MPC Party has its main political agenda revolving around the famous Six Basic Needs.

1. Economic self-sufficiency.
2. Provision of sufficient drinking water for all.
3. Production of sufficient Power & Electricity from our rivers.
4. To link up all village in Mizoram with good roads.
5. Development of communication Networks viz. airway, Railway, Waterway, telecommunications and vice versa.
6. Thrust in rural development.

The guiding principles of the party stands as, “*The interest of the people and Mizoram shall be the guiding principles with overriding priority and precedence over those of the Party*”.

The Party being a regional party, formed on the basis of the welfare and overall development of the people of Mizoram stands firm in its commitments to steer Mizoram forward. This largely reflects the political ideology of the Party and its ever present voice through political agenda and campaigns. The party determines and puts in priorities such as economic development of the Mizo people, better infrastructure and power and the party is also identified with these aspects as its trademarks. The campaign agenda of the MPC is often synonymous with its vision primarily devoted to economic sustainability and its dreams project of power production which as evidence from their brief term in power which unfortunately remain unfulfilled till date.

5) Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP):

Zoram Nationalist Party, originally known as Mizo National Front (Nationalist) MNF (N) is a regional Party of Mizoram and was formed on March 7, 1997 as a result of the break up faction within the Mizo National Front. Its political ideologies and foundation is based on the principles and dreams of Party founder and President Pu. Lalduhawma, former Indian Police Service and a highly decorated police officer, personally trusted and friend of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Though, the party may be an amateur or the youngest among the current political parties of Mizoram. Party founder and President, Pu. Lalduhawma as is dearly known by the masses, is a well-respected and loved politician and an Ex-Member of Parliament in the Indian Union, former President of Indian National Congress in Mizoram and ex-Vice President of the famed Mizo National Front and huge contributors in the political circles of Mizoram. He was a major activist who was personally contributed in the signing of peace accord between the then insurgent MNF and Government of India. During his days in the Indian National Congress, he was an MP and influential leader. He was one of the main liaisons between Pu. Laldenga(L), then President of MNF and GOI especially in his initial years of active politics.

Following internal conflicts in the MNF and proposed conspiracies of the Party General Election, then party Vice President Pu. Lalduhawma and his followers left and formed the Mizo National Front (Nationalist) which was later changed to Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) as is known till date. The mainstay of the party ideology is to spread the ideals of democracy for the progress and development of the society and Government. It emphasize on economic stability with special mention for market security so as to increase production and for overall economic development of the farmers and sustainability in agriculture.

Being a regional party and an offshoot of the party who championed Nationalism, ZNP has determined roots in Mizo Nationalism revolving around achievement of rights as per UN declaration of Indigenous People and also the safeguard of the indigenous Mizo from assimilation as per Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR)

1873 which was later incorporated on attainment of statehood in the famous Memorandum of Settlement. As per the Party policy which was published in 2014, one of the main political goals of the Party is to create a commission to study and research the historical origin of the Mizo people and to safeguard, protect the Mizo people. The party also stands for development link with Zo ethnic people beyond Mizoram and international boundary. The party also tries to form a border cell to study upon the border which unknowingly divided the Zo ethnic group in to different territories and assigned specific portfolio to a particular Minister.

Many political parties emerge in Mizoram with different ideologies, visions, aims and objectives. But, many of them were eliminated and they vanished due to negligence of their ideological standpoint and unstable leadership qualities. Some of the parties which formed government neglect their ideologies when they are in power. They should be realistic with their policy and programmes to promote economic and social development in the regions. Most of the party members are less aware of their party ideologies, because it is one of the reasons for fragmentation within the party.

CHAPTER-3

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (MNF)

The Mizo National Front was formed on 22, October, 1961 with the objectives of attaining independence for greater Mizoram, re-uniting all the Zo ethnic group of people living in the contiguous areas, improving the social, economic and political conditions of the Mizos, safe-guarding and promoting Christianity, planning a long term strategy for violent movement to achieve its aims and acquiring dependable source of support from some foreign countries. The tail end of the party's aim yelled out 'Mizoram for Mizos'. Laldenga and R. Vanlawma were first elected President and General Secretary respectively¹³. The MNF aimed at self-determination which implies highest sovereignty for safeguarding Mizo tradition, culture and Christianity.

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

¹³ R.N.Prasad & A.K.Agarwal (1991).Political and economic development in Mizoram).New Delhi,India:Mittal publications.p.93.

- 1) Integration of all the Zo ethnic groups under one government possessing the highest degree of freedom.
- 2) Up gradation of the status, and the development of the economic conditions, of the Mizo people.
- 3) Safeguard of the Christian Religion.¹⁴

The ideology of the MNF, therefore, was fundamentally based on ethnic, political, socio-economic and religious factors. When MNF formed constitution of government of Mizoram in March, 1964, it clearly mentions that they believe in secularism with liberty of life and justice in individuality. The MNF does not have stable policies and programmes, but it transforms its manifesto based on circumstances of the situations. Unlike Congress party in Mizoram having New land Used Policy (NLUP) and Mizoram People Council (MPC) policy five basic needs, MNF does not long term policy in social and economic development.

The MNF party has two constitutions; the first one was drafted in March, 1964 when the party was established as a political party. The second constitution of the party was drafted after the signing of Mizoram Accord where the party was transformed into regional political party. The first constitution was made for the Government of Mizoram for governance of the Mizo nation and it was copied from the American declaration of independence 1776. The constitution envisaged Presidential forms of government for the sovereign government of Mizoram. It contains the detail, write-ups about the administration, function and organization of the Mizo nation. However, after the party settles its dispute with the Indian

¹⁴ R.Zamawia(2007).Zofate Zinkawngah Zalenna Mei a Mit Tur a Ni Lo.Lengchhawn Press,Khatla.p.177

government, the party constitution transforms into pure regional party organization just like others regional parties.

The constitution of the MNF party and the election manifesto has never made any references to official language, medium of instruction, centre-state relations, inter-state relations in north east and agration question. It, no doubt, talks of safeguarding and preserving the identity, interests, customs and culture of the Mizo people. But the specialities of the means of implementation of the said programmed are never spelt by the MNF. The party while in power prepared a number of schemes to develop telecommunications, road communications, local resources based industries, and to supply drinking water to rural and urban masses.¹⁵ Some of their programmes like bamboo project, passion fruit process etc was mainly for upliftment of social and economic development and upliftment of the people but it did not have much impact due to negligence of infrastructure and marketing process.

Ideology refers to a set of political beliefs or a set of ideas that characterize a particular culture. With regard to the MNF party, the party does have rigid ideological standpoint or principle. The party does not identify itself with particular political ideology like leftist, centrist and rightist party. The constitution of the party was based upon the principle of democracy, secularism and equality and upliftment of the poor. However, mentioning of these principles do not clarify the ideology of the party because the party workers in the MNF office do not know the core ideas of the party other than Mizo nationalism. At the same time, the party also formed a coalition government with congress party in 1986 and it also agrees to join the North East

¹⁵Op.Cit.p. 108.

Democratic Alliance (NEDA), an alliance formed under the auspices of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at present. But, these do not mean that the party neglect and override its ideology. The reason being the party ideology was still the same even they had alliance with other parties. MNF still advocates nationalism and many MNF leaders claim that MNF stands for Mizo nationalism. Mr. Zoramthanga, President of the MNF claims that 'The MNF party was nationalism symbol of the north-east', and 'MNF still believe for the formation of the Mizo nation', he added.

The ideologies of MNF was seen, studied and observed from their activities, policies, programmes, vision and even in interview with their prominent party members. Some of the points given were highlights of the activities which the party faced and experienced from its functioning. The MNF party ideology did not have drastic change in pre and post insurgency period. The party ideology is analyzed as a whole without classifying certain period time.

1) Laldenga Ideology:

Laldenga was the founder President of the party and the party was moulded and activated by him. As he was the first president of MNF party, sometime the party went too far on the basis on his ideology instead of following the party constitution. While the MNF fought for independence of Mizoram, the political system was stated to be based upon Presidential form of government as the constitution mentions it clearly. Laldenga had hegemonic control over the party. He was the chief of MNF combining both de-jure and de- facto authority in himself and he exercised powers in

an authoritarian manner. He could also overpower most of the suggestions without confronting other leaders within the party.

He even by-passed the departmental autonomy and privileges of the ministers of his so-called cabinet many times and he disregarded the norms of collective responsibility. In other words, little regard was given to the principle of collective responsibility although it was mentioned in the constitution of the party. The hegemonic domination of Laldenga led to indecisiveness in the discharge of responsibilities and implementation of policies. So on these counts, the moderates or intellectual, perhaps, wanted to drift away from the extremist group led by Laldenga. It thus appears from the above that the anti-Laldenga feeling led to division of the party into factions and groups. The anti-Laldenga group was led by Lalnunmawia and the emergence of the intra-party contradictions were a result of the clash of personalities, personal rivalries and race for power which had been accentuated by the internal and external problems and set-backs in later years. Finally, the intra-party conflicts reached the point of no return. Thus, the MNF struggled inside the trap which was of its own making.¹⁶

Although Laldenga committed many mistakes, the quality about him was that, he creates the spirit of Mizo nationalism among the people of Mizoram to stand for their own self. He quote that 'We do not fight for independence, we spread the word that we are independent nation', these define his strong impression on nationalism. He supported liberal economic policy instead of socialist policy implemented by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Indira Gandhi. He also wanted economic

¹⁶ R.N.Prasad (1987).Government and politics in Mizoram.Northern Book Centre.p.218-219.

independence of Mizoram through foreign aid, and he wanted to establish cordial relationship with capitalist countries like America. He along with his defense minister R.Zamawia met U.S consul in 1963 at Calcutta. Over and above that, his Foreign Minister Lalhmingthanga tried to meet U.S consul in Dacca secretly without the acknowledge of the Pakistan government but it did not have much impact because the Government of USA was not interested on it.

2) Ethnic and Mizo nationalism:

The word 'nation' has been used since the thirteenth century and it derived was from the Latin 'nasci', meaning to be born. In the form of nation, it referred to a group of people united by birth or birthplace. In its original usage, nation thus implied a breed of people or a racial group. Nationalism can broadly be defined as the belief that the nation is the central principle of organization. As such, it is based on two core assumptions. First, humankind is naturally divided into distinct nations and, second, the nation is the most appropriate, and perhaps only legitimate, unit of political rule.¹⁷

Ethnic nationalism, also known as ethno-nationalism, is a form of nationalism wherein the "nation" is defined in terms of ethnicity. The central theme of ethnic nationalists is that "nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry". It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of the group, and with their ancestors.

¹⁷ Andrew Heywood (1992). Political Ideologies An Introduction. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. p.143.

Nationalism as a political ideology only emerged when the idea of national community encountered the doctrine of popular sovereignty. All forms of nationalism address the issue of identity. Whatever political causes nationalism may be associated with; it advances these on the basis of a sense of collective identity, usually understood as patriotism. And it is exactly on this feeling that Laldenga-led MNF brought the Mizos under the common banner of Mizo nationalism in 1966.

Being of mongoloid stock, ethnic-cultural differences with the mainstream of India is another important factor to have stirred up Mizo nationalism. Many a time, the founder president of the MNF, Laldenga articulated the ethnic distinctiveness of the Mizos in order to arouse the nationalist feelings and indoctrinate the feeling of separatism in the minds of the people. He used to say that they should stay separated from India being a Mongoloid stock with distinct culture and customs.¹⁸

MNF is unique in the sense that it is only party built on the foundation of Mizo nationalism. Mizo nationalism meant to protect, preserve and scatter the feeling of Mizo ethnic-cultural identity, customs and traditions, unification of Mizo racial groups, language etc and to stand up for building up strong Mizo nation where every Mizo racial group can settle peacefully. The MNF was founded to protect the identity of Mizo people as a nation. The former Chief Minister and present president of the MNF Mr. Zoramthanga interprets Mizo Nationalism as 'Mizo National Sentiment'. In the present stage, although they made settlement with the Indian government in June 30, 1986; the party still hopes to achieve the uprising of Mizo nation in the coming future. However, the Mizo nationalism, spearheaded and advocated by the MNF

¹⁸ Chawngsailova (2012). Mizoram During 20 Dark Years. EBH publishers, Guwahati. p.30.

seems to be lip service without any practical persuasion for fulfillment from the party side.

3) Democracy:

The term 'democracy' was first used in the fifth century BC by the Greek historian Herodotus in the sense of 'rule by the people'. The term is derived from a combination of two Greek words: demos, meaning 'the people', and kratien, meaning 'to rule'. Democracy as a form of government implies that the ultimate authority of governance in this system is vested in the ordinary people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interests of the people.

Since the Mizo National Front started its secessionist activities, its constitution and formation of the party was always based on democratic decentralization and Presidential form of government. The first MNF convention held at Aizawl Cinema Hall (Krishna Talkies) during April 2-3, 1962 considered the future path of the party and elected office bearer's and executive committee members through vote by the member present in the convention. After that convention, many units were opened in villages throughout Mizoram with the acknowledgement of the Party general headquarters, Aizawl. The party leaders were aware that decentralizing authority can create efficiency among the members, apart from establishing unit office in various villages. The party opened Divisional headquarters at Lunglei and elected divisional office bearer and executive committee member with the approved of General Headquarters in 1963. The organizational structure of the MNF was of a hierarchical

basis, having its headquarters at Aizawl, area headquarters at sub-divisional level and block committee at the village level. The highest authority of the party was the General Assembly, which met once in a year. However, a special assembly could be convened at any time.

Later, Provisional Government of Mizoram was formed upon the principle of Free, Sovereign and Independence state by the MNF and it had three organs of the government-the legislative, executive and judiciary. The constitution of the MNF was drafted on March 1964 on the pattern of American Declaration of Independence, 1776 and the constitution of USA. The constitution consists of 7 Article, which mentions specific government organizations with Presidential form of government with two houses of parliament- House of Representative (lower house) and Senate (upper house). Just like American constitution the two houses played confidential role to raise the principle of democracy, participation of the members with their vote was the main form of election in various level. All the members of the parliament was elected by the people from various constituency for five years term in the House of Representative and six years in House of Senate, also the president and vice-president was directly elected by the citizen of Mizoram for five years and various rights was given to the citizen on the principle of democratic form of governments.

Soon after the armed revolt, the MNF president Laldenga and his family escaped to East Pakistan. Due to the absence of President in the field, many decision needed to be taken up by Vice-President Lalnunmawia. Because of these, there was a lot of controversial issue to support whether presidential or parliamentary form of government was relevant for governance or not among the members of MNF. The

first Parliamentary session of the MNF after armed revolt movement was held at Sialsir village on December 2-16, 1966 which was named as the Sialsir convention. On this convention, there was revision of the constitution of MNF as well as Provincial government of Mizoram and a huge debate was held on the issue of whether President type and Parliament type of government was feasible for Mizoram. After long debate and comparison of the two types of government, Presidential form of government was accepted as it was practiced from before, but cabinet minister was summoned as Minister instead of name as Secretary due to the awareness of the public. In recent trends, the party election was still organized on democratic form of election at all levels.

4) Secularism:

The term "secularism" was first used by the British writer George Jacob Holyoake in 1851. Secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions and religious dignitaries. One manifestation of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or in a state declared to be neutral on matters of belief, from the imposition by government of religion or religious practices upon its people. Another manifestation of secularism is the view that public activities and decisions, especially political ones, should not be influenced by religious beliefs and practices.

In the constitution of Mizoram drafted by the MNF while fighting for independence, it was mentioned in the preamble that 'for a perfect Nation's

Individuality under Justice; practice our chosen religion and secure the blessings of Liberty.....'. This mentioned clearly about how the MNF uplift the backbone of Secularism in its constitution and in various activities performed by the MNF in insurgency period. MNF armed struggle was not simply joined by Mizo alone, some outsider others than Mizo also support and volunteer in the movement. Even their main supporter was East Pakistan government, which comprised of Muslim community. Some MNF volunteers were also from religious background such as, Chakma and Hindu religious background lives Gorkha, who settle in Mizoram from their forefather's time. As the true supportters of Secularism, there was no much discrimination on ground of religion among the MNF volunteers during insurgency period even though most of the volunteers were from Christian community.

When Laldenga and his foreign minister visited China in september 1970, they beg for their helps, which continued even in later years. But, the Mizo people being mostly Christians did not welcome the idea of getting support from the communist country. The church leaders and the Mizo people saw in it a threat not only to their own existence but to the Mizo way of life as a whole. But, the underground rebels, being mostly Christians, who invoked the name of Christianity and used the cross as their party symbol and seal did not pay heed to this objection. It did not mean that the MNF leaders did not respect the view of the church leaders but they did it only due to political compulsion because they wanted financial and military support of powerful country like China for survival of the MNF movement. As such, the MNF did not want the church to interfere too much in the political arena and it advocates secularism for achievement of its target.

After MNF and Indian government signed peace accord on 30 June, 1986. Mizo National Front was completely transformed into regional political party and started participatory in state various elections, namely, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assembly, District Council, Local Council etc. Over and above that, the constitution of the party was also modified and it added secularism as one of the principles of the party. However, in the party aims and objectives, it mentions in point (iii) as “To preserve and uphold Mizo religion”. The MNF party is vehemently criticized on this very issue of preserving and upholding Mizo religion because the critics alleged that the party contradicts itself. However, when the issued is properly analyzed it does not contradict the principle of secularism. Although the party wants to preserve and safeguard Mizoram and unify the Mizo people, it never discriminates Mizo people on the ground of religion. In fact, the party mingles and co-operate with Zo ethnic tribe in Myanmar, Manipur, Tripura , Assam, Bangladesh and Burma etc even though many of them are from different religions and administer by different government. The MNF party also never discriminate the beneficiary on ground of religion, caste etc even when it was in power.

5) Democratic Socialism:

It is a political ideology that advocates political democracy alongside social ownership of the means of production, often with an emphasis on democratic management of enterprises within a socialisteconomic system social democracy. It refers to support for political democracy, regulation of the capitalist economy, and a

welfare state. It basically aims in social equality, inclusion and forming stable society with socializing and upliftment of the poor. Social equality is a state of affairs in which all people within a specific society or isolated group have the same status in certain respects, namely, civil rights, freedom of speech, property rights, and equal access to social goods and services. However, it also includes concepts of health equity, economic equality and other social securities. It also includes equal opportunities and obligations, and so involves the whole society. It requires the absence of legally enforced social class or caste boundaries and the absence of discrimination motivated by an inalienable part of a person's identity.

Democratic socialism is defined as having a socialist economy in which the means of production are socially and collectively owned or controlled alongside a politically democratic system of government. There is a strong correlation between promoting social inclusion for building safer, more stable and just societies for all, and creating the enabling conditions for adequately managing social transformations leading to sustainable development and peace. From insurgency period till the present day, the MNF party always promises equality among the Mizo and tries to uplift the poor as we can see from its policies and programmes.

The MNF had remarkable achievement towards socio-economic development of Mizoram, especially in agricultural and infrastructure development. When the MNF party formed government in Mizoram, it introduced and implemented several infrastructure and socio-economic development projects. Some of the flagship programme of the party comprised of Mizoram Intodelh Project (MIP) or the

Mizoram self-sufficiency scheme, bamboo flowering, passion fruit and ginger cultivation and Famine combat scheme (BAFFACOS). Many centrally sponsored schemes were planned to improve and uplift the social-economic condition of the people for promoting social equality. But, worse supervision, corruption, defeat in election, loose organization etc tainted the status and prestige of the party. Therefore, the party properly implements its policies and programmes and cannot concretize its programme for socio-economic and progress of the people. In the coming 2018 Mizoram General Election, the MNF struggles to regain and captures the popular vote with its new economic programme known as Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) which it is not yet publicized.

6) Nationalist Left-wing Populism:

It describes a form of nationalism based upon social equality, popular sovereignty, and national self-determination. Populism is a political ideology that holds that virtuous citizens are ill-treated by a small circle of elites, who can be overthrown if the people recognize the danger and work together. Populism depicts elites as trampling on the rights, values, and voice of the legitimate people. Left-wing politics supports social equality and egalitarianism, often in opposition to social hierarchy and social inequality. Left-wing politics also fights for the benefits of disadvantaged people and it tries to abolish unjustified inequalities which are prevailing in society. The Left-wing grouping also stresses to abolish social inequality by advocating social

justice in society. Thus, the term left wing can also refer to "the radical, reforming, or socialist section of a political party or system".

Left-wing populism is a political ideology which combines left-wing politics and populist rhetoric and themes. The rhetoric often consists of anti-elitist sentiments, opposition to the system and speaking for the "common people". Usually the important themes for left-wing populists include anti-capitalism, social justice, pacifism and anti-globalization, whereas class society ideology or socialist theory is not as important as it is to traditional left-wing parties.

The MNF movement emerged and the MNF party was established for the upliftment of Mizo people and society on the basis of social equality, popular sovereignty, national self-determination through motivation of the people with Mizo nationalism. From the perspective of politics and modification of the constitution of the party, it can be found out that the MNF movement depended on left-wing politics supporting reformation of Mizo society which was deeply influenced by the Indian culture during 1950's, when most of the shop and big building was dominated by the Indian (whom they call Vai) business people in various part of Lushai Hills (Mizoram) during that time.

The MNF came up with the spirit of reforming Mizo tradition by promoting social equality, social justice etc and challenging the present conditions of Mizoram for better status. The party wants to pursue better treatment from the Indian Union, it fought for upliftment of the low social and economic condition of the Mizos, and pressurized the Mizo District Council leaders to take more serious steps for

controlling Mautam famine which caused starvation and suffering to the people. However, the demand of the MNF was not given importance and it switched itself to indulging in violence and extra-constitutional method of fighting for sovereign Independent Government of Mizoram. As a result, the MNF started armed struggle against the Indian Union and its started threatening and attacking the elite group who wielded economic and political power.

7) Religious Nationalism:

Religious nationalism is the relationship of nationalism to a particular religious belief, dogma, or affiliation. The influence of religion on politics is more ideological, where current interpretations of religious ideas inspire political activism and action. But, Ideologically-driven religious nationalism may not necessarily be targeted against other religions. The danger is that when the state derives political legitimacy from adherence to religious doctrines, this may leave an opening to overtly religious elements, institutions, and leaders, making the appeals to religion more 'authentic' by bringing more explicitly theological interpretations to political life. The MNF does not legitimize its policies and activities with the influence on religious doctrines, even though in its first constitution mentioned that 'The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of Mizoram and the Holy Bible is the foundation of her administration'. In the preamble of the constitution of the party, it was highlighted that the final aims and objectives of the party to achieve separate state and to be in equal status which the law of nature

and the provision of God entitle human beings to prosper as the Creator had rendered upon them.

The Movement got the support of the public in the form of 'Christians'. The original aims and objectives of MNF, which was published in November 16, 1972 point no. 3 indicate to safeguard the Christian religion, which is how dominant religion of the Mizo people. The Mizo people are devoted Christians who are all brought with Christian ethics and Biblical teaching. Therefore, the Mizo people are faithful to Christian doctrine and to the teaching of Jesus Christ. So, within the MNF party and movement, the Mizo Evangelical committee was formed on June 11, 1969 and it was organized like Church administrations. Perhaps, the party emphasizes to preserve Christian religion, but it did not condemn any other religious believe and still exalt religious equality. The preamble of the party permits every individual to chose religion freely and secures the blessing of liberty. In the second constitution, emphasize was also given to secularism. However the party also wants to promote Christianity to the whole Mizo dominated territory and the MNF leader believed that Christianity may provide sense of national unity and solidarity to the Mizo people. Further, the party also politicizes the religious spirit of the people to gain more mass support, which can unite the people and help the party for their struggle for freedom.

The MNF is the oldest regional political party in Mizoram because regional parties which were established earlier namely, Mizo Union and United Mizo Freedom Organisation were already out of the political scene. The party leaders like Mr. Laldenga and Mr. Zoramthanga dominated the party and guided the party as well organize party with their charismatic leadership, which other regional parties neglect

it. But, the party need to take more serious stand on their ideologies apart from their nationalist theory because of the party were required to be aware more on the core value of their ideological standpoint.

CHAPTER-4

ROLE AND IMPACT OF MNF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AMONG THE YOUTH IN MIZORAM DURING INSURGENCY ERA

Mizo National Front political ideology is basically Mizo Nationalism and the slogan of Mizo Nationalism deeply influence the youth of Mizoram in pre and post insurgency period. As mentioned earlier, after the formation of the MNF on October 22, 1962 many youth in and outside Mizoram from different tribes of the Zo ethnic groups participate in the movement of Mizo nationalism. Infact, the slogan of Mizo nationalism spearheaded by the MNF had wide ranging influence among the Zo ethnic tribe inhabited territories even outside Mizoram. The MNF movement has both positive and negative impacts among the youths. The slogan of Mizo Nationalism promotes a sense of identity, unification spirit, promotes pride among the mizos but on the otherside its leads to conflict with others, infringes on rights of others, creates xenophobia-the fear that someone will take them over. This younger generation has elaborated and adopted ideas of nationalism, trying to achieve political goals through democracy and freedom.

In the early sixties, a section of the younger generation, who studied outside began to despise Mizo culture and customs when they came back home. Moreover, there was the fear of renunciation of Mizo tradition because young men who studied outside began to imitate the behavior and mode of living of the non-Mizo people. Successful procession was held at Aizawl to express the dissatisfaction of the Mizo public against the Government of Assam for its negligence of taking precautionary

measures and slow pace of rehabilitation of the famine stricken people. In fact, the procession was organized to instigate the people against the Government of India for their allegedly step-motherly treatment which also contributed to the political awakening of the Mizos.¹⁹

During those days, Shillong the capital of Meghalaya was one of the main educational destinations of the Mizo youths to pursue college education and higher learning. It was the main education centre where Mizo in large number studied outside Mizoram. When the MNF emerged as a party based on regionalism, it had deep impact upon the students who were in Shillong. They used to have secret meeting in some places to discuss about the MNF policy, because most of the students were deeply influence by their policies and programmes taken up by the party in MizoHills district. They used to write letters concerning about the Mizo nationalism and send their opinion and advice to various intellectual personality, political leaders in the district. Those young students were even invited to attend MNF general assembly in 1964 and Mr. K. Zoliana was attending this assembly on behalf of Shillong Mizo student as a delegate. When insurgency broke out in Mizoram, many of the Mizo student came home to comfort their parents and later join the party, many hold high position in the party due to their high educational degree.

The MNF movement was also rapidly influence different Zo ethnic tribes in the Hill Areas of Manipur. In October, 1964 Mizo Zirlai Pawl general conference was held at Kawnpui village, Churachanpur. In this conference, most of the speakers encouraged the students about their ethnic identity and topic on Mizo nationalism.

¹⁹ Ibid.p.32-33

The next year in January 1965, there was a Mizo's People Conference in the same village, in these conference MNF leaders with the guidance of Laldenga attended the conference. Laldenga talked about unification of Mizo tribe who settle in different places, unifying different Mizo tribes and build one strong nation through the spirit of Mizo nationalism. By the outcome of these conference, MNF unit was established with the leaderships of Mr. Tlangchhuaka, later when insurgency broke out in Mizoram, the unit was transformed into Independent Eagle Brigade and tried their best to help the MNF volunteers in times of need, but the group was exiled by the Manipur government with the help of India army due to their disturbance of Manipur state and involvement of MNF in Manipur.

Laldenga became the first MNF president and he turned the party into an effective organization, carrying its message throughout of Mizoram and even outside Mizoram in the Zo ethnic tribes inhabited territories. As a powerful speaker, he could be able to win the hearts of Mizo people and many youths volunteered to be the member of MNF due to his strong motivational speech. As it was mentioned earlier, the movement of Mizo nationalism was in the mind of some mizo educated intellectual since India got independence from the yoke of British Empire. In pre-insurgency period, the nationalist spirit was in the mind of various Mizo political parties leader but no one ever stood up against the India Government in violence mean with mass support. In February 21, 1947, some Mizo intellectuals gather at Aijal Bengali Theatre Hall and discuss about the sovereignty of the Mizo people and made a resolution that 'We the Mizo should be administered by ourselves without outside interference and we should stand by our own', but these issue does not gone

long because of the negligence and less aware of the mizo people about sovereign state due to illiteracy, also the first Mizo political party Mizo Union leaders did not support at all due to their deep involvement of politics under the Indian Government.

Starting from 1951 and consecutively 1957, Mizo Union won Lushai Hills (former Mizoram) District Council General Election under the Indian Union, but many Mizo people were not sacrificed only with the position of District Council. However, the Mautam famine of 1958 and the border problem with Cachar in 1960-62 convinced the Mizo people to fight for sovereign states. As, Mizo National front was formed in October 28, 1961 with the main ideology of Mizo Nationalism, large number of youth volunteered to be members of the party and they were ready to stand up to fight for 'Sovereign Independent Greater Mizoram'.

After the formation of the party, its main slogan 'Mizo Nationalism' was rapidly spreaded out through public speech by the party leaders in Bazar and public places, where large people possibly gathered together and they also organised public assembly in Dawrpui Middle English school. The party also published newspaper and pamphlet name as 'Freedom' and 'Freedom Message' to awake the strong nationalist mindset of the Mizo people. The influence of Indian culture was rapidly spreaded among the Mizo people especially among the youths. However after the formation of District Council, various variety shows which were conducted on Indian style began to be abolished and revived Mizo old good practices, it awake the nationalist spirit of many Mizos to stand up for preservation of their culture and tradition. Infact, the steps taken up by the Mizo District Council with regard to revival of old Mizo

practices also inculcated the spirit of nationalism among the Mizo people and they began to know the significance of preservation of custom and culture.

While the reasons for the rise of the MNF given by Dr. V. V. Rao are generally true, one should not have the impression that the MNF was a mere collection of unwanted and jobless people and delinquent youths. Many successful government servants, highly educated youths, promising youths and students left their careers and joined the movement. It is also a fact that the 'spirit of Mizo independence' haunted the minds of many Mizos, and the MNF party clearly enjoyed the admiration of various sections of the Mizo people. For young men it was shameful not to be an MNF volunteer. The old people, woe memories of the tales about their forefather's settlement in Burma and demarcation of the Zo ethnic group inhabited areas in to three international boundaries also encouraged the Mizo mindset to reunify with their brethren across the border and it also strengthen the movement.²⁰

With its strong ideological influence among the youths, young men in large number volunteered themselves to be members of the MNF armed wing. They started raising, organising and training army-type preparation for the movement. The volunteers were divided into three categories- Commando squad, Intelligence squad and Signal squad. At the same time, the MNF also intensified its activities openly by collecting funds and forced donations from the people of towns and villages for the party organisational works and liberation programmes. Of course the people were

²⁰ Lalchungnunga (1994). Mizoram politics of regionalism and national integration. Reliance publishing house, New Delhi. p.83.

sincerely willing to donate and help them, as they knew that the volunteers were going to fight for independence of Mizoram on behalf of the Mizo people.

Many young volunteers were sent to Pakistan for training in guerilla warfare and commando tactics. In November 1964, more than forty volunteers led by R. Zamawia, a fresh graduate from Shillong went to Pakistan. This contingent received military training there and on their return brought considerable quantity of arms and ammunitions. Thus, they formed the nucleus of the MNF. During 1965, many more spirited volunteers were sent to Pakistan for training and smuggling of arms and ammunition and they went through different routes from time to time. Thus, the MNF started dumping and hiding arms and ammunition here and there in the territory.²¹

The MNF had also defense wing or military wing composed of youngmen from colleges, schools, farms and ex-service men. They were given arms by the party. They were selected on voluntary basis and later indoctrinated with party propaganda, anti-national and religious or cultural values. This was one reason why the rate of defection from the MNF was low in the beginning. The army headquarters was in Aizawl. In the army headquarters, there was an armed wing called Mizo National Volunteers (MNV). The members or volunteers were always afraid of being branded as traitors and hence they hardly discussed any controversial political subjects among themselves. Anyonewho was frequently absent without permission was treated as a spy. This is worth-nothing that there was no distinction between the leaders and the members/volunteers. Severe punishments were awarded to those, who, disobeyed party orders and violated the ideology of the party.

²¹ R.N. Prasad(1987).Government and politics in Mizoram.Northern book centre,New Delhi.p.169.

Some of the volunteers were educated youths who joined the movement by sacrificing their career. R.N. Prasad changed the MNF volunteer as educated youths who passed out from schools and colleges without any suitable employment avenues in the district. However, this change seemed to be lacking objectives analysis. There was no such employment problem during that time. So, some of the educated youths who joined the movement cleared Army Commission officers examination and some left prospective jobs. R. Zamawia and Malsawma Colney might reach high rank of Indian army if they would not joined the MNF because they successfully passed out Army Commission officers examination but they decline to joint. Therefore, there was no point of frustrated as unemployed young men joining the movement. Infact, the educated young men with good future prospect sacrifice their career and joined the movement. So, these spirited young men with awareness in ethnic consciousness and identity issue, activated the movement and they formed the nucleus of the hard-core rebels. Over and above, that many youths also joined the movement owing to neglect of socio-economic development by the state and central Government. The MNF volunteer joined the movement mainly because of their conviction to Mizo nationalism.

Most of the MNF volunteers were from villages and they were influenced by the ideology of MNF apart from Mizo nationalism. The youths who joined the movement had commitment for Mizoram independence. Some of the issues which convinced the youths to join MNF movement can be analyzed as given below.

- 1) Mizo National Famine Front was established in 1960 with the ideas to convey nationalist feeling in Mizo society apart from the Indian union, to comfort the people with suitable measures and to put pressure upon that steps taken up for handling Mautam Famine. The Mizo District Council leaders were not adequate for the people. When some of the MNFF leaders like Laldenga and R.Vanlawma established MNF party with the idea of Mizo nationalism, the masses of the people supported and volunteered to be the constant member of the party.

- 2) During the time when MNF party emerged, some of the political party in the region like Mizo Union, United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), Eastern India Tribal Union (EITA) did not reach the expectations of the people to developed, preserve and improve the economic and social condition of the region. On the other hand, poverty and inequality prevailed in Mizo society with strong influence on Indian culture which was also found to be threat to Mizo culture and tradition. At that strategic fracture, the MNF emerged with unique ideological standpoint.

- 3) Many song writers like Rokunga, Laltanpuia, Laisiama, Chhawntluanga etc composed song with the theme in typical Mizo folklore to inculcate the spirit of Mizo nationalism. All these blazes the mind of the young people to join the party with strong believe and expecting to revive Mizo nationalism. In every corner of the region, these kind of song were played to acknowledge the youth for getting their rights.

- 4) The personal charismatic of Laldenga with his talented oratory skill greatly influenced the people. They looked him up as their savior to liberate the Mizo people from Indian domination. As such, the oratory skill of Laldenga convinced the youths to join the party and the movement. Subsequently, youths were indoctrinated by the MNF ideology and they did not hesitate to sacrifice their life for independence of greater Mizoram. Thus, Laldenga strongly dominated the party and centralized the party functioning with his hegemonic rule and personal charisma.

- 5) The MNF took popular support from religious ideology. During 1960's people within Mizoram were already absorbed to Christianity as a result of the preaching of gospel by Welsh missionaries and Baptist missionaries. The MNF advocated the ideas that the Mizo people need to protect their religious believe from the Indian Hindu religion. Thus, the slogan of protecting society from others religious doctrines was wholeheartedly supported by the Mizo society. So, the party also became popular because of this religious sentiment.

- 6) The party propaganda like Mizo people are from mongoloid stroke and they are fully different from mainland India from their complexion and lifestyle also convinced the public. He further classified that Mizo people had the inherent right to be independent because of this uniqueness. He also advocated that strong nationalist mindset was required for survival as an ethnic group. The MNF also opposed the Mizo Union because it tried to get more opportunity from the Indian Union. As a matter of fact, many Mizo Union members left their party and joined MNF.

Apart from the above point, there are many youths who joined the MNF because of its popularity especially from the village during those days. When MNF changed its strategy from democratic method to violent method, many people who expected independence from the convincing speech of Laldenga joined the movement. However, there was some indiscipline volunteer army at the MNF which also destroyed the image of the party. Some Mizo people who worked with the Indian army were killed by MNF volunteers who were called Mizo National Army (MNA).

Some volunteers of the MNF surrendered and some withdrew from the movement due to certain problems. But, still many youths joined MNA and sacrificed faithfully and struggled to get independent state for Mizo nation. The India government used various kinds of strategy like grouping village for suppressing the movement, but these do not suppress the movement and most of the village people still supported and supplied food, shelter to the MNF army. Consequently, many civilians were tortured and murdered by the Indian army, but they did not forsake the party and died for the Mizo nation.

As a result of tightened security measures by the Indian army and wretched conditions of the MNF rebels, there was confusion among the MNF volunteers. Over and above that, liberal groups also emerged among the MNF. Consequently, majority of the hostiles or rebels wanted peace to lead a normal peaceful settled life. So on 28th January 1967, the government of Assam offered amnesty to the rebels for returning home to their families. As a result of which, a large number of hostiles started

surrendering to the government for a better and normal life within the Indian union²². But many volunteers did not abandon the MNF leaders and still believed in the ideology of the party to achieve their goal. Till peace accord was signed on June 30, 1986 a large number of volunteers still struggle to achieve their goals.

²²ibid.p.207.

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

The dissertation starts with introduction and it introduces the meaning and origin of political ideologies. It highlights how political ideas and ideologies play an important role in the process of unifying the society. It also discusses the role played by the political parties in influencing the public through its ideological belief and principle, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and methodology of the study and review of literature.

Nature of political ideology in Mizoram is not stable. The ideologies of five regional political parties in Mizoram are specifically studied. The evolvement of Mizos and origins of chieftainship ideology was also described. But these were certain changes in chieftainship concept after the annexation of Lushai dominated hills by the British because chiefs were put under the jurisdictions of the British supremacy. The British named the hills as Lushai Hills district in 1898 AD.

Under British dominance, any kind of political activities was banned by the Superintendent. The Mizo people then get political consciousness through education. The educated middle class emerged and formed the first Mizo political party Mizo Union in 9th April, 1946. The Party came into fraction which led to the formation of new party call United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) on 5th July, 1947. Soon after, one of the strong regional party named as Mizo National Front (MNF) came up in October 22, 1961 with the ideology on Mizo Nationalism. Later on, Mizoram

People's Conference was rigidly formed by the India army retire Brg. Thenphunga Sailo on 17th April, 1975. The last regional political party in the political history of Mizoram was formed by former IPS officer Lalduhawma in 1997 named as Zoram Nationalist party.

Various regional political parties were formed in Mizoram since India independence, but most of the party did not last long due to less political consciousness and lack ideological commitment of the party members. These five political parties came up with different ideologies, but they really impressed the Mizo people in their own period. The period between 1945-1975 was the time where political ideologies played a very important role in the Mizo society. These was also the time, most of the the Mizo people were deeply influenced by the ideology of Nationalism. Political parties like Mizo Union, UMFO and MNF took the public attractions because of their ideological believe and principle.

When Mizo union uprising in the political field of Mizoram with the ideology to stand on behalf of the common people, it gives hopes to the public to abolish long dominance chieftainships system which was a burden for the public. Even the UMFO emerged with separatist ideas in a moderate manner. The UMFO awakens the nationalist spirit of educated middle class. Soon after, when the MNF came up with the idea to claim for independent Mizo nation from the Indian union, it gains the mass support within a short period of time. When the MNF transformed its strategy into violence and fight for Greater Mizoram, many people joined the party because of its ideological influence. But after struggling for years, people feel discontented of unpeaceful environment caused by the MNF and India army. Then People's

Conference came up in 1975 with different ideology focused more on socio-economic development. These was the time when Mizo people concerned more on social and economic development instead of nationalist ideology, they wanted to stay in peaceful environment, and they have less hope to get independent from the Indian union. After the signing of peace accord in 1986, ideological politics did not take much concern among the people. The emergence of ZNP, a break up faction of the MNF tried to rise up nationalist spirit annoy the people with its ideologies and compete the MNF. But, most of the people are not concerned with political ideology while supporting their favorable party, as such political parties in Mizoram tried to gain popular support through any possible means. The party members and even the party itself began neglecting and did not put more significant on their ideology while they campaign for election.

The ideology of the MNF party is specifically studied and it also examines how the ideology relates to the policies and programmed of the party. The MNF party was formed on 22 October, 1961 with the objectives of attaining independence for greater Mizoram. The main ideology of the party was to form Mizo Nation, re-uniting all the Mizo people living in the contiguous areas, improving the social, economic and political conditions of the Mizos, safe-guarding/promoting Christianity, planning a long term strategy for violent movement to achieve its aims and acquiring dependable source of support of some foreign countries. The tail end of the party's aim yelled out 'Mizoram for Mizos'. The ideology of MNF was classified into seven points, various point were explained and examined the relation with regard to party constitutions, movement and programmed. These chapters discuss various ideology of the MNF

party, which played a deep role in the formation and organizations of the party. They are:

- 1) Due to his strong personality and charismatic leaderships, the party went too far based on Laldenga political ideology. His ideology played a huge role in the formation of the party.
- 2) Due to the ideology of Mizo Nationalism which was popularized by the MNF party, Mizo uprising of 1966 occurred in the region to protect for their racial and ethnic differences.
- 3) The Mizo National Front came with the idea for promoting democratic form of government. Their framing of constitution and formation of the party was always based on democratic decentralization and presidential form of government like America political system.
- 4) The party always promotes secularism and tends to uphold separation of state and the church and eliminate privileges granted to people solely on the basis that they are members of religious bodies.
- 5) The MNF came up with the idea of democratic socialism and promoting social inclusion for building safer, more stable and just societies for all.

- 6) Left-wing populism ideas holds significant role in the formation and organization of the party.
- 7) The MNF with their ideas of religious nationalism extremely helped the party to gain public support.

It should be recollected that the MNF always put forward the ideology of Mizo Nationalism. The issue of Mizo nationalism was the main reason why the party turned into violent method which cause insurgency in Mizoram. In the present situation, the party will never get popular support from their nationalist ideology. It needs to focus more on socio-economic development. Apart from nationalist ideas, the party had various ideologies which the general public was not aware of.

While interviewing members of MNF party, most of them could not interpret their ideology apart from Mizo nationalism. They were not aware of their ideology like secularism, democratic socialism, left wing populism etc. The party needs to exalt its ideology; and should put more effort on its ideology and need to motivate the people to vote for ideology of the party. The ideology need to hold a deep root in the policies and programmes of the party, yet the MNF party does not have stable proper policies and programmes which made it rather difficult to examine its ideology based on the policies and programmes of the party. The party transforms and adjusts its manifesto based on certain circumstances; it should have stable social and economic policies which can reflect the ideological belief and principle of the party. There new socio-economic programme like Social Economic Development Plan (SEDP) was launched

but it is not yet popularize to the public, it was a plan based policy which is expected to be alternative to NLUP. Many people criticize the party due to its unstable political standpoint. The reason being, although the party stands for Mizo nationalism, it makes electoral alliance with Indian National Political Party. But, on the other side the party always strongly looks forward to achieve unification of Mizos in one government administration.

The MNF party needs to come up with strategies to influence voting patterns by taking into account the dynamics of the political ideology. The party is in declining trends in the politics of the state at present. From the previous performance while it forms the government in 1998 and 2003 respectively, it develop the state in many ways but on the other side many cases of corruption, scandals, unfinished projects etc. were found which reduce the public support as it show clearly in 2008 and 2013 state assembly elections. The MNF really needs to transform within the party through its ideological belief and principle with encourage truth and honesty among the party members.

The role and impact of the MNF ideology upon the youth of Mizoram during the fight for 'Sovereign Independent Greater Mizoram' had also being analyzed. It discusses about why and how most of the youths did joined the MNF party. After the formation of the party, many youths was inspired by the party ideology i.e. Mizo Nationalism. But apart from these, many joined the party because of their programmed, strategy and propaganda. Most of the volunteers were not literate and did not understand much of their ideology, due to these the party leaders used various strategy to gain public support, and tried to raise up the nationalist spirit. It main

slogan 'Mizo Nationalism' was rapidly spread out through public speech by the party leaders in Bazar and elsewhere. Brief highlights some of the reasons why Mizo youth joined the party:

- 1) The Mizo National Famine Front was established in 1961 with the ideas to convey the nationalist feeling in the Mizo society to be apart from the Indian Union.
- 2) During the time when MNF party emerged; some of the political parties in the region did not get mass support for their performance. On this shaky time, MNF came up with different ideology which easily got support from the people.
- 3) Many songs were composed to influence the public on Mizo nationalism. These impress the idle mind of the youth to raise their voice and prepared to stand for their nations.
- 4) The charismatic personality, series of brilliant speeches, and oratory skill of Laldenga effectually caused the uprising of MNF party. He strongly dominated the party from spilt among the members; handle the fearful situation in various circumstances with his great personality.
- 5) MNF took popular support from its ideology on religion. During 1960's most of the Mizo were Christians as a result of Wales and Baptist missionary render upon us. The

MNF emerge with the ideas that the Mizo people need to protect their religion from others religious believe.

- 6) The party propaganda like Mizo people are from mongoloid stroke, they are fully different from mainland India from their complexion and lifestyle also convinced the Mizo people. This feeling of natural alienation from mainland India was also one of the strong reason which influence the youth to join the party.

Apart from the above point, there are many youths who joined the MNF because of their popularity especially from the village during those days. When the party changes its strategy with violent methods, educated youths and youths from village joined in large numbers. However, a faction cropped within the MNF and MNF also started killing Mizo who worked together with the Indian army.

After the peace accord was signed, the Mizoram National Front (MNF) party has been functioning as a regional political party and also won State Legislative Elections 1987 and formed government which did not last even half of the term. The MNF was then in political wilderness for more than 10 years and won election in 1998 as a result of pre-poll alliance with the MPC. After that, MNF won election by itself again in 2003. It is one of the largest regional party in Mizoram in the present day. After the signing of peace accord on 30th June, 1986, MNF party won election three times and became the ruling party for a total consecutive period of 10 years. While leading the

Government, it had initiated and completed several numbers of big projects for the better development of Mizoram.

The MNF attempts to unify the Mizo people under a single administration and it is said to be objectives of the party till today. The party also stress to unify different tribes of the Zo ethnic group in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, however, there are certain limitations for the party to do in this regard as it is already a political party under the purview of the constitution of India. Despite emphasizing Mizo nationalism, it can also be objectively commented that the MNF does not do better than other political party in this regard. Further MNF seems to be not acting enough like what it propagates with regard to Mizo nationalism whatever be the case, the MNF is now the most reliable and dominant political party in Mizoram.

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ABSTRACT

Political Ideologies in Mizoram: A Case Study of the Mizo National Front Party

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Introduction:

Political ideas and ideologies can act as form of social cement, providing social groups and indeed whole societies, with a set of unifying beliefs and values. Political ideologies have common beliefs and values. The French philosopher Antonie Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836) coined the term 'ideologies' in 1796. The aim of ideology was to establish a solid and unquestionable method by which correct ideas could be scientifically identified for the governance of human affairs and also for the betterment of society as a whole.

Political parties used to influence the masses by their ideological believe and principle, when in power, a party attempts to put its philosophy and ideas into practice through legislation. In a political world, political party's ideology can play a role in shaping party policies regarding conduct, operations and even product offerings. Balancing ideology with the support of the masses is a key for political parties to achieve sustained success.

Political Parties in Mizoram began to grow with the rise of educated middle class. The process started on the eve of the demise of the colonial rule. A section of people began to be conscious of their civic rights, and they began to claim for their rights too. They also became aware to preserve their identity, to protect custom and convention as well as to promote nationalism.

The development of education and political enlightenment among the Mizos came with the spirit of Mizo Nationalism. The formation of Mizo National Front as a regional political party on October 22, 1961 with Laldenga, Lalnunmawia and S. Lianzuala as the President, Vice-President and General Secretary respectively showed the growing political enlightenment of the

Mizos. The main object of the Mizo National Front party was to make Mizoram politically free from the Indian Union and to inculcate spirit of nationalism in the mind of the Mizo people.

Objectives

1. To study the nature of MNF political Ideology.
2. To examine the influence of MNF movement towards the Mizo people.
3. To study the decline of political ideologies by various regional political parties in Mizoram.

Research questions

1. Does MNF follow a particular political ideology/principle?
2. How much MNF political ideology influences the people during insurgency era.
3. How MNF ideology does played a significant role in the party manifesto/policies and programmed.
4. What are the differences between MNF political ideology and ideologies of other regional parties in Mizoram?

Methodology

The Methodology used for the research includes applying historical and analytical approaches with the help of both primary and secondary sources. As for primary sources, respondents (people of the Area of study) have been interviewed on their opinion and knowledge level of this topic. For secondary sources, various published literatures, journals, pamphlets, newspapers, books, etc., are consulted.

Statement of the problem

The influence of people of Mizoram by MNF political ideologies/principle during the insurgency period needs to be examined. This could hopefully reveal the deep relation between MNF volunteer and people of Mizoram during insurgency period.

Various regional political parties in Mizoram obviously neglect their ideological statement. They are more concerned for their party winning election in State Legislative Assembly election, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Village Council and Aizawl Municipal Council elections than ideological commitment. They neglect their ideological apparatus during election campaign.

The dissertation is analysed into the following chapter.

Chapterization:

Chapter 1 . Introduction

Chapter 2. Political Ideologies in Mizoram.

Chapter 3. Political Ideology of Mizo National Frony (MNF)

Chapter 4. Role and Impact of MNF political ideology among the youth in Mizoram during insurgency period.

Chapter 5. Conclusion.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the proposed study, it include the meaning and origin of political ideologies. It highlights how political ideas and ideologies play an important role in the process of unifying the society. The chapter also discusses the role of political parties in influencing in the public opinion through their ideological beliefs and principles, it also highlights statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, methodology of the study, review of literature and tentative chapterization.

Chapterr 2: Political Ideologies in Mizoram

This chapter discusses about the nature of political ideologies in Mizoram. Its deals with the formation and ideologies of five regional political parties in Mizoram .The evolvement of Mizos and origins of chieftainship ideology was described. It also analyses the political situation of Lushai Hills after the British annexation, modification, modification of chieftanship and political development in Lushai Hills.

Under British dominance, any kind of political activities were banned by the Superintendent, however the Mizo people got political consciousness through education. The educated middle class emerged and formed the first Mizo political party Mizo Union in 9th April, 1946. The Party came into fraction that led to the formation of new party call United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) in 5th July, 1947. Soon after, one of the strong regional party named as Mizo National Front (MNF) came up in October 22, 1961 with the ideology on Mizo Nationalism. Later on, Mizoram People's Conference was rigidly formed by the India army retire Brg. Thenphunga Sailo on 17th April, 1975. The last regional political party in the political

history of Mizoram was formed by former IPS officer Lalduhawma in 1997 named as Zoram Nationalist party.

Various regional political parties were formed in Mizoram since India independence, but most of the party did not last long due to less political consciousness and ideological commitment of the party members. These five political parties came up with different ideologies but they really impressed the Mizo people in their own period. The period between 1945-1975 was the time when political ideologies played a very important role in the Mizo society. These was the time, most of the the Mizo people were deeply influenced by the ideology of Nationalism. Political parties like Mizo Union, UMFO and MNF took the public attractions because of their ideological belief and principle.

Chapter 3: Political Ideology of Mizo National Frony (MNF)

This chapter deals with the origin and emergence of the political ideology of MNF party and it also examines how the ideology relate to the policies and programmes of the party. The MNF party was formed on 22 October, 1961 with the objectives of attaining independence for greater Mizoram. The main ideology of the party was to form Mizo Nation, re-uniting all the Zo ethnic tribes living in the contiguous areas, improving the social, economic and political conditions of the Mizo people, safe-guarding/promoting Christianity, planning a long term strategy for violent movement to achieve its aims and acquiring dependable source of support of some foreign countries. The tail end of the party's aim yelled out 'Mizoram for Mizos'. In this chapter, the ideology of MNF was classified into seven points, various point was explain and examine the relation with the party constitutions, movement and programme. This

chapters discusses various ideology of the MNF party, which played a deep role in the formation and organizations of the party.

The MNF always put forward the ideology of Mizo Nationalism since its initial stage. As such MNF party spearheaded violent movement into violent which caused insurgency in Mizoram. However the party needs to transform its ideology to go beyond Mizo nationalism needs to focus more on socio-economic development to gain popular supports.. Apart from nationalist ideas, the party has various ideology which the general public did not aware of it.

While interviewing members of MNF party, most of them could not interpret the ideology of the MNF apart from Mizo nationalism. They were not aware of ideology of the party like secularism, democratic socialism, left wing populism etc. The party needs to exalt its ideology; and should put more effort on the party ideologies and need to motivate the people to vote for their ideology. The ideology need to hold a deep root in the policies and programmed of the party, unfortunately the party does not have stable proper policies and programmed which make it difficult to examine its ideology based on the policies and programmes.

The MNF party needs to come up with strategies to influence voting patterns by taking into account the ideology of the party. The party is now in the declining trends in the politics of the state at present. The MNF really needs to transform the party with in its ideological belief and principle for influencing voter of the state.

Chapter 4: Role and Impact of MNF political ideology among the youths in Mizoram during insurgency period.

The fourth chapter talks about the role and impact of the MNF ideology upon the youths of Mizoram during the fight for 'Sovereign Independent Greater Mizoram'. It discusses about why

and how most of the youths did joined the MNF party. After the formation of the party, many youths were inspired by the ideology of the party i.e. Mizo Nationalism. But apart from these, many youths joined the party because of their programmed, strategy and propaganda. Most of the volunteers were lowly educated from remote area and they did not understand much of their ideology. Therefore, the party leaders used various strategies to gain public support and tried to raise up the nationalist spirit. Its main slogan 'Mizo Nationalism' was rapidly spread out through public speech by the party leaders in Bazar and elsewhere.

Many youths joined the MNF because of its popularity especially from the village during those days. When the party changed its strategy with violence methods, many more youth joined the movement and these were also some negative aspects. Some of the Mizo people who worked with the Indian army were also killed by the MNF volunteers whom they called Mizo National Army (MNV).

Chapter V: Conclusion

This chapter analyzes the contents of the above chapters. It highlights the significance of this research and the importance of the above chapters. It highlights the importance of political ideologies for political parties in Mizoram. It also analyzes the opinions and views of various political party leaders with regard to ideology of the respective party. This chapter highlights the emergence and ideologies various regional political parties and it basically analyses the political ideology of MNF party. This chapter also presents an analysis for the reason why MNF was mainly supported by the youths during insurgency period. It also studies the negligence of political ideology by political parties in Mizoram. It also includes finding and suggestion.

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