

# **PARTY SYSTEM IN MIZORAM: ITS ORIGIN, GROWTH AND ROLE**

A Dissertation submitted in partial Fulfillment of the degree of  
**Master of Philosophy**

By

LALMUANA GUITTE  
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SUPERVISOR  
PROF. Jagadish K. Patnaik



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY  
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## **DECLARATION**

I, Lalmuana Guite, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record work done by me and that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to anybody else, and that this work has not been submitted by me for any other degree in other university or institute

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lalmuana Guite

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**  
**AIZAWL-796004**

*Prof. Jagadish K. Patnaik, Ph. D (Queen's)*  
*Professor*

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that Mr. Lalmuana Guite has prepared the dissertation titled *Party System in Mizoram: Its Origin, Growth and Role* under my guidance and supervision for M. Phil degree in Political Science of Mizoram University. In preparing the dissertation, Mr. Lalmuana Guite has complied with all the requirements as laid down in the M. Phil Regulations of the University. This dissertation is the original work of the scholar and has not been submitted for any degree to any other university.

Date:

Prof. JAGADISH K. PATANIK  
(SUPERVISOR)

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(LALMUANA GUTE)

## ABBREVIATION

AICC = All India Congress Committee  
APCC = Assam Pradesh Congress Committee  
ARPC = All Regional Party Convention  
CEM = Chief Executive Member  
DP = Democratic Party  
EITU = Eastern Indian Tribal Union  
EVM = Electronic Voting Machine  
HPC = Hmar People Conference  
INC = Indian National Congress  
JD = Janata Dal  
MDCC = Mizo District Congress Committee  
MDF = Mizoram Democratic Front  
MHIP = Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl  
MLA = Member of Legislative Assembly  
MNF = Mizo National Front  
MNFF = Mizo National Famine Front  
MPC = Mizoram People Conference  
MPCC = Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee  
MPF = Mizoram People Forum  
MU = Mizo Union  
MUP = Mizo Upa Pawl  
NDA = National Democratic Alliance  
NLUP = New Land Use Policy  
PC = People Conference  
PLTU = Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union

PRISM = People Right's to Information and Development Implementing Society of Mizoram

RAC = Regional Party Action Committee

SEDP = Socio-Economic Development Policy

SHDC = Sinlung Hills Development Council

UMFO = United Mizo Freedom Organization

USA = United State of America

UT = Union Territory

YMA = Young Mizo Association

ZNP = Zoram Nationalist Party

ZORO = Zo Re-unification Organisation

## Chapter-I

### Introduction

A representative government cannot function without political party or party system. In other words we can say that party system is indispensable for the success of democracy. Political parties are important not only because of the range of functions they carry out but also because of the interrelationships between and among parties. This interrelationship among parties is called party system.<sup>1</sup> In the modern world, there is no government without political parties or party system. Even in non-democratic and non-representative government, erstwhile political parties and party system exist in one form or the other. Whether in a totalitarian systems like in Soviet Union, Fascist Italy or and Nazi in Germany and also newly independent African countries and Latin American Republic or even in communist regimes of China, the political party or party system in one form or another is omnipresent. India is not an exception. And for that matter, the state of Mizoram is also not free from party system.

### Meaning of Political Party

For the existence of party system what is important first is the existence of political party. A political party is a group of people that is organized for the purpose of winning government power, by election or other means. Parties may be authoritarian or democratic; they have rule power through election or through revolutions and they may espouse ideology of the left, right or centre, or, indeed, disavow political ideas altogether. Leaving aside the case of some traditional-ridden states like Saudi Arabia and Thailand, every state of the world has a party system of its own whether it pertain to a one-party model, or to a bi-party model, or to a multi-party model, or to a peculiar a mixture of them.

Edmund Burke defines a party “as a group of men who had agreed upon a principal by which the national interest may be served.”

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<sup>1</sup> Anderw Heywood, *Politics*, New York. Palgrave MCMILLAN Publication. 2002.pp258.



Max Webber has defined a political party “as a voluntary society of propaganda and agitation, seeking to acquire power in order to procure chances for its active adherence to realize objective aim or personal advantages or both.”

Though the definition of political party had been given by different scholars, they all agree with what constitute the most essential attribute of a political party. A political party is an organization or an association of like minded people from different sections of the society, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex etc., who have decided to work together under one leadership, with the aim to capture political power through election, and trying to gain control of the government. So in a sense, a political party generates power, shapes it and applies it to government, which in turn, translates it into various programmes, policies, decisions and acts. So, we can say that political party has four main characteristics;

- (1) It is an organization.
- (2) It is an organization of like minded people.
- (3) It is a goal oriented.
- (4) It aims to capture and retain political power.

Parties in the modern kind first emerged in the USA. According to Maurice Duverger, there were no political parties in the modern sense of the world in any country before 1850 except the USA.<sup>2</sup> The movement toward nation-states and the growth of universal suffrage and parliamentary supremacy in Europe ultimately brought the development of political parties.

Political parties were first acknowledged by Burke in 1769. Some scholars see the origins of party in the Whig and Tory in the late seventeenth century. Ostrogorski and Webber have asserted that the origins of party legitimacy are to be found in the effects of 1832 and 1867 Reform Act and the rise of extra parliamentary mass organization of political parties. The modern political parties emerged in Europe and USA in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In France and other

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<sup>2</sup> Duverger, Maurice *Political Parties: Their Organisation in the Modern State*, New York, John Wiley & Sons Inc. 1954, p. xxiii.

Europe country the year of revolution brought about the emergence of mass base political organization. In the USA political parties emerges in the late 1820's though there were 'Federalist' of Hamilton and 'Anti-Federalist' of Jefferson in 1790s. In India there were organizations and associations like British Indian Association (1815), Bombay Associations (1852), Indian Associations (1878) etc. But political parties in the modern sense emerged only after the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 in Bombay.

### **Definition and Meaning of Party System**

The concept of party system was originated by European scholars studying in United States especially James Bryce, Moisey Ostrogorsky and Giovanni Sartori. In simple term, party system may be defined as 'the system of government by political parties in democratic country'. To G. Sartori (1976), 'party system is the system of interaction resulting from inter-party competition'.<sup>3</sup> He further states that what is vital is to establish the relevance of parties to the formation of government. To Maurice Duverger, 'party system is the forms and modes of co-existence between parties'.<sup>4</sup>

From the above definition we can say that party system is the way in which political parties interact with each other and compete among them for the purpose of holding power. Party system around the world may be classified in various types. But the most obvious characteristic of a party system is the degree of competition it exhibits. So, mere presence of parties does not necessarily guarantee the existence of party system. However, it is the competition and inter-relationship among parties plus stability and degree of orderliness which are important.

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<sup>3</sup> Michel G. Roskin, Robert L. Cord, James A. Medeiros, Walter S. Jones, *Political Science an Introduction*, New Jersey. Prentice Hall Publication. 2003.p208.

<sup>4</sup>Duverger (1964) suggests four basic elements of party's organization as (a) Caucus: a small unit of core members depending not upon their number but the quantity of their members. (b) Branch: a mass base parties keeping close proximity with masses of people. (c) Cell: found in communist parties, greater holds on its member then caucus and branch. (d) Militia: In militia structure the armed personals become the basis of party organization.<sup>4</sup> Almond also classifies party base on authoritarian party system, dominant non-authoritarian party system, competitive two party systems and competitive multi-party system. See, Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, 1954. John Wily & Sons Publications. New York.

## Types of Party System

In order to understand party system as a political institution in either totalitarian or democratic polity, it is necessary to understand different types of party system.

**One-party system:** One-party system is usually found in totalitarian political system. In one-party system the ruling party controls all aspects of life in the state. No other party other than the ruling party is allowed to function. The Communist party in the communist country is an example of the one-party system. One party system is found in some African countries and in some states ruled by military. In totalitarian countries there exist political parties but to enhance state power and suppress political opposition. For example, Germany under the Nazi, like many communist countries the party became the government.<sup>5</sup>

Though authoritarian government is found in non-democratic states, some are embedded even in democratic states. This could happen when a particular party due to some historical or social or cultural reasons, manages to win the support of the masses over a long periods of time; for example, domination of Indian party system by Congress Party soon after independent up to 1970. However, such case is rare and evolves only in a multi-party system or authoritarian one party system.

**Two-party system:** Two-party system exists in a state in which two parties dominate. The two party systems are quite rare and exist only in Great Britain, United State, and New Zealand. Other parties may also exist in these countries but they have little political importance. In two party systems, two major parties enjoy the support of the vast majority and have advantages of winning the election. The one who lost election form the opposition party in support of other minor parties.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas M. Magsladt, Peter M. Schollen, *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions and Issues*, New York. St.Martin Publishing. 1993.p 306.

One important feature of two party systems is that it provides a stable government. The voters can make their choice from the two major parties without much thinking. It also provides accountability due to strong competition between the two leading parties. However two party systems are also not free from its criticism. Due to vehement competition between the two major parties, the parties make promises which they will not be able to fulfill even if they get elected. The money involved in election was also huge. But today, the country which practices two party systems seems to do well than those who practice other system.

***Multi-party system:*** Multi-party system is the existence of more than two political parties in which one single party is expected to win majority. It is difficult to define multi-party system in term of the number of major parties because it often resulted in the formation of coalitions consisting of several smaller parties. Indian political system is an important example of multi-party system where not only the national parties but also the regional parties also played important role in the formation of coalition government. Sartori (1976) distinguished multi-party system into two, moderate and polarized pluralist party.<sup>6</sup> In moderate pluralist party system the formation of coalition is easy because the ideological gaps between parties are fairly narrow. Example, parties found in Norway. However in polarized pluralist party the ideological gap between parties are very wide. Example, parties in Italy, France and Spain.

The strength about multi-party system is that they create internal checks and balances within the government. They provide many choices for the people. The process of coalition formation results in a feeling of cooperation and correlation instead of competition and conflict. However, it also has its own drawback that the period of negotiation for formation of coalition takes a week or a month. Sometimes it is difficult for the majority members of the coalition to keep every body happy which often resulted into its pitfall. But this is not always the case; we also see strong coalition government in Germany and Sweden as well. The main problem of coalition is that it is build by negotiation and conciliation which lacks conviction. However

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<sup>6</sup> Michel G. Roskin, Robert L. Cord, James A. Medeiros, Walet S. Jones, *Political Science an Introduction*, New Jersey. Prentice Hall Publication. 2003.p208.

multi-party system, where different parties can compete in election for holding power is important for the growth of party system and democracy.

***Dominant party system:*** Dominant party system is different from one-party system. Here though there are different parties, a party is so influential that it is capable of capturing power again and again; for example, the Congress Parties domination of Indian politics from independence to 1967. It must not be confused with one-party system though the two sometimes possess similar characteristics. Japan is also usually cited as classical example of dominant party system. Until it fell in 1993, the Liberal Democratic Party was in power. Though other parties also present and compete in election, only the dominant party enjoys mass support.

### **Party System: Context of India**

In India, party system has its roots in the national movement. The Indian National Congress was organized in 1885 and has actively led the national movement. This was followed by several parties such as Communist Party of India and the Bhartiya Jan Sangh. Till the 1967, the Congress had dominated the Indian party system. After 1967 election several strong regional parties had emerged and formed government in some state. In 1977, the Janata party gained power at the Centre and the Congress suffered heavily in North-India mainly due to Emergency excesses. However, the Janata Party was a coalition of different parties with different ideologies; its glory days did not last long. The Janata party disintegrated in 1979 and consequently the Congress once again came back to power at the Centre in 1980 Lok Sabha election. The Congress led by Rajiv Gandhi again captured power in 1984 election due to the sympathy wave of the assassination of Indira Gandhi. In 1989, the Congress once again lost power. After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress could not retain its former popularity.

Since the national parties began to lose the support of the people, there emerged an opportunity for the regional parties to form government at the Centre. With this the chances of transforming the two party systems into multi-party system had opened wide. In 2001, there was a rumor about the formation of third front by leaders of regional parties. Today India is having

coalition politics where the BJP party formed coalition with regional and other national parties form the government. In most of the states also regional parties or in coalition with some national parties have formed the government. In 1996 & 1998 elections coalition governments NDA led by BJP was formed. But in 2003 election the Congress alliance UPA return to power that lasted for ten years. But in 2014 General Election BJP alliance beat Congress by wining 334 MP seats.

### **Statement of the problem**

The purpose of the present research work is to understand and examine the party system in the context of the state of Mizoram.<sup>7</sup> The intention is to underscore the national pattern in the political process of the units of Indian federal political system. In other words, we intend to examine whether the state of Mizoram exhibits similar party structure as it is available at the national level.

### **Origin of Political Party and Party System in Mizoram**

Before the British came to Lushai Hill, the Mizo society was simple and peaceful. Up to the end of World War II, there was no political activity of any kind in the area. There was political consciousness among the people but political party of any kind did not exist. They were kept in isolation from outside interference under Chin-Hills Regulation Act (1896), block from all those development and progress that could come from outside. This system worked well in the beginning of British colonialism but on the wake of independent this system developed a feeling of isolation and independence in the minds of the early educated youth. This is the main reason for the wake of political awareness among the Mizo.

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<sup>7</sup> Mizoram, also known as Lushai Hill District during the British rule is situated between 22° 19' north latitude and 92° 16' and 93° 26' east longitude with an area of 21,081 square kilometers.<sup>7</sup> It shares boundary with the state of Assam and Manipur on the west by Bangladesh and state of Tripura on the east and south by Myanmar (Burma) having an international boundary of 710 kilometers along with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Have a population of 10.97 lakhs according to 2011 census with 91.58 literacy rate.

Such feeling then resulted in the formation of Mizo Union (MU), the first ever political party in the Lushai Hill on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1946.<sup>8</sup> First it was named Mizo Commoners Union which was later rechristened into Mizo Union. This has marked a new era of Mizo society politically. This was formed by the early educated youth mostly belonging to commoner family who did not want to hand over power to the chiefs' (who acted on the advice of the British) after independence. The party was formed under the leadership of R. Vanlawma and Pachhunga was its first President. The aim of the party was to form a party through which the voice of the majority i.e. the commoner could be heard. Besides, some of its objectives are to develop better understanding between the chiefs and commoners, general uplift of the Mizo people, to popularize Mizo language and become democratic representatives for the whole of Mizo. Integration of Mizos living in different political units into a harmonious one was some of the objective of the party.

Immediately after its formation the party was able to maintain a strong hold among the Mizo. Vanlawma invited the chiefs to join the party. But they argued that the name itself was Mizo Commoners Union and the chiefs had no place. To enable the chiefs to take part in the party, the first name Mizo Commoners Union was changed into Mizo Union party. Though the party was open to all commoners and chiefs, it enjoyed more popularity among the commoners may be due to the anti-chief policy of the party. Its popularity among the party was so strong that the party was able to remain in power throughout district council period except for a short interval during 1970-71. In the first Union Territory Legislative Election also, the party had a landslide victory.

At the time of independence, Lushai Hill District was a part of Assam. The MU had fully accepted this and wants to remain under India. But there were some who wanted to merger Mizo Hills District with Burma leaded by Lalmawia. This idea was also supported by some leaders of Mizo Union which resulted into splitting of the party. It resulted into the existence of MU, Right

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<sup>8</sup> Jagadish K. Patnaik, *Mizoram: Dimensions and Perspectives ( Society, Economy and Polity)*, 2008. Concept Publishing Company. New Delhi, p11.

Wing (conservatives) and MU, Left Wing. It was the Left Wing led by Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga who succeeded in the MU party. A fresh election was conducted where those leaders who did not support Mizo Hill District to remain under India had no more place in the party. Some MU Right Wing later with Lalmawia and Lalbiakthanga later formed United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) party to counter MU. They received full support from the chiefs'. These two parties since its very first day were in rivalry. However the Mizo Union continued their quest for the abolition of chieftainship, and improvement of social and economic condition of the Mizo. They competed with each other for power in the 1<sup>st</sup> District Council election. The MU support Mizo Hill District as a part of India. They also stood for the abolition of chieftainship. On the other hand, the UMFO campaigned for the merger of Mizo Hill District with Burma. This political war had continued, which lasted till the early days of the Union Territory (UT). To some extent we can also state that this contributed to the emergence of two party systems in Mizoram from the beginning of the political process. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 1974, the MU had merger with the Congress.<sup>9</sup>

United Mizo Freedom Organization was formed on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1947 with Lalbiakthanga as its President, Rev. Zairema as Vice-President and L. H. Kisua as Secretary.<sup>10</sup> Both the President and Vice-President were former members of MU who had left the party due to conflict of interest. Some of the aims of the party were to secure a Government where the people would enjoy full freedom, independent when condition is favorable, understanding among people and reform of administration. Most importantly, unification of Lushai Hills with Burma after India got independence were some of its objectives.

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<sup>9</sup> V. V. Rao, *A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India-Mizoram*, New Delhi. S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd. 1987.pp139.

<sup>10</sup> The initiative in the formation of UMFO was taken up by Lalmawia an ex-Burmese armyman who reside in Lushai Hill. During his service he experienced that in Burma there were many resident of Mizo tribes. After his return to Lushai Hill he then began his campaign for the unification of Lushai Hill with Burma. He was fully supported by the Mizo chiefs knowing their extinction with the coming of India independent. He even met the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu in December 1946 and discusses with him his idea of unification. However he did not received much welcome because Burma already had enough trouble from tribal's of Burma. See, V. V. Rao, *A Century of Government and Politics In North-East India-Mizoram*, New Delhi. S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd. 1987, ,p139.



The party, however, did not receive much success in the election. In 1952 District Council election, it won only one seat out of 24. In 1952, Assam Legislative Election though the party put up three candidates where all had lost the election. On Oct. 1956, Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU) was inaugurated in Mizoram. UMFO was dissolved and mingled itself inside the new party with Lalmawia as President. In 1957, Assam Legislative Election, UMFO won two seats. In the district council election also the party won eight seats. With this the party strengthened its position in the district council and legislative assembly. Lalmawia was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary, offered Deputy-Minister post which he refused. In 1962 election the EITU face a serial set back. It won only one seat in the District Council and Legislative Assembly. From this period onwards UMFO (under EITU) was never able to grow. One reason for this was that UMFO party has no meticulous political base and were facing financial crisis almost all the times. This resulted into weakening of the party which finally withered away during insurgency movement in Mizoram.

Among the two parties, the MU was more successful. The party soon achieved their demand for the abolition of chieftainship in 1954. Under the district council the two parties were the main competitors. The MU was able to form government throughout the District council periods except in the last District Council election while UMFO alone or under the banner of EITU was in opposition. Even after Mizo District Council was converted into Union Territory (UT) the MU was still in a position to hold power in the first UT election. The main factor for the strength of MU was that it has a precise political base among the general public than UMFO.

### **Growth and role of party system in Mizoram**

The first two parties were soon followed by a number of political parties, both national and regional. A branch of Indian National Congress, Mizoram District Congress Committee (MDCC) was formed on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1961. In 1962, the Congress workers General Conference elected A. Thanglura as President, Lalsawia as Vice-President, Lalthankima as General Secretary and Hrangchhuana as Treasurer. The party did not gain much popularity in the initial stage, because the President was a defector. During the (Assamese) language problem of 1960's

he was appointed as Chief Parliamentary Secretary from the seats of EITU. When the problem started he took the side of his own party but when he was asked to resign from his post in protest against Assamese as state language, he refused. Though the Mizoram All Congress Committee (MACC) fought elections in 1962 bye-election, 1963 and 1964, they were defeated by the MNF. In 1966, the MNF insurgency broke out. In 1976 legislative election only Thanglura had filed nomination in Aizawl East and Aizawl West. After winning both, he had vacated Aizawl West seat. However, since he resided in Shillong and hardly came out to Mizoram due to insurgency, the party was less effective as ever.

In 1967, an *ad hoc* Committee was reconstituted by MACC with R. Dengthuama as President. The committee traveled the length and breadth of Mizoram to help those people suffering due to insurgency. This mission had greatly lifted up the party image among the people. In 1968, a special meeting of Mizoram District Congress Committee (MDCC) elected Hrangchhuana as President. But a member of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) came to Mizoram to form an *ad hoc* Committee with Dengthuama as President. Hrangchhuana could not accept this and formed another MACC which then resulted in splitting of the party. Members who had goodwill for the party worked hard for the unification of the two wings. Just before 1970 election the two groups reunited to elect Hrangchhuana as President, Dengthuama as Vice-President, Lalsangzuala and Lalthanhawla as General Secretary.

The United Congress Committee fought 1970 District Council election and was able to capture 10 seats out of 22. With the support of three independent the party then formed government. However, due to internal fighting for leadership its glory days were short lived. In the first U.T election the party again suffered defeat against MU. It won only six seats out of 30. With the creation of UT, the MDCC was dissolved and MPCC came into exist. It was the formation of U.T that decreased the authority of APCC on MDCC. After the merger of MU with Congress in 1974, Lalthanhawla was elected as party President in 1977, Lalbuaia as Vice-President and C.I. Ruala as Treasurer. On the 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1979 the MACC decided to join Congress (I). At the beginning it followed the rules and regulation of AICC (All India Congress

Committee). But after sometime the party ask permission to reframe the rules to suit to Mizoram. The whole of Mizoram was divided into five districts each having their own District Congress Committee. There was a block committee under District Committee. They were thirty in number. Under this there were units with a committee on each of them. The Central Executive was framing the policy. From this we can recognize that in Mizoram as a party, the Congress was the first to have such a formal system of party organization. The party had formed committees at the state capital, district, blocks and the units. With this there was proper division of works among the party workers. This might be reason that the Congress is the only party to form government for the times till today.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1962 the Front turns into Mizo National Front (MNF) with Laldenga as its President.<sup>11</sup> The party contested in the District Council election with three important messages for the people: integration of all areas inhabited by the Mizos, independence of Mizo Hill district from Indian Union, and safeguard of Christianity and ‘Mizoram for the Mizos’. Both the party Congress and MNF did not gain much popularity in their previous period. However after about two years of their formation they played the leading role in Mizoram politics. The State witnessed insurgency.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In Mizoram, every 48 years, there occurs *Mautam* (Famine). In 1958 also this famine occurred that killed many people including women and children. The District Council MU warned Chalihas’ government to make an arrangement to counter the famine. But Chaliha’s government did not pay much attention to the district council. Just at that moment Laldenga along with his friend John F. Manliana who ran Mizo Culture Society converted into Mizo National Famine Front. The front gathered hundreds of young man and women to work for famine relief. Laldenga also took active part in relief work. The front had achieved much success in helping people along the length and breath of Mizoram. After the famine was over the leader of the front Laldenga gained much popularity among the Mizo.

<sup>12</sup> On the eve of 1965, there were rumors that the MNF was collecting arms and ammunitions. But nobody could really believe that they really do. It was on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1966, the MNF forces carried out attack on different government institutions at Aizawl, Lunglei, Vairengte, Chawngte, Chhimtuipei and many other places.<sup>12</sup> With this insurgency movement in Mizoram had begun which lasted for 20 years. Many men, women and children were forced to leave their house. They were grouped together in one village where there were scarcity of water and food. This was followed by famine and many people including children died of hunger. Not only this, since the army was given full control of the situation there were many violation of human rights by security force. Innocent people were tortured and killed. Many women were also rape but no action against the army was carried out.

It was at this critical juncture that a retired Mizo army officer, namely, Brig.T.Sailo came out to Mizoram to defend the innocent people from violation of human rights carried out by the arm forces. As a retired army officer, he received much respect from both the party - the MNF and the army. He had formed Human Rights Commission and successfully carried out his mission of defending the people from violation of their rights. Before he came out to Mizoram there were many complains of violation of human rights by the army. Innocent people were tortured due to suspicion of insurgent volunteers. Under the Human Rights Commission, Brig. T. Sailo carefully examined all the action under taken by the armed forces. He filed complaints against them to Central Government. He went around different parts of Mizoram, give awareness campaign to the people about their rights. The commission was greatly appreciated by the people. With this Brig. T. Sailo was also gaining much popularity among the Mizo people.

When the insurgency movement had cooled down he turned this Commission into a political party known as People Conference (PC) party on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1975.<sup>13</sup> Since Brig.T.Sailo had already gained popularity amongst the people the party had immediately gained people's attention. In 1978 election and 1979 mid-term poll the PC had landslide victory. His slogan was on the basic needs like food, water and road. The party enjoyed full five years term and laid the foundation for many developmental works in Mizoram. He worked for the hydro-power project, roads construction, infrastructure and many more.

Under the District Council it was the MU and UMFO who were struggling for political power. In most elections the MU had the upper hand while the UMFO was a faithful opposition. When Mizo Hills District Council was elevated into Union Territory more political parties began to play active roll. The insurgency movement was carried out by MNF. This did affect much of the political system including a few boycotted elections. Besides MU, UMFO, Congress, MNF, EITU and PC there were also many smaller parties. With the emergence of more and more political parties there is a growth of party system in Mizoram.

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<sup>13</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*, Aizawl. P. Lalnithanga Publication. 2005.p81.

Under the UT also it was the MU who took the leading roll in the formation of government until the formation of PC party. So it was again the race between the PC and the INC after its merger with MU. In 1972 election the MU had a landslide victory. The reason for this may be because they had in their manifesto-a struggle for statehood and also peaceful settlement of the then present political problem among others.<sup>14</sup> Besides this the internal conflict for leadership inside the Congress is another factor.

PC took over the government in 1978 and again in 1979 By-Election. The success of PC was mainly due to the popularity enjoyed by Brig. T. Sailo for saving many innocent people from the arrogant action of the army. Another important factor was also his campaign slogan of six basic needs for Mizoram. But in 1984 election the Congress had a landslide victory. Majority of the people claim the strictness and army nature of Brig. T. Sailo for the downfall of PC party. The internal clash among the party members is another reason for its downfall. But till today, Brig.T.Sailo is still considered the best chief minister Mizoram had ever produced.

With the signing of peace accord on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1986, the 20 years of insurgency movement had come to an end. On the 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1987 Mizoram was elevated into a full- fledged state. After the achievement of statehood only two parties, i.e. MNF and INC took the leading roll in the formation of government. First it was the MNF, under Laldenga formed the government after the 1987 Assembly Election. The Congress put up 40 candidates for all the 40 seats. They had declared in their manifesto the integration of Mizos living in different areas under a single administrative unit. They also did mention to protect and promote culture, tradition and customs of the Mizos, job generation for the unemployed youth, better working condition for government servant and many more. The MNF, on the other hand, put up 37 candidates. Their manifesto was to fulfill all the conditions implied in the peace accord, ensuring lasting peace, normalcy and freedom, making Mizoram a model state, to bridged the gap between the rich and poor, eradicate corruption and fight all social evil etc. The PC was also still taking active roll in this election. The party put up 36 candidates with important manifestos

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<sup>14</sup> Prasad & Agarwal, *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*, New Delhi. Mittal Publication. 1991.p47.

like clear demarcation of Mizoram boundaries with neighboring states improve educational system and program, provides compensation for the MNF returnees and many more. Though the Mizo National Union also contested 11 seats, they drew blank.

In this election the MNF came out with landslide victory by winning 24 seats. The Congress captured only 13 seats. The PC party won only three seats. The main reason for the strength of MNF was the charismatic nature of Laldenga. He went for campaign through the length and breadth of Mizoram. He was able to draw the attention of majority of the youth. Another important factor was the internal conflict inside Congress which resulted in the splitting of the party. Beside these, the wave of nationalism brought back by MNF returnees was still strong. People had high expectation on MNF to bring about peace, save guarding Mizo culture and society and work for the development of Mizoram. But due to defection of 8 MNF MLA's the government could not continue for long and was soon dissolved. With the dissolution of MNF ministry Mizoram was put under President's rule from 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 1988. One important happening during the MNF ministry was the issue of liquor permit. Though, the Church with some people did not support such law. The government announced its readiness to pass liquor permit. Even the Church had failed to convince the government not to pass the law. However, due to the fast unto death by Lalbiakliana the government withdrew the law.<sup>15</sup> In this election, though other smaller parties were also taking part, it was the MNF and the Congress who was the main contender for power.

### **Return of Congress Ministry**

The Congress benefited the Church's opposition to liquor licensing which facilitate them to form government once again in 1989 election. The Congress won 24 seats while the MNF bagged only 14. Laldenga, President of MNF party also lost from Aizawl North (II) Constituencies while winning from Aizawl South (II). Many heavy weight members of MNF also lost the election like Ngurchhina, Saingura Sailo, H .Lalruata and Lalhlimpuia. The PC though campaigned heavily on ZORO (ZO Re-Unification Organization), but won only one seat.

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<sup>15</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*, Aizawl. Lalnithanga Publishing. 2005.p182-186.

The MNF and PC then formed the opposition. They attacked the Congress (I) as being ‘Vai’ (Non-Mizo) agent. The opposition also accused the then Union Minister of state for Home, Santosh Mohan Dev as manipulating the election for the Congress (I) return to power. They did this because they found some empty ballot boxes in one of the rooms of Circuit House.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1989, five leaders of Regional Party Acton Committee (RAC) namely C. Chawngkhuma, C .Vulluaia, F .Malsawma, Laltanpuia and Tuikhuaahthanga were apprehended in connection with the disappearance of some ballot boxes. There was a modest disturbance between the civil people and the security force. There was stone pelting and a sloganeering that ‘rigging government should resign’. There was also bomb explosion near the residence of Saikapthianga, MLA, but no one was injured.<sup>16</sup> However, the Congress had successfully completed their full term without much difficulty. In this five years ministry it was the Congress (I) who form the government and the MNF was in the opposition.

Due to celebration of Gospel Centenary the seventh general election in Mizoram to be held on 1994 had to be expedited and thus was held on November 30, 1993. A unique election scenario surfaced in 1993 as the Congress formed an alliance with PC who turns it into Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) just after 1989 election. The Congress secured 16 seats, MNF bagged 14 and PC (B) got 8. The MJD under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo and Congress under Lalthanhawla formed a new coalition government with Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister. Five MLA’s H. Lalruata, L. P. Thangzika, F. Lalzuala, Zakhu Hlycho, T. Hranghluta who was elected on M. N. F seats defected to Congress. The two independent MLA’s who bagged M. N. F also joined Congress. There was a great uproar and anger against those defected MLA’s.

The coalition ministry of Congress and MJD, however, did not last long. After few months of its inauguration, Lalhmingthanga Finance Minister and Thangkima, Minister of State were sacked. Meanwhile, the other two MJD Ministers C. Chawngkunga and Zosiama Pachuau formally joined Congress (I). Later the three remaining Ministers of State from MJD were also

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<sup>16</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*. op. cit. p193.

dropped. However, the Congress with the support of the five defected MLA's from MNF and two Independence continued to run the government and fully completed their term. The MNF party was also in great trouble during this period. In 1997 party office bearer election, there emerged a splinter group led by Lalduhawma. He move out of MNF party and form a new party MNF (Nationalist) Party. In 1998 election MNF-MPC coalition won a landslide victory. After the coalition broke down the MNF ministry continued for the next ten years when they suffered a defeat from Congress party. Today, the Congress party begins their 16 years of ruling with the hope to continue for another five years.

With the emergence of more political parties there is also a growth in the party system. With more parties there exists more interaction and correlation among parties. When election comes the party has to consider not only one or two party only, but it also has to consider all those smaller party. This is good for party system and democracy because the people had much choice in the election. Therefore, for party to won election they have to sets their manifestos in the best manner to win over all sections of the society. Because, the competition among parties was high and no party can neglect any other parties.

In 1998 the MNF and MPC fought election in a common platform. They divided the seats as 20 common seats and 20 equally divided between the two parties. The MNF bagged 21 seats, 12 seats by MPC and 6 by Congress. A coalition government of MNF and MPC was then formed. The reason behind the fall of Congress was the growing gap between the haves and have-not apart from anti-incumbancy. Negligence of economic growth and prosperity for cultivators, unrestricted nepotism and favoritism practiced under the Congress Ministry and abstance of economic opportunities for the poor. With the return of MNF-MPC ministry many people felt relief. They had a high expectation that their social and economic condition would be improve under the new ministry. The new ministry promised the people to deliver better food grain and generate sufficient power supply.



But just like the previous MPC-Congress coalition, MNF-MPC coalition government did not last long. It came to an end on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> 1999 due to the discovery of secret agreement between the Congress and MPC to contest the Village Council election. On 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2000, a pure MNF ministry supported by one independent MLA formed a new ministry. The ministry began to prove itself by reopening the Treasury which was closed for several periods due to the bad performance of the previous ministry. They distribute salary to government servant as regular as possible. The new ministry also developed many schemes for economic improvement as well. In the field of education a new syllabus was introduced by eliminating the old one at high school and secondary level. This was a good start for bringing progress and development in Mizoram.

In 2003 election the MNF emerged as the only largest party by capturing 21 seats, the Congress 12 and MPC and Zoram National Party (ZNP) combine 5. The election took place in a peaceful manner except in Suangpuilawn constituencies where the candidates of MNF, MPC and Congress were kidnapped. The election was also remarkable that it was the first time in the history of Mizoram an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) had been used. However, the government, at the end of their second term faced many problems like gossip a part form incumbency. And this was believed to be the major factor for downfall of MNF ministry.

Today the Congress is ruling for their 16<sup>th</sup> years, they have achieved much success during the last five years which gave them a landslide victory winning 34 seats out of 40 in the last 14<sup>th</sup> legislative election held in 2013. During the election campaign there was a word of war especially between the Congress and MNF. The MNF accused Lalthanhawla as anti-Mizo and anti-Christian. There was a change of harsh word between the two parties on chahnawih sen (Tilak) taken by Lalthanhawl the Chief Minister. The Congress also attacks MNF of being uncertain about Mizo nationalism. However, the reinvention of NLUP helps the Congress party in winning the people votes. Also the feeling of incumbency against the Congress was not experienced for the time being.

## **The Role of Opposition**

The opposition plays an important role in a democratic political system. A democracy cannot function in the absence of opposition.<sup>17</sup> The opposition keeps a constant watch over the party in power and acts as a watch-dog to safeguard the interest of the people. It not only criticized the anti-people policies but also mobilized the people to fight against the governmental and bureaucratic tyranny. In case of Mizoram also the opposition party plays an important role in running the government. They check hasty and ill-considered legislations from the government. The party in power knowing that the opposition party as an alternative for the people does not want to go against the will of the people. But when situation demands for the good and welfare of the society, the opposition also does not hesitate to cooperate with the government.

From the above discussion we can say that party system in Mizoram originated with the emergence of the first two political parties MU and UMFO. From the very beginning the two parties were rivals to one another. While the MU supported Mizoram under India, UMFO campaigned for the unification of Mizo Hill District with Burma. Though the UMFO continued to from the opposition, they remained as an active opposition party. They did not only oppose the government but also cooperated with them on many occasions. Under the UT and State also, which ever party, MU, UMFO, MNF, PC or Congress is in opposition; tries their best to stay active not only for their survival in political field but also to push the government to move in the right direction. Though war of words was interchanged between parties during election, nobody takes them as personal beyond the political arena. Till today no party had ever carried out criminal activities against others in the history of Mizoram in the name of political party. While playing their role of opposition faithfully, they do not hesitate to cooperate with ruling party for the sanctuary of the state and the people. This is truly the most important characteristic of accountable opposition party.

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<sup>17</sup> Hari Hara Das, *Analytical Study of Political Science*, New Delhi. Anmol Publishing Pvt. Ltd. 1997.pp214-216.

The party system in Mizoram is mainly based on two party systems. The first two parties soon after their formation are in competition with one another. Though the UMFO had merged itself with parties like EITU it never changed its stand against MU. Under District Council it was MU and UMFO who was the main competitor for power. Then under Union Territory it was MU (with Congress) and PC who had competed each other while the MNF were indulged in insurgency movement. After statehood though many parties had existed it was the MNF and Congress who play major leading role in Mizoram politics. Till today, from statehood periods no other party had formed the government except MNF and Congress. Though a coalition government was seen two terms in a row led by Congress in 1993 and in 1998 by MNF were formed, they did not last for long.

Another unique feature of Mizoram party system is that political parties try every means in order to win elections. Almost all political parties, specifically, parties like Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), during election campaign talks about unification of Mizos staying in different parts (Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Bangladesh and Myanmar). This promise is just a deception which can never be achieved. But still the political parties do not hesitate to use this slogan to draw the attention of the voters. Some slogan like ZORO(Zo Re-Unification Organisation), Greater Mizoram, Corruption Free State were promised by politician but none had been achieved till date. Money also played an important role in Mizoram election politics. Some scheme like NLUP, Immediate Economic Package and Socio-Economic Development Programme (SEDP) had looted many innocent minds. Through this scheme every party design an economic development programme with the promised of free money distribution to each beneficiaries. Since people knew that they can receive a huge amount of money of course by free it makes them lazier and easier going. Besides this there are many non-achievable issue and promises which the political parties used for vote bank.

### **The role of the Church and Civil Societies**

In studying Mizoram politics we can never miss the role of the Church and other civil societies. It was the missionaries who gave education to the early educated youth. This educated

youth were the one who inculcated the feeling of political consciousness among the Mizo. During the insurgency movement also, the leaders of different Church domination were acted as a messenger of peace between the underground and the army. They convinced the insurgent group, different political parties and even the Central Government in order to attain peaceful settlement. Today also the Church plays a very active part in different activities of society. For example, it exercises its influence on the question on liquor. Since the Church was against liquor consumption and selling, the government did not have the courage to go against it. This makes Mizoram a dry state. Because in Mizoram more than 95% of the population are Christian and the Church was in a position to convince majority of the population. If the government then wants to win election, it must have good rapport with the Church.

During the time of election also, the Church of different denominations under the banner of Mizoram Peoples Forum (MPF) coordination with different civil societies (YMA, MUP & MHIP) exercises its control over the process of campaigning and voting in election. Though no legal action can be taken by them people gave a high regards to the rules and regulation put forward by them. in such manner, under the umbrella of MPF they became a watchdog for having free and fair election in Mizoram.

## **Review of literature**

In order to grasp the extent of work done on the party system in Mizoram, we have attempted to review the existing literature in the field. Although we have not made any exhaustive review of literature, representative works available on Mizoram political process as well as party system has been done. For instance, Maurice Duverger (1964), *Political Parties: Their Organization and activity in the Modern State*' (translated by Barbara and Robert North) provides a definite work on political party and party system. In fact, any discussion on party system must begin with M. Duverger. His book provides the first foundation for the study of party and party system for future study. He also categorizes party system according to the number of parties in the system.

Barnie Axford, Gary K. Browning, Richard Huggings and Ben Rosamond (2002) in their book, *Politics: an Introduction*, also put a separate chapter on the discussion of political parties and party system. It discusses the functions of parties, parties under democratic and communist government. Then most importantly the different types of party system.

*Political Parties and Party Systems* edited by Ajay K. Mehra (2003), a collection of essay studies the evolution of political parties and party systems in India. It also highlights the dominance of Congress party since independence and its split in 1967. It also includes the study of political parties' based on leadership, ideological profile and support base and programmatic content.

Manoj Sharma (2004) in his work *Comparative Politics and Political Analysis* also talks about political parties and party system. The classification of party system by G. Sartori and Maurice Duverger were also clearly mentioned by him. He also highlights the traditional classification of party system as one-party system, two-party system and multi-party system. Hari Hara Das (1997) also discuss a chapter on party system in his book *Analytical Study of Political Science*. He also provides the classification of party system into bi-party and multi-party system, its merits and demerits.

With regard to Mizoram, though there are a few works on the political process in Mizoram, the literature on party system in Mizoram is hardly relating to the present scenario. Most of the works relate to the history of the evolution of the political process in Mizoram through the party system. For example, R.N Prasad (1987) and V.V. Rao (1987) P. Lalnithanga (2005) R.N. Prasad and A.K. Agarwal (1991) have written about Mizoram politics. All these books talk about politics and political parties in Mizoram but rarely touched the party system *per se*. They highlighted the emergence and organization of different political parties but did very less on the party system in Mizoram.

Jagadish K. Patnaik (2008) in his edited book *Mizoram Dimensions & Perspectives-society, economy and polity* has dealt with the political process of Mizoram, though. It also highlights the political condition of Mizoram during insurgency periods of 1966-1986. The signing of peace accord and holding of peace agreement till date. Specifically, the book deals with the socio-economic development of the Mizo after the attainment of peace between M.N.F and Indian government. It is a reliable piece of work for tracing the party system in Mizoram to a considerable extent.

K.M. Zakhuma in his work *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946-1989* begins by highlighting the historical and geographical status of Mizoram. It mentions about the system of administration under the Mizo chieftainship. Then it studies the administration under British government and how the fire of political feeling ignited under the British rule. Then it discusses the origin of different political parties and their development and role under the district council and union territory. Though this book provides an historical account of the evolution of party system in Mizoram, the time frame is limited up to 1989. Therefore, it is more appropriate to examine in detail the works of party system beyond 1989 till the present.

V. Venkata Rao. H. Thansamga, and Niru Hazarika (1987) also provide a separate literature on Mizoram. In the book *A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India vol-III-Mizoram* they begin with the profile of Mizoram. It then discusses the status of Mizoram under the constitutional development since 1947. Then it deals with origins of different political parties. It also discusses the function of district council and the origin and causes that resulted in insurgency. This does not, however, contribute much in terms of the growth of party system in Mizoram.

R. N. Prasad and A. K. Agarwal (1991), in their book *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram* clearly highlight the election under District Council as well as Union Territory which greatly helps us in analyzing the performance of different political parties. Since

the publication of this book there has been so much development with respect to party system in Mizoram, there is need to at least have a fresh look at the subject.

P. Lalnithanga (2005), *Emergence of Mizoram* is also a good work on the origin of political consciousness, emergence of political parties and their role in formation of government. It also discusses about insurgency, role played by political parties, Church, and different organizations for bringing peace. Though the book largely discusses about political parties it devoted less discussion on party system and correlation among political parties. Due to this we need to have a closer study on the growth, development of party system in Mizoram.

Another important literature on party system is the work of R. Michael Alvarez. In the *Political Analysis*, Vol. 12, No.1 (Winter 2004) he wrote an article on 'Party System Compactness: Measurement and Consequences'. Here he talks about the important characteristic of party system in the choice it provided to the electorate. It also discusses about the compactness of the party relative to the distribution of the voters. He states that the greater the choice offered by the parties in an election, the more likely that the issue of voting will play a major role in the election.

Adam Ziegfeld in 'Coalition Government and Party System Change: Explaining the Rise of Regional Political Parties in India', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 45, No.1 (October 2012), also discusses on various factors affecting the Indian party system. He talks about the sociological and psychological factors affecting the sudden shift from a single dominant party system to a multi-party system. It also discusses the reasons for the rise of regional parties in many states and the important role they played since the 1990's in Indian politics as well.

A review of the existing literature on party system in Mizoram has clearly brought out the need for more historical, empirical and analytical study. We shall focus our study on that direction. This study is necessary for understanding the importance of political party and party

system for the success of democracy whether at the national or state or local level of government.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of the study carried out in the work cannot be denied owing that a particular subject on Party System in Mizoram had never been taken up by scholars. The literature review carried out earlier also highlights the limitation of a proper research work in this particular subject. But to have a better knowledge on political development and process in Mizoram one of the foremost important things is to have a good understanding of party system of Mizoram. Due to all these, it is a challenging task to undertake a detailed study on the subject of party system in Mizoram.

### **Objectives of the study**

The dissertation will have the following objectives:

1. To analyze the origin, growth and role of party system in Mizoram.
2. To highlight the important role played by regional and national parties in the state.
3. To understand the theoretical implication of party system in the context of the state of Mizoram.
4. To examine the nature of party system available in the state so as to understand the functioning of electoral democracy in the State.

### **Hypotheses**

1. In Mizoram the party system is characterized by two party systems.
2. The national political party has more acceptability to the people than regional parties.
3. Regional party gains success when national parties fail to gain support from the people.



## **Methodology**

For the purpose of data collection we will adopt empirical method. We will also adopt historical method to trace the origin and growth of party system in Mizoram. Basically, the research work heavily depends on secondary analysis, although primary data may also be used to elicit information about the present scenario. The researcher may also use interviewing technique to know about the perspectives of important political leaders.

## **Limitation**

Given the nature of work, this dissertation is limited by factors like time and money. The dissertation has limited focus on the state of Mizoram, although electoral politics during Assam days could have been dealt with. Another limitation is that since no study on the particular topic had ever been undertaken by other scholars and researchers a comparison with one is not possible.

## **Tentative Chapterization**

CHAPTER-I: Introduction: This chapter is an introduction to the thesis. It discusses the theoretical framework, definition and meaning of political party and party system. Then it would highlight the different types of party system commonly practiced around the world. This is followed by a statement of the problem of party system in the context of India and Mizoram as well. It also deals with review of literature, significance of the study, hypotheses and research method.

CHAPTER-II: Origin of Party System in Mizoram: This chapter will discuss the profile of Mizoram: the land and people. It will also discuss the annexation of Lushai Hills by the British, the permanent settlement of British in Lushai Hills and Inner Line Regulation, political and administrative development in Mizoram before 1947 such as customs, different social institutions etc. This chapter also deals about emergence of political consciousness, the

creation of Lushai Chief Council, the origin of Party and Party System in Mizoram with a special focus on Mizo Union, United Mizo Freedom Organization, Congress, MNF & EITU. The chapter will also highlight the creation of Mizo Hill District Council and its Elections.

**CHAPTER-III: Growth and Role of Party System:** This chapter will deal with the elevation of Union Territory of Mizoram and its elections. It will also discuss the merger of Mizo Union with Congress in 1974 soon after the first UT election. It will also discuss the formation of Human Right Committee by Brig. T. Sailo and the birth of People Conference party. This chapter will also highlight the problem of defection and factionalism within the party and performance of the PC government and its fall. It will also discuss the involvement of criminalization in Mizoram. It also highlight revival of peace talks under the Congress ministry and the signing of peace accord in 1986. This chapter also deals with MNF ministry under Laldenga and the crisis within the party. It would also highlight 1989 election and the conspiracy of the involvement of malpractice in election. The chapter also highlights the disintegration of PC as a party. It also discussed the activities of Hmar People Conference and their role in influencing Mizoram politics. The chapter also deals with Coalition government of MNF-MPC Ministry, splitting of the coalition and the performance of MNF ministry. It also deals with 2003 election.

**CHAPTER-IV: Political Process in Mizoram:** In this chapter we have a close study of the Assembly Election of 2003, 2008 and 2013. We also have a close observation of the Parliamentary Member election of 2004, 2009 and 2014. According to the performance of Political parties in these last three elections, we can draw the true characteristic of political process in Mizoram which also tells us the present behavior of the party system in Mizoram. Besides the role of Election Commissioner, MPF and other civil societies like YMA, MUP & MHIP in Mizoram election was also thoroughly discussed.

**CHAPTER-V: Conclusion:** This chapter will contain the conclusion or summary, findings and suggestion of the research.

## Chapter II: Party System in Mizoram its Origin

### Profile of Mizoram: Land and People

The present Mizoram, also known as Lushai Hills during the British rule became the 23<sup>rd</sup> state of Indian Union on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1987. The name is a combination of two words 'Mizo' and 'Ram', which literally means the land of the Mizos. Mizoram occupies an area of greater strategic importance in the north-eastern corner of India having a total boundary length of 630 miles-with Bangladesh and Myanmar.<sup>18</sup> It is geographically situated between 22 “19’ north latitude and 92” 16’ and 93 “26’ east longitude with an area of 21,081 square kilometers. Mizoram is situated in the north-eastern corner of India. Though small in size, the state shared approximately 1014 kilometers of international boundaries. The state is also cut right across in the middle by the tropic of cancer.

The people inhabiting Mizoram are known as Mizos by the people outside as well as inside Mizoram. In a generic term, 'Mizo' means Hillman or Hilllanders. The Mizos consists of several clans such as Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Ralte and Pawi (Lai).. The different clans were again divided into many sub-clans (e.g. under the Lushai comes several clans such as Sailo, Hahnuar, Pachuau, Chhakchhuak, Rokhum, Rivung etc). Apart from Lusei, Paite, Hmar and Pawi; Lakhers (Mara) and Chakmas are also inhabiting the southernmost parts of Mizoram and western areas bordering Bangladesh respectively.<sup>19</sup> A sizeable numbers of Nepalis and Gorkhas are also there scattered in different parts of the state. During the period of chieftainship, the Sailo ruled over almost all the village with a few exceptions here and there

According to the first Census of the then Lushai Hills held in 1901 recorded total population of 82,434 living in 239 villages. The next Census held in 1911 showed a population of 91,204 and the 1921 Census 98,406. The Census of 1951 indicated total population of 196,202 in 623 villages. In 1961 Census, the population rose to 266,063 and in 1981 the figure

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<sup>18</sup> Jagadish K. Patnaik, *Mizoram; Dimensions and Perspectives, 'Society, Economy and Polity'*, 2008. Concept Publishing Company. New Delhi.,p1

<sup>19</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*, P. Lalnithanga Publishing. Aizawl. 2005.,p1

came to 493,757. In 2001 Census it has a population 891,058 people. According to the latest Census 2011, Mizoram has a population of 10.97 lacks of which male and female are 555,339 and 541,867 respectively.<sup>20</sup> The density of population is 52 persons per sq. km. The literacy rate is 91.33 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that male literacy stands at 93.35 percent while female literacy is at 86.72 percent. In actual numbers the total literates in Mizoram stands at 438,529 male and 409,646 female. This good record is the result of the work of the early Christian missionaries, who gave education to the Mizos during the British rule. Sex ratio in Mizoram is 976 i.e. for each 1000 male which is more than national average of 940 as per census in 2011. In 2001 the sex ratio of female was 938 per 1000 males in Mizoram.

The climate in Mizoram is neither too hot in the summer nor too cold in the winter. It is a mountainous region. The winter temperature varies from 11 degree Celsius to 24 degree Celsius and in the summer the range is 19 to 29 degree Celsius, making the region quite comfortable throughout the year. The average rain fall is estimated to be 254 centimeters every year.<sup>21</sup> The hills in Mizoram are steep and rugged, running from north-south with average height of 900 meters. 'Phawngpui' or the Blue Mountain towering 2065 meters is the highest peak of Mizoram. The hills are divided by rivers flow either north-worth or to the south and fall eventually into the Barak river of Cachar District of Assam, in the Chintuipui in the southern and Khawthlangtuipui in the northern side. Some of these big rivers were the main routes of transportations with other part of the country before independence.

The Mizos are now practically almost all are Christian. This we can say is the outcome of the work of the British missionaries. It was the missionaries who had first introduced education in the Lushai Hills. With the introduction of education they also tried to inculcate Christian beliefs in the minds of the unpopulated tribal. They also achieved much success. By doing this they sowed the seed of Christianity among the Mizos, who did before worship tress and rocks. In 1901, there were all together 45 Christians. They were soon able to convert larger number of

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<sup>20</sup> Mizoram Population Census Data 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Shyam Nath, *Panorama of North East India*, p.135

the population into Christianity. The Church thus became a centre of power and patronage in the Mizo Hills District. Today, more than 95% of the population is Christian. The Church continues to play a very important role in Mizoram both socially and politically.

### **Political and Administrative Development before 1947**

Before the British came to the Lushai Hills the Mizos were under the administration of the chiefs which was autocratic. Different villages were governed by different chiefs without the interference of outsiders. Each chief had his own territory demarcated by natural marks like rivers and mountain ranges. Each village became an independent unit with a democratic village of its own, resembling Miniature Republic in which an individual was as good as the other.<sup>22</sup> The chief was given the ultimate authority even the right to decide a death penalty. The chief did exercise all authorities and the common man has no authority to interfere in the government. The chief exercised his power mainly based on the customary laws of the land. He was the guardian of the people, Commander-in-chief of his army and the chief justice. He was advised and assisted by the elders (Lal Upas) mostly chosen by him. He settled all dispute between the villagers and also had the right to protect the fugitives who sought refuge in his house. The chief had the power to banish any subject from his village and confiscated all his property. However, if the chief happened to behave rudely the villagers sometime migrated to other village. Therefore, the chiefs, knowing that a large population was necessary for the security of the villages always acted in a way so as win over majority of the people.

Other important functionaries were the Zalen, the Ramhual, Tlangau, Thirdeng, Puithiam and Sadawt. They were selected from the rich, well-informed, broad-minded and influential persons of the villages. They performed multiple functions and their purpose was to assist the chief. The villagers were also required to pay different taxes like Fathang (paddy tax), meat tax etc. The villagers were also required to voluntarily offer their services to build the house of the chief.

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<sup>22</sup> R. N. Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, 1987. North Eastern Book Centre Publication. New Delhi.

## **Zawlbuk: The First Social Institution**

In traditional Mizos society the most important institution was the 'Zawlbuk' or 'Bachelor In'. But it has much deeper meaning than what can be understood from such a simple connotation. This institution provides us with a great insight about the social life of the Mizo. It occupied a central position in the administration and organization of a Mizo village in the earlier days, and had functioned as the most potent institutionalized mechanism of social control.<sup>23</sup> It was here that the youth learnt the art of discipline and obedience. Minor boys were required to collect dry branches of trees which would be burnt in Zawlbuk during night time. By doing this the boys learned how to obey and to fulfill the task given upon them. Once they reached the stage of puberty they were freed from such duty because they had learned how to behave as a sociable person.

Among the bachelors who gathered in the Zawlbuk, there were few persons who were called 'Val-Upa' means elders or leaders among the bachelors. They were the ones who earned others' respect through their deeds, not selected by the chiefs or his Upas. They were the one who gave lessons to the young boys and other bachelors at the early period of the night. They lectured stories about valiant, gallantry and folklore. Since the Mizo had no written language in the early days, it was in the Zawlbuk that the elder had narrated the past history to the younger generation. In this way, the history of the Mizo had been recorded and passed on to younger generation till the missionary had developed Mizo alphabet A, AW, B which became the alphabet of the Mizo.

One custom which has prevailed in the Mizo society is the spirit of what is called Tlawmngaihna under which one is duty bound to help others.<sup>24</sup> It was in the Zawlbuk that this spirit of Tlawmngaihna had been taught to the youth by the bachelor. In simple terms we can say that Tlawmngaihna means 'selfless regard for others'. Under this, one is required to be courteous and considerate in relation to others and be prepared to help, irrespective of one's

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<sup>23</sup> C. G. Verghese & R. L. Thanzawna, *A History of the Mizo*, Vol. 1, p.18.

<sup>24</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*, P. Lalnithanga Publishing, Aizawl. 2005. p14

inconvenience, under all circumstances. But with the coming of materialism followed by economic development and individual property, the spirit of Tlawmngaihna is gradually decreasing. But some social organization like Young Mizo Association (YMA) is doing their best to retain and preserve it at all costs. Till today this is still very active in the Mzio society, especially in the villages and also in towns to some extent as well. Some people might say that the influence of western culture among the young generation had decreased the value of 'Tlawmngaihna'. This is true to some point because in this post-modern era people became more and more busy. Everyone has to do some work to earn their livelihood and has little time to spare for others. However, this 'Tlawmngaihna' is one of the identities of the Mizos that can be practiced in every day activities. Due to this it would always prevail among the Mizos so long as the Mizo society survives.

### **Annexation of the British**

The British annexation of the Lushai Hill brought about many changes, both in the social and political lives of the Mizos. The mountainous land of Lushai Hills was neither commercially inspiring nor having mineral resources to attract the British to penetrate into the hills. This took them a long time to settle themselves inside the hilly terrain of Lushai Hills. But the frequent raid of the Mizo on the tea planter at the foothill of Cachar including the British subject forced the British government to carryout an expedition on the Lushai Hills.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1871, Bengkhuaia, a Haulawng chief attacked the Alexandrapur Tea Garden in Cachar. A tea planter by name Winchester was killed and his six years old daughter Mary was taken into captive. Along with this many tea gardens were also raided by the Mizos that resulted into many casualties. This had angered the British government which resulted into the expedition of 1871-72. This was meant to prevent the raiding activities of the Mizo raiders. However, it was the government wish to seek friendship and not conquest. There was also condition put by the Government prior to any negotiation with the Mizos to release all captives in their custody. The expedition was carried out from two sides, one column from Cachar and another from Chittagong. It was shown to the Lushai Hills that they were under the British

Control. Though the Mizo chiefs fought back with their best weapons they could not stand the might of the British army. On the 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1872 the British army did reclaim Mary Winchester from Sailam chief Bengkuaia. The Mizo chiefs and the British government reached agreement that the Hill people should no more carryout raids on the plain people. The column then returned to Silchar on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1872.

### **Inner Line Regulation**

The Inner Line Regulation is an imaginary line that separates the hills from the Plains. After signing the Treaty of Yandabo (between the British and the Burmese King) on February 24<sup>th</sup> 1826, the British took control of Assam. The British then began to think of territorial expansion and also wanted to expand the area of tea plantation. This expansion of tea plantation had created conflict between tea cultivators and the tribes of the hill region. In 1872-73, it was found that there was urgent and absolute necessary for bringing under more stringing control, the commercial relations to the British Subjects with the frontier tribes. Accordingly, a regulation was formed by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, George Campbell, which was approved by the Governor General in Council. After it was assented by the Governor-General on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1873, this regulation gave power to the Lieutenant Governor to prescribe a line to be called 'Inner Line', in each tribal areas, beyond no plains people (British Subject) and certain foreign resident would pass or enter into such areas without holding a pass or license issued by the Superintendent or the District Commissioner. One who violates this order was liable to be punished.

Under the Schedule District Act 1874, the whole of Assam was declared to be a schedule district till the introduction of Montaque Clemsford Reforms in 1919. As per the Schedule District Act of 1874, Inner Line Regulation was later extended to the areas of Eastern Duars in Goal-para District, Mokokchung sub-division of Naga Hills Distirct and Lushai Hills District. Chin Hill Regulation Act was also formed and introduced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1896 in Lushai Hills. Thus even after achieving statehood, the Inner Line Regulation is still enforced in the state of Mizoram with some modification from time to time. To some this regulation creates a feeling



of alienation from mainland India. It also weakened the process of development because experts and skilled people did not like to come to the state due to the introduction of this regulation. However, we cannot deny that this regulation has saved the Mizo people from business exploitation of the plains. It also prevents assimilations, prevent socio-economic and cultural conflict and also protect Mizos identity. States like Meghalaya and Manipur are also now demanding such type of regulation because of fear of assimilation.

### **Permanent Settlement of the British in Lushai Hills**

Since 1875, the British had built some sea roots with some of the big rivers for marketing purpose. Maharajas from the plain come to the hill areas for marketing. The Mizo on the other hand trade them with rubbers from the forest. But this system could not continue for long due to the lack of more rubber from the Mizo to trade with. At the same time, a natural disaster had occurred in Mizoram, which happens after every 48 years. The paddy fields were destroyed by rats and they had little to harvest. Majority of the people did not have sufficient to eat and were starved to death. In such a situation, inspite of the agreement that the Mizo must stop raiding the British subject on the foothill of Cachar, they had no choice but to raid the Cachar villages from time to time for food and salt. The self sufficient Mizo facing the famine had to break the agreement for their survival. This once again aroused misunderstanding between the British Government and the Mizo chiefs. Accordingly Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90 was then carried out that brought the entire Lushai Hills under the British administration.

The Expedition was also carried out to avenge the assassination of Leut. J. F. Stewart along with two British soldiers by the men of chief Hausata. The expedition was lunched, one from the Burma side into Chin Hills and other from Indian side into Lushai Hills. General Tregear was in command of the column operating from Chittagong. Col. Skinner was in command of the second column operating from the course of the Dhaleswari River. During the operation of 1890 there was no opposition from the chiefs. The fall out expedition then established Fort Lunglei and road was also constructed. Col. Skinner then selected Aizawl for the construction of a permanent post in the Lushai Hill which laid the foundation of the future

township and headquarter at Aizawl in 1880. General Tregears expedition also built a stock at Lunglei in 1889.

### **Emergence of Political Consciousness**

On the administrative side the expedition led to the creation of two district, viz. North Lushai Hill as a part of Assam with Aizawl as capital and South-Lushai Hills as a part of Bengal with Lunglei as a capital.<sup>25</sup> North-Lushai Hill was under the command of Capt. Brown and the South-Lushai-Hill was under the command of Mr. Murray. However, some of the senior administrative officers associated with the Lushai Hills thought that separation of the area under two administrative units would create more problems. Therefore the two must be merged into one district under one administration. This would also bring together all the Mizo tribes under one administration. A conference, Chin Lushai Conference was held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1892 to discuss the amalgamation of both the North and South Lushai Hill district. On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1885 the British Government passed an order for the amalgamation of the two districts. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1898 the two districts were amalgamated and placed under the Assam Province with the name 'Lushai Hills'. The Lushai Hills was then put under the 'Excluded Area'. Captain Shakespeare was the first superintendent of the united district and Aizawl was made the headquarters. A sub-divisional officer was posted in Lunglei.

To maintain simple and inexpensive administrative system, the British Government decided to continue the traditional chieftainship. Though chieftainship was still retained the real authority belonged to the Superintendent. The chief acted on the command and advice of the Superintendent; the Superintendent was the real power, even in the matters of taxation and administration of justice his word was the final. The Chiefs were forbidden from some of their power like the right to capital punishment, the right to seize store and property of the villagers. The right to tax traders doing business within the area of the chiefs jurisdiction, the right to setup his son as chief, under their own jurisdiction, the right to attach the property of the villager and many more. However, the chiefs were allowed to exercise many of their powers especially on

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<sup>25</sup>Jagadish K. Patnaik, *Mizoram; Dimensions and Perspectives op. cit P.9*

customary law. The whole area was divided into a number of Circles. The new government placed a Circle Interpreter a native Mizo who would be the medium of communication between the Superintendent and the Chiefs. Every village is ruled by the chiefs under the command of the Superintendent which was dictatorial.

Since the British government had curbed some of the power of the chief the common people felt that the new government had done a great work for them. They were greatly impressed by the way the Superintendent exercised his power. This feeling gave them the courage to even stand against their own chiefs which was not unthinkable in the past. They became brave enough to speak out the wrong doing of the chief for the first time. Even in some villages like Lungleng and Chhingchip, they complained their chiefs to the Superintendent in which they even win the case. This, we can say, must have been the first and foremost important movement towards the idea of democracy in Lushai Hills.

In the meantime some well educated people in Aizawl were beginning to worry about the future of the Mizo. Being educated they knew that the British government would not be able to stay with them forever. There was a rumor about the independence of India from the British as well. Therefore, they wanted to come up with something for the Mizo when the time came. So, they decided that if anything had happened, the Lushai Hills would stay under the Assam council. For this, they set up some committee. The members of the Committee went to Shillong to enquire about the Assam Council. But when the Superintendent happened to know about such plan, he arrested all the leaders such as Pu V. Z Biaka, Pu Telela, Pu Saikunga, Pu Laldela, Pu Thuama. Pu Laldela was expelled by the Superintendent from Mizoram. These brave people, we can say were the fore-runner of political feelings and consciousness among the Mizos.

### **The Lushai Chiefs Council and District Durbers**

The Lushai Chiefs Council was formed in 1939 under the guidance of the Superintendent L.L.Peters. This was formed to aid and advice the Superintendent in case of customary laws, hierarchy principles of the chiefs and all matters relating the administration of the people.

McCall, the then Superintendent decided to have a District Durbar having representative chiefs from each circle. This we can say is among one of the first steps towards democratization of the Mizo. The function of the Durbar was not only to deal with the welfare of the people. It also highlighted the practice of administrative discrimination if any, and brings it to the notice of Governor. However, the Durbar consist only the chiefs; there was no room for the commoners. It acted only to achieve the interest of the chiefs under the command of the Superintendent. In 1946, the then Superintendent A. R. Mc Donald took a bold step, allowing commoners being elected to the Durbar. When he saw that the chiefs were exercising their power in such a way so that the commoner had no right to say, the Superintendent thought that this was not right. So, he wanted to create a government where the majority opinion and will could be heard. With this the democratic value in Lushai Hills got further strengthened.

### **Origin of Party and Party System in Mizoram: Initial stage**

Under the Government of India Act 1935, the Lushai Hill was put under the excluded areas, over which the provincial ministry had no jurisdiction. The Governor of Assam as an agent of Governor-General in Council was vested with authority over the district. Before independence the district had no representation in the Assam Legislative Assembly and the Central Legislative Council as well. No federal or provincial legislature extended to this district automatically. The British as per 1935 Constitution did not want to give local self government to the Mizos. Any resemblance of political movement was suppressed. The village administration was still at the hand of the traditional chiefs who acted on the advice of the British. With this they could still exercise their powers under which the common people face many hardships. Though the District Conference was formed to look after the welfare of the people, it was dominated by the chiefs under the supervision of the Superintendent. The chief under the Chairmanship of the Superintendent used to control the Conference for their own benefits. Though the commoner also had some representation, they were dominated by the opinion of the chiefs and the Superintendent. The British government wanted to have full control over the people, so they always cited the traditional chief which is the best thing for them to do.

Upto the end of the Second World War, there was no political party of any kind in the Lushai Hills District. There was political consciousness among the people. But the formation of political party of any kind was baned. Anyone suspected of taking such steps was arrested by the Superintendent. It was after the Second World War, the political feeling which had been suppressed for a long time had come into being exposed. This was the result of two important factors; Firstly, during the war, many volunteers from the Lushai Hills went to France on her Majesty service. These people seeing the outside world, experiencing the freedom enjoyed by others came back with a feeling of Mizo nationalism. Secondly, the long political enslavement of the Mizo people at the hands of the Superintendent and the chiefs brought a lot of political feelings and consciousness among the people in the district. The common people had to bear many sufferings under the rule of the chiefs which they wanted to change by any means. It was the early educated youth who wanted to organize themselves into a political party because they did not want the transfer of power to the chiefs after India became independent. They can no more consider themselves under the dictatorial rule of the chiefs.

### **The Mizo Union (MU): Origin and Function**

As a result of these political events, a political party by name Mizo Union (MU) was formed on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1946 with the approval of the Superintendent.<sup>26</sup> This has marked a new era of Mizo society politically. This was formed by the early educated youth mostly belonging to commoner family who did not want to hand over power to the chiefs (who acted on the advice of the Superintendent) after independence. The party was formed under the leadership of R. Vanlawma and Pachhunga was its first President. The first ever political party in Mizoram, the Mizo Union (MU) was first named as the 'Mizo Commoners Union,' which was later changed into Mizo Union. Vanlawma invited the chiefs to join the party. But they argued that the name itself was Mizo Commoners Union and the chiefs had no place. To enable the chiefs to take part in the party, the first name Mizo Commoners Union was changed into Mizo Union party. The aim of the party was to form a party through which the voice of the majority i.e. the commoner

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<sup>26</sup> Jagadish K. Patnaik, *Mizoram: Dimensions and Perspectives op. cit.* pp11.

could be heard. Its main purpose was to voice the aspiration of the people and their demands. After India attained independent, as per the Indian Independent Act 1947, the Mizo Hills was incorporated with the state of Assam. The Mizo Union also later decided to remain a part of Assam and sent its assent to the Governor.

After its formation, the party was soon able to maintain a strong hold among the Mizos. Though the party was open to all commoners and chiefs, it enjoyed more popularity among the commoners. It may be due to the anti-chief policy of the party. Some of the objectives of the party included-achieve a rightful status for the Mizos; to unify the common people; generate; uplift of the Mizo people; to become a democratic representative and spokesman for the whole of Mizo people; and to popularize the Mizo language.<sup>27</sup> Its popularity among the people was so strong that the party was able to remain in power throughout during the district council period except for a short interval during 1970-71. In the first Union Territory Legislative Election also, the party had a landslide victory.

However, the MU in its initial periods was also not free from problems. Since it stood for the abolition of chieftainship and considered the party as the representation of the Mizo, its relation with the Superintendent was not so good. Due to this the Superintendent had captured the fund collected by the MU and also baned further collection of fund by the party. He also prohibited the gathering of more than 10 people without the permission of the chiefs or village authority. All these were meant to curb the activities of the MU. The Superintendent also declared that the true representation of the Mizo was the Advisory Council. But the MU felt that the Council being equal members of the commoner and the chiefs who were on the side with the Superintendent was not truly a democratic body. So, they even did boycott the meeting of the Council because they think that L. L. Peters, the Superintendent had sided with the chiefs. The Superintendent even declared the party to an end, due to the growing mis-understanding with the party leaders. There was also crisis inside the party for leadership as well. But the MU leaders did not give up that easy, rather carried on the party to achieve their goals.

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<sup>27</sup> The *Original Constitutions of the Mizo Union* 1946, p.1

Stood for the cause of commoner the party enjoyed much popularity among the commoners. But the chiefs were also having their own forums in the Chiefs Council and District Conference. They tried to perpetuate their rule by advocating a 'Crown Colony' for the Mizo after the British left.<sup>28</sup> The original leaders of the MU were also more inclined to this aspiration of independence. But soon they were replaced by the pro-Indian leadership who had capitalized the commoner's anti-chiefs fervor. After the re-election of the party, those who supported the idea of 'Crown Colony' or 'Mizo Independence' had no more place in the party. The MU movement itself became anti-chief and Indian regionalist movement. The future of the Mizo, according to the leaders of MU lies with the Indian Union. For them, the welfare and modernization of the Mizo could be best achieved under the Indian Union.

When the time for India independence became nearer, Mc Donald the Superintendent decided to bring the District Conference into existence in 1946. Before this, no political activity of any kind was allowed to exist in the Lushai Hills. But Mc Donald had decided to lift this prohibition. In the past there existed only the Chiefs Council to advise the Superintendent. But the District Conference would consist of 20 representatives from the chiefs and 20 from the commoner. The MU also fully accepted the formation of District Conference and also its compositions. But it soon faced problem mainly on the number of representations. Though the chiefs were lesser in populations they have the same number of representation with that of the commoners which resulted into dissatisfaction among the commoners. Accordingly, they put a demand to the superintendent that the commoners should be given more priority. In the second District Conference election held in 1947, the system of election was slightly modified. The commoners were allowed to cast their vote in such a way one to the chiefs and one to the commoner's candidates. In this way the chiefs in order to win seats in the election were to be acceptable to the commoners. However, the Chairman was the Superintendent and all the final authority rest on him which was still undemocratic.

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<sup>28</sup> Lalchungnunga *Mizoram Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*, 1994. Reliance Publishing House. New Delhi.,p73

When the Bordoloi Sub-Committee consisting of Rupnath Brahma, A. V. Thakkar, B. N. Rau, the Constitutional Advisor to the Constituent Assembly and Rev. J. J. M. Nichols Roy, the Khasi leader and Minister of Assam had a sitting at Aizawl on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 1947, the Mizo Union submitted a memorandum demanding for (1) the inclusions of areas inhabited by the Mizos in the adjacent district such as Manipur, Cachar and Tripura and the substitution of the term Mizo for Lushai (2) powers of autonomous administration in the internal affairs within the general framework of the province of Assam, and (3) a special provision for liberal financial assistance from the central government. But when the temporary map of India was drawn out, there was an attempt to carve out an independent state between India and Burma in the name of 'Crown Colony' consisting the hill areas of Assam. This was fully supported by Mc Donald the then Superintendent of the Lushai Hills which immediately got the attention of the people with the hope of achieving independent status in the future.

Since the political wind was blowing in different directions, on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947 a meeting of public leaders under the chairmanship of L. L. Peters' the Superintendent had passed the following resolutions:

- The Lushai's Should be informed by the Governor of Assam whether they had the option to join any other Dominion, i.e. Pakistan or Burma; and if they were to remain in India, their demands are (i) the existing safeguard of the customary laws and tenure etc., should continue (ii) the Chin Hills Regulation of 1896 and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 should be retained and (iii) after a period of 10 years the Lushai should be allowed to opt out of the Indian Union, if they intended to do so.

As the Indian Independence and the transfer of power from the British to India drew nearer, there was a feeling of consciousness among Mizo about the future. The first political party the MU decided that it is best for the Lushai Hills to remain under Assam Province, having Autonomous District. But this idea was not fully supported by some people even inside the MU party. Some people support supreme sovereignty and full independent after the British left the Lushai Hills. A meeting on this topic was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1947 at the Bengali Theatre



Hall, Aizawl, where Pu Sainghinga Assistant Superintendent, Aizawl took the chair. The meeting was attended by people from different fields like teachers and church elders. The meeting had passed a resolution that after the British left the Lushai Hills, the Mizo people wanted to have a full independence.

### **United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO): Origin and Function**

There was conflict inside the MU party. It resulted into the existence of MU, Right Wing (conservatives) and MU. Left Wing. It was the Left Wing led by Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga who succeeded in the MU party. A fresh election was conducted where those leaders who did not want Mizo Hill District to be under India had lost leadership position in the party. The MU Right Wing later formed United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) along with Lalbiakthanga and Lalmawia to counter MU. They immediately received full support from the chiefs.

The initiative for the formation of the UMFO party was undertaken by Pu Lalbiakthanga (MA) and Pu Lalmawia (BA) which was also popularly known as Zalen Pawl. On the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1947, the party changed its name as United Mizo Freedom Organisation with Lalbiakthanga as President, C. Chunbura as General Secretary and Lalrinliana as a Treasurer. Their main ideology was to join the Burma government after the British left Lushai Hills. Their argument was that India had a vast population who were much clever than the Mizos. If we happen to join India we would have to compete with those clever people which we are bound to loss. If this ever happens we would not have the chance to protect our own custom and culture. We will soon be eliminated by the mainland people. If we join Burma, there are many hill people which will gave us more chances to survive, even if we are over populated in our land we could go to many places where other hill tribes reside. However, this idea was not well received by the majority of Mizo people. Though the party became much popular in the beginning it could not over shadow the outstanding performance of the MU.

The party also did not receive much success in the election. In 1952 District Council election, it won only one seat out of 24. In 1952, Assam Legislative Election though the party put up three candidates all lost the election again. On Oct. 1956, Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU) was inaugurated in Mizoram. UMFO was dissolved and mingled itself inside the new party with Lalmawia as President. In 1957, Assam Legislative Election, UMFO won two seats. In the district council election also the party won eight seats. With this it strengthened its position in the district council and legislative assembly. Lalmawia was appointed as parliamentary secretary and offered deputy-minister post which he refused. In 1962 election the EITU faced a serious set back. It won only one seat in the District Council and Legislative Assembly. During these periods UMFO (under EITU) was never able to grow. One reason for this was that UMFO party has no particular political base and were facing financial crisis almost all the times. This resulted into weakening of the party which finally withered away during insurgency movement in Mizoram.

The two parties since its very first day were in rivalry to each other. They competed each other for power right from the 1<sup>st</sup> District Council election. The MU support Mizo Hill District as a part of India. They also stood for the abolition of chieftainship. On the other hand, the UMFO campaigned for the merger of Mizo Hill District with Burma. They also supported the idea of ‘Crown Colony’ where they might be in a position to withstand their status as a chief for many more generation to come. To fulfill this belief and desire, the chiefs are now using the UMFO as a political weapon. However the Mizo Union continued their quest for the abolition of chieftainship, and improvement of social and economic condition of the Mizo.

### **District Council and Election in Lushai Hills**

Under paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the Government of India framed the Assam Autonomous District (Constitution of District Council) Rules 1951 and the Pawi-Lakher (Constitution of Regional Council) Rules 1952 for the autonomous region in the Lushai Hill District. Consequently, the Lushai Hills District Council came into being in 1952 and its name was rechristened as Mizo Hills District Council in 1954 by an Act of Parliament.

For the first time in the history of the Mizo people, the first election to the Mizo District Council on the basis of adult franchise was held in February 1952.<sup>29</sup> The total strength of the District Council was 24 seats. Out of which 18 were directly elected from the single member constituencies and 6 were nominated by the Governor of Assam, on the advice of the Chief Executive Member. Only two seats were allowed to contest from the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The term of the office of the district council was five years. The MU and UMFO set up their candidates; the two parties are the main competitors for power in this election. The MU won 15 seats out of 18 seats contested by it. The UMFO suffered a complete set back. Pachhunga, the first President of the MU who later became member of the MU (Right Wing) who contested on UMFO seat also won. This was the only lone seat won by the UMFO. From this we can know that the MU had been able to generate the support of majority of the Mizos. Their stands to remain a part of India and the abolition of chieftainship were fully endorsed by the Mizo people. The Governor accordingly nominated Sainghinga, a representative of Government, Taikhuma, one of the Mizo chief from Lunglei and Dr. Rosiama of Cachar District as a member. As a representative of the women, Pi Lalziki was also nominated. Medhia Chakma was also nominated to represent the Chakma community. Besides this, two members were also elected from the Pawi-Lakher regional council. On the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1952, the Chief Minister of Assam, Medhi inaugurated the first democratic administrative machinery of the Lushai Hills District Council.

A very important landmark in the political history of Mizo Union was the nomination of Saprawnga as a Member of Rajya Sabha in 1950 under the Congress ministry of Assam. This was received with great enthusiasm all over the hill areas, because he was the first Mizo to be elevated to the membership of the central legislature. In the first general election of the country held in 1952, the Lushai Hill District was allotted three seats in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Two seats for Aizawl sub-division and another one seat for Lunglei sub-division. In this election also the MU party won all the three seats. Their success in the District Council

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<sup>29</sup> R. N. Prasad, Government and Politics in Mizoram.op.cit.p103

election and Legislative Assembly election certainly proved that the Mizo Union party won the confidence of the people and its policy was overwhelmingly approved.

Again in 1954, the Mizo Union party had reached another milestone by successfully convincing the Assam government to pass the bill of Assam Lushai Hills (Acquisition of the Chief's Rights) Act of 1954. Accordingly, the chieftainships was abolished, the chiefs and their council of Upas (elders) in the Mizo Hill district were eliminated. The District Council constitutes an administrative set-up in the forms of village council on the basis of universal adult suffrage. However, the chiefs were given compensation by the government for their lost of position, people and lands. But this achievement had marked the victory of the common people once again. Under the chieftainship all the authority rested with the chiefs; and the common people had no place in the administration. But now things began to move in different directions. With the removal of the chiefs, the common people would begin to have more and more voice in the public which is truly democratic.

As per the rules of the Sixth Schedule, there is a provision for the election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman, who normally presides over the council in sessions. Both the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman were to be elected from the elected members of the District Council. This election may be conducted by the District Commissioner or any officer as authorized by the Governor of Assam. Any member of the District Council could nominate another member for Chairmanship. The nomination paper should be delivered before noon on the day preceding the date of election to the Deputy Commissioner. It should be signed by the proposer and seconded. Accordingly the elected member of the new District Council met on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1952 and elected Dr. Rosiama as the Chairman and Tuikhurliana as the Deputy Chairman. Dr. Rosiama though a nominated member was still elected as the Chairman which is rare. However, this is exception to this general rule. Both of them held the position until the next general election to the Council was held in 1957.

The elected members of the Council wanted both R. Thanhlira and Ch. Sarawnga to be the Chiefs Executive Member (CEM). When vote was taken on secret ballot, Ch. Saprawnga got majority of the vote. However, since he was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary under Assam government and also R. Thanhlira was appointed as an MP then the member had to elect another CEM. On the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1952, the member of the Council again put up the name of Pu Lalsawi and Pu Lalbuai for the post of CEM. By secret ballot Pu Lalsawi got majority vote and become the CEM. He then appointed Pu Hrangai and Pu F Sangkunga who were previously elected by the Block Officers and Councilors as the Executive Members (EM)

### **Birth of National Party in Mizoram**

In 1957, the second election to the District Council was held. In this election the number of political parties who contested raised to four namely MU, UMFO, Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) and the Congress. A branch of the Indian National Congress was formed on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1961. In 1962, the Congress workers General Conference elected A. Thanglura as President, Lalsawia as vice-President, Lalthankima as General Secretary and Hrangchhuana as Treasurer. This body was formed as the first adhoc committee of the party. In 1962, a conference of the Congress worker held in Aizawl formally constituted the Mizo District Congress Committee (MDCC) and proceeded to elect its office bearers consisting of the President, A. Thanglura, Vice-President, Lalthangliana, the treasurer, Hrangchhuana and the General Secretary, Zalawma. The party did not gain much popularity in the initial stage, because the President was a defector.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> During the (Assamese) language problem of 1960's A. Thanglura was appointed as Chief Parliamentary secretary from the seats of EITU. When the problem started he took the side of his own party but when he was asked to resign from his post in protest against Assamese as state language, he refused. Though the Mizoram All Congress Committee (MACC) fought elections in 1962 bye-election, 1963 and 1964, they were defeated by the MNF. In 1966, the MNF insurgency broke out. In 1976 legislative election only Thanglura had filed nomination in Aizawl east and Aizawl west. After winning both, he had vacated Aizawl west seat. However, since he resided in Shillong and hardly came out due to insurgency, the party was less effective as ever.

The United Congress committee fought election and was able to capture 10 seats out of 22. With the support of three independent the party then formed government. However, due to internal fighting for leadership its glory days were short lived. In the first U.T election the party again suffered defeat against MU. It won only six seats out of 30. It was the formation of U.T that decreased the authority of APCC on MDCC. With the creation of UT, the MDCC was dissolved and MPCC came into exist. After the merger of MU with Congress in 1977,

In this election the number of elected members was increased from 18 to 22 and the number of nominated members was brought to 2 from 6 out of 22 seats. The MU was able to capture only 11 seats while the UMFO won eight seats. The PLTU and the Congress are also able to win two seats and one seat respectively. This election is a great setback to the MU because in the first election it won 15 seats out of 18, but now it won only 11 seats out of 22 elect-able members. Smt Lalziki nominated to the first District Council in 1952 was replaced by Smt Hmingliana (Mrs R. Thanhkira) by fresh nomination. Dr. Rosiama was renominated for the second term but died while in office in 1959. He was replaced by Lalhmingthanga in October 1959 and Medhia Chakma was elected from a Congress seat.

After the election to the Second District Council in 1957, the members of the Council met on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1957 and elected V. L. Tluanga as a Chairman. Because, Dr. Rosiama, who was the Chairman of the first District Council, became a member of the District Council. Hrangaiia, who was a member of the Executive Member, was elected as the Deputy Chairman on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1957. Dr. Rosiama died in June 1959 so Hrangaiia resign his post and became a member of District Council on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1959. after his resignation C. Pahlira was elected as Deputy Chairman. Both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman hold the office until the next election.

In 1967, an *ad hoc* Committee was reconstituted by MACC with R. Dengthuama as President. The committee traveled the length and breath of Mizoram to help those people suffering during the insurgency. This mission had greatly lifted up the party image among the people. In 1968, a special meeting of Mizoram District Congress Committee (MDCC) elected Hrangchhuana as President. But a member of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) came to Mizoram to form an *ad hoc* Committee with Dengthuama as President. Hrangchhuana

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Lalthanhawla was elected as party President, Lalbuaiia as Vice-President and C.I. Ruala as treasurer. On the 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1979 the MACC decided to join Congress (I). At the beginning it followed the rules and regulation of AICC (All India Congress Committee). But after sometime it asked permission to reframe the rules to suit to Mizoram. The whole of Mizoram was divided into five districts each having their own District Congress Committee. There was a block committee under district committee. They were thirty in number. Under this there were units with a committee on each of them. The central executive was framing the policy. From this we can know that in Mizoram as a party, the Congress was the first to have such a formal system of party organization. The party had formed committees at the state capital, district, blocks and the units. With this there was proper division of works among the parties. It might be due to this reason that the Congress is the only party to form government five times till today.

could not accept this and formed another MACC which then resulted in splitting of the party. Members who had goodwill for the party worked hard for the unification of the two wings. Just before 1970 election the two reunited to elect Hrangchhuana as President, Dengthuama as Vice-President, Lalsangzuala and Lalthanhawla as General Secretary.

### **A New Strong Regional Party entered Mizoram Politics: Mizo National Front (MNF)**

The third election to the District Council was held in 1962. Besides MU, Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU), PLTU and Congress a new regional party Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga was also taking part in the election. By the end of 1952, the Mautam famine was over and the organization itself had no more purpose for existence. On Oct, 22<sup>nd</sup> 1961, the MNFF dropped the word 'Famine' from its name, and became Mizo National Front (MNF) as a political party with Laldenga an ex-havildar as President and R. Vanlawma as the first Secretary was formed. The objective of the new party was creating an independent and sovereign state of Mizoram.

The idea of independent movement was not a new thing; it had been planted long before the MNF came into existence. On the 21<sup>st</sup> February 1947, a public meeting was held at the Theatre Hall in Aizawl to discuss the future of Mizoram. The meeting was chaired by Sainghinga, Assistant Superintendent and about 200 members consisting of important officials, church leaders and teachers were present in the meeting. After a long serious debate, the meeting decides to take a decision by raising a hand. Those voted for independence were in majority. Accordingly, the meeting had passed a resolution, "We the Mizo should have self-rule and stand on our own feet." Some of the leaders who were present in the meeting had popularized this idea stating that this was necessary to safeguard and protect Mizo identity. Because of the charismatic personality of the party President Laldenga and also independent policy, the MNF popularity continued to grow.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1962 the Front turns into Mizo National Front with Laldenga as its President.<sup>31</sup> The party contested in the district council election with three important messages for the people: integration of all areas inhabited by the Mizos, independence of Mizo Hill district from Indian Union, and safeguard of Christianity and ‘Mizoram for the Mizos’. Both the party did not gain much popularity in their earlier period. However after about two years of their formation they played the leading role in Mizoram politics. The State witnessed insurgency.<sup>32</sup>

The Congress put up their candidates for the first time on the Second District Council Election in 1957. But, being a new comer the party won only one seat. In 1962 District Council Election besides MU, UMFO and Congress the MNF put up their candidates for the first time. However, being a young party, both the party (Congress and MNF) had not much impact in this election also. In this election the MU won 16 seats, UMFO 2 and two other independent. Congress and the MNF had lost all the seats in their attempt to capture power. However, they were not a total loser because this election became an important milestone for the two parties in the future.

### **Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU)**

On October 1956, EITU (Eastern Indian Tribal Union) was inaugurated in Mizoram UMFO party was dissolved and mingled itself inside the new party EITU with Lalmawia as its President. Some independent candidates were also fighting the election. The Council had the

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<sup>31</sup> In Mizoram, every 48 years, there occurs *Mautam* (Famine). In 1958 also this famine occurred that killed many people including women and children. The District Council MU warned Chaliha's government to make an arrangement to counter the famine. But Chaliha's government did not pay much attention to the district council. Just at that moment Laldenga along with his friend John F. Manliana who ran Mizo Culture Society converted into Mizo National Famine Front. The front gathered hundreds of young man and women to work for famine relief. Laldenga also took active part in relief work. The front had achieved much success in helping people along the length and breath of Mizoram. After the famine was over the leader of the front Laldenga gained much popularity among the Mizo.

<sup>32</sup> On the eve of 1965, there were rumors that the MNF was collecting arms and ammunitions. But nobody could really believe that they really do. It was on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1966, the MNF forces carried out attack on different government institutions at Aizawl, Lunglei, Vairengte, Chawngte, Chhimituipui and many other places.<sup>32</sup> With this insurgency movement in Mizoram had begun which lasted for 20 years. Many men, women and children were forced to leave their house. They were grouped together in one village where there were scarcity of water and food. This was followed by famine and many people including children died of hunger. Not only this, since the army was given full control of the situation there were many violation of human rights by security force. Innocent people were tortured and killed. Many women were also rape but no action against the army was carried out.



strength of 24 seats of which 22 were elected and 2 were nominated. The MU won 16 seats out of 22. The EITU 2 seats, Lalmawia and H. Kiautuma, PLTU 2 seats, Hengmanga and Mhlai Hlycho and independent 2 seats, J. Thanghuama and Hari Kristo Chakma. Zalawra of Aizawl and Lalsanga of Lunglei were nominated. All the above elected and nominated persons had formed the office of the third District Council. Once again it was the MU which won majority seats, had formed the government for the third term in a row.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1962 the third District Council held its meeting and elected H. K. Bawichhuaka as Chairman. He was the former Secretary of the District Council. V. Rosiama was elected as the Deputy Chairman. But Bawichhuaka resign on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1965 to become C.E.M. In his place Lalbuaia one of the members of Saprawngas cabinet was elected as Chairman on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1965. Both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman held their positions till the next election. Thus, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman offices during 1952-1970 were successfully held by the Mizo Union.

With the competition for power between the two parties in the election and other areas, we can say that the party system in Mizoram had come into being. This political rivalry, however, had lasted till the early days of the Union Territory (UT) when the UMFO was slowly replaced by the Congress. Also, we know that during these periods the MU always had the upper hand. To some extent, we can also state that this scenario had immensely contributed to the emergence of two party systems in Mizoram.

### **For the First Time National Party Dominate Mizoram Politics**

Due to the outbreak of insurgency the Fourth District Council election could not be held in 1967. Accordingly, the tenure of the Council was extended till 1970. So, election of the Fourth District Council was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1970. The MU, Congress and some independent had contested the election. The Congress won 10 seats, the MU 9seats and Independent 3 seats. In this election for the first time the MU who had successfully captured the Council power since 1952 had to lose to the Congress. There can be several reasons for the

setback of the MU such as intra-party conflicts, personal interest and lust for power and leadership. The Congress took advantages of the inner problems of the MU and came to power for the first time. The Congress along with the 3 Independent candidates and two nominated members could rally 15 members. In this election Saprawnga and Hranggaia were elected for the fourth term, three for third term, four for the second term and the rest 15 mostly the Congress for the first term. But the party could not succeed to maintain its stability because of its factious group and the pressure of the MU. The coming of Congress party into power is a very important achievement for the growth of party system in Mizoram. Before, it was the MU and UMFO who were the main competitors for power. But now UMFO was replaced by a national party, the Congress party. This was a healthy sign for the growth of party system in Mizoram.

The members of the Council in their meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1970 elected F. C. Nghinga a Congress as their Chairman unanimously. B. Sangchema an Independent member from Pawi-Lakher region was elected as Deputy Chairman. In the meantime, the Congress party were facing internal problem. The party split up into two group, headed by Hrangchhuana and Dengthuama. The split was mainly for power and leadership which brought frequent change in the political executive and subsequently marred the stability of the District Council administration. F. C. Nghina, the Chairman had joined the (H) Parliamentary party. So he resigned his office on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1971 to become the Chief Executive with the help of the Mizo Union. So, the (H) and the MU formed a coalition and toppled down Zalawmas government with no confidence motion. This was carried out in a way that after Nghina became the C.E.M the MU should be given the post of chairmanship in the Council. But when the time came, even-though the MU recommended C. Thansiamama to be the Chairman, Nghina favored J. Thanghuama. When Thanghuama became the Chairman in 1971, the MU felt that they were betrayed. This resentment of the MU led to the toppling of the Nghingas cabinet. Thanghuama however, continued to hold his office till the abolition of the District Council in 1972.

With the formation of the first two political parties, MU and UMFO, that party system in Mizoram had come into existence. Because, these two parties, soon after their formation competed with each other to win over majority of the people and to hold power. During the District Council period the two parties were the main competitor for power. Though the MNF and Congress came to Mizoram political scene in the last decade of the District Council they were no competitors till the 4<sup>th</sup> Council election. The political system was successfully dominated by the MU and UMFO. Throughout the District Council period, it was the MU which had formed the government except for a short interval in 1972 election. From the very beginning of their very existence, the two parties were in opposition to each other. The MU decided that after the British had left India, it would be best for the Lushai Hills to remain as Assam Province and continue to be a part of India. However, for the UMFO, absolute independent would be most preferable choice. From this also we can say that the two parties soon after their formation were rivals to each other in their ideology. Another factor was that while the MU stood for the anti-chiefs movement, the UMFO were getting full support from the chiefs to counter the MU.

Though the two parties were in rivalry and the MU had formed the government the UMFO still remained a faithful opposition. Even after the birth of the MNF and the Congress, under the District Council, the UMFO remained the main competitor against the MU. Accordingly, though other parties were also there, the two parties were dominating Mizoram politics.

Besides competition for power among the parties, the internal problems of the party must also be considered. The infighting and competition inside the party for power and leadership had significant impact on party system in Mizoram. In the above discussion almost every party faced internal crisis like conflict over ideologies, infighting among members for leadership etc. Such crisis had led to the development or decline of those parties. For example, the MU, though majority of the founding members were in favor of having 'Crown Colony'. But after the general election those young blood took over the leadership role, who had converted the idea of independence into Indian nationalism. In this way the party system had been revived from one

point to another from time to time. Such revision did not, however, lead to the degradation of the party, but led them to win more votes. Under certain circumstances it had led to political instability. But still they were considered a necessary for the development of party system.

### Chapter III: Growth and Role of Party System in Mizoram

#### Union Territory and First General Election

By the end of 1971, the Central Government finalized the scheme of reorganization of north-eastern region. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1972, the Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, coming all the way from Delhi, inaugurated the Union Territory of Mizoram at the Assam Rifle ground, Aizawl.<sup>33</sup> She was accompanied by Moinul Haque Choudhury, Central Minister from Silchar. The inauguration of Union Territory was soon followed by an election which was held in the month of April 1972.

This was the first General elections under the Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha seats after Mizoram had attained the status of Union Territory. Mizoram under the Assam government had faced four General Election of the Assam Legislative Assembly. In this election the MU once again won majority of the seats, though the MU, Congress, Socialist and Mizo Labour Party (MLP) were in the election fray. Almost all the political parties had similar manifestos or objectives in this election such as, struggle for state-hood; integrate the Mizo contiguous areas to Mizoram and peaceful settlement of Mizoram political problem.<sup>34</sup> However, the MU received majority support for some reason like (1) the Congress had entered the election with a divided organization which resulted in great defeat (2) the other two parties the Socialist and MLP were formed just before the election and did not have a proper political base. All this had played a suitable condition for the MU to emerge victorious.

In May 1972, the first Mizoram Government with Legislative Assembly of its own came into existence. Ch. Chhunga became the first Chief Minister. He then appointed Khawtinkhuma, R. Thangliana and Vaivenga as his Cabinet Minister. H. Thansang was appointed the Speaker of Legislative Assembly and Hiphei as the Deputy Speaker. Soon the Cabinet was enlarged with

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<sup>33</sup> P. Lalnithanga *Emergence of Mizoram*, P. Lalnithanga Publication. Aizawl. 2005 pp.,35.

<sup>34</sup> R. N. Prasad and A. K. Agarwal *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*. Mittal Publications. 1991 pp.,47.

Lalsangzuala and Ch. Saprawng were inducted as a Cabinet Ministers and P. B. Nikhuma as Deputy Minister.

### **Convergence of a Regional (MU) and National (Congress) Party**

The year 1974, was very important year for party system in Mizoram. It was in this year that a significant trend in Mizoram politics emerged. Ch. Chhunga, the then Chief Minister decided to merge unconditionally with the Congress on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 1974. This event took place because the Congress being a central party wanted active involvement in the territorial administration while the MU being a regional party always inclined to join the mainstream. The two parties, by merging with each other fulfilled each others desires and assumptions about their political objectives. However, after the merger, the MU vanished completely because the party as a whole submerged itself inside the Congress party. Many people regard this as the turning point for the Congress to emerge itself as one of the two strongest parties in Mizoram till date. To survive for a longer periods of time, a party needs a deep rooted committed supporters. The Congress in its initial days did not have such supporters, because the Mizo people considered it as a Central party which would not really care for Mizoram and the people. But when it merged with the MU, those people who had supported the MU party since its very beginning due to its stand for the Mizo, gradually changed their attitude towards the party. They continue to become a faithful party members of the Congress since those MU leaders whom they trusted with all their life were now holding top post in that party, even after its merger with the Congress. This in the long run helped the Congress party to form the government five times which is higher than any other parties.

With the merger of MU with Congress in 1974, Ch. Chhunga's cabinet was further extended from 5 to 7. Lalsangzuala, Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee, General Secretary joined as Cabinet Minister and Zalawma as the Deputy Minister. Besides, the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Ad-hoc Committee comprising of 50 members including Lalthanhawla and Saprawnga as Vice President was also constituted. It is important to note that since all the elected members were from the Congress party, the Congress had emerged as the dominant party in Mizoram

during this period. The MU, the only party who had the strength to compete with them decided to merge with them. At this point Congress had no more competitors and the party system in Mizoram became one party system of the Congress.

This is a negative sign for the growth of party system because for party system to grow healthily we need competition and interaction among the parties. If the party had excessively dominated the system or had no competitor, they would soon neglect the voice of the public. Because they know that there was no opposition to counter and check their misdeeds. With this the administration system would be soon neglected, and the politicians would not hesitate to use their power for gaining their self interest. The opposition party used to check all this possible misuse of power by the ruling party. But having a very weak or we can say an invisible opposition is hazardous for party system. Having a single party, dominating the political system, also somehow resembles that of dictatorial government, which is un-democratic.

### **Political turmoil and President's Rule**

However, on the positive sides we must also recognize that the decline of one party had been evenly matched by the emergence of another party. The above stages were an indication of possible period of political transition that facilitates a democratic change within the system. Ch. Chhunga's cabinet with all its stresses and strain continued functioning till May 1977. This was followed by the imposition of President Rule's from 11<sup>th</sup> May 1977 which continued for a year. The state of political disturbance caused by insurgency was so much that it was not possible for a democratically elected government to maintain law and order. Under the President Rule, the army was given the full authority to exercise law and order.

Though the army was sent in to counter the insurgent group, burning and grouping of a number of villages to a single village had led to sufferings like starvation, spreading of diseases, scarcity of drinking water and left people homeless. In other words, the innocent Mizo were the one who suffered the most. The self sufficient Mizo now have to beg for food, cloth, drinking water and shelter to hide them from heat and cold. Especially inside those villages under the

hideout areas of MNF, the security forces were the supreme power. There were also many cases of violation of human rights by the security force.

### **Human Right Violation and the Birth of new Political Party: People Conference (PC)**

It was in this critical juncture that a retired Mizo Indian Army officer Brig. T. Sailo decided to come over to Mizoram. But the political development during the time in Mizoram was precarious. Sailo, being a disciplined soldier wanted to help the innocent people who were suffering in the hands of the insurgent as well as the army. In fact, one of Sailo's own son also did join MNF during the time. Brig. T. Sailo returned to Mizoram changing his retirement plan; and he plunged into active politics in the state-first as a human rights activist than as a politician.

### **Brig. T. Sailo in Mizoram**

As a retired army officer, he received much respect from both the parties - the MNF and the army. He also had a good knowledge of how the disproportionate acts of the army that resulted into the suffering of innocent people at large. Soon after his coming to Mizoram on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1974, he formed Human Rights Committee. This was meant to carry out his mission of defending the people from violation of their rights by the security force and the insurgent group as well. The aims and objectives of the Committee were to protect and sustain the freedom guaranteed in the constitution of India; to seek judicial protection in the case of transfer of the people from place to place, to bring about mutual understanding and cooperation between the security force, and the people, to focus the attention of the people to the physical and mental suffering of the people who were compelled to evacuate their ancestral homes and occupy the newly formed villages.

Before he came to Mizoram there were many complains about violation of human rights by the army. Innocent people were tortured due to suspicion of being underground volunteers. Though complains were made on the society, no action had been taken because the law was with the army. But under the Human Rights Committee, Brig. T. Sailo carefully examined all the action under taken by the armed forces. He filed complaints against them wherever he found



inhuman actions carried out by the security force against the local people. He went around different parts of Mizoram, gave awareness campaign to the people about what the army can do and cannot do. This campaign was greatly benefited by the people all over Mizoram. People are now having certain knowledge about their rights and privilege. The army also began to behave themselves, knowing that there was a man who knows the rules and regulation of the army not less than any other, who would defend the Mizo if they were mistreated. The Committee was a non-political body which committed itself to the duty of corrective measure. It submitted a long memorandum containing the alleged commitment of human rights violation by the security force till 1974. In Gauhati High Court, a case was filed against the shifting of villages and also a demand for compensation for the lost of properties were made. The committee was greatly appreciated by the people and Sailo was considered by many as the, 'Messiah'. With this he had gained much popularity among Mizo much deeper than anyone before.

### **Birth of People Conference (PC) Party**

When the insurgency movement had cooled down there was a demand from the public for Sailo to take his chance in the arena of Mizoram politics. Sailo then converted the Human Rights Committee into a political party known as People Conference (PC) party on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1975.<sup>35</sup> Brig. T. Sailo himself became the first President of the new party, Sahkhawliana Vice-President, Zairemthanga the General Secretary and Zalianchhunga as the Treasurer. Since Brig.T.Sailo had already gained popularity amongst the people the party had immediately gained people's attention. Some of the objectives of the PC Party were, first, it would make every effort to encourage and assist the MNF for the peaceful settlement of Mizo problem. Second, it would try to bring all the contiguous areas inhabited by the Mizos under one administrative unit which would be designated 'Greater Mizoram'. Thirdly, it would preserve and protect the culture and language of the Mizo's. Fourth, it would take up a developmental work for the speedy progress of the UT., especially of the rural sector. To Brig. T. Sailo the reason for the underdevelopment of the rural sector was the poor function and corrupt practices of Ch. Chhungas' Cabinet. The

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<sup>35</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*, op. cit. p81.

structural organization of the party was much similar with other parties before. The Motto of the party is Psalm No.15 in the Bible.

### **New Party from a New Government: Downfall of the Congress**

After two years the PC party had faced for the first time the Lok Sabha election held in March 1976. In this election Dr. Rothuama a PC candidate won the lone seat defeating his Congress rival C. L. Ruala by a wide margin. The party right away, proved itself to be a considerable competitor to other party especially the dominant party i.e., the Congress. In 1978 Legislative Election the PC had secured an overwhelming victory capturing 23 seats out of 28. The overwhelming victory of the PC party was a good sign for the regeneration of party system in Mizoram which was for sometime totally dominated by the Congress party alone.

As discussed in the earlier paragraph, due to the merger of the Congress and MU, Mizoram had experienced a dominant one party system for a short interval period of time dominated by the Congress. The MNF was supposed to be the main competitor for the Congress even after the merger. However, since Laldenga decided to carry arms and called for independent struggle, the MNF was declared outlaw and baned from any kind of political activity. But along with the one party dominant system with the Congress party ruling the roost, Mizoram witnessed the emergence of a regional party which incorporated the suffering of its people the political plank. This party being guided by a learned man with great visionary and leadership experience is able to cut off the dominant system of the Congress. The dominant party system turned into a two party systems with the competition between the PC and the Congress. During the PC government many development schemes and programmes were implemented. The relationship between the local people and the security force had improved to a very considerable extent.

### **Factionalism and Defection**

Soon after the formation of PC ministry, 8 PC MLA's rebelled with the support of 4 Congress, 1 Janata and 2 Independent MLA join together, forming United Legislature Party and

challenged the confidence of Sailo Government under the leadership of Thangridema the then speaker. With this the internal conflict and difference within the PC party had exploded. The result was the splitting up of the party into PC(A) led by Sailo and PC(B) led by Thangridema. This is one of the most remarkable moments in the history of party system in Mizoram. Because defection with such number of MLA's had not taken place in the past. After a careful consideration Sailo took a bold step, asked the Governor to dissolve the house and conduct a fresh election. This was a remarkable move for Sailo to call for fresh election because those 8 MLA's rebel from their party only because of the lust for power. They might have other excuses but their target was power.

### **Mid-Term Poll of 1979**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1979 mid-term poll, the PC again had landslide victory. But this time their numbers reduce to 23. The Congress had slight improvement from 4 in 1978 to 5 seats in 1979. In this election almost all the political parties made a common slogan like resumption of peace talk between the MNF and the Central Government to bring normalcy, statehood to safeguard Mizo custom and culture, and rehabilitation of the MNF returnees. However, among all the parties the PC had the majority support. The PC in their slogan had basic needs like food, water and road.

### **Performance of PC Government**

The party enjoyed full five years term and laid the foundation for many development works in Mizoram. The party worked for the construction and building of hydro-power project, roads construction, infrastructure and many more. What the PC party had done during this period are still the face of development in Mizoram till today. But most importantly, the PC party had stopped the dominant character of the party system by the Congress. With this consecutive shifting of power, the party in power would not dare to defy the people. Because if they do so the people now had an option among the parties, they can change the ruling party in the next election. This is one of the most important factors for the growth of democracy as well.

Though, the PC held power for only five years, they have done a large amount of works compared with other parties. During their ministry gigantic projects like Bairabi Hydel project and Serlui Hydel project were initiated. The Silchar to Aizawl and Aizawl to Lunglei roads were converted into National Highways. The rail road construction project from Silchar to Bairabi was also taken up under the initiative of Brig. T. Sailo. As a matter of fact, he meant business and he actually did a lot. He is highly disciplined person, free from tobacco and drinks.

However, though he worked very hard for the Mizo people he was not a mean politician capable of holding lively and animated dialogue with all and sundry. But some people during this time were also blind folded by the oratory of some politician;’ who accused Brig. T. Sailo of being against restoration of peace. They know that the people wanted to have a proper life in a peaceful situation. This feeling had overshadowed all the good work done by the PC government which was today greatly appreciated by the younger generation. The PC party won only 8 seats out of 30 in the next election held in 1984. In the first Legislative Assembly election held in 1987, the party bagged 3 seats out of 40. Since then, it could hardly be any force to reckon within the political arena of Mizoram.

From the above discussion we can say that the lust for power and leadership is also one of the important factors that affect party system in Mizoram. This is not the problem of PC alone but also the Congress and the MU also though not as big as that of the PC party. Apart from this there is the undenyng fact that during this period the opposition parties have no hesitation of joining force together to solve the problem of their political survival. This is clearly visible in the 1980 Lok Sabha election where the Congress, Janata, People Conference (B), Mizo Democratic Front (MDF) and MU (new) formed a Steering Committee in order to jointly fight the PC party. In this election the all opposition party candidate Dr. Rothuama defeated Brig. Vankunga (Retd) a PC candidate. This is one of the most important characters of party system in Mizoram adopted by the opposition parties. This was meant to gain at-least one of the top spots in order to weaken the popularity of the ruling party and also highlight that they were still in the political game. This practice, we will see very often in the future election as well.

## **Fall of PC Ministry**

Though many people had appreciated the good work of the PC party, there were also many who criticized it. They've accused Brig. T. Sailo of forming anti-Laldenga policy and attempt to suppress insurgency by force not by political means. This was fiercely reacted by the MNF where some staunch supporters of PC were killed by the underground. There was also a rumor that the officers did not personally like the Chief Minister because he did not hesitate to punish even those officers, any time anywhere, if they did not abide by the office rule. To some extent, this had weakened the backbone of PC ministry. People were fed up of insurgency; they wanted to reach an agreement between the MNF and Central Government. At this juncture, there was a rumor that, since Sailo was anti-Laldenga, he always obstructed the peace process. The opposition parties took advantages of all this problems and used them to pull down the government. They organized students to stage protest strikes against the government. In the fourth general election held in 1984, Sailo's party lost the people's mandates and the Congress (I) party which capitalized on the support of MNF came victorious.

However, this does not meant that the opposition was using unfair means to overthrow the government. Highlighting the misdeeds of the government and informing the people about that, candidates at the time of election campaign did not hesitate to throw a word of mud at each other. The Congress had been accusing Sailo of blocking the peace process without evidence. They knew that the people wanted peace by any means and they looked for the solid subject to win the people hearts. This is one of the most important factors for the survival of the party in election. Above all, for the healthy development and growth of party system, we need a system where power is inter changed among the parties. If one party holds power for a very long period, it turns out totalitarian that is unhealthy for the growth of democracy.

## **Criminalization of Politics and the Return of Congress in Power**

As discussed earlier, in 1980 Lok Sabha election the joint opposition party candidate Dr. Rothuama defeated PC candidate Brig. Vankunga. On the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1984 the fourth election to the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Mizoram was held. In this election there was

a competition between the PC, Congress, Mizo Convention, Mizo Union and Mizo Peace Forum. In this election, for the first time in the history of Mizoram politics, criminalization had begun to take its root. On the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1984, a PC candidate Lalthawmvunga from North Vanlaiphai was shot dead by the MNF at election meeting.<sup>36</sup> In the initial stage PC and Congress politicized the death of their fellow candidate accused each other as responsible. However, they did this only to gain better position in the coming election. They tried to use the death of their fellow candidate as a weapon of destruction against their rival party. This is the first time such thing took place in Mizoram. Mizoram now started experiencing some characteristic of party system of the mainland. Earlier, election was held under a peaceful situation; and the MNF though underground did not want to disturb the election process. But now, the situation had changed. This might be the result of the conspiracy of anti-Laldenga policy by T. Sailo. Such happening is a set back for the growth of party system. For the growth of party system we need healthy interaction and competition, and not bloody campaigning. After the election result was out the Congress captured 19 seats while the PC won only 8 seats.

The Congress (I) under the Chief Ministership of Lalthanhawla then formed the government on May 1984. The Congress soon after coming to power stated that it would give utmost importance to peace and harmony in Mizoram by ending 18 years of insurgency. It would chalk out a variety of development programs and socio-economic development of the vast majority of the Mizo. In the 8<sup>th</sup> Lok Saha election on the 24<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1985 the Congress put up Lalduhawma, who without contest was declared elected.

### **Revive of Peace Talk under the new Government**

The Congress (I) demanded the Central Government headed by Indira Gandhi to resume talks with the MNF. The Government then cancelled all the pending cases against Laldenga on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1980. However the talk failed since the government cannot accept some of the demand put forward by the MNF like constitution of a state with safeguards on Jammu & Kashmir type, constitution of greater Mizoram including Mizo inhabitat areas from Assam,

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<sup>36</sup> P. Lalnithanga, Emergence of Mizoram. op. cit. p113-114

Manipur and Tripura, formation of interim government by ousting Brig. T. Sailo and many more. However the Government did not reject the elevation of UT into Statehood.

This talk was resumed on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1985, when the Congress (I) came to power in Mizoram. Laldenga then met the Prime Minister and offered his service for the restoration of peace and normalcy. The MNF agreed to stop all underground activities with effect from midnight of July 31<sup>st</sup>/ 1<sup>st</sup> August 1986. The government also suspended operation by the armed forces from that date. Laldenga had a serious discussion on various issues with the Central Government Officers, leaders and finally the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Then the historic memorandum was signed by the Home Secretary R. D. Pradhan, Government of India and Laldenga on behalf of MNF and Lalkhama Chief Secretary of Mizoram, Government of Mizoram on June 30, 1986, to ensure permanent peace and harmony in Mizoram. The MNF then agreed to delete its objectives of 'Independence and secession from Mizoram' from the Union of India from its constitution to ensure its working within the constitutional framework of India. It also agreed not to help the Tripura Tribal National Volunteers, Peoples Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and any group by training, supply of arms or providing protections or in any other manner. The Government also agreed to provide shelter and rehabilitation to the MNF returnees. And most importantly it agreed to confer the status of statehood on the UT of Mizoram to satisfy the desire and aspiration of the Mizo people. It was also pointed out by the Government that as soon as Mizoram became a state:

1. The provision of part XVII of the constitution will apply and state will be at liberty to adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the state, as the language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the state.
2. It is open to the state to move for the establishment of a separate University in the state in accordance with the prescribed procedure.
3. Mizoram will be entitled to have a High Court of its own if it so wishes.

Though many of the above points were fulfilled, some like High Court for Mizoram were not yet delivered till date. However this was a great achievement for Mizoram politics because it put an end to the past 20 years of political instability. It ended the suffering of the people of Mizoram. And most importantly, it once again opened up an opportunity for political parties to compete under the banner of democracy.

### **Congress Party and Peace Accord**

As agreed upon between the Central government and the MNF, the Congress in its meeting resolved to accept Laldenga as the leader of the Congress(I)-MNF Coalition government to ensure permanent peace and harmony in Mizoram. So, Lalthanhawla, the then chief Minister, resigned to facilitate the formation of Congress (I)-MNF coalition. Then a coalition government with Laldenga as Chief Minister and Lalthanhawl as Deputy Chief Minister was sworn in on August 21<sup>st</sup> 1986. With this we saw the birth of coalition politics in Mizoram for the first time. The other seven Minister of Cabinet ranks were also sworn in on the same day. The new Cabinet consisted of 5 Congress Ministers and 4 MNF Ministers. After the formation of the Congress (I)-MNF coalition government, the Chief Minister Laldenga described the vacation of the seats of Chief Ministers and other ministers by Lalthanhawla and his colleagues as a significant contribution towards the implementation of Mizoram Peace Accord. In a public meeting held at Aizawl on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1986 the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi also praised Lalthanhawla and his colleagues for their sacrifice and called them patriots putting their country above personal interest. The Congress had promised to do whatever means necessary to end the insurgency movement that lasted for 20 years. The credit for the restoration of peace fully goes to the Congress politically. By doing all this, the Congress party also won the heart of many more people who in the future became faithful supporters of the party. In this way, they once again firmly settled their position in Mizoram party system. What they did at this period also decided their future in Mizoram politics to a great extent.



## **The new MNF as a Political Party**

The life time of the interim government headed by Laldenga was limited to only six month, after which a fresh election was to be conducted. This is because the MNF representatives were not elected by the electorates; they must face the election to prove that they were the true representatives of the people. The Government had indicated February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1987 to be the date for fresh election. The parties then soon began their campaign through the length and breadth of Mizoram. Even in coalition government both MNF and Congress were carrying out the campaign separately. There was infighting between the two parties (MNF & Cong). The Congress stated that the MNF responsible for making Mizoram a disturbed area for 20 years. Their hands were still smeared with the blood of innocent people and were not fit for exercising power. The PC party also attacked the MNF party from all sides. However, due to the charisma and oratory skill of Laldenga and the feeling of Mizo nationalism brought up by the underground returnees, the MNF had massive victory in this election. The MNF won 24 seats, Congress 12 seats and PC 3 seats. Laldenga continued as Chief Minister and Zoramthanga became the Finance Minister.

Once again the MNF emerged as one of the most popular regional parties like they did in 1960s'. They were outlawed from politics by the Government in 1970s' due to taking up arms against the Government. At the first General Election of Mizoram State the party was able to revive itself in the position of exercising power. This we can say is a remarkable achievement for the party to survive in Mizoram politics. Because, after spending several years inside the jungle, they could lose the confidence of many party supporters. But the election result tells us that the people still trusted in the party system adopted by the MNF. In other words, we can say that, majority of the Mizo still favored politics based on regional and Mizo nationalist sentiment.

The MNF in the beginning consisted of mostly non-propertied persons. After memorandum of settlement, the party has brought the urban rich, the urban proletariat, the educated petty bourgeoisie, the upstart contractor, businessman to its fold, who had their specific needs and demands. The party also enrolled many people belonging to urban/rural class. It also

extended its supporting base to the areas of Pawi District Council inhabited by the Pawi tribes. It accepted the discipline of Parliamentary democracy. The party leadership has also claimed to be a legitimate body based on election. Despite all this, the party still did not lose its characteristic of personality cult politics because the leaders were still those people who guided the party before the memorandum was signed.

### **Conflict within MNF Party**

The MNF government which enjoyed complete majority in February 1987 election was rudely shaken in August 1988, when 8 MNF MLA's announced the withdrawal of their support for Laldenga's government. They did this because they were not happy with the appointment of cabinet members under Laldenga. However, the speaker J. Thanghuama soon announced the suspension of the rebel MLA's with the promise that a strict action would be taken against them under the Anti-Defection Law. He did this with the hope that, if all the rebel MLA's were suspended the MNF could still retain majority in the house. Meanwhile, the Congress (I) President Lalthanhawla also knowing that there was the possibility of forming a government went to Dew Delhi to discuss the matter with their leaders. But, on the night of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1988 the Governor, Hiteswar Saikia announced, the proclamation President Rule in Mizoram under Article 360 of the Indian Constitution. The MNF government, upon which the people put up so much hope collapsed without completing half of its term. This is a great setback for the political development of Mizoram because after 20 years of suffering, the people of Mizoram once again had to live their life under the President rule.

### **1989 Assembly Election**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1989, a fresh election was conducted. The Congress (I) secured 24 seats, the MNF bagged only 14 seats where even Laldenga lost from Aizawl North (II) while he won from Aizawl South (II). The PC party secured only one seat despite their heavy campaign for ZORO (Zo Reunification Organisation) slogan.<sup>37</sup> After the election result was announced,

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<sup>37</sup> P. Lalnithanga, Emergence of Mizoram. Op. cit. p191

MNF and PC started making a serious allegation of 'rigging' in the election. They accused Santosh Mohan Dev, the then Minister of State for Home at Centre, of manipulating the election that helped the Congress (I) to return to power. And this is the first time such thing happened in Mizoram. A joint procession was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1989 where Laldenga and Brig. T. Sailo who were, all along showing each other back, sat together. There was the joining of forces by those parties who could not get the majority to overthrow the party in power.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1989, the Congress (I) Ministry headed by Lalthanhawla, was sworn in. Besides the Chief Minister Lalthanhawla, J. Lalsangzuala, Rokamlova, Zalawma, H. Thansanga and C. L. Ruala were Minister of Cabinet Rank, while P. Siamliana, S. Hiato and Nirupam Cakma were sworn in as Ministers of State. The ministry was subsequently enlarged with the introduction of Vanlalnghaka, Saikaphthianga and Lalhuthanga as Minister of State.

From the above discussion, we can see that as soon as Mizoram was elevated into statehood, there was a high level of political competition between the MNF and Congress. Though the PC party had existed, it could no more compete with the other two parties. We can also say that this competition somehow resembled the characteristic of competition between the first two political party in Mizoram i.e., the MU and UMFO. The party systems in Mizoram once again resembled the characteristic of two party systems.

### **Malpractices in Election**

There was a rumor that some of the ballot boxes that were used by the Congress were found under a culvert. The Regional party Action Committee (RAC) on the night of 16<sup>th</sup> February 1989 made a statement that they would exhibit the missing ballot boxes that were recovered on the following day. On the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1989 there was a huge public gathering

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*ZORO is a non-governmental organization working for the reunification of the ZO (Chin-Kuki-Mizo) people. The generic word "ZO" covers our people in the present Arakan hills, the Chin Hills, the lower and upper Chindwin of Somra tracts including the Kachin hills in Burma, the Chittangong hill tracts in Bangladesh, the hill areas of Tipperah (Tripura), the Cachar hills, the south-eastern and western hills of Manipur, and the Lushai hills, which now called Mizoram state, in India with the total area of roughly 91,000 square miles. Its ultimate objective is to reunify the ZO people under one administrative head in conformity with the resolution of the Chin-Lushai conference held at Fort William in Calcutta on January 29, 1892, attended by senior administrators of the then British-India government. The resolution reads: The whole tract of country known as the Chin-Lushai hills should be brought under one administrative head as soon as this can be done.*

where RAC made a statement that the Congress had rigged the election but did not have any ballot boxes to exhibit. That night, at about 8; 40 pm there was a bomb explosion near the residence of Saikapthianga, MLA at Republic Veng, but luckily no one was injured. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1989, five leaders of the newly formed Regional Party Action Committee (RAC) namely C. Chawngkunga, C. Vulluaia, F. Malsawma, Laltanpuia and Tuikhuahthanga were apprehended in connection with the alleged disappearance of ballot boxes. A case under section 380 IPC was made out against them for the loss of 166 ballot boxes from the custody of Government which were subsequently, found in the possession of leaders. However, this arrest led to near disorder of law and order when stones were pelted at the Police personnel following shouting of slogan “Rigging Government should resign.” There was a clash between the two parties due to this 15 persons were brought to the nearby Civil Hospital. The leaders who were being arrested were then lodged at the Central Jail that night.<sup>38</sup>

One news paper ZOENG, issue on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1989 said that one ballot box under a culvert was discovered as claimed by C. Chawngkunga. But the Chief Election Commissioner Lalmanzuala, in an interview claimed that the Government had in its possession all the ballot boxes used in the election. In the meantime, the Congress (I) proposed to hold a ‘Victory Rally’ at Aizawl on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1989. However, due to the prevailing atmosphere and the fear that such rally might only result in more disturbance as the ‘rigging’ of election climate was still on , they dropped it. They did this on the request of the Church and different social organizations. The MNF and PC then filed a case on the rigging of election against the Congress.

### **The Disappearance of PC Party**

By the middle of 1989 a new party called Democratic Party (DP) was born. In the All Regional Party Convention (ARPC) which was held on July 12<sup>th</sup> 1989 Lalkhawliana in his speech said that there was a unanimous decision to form a new regional party by abolishing the existing People’s Conference and the Mizo National Union. Brig. T. Sailo said that those who dislike Congress must all join the new party where there would be no selfish end. Lalthankunga

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<sup>38</sup> P. Lalnithanga, *Emergence of Mizoram*. Op. cit. pp192-195

remarked that the only means available to save Mizoram was in the new party since the MNF had lost all its principle. Zosiama Pachuau suggested that the new party must be name 'Democratic Party' (CDP) which was fully accepted. Brig. T. Sailo was made the President, Lalduhawma the Working President, Lalhmingthanga Sailo as Vice President and Malsawma Colney as Treasurer. The DP, in the Assembly held on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 1990, decided to merge into the Janta Dal (JD) Party. On the 27<sup>th</sup> September 1990, Dulal Chandra Barua, Janata Dal Zonal Convener inaugurated the new JD office at Aizawl. The PC office, office of the DP then become the office of the JD which complete sweep away the PC and one time much talked about policy ZORO completely disappearance.

### **The Demise of MNF President Laldenga: Great loss for Mizoram Politics**

The year 1990 continues to be not a very good year for Mizoram politics. It was on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1990 Laldenga, the founding father and President of MNF suddenly died at the London Heathrow Airport on his way to home. This was a great loss for MNF as well as Mizoram because he was a natural born politician. He was a man with such vocabulary that can win over the hearts of thousand of Mizos. He led MNF from the beginning, throughout the insurgent period and after which the party form the government under Mizoram State for the first time. He put the party in respectable position. Personally he was a man with self confidence who never made himself tamable by others even at the time of negotiation with the Indian Government.<sup>39</sup> After the death of Laldenga, Zoramthanga became the President of MNF.

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<sup>39</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> July 1990 his body reached Tuirial Airport accompanied by the family of the deceased and received by the Governor Swaraj Kausal, Council of Ministers, different political leaders and thousands of people. At the airport when the body was brought out from helicopter thousands of people weep bitterly at the passing away of the great leader. State funeral took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1990, with great honors. George Fernandes, the Railway Minister, Subodh Kant, Minister of State for Home and Ajay Singh, DY. Minister of Railway in the Central Cabinet, Lalthanhawla, Brig. T. Sailo, Lalduhawm and Zoramthanga all had attended the funeral. The crowd which had collected all along the route from the residence of Laldenga up to the burial site on the day of the funeral was unprecedented, gigantic and mammoth, as all resident of Aizawl had turned up to give their last respect to the great leader.

The absent of Laldenga is a great lost for MNF because it was during this period that the battle for political power reached its zenith between MNF and Congress. With the signing of Peace Accord MNF-Congress coalition government was formed. After six month an election was held where MNF had the upper hand. But due to defection of 8 MLA the government was dissolved and put under President Rule. In 1989 election the Congress won majority seat. In such manner, this few years after the attainment of statehood were very crucial for parties to settle themselves in Mizoram politics. Because peace and harmony had return in the state which also means the returned of a stable political atmosphere in the state. Under such condition it is important for all the parties to sell their party system in order to win as many people as they could. In such a crucial moment losing a charismatic leader like Laldenga was truly a great lost for MNF. If people were to buy what party present sell to them it was the one sold by Laldeng that majority of the people would love to buy for. Such is the leadership quality of Laldenga that made him a capable leader. With his dead many of his ideas and passion for the party's future plan were also buried with him.

### **Hmar People Conference (HPC)**

Hmar peoples living outside Mizo Hilla District took active part in MU and MNF-integration Movement. One of the main objectives of MNF and MU was the unification of all the areas inhabited by Mizo. In 1950's Hmar National Congress (HNC) was formed. In 1958 HNC and MU-Manipur merger and form Hmar National Union (HNU). HNU then demanded all the area inhabited by Hmar peoples at Manipur and Assam (including Lushai Hills) into a single administrative unit. For this they gave full support to MNF movement of independent for Mizoram. They believed that under independent Mizoram, Hmar people would also enjoy better status. However, when Peace Accord was signed between MNF and India Government, a large portion of Hmar inhabited area was left out, not only this the Hmar people in Mizoram did not get what they expected from Laldenga government and the ministry that followed.

In 1986, after signing Peace Accord, Hmar in Mizoram formed Mizoram Hmar Association (MHA) which was later converted into Hmar People Conference (HPC). The HPC

then spearheaded a political movement for self government of the Hmar's in Mizoram in line with Autonomous District Council of Lai, Mara and Chakma. In 1989, HPC to attain their demand organized a band at Sailutar. To counter them the state government sends MAP where many people including non-member of HPC were severely tortured by security force. This had awakened the leader of HPC, as a result of which an armed wing the Hmar Volunteer Cell (HVC) was formed. On May 16<sup>th</sup> 1989, at Moniarkhai, in Cachar district, the first encounter of HVC with MAP took place where 2 HVC and 1 MAP personnel lost life. This encounter continued till 1990's.

By the year 1991, the Hmar People Conference (HPC) envying the achievement of Autonomous Districts of Chakmas, Lakhers and Pawi also made a demand for autonomous council by carrying arms. A clash between Mizoram Police and HPC had taken place. The HPC did whatever means to give headache to Mizoram government. This sometimes led to feeling of instability among the people because the HPC were carrying arms. It also led to political instability at one time which however calmed down after a short while. This trend is also important even in Mizoram political history. Because it indicates that though the different clans of Mizo seem to be united under the umbrella of 'Mizo' but each clan tried their best to put themselves in the best position both psychologically and politically as well. Such idealism of politics based on clans, tribes is more vulnerable among the Lakhers and Pawi and Hmar. On the 24<sup>th</sup> July 1994, an agreement was reached between the government and HPC which resulted in the creation of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) followed by surrender of all arms on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> 1994. But some members who did not want to sign the agreement continue to carry arms by taking the name HPC (Democratic).

However, till today the demand for District Council was not granted. The Government, whichever party is in power did not want to offer such demand because they were afraid that it would only lead to the demand of the same by other Mizo tribes for example the Paite community near the border of Manipur. And the district council is an instrument of division and separatist feelings among the different tribes as seen from the Lakhers and Pawi who used their

own dialect instead of Mizo (Duhlian). Sometimes they even addressed themselves as Lai or Mara not Mizo.

### **Defection: Problem of the past and present**

Defection is not a new trend in Mizoram politics. In 1993 assembly election Congress won majority seats. Five MLA's who returned on MNF ticked in the election held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1993 from Lunglei and Chhimtuipui Districts namely, H. Lalruata (made Cabinet Minister), L. P. Thangzika F. Lalzuala (made Deputy Chief whip of Congress (I) , Zakhu Hlychho, T. Hranghluta defected to Congress (I). Two independent MLA's H.Zathuama and Rokhuma from Suangpuilawn and Tuipang Constituencies also respectively joined Congress (I); since they were made Chairman of MIZOFED and MIFCO respectively.<sup>40</sup> From this we see that not necessary fro party ideology or belief but for better status many MLA's did not hesitate to betray their party. It is also a part of the strategy of the ruling party to gather in some of the MLA's of the opposition party. By doing this they had weakened the bond of the opposition party and further strengthened their majority rule. This is not a new trend; it is now a part and parcel of party system in Mizoram. An attempt was made by the MNF to disqualify the defected MLA's but their efforts proved to be of no avail.

After this election we see the formation of coalition government between the JD and Congress. But just as the coalition that we've seen in the earlier period this coalition Government also did not last long. After a few months Lalhmingthanga, Finance Minister and H. Thankima, Minister of State was sacked. Meanwhile, other two JD ministers namely C. Chawngkunga and Zosiama Pachuau formal joined the Congress (I) and got themselves firmly entranced in the Ministry. Later on, the three remaining JD Ministers of State namely C. Vulluaia, Hrangthanga Colney and F. Lawmkima were also dropped from the Ministry.

In the meantime, the opposition MNF was also not free from its internal problem. The election of the party office bearer in March 1997 resulted in the emergence of a splinter group

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<sup>40</sup> P. Lalnithanga, Emergence of Mizoram. Op. cit. p241



led by Lalduhawma who formation MNF (Nationalist) Party. But in 1998 Parliamentary election as experience before, two heavyweight opposition parties MNF and MPC (Mizoram Peoples Conference) put up a joint candidate Dr. Lallungmuana a Lecturar in Pachhunga University College. In this election Dr. Lallungmuana won the election against rival Congress by only a margin of 40 votes which many analysts believed was due to the anti-incumbency feeling towards the Congress (I).

### **Coalition among opposition parties: A common scene in Mizoram politics**

Following their success in the Lok Sabha election, MNF and MPC agreed to fight Legislative Assembly Election on a joint platform. The fourth Legislative Assembly Election of Mizoram was held on 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1998 in which the combination of MNF and MPC bagged power convincingly. This victory is followed by the formation of MNF-MPC coalition Government. The 1998 election was one of the most peaceful elections Mizoram had ever experienced. The credit for such calm and peaceful atmosphere goes to the Church and social organization like YMA made utmost appealed for peace and efficient handling of election by the Election Commission despite the fervent and vehement characteristics of campaign lunched by different political parties.<sup>41</sup>

Out of the total of 40 seats MNF-MPC secured 33 seats which is absolute majority. The Congress won only 6 seats, while Lalthanhawla and all his Cabinet rank Ministers had lost the election. The MNF (Nationalist) Party including its President Lalduhawma also failed to return any of its candidates. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1998 the new MNF-MPC Ministry was sworn in with Zoramthanga, MNF President, as the Chief Minister, and Lalhmingthanga, Working President MPC as Deputy Chief Minister.

With the coming into power by the MNF and MPC, there was a vigilibility of relief on the face of the common people at large irrespective of party affiliations. The growing gap between the haves and the haves not's, absence of economic opportunities for the common man

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<sup>41</sup> P. Lalnithanga, Emergence of Mizoram. Op. cit. p243

particularly those outside the fold of the ruling Congress (I) party, unrestrained nepotism and favoritism flagrantly practiced by those in authority creating in public mind that government was only for those people in the ruling party and not for others, total neglect of economic growth and prosperity of the cultivator who constituted the majority bulk of the population-all seemed to have contributed to the debacle suffered by the ruling Congress (I) in the Assembly Election. The result also indicated the futility of money power in elections in the ultimate analysis.

The task of the new Ministry was not that easy. It had inherited an empty coffer and debts to the tune of over 400crores of rupees and liabilities to be cleared amounting to over Rs.60 crores. The financial position of the state as a matter of fact was in shameless. According to the Finance Commission, the above debt and liabilities have to be met within the current 1998-99 budget. The new Ministry is therefore confronted with a formidable financial problem of gigantic character at the very outset before it could launch itself in developmental works of basic nature for future growth and prosperity. The Ministry put top priority on sufficiency on food grains. It also made efforts about the generation of sufficient power from the local rivers by drawing up appropriate schemes and projects in this direction.

### **Conspiracy within coalition parties and Rivalry of the MNF**

But, soon the MNF-MPC coalition government ended on 9<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1999 after a year and six days. This was the result of the discovery of the plan of the MPC and Congress to work together on the coming Village Council election to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1999, so as to weaken the MNF and form MPC-Congress Ministry. Faced with this the Chief Minister had no other choice but to politely ask the five MPC Ministers to resign. The resignation of the MPC MLA's made a way for the formation of pure MNF Government. Accordingly, on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2000 the new MNF ministry was formed. As stated above the first task of the Government was to stabilize the financial problem. For this they had to make sure that the ever opening of the Treasury and regular withdrawal of salaries by Government employees. For this the Chief Minister had to fly down to Delhi to confer with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to apprise them of the financial condition faced by Mizoram. He did this extremely well due to

which the Government had soon put the state to a considerable condition within short time period.

### **Performance of MNF**

Another important achievement of the new Ministry was the setting up of the Central University in Mizoram. They did this with the intention of improving the standard of education. In terms of power generation also, the new Ministry took up projects like Kolodyne Hydel Project Phase-I (120 MW) involving Rs.804 crores, Bairabi Hydel Project (80 MW) costing Rs.429 crores, Kolodyne Phase-II (400 MW), Tuivawl (60 MW) were expected to be ready in the year 2010. The project for setting up of Referral Hospital at Falkawn is also taken during the ministry of the MNF.

One remarkable thing that happened during MNF Ministry was the reward of Peace Bonus amounting of Rs.182.45 crores to Mizoram by the Central Government. The award was announced by the Prime Minister Vajpayee at the Conference of Governors and Chief Ministers of the North Eastern State in January 2000 at Shillong. Mizoram received the reward for keeping and maintaining peace in the state successfully. The reward also brings with it the sanction of at least Rs.50 crores from the Non-Lapsable Pool to be made available for five consecutive years. It was hoped that all these would greatly help in improving the financial position of the state which was a great relief for the state Government.

### **Return of MNF into power**

The good performance of the MNF once again let them to victory in the Fifth Legislative Assembly election held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2003. On the whole the election was taking place under peaceful atmosphere except in Suangpuilawn Constituencies where the three candidates of the three parties, were kidnapped by unidentified persons with arms. They were, however, abandoned and left to themselves by the kidnapper without any harms carrying out on them.

### **Introduction of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)**

In this election, also, for the first time in the history of Mizoram Elections, the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was used for casting votes. After the counting of votes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2003, the MNF captured the largest number of 21 seats, Congress 12 and MPC-ZNP Combine 5 seats. The Mara Democratic Front (MDF) also returned their President P. P. Thawla from Tuipang Constituency. He later signified his support of the MNF Ministry at the behest of his party and became a Minister of State in the new Ministry.

Even after the swearing in of the new Ministry the Suangpuilkawn drama still continued. The EVM from the Constituency was sent down to Delhi for counting. After the votes were counted H. Lalsangzuala an Independent candidate got elected. But the YMA claimed that election in this constituency did not take place under peaceful atmosphere and therefore, the candidate who got elected must resign after the swearing in ceremony. But no resignation or stepping down of any MLA was ever done.

### **Change of Government: Return of the Congress Party and its performance**

However, in the last two Assembly Election, 2008/2013 the Congress dominated the elections. The MNF claimed the anti-incumbency feeling as the major factor for their defeat in the 2008 election. But in the 2013 election in spite of high hope from the MNF-MPC coalition, the Congress captured much more seats than in the previous election. Many people gave the credit for the Congress success was due to the introduction of NLUP (New Land Use Policy). This programme was meant to provide financial and material support to those unemployed citizens who do not have the capital to start their own occupation. The programme had benefited many people by providing them with a source of livelihood. But there are also cases of misuse of the free money and material provided by the government. However, in the overall, this programme is a key for the Congress to harvest votes in the election. Majority of the voters who lived outside the district capital were relying on daily labor for livelihood. For this people, a help with Rs.100,000 is like a heaven fall. But to get this money they must support the Congress party in one way or another. However, by the end of 2008-13 term, the money was also

distributed to the non Congress members. But this was also another scheme of the party to win the heart of those people so that they could get more votes in the next election. And this worked very well that the Congress in the 2013 election captured 32 seats out of 40. After the election was over, it is also clear that the Congress did well in the urban area in comparison to the rural area.

Though in the mainland India, the withering of national outlook and emergence of regional politics became popular, but this is not true with Mizoram. Before, people were more inclined towards regional politics like MU and MNF. But now, people did not hesitate to cast their vote to Congress party because they saw satisfaction in the party policy. They did not care for local or regional issues but cared for the best policy for the people. But one thing is also clear that in Mizoram, though some parties consider themselves as regional parties they always wanted to have connection with other national party. For example, the MU, being the foremost party in Mizoram had been considered as totally regional. But the party maintained links with the Congress for a long time which in the end in 1974 fully decided to merger with MPCC. The case of MNF is also not different. The party fought for the Mizos by taking arms with the slogan, “Mizoram for the Mizos”. But after turning itself into political party and holding power, it maintained strong ties with BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party). So, we can say that the Mizo people are not so stranger from regional politics as well. Today, it seems that they are more prone towards national politics having regional issues as agenda as they gave absolute majority to the only national party the Congress after completing five years time to continue for another five years. Besides, some prominent politicians like J.V. Hluna who was earlier with MPC recently had joined BJP. But this could be also due to the fact that the national parties too tend to become more and more regional in their out look.

### **Shifting of Ideologies by Parties**

One important factor that differentiates the past elections from the last Legislative Elections (2013) in Mizoram is economic issue. Before, every party used the slogan of unifying Mizos living in different part and other local importance. But in this election all the parties put

forward economic policies as their major theme of campaign. The Congress proudly put forward NLUP, which they did successfully for the past five years.<sup>42</sup> The MNF put up SADP; likewise the MPC and ZNP also put up their own economic policies.<sup>43</sup> This shows that the electorate was really becoming aware of the policies and programmes of the parties. They did not want to see those false promises from political parties that could not be achieved in reality. This was responded very well by the parties and they did to go beyond the strict ideological framework of the party. Though it is a slow start, this is a good sign for the growth of party system in the future. Because in this post-modern world, we cannot continue to stick ourselves with those ideology of the 1990's. We need to move forward and this we achieved very well. With the growth of technology and information, majority of the people are now politically educated which make the politicians also need to become more active and practical.

With the passage of time, Mizoram had given birth to more and more political parties. Even-though new parties had come and gone almost all the political parties had almost similar ideologies. We have discussed in this chapter, only those parties which had impact in election. But besides this there are also many parties who have mostly with electoral success:<sup>44</sup>

Mara Freedom Party (MFP) founded on April 1963 and merged with Congress Party in 1980.

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<sup>42</sup> Mizoram Pradesh Congress Election Manifesto 2013

NLUP is an integrated & comprehensive planning and implementation of the same to translate into action the vision of the Government to make "New Mizoram", through Transformation Development Model Objectives of NLUP: • Making of a new Mizoram (Zoram Thar) through socio-economic transformation development. • To wean away farmers from Jhuming practices to adopt sustainable on farm and off farm economic activities. • To introduce commercial farming in lieu of subsistence farming/cultivation • To restore ecological balance through rejuvenation of forest cover, improvement of surface and water management, introduction of new forest and land management system. • To create food security for all • To improve income level of Urban and Rural poor through sustainable farming activities, Micro enterprise & Cottage industries. • Security of farmers: Crop/animal/farmers insurance and introduction of hand-holding policy between farmers and industries, in lieu of contract/captive farming. • Protection of land for the farmers and the community.

<sup>43</sup> Mizo National Election Manifesto 2013, Zoram Nationalist Party Election Manifesto 2013.

SEDP is a flagship programme of MNF. It mainly focus on proper utilization of land by promising Rs. 4000 every month to each beneficiary. Using this money the beneficiaries would choose a trade of their choice whether farming, crop plantation, fisheries, business, dairy farming, piggeries, poultry farming, sericulture, oil palm farming, rubber cultivation or many more, they would start their business. With this self sufficiency in agriculture production, meat supply, and a standard livelihood for many people would be achieved. Not only had this under this scheme the government would also under taken road, railway, sea root and air way construction. It would also fine a market for those farmers to sell their production. E scheme also cover an opportunity for student to apply for a loan with special subsidy. With this they hope that the economy of Mizoram be become self reliable.

<sup>44</sup> Lalhmachhuana Zofa, Mizoram Political Records, Diktawn Press, Aizawl. 2013. pp.24- 28

Chin National Front (CNF) founded on 1963 also merged with Congress Party in 1980  
Socialist Party of India (SPI) founded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 but did not last long  
Mizo National Union (MNU) founded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Dec, 1971  
Mizo Inzawmkhawm Pawl (MIP) founded in 1971  
Mizo Labor Party (MLP) founded in 1972  
United Pang People's Party (UPPP) founded on the 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 1974 as an instrument for demanding Pang autonomy. But neither the party nor their demand was successful.  
Mizo Democratic Front founded in April 1976  
Mizo Peace Forum (MPF) founded by ZNP and MSU on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1983  
Lairam Congress Party (LCP) founded in 1992 at Lawngtlai  
Bharat Janata Party (BJP) came to Mizoram on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Feb, 1993  
Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) founded in 1997 at Saiha

These parties do not have much impact in election, but they also had important contribution for the growth of party system. Especially, those parties in the southern sides inside Lai and Mara District Council played important role. In 2013 election also we saw new parties like ZTD (Zoram Thar Duhtute) and Aam Admi Party headed by a retired IAS officer L. Sailo and Lalmanzuala. But whatever is the scenario, it is clear from the above that, though a number of parties had fought the election, only two parties were the main competitors for power since district council era till today. It is important to note that election result of the past gave the message that electorates of Mizoram had endorsed a two party system to dominate the political scene. Another important thing is that the strongest opposition parties always make an alliance with other weaker opposition parties in the elections. Because, an alliance may help to score more seats than fighting alone.

Coalition politics is also another reason for instability and uncertainty of party system in Mizoram. In Mizoram we see a coalition government more than twice i.e., between the PC and the Congress and MNF and MPC as well. But so far as we see, this coalition could not last for a very long time. Within a few moments, there emerged friction between the two parties. This

further resulted into winding down of the government. A new election was to be conducted, which meant spending extra money and man power. It affects not only the election but also the economy. Therefore, we need a party which can gather the support of the majority in an election so that we can avoid those extra expenses. But till date, those parties in opposition still consider this system of coalition among them to be the best means to overthrow the government and put themselves in position of forming power. This to some critics was also the only reason why the Congress party returns to power with more than absolute majority. Because, if the opposition party do not have the courage to fight alone, the people will soon lose confidence on them. As soon as the strongest opposition party takes decision to go solo even though they are in the opposition we will have a stable party system i.e., two party system which seems to have begun. So, considering all the above discussion, party system in Mizoram grows to a remarkable extent after the elevation to UT till today. It had experienced a single party system under the Congress then into a two-party system with the coming of the PC in power. It also experienced coalition politics, defections and other dramas as we have discussed. All these we can say were important characteristics of Mizoram party system and Mizoram politics at large.



## **Chapter-IV: Political process in Mizoram-National and Regional Party**

In the previous two chapters, we had discussed how political parties and party system had emerged. We also talk about how the two party systems set its root in Mizoram politics since District Council periods till date. In this chapter we shall have a close study of the performance of political parties in the last three general elections i.e., 2003, 2008 and 2013 Legislative Assembly Election, and also 2004, 2009 and 2014 Member of Parliament election. The performance of political parties in these elections would tell us the true nature of political process in Mizoram.

In 1998 election MNF party won a land slide victory. This victory ended the reign of Congress government who suffered many bad reputations at the eve of their last ministry. The corrupt and miss deeds of the government led the people suffered for the past several years. The people expressed their reluctant by casting their votes against the government in the election. This will give them another prospect to have a fresh start under a new government. The wish of the people was fulfilled when the Congress lost the election to Mizo National Front. The people had high expectation that under the new government many new improvement and development would be undertaken. The new government successively proof themselves by fulfilling the wishes of the people. They had rescued and rehabilitated the financial position which was at the brink of turmoil. In term of administration also the government had eliminated many of the corrupt and evil practices which were domesticated in the past ministry. The good performance of the government had placed them into a good position for the coming election.

### **2003 Assembly Election**

Since the tenure of the Fourth Legislative Assembly of Mizoram tend to expire on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2003 the Election Commissioner (EC) issued a notification that 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2003 must be the date for the Fifth Legislative Assembly election in Mizoram. The EC also fixed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2003 would be the date for counting votes. The parties who contested in this election are Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Indian National

Congress (INC), Mizo National Front (MNF), Mizo Peoples Conference (MZPC), Mizo Nationalist Party (ZNP), Ephraim Union (EU), Hmar People Conference (HPC), Janata Dal JD(U), Maraland Democratic Front (MDF). Table 1.1 shows the allotment of symbol to different parties.

Table 1.1

**SYMBOLS ALLOTTED TO PARTIES**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Symbol</b>
BJP	Lotus
CPI	Ears of Corn and Sickle
INC	Hand
MNF	Star
MZPC	Electric Bulb
ZNP	Sun without rays
EU	Table
HPC	Hat
JD (U)	Arrow
MDF	Aeroplane

Source: *Statistical Handbook, Reports on Fifth General Election to the Legislative Assembly, 2003.*

## Summary of Party Manifesto

### *Mizo National Front:*

We can summarize the Manifesto put up by MNF party into nine points:

1. Political: Under this, the party first focuses on the unification of Mizos resident in different parts of Manipur, Tripura, Myanmar and Mizoram. Then it talks about protection of customs and culture of the Mizo. The Party also promises to take steps for solving border problems with other states.
2. Economics: Under this point the party objectives were (a) economically self sufficient (b) exploration of rich natural resources (c) giving assistance financial and belonging to poor citizens (d) helping farmers for increasing their production and find a good market for them. (e) Building good border trades (f) privatization of farms for good (g) proper utilization funds and money coming from the central.
3. Administration: (a) forming a good and reliable government (b) administrative reform (c) fighting illegal business (d) eradication of corruption
4. Social: (a) building good cooperation with Church and NGO's (b) compensation for elderly people and physically handicapped persons (c) fighting drugs and alcohols
5. Youth Commission: (a) working for youth development (b) providing incentives for person who do well in sports (c) building more road, railways and air ways (d) tourism (e) sufficient health care scheme for rural and urban areas (f) financial and infrastructural development of Mizoram University (g) completion of Referral Hospital
6. Industries: (a) proper utilization of goods within the state to generate more production (b) generate more Handloom and Handicraft industries
7. Farmer: (a) finding market for their production (d) assist them to generate more production
8. Employment Generation: helping more youth to enter in the field of engineer, medical and army.
9. Press and Journalist: protecting rights and freedom of the press.

### ***Congress:***

We can summarize Congress manifesto as follow:

1. Political: Unification of areas inhabited by Mizos. Solving border fencing problems and protection of social, customs and culture of Mizo.
2. Infrastructure: (a) prepare all the Hydro project in Mizoram to generate 2196 MW which it is capable of (b) build a solar power plan (c) building transportable roads between state, town, district and villages (d) construction of rail road, sea roots and air transport (e) exploration of natural resources
3. New Land Use Policy: This is meant to help farmers who lack capital to start. The scheme will also cover many other projects where a person will be given assistance in terms of finance or kind.
4. Creating Youth Welfare Commission, Youth Welfare and Development Corporation, Coaching Central and Sainik School
5. Sport and Youth Development: Providing incentives for person doing well in sport and education.
6. Anti-Corruption Wing to eradicate corruption
7. Proper utilization of Finance
8. Urban development
9. Employment Generation
10. Good Health Care Scheme

### ***MPC & ZNP:***

1. Mizo Nationalism: unification of Mizo residing in different part
2. Solving border issue
3. Inner Line Permit
4. Agriculture: finding good market for farmer
5. Eradication of corruption
6. Preparing budget to suit financial needs of Mizoram
7. Reform education and social life.

With the above allotted symbols and manifestos each party put up a candidate of their own in the election. Table 1.2 shows the performance of political parties in the election.

Table 1.2

THE PERFORMANCE OF DIFFERENT PARTIES

Sl No.	Party	No. of seats Contested	No. of Seat won	Votes polled	Percentage %
1.	Bhartiya Janata Party	8	Nil	7823	1.87
2.	Communist Party of India	4	Nil	124	0.03
3.	Indian National Congress	40	12	125690	30.06
4.	Mizo National Front	39	21	132507	31.69
5.	Mizoram People's Conference	28	3	67576	16.16
6.	Zoram Nationalist Party	27	2	61466	14.70
7.	Ephraim Union	3	Nil	108	0.03
8.	Hmar People's Convention	1	1	2195	0.05
9.	Janata Dal (United)	28	Nil	1879	0.45
10.	Maraland Democratic Front	2	1	8146	1.95
11.	Independent	12	Nil	10599	2.53

*Source: Statistical Handbook, Reports on Fifth General Election to the Legislative Assembly, 2003.pp-74*

Election was conducted on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2003 between 7AM to 4PM. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2003 votes were counted from 8AM in the morning. The above figure shows how each party won seats. In this election there were 200 man and 7 women who field nomination.

Out of which 2 men withdraw their nomination paper and 13 men were rejected by Election Commissioner. So, 192 candidates fight election out of which 7 were women. The Constituency was divided into 40 seats.

In this election for the first time in the history of Mizoram election an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) manufactured by ECIL was introduced. For this an intensive state wide awareness campaign was conducted in all 798 polling stations. A total of 1500 EVM's was issued for the election, out of which 934 were used.

The excellent performance of MNF over the past five years put themselves into a position of exercising power once again. The party won 21 seats out of 39 seats they contested which are 52.5% of the total seats. The Congress the main rival party of the government (MNF) shows a slight improvement by wining 12 seats out of 40 which is 30.0% of the total seats. In 1998 election the Congress was able to capture only 6 seats out of 40. That is a great shame for the party who had form government for the past 10 years. But now the party slowly adjust themselves by correcting their past mistakes. The election result shows that once again the party started to win the confidence of the people. But they still needs more time to seize the position of power. ZNP a new regional party headed by Lalduhawma (former MNF Nationalist) won two seats while another regional party MZPC which once form the government shows a sign of decline. In 1998 election MZPC party secure 12 seats but now they capture only 3 seats. This is a great set back for the party prospect. Because instead of gaining more seats the party loss more seats after each elections.

A regional party from Mara Autonomous District Council MDF (Mara Democratic Front) also won one seat out of two seats it contested. Many independent candidates were also trying their best to fill up MLA seats. But the election result reveals that the people prefer a party having well displayed manifestos with credible plans and programme for future development. Accordingly, the electorate of Mizoram once again gave majority votes to MNF party whom they consider best fit to take over the administration for another five years term. In other words,

the people still believed that MNF government had much more development and progress work to deliver to Mizoram. Table 1.3 indicates the list of successful candidates with their constituencies.

Table 1.3

LIST OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES IN 2003 ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN MIZORAM

Sl. No.	CONSTITUENCY	WINNER	SEX	PARTY
1.	TUIPANG (ST)	P. P. THAWLA	M	MDF
2.	SAIHA (ST)	S. HIATO	M	INC
3.	SANGAU (ST)	H. RAMMAWIA	M	MNF
4.	LAWNGTLAI (ST)	H. VANLALTHALIANA	M	MNF
5.	CHAWNGTE (ST)	RASIK MOHAN CHAKMA	M	MNF
6.	TLABUNG (ST)	NIHAR KANTI	M	INC
7.	BUARPUI (ST)	ZODINTLUANGA	M	INC
8.	LUNGLEI SOUTH	LALHMINGLIANA	M	MZPC
9.	LUNGLEI NORTH (ST)	DR. R. LALTHANGLIANA	M	MNF
10.	TAWIPUI (ST)	Z. H. ROPUIA	M	MNF
11.	VANVA (ST)	C. LALRINSANGA	M	MNF
12.	HNAHTHIAL (ST)	F. LALTHANZUALA	M	MZPC
13.	NORTH VANLAIPHAI (ST)	D. THANGLIANA	M	MNF
14.	KHAWBUNG (ST)	K. VANLALAUVA	M	MNF
15.	CHAMPHAI (ST)	ZORAMTHANGA	M	MNF
16.	KHAWHAI (ST)	LALRINLIANA SAILO (ST)	M	INC
17.	SAITUAL (ST)	R. LALZIRLIANA	M	INC
18.	KHAWZAWL (ST)	ANDREW LALHERLIANA	M	ZNP
19.	NGOPA (ST)	H. ROHLUNA	M	INC
20.	SUANGPUILAWN (ST)	H. LALSANGZUALA	M	HPC

21.	RATU (ST)	LALDUHAWMA	M	ZNP
22.	KAWNPUI (ST)	SAILOTHANGA SAILO	M	MZPC
23.	KOLOSIB (ST)	ZORAMTHANGA	M	MNF
24.	BILKHAWTHLIR (ST)	LALCHAMLIANA	M	MNF
25.	LOKICHERRA (ST)	TAWNLUAI	M	MNF
26.	KAWRTHAT (ST)	SAIKAPTHIANGA	M	INC
27.	MAMIT (ST)	LALTHLENGLIANA	M	MNF
28.	PHULDUNGSEI (ST)	LIANSUAMA	M	INC
29.	SATEEK (ST)	B. LALTHLENGLIANA	M	MNF
30.	SERCHHIP (ST)	LAL THANHAWLA	M	INC
31.	LUNGPHO (ST)	K. LIANZUALA	M	INC
32.	TLUNGVEL (ST)	SAINGHAKA	M	INC
33.	AIZAWL NORTH-I (ST)	DR. LALZAMA	M	MNF
34.	AIZAWL NORTH-II (ST)	H. LIANSAILOVA	M	INC
35.	AIZAWL EAST-I (ST)	K. SANGTHUAMA	M	MNF
36.	AIZAWL EAST-II (ST)	H. VANLALAUVA	M	MNF
37.	AIZAWL WEST-I (ST)	AICHHINGA	M	MNF
38.	AIZAWL WEST-II (ST)	LALRINCHHANA	M	MNF
39.	AIZAWL SOUTH-I (ST)	R. TLANGHMINGTHANGA	M	MNF
40.	AIZAWL SOUTH-II (ST)	R. KHAWPUITHANGA	M	MNF

Source: *Handbook, Reports on Fifth General Election to the Legislative Assembly, 2003 pp-7*

The fifth Legislative Election in Mizoram took place under a peaceful atmosphere except in Suangpuilawn Constituency. On the eve of election the three candidates of the three parties MNF, MPC and Congress, from this constituency were kidnapped by unidentified persons with arms. This incident was used by the parties to counter against each other at the last minute of their campaign. All blame each other that such drama was conducted by other parties for gaining



the support of more voters in the coming election. However, soon after the election was over, this blaming drama also faded away.

### **2003 Lok Sabha Election**

The General Election to the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha from 1-Mizoram (ST) Parliamentary Constituency from and Bye-Election to Mizoram Legislative Assembly from 23-Kolosib (ST) Assembly Constituency were held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2004 as per the schedule drawn by the Election Commission of India. In this election Electronic Voting Machine was used for voting. List of Contesting Candidates with party affiliation are Lalzawmliana (MNF), Tlangdingliana (EU) and Dr Laltluangliana Khiangte an Independent Supported by Mizoram Secular Force Consisting of INC, MZPC and ZNP

In this election there were 798 polling station. In this Lok Sabha election 63.37% of the electorate exercises their franchise. In terms of numerable 349799 voters cast their vote out of which 175372 were male and 170000 were female and 4427 votes come from postal voting. Table 2 highlights the performance of parties in the Lok Sabha election

For the first time in the history of Mizoram a simultaneous election were held in 23-Kolosib (ST) Assembly Constituency, along with the General Election of the Lok Sabha. Bye-Election was held as a result of the vacancy caused by resignation of Zoramthanga who was elected from two Assembly Constituencies of the State Assembly Election conducted in November 2003.

Table 2.1

## PERFORMANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ELECTION

Sl No.	Parties & Candidates	No. of Seat	Seat won	Total Valid Votes polled	Percentage (%)
1.	National Party	Nil			
2.	State Party Lalzawmliana (MNF)	1	1	182864	52.48
3.	Entered Unrecognised Party Tlangdingliana (EU)	1	0	6512	1.87
4.	Others Ind. Supported by INC, MZPC & ZNP Dr. Laltluanglaian Khiangte	1	0	159170	45.67

Source: *Statistical Handbook 2004, Reports on General Election of Lok Sabha from 1-Mizoram (ST) Parliamentary Constituency & By-Election to Mizoram Legislative Assembly form 23-Kolosib (ST) Assembly Constituency.p-24*

As scheduled by the Election Commissioner Bye-Election to 23-Kolosib (ST) Assembly Election was conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2004. Only two candidates K. Lalrinliana (MNF) and C. Lalbiakthanga Independent had filed nomination. K. Lalrinlaina (MNF) won the only seat by capturing 6113 votes which is 55.9%.

In the above two elections the MNF and Congress party was the two contender for power. Though other parties also fought the election, they were not in a position to decide the faith of the government. In terms of policy and manifesto formulation also, Congress and MNF preceded all the other parties. This is clear from the fact that it was after reading party manifesto that the educated and uneducated voters cast their votes. Due to this party had to frame their policy in such a way to best suit both the people living in rural and urban area.

It was the Congress who's closest to the leading party MNF by winning 12 seats out of 40. But they are half way less in number to equal the winning party. However, being in the opposition we can not deny that getting 12 seats is not a very bad performance whilst the government had completed only one term. Therefore, the Fifth Legislative Election and 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election in Mizoram was a two way fight election i.e., between MNF and MPCC. In other words, though other parties also played active role in election; majority of the electorate in Mizoram decides to give their valuable votes either to MNF or Congress. This also means that keeping asides other parties, the Mizo people have more confidence in Congress (National party) or MNF (leading Regional party) to take over the state administration. In this manner, 2003 MLA election and 2004 MP election was dominated by a competition between a national party (Congress) and Regional party (MNF).

In the meantime the Congress party also faces some crisis within the party during this period (2003-08). There was a war of leadership among the top ranking leaders. Some of the party members wanted to overthrow Lalthanhawla from the President of MPCC. This resulted into the splitting of the party into two, MPCC and MCP. Saikapthianga MLA and Liansuama took side with MCP. In 2008 election the MCP works together with MNF, giving an indirect support in the election.

### **Performance of MNF Government**

During (2003-2008) Mizoram Legislative Assembly term border issues, Look East Policy, World Bank Road and Baffacos were the headlines of the government. MNF in their manifesto put up many promises to deliver to the people if they ever get the chance to govern another five years term. In their manifesto the party states that it would protect the culture and custom of Mizos. It also talks about unification of Mizo's staying in different parts of Manipur, Tripura, Myanmar and Mizoram. However, unification of Mizo's residing in different part is just a fraud promises that would never take place in actuality. On border issue, the government makes a vow that proper settlement would be soon established. But throughout their ministry they can not come out with any reliable resolution. Till today even under the Congress ministry

we still have border issues with neighboring state like Assam. It also promises to give a better living standard for those people whose living condition were much laborious then others. But no much action was taken by the government. The government in their manifesto also mentions about privatization of some enterprises controlled by the government. This was meant to curb the loss of public money spending on such enterprises; because they did not make any profit, but it was never realized. In terms of resource mobilization also, the government is a total failure, the government dreams to extent Referral Hospital was completed only after the Congress came into power.

However, the ministry is not a total failure; despite many drawbacks the government also delivers many progress and development to the state. In terms of industries the government had taken up many developmental projects. It provides financial support and gave training to many youth to develop a skill that would earn them livelihood. One of the major projects under taken by the government was to have a Bamboo Industry that would deliver one of the finest productions which is exportable. This would generate employment as well as the state capital. Progress was also seen in agriculture, sericulture and horticulture department. The government also encourages the cultivation of silk worm in order to generate more silk. During the MNF ministry a full department of Information Technology was set up. Compared with the last Congress Ministry under MNF government developmental works can be seen with the naked eyes. In terms of electricity supply more people received more power supply. The government also took utmost steps to supply clean drinking water to urban areas which they successfully had accomplished. They also build many water storage tanks in rural area to provide healthy drinking water.

But, on the other side, in administration reform and anti-corruption the government is a total failure. By the end of their ministry the government had many bad reputations particularly in corruption. Health Care Scheme where one of the Minister used public money for investment in a bank. Building expensive jhum house or resort by seizing public money and many other

miss used of finance. Besides this the anti-incumbency feelings among the voters after ten years of ruling decides the result of the coming election.

### **2008 Assembly Election**

As the tenure of the Fifth Legislative Assembly drawn close to its expiry date the Election Commissioner on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008 issued a notification that election for the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly should be conduct on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008.

Soon after the date for election was announced by the Election Commissioner every party kept themselves busy to face the coming election. Parties are trying their level best to offer the best manifesto and policy to win over the heart of the electorates. In other words, as one of the Chief Minister said the parties were competing each other to frame the most attractive manifesto for the people which were on the other hand never to be realized. Let's take out some of the important point the political parties listed in their manifesto

### **United Democratic Alliance**

United Democratic Alliance was an alliance form by three party MPC, ZNP and Zoram Kuthnathawktu Pawl (a farmer body). The three parties made an agreement to fight together the coming election under one umbrella. Immediately after formation the party (UDA) generates a huge wave among the middle class as well as labor/working class. Especially in those rural areas where cultivation was the main source of livelihood they received complete support. Some important points they've put up in their manifesto were:<sup>45</sup>

1. To give, 'MIPUI SAWRKAR DIK TAK' (a truly people's government).
2. Then they talk about Decentralization of power by introducing Panchayati Raj system in rural areas and Municipal Council in urban area in a more effective ways.
3. Making state Anti-Corruption Bureau more powerful.
4. To protect and safeguard the freedom and rights of the press.
5. To create a scheme for buying, selling, stocking and financial support for farmers.

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<sup>45</sup> UDA Election Manifesto 2008, ' *Sawrkar Dik Tak Kan Ram Tan,*' pp.1-10

6. To build a collection centre for them and to prepare a Cash-crop zone to increase production.
7. To have a separate High Court for Mizoram.
8. Women and children upliftment.
9. Building more dams to generate electricity.
10. Using Tlabung and Zokhawthar as a trade link with Bangladesh and Myanmar.
11. Utilization of Medicinal Plant for medical purposes.
12. Good Health Care Scheme,
13. To give preference to those family without government service among family member at times of employment generation.
14. A policy for those who did well in different discipline of sports
15. A policy of internship with western educational institution etc.

### **Mizoram Pradesh Congress (MPC)**

Unlike UDA Congress decided to go solo in this election. The party this time gain more confidence that there's higher chance to win the election. Another advantage of the Congress is also that at the Central there's change of government the INC had came into power. In terms of financial support also, MPCC had no worries anymore. They would by no means get full support from the Central Government. Some important point the party puts up in its manifesto are:<sup>46</sup>

1. Good governance for the people of Mizoram.
2. To form an independent anti corruption body called State Vigilance Commission.
3. Making Mizoram Public Service Commission and Police force more and more independent from the legislature.
4. Decentralization of administration.
5. High Court for Mizoram.
6. Applying Separation of Judiciary.

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<sup>46</sup> *Mizoram Pradesh Congress Election Manifesto* 2008 MLZ General Election. Published by Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee Aizawl, Mizoram.pp.1-31

7. Helping for more youth to join the arm services.
8. To gave persons with disabilities their rightful place.
9. Protecting the right and welfare of women and children.
10. To take further step for the functioning of Sinlung Hills Development Council.
11. Labor welfare scheme.
12. Education Reforms Commission for rebuilding education.
13. A new world for younger generation.
14. Beside the above points there are many more such as protection of Mizo culture and customs, building a mega-hydro project to generate more power, building sea ways, rail roads and air transportation.
15. But most importantly, the introduction of New Land Use Policy. Under this scheme an assistant in terms of kind or money shall be given to the beneficiary who chose a trade of his own. This was a scheme meant to end the practice of jhum cultivation by introducing internship crops.

### **Bhartiya Janata Party**

BJP a national party, opposition at the central also decided to fight the election alone.

Some of its manifestos are:<sup>47</sup>

1. Agriculture: To help the farmer for gaining more profit from their product, also to make Mizoram self sufficient in agriculture product.
2. Health: To make a scheme so that Doctors from the city and town goes to rural areas more frequently for free service. Proper utilization of medicinal plant.
3. Road: Building more transportable roads between remote villages with city and towns.
4. Electricity: Self sufficiency in electricity. Providing electric power to all the villages as well.

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<sup>47</sup> *BHARTIYA JANATA PARTY Election Manifesto 2008*, Published by BHARTIYA JANATA PARTY General Headquarters M. G. Road, Upper Khatla, Aizawl, Mizoram.pp.1-5

5. Education: Distribution of free books. BJP will give stipend to those student above class X who study outside Mizoram.
6. Protecting the rights of women.
7. Putting Mizoram under an Autonomous District as before.
8. Distribution of 1kg of rice by Rs.3
9. Generation of employment for the unemployed youth.
10. Proper utilization of trees and bamboo for industrial purpose.

Table 3.1 highlight the parties participating in 2008 election along with the symbol allotted to them.



Table 3.1

## PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN 2008 ELECTION

Sl No.	Party	Symbol	Abbreviation
1.	Bharatiya Janata Party	Lotus	(BJP)
2.	Indian National Congress	Hand	(INC)
3.	Nationalist Congress Party	Clock	(NCP)
4.	Mizo National Front	Star	(MNF)
5.	Mizo Peoples Conference	Electric Bulb	(MPC)
6.	Mizo Nationalist Party	Sun without rays	(ZNP)
7.	Ephraim Union	Table	(EU)
8.	Hmar People Conference	Hat	(HPC)
9.	Janata Dal	Arrow	JD(U)
10.	Maraland Democratic Front	Aeroplane	(MDF)

Source: *General Election to the Sixth Mizoram Legislative Assembly, 2008 Statistical Report. Directorate of Election, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl..pp.3*

The Constituency was divided into 40 seats 39 (ST) and 1 (Gen) namely. The total number of pooling station is 1026 where average number of electorates per pooling station is 596.11. The total number of candidates was 206 out of which 9 were women and the rest 197 were male. So, we see a little improvement from women participation by adding 2 compared to the last election. However, after the election was over, 86 men and 5 women forfeited their deposits. The total number of citizen who can cast their vote number 611618 but only 503665 cast their vote of which 238273 men and 251147 were women. There were also 14245 postal votes. Table 3.2 highlights the performance of different parties in the election.

Table-3.2

ELECTION RESULT, 2008

Party	No. of elected
Indian National Congress	32
Mizo National Front	3
Mizo Peoples Conference	2
Zoram Nationalist Party	2
Maraland Democratic Front	1

Source: *General Election to the Sixth Mizoram Legislative Assembly, 2008 Statistical Report. Directorate of Election, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.P-84*

Table 3.3 highlights the list of successful candidates along with their constituencies.

Table-3.3

## CONSTITUENCY WISE RESULT, 2008

No	Constiteucy	Winner Name	Party	Votes	Runner Up	Party	Votes	Margin
1	Hachhek	Lalrinmawia Raltec	INC	6990	H.Lalenvela	MNF	4373	2617
2	Dampa	Lalrobiaka	INC	5004	Lalrintluanga Sailo	MNF	4324	680
3	Mamit	John Rotluangliana	INC	4421	Lalthlengliana	MPC	2274	2147
4	Tuirial	Hmingdailova Khangte	INC	4717	Sailothanga Sailo	MNF	3695	1022
5	Kolasib	P.C. Zoramsangliana	INC	5510	K. Lalrinliana	MNF	4462	1048
6	Serlui	K. Lalrinthanga	INC	4536	D. Thangliana	MNF	3612	924
7	Tuivawl	R.L.Pianmawia	INC	4276	Gogo Lalremtuanga	MPC	3803	473
8	Chalfilh	Chawngtinthanga	INC	4924	Lalvenhima Hmar	MNF	4381	543
9	Tawi	R.Lalzirliana	INC	4710	Lalchhandama Ralte	MNF	3499	1211
10	Aizawl North-I	R.Romawia	INC	4948	Dr. Lalzama	MPC	3911	1037
11	Aizawl North-II	H.Liansailova	INC	5207	Lalthanliana	MNF	4941	266
12	Aizawl North-IIi	Lal Thanzara	INC	4109	K.Sangthuama	MNF	3603	506
13	Aizawl East-I	R.Lalrinawma	INC	5084	F.Malsawma	MNF	3995	1089
14	Aizawl East-II	Lalsawta	INC	4794	H.Vanlalauva	MNF	3445	1349
15	Aizawl West-I	Lalduhawma	ZNP	5705	R.Tlanghmingthanga	INC	4963	742
16	Aizawl West-II	Brig. T. Sailo	MPC	4654	Zothankimi	MPC	4156	498
17	Aizawl West-IIi	R.Selthuama	INC	5233	Col. Lalchungnunga Sailo	INC	4120	1113
18	Aizawl South-I	K.Liantlinga	ZNP	4498	R.Vanlalvena	ZNP	4470	28
19	Aizawl South-II	Lt.Col. Zosangzuala	INC	5159	Denghmingthanga	MNF	4670	489
20	Aizawl South-IIi	K.S.Thanga	INC	5284	Tawnluia	MNF	4934	350

21	Lengteng	H.Rohluna	INC	4776	L.Thangmawia	ZNP	3990	786
22	Tuichang	Lalrinliana Sailo	INC	4428	Rualkhuma Hmar	MNF	3547	881
23	Champhai North	T.T.Zothansanga	INC	5699	Zoramthanga	MNF	4443	1256
24	Champhai South	Jh.Rothuama	INC	5345	Zoramthanga	INC	4287	1058
25	East Tuipui	B.Lalthlengliana	MNF	3787	H.Thangchuanga	ZNP	3320	467
26	Serchhip	Lalthanhawla	INC	4744	C. Lalramzauva	MPC	3792	952
27	Tuikum	K. Lianzuala	INC	4265	Vanlalthiana	INC	3863	402
28	Hrangturzo	Lalthansanga	MPC	4431	Ronald Sapa Tlau	ZNP	3979	452
29	South Tuipui	Lalthanhawla	INC	3772	J. Lalchhuana	MNF	3676	96
30	Lunglei North	Pc Lalthanliana	INC	4914	C. Lalrinsanga	MNF	4209	705
31	Lunglei East	Joseph Lalhimpuaia	INC	3898	Samson Zoramthanga	INC	3475	423
32	Lunglei West	Dr. R. Lalthangliana	MNF	4156	J. Lawmzuala	MNF	3433	723
33	Lunglei South	S. Laldingliana	INC	5276	Z.H Ropuaia	MNF	4235	1041
34	Thorang	Zodintluanga	INC	4442	Lalnuntluanga Sailo	MNF	2613	1829
35	West Tuipui	Nihar Kanti Chakma	INC	5052	Alak Bikash Chakma	MNF	3512	1540
36	Tuichawng	Nirupam Chakma	INC	10421	Rasik Mohan Chakma	INC	7309	3112
37	Lawngtlai West	C. Ramhluna	MNF	6086	L.H. Chhuanawma	MNF	5286	800
38	Lawngtlai East	H. Zothangliana	INC	6294	H. Rammawi	MNF	5383	911
39	Saiha	S. Hiato	INC	4772	H.C. Lalmalsawma Zasai	INC	4669	103
40	Palak	P.P. Thawla	MDF	4206	T.T. Vakhu	IND	4122	84

Source: *General Election to the Sixth Mizoram Legislative Assembly, 2008 Statistical Report.*  
*Directorate of Election, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.*

The above election result shows that the Congress had a landslide victory much more beyond expectation. In this election even the President of ruling party Zoramthanga who contested from two constituencies lost from both the constituency. Due to anti-incumbency feelings and bad performance of MNF at the end of their term the people want change. But nobody ever expected such a defeat that the ruling party able to regain only 3 seats out of 40. This shows that voters in Mizoram were politically well educated. They see the performance of the last government and they are not satisfied. When election time comes, they did not hesitate to express their desire while exercising their freedom to choose. In other words the anti nationalist party feelings had slowly disappeared. If it is for the betterment of the state and welfare of the people insides the voters no more hesitate to caste their votes for national parties. Before, national parties like Congress were considered as anti-Mizo party. The people felt more incline towards regional parties like MNF and MPC. But now things had changed, if the regional parties did not satisfy the people, they would give a chance for regional parties and vise-versa. It is the people who choose the government and dismantle them as well. Like the previous election this election was a competition between the Congress and MNF. Though MPC, ZNP and MDF were also winning some seats but taking them as a single party they were no competitor for MNF and Congress.

The Congress ministry composed of Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister and R. Lalzirliana Home Minister. Other important members were H. Liansailova, S. Hiato, P. C. Zoramsangliana, J. H. Rothuama, Lalsawta, H. Rohluna, Lalrinliana Sailo and Zodintluanga. Nihar Kanti Chakma and P. C. Lalthanliana were made Minister of State.

### **Lok Sabha Election 2009**

The Election Commissioner issued a notice the election for the 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha must be conduct before 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009. The EC then finalize 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 must be the appointed date for Lok Sabha election in Mizoram and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2009 must be the date for counting vote. In this election only two party participate Indian National Congress and National Congress party.

The Candidates are C. L. Rual (INC), Lalawmpuia Changte (NCP), Dr. H. Lallungmuana (Ind), Rualpawla (Ind)

For this election an awareness campaign was conducted on a large scale regarding the use of EVM. Both print and electronic media were also utilized to inform the importance of election to the people. Non-government organization like Church, YMA, PRISM, MPF and other NGO's are also playing an important role; checking electoral offences by parties and candidates.

After the election was over Mr. C. L. Ruala an INC candidate was declared elected second by Dr. H. Lallungmuana an Ind candidate. However, the other two candidates Lalawmpuia Chhangte and Rualpawla had forfeited their deposit. The Congress continued their good performance by wining the lone Lok Sabha seat from the Mizoram. Table 4 highlights the performance of candidates in 2009 MP election.

Table-4

PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES IN 2009 MP ELECTION

1.	C. L. Ruala	213779	65.58%
2.	Lalawmpuia Chhangte	3299	01.01%
3.	Dr. H. Lallungmuana	104824	32.16%
4.	Rualpawla	4089	01.25%

Source: *General election to 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha from 1-Mizoram Parliamentary Constituency. Statistical Report 2009, Directorate of Election Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.pp-7*

**Performance of Congress:**

The period of 2008-2013 Congress ministries is an era of NLUP. The government, the people all plunged in the pool of NLUP. Especially in those rural areas many people did not hesitate to enroll themselves as member of Congress party with the hope of getting a glimpse of NLUP. Many people benefited from this scheme but there are also some who miss used it.

The Congress under the Chief Ministership of Lalthanhawla then forms the government. The new government immediately takes up the issue of NLUP which they campaign so hardily in their election manifesto. Under this scheme the government gave support to many farmers and small business owners. The amount of project beneficiary was fixed at 100,000. The scheme also includes the distribution of auto, cow, pigs, fisheries, chicks and financial support to some beneficiaries who did not have the capital to start business. The aim of the scheme is to give all beneficiaries in the state suitable, permanent and stable trades. The government covered Lammual (Assam Rifle Ground) with artificial grass. This alone is also enough to fulfill the expectation of many peoples who love sports (football).

Congress during their campaign promises to create State Vigilance Commission. It would be a strong and independent body to fight all activities of corrupt practices. To prevent the misused of this body it also states that leader of opposition party and other important leaders of NGO's must be included in the selection member of its members. But after the people had voted them they seem to have forgotten all this promises. A body called State Vigilance Commission was never created neither a Forensic Department to assist SVC can't be form. On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2010 the government gave more responsibility to ACB where a rank from inspector and above was permitted to conduct a check or seize without a pre warrant. This is the best what the government can do concerning about the fighting of corruption.

To make MPSC more independent and strong the government before election campaign for the inclusion of Opposition leader and leader of Assembly Group during selection of its members. But after holding the staff of power they did not consult any of the above persons. They selected a person of their choice to hold the position. The Government plan to established District Development Board in all districts is also accomplished only in Lunglei District. The plan to create Mizoram Southern Divisional Headquarter is also a complete failure. The Government tries to create a Southern Divisional Headquarters where a Cabinet Meetings will be conducted at least once a year. But on this particular subject the government chooses to keep silent till today.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Ethnic Committee, a body believed to guide and advise the Government to the right direction was established. This was one of the promises of the government during their election campaign. The Government also under took inter-village, district and towns link road construction under PMGSY. Much of the works were completed while many more needs to be done. Tuirial Hydel Project, kept in isolation by MNF Ministry for the last ten years was also revived by the new Government. Solar power generation was also under taken by ZEDA with the recommendation of the government. Wind power generation was also about to be taken up in Ngopa and Chalfilh area. Since no Gas or Oil had been explored from Mizoram, the government can do nothing much with regards to exploration of natural resources.

In agriculture the government plant to adopt contract farming was rejected. To fight retard crops the government took steps to cultivate a nursery under NLUP to produce a better seed-links. Minor-irrigation project was introduced in many places. Many community water tank, individual water tank and tube tank were also constructed. The whole area of Mizoram was divided into Agro-Climatic zone and steps were taken to practice agro-crop zone cultivation system. The government also continues to build many more economic roads apart from the one already created under MNF ministry. However, one of the most important bodies Farmer Commission was not yet established. This body was meant to look after the needs and aspiration of farmers and cultivators.

The police were given no extra freedom or independence except the usual routine they enjoyed. But new training and combat facilities were provided. Two commando unit and two Anti-Human Trafficking units were being created under the last Congress ministry. 164 vehicles, 1 bullet proof car, TATA Armored troops carrier, and 2 bullet proof sumo were purchased. Four cases were also already being consent by the government to CBI for investigation. The Government took utmost steps for the establishment of Sainik Schools.



Regarding youth development and employment generation programmed the government role is insufficient. The promised to gave preference to a house hole having no government service among its member while enrolling employment was never practice. In terms of education no much effective steps were introduced. The only change the government tries to implement is the introduction of more vocational education and appointment of physical training teacher in every educational institution. But till today such change or reform had never happen. Though Mizoram University is a central university the government promised to gave assistance by any means to make it more credible. But till today Mizoram University had never received such support from the State government. Though the governments claim that they've taken some steps, Mizoram till today did not have a separate high court of its own. The government claims to have a separate Judiciary was also already implemented during the MNF ministry. In their election campaign also the Party talks about railroad extension till Sairang village. But till today this garrulous promise of the Government were not yet accomplished.

However, it was NLUP that make Congress government most popular. As the Chief Minister said in the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of NLUP Apex Board on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2013, ' the NLUP, which start as a political agenda has become a model of development for uplift of the people, and no developmental programmed in post-independent era, is so popular and well received by all section of the people'.<sup>48</sup> Under this flagship programmed broom grass cultivation and broom making has increased farmer cultivation from 4 to 5 times. Those beneficiaries who choose dairy cows had received a high breed quality from plain. This in no time had increased milk production rate to a recognizable extent under MULCO. Those who lost cow due to F&MD also received replacement. Sericulture department which was able to provide only 2.5% of farmers required seeds can now supply 60% of seeds and other department like Fishery, Soil & Water Conservation, Horticulture, AH&Vety are expected to achieved self sufficiency within one or two years. A number of NLUP link roads were also constructed in many compact areas. Besides this, NLUP also gave capital support to many small business men.

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<sup>48</sup> NLUP Newsletter, Vol. 1 No.2, July, 2013 pp7

The scheme had covered around 135000 families. This means for example, taking that there were 4 members in each families. If that is the case then  $135000 \times 4 = 590000$  is the actual beneficiary of NLUP which is more than half of the total population of Mizoram. Then we see that NLUP if used proper can introduce a striking economic as well as social transformation. The scheme is also a boom for the party considering of vote bank as well. Many people under the scheme received support in terms of finance or kind. With the support they received people were able to begin new occupation to earn livelihood. The way in which the people received this flagship programmed also greatly determines the result of the next election.

### **2013 Assembly Election**

The Election Commissioner issued a notice on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 for the election of Seventh Legislative Assembly members. For this the date for poll was fixed at 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013 vote will be counted. Table 5.1 highlights the parties contested in 2013 election.

Table-5.1

## PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN 2013 ELECTION

1.	Party	Abbreviation	Symbol
2.	Bharatiya Janata Party	(BJP),	Lotus
3.	Indian National Congress	(INC)	Hand
4.	Nationalist Congress Party	(NCP)	Clock
5.	Mizo National Front	(MNF)	Star
6.	Mizo Peoples Conference	(MPC)	Electric Bulb
7.	Mizo Nationalist Party	(ZNP)	Sun without ray
8.	Ephraim Union	(EU)	Table
9.	Maraland Democratic Front	(MDF)	Aeroplane
10.	Jai Mahabharat Party	(JMBP)	Pot

Source: *General Election to the Sixth Mizoram Legislative Assembly, 2013 Statistical Report. Directorate of Election, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.pp-2*

In this election nine political parties had fought the election. There were also independent candidates who fought the election from different constituencies. For this election there were 1126 polling station, 201 men and 9 women had filed nomination. But two men had withdrawn themselves and another two men were rejected which had the actual numbers of candidates 206, 9 women and 197 men. Among these candidates, 40 male got elected. This means once again no women candidate had the chance to sit in the legislative assembly of Mizoram. This is not a new thing in Mizoram politics; because though every parties talks about women empowerment and upliftment at the time of election campaign. But when the time for selecting constituency does arrive, they hesitate to give a safe constituency to women candidates. The Government also talks about reservation of 33% of seats for women. But so long the parties used women candidates only as a buffer to consulate the party position such reservation would be meaningless. Because

contesting alone is not enough. Women must win the election to represent the wants and needs of women community.

The main contest was between incumbent MPCC and MNF led Mizoram Democratic Front. For this election the Congress put up NLUP as the main slogan of their campaign. To counter this MNF also frame an economic scheme called SEDP (Socio-Economic Development Programmed). So, the ruling party and the opposition fought the election by selling their own economic scheme to the people. The Congress during their five years term did quite well with NLUP programmed. Many beneficiaries get an installment from what they were promised to receive 1 lack rupees. With this money many beneficiaries begin their own business, farms and other occupation. Those who choose auto-rickshaw were also receiving auto. In this way though there were some who miss used, but there were also many who benefited from this scheme. Especially in those rural areas, putting people under this scheme by giving them 10,000 rupees and promised them to gave 90,000 some time is a good instrument to collect vote.

Mizo National Front in their manifesto SEDP put out many economic programmed. Some of their main point includes improving sericulture, self sufficiency in food grain and meat supply, rubber project, bamboo plantation and processing, power & electricity etc. It has many similarities with that of NLUP though there are some differences. Other parties like ZNP and MPC also frame their own economic programmed (Immediate Economic Package). They talk about farmer welfare, power generation, rail, sea and air transport and also youth development. The entire flagship put forward by each party would be able to transform Mizoram economy up side down if properly used. Such was the quality of the manifesto put forwarded by parties in Mizoram when election times come. But after coming to power they would never remember what was written in their manifesto. They would not even know where the manifesto was kept after 2/3 month of the election.

After the election result was counted, the Congress won 34 seats out of 40 which is way beyond expectation. This result is a surprise result for all the other party as well because at the

eve of election, MNF and ZNP build a very high expectation from the public. ZNP conducted a 'Freedom March,' between Aizawl to Lunglei by foot. This was a part of their campaign strategy to free Mizoram from corruption. They received great support through the length and breadth of Mizoram. Particularly among the youth they seem to have a good reputation than other parties. But the result shows that things were not actually the way it looked. The Congress NLUP did work well in rural areas. This gave them the chance to run the government for another five years.

### **Election Result**

In the Seventh Mizoram Legislative Assembly election the Congress seal their victory by winning 34 seats out of 40 adding one more seat from 2008 election. Mizoram Democratic alliance (MDA) a coalition of MNF, MPC and MDF won 6 seats while ZNP one of the most influencing party's at the time of election goes nil. Apart from the political parties many candidates also file nomination but none got elected this time.

Five MLA from Congress lost their seats from the constituency of Aizawl North-II, Aizawl West-I, Aizawl West-II, Aizawl West-III, Tuikum and Saiha. Among the big gun of INC candidates, H. Liansialova PHE Minister and R. Serthuama NLUP Implementing Board Chairman lost their Constituency. In the meantime, MNF MLA's also lost all their previous constituencies but won from another five new constituencies of Tuikum, Saiha, Aizawl West-I, Aizawl West-II and Aizawl West-III. From Aizawl North-II, MNF-MPC alliance MDA also won one seat.

Since EVM does not function properly at Tialdawngilung polling station at Lawngtlai East, Election Commissioner recommended a fresh election on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013. Among the candidates B. D. Chakma (INC) from Tuichawng constituency got the highest vote 14,626 while F. Remkhuma (JMBP) candidate from Hrangturzo Constituency got only 29 votes which is the lowest. At Thorang constituency 169 voter push NOTA button which is the highest.

One remarkable thing in this election is that except Lalthanhawla all the other party's President Zoramthanga, Lalduhawma and Lalhmangaiha Sailo lost the election. Zoramthanga MNF President who contested from two constituencies got defeated from both the constituencies. There were ten newly elected MLA's.

### **Politics after Election**

Soon after the victory of Congress had been announced, MPCC President Lalthanhawla in an interview says that, ' the Government would continue its focus on social and communal welfare development programmed, self sufficiency in means of livelihood, prosperity in agricultural production and proper utilization of finance'. On the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013, day before the new Ministry was sworn in, he addressed MPCC meeting that, 'Congress party is God chosen party and due to this none of the Ministers or MLA's in the previous Ministry had involved in any corrupt or misbehavior practices. In the coming Ministry also we must continue this good performance. No body shall miss used his title of Minister or MLA. All the newly elected legislative members must know that we are the representatives of the people who shall work for the people'. In this meeting MPCC expelled F. Rohnuna LADC Chairman form the party due to his negative speech against Ngunlianchunga (INC) candidate from Lawngtlai during the election.

Zoramthanga, MNF party President also congratulate MPCC for their victory. In the meantime, he also encouraged supporters of MNF party not to be downhearted over their disappointing performance in the election. He claims that Ministry in Mizoram seems to have change only after ten years. This is true to some extent that especially after statehood the government changed only after ten years 1989-98 (INC), 1998-2008 (MNF) and now Congress are hoping to continue their ministry for another five years i.e., 2008-18. Due to this five years of Congress ministry was too short for the voters to make a decisive decision. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of December MDA MLA's at MNF Headquarter choose Vanlalzawma as MDA legislative party leader (opposition leader in the house).

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December new Congress ministry was sworn in by Governor Vakhom Purusothaman on the recommendation of Lalthanhawla MPCC President. We see new faces among the cabinet minister, R. Romawia, Speaker and John Rotluangliana Deputy Speaker in the previous ministry were given Cabinet rank. P. C. Lalthanliana Parliamentary Secretary in the last ministry was also put into Cabinet rank. Lalthanzara and Lalrinmawia another P.S in the last ministry were also made Minister of State. From the newly elected MLA's Ngunlianchung and B. D. Chakma were also given the position of MoS. On the otherhand, P. C. Zoramsangliana, J. H. Rothuama, Lalrinliana Sailo (all cabinet minister) and N. K. Chakma were exempted from their previous position.

So, for the fifth term Lalthanhawla was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Mizoram (1984-1986, 1989-1993, 1993-1998, 2008-13, 2003- continue). Member of Parliamentary Secretary were H. Liansailova, Joseph Lalhlimpaia, K. Lalrinthanga, K. S. Thanga, Col. Z. S. Zuala, Hmingdailova Khiangte, T.T. Zothansanga. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December at the first sitting of the Session of the Seventh Legislative Assembly Members, Hiphei was elected as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

### **Lok Sabha Election 2014**

The Lok Sabha polls for the lone Parliamentary seat of Mizoram took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. For this election there were 1,126 polling station, 7, 02,189 eligible electorate out of which 3, 46, 229 were male and 3, 55, 960 were female. On the day of balloting 62.20% voter turn out was recorded. Total three candidates contested the lone reserve seat (ST) of Mizoram. Contestants fielded in the polls included C. L. Ruala (Cong), Michael Lalmanzuala of Aam Aadmi Party and Robert Romawia Royte of United Democratic Front (MNF, MPC, ZNP, MDF, BJP, NCP, HPC & Paite Tribal Council). The election process was also conducted in the six Tripura relief camps of Naisingpara, Hazacherra, Asapara, Kaskau, Khakchangpara and Hamsapara. After the vote was counted C. L. Ruala got 210485 votes which is 49%, Robert Romawi Royte got 204331 votes which is 48%. Once again Congress won the lone MP seats from the state.

Many changes took place over the past three elections. In the first place the replacement of ballot system by Electronic Voting Machine. Then recently the introduction of NOTA votes for voter who did not have nag favorite among the candidates. But most importantly the coming back of Congress from their humiliating defeat in 1998. By that period people never believed that the Congress will rise again because of their worse performance. But today, Mizoram people favor them more than the state leading regional party MNF. Some might claim that the introduction of NLUP and the good support they received from Central makes the party wealthy. If the party had good financial support it is not difficult for them to please the people. However, in 1989-1998 terms also they received support from Central Congress but they did not performed very well. It was during this term that NLUP was introduced.

Some critics said that it was the introduction of NLUP which bring down the government in 1998 election. This is because the programme was misused, instead of progress and development it was corrupted. But today, the positive impact of NLUP can be seen in many fields. Not only this have we seen a much more effective Congress which gave more satisfaction to the people. All the support received from the central cannot be neglected because to have an active state government there's need to be a good combination with the Central government. However, this is not the deciding factor; it was the actual action of the government that decides its true nature. In this position, Mizoram though a state dominated by regional parties with regional feelings for sometimes was having more trust on the national parties the Congress.

### **Election Commissioner in Mizoram**

Under Article 324 (1) of the Constitution of India the Election Commissioner of India is vested with the power of superintendence, direction and control of the Election to both the House of the state legislature. Detailed provisions are made under the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the rule made this under.

As per section 13A of the Representation of the People Act 1950, read with section 20 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 the Chief Electoral Officer of the State/ UT is



authorized to supervise election work in the State/ UT subject to the overall superintendence, direction and control of the Election Commissioner (EC). Under the superintendence, direction and control of the Chief Electoral Officer the District Electoral Officer (DEO) supervised election at the district. The Election Commissioner designates an officer of the state government as the DEO in consultation with the state government. The Election Commissioner also appointed a Returning Officer to help the electoral officer and also one or two other Assistant Returning Officer to assist the Returning Officer.

Presently, the Chief Electoral Officer of Mizoram is Ashwini Kumar. He was and IAS officer since 1992, an IIT with B. E degree in engineering and also hold a master degree in International Development and Economic from Stamford University. In Mizoram various officers were appointed by EC to carry out its electoral duties and activities in the state. The names of different officer are as follows:

1. Chief Electoral Officer: Ashwini Kumar
2. Joint Chief Electoral Officer: H. Lalengmawia
3. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Mamit: V. Remthanga
4. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Kolasib: Niharika Rai
5. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Aizawl: Franklin Laltinkhuma
6. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Champhai: Lalthangpuia
7. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Serchhip: Juhi Mukherjee
8. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Lunglei: V. Sapchhunga
9. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Lawngtlai: B. Lalhmingthanga
10. Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Saiha: Alok Swarup

### **Role of Election Commissioner in Mizoram Politics**

The first and foremost important role of EC is that it is the custodian of free and fair election. The most crucial challenge before EC is to implement norms and model code of conduct to ensure free and fair election in the country/state. This is necessary because democratic elections are also not free from sabotage. The EC regulates political parties and

registered them for being eligible to contest election. EC also made a limit on campaign expenditure. For example, in the last election the ECI directed that political parties must limit campaign expenditure to 8 lakh per candidate. EC also ensures that all political parties regularly submit their audit financial report. If parties neglect this the EC has the power to even eliminate the party from politics. Due, to this, it has been empowered to oversee political parties and candidates and take appropriate action in case of violations.

### **Power**

The Election Commission is an independent Constitutional body created under Article 324 of the Constitution of India. It is one of the pillars of the Constitution of India, the other being the Supreme Court, Public Service Commission and Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Due to this it has been vested with certain powers as follow:

1. The commission can suppressed the result of opinion polls if it deems such an action fit for the cause of democracy.
2. The commission can advise for disqualification of members after the election if it thinks they have violated certain guidelines.
3. The commission can suspend a candidate who cannot submit their electoral expense timely.
4. The EC also prepare for identification the up-to-date list of all the persons who are entitle for voting at the poll.
5. It exercises the nomination paper of the candidates. The returning officer see that whether the requisite requirement of security deposits, election symbols, election agent etc, has also been fulfilled.

In the last Mizoram Legislative Assembly Election, political parties, Churches and NGO's had sought a change in the date of polling and counting of votes say that the appointed day coincided with the Conference to be hold by the largest domination Presbyterian Church in Mizoram and also the counting of vote should not be held on Sunday, a secret day for the Christian. After a careful consideration the EC change the Mizoram Assembly Election schedule

by advancing the polling to Nov, 25<sup>th</sup> and postponing the counting by a day to Dec, 9<sup>th</sup> which was earlier schedule for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December. The EC also rejected 2 of the candidates who had filed nomination.

Again, in the last lone Lok Sabha Election from Mizoram, EC had to postpone the polling. This is due to the state wide bane called by different NGO's because of the exercise of franchise by Bru voter lodge in Tripura camp through postal ballots. The Joint NGO sends a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer Ashwini Kumar to Shift the date of poll. The EC then decided that in future election provision would be made for exercise of franchise within the state of Mizoram by Bru living in Tripura, but enroll them in voter list of Mizoram.

Due to the effort of Election Commission, Mizoram election became less expensive, more order and less violent. The election code put up by EC is respected by all the parties because it has legal binding. If any candidates or parties violate such code they can be punished accordingly. This guides parties and candidates to maintain the politics and election atmosphere so that no unwanted things like crime of unfair means had happen. One of the most remarkable features of EC in Mizoram is its capacity to work together with societies like YMA, MUP, MHIP, PRISM, MPF and Student Union to have a fair election

### **Role of Non-Governmental Organisation/Civil Societies in Mizoram Election**

In Mizoram, civil societies like YMA, MUP and MHIP had played a very important role not only in social life but also in politics as well. Though a non-political body they act as a check on government to drive them in the right direction. Especially when election is coming this civil group took every steps to have a clean and fair election. They help the EC, and under the norms put out by the EC they issued some notification to candidates and parties what to do and what not to do. In this way, being a civil society with large members no party can neglect them. They put up tremendous effort to have a clean election.

Young Mizo Association (YMA), the largest and most comprehensive non-profit secular and non-governmental organization of the Mizo people was established on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1935 originally as the Young Lushai Association (YLA) which was later replaced with Young Mizo Association in 1947. It was initiated by the Welsh Missionaries who undertook the need of cultural conservation of the Mizo tribes who were under pressure of political and social modernization. Because to this it had a close link with the Church especially Presbyterian church for sometime but due to it slowly developed a political character slowly by slowly it had deviated from the Church. Currently YMA has more than 2.5 lakh members all over Mizoram.

Some of the objectives of YMA includes good use of leisure time, good management of family, just and truthfulness, respect for religion, reservation of culture abstinence from liquor and drugs and many more. It also takes up many activities like opening of adult education centre at every district headquarter, cleanliness campaign, green Mizoram. However, being a social group with the largest following members it had vehemently shape Mizoram politics. All political parties cultivate its support, though it manages to remain to be seen as neutral and non-political. Before election YMA issued some important guidelines to be given important by political parties and the people as follow:

1. Kan ram rorelna hi mipui siam a ni a, a chhiat a that mawhphurtu kan ni tih hriain, khua leh tui diktak te chuan vote I thlak theuh ang u.
2. Mizo hnaathlak zingah chibing/sakhaw bing inthliar hrang zawnga chetna hi Central YMA chuan tha ati lova. Kan hmaa inthlan kan neih torah pawh chutianga hma la lo tur leh chibing/sakhaw bing puala candidate siam lo turin political party leh mipuite kan ngen ani.
3. Inthlan hun puan anih hnuah leh party hrang hrang ten candidate an puan hnuah chuan political party emaw, candidate in khawtlang ruai siam hi tha kanti lova, tumahin khawtlang huap ruai siam loh ni se.
4. Aurinna hman chungchangah political party tinten sawrkarin a phal dan ang bak leh khawtlang tan ninawm thei tur ang chi chu tih loh hram ni se.

5. Candidate te hi ramhruaitu turte an nih avangin Zuruih hmangte, Eiruk chingte leh nungchang thlahdahte chu political party ten candidate atan thehchhuah loh nise. Hetiang mi candidate zingah anlo awm palh anih pawh in vote loh ngam nise.
6. Naupang kum tlinglo leh thil kalphung hre phalo te, inthlan boruaka hnuhlul loh leh hmanrua a hman loh ni se.
7. Political party manifestoah a taka tih puitlin theih ngei tur tarlan nise.
8. Inthlanna muanawm, boruak tha tak hnuaia kan neih theihna turin thlangtu mipuite leh mawhpurtu zawng zawngte theih tawp chhuaha tan tan la turin kan ngen ani.
9. Helpawl hmanrua a hman leh ralthuam chelekna reng reng kan duh lova, mitinin a chhia leh tha hriatna thianga tak hmanga vote an thlak theih nan Sum leh Therhlo dang hmanga vote lei leh hralh hi tih loh nise, mipui, pawl hrang hrang leh kohrante pawhin party leh candidate te sum leh thildang dill oh nise.<sup>49</sup>

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013, YMA office bearer meets with MNF party leaders at MNF Headquarter. The agenda of this meeting was that, YMA urged political parties not to indulge in any kind of clan base or cast base politics in the coming election. MNF President Zoramthanga praised the effort put up by YMA saying that, ‘YMA must take tougher steps to eradicate clan/caste base politics from Mizoram.’<sup>50</sup> Likewise, YMA had meeting with other political parties on the above agenda. On the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 Central YMA Coordination Committee meeting made a resolution that Bru staying at Tripura refugee camp must be exempted from voting.

One remarkable thing is that former President of YMA, T. Sangkunga, who had vacate his seats of Presidency just two months before the election joined Congress party. He contested from East Tuipui constituency where he got elected. Joseph Lalhlipui who won the election from Lunglei West constituency in 2008 and also 2013 is also a former office bearer of Central YMA.

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<sup>49</sup> Issued by: Central Young Mizo Association, Mizoram, Aizawl.

<sup>50</sup> Vanglaini Daily news paper, 2<sup>nd</sup> August. 2013.

However, during their indulgence in YMA activities they were forbidden from having any connection with political parties. The people expected them to remain neutral; who work for the welfare of civil societies. But as soon as they end their connection with YMA they have all the rights to participate in politics. Some former office bearer profited their indulgence in YMA in such a manner that being an office bearer in YMA they become popular. After leaving the group, they joint political parties where they were no strangers to the people.

The Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) was established on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1974. The membership of the group was accepted to all women from the age of 14 years onwards. It is therefore a strong social forces devoted solely for the welfare and upliftment of the weaker section of the society particularly women and child section. Being a women organization most of its activities emphasis on upliftment of women. One remarkable development in the last election is the given by MHIP to women candidates. This is a very important step because Mizoram hardly had a women legislative member. They make a request to all their members to give a full support to women candidates so that they might have women representative.

In the last Legislative Assembly Election, former MHIP President B. Sangkungi, candidates from Champhai. Other popular women candidate from MNF was Lalmalsawmi, an Aizawl Municipal Council member. Though the number of female voters is higher, women candidates are unlikely to squeeze any advantage out of the number. However, fortunately, in Hrangturzo constituency By-Election Lalmuanpuii from INC got elected. So, after a gap of 27 years women are able to send one representative in the highest decision making body of the state. This could be a positive start though there's many to be accomplished.

Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP) founded in the early 80's was an elderly association. Its membership is open to all men and women above the age of 50. Its aim is to preserve traditional values to work for the welfare of senior citizen. But, it cannot abstain itself from daily political activities since they work for the welfare of the society. However, they did not take parts in political party and its activities. The MUP is a very active member of MPF where the President

and Treasurer hold a position of Vice-President and Finance Secretary in MPF. During election they did not make any particular issues of notification from their side but put all their activity about election through the MPF as told by H. Ralliana, Office Superintendent, MUP Headquarter, Aizawl.

Leaders of Joint NGO's YMA, MUP and MHIP had a meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2013 at MUP office. In this meeting, they discussed about danger of clan/caste base politics. For this they decided to inform all the political parties not to take up the subject of clan/ caste politics even during the election campaign. The Joint groups ask the government not to give or promise any autonomous district council base on clan/ caste. To them autonomous council or development council could act as an instrument of separation among the Mizo tribes. Therefore, such activities must be avoided by even the next government to come. The groups also condemn the involvement of malpractices in the last Village Council election. Therefore, they request all political parties not to repeat such practices in the future election.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 a joint NGO's of YMA, MUP and MHIP send a memorandum to the Election Commissioner. In the memorandum they request the EC to bring back Mizoram Bru who stayed in Tripura refugee camp before February. Those who refuse to come back within time must be eliminated from voter list is what they propose. The Joint NGO's had a meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January where an agenda on Bru saying in Tripura Refugee camp was discussed. In the memorandum Central YMA Secretary Vanlalruata, MUP General Secretary Sainghinga Sailo, MHIP General Secretary Saipuii and MZP General Secretary L. Ramliana Renthlei had put their signature<sup>51</sup>. The joint NGO also request all political parties not to go to Tripura Transit camp for campaign.

### **Mizoram People Forum (MPF)**

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<sup>51</sup> Tuikuk an mahni duhthu ngeia Mizoram chhuahsantu an awmna Tripura Transit Camp a vote thlak tir thin hi kan ngai thiam lo hle a, vawitamtak Election Commissioner of India ah pawh kan lo thlen tawh thin a. Amaherawhchu Election Commissioner of India chua kan hma lawk a inthlan lo awm torah pawh vote thlak tir leh turin hma ala mek tih kan hria a, NGO te chuan kan ngai thiamlo tak zet ani.

Tuikuk te hi MP inthlan hma ngeia lo haw turin kan duh a, heta lo haw duhlo te chu Tripura Transit Camp a vote thlak tir tawh lo tur leh Mizoram Electoral Roll atang pawh a paih an nih theih nan hma min laksak turin kan ngen a che.

Mizoram People Forum was formed in 2006 as a result of dismal incident in 2003 election. In 2003 Legislative Assembly election, all the three candidates from Suangpuilawn constituency were kidnapped by unknown underground with arms. Due to this, in 2004 Synod resolved to take necessary steps to reform politics of the state. After a series of consultation and negotiation with all major church and NGO's such as YMA, MUP and MHIP, a common platform to reform politics and election in the state was formed on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006 headed by Synod. The Churches and NGO's agree to work together for political and electoral reform.

The membership comprises of all section of the society like YMA, an association of youth. Any Mizo who had attained the age of 18 years was regarded as a member of YMA. The MHIP, a women federation, all Mizo girl who attained the age of 14 years were considered as a member of MHIP. MUP a senior citizen group, all Mizo men and women who attained the age of 50 and above were member of MUP. In such manner, we can imagine the size and effectiveness of MPF in the state.

### **Goals and Objectives**

1. To work towards establishing of democratic government through free and fair election.
2. To reform the electoral process and do away with the corrupt and malpractices in the electoral system in the state.
3. To put in place a transparent, accountable and responsible government.
4. To educate the people on the governance issue and make them a responsible citizen.
5. To guide and advice the government on developmental issue.
6. To conduct the social audit for social reform.
7. To counter any form of violence, use of arms and terrorism.

With this points MPF hope to achieved a peace, harmony and good governance for progressive, just and sustainable socio-economic development and freedom of the people through electoral reform.



The major step put forward by MPF was in providing, 'Election Guidelines,' in 2008, keeping in mind, 'Election Model Code of Conduct,' issued by the Election Commission of India as follow.<sup>52</sup>

### **FRAME WORK OF GUIDELINES FOR ELECTIONEERING**

*The desire for a clean, free and fair election in Mizoram have prompted leaders of the Mizoram People Forum and the Political Parties to have consultations to work out the modalities and frame an 'Election Guidelines' to achieve the above objective. The consultations held on September 25th, 2006 and April 30th, 2008 framed the following guidelines. Political Parties are expected to follow them as far as possible; while the MPF will take all possible steps to see its implementation.*

#### **1. Election expenditure:**

- i) No party or candidate shall indulge in huge and wasteful election expenditures. Election expenditures should be kept to the minimum.*
- ii) Activities which are 'corrupt practices' and offences under the election law can crop up during the house to house campaign. Therefore, all such activities must be avoided. Procession may also be dispense with.*
- iii) Influencing of voters through money or other incentives must be avoided.*
- iv) Community feasting, picnic, poster and flag wars escalate the election expenditure unnecessarily. Therefore, they may be avoided.*
- v) General public, organizations and individuals are requested not to ask or expect any favour from the candidates. Similarly, candidates and Political Parties are also requested to refrain from announcing any financial grants or promises thereof.*
- vi) Setting up of Campaign/Election Office may be avoided.*

#### **2. Free and fair election, and security issue:**

- i) Use of force, intimidation and undue influence to the voters to secure their votes must be avoided.*
- ii) Securing the support of underground armed groups and use of arms shall be prevented at all cost.*
- iii) Take all necessary actions to security and peaceful election, especially along the border and sensitive areas.*

#### **3. Policy implementation and candidature issue:**

- i) Only realistic and do-able policies and programmes must be included in the Party manifesto.*
- ii) Personal and individual life of the candidates should not be used as a poll issue. Election campaigning should revolve around the Party policy and programme.*
- iii) Political Parties are expected to put forward those who are upright, God-fearing, clean and honest persons as candidates.*
- iv) Campaigning by use of false propaganda, unproven truth and scandalous issues must be avoided.*

#### **4. Joint electioneering effort:**

- iv) As and when possible, joint election campaign platform will be organized for various candidates, under the guidance of MPF.*
- v) All public meetings, even those organized by individual party, may be held under the guidance of MPF.*
- iv) Distribution of party manifesto, policy and programmes and any other leaflets may be undertaken by the MPF duty or in a joint effort with the party workers.*

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<sup>52</sup> Issued by Mizoram People Forum, Central YMA building, M. G. Road Aizawl.

*v) No tea or eatables shall be served on the Polling day. Giving out of election numbers or slips shall be undertaken by the MPF duty or in a joint effort with the party workers.*

*5. In addition to the above mentioned guidelines, the MPF Local Forum and leaders of the Political Parties may, without deviating from the spirit of the agreement, draft in details actions to be taken within their localities, as per their requirement.*

The distribution of party leaflets, manifesto, candidate's bio-data and all the other literature are done by MPF volunteers. Numbers of posters and flags to be put up by parties are also decided with the presence of MPF members. For a candidate to reach out to the electorate a common platform in each locality of a constituency was offered by MPF. In this kind of programme the candidates had the chance to sell their manifesto to the voters and the electorate also had an opportunity to interact with the candidates. Even when Congress heavyweight Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and BJP Prime Minister Candidate Modi came to Mizoram to support their party all the Campaign programme was chaired by MPF members not party leaders. From this single even also we might be able to visualize the fairness measure undertaken by MPF to have a clean electoral politics.

Other important steps taken by MPF:

1. Banning house to house campaign: This is meant to prevent corruption by giving gift and money.
2. Banning campaign in public meeting: Campaign in public meeting with concert followed by feast creates nuisance and extra used of money in the election. Therefore, creating a common platform for all greatly reduce election expenditure.

In the last Legislative Assembly Election MPF sign an agreement with all the political parties to have a clean and fair election as follow:

## **POLITICAL PARTY-TE LEH MPF THAWHHONA THUTHLUNG**

Mizoram chungna Inthlanna hrang hrang heng - Mizoram Legislative Assembly General Election 2008, MP Election 2009, Village Council Election 2009 & 2012, Aizawl Local Council Election 2012, Aizawl Municipal Council Election 2010 leh Autonomous District Council Elections-ah te hlawhtling takin 'Thawhhona Thuthlung' siam a, Mizoram chungna political party hrang hrang leh Mizoram People Forum-te hmalâkna chuan rah tha a chhuah zel a. Kan inthlanna pawh a tha thawkhatin, ram chung leh ram pâwn lam thlengin mite hriat leh ngaihven a hlawh ta hle a. Hei hi kan zavaia tan tlâna leh thawhhona rah a ni.

Kum 2013-a Mizoram Legislative Assembly General Election lo awm turah pawh hian **inthlanna thianghlim, dik leh felfai tak a awm ngei theihna tur leh sawrkâr tha, thlei bîk nei lo, mipui huapzo** din a nih ngei theihna turin Mizoram People Forum General Headquarters hruaitute leh Political Party hrang hrang hotute chuan tan lâk ho dân tur kan ngaihtuah a. A hnuai inkaihruaina tlângpui târ lante hi zawm theuh tha kan ti. Hei hian MLA General Election 2013 Inthlan hun puan atanga Inthlan zawh fel thleng a huam ang.

### **1. Inthlan chungchâng**

- (1) Inthlan thianghlim, dik leh felfai tak a awm ngei theihna turin mi tinin theihtâwp chhuah theuh ni se.
- (2) Helte hmanruaa hman leh râltuam chelekna awm thei te huai taka dodâl theuh ni se.
- (3) Vote thlâk tur khawpui atanga anmahni khaw lama an hawna tur ngaihtuhsak emaw, hmun dang atanga anmahni vote awmna lama an kalna tur ngaihtuah a, insengsova buaipui emaw hi tu mahin tih loh ni se.

### **2. Inthlan senso chungchâng**

- (1) Inthlan hautak lutuk leh senso sâng lutuk titem turin theihtâwp chhuah theuh ni se. MPF-ten candidate-te leh party te hnenah pawisa dîl emaw, dawn emaw khap tlat a ni.
- (2) House to house campaign hi thil dik lo tam tak inphum ruk theihna leh senso titamtu a nih theih avângin tih loh hi a tha ber a; amaherawhchu, mipuiten candidate-te an hmuh duh thin avâng leh candidate-te pawhin an bial mipuite tlawh an duh thin avângin inthlan hma ni 10 thleng chuan house to house campaign programme siam theih a ni ang a; chumi hnu lamah erawh chuan tu mahin tih loh ni se.
- (3) Sum leh therhlo dang hmanga vote lei leh hralh hi tih loh ni se. Mipui, pâwl hrang hrang leh Kohhrante pawhin party leh candidate-te hnenah thil phut neih tur a ni lo. Chutih rualin thil chi hrang hrang sem, (enîr nan- silpouline, jersey, football, mobile handset, sawrkâr development kal lai leh NLUP leh thil dangte) hi tih loh ni bawk se.
- (4) Kawng zawh hi inthlan hma ni 10 hnu lamah chuan tih loh ni se, ruaitheh leh picnic hi tih loh ni bawk se. Ruaitheh tih hian mikhual chaw eipui te, block leh unit hruaituten tul bîk thila chaw an ei khâwm thin angte hi a huam lo vang. Candidate-te rulh tura anmahni hriat lohva dâwr leh hmun dang atanga thil lo lâk leh pekte hi tih loh tur a ni.
- (5) Candidate-te tana inthlan tihautaktu, heng - banner, flag leh poster-te hi veng tina târ zât tur hetiang hian bithliah a ni :-
  - \* VC / LC member pasarih nei chinah : Banner - 3, Flag – 30 leh Poster - 20 thleng
  - \* VC / LC member panga nei chinah : Banner – 3, Flag – 20 leh Poster - 15 thleng
  - \* VC / LC member pathum nei chinah : Banner - 3, Flag – 10 leh Poster - 10 thleng
  - \* Banner hi 18 x 4 aia lian lo ni se. Poster hi 2'x 11/2' aia lian lo ni se.

- \* Party symbol chuang lukhum, badge leh sticker te hi campaign na hmanruaah hman loh ni se.
- \* Flag, Banner leh Poster bituk aia tam tar an awm chuan MPF-in la thla turin hrilh se.

### 3. **Zalen taka inthlan leh venhimna chungchâng**

- (1) Invau leh inrikrâp awm lo turin theihtâwp chhuah theuh ni se.
- (2) Helte hmanruaah hman leh râltuam chelekna awm thei te huai taka dodâl theuh ni se.
- (3) Border leh sensitive area-ah te a tul leh mamawh anga venhimna a awm theih nân hmalâk ni se.

### 4. **Policy implementation**

- (1) A tak ram thleng thei tur leh tihhlawhtlin theih tur chauh - manifesto, policy leh programme duan ni se.
- (2) Mimal chungchâng leh tualchhung thil chauh ni lovin, party policy leh programme hi campaign-na leh inzawrhna atân hman ni se. Dâwt leh thu belhchian dâwl lo leh finfiah nghâl mai theih loh hmanga inbeih hi tuman tih loh ni se.

### 5. **Candidate chungchâng**

Political party tinin candidate an siam lain hetiang mi hi candidate atân ruat tura beisei an ni :

- (1) Mi hmingtha, mize nghet leh rilru puitling.
- (2) Mi taima leh rinawm.
- (3) Dik lo leh kut tling lova sum leh thil dang hmuh tum lo mi.
- (4) Zu leh ruihtheih thil dang laka fihlim
- (5) Mipat hmeichhiatna kawnga sawisel kai lo.
- (6) Ram leh hnam Dân pawisa mi leh dikna ngaisâng mi.
- (7) Khawtlâng leh mahni mihring puite thatna tur duha, chumi atâna inhmang peih mi.
- (8) Mahni sakhua, kohhran leh pâwla mi hmingtha leh rinawm.

### 6. **Thawhhona chungchâng**

- (1) Constituency huam chungh khaw lian deuh deuhvah MPF leh candidate-te remruatna angin, MPF Constituency Forum kaihhruaina hnuaijah Joint Platform buatsaih theih a ni ang a, chungh tinten candidate an lo hmelhriat theih nân leh an thu leh hla an lo dawnawn theuh theih nân, a theih leh remchân dân angin, he programme hi Local TV leh Media-ah te pek chhuah ni se. Joint Platform hi pâwl dang leh mi dangin buatsaih loh ni se.
- (2) Party malin a hranpaa public meeting neih an duh a nih pawhin MPF kaihhruaina hnuaijah ni thei se. MPF awm lohnaah chuan party malin a remchân dân anga kalpui mai ni se.
- (3) Vantlâng tâna thingpui lum loh ni se; polling booth area bul hnaia electoral roll en leh number pek chhuah hi political party-ten a mala buaipui lovin, MPF kaihhruainain, fimkhur taka buaipui ni se.

### 7. **Tlângkawmna**

- (1) A chungh 'Thawhhona Thuthlung' târ lan piah lamah hian MPF District, Constituency leh Local Forum ten ruahmanna hran siam loh ni se.
- (2) Heng 'Thawhhona Thuthlung' hi bawhchhia an lo awma, finfiah ngei a nih chuan, MPF-in a theih leh remchân dân angin an bawhchhiatna constituency huam chungah a puangzâr ang.
- (3) He 'Thawhhona Thuthlung' hi MPF leh political party tinin a zau thei ang berin theh darh ni se.

Addressing a press conference in Aizawl on the 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2013, MPF Chairman Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau said that, 'as per the agreement sign with political parties, candidates and parties were not to undertook door to door campaign/canvassing from the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2013.

All the candidates including independent candidates would be allowed to address a joint platform organized by MPF for political parties'. Political parties were also allowed to have campaign office in village and urban localities, but were asked to make them inexpensive and simple.

MPF has been considered as the only genuine election watchdog by Mizoram people, true to that, Legislative Election 2008 and all the election after till today were conducted under peaceful environment with the massive help of MPF. It appealed parties to put up upright, honest and reliable candidates. It also ensures that no party or candidates arranges lavish feasts, music programme, road show, public meetings and other such events. On the day of polling, to lessen the burden of the voters members of YMA, which is a constituent member of MPF are present at all the polling station across the state, arranges benches for voters to sit in line waiting their turn to cast vote. In some places, MPF members even distribute tea for the voters. The voters exercise their franchise under the watchful eye of MPF.

The Election Commissioner has also been supportive of MPF. When asked by reporter about the contradiction inherent in a church-sponsored body playing a role in a secular election, Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer, Ashwini Kumar said at a recent conference that the EC and MPF aims were similar, i.e., to ensure free and fair election. MPF had been praised all over the country ECI. Memorandum sign between parties and MPF possess as preventive measures for the parties. Though MPF can take no legal action against party or candidates it received high regard from the people due to its impartiality. We cannot deny that its effort and achievement till today brings peaceful election in Mizoram. Such an NGO group working for free and fair election was found nowhere in India.

From the above discussion we see that apart from Election Commissioner the impact of civil societies in Mizoram election must also not be underestimate. The YMA, MHIP and MUP, all had in their own field tries to send out a message not only to their members but also to the society as a whole, so as to achieve a peaceful election. They are a great help to the EC because,

without their help such a calm atmosphere of election would never be experience. In other states where an organization like MPF was absent, during election we see and hear undesirable news about crimes, clash between party workers and many bad experiences. Though some who had criticized that efforts of MPF taken away some of the enthusiasm and freedom associated with election campaigning. But till today, nobody denies that it was the presence and hard work of all members of MPF that makes Mizoram election one of the most peaceful among Indian states. We did not say that the MPF is doing perfect because the one who leads MPF are also human beings. Their might be some points, on which we need to make some adjustment on the activities of MPF from time to time as well. But till today taking as a whole, we can confidently say that the MPF is the guardian angle of Mizoram election.

## Chapter-V: Summary and Conclusion

The emergence and development of party system in Mizoram is a very interesting subject to study. It is a topic never touched by scholars who had published even two to three books on Mizoram politics. In the present study, we have tried to throw light on the origin, growth and role of the party system in Mizoram: The role played by regional and national parties and to examine the nature of party system available in the state.

The Mizo in the real sense, are entered in a political field, when the first political party Mizo Union was formed in 1946. The MU was formed under the leadership of R. Vanlawma as 'Mizo Commoners Union' in the initial stage. On the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1946, MU had their first Conference where Pachhunga was elected the first President. However, since the Chiefs had complained that the word commoner's party made them feel that they were being exempted. To make the party more acceptable to the chiefs the name of the party was later changed into Mizo Union (MU). The credit goes to those few brave men who had the courage to oppose the Chiefs and even the Superintendent as well, fighting for the rightful place of the commoners.

The emergence of political party in Lushai Hills was highly valued by the people of Mizoram. Some of the foremost objectives of MU were to eliminate chieftainship from Lushai Hills and to remain as a part of India even after independence. In the real sense, the MU party was formed by those educated intellectuals from among commoners who did not want the return of the Chiefs to their traditional position, after British had left India. With this they did hope to give the commoners the rightful place in the society which they did not enjoy under the Chiefs controlled by the British. However, this idea had pierced the feelings of the Chiefs, like poking them with a sharp spear. From that day onwards, they were looking for an alternative party to counter the activities of the MU with what ever means necessary.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1947 a new regional party United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) was born under the leadership of Lalbiakthanga. The Chiefs considered this new party as an

answer to their vested desire. Being hostile to MU they gave their full support to the new party. Lalmawia who retired Burma Army, later replaced Lalbiakthanga from the party President since he had joined government service. He tries to inspire the people that the Mizo would be better treated if they join Burma after India's independence. So, in terms of ideology the first two political parties are in contrast to each other. This might also be one of the reasons why the Chiefs took advantage of the party to develop it as an agent to counter the activities of MU. The party was soon joined by Pachhunga and his colleagues who defected from MU. After the formation of the first two parties, the Mizo began to have the real taste of politics.

Soon after India got independence, a parliamentary democracy was introduced in the Lushai Hills by granting District Council status under the Sixth Schedule. Though the Mizo Chiefs were still enjoying their traditional position, sooner or later they had to give up their position. Under the District Council people would elect their representatives who would run the administration. This is what the Chiefs feared most because they wanted to retain their position as long as possible. To achieve this, they used UMFO as a political base. However, MU considered elimination of the totalitarian authority of the Chiefs as their sole duty. Besides this, the two parties were also having different opinions over whether Lushai Hills must be a part of India or not after independence. This idea made the two parties opposed to each other. This gave rise to the party system in Lushai Hills with competition between the two parties going deeper and stronger.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1952 the first District Council election was held and MU had a landslide victory. This shows that majority of the people favored the idea advocated by MU. The MU took this as a good opportunity to accomplish some of their objectives. In 1954, under The Bill of Assam Lushai Hills (Acquisition of the Chief's Right) Chieftainship in Lushai Hills was abolished. They were replaced by Villages Council members who were elected through adult franchise. In the Village Council election also MU again captured all the seats. It was in the same year that the name of Lushai Hill District Council was rechristened as Mizo Hills District Council.



With the passage of time, Mizoram politics had experienced many new developments. In 1961 for the first time a national party Indian National Congress entered Mizo Hills District. Before the two popular parties were MU and UMFO, these two parties rested on Mizo regional and secular sentiment for their political success in Mizoram. The people in Mizoram thought that the national party i.e. Indian National Congress was a foreign party and would not care about them; rather it would impose on them whatever the Central want. Due to this people in Mizo Hills did not know exactly how to respond the new party. Therefore, in the initial stage the Congress party was regarded as a foreign party and it did not receive much support. However, due to the handwork of party leaders after the 4<sup>th</sup> District Council election, Congress was able to form the government by beating MU. Within less than a decade, the only national party i.e. Congress was able to erase the ‘foreign party’ feeling of the people. It had earned the trust of the people with hard work and dedication. Due to this the people wanted to give them a chance to see whether they really meant business or not. With this, the foundation of Congress party in Mizoram politics became more stable.

However, it was the merger of the MU with Congress in 1974 that had changed the political status of Congress forever. Mizo Hills District was converted into Union Territory in 1972 and became Union Territory of Mizoram. In the first UT election MU and Congress were the main competitors for power. But due to the weak performance of previous Congress government MU got majority seats in the election. The MU then formed the first Mizoram UT government. However, in 1974 the MU government decided to merged with the Congress which was unexpected because both were the main rival parties. But in highlighting MU party’s the merger was not much of surprise. Since the first election of Legislative Assembly seats of Assam from Lushai Hills District, MU had worked together with Congress party in Assam. With the passage of time MU party wanted to play more active role in central politics and the Congress also wanted to gain more regional support. The two parties considered best to merge and share government portfolio among the two leaders under the name of Congress party. The merger eliminated MU party from Mizoram politics and the Congress became the dominant

party with no other party which is strong enough to stand even as an opposition party. During this time, the Congress was the dominant party in Mizoram, as there were no opposition parties.

During insurgency spanning for twenty years the political atmosphere in Mizoram was surcharged with high emotion. The party formed by Laldenga i.e. Mizo National Front (MNF) was not allowed to take part in politics as it was engaged in insurgency. The imposition of AFSP (Arms Forces Special Power) Act did change the nature of politics in Mizoram. The contribution of a retired army officer Brig. T. Sailo in highlighting the Human Right violation during insurgency made the people to appreciate Brig. T. Sailo. This inspired Brig. T. Sailo to form a new party MPC (Mizoram Peoples Conference) which continued for only five years. The rigid military style of functioning of Brig. T. Sailo was not palatable to the people of Mizoram for the reason for which he became unpopular and lost support in the next election. However, MPC remained as an effective opposition party following the 1978 elections to Assembly.

In the beginning of 1980s, the party system in Mizoram witnessed a new development. In the General Election to the Parliament in 1980 Congress, Janata, People Conference (B), Mizo Democratic Front and Mizo Union formed an alliance under Steering committee and decided to fight Lok Sabha election on common platform against the ruling People Conference (A). This is the first time where a regional party formed an alliance with national party in the history of Mizoram politics. In this election the Steering Committee candidate R. Dengthuama defeated PC candidate Brig. Vankunga. Likewise, almost every election after this was followed by alliance of opposition parties fighting against the ruling party. From this period, formation of alliance by all the non-ruling parties at the time of Lok Sabha election become common practices of party system in Mizoram.

After the elevation of Mizoram UT into Statehood only two parties i.e. Congress and MNF dominated Mizoram politics. The two parties hold the government alternately (1989-98) Congress, (1998-2008) MNF and (2008- ) Congress. Though there are parties like MPC and ZNP who usually make much noise at the time of election; but at the best they end up in

supporting the opposition party which is either Congress or MNF. For the survival of their party they have to fight the election from the shadow of either of the two leading party.

The scenario became visible during the past state elections. In 1989 election, for the first time in the history of Mizoram, Congress and MNF (D) made an electoral agreement. In 1993 election, Congress worked together with PC which later turned into Janata party. But the alliance soon broke down not long after forming the government. In 1998 election MNF-Mizoram Peoples Conference alliance threw out Congress ministry. The alliances then formed the government whom the people expected them to bring reform in administration. But the MNF-MPC alliance also did not last long. MPC made a secret agreement with Congress over Village Council election. When this secret came into limelight MNF had no choice but to end their alliance with MPC. In 2003 election the two leading parties MNF and Congress fought the election alone while ZNP&MPC were making an agreement. But MNF won the election while ZNP&MPC combine won only 5 seats.

In 2008 election also while the two big parties fought on their own an alliance was formed between ZNP, MPC & Zoram Kuthnathawktu Pawl under the banner of United Democratic Alliance. The election was won by Congress capturing 32 seats out of 40. In 2013 election as well MNF, MPC & MDF formed an alliance under the umbrella of Mizoram Democratic Alliance (MDA). The election was however, overwhelmingly won by Congress with 34 seats. Besides the legislative election in Parliament election there is a common procedure followed by political parties that all who are not in ruling would support one candidate to counter the candidate put up by the ruling party. Though this is not a mandatory but the procedure is being practiced in Mizoram for elections. Interestingly, however, despite the common candidate being put up by the opposition parties, most of the time the candidate from the ruling party gets elected in the Parliamentary elections.

One remarkable development about party system in Mizoram is the change in the attitude of the voters for regional or national parties. Earlier, people were more inclined towards regional

parties. They even considered the first national party Congress as a foreign party. However, such attitudes now over; now people cast their votes no more on the basis of regional or national but on the basis of the fitness of the candidates. This new development has tremendously changed the face of Mizoram politics.

## **Findings**

In Mizoram it was after the birth of UMFO party, that the party system had taken its actual shape. The first party MU and the party that followed UMFO were having a different ideology which we have discussed earlier. The MU supported being a part of India even after independence while UMFO was spreading the idea of Lusahi Hills joining Burma. MU stood for the elimination of chieftainship while UMFO was a party that marched with the support of the chief's. Soon after their formation they have to work really hard to convince the people that the ideas put forward by them was better than that of the other. This interaction and competition between the two parties had contributed to the growth of party system in Mizoram. Since the competition had been mainly between two parties we can call it a two party system in Mizoram.

In the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> District council election, MU and UMFO were the only two competitors. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Council election though UMFO fought the election under the name of EITU the party is more or less the same. And it was soon after this that UMFO party had vanished from Mizoram politics. Many people thought that since UMFO was no more, MU might become a dominant party. However, in the 4<sup>th</sup> District council election MU received a challenge from an unexpected corner. The Indian National Congress party formed an ad-hoc committee in Mizoram in 1961. Even though a national party it soon gained popularity and was able to fill up the vacant place left by UMFO. The election was a two way fight between Congress and MU. The Congress for the first time in Mizoram history then formed the government.

In 1972, Mizo Hill District was elevated into Union Territory of Mizoram. The first election of Mizoram Legislative Assembly with 30 members was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1972. In

this election the main competitors were Congress and MU. But this time MU had the upper hand and Congress had to sit in the opposition. However, since the leaders of both the parties agreed to merge in 1974, MU government was dissolved which become Congress government. The desire of the MU leaders to be part of the national framework by being national party motivated them to merge with the Congress party. The important portfolios were divided between the two parties under the name of Congress government. Since the two strong parties' had merged, they had no competitors. At this point of time Mizoram had one party dominant system and Congress had dominated Mizoram politics with no opposition party to call for quite long time.

However, the coming of People's Conference party soon changed the scenario. A Human Rights Commission turned political party under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo attracted supporters who wanted to end insurgency. In 1978 election and 1979 by-election it competed with Congress party for power in which the party became victorious in both the elections. The important thing here is that the strong popularity of PC had ended the domination of Mizoram politics by Congress party. The dominant party system again automatically turns into two party systems. In 1983 election also the PC and Congress were the main competitors. But this time Congress won majority seats.

After Mizoram attained statehood, politics was dominated by two parties Congress and MNF. The two parties are now dominant in the state alternating every ten years in power. First the Congress ruled for ten years (1989-1998); this was followed by ten year MNF government (1998-2008) and now Congress government is elected to power in 2008 election. In all these elections though there were other parties, like PC, ZNP, BJP and other regional and national parties every election was a battle ground for MNF and Congress. The other parties knowing that they cannot compete with the two major parties would decide to support either side which is usually the opposition party. There was also a coalition government of Congress-PC alliance in 1993 and again PC-MNF coalition government in 1998.

In fact, party system in Mizoram since the First District Council election till today embraces a two party system. Mizoram politics, however experienced a dominant party system at one point of time when the MU merged with Congress. But this was soon changed into two party systems by the coming of PC party. Especially after the attainment of statehood, party system in Mizoram is purely a two party system. The competition for power in every election was a competition between two major parties, MNF and Congress, where either of the two forms the government.

In the Fourth chapter of this thesis it had been observed that regional feeling or sentiment was the major factor that brought political consciousness in Mizoram. Due to this, Mizo are more inclined towards regional politics than national politics in the earlier periods. This can be seen from the fact that the first two political parties MU and UMFO were purely regional parties. Though their stand on the future of Lushai Hills after independence was different, but both the parties opted for protection of customs, culture and tradition of the Mizo and prevention from exploitation by outsiders. For the common people such aims and objective were enough to give them full support. The emergence of MDCC (Mizo District Congress Committee, a branch of INC) in 1961 also did not make much change. Having the name of national party, the people immediately saw them differently. Being a national party they believed that the party would function for the good of the central government but be concerned less about the state. In other words, though all the party leaders and members were Mizo, but being a national party made them less attractive to the people. Since the anti-Indian feeling was still growing large during that time, Mizoram politics was driven by Mizo regional sentiments.

However, due to the hard work of party leaders, the indifference to the national party was soon eliminated. The leaders were engaged in convincing the people that the true aim of the party was the welfare of the Mizo. They began to win the confidence of the people slowly. In 1970 District Council election, Congress party formed the Government for the first time. In every election after this, Congress becomes the leading contender for power. The effort the party put up for the return of peace in Mizoram was greatly appreciated by all. Because of this the

party position in Mizoram politics also becomes more and more secure. Especially after statehood, Congress party ruled for 16 years and is continuing. In other words, with the passage of time, people seeing the true nature of the party are becoming more and more willing to give support to the party. People believed that regional political parties seem to have more concern for the needs and aspiration of regional people; therefore supporting them is a must. But things have changed, today voter decides on the basis of its performance in delivering the goods.

In Mizoram, out of seven legislative elections after statehood, Congress party won four times. MNF the strongest regional party and main competitor for Congress won three times. The political scenario today shows different scene. Earlier, Mizoram people were more inclined towards regional parties. Today if the national party performs better than the regional party, people are willing to vote them. This is exactly what we've seen in Mizoram politics.

Another important common characteristic of party system in Mizoram is the formation of alliance by opposition parties. After statehood we saw a coalition government in 1993 PC (Janata)-Congress coalition and in 1998 MNF-MPC coalition government. Since then, coalition system has been absent in Mizoram. One thing interesting is that on matters of importance, specifically relating Mizo common interest or Mizo sentiment the opposition parties coalesce in the legislature. This is more often than not when the number of the opposition party members is very small. Such kind of coalition at times proves costly to the ruling party.

They did succeed in bringing down Congress government and MNF-MPC coalition government (1998) was formed. In central politics coalition government was not a new thing. In central politics coalition government was not a new thing. They could complete the full tenure in recent years. But in the case of Mizoram things are different. Though coalition had been formed they did not last for long. As we said earlier, either of the two major parties, MNF or Congress sometimes agrees' to work together with other parties who are also gaining much support from voters. But when the coalition government was formed there is always difficulty in distribution of portfolios. The bigger party always wanted majority in the portfolios while the smaller party

is also not less. In this way though in the initial stage they can somehow manage to agree to each other but due to the discontent of some party leaders soon the coalition had to break down.

Politics in Mizoram like mainland politics is also not free from the various malpractices. In 1978, 8 PC MLA rebels moved out of PC government and formed PC (B). This resulted in a by-election in 1979, where PC (A) under the leadership of T. Sailo won the election. Again in 1987, 8 MNF MLA defected from Laldenga's government and formed MNF (D). The defected group then made an agreement with Congress party to overthrow Laldenga's government by conducting a by-election. However, due to the agreement signed between Indian government and MNF the aspiration could not be fulfilled. This resulted in the imposition of President Rule in Mizoram from 7<sup>th</sup> September 1988 till the next election in 1989.

Looking at the above we can see that defection happens mainly because of dissatisfaction over the distribution of portfolios. If it is for them to sit at the top of the party some politicians would not hesitate to do anything. Such a thirst for position within the party leads to splitting of the party. The result of this is easy formation of new party which however did not last for long. For example in case of PC (B) and MNF (D) also the party soon dissolved not long after its formation. This is one of the stumbling blocks for the growth of party system in Mizoram. Because, for a simple disagreement within the party, some politicians did not hesitate to defect from the party, then form a new party sharing the name of their original party. Such activities tear down party images which let down the moral support of party members. It also reveals their instability in the party ideology and code of conduct. This is also one of the main reasons why many new parties from MNF, MPC, Congress etc never succeeded.

It was during the reign of PC ministry that criminalization in Mizoram politics happens for the first time. In 1982 R. Zadinga who was freshly elected from Phuldungsei Constituency in a by-election in PC ticket was murdered. This incident shocked citizens of Mizoram because it happened for the first time in Mizoram history. PC candidate Thawmvunga from N. Vanlaiphai constituency was again shot dead by underground during an election campaign in 1984. Earlier,



during the election, an interchange of conversations and a mud slinging of words to each other face during campaign was familiar. The temperatures were high because every party wanted to win the election. But no activities of killing and murder over politics were ever experienced.

Recently, in 2003 election three candidates of MNF, MPC & Congress from Suangpuilawn constituency were kidnapped by unidentified arm men. All the parties accused the other parties for carrying out such actions. However, this time there is no injuries or losses of life. Just before the date of election the kidnappers left the hostage without harm and flees away. This incident had a less bearing on the general outcome of the election; though, Mizoram is also not free from such incidents.

Election in Mizoram especially after the attainment of statehood has been quite peaceful. This is because of the effort put forward by the Churches and different NGO's ( YMA, MHIP, MUP, & Student Union) with the support of the government. In Mizoram, unlike other states, there are organizations like MPF (Mizoram People Forum) and PRISM (1996, People Right's to Information and Development Implementing Society of Mizoram) to check the practice of unfair means by political parties; though there is the Election Commissioner who controls the election. Since its member includes Church leaders and YMA, HMIP & MUP members, the voice of the organization reaches every citizen. They also published their own manifesto (Mipui Manifesto) to be considered important by political parties before election. They also put a check on every candidate regarding their income. The MPF since 2008 became a watchdog of Mizoram election.

Before election MPF signed an agreement with every political party not to indulge in any malpractices. Though the organization cannot take any legal action, since it gets the support of the people; every parties had to give importance to the regulation issued by them. They organized political awareness among the people before election. In this way they educated the person about how to cast their vote, whom to vote and which is best for them to vote. Because of all this, people have a good understanding of the importance of casting vote and the importance

of voting the best candidates. For this they make rules and regulation to be followed by political parties. They ban house to house campaign, bribing voters, using loud speaker in the street, and forbid distributing liquor or any thing to attract voters, organizing concert and feast for the public etc. not only this they check the performance of the government after formation of the government as well. They check whether the government had fulfilled the aims and objectives they've listed in their manifesto and many more.

Some critics said that imposition of too much of restriction make the election atmosphere duller. It restricted the enthusiasm and freedom enjoyed by parties and candidates in campaigning. Some 10-15 years back house to house campaign were not restricted, parties were shouting with loud speaker in the street urging the people to vote their party. In this way people were more excited due to which they pay more attention towards election politics. Concerts were organized by parties followed by feast to attract the attentions of the public. In this way people enjoyed the election atmospheres more like a festival of one kind; due to which they also pay more awareness towards the election. This is what they claim. But there are others who claim that such a free atmosphere increases the chances of conducting malpractices from political parties. Therefore we need to impose many checks and band so that our politics becomes cleaner.

However, it does not mean that Mizoram is completely free from political malpractices. Though the government tried its best to curb unfair practices its action also has some limitation. We might not experience killing or murder, but we usually hear some conspiracy about bribery, distribution of liquor and other gifts to attract voters and many more on the day of election. To eliminate all such malpractices some action needs to be taken. Regarding this the effort of the Churches and NGO's under the banner of MPF was not in vain. Since they took active measure to eliminate malpractices in politics the election becomes cleaner due to which Mizoram is having one of the most peaceful elections among Indian states.

In Mizoram politics, both the regional and national parties played equally important role. We have already discussed the developmental and progress made by each party in running the ministry. Besides this, another important role played by them is the commitment each party made in order to bring back lasting peace in Mizoram. We know the insurgency that began in 1966 lasted for 20 years and ended only in 1986. For the achievement of lasting peace in Mizoram the MNF, Congress and PC made their own sacrifice.

In 1966, MNF under Laldenga decided to carry arms to fight for independence from India. Since he was a charismatic leader with a good oratory, immediately he won the support of many young educated persons who enrolled themselves in the insurgent group. The group claimed that Indian government did not really care for Mizo. Mizo received only a step motherly treatment. Therefore, the only choice for the Mizo to receive full attention is to fight for independence. However, some critic said that the reason behind MNF taking up arms was due to the declining of MNF in Mizoram politics. Whatever the case might be, soon after insurgency began, Mizoram was put under President rule. The army took over the administration of Mizoram. Burning and grouping of villages resulted in starvation and hunger because food and water supply became limited. Besides, the social life of the people was greatly disturbed due to the imposition of curfew almost all the time. All this made the people being tired of insurgency. Due to this they pressed the party in power to resume peace in Mizoram by any means. Under PC ministry peace dialogue between MNF and India government was going a long way. But, since the government could not accept some of the demands of MNF like vacating legislature seats to Laldenga and his ministry; the peace process could not make solid conclusion. For this some people accused T. Sailo of not really wanting to have peace in Mizoram. The Congress even accused PC government as preferring military solution to solve Mizoram problems rather than political one. However, all political parties had to contribute for the return of peace in Mizoram.

MPC and MNF also did their best for the return of peace in Mizo Hills. It was the MPC ministry that took the peace dialogue with serious concern at the first position. But due to some

misunderstanding they could not achieve what they wanted. Congress then continues the unfinished work of PC ministry which they completed successfully. The vacation Chief Minister post and divide portfolios between Congress and MNF by Congress government under Lalthanhawla was also not an easy task. Above all, the willingness of MNF to give back the wishes of the people that is lasting peace is also not less. In the peace dialogue it was MNF alone who could change the outcome. After 20 years of fighting, to give up in what they believed in was not an easy thing to do. But MNF agreed to give up arms and return to civil life. With this insurgency had ended and political stability returned in Mizoram.

From what we have discussed, we can say party system in Mizoram is characterized by a two party system. Politics in Mizoram was dominated by two parties MNF and Congress who are equally strong to compete with each other. Though there are other parties like MPC, ZNP, BJP, MDF etc they are no strong competitors for the two major parties. Instead, sometimes they formed an alliance with either of them to try their luck in the shadow of the bigger party. Due to good awareness campaign, people are also becoming more aware of politics. At the time of election people decide whom to vote not by the parties but by the personality of the candidates? The preference for regional parties over national party is also now vanishing. This can be seen from the return of Congress party after the completion of five years term in the last election in 2013.

Like mainland politics, Mizoram is also experiencing some problems of electoral malpractices. To curb such unfair means steps were taken by civil organization like PRISM and MPF which was greatly appreciated. Today due to good awareness campaign election politics has changed. In the 80's people see politician to be a greedy men who only look for their personal gained. But after 90's people began to understand the main purpose of politics more and more. The popularity of media, both print and electronics played an important role in promoting the activities of the government. In such manner, even people in the most remote area have the knowledge of what is happening inside the assembly house. With this people become more aware with every day political activities. They now know what the importance of casting

votes in election is. In the past due to the bad behavior of some politician people were reluctant not only to cast their vote; they are not interested to even think about politics for just a moment.

In Mizoram, parties are changing their electoral strategy. Parties are now looking for young educated energetic people instead of an old people. People today are politically aware, they don't want an old man who cannot work but use the people money to boost his treasures. The people want a young and sharp minded person, who is enthusiastic to work for them. This change gave a fresh hope not only to the elderly citizens but also to the younger generation who wanted some change to drive Mizoram politics in the right path once again.

This is one of the most promising developments of party system in Mizoram. Because, in this post modern world, things move fast due to which we need a sharper mind to act quickly when situation demands. To do this if all the important legislature members comprises of those elderly person with their classic ideas it would soon leads to anxiety from the youth. The best way to avoid this is to include more and more young legislative members among the decision making body under the guidance of elder party leaders.

One remarkable thing is the role played by both regional and national parties for the return of peace in Mizoram. Besides the Congress, MPC and MNF also did their best to have a long last peace in Mizoram.

Another important development of party system in Mizoram is the return of women MLA. The first woman to be elected as member of legislative assembly was L. Thanmawii (PC) from Sangau constituency in 1977. In 1979 election for the first time in the history of Mizoram election two women got elected. L. Thanmawii (PC) from Aizawl West constituency and H. Rammawi (PC) from Sangau constituency. Till today this record had not been broken. However, after 27 years of gap, in the last by-election a women candidate Vanlalawmpuii (INC) got elected from Hrangturzo constituency.

In the last three elections we see that women voters turn out more than men. But when the election result came out we never have a winner from women candidates. This is one of the greatest set back of party system in Mizoram. During election campaign parties were talking about empowerment of women and the importance of having a women MLA. But during seats distribution women candidates were set to a constituency where opposition candidates is certain to win. And not only this when women candidates were put up by political parties even women voters themselves are reluctant to give their votes. At the end of the day it is the male candidates who got elected. When some problems against women comes up, might be in legislature, administration and civil life, all they can do is to put all the blame on men. Therefore, neither of the two parties cannot break away from the blame both have to change their mind set and only after that we could expect a change.

During the reign of PC there were two women MLA's. After three decades the Congress can put up one women MLA which is a great achievement considering all the elections between those years. We can use this as a new starting point regarding women participation in politics. We already said that in every election women voter turn out more than men but we hardly have women MLA. However, mere participation in election was no more enough but what is important is that they must also win. Almost every political party had women wings to generate the activities and involvement of women in the party. They work hard and gave their best effort for the party just like men. Therefore, they also deserved a better handling like men. The best way for parties to care them best is to give them the constituency at which they have the best chance to win the election. If the parties ever dare to do this we would surely have more women MLA in the years to come.

Looking at the mainstream politics we see the involvement of women in is very high. In the previous UPA ministry Sonia Gandhi controlled everything. In the present ministry also we see women among the cabinet ministers. So, it is time for us also to put some women in the decision making body at least to represent women community. I did not say that the position enjoyed by women in our society is not sufficient. In Mizoram, women enjoy a high position

and they are playing a very important role in many social activities. But politically the level women have reach is not far. Therefore, it is high time especially for the women voters, to give support to the women candidates so that they can send a women representative in the legislature.

Mizoram, being a part of India, the largest democratic country in the world had adopted a Parliamentary form of government. Many political parties had come and gone, some of the parties which exist till today are Congress, MNF, MPC, ZNP, BJP, NCP, EU, MDF, JMBP, AAP and ZTDP. Due to the existence of all the above political parties some might say that party system in Mizoram is a multi party system because all the above mentioned parties competes each other for power in the election.

However, mere existence of parties of mere contesting in the election did not define the status of party system. It is the effectiveness of the party in competition that defines the party system. So, looking at the above parties only two parties MNF & Congress were today the only really effective party in Mizoram politics. Parties like BJP, EU, NCP, & JMBP are silent players. MPC & ZNP once a very promising party now had lost their charms. Though they've made loud noises when election come they could no more regain their pass glory. The numbers of their MLA's were decreasing after every election. Especially ZNP had lost all their MLA's in the last election. So, under such circumstances they are not strong enough to compete for power. But the two leading parties MNF & Congress were no less powerful. The two parties have dominated Mizoram politics where the people had to make a choice between the two. Especially after statehood, party system in Mizoram was the party system of either of the MNF or Congress. All the other political parties remain as the shadow of either of the two parties.

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