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DECLARATION

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

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

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Abbreviations

APHLC	:	All Party Hill Leader's Conference
CEM	:	Chief Executive Member
Cong (I)	:	Congress (India)
Congress (L)	:	Congress (L. Chinzah faction)
Congress (M)	:	Congress (Manghnuna Faction)
CRC	:	Chakma Regional Council
DCA	:	District Council Affairs
EM	:	Executive Member
ICS	:	Indian Civil Service
ILR	:	Inner Line Regulation
INC	:	Indian National Congress
LIEC	:	Lakher Independent Evangelical Church
LRC	:	Lakher Regional Council
MADC	:	Mara Autonomous District Council
MDC	:	Member of District Council
MDF	:	Maraland Democratic Front
MFP	:	Mara Freedom Party
MRC	:	Member of Regional Council
MNF	:	Mizo National Front
MU	:	Mizo Union
PC	:	People's Conference
PHED	:	Public Health Engineering Department
PWD	:	Public Work Department
PLRC	:	Pawi-Lakher Regional Council
PLTU	:	Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union

PRC : Pawi Regional Council
SDO : Sub-Divisional Officer
UMFO : United Mizo Freedom Organisation

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Mara before the advent of the British Administration lived a simple life and enjoyed independent life in their respective village under the administration of the Village Chief. The Chief administered the village with the help of his Council of Elders (*Machas*) and performed the legislative, executive and judicial functions. On 31st January, 1922, at the *Baw* meeting the whole area occupied by the Mara was divided into three different districts such as the Lushai Hills, the Chin Hills and the Arakan Hill Tracts. This demarcation brought about new demarcation of the district boundaries within the Chin-Lushai areas and from 1924, the Mara villages which fell under the Chief Commissioner of Assam formed part and parcel of the Lushai Hills District.¹ The Mara came under some type of loose administration of British Authority with the final annexation of Zawngling village in 1924 and subsequently all the laws and rules in force in Lushai Hills were extended to this area by the Assam Government.

With the advent of the British administration in Maraland significant changes were brought in the social, cultural, political, economic and religious life of the Mara. The most remarkable change with the introduction of the British Administration was the gradual weakening of the positions and powers of the Chiefs. The institution of slavery was also abolished because the British thought this institution abhorrent. The abolition of slavery undoubtedly diminished the wealth and importance of the Chief. Moreover, the traditional religious belief of the Mara was replaced by Christianity and with the coming of the Christian missionaries education was also introduced among the Mara.

¹K. Zohra, *The Maras: Indigenous Tradition and Folkculture*, P. 1.

The impact of Christianity and the British rule were significant towards the political life of the Mara. The new wave of politics began to penetrate into the minds of the people. The growth of the Church and education had gradually brought about a lot of political awareness among the Mara. There has been an increasing political inclination of the Chiefs and the people leading to the formation of regional and clan based political parties. The new awakening also brought an end to the centuries old Chieftainship.²

Political consciousness Of the Mara

On the eve of India's independence, political consciousness sprang up among the Mizo as the Government of India Act, 1935 failed to provide autonomous administration and political autonomy. The Lushai Hills district had no representative in the Assam Legislature and no federal or provincial legislature was extended to this district. Moreover, the autocratic, oppressive and unbearable rule of the Chiefs who were fully safeguarded by the British Superintendent created the desire for better status among the commoners since the 1940's. In 1946, the District Conference created by Mac Donald, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, greatly supported by the Chiefs led to the rise of great resentment among the commoners on the ground of same representatives between the Chiefs and commoners. These factors led to the emergence of political consciousness among the commoners which led to the formation of the Mizo Common People's Union on 9th April, 1946 to voice people's aspiration and various demands especially political rights and status. This party was later renamed Mizo Union.³

²K. Robin, *The Lakhers in Mizoram: The Impact of Christianity and Colonial Administration*, P. 334.

³RN Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, P. 74-76.

The political consciousness of the Mara started since the pre-independence era. Capt A.I Bowman was said to be the first Englishman to awaken the political consciousness of the Mara Chiefs. In 1944, he visited Serkawr and inspected records of the village writer which was recorded in Lushai language and questioned why it was written in Lushai language. Capt A.I. Bowman was said to be so moved with the reply that the Mara dialect was not officially recognized and rebuked Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr to demand better status for the Mara. Accordingly, Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr convened Mara Chief's Conference at Serkawr on 4th, January, 1945, which was attended by 23 Mara Chiefs. A memorandum was adopted and submitted to the Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, Lunglei demanding Mara District Council. As no actions were taken to their demands, the Mara Chiefs assembled again at Serkawr on 3rd, November, 1945 and consequently submitted a memorandum to the Superintendent of the Lushai hills. And just before the visit of the Bordoloi Committee to the Lushai Hills another petition was submitted to the Governor of Assam.⁴

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the role of Mara Freedom Party in the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council

After the Second World War, Labour Party formed government in Great Britain on July 26, 1945 and a special Mission of Cabinet Ministers headed by Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India to help her attained freedom as speedily and fully as possible. Special attention was given to the tribal areas, as such the Cabinet Mission suggested the formation of an Advisory Committee, to study on the rights of minorities and tribes of Excluded and Partially Excluded Area. The Constituent

⁴RT Zachono, *The Maras Toward Autonomy*, P. 139-141.

Assembly set up an Advisory Committee which further appointed a sub-committee known as the North Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi as Chairman. The other members consist of Rupnath Brahma, A.V. Thakkur, Mayang Nokcha, B.N. Rau and Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy⁵. The Bordoloi Committee members visited the headquarters of the hill areas and study the mind, problems and desire of the tribals with regard to autonomy for their area. After assessing and observing the demands of the tribal people of the North-East, the Bordoloi Committee realised that these people needed protection and safeguard to preserve their way of life and participate in the political process of the Country. The Committee submitted its report to the Advisory Council and recommended for a new scheme of administration for the Hills areas in Assam.⁶

The Sub-Committee submitted its report on July 28, 1947 to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee forwarded the report of the Sub-committee to the President of the Constituent Assembly on 4th, March, 1948. The Provisions of the Sixth Schedule were considered by the Constituent Assembly on September 5,6 and 7, 1949. There was heated deliberation on the issues among the members of the Constituent Assembly. Some members like Kuladhar Chaliha, Brajeshwar Prasad, Rohini Kumar etc. strongly opposed the formation of District Councils. However the support from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, the efforts of Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy and the positive role of Gopinath Bordoloi enabled the

⁵Surajit Kumar Chatterjee, *North-East India: Dispersion and Discontent*, P. 383

⁶J. Zahluna, *Constituent Assembly and the Sixth Schedule: With Special Reference to Mizoram*, P. 1238.

approval of the provisions of the District Councils and Regional Council inserted in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.⁷

After the Indian Constitution was brought into force, the immediate formation of the District Council in the Hill Districts was not possible. Therefore an interim Advisory Council was set up. Election to the Advisory Council was held on 23rd March, 1948 for electing Chief's representatives by the Chiefs and Commoner's representatives by the commoners on the basis of Adult Franchise on 15th April, 1948. The Advisory Council comprised 35 members, out of which 10 were Chief representatives and 15 were Commoner's representatives, L.L. Peter, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills was Chairman of the Advisory Council. From the Pawi-Lakher region Z. Hengmang and Vako were the commoners representatives and Chhohmo was the Chief's representative. At this point, the Lai (Pawi) and Mara (Lakher) leaders became aware of the fact that they could be facilitated with Regional Council under the provision of the then proposed Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Therefore, they vigorously pursued their demand for establishment of Regional Council with the formation of Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union at Lawngtlai on 25th October, 1949 with Z. Hengmanga as the President. The Advisory Council was changed to Advisory Committee in 1949 which function till 1951. The first general election of the Lushai Hills District Council was held on 4th January, 1952, out of 18 seats Mizo Union won 15 seats and Lalsawia become the first Chief Executive Member. The Lushai Hills District Council was finally inaugurated on 26th April, 1952 at Aizawl by Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam. Further the Lushai Hills District came to be known as Mizo District as per the Lushai hills District (Change of Name) Act,

⁷Jangkhongam Dounghel, *Autonomous District Councils: A Study of the Implication of the Sixth schedule in Mizoram*, P. 207-208.

1954 (Act XVIII of 1954) of the Indian Parliament. Consequently, the Lushai Hills District Council also came to be known as Mizo District Council since 1954. As a result of the demand of the Pawi-Lakher leaders, a Regional Council called the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) was inaugurated with headquarters at Saiha, by Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam at Lunglei on 23rd April, 1953.⁸

The first general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was held in April, 1954 and Z. Hengmanga was elected as the Chairman. Whereas, C. Zochhuma was elected as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and he continued till his death upto August 31st, 1956. After his death H. Kiautuma was elected as the CEM on 15th, January 1957. The second election to the PLRC was held in 1957. After the election, dispute cropped up as the Mara demanded for the key executive post as per the agreement reached on the formation of the first term of the PLRC. Shortly their dispute was resolved and H. Kiautuma was elected as CEM and Mylai Hlychho was offered the EM post which he first declined and later accepted. Before the third general election, there was a political development in the PLRC, the Lakher formed the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) in 1963 with V. Hlychho as its President and Mylai Hlychho, as the secretary. The party's main aim was to secure a separate Mara Autonomous District Council. In order to secure its demand the MFP boycotted the PLRC and formed an Interim Mara Autonomous District Council.⁹

The third general election to the PLRC in 1964 was boycotted by the Lakher but the Pawi and the Chakma participated in the election. Lalchunga Chinzah, H.

⁸Jangkhongam Doungel, *Evolution of District Council Autonomy in Mizoram*, P. 7-8.

⁹RT Zachono, opt cited, P. 147-148.

Tanmanga, Bualthiauva, Laltuma, Atul Chandra Chakma and Lalngaia were elected as the Members of Regional Council. The Governor of Assam nominated K. Rohnuna as nominated member. The elected members elected H. Tanmanga as the Chairman and Lalchunga Chinzah as Chief Executive Member and remained in office till the next general election held in 1970.

In 1969 when the Fourth general election of the PLRC was to be held, the Mara leaders decided to contest the election and decided to pursue their demand with power and the staff also rejoined their former jobs in the Regional Council. For the first time Zakhu Hlychho, a Mara was elected the CEM, with the executive body of Lalchunga Chinzah as Chairman, U. Zathang and S. Pailei as EM and Atul Chandra Chakma as Deputy Chairman. This executive body remained in office till the creation of Lakher District Council, Pawi District Council and Chakma District Council.¹⁰

Formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) functioned for a period of 19 years from 1953 till its trifurcation into three regional councils on 2nd April, 1972. On 21st January 1972, the erstwhile Mizo Hills was separated from Assam with the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram by the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was also trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma Regional Council on 2nd April 1972 as per the Administrator of Mizoram Notification No. CCMP/3/72-77 of 1.4.1972. On 29th April 1972, the three Regional Councils were upgraded to the status of the full-

¹⁰R. Hmingthanzuala, *Emergence of Social and Economic Forces for the Creation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council*, P. 46.

fledged Autonomous District Councils and were governed by their respective interim government till the conduct of District Council election in June, 1973. After the trifurcation of the PLRC, an administrative arrangement was made in such a way that the existing Members of the PLRC would become Members of their respective Regional Council. As such, all the Pawi Members of Regional Council (MRC) become members of Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher MRC become members of Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma MRC become the members of CRC respectively.¹¹

The Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) has three main structural organs of government such as Legislative, Executive and Judiciary. At present, there are 93 Village Councils within MADC area with 436 Village Council Members¹². Mara Autonomous District Council has 28 departments with 545 plan staff and 1476 non plan staff employees.¹³ The first general election to the Mara Autonomous District Council was held on 17th December, 1972. In the first general election, Mara Freedom Party won all the 9 seats and formed the Executive Committee. Ngony Hlychho, a woman candidate also won the election. The Second general election to MADC was held on 12th December, 1977, the Janata Party won 12 seats out of 15 seats and 2 seats was won by Independent candidate. The Janata Party formed the Executive Committee.¹⁴

The third general election to MADC was held in December 1982. The Congress (I) won 7 seats and People's Conference (PC) party won 7 seats. Two elected members from Congress (I) joined the People's Conference as such the

¹¹Jangkhongam Dounel, opt cited, P. 68-69.

¹²Ibid, P. 91.

¹³Budget of the Mara Autonomous District Council (2014-2016) published by Mara Autonomous District Council, Saiha, Mizoram, P. 24, 25, 26, 63.

¹⁴V VenkataRao, *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India*, P. 185-186.

Council was form by the PC. The fourth general election to MADC was held on 14th February 1985. In the fourth general election, Cong (I) won 12 seats and Mizo National Front (MNF) won 2 seats. The Executive Committee was formed by Congress. The fifth general election to MADC was held on 6th February 1990. In the fifth term the members of District Council was increased from 14 to 19 members. In this election, Cong (I) won 12 seats, MNF won 5 seats and 2 independent candidates won 2 seats. In the fifth term of MADC, the executive body was form by Cong (I).The Sixth general election to MADC was held on 9th February 1995. Out of the 19 seats, Cong (I) won 17 seats and 2 seats were won by Independent candidates. In the Sixth term of MADC, the Executive body was formed by Indian National Congress (INC).¹⁵

The Seventh general election to MADC was held on 9th February, 2000, out of the 19 seats, INC won 7 seats, Mizo National Front (MNF) won 3 seats, 1 seat was won by an independent candidate and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) a new sub-regional political party formed in 1996 won 8 seats. In the Seventh term as there was no single majority party to form the Executive Committee, a coalition government was formed by MDF and MNF and an independent elected member. On 11th November, 2000 this Executive Committee became minority due to withdrawal of support by the MNF and a new Executive body was formed. On 4th December, 2003 No Confidence Motion was moved against this new Executive Committee and the existing Executive Committee was voted out and a new Executive Committee was formed on 6th December 2003.¹⁶

¹⁵K. Sachho, *Zoram Thlirvelna*, P. 61.

¹⁶K. Sachho, opt cited, P. 63.

The Eight general election to Mara Autonomous District Council was held on 24th April, 2005. Out of 22 seats, INC won 4 seats, MDF won 7 seats and MNF won 10 seats and an independent candidate won 1 seat. As there was no single majority party to form the government, MDF and INC supported by an independent elected member formed a coalition government. Before the completion of the eight term, the existing Executive Committee was voted out as an independent elected members joined MNF which made MNF the single majority party. A new Executive Committee was formed by the MNF. However, this Executive Body was dissolved on 5th March, 2007 which results in another election to MADC.¹⁷ The ninth general election to MADC was held on 8th May, 2007, out of 22 seats, INC won 8 seats, MDF won 7 seats and MNF won 7 seats. In the ninth term, MDF and INC formed a coalition government which was voted out on 30th March, 2008 by elected members from MDF and MNF to form a new Executive body. However, new Executive Body was formed again on 20th January, 2009 by INC as some elected members from MDF and MNF defected to INC, which make INC the majority party to form a new Executive Committee.¹⁸

The Tenth general election to MADC was held on 3rd May, 2012. The members of MADC was also increased from 22 to 25 with 3 nominated seats. Out of 25 seats, INC won 15 seats, MDF won 5 seats, MNF won 3 seats and 2 seats were won by Independent Candidates. In the Tenth term of MADC, the Executive body was formed by INC headed by RT. Zachono as the Chief Executive Member.¹⁹

Land

¹⁷ Ibid, P. 64.

¹⁸ Ibid, P. 65-67.

¹⁹ madc.mizoram.gov.in (official website of MADC), accessed on 25th November, 2015.

Maraland, formerly known as the Lakherland is a hilly region situated at the extreme South of Mizoram. Saiha, which is also known as Siaha, is the headquarter or capital town of the Mara Autonomous District Council. In the past, Saiha was also the headquarters of Chhimtuipui District, when the Mara area and the Lai area were loosely amalgamated to form the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The Mara Autonomous District Council lies in the loop of the Kolodyne river, geographically situated between the Latitude 22°.07' and 22°.38' North and between the Longitude 92°55' and 93°.10' East. The Mara Autonomous District Council is also situated in the southern most part of Mizoram and the district covers an area of about 1399 sq. kilometres. It is flanked on the north and the west by the Lai Autonomous District Council of Mizoram, and on the south and east by the Chin State of Myanmar covering an international boundary with Myanmar for 159 kilometres. The geographical area of the Mara Autonomous District Council also constitutes an administrative district known as Saiha District since the bifurcation of Chhimtuipui District into Lawngtlai District and Saiha District in 1998. According to the 2011 Mizoram census, the total population of Saiha district is 56,574, with 28,594 male and 27,980 female.²⁰

Geographically, the district is isolated from the rest of India both in distance and forbidden nature of hill terrain. Steep hill ranges and mountains are running in different directions which plunge the natural features. Hill ranges are numerous, and are separated from one another by ridges, furrows and gorges. The average height of these ranges is about 900-1500 metres. The Sahiatla with the height of 2022 metres is the highest mountain in the Mara Autonomous District

²⁰Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2014, P.1.

Council. There are other prominent mountains within the district like Tliatlu, Kahrie, Mawma, Meisabyu etc.²¹

Several rivers, rivulets and streams run through the land in various directions. The most prominent rivers are the Beino (Kolodyne), the Tisi, Pala, Ka-ao, Kaochao, Salyu, Titlao, Tisopi etc. There are also lakes, the most important one being the Pala Tipo, which has a depth of twelve metres, and it covers an area of about one square kilometres. The tropical jungle with its favourable climate makes the land an ideal sanctuary for wild animals. Large varieties of wild animals are found in the forest, but most of the wild animals are extinct now. Besides, several varieties of birds, peacock, black pheasant, jungle fowls, partridge, various sea birds, etc. are also found in the district.

People

The Mara occupy a large hill tracts of the Southern part of Mizoram, the erstwhile South Lushai Hills. The whole region inhabited by the Mara is known as 'Mararah' in their local language, meaning '*the land of the Mara*'. In the early British period, this hill region was popularly known to the British as '*Lakherland*' as the Mara were then designated as 'Lakher'. In the context of the political sanction resolved at *Baw* meeting on 31st January 1922, the whole area occupied by the Mara was divided into three different parts amongst the three districts such as the Lushai Hills, the Chin Hills and the Arakan Hill Tracts. This partition brought about new demarcation of the district boundaries within the Chin-Lushai areas, and from 1924, the Mara villages which fell under the Chief Commissioner of Assam formed part and parcel of the Lushai Hills district. For better governance,

²¹ K. Zohra, opt cited, P. 2.

in 1953, the Mara area was loosely amalgamated with the Lai area to form regional autonomous body designated as 'Pawi-Lakher Regional Council' under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution of India.²² With the creation of the Union Territory of Mizoram, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three regional councils, namely, Chakma Regional Council, Lakher Regional Council and Pawi Regional Council on 2nd April 1972. Subsequently, the three regional councils were upgraded to full-fledged Autonomous District Council on 29th April 1972. Later on, Lakher Autonomous District Council was changed into Mara Autonomous District Council by the Act of Parliament in 1988.²³

The Mara belongs to the Mongoloid stock of the Tibeto-Burman family. The term 'Mara' is used as a generic term for the whole Mara people who inhabit the entire perimeter of the present Mara Autonomous District Council area of Mizoram and also large areas of the hill tracts of the erstwhile South Haka (Halkha) Sub-division of the Chin Hills of Myanmar. In fact, people who share the same myth, custom, tradition and dialect and are being closely similar are commonly designated as '*Mara*'. The appellation '*Mara*' is a compound syllable of '*Ma*' and '*Ra*' meaning costly demand of marriage price (*Ma*= marriage price, *Ra*= costly demand). Secondly, it is also held that the word Mara is synonymous with '*Maliara*' meaning '*others*' land (*Malia*=other people, *Ra*=land). Thus the term was coined to designate the Mara because of their frequent migration to new tenable and more suitable land for better jhum cultivation. Finally, the most plausible derivation is that the term '*Mara*' is a Mara transliteration of the word '*Mawra*' meaning '*bamboo land*' (*Maw*= bamboo, *Ra*=land). The word *Mawra* is

²²Ibid, P. 1-2.

²³Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited,P. 7-8.

purely a reproduction of the Halkha word '*Mauram*' meaning '*bamboo land*' (*Mau*=bamboo. *Ram*=land). Thus the term was, thus, applied to the Mara as they frequently made a nomadic movement, and they settled in the more suitable tropical jungle covered with the bamboo forest.²⁴

The Mara were also called by several names such as Shendus, Tseindus, Shentoos, Shendoos, Shandu, Shindoos, Shindus, which seems to be one name and are identical and synonymous. In Khumi, Shendus, Tseindus, Shentoos, Shendoos, Shandu, Shindoos, Shindus means 'a people who always fight and make others restless'. Others believed that Shandu in Khumi means 'Hair holding people', '*Shan*' means '*hair*' and '*du*' means '*hold*', this has its roots in a story which says that the Mara people, long ago, used to raid the Khumi tribe and cut off their heads holding the hair. This could be an inclusive term for the Mara (Shendus) along with Zophei and zotung (Zathang & Chinzah).²⁵ Phayre by connecting the thirteen (13) clans of Tseindus, which are with the present Mara clans, he identified these Tseindus both as Pawi as well as purely Mara tribes²⁶.

In the early days, the Mara were also commonly known to the Chin as '*Zao, Zyu, Yo*'. They were also known as '*Zo*' or '*Zochhia*'. The term '*Zao*' or '*Zou*' is, however, used by different authorities in various references. The term is also appeared as '*Yo*' which is prominently used by B.S. Carey and H.N. Tuck to designate the Mara who lived in the areas of the southern independent villages of the Halkha sub-division (Chin Hills) and the northern Arakan Hill Tracts. The word '*Zao*' or '*Zou*' is widely used by the Chins as a generic term to denote the

²⁴ K. Zohra, opt cited, P. 7-8.

²⁵ Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, *The Maras: Headhunters to Soulhunters*, P. 44.

²⁶ *Ibid* , P. 44-45.

Mara inhabiting south Halkha sub-division of the Chin Hills.²⁷ The Chin name for the Mara is 'Zo', though the clans call themselves Mara, and the Lushai called them 'Lakher'. The Arrakan named the Mara as 'Tlongshai (Tlosai)'.²⁸ The Pawi (Lai) also refers the Mara as 'Zo'. Even today the elder section of the Lai called the Mara as 'Our Zo Brothers'.²⁹

The early Mara were also commonly known as 'Lakher', by the Lusei. The word is purely a Lusei word of expression which means 'plucking of cotton' (La=cotton, Kher= plucking). The story held by local elders says that a Lusei, on his visit to the Mara area saw a Mara woman plucking cotton, thus he named the Mara as 'Lakher'.³⁰ The term 'Lakher' was thus picked by the British, and it was applied to the Mara of the erstwhile South Lushai Hills and its adjoining areas of Myanmar.

When the Christian Missionaries came to the present Maraland under the 'Lakher Pioneer Mission', the Missionaries founded the 'Lakher Independent Evangelical Church (LIEC)' which was later rechristened from 'Lakher' to 'Mara' in 1967 at the LIEC Assembly held at Chakhang. After the formation of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP), on 16th December, 1963, a convention was held at Zawngling. The party at this convention passed a resolution that the term 'Lakher' should be replaced by 'Mara'. Subsequently on 1st May, 1989, the 'Lakher Autonomous District Council' was changed into 'Mara Autonomous District Council'.³¹

²⁷Ibid , P. 11.

²⁸Lt. Colonel. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, P. 211.

²⁹Rev .Dr. M. Zakonia, *History of Maraland*, P. 8.

³⁰Ibid , P. 9.

³¹ C. Haoko, *Mara History: The History of Mara in India and Myanmar*, P.22-23.

Origin of the Mara

The origin of the Mara is also similar with other people of hill tribes in general and the *Zo* ethnic group in particular. Their migration from China to Myanmar also is believed to be same with other Chin people. They migrated to their present occupation from Myanmar around 15th Century AD.

The origin of the Mara tribes as handed down by tradition is as follows: Long ago, before the darkness called *Khazoh Hra* fell upon the world. All men came out of a hole below the earth. As the founder of each Mara group came out of the earth he called out his name. Tlongsai (Tlosai) called out “I am Tlosai”; Zeuhngang (Zyhno) called out “I am Zyhno”; Hawthai called out “I am Hawthai”; Sabeu (Saby) called out “I am Saby”; Heima called out “ I am Heima”. Accordingly, God thought that a very large number of Mara had come out and stopped the way. When the Lusei came out of the hole, however, only the first one to come out called out, “I am Lusei” and all the rest came out silently. God on hearing the announcement of the arrival of only one Lusei, God thought that only one Lusei had come out, and gave them a much longer time, during which Lusei were pouring out of the hole silently in great numbers. It is for this reason that the Lusei to this day are more numerous than the Mara. After all men had come out of the hole in the earth God made their languages different, and they remain so to this day.³²

The advent and origin of the Mara before their arrival in the Chin Hills in Myanmar is shrouded in mystery because of the absence of a well-accepted tradition or other evidence. The only known fact regarding their earlier history is

³² NE Parry, opt cited, P. 4.

that they came from the north i.e. China. It is beyond any doubt that the Mara belongs to the Tibeto-Burman stock of the Chin sub-group. The Chin sub-group includes- the Lusei, Paite, Hmar, Pawi (Lai) and the Lakher (Mara) etc. The Chin sub-groups have common origin based on the tradition, customs and cultures and as such a common name '*Mizo*' was adopted.³³

The Mara were believed to have come over from China to Tibet through the Chindwin valley. They spread out into various parts of the hilly areas. While they occupied the Chindwin valley, the Burmese called them 'Chins' and the name was recognized by the English writers who sub-divided the Chins into Southern Chins along with the Lusei. In tracing out the origin of the Chin tribes the obscurity is completely removed from the period they settled in the Chindwin valley and the Chin Hills. In searching out the origin of the Mara, it was believed that indeed they occupied some parts of the Chin Hills and that some of the Mara tribes still remained in that area. The Mara came to their present home in Lushai Hills in about 1650 A. D.³⁴

Migration and Settlement

Tlosai, Hawthai, Zyhno, Chapi, and Vytu constitute the principal Mara tribal groups. Tradition says that the Mara came from the north, and it is certain that they all came to their present home in the Halkha Sub-division of the Chin Hills, presumably pushed forward by pressure from the east. The progress of their migration to their present settlement can be traced briefly as stated below.

³³Rev. Dr. M. Zakonia, opt cited, P. 9.

³⁴Thasia T Azyu, *The System of Administration in South Mizoram*, P. 115.

Migration and settlement of the Tlosai

The people of Tlosai group originated at a place called '*Leisai*' between *Leitak* and *Zephai* in Chin Hills. From *Leisai* they moved to *Saro* and thence to *Chakhang*. From *Chakhang* they crossed the river Beino (Kolodyne) and came to their present Maraland in the southern most part of Mizoram and first settled at *Phusa*, on a high hill between *Iana* and *Siata*, then they moved to *Khupi* on the river *Tisi*, then to *Theiri* and then to *Beukhi* (*Bykhi*). The Tlosai-Siaha and the Tlosai-Saikao got separated in the course of migration at *Bykhi*. The Tlosai-Siaha occupy various sites in the neighbourhood of *Bykhi* and ended up at Saiha, while the Tlosai-Saikao moved successively to Serkawr.³⁵

Eventually, after settling at Serkawr about fifty or sixty years ago, from Serkawr they have formed the other villages of *Tlosai* group ruled over by Hlychho Chiefs. From the number of village sites they have occupied since coming to the Lushai Hills, it has been said that the Tlosai were the first inhabitants of the present Maraland and it is certain that they must have been settled in Maraland since 1580 or not later than 1632.³⁶

Migration and settlement of the Hawthai

The Hawthai originated at a place called '*Chira*' in Chin Hills. From *Chira* they crossed the river *Beino* and came to Mizoram and scattered in their present territory of *Tisi*. Hawthai clan, whose main village is *Tisi*, originated at a place called *Chira* in Haka (Halkha). They came to *Chira* through *Saro*, *Siata*, *Paimi* and *Noaohlah* and came to *Tisi*. They are more recent immigrants than the Tlosai.

³⁵ NE Parry, opt cited, P.2.

³⁶ Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited P. 55

Noaohlah, *Chhaolo* and *Lobo* are Hawthai villages.³⁷ They came to *Tisi* only around 1900 and they are more recent immigrants than the *Tlosai* and *Zyhno*. The Hawthai villages were ruled by the *Nohro* Chiefs.³⁸

Migration and settlement of Zyhno

The *Zyhno*, who are the people of *Savang*, originated at the *Hnarang* (*Hnaro*) in *Haka* (*Halkha*). They crossed the *Kolodyne* and settled on a high range called *Kahri Tlah*. They moved in succession to *Hloma* near *Seihmo* and *Chyo* on the banks of *Tisi* river and came to their present territory of *Zyhno*. They came to *Maraland* at around 1802.³⁹

Migration and settlement of Chapi

The *Saby*, who are the people of *Chapi*, originated at *Thlatla* in *Halkha*. One of their Chiefs, *Mahli*, married a *Lakher* woman, and from that time the royal house has regarded itself as *Lakher*. This *Mahli* moved from *Thlatla* to *Ngiaphia*, then moved on to *Pazo*, *Khothlaw*, *Chorihlo*, *Chawkhu*, *Fachaw* (near junction of the *Satly* river with *Kolodyne*), *Khiraw*, *Ravaw*, *Tichei*, *Pasei*, *Sacho*, *Loma* and then to their present site called *Tichha*. Another *Saby* Chief *Vasai Chozah* and a cousin of *Rachi*, Chief of *Chapi* settled at *Kihlo* along the top of the mount *Kahri* range.⁴⁰

Migration and settlement of Vytu

The migration of the *Vytu* people is of recent origin than other groups of *Mara*. They came from *Vytu* village in *Chin Hills*. From *Vytu* they came to

³⁷ Ibid, P. 2.

³⁸ MylaiHlychho, *Mara History*, P. 228.

³⁹ Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P.55.

⁴⁰ NE Parry, opt cited, P.3.

Maraland and occupied their present *Siata* territory. Among the Mara tribe, the Vytu are the last group to migrate to Maraland. There is another theory about the migration of the Vytu that the Vytu came to *Hnychao* near the present *Siata* village around 1500-1600, after about three generations of settling there in *Hnychao*, they came to the present *Siata* village around 1890.⁴¹

Social Structure

The Mara social structure is largely built on political, kinship and economic bases. Village, family, marriage, clan and kinship constitute the most important part of the Mara social structure.

Village

Village occupy an important place in the traditional Mara society like other tribal groups of North East India. Village acts as a political unit as well as economical unit in the Mara society. The political, social and economic activities were controlled by the Village through warfare.

The village community mainly consists of three estates such as: the Chief (*Abei*), the Patrician (*Phosah*) and the Plebian (*Machhie*). The Chief managed the village administration with the assistance of the Village Elders (*Machas*) selected by the Chief. Usually the *Machas* belong to noble clans, in case of less intelligent noble, able plebeians were often appointed by the Chief. Apart from the *Machas*, there were other village officials like the *Tla Awpa* (*Village Crier*) who went round the village every evening giving out the Chief's order for the next day, and was remunerated from coolie labour. The other village officials were the *Sohdaipa* (*the Blacksmith*), who repairs the tools and fashions new ones and the *Khireihpa* (*the*

⁴¹Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P. 56.

Village Writer), who wrote all letters for the Chief and acted as his clerk and man of all work. Both the *Sohdaipa* and the *Khireihpa* received certain dues from the villagers and were exempted from coolie labour by the government. The Mara village have no such thing as village priests, each householder performed his own sacrifices, but for the 'Tylia' sacrifice a special *priest (Tyliabopa)* is appointed by the Chief.⁴²

Family

The family in the Mara society is a nuclear family. The family mainly consists of the father, the mother and children. Being a patrilineal descent group, the father is the head of the family, command and administered the family in all matters. The eldest son usually inherit the family properties and he is empowered to function as the father's-in-charge. The father being the head of the family, usually looks after the family. Women on the other hand, take care of the home front, gather and prepare food and engage in cooking, washing, cleaning etc. Family acts as an important agency of socialization. It is a primary channel through which children learn societal norms and values of society. The family environment is calm and due to different works assigned to the family members only during mealtime, the family members get the opportune moment to meet and talk to each other.⁴³

Family acts as an important agency of socialization. It is a primary channel through which children learned societal norms and values of the society. So the lives of the children had been shaped by family environment. Family is a place of

⁴² NE Parry, opt cited, P.245-246.

⁴³Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P.77-78.

reproduction of young, physical maintenance of family members, social placement of the children, socialization and social control.

Marriage

Marriage was considered as a primary or basic factor for blood ties or partnership for the life of different families in Mara society. Marriage has been prescribed among the relatives, the Mara favoured marriage with the mother's brother's daughter, as it keeps the maternal avuncular relationship in the same line, but it is not obligatory.⁴⁴ Marriage was usually arranged by the parents. When a suitable bride is selected, the boy's parent initiated the marriage negotiation by sending an emissary (*Lyuchapa*) to the girl's parents with a marriage proposal. Once the marriage proposal was accepted and settled the bride price would be negotiated in the girl's parent and the marriage day would be fixed.⁴⁵

The marriage price among the Mara is very high, higher the status of the clan, the bride price is also higher. They always preferred to marry a girl belonging to the higher clan mainly to raise the social status. As the marriage price were normally high and costly, close-relatives and clans-men were compelled to help each other by contributing towards the payment of bride prices.⁴⁶

Clan:

The first kin group in the Mara society is the patrilineal Clan. In Mara society, there is no existence of a single clan's village, every village is inhabited by multiple clans. Each clan is said to have the name of its earlier ancestor. The Mara society is composed of at least four major clan group, such as the ruling clan, the

⁴⁴ NE Parry, opt cited, P, 295.

⁴⁵ Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P.79.

⁴⁶ Lt. Colonel. J. Shakespear, opt cited. P. 214.

high clans, the middle clans and the lower clans. The ruling clans of the Mara are *Hlychho, Khichha-Hlychho, Nohro, Chozah, Bohia and Zawtha*. Besides these ruling clans there are twenty-four patrician clans and more than one hundred and twenty plebeian clans. The Mara society is made up of the combination of the different clans and the clans determined the social framework of the Mara society.⁴⁷

Clan is connected with marriage, birth, death and certain sacrifices of a private nature that the clan assumes importance. A clansman in distress could count on the help from his fellow clan members. Clansmen help each other in contributing towards the payment of marriage prices. Although there is no taboo against marrying one's own clan members, marriage within the same clan is less frequent.

Kinship

The Mara social structure is largely one of a kinship. It is organized by the filial relationship between descent groups of the tribe. In the kinship network there are three ties- affinity, consanguinity and fictive. Affinity refers to kinship relationship through marital bonds. Consanguinity refers to the biological relationship by blood and birth. The fictive refers to a socio-legal tie- a tie by law or ceremony or religion.

Kinship institution is one of the important units of the Mara society. Kinship ties are very strong among the Mara. Kinsmen were surrounded by

⁴⁷Dr John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P. 80.

concern and care. As the Mara are patrilineal descent group, inheritance is reckoned through male line.⁴⁸

The traditional political institution under Chieftainship

In the early Mara political life, the people were under the administrative rule of the Village Chief (*Abei*), the head of the village. The Chief is the owner of the village lands, the protector and the father of his people, he is also the leader in war. In most of the case the Chief is possibly despotic and commit tyrannical acts, but there exist a mutual relationship of benefit and help between the Chief and his people. One of the important function of the Chief is protection of his people. As the head of the village land, he let the villagers cultivate in his land. It is his duty to help his people in time of famine and other distress, in return the people pay him certain dues, render him certain services, and come to his aid when called upon by him for assistance. The Lakher (Mara) have no single ruling clan like the Sailo Chief of the Lusei. The Chief represents the village in all dealings of the government and all dealings with the villagers should as far as possible to be carried on through the Chief. The Chief's power and privilege come from his birth.⁴⁹

The Chief selected the *Machas* (Council of elders) to assist him in administering the village. Usually they belong to noble clans, but if there are any specially able plebeians available, the Chief often appoint them as elders in preference to less intelligent nobles. The elders received a share in the meat due called '*Vaopia*' which is paid by the loser whenever a case is decided. Besides the *Machas*, the Chief also appointed some village officials such as, the village crier

⁴⁸Ibid, P. 82.

⁴⁹NE Parry, opt cited, P.248-249.

(*Tla awhpa*), the blacksmith (*Sodaipa*) and the village writer (*Khireipa*). The village crier went around the village every evening giving out the Chief's orders for the next day and he is enumerated by being exempted from coolie work. The blacksmith repaired the tools and fashioned new ones for the villagers. The village writer wrote all letters for the Chief and acted as his clerk and man of all work. Both the blacksmith and the village writer received certain dues from the villagers and are exempted from coolie labour by the Government.⁵⁰

The Chief and the village officials carry out the village administration efficiently for the welfare of the villagers. The judicial function is also performed by the Chief and his Council of elders. All types of cases and disputes were tried and decided according to the Mara customary laws. The decision made by the Chief to any cases is final and normally carried out and obeyed by the villagers.⁵¹

The Chief and the *Machas* were the highest court of justice. The role and function of the Chief was to give leadership to the village community, to protect and defend village rights and judge criminal cases. The Chief and his Council of Elders exercised authority by taking responsibility for land division, disposal, sequestration and redistribution within the village boundaries. The Chief has the privilege of receiving rice dues called *Sabai*, meat dues called *Sahaw* and all sorts of crops grown in the fields dues called *Rapaw*, *Vaohly* etc. *Sabai* was the tax payable to the Chief in recognition of his Chiefship and was usually one basket of paddy. *Sahaw* was the tax of a hind or fore leg of meat, payable to the Chief and certain other persons in the village on every wild animal killed by a villager and in some cases tax was payable on certain domestic animals also. *Rapaw* was the price

⁵⁰Ibid , P. 246.

⁵¹Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P.164.

payable to the Chief for cutting *jhum* on his land. It had to be paid for in paddy and other crops according to the owner's demand. *Vaohly* was the tax paid by each of the villagers of a piglet a year to the Chief.⁵²

The Chief have full power of control over the village and he can imposed punishments through fines. In case of the disobedience of the Chief's order, the Chief can refuse to allow the offender to cultivate his lands and can turn him out of the village.⁵³

Before the advent of the British, the Mara enjoyed full independence within their own respective villages. The Chief was the sole authority over the subjects and he was also empowered with the power to pronounce death sentences. The Chief also enjoyed a number of privileges within the jurisdiction of the village, but the situation had been changed with the coming of the British and took control over the land.

Review of Literature

'The Lakhers' written by NE Parry is an important record which deals with the Mara history. The history of the Mara, their origins and migration to their present land were stated in this book. The book also deals with traditional political institution of the Mara and how they were administered under the Village Chief. The book also narrates the role of the Chief how he acted as the guardian and the protector of the people in the village administration. The book also partly deal with

⁵²Ibid, P.165.

⁵³NE Parry, opt cited, P.250.

how the Mara came under the British administration and its effect in their social life.

Venkata Rao, Thansanga and Hazarika in '*A Century Of Government and Politics In North-East India: Volume III-Mizoram*' (1987), dealt with the political development, the formation of the Autonomous District Council, a brief history of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the powers and functions of the Autonomous District Council. The book also covers various constitutional development since the British era and the development since the Indian Independence with regard to an important landmark in the formation of Autonomous District Council in Mizoram.

In *North-East India: Dispersion And Discontent*, the author Surajit Kumar Chatterjee highlights how the Cabinet Mission was sent to India on the eve of India's Independence to help India's attainment of Independence in a more progressive and speedy manner. The Cabinet Mission gave special attention to the tribal areas, as such, the Constituent Assembly set up an Advisory Committee which further appointed a sub-committee known as the North Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi as Chairman. The Bordoloi Committee after touring and studying the demands and problem of the tribal areas made recommendations and submitted its report on July 28, 1947 to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. The book also mentioned the debate and deliberation about the Sixth Schedule provision in the Constituent Assembly.

The book, '*Government And Politics In Mizoram, 1947-1968*' (1987), written by RN Prasad is also an important book in the study of Mizoram Politics.

This book covers the administration and the constitutional position of Mizoram and touches upon a very important aspects dealing with the awakening and emergence of political awareness among the Mizo. He also touches upon the emergence of political parties which played a key role in the autonomy movement. The author also dealt with the formation of constitutional structure of the district council, a brief history of the regional council as well as the powers and functions, working of the district council.

In the '*Autonomy Movements In Mizoram*' (1994), RT, Zachono wrote an essay '*The Maras Towards Autonomy*' in which he writes about the history of the Mara and how the Mara came under the British administration. The author also mentions in his writings that the British came to know about the Mara in the course of the defence for their occupied territory as these territories were often raided. The whole of the Mara inhabited area were brought under the British administration by 1930. From the very beginning, the Mara were separated administratively between Burma and India for the sake of British administrative convenience which created a feeling of separation among the Mara. In this essay the author also mentioned that the Mara tribe had political consciousness in the early forties of the 20th century. In 1945, the Mara Chief's conference was convened at Serkawr and they unanimously adopted a resolution demanding a Mara District Council and submitted a memorandum to the Additional Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, Lunglei. In their memorandum the Chiefs demanded for a separate District Administration but not under the Lushai Hills districts. In 1947, the Bordoloi Committee visited the Lushai Hills to study the people, their desires and administrative problems. The committee recommended the creation of District Council and Regional Council to solve their problem. The Regional Council which

was demanded by the Mara since 1945 was joined by the Lai in 1952 which automatically led to the creation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in 1953. The emergence of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) in 1963 with the aim of securing a separate Mara Autonomous District Council, played a key role in achieving its goal. This essay by and large, mainly contains the autonomy movement of the Mara which lead to the creation of the Autonomous District Council in Mizoram under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Jangkhongam Doungel in his book, *'Evolution Of District Council Autonomy In Mizoram'* (2010), made an indepth study of the genesis of the Sixth Schedule provision of the Constitution and the formation of the Lushai Hills District Council. He also traces the genesis of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union, a political party formed by the Pawi and the Lakher to pursue the demand for Regional Council of the Pawi and the Lakher tribes which was later achieved. This book also covers the profile and the working of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council as well as the election of the member of the Regional council. He stated that the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union being the only political party in this region, election of the members of the Regional Council were conducted at a peaceful and cooperative manner. He also wrote how resentment and misunderstanding started between the Pawi and the Lakher for the post of Chief Executive Member and the Executive post as these post are dominated more or less by the Pawi as they are more advanced and educated. As a result, the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union abruptly came to an end as a common political platform with the formation of the Mara Freedom Party by the Lakher on their regional clan based with the main aim for the demand of a separate

Lakher District. This book also covers important area like the appearance of the National Political Party in the Pawi-Lakher region. The book also highlights various acts, regulations and rules passed by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council like social customs and property inheritance, finance, agriculture and forests etc.

R. Hmingthanzuala in his book, *Emergence of Social and Economic Forces for the creation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council* made a study on the social and economic forces which led to the birth of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. In his study, the author mentioned two social forces- education and language. Till 1947, not a single Primary School was established in Lakher areas. They were merely taught how to sing hymns and read Bible by the Christian Missionaries. The younger generation began to realize that the wide gap in the social position of the Lusei and the Lakher societies lay in education. As such discontentment arise due to their social status and wide differences in education and economic development. The Lakher spoke different dialect which is also foreign to the Lusei. Difference of language created a great gulf between the Lusei and the Lakher. Therefore, the Lakher could not feel at home in the midst of the Lusei.

The setting up of the Pawi-Lakher Company shop was opened at Lunglei bazaar in which the Pawi and Lakher were directed to purchase materials only from the company than from other shops. The formation of this company may be treated as one of the factors for the initial beginning of expression which later on led to the demand for creation of a separate Hill District administration.

In '*Mizoram: Dimensions And Perspective*' (2008), Jangkhongam DOUNGEL wrote an essay on '*Autonomous District Council: A Study Of The Implications Of The Sixth Schedule In Mizoram*'. In this essay, he traces the genesis of the Sixth

Schedule to the Constitution of India and District Council set up in Mizoram and the emergence of the present Autonomous District Councils of Mizoram. The functioning of the Autonomous District Councils, the administrative setup, the legislative function, the executive function and the judicial function of the District Councils are highlighted. Another of the important issue highlighted in this essay is the limitation in the functioning of the District Council. Many factors have disturbed the effective functioning of the District Councils. Some of these factors groupism, clanism, political instability, small constituency, defection, negligence by state government, inadequate efforts in law-making, nepotism etc. It is evident that till now elections are conducted often before completion of its term and clanism and family based election are seen regularly. There is also a feeling of negligence from the State Government in terms of non-release of fund, encroachment of District Council power and non-cooperation are the normal grievances raised by District Councils. The issue of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution(Amendment) bill expected to be tabled in the Parliament in the near future and its concerns about the up gradation of the status of the Autonomous Councils would whether be beneficial and do justice for the area are also covered in this essay.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are mentioned below:

1. To trace the evolution and development of Mara Autonomous District Council.
2. To examine and analyse the role of the Mara Chiefs in the formation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.

3. To examine and study the role played by Mara Freedom Party, a political party formed with the goal of achieving Mara Autonomous District Council.

Hypothesis

The Mara Freedom Party played a key role in the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council

Methodology

The Methodology used for this Research includes historical and descriptive approaches with the help of primary and secondary sources of data. As for primary sources, an unstructured interview has been conducted with Mara politicians and Ex-Leaders of Mara Freedom Party in order to acquire formation required for this study. Government document is also use as primary source of data. For secondary sources, published and unpublished literatures, journals, books etc. were used to collect information.

Chapterisation

1. Introduction

This chapter will deal with a brief introduction of the study. And also deals with the historical study of the Mara, their origin, migration, their settlement in Mizoram, the social structure and the traditional political institution under Chieftainship

2. The Advent of British Administration and its impact

This chapter will deal with the advent of the British Administration in Lakherland and its impact.

3. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the role of Mara Freedom Party in the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council

Chapter three will deals the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the formation of the Mara Freedom Party and its role in the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council.

4. Formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council

This chapter will deal with the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council, its powers and functions.

5. Conclusion

This chapter will deal with an over view of the above Chapter along with the findings of the study.

Chapter 2

THE ADVENT OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN LAKHERLAND AND ITS IMPACT

According to tradition, the Mizo before coming to their present habitat lived in the hill tracts of Burma between the *Run* and the *Tiau* rivers during which period the politics of Chieftainship had been introduced. The strongest one in the art of warfare used to declare himself as the Chief. Among the Lusei tribe, the Sailo clan became the most powerful Chief. Later, in search of more fertile land for *jhum* cultivation on the one hand and strong pressure of the Pawi people on the other, they thus moved westward crossing the *Tiau* river which now forms the Indo-Burma border line and settled down in the southern part of the present Mizoram. This movement of the Mizo is believed to have occurred in the early part of the 18th century. And in about the year 1780, the strong Sailo group began moving from the south to the northern direction driving before them the Kukis until the Sailo with their Lusei tribe had consolidated their internal position in 1810 under the Chief Lalluia Sailo by occupying the area between Champhai and Demagiri northwards up to the borders of the then Cachar and Sylhet. This is how the Mizo came and settled in the present State of Mizoram.¹

The occupation of the Mizo habitats and the establishment of colonial rule by the British government was mainly due to the constant raids and attacks by the Mizo on the British frontiers bordering Lushai Hills in Chittagong, Cachar, Manipur and semi-independent state of hill Tipperah. Initially, the British have no interest in administering Lushai Hills as the expenditure to be incurred would be far more than the income from the area. Therefore, the British Government

¹Mizoram District Gazetteers, opt cited, P. 22 .

followed the appeasement policy in the initial stage in dealings with the Lusei to maintain friendly relation with them. But the appeasement policy of the British government was a total failure and the British government adopted the policy of aggression and annexation as raids and attack on British frontiers continued.² There were 19 raids, 107 persons were killed and 136 captives taken during a short period of 1837-1854. In 1860, 16 villages were raided, 185 killed and 150 taken as captives. A large number of raids took place at the end of July 1871 on the British plain villages of Cachar, Sylhet and Tiperrah.³

In 1869, the first Lushai Expedition took place and two British columns entered the Lushai Hills in 1871. The British colonial rule began to gain ground in Lushai hills after the expedition of 1889-1890 and the whole Lushai Hills was annexed to British for administrative purpose. The operation of 1889-1890 led to the creation of the two districts-the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills with headquarters at Aizawl and Lunglei respectively. The North Lushai Hills became part of the Chief Commissionership of Assam, while the Southern District was attached to Bengal.⁴

Amalgamation of the North and South Lushai Hills

After the annexation of the Lushai Hills by the British in 1891, the Lushai Hills was divided into two administrative units- the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills. The South Lushai Hills was placed under the administration of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and North Lushai Hills came under the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam by the proclamation of the

²ChittaRanjan Nag, *Mizo Polity and Political Modernisation*, P.48-49.

³RN, Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, P.12.

⁴Sir Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, P. 18-19.

Governor General. In 1894, the Chin-Lushai Hills Conference was held at Calcutta in which the amalgamation of Lushai Hills and Chin Hills was proposed but this unification proposal was opposed by administrators of Burma. However on 1st April 1898, the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills were amalgamated into a district and was placed under the name of Lushai Hills district under the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam with Aijal (Aizawl) as the headquarters⁵.

After the amalgamation of the North and South Lushai Hills, Shakespear became the first Superintendent of Lushai Hills. He introduced the “Land Settlement” system in which the Chief was given certain area of land in which he and his people could move about as they liked. In 1901-1902, an important event took place with the introduction of the new system of “Circle Administration”, a system in which the whole district was divided into 12 Circles in Aizawl sub-division and 6 circles in the Lunglei sub-division.⁶

Inner Line Regulations

Ever since the annexation of Assam, the British administrators felt it necessary to protect the plainsmen from raid of the wild tribes and the tribes from assimilation of the plainsmen by enforcing specific regulation. Accordingly, the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 was framed. The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, popularly known as ‘The Inner Line Regulation’(ILR) was the first law promulgated in Assam for the peace and governance of certain districts on the Eastern Frontier of Bengal. The ILR was an imaginary line which demarcated the boundaries between the plain districts of

⁵Suhas Chatterjee, *Mizoram under the British Rule*, P.122 & 127.

⁶ Sir Robert Reid, opt cited, P.61.

Assam and the neighbouring hill areas inhabited by the tribal people. This regulation was adopted to ensure minimum interference of the colonial rulers in the hill areas of Assam without obtaining a pass or permit.⁷

On 30th June, 1879, the ILR system was extended in the Chittagong Hill Tracts affecting the South Lushai Hills District. Entry of non-indigenous persons into Mizoram is governed by the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873. The main aim of this inner line regulation is to safeguard the area from economic exploitation as well as social and cultural assimilation by the larger and more economically advanced neighbours. The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 was extended to Mizoram in 1930 and is still in force since the Government of India Act, 1935 did not include the Lushai Hills District which was categorised as 'Excluded Area'.⁸

The Government of India Act, 1919.

Before the promulgation of the Government of India Act, 1919, the Lushai Hills was declared Scheduled District under the Scheduled District Act, 1874. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report recommended exclusion of backward areas from its jurisdiction. Therefore, it was implied that for the Lushai Hills, the Assam Legislative Council would not legislate any law. The subject of backward areas was kept as a reserved subject for the Governor's special interest. The Government of Assam was determined to exclude these areas and thus Lushai Hills was kept out of the purview of the Government of India Act, 1919.⁹

⁷J. Zahluna, *Inner Regulation and Mizoram*, P.221-222.

⁸Ibid, P. 223-224.

⁹K.M. Zakhuma, *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989*, P.48-49.

Government of India Act, 1935

Under the Government of India Act of 1935, the hill areas of Assam were divided into two categories- Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas. The Lushai Hills, the Naga Hills and the North Cachar Hills were under the Excluded Areas, over which the provincial ministry had no jurisdiction. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills and the Mikir Hills were Partially Excluded Areas. Excluded Areas were the areas where there was no possibility of having any advanced form of Government due to the backwardness of the people. In the case of Partially Excluded Area, normal administration and reform could be enforced. However, discussion in the Legislative Assembly was not barred and was administered by Ministers subject to the overriding authority of the Governor.¹⁰ The Government of India Act of 1935 failed to provide autonomous administration or political autonomy for the Mizo people to manage their local affairs according to their own genius and ability. So this administrative isolation coupled with the remoteness of the district entirely hindered closer contact with the rest of India which had a large political influence on the minds of the Mizo commoners. Any resemblance of political movement was suppressed. Thus up to the end of the Second World War, there was no political activity of any kind in the district.¹¹

Annexation of Lakherland

The British came into contact with the Lakher in the course of the needs for defence of the British occupied territory as this territory were often raided by the Lakher tribe. In 1888, a raiding party of *Shendus* under Hausata murdered Lieutenant John Stewart of the Leinster Regiment who was engaged in survey

¹⁰ RN, Prasad, opt cited, P.45-47.

¹¹ Ibid, P. 74-75.

work with a small escort of Gurkhas. This outrage led to the immediate cause of the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1888-1889, which resulted in the occupation of the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills and some of Lakher villages of *Saiha*, *Serkawr* and other *Tlosai* village were brought under the British. In 1906, the *Zawngling* raided British village *Paithar*, in 1917, the *Zawngling* raided the Arakan Lakher village of *Tybu*, had taken heads and made captives. In retaliation to this, the *Lialai*, who were friends of *Tybu*, raided the small *Zawngling* hamlet of *Mangtu*, below *Laki* and above the *Tilo* river, killed the Chief, *Huatmanga*, and four others and seized nine captives for slaves. The *Zawngling* village of *Laikei* seized a girl from the British village of *Kiasi*, while *Chapui* had raided the British village of *Lochei* and carried off some women as slaves. As a result of these forays a column was taken through the independent villages by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, and the *Chapui* and *Laikei* were punished. In 1920, 1922 and 1924, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills again toured the villages, and in 1922 a meeting was held at Baw between the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills and the Deputy Commissioner of the Chin Hills and the North Arakan Hill Tracts, at which the boundaries between the three districts were laid down and the villages in the independent area were divided among them.¹² From 1924 the Mara regions of *Zawngling*, *Hawthai*, larger part of *Tlosai-Saiha*, small parts of *Vytu* and *Chapui-Ngiaphia* territories which fell to the Lushai Hills have been administered as part of the districts and the system of the administration was the same throughout the district. The entire regions of *Lytu*, *Lochei*, *Lialai* and bigger parts of *Vytu* and *Chapui-Ngiaphia* which fell to the Chin Hills and North Arakan were also absorbed in the same way into those districts. It

¹²NE Parry, opt cited, P. 9-12

may be noted that all the Lakher came under the British Administration since 1924.¹³

Impact of British Administration

The Lakherland came under some type of loose administration of the British Authority in 1924. The formal inclusion of the areas as British territory took place in 1931-1932. Subsequently, all the laws and rules in force in Lushai Hills were extended to this area by the Assam Government. Gradually, British administration started its root in Lakherland which was a no man's land before its annexation to South Lushai Hills in 1924.¹⁴

The British rule brought about drastic and significant changes in the social, cultural, political, economic and religious life of the Lakher. Prior to the advent of the British, the Lakher practiced frequent raids and fought numerous wars. With the advent of British Administration, the people had obtained certain benefits from the British rule. Firstly, they could sleep at night without sentries, and without fear of raid, they could travel wherever they like. They had no more fear of an ambush and surprise attack of their village at any time. They were no longer bother that they might be raided and cut up while intoxicated. The British rule had therefore removed fear and implanted a sense of security and enabled the people to make the most of their simple pleasures. The British also brought changes in the economic life with the introduction of money economy. People started to experience a completely new way of buying and selling. The people started selling their surplus rice in order to make a little money. Before this area was taken over, the people practically knew nothing about money. However, when they found that they had to

¹³Dr. JohnHamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P. 182.

¹⁴Thasia T Azyu, opt cited, P. 120-121.

pay house tax, the people realised they need to obtain money and this inevitably led to the desire to acquire wealth.¹⁵

Another area of change that was immediately witnessed was the abolition of slavery. The British found this institution abhorrent and therefore, freed slave in accordance with the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which terminated slavery throughout the British Empire. Slavery (*Sei*) among the Lakher undoubtedly appeared to be more closely related to what is generally connoted by the word slavery than did the Lusei *bawi* system. The Lusei *bawi* was never seem to be a slave, he was only a Chief's dependent, he was never sold and the relationship between him and his Chief was one of mutual help. Among the Lusei only Chiefs could have *bawis*, while among the Lakher, Chiefs, nobles and anyone who made captives in war could own slaves. The Lakher slaves (*Sei*) was the counterpart of the Lusei *Sal*, a captive made in war who was the personal property of his captor. As soon as the Lakher area was taken over by the British, large number of Slaves or the Chief's dependent came forward to pay the forty rupees ransom which frees them from the obligations to the Chief. Some of these freed men remained in the village, but many migrated elsewhere. The Liberation of the Slaves undoubtedly diminished the wealth and importance of the Chief.¹⁶

The most remarkable result with the introduction of the British administration was the gradual weakening of the positions and powers of the Chiefs. The Chief's, though deprived of much of their original rights were allowed to remain as Chiefs in their respective villages on the condition that they should

¹⁵NE Parry, opt cited, P.13-14.

¹⁶K. Robin, *The Lakhers in Mizoram: The Impact of Christianity and Colonial Administration*, P. 329.

pay and maintain law and order within their respective jurisdictions as directed by the Government.

The following traditional rights of Chiefs were abolished.

- (a) Right to order capital punishment.
- (b) Right to seize food stores and property of villagers, who wished to transfer their allegiance.
- (c) Proprietary rights over lands, now arbitrarily reserved by Government, in the interest of the public living in neighbouring areas in British India.
- (d) Right to tax traders doing business within the Chief's jurisdiction.
- (e) Right to freedom of action in relation to making their sons chiefs under their own jurisdiction.
- (f) Right to help those *Bawis* who were by customs, not open to redemption.
- (g) Right to attach the property of their villagers when they wished or deemed fit, with or without fault on the part of the villagers.¹⁷

Formal education was first introduced among the Mizo by the Christian missionaries and the British Government. The Missions initiated educational matters and the British government extended ready approval with possible support of all kinds, especially in financial terms. Rev. F.W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain reduced the Mizo language into writing and introduced grammar of the language.¹⁸ The first record of the Mara language was made by Capt. S.R. Tickell, who in 1852 drew up a small vocabulary. He was followed by Captain Lewin in 1869, who also drew up a list of common words. It was not until 1908 that a grammar and

¹⁷ Mizoram District Gazetteers, opt cited, P. 48-49.

¹⁸ Ibid, P.79.

dictionary of the language was introduced by Rev. F.W. Savidge. Later RA.Lorrain, the British missionary compiled Lakher grammar and dictionary.¹⁹

Impact of Christianity

The Lakher Pioneer Mission was established at Serkawr in 1907 which emerged from the London Baptist Mission. The colonial officials left the task of civilizing the Lakher in the hands of the Christian missionaries. There exist a close collaboration between the colonial forces and the missionaries in their bid to exercise their hegemony. With the spread of Christianity, 'headhunting' was gradually stopped by teaching the people that killing of human beings was an act against God. The missionaries taught the people that killing of human beings was an act against God who was the creator of all living and non-living things in the universe. The missionaries were trying hard to sensitize the people morally conscious of the abominable practice, for they knew unless this was done, the practice would remain alive and continued. Thus, they began to preached the gospel which was against killing of human beings. In this way the missionaries indirectly inculcated the idea that headhunting was sin. Accordingly in 1918, the British government took direct action against the people of Zawngling when they carried out their raid. Eventually the Hawthai and Tlosai tribes also gave up their habit of headhunting. Thus, both the government and the missionaries were responsible for bringing an end to the age-old practices of the Lakher within a short span of time.²⁰

¹⁹NE Parry, opt cited, P.510-511.

²⁰K. Robin, opt cited, P. 328-329.

The Lakher before the advent of Christianity, were worshippers of nature and believed in variety of gods and spirits. The superstitious beliefs and its associated cultures were soon done away with particularly as a result of the spread of Christianity and with the introduction of education among the people. Fertile lands, which were once were avoided for cultivation for fear of spirits began to bloom into fertile farms. Rivers and streams, which were once forbidden for use because of fear of spirits, now are used for wet cultivations. Thus, people were freed from bondage of spirits in their everyday lives. Offerings and sacrifices that were being made to the spirits and gods gradually disappeared.²¹

The Christian missionaries introduced a written language for the Lakher for their own religious purpose. A written language provided the basis for the introduction and development of Mara literatures. Beside developing a written form of the language, the missionaries were the first to produce a literature; a Mara primer, Grammar, Dictionary, Hymn book, Scripture portions and school text books.²²

The Mission School was first started at Serkawr village by the missionaries in 1908. Within a few years the Mission School was established and spread to ten schools and in 1945 already fourteen Mission schools were there in the entire Lakherland. Along with the Mission School, the missionaries also started Medical Ministry very early by distributing free medicines and offering free clinic to the Mara people. When Mara people found that the medicines distributed by the missionaries worked better than their sacrifices to demons, they were attracted to

²¹Ibid, P. 329-330.

²²Dr. John Hamlet Hlychho, opt cited, P.329-330.

Christianity.²³ It has been quite true that Christianity and education have many positive contributions on the socio-cultural life of the Lakher. People started maintaining cleanliness in their homes, start caring about personal hygiene in total contrast to their old life.

The advent of Christianity also led to the abolition of traditional festivals in which drinking of *Sahma* (Rice beer), dancing and singing occupied a very important place. However, Christianity had forbidden to participate in any kind of the festivals. Instead, festivals like Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas, New Year etc, were being celebrated. One of the most important social institution of the Mara "*Laipho*" also come to an end. *Laipho* was one of the oldest social institutions, which was prominently recognised as bachelor's house or dormitory. It was entirely composed of several unmarried young men, who freely chose a common sleeping place, the house of any unmarried girl whom they admired most.²⁴ The *Laipho* served as a club of young men where many social recreational activities such as courting of a girl, household feast, drinking, singing, wrestling, merry-making etc were performed.²⁵ The Christian missionaries prohibited the drinking of *Sahma* and the new converts opted for abolition of *Laipho*. This was because, though there were many positive sides of *Laipho*, many evil things like gossip, rumours, learning of bad behaviour etc., were connected with *Laipho*. In all probability, the negative effects outweighed its positive side in the minds of the new converts. Besides, establishment of Churches and Schools reduced the importance of *Laipho* as a centre of learning.

²³RA Lorrain, *Five Years in Unknown Jungle*, P. 160.

²⁴K. Zohra, opt cited, P. 19

²⁵Ibid, P. 24

The impact of Christianity and the British rule were significant towards the political life of the Lakher. The new wave of politics began to penetrate into the minds of the people. The growth of the Church and education had gradually brought about a lot of political awareness among the Lakher. There has been an increasing political inclination of the Chiefs and the people leading to the formation of regional and clan based political parties. The new awakening also brought about an end to the centuries old Chieftainship.²⁶

The whole Mara political system and political privileges of the Mara Chiefs were totally transformed and changed by the coming of the British along with new law under the Government of India. The power and functions of the Chiefs were curtailed by the British Superintendent and laid down certain duties for the Chiefs. The Chieftainship inherited by the eldest son was abolished and judicial powers of the family over villages and tribes was now relocated to the people. After India attained Independence in August 15th 1947, the Constitution of India came into effect in 1950. In 1954, the Government of India announced the new law for the tribal Chiefs – the Assam Lushai Hills Acquisition of Chief Right Act 1954, which also immediately affect the Mara Chiefs. By 15th April, 1956, all power and judicial responsibility of the Mara Chiefs were totally abolished without giving any special status in the society.

It may be noted that on the verge of the abolition of Chieftainship in the Lushai Hills there was already a wave of discontentment against the Sailo Chieftainship as some of the Sailo Chiefs treated the villagers as their servants and reduced some to absolute slavery. Whereas in the Mara area there was a sympathy wave which blew over the Chiefs as the Mara Chiefs seldom oppressed their

²⁶K.Robin, opt cited, P. 334.

subjects. They also had received political education from the Missionaries in the early forties of the twentieth century and had foreseen the new political system of democracy. So they had prepared themselves for change and were ready to step down from Chiefship. This was supported by the fact that just before the abolition of Chieftainship the political leadership in the Mara area was taken up by the Chiefs and their sons.²⁷

Introduction of Primary Education in Lakherland

Education among the Lakher was first introduced by the Christian Missionaries with the set up of the Mission School at Serkawr in 1908. The introduction of school by the Christian Missionaries was very limited as it was confined mainly for the purpose of their mission. The Lakher people were merely taught so that they could read Bibles and sing hymns. However, till 1945, already fourteen Mission schools were there in the entire Lakherland. The British rulers did not introduce schools in Lakherland till 1948, 21 Government Primary Schools and one Government Middle School were set up in the Lakher area after 1948. Though the Schools were introduced after the Indian Independence it was the British rulers who initiated the policy. By the time when 21 Primary Schools and one Middle School were about to set up by the Government of Assam, there was no qualified person from the Lakher tribe who could be appointed as teachers in these schools. Till 1945, there were no Lakher who even passed the VI standard.

In the so called Primary Schools set up by the Christian Missionaries Mara Language was used as the medium of instruction. During the period between 1948

²⁷Thasia T Azyu, opt cited, P. 122.

to 1972, Lusei was used as the medium of instruction in all Government Schools till its substitution with Mara in the new era in which Lakher District Council came into existence. When the Lusei was introduced as the medium of instruction in the Schools within Lakher area, the progress in education was far from being satisfactory. The main reason being Lusei was a foreign tongue to the Mara pupils.²⁸ Moreover, many Lakher could not pursue higher education due to poverty as they have to go to faraway places where high schools were accessible.

After the introduction of formal education in Lakherland, the Lakher tribes have benefitted in many ways. However, it may be noted that when the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council came into existence in 1953 under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, there were no educated Lakher who could run the council. As a result, the council was dominated and run by the Pawi who were more advanced in terms of education. However, education was first imparted among the Lakher tribes by the Christian missionaries though for their religious purposes, the people had benefitted in many ways.

²⁸Valua Hlychho, *Education in Maraland*, P. 141.

Chapter 3

THE PAWI-LAKHER REGIONAL COUNCIL AND THE ROLE OF MARA FREEDOM PARTY IN THE FORMATION OF THE MARA AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

After the Second World War, the Labour Party formed government in Great Britain with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister on 26th July, 1945. With the installation of the Labour ministry, political development moved in quick succession. The Labour Government announced in Parliament on February 19th, 1946 its plan of sending out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her attain freedom as speedily and fully as possible. The Cabinet Mission consisting of Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, arrived in India on March 24th, 1946, and put forward its own proposals on May 16th, 1946.¹

The Tribal Areas had drawn special attention of the British administration since pre-independence era. Therefore, the Cabinet Mission suggested that there should be an Advisory Committee on the right of the Citizens, Minorities and Tribals of Excluded Areas. The Chairman of the Mission, Stafford Cripps suggested that a proper and powerful committee should be set up to make proposals for the administration of tribal areas.² Accordingly, the Advisory Committee appointed three sub-committees to report and recommend on: (1) the North-East Frontier (Assam) tribal and excluded areas, (2) the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas in the Province (other than Assam), and the Tribal areas in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. The partition of India made

¹Surajit Kumar Chatterjee, *opt cited*, P.383.

²SN Singh, *Mizoram: Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political And Administrative*, P.142.

the third redundant. The Sub-Committee on the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas in Province (other than Assam) submitted its report in two instalments on 18th August, 1947 and in September, 1947. The third Sub-Committee-The North-Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee also known as Bordoloi Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of G.N. Bordoloi, the then Premier of Assam. Other member comprised of Rupnath Brahma (Plain tribal leader of Assam), A.V. Thakkar, Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy (Khasi Leader), B.N. Rao (Constitutional Advisor of the Constituent Assembly).³

The Bordoloi Committee visited to the headquarters of all the hill districts of Assam during 18th April-14th July, 1947 but could not visit the Garo Hills and Jowai Sub-Division of the Khasi Hills on account of bad weather and difficult communications. However, representatives of the two areas were interviewed at Gauhati and Shillong respectively. The Bordoloi Committee co-opted two members from each of the Hill areas they visited. However, no person was co-opted from the Frontiers Tracts. The Bordoloi Committee received memoranda from all those who were directly or indirectly affected by the inquiry. The committee co-opted two members- Khawtinkhuma and Ch. Saprawnga from the Lushai Hills both belonging to the Mizo Union Party.⁴

The Bordoloi Committee, consisting of Rup Nath Brahma, A.V. Thakkar, Sir B.N. Rau and Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, visited Aizawl in April, 1947, to study the mind of the Mizo people, their administrative problems and the desire to have autonomy for their area. The Sub-Committee in Aizawl asked the Mizo representatives belonging to various interests, such as, political leaders, Church

³S.K. Chaube, *Hill Politics in North-East India*, P.81.

⁴J. Zahluna, opt cited, P.1235-1236.

leaders, Chief representatives, Ex-servicemen and Government officials. However, the Pawi and the Lakher were not aware of the visit of the Bordoloi Committee and their case was also not represented by any political leaders, political parties or groups.⁵

After assessing and observing the demands of the tribal people of the North-East India, Bordoloi Committee prepared its Report wherein it included several recommendations for the constitutional and administrative positions of the tribal areas. When the Bordoloi Committee studied the problems of the tribal people, it realised that these people needed protection and safeguard so that they might preserve their way of life and at the same time be able to participate in the political life of the country along with others.⁶

Some of the recommendations of the Bordoloi Committee:

For the purposes of administration the sub-committee divided these areas into two categories. In the first were included the backward tribal districts of Assam where representative institution and normal administration could be introduced, and the second comprised the tribal areas which should be administered through the agency of the Governor of Assam by the Central Government. In the case of the former, the unit of administration was to be autonomous tribal district, and there were to be six such districts, namely, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District, the Garo Hills District, the Lushai Hills District, the Naga Hills District, the North Cachar sub-division of the Cachar district and the Mikir Hills. For each tribal district the Governor was to set up a district council, and if there were different tribes inhabiting distinct areas within a district,

⁵ Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P.207-208.

⁶ J. Zahluna, opt cited, P.1238.

each area or group of areas could be divided into autonomous region with regional councils. A district council was to consist of not less than twenty and not more than forty members, of whom not less than three-fourths were to be elected from territorial constituencies on the basis of adult suffrage. The administration of the district was to be vested in the district council and of a region in the regional council.⁷

In the legislative field the district and regional councils were to be empowered to make laws on the following subjects:

- (1) The allotment, occupation or use of land;
- (2) The management of forests other than reserved forests;
- (3) The use of canals and water courses for agriculture;
- (4) Regulation of the practice of 'Jhum' or other forms of shifting cultivation;
- (5) The establishment of village or town committees or councils;
- (6) The appointment or succession of chiefs or headmen;
- (7) The inheritance of property;
- (8) Marriage; and
- (9) Social customs.

The district councils were also to be given executive power in the construction and management of primary schools, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads and waterways in the district and to the prescription of the medium and manner of primary education.⁸

⁷Surajit Kumar Chatterjee, *opt cited*, P.394.

⁸*Ibid*, P.394.

The Sub-Committee submitted its report on July 28, 1947 to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee forwarded the report of the Sub-committee to the President of the Constituent Assembly on 4th, March, 1948. The Provisions of the Sixth Schedule were considered by the Constituent Assembly on September 5, 6 and 7, 1949. There was heated deliberation on the issues among the members of the Constituent Assembly. Some members like Kuladhar Chaliha, Brajeshwar Prasad, Rohini Kumar strongly opposed the formation of District Councils. However the support from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, the efforts of Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy and the positive role of Gopinath Bordoloi enabled the approval of the provisions of the District Councils and Regional Council inserted in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.⁹

Formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

On the eve of India's independence, political consciousness sprang up among the Mizo as the Government of India Act, 1935 failed to provide autonomous administration and political autonomy. The Lushai Hills district had no representative in the Assam Legislature and no federal or provincial legislature was extended to this district. Moreover, the autocratic, oppressive and unbearable rule of the Chiefs who were fully safeguarded by the British Superintendent created the desire for better status among the commoners since the 1940's. In 1946, the District Conference created by Mac Donald, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, greatly supported by the Chiefs led to the rise of great resentment among the commoners on the ground of same representatives between the two- the Chiefs and commoners. These factors led to the emergence of political consciousness among

⁹Jangkhongam DOUNGEL, *opt cited*, P. 5-6.

the commoners which led to the formation of the Mizo Common People's Union on 9th April, 1946 to voice people's aspiration and various demands especially political rights and status. This party was later renamed Mizo Union.¹⁰

Ever since the Mara were brought under the Lushai Hills under the Lunglei Sub-Division. They were never at home to be amid with the Lusei. The Mara always felt that their customs and traditions were different from the Lusei and the Mara dialect was also different from that of the Lusei. As such the Mara had a strong desire for separate administration. The political consciousness of the Mara dated back to the pre-independence era. Capt A.I. Bowman was known to be the first Englishmen to awaken the political consciousness of the Lakher Chief. In 1944, Capt A.I. Bowman visited Serkawr and inspected the records of the village writer which was recorded in Lusei and questioned why it was written in Lusei. He was answered that the Lakher dialect was not officially recognized. Capt A. I. Bowman was so moved by this answer and advised Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr to demand a better status for the Mara. Accordingly, Chhohmo convened Mara Chief's Conference at Serkawr on 4th January, 1945. The Conference was attended by 23 Mara Chiefs and unanimously adopted a resolution demanding a Mara District Council and accordingly submitted a memorandum to the Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, Lunglei. But the demand of the Mara Chiefs did not received action as expected, another memorandum was submitted to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills in December, 1945. On 7th April, 1947, just before the visit of the Bordoloi Committee to the Lushai Hills another petition was submitted to the Governor of Assam. But no action was taken on the petition. On

¹⁰RN Prasad, opt cited, P. 74-76.

behalf of the Mara Chiefs, Chhohmo submitted another representation to the Governor of Assam on 7th July, 1947.¹¹

In the early forties, the educated circle among the Pawi and the Lakher were quite conscious of their political fate and adopted various measures to redress their grievances. In 1945, employees of the Pawi and the Lakher working in Lunglei Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) office resolved to established the Pawi-Lakher Company. They collected money, bought a plot of land and established a canteen which later came to be known as the Pawi-Lakher Company. Thatching of Tawipui and Lairua of Serkawr were entrusted to be managers of the company and this company worked mainly for the welfare of the two community. During this period, the Sixth Schedule was about to be introduced in the hill districts of Assam and there was also proposal for conducting a Tribal Advisory Council election in all the hill districts including the Lushai Hills. Thus, the on-going political situation in the then Lushai Hills and the growing political consciousness of the Pawi prompted the Pawi of Phawngpui area to establish the Chin Association at Lungpher village on 2nd January, 1947.¹²

It may be noted that when there was a development of anti- Chiefs movement in the Lushai Hills under the initiative of the Mizo Union, the activities and movements of the Mizo Union had not much impact in the Lakher inhabited area. There was a good understanding and no enmity feeling was found between the Chiefs and the commoners in this region. Above all, it may be kept in mind that the chiefs were the first who were politically aware and took the initiatives in demanding the Mara District Council.

¹¹RT Zachono, opt cited, P.139-141.

¹²Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P. 27.

After the Indian Constitution came into force, the immediate formation of the Autonomous District Councils was not possible. Therefore, the Government of Assam set up Advisory Council in five of the six Hill Districts of Assam including the Lushai Hills. The District Advisory Council in the Lushai Hills was formed on 15th April 1948. Election to the Advisory Council was held for the Chiefs to elect their representatives on 23rd March 1948 and for the commoners on the basis of adult franchise on 15th April 1948. The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, L.L. Peter was an ex-officio Chairman of the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council comprised of 35 members, out of which 10 were Chief's representatives and 25 were commoners.¹³ From the Pawi-Lakher region Z. Hengmanga and Vako were elected as the representatives of the commoners and Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr was the Chief's representative at the Advisory Council. On 9th August 1948, meeting of the Advisory Committee was held at Aizawl to discuss Lushai Hills political status. The meeting was presided over by Nari Rustomji, I.C.S., the then Commissioner of Assam. In the meeting Chhohmo on the advice of L.L. Peter (the Superintendent of Lushai Hills) spoke for the Mara Regional Council because L.L. Peter was aware of the fact that the Mara and the Lai could be inserted with a regional council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule and advised Chhohmo to speak for a regional council. As such, Chhohmo who took the initiative role of convening the Mara Chief to demand Mara District Council spoke for Lakher Regional Council in this meeting.¹⁴

The representatives of the Pawi and the Lakher also become aware that they could be facilitated with a regional council and thus when the Mizo Union (MU) and the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) boycotted the meeting

¹³ Jangkhongam Dounel, opt cited, P.7.

¹⁴Thasia T Azyu, opt cited, P.123.

of the Advisory Council refused to support the boycott. The representatives of the Pawi and the Lakher also took advantage of the coming of Nari Rustomji, I.C.S., Advisor to the Governor of Assam because he was regarded as most sympathetic towards them. They submitted a Memorandum to him in 1949 for a separate Regional Council and stated that if their demand was not fulfilled they would abstain from all meetings of the Advisory Council.¹⁵

L.L. Peters, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills advised the Mara and the Laito organized and further their demand for a separate regional council. The Pawi and the Lakher on the advised of L.L. Peter, unitedly set up a separate political party known as the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union on 25th November, 1948 at a conference held at Lawngtlai. The elected office bearers were as follows:

1. President : Z. Hengmanga (Lai)
2. Vice President : Thatchianga (Lai)
3. Secretary : Zavai (Mara)
4. Treasurer : Vako (Mara)
5. Finance Secretary : K.L. Pakhai (Mara)

The Tribal Union with a clear objective pressurized both the Government of Assam and India to form a Regional Council for the Pawi and Lakher tribes under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Tribal Union was successful in realizing its demand with the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.¹⁶

¹⁵Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P. 30-31.

¹⁶R Hmingthanzuala, opt cited, P.57-58.

In 1952 the Government of Assam enacted the Assam Autonomous District (Constitution of the District Council) Rules to constitute the District Councils in Hill Districts. Subsequently, all interim District Councils in Hill districts of Assam became full-fledged Autonomous District Council. Accordingly, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was officially inaugurated by Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam at Aizawl on 26th April 1952. Later on, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was changed into Mizo District Council with effect from 1st September, 1954 as per the Lushai Hills District (change of name) Act 1954 (Act XVII of 1954) which was enacted by the Indian Parliament.¹⁷ Accordingly, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council as provided under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 1 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India was constituted by the Government of Assam vide Notification No. TAD/R/10/50 dated 31st July 1951. Thus, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was inaugurated by Ch. Saprawnga in Lunglei, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam with headquarters at Saiha on 23rd April 1953. Further the Government as per powers conferred under sub-paragraph (6) of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule also enacted rules called the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Constitution of the Regional Council) Rules 1952 to constitute the first such council under Notification vide TAD/R/3/52/15 of 20th May 1952.¹⁸

With a view to framing the first Constitution and marking the boundaries of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, an Advisory Council was constituted by the Government of Assam under the Chairmanship of B.W.Roy the then Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Lunglei. Other members consists of Mangsaia of

¹⁷Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P. 7.

¹⁸Ibid, P.33-34.

Chawnhu, Khuaimawnga of Vawmbuk, Z. Hengmanga of Sangau, Vako of Zawngling, Thangkipleia of Ngharum and Anando Chakma of Sumsilui.¹⁹

Subsequently, the first Constitution of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was formed by a Notification no. TAD/R/3/52/15 by the Governor of Assam followed by election to the said Council in 1953. As per rules framed under the Sixth Schedule, the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Constitution of Regional Council) Rules, 1952, allocated 12 seats to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Out of the 12 allocated seats, 9 are to be elected directly on the basis of adult franchise from single member constituencies and not more than 3 persons are to be nominated by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) for a term of five years. Immediately after the first general election, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was inaugurated by Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam, on 23rd April 1953 at Lunglei.²⁰

The First term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

With the setting up of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the first general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was held in 1953. Since the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) was the only political party, there was no question of setting up official candidates to the election. So the party decided that any candidate would contest the election independently, after being elected the candidates would be regarded as the PLTU members.²¹ Thangkipleia of Ngharum, F. Sangluaia of Mampui, C. Tanmanga of Lawngtlai, C. Tialupa of Bualpui, Z.

¹⁹Ibid, P. 34.

²⁰Rt, Hnialum, *Road to Lai Autonomous District Council*, P.117-118.

²¹RT. Zachono, opt cited, P.117.

Hengmanga of Sangau, Zavaia of Serkawr, Khaido of Laki, Pakhai of Saiha and Tumhulha of Tuithumhnar were elected. Later Khaido died soon and in his place Laitei of Zawngling was elected. Chhabia of Serkawr, Chhohmo of Serkawr and C. Zochhuma of Bualpui were nominated by the Governor of Assam. Chhabia soon died and in his place Sakia of Phalhrang was nominated.²²

In April 1954, the first sitting of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was held at Saiha Primary School building and Z. Hengmanga was elected as the Chairman. C. Zochhuma was elected as Chief Executive Member (CEM) and continued in his office up to his death on 31st Aug 1956. After the death of C. Zochhuma, H. Kiautuma, a graduate was nominated and was elected as the Chief Executive Member by unanimous vote on 15th January 1957. Sakia, the nominated member from Phalhrang was asked to resign by the CEM. Accordingly, Sakia resigned on 7th July 1957. After the removal of Sakia, the CEM H. Kiautuma appointed K.L. Pakhai as Executive Member (EM). Till the end of the first term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the CEM, H. Kiautuma, Z. Hengmanga, the Chairman and K.L. Pakhai the EM remained in the office.²³

In the first Executive meeting of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the Pawi and the Lakher reached an agreement that the post of the CEM and the Executive post should be shared between them alternatively in every term. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council during its first term functioned without any opposition as there existed only the PLTU. The PLRC also completed its first term without any interruption under the Chairmanship of Z. Hengmanga.²⁴

²²H.C. Thanhranga, *opt cited*, P.106.

²³RT Zachono, *opt cited*, P.147-148.

²⁴Ngurbiaka, *Emergence of Mizo District Council and Pawi-Lakher Regional Council*, P.152.

The Second term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

The second general election was held in 1958, there was a slight change in the number of seats. The number of elected seat was increased from 9 to 10 and the nominated seat was reduced from 3 to 2 seats. All the sets were won by the PLTU and the nominated seats were also assigned to the PLTU members.²⁵ H. Kiautuma, Lalchunga Chinzah, Tlunghleia, F. Sangluaia, Atul Chandra Chakma, Z. Hengmanga, Mylai Hlychho, Zavai, Chhohmo Hlychho and Vako of Chapui were elected. Sakia and C. Tanmanga were nominated as Member to the Regional Council.²⁶

After election, the S.D.O (Civil) Lunglei called for the meeting of the elected members at Lunglei to elect a Chairman and CEM. Here some dispute cropped up as the elected members from Lakher region demanded from the S.D.O (Civil), the post of CEM and some other Executive post for the Lakher. This demand was as per the resolution regarding equal distribution of the offices of the Regional Council between the Lakher and the Pawi as per the agreement reached in the first term of the PLRC. But the S.D.O. (Civil) refused to the demand on the ground that it was unconstitutional and against the rules framed under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Subsequently, the Lakher members of the Regional Council walked out of the meeting.²⁷ Only the Pawi and Chakma remained in office and elected Lalchunga Chinzah as the Chairman on 1st August 1958 but he resigned on 7th December 1958. The election of the Chairman was held again on 3rd March 1959 and F. Sangluaia was elected as Chairman. He

²⁵V. Venkata Rao, opt cited, P. 294.

²⁶V. Lalchhawna, *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram*, P.97.

²⁷Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P.39-40.

continued in his office till the next general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.²⁸

The dispute between the Lakher and the Pawi was resolved after sometime when the Chief Executive Member (CEM), H. Kiautuma offered the post of Executive Member to Mylai Hlychho. Mylai Hlychho first declined the post and he later accepted and the dispute between the Pawi and the Lakher eventually came to an end.²⁹

The formation of Mara Freedom Party (MFP) and its role in the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council

Before the third general election to the PLRC an important political development took place in the Pawi-Lakher region with the birth of Mara Freedom Party (MFP). Till the Second term of the PLRC, the key Executive post in the PLRC were occupied by the Pawi as they were more advanced in terms of education than the Lakher. This created a fear of exploitation and assimilation and generated a sense of unrest in the minds of the Lakher. Moreover, the Lakher believed that the Executive posts in the Council should be shared and distributed equally between the Pawi and the Lakher consecutively in every term of the PLRC but all the key post were occupied by the Pawi. In the case of recruitment of staffs to the PLRC, all the high post went to the Pawi, the Lakher were appointed at peon, chowkidar and clerk level. The Lakher leaders felt that it become impossible for both the Lakher and the Pawi to remain under one roof. Hence, the Lakher leaders toured the length and breadth of their area to revitalized unity and

²⁸V. Venkata Rao, opt cited, P. 161-162.

²⁹V. Lalchhawna, opt cited, P.98.

concerted effort with the determination for a separate administration³⁰. As such, on 16th January 1963 Mara Convention was held at Zawngling and an ethnic based political party known as the Mara Freedom Party(MFP) was formed. The office bearers of MFP were:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. President | V. Hlychho |
| 2. Vice President | Hiphei |
| 3. Secretary | Mylai Hlychho |
| 4. Asst. Secretary | V. Lalchhawna |
| 5. Treasurer | Chiahmo |
| 6. Financial Secretary | Chhobi. ³¹ |

The main aim and objective of the Mara Freedom Party was to secure a separate Mara Autonomous District Council exclusive of the Pawi which was first demanded by the 23 Mara Chiefs in the pre-independence period. The Party also resolved that they must be separated from the Pawi as they are different from the Pawi. The Party also aimed to conserve and develop the Lakher ethos of their culture, customs, traditions and diverse genius skilled of their own under Autonomous District Council³². The party further committed to introduce the Mara dialect as the official language of the District Council as well as medium of instruction in the schools within the Council's jurisdiction. The Party also resolved that the movement should be non-cooperation on the line of non-violence enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi in the cause of movement for India's self rule.³³

³⁰RT Zachono, opt cited, P.149-150

³¹Mylai Hlychho, *The Birth of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in Lushai Hills District and the formation of three Autonomous District Council(Lai, Mara and Chakma) with the upgradation of Mizoram to Union Territory, P.7.*

³²Valua Hlychho, *Demand for Separate Administration for the Lakhers, P. 166.*

³³RT Zachono, opt cited P. 150.

In an interview with Hiphei the Ex- Vice President of Mara Freedom Party at Aizawl on 17th October 2015, Hiphei revealed that when misunderstanding arise between the Pawi and the Lakher with regard to the sharing of executive post in the PLRC, the Lakher felt that they were being treated as an outsider and felt neglected in a regional council which was mainly formed as a result of their demand. As such a great sense of fear of being assimilated by the larger and more advanced Pawi tribe developed in the minds of the Lakher leaders. With the formation of the Mara Freedom Party at Zawnling Convention on 16th January 1963, the party resolved that the demand for a separate Mara Autonomous District Council should be the main policy of the Party. As such the MFP leaders toured the length and breadth of the Mara area and preached the policy of the MFP. The Mara people wholeheartedly supported and embraced the policy of the MFP- the demand for Mara Autonomous District Council. This was evidently clear when the MFP boycotted the PLRC and formed the Interim Mara District Council, all the Mara employees resigned from their job and the Mara people also paid taxes to the Interim Council without hesitation.

In pursuance of resolution passed by the General Assembly held at Zawnling on 19th and 20th January 1963, the MFP resolved to submit a memorandum to the Governor of Assam. The leaders of the Mara Freedom Party for the first time submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Assam. The memorandum contained the demand of the Mara for an Autonomous District Council separately meant for the tribe. The memorandum was submitted to P.B. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam. The delegates entreated that the Chief Minister of Assam may please reply the Mara leaders in writing regarding their demand for a separate Council. The Chief Minister gave them a written statement

that the Government of Assam would look into the demand and made a study to learn more about the Mara tribe. The Assam Government sent copies of the memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner of Lushai Hills District and Chief Executive Member of the PLRC and asked them to give their comments on the point raised in the memorandum.³⁴

In order to study and analyse the problems of the Mara in connection with their political demand, A.C.Ray, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl came to Saiha. He met the leaders of the MFP and discussed with them matters relating to their demand. However, on receiving copy of the memorandum, the Chief Executive Member of the PLRC, H. Kiautuma tried his best to disprove the points given in the memorandum. He gave a comment to the extent that the Lakher (Mara) and the Pawi (Lai) were of the same tribe and thus the two tribes should not be placed in a separate administration. His attention was to thwart an effort of the Mara in their demand for a separate administration.³⁵

As the demand for Mara Autonomous District Council by the MFP got no response, the MFP at its 5th General Assembly held at Serkawr on 4th and 5th February 1965 passed a resolution and set up an Interim Mara District Council on the same day³⁶. The Interim Mara District Council boycotted all the functionaries and activities of the PLRC. The 13 employees of the PLRC who belong to the Mara community also resigned from their post and worked at the Interim Council without salary. Taxes were paid to the Interim Council and the Council also exercised its function over land pass and took up the function of the village court within the Mara inhabited area and minor cases were tried by the Interim Council

³⁴R. Hmingthanzuala, opt cited, P. 101.

³⁵Ibid, P.102.

³⁶Mylai Hlychho, opt cited, P. 7.

Court. All the Village Council in the Mara region were also put under the jurisdiction of the Interim Mara District Council.³⁷

In the later part of 1965, R.V. Pillai, the then Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei visited Saiha. From Saiha he made a tour in the Mara area to assess the pace of the MFP movement. On seeing that the Mara were well united in their political demand under the Mara Freedom Party, R.V. Pillai encouraged the villagers in their political movement. He told them that, if the Mara persisted in their movement, victory would be won some day. He further told them that persistence was required for them. The villagers were very much happy at his words. His advice gave them new hope and encouragement in their political aspiration.³⁸

The Chief Executive Member of the PLRC, L. Chinzah reported the matters relating to the activities of the MFP to the Government of Assam. The Government of Assam set up a Commission headed by K. Saigal, the Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl and visited the Interim Mara District Council at Saiha in March, 1964. During his visit, the Mara leaders resorted that the Mara wished to be away from the Lushai Hills as well as from the Pawi. The Commission investigated the matters and reported to the Government of Assam but no legal actions were taken on the matters.³⁹ When the demand for a Separate Hills State spearheaded by the All Party Hill Leader's Conference (APHLC) was at its height, the Government of India appointed a Commission headed by Pataskar to study on the demand of the APHLC and the demand for amendments in the Sixth Schedule provision to the

³⁷Zakhu Hlychho, *Mara History*, P. 187-188.

³⁸Valua Hlychho, *opt cited*, P. 124.

³⁹*Ibid*, P.188.

Constitution of India.⁴⁰ The Mara Freedom Party also submitted another memorandum to the Chairman of the Commission for the Hill Areas of Assam in which the party demanded for a full-fledged Autonomous District Council for the Mara (exclusive of the Pawi) in June, 1965.⁴¹

T. S. Gill, the Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl came to Saiha after the visit of R. V. Pillai, the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei on the report received from L. Chinzah, the Chief Executive Member of the PLRC in relation to the non-cooperation movement launched by the Mara. Here the Pawi leader felt that the MFP leaders might not be able to escape from being penalized for their illegal acts. To the contrary, T. S. Gill was lenient to the MFP leaders. He rather advised the MFP leaders that the people should not be forced to pay taxes and fees to them but they might pay voluntarily to the Interim Mara District Council.⁴²

With the setting up of the Interim Council and the boycott of all the functionaries and activities of the PLRC by the MFP, the functioning of the PLRC also faced hindrance and difficulties. Moreover, the outbreak of Mizo National Front (MNF) insurgency which took place in Lushai Hills District with effect from 28th February 1966 caused enormous problem in the Lushai Hills. The MNF insurgency paralyzed the smooth functioning of the government machinery which also effected the Pawi-Lakher region. In an interview with S. Pailei at Saiha on 6th August 2015, he revealed that during MNF insurgency the Mara Freedom Party gave a moral support to MNF as MFP was not in a position to give any physical support. However, the MNF leaders wanted and expected the Mara Freedom Party to quit its demand for a separate district council as the MNF fought for

⁴⁰S.K. Chaube, opt cited, P. 134.

⁴¹Memorandum submitted to the Chairman of the Commissioner for Hill Areas of Assam, 1965.

⁴²Valua Hlychho, opt cited, P. 126.

independent Mizoram. But this was unacceptable for the Mara Freedom Party. As a result, the MNF volunteers were order to execute the MFP leaders. In the meantime, the MFP leaders were considered as an informers to the Assam Rifles and order was issued to the MNF volunteers to executethe MFP leaders unless they quit their demand but no leaders were executed. However, two civilians were shot by the MNF volunteers near Tuipang and Thaisa (who was physically challenged) of Tokalo village was shot death by the MNF volunteers as these persons were suspected as an informer to the Assam Rifles. Other than these incidents, no Civilians or MFP leaders were killed by the Assam Rifles or the MNF volunteers. During this insurgency period, another remarkable thing was that no village grouping took place in the Mara region.

Apart from the boycott of the PLRC, the Headquarter of the PLRC was shifted from Saiha to Lunglei where security forces were available. In the meantime, L. Chinzah, the Chief Executive Member of the PLRC was elected as Member of Assam Legislative Assembly and he looked after the functioning of PLRC from Shillong.⁴³ During the whole term, L. Chinzah held the double responsibility of MLA and CEM of the PLRC as the People's Representation Act of 1956 enacted by the Parliament allowed a member of District Council and a member of Regional Council to contest an election and become member in either house of Parliament or of the State Assembly.⁴⁴ The MNF insurgency in a way forbid the effort of MFP in their demand for a separate District Council. In an interview with Zakhu Hlychho, first Mara CEM of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council at Aizawl on 17th October 2015, he revealed that in 1969, the MFP Special Assembly was held at Saiha and Zakhu Hlychho and S. Hiato were invited to

⁴³R. Hmingthanzuala, opt cited, P.105.

⁴⁴Jangkhongam Dounel, opt cited, P.43.

joined the party and to further carry out the demand for a separate District Council in a faster means. Zakhu Hlychho and S. Hiato resigned from their respective jobs and joined the Interim Council in 1970. S. Hiato was appointed as the Interim Council Secretary and Zakhu Hlychho as Judicial Officer of the Interim Council. All the cases were tried at the Interim Council Court by the Judicial Officer.

During the boycott of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the Mara people gave their support to the Mara Freedom Party as the people wholeheartedly supported the policy of the party. The people were aware that if the Mara were given a separate administration they would be more developed. However, it may be noted that some villages in the Mara area like Niawhtlang and Tuipang 'L', the movement of the MFP could not yield support as majority of the villagers belong to Pawi tribe. Other than these two villages in the Mara area, the movement of the MFP gained 100% support.

The third general election to the PLRC

The third general election to the PLRC was boycotted by the Lakher and was held among the Pawi and Chakma in 1964. Lalchunga Chinzah, H. Tanmanga, Bualthiauva, Laltuma, Atul Chandra Chakma and Lalngaia were elected as the Members of Regional Council (MRC). The Governor of Assam nominated K. Rohnuna as nominated member. The elected members elected H. Tanmanga as the Chairman and Lalchunga Chinzah as the Chief Executive Member and remained in office till the next general election held in 1970.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Ibid , P.41-42.

The Fourth Term of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

In 1969, as the fourth general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council which was to be held in 1970, the Mara leaders discussed whether they would continue the boycott or participate in the election. The Mara leaders decided to participate in the election as they thought that it would be easier to pursue their demands if they were in power. It may be noted that there was no other political party in the Mara area other than the Mara Freedom Party. On the other hand, the Pawi leaders convened a general Conference at Lawngtlai on 17th January, 1970 wherein, they decided to join the Indian National Congress (INC). Election to the PLRC was held on 23rd April 1970 and a party wise contest was experienced for the first time.⁴⁶ However there developed a problem among the Pawi leaders who joined the Indian National Congress on the selection of candidates to the election. The INC was divided into two factions- Congress led by L. Chinzah (Congress L) and Congress led by F. Manghnuna (Congress M). The election of the fourth term was held between MFP, Congress (L) and Congress (M). From L. Chinzah faction, Lalchema, L. Chinzah and Ukmang Zathang were elected whereas Sapliana Vandır was the lone elected member from the F. Manghnuna faction. From the MFP, Zakhu Hlychho, S. Pailei, K. Khosa and S. Hiato were elected and from Chakma area, Atul Chandra Chakma and Arun Kumar Dewan were elected as Congress nominees. Arun Kumar Dewan joined the Manghnuna group whereas Atul Chandra Chakma remained with L. Chinzah. Zavai and K. Sangchhuma were nominated as member of the Regional Council. K. Sangchhuma later joined the Manghnuna group.⁴⁷

⁴⁶R. Hmingthanzuala, opt cited, P. 107.

⁴⁷Jangkhongam Doungei, opt cited, P. 44-45

The elected members of the PLRC met on 15th July 1970 to elect the Chairman and Chief Executive Member. F. Manghnuna requested his three colleagues, Sapliana, K. Sangchhuma and Arun Kumar Dewan to side with the Lakher in the election of the Chairman and CEM. With the support of Manghnuna's Group, the Lakher captured majority having the strength of eight members in the Council, whereas L. Chinzah got only four supporters. The meeting was presided over by the Sub-Divisional Officer, Lunglei and elected S. Pailei as Chairman and Zakhu Hlychho was elected as the first Mara CEM of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. Sapliana Vandır was selected by Zakhu Hlychho as his Cabinet colleague on 16th July 1970. However, the Chinzah group did not participate in the election. Zakhu Hlychho became the first Mara CEM of the PLRC.⁴⁸

Within a short period of time, Zakhu Hlychho's committee was toppled as L. Chinzah continued to gain the support and confidence of F. Manghnuna's group so as to form the Executive Committee with the leadership of the Pawi. F. Manghnuna's group withdrew its support to Zakhu Hlychho and a no-confidence motion to Zakhu Hlychho's government was moved. S. Pailei then resigned from his Chairmanship and Arun Kumar Dewan, the Deputy Chairman conducted the session when a no confidence motion was discussed. In the session every member spoke in his own dialect, the Deputy Chairman could not understand what they were talking and adjourned the session. The Mara leaders convinced K. Sangchhuma and Sapliana to support them by offering them the post of Chairman and CEM. As a result K. Sangchhuma was elected the Chairman but later resigned. As per the rules framed under the Sixth Schedule the new Executive Committee

⁴⁸R. Hmingthanzuala, opt cited, P. 108.

should be formed within forty eight hours immediately from the dismissal of the outgoing Executive Committee. No individual member or group of political party was able to form an Executive Committee. As such, the Governor of Assam appointed L. Chinzah as care-taker.⁴⁹

The 12 members of PLRC met on 17th March, 1972 and re-elected Zakhu Hlychho as CEM and he appointed S. Pailei and Ukmang Zathang as Executive Members. L. Chinzah was elected as the Chairman and for the first time Arun Kumar Dewan was elected as Deputy Chairman. They all remained in office upto 1st April, 1972 till the trifurcation of the PLRC into three separate Regional Councils.⁵⁰

In an interview with Mylai Hlychho (Ex-Secretary of MFP and Ex-EM, PLRC) on 4th October 2015 at Aizawl in 2015, he stated that in 1971 when the Pawi and Lakher leaders heard about the elevation of the Mizo District Council to Union Territory of Mizoram, the leaders decided to demand for a higher status as well. As such, delegates namely, Zakhu Hlychho, S. Hiato and Mylai Hlychho from Lakher tribe, F. Manghnuna, Sapliana and K. Sangchhuma from Pawi tribe and Atul Chandra Chakma from Chakma tribe went to Delhi to further their demand for a separate district council. On 9th October, 1971, these delegates met the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi and these delegates demanded for the elevation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council to Union Territory. However, the Prime Minister told these delegates about her inability to meet their demand and instructed them to meet the Union Home Minister. The Union Home Minister informed the delegates that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council would be upgraded

⁴⁹Ibid, P. 110.

⁵⁰Ibid , P. 46.

to the status of Autonomous District Council. In the meantime, the delegates meet the Special Secretary for Union Territory and in this meeting the Mara delegates demanded for a separate Mara Autonomous District Council as they could not accept the proposed Pawi-Lakher District Council. During their meeting with the Special Secretary for the Union Territory, the delegates from the Pawi and Atul Chandra Chakma also demand for a separate District Council for their respective tribes.

In December, 1971 AB. Roma and Chhohmo, Ex-Chief of Serkawr were again deputed to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister of India for the second time. The two delegates met the Home Secretary and told him that the Lakher (Mara) were different from the Pawi (Lai) and the Lusei and they could not be placed together with the Pawi under one Regional Council. If the Lakher continued to be with the Pawi under one administration in Mizoram, the Lakher would be assimilated sooner or later. Hence, the Lakher wanted permanent solution for survival from being dominated and assimilated. In responses to the plea made by Chhohmo, the Home Minister also responded that, “though you are not successful now in your demand, do not get disappointed. You will have to persist in your demand. Repeated representation is required in democracy”. In February 1972, Mylai Hlychho, Secretary of Mara freedom Party set out for Delhi in his own expenses. He had an interview with the Home Minister and Mylai Hlychho strongly pleaded for the cause of the Mara and urged him that the Union Government would have to expedite creation of an Autonomous District Council for the Mara tribe. He told the Minister that the creation of District Council for the Mara was an absolute necessity for the survival of the tribe. The Home Minister

responded that Government knew all the problems of the Mara tribe and assured him that the Government had been working on it since then in favour of the tribe.⁵¹

By the North Eastern Reorganisation Act, 1971, the Mizo District Council was elevated to the Union Territory of Mizoram on 21st January, 1972 and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma Regional Council on 2nd April, 1972 as per the Administrator of Mizoram Notification No. CCMP/3/72-77 of 1.4.1972. The administrative arrangement was also made in such a way that the existing Members of PLRC would automatically be Members of their respective Regional Councils. The Deputy Commissioner of Union Territory of Mizoram appointed interim Chief Executive Members for the three Regional Councils, namely, L. Chinzah for Pawi Regional Council, Zakhu Hlychho for Lakher Regional Council and Atul Chandra Chakma for Chakma Regional Council. The three Regional Council were elevated to the status of a full-fledged Autonomous District Councils, namely, the Lakher Autonomous District Council, the Pawi Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council on 29th April, 1972. But they were continued to govern by their respective interim government till the conduct of District Council election in June, 1973.⁵²

Powers and functions of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

Under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Regional Council and the District Council has been entrusted with the power to make laws with respect to-

⁵¹Valua Hlychho, *The struggle for the Survival of the Lakher Tribes*, P.131-133.

⁵²Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P. 69-71.

(a) The allotment, occupation or use, or setting apart, other than any land which is a reserved forest for the purposes of agriculture or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes or for any other purpose likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town:

Provided that nothing in such laws shall prevent the compulsory acquisition of any land, whether occupied or unoccupied, for public purposes in accordance with the law for the time being in force authorising such acquisition;

- (b) The management of any forest not being a reserved forest;
- (c) The use of any canal or water-course for the purpose of agriculture;
- (d) The regulation of the practice of *jhum* or other forms of shifting cultivation;
- (e) The establishment of village or town committees or councils and their powers;
- (f) Any other matter relating to village or town administration, including village or town police and public health and sanitation;
- (g) The appointment or succession of Chiefs or Headmen;
- (h) The inheritance of property;
- (i) Marriage and divorce;
- (j) Social customs

(2) In this paragraph, a 'reserved forest' means any area which is a reserved forest under the Assam Forest regulation, 1891, or under any other law for the time being in force in the area in question.

(3) All laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and, until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

(4) Paragraph 4 (1) provides that the District Council may constitute Village Councils or Courts for the trial of suits and cases between the parties all of whom belong to Scheduled Tribes within such areas, other than suits and cases to which the provisions of sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 5 of this Schedule apply, to the exclusion of any court in the State, and may appoint suitable persons to be members of such village councils or presiding officers of such courts, and may also appoint such officers as may be necessary for the administration of the laws made under paragraph 3 of this Schedule.

(5) Paragraph 5 provides for conferment of powers under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, and the code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, on the Regional Council and District Councils and on certain courts and officers for the trial of certain suits, cases and offences.

As per paragraph 6(1) the District Council for an autonomous district may establish, construct, or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads, road transport and waterways in the district and may, with the previous approval of the Governor, make regulations for the regulations and control thereof and, in particular, may prescribe the language and the manner in which primary education shall be imparted in the primary schools in the district.

(2) The Governor may, with the consent of any District Council, entrust either conditionally or unconditionally to that Council or to its

officers functions in relation to agriculture, animal husbandry, community projects, co-operative societies, social welfare, village planning or any other matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

Paragraph 7 of the Sixth Schedule entrusted the District Council with the responsibility to constitute a District Fund and frame rules for its management in consultation with the Governor.

Under Paragraph 8 (1) the Regional council for an Autonomous region in respect of all lands within such region and the District Council for an Autonomous District in respect of all lands within the District except those which are in the areas under the authority of Regional Councils, if any, within the District, shall have power to assess and collect revenue in respect of such lands in accordance with the principles for the time being followed by the Government of the State in assessing lands for the purpose of land revenue in the State generally.

(2) The Regional Council for an autonomous region in respect of areas within such region and the District Council for an autonomous district in respect of all areas in the district except those which are under the authority of Regional Councils, if any, within the district, shall have power to levy and collect taxes on lands and buildings, and tolls on persons, resident within such areas.

According to Paragraph 11, all laws, rules and regulations made under this Schedule by a District Council or a Regional Council shall be

published forthwith in the Official Gazette of the State and shall on such publication have the force of law.⁵³

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council is entrusted with Legislative, Executive, Financial and Judicial powers and function. However, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council had no power to establish or manage primary schools.⁵⁴ With regards to the Judicial power, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council also established Courts which functioned from 15th March, 1957. The PLRC Court was at Saiha, no Subordinate Council Courts were established under the Regional Council except the Village Council Court which were 48 in number.⁵⁵

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council functioned from 1953 till its trifurcation in to three regional council, namely, Pawi Regional Council, Lakher Regional Council and Chakma Regional Council on 2nd April, 1972 by the North Eastern Reorganisation Act, 1971.

⁵³ P. M. Bakshi, *The Constitution of India*, P.345-353.

⁵⁴ V. Venkata Rao, opt cited, P. 190.

⁵⁵ H.C. Thanhranga, opt cited, P. 158.

Chapter 4

FORMATION OF THE MARA AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL: ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) functioned for a period of 19 years from 1953 till its trifurcation into three regional councils on 2nd April, 1972. On 21st January 1972, the erstwhile Mizo Hills was separated from Assam with the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram by the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was also trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma Regional Council on 2nd April 1972 as per the Administrator of Mizoram Notification No. CCMP/3/72-77 of 1.4.1972. On 29th April 1972, the three Regional Councils were upgraded to the status of the full-fledged Autonomous District Councils and were governed by their respective interim government till the conduct of District Council election in June, 1973. After the trifurcation of the PLRC, an administrative arrangement was made in such a way that the existing Members of the PLRC would become Members of their respective Regional Council. As such, all the Pawi Members of Regional Council (MRC) become members of Pawi Regional Council (PRC), the Lakher MRC become members of Lakher Regional Council (LRC) and the Chakma MRC become the members of Chakma Regional Council (CRC) respectively.¹

An Interim Chief Executive Members for the three Regional Councils were appointed by the Chief Commissioner. Zakhu Hlychho was appointed as the interim Chief Executive Member for the Lakher Regional Council. S. Hiato and S. Pailei were appointed as the Executive Members, K. Khosa as the Chairman and

¹Jangkhongam DOUNGEL, *opt cited*, P. 68-69.

A.B. Roma as the Deputy Chairman. This executive body of the Lakher Regional Council continued till the conduct of the first general election to the Lakher Autonomous District Council. The members of the Lakher Regional Council later came to be known as the Members of District Council after the upgradation of the Lakher Regional Council to the status of Lakher Autonomous District Council. In 1988, the Lakher Autonomous District Council was changed to the Mara Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1988 of Indian Parliament (No. 67 of 1988).²

Administrative Area of Mara Autonomous District Council

The Mara Autonomous District Council is the second largest in geographical area among the three Autonomous District Councils of Mizoram with a geographical area of 1,399 Sq.km. As per 2011 Census conducted by Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Mizoram, the total population of MADC is 56,574 persons with 28,594 males and 27,980 females.³ The Mara Autonomous District Council lies in the loop of the Kolodyne river, geographically situated between the Latitude of 22°.07' and 22°38' North and between the Longitude 92°55' and 92°10'. The Mara Autonomous District Council is also situated in the most Southern part of Mizoram and is flanked on the north and the west by the Lai Autonomous District Council and on the south and east by the Chin State of Myanmar covering an international border with Myanmar for 159 kilometres. The Headquarter of Mara Autonomous District Council is located at Saiha, which is also the capital of Saiha District. Tuipang is the Sub-Headquarter of MADC. The Mara Autonomous District Council has three main structural organs of government

²RT. Hnialum, *Road to Lai Autonomous District Council*, P. 59.

³Mizoram Statistical handbook, 2015, P. 1.

such as Legislative, Executive and Judiciary. At present, there are 93 Village Councils within MADC area with 436 Village Council Members⁴. Mara Autonomous District Council has 28 departments with 545 plan staff and 1476 non plan staff employees.⁵

Powers and functions of the Mara Autonomous District Council

The powers and functions of the Mara Autonomous District Council mainly consist of the Legislative, Executive and Judicial powers as given below:

Legislative Powers

The Mara Autonomous District Council has the power to make laws on the allotment, occupation or use or the setting apart of land, other than reserved forests, for the purpose of agricultural or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town; the management of any forest not being a State Reserved Forest; the use of any canal or water course for agricultural purposes; the regulation of the practice of *jhum* or other forms of shifting cultivation; the establishment of town or village councils and the determination of their powers and functions; any other matter relating to village or town administration including town or village police, public health and sanitation, the appointment or succession of chief or headmen, the inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs, money-lending and trading by persons other than Scheduled Tribes.⁶

⁴Ibid, P. 91.

⁵Budget of the Mara Autonomous District Council (2014-2016) published by Mara Autonomous District Council, Saiha, Mizoram, P. 24, 25, 26, 63.

⁶V Venkata Rao, opt cited, P. 189.

Executive Powers

As regards to the executive powers, the Mara Autonomous District Council has the power to establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads, and waterways. It has also power to determinate the language and the manner in which primary education should be imparted in the primary schools within its jurisdiction.⁷

Judicial Powers

The Mara Autonomous District Council has the power to constitute Village Council Courts for the trial of suits and cases in which both the parties are tribals. It may appoint suitable persons to be the members of the village courts. It may also appoint such officers as may be necessary for the execution of laws made by the District Council.

The District Council is a Court of Appeal in respect of all suits and cases trial able by the village council. No other court except the High Court and the Supreme Court of India has jurisdiction over such suits and cases.⁸

Legislative Functions

The Legislative department in Mara Autonomous District Council is administratively headed by the Legislative Secretary and the legislative department has to make necessary arrangement for convening Session and receive questions from the Members of District Council (MDC) which should be submitted to the Chairman for scrutiny. The Chairman has to see whether the questions are concern of the District Council and questions should be submitted 15 days before the

⁷Ibid, P. 190.

⁸Ibid, P. 281-282.

session. The Legislative Department also makes arrangement for election of Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and the Chief Executive Member under the supervision of the concerned Presiding Officer. Further, it also has to record and publish the proceedings of the District Council Session and it should send Bill for approval of the Governor after being authenticated by the Chairman. However, the real legislative function or law-making power is exercised by the legislature of the District Council which comprises of the MDCs. At present the MADC has 28 members, out of which 25 are elected and 3 are nominated.⁹

On the basis of power conferred by paragraph 3 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and as per the provision laid down in Rule 73 of the Mizoram Autonomous District Council (Constitution and Conduct of Business of the District Council) Rules, 1974, the Autonomous District Council has certain legislative powers. Accordingly, MADC has enacted 28 Legislations and passed 29 resolutions.

Executive Function

The Executive function of the district council is vested in the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is headed by the Chief Executive Member (CEM) but the administrative responsibility of the Executive Committee lies with the Executive Secretary. The Executive Committee comprises of the CEM and the Executive Members (EMs) and the main work of the Executive Committee is to execute the plans of the District Council as well as implement and enforce the laws and legislations enacted by the legislatures.¹⁰

⁹Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P. 213.

¹⁰Ibid, P. 215.

As provided in paragraph 6 (1) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, Primary School was entrusted to the District Council in 1975 and Middle School (Upper Primary School) was further entrusted to the District Council in 1994. For effective implementation of the development schemes, District Councils have certain developmental departments such as Rural Development, Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Public Works Department (PWD), Agriculture, Industry, Veterinary, Soil Conservation, Local Administration, Fisheries etc.¹¹

Judicial Function

As provided in sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 4 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the District Council may constitute the District Council Court with the approval of the Governor of Mizoram. The provision for establishment of Village Council Court was enshrined in sub-paragraph (1) of the same paragraph. Accordingly, three tier courts, namely Village Council Court, Intermediate District Court and District Council Court are subsequently established by each of the Autonomous District Council under the provision of the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Administration of Justice) Rules, 1954 which was adopted by each of the District Council. The Mara Autonomous District Council Court is located at Saiha and the Intermediate District Council Court at Tuipang and 93 Village Council Courts. Customary Law is often deal by the District Council Court.¹²

¹¹The Mizoram Gazette, Extra Ordinary, published by Authority, No. C. 13016/3/2010-DCA.

¹²Jangkhongam Doungel, opt cited, P. 216-217.

Functioning of the Mara Autonomous District Council

As provided in sub-paragraph 6, paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Government of Mizoram had enacted the Mizoram Autonomous District Council (Constitution and Conduct of Business of the District Councils) Rules, 1974 which then become the guiding principle of governance of the three Autonomous District Councils of Mizoram, namely, the Lai Autonomous District Council, the Mara Autonomous District Council and the Chakma Autonomous District Council. The Government of Mizoram also created a separate Department in Secretariat known as “District Council Affairs Department” (DCA), to look after the affairs of the three Autonomous District Councils of Mizoram, and funds for the District Councils are channelized through this department with the approval of the state finance department. Thus, the DCA department becomes the main controlling authority concerning the affairs of the District Councils of the State.¹³

The Mara Autonomous District Council as governmental set up at the local level with the three organs of government signifies certain resemblance with the State Government and Central Government in its functioning. The Governor is the executive head of the district council within the state as he is also the head of the State. The law enacted by the District Council came into force after the Governor gives his assent. In the like manner, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman are elected from amongst the Members of District Council (MDC) themselves and are similar to the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the State. MADC has also the Executive Committee headed by the Chief Executive

Member (CEM) and the CEM recommended certain MDCs for appointment as Executive Member (EM) to the Governor of Mizoram.¹⁴

First term of MADC (1972-1978)

The strength of the Mara Autonomous District Council was 10, out of which 9 members should be elected and 1 member should be nominated.

The first general election to MADC was held on 17th December 1972 and there were 9 territorial constituencies. In the first general election, Mara Freedom Party won 9 seats and one woman candidate Ngony Hlychho also won the election from MFP. The elected members of the first term of MADC were as given below¹⁵:

1. S. Hiato
2. S. Vadyu
3. K. Paichho
4. K. Khosa
5. Hmaoko Hlychho
6. Zakhu Hlychho
7. Ngony Hlychho
8. AB. Roma

NT. Leipo was nominated as Member of District Council who died soon and was replaced by Laizai. The first MADC formed its Executive on 24th January 1973 with S. Hiato as its first Chief Executive Member. The Chief Executive Member appointed S. Vadyu and K. Paichho as Executive Members, S. Pailei as

¹⁴Ibid, P. 211-212.

¹⁵Mara Autonomous District Council Silver Jubilee (1972-1997) Souvenir, P. 3-4

Chairman and K. Khosa as Deputy Chairman were elected by the elected members of District Council.

It may be noted that before the completion of first term of MADC, Mara Freedom Party merged with India National Congress in 1975 which was later merged with Janata Party in early part of 1977 before the second general election to the MADC.

The Second term of MADC (1978-1983)

The second general election was held on 12th December 1977. In the second general election the number of members was increased from 9 to 15 members, out of which 14 members should be elected and 1 member should be nominated. The election was contested by the Janata Party and Independent candidates. The Janata Party won 12 seats and 2 seat was won by independent candidates. The elected members of the second general election were as given below¹⁶:

1. Ryusa
2. S. Vadyu
3. N.T. Makho
4. K. Thahro
5. Zakhu Hlychho
6. Mylai Hlychho
7. M. Thatua
8. S. Khipo
9. S. Pailei

¹⁶Mara Autonomous District Council Silver Jubilee (1972-1997) Souvenir, opt cited, P. 4.

10. B. Tevo
11. AB. Roma
12. K. Paichho
13. S. Hiato
14. Lalringa

K. Khosa was nominated as Member of District Council. In the second term of the MADC, the office of the Chief Executive Member was hold by Mylai Hlychho and K. Paichho and Zakhu Hlychho were appointed as Executive Members. S. Hiato was elected as the Chairman and K. Thahro as Deputy Chairman. This executive body run smoothly till the end of its term. However, the Mara Freedom Party merged itself with Indian National Congress (INC) and the Congress of the Maras joined the Janata Party in 1977. And again when the Janata Party fell and Congress came back to power in 1980, it rejoined its parent body, the Congress.¹⁷

The third term of MADC (1983- 1985)

The third general election to MADC was held in December 1982. The Congress (I) won 7 seats and People’s Conference (PC) party won 7 seats. Two elected members from Congress (I) joined the People’s Conference as such the Council was form by the PC. The elected members of the third general election were as given below¹⁸:

1. S. Zakho (Cong- I)
2. S. Khipo (Cong-I)

¹⁷V Venkata Rao, opt cited, P. 155.

¹⁸Mara Autonomous District Council Silver Jubilee (1972-1997) Souvenir, opt cited, P 4-5.

3. H. Pakhu (Cong-I)
4. B. Tevo (Cong-I)
5. AZ. Laicho (Cong-I)
6. S. Hiato (Cong-I)
7. Lengduna (Cong-I)
8. RT. Zachono (PC)
9. N. Chosa (PC)
10. Vahnua (PC)
11. Zakhu Hlychho (PC)
12. Timawthy Lakher (PC)
13. S. Vahlo (PC)
14. K. Chialo (PC)

V. Lalchhawna was nominated as Member to the District Council. In the third general election the Congress and the PC won equal number of seven. Two elected members from Congress defected to PC. As such, the Executive body of the third term of the District Council was formed by PC with Zakhu Hlychho as Chief Executive Member and N. Chosa and S. Zakho were appointed as Executive Member and from the elected members, ZT. Zachono was elected as Chairman and K. Chialo as Deputy Chairman. This Executive body functioned smoothly till the end of its term.¹⁹

¹⁹ V Venkata Rao, opt cited, P. 186.

The Fourth term of MADC (1985- 1990)

The fourth general election to MADC was held on 14th February 1985. In the fourth general election, Cong (I) won 12 seats and Mizo National Front (MNF) won 2 seats. The elected members of the fourth term general elections were²⁰:

1. S. Vadyu (Cong-I)
2. Chhiesa (Cong-I)
3. NT. Makho (Cong-I)
4. RSK Chhamo (Cong-I)
5. Laicho Notlia (Cong-I)
6. K. Paichho (Cong-I)
7. S. Khipo (Cong-I)
8. S. Pailei (Cong-I)
9. B. Tevo (Cong-I)
10. Az. Laicho (Cong-I)
11. S. Hiato (Cong-I)
12. Lengduna (Cong-I)
13. RT. Zachono (MNF)
14. K. Chialo (MNF)

In the fourth term of the MADC, the executive body was form by Cong (I) with S. Vadyu as Chief Executive Member and S. Khipo, B. Tevo, Laicho Notlia and NT. Makho were appointed as Executive Member. Laicho Notlia was elected as Chairman and remained in office from 22nd February, 1985 to 14th January, 1989 and was replaced by AZ. Laicho (who was the then Deputy Chairman) on

²⁰Mara Autonomous District Council Silver Jubilee (1972-1997) Souvenir, opt cited, P. 5

13th March , 1989 and remained in office till the end of the Fourth term of MADC. After AZ. Laicho replaced Laicho Notlia as Chairman, RSK Chhamo was elected as Deputy Chairman. AB. Roma, TT. Vakhu and K. Thahro were nominated as Member of District Council.²¹

The fifth term of MADC (1990-1995)

The fifth general election to MADC was held on 6th February 1990. In the fifth term the members of District Council was increased from 14 to 19 members. In this election, Cong (I) won 12 seats, MNF won 5 seats and 2 independent candidates won 2 seats. The elected members of the fifth general elections were²²:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| 1. RT. Zachono | (Cong-I) |
| 2. Lengduna | (Cong-I) |
| 3. Ng. Silla | (Cong-I) |
| 4. S. Khipo | (Cong-I) |
| 5. Az. Laicho | (Cong-I) |
| 6. TT. Vakhu | (Cong-I) |
| 7. FC. Zase | (Cong-I) |
| 8. S. Pailei | (Cong-I) |
| 9. H. Valai | (Cong-I) |
| 10. K. Paichho | (Cong-I) |
| 11. Laicho Notlia | (Cong-I) |
| 12. S. Vadyu | (Cong-I) |
| 13. Zakhu Hlychho | (MNF) |
| 14. N. Zakhai | (MNF) |

²¹K. Sachho, opt cited, P.58.

²²Mara Autonomous District Council Silver Jubilee (1972-1997) Souvenir, opt cited, P. 5-6.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 15. N. Hmoko | (MNF) |
| 16. Lalringa | (MNF) |
| 17. J. Hrangliana | (MNF) |
| 18. H. Sahlo | (Independent) |
| 19. K. Chiama | (Independent) |

In the fifth term of MADC, the executive body was formed by Cong (I) with S. Vadyu as Chief Executive Member, S. Khipo, Laicho Notlia, S. Pailei, RT. Zachono and Az. Laicho were appointed as Executive Member. K. Paichho was elected as Chairman and H. Valai as Deputy Chairman. Timothy Lakher was nominated as Member of the District Council.²³

The Sixth term of MADC (1995-2000)

The Sixth general election to MADC was held on 9th February 1995. Out of the 19 seats, Cong (I) won 17 seats and 2 seats were won by Independent candidates. The elected members of the Sixth term of MADC were as given below²⁴:

- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| 1. RT. Zachono | (Cong-I) |
| 2. V. Vanhupa | (Cong-I) |
| 3. Ng Silla | (Cong-I) |
| 4. S. Khipo | (Cong-I) |
| 5. K. Hrahmo | (Cong-I) |
| 6. TT Vakhu | (Cong-I) |
| 7. FC Zase | (Cong-I) |

²³Ibid, P. 6.

²⁴Ibid, P. 6.

8. K. Rahi	(Cong-I)
9. H. Valai	(Cong-I)
10. K. Paichho	(Cong-I)
11. Laicho Notlia	(Cong-I)
12. Lawmkima	(Cong-I)
13. N. Zakhai	(Cong-I)
14. H. Sahlo	(Cong-I)
15. Nohro Hmoko	(Cong-I)
16. N. Chosa	(Cong-I)
17. S. Vadyu	(Cong-I)
18. K. Chياما	(Independent)
19. RC. Fanchun	(Independent)

In the Sixth term of MADC, the Executive body was formed by Indian National Congress (INC) with K. Paichho as Chief Executive Member. RT. Zachono, FC. Zase, Ng Silla, H. Sahlo, TT. Vakhu, N. Zakhai and H. Valai were appointed as Executive Member. S. Khipo was elected as Chairman and V. Vanhupa as Deputy Chairman. NT. Makho, Lengduna, FC. Kiahlei and J. Maki were nominated as Member to the District Council. K. Paichho remained in office as Chief Executive Member from 15th February, 1995 to 24th April, 1998 and was replaced by S. Khipo after his death. As S. Khipo became the CEM, in his place, Nohro Hmoko was elected as the Chairman and remained in office till the end of the sixth term of MADC.²⁵

²⁵Ibid, P. 7.

The Seventh Term of MADC (2000-2005)

The Seventh general election to MADC was held on 9th February, 2000, out of the 19 seats, INC won 7 seats, Mizo National Front (MNF) won 3 seats, 1 seat was won by an independent candidate and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) a new sub-regional political party formed in 1996 won 8 seats. The elected members of the Seventh general election were as given below;²⁶

1. ZT. Zachono (INC)
2. V. Vanhupa (INC)
3. Nohro Hmoko (INC)
4. K. Hrahmo (INC)
5. S. Khipo (INC)
6. FC. Zase (INC)
7. N. Zakhai (INC)
8. HC. Chhisa (MDF)
9. C. Vahlo (MDF)
10. S. Pailei (MDF)
11. PP. Thawla (MDF)
12. M. Laikaw (MDF)
13. K. Chiama (MDF)
14. C. Vadu (MDF)
15. S. Vadyu (MDF)
16. Lengduna (MNF)
17. IP. Junior (MNF)
18. L. Khaichyu (MNF)

²⁶ K. Sachho, opt cited, P. 61.

19. N. Viakhu (Independent)

In the Seventh term as there was no single majority party to form the Executive Committee, a coalition government was formed by MDF and MNF and N. Viakhu an independent candidate also joined MNF. The Executive body was formed by PP. Thawla as Chief Executive Member, S. Vadyu was elected as chairman and HC. Chhisa as Deputy Chairman. IP. Junior, S. Pailei, K. Chiama, Lengduna, N. Viakhu, C. Vahlo and M. Laikaw were appointed as Executive Members. C. Lawbei, Mylai Hlychho, S. Lalremthanga and Lalbiakluanga were nominated as Members of District Council.

On 11th Novemeber, 2000 the Executive Committee led by PP. Thawla became minority due to withdrawal of support by the MNF and a new Executive body was formed with IP. Junior as Chief Executive Member. Nohro Hmoko was elected as Chairman whereas, Lengduna, RT. Zachono, N. Viakhu, N. Zakhai, FC. Zase, L. Khaichyu and V. Vanhupa were appointed as Executive Members. S. Lalremthanga, Lalbiakluangi and HC. Chhisa were nominated as Members of District Council.

On 4th December, 2003 No Confidence Motion was moved against the Executive Committee and the existing Executive Committee was voted out and a new Executive Committee was formed on 6th December 2003. The Government of Mizoram approved the new Executive Committee on 19th December, 2003 led by N. Viakhu as Chief Executive Member and this Executive body remained in office till the next general election.²⁷

²⁷Ibid, P. 63.

Eight term of MADC (2005-2007)

The Eight general election to Mara Autonomous District Council was held on 24th April, 2005. Out of 19 seats, INC won 4 seats, MDF won 7 seats and MNF won 10 seats and an independent candidate. The elected members of the Eight general election were as given below,²⁸

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| 1. K. Hrahmo | (INC) |
| 2. S. Khipo | (INC) |
| 3. K. Beisa | (INC) |
| 4. H. Sahlo | (INC) |
| 5. M. Laikaw | (MDF) |
| 6. Beisa Kathie | (MDF) |
| 7. S. Lalremthanga | (MDF) |
| 8. C. Vahlo | (MDF) |
| 9. C. Vadu | (MDF) |
| 10. MH. Tiabi | (MDF) |
| 11. VB. Byhna | (MDF) |
| 12. HC. MalsawmaZasai | (MNF) |
| 13. Lengduna | (MNF) |
| 14. V. Sangvuana | (MNF) |
| 15. K. Rahi | (MNF) |
| 16. FC. Rehmo | (MNF) |
| 17. L. Khaichyu | (MNF) |
| 18. NL. Hmunsanga | (MNF) |
| 19. IP. Junior | (MNF) |

²⁸Ibid, P. 63.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 20. LC. Hlychho | (MNF) |
| 21. Nahlo Solo | (MNF) |
| 22. N. Viakhu | (Independent) |

In the eight term of the MADC, the number of seats were increased from 19 to 22 and along with 4 seats for nominated members. As there was no single majority party to form the government, MDF and INC supported by an independent elected member formed a coalition government. The Executive Committee was headed by N. Viakhu as Chief Executive Member, S. Khipo was elected as Chairman and VB. Byhna as Deputy Chairman. K. Beisa, K. Hrahmo, MH. Tiabi, S. Lalremthanga, M. Laikaw, H. Sahlo, C. Vadu were appointed as Executive Members. M. Manasia, NT. Thatlua, Hrangduna and Mrs. Ngothlua were nominated as Members of District Council. This Executive body remained in office from 25th April, 2005 to 27th January, 2006.

Before the completion of the eight term, the existing Executive Committee was voted out as an independent elected members N. Viakhu joined MNF which made MNF the single majority party. As such a new Executive Committee was formed by the MNF. The New Executive Committee was headed by N. Viakhu, HC. Malsawma Zasai was elected as Chairman and NL. Hmunsanga as Deputy Chairman. However, this Executive Body was dissolved on 5th March, 2007 which results in another election to MADC.²⁹

²⁹Ibid, P. 64.

The Ninth term of MADC (2007-2012)

The ninth general election to MADC was held on 8th May, 2007, out of 22 seats, INC won 8 seats, MDF won 7 seats and MNF won 7 seats. The elected members of the ninth general election were as given below;³⁰

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. S. Khipo | (INC) |
| 2. K. Chhuabei | (INC) |
| 3. FC. Zase | (INC) |
| 4. K. Hrahmo | (INC) |
| 5. KH Beihlo | (INC) |
| 6. K. Beisa | (INC) |
| 7. V. Vanhupa | (INC) |
| 8. H. Sahlo | (INC) |
| 9. Beisa Kathie | (MDF) |
| 10. S. Lalremthanga | (MDF) |
| 11. B. Tusa | (MDF) |
| 12. MH. Tiabi | (MDF) |
| 13. S. Vadyu | (MDF) |
| 14. M. Laikaw | (MDF) |
| 15. VB. Byhna | (MDF) |
| 16. N. Naphie | (MNF) |
| 17. L. Khaichyu | (MNF) |
| 18. NL. Hmunsanga | (MNF) |
| 19. IP. Junior | (MNF) |
| 20. Lengduna | (MNF) |

³⁰Ibid, P. 65.

21. LC. Hlychho (MNF)

22. HC. Malsawma Zasai (MNF)

In the ninth term, MDF and INC formed a coalition government with an executive body headed by S. Khipo as Chief Executive Member, S Vadyu was elected as Chairman and K. Chhuabei as Deputy Chairman. M. Laikaw, K. Hrahmo, S. Lalremthanga, MH. Tiabi, K. Beisa, VB. Byhna, FC. Zase and H. Sahlo were appointed as Executive Members. L. Patha, LC. Chakhai and B. Pasia were nominated as Members of District Council. This Executive body was voted out on 30th March, 2008 by elected members from MDF and MNF to form a new Executive body. This new Executive Committee was headed by M. Laikaw as Chief Executive Member and S. Vadyu was elected as Chairman and N. Naphie as Deputy Chairman. However, this Executive Committee was also dissolved on 17th January, 2009 as elected members namely, N. Naphie (MNF), MH. Tiabi (MDF), IP. Junior (MNF), VB. Byhna (MDF) and L. Khaichyu (MNF) defected from their party and joined INC. A new Executive Body was formed on 20th January, 2009 with S. Khipo as Chief Executive Member, FC. Zase was elected as Chairman and KH. Beihlo as Deputy Chairman. This Executive body remained in office till the next general election of MADC.³¹

The Tenth term of MADC (2013-2017)

The Tenth general election to MADC was held on 3rd May, 2012. The members of MADC was also increased from 22 to 25 with 3 nominated seats. Out of 25 seats, INC won 15 seats, MDF won 5 seats, MNF won 3 seats and 2 seats

³¹Ibid, P. 67.

were won by Independent Candidates. The elected members of the Tenth general election were as given below;³²

1. RT. Zachono (INC)
2. Hiphei (INC)
3. L. Prisila (INC)
4. MH. Tiabi (INC)
5. KH. Beihlo (INC)
6. VB. Sawma (INC)
7. K. Chhuabei (INC)
8. N. Zakhai (INC)
9. IP. Junior (INC)
10. F. Lawmkima (INC)
11. K. Hrahmo (INC)
12. K. Pawhnie (INC)
13. LC. Chakhai (INC)
14. S. Beirahmo (INC)
15. Hrangchunga (INC)
16. J. Rawna (MDF)
17. B. Pasia (MDF)
18. K. Chiama (MDF)
19. Pakhu Hlychho (MDF)
20. C. Lawbei (MDF)
21. FC. Rehmo (MNF)
22. Nahlo Solo (MNF)

³²madc.mizoram.gov.in (official website of MADC), accessed on 25th November, 2015.

- 23. Sangtlunga (MNF)
- 24. LC. Apaw (Independent)
- 25. Tiahlei Syuhlo (Independent).

In the Tenth term of MADC, the Executive body was formed by INC with RT. Zachono as the Chief Executive Member, Hiphei was elected as Chairman who was later replaced by LC. Chakhai and L. Prisila as Deputy Chairman. MH. Tiabi, KH. Beihlo, VB. Byhna, N. Zakhai, IP. Junior, F. Lawmkima, K. Hrahmo were appointed as Executive Members. Mrs. B. Ngokei, Mrs. Nunkungi and C. Khaitha were nominated as Members to District Council.³³

The Mara Autonomous District Council since its formation has functioned for about 42 years and has completed its Ninth term and is in the middle of its tenth term. In the early stage of the Mara Autonomous District Council, it has experienced a single majority ruling party till the Sixth term of MADC. Since the Seventh term, as there was no single majority party to form the government, coalition government were formed. In the Seventh term, a coalition government was formed by Maraland Democratic Front and Mizo National Front. However, this Executive Committee last only for about 8 months as MNF withdrew its support to form a new Executive Committee with INC. On 4th December, 2003 No Confidence Motion was moved against the Executive Committee formed by INC and MNF and the existing Executive Committee was voted out and a new Executive Committee was formed on 6th December 2003. In the Eight term of MADC, another coalition government was formed by INC and MDF supported by an independent candidate. Before completion of its term, the Executive Committee was voted out as the Independent candidate joined MNF which make MNF the

³³K. Sachho, opt cited, P. 67-68.

single majority party to form new Executive Committee. This Executive Committee remained in office till the completion of its term.

Another coalition government was formed in the Ninth term by MDF and INC which was voted out on 30th March, 2008 and a new Executive Committee was formed by MDF and MNF. However, the Executive Committee formed by MNF and MDF was dissolved on 17th January, 2009 as 3 elected members from MNF and 2 elected members from MDF defected to INC. As such, a new Executive body was formed by Congress on 20th January, 2009 with S. Khipo as Chief Executive Member. It may be noted that since the Seventh term to the Ninth term, MADC has experienced a coalition government which lasted for a short period of time. The main reason being, when a coalition government was formed, dispute often cropped up between both parties regarding the distribution of Executive post among the two groups. Often dispute cropped up with regards to the occupation of the post of Chief Executive post. Therefore, a stable coalition government could not last long.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION:

Before the advent of the British, the Mara enjoyed full independence in their respective village. The people were under the administrative rule of the Chief, who had the sole authority over the land and his subjects. In administering the affairs of the village, the Chief was assisted by the *Machas* (Council of elders) selected by the Chief. Besides the *Machas*, the Chief also appointed some village officials such as, the village announcer, the blacksmith and the village writer. The Chief and the village officials carry out the village administration efficiently for the welfare of the villagers. The judicial function is also performed by the Chief and his Council of Elders. The Chiefs have full power of control over the village and he can imposed punishments through fines. In case of disobedience of the Chief's order, the Chief can refuse to allow the offender to cultivate his lands and can turn him out of the village. The Chief was the sole authority over the subjects and he was also empowered with the power to pronounce death sentences. The Chief also enjoyed a number of privileges within the jurisdiction of the village, but the situation had been changed with the coming of the British administration in the Mara area.

The British administration started in the whole of the Mara inhabited area in 1924 with the final annexation of Zawngling (Zyhno) village. With the advent of the British in this area, many changes had taken place in social, political, cultural, economy and political life of the Mara tribes. The British had introduced a new system of administration which gradually weaken the traditional powers and functions of the Chief. The whole Mara political system and political privileges of the Mara Chiefs were totally transformed and changed by the coming of the British

along with new law under the Government of India. The power and functions of the Chiefs were curtailed by the British Administration and the Superintendent became the ruling authority over the Chiefs. The Superintendent also laid down certain duties for the Chiefs. After India attained Independence in August 15th 1947, the Constitution of India came into effect in 1950. In 1954, the Government of India announced the new law for the tribal Chiefs – the Assam Lushai Hills Acquisition of Chief Right Act 1954, which also immediately affect the Mara Chiefs. By 15th April, 1956, all power and judicial responsibility of the Mara Chiefs were totally abolished without giving any special status in the society.

Ever since the Mara were brought under the same roof with their Lusei brothers under the administrative unit of Lushai Hills. They never felt at home to be amid with the Lusei as they strongly believed that their customs and traditions were different from the Lusei. Though the dialect of other tribes are closely related with one another, the Mara dialect was different from that of the Lusei. As such the Mara considered themselves different from the Lusei and had a strong desire for separate administration.

Political Consciousness of the Mara

The Mara were known to be politically awaken in the pre-independence era by Capt A.I. Bowmam, an Englishmen . In 1944, Capt A.I. Bowman visited Serkawr and inspected the records of the village writer which was recorded in Lusei and questioned why it was written in Lushai. He was answered that the Lakher dialect was not officially recognized as a result the village records were written in Lusei. Capt A. I. Bowman was so moved by the answer and advised Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr to demand a better status for the Mara. Accordingly,

Chhohmo convened Mara Chief's Conference at Serkawr on 4th January, 1945. The Conference was attended by 23 Mara Chiefs and unanimously adopted a resolution demanding a Mara District Council and accordingly submitted a memorandum to the Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, Lunglei. But the demand of the Mara Chiefs did not received action as expected, another memorandum was submitted to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills in December, 1945. On 7th April, 1947, just before the visit of the Bordoloi Committee to the Lushai Hills another petition was submitted to the Governor of Assam. But no action was taken on the petition. On behalf of the Mara Chiefs, Chhohmo submitted another representation to the Governor of Assam on 7th July, 1947.

It may be noted that when there was a development of anti- Chiefs movement in the Lushai Hills under the initiative of the Mizo Union, the activities and movements of the Mizo Union had not much impact in the Lakher inhabited area. The main reason behind this was that there exist a good understanding and no enmity feeling was found between the Chiefs and the commoners in this region. Above all, it may be noted that the chiefs were the first who were politically aware and took the initiatives in demanding the Mara District Council. Moreover, the Mara Chiefs were aware that with the ongoing movement against the Sailo Chiefs by the Mizo Union one day the Chiefs had to give up their power. The Mara Chiefs were ready to give up their traditional powers and privileges and rule their subjects in a more democratic form. As such, among the Mara, the Chief were the first who were politically awaken and took up the political leadership.

Formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council

After the Second World War, Labour Party formed government in Great Britain on July 26, 1945 and a special Mission of Cabinet Ministers headed by Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India to help her attained freedom as speedily and fully as possible. Special attention was given to the tribal areas, as such the Cabinet Mission suggested the formation of an Advisory Committee, to study on the rights of minorities and tribes of Excluded and Partially Excluded Area. The Constituent Assembly set up an Advisory Committee which further appointed a sub-committee known as the North Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi as Chairman. The other members consist of Rupnath Brahma, A.V. Thakkur, Mayang Nokcha, B.N. Rau and Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy. The Bordoloi Committee members visited the headquarters of the hill areas and study the mind, problems and desire of the tribals with regard to autonomy for their area. In April, 1947, the Bordoloi Committee also visited Aizawl and co-opted two members- Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma from Mizo Union to represent the Lushai Hills. After assessing and observing the demands of the tribal people of the North-East, the Bordoloi Committee realised that these people needed protection and safeguard to preserve their way of life and participate in the political process of the Country. The Committee submitted its report to the Advisory Council and recommended for a new scheme of administration for Lushai Hills-District Council for Lushai Hills and Pawi-Lakher Regional Council for the Pawi and Lakher.

The Sub-Committee submitted its report on July 28, 1947 to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee forwarded the report of the Sub-committee to the President of the Constituent Assembly on

4th, March, 1948. The Provisions of the Sixth Schedule were considered by the Constituent Assembly on September 5,6 and 7, 1949. There was heated deliberation on the issues among the members of the Constituent Assembly. Some members like Kuladhar Chaliha, Brajeshwar Prasad, Rohini Kumar etc strongly opposed the formation of District Councils. However the support from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, the efforts of Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy and the positive role of Gopinath Bordoloi enabled the approval of the provisions of the District Councils and Regional Council inserted in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

After the Indian Constitution was brought into force, the immediate formation of the District Council in the Hill Districts was not possible. Therefore an interim Advisory Council was set up. Election to the Advisory Council was held on 23rd March, 1948 for electing Chief's representatives by the Chiefs and Commoner's representatives by the commoners on the basis of Adult Franchise on 15th April, 1948. The Advisory Council comprised 35 members, out of which 10 were Chief representatives and 15 were Commoner's representatives, L.L. Peter, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills was Chairman of the Advisory Council. From the Pawi-Lakher region Z. Hengmang and Vako were the commoners representatives and Chhohmo was the Chief's representative. At this point, the Pawi and Lakher leaders became aware of the fact that they could be facilitated with Regional Council under the provision of the then proposed Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Therefore, they vigorously pursued their demand for establishment of Regional Council with the formation of Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union at Lawngtlai on 25th October, 1949 with Z. Hengmanga as the President. The Advisory Council was changed into Advisory Committee in 1949 which

function till 1951. The first general election of the Lushai Hills District Council was held on 4th January, 1952, out of 18 seats Mizo Union won 15 seats and Lalsawia become the first Chief Executive Member. The Lushai Hills District Council was finally inaugurated on 26th April, 1952 at Aizawl by Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam. Further the Lushai Hills District came to be known as Mizo District as per the Lushai hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954 (Act XVIII of 1954) of the Indian Parliament. Consequently, the Lushai Hills District Council also came to be known as Mizo District Council since 1954. As a result of the relentless demand of the Pawi-Lakher leaders, a Regional Council called the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was inaugurated with headquarters at Saiha, by Ch. Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam at Lunglei on 23rd April, 1953.

The first general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was held in April, 1954 and Z. Hengmanga was elected as the Chairman. Whereas, C. Zochhuma was elected as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and he continued till his death upto August 31st, 1956. After his death H. Kiautuma was elected as the CEM on 15th, January 1957. The second election to the PLRC was held in 1957. After the election, dispute cropped up as the Mara demanded for the key executive post as per the agreement reached on the formation of the first term of the PLRC. Shortly their dispute was resolved and H. Kiautuma was elected as CEM and Mylai Hlychho was offered the EM post which he first declined and later accepted. Before the third general election, there was a political development in the PLRC, the Lakher formed the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) in 1963 with V. Hlychho as its President and Mylai Hlychho, as the secretary. The party's main aim was to secure a separate Mara Autonomous District Council.

The third general election to the PLRC in 1964 was boycotted by the Lakher but the Pawi and the Chakma participated in the election. Lalchunga Chinzah, H. Tanmanga, Bualthiauva, Laltuma, Atul Chandra Chakma and Lalngaia were elected as the Members of Regional Council. The Governor of Assam nominated K. Rohnuna as nominated member. The elected members elected H. Tanmanga as the Chairman and Lalchunga Chinzah as Chief Executive Member and remained in office till the next general election held in 1970.

In 1969 when the Fourth general election of the PLRC was to be held, the Mara leaders decided to contest the election and decided to pursue their demand with power and the staff also rejoined their former jobs in the Regional Council. For the first time Zakhu Hlychho was elected the CEM, with the executive body of Lalchunga Chinzah as Chairman, U. Zathang and S. Pailei as EM and Atul Chandra Chakma as Deputy Chairman. This executive body remained in office till the creation of Lakher District Council, Pawi District Council and Chakma District Council.

Formation of the Mara Freedom Party and its role in the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council

An important political development took place for the Mara tribe with the formation of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) on 16th January, 1963. The main reason behind the formation of the Mara Freedom Party was that, the Mara strongly believed that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was formed as a result of the demand initiated by the Lakher Chiefs and considered themselves as the right owner of the PLRC. However, during the early stage of the PLRC, the Mara were educationally more backward than the Pawi and there were no graduate among the

Mara who could hold the executive post in the PLRC. As the Pawi were more advanced in terms of education, all the executive post and the higher post were occupied by the Pawi as no eligible Mara were available for these post. However, the Pawi and the Mara reached an agreement during the first term of the PLRC that the post of the Chief Executive Member and other executive post would be share between the two tribes. In the first term of the PLRC both the post of the CEM and Chairman went to the Pawi. In the second term of the PLRC, dispute cropped up between the Pawi and the Lakher regarding the holding of the executive post. The Mara believed that as the post of the Chief Executive Member went to the Pawi in the first term of the PLRC, it was their turn to hold the post. However, the post of the Chief Executive Member and the Chairman of the PLRC went to the Pawi again. The Mara were greatly resented about this matter but shortly this resentment was resolved as Mylai Hlychho was offered the post of the Executive Member which he first declined and later accepted the post.

A fear of exploitation and assimilation by the larger and more advanced Pawi tribe developed among the Mara. The Mara strongly felt that for the advancement and survival of the Mara tribe a separate administration exclusively for the Mara should be demand. As such, before the third general election to the PLRC, the Mara leaders convened Mara Convention at Zawngling in 1963. During this time, it may be noted that few educated Mara leaders emerged and took up the leadership. The Mara leaders in this Convention resolved to form a political party to pursue the interest of the Mara tribe. As such the Mara Freedom Party was formed on 16th January, 1963 with an aim to secure Mara Autonomous District Council which was first initiated by the 23 Mara Chiefs in the pre-independence era. The party also aimed to conserve and develop the Lakher ethos of their

culture, customs, traditions and diverse genius skilled of their own under Autonomous District Council. With the formation of the Mara Freedom Party, the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union came to an end as a common political platform for both the Pawi and the Lakher.

Role and activities of the Mara Freedom Party

After the formation of the Mara Freedom Party(MFP), the leaders toured the length and breadth of the Lakher areas and preached the policy of the Party. The Mara people wholeheartedly embraced and support the Party's policy in securing Mara Autonomous District Council. In pursuance of resolution passed by the General Assembly held at Zawngling on 19th and 20th January, 1963, Mara Freedom Party resolved to submit a memorandum to the Governor of Assam. The memorandum contained the demand for an Autonomous District Council separately for the Mara tribe. The memorandum was submitted to P. B. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam.

Interim Mara District Council

As the demand for Mara Autonomous District Council by the Mara Freedom Party through memoranda did not received expected response and action, the MFP decided to boycott the third general election to the PLRC. The third general election to the PLRC was held in 1964 among the Pawi and the Chakma but was boycotted by the Mara. As the demand for Mara Autonomous District Council by the Mara Freedom Party got no response, on 4th and 5th February the 5th MFP General Assembly was held at Serkawr. In this Assembly, a resolution was passed for establishment of Interim District Council. The so called Interim District Council was set up under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of

India. The Interim District Council boycotted all the activities and functionaries of the PLRC. 13 employees of the PLRC who belong to the Mara Community also resigned from the PLRC to support the MFP. The employees who resigned from the PLRC joined and worked for the Interim District Council without salary. People belonging to the Mara areas also paid taxes to the Interim District Council. In the meantime, the Interim District Council also exercised its functions over land pass and all cases were also tried at the Interim Council Court. The boycott of the PLRC was mainly to show the Government of Assam that Regional Council was not powerful enough for the Mara so as to preserve and develop the Mara tribe, its culture, customs, traditions and diverse genius skilled and to show that the Mara could not be placed together with the Pawi under one Regional Council.

When the Pataskar Commission visited Aizawl in June, 1965, the MFP leaders submitted a memorandum to the Commission which contained the demand for a full-fledged Mara Autonomous District Council but the demand of the MFP was either reciprocated nor known ever after. During Mizo National Front (MNF) Insurgency, the movement of MFP and the functionaries of the PLRC were paralyzed. As such, insurgency forbid the MFP leaders to continue with their demands. In 1969, the MFP Special Assembly was held at Saiha and resolved to carry out the demand for a separate District Council in a faster means and for this purpose, Zakhu Hlychho and S. Hiato were invited to join the Interim District Council.

In 1969, when the fourth general election to the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was to be held in 1970, the Mara leaders discussed and decided to contest the election. They believed that they could pursue their demand in a faster and effective means if they were in power. The MFP contested the election and the

staff who resigned from PLRC also rejoined their former jobs in the Regional Council. For the first time, Zakhu Hlychho was elected the CEM, with the executive body of Lalchunga Chinzah as Chairman, U. Zathang and S. Pailei as EM and Atul Chandra Chakma as Deputy Chairman. This executive body remained in office till the creation of Lakher District Council, Pawi District Council and Chakma District Council.

In 1971, Zakhu Hlychho, S. Hiato and Mylai Hlychho from Mara Tribe, F. Manghnuna, Sapliana and K. Sangchhuma from Pawi tribe and Atul Chandra Chakma from Chakma tribe were delegated to Delhi to demand a separate administration. On 9th October, 1971 these delegates met the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi and demanded for the elevation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council to the status of Union Territory. However, the Prime Minister told the delegates about her inability to meet their demand and instructed them to meet the Union Home Minister. The Union Home Minister informed the delegates that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council would be upgraded to the status of Autonomous District Council. In the meantime, the delegates meet the Special Secretary for Union Territory and in this meeting the Mara delegates demanded for a separate Mara Autonomous District Council as they could not accept the proposed Pawi-Lakher District Council. During their meeting with the Special Secretary for the Union Territory, the delegates from the Pawi and Atul Chandra Chakma also demand for a separate District Council.

In December, 1971 AB. Roma and Chhohmo, Ex-Chief of Serkawr were again deputed to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister of India for the second time. The two delegates met the Home Secretary and told him that the Lakher were different from the Pawi and the Lusei and they could not be placed together with

the Pawi under one Regional Council. If the Lakher continued to be with the Pawi under one administration in Mizoram, the Lakher would be assimilated sooner or later. Hence, the Lakher wanted permanent solution for their survival from being dominated and assimilated. In response to the plea made by Chhohmo, the Home Minister also responded that, “though you are not successful now in your demand, do not get disappointed. You will have to persist in your demand. Repeated representation is required in democracy”. In February 1972, Mylai Hlychho, Secretary of Mara freedom Party set out for Delhi in his own expenses. He had an interview with the Home Minister and Mylai Hlychho strongly pleaded for the cause of the Lakher and urged him that the Union Government would have to expedite creation of an Autonomous District Council for the Lakher tribe. He told the Minister that the creation of District Council for the Lakher was an absolute necessity for the survival of the tribe. The Home Minister responded that Government knew all the problems of the Lakher tribe and assured him that the Government had been working on it since then in favour of the tribe.

The need for a separate administration for the Mara tribe was first realised by the Mara Chiefs who in the same time initiated the demand for Mara District Council. The demand for Mara District Council by the Mara Chiefs left an important landmark in the political history of the Mara. The first memorandum for the demand of Mara District Council was submitted by the Mara Chiefs in 1945 to the Additional Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, Lunglei. Another memorandum was submitted to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills in December, 1945 as the first memorandum submitted did not received expected action. Just before the visit of the Bordoloi Committee to the Lushai Hills another petition was submitted to the Governor of Assam on 7th April, 1947. Another memorandum was

submitted to the Governor of Assam by Chhohmo, Chief of Serkawr, on behalf of the Mara Chiefs on 7th July, 1947. Later, on 25th November, 1948, the Mara and Lai on the advice of L. L. Peters, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills unitedly set up a separate political party called the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union at a Conference held at Lawngtlai. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council also pressurized both the Government of Assam and India to form a Regional Council for the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. As such, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was given to the Pawi and the Lakher under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

The demand for a separate administration for the Mara was first initiated by the Mara Chiefs in the form of Mara District Council. The initiative of the Chiefs had in a way led to the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council for the Pawi(Lai) and Lakher (Mara) tribes. The Mara Chiefs who were uneducated at that time were aware of the fact that with the decline in the powers and importance of the Chiefs, they greatly believed that their traditional powers could be replaced by governing their subjects in a new form of democracy. In an interview with politicians and leaders of Mara Freedom Party, they strongly believed that they might not have felt or developed the desire to demand for Mara Autonomous District Council. The initiative role played by the Mara Chiefs had led to the birth of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the Mara leaders realised that the Mara and Lai could not remain in the same Regional Council and thus demand for Mara Autonomous District Council.

The findings of the Research may be enumerated below:

1. The formation of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) in 1963 had opened a new chapter in the political life of the Mara tribe. The few educated Mara and the political leaders believed that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council(PLRC) could not safeguard the interest of the Mara tribes as the PLRC was dominated by the Pawi, a larger and more advanced tribe. Apprehension, misunderstanding and distrust dominated the minds of the Mara leaders. As such, the Mara Freedom Party with an aimed to secure Mara Autonomous District Council was formed. To secure its demand, the MFP submitted memoranda but no expected response and action were taken on their demand. Therefore, the MFP boycotted the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The boycott of the PLRC may be considered as one of the most important step taken by the MFP because all the functionaries and activities faced many hindrances and caused difficulties in the smooth functioning of the PLRC. Apart from the boycott of the PLRC, an Interim Mara District Council was formed on 5th February, 1965 as per the resolution passed on the 5th MFP General Assembly held at Serkawr. The employees at PLRC from Mara community resigned from their respective jobs to show their support to the MFP. The Mara people also paid taxes to the Interim Mara District Council and all cases were also tried at the Interim Council Court. Apart from this in order to pursue their demand, MFP also send delegates to the Central government. The Mara Autonomous District Council was therefore formed by the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971 on 29th April, 1972. The role and activities of

the Mara Freedom Party though in the early stage of its movement got no response and action, the dream and desire of the Mara people was achieved through the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council. The Mara Freedom Party played the main role in the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council.

2. During the political movement of the Mara Freedom Party, the Mara people wholeheartedly supported the activities of the MFP except in few Mara villages of Tuipang 'L' and Niawhtlang. In these villages, majority of the villagers belong to the Pawi community and could not extend their support to MFP. This was unacceptable for the Mara and thus led to tension among the Mara and the Pawi. The tension reached its highest stage in 1965 when Hrikhai (Mara) of Tuipang village was injured by the Pawi of Tuipang 'L'. This incident enraged the Mara and they assembled at Tuipang and spread the word that the Pawi should leave their area. When the Pawi from Vawmbuk and Bualpui (NG) heard about this rumours, they came to Saiha with their spear and machete. However, this tension was resolved by the leaders of both the tribes. Other than these two villages, the movement of the Mara Freedom Party was wholeheartedly supported by the people by paying taxes and used the Interim Council Court to try their disputes and cases. The Mara employees working at the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council also resigned from their respective jobs and joined the Interim Mara District Council without any salary to show their support to the MFP. During the MNF Insurgency, when the Mizo National Army Volunteers

were ordered to execute the MFP leaders, the villagers would hide and protect the MFP leaders from the MNF volunteers.

3. The research finding also reveals that though the Mara Freedom Party took a distinguished role in the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council, the political environment in hill areas of Assam was just ripe to meet their demand. The region had then witnessed waves of prominent political demands. Demand for a separate Hill State was spearheaded by the All Party Hill Leader's Conference (APHLC) and the Mizo National Front (MNF) Insurgency in Mizoram resulted in political turmoil in the Hill areas of Assam. As a result the Government of India could not overlook these matters and take up some measures. As such, the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971 was adopted by the Government for creation of various states in Assam. The political movement of the MFP was spearheaded at the right time when the attention of the Government of India was most focussed in the Hill areas of Assam. As a result the political condition and the role of MFP contributed in the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council.

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) which was formed for both the Pawi and the Lakher function for a period of 19 years from 1953 to 1972 till its trifurcation into three Regional Councils. During the first term of the PLRC (1953-1958), the PLRC functioned without any interruption and a good relationship existed between the Pawi and the Lakher and both the tribes were bond together with Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) which was the only political party in the Pawi and Lakher area. However, since the Second term of the PLRC, differences

and resentment arose from the Lakher with regards to the occupation of the Executive Post in the PLRC. The Pawi who were at that time more advance in term of education dominated the PLRC which caused a great sense of fear of assimilation and uncertainty of their future among the Mara. As such desire for better status was felt by the Mara to demand the Mara Autonomous District Council. As such, the Mara Freedom Party was formed on 16th January, 1963. Since its formation, the Mara Freedom Party engaged actively to secure its demand and the Mara people also supported the movement and activities of the MFP. The desire and demand of the MFP was successful with the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council on 29th April, 1972 by the North Eastern Reorganisation Act, 1971.

After the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council(MADC), the first Executive Committee was formed by the Mara Freedom Party(MFP). However, before the completion of the first term of MADC the Mara Freedom Party merged itself with Indian National Congress (INC) and the Congress of the Maras joined the Janata Party in 1977. And again when the Janata Party fell and Congress came back to power in 1980, it rejoined its parent body, the Congress. After MFP merged with INC in 1980, the Mara Freedom Party came to an end as a common political platform for the Mara.

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ABSTRACT

**MARA AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL:
EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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The political movement of the Maras can be traced back to the pre-independence era with the demand of Mara District Council by the 23 Mara Chiefs in 1945. An in depth study of the evolution and development of Mara Autonomous District Council is necessary as it covers the political movement of the Mara. Further, it also connects with the desire for better status and the desire of the Mara to have separate Mara Autonomous District Council of their own. The Mara, compared to the other tribes in Mizoram were considered to be more backward in terms of education, livelihood etc, and only few educated circles were aware of their conditions and their political status. Subsequently, the desire for better status cropped up and felt that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) was not enough for the betterment of the Mara tribe. As a result, the demand for Mara Autonomous District Council was spearheaded by the Mara Freedom Party (MFP), a sub-regional political party formed with an aim to secure a separate Mara Autonomous District Council exclusive of the Pawi. The movement led by the MFP was supported by the people, the employees of the PLRC belonging to the Mara community resigned from their respective jobs and people also paid taxes to the Interim Mara District Council. The MFP carried the struggle which later led to the creation of Mara Autonomous District Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

The present study mainly deals with the evolution and development of Mara Autonomous District Council which was first initiated by the Mara Chiefs and was accomplished in the form of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. This study also highlights the role of Mara Freedom Party, a sub-regional political party formed mainly with an aim to secure Mara Autonomous District Council. This study also highlighted the role and activities of Mara Freedom Party which mainly includes the submit of memoranda in pursuance of achieving its demand, the boycott of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the set-up of Interim Mara District Council and formation of Mara Autonomous District Council

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are mentioned below :

1. To trace the evolution and development of Mara Autonomous District Council.

2. To examine and analyse the role of the Mara Chiefs in the formation of Pawi-Lakher Regional Council.
3. To examine and study the role played by Mara Freedom Party, a political party formed with the goal of achieving Mara Autonomous District Council.

HYPOTHESIS

The Mara Freedom Party played a key role in the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The Methodology used for this Research includes historical and descriptive approaches with the help of primary and secondary sources of data. As for primary sources, an unstructured interview has been conducted with Mara politicians and Ex-Leaders of Mara Freedom Party in order to acquire formation required for this study. Government document is also use as primary source of data. For secondary sources, published and unpublished literatures, journals , books etc were used to collect information.

The study is divided into five Chapters:

Chapter 1:

The first Chapter of this Dissertation deals with a brief introduction of the Study. The historical study of the Mara, the migration of different Mara tribes namely – Tlosai, Hawthai, Chapi, Zyhno and Vytu from different parts of Halkha Sub-division of the Chin Hills to their present settlement in the extreme south in Mizoram is also dealt in this chapter. Village, family, marriage, clan and kinship which constitute the most important part of the Mara social structure were also dealt in this chapter. The traditional political life of the Mara revolved around the institution of traditional Chieftainship. The administration of the village was under the authority of the Chief who was assisted by the Council of elders (*Machas*)

selected by the Chief. The Chief was the sole authority of the village land, represent his subjects in all dealings of the government. The Chief and his Council of elders also acted as the highest court of justice.

Chapter 2: The advent of the British Administration and its impact

In 1871, the first Lushai Expedition took place and two British columns entered the Lushai Hills in 1871. The British colonial rule began to gain ground in Lushai hills after the expedition of 1889-1890, the whole Lushai Hills was annexed to British for administrative purpose. The operation of 1889-1890 led to the creation of the two districts, namely, the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills with headquarters at Aizawl and Lunglei respectively. The North Lushai Hills became part of the Chief Commissionership of Assam, while the Southern District was attached to Bengal. The North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills were amalgamated in 1898. The inclusion of Lakherland into British administration started after the final annexation of Zawnghing in 1924. The formal inclusion of the areas as British territory took place in 1931-1932. Subsequently, all the laws and rules in force in Lushai Hills were extended to this area by the Assam Government.

With the advent of the British Administration in Lakherland many changes have been brought in the social, economic and political life of the Mara. The introduction of Christianity also brought changes in the life of the Mara tribe. Informal education was first introduced by the Christian Missionaries. The advent of British Administration had result in the abolition of certain traditional rights and privileges of the Chief. The whole Mara political system and political privileges of the Mara Chiefs were totally transformed and changed by the coming of the British along with new law under the Government of India.

Not only Christianity has affected the political life of the Mara. After India attained Independence in August 15th 1947, the Constitution of India came into effect in 1950. In 1954, the Government of India announced the new law for the tribal Chiefs – the Assam Acquisition of Chief Right Act 1954, which also immediately affect the Mara Chiefs. By 15th April, 1956, all power and judicial responsibility of the Mara Chiefs were totally abolished without giving any special status in the society.

Chapter 3: The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council and the role of Mara Freedom Party in the formation of the Mara Autonomous District Council

The demand for Mara District Council was first initiated by the Mara Chiefs and was further pursued with the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union by the Pawi and Lakher on 28th November, 1949 to demand Pawi-Lakher Regional Council(PLRC). After the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, the Mara realised that the PLRC was not enough for the upliftment of the Mara. Moreover, the Pawi were more advanced in terms of education than the Mara. The Pawi dominated the PLRC by holding all the key post which caused great resentment. The few educated among the Mara leaders revived the days when the Mara Chiefs had demand for a separate Mara District Council and felt that a separate Mara Autonomous District Council exclusive of the Pawi should be demand. As such the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) was formed . the main focus of this Chapter is on the role of Mara Freedom Party (MFP) which was formed on 16th January, 1963 with the main aim to secure Mara Autonomous District Council. The MFP to achieve its demand submitted Memoranda, boycott the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, an Mara Interim District Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India was set up by MFP and delegates were send to pressurized the Central Government and Assam Government.

Chapter 4: Formation of Mara Autonomous District Council: Its Powers and Functions

Chapter 4 deals with the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) and its powers and Functions. The Legislative functions, Executive functions, Judicial function, Legislative powers, Executive functions and Judicial functions of Mara Autonomous District Council were included in this Chapter. Moreover, the MADC since its first term till its tenth term were also found in this Chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this Chapter a brief overview of the above Chapters were included. The main findings of this Study were also highlighted in this chapter.

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