

Acknowledgement

My present research work entitled **“Interest Articulation and Political Process: A study of the role of Pressure Groups in Mizoram”** attempts to study the role of Church, youth, students and labour union as pressure groups in the political process of Mizoram. The study analyses and examines how much these groups have been able to achieve their goals.

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Date.

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DECLARATION

I, Mr. R. Lalzawnga hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis entitled “INTEREST ARTICULATION AND POLITICAL PROCESS: A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF PRESSURE GROUPS IN MIZORAM” is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

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

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Certificate

This is to certify that Mr. R.Lalzawnga has prepared the thesis titled “**Interest Articulation and Political Process: A study of the role of Pressure groups in Mizoram.**” under my guidance and supervision for the Ph.D degree in Political Science Department of Mizoram University. In preparing the thesis, Mr. R.Lalzawnga has complied with all the requirements as laid down in the Ph.D. Regulations of the University. This thesis is an original work of the scholar and has not been submitted for any degree of any other University.

Date:

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Media

ABBREVIATION

AMSC	All Mizo Students' Convention
BA	Bachelor of Art
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
Brig.	Brigadier
CADC	Chakma Autonomous District Council
CIC	Chief Election Commissioner
CM	Chief Minister
C.P.C.	Christian Peace Committee
CPM	Christian Peace Mission
CYMA	Central Young Mizo Association
D.C.	Deputy Commissioner
DP & AR	Department of Personnel & Administrative Reform
DPC	Departmental Promotion Committee
Gen.	General
G.H.C.	Gauhati High Court
HAS	Hmar Students' Association
Hqrs.	Headquarters
HSLC	High School Leaving Certificate
HSSLC	Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate
LDC	Lower Division Clerk
ILP	Inner Line Permit
IMFL	Indian Made Foreign Liquor
KM	Kilometres
LADC	Lai Autonomous District Council
LSA	Lai Students' Association
MADC	Mara Autonomous District Council
MBSA	Mizoram Bawm Students Association
MDC	Member of District Council
MEMS	Mizoram Education Mission Society
MHIP	Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl
MJA	Mizoram Journalist Association
MKHC	Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MLTP	Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition
MP	Member of Parliament
MPC	Mizoram People Conference
MPCC	Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee

MPF	Mizoram People Forum
MSA	Mara Students' Association
MSIC	Mizoram State Information Commission
MNF	Mizo National Front
MNFF	Mizo National Famine Front
MSU	Mizo Student Union
MU	Mizo Union
MUP	Mizo Upa Pawl
MWR	Minimum Wages Rate
MZP	Mizo Zirlai Pawl
NEC	North Eastern Council
NEPTYF	North East Plain Peoples Traders and Youth Federation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NTUM	National Trade Union of Mizoram
OBC	Other Backward Classes
PC	Peoples Conference
PM	Prime Minister
PWD	Public Works Department
Rev.	Reverend
RMSA	Rashtrya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhyan
RSL	Ralte Students' League
RSU	Ranglawng Students' Union
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Schedule Caste
SDO	Sub Divisional Officer
SJAC	Students' Joint Action Committee
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abihyan
SSPP	Siamsinpawlpi
TKSU	Thado/Kuki Students' Union
UDC	Upper Division Clerk
UPC	United Pentecostal Church
USA	United States of America
UT	Union Territory
YMA	Young Mizo Association
ZNP	Zoram National Party

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most effective factors of democracy in the political process of modern time is the existence of a number of pressure groups. The term “pressure group/interest group” has become more popular in the present world and refers to any aggregate, organized or unorganized group which applies pressure tactics.¹ Before association was possible in the society, all powers were confined in the hands of the monarch and his aristocratic members only. According to Grazia, pressure groups can be traced back the role of ‘Eastes’ in the Middle Ages.² The noblemen, the clergymen, the yeomen, the merchants and the artisans were also acting as a part of society in Europe. They had certain duties and privileges in connection with their status and occupation. Like Eastes in middle age, there was the ‘Guild’ which was organized by merchants and artisans for the interest of their groups. However, the French Revolution and the American Revolution resulted in the destruction of the Eastes and Guilds.³ After that type of society was broken, there was the growth of social movements such as individualism, Marxism, communism and syndicalism etc.⁴ Some interest groups like association of new religious sects, the small craftsmen and independent merchants appeared in the society. In the initial period, political authority had a strong restriction on the association of merchants/merchant society. The initial restriction to control over economic activity came in France in the form of an agrarian group known as Physiocrats’s agitation in the 18th century followed it.⁵

¹ I. Barua, *Pressure Groups in Assam*, Omsons Publications, T. 7, Rajouri Garden N. Delhi - 271990, p.1

² A.D. Grazia, *Political Behaviour*, The Press, New York, 1965, p. 256

³ I. Barua, *Pressure Groups in Assam*, Op.cit, p. 8

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁵ J. Eujene, et.al, *The Dynamic of Modern Government*, McGraw Hill, Kgakusha, Ltd. Tokyo, 1972 p. 60

Due to the impact of industrial revolution and the work of economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo there was full freedom of associations in economics matters in Britain, France and the USA.⁶ Then gradually pressure groups became more and more popular in modern complex society.

Professional and new pattern of industrial institutions like worker's association, trade organization and business enterprises are seen in the political scene. The study of interest group is a recent phenomenon, which stemmed from the realization that there are several groups within the political arena besides political parties that are influencing policies of governments. Thus the study of such groups captured the interest of many social scientists. These groups are numerous and for academic convenience they were brought under one umbrella called pressure groups. In the United States, one of the first statements regarding the political interest groups was written by James Madison in 1788, during the struggle over the adoption of the constitution.⁷ The term "Pressure group" was first used by Arthur F. Bentley in his book. *The Process of Government* published in 1908; and later by David B. Truman's book, "*The Governmental Process, Political Interest and Public Opinion*" published in 1951.

Meaning and Definitions of Pressure Group

'Pressure groups' and 'Interest groups' are terms, which are used interchangeably in this work. There is no basic difference between the two. Like several other terms in Political Science, pressure group cannot

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁷ William Ebenstein, et al., *American Democracy, In World Perspective*, Hoper and Row, Publisher New York, 1963, p. 306

be defined easily, though the expression appears to be simple and self explanatory. Pressure group may be defined as any collection of individuals with a shared attitude on some matters who make certain claims or demands on others in society with respect to that matter.⁸ Almond and Powell defined interest groups as “a group of individuals who are linked by particular bonds of concern or advantage, and who have some awareness of these bonds.” and discussed their role in the wider context of interest articulation. In every society, there is a process of presenting people’s demand before the policy makers. Almond and Powell said that interest articulation is the process by which individual and groups make demands upon the political decision-makers.⁹ V.M. Sisikar defines pressure group as such kind of non political party group attempting to bring about political change in the legislative body at a particular time.¹⁰ As H. Zeighler points out, pressure group is an organized aggregate which seek to influence the content of governmental decision without attempting to place its members in formal governmental capacity.¹¹ A pressure group tries to protect and promote its own interest by trying to influence the formation and enforcement of public policy by government. According to Myron Weiner, pressure group means any voluntary organized group, outside the government structure, which attempts to influence the appointment of government personnel, the adoption of public policy, administration and adjudication.¹² Irish and Prothro defined a pressure group as an organized attempt to influence government policy decision without

⁸ Richard A Watson, *Promise and Performance of American Democracy*, John Wiley & son, Inc. New York, 1972, p. 168

⁹ A.S. Narag, (ed) *Comperative Politics: Issues and Trends*, Gita Offset Printers, C.90, Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi 1980 p. 306

¹⁰ *A Survey of Research in Political System Vol. I* ICSSR, Allied Publishers Pvt.Ltd. New Delhi, 1979, p. 87

¹¹ U.R Ghai, *Indian Political System (A Study in Government and Politics,)*, New Academic Publishing Co. Jalandhar, 1995, p. 117

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 117

officially entering in the political field.¹³ Allen and his friends said that pressure groups are simple group of people with a common interest; they are inevitable in the free society.¹⁴ According to Key, pressure groups are non political groups; though they were engaged in politics, their politics is that of policy.¹⁵ Skidmore and Tripp speak out that pressure groups are nothing but associations of individuals sharing some common ground.¹⁶ David B. Truman summarized an interest group as a share-attitude group that makes certain claims upon other groups in the society. Thus, it can be said that pressure group is a group of people having common interest that tries to influence government decision makers to make policies for the benefit of themselves.

From the above different definitions, the following assumptions may be raised in mind. First, pressure groups are inevitable in free society and also occupy important position in political process. Keeping in view the ineffectiveness of individual voice at the governmental level, they formed associations; they are the collection of individuals having common goals and problems. Secondly, Pressure groups are linked together by their particular bonds of concern or advantages. Some are permanent and some are temporary, it may be national, regional, district and local level organization. These groups may base on government institutions, professions, economics, regional, religion, caste and tribes etc. Thirdly, pressure group is not a political party but make demands upon the decision making body. They attempt to change political process in favour of their interest only. Fourthly, Pressure group

¹³ M.D. Irish and J.W. Prothro, *Politics of American Democracy*, Prentice Hall Inc, Eaglewood, 965, p. 250

¹⁴ Jack Allen et.al, *The Problem and Promises of American Democracy*, McGraw Hill, Kogakusha, Ltd. Tokyo 1972 p. 59

¹⁵ V.O Key, Jr, *Politics and Pressure Groups*, Cromwell Co.,9 New York, 1964 p. 18

¹⁶ Max J. Skidmore, Marshall Cater Tripp, *American Government (A Brief Introduction)* Affiliated to East West Press Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi. 1992 p. 73

attempts to place its members in formal governmental capacity, but do not officially participate in election contest. Fifthly, Pressure group is a share-attitude group and a convenient forum for the redressal of grievances of group members. Sixthly, pressure groups use different techniques and methods for the fulfillment of their claims. Sometimes they don't mind to use violent means too.

Pressure group techniques

Pressure groups make use of different techniques and methods to achieve their objectives. The most familiar form of technique in the political arena is that of lobbying to influence legislature. According to Skidmore and Tripp the techniques of influence used by pressure groups are - mobilizing public opinion, promoting campaigns, dispensing legislative advice, endorsing candidates, publicizing opinions, serving on advisory committee, sponsoring testimonial dinners, and so forth.¹⁷ In recent years, the most important development in the tactics of pressure groups is the use of mass media through radio, television and publication.¹⁸

From the above, it can be assumed that pressure group uses the following techniques and methods for the fulfillment of their call for in the society.

Firstly, the most popular technique used by pressure group is lobbying. Lobbying is the dearest technique used by the pressure group

¹⁷ Max J. Skidmore, Marshal Cater Tripp, *American Government (A Brief Instructions)* Affiliated East –West Press, Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi 1992 p. 78

¹⁸ L.W Show, *The political Process and Problems of Society*, Prentice Hall Inc. Eglewood, N. Jersey USA p. 105

for influencing politicians on a particular issue. Since lobbying is a means of influencing the decision making body, pressure group may form any kind of linkage such as personal contact, sending messages, writing letters and articles etc.

Secondly, taking the advantage of periodical elections, pressure groups also try to influence the choice of candidates from political parties. Expecting the favour of the particular candidates, they mould public opinion, campaign, and supply materials and money too. This means that pressure groups try to win the election by hook or crook.

Thirdly, taking advantage of the information explosion, pressure groups use the means of media for drawing of public support on their demands and interests. Advising and hosting of dinner for legislators is also another technique of pressure groups.

Fourthly, sometimes pressure groups do use the techniques like strike, demonstration and other violent means in support of their demands.

Thus, it may be said that pressure groups first use convincing and legitimate methods such as lobbying, endorsing candidates, election campaign, publishing opinion, advising decision makers etc, and if all these fail, they resort to direct action like strike, picketing, demonstration etc.

Pressure groups and political parties

Pressure groups and political parties are closely related. They are both agencies of public opinion. Unlike political parties, the main aim of pressure group is not to capture political power, but to pursue issues that concern their interest. Interest groups/Pressure groups are the representative of homogenous interest, but unlike political party they are non political in nature. Political parties devoted their talents and energies exclusively for getting political power in the state. At the same time pressure groups' objective is to influence the authority to make decision for the interest of their groups only. Political parties may exist only under a democratic set-up, but pressure groups are found in all systems. Even in monarchy and dictatorship the pressure group may exist. Therefore it can be said that pressure groups and political parties are closely related, although they are not same in nature and scope.

Pressure groups and Interest groups

The interchangeable use of the term pressure group with interest group poses a theoretical problem in the study of pressure groups. There is no doubt that phrases like, 'Interest groups,' 'Lobbies,' and 'Pressure groups,' are often used interchangeably.¹⁹ One of the modern writers A.H. Doctor has preferred to use the term 'interest group' to 'pressure group' in his discussion of pressure group.²⁰ Dragnich prefers to use the term "interest group" for the study of pressure groups in different countries such as USA, Britain, Canada and Germany etc. Dragnich and his companions opined that the term "interest group" is not difficult to

¹⁹ B.L. Fadia, *Indian Government and Politics*, Shidya Bhawan Publication, Agra, 1999, p. 605

²⁰ V.M. Sirsikar, *A Survey of Research in Political System Vol. I*. Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Allied Publishes Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi 1979 p. 90

understand. Interest groups are simple groups of people with common interest... if interest groups' attempt to influence public policy is reasonably sustained; it would be called by some writer a pressure group.²¹ Generally no distinction is made between "interest groups" and "pressure group." Interest group is simply a group of people with a common interest, but when they start influencing the formation and administration of public policy by government they become pressure group. Interest groups are pressure groups in influencing both the legislature and public opinion. Lobbies concentrate chiefly on the legislature while it is in session and are concerned with the passage or defeat of particular bills. Most pressure groups maintain "lobbies" in addition to their attempts to influence legislation directly through affecting public opinion.²² In simple term, "lobby" means a group of people who try to influence a politician on a particular issue. In his article *Interest Groups in the American Political System*, E. Latham said that phrase like "Interest Groups," "Pressure Groups," "Private Organizations" and "Lobbies" are often used interchangeably, but care should be taken to separate their meaning.²³ All pressure groups are interest groups but all interest groups are not pressure groups. The pressure used by these groups may be economic, social or political. But unless an interest group participates in bringing some kind of pressure to influence public policy, it does not become a pressure group.²⁴ The term "pressure group" and "Interest group" are often used interchangeably; as many scholars advocate that there exists no real difference between the two. These are called pressure groups because the basic organization of each group is the shared and common interest of the members who

²¹ Alex Dragnich, et. al. *Politics and Government*, Rekha Printers Pvt.Ltd. New Delhi, 1997 p. 18

²² V.D. Mahajan, *Political Theory*, S. Chand & Company Ltd. Ram Nagar, New Delhi, 1997, p. 587

²³ Stephen K. Bailey, *American Government and Politics Esseys in Essential*, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. Culcatta, Bombay, New Delhi. p. 143

²⁴ *Elements of Political Science*, North Eastern Hills University Publication, 1985, p. 88

believe that this interest can be secured through their collective efforts in the group. Each group tries to secure and promote its interest by putting pressure on government. This means that if a collection of individuals or a group having same interest attempts to influence or press political authority or other group it would automatically become pressure group. For the purpose of the study of interest articulation and political process in Mizoram, the term ‘pressure group’ will be more used than ‘interest group.’

Importance of Pressure Groups

In the mid twentieth century it seems that the important role played by pressure groups in influencing government policy has captured the interest of many researchers and scholars resulting in a plethora of studies and researches in this field. The USA is one such example, with the kind of the politics “Checks and Balances” in place it provides just the right environment for such studies. In Britain, due to the strong unitary form of government, pressure groups are seen only as a necessary means and not an end to achieve political goals. In totalitarian state, pressure groups are used as agencies to transmit government policies to its members. However, the role of pressure group in a democracy is to translate group interest into government policies.²⁵

The society becomes more complex and the scope of its different activities and interactions are greater than before. The individual feels that he cannot achieve anything by his own efforts as nobody would give any importance to him. In order to gain greater bargaining power

²⁵ William Ebenstein, et.al. *American Democracy in World Perspective*, Hoper and Row Publishers, New York, 1963 p 305

and make his point of view effective and forceful, he joins with other people who share his ideas and values and constitute a particular group. For the purpose of achieving their objectives individuals organize themselves into various kinds of groups.²⁶ Pressure groups are inevitable in a democratic state; it keeps democracy alive during the interval of election and also chalk out valuable data of government agencies that can mould public opinion. Pressure groups are not absolutely absent in other forms of government like authoritarian state etc.

Pressure groups render important services not only in democratic states but also in the totalitarian state. But sometimes they may be the cause of annoyance also. The pressure groups may compel the party in power to adopt policies which may prove detrimental to the general interest. This may happen when a particular group promotes its interest at the cost of general welfare.²⁷ Thus it can be said that Pressure groups and their role in the political process are not free from criticism.

Nature and Function of Pressure Groups

The nature and function of pressure groups are not same in every country. Some interest groups represent with economic and social stake in society that requires protection; hence they are designed to serve the interest of particular causes that extend beyond the private and personal interest of members.²⁸ The main aim of pressure group is not to capture political power as a whole but to achieve in selected matters which are

²⁶ H. H. Das and B.C. Choudhury, *Introduction to Political Sociology*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. N. Delhi 1997 p. 250

²⁷ D.K. Sharma, *Political Science for +2 Stage Vol I*, New International (P) Ltd. Publisher, N. Delhi 1997 p. 134

²⁸ P. Chander, *Indian Government and Politics*, Cosmoc Bookhive (P) Ltd. New Delhi, 1996. p. 77

concerned with their interest only. For example in Mizoram the Church organizations and the Young Mizo Association would like to determine their policy on the total prohibition of alcoholic drinking without considering the matter relating to taxation and the need of tourists. Irish and Prothro study about the role of interest groups in American politics, According to them, pressure groups are based firmly on the constitutional guaranteed freedom of assembly and petition. The interaction of pressure groups and government has enormous advantages in American democratic administration.²⁹ In their study of presidential and parliamentary system such as the United States, British and Canada; Dragnich, Graham and Rasmussen said that in a free society, individuals combine to promote their aspirations, to this end, organization arise in the political arena to advocate a variety of interests. This is natural because where there is power, pressure will be applied. Besides these, they also mentioned that the influence of pressure groups depends on several factors: size, cohesion, status, leadership, organization, and programme.³⁰

The channels that British interest utilizes are less conspicuous than those employed by their American counterparts. The distribution of power in the American system practically forces interest groups to concentrate much of their activity on Congress and the state legislature.

In Britain such kind of activity seems absent. This is understandable because British legislative committees are not powerful and cannot override the leaders of the government. Since the Cabinet's control over its majority is so strong, the votes of individual members

²⁹ M.D. Irish and J.W. Prothro, *The Politics of Modern Democracy*, Prentice Hall, Inc. Eglewood, N.J. USA, 1965, p. 205

³⁰ Alex Dragnick et.al. *op. cit.*, p. 18

rarely are changed by the actions of interest-group representatives. Consequently, lobbying of the type of Americans is not useful. This does not mean that British interest groups are not effective but that they act in different ways. They try to influence the decision makers such as the Cabinet ministers and their advisers and associates. One of the most effective works of British interest groups is to work through the political parties that is, by working for the nomination and election of candidates who will be sympathetic to their interests. Therefore, the influence of an interest group always rests on the ability of the group to supply the kind of expert knowledge ministers or administrators require.³¹ In short, interest activities in British and USA have the same goals and similar objectives. But there are different tactics as the political power is distributed differently in the two systems.

In France, most of the techniques used by pressure groups are familiar to America, that is, mobilization of public opinion, supplies of information to administrators and especially application of pressures to parliamentarians and ministers. In Germany, unlike other countries, German churches and their auxiliary organizations act as political interest groups.³² In France and Germany interest groups' maintained close relationship with officials in the executive branches of the states and the national governments.

According to Lawrence Graham and his friends, in Japan there is a wide spectrum of interest groups ranging from farmers' cooperative to business associations, from organized labour to professional organizations. More recently there has emerged an increasing number of single-issue pressure group concerned with the ecology, welfare,

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20

³² *Ibid.*, p. 65

women's rights, taxes, smoking and the like. Interest groups may be divided into two broad categories: Those that are institutional clients of government ministries and agencies (e.g. Farmers' cooperative vis-à-vis the ministry of agriculture). These groups of people are closely working together with the concerned ministry, administrators and the member of the relevant policy committee of the ruling party. The second category is not related with the party and bureaucracy. They used to press government with their tactics such as demonstrations, rallies, pamphleteering, petitions to ministries and parliament and electoral campaigns.³³

In the study of third world political system, as pointed out by T. Tsurutani et. al, the organization and function of interest groups in Mexico is different from the United States and Western Europe. Although they are as numerous as in any western countries, interest groups are much more likely to be organized and licensed by the state. According to the issues which they demand to the government, the interest groups may enter and exit from the political process. To compare with other interest groups in different countries of the world, interest group behaviour is much more subject to the control of the state and likely to be influenced by government action.³⁴ S.A Kochanek mentioned that the government of Pakistan has sought to control group mobilization and development in an effect to limit rather than expand political participation.³⁵

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 144

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 205

³⁵ S.A. Kochanek, *Interest Groups and Development*, Delhi Oxford University Press, 1983 p. 83

Classification of Pressure Groups

Pressure groups may be classified on the basis of the interest represented by them. They may be permanent or temporary, large or small, rich or poor and powerful or weak. Almost in every democratic society, the businessmen and the laborers are well organized. In addition to these groups, there are also powerful organizations based on religion, community associations, professional associations, students associations, farmers associations, and societies of the intellectuals and others.³⁶ From the general study of scholars such as H.S. Fartyal,³⁷ A.H. Hudson and Dauglas,³⁸ and O.P. Goyal,³⁹ it can be classified pressure groups as the following –

- 1) Institutional Interest groups such as political parties, defense services, educational institutions etc
- 2) Associational groups interest groups such as trade unions, manufacturers' associations and
- 3) The third category includes the interest groups based on religion, caste, tribe, language and other traditional social structures. Besides these, it may be temporary pressure groups existed for the achievement of their objectives for a particular period of times only.

Pressure Groups in India

In India like other countries, there are a number of pressure groups which exercise a profound influence on policies and actions of government. Indian pressure groups have come into prominence only after independence, but due to the influence of caste, language and

³⁶ Hari Hara Das and B.C. Choudhury, *op.cit.*, p. 249

³⁷ H.S. Fartyal, *The Opposition in Indian Parliament*, Alahabad, 1971, pp. 228-229.

³⁸ A.H. Hudson and Daughlas, *India's Democracy*, New Delhi, 1972 pp. 88-90

³⁹ O.P. Goyal, *India: Government and Politics*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 143-61

religion, pressure groups do follow not only the peaceful methods of lobbying, but their activities often get manifested in the ugly form of violence. This had led to the feeling that pressure groups are not a healthy part of the democratic system; which is eroding into the fabric of national unity and integrity. Nonetheless pressure groups in India tend to influence policies to a great extent. The development of interest groups and interest articulation in Indian political process is one of the important factors for the political modernization in India. Since independence the most dominant interest groups are not based on the social and economic interest but on the line of caste, community, religion, regional and language etc. Role of pressure groups in Indian politics reflects the diversities of Indian democratic society.

The historical background of Indian pressure groups may be traced back from the British period. The introduction of western education in India has changed the ideas of Indians and also gave rise to the emergence of new groups. Out of this new group there arose the political consciousness among the people. They attempted to build a form of organization that would enable them to promote their own interest.

Before independence of India, there were only a few groups, but the post independence era was witnessed by the rapid increase of pressure groups in India. Hanson and Doughlas divided today Indian pressure groups into two types- those that are based on traditional social structures associated with religion, caste, tribe or language, and those which spring from the modern centre of society, such as industry and the

universities.⁴⁰ In the beginning these kinds of new groups were very limited on small groups and did not openly discuss political issues. According to Fadia, the Atmiya Society (1815), the Brahma Sabha (1830) (later Brahmo Samaj), The Dharma Sabha (1830), the Young Bengal Group (1831) etc. were the earliest groups in India. These groups either had their own newspapers or those of friends to publicize their views or apparently were fortunate enough to have the financial support of a few upper class individuals. In respect of membership figures, newspaper circulation or organizational support and finance, the operative scale was rather modest. Gradually similar societies with a broader social base were established in India. The Satyashodhak Samaj (1913) of Poona, the Prarthana Samaj (1867) of Bombay, and the Arya Samaj (1875) were some of the leading landmarks in associational development in the field of social reform drawing a wider base of social support than before. In the field of political reform the educated classes were becoming equally organization-minded. From the small beginning of the Zamindari Association of Bengal in 1837, the British Indian Association (1851), the Bombay Association (1852), and the Native Association of Madras (1850), to the larger all-India base political associations like the Indian League (1875) and later the Indian Association (1976), the strategy was one of gradually widening the support of the educated middle class for organized activities.⁴¹

The present various Indian pressure groups can be categorised as the following. 1) Special interest groups: The special interest groups include the group of business, trade unions, labour union, students

⁴⁰ Max Beloff, (Ed) *India's Democracy* – A.H. Hanson and Janet Douglas, Widen field and Nicolson 5 Winsley Street, London W-1 1972 p. 88

⁴¹ Dr. B.L Fadia, *op.cit.*, p. 609

unions, religious groups and the peasant organizations etc. 2) Groups based on caste, linguistic and region.

Types of Interest Groups in India

There are different opinions regarding the classification of pressure groups in India. Hanson and Douglas divided pressure groups into two types- 1) those that are based on traditional social structures associated with religion, caste, tribe or language, and 2) those which spring from the modern centers of society, such as industry and the universities.⁴² Agarwal divided it into 9 such as 1) Business groups and Multi-national Corporations 2) Trade Union or Labour Organisations 3) Agrarian Organizations 4) Religious and Cultural Organizations 5) Caste Organizations 6) Tribal organization 7) Linguistic Groups 8) Student and Youth organization 9) Organizations representing the Gandhian heritage.⁴³ Hari Hara Das and B.C. Choudhury said that in every democratic society the business and the laborers are well organized. There are powerful organizations based on religion, community association, professional associations, students associations, farmers' organizations and societies of the intellectuals and others.⁴⁴ Shrivastava broadly categorized as the following- a) Special Interest groups: this group include- Trade Union, Peasant organization, Students Organization b) Communal group and Religious Bodies eg. Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh c) Groups based on Narrow Casteism and Linguism, d) Organization Representing the Gandhian Ideological Heritage.⁴⁵ Fadia classified Indian pressure groups

⁴² Max Beloff, *India's Democracy- A.H. Hanson and Janet Douglas*, Weiden Field and Nicolson 5 Winsley Street London, W-1 1972, p. 88

⁴³ R.C. Agarqwal, *Indian Political System*, S. Chand and Company Ltd, New Delhi 2002, pp. 51-54

⁴⁴ Hari Hara Das, B.C. Choudhury, *op. cit.* p. 249

⁴⁵ Shrivastva, *Indian Political System (A Study of Government and Politics)*, SBD Publishers Distributors 4075, Nai Sarak Delhi 110006, 1999; p.498-501

into four categories – 1) Institutional pressure groups eg. The Congress working committee. 2) Associational pressure groups eg. Trade Union. 3) Non Associational Pressure groups eg. Communal and religious groups. 4) Anomic pressure groups eg. Naxalites. From the study of different books it can be said that there are different pressure groups based on institution, association, community, religion and others.

Politics of Pressure Groups in Mizoram

The politics of pressure groups in Mizoram is a recent phenomenon. However, there exist a number of non-governmental organizations in Mizoram that are emerging which would be studied from the pressure groups perspective. Those are the Church, the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), the Mizo Students' Union (MSU) and the National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM). It appears that these organizations have more or less similar objectives and in recent years they seem to be using some pressure tactics like procession, bandhs and picketing etc to influence the policies of the government of Mizoram. This work is an attempt study five organizations: (1) Church, (2) Young Mizo Association, (3) Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Student' Association), (4) Mizo Students Union (MSU) and (5) National Trade Union of Mizoram. These groups do influence the policies of the government to a large extent.

Over the last few decades, the clergymen, students, youths and labour organizations seem to have actively participated in the political process of Mizoram state. These associations have sought to generate public debates on several policies of the government of Mizoram and have even exercised their hegemony for mass mobilization by shaping public opinion according to their own perspective.

Before the coming of the British, the Mizo had their own distinctive political, social, economic system and religious belief; their tradition, religions and its practices had a deep root in their day to day life. The first Christian missionary Williams William, a Welsh Presbyterian Khasi and Jaintia Hills came to Mizoram on the 1st March 1891.⁴⁶

From the general point of view, however, Church is concerned only with the spiritual matters. But in practice, since the worldly and heavenly things are inseparable in this world, Church is also involved in social, economics and politics of Mizoram. During the MNF underground movement form 1966-1986 in the name of 'Peace Mission Committee' the two major Churches Baptist and Presbyterian Church leaders initiated to settle down the political problems between the MNF and the Government of India. Later on, the problem was taken up by a bigger church organization known as Mizo Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (Mizoram Church Leaders Committee). Besides these, this study would cover the involvement of Church in election, social and economic and government liquor licensing policy, etc. The formation of Church based organization called Mizoram People Forum (MPF) and its role in the election of people representative and governmental process also included in this work.

⁴⁶ V.L Zaithanga, *From Head Hunting to Soul Hunting*, Mizorm Synod Press, Aizawl, 1981, p. 11

Mizo Young Association (YMA), the first and biggest youth organization in the state was formed on the 15th June 1935.⁴⁷ It is a non political organization no doubt. But it always puts pressure on government whether it is a state or central government. Generally on the eve of MLA, MP, and Village Council elections, YMA used to issue pamphlets requesting all the parties and the candidates to maintain peace during election. They also request people not to elect drunkard, corrupt and loose character candidates.⁴⁸ Like the Church leaders the YMA took part in the peace talk between MNF and Government of India in 1986. YMA used to discourage illegal traders who misused their inner line regulations and conditions. It is also involved in detecting unlawful international smugglers and violators of Inner Line Permit (ILP) and reports such matters to the government.

Regarding the preparation of electoral roll, YMA and government officials convened joint meeting in 1998. In this meeting every political party accepted to drop any doubtful persons from the electoral roll irrespective of their party affiliation. From this day on ward YMA has been actively involved in electoral roll preparation.⁴⁹ In addition to the above, recent YMA General Conference theme “Ruihhlo Do” (Declaration of war against intoxicants) and its impact on Mizo society were greatly interesting and debatable.

The first Mizo Students’ Association “Mizo Zirlai Pawl” (MZP) was formed in 1935.⁵⁰ The main aim of MZP was to do the welfare of

⁴⁷ C. Vanlallawma, *YMA History, (1935-1995)* Aizawl, Central YMA in Collaboration with National Foundation for India., 1998, p. 8

⁴⁸ *Pamphlet*, issued by the Central YMA, Mizoram 1997, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Nghaklianmawia, *Ram leh Hnam Humhalh*, YMA Press, Aizawl, 2000, p. 17

⁵⁰ *MZP Chanchinbu* (A History of MZP) in MZP Golden Jubilee Souvenior MZP Hqrs. Aizawl Mizoram 1981, p. 1

the students. Their motto was “Union is Strength”.⁵¹ The increasing educational facilities and the dramatic change in higher education produced more students in Mizoram. Students are sensitive group facing numberless party temptation in political games. Students’ union and their leaders are an easy prey to political parties. MZP used to pursue programs and policies by demanding separate state, and more seat reservation for Mizo tribal in technical education especially in engineering and medical colleges etc. It is interesting to study the interaction between MZP and government in Mizoram politics.

The new students’ union called Mizo Students Union (MSU) was formed on the 12th February 2001. The motto of MSU is “A good beginning makes a good ending”. Its main aim is to safeguard the rights of Mizo students, and work hard for their welfare Mizo students.

MSU used to pursue their aims and objective by demanding increase of scholarship, prohibition of service extension of pensioners, free and fair recruitment of staff in government offices such as Mizoram State Information Commission, Education Department especially Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abihyan (RMSA) and Sarva Shiksha Abihyan (SSA). It is also interesting to study the interaction between MSU and Mizoram University on the issue of education and campus development.

⁵¹ *MZP Constitution*, 1977, Art. XIV p. 4

National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM) was established on the 26 April, 1986.⁵² It is a voluntary organization of workers formed to promote and protect the interest of workers through collective action. Though the operational area of NTUM is subjected to cover the entire state of Mizoram; the central working committee is entrusted to alter the coverage as necessary.

NTUM is affiliated to Bharatya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) though the ideologies of the two are not the same in all respects. The BMS was formed by the then Jana Sangh (Now Bharatya Janata Party) in 1955. It is the biggest trade union in India with 31,17 lakhs members, which constitutes about 36.20 percent of the total work force in the country.⁵³ Of the aims and objectives listed by the union (NTUM), some of the prominent are – to develop good and suitable relationship between the employers and employees and to promote the interests of the labours as provided by the exiting acts, rules and regulations.

NTUM members are drawn from different workers of departments of Mizoram government. As their main aim is to promote the status of labors they tried to implement the latest labor laws, minimum wages rate and other rules like Workmen's Compensation rules, State Employee Insurance rules etc. Their demands for the fulfillment of labour laws and minimum wages rates and the subsequent government actions on that matter will form an interesting study. Sometimes by making alliance with a particular party, NTUM leaders

⁵² Vanlalngheta Hnamte, *What is NTUM ?*, Issued by the National Trade Union of Mizoram Hqrs., Aizawl 2002 p. 1

⁵³ U.R. Ghai, *Indian Political System*, New Academic Publishing Company, Jallander, 1995 p. 226

are so much involved in the Parliamentary and the state assembly elections in Mizoram.

Besides these, it will be also interesting to examine the common stand of the different organizations in issues, like peace, inner line regulations, tribal seat reservations, foreigners' issues etc. The study of labour union activities for the fulfillment of their demand and the tactics which they used like hunger strike, processions and no work etc, are very interesting.

Various associations had been formed from time to time in Mizoram, but the study will focus only on five groups. In short, this work attempts to study the activities of church, youth, two groups of students and labour organizations and their role as pressure group in Mizoram politics. The research tries to analyze and examine how much these groups have been able to achieve their goals in the political process of Mizoram.

Review of literature

The study of pressure groups in modern political process had occupied a very important place. W. Ebenstein in *American Democracy, In World Perspective* (1963) mentioned that one of the first statements regarding political interest groups was written by James Medisons in 1799, during the struggle over the adoption of the constitution.⁵⁴ In his book *The Process of Government* (1908), Bentley an American author, made the first attempt to analyses the governmental process from the

⁵⁴ William Ebenstein, et. al., *American Democracy, In World Perspective*, Hoper and Row, Publisher New York, 1963, p. 306

point of view of group interaction. He emphasized the role played by the various groups. A full scale study of pressure group was made by David B. Truman in his book, *The Governmental Process, Political Interest and Public Opinion* (1951). In his book Truman said that outside the United States in 1950 the literature concerning interest groups, even in the countries of European tradition, was almost non-existent.⁵⁵ Irish and Prothro in the book, *The Politics of American Democracy* (1965)⁵⁶ studied about the role of pressure groups in American politics. According to them, pressure groups were based firmly on the constitutional guaranteed freedom of assembly and petition. The interaction of pressure groups and government has enormous advantages in American democratic administration.

H.R. Manhood's *Groups in American Politics* (1996)⁵⁷ was a study of pressure groups in American politics. He remarked that the American organized groups may be regarded as a system of private government, while the organ of the state represents a system of public government. He also added that the political process is the amalgam of the political environment, values, attitudes and the political system along with pressure groups.

Political Parties and Pressure Groups (1964) by V.O Key Jr.⁵⁸ deals with a study of political parties and pressure groups in America. According to him pressure groups are a private association formed to influence public policy. He observed that a prominent place must be

⁵⁵ David, B, Truman, *The Governmental Process, Political Interest and Public Opinion*, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1951

⁵⁶ M.D. Irish and J.W. Prothro, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ H.R. Manhood, *Pressure Groups in American Politics*, Charles Scribner and Sons, New York 1966.

⁵⁸ V.O. Key Jr. *op. cit.*

given to the activities of these organizations. Regarding the activities of pressure groups, Key mentions that the pressure groups may campaign for party candidates in the election, party system and the formal instrument of government by serving as spokesmen of special interest within society.

American Government, A Brief Instruction (1992) by Max J. Skidmore and Marshall Cater Tripp⁵⁹ studies interest groups, public opinion and the media in the USA. According to them, pressure groups are associations of individuals sharing same common ground. There are two types of pressure groups- Primary Association built on characteristic of birth or family background and the Voluntary Secondary Association organized groups with which the individuals have the right to choose affiliation in private groups. They divided American pressure group techniques as the techniques influence into judicial techniques (working through judicial system), legislative techniques (lobbying to influence the legislative members); executive techniques (lobbying to influence the executive members), and the direct legislation by the voters through initiative and referendum.

Like western democracies, pressure groups are also active in India. *Indian Democracy* (1972) edited by Max Beloff⁶⁰ divides Indian pressure groups into two types- 1) those are based on traditional social structures associated with religion, caste, tribes or language and 2) those spring from the modern centre of society such as industries and the universities.

⁵⁹ Max J. Skidmore and Marshall Cater Tripp, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ Max Beloff, *op. cit.*

B.L Fadia, *State Politics of India* (1999)⁶¹ talks of the role of pressure groups in Orrisa, West Bengal and Rajasthan politics. However, no detailed and critical study was given in this book. L.P. Misquita's *Pressure Groups and Democracy in India* (1991)⁶² was mainly a study of business, farmers and agricultural labours. V.M. Sirsikar's *A Survey of Research in Political System, Vol I*, (1971)⁶³ deals with pressure groups like business pressure groups, trade union, cooperatives and organized caste groups. According to him the literature on big business as a pressure group in India come from foreign authors. Much of the literature is in terms of articles, the majority of which, fully or partially deals with the premier organization of big business, namely, the "Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries. (FICCI). B.L. Fadia's *Pressure Groups in Indian Politics*, (1990)⁶⁴ was in general study of the role of pressure groups in Indian politics. The central theme of this book embodies the idea that the development of legitimate and stable democratic political institution in India depends upon the people's ability to develop a responsive model of pressure groups.

Indrani Barua's *Pressure Groups in Assam* (1990)⁶⁵ is a study of pressure groups in Assam. It includes studies on pressure group dominant in the political scene of Assam in the post independent period. They have made positive impact in the state politics.

⁶¹ B.L. Fadia, *op. cit.*

⁶² L.P. Misquita, *Pressure Groups and Democracy in India*, Starling Publisher Private Limited, New Delhi, 1991

⁶³ V.M. Sirsikar, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ B.L. Fadia, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ I. Barua, *op. cit.*

A.C. Sinha edited volume, *Youth Movement in North East India* (1995)⁶⁶ is the book which contain six theme papers and nineteen case studies on problems of Youth and Youth movement in north east India by social scientists and youth activists of the region. M.N. Karna's *Social Movement in North East India*, (1998)⁶⁷ is a study of a social movement including the movements of women, youth and religion in north east India. Beside these, the conceptual issues, social awakening, revivalism and educational movements are also given in this book.

So far as Mizoram is concerned, a number of authors have written on politics of Mizoram. *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India, Vol. II (Mizoram)* (1997) by V.V. Rao, N. Hazarika and H. Thansanga⁶⁸ deals with Mizoram at some length as a part of north eastern politics. But the work does not deal with the role of pressure groups in Mizoram politics. Amit Kumar Nag's *The Mizo Dilema* (1984)⁶⁹ is a general presentation of major developments in Mizoram political movement. H. Thansanga's doctoral thesis *Government and politics in Mizoram* (1981)⁷⁰ is an enormous collection of data relating to the governmental and political history of Mizoram but it fails to deal with pressure group politics in Mizoram. R.R.T. Sanga's doctoral thesis *Administrative Development in Lushai Hills up to 1972* (NEHU 1986)⁷¹ was a study of administrative development from the traditional chief to the formation of Union Territory in Mizoram. J.

⁶⁶ A.C. Singha, (ed), *Youth Movement in North East India*, Har-Anand Publication, New Delhi, 1995

⁶⁷ M.N.Karna, (ed), *Social Movements in North East India*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1998.

⁶⁸ V.V. Rao, N. Hazarika and H. Thansanga, *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India*, Vol. III, Mizoram, S.Chand and Company Limited, Ram Nagar, New Delhi, 1987

⁶⁹ Amit Kumar Nag, *The Mizo Dilema*, Tribal Mirror Publication, Silchar, 1984

⁷⁰ H.Thansanga, *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, Ph.D Thesis submitted to the Gauhati University, Gauhati 1981.

⁷¹ R.R.T. Sanga, *Administrative Development in Lushai Hills up to 1972*, Ph D Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong 1986

Lalsawmliana's M Phil. Dissertation *Students Politics in Mizoram (A case study of Mizo Zirlai Pawl) 1972-1986*⁷²(NEHU 1992) which is a research in a particular student organization. He traced the origin, development and the activities of students in Mizoram politics. Lalchungnunga's doctoral thesis *Regionalism in Mizoram* (NEHU 1987)⁷³ which is a study of regional politics in Mizoram. In spite of having a number a research works on different organizations, no attempt has been made to study the politics of pressure groups in Mizoram.

Methodology

This study is based on empirical analysis made from primary and secondary data. Primary data include interview with leaders of the church, YMA, MZP, MSU and NTUM, as well as memoranda and demands submitted to the government from time to time. The secondary sources include books in Mizo language, newspapers, journals, magazines, articles, and letters such as press releases, circulars, orders etc. by the associations and the government etc.

Objectives

This thesis attempts to study the activities of church, youth, student and labour organization as pressure groups in the political process of Mizoram. The present study analyses and examines how much these groups have been able to achieve their goals. The research has been undertaken to fulfill the following objectives:

⁷² J. Lalsawmliana, *Students Politics in Mizoram (A case study of Mizo Zirlai Pawl) 1972-1986*, M Phil. Dissertation submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1992

⁷³ Lalchungnunga, *Regionalism in Mizoram*, Ph.D Thesis submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1987

1. To assess the contributions of Church, YMA and MZP for peace during the MNF underground movement.
2. To examine the techniques and strategies of the pressure group organizations.
3. To analyse the role of Church, YMA, MZP, MSU and NTUM and their influence in Mizoram politics.
4. To examine the contribution and achievements of the various organizations as pressure groups and the government response and reactions to their demands.

Hypotheses

1. The pressure groups occupy a very significant place and also become one of the important steering wheels in Mizoram politics.
2. The demands made by the Church, youth, students and labour organizations are always reflected in the policy or the decision of the government.
3. The last two decades witnessed the rapid increase of interest group activism. The main causes of pressure group activities are negligence and slow process of government against their demands.
4. The failure of the government to fulfill the particular and common problems of pressure groups led to the present complex activities of these groups in Mizoram.

Significance of the study

The study of pressure groups occupies a very significant place in modern political system. It is difficult to understand the working of

government without studying pressure groups' role in the country. From the study of the significance of pressure groups in modern political system, Fadia opines that there was a time when pressure groups were viewed with moral annoyance and also said that it was held that they lead to a distortion of the democratic process.⁷⁴ However, it is gradually accepted by the society as indispensable for the balance of the interest of different sections of the people. Some of the important points of the study of pressure groups are-

1. Pressure groups are one of the best information feeders to the legislators. Their expertise knowledge and specialize skills always influence the law making body in the floor.
2. Pressure groups are inevitable in modern political process. They are considered as the link of communication between general people and the government. Their main objective is to balance the national and particular interest.
3. The services of pressure groups such as making and supply of valuable information and accurate statistics to the government decision making body are very important for the finding of truth and policy making.
4. Pressure groups are the refugees of the despaired individuals for the fulfillment of their objectives. Group interest is also nothing but the accumulation of individual interest.

Limitation

The study of pressure groups in Mizoram has remained an unreached area and there was no account of investigation on the subject to rely upon. In general, pressure groups do not maintain proper and

⁷⁴ Dr. B.L Fadia, *op.cit.* p 606

uniform records on the subject. The following can be described as the specific limitations in the way of this research work.

1. The diverse activities of the different studied groups rendered problems to understand how far the study would be made on those points.
2. The triangular arguments of pressure groups, government and the opposition party created problem to understand the truth.
3. Misplaced and no proper documentation of pressure groups and the government itself too limited the research work.
4. The constant change of leadership among the studied groups renders problem to trace and find out the needed information.

A PROFILE OF MIZORAM

People

It is relevant here to have a look at the profile of Mizoram. This brief profile will make us understand the context of the socio-political process of Mizoram. There are many definitions of the term Mizo. After the coming of British they were called Lushai. Various definitions have been suggested for the word 'Lushai' among which is 'Lu' meaning head, and 'Shai' to cut or 'Shai long haired'.⁷⁵ According to McCall the origin of Lushai was nothing but a colloquialism, the term used by men of olden days to explain the people with long heads, or perhaps the wise heads. The word 'Lu' meaning a head and the suffix 'Sei' meaning long.⁷⁶ In fact, Mizo never called themselves as Lushai or Luhsei and used only the term 'Mizo.' Therefore, Mizo implies the hill people, highlanders or hills men. It is very difficult to trace out the exact time

⁷⁵ A.S.Reid, *Chin Lushai Land*, Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1976 (reprinted), p. 5

⁷⁶ Maj. A.G.McCall, *Lushai Crystals*, Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram, Aizawl 1976 (reprinted) p.19

when the people assumed the term Mizo. One of the Mizo historians Lalthangliana opines that the people were called ‘Mizo’ only after settling up a town called *Zopui* in 1765.⁷⁷ The people of that town were known as ‘Zomi’. Later they adopted the phonetic word Mizo.⁷⁸ The phonetic word was used by the people as the common word for calling themselves.

The word ‘Mizo’ means the hill people, and the name ‘Mizoram’ means the land of the hill people. ‘Mi’ means men; ‘zo’ means hill.⁷⁹ Therefore, Mizo implies the hill people, highlanders or hills men.

The population of Mizoram comprises of Mizo tribes such as Mara, Lai, Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Paite etc. Each of these major tribes may be broadly divided again into sub-tribes or clans.

According to Liangkhaia a Mizo historian, the speech of Mizo belongs to the Assam – Burma branch of the Tibeto-Burmese family of Language.⁸⁰ At present the Mizo Language/*Duhlian* is commonly understood and used in Mizoram. Various tribes and sub-tribes have their own dialect. However, Reangs and Chakmas use their own language; it is quite different from Mizo language.

⁷⁷ B.Lalthangliana, *History of Mizo in Burma*, History Department, Arts and Science University, Burma Mandalya, 1975 p.71

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Rev.V.L.Zaithanga, *From Head Hunting to Soul Hunting*, Synod Publication Board, Aizawl, 1981, p.9

⁸⁰ Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, The Mizo Academy of Letters, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1976, p.21

Mizo migrated from Myanmar. V.L. Siama a historian said that the date of their migration from the Chin Hills of Burma to the present habitat was around 1700 A.D.⁸¹ Soppit suggested that the first batch of Mizo tribes were settled in Mizoram sometime in the middle of the 16th century.⁸² McCall a Superintendent of Luhsai hill said that the last batch of Sailo clan (Chief clan) entered the present Mizoram in 1780 by occupying most of the country between Champhai and Demagiri, northwards up to the border of Cachar and Sylhet.⁸³ Therefore it can be opined that the all Mizos were not confined in a particular area in the past; they were scattered in different groups. Their migration took a long time, but they must have been there in the present habitat since 17th century.

Geographical location

Mizoram is situated in the north eastern corner of India between Myanmar and Bangladesh. It has 585 kilometers international boundary with these two countries. It is bordered on the North West by the side of Tripura, on the north by Assam state and on north-east by the state of Manipur. Its total area is 21,081 squares kilometers, ie.0.64 percent of India's total area.⁸⁴ Mizoram lies between 21*56'N-24*31'N latitudes and 92*16'E – 93*26'E longitudes. The tropic of cancer, i.e. 23*30'N latitude cuts across the region, this imaginary line divide the region into two almost in-equal parts. Its maximum dimensions – north to south is 285 kilometers and east to west is 115 kilometers.⁸⁵

⁸¹ V.L.Siama, *Mizo History*, Lalrinliana and Sons, Bara Bazar, Aizawl, 1953, p.6

⁸² C.A. Soppit, *A Short Stories of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North Eastern Frontiers*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. Calcutta, 1976, p.5

⁸³ A.G. McCall, *Lushai Crystals*, Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1976 (reprinted) pp. 25.26

⁸⁴ Dr.Rintlauanga Pachuau, *Geography of Mizoram*, Published by R.T. Enterprise Venghlui, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1994. p.1

⁸⁵ Dr.Rintlauanga Pachuau., *op.cit.* p. 21

Topography

Mizoram is the hilly areas that comprise of small ranges and deep gorges. The small mountain ranges are inclined north to south direction in parallel series. The small ranges are separated from one another by narrow deep river valley. High points are generally over 1000 meters. The average elevation in Mizoram is 1500 meters.⁸⁶ The highest mountain Phawngpui also called Blue Mountain situated in the eastern part of Lawngtlai District Council is 2157 metres height.⁸⁷ There are only few natural lakes in the province; Palak, Tamdil, and Rengdil are the large lakes in Mizoram.⁸⁸

Climate and Rainfall

Mizoram enjoys moderate climate throughout the year. Generally it rains heavily from May to September. The average rainfall is 250 centimeters per annum. There are three types of seasons- 1) Cold or Winter Season (November-February) 2) Warm Season or spring (March- first part of May). 3) The Rainy Season or summer (from second part of May- October).

Demography

Mizoram is sparsely populated. According to 2011 census the density of Mizoram was 51.75 per square kilometers. Mizoram is highly educated in literacy rate and occupies second position in India.

⁸⁶ Dr.Lalrintluanga , Pachuau, *op.cit.* p.33

⁸⁷ Lalhmachhuana Zofa, *Mizoram General Knowledge*, Published by Lalhmachhuana Zofa (Chhuante-a) Electrict Veng Aizawl, Mizoram. 2005 p.3

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35

According to 2011 census, the percentage of literacy in Mizoram is 91.58⁸⁹ Population of Mizoram through the Decadal Census is given below:

Sl/No	Year	Population in Numbers		Total	Percentage in decadal variation
		Male	Female		
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1901	30,004	43,430	82,434	-
2.	1911	43,028	48,176	91,204	(+) 10.64
3.	1921	46,625	51,754	98,406	(+) 7.90
4.	1931	59,186	65,218	1,24,404	(+) 26.42
5.	1941	73,855	78,931	1,52,786	(+) 22.81
6.	1951	96,136	1,00,066	1,96,202	(+) 28.42
7.	1961	1,32,465	1,33,958	2,66,063	(+) 354.61
8.	1971	1,70,824	1,61,566	3,32,390	(+) 24.93
9.	1981	2,57,230	2,36,518	4,93,757	(+) 48.55
10.	1991	3,58,978	3,30,778	6,89,756	(+) 30.70
11.	2001	4,59,109	4,29,464	8,88,573	(+) 29.82
12.	2011	5,92,088	5,64,305	11,56,393	(+)30.14

⁸⁹ *Census of India 2011 Provisional Population* Totals Paper 2 Volume 1 of 2011 Mizoram Series 16 p.20

Source: *Economic Survey Mizoram 2010-2011*, issued by Planning and Programme Implementation Department, Government of Mizoram. P. 92

Economy

The per capita income of Mizoram for the year 2010-11 is Rs 44,758/- as against the previous year's estimate of Rs 38,145/- Per capita income at the national level is Rs 46,492/- The following table shows the growth of per capita income during the last five years.

Per capita Income of Mizoram

Year	Per capita income (in Rupees)
2006-2007	28,764
2007-2008	32,488
2008-2009 (P)	38,145
2009-2010 (Q)	44,758
2010-2011 (A)	50,021

P = Provisional, Q = Quick Estimate, A = Advance Estimate

Source: *Economic Survey Mizoram 2010-2011* issued by Planning and Programme Implementation Department, Government of Mizoram. P. 5

Regarding the sectoral performance in Mizoram economy, the tertiary or service sector contributes 67 % of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Industry sector contributes about 19 % of the state economy, while the agriculture and allied sector contributes 14 % of GDP.⁹⁰

Occupational Structure

Population census of 2011 reveals that out of the total population of 1,091,014 in Mizoram, 4, 67,159 i.e.52.57 % were workers and the rest 4,21,414 were non workers. It is also known that the proportion of workers was higher in the rural areas at 55 % than in the urban area which has about 45% of the workers. Female workers constitute about 44 % of total workers and the share of male workers was about 56 %.⁹¹

Industries

The growth of Industry and Industrial development is relatively slow owing to its geographical disadvantages and lack of sufficient infrastructure such as power supply, transport and communication. The Industry sector contributes 20.45 % in the Gross State Domestic Products (GSDP) in 2007-2008.⁹²

⁹⁰ *Economic Survey, Mizoram, 2009-2010*, Issued and Published by Planning & Programme Implementation Department, Government of Mizoram 2009-2010, Aizawl, p. 6

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p 7

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.80

There were 7,888 registered industrial units as on the 31st March 2010. The flow of investment during 2009-2010 is Rs 1979.29 lakhs,⁹³ the following table shows the achievements during the years.

Years	Cumulative no of registered unite	No. of Units registered during the year	Investment during the year (in Rs in lakhs.	Employment
2004-2005	6080	319	717.50	1116
2005-2006	6395	315	661.50	1128
2006-2007	6730	344	791.20	1376
2007-2008	6944	594	593.00	594
2008-2009	7431	487	866.30	4113
2009-2010	7888	457	1978.29	3977

Source: Economic Survey Mizoram 2009-2010, p. 62

Vegetation

Mizoram forest covers 19,240 sq.km which is 91.27 % of the state's geographical areas. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the state has 134 sq.km. Moderately dense forest and 12,855 sq.km open forest. The recorded forest area of the state is 16,717 sq.km. Reserve forest constitutes 47.31 %, Protected forests 21,34 % and unprotected

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.62

forests 31.35 % of the total forest area. About 80 % of the state's geographical area is under recorded forests.⁹⁴

Administrative Development

The traditional chieftainship administration which had existed from time to time was changed by the British government in 1891; the north Lushai Hills remained under Assam while the southern half remained under Bengal. Both these parts were amalgamated in 1898 into one district called Lushai Hills District under the chief Commissioner of Assam.⁹⁵ After the independence of India, Lushai Hills got the status of autonomous district under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution. The inauguration of Mizo District Council on the 25th April 1950 was followed by the launching of an Autonomous Regional Council called 'Pawi-Lakher District Council' on the 23rd April, 1953 in the southern part of Mizoram.⁹⁶

The Lushai Hills District was renamed Mizo District Council by an Act of Parliament in 1954. With the implementation of the North Eastern Re-organisation Act (1971), the Mizo District was upgraded into a Union Territory and renamed Mizoram in 1972. The two decades old disturbances between MNF (underground) and the Government of India came to a welcome end on June 30, 1986 with signing of the epoch making Mizoram Accord by the Government of Mizoram and the MNF.

⁹⁴ *Economic Survey, Mizoram, 2009-2010*, Issued and Published by Planning & Programme Implementation Department, Government of Mizoram 2009-2010, Aizawl p. 56

⁹⁵ *Mizoram, The Exotic land of Highlanders*, Published and Issued by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, 1990

⁹⁶ R. Lalthangliana, *Occupational Mobility Among the Mizos*, A thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D, Shillong, NEHU, 1985 p.47

Consequent upon the passage of the constitution (53rd) Amendment Bill and the state of Mizoram Bill (1986) by the Parliament on August 7, 1986. Mizoram become a state in February 20, 1987. The Bill also provided for a 40 Members of Legislative Assembly. The first State MLA election was held on the 16th February 1987 which leads to the formation of the MNF ministry.

CHAPTER II

CHURCH: PEACE TALKS AND ELECTIONS

The Church is an inseparable institution of Mizoram. As a pressure group, its role during the insurgency days has been commendable. Even after the insurgency the Church plays a crucial role in the state of Mizoram. It is not only an important civil society organization; it is also very effective pressure group in changing the policies of the government. It also influences public opinion through its various activities. It may be said that the Church in Mizoram is the most prominent and dynamic organization in determining the way of life of the people of the state. This chapter will deal with the role of the Church in the peace talks during the insurgency. It will also deal with the role of Church following the signing of the Accord. It will provide us with an insight about the church as a pressure group in faith taking peace and tranquility in the state of Mizoram.

Before the arrival of the Christian missionaries in the then Lushai District, Mizos followed their traditional religion and practiced ritual ceremony. The traditional village priest had been there in every village; but those priests never gave religious teaching to the people. General people did not know the detailed story of god and evil spirits too. If they got blessings they simply said 'My god is good'. They regarded suffering as the punishment of the evil spirit. They approached the priest known as *Puithiam* and offered animal sacrifice according to what the priest prescribed. Superstitious thinking occupied the highest place in their mind. They used to think that the supernatural beings watching

them from anywhere, so they were very careful in their day to day life. While the Mizo life was very insecure in the past, Christian missionaries came to Mizoram and began preaching the gospel in the beginning of 1880s.

Emergence of Christianity

According to the available data the first meeting between Mizo (the then called Kuki) and the British official took place in 1776. It was casual and friendly meeting.¹ Since the Mizo chiefs used to raid their neighboring plain people of British territories especially Syhlet and Cachar area, the British launched two expeditions, namely, the First and the Second Lushai Expedition.

In the first Lushai expedition British troops came from two sides. The troop which came from northern side was called the Left or Cachar Column and other who came from southern side was known as Right or Chittagong Column. The left Column led by Brig. Gen. G. Bouchier left Silchar for Mizoram on the 16th December 1871. The Right Column led by Brig. General G.A. Brownlow left *Uiphum Tlang* (Now Bangladesh) on the 1st December 1871 and made arrangement to subdue Mizo chiefs with the left or Cachar Column. The first Lushai expedition lasted from 1871-1872.² During this expedition some Mizo chiefs made agreement with British; but some chiefs did not have any kind of understanding with the mighty British.

The nonstop interference of tribal chiefs in British area led to the second military expedition known as the Lushai Expedition launched in

¹ T.H.Lewin, *Wild Races of South East Asia*; W.M.H. Allen and Co. London, 1970, p.281

² R. Zamawia, *Zofate Zinkawngah- (Zalenna Mei a Mit tur a ni lo)*, Lengchhawn Press, Khatla Aizawl, 2007, p. 33.

1889-1890. Like the first expedition in this Second Lushai expedition, the British army came again from northern and southern side. The southern army who come from Chittagong was divided into two: One was led by Col. F.V.C. Tregear and the other group was led by Col. J.C. Skinner. Meanwhile the other group who were coming from Cachar was led by W.W. Daly. Many of the Mizo chiefs opposed the intruders; even then the British army began to settle down in Mizoram. This Second Lushai expedition lasted up to March 1890. Officially they called this second expedition as “The Chin-Lushai Expedition 1889-90.”³

This new era brought British rule to Mizoram and also made way for the Christian missionary’s work in Mizoram. The first missionary who came to Mizoram was Rev. William Williams, a Welsh Presbyterian missionary in Khasi and Jantia Hills.⁴

Coming of Arthington Mission

Meanwhile an English Christian millionaire Robert Arthington by name heard about the sending of missionaries to Mizoram and its neighbouring hills. Therefore, he formed the ‘Arthington Aborigenes Mission’ and by the end of 1880, three of his missionaries had sailed for India and other ten missionaries also followed soon. Two of these missionaries became the Pioneer missionaries of Mizoram.⁵

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Rev. V.L. Zaithanga , *Fron Head Hunting to Soul Hunting*, Mizoram Synod Press, Aizawl, 1981, p. 11.

⁵ A.M. Chirgwin, Arthington,s Millien, *The Romance of Arthington Trust*, The Gorey Press, London, p.76

The following table shows the increasing rate of Christianity in Mizoram from 1901-1981.⁶

Years	Population	Christian Community	Percentage of Population
1901	82,434	55	0.45
1911	91,204	2,461	2.77
1921	98,406	27,720	28.17
1931	1,24,404	59,123	47.52
1941	1,52,786	98,101	64.21
1951	1,96,202	1,57,575	80.31
1961	2,66,063	2,30,509	86.31
1971	3,32,390	2,86,141	86.09
1981	4,93,757	4,13,840	83.91

According to 2001 census the populations by religion in Mizoram are as follow- Christian 7,72,809, Hindu 31,562, Muslim 10,099, Sikhs 326, Buddhist 70,494, Jain 179, Religion not stated 661, Others 2,443.⁷

From the above table it is for that the percentage of Christian has come down during the two decades of 1970s to 1980s. It did not mean that some Christians were converted into other religion; it implies the increasing number of non Christians especially in southern corner of Mizoram. The recent percentage of Christian population is 86.97 %.

⁶ *Mizoram Statistical Hand Book 1987*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Aizawl, Mizoram, p. 14

⁷ *Statistical Handbook Mizoram 2010*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Mizoram Aizawl, p. 5

The existence of different denominations within Christian community effected Mizo believers too. At present there are 46 Church denominations and sectarian groups in Mizoram as shown in the following table.

Sl No.	Name of Church Denomination	Year of Establishment
1.	Presbyterian Church	1897
2.	Baptist Church of Mizoram	1903
3.	Independent Church of Maraland	1907
4.	Independent Church of India	1910
5.	Evangelical Free Church of India	1913
6.	The Salvation Army	1917
7.	Pathian Nung fate	1917
8.	Roman Catholic Church	1925
9.	Sialsuk Thiangzau	1943
10.	Seventh Day Adventist	1946
11.	United Pentecostal Church	1949
12.	Chana Pawl	1955
13.	Jehova Withness	1961
14.	Lalram Maicham	1963

15.	Pathian Fatir Kohhran	1966
16.	Church of God	1967
17.	World Wide Church of God	1969
18.	Isua Krista Kohhran	1970
19.	Zion Church of God, Israel	1970
20.	Mizoram Pentecostal Church	1970
21.	Jehova Jire	1974
22.	Susan Kohhran	1975
23.	Pawlo Pawl	1976
24.	Church of Faith	1977
25.	Bible Believing Evangelical Church	1977
26.	Lalchhungkua	1978
27.	Lalzawna Pawl	About 1978
28.	Vanawia Pawl	1979
29.	Abrahama Thuthlung Pawl	1981
30.	Pawiram Baptist Kohhran	1982
31.	Fundamental Baptist Church	1982
32.	Four Square Church	1982
33.	Missor for Christ	1983

34.	Kohhran Thianghlim	1984
35.	Pentecostal Reform Church	1987
36.	Mizo Kohhran	1987
37.	Messianic Israel Zionist organization	1987
38.	Nunna Lalchhungkua	1995
39.	Enoka Israel Pawl	1995
40.	Assembly of God	No Data
41.	Pathian Nung Kohhran	-do-
42.	Isua Kohhran	-do-
43.	Eden Thar	-do-
44.	Messianic Judaism	-do-
45.	Zoramthar	-do-
46.	Zathangvunga Pawl	-do-

Note: Some year of establishment are not mentioned due to lack of data. Someone says that more than these numbers may be available in Mizoram.⁸

There are different Church denominations as mentioned above, but there is a great difference in their membership. Some churches such

⁸ Lalmachhuana Zofa *Mizoram General Knowledge*, Blue Mountain Offset Printers, Aizawl, Mizoram, 2006, pp. 45-51

as Presbyterian Church, Baptist church of Mizoram, United Pentecostal Church, The Salvation Army, Roman Catholic Church are big in number, while the rest are smaller ones and some are still lesser.

ROLE OF CHURCH IN PEACE TALK

For the better understanding of the role of Church in peace talks, first of all, it is necessary to know how the peace faded away in Mizoram. Since the Mizo National Front (MNF) party was mainly responsible for the abnormal political environment in the then Mizoram District and therefore it is necessary to trace the genesis and the consequent movement of MNF underground.

Formation of MNF

In Mizoram there is an interesting natural cycle of bamboo flowering called 'Mautam'. It is a phenomenon occurring at the interval of fifty years,⁹ resulting with incredibly high proliferation of rodents which swarmed the jhum and devoured all the crops. This resulted in widespread famine which was called the Mautam Famine in 1958-59. A cultural society called Mizo Cultural Society was formed in 1958 by J. Manliana, a PWD contractor and some men at Aizawl.¹⁰ Mr. Laldenga gave up his clerical job in District Council office and joined the Cultural Society as a secretary. The society converted itself into Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) in 1958 with an objective of doing relief work for the impending 'Mautam Famine.' Mr. R. Dengthuama and Mr. Laldenga were elected as the President and the Secretary. Their main task was to

⁹ *Heralding Mizoram State*, Published and Issued by the DIPR, Government of Mizoram, 1986, pp. 3,4,

¹⁰ B.B. Goswami, (ed.), *Mizo Unrest*, Alek Publisher, Jaipur, 1979 p. 142

help the rural people who came to the Superintendent's office in search of food.

After the Mautam famine was over in 1961, the main task of MNFF also automatically came to an end. But the MNFF leaders wanted to involve in politics and therefore converted into a political organization by dropping the last letter 'F' and thus came into the existence as the Mizo National Front. On the 22nd October, 1961 MNF was born with Laldenga as its first President, and R. Vanlawma as the first Secretary.¹¹

After a short span of time, MNF started an armed uprising on first March 1966 by declaring 'independence' and over-running most area of 8,134 square miles of Mizo hills.¹² The declaration of independence was signed by 61 prominent politicians including Laldenga and his colleagues on the first March 1966.¹³

By borrowing the name of the most Israelites successful war against their enemy 'Operation of Jericho' in Old Testament of the Bible, MNF declared 'Operation of Jericho' which was war against Indian Army. This Operation of Jericho covered the operation of important places like Aizawl, Lunglei, Aizawl to Silchar Road, Tuipuibari, Marpara, Champhai, Khawzawl, Darngawn, Vaphai, Hnahlan, Tlabung, Chawngte, Sangau, Hnahthial etc.¹⁴ In the Operation

¹¹ V.V. Rao, N.Hazarika and H.Thansanga, *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India*, Vol. III, Mizoram, 1997, p.149

¹² V.I.K. Sarin, *India North-East in Flames*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. Dhawan Printing Works, 26-A Mayapuri, New Delhi 110 064, 1980, p. 28

¹³ R. Zamawia, *Op. cit.*, 795

¹⁴ R. Zamawia, *Op. cit.*, pp. 274-337

of Jericho, MNF could not control Aizawl, the District Headquarters, but they captured and controlled some other important Indian defense posts such as Lunglei, Champhai the second and the third big town of Mizoram.

Operation of Jericho: Aizawl

The main targets of operation of Jericho, Aizawl were to capture the duty of Armed Police at Treasury, and the 1st Bn. Assam Rifles Headquarters in the heartland of the town and BRTF post in the skirt of Aizawl, Zemabawk. According to the original plan chalked out by the MNF Defence Ministry the ‘Operation of Jericho’ Aizawl was to be started from the midnight of the 28th February 1966. After almost all the war plan and tactical arrangement was over, without consulting and informing his officials including the underground MNF Defence Minister, Laldenga the then President of MNF changed his mind not to carry out operation in Aizawl town, therefore trained special force that would be deployed to attack Assam Rifles were removed to other unknown places from the point where they were appointed to be there. So the underground MNF Minister and his army officers could not carry out the operation in time. But due to the strong force of mass history, capture of treasury, ambush of Assam Rifles and Police patrolling occurred in some part of Aizawl town.

As the first attempt had come into smoke, R. Zamawia underground MNF Defence Minister initiated another plan to attack

The first MNF Provincial Government Cabinet members were: President- Laldenga, Vice President- Lalnunmawia, Home Minister- Sainghaka, Finance Minister – C. Lalkhawhluna, Defence Minister – R. Zamawia, Foreign Miniater – Lalhmingthanga; Information Minister – Ngurkunga, Chief Justice – John F. Manliana. (Source: J.V. Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, Mizoram History Association, Aizawl 1985, p.95

Assam Rifles Camp. Under the presence of the then MNF President the attack of Assam Rifle Battalion, Aizawl was started from the sunset of 3rd March 1966. While the terrible firing between India army and MNF was carrying on, Indian Air Force reinforced the existing army by using Caliber Machine Gun and dropping incendiary bombs etc.¹⁵ After the bombardment, MNF withdrew their troops, therefore the arm fighting came to an end at Aizawl on the 5th March 1966, it lasted only three days.

Since the arms revolt broke out in Mizoram, the government of Assam did not keep silent and clearly understood that there was independent movement in Mizoram. As soon as it received the use of violent means in the district, Government of India sent a team of officers including the Commissioner of the Division, the Inspector of Police, the Assam Rifles and a senior officer of the Army to Aizawl to study the condition on the spot. The team suggested that the matter should be handed over to the army.¹⁶

On the 2nd March 1966, the Mizo District was declared as ‘a disturbed area’ under the Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 along with the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act 1958.¹⁷ Government of India also made same declaration under article 352 of the constitution of India.¹⁸ Troop was sent to Aizawl by road and air. Instead of the Armed Police Forces, the army was given the charges of operation for as long as necessary. On the 3rd March G.L. Nanda the

¹⁵ R. Zamawia, *Op cit.*, pp. 288, 297

¹⁶ V.V. Rao, H. Thansanga, N. Hazarika, *A Century of Government and Politics in North East India*, Vol. III, Mizoram, 1987, p. 243

¹⁷ N. Nibedon, *Mizoram the Daggar Brigade*, Lanar Publication, New Delhi, 1983, p.78

¹⁸ J.V. Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, Mizo History Association, Aizawl 1985, p.98

then Union Home Minister of India announced that the army had moved in. An adjournment motion to censure the government for its failure to prevent the development of such a serious situation was discussed for over two and half hours in the Indian Parliament; but it was rejected by a majority vote. On the 5th March 1966, in connection with the discussion of Mizoram politics, Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam angrily charged the MNF leaders as betrayers and observed that they will have to be dealt in an appropriate manner.¹⁹ Home Minister (L) G.L. Nanda said “Mizo are strictly controlled not to move like the Nagas.”²⁰

More army reinforcement battalions were dispatched to add the existing Assam Rifles 18th Battalion in Mizoram. The army convoy that was coming from Vairengte (the first Mizoram village from Silchar Assam state) was disturbed by MNF by ambushing, damaging roads, bridges and cutting down tree across the main road. But slowly the army reached Aizawl on the evening of the 6th March 1966. The divergent movement of Indian soldiers to different places of Mizoram was tried to stop by the MNF army known as Mizo National Army (MNA).

Initial role of Southern Church in peace talks

From the day of declaration of ‘Operation of Jericho’ on the 1st March 1966, arm fighting, killing, torture, looting and lawlessness prevailed in different parts of Mizoram. In Lungei town, after five days continuously fighting the 18th Bn. Assam Rifles Wing Headquarters Commander Lt. Marwah and his men surrendered to MNF Brig. Gen.

¹⁹ N.Nibedon, *Op Cit.*, p.78

²⁰ Tlangchhuaka, *Mizo Politik Chanchin*, The General Headquarters MNF, The U Tien Press Akyab Burma 19732 p.51

Lalngura on the 5th March 1966.²¹ Therefore Lunglei town was completely under the control of the rebels.

During this critical period some Church leaders of Lunglei town realized that unless some efforts were made the situation would turn from bad to worse in Lunglei town. Even before the attack of Lunglei Assam Rifles Post by the MNF, Rev. H.S. Luaia one of the Baptist senior pastors tried to persuade MNF authority not to do violence against the Indian soldiers, but it was refused by one of the staffs. Then the pastor and two Church elders moved to the church and prayed seriously for the avoidance of violence at Lunglei town. In the next morning an unwelcome incident took place near the pastor's residence. Sarabhaia (Muslim Shop keeper) was killed and buried at Serkawn village, 4 Kms to the west of Lunglei town.²²

Two Baptist Church pastors, Rev. H.S. Luaia and Rev. C.L. Hminga who were working in their headquarters office at Serkawn met MNF Commanders and discussed how to tackle the present problem and how to make peace in Lunglei area. The two pastors requested the authority to provide a vehicle. After getting positive answer Luaia and Hminga left Lunglei for Aizawl via Thenzawl road on the 10th March 1966 with pasting "Peace Mission" on white big clothes in their vehicle. MNF volunteers stopped them at Thenzawl village, after asking what they would be doing there in Aizawl, permitted them to continue their work.²³ After the night fall the journey men prayed at Ngaizel area, only 2 Kms south of Aizawl town. As soon as they reached Aizawl they contacted Thanthuama of Kulikawn and Darthankima the then Inspector

²¹ R. Zamawia, *Op cit.* p.327

²² An *Interview* with Rev. H.S. Luaia on 16.7.1989 at his residence, Serkawn.

²³ R. Zamawia, *Op cit.*, pp. 355,356

of School. Both of them are very surprised by the coming of the two southern pastors on such time of critical situation. The churchmen frankly told them that they had come to see Aizawl District Commissioner on the issue of peace making in the state.

To achieve their main task, the southern clergy men approached District Commission's quarter under the strict curfew of Aizawl town. At first, they were arrested at Khatla area, but after understanding their mission and allowed to meet T.S. Gill, District Commissioner. Two letters which were sent by the Civil Sub Divisional Officer and the MNF were handed over to D.C. Both Pastors seriously expressed that they really wanted to get peace and tranquility in Mizoram.²⁴ From the words of D.C. and his companion army colonel, the pastors realized that the army had been dispatched to Lunglei and they might be reaching there the day after tomorrow. They were also informed that if the column was fired the air strike would positively follow. As soon as the meeting was over Luaia and his co-worker Hminga left Aizawl and hurriedly moved to Lunglei via Thenzawl road on that night at 11.00 Pm.

On the 11th March 1966 (Friday) at 9.30 Am the churchman reached Pukpui (5 Kms from Lunglei to the north) the place where MNF officials were there. Luaia informed them about the effect of violence and the consequent suffering of innocent civilians and also added that they were very pitiful. He also further told them that if the army column approaching Lunglei were ambushed or stopped, that may result in jet fighter attack and more suffering and even the complete destruction of Lunglei would take place. He, therefore, earnestly requested them not to attack the coming army. MNF official Malsawma Colney agreed to

²⁴ *An Interview* with Rev. H.S Luaia on 16.7.1989 at his resident, Serkawn.

churchman appeal and told him that they would not ambush the army convoy.²⁵ After a long journey the army convoy led by Col. Backtine arrived Lunglei without disturbance of guerrillas. It seems that the hard work of pastors resulted in the less suffering of the southern people.

As soon as the army arrived in Lunglei, automatically it came under their control. At the outset, army demanded MNF to return all the weapons of 18th Bn. Assam Rifles which had taken during the 'Operation of Jericho' from the 1st – the 5th March 1966. The MNF headquarters did not accept this demand and did not return even a single arm.²⁶ Baptist church was working very hard for bringing peace to the state. It can be said that Lunglei was not burnt down due to the work of their pastors.²⁷

Formation of Peace Committee

Peace and tranquility faded away in the then entire Mizo District. Mizoram, Baptist Church understood the urgent need to form a committee for the restoration of peace and tranquility in the district. On the 9th March 1966 at 8.30 Am., Peace Committee was formed at Mission Banglow, Serkawn.²⁸ They considered that bringing peace and normalcy to the state would be among other things a good service in the eyes of God. Baptist church was very interested in peace making, and selected the delegation of Peace Committee.²⁹

²⁵ Rev. H.S. Luaia. *Personal Record file, Dt. 24.6.1966*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Rev. V. Lalzawnga, *Baptist Kohhran Chanchin Pawimawh Lawrkhawm*, Part I (Preface), 1987, p.2

²⁸ *The Baptist Church Record of 24th April 1966*, Serkawn, Mizoram

²⁹ *Ibid.*

*The original Peace Committee members were – 1.Rev. H.S Luaia Church Secretary. 2.Rev. C.L. Hminga Assembly Chairman (elected) 3. Rev. K. Thangchungnunga Assembly

On the 7th March 1966, Rev. H.S. Luaia sent a letter to Presbyterian Church that they would form Peace Committee and also requested them to form peace mission committee and choose representatives from them. The Presbyterian Church also agreed to form peace committee and took action immediately.

Formation of Citizens Committee

After the Operation of Jericho Aizawl town was over, there was no proper administration in the town around a week. During this critical period, uncollected dead bodies, looting, and no help to the persons who need the help of others prevailed in the district capital. So Church could not lose sight of what had happened, then with the initiative of Rev. Lalngurauva Ralte and Rev. A. Robert, Presbyterian Church Moderator convened an emergent meeting on the 12th March 1966 at Synod Office, Mission Veng, Aizawl.³⁰

In this meeting Rev. C.L Hminga told the meeting about the action which had been taken by the Baptist Church. The third resolution of this meeting passed the formation of Citizens Committee and also appointed 20 members representing different Church denominations, government officers and eminent citizens. The main task of this Committee was to help the needy persons.

Chairman (elected) 4. K.L. Vangaia, Financial Secretary 5. R.T. Bawia, Assembly Treasurer.

* The Delegation of Peace Committee were- Rev. H.S. Luaia, Rev. C.L.Hminga and Rev. K. Thanchungnunga..

³⁰ R. Zamawia, *Op. cit.*, p. 352

* Member Presented in the meeting were- 1. Rev. Alwyn Roberts Chairman, 2. Chalhuna 3 Rev. Lalsawma 4.Muka 5 Chawngzika 6. Vanchuanga 7 Rev. C. Pazawna 8. V.L. Thawma 9.Darthankima 10. Rev. V.L. Zaithanga 11. Lalngurauva 12. Rev. C.L Hminga (Invitee and representative of Baptist Church.

Formation of Christian Peace Committee (C.P.C.)

Regarding the formation of Peace Mission a senior Presbyterian pastor Rev. Zairema agreed to form a peace mission, and also thought that the Government of India would be ready if MNF agreed to give up the ideas of independence and ready to talk within the framework of the Indian constitution.³¹

There were different ideas from different Pastors and church elders. But with the acknowledgement of Presbyterian Synod Standing Committee, Rev. Lalngurauva visited Lunglei in the month of September 1966, and requested Baptist Church Assembly Executive Committee to form a combined peace committee known as 'Christian Peace Committee'. After the acceptance of the proposal the committee functioned in a proper way.³²

Church and Peace Talks

In 1966 the two major Churches, Baptist and Presbyterian Church selected their members to be the Peace Committee members. In the beginning Baptist Church appointed Rev. H.S. Luaia, Rev. C.L. Hminga and Rev. K. Thangchungnunga.³³ The representative of Presbyterian Church were Rev. Zairema, Rev. Lalngurauva Ralte³⁴ Rev. C. Pazawna, Chalhnuna, Pu Chalhnuna and Muka³⁵ Some of the important objectives of Christian Peace Mission Committee were- to restore peace and normalcy, to appeal the Indian government and the MNF to stop armed

³¹ *A letter sent by Rev. Zairema from Silchar to A. Robert, Moderator Presbyterian Church Synod, on 29.7.1966*

³² R. Zamawia, *Op. cit.*, p.356

³³ Rev. H.S. Luaia, *Church Secretary Report on 24.4.1966*

³⁴ *A letter sent by Rev. Zairema to Laldenga President of MNF on 24.9.1966*

³⁵ President Government of Mizoram (MNF) *letter No. M.S. 4/67/103 Dt 17.7.1967*

fighting, to request them to have peaceful settlement on misunderstanding issues, and not to have armed fighting again.

The social and political condition of Mizoram was very bad during this period. As soon as armed rebellion broke out on the first March 1966, the Government of Assam declared Mizoram District as ‘a disturbed area’. A number of the 18th Assam Rifles Battalion and Jat Regiment were moved in. The whole district was covered by major army operation. The Mizo National Army, (MNA) formed by the MNF earnestly countered the operations which resulted endless fighting and killing in the whole area. Therefore, the army and Police suspected almost all Mizo.

Under this critical condition, Rev. Zairema tried to contact the MNF chief and sent a letter to him on the 6th September 1966.³⁶ The letter was sent through a secret messenger. The President received the message and sent back his acceptance to the proposal.³⁷ In those days

³⁶ **A letter** sent by Rev. Zairema to Laldenga President Government of Mizoram (MNF) Camp. Mobile, 6.9. 1966

In his letter the Pastor said, “We shall realize the difficult situation in Mizoram. The Government of India has no intention of withdrawing from our state, and you, on your part, are determined to drive them out. Your military forces have had frequent clashes, resulting in the sufferings of innocent men, women and children. If thing continues as they are this suffering will increase in intensity.

We all anxious as you and your government are to restore peace in our country. I, therefore, have every hope that you will welcome to meet the representatives of our churches at your convenience and co-operation with them in exploiting ways and means for speedy restoration of normalcy. I shall, therefore, greatly appreciate your view of this proposed personal meeting.... If you agree to such meeting we shall let you know the name and of the church representatives. May I also request you to make tentative appointment regarding the time and place of meeting.”

³⁷ Laldenga’s **letter** no. MGG (4.PO)/66/22 Dt 17.9.1966 to Rev. Zairema.

there was no MNF permanent headquarters and official location. MNF president Laldenga himself also in fact moved here and there in jungle with his escorts.

Sabual Peace Talk:

Following the suggestion of the churchman, Laldenga selected Sabual village, linked with jeepable road, 39 miles west of Aizawl for the venue of meeting. C.P.C. selected Rev. Zairema. Rev. Lalngurauva Ralte and Rev. H.S. Luaia. After reaching Sabual, the first meeting between Christian Peace Mission and MNF was held. On this day beside the President Laldenga, other important officials such as R. Zamawia Defence Minister, Thangzuala Army Chief, Col. Biakvela, B.P. Rosanga Dampa Chief Commissioner and 50 Mizo National Army were there in Sabual village.³⁸

The interaction between clergymen and MNF President can be summarised as follow-

Church leaders expressed their disapproval of arms and violent means committed by the MNF. Laldenga told them that from the very beginning they themselves also did not choose violent means for fighting independence. They were told how the MNF tried to use non violent means. Laldenga vehemently blamed Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam as the main cause of using force in Mizoram. He further added that arms and violent means which they used also only did for self defence and personal liberties.

³⁸ R. Zamawia, *Op cit.*, p. 359.

Laldenga told the delegates that Church should be confined to spiritual matters; at the same time it should not harm the political feeling of any section of Church members. He expressed his appreciation of Church pamphlet containing ‘condemnation of violence’, and further added that church leaders should blame not only the action of MNF side, but also the inhuman action such as dropping of incendiary bomb, burning of houses, forcing of villagers to work without payment, curtailment of human rights etc. committed by the Indian army.

With regard to cease fire, Laldenga opined that such kind of proposal would not be agreed if government of India concedes to refrain from military operation. He, however, mentioned that if Indian government agreed to work out the principles of having a peaceful solution to the problem and stop the idea of using force against them. They would agree to a cease fire under certain terms which they need not to discuss at that time.³⁹

The delegation expected that the meeting would narrow down the gulf between the MNF and the District Council authorities. The first talk between MNF and Church was followed by the subsequent talks in other places.

Khawrihnim Peace Talk

The second talk between MNF and Christian Peace Mission was held at Khawrihnim Village 12 miles west from Aizawl on the 11th April 1967 from 8.00 Am - 3.00 Pm. In this meeting Christian Peace

³⁹ J.V. Hluna, *Op. cit.*, pp. 118,119

Committee was represented by Rev. H.S. Luaia, Rev. Lalnguraiva Ralte and Rev. Zairema. MNF officials whom they contacted were Sainghanga, Home Minister, Bualhranga, Senator, Lalnundawta acting Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl area and Zailiana former Commissioner of Aizawl area who recently escaped from Silchar jail.⁴⁰

As a result of this talk, MNF initiated to cancel Mizo Union leader's liquidation order which they had issued on the 3rd January 1967; and suggested for preparation of common platform between the two hostile parties MNF and District Council official such as C. Chhunga, Party President, H.K. Bawichhuaka Chief Executive Member, C. Pahlira Executive Member and Lalbuaia.⁴¹

After the second meeting was over Rev. Zairema rushed to meet Mr. Chaliha Assam Chief Minister at Shillong and the Prime Minister of India in New Delhi, but he could not meet them. Instead he met the then Home Minister of India Y.B. Chavan and told about what had happened in Mizoram and the necessity to have talks. But Home Minister said "Let them give up their arms. After that we can talk." Pastor told the home Minister that the army operation was not the appropriate answer. But, "I have to punish my children surely, if they had behaved badly" was the last retort of the Home Minister.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Church Report of 15.4.1967* From Rev. H.S. Luaia, Serkawn.

⁴¹ R. Zamawia, *Op cit.*, pp. 361,362

⁴² N. Nibedon, *op.cit.*, p. 118

Contact of MNF and Indian Officials

On the 17th February 1969 the Peace mission delegates such as Luaia, Zairema and Lalngurauva reported about the Government of India stand. They said that any solution of Mizoram political problem had to be in the context of the Indian Union, arms should be laid down, while in turn it would be followed by a political rehabilitation. The MNF replied that unless they knew the probable scope of the term 'political rehabilitation' they were not in a position to make any comment.

In the next week on the 24th February 1969, the Peace Committee representatives faced MNF Finance Secretary, Lalkhawhiana and discussed to arrange peace talk issue at length. The critical question was whether the underground outfit would now agree to a settlement within Indian Union and lay down their arms. In reply to the Pastors' query, the MNF Finance Secretary said. "Yes, provided the Government of India is prepared for a peaceful talk." As the MNF leaders accepted the 'Peace talk' Church leaders were very happy and called the meeting 'Ebenezar' which means 'God accompanied us up to this place'⁴³

In another development, MNF officials including Sainghaka, the underground MNF Home Minister and Vanlalngaia, Director of Intelligent Service of MNF were arrested soon after the meeting with the churchmen was over. This incident resulted in assuming churchmen as

⁴³ R. Lalzawnga, *Role of Church in Mizoram Politics (1966-1987)* M.Phil Dissertation submitted to NEHU, 1989, p. 66 (unpublished)

betrayers.⁴⁴ At the same time, it seemed that Indian officials also thought that the Church leaders were the agents of MNF to report their ideas to the Government. Therefore, the first attempt to make peace in the late 1960s ended in whimper.

Role of Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (Mizoram Churches Leaders Committee) in Peace Making.

It is relevant to underline the fact that during and after the first attempt to make peace was over, army operation was going on. Many hostile activities and terrible incidents such as killings, kidnappings etc. prevailed in different parts of Mizoram. The two most important acts of MNF happened in the middle of 1970 were the ambush of Mizoram Lt. Governor and the killing of Inspector of General Police, Deputy Inspector of General of Police and the Superintendent of Police. In retaliation to these dreadful incidents on the 13th January 1975, Indian security forces launched a rigorous campaign against the MNF. Large quantity of arms and ammunitions were seized, 266 MNF workers were captured.⁴⁵

After the downfall of the Central ruling Congress Ministry in 1977, the new Government led by Prime Minister Morarji Desai, Janata party and Laldenga continued the talk on the 18th May 1977. A subsequent meeting with Home Minister Charan Singh also was conducted on the 31st August 1977. After the talk, Laldenga was alleged as a leader who could not control his followers and also accused him to feed wrong information and different ideas to both sides. Then he was ordered to leave India on November the 21st 1977. But Laldenga

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ R. Lalzawnga *Op. cit.*, p. 68

informed the Union Home Minister to clear all the blocks which were there in the way of peace agreement. Then he was given a chance to make up his mind with his followers and allowed to stay longer in India.⁴⁶

In the month of May 1979, MNF issued ‘Quit Mizoram Order’ to all non Mizo and also fixed the 1st June 1979 as the dead line. Laldenga and his son Danmawia was arrested and were put behind the bar on the 8th July 1978. His case was cleared only on the 14th February 1980. After the failure of the talk Laldenga was directed to leave the country. He flew to London on the 21st April 1982.

Since the aspiration of peace came into smoke, Mizoram church leaders realized that they themselves may be one of the important cornerstones in the building up of peace in Mizoram, and formed a new committee called “Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee” (MKHC) on the 15th June 1982, by nine Christian denominations in Mizoram.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ R. Zamawia, *Op. cit.*, p.901

⁴⁷ J.V. Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, Mizo History Association, Mizoram, 1985 p.123

The representatives of nine Christian denominations are as shown in the following table.

Sl/ No	Name of Church Denominations	Name of Representatives
1.	Lawngtlai Baptist Church	Rev. Lawmthanga
2.	Baptist Church	Rev. Dr.Lianzuala
3.	The Salvation Army	Brig. Saplana
4	Roman Catholic	B. Thangliana
5	United Pentecostal Church	Rev. Saihnuna

The first committee, held on the 30th July 1982 (10.00 Am) at Synod Hall, Aizawl appointed their office bearers. The second meeting was held on the 13th August 1982 (10.00 Am) at Mission Veng Church Vestry, Aizawl. In that meeting Rev. Thangchungnunga Baptist Church said that the important agenda was the search for peace and also asked every church representative whether they really represented their church members or not.⁴⁸

The representatives of Church denominations stated that they were the right representatives of their respective churches and also mentioned that they wanted to unite for bringing peace and tranquility in Mizoram. The first resolution of the second committee meeting was to talk with the MNF and the Government of India, and also spare every Sunday of the month for prayer of state. Rev. Lalsawma, Rev. Dr. Lianzuala and Rev. V.L. Rawna were appointed as their representatives and were entrusted to start their work as necessary.⁴⁹

The church leaders meeting held on the 13th September 1982 fixed the amount of donation which every denomination should contribute to the committee. The committee informed their delegation to meet first MNF officials at the headquarters and then to Government of

6.	Seventh Day Adventist	C. Aitawna
7.	Isua Krista Kohhran	Evan. Lalhleia
8.	Assembly of God.	Rev. Hrangchhuana
9	Presbyterian Church	Rev. Zairema

⁴⁸ MKHC, *Minute Book*, on the 13th August 1982, Aizawl, Mizoram

⁴⁹ MKHC, *Minute Book*, Church Office, Aizawl Mizoram.

India and MNF President abroad. On November 22nd 1992 MKHC directed their Secretary to see Laldenga in London.⁵⁰ In the meantime Rev. Zairema and Rev. Dr. Lianzuala were very busy for going to New Delhi to meet central government officials. The Secretary met Laldenga and discussed how to resume peace talk between the MNF and the Government of India.

On the 17th May 1983 Rev. Zairema who had visited New Delhi reported about his interaction with the Central government authorities on the issue of Mizoram. According to him the Government of India had not yet welcomed the idea of having talk with the MNF. In the light of the report, MKHC felt the necessity of taking steps for the resumption of talk. They organized a general meeting and published pamphlets.

MKHC organized a joint meeting with all political parties on the 31st May 1983 at Synod Conference hall, Aizawl. The meeting was presided over by Rev. Thangpuiliana. The all party delegates accepted the MKHC draft memorandum and gave signatures and seals and submitted to the Government of India.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Record file of MKHC*, Church Office, Aizawl 1983
The following is the text of the said memorandum.

“On this first day of May of the year nineteen hundred and eighty three, we the undersign, requesting all political parties in Mizoram do hereby declare our united stand in urging the Government of India and the Mizo National Front to enter into fresh negotiations and dialogue in order to arrived at a peaceful settlement of political dead lock in Mizoram.

We affirm that all sections of the people living in the Union Territory are in full accord with this plea, and we further declare on unanimous assurance of readiness and render any possible help toward creating of conducive atmosphere for peace talk to resume.”

The memorandum was submitted to Prime Minister and Laldenga on the 15th June 1983 and also distributed the copies among the 13 churches within Mizoram and 7 churches to outside Mizoram such as Cherra, Meghalaya; Imphal, Manipur; New Delhi, Calcutta, West Bengal, Pune, Maharashtra, Dibrugarh, Assam, Shillong, Meghalaya. Further, expecting the help of Lt. Governor, Church leaders called on Mizoram Lt. Governor on the 19th July 1983 and urged him to take steps for resuming peace talk between MNF and the Government of India.

MKHC wanted to know about the intending of political parties on their activity and asked the following three questions. 1) How they felt about the work of church leaders in peace negotiation. 2) How to organize the ensuing general election, 3) and about their efforts in bringing the MNF underground for negotiation.

Since there was no sign of peace process, MKHC approached Lt. Governor again on the 21st and the 22nd December 1983. During the two days meeting the churchmen asked the Lt. Governor to explain why the central government did not response to the peace initiative by the church. They also enquired about his reaction about the activities of the church regarding peace talk initiated by them.

Churchmen felt that the indirect contact of Central Government through Lt. Governor was not enough for the speedy peace talk. They met some politicians and discussed how to urge for peace talks on the

15th December 1983. In the next year, i.e. on the 6th February 1984, MKHC appointed all Executive Members to meet Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister in New Delhi. The Church delegates asked the Prime Minister why the Church question was not yet answered and urged her to continued peace talk between MNF and Government of India. Besides the main theme of peace talk, the committee requested the Election Commission of India to postpone the tentative date of Assembly election scheduled for the 31st March 1984, which happened to be Saturday.⁵²

In the middle of April 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came to Mizoram and delivered a speech at Assam Rifle's ground, Aizawl. She stressed the need to have peace and normalcy in order to achieve progress and development. On the 16th April 1984 MKHC met Prime Minister and submitted a memorandum. In pursuance of the MKHC appeal Mizoram Legislative Assembly election was held on the 25th March (Wednesday), 1984. The Congress (I) party secured an overwhelming victory in the election. The new Congress Ministry led by Lalthanhawla was very conscious about the on going peace talks. On the 14th April 1984, during the election campaign, David Danmawia, the eldest son of Laldenga openly stated that Congress (I) was a real party looking for peace.

After the formation of new Ministry, MKHC leaders were in touch with the Chief Minister and his colleagues. All of them were working hard for the restoration of peace in Mizoram. On the 6th June 1984 Rev. Zairema told MKHC Laldenga trusted only the church leaders; he also reported that Laldenga had felt sorry as the church leaders did not consult him before approaching the Prime Minister. The

⁵² *In Mizoram certain denomination of Christians attends church on Saturday.*

MNF chief grumbled at he did not receive any official information from the church side. On that day itself the committee sent information to MNF leader.⁵³

On the 5th September 1984, Lalthanhawla the then Chief Minister of Mizoram told the pressmen in his chamber that the peace talk between the MNF and the Government of India was to begin within a month or two, for which Laldenga had already obtained approved from the MNF high command. He said that Congress (I) appointed Shri K.C. Pant, Chairman Energy Commission and Shri G. Parthasarathy, Law Expert as the representatives of India in the proposed peace talks.⁵⁴

The Mizo were eagerly waiting for the progress of the process of peace talks under the guidance of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. She was unfortunately assassinated on the 31st October 1984. The turbulent clouds that descended on the nation slowed down the Mizo peace process. After Indira Gandhi, her son Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India. On the 12th December 1984, MKHC sent obituary to Rajiv Gandhi and also requested him to continue to work his mother's footprint for Mizoram peace talk.⁵⁵

MKHC held a meeting on the 12th December 1984 at Aijal Club, Aizawl, and passed a resolution to have mass prayer on Saturday or Sunday night of first week of January 1985. They also appointed new delegation such as Rev. Lalsawma, Chairman and Rev. Hrangvunga and

⁵³ MKHC *Minute Book*, Church Office, Aizawl Mizoram.

⁵⁴ *Fortnightly Confidential report of Mizoram Government, 1-15 Sept, 1984*

⁵⁵ MKHC *Record File*, 1984, Church Office, Aizawl.

Rev. Dr. P. Lianzuala.⁵⁶ According to their proposal on the 28th March 1985 all executive members of MKHC were supposed to go to New Delhi to urge for peace talk process. But only six leaders went to New Delhi to meet Prime Minister.⁵⁷

Church leaders not only submitted ‘Memorandum’ to the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi but also personally requested him to accentuate the process of restoring peace in Mizoram. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Church leaders and informed them what he had been doing for the peace talks with Laldenga. In July 1985, the demands of all points except the High Court provisions were accepted by the MNF and the Central Government. For the early solution of the deadlock MKHC sent another letter to the Prime Minister and Laldenga. After a long hard work of MKHC, their aspiration of the Memorandum of Settlement was signed on the 30th June 1986 by the Indian Home Secretary, Shri R.D. Pradhan, the Mizo National Front leader Shri Laldenga and the Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram, Shri Lalkhama to bring peace and end the disturbed situation in Mizoram. The 20 years old MNF underground movements come to an end.

After the accord was signed, MKHC circulated pamphlet to every Church congregation and told every member to give thanks to God on the Friday night of 11 July 1986 at 7-8 pm. All the MNF personnel became over ground and began normal life in the country. The study of Church involvement in peace talk between the MNF and the Government of Mizoram reveals how the important the contribution of

⁵⁶ MKHC *Miniute Book*, Church Office, Aizawl, Mizoram

⁵⁷ **Record of MKHC**, Aizawl, Mizoram 1985

The following six leaders met Prime Minister- Rev. Lalrinsanga, Rev. Lalsawma, Rev. Dr. P.L. Lianzuala, Maj. Thansanga, Maj. Sawichhunga and V.L. Bela.

Churches for the formation of peace in Mizoram. It can be said that MKHC acted as an important pressure organization in bringing peace in Mizoram. The above discussion reveals not only extent of activism by the Church organization in the peace process of Mizoram, but also the level of dynamism by the Church in influencing the Central government as well as the other parties for the well-being of the state.

CHURCH AND ELECTION

It is to be noted that regular and frequent elections are held in Mizoram since independence. During the British period, however, Mizoram was declared 'an excluded area' under the Government of India Act 1935 and placed directly under the Governor.⁵⁸ After independence of India, Mizo District was set up in 1952 as per the 6th Schedule of the Constitution of India. The first District Council election was held in 1952. There were four general elections during District Council period.⁵⁹ The following table gives the details about the elections during the District council time.

Year	Number of Elected	Number of Nominated
1952	18	6
1957	22	2
1962	22	2
1970	27	3

⁵⁸ *Heralding Mizoram State*; Issued and Published by the DIPR & T, Government of Mizoram, 1986, p.2

⁵⁹ V.V.Rao; *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India 1874-1974*, S. Chand and Company Ltd. Ram Nagar, New Delhi, 1976, p. 216.

Assam MLA election was also held in Mizoram in 1952, 1957, 1962, 1963 (bye election), and 1967.⁶⁰

Mizoram became a Union Territory on the 21st January 1972. Three Regional Councils known as Lai, Mara and Chakma Council were also set up in the southern portion of Mizoram. These three regional councils also held periodical elections since the inception to the present. During the Union Territory period there were 30 Assembly Constituencies, but after Mizoram become a state on February 20, 1987, as per the bill passed by the Parliament and the Delimitation of Assembly Constituencies order issued by the Election Commission of India, the number of Assembly Constituency was upgraded from 30 to 40.⁶¹

During Union Territory period four times Parliamentary election (1972, 1977, 1980, and 1984), Assembly Elections (1972, 1978, 1979, and 1984) and three bye Elections (1982, 1983, and 1984) in some constituencies due to withdrawal of MLA, murder of MLA, and vacate due to dual membership were held in Mizoram.

The first people representatives' election was started in 1952, which was after 55 years of the existence of the oldest Church. During the time of District Council, Churches had not contribution in the election of Member of District Council (MDC), Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and Member of Parliament (MP). After the attainment of Union Territory status different Church denominations became more

⁶⁰ Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History of Mizoram (1920-1980)*, L.B. Press, Republic Veng, Aizawl, 1981 p. 42

⁶¹ *Election Commission Notification No. 282/Miz/86 30.12.1986*

active in social and political matters. They understood the importance of election and used to give guidance to their people by issuing messages before different election. Mizoram Churches never supported particular political party but they instructed Church members to choose the right person from the candidates. In general different Churches followed same style or pattern of election message known as “*Inthlan thuchah.*” (Election messages)

It is difficult to study the definite role of Church during the MDC, MLA and MP and elections. Churches have been issuing election messages in every election, but after 2006 a new Church organization, known as Mizoram People Forum (MPF) actively took responsibilities in the matter relating to election and politics. But from the critical study of the role of Church in the first state MLA election, 1987 it can be understood how churches are involved in the election.

Role of church in the first State MLA Election

After signing of the Peace Accord, Mizoram a Union Territory became state through a parliamentary enactment. The first State election process started from the last part of 1986 election. Different political parties such as MNF, Indian National Congress, Peoples’ Conference and Mizo National Union published and issued their respective election manifestos and pamphlets and press releases etc. for the election.

The Church understood the political process and high political tension assigned with election and election campaign that concerns their church members. Who comprised of 83.71 % of total population. They

ask the public to keep off violent activities and pave the way for holding election without degrading the atmosphere.

On the 13th November 1986 Rev. Rokhuma, Secretary, and Rev. Robawia, Moderator of Presbyterian Church, published and issued a pamphlet called “The message of Mizoram Presbyterian Church for the General Election, 1987”. It was an appeal to the people of Mizoram asking them to oppose hate campaigns during the elections. The appeal exhorted the public to adopt conciliatory attitude and also appealed to the people to support justice even if it is difficult for them.⁶²

Besides the Presbyterian Church, in the last part of 1986, on the 20th November the Baptist church also circulated message for the first Mizoram State MLA election, this was issued by Rev. C.L. Hminga, General Secretary and Rev. H. Hrangenga, Chairman Mizoram Baptist Church. The United Pentecostal Church, Lunglei District too published their pamphlet for the preparation of 1987 MLA election.

The three dominant Churches issued election pamphlets for the avoidance of selection of persons who were indulging in corruption and drinking. The entire three Churches tried their level best for the neutralization of hot political tension in the state. The main aim was to have free and fair election in the election. An analysis of the major Churches election message can be discussed in the following paragraphs.

⁶² *Inthlanpui Chung changa Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Thuchhuah*, form Rev. Rokhuma Secretary and Rev. Robawia Moderator, Presbyterian Church Synod, Aizawl, Mizoram, the 13th Nov, 1986

1. Peaceful Election:

During the period of the insurgency there was virtually no freedom of speech in the state. In 1984 MLA election during the Union Territory period one of the People's Conference party candidates Lalthawmvunga was shot dead by the MNF personnel while he was starting campaign speech in a public meeting at N. Mualcheng Village (164 Kms from east of Aizawl), N. Vanlaiphai Constituency.⁶³ Besides this, threatening and fraudulence always occurred in different parts of the state.

Presbyterian Church Synod appealed to all parties and individuals not to make any disturbances.⁶⁴ Baptist Church also appealed to all people of Mizoram to adopt peaceful means during election campaign.⁶⁵ United Pentecostal Church too had the same view and suggested that the successful candidates to heed to the advice of Mizoram church leaders.⁶⁶ From the beginning it could be understood that Churches' objective included maintenance of peace and moulding of public opinion before and during election.

2. Selection of Candidates:

The Mizoram Baptist Church suggested some important criteria while selecting candidates for elections. They insisted that the candidate had to be honest and hardworking. He should be able to bring about

⁶³ *An Interview with C. Lalawia (L) on the 16th July 1985* at the writer's Residence at Zotlang, Aizawl.

⁶⁴ Rev. Rokhuma, et al., *Inthlanpui Chungchanga Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Thuchah*, 1986, p. 1

⁶⁵ Rev. Dr. C.L. Hminga, *Mizoram State MLA Inthlan Hmasak Ber 1987 atana Zoram Baptist Kohhran Thuchah*. p. 1

⁶⁶ Rev. Saithanga Sailo., *Mizoram State MLA Inthlan Thuchah*, The United Pentecostal Church, Lunglei District. p. 1

change to the state. He should be free from alcohol and drug addiction as well as free from sexual indulgence.

Presbyterian Church Synod also did the same stipulate qualification or criteria for the selection of candidates and for the guidance of political party.⁶⁷ The Church wanted the candidate to be of fame and a trusted person in his private and public life; an honest and hard working man. He should be a person of self control in dieting and not corrupt and drunkard. He should be a person who is free from sexual indulgence an honest man in marital matters.

United Pentecostal Church Lunglei District also published and issued the appeal for the steering of the nomination of election.⁶⁸ Religious and truthful persons, free from corrupt practices must be nominated for the elections. A person, who does not really indulge in wine and drugs, must be nominated. He should be a true Christian who safeguards the Christian religion, having no partial view on the different Church denominations. He should be a self controlled person on sexual matters; an honest and hard working man.

Different Church denominations wished to have good leaders to run the state administration. As the social evils such as, indulgence in sex, wine, drugs and corruption had been increasing considerably in the society; Church leaders were very worried and wanted to save the people from that kind of social evil practices. They believed that the root cause of all the social evils was lack of good guidance. They thus tried

⁶⁷ Rev. Rokhuma, et al., *Op cit.*, p. 1

⁶⁸ Rev.Saithanga Sailo, et. al., *Mizoram State MLA Inthlan Thuchah*, The United Pentecostal Church Lunglei District, 1987, p. 1

to provide that guidance through their appeals in the pamphlets for the welfare of the community.

3. **Election Campaign:**

Baptist church and UPC Lunglei District drew up plans for the election campaign. The Baptist Church and UPC Lunglei gave direction to the candidates and their parties in the election campaign of 1987.

The UPC Lunglei District also gave guidelines for 1987 MLA election. They instigated that the private life of the candidates not be criticize. There should be no abomination, threatening and violence during the campaign. Criticism of other parties based on false and unverified allegation had to be avoided. They directed that only the party policy be the means of election campaign.

The Baptist Church felt sorry to learn that there were some party campaigners who were corrupting the electorates in various ways. It outlined some important points and appeal to all the people of the state to give due regard to it.⁶⁹ They suggested that criticism of private life and using false allegation should be avoided. Threatening, violence and compulsion should be avoided. Any activity which may motivate repugnance and antagonistic idea should be avoided. They believed that making tea in common place was far better than serving tea in separate place by different parties. They assumed that it would not be a good practice such as selling and purchasing votes and distribution of any materials for purchasing votes. Such kind of unfair means were to be avoided. Insulting or speaking ill of people to other party campaigners

⁶⁹ Rev. H. Hrangenga, et. al., *Mizoram State MLA Inthalan Hmasa ber 1987 atana Zoram Baptist Kohhran Thuchah, 1986*, p. 2

during the election campaign and election should be avoided. The Baptist Church also urged not to enroll people in the electoral roll falsely the name of those below 21 years.

Unlike other churches, Presbyterian Church gave special emphasis on the use of money during the election campaign. They pointed out that the Government of India fixed Rs 35,000.00 and Rs 5,000.00 only for Parliamentary and Legislative member candidates. They also mentioned that the candidate should record all his election expenditures and submit to the Returning Officer within a specific time given by the Election Commission of India. Those candidates who recorded wrongly or submitted wrong vouchers were subject to three years imprisonment. Even if he is elected, there is possibly of cancellation of his election.

According to the church use of huge amount of money by party and candidate might result in following bad practices.⁷⁰ The unsuccessful candidate cannot recover his expenditure and burden would be unbearable. The successful candidates might engage in corrupting the government fund for the recovery of his expenditure. It would also leads to the suffering of public and corruption at the national level. The church appealed to every candidate not to purchase vote with money or community feast for the popularity of their names that spend a huge amount of money in the election campaign.

⁷⁰ Rev. Robawia, *Inthlanpui Chungchanga Presbyterian Kohhran Thuchah*, 1986, p. 1

4. For the Electorate:

Regarding the voting behavior of the electorate, the Presbyterian Church came up with for guidance as well. They instigated the voters to elect good candidates regardless of their party affiliations. The betterment of the state, according to them was more important than the party. They are very particular for the voters to be vigilant about money play in capturing votes. Threat and use of force might be discarded during the election by the people.

The guidelines for the electorate published and issued by UPC suggested only the qualified above 21 years old should cast their votes in the election. Votes are to be used for choosing the best one. The UPC also emphasized the importance of good conduct by the candidate. The character of the candidate was more important than anything else. The UPC also instigated those good candidates who are good for the state need to be selected, no matter whatever party affiliation they might have.

The Zoram Baptist Church also appealed to the electorates-⁷¹ that a government procedure people below 21 years old should not cast their votes. With the understanding that everyone can make good leaders all the electorates ought to exercise their votes. Vote should not be cast only for the interest of private profit or the candidates or relative or same party. The best one should be elected with the consent of God, Church extorted.

⁷¹ Rev. Dr. C.L. Hminga et al., *Op. cit.*, p.2

Like all other states, Mizo are also very conscious about their representatives. Every political party used their respective tactics for catching votes in every constituency. Political attack and counter attack prevailed everywhere. Since political party win elections by hook and by crook, general people could not understand the truth. When the schedule of polling date draws near, political debates, endless questions and counter questions, criticism and appreciation of political leaders and candidates were of everywhere. To calm down the tension among parties, churches announced that violent activities and destructive criticism of opponent was not appropriate with Christian teaching. According to the Christian concept everything which they want is to be conveyed to God in the form of prayer. Every Church prayed to God for the avoidance of violence and also for choosing right persons in the election. Mizoram Churches expected all the parties, candidates and electorates to follow their guidelines and government rules in the election.

Since there was no unwelcome incident during the election, it could be said that church appeals were followed by the electorates. A study of first state MLA election revealed the importance of Church in the election.

FORMATION OF MIZORAM PEOPLE FORUM

The Mizoram People Forum (MPF) came into being from the footprints of Synod Social Front. MPF is a non-governmental and non-political organization, established under the society registration Act, 2000.⁷² In 1979, one of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Presbyteries,

⁷² *Society Registration Act*, 2000 vide No MRS- 61 of 21.8.2007

called Chhimphei Presbytery resolved to form Social Action Committee and submit their proposal to higher level committee called Mizoram Synod. In 1979, Mizoram Synod approved this agenda and formed Mizoram Synod Social Front. This social front is a sub-committee working under the supervision of Synod Executive Committee. The Synod Executive Committee authorized this Social Front with high power.

The main aim of Social Front are to guide Church members according to the wishes of God and Church in the field of politic, economic and social life-⁷³ to teach and guide church members to be a good citizen of the country and to have good relationship between Church and national life; and also to think of relief and rehabilitation.

Besides these, Synod gave more assignment to Social Front on the matters relating to Political Education, Liquor, Drug Abuse, AIDS awareness Campaign, Seminar on Corruption etc. So they organized seminars, workshops and consultations with their members in different parts of the state. In 1986, Synod Social Front established Synod Rescue Home for looking after those persons who indulged in drinking, drug, sex and other social evils. They published more than 17 series of booklets.

For the smooth conduct of Mizoram politics, Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod entrusted Synod Executive Committee to

⁷³ **Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Social Front Hmalakna Tlangpui**, Published by the Synod Social Front, 1995, pp.1-4

take necessary action.⁷⁴ In 2006, The Social Front circulated questionnaires for the understanding of political atmosphere of Mizoram. Synod Executive Committee entrusted five persons to study the prevailing situation based on the result of Social Front questionnaires.⁷⁵

The Synod Executive Standing did the sum up of their conclusions; The Committee concluded that in the last Assembly election, held in November, 2003 there was excessive use of money power.⁷⁶ It appears that corrupt practice spiraled in every time of election. It is understand that a candidate tries to win by hook and by crook. They did not hesitate to use violent means and militant elements appeared during election campaign. It is apprehended that there would be the appearance of violent means such as kidnapping and event killing etc. in the next election. It seemed that circulating messages was not enough to change and reform the prevailing unhealthy democratic politics. Therefore it becomes imperative to do some substantial and concrete works, the committee concerned.

In view of the prevailing of dirty activities and the necessity of stopping undesirable practices in the electoral politics, The Presbyterian Church initiated the formation of an organization to combat the high election campaign expenditure, use of money and kinds for purchasing votes and violent means for winning over the opponent. At first it was designed for including all the church denominations. There are 11

⁷⁴ *Mizoram Peace Forum, Hmalak Dan Tur Kaihhraina (Working Guidelines)*, published by MPF, the 2nd Edition, 2009 p.1

⁷⁵ *Synod New Letters*, No 274 August, 2006.

⁷⁶ P. Lalthanzama *Role of Mizoram People Forum in Mizoram Politics*, A paper submitted to IGNOU, 2009, pp, 4,5.

founding members consisting of 7 Church denominations and five NGOs. Beside these, there are 6 associate members.⁷⁷

Goals and Objectives of MPF

The MPF is established for the pursuit of good governance, peace and harmony, sustainable socio-economic development and freedom in the state. It is relevant here to mention the summary of its goals and objectives of MPF are as follow:⁷⁸

It aim to work towards establishing democratic government through free and fair election, and reform the electoral process and do

⁷⁷ *Concise Profile of Mizoram People Forum.* p.1

With the initiative of Presbyterian Church the following church denominations and NGOs are the founding members of the MPF-

1. Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod.
2. Catholic Church, Mizoram.
3. Wesleyan Methodist Church.
4. Evangelical Church of Maraland, Saiha.
5. Evangelical Free Church of India.
6. Lairam Isua Krista Kohhran, Lawngtlai.
7. Young Mizo Association.
8. Mizo Upa Pawl.
9. Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl.
10. M.T.P. Headquarters, Saiha.
11. Young Lai Association Headquarters, Lawngtlai.

The following associations are the Associate members of the MPF.

- i) Mizoram Young Chakma Association, Chawngte.
- ii) Mizoram Chakma Students Union,
- iii) Mizoram Chakma Mahila Samiti.
- iv) Mizoram Buddhist Association.
- v) B.R.K Headquarters, Chawngte,
- vi) M.Ch.P. Headquarters Saiha.

⁷⁸ *Mizoram Politics Siamthatna, Mizoram Peace Forum Hnathawh (10th April –March 2009)* Documents Compiled by MPF, 2009 p.5.

away with the corrupt and mal-practices in electoral system in the state. It intends to put in place a transparent, accountable and responsible government; and also educate the people on the governance issues and to be responsible citizens. The objective is to guide and advise the government on developmental issues, and to conduct social audits for social reforms and to counter any form of violence, use of arms and terrorism.

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the MPF is decentralized. The lowest or grassroots structure is the most vital unit of the organization. The organization is structured into six forums as mention below:⁷⁹

1. **General Body:** The general body is constituted by all the members of MPF and the meeting of the general body is held at least once a year. This is the highest policy making body and the supreme authority of the organization.

2. **Central Forum:** The Central Forum, also known as the ‘Governing Board’ is the highest executive body under the general body. All the decisions and resolutions made by the general body are carried out by the Central Forum. Central Forum also co-ordinates and looks after the functioning of the District Forum.

⁷⁹ *Concise Profile of Mizoram People Forum.* p.2

3. **Board Executive Forum:** The Board Executive Committee looks after the day to day duties and functioning of the organization, and pursues all the tasks and resolutions of the general body and the Central Forum.

4. **District Forum:** The District Forum is established in all the Administrative/Political District within Mizoram and its function is to co-ordinate and look after the local forum within its jurisdiction.

5. **Constituency Forum:** It is proposed to be set up at the time of the State Assembly election or when the specific need arises, the Constituency Forum will be formed as per Assembly Constituency, covering the same area under the Assembly Constituency. This forum will co-ordinate and look after the Local Forum MPF within its jurisdiction, especially at the time of the State Assembly Election.

6. **Local Forum:** Established in all the village council areas within the state, Local Forum MPF is the backbone and strength of the organization. The majority of the task and activities to fulfill the aims and objectives of the organization are being carried out at this level.

Role of MPF

The vision and mission of MPF is to establish good governance, peace and harmony, progress, just and sustainable socio-economic development and the freedom of the people. MPF tried their level best for the fulfillment of their vision and policies. From the inception to the present MPF experienced different elections such as i) Tlungvel Constituency MLA Bye Election, October 30, 2006, ii) Mara Autonomous District Council General Election, May 30, 2007, iii) Chakma Autonomous District Council General Election, March 2008,

iv) Mizoram Legislative Assembly General election, December 2, 2008, v) Village Council Election March 24, 2009, vi) Member of Parliament election along with South Tuipui MLA bye election, April 16, 2009. In these different levels of elections MPF tried their level best for the fulfillment of their policies and objectives.

One of the first and foremost tasks of the newly constitute MPF was to consult the representative of different political parties and make decision along with them. The first consultation with political parties including Indian National Congress, Mizo National Front, Mizoram Peoples Conference, and Zoram National Party was held on the 25th September, 2006 at Synod Conference room. They prepared a draft of 'Election Guidelines' in agreement with each other. The second consultation was held on the 30th April 2008, which was attended by the additional party representatives of Bhartya Janata Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Nationalist Congress Party. After minor modification and alteration the meeting adopted the 'Election Guidelines' to be followed in the ensuing MLA General election. The meeting minutes were circulated to every nook and corner of the state via the MPF network, and the political parties were also requested to circulate the same message to different places through their blocks and units.

The consultation of the founding members and the political parties of Mizoram were held on the 25th September 2006 and April 30th, 2008 framed the certain election guidelines for the smooth monitoring

and conduct of election in the state of Mizoram.⁸⁰ Let us examine the various guidelines for understanding the real purpose having the MPF.

Election Expenditure

The MPF is very strict about the election expenditure. They insist that no party or candidate shall indulge in huge and wasteful election expenditures. Election expenditures should be kept to the minimum. Activities which are ‘corrupt practices’ and offences under the law can crop up during the house to house campaign. Therefore, all such activities must be avoided. Procession may also be dispensed with. Influencing of voters through money or other incentives must be avoided. Community feasting, picnic, poster and flag wars escalate the election expenditure unnecessarily. Therefore, they may be avoided. Public, organizations and individuals are requested not to ask or expect any favour from the candidates. Similarly, candidates and political parties are also requested to refrain from announcing any financial grants or promised thereof. Setting up of campaign/election office may be avoided.

Free and fair election and security issue

The MPF is determined to conduct the election in the state in a free and fair manner. Use of force, intimidation and undue influence to the voters to secure their votes must be avoided. It objects to the securing the support of underground armed groups and use of arms shall be prevented at all cost. They want to take all necessary actions to

⁸⁰ *Framework of Guidelines For Electioneering*, issued by MPF Hqrs. Central YMA Building, M.G. Road, Aizawl 2009, p.14

security and peaceful election, especially along the border and sensitive areas.

Policy implementation and candidature issues

The MPF is very keen about the various strategies adopted by the candidates during the elections. Only realistic and do-able policies and programmes must be included in the party manifesto. Personal and individual life of the candidates should not be used as a poll issue. Election campaigning should revolve around the party policy and programme. Political parties are expected to put forward those who are upright, God-fearing, clean and honest persons as candidates. Campaigning by use of false propaganda, unproven truth and scandalous issues must be avoided.

Joint Electioneering Effort

The MPF is particular about soaring expenditure as well as maintaining peace at the time of election. For this reason they insist joint electioneering efforts. As and when possible, joint election campaign platform will be organized for various candidates, under the guidance of MPF. All public meetings, even those organized by individual party, may be held under the guidance of MPF. Distribution of party manifestos, policy and programmes and any other leaflets may be undertaken by the MPF duty or in a joint effort with the party workers. No tea or eatables shall be served on the polling day. Giving out of election numbers or slips shall be undertaken by the MPF duty or in a joint effort with the party workers.

In addition to the above mentioned guidelines, the MPF Local Forum and leaders of political parties are authorised, without deviating from the spirit of the agreement to draft in details actions to be taken within their localities, as per their requirement.

MPF and Election Campaign

The first challenge of MPF was Aizawl District Tlungvel MLA Constituency bye election. MLA seat was vacated due to the untimely demise of the then existing MLA Mr. Sainghaka, The Election Commission of India issued notification and conducted bye election on the 30th October 2006. On the 25th September 2006, the MPF convened consultation with political parties such as Mizo National Front (MNF), Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), Mizoram Congress Party (MPC), Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and Mizoram Peoples Conference Party (MPC). Every party accepted to follow the election guidelines framed by the MPF and also wished to work for the existence of free and fair election in the coming election.

For the smooth functioning of MPF electioneering work, four local forums were set up in different villages. For the enlightenment of innocent and illiterate electorates they organized seminar, training and MPF policy awareness campaign in different places. They taught the people not to elect a candidate who are indulging in drinking, sex and corruption. They also prohibited house to house campaign, use of money for the influence of voters, preparation of public feast, quoting of personal life in the polling campaign, use of violent means and underground armed group etc. They also encouraged all candidates and

party men to follow Election Model Code of Conduct. As a result of the involvement of the MPF during the election and election campaign, there was no public nuisance, spending of huge amount of money in the election.⁸¹ It can be mentioned that the existence of free and fair election under cool environment was due to the hard work of the MPF.

The first challenge of election from the inception of MPF was followed the second and the third Autonomous District Council level election i.e. Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) election, held on the 3rd May, 2007 and Chakma Autonomous District Council(CADC) election held on the 5th March, 2008 election. These two Autonomous District Councils are situated in the southern part of Mizoram. The greatest and most effective election faced by the MPF, however, was Mizoram State Legislative election held on the 2nd December 2008. The grassroots' level Village Council election covering the whole state was held on the 24th April 2009. The subsequent election of Member of Parliament and South Tawipui Constituency MLA bye-election was held on the 16th March 2009. In all these elections, MPF headquarters and its District, Constituency and Local level forums tried their level best for the successful realization of their goals and objectives.

MPF realized that the main cause of high expenditure of election campaign are due to non practices of election model code of conduct and the habit of the following traditional campaign such as use of money for influencing electorates, organizing public feasts or picnics, and excessive use of posters and flags. Therefore, with a strong

⁸¹ *MPF Thuchhuah*, Dated Aizawl the 21st May 2007

determination, the MPF and its constituent NGO members, could stop and reduce that kind of political habit in Mizoram election.

MPF believed that arrangement of public meeting by different political parties in separate places may create a problem not only for the party but also to general mass. They organized common platforms for all parties under the chairmanship of MPF leaders. Equal chance is given to all party candidates. In the past elections, every party distributed their election manifesto, Press release and bio-data of their candidates by the party itself. But after the formation of MPF, it took up the responsibilities of the distribution of all party manifestoes and other issues to electorates.

One of the hardships of a candidate and his/her campaigners were engaged during the election is house to house campaign which had been a practice from quite long time. The MPF assumed that house to house campaign in the eve of election may create a loophole for corrupt practices and therefore strictly prohibited such kind of campaign. In addition to this they also informed political parties to avoid public rally and procession during election campaign

For the calming down of political tension, the MPF tried their level best for the avoidance of having election/campaign office in every village. Absence of election office in the villages automatically stopped the excessive use of loudspeaker for the popularization of their party and unnecessary announcement from party office. Information offices temporarily were opened only for election purpose was commonly used for by all parties.

Prohibition of use of force and fraudulence

The main idea of MPF is to have free and faire election and to enable the law abiding citizens to exercise their franchise without fear. MPF urged to all parties not to cooperate with different militant ethnic groups inside and outside Mizoram and also asked the Governor of Mizoram to check illegal infiltration of foreign nationals and militant groups of neighbouring state.⁸² Before the election the MPF had sought the help of the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) to persuade militant groups not to interfere during the polls.⁸³ Uses of fraudulence, false propaganda, and unproven truth, attacking of personal and private life of candidates and scandalous issues were to be avoided, the MPF insisted.

Since inception to the present, the MPF has played an important role in the electoral process, wherever and whenever election is held in the state. They advised government for the strict implementation of Election Model Code of Conduct.⁸⁴ The MPF advised political parties to make only realistic and doable policies. Unlike in the previous elections, criticism of personal and individual life of a candidate as a poll issue is rare. In general, the campaign speeches and slogans revolved around party policies and election manifestoes.

In fact, due to the present of MPF, there is a real change in the practices of democracy in Mizoram. They worked with firmness and good sense to induce cooperation and compliance, not only among

⁸² *MPF's Letter to His Excellency The Governor of Mizoram* Dated Aizawl the 15th May 2008.

⁸³ *The Time of India* Date. 26 September 2008.

⁸⁴ General Secretary and Sr. Vice President, MPF, *Letter* to His Excellency, Governor of Mizoram. Dated Aizawl the 3th April, 2007.

political parties but also from militant groups, so that they avoided violence and enjoyed free choice in the election. MPF does neither support nor work together with any political party but what they want is to have free and fair election. In case of the displaced Mizoram Bru/Bru population in Mizoram exercise of franchise during the Assembly election in December 3, 2008, the Election Commission of India made a proposal for the convenience of the Bru voters in the refugee camps. MPF however demanded the participation of rightful voters only in the Polling Booth.⁸⁵ The MPF strongly discouraged withdrawal of nomination filed in the eve of election day. They also requested the Government to continue ‘suspension of operation’ against the militant group called United People Front.⁸⁶

All most all kinds of elections from the grass root level to Parliamentary were conducted under the supervision of the MPF. The MPF now turns its attention to good governance. The aim now is to monitor the working of the Government, to see that there is an efficient, transparent and accountable government policy in place. To educate the people on good governance, developmental process and positive role of the people are the important action plan of MPF. Regarding the performance of MPF in Mizoram elections Lt. Gen. (Retired) M.M. Lakhera, Governor of Mizoram said, “I know what the Legislation or Acts and Rules cannot do can be achieved through social pressure which the MPF has great advantage.”⁸⁷ It can be said that with the guidance of Governor and the support of MPF the recent elections were completed smoothly and peacefully.

⁸⁵ MPF *Letter to His Excellency, Governor of Mizoarm*, Dated Aizawl 24th October 2008

⁸⁶ MPF *Press Release*, Dated Aizawl the 24th October 2008.

⁸⁷ Governor’s *Letter* No D.O. NO F230/56/2008-GS Dated Aizawl the 12th December 2008 to Rev. Dr. H. Vanlalauva, President MPF Hqrs. Aizawl Mizoram.

Although the MPF tried to conduct the poll with minimum expenses, it was not to be. It was said that sale of SIM cards and mobile handsets had drastically gone up in Aizawl town. A candidate says, “Since door to door campaign are no more allowed. SMS are an alternative method.”⁸⁸ The church has succeeded in putting a break on use of money power during the election to some extent, but not wholly. It is very difficult to know how far money is used for the expenses of party campaigners and for the influence of voters.

The Level of people’s participation is not same in different elections, while voters gave full attention to Assembly election, it may be less in bye election. Autonomous District Council elections had enormous effect in the affected areas only. The attention of electorates to Parliamentary and village council also may be different in degree. Role of MPF in all these elections are not the same e.g. there were lesser activities in Chakma Autonomous District Council election than in Assembly election. It can be said that all the elections conducted under the watchful eyes of MPF may not be so successful in all respects, but it has an impact on the political process of Mizoram. The Election Commission (EC) has also praised its role in the election. The Commission special observer, Debasis Sen, felt that other states too should follow the MPF way.⁸⁹

In the last MLA election Indian National Congress led by Mr. Lalhanhawla won 32 seat of the 40 Assembly seat. After the formation of Government, the MPF sent a letter to Hon’ble Prime Minister of India

⁸⁸ *The Assam Tribune*, Dated the 20th November 2008.

⁸⁹ *Op.cit*, Date 12th December 2008.

informing him that the Congress party led by Lalthanhawla got more than three-fourth majority in the Ministry and also highlighted that Mizo people had high expectation from his ministry for the development, economics stability and security of the state. They urged the Prime Minister to render all possible assistance and guidance to the new Ministry for the fulfillment of their election manifestoes and peoples' aspiration.⁹⁰ This means that the MPF still continues its services even after election for the welfare of the society.

Thus, it can be assumed that the different churches established by Christian missionaries had played a very important role during the MNF underground movement. The church also plays an effective role in the post insurgency period. The MPF which is an offshoot of the Church tries to maintain peace during elections in the state. This has been evident from its role in different elections being held from time to time.

⁹⁰ *MPF Letter to Prime Minister of India, No. MPN-5/2007/27 Dated Aizawl the 15th January 2008.*

CHAPTER III

CHURCH AND THE GOVERNMENT POLICY

The rise of Christianity and its impact on the Mizo society is very important. Church is involved in temporal aspects such as social and political matters. It is seen that the Church in Mizoram has from time to time reacted to the Government policies and have even influenced the policy making to a great extent. This is evident in the policies like the Government Liquor Licensing Policy.

Liquor Licensing Policy

Drinking of local rice beer was traditionally common to the Mizo, especially prior to the coming of Christianity to the state. By the end of the 19th century Mizo began to accept Christianity as their religion. Consequently, Christian missionaries used to say that the drinking of liquor was not only a social evil but also the opposite of Christian teaching. The traditional religion permitted people to drink whatever they wanted to, while the Christian religion strongly prohibited that kind of practice. Then there was an endless debate regarding the advantage and disadvantage of drinking any fermented liquors.

The first Mizoram Church official anti-country liquor campaign was started in the year 1903 by the Mizoram Baptist Church Conference held at Sethlun, 5 kms from the south Mizoram headquarters Lunglei. The conference strictly prohibited the sale, possession and drinking of country liquor by the church members. In the northern part of Mizoram, the missionaries began to teach the Church members not to indulge in

any kind of alcoholic drinking in the latter part of the first decade of the present century. The missionaries used to say that the selling, buying and drinking of liquor was not appropriate with the Christian conduct.

In the past, several liquor licensing had been given to the different persons. During the British period, the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division passed the Lushai Hills Excise Act of 1923. The Commissioner granted the first Lushai Hills (Mizoram) liquor selling permit to Shri Dev Narain Ram, Silchar.¹

After liquor shops were freely opened to the public, Christian missionaries began to complain to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills and were able to convince him. The Superintendent subsequently stopped the selling up to 1940.² In 1940, the government issued another liquor selling license to another group of persons. The second license too stopped as per the request of the Missionaries to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. Between the Independent of India (1947) and the outbreak of the MNF movement 1966 another Liquor license was granted to Shri Vankhama and Shri Lalbuaia etc. These licenses were stopped due to the expiry of the validity and other unfavourable circumstances.

The traditional Mizo household beer made out of rice was one of the items of consumption. Following the teaching of the missionaries soon after the embracement of Christianity the general people wanted to stop drinking and making of local rice beer. Anyhow, the government never legalizes local made rice beer. The liquor which included in the

¹ *Mizoram District Council Record Room File NO. 11-12 of 1923, vide letter letter No.366E. Dt 15th May 1923, under the license No 565(T) Dt. 22.6.1923*

² An *interview* with C. Lalchawimawia District Council Record Room.

Excise Acts was only Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). All the local Church denominations were united in their efforts of eliminating drinking and selling of liquor within Mizoram. Only a few people supported the introduction of liquor licenses in the state. Then there was a continuous debate on the introduction and use of the Mizoram Excise Act and the Rules. The greatest church reaction was to the government policy on the introduction of the Mizoram Excise Bill of 1973, which originated from the Finance Department and introduced in the Assembly on the 25th September 1973, and passed on the 10th April 1974. Then it becomes Mizoram Act No. 7 of 1974.³ The Act was published in Mizoram Gazette Extra Ordinary dated 22nd May 1974. The Mizoram Excise Act 1973 was used to control the import, transport, manufacture, sale and possession of the alcoholic liquor and intoxicating drugs and to provide for the imposition of excise text there on in Mizoram and for matter connected therewith.⁴ The Mizoram Excise Act 1973 was not enough to control, import, transport and dispose of liquor in the state. It is necessary to have the subordinate rules which come to be known as the Mizoram Exise Rule of 1983.⁵

³ *Register for Bills Introduced in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly* from 1973 . p.3

⁴ *The Mizoram Excise Act 1973* (Act No. 7 of 1974) Published by the Commissioner of Excise and Taxes Mizoram, 1974, p.1

⁵ *The Mizoram Gazette Extra- Ordinary*, published by authority XIII, Aizawl, Tuesday 19.10.1984 ASVINA 17. SE 1906 Issue No 47. According to the Rule 208 of Mizoram Excise Rules, 1983 licenses for the whole sale and retail vend of Intoxicants may be granted for one year from 1st April to 31 March, or any other shorter period within that year subject to the following provisions: If any license be granted during the course of the year, it shall be granted only up to the 31st March next following; Whole sale license for the supply and sale of intoxicants may be granted for any number of years not exceeding five as the government of Mizoram may decide in each case.

Following the excise rules, the Government of Mizoram issued the dealership license of bonded warehouse cum whole sale to Rothangpuia, Lunglei and Liantluanga Dawrpui, Aizawl.⁶

In addition to the legal liquor vendors, there were some other illegal local rice beer sellers and foreign liquor marketers. According to some unofficial estimated the owner's of bar or wine shops daily income was from Rs. 3,000.00 to Rs 5,000.00. In the same way the illegal wine sellers also got daily income form Rs 2,500.00 to Rs 4,000.00. Then both the legal and illegal wine shop or bar daily income amounted to Rs 5,500.00 to Rs 9,000.00.⁷ This may seem to be rough estimate, but they are indicative of the extent of business.

After the enactment of the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 and the Mizoram Excise Rule 1983, all the wine shops were opened on the 19th February 1985. On that first day crowded customers making long queue were seen in different shops. According to the daily newspaper report, during this time every night more than ten drunkards were arrested by the police.⁸ The introduction of the Excise Act increased the numbers of drunkard in the Mizo Society.

As mentioned earlier, from the inception in Mizoram churches had been carrying out anti-liquor campaign in the society. In 1985, the Presbyterian Church appealed to the Government of Mizoram to stop the free selling of liquor in Mizoram as it was not appropriate with the

⁶ *Government Letter NO G. 2816/1/84 COMET* Dated the 17th Sept. 1985. Rothangpuia, Lunglei vide Memo No. G. 28016/1/84 COMET and Liantluanga, Dawrpui, Aizawl. (P & Sons) on the 17th September 1985

⁷ *Senhri*, Mizoram Weekly Magazine, 15-22 September 1985, p. 14.

⁸ *Hunthar*, Daily Magazine, Vol.XI Date 5.2.1985 Issue No 4632.

Christian community. At the same time some voluntary organizations such as Young Mizo Association (YMA), the women organization like the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) and some political parties understood the rapid increase of drinking and the bad effect of drinking in the society, and tried to stop the implementation of the said Act and Rules.

The Presbyterian Church, which is the biggest denomination in the state appealed to all party leaders to select only those politicians who refrained from drinking to contest the elections.⁹ On behalf of the leaders of different denominations of local churches Rev. R. Lalrinsanga and Rev. Lalsawma strongly criticized the consumption of liquor and other alcoholic drinks, and also mentioned that they wanted to support the organization who is working for the elimination of that kind of social evil.¹⁰ On the 20th November 1986, Dr. C.L. Hminga, General Secretary and Rev. Hrangenga, Chairman Zoram Baptist Church requested public leaders not to indulge in alcoholic liquor and intoxicating drugs. In the same way United Pentecostal Church, Lunglei District also declared that they wanted to get the state leaders to refraining form drinking. To ban the Mizoram Excise Act 1973, under the leadership of T.C. Kapmawia, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students' Association) approximately 200 students passed a resolution to move the government for the passing of 'Liquor Prohibition Bill' in the first Assembly session.¹¹ It can be thought that students' action in this regard was the result of the Church work

⁹ *Inthlan Chung Changa Presbyterian Thuchhuak* by Rev. Rokhuma Secretary and Rev. Robawia, Moderator, Mizoram Church Synod Aizawl. Dated the 13th Nov. 1983

¹⁰ *An Appeal to all the People of Mizoram by MKHC*. Date 13th September, 1988

¹¹ *Government Fourth nightly Confidential Report 14-30, July 1979*.

Due to the continuous and severe criticism of the free sale of liquor in the state, the government had no option but to withdraw the Excise Act. In practice, it was not an easy task to repeal the Act as the President of India had given his assent. Actually it was not possible for the state government to withdraw the act at once. However, Mizoram Churches demanded strict prohibition of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and local liquor, (in reality local rice beer manufacturing was not allowed any time). The progress of demanding prohibition of liquor license was very slow. The stumbling block behind the screen was the large number of the supporters of the existing Excise Act 1973, and the Rules of 1973. Because of support for free sale of liquor in public was shameful in Mizo society, even the regular drinkers had no voice during the withdrawal process of the liquor licenses. The non stop demand by the Church was later supported by other social organizations, and then the general public gradually understood the evil effects of the sale and drinking of IMFL and local rice beer in Mizo society.

In this case, the Church, the only religious organization alone could not directly do anything. It was in the hands of the government authority. Since the government is made of political party with the support of majority voters known as electorates, the act on the concerns of political party clearly understands that they need to hear the public; at the same time social organization or interest groups also are aware of their importance at the time of election. In order to get the support of Church the then major political party such as the Congress (I), People's Conference (PC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) were blaming each other on the issue of Liquor Licenses in the state. In fact, the passage of Mizoram Excise Act 1973 and the Mizoram Excise rule was done during the Congress Ministry.

The constant pressure of the Church for the withdrawal of liquor licensing policy thus changed the policy of different parties on the issue of liquor licenses. During 1989 MLA election campaign, the Congress (I) led by Lalthanhawla promised the people to stop the sale of IMFL and local rice beer if they got majority in the Assembly seats. When the election result was declared Congress (I) got majority in the State Assembly and formed the ministry. The Congress implemented their promise and scrapped liquor licensing policy. In pursuance of church appeal the Government of Mizoram passed Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act in 1995. Even after 15 years of operation of MLTP Act, the Presbyterian Church Synod Executive Members asked the Government led by Mr. Lalthanhawla to continue the existing MLTP act of 1995.¹² To remove or amend MLTP Act of 1995 is a burning topic in the first decade of present millennium.

Thus it may be said that the efforts of the Church in removing liquor licenses from the state bore results. The Government could not withstand the pressure put up by the various church organizations and the public opinion generated by them. The policy making process was heavily influenced by the Church on matters of moral purpose like banning drinking etc.

¹² *Mizoram Legislative Assembly Member (MLA) te Lawmna leh Thuchah* Issued by Mizoram Presbyterian Synod on the 18th February, 2009.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH ORGANIZATION AS A PRESSURE GROUP IN MIZORAM POLITICS

The first Mizoram youth organization appeared as a result of a new kind of interaction among the Mizos especially in the wake of Christianity. The transition from the primitive societal life of migrating here and there to permanent settlement, and the enlightenment of the general people under the British administration, led to the formation of association among the Mizo. The Christian missionaries encouraged the youth of the then Lushai Hills to form the Young Lushai Association that come into being on the 15th June 1935.¹ This association was formed in the line with the young Welsh organization. The name of Young Lushai Association (YLA) was later changed into Young Mizo Association (YMA). The mottos of this association were to make leisure profitable, to seek progress and uplift of the Mizo society, to uphold the honour of the practice of Christian value.² YMA is a non political organization standing on the commitment of helping the needy persons.³ This organization was registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 (Act XXI) on the 14th May 1977. Ten texts or passages committed to memory and ten guiding principles are there in their constitution.⁴

¹ C. Vanlallawma, *YMA History 1935-1995*, Published by the CYMA in collaboration with NFI, 1998 p. 8

² C. Dothansanga, *The YMA, Its Activities and Impact on the Mizo Society*, M.Phil Dissertation Submitted to NEHU, Shillong, 1991, p. 32

³ *YMA Dan Bu (Constitution)*, 1999, p.1

⁴ The ten guiding principles are- 1. The traditional Mizo patriotism, voluntary and politeness should be blossom in my life. 2. Remembering the practice of different kinds of corruption and indulgence in alcoholic things are not appropriate with the nature of YMA, I should be refraining from those things. 3. I should demonstrate the most precious heritage of Mizo *Tlawmngaihna* (voluntary/to help other people without expecting any thing return) nicely in the eyes Mizo and non Mizo, and I also would use it for the declaration of the respectfulness of the Mizo nation. 4. Since the respect of the elder one is inculcated in the Mizo culture, I should therefore, respect any elder even if he is in a lower position. 5. I should not insult other nationals, at the same time I should not be in a position to be look down by them. 6.

The chief/head organization of YMA is Central YMA (CYMA); the headquarters is situated at Aizawl, Mizoram. Under the guidance of Central Coordination Committee, Central Executive Committee leads CYMA. Under the CYMA there is one Sub-Headquarters at Lunglei to coordinate all YMA branches living within Chhimituipui and Lunglei district. The standing committee of Sub-headquarters is called Sub-headquarters Executive Committee. For the convenience of administration and delegation of power the Central Executive Committee may form Group YMA which is to look after of the Group YMA Executive Committee. Under Group YMA there are Branch YMAs almost in every village. In some towns and big villages more than one branch may form Joint YMA.⁵

There are two types of acquiring YMA membership, i.e. annual member and life member.⁶ Any person above teenage who accepts the principles and the commitments is eligible to be annual member and life member of the YMA by paying a prescribed membership fee.⁷ Every structural organization of YMAs has designated leader such as President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Every post has power and function as prescribed by the constitution. Every leader from top to bottom is elected by the members according to the electoral rules laid down by the YMA constitution. The area of operation covers the entire state of Mizoram

Remembering self reliance is the source of honour and bravery, I should be a self reliance person, not to ask help from other and help to them. 7. Understanding the flora is the need of human being, I have to safeguard it with all my strength. 8. I should be a good citizen of the state, who cooperate the government and not to criticise but to give good advice. 9. I should not care only myself interest but other too, I should control myself to respect other idea and follow them. 10. Being a member of YMA, I should take care of my life for the beauty of Mizo nation and the sanctity of the YMA.

⁵ C. Vanlallawma, *YMA History 1935-1995*, Published by CYMA, 1998, p. 59.

⁶ *The annual membership* fee is Rs 2.00 *The life time membership* fee is Rs 100.00

⁷ *YMA Constitution (Dan Bu) 1999*, Revision Chapter III, Clause No.17-18

and some part of neighboring states like Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura.

Since the inception till date, YMA has been known as a non-political organization. Officially they never support particular party and also do not want to be called as a pressure group. In his presidential address to public on YMA day, the 15th June of 2008, the Central YMA President J.H. Zoremthanga announced that they (YMA) did not want to be a pressure group.⁸ Holding of posts of office bearers of the CYMA is open to all members regardless of their involvement in political parties, religious organizations and government services. As time went on, there arose an idea among the members that office bearers in the CYMA should not be active workers of political parties. Thus in 1987 CYMA General Conference was held at Khawzawl. There various branches namely Branch II, Republic Veng Branch, Zotlang Branch and Group 41 YMA raised an agenda for demarcation of the youth organization from involvement in politics. Although the wordings of the agenda submitted by these various branches and one group are not same, it is clear that certain sections of YMA wanted to have office bearers who are totally free from political involvement.

However, when the agenda were opened for discussion, there was no supporter in the forum, and then the proposals were turned down in the conference.⁹ This means that some members are not satisfied with the existing system of YMA, their proposal could not be pushed through in the General Conference and expected proper demarcation of youth

⁸ *Presidential Address of CYMA, J.H. Zoremthanga on the 15th July 2008* Broadcasted in local cable T.V. LPS

⁹ *CYMA Conference Minute of 1987* Resolution No 11. The conference was held from the 20th September – 2nd October 1987 at Khawzawl.

organization from the linkage of political parties. We can examine the role of YMA in political matters such as the peace talk, preparation of electoral roll, maintaining free and fair election, foreigner issue and the Inner Line Permit.

YMA and the Peace Talk

YMA is a non political organization no doubt, but it always puts pressure on government whether it is a state or central government. Since the Mizo National Front (MNF) armed revolt broke out on the 1st March 1966, the normal activities of YMA were calmed down as the then whole district was faced with war like situation unleashed by the MNF underground movement and the counter insurgency movement launched by the Government of India. According to C. Vanlallawma, the period during 1963-1968 the YMA was totally dormant.¹⁰ In the beginning of 1970s there was a bit of change of political atmosphere, then the YMA restarted activities in the first Mizoram Union Territory MLA election which was held on the 18th April 1972, five YMA office bearers were elected as MLAs.¹¹

On the 2nd March 1966, the Mizo District was declared as ‘a disturbed area’ under the Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 along with the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act 1958.¹² Government of India also made same declaration under article 352 of the constitution of India.¹³ Underground MNF operation and the Indian army counter action created many problems in the Mizo society. During

¹⁰ C. Vanlallawma, *Op cit.*, p 48

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² N. Nibedon, *Mizoram the Daggar Brigade*, Lanar Publication, New Delhi, 1983, p.78

¹³ J.V. Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, Mizo History Association, Aizawl 1985, p.98

this time, besides the killings, public life was very insecure; torturing of innocent civilians and the curtailment of individual freedom prevailed in the length and breadth of the district. YMA understood the problems faced by the Mizos and submitted a complaint against the activities of Indian army to the Prime Minister of India on the 23rd November 1974. On the same day, YMA and the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Student Association) organised silent procession against the then prevailing lawlessness and the suffering of innocent people.

After the up-gradation of Mizo District into Union Territory (UT), the first Chief Minister, Mr. Ch. Chhunga requested the President and the General Secretary of Central YMA to attend the peace research committee held on the 8th November 1974 at Aizawl club. With the permission of Central Executive Committee the two leaders of YMA attended the meeting. This meeting resolved to constitute 'Peace Advisory Committee.' As per the request of the committee itself YMA also became the member of the said committee. Central YMA kept on offering valuable advices to the peace making body. During the MNF movement, along with political parties and other associations they did their level best for the restoration of peace in Mizoram. During the peace talk between Government of India and MNF, Central YMA pressed both the parties to make peace and settlement in Mizoram.¹⁴

As the first and most important thing was peace and tranquility, Central YMA thought it necessary to cooperate with other Non Governmental Organizations such as students' association, women organization and even political parties too. The YMA General

¹⁴ *Central YMA Committee Resolution* No 1 of 22.3.1976

Conference which was held in 1976 at Kolosib town passed a resolution for peace and harmony in the state.

In order to show the appreciation of the Mizoram Accord signed on the 30th June 1986, the YMA lighted torch on the night of the 30th June 1986 throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram.¹⁵

YMA and Electoral Roll

Free and fair election is an essential condition for the success of democracy. If the election is not free and fair people may not trust their rulers. As the CYMA pointed out, the first important step for the decency of election depends upon the preparation of electoral roll.¹⁶

Central YMA feels it essential to safeguard the state and the nation against the illegal immigrants especially from the neighboring nations and sister states. For this purpose they formed a committee known as 'Ram leh Hnam Vengtu Committee' which means a watch dog committee on state and nation.

Since 1996, in the name of CYMA, *Ram leh Hnam Vengtu Committee* initiated action to perform the assignments allotted to them. A notable work concerning the electoral roll was deletion of illegal enrolment from electoral roll.¹⁷ All the YMA branches were informed to check and record their respective area of electoral roll and also informed them to submit the report to the government for perusal. For the purpose

¹⁵ C. Dothansanga, *The YMA: Its activities and impact on the Mizo Society*, NEHU, Shillong, 1992, p. 83 (Unpublished)

¹⁶ J.H. Zoremthanga, *Secretary, CYMA, CYMA General Conference Vawi 55-na 2000 p.21*

¹⁷ Lalbiakmawia Ngente, *Ram leh Hnam Humhalh*, CYMA, Aizawl, 1998, pp.62-63

a one day seminar on Electoral roll form was organized on the 28th November 1996 at Synod Conference Hall, Aizawl. For the interception of foreigners and implementation the authentic of Voter Identity Card introduced by the Election Commission of India, YMA rendered idea and assistance to the government of Mizoram.

As Mizoram has a number of foreigner guests especially from Myanmar and Bangladesh, YMA understood that the inclusion of foreigners in the electoral roll is illegal and having bad effect on the socio economic and political life of the Mizo. Therefore, the CYMA demanded genuine electoral roll that will be acceptable by every party.¹⁸ During the preparation of the electoral roll for 1998 Assembly election, party workers collected 75,000 names to be listed in electoral roll.¹⁹ This meant that every party collected names of their respective party supporters to be enrolled in the E/Roll. YMA felt that if the system was allowed to continue Mizoram may get the most wrongful E/Roll in India. Then with the initiative of CYMA, a joint meeting with political parties was held on the 15th September 1998, and decided to set aside party feeling and prepared the best possible E/Roll under the guidance of YMA.²⁰ According to the norm, the existing E/Roll was to be revised in the last part of the previous year. But with the initiative of YMA the existing electoral roll was used for the ensuing MLA election without revision. Generally electoral roll is revised in the last part of the current year and the first of part the next year. From the year 1998, however, onward YMA has actively been participating in the preparation of electoral roll.

¹⁸ *CYMA Election Message (MLA Election of 1987)*

¹⁹ Nghaklianmawia, *CYMA General Conference Vawi 55-na*, Thupui No I. Ram leh Hnam Humhalh, 2000, p. 17

²⁰ T. Sangkunga, *Ram leh Hnam Hunhalh*, CYMA General Conference Vawi59-na 2004, p. 9

During the preparation of Village Council electoral roll and the summary revision of Assembly/Parliament electoral roll in 2000, the CYMA did their level best for the deletion of foreigners and other nationals. With the initiative of YMA around 50000 names of illegal immigrants were removed from V/C electoral roll; at the same time CYMA office bearers met some government officials such as Deputy Commissioner and Local Administrative Department Minister. A Joint meeting with political parties and other Non-Government Organizations was organized under the guidance of LAD Minister at Secretariat Conference Hall. Regarding the summary revision of the roll sheets in 2000 for 2001 Assembly/Parliament electoral, CYMA reported that the rate of increase of voters was much less in 2001.²¹ On the special revision of electoral roll of 2001, State level meeting held at the Chief Election Officer's Chamber, CYMA General Secretary attended on behalf of YMA. In the next month on the 2nd October, 2000, the President of CYMA was present in the District level electoral roll special revision for 2001. It is learnt that due to the two important meetings the rate of increase of voters became less compared with the previous years.²²

In pursuance of the 56th YMA General Conference theme “*Ram leh Hnam Humhalh*” (Safeguarding of the State and Nation) on the 15th November 2001, CYMA organized training on electoral roll. In this training Branch and Group leaders coming from different places were told to have fair electoral roll with a request to work hard during the preparation of special revision of electoral roll for 2002. Then the increasing rate of voters in the special revision of 2002 became 2.97 %

²¹ J.H. Zoremthanga, Gen. Secretary, *Central YMA General Conference Vawi 55-na* 2000, p. 22

²² *Central YMA General Conference Vawi 56-na* On 23-25 October 2000, at Kawnpui, p. 18

in the whole state. On the 7th November 2002 Mr. Lalruatkima, General Secretary of CYMA, attended the state level coordination committee on electoral roll at the office chamber of Aizawl Deputy Commission. Besides this, CYMA leader met Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on the issue of electoral roll summary revision of 2002.²³ In the joint meeting of political parties and YMA held on the 3rd August 2002, all parties requested YMA to render their best service for the preparation of Village Council electoral roll. Since the Election Commission of India ordered government to prepare voters photo identity card, it was necessary to have genuine Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC). Thus CYMA leaders approached the concerned department and organized meeting at Synod Conference Hall on the 4th October 2002. In this meeting CYMA informed all its branches of Mizoram to cooperate with the election officials in the preparation of EPIC. In the discussion of the next MP/MLA special revision of electoral roll for 2003 under the guidance of D.C. Aizawl, on behalf of CYMA T. Sangkunga Central Executive Member attended. Like the previous years, YMA told all their members to delete foreigners and other nationals in the next coming special revision of electoral roll.²⁴ In 2003, like other year, they attended the State and District level committee on electoral roll. Following the direction of CYMA almost every branch and Group leaders actively participated in the preparation of electoral roll especially during the hearing of voters. In September 2003, Government of Mizoram conducted short term verification of electoral roll, this time YMA unusually submitted complaint to the Chief Election Commissioner of India. On 12.9.2003 the CYMA leaders met the Joint Chief Election Commissioner and the Acting Chief Secretary of Mizoram, and also submitted the matter to another Non-Governmental Organization called Safe Mizoram Committee. The next day i.e. on the

²³ *Central YMA General Conference Vawi 57-na* On 22-24 October 2002 at Khawzawl p.31

²⁴ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 57-na*. On 22-24 October 2002 at Khawzawl p.32

13th September 2003, they also visited the Home Minister of Mizoram Mr Tawnluia, and told their grievance in respect of short term verification of the electoral Roll.²⁵

During the special summary revision of electoral roll between 12th January 2004 – 29th February 2004, YMA sub-headquarters, groups and branches actively took part for the removal of foreigners and unqualified candidates from the electoral roll. Thus in cooperating the government in the preparation of electoral roll, YMA can be said as the leading organization among other NGOs such as Mizo Hmeichhe Insuikhawm Pawl (Mizo Women Federation), Mizo Upa Pawl (Mizo Senior Citizen Organization) and Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Student Association). During the intensive revision of electoral roll 2005 YMA firmly stood on 1993 electoral roll for the entry of Reang people who inhabiting in the north western belt of Mizoram. In the past few years due to the misunderstanding between Reang (also called Tuikuk) and the Mizo, many Reang families migrated to the neighbouring state Tripura. After the return of those people it becomes difficult to distinguish between Mizo Reang and Tripura Reang, YMA was very careful in this matter. Therefore YMA demanded use of 1993 electoral roll for the entry of Reang people in Mizoram electoral roll.²⁶

Since the entry in the electoral roll and obtaining EPIC is one of the most important factors of citizenship, it has many important other things too. If foreigners and unqualified persons are enlisted in electoral

²⁵ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 58-na*. On the 30th Sept -2nd Oct.2003 at Thenzawl p.35,36

²⁶ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 59-na*, On the 19th-21st October 2004 at Zawlnuam p.32,33.

roll it will harm the Mizo people not only in political matters but also in social life.

YMA and Election

After the independence of India, Mizoram experienced 14 elections in its different stages of political status. During the elections to the District Council which were held three times, the voice of YMA was not known. The YMA's contribution in the election was seen only during the U.T. and State period. The YMA acts as the guardian of Mizo society, and it is very difficult for them to keep silent. Whenever they feel that the political parties and the government moved away from the right path they contribute their best effort to correct the errors. Some of the means which YMA used for steering political parties and the government are procession, preparation of press release, display of posters etc. Besides these, expecting better condition in running the government, YMA used to convene special meetings with the newly elected MLAs.

Amidst a series of the activities the YMA contributions during the elections, let us point out only the first two state MLA elections in which messages were published and distributed by Central YMA.

After the attainment of statehood in June 1986, CYMA expressed that they wanted free and fair election. They also felt that political parties and candidates used to spend money excessively in the elections. They argued that if things went on like that, the government would fall into the pit of corruption. In 1986, for the first time, representatives of YMA and political parties had a joint meeting on the 22nd November

1986, and made arrangement to serve tea indiscriminately to the voters who gathered in the premises of polling booth; which would replaced the previous practice in which party used to establish separate comps for serving tea and thus facilitated the increase of political tension on voting day.²⁷ Since then the funds contributed the candidates were utilized for that common tea. This implied that YMA helped in calming down of political restlessness on polling day. So for the prevention of corruption and the prevalence of free and fair election, central YMA issued directives to the voters and the political parties.²⁸ When the YMA issues directives, the public follow them without protest. Such is the extent of influence of this organization.

Since the electoral roll is the main source of annoyance of the loser party in the post election, the consent of every political party should be taken in the preparation of electoral roll. Only legally qualified persons are to be enrolled in the electoral roll. Central YMA informed all the electorates to remember that making good government was their responsibility, and requested all the branches of YMA to cast their votes and not to demand and receive anything from the candidates. They also suggested all other associations to follow their requests.

CYMA requested all political parties to avoid painting election slogans, symbols etc. with indelible ink in the streets and public places as it may become dirty after the elections. As serving of tea to voters by every political party on polling day may result disintegration of all parties they requested every party unit not to serve tea one election day. They also prohibited organising public feast and appealed all parties to

²⁷ *Joint Committee Minute of YMA and Political parties* held on the 22nd Nov. 1986

²⁸ *Central YMA inthlan thuchah (MLA elections), 1987 & 1993.*

select only the persons having good quality suitable for the better administration of the state. Regarding the election campaign speeches, YMA requested all parties not to look at other parties as enemy and also appealed party men to refrain from any kind of bad activities that may result in misunderstanding among the family and community. Parties were informed not to engage children below the prescribed age and the innocent persons in election campaign. YMA discouraged competition in party wise flag display as a means of election campaign. All parties were requested not to select their candidates those who are not free from intoxication, morally bad and corrupt people. If such kind of persons were selected, the people were requested not to cast vote in favour of those persons.

CYMA acknowledged that the election messages which they had circulated were followed by the people and political parties. From the study of CYMA election message of 2008, it can be understood that YMA has been playing a major role in the elections.

Before 2008 Mizoram MLA election, CYMA distributed their election messages and expected the then coming election to be a model of fair and peaceful election. In the second Mizoram state MLA election, YMA requested the electorates and all political parties to pursue their election messages of 2008.²⁹

Thus CYMA influenced all political parties not to set corrupt persons, bearing loose character as candidates in the coming elections; and also did not allow serving public feast. They condemned use of

²⁹ *CYMA Inthlan Thuchah 2008*. Issued by CYMA, Mizoram, Aizawl. p. 1

innocent children as a means of election campaign and also suggested that all the parties should make election manifestoes only relating to in those issues which they could fulfill after election. YMA denounced selling and purchase of votes with money and other things, and also requested all organizations including the Church not to demand any thing from the parties and candidates.

From the examination of the role of YMA in election process, it can be said that the YMA occupied a very important place in MP, MLA and V/C elections.

YMA and *Ram leh Hnam Vengtu*
(Guardian of Mizo Nation and State).

From the first part of 1940s CYMA conference used to choose conference theme almost in every conference. Generally conference themes were concerned with social, cultural, educational and economic issues. One of the themes concerning foreigner issue was the declaration of safeguarding the state and the nation. In the latter part of 1997; the CYMA formed a subcommittee called '*Ram leh Hnam Vengtu*' (Guardian of Nation and State). With the initiative of *Ram leh Hnam Vengtu* Committee the YMA chalked out how to safeguard the Mizo against the foreigners and other illegal immigrants and also organized seminar on this matters. In the next year, the CYMA conference launched *Ram leh Hnam Humhalh* (Safeguard of State and Nation) as

the theme and extended up to 2000.³⁰ This means that the proclamation of *Ram leh Hnam Humhalh* lasted for three years from 1997-2000.

For the implementation of their objectives YMA pursued different activities. Which can be discussed under various heads as follows-

1. YMA and Foreigner Issue

Like other north-east states, Mizoram is also not free from the foreigners' problem. Since independence of India, foreigner's infiltration started in Mizoram. The main cause of the incoming of foreigners is economic and secondly socio and political in nature. Being aggrieved by the fact that a number of illegal traders and infiltrators are staying in Mizoram, the CYMA chalked out a programme to scrutinize names and to delete illegal ones with constitutional means from electoral roll as well as private and government jobs.³¹ In case of any problem arising out of these activities all members are requested to approach authority and CYMA.

Another important means for the detection of foreigners and other nationals are to maintain Village Census Register. Lalbiakmawia Ngente, CYMA official opines that if Village Census Register is carefully maintained there will be no problem for the detection of foreigners and illegal infiltrators.³² CYMA requests all branches of

³⁰ C. Zoramliana, *Ram leh Hnam Humhalh*, CYMA Conference Vawi 55-na, Hnahtial, 2000, p. 1

³¹ *Ram leh Hnam Humhalh* by the Central YMA, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1998 p. 66

³² *Ibid.*

YMA not to issue any certificate to any foreigner and not to allow change of names in respects of non Mizo name into Mizo name.³³

Regarding the protection of international border against the foreigner's infiltration, there is a 630 Kms international border to safeguard, that it is a heavy task.³⁴ In pursuance of the 54th CYMA General Conference resolution, the CYMA requested the government to construct good road communication and fencing along the international border for the safeguard of Mizo people. Government of Mizoram informed CYMA that the work would be started soon.³⁵

Foreigners (Protected Area) Order, 1958 did not allow any foreigner to visit Mizoram as it was a protected areas. But this strict order was relapsed by Circular No. 154 Date 16.11.1992. According to this circular, Ministry of Home Affairs empowered Mizoram state government to allow 4 or more foreign tourists to visit Mizoram for 10 days.

According to Para 4 of this circular No 154, only Central Government, Ministry of Home Affairs can issue permit to the neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. On basis of Rule 4 of the Passport (Entry to India), Rule 1950, Government of Mizoram issued Memorandum no. F.22015/10/83-HM (PP) Date 14.4.1988. This new order made the free trade zone for Indian and hill

³³ J.H. Zoremthanga, *CYMA Cen. Conference Vawi 55-na* 2000, p. 19

³⁴ *CYMA General Conference. Thupui I Ram leh Hnam Humhalh*, 2000, p. 6.

³⁵ CYMA General Conference, *Ob.cit.*, p. 17

people of Myanmar within 40 Kms in the entry and exit points of international boundary.³⁶

While the above rules and orders are operating in Mizoram, the continuous coming of foreigners from Bangladesh and Myanmar is a well-known affair. In 2001 CYMA conducted foreigner census from 279 branches. However, only 67 branches submitted their reports to the headquarters.³⁷

In 2003 YMA tried to find out foreigners and illegal immigrants and reported to the government to take necessary action. Following their General Conference resolution, 'Let the government be moved to make foreigner check gate where ever necessary.' YMA requested Home Minister to fulfill their desire. As a result, Government of Mizoram issued 'Guideline for Regulation Entry of Myanmarese and non tribal into Mizoram' on the 5th November 2003. According to this order check gate would be made at the following places- Zokhawthar (Champhai District), Thingsai (Lunglei District), Phura (Saiha District) and Lungbun (Saiha District).³⁸

In the year 2004, the CYMA pressurized the government to be rigid on the maintenance of foreigner rules and regulations and also

³⁶ Nghaklianmawia, *CYMA Gen. Conference, Ram leh Hnam Humhalh* 2000, pp. 6,7.

The entry and exit points of international border are-Aizawl District: Administrative Officer of Mimbung, Kawlbem, Hnahlan, Zote, Ruantlang, Vaphai Farkawn; SI/ASI of Melbuk, Phaizawl, Khuangthing. Lunglei District: Administrative Officer of Thingsai. Chhingtuipui District: Administrative Officer of Sangau; SI/ASI of Lungbun, Zawngling, Ainak, Laki, Khengkhawng, Kakiferry, Zokhawchhuah; A.O. Pharva. A.O and SI/ASI may issue permit for 7 days, but in special case it is extendable for another 7 days.

³⁷ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 56-na*, 2001, Kawnpui p. 28

³⁸ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 58-na* 2003, p. 44

informed government officials such as Home Minister, Home Secretary and Deputy Commissioner Aizawl verbally and in writing. They also circulated an appeal on the 6th March 2004 to the public for the discouragement of foreigners and illegal traders and non ILP holders. According to their appeal all people were informed not to provide residence and shop to illegal outsiders.³⁹

The illegal trafficking and crime committed by the foreigners were increasing in the length and breadth of Mizoram. The support base organization YMA pressed the government to be strict in enforcing foreigners Act, and also entrusted Mr J.H. Zoremthanga, Vice President, CYMA to write notes on the conditions of foreigners and the foreigners Act. The draft was approved by the Central Executive Committee on the 13th April 2005 for distribution to the public.⁴⁰

According to Lalbiakzuala, the CYMA estimate of the Myanmarese refugees and immigrants was between 60000-70000 in 2008, among which only 400 were proper refugees.⁴¹ YMA felt that the free movement of foreigners across the international boundary had a bad effect in Mizo society such as illegal drug trafficking, increase of smuggling and crime. From 1997 onwards YMA urged the Government to pay attention to safeguard the international border. At present the Indo-Bangladesh border fencing is going on. In the eastern side Police Check Point is also established at the main gate of Indo-Myanmar border at Zokhawthar. It can be said that it is the result of YMA pressure to the government of Mizoram.

³⁹ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 59-na* 2004, Zawlnuam p. 25

⁴⁰ *CYMA General Conference Vawi 60-na*, 2005, p.24

⁴¹ *Lalbiakzuala, Asst. Secretary CYMA, A Seminar on Ram leh Hnam Humhalh*, 2008, p. 2

2. YMA and Inner-Line Regulation

Before the coming of the British to Mizoram, there were a number of independent Mizo traditional chiefs. In the Battle of Plassey 1757, the British got victory against the Indian ruler Siraj-Uddaullah. Siraj-uddaullah was replaced by his Commander in Chief, Mir Jaffar. But as Mir Jaffar was not efficient in the eyes of the British government, and his grand son Mir Kasim was appointed as the ruler. As a token of his gratitude Mir Kasim offered Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the British in 1760. Therefore Chittagong which lies in the area bordering the present Mizoram became the British territory. The plain of Syhlet which the Mizo, used to invade was lying in this area. According to the treaty of Anglo Burmese, known as Treaty of Yandaboo, on the 24th February 1826, Mizoram bordering areas Arakan and Cachar were put in the hands of the British. Therefore, the Mizo inhabited area was bounded by British territory on all sides. The eastern side called Chin Hills was ruled by the British Burma.

As seen from the earliest records available, the first contact between the Mizos (then called Kuki) and the British were held in 1776. The first meeting was a cordial meeting. Mizo troupes visited and showed their cultural dance to British official Charles Croftes at Esq. Jafaribad.⁴² After 60 years the second record which appeared in Mizo history was the raid of British territory, Syhlet, by Mizo Chief Lalrihua. The raid was called ‘Massacre in the Plain of Syhlet.’ Since the tendency toward British was changed by Mizo Chiefs, around 62 raids were conducted in their neighbouring British areas in between 1844-1892.

⁴² F. Lalremsiama, *Milu Lak Leh Vai Run*, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 1997 p.62

Before the operation of Inner Line Regulation 5 of 1873 in Lushai Hills District a similar Regulation called Chin Hills Regulation V of 1906 had been in operation since 1911.⁴³

In 1873, the government of British India constituted a new regulation known as Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, for the protection of indigenous tribal culture and custom in north east India. At the very beginning this regulation included only Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Lakhipur, Khasi and Jaintia hill, Naga hill and Cachar District.⁴⁴ Before 1930 Inner Line Regulation (ILP) was not applied in the then Lushai Hill (present Mizoram) but it was extended to cover Mizoram with the Executive order on the 28th August 1930.⁴⁵

After independence of India, by virtue of Article 372 (I) of the constitution,⁴⁶ the ILP has been in force in Mizoram since Independence. Regarding the continuance in force of the existing laws and their adoption, the constitution says that all the law in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of this constitution shall continue in force therein until altered or repealed or amended by a competent legislature or other competent authority.

According to the guidelines of ILP in Mizoram, only Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl is authorized to issue ILP. As per rule, permit

⁴³ *Mizoram Chamber of Commerce, Souvenir, Aizawl 1990, pp. 30,31*

⁴⁴ Lalduwama, President Zoram Nationalist Party, *Debating speech* on the issue of Sales Tax organized by Mizoram Journalist Association on 4.7.2001, at Vanapa Hall, Aizawl p. 4

⁴⁵ *Government Notification* No. 910 AP Dated 28th August, 1930.

⁴⁶ *Article 372 (I)* Notwithstanding the repeal by this constitution of the enactments referred to in Article 395 but subject to the other provision of this constitution, all the laws in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of this constitution shall continue in force therein until altered or repeal or amend by a competent Legislature or other competent authority.

may be issued to a person- who wanted to visit his/her relative who is serving as government servant or any one sponsored by the government and the tribal people to do some work- mechanic and technician engaged by the owner of industries and workshop in Mizoram, tourists, government servants, students and the representatives of company who wanted to visit their agents in Mizoram.

YMA understood that the main causes of the coming of large number of illegal labours and traders were due to the misuse of ILP and lack of skilled labourers and the high demand of labourers in different works. Mizo contractors, businessmen and suppliers used to sponsor outsiders. To send back the labour or renew the permit is the responsibility of a person who sponsored labourer from outside the state.

According to ILP rules, all the permit holders are legally bound to work only for the name of the job mentioned in the permit itself. In practice, when the work against the sponsorship was over the sponsorer never sent back the labourers to their home and the permit is renewed by labourers themselves and they work for whatever jobs available to them.

Other problems are the increasing number of illegal traders such as doing business without permit and using tribal names in the business of plain people. According to a survey report conducted by Zoram Vengtu Co-ordination Committee, there were around 236 illegal traders in Aizawl town alone.⁴⁷ In September 1995, a murder of Mizo gentleman at Silchar resulted in a hot communal tension between the

⁴⁷ *Zoram Vengtu, Special Issue Pamhlet No 6*, by the Chamber of Commerce, Mizoram, Aizawl. October, 1993 pp. 21-28

Mizo and the people of the neighbouring state, Assam. The angry mob threatened and damaged non Mizo properties. The incident led to a number of non Mizo trader fleeing from Mizoram and their number has comparatively decreased since then.

From the study of the problems of other Indian states on foreigners and outsiders issue, Lalrinmawia Sohnel, a YMA official said that it is high time to stop the influx of outsiders.⁴⁸ In pursuance to it, a Committee on Safeguarding of State and Nation passed a resolution to appeal to the government to push back all illegal infiltrators to their original place.⁴⁹ It may sound awkward, but Nghaklianmawia, a Central YMA Executive Committee member said that ILP is the gift of God through British rulers for the protection of the Mizo, it should not be only kept in mind, but to utilize it for the purpose. He also mentioned the necessity of enlarging ILP cell in the government office.⁵⁰ In the middle of 2002, according to government records there were 6590 registered ILP holders. Thinking that the appearance of non Mizos and the number of registered ILP holders would not tally, they launched the operation of checking out in the month of September and October, 2002.⁵¹ Several illegal traders and labours were reported to authority.⁵² Since the checking out of non ILP holders had been strictly going on, Central YMA General Conference that was held on 24-26 October 2006, at Saitual passed a resolution to move the government to be more stringent on the implementation of Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act. Central YMA office bearers and CEC meeting opined that the

⁴⁸ Lalrinmawia Sohnel, *Ram Dang Mite*, A seminar paper presented on Ram leh Hnam Siamthat Seminar, 1997, organized by Ram leh Hnam Vengtu Committee, Central YMA. p.18

⁴⁹ *Ram Leh Hnam Humhalh*, published by Central YMA, Aizawl Mizoram 1998, p. 63

⁵⁰ *Central YMA Conference, Vawi 55*, October 17-19, 2000, p.4

⁵¹ *Central YMA Conference, Vawi 57*, October 22-24, 2002, p.18

⁵² *Central YMA Conference, Vawi 58*, 30th September – 2nd October 2003 p.44

existing rule is enough, but it is necessary to develop its application in an effective way. They also made a plan to discuss the matter with the magistrates.⁵³ CYMA used to convene joint committee with other NGOs like Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (Mizo Women Federation) and MUP (Mizo Senior Citizens Organization) etc. and discussed how to safeguard Mizoram against foreigners and outsiders.

Since ILP created problems for the free movement of the plain people, North East Plain Peoples Traders and Youth Federation (NEPTYF) submitted a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) to Gauhati High Court (GHC) on the 2nd June 2008 for the removal of ILP in some north eastern states. Gauhati High Court informed Government of Mizoram to give para-wise comments on that matter within 10 days, i.e. June 2-12 2008. The Government of Mizoram did not give comment within the given time.⁵⁴ Mizoram Chamber of Commerce said that after expiry of ten days the Gauhati High Court extended another one day i.e. 13th June 2008; even then the representative of Mizoram Government, Additional Advocate General, did not give comment on that issue. Therefore, G.H.C. issued interim order for the suspension of ILP. That meant there was no distinction between tribal and non tribal in the tribal inhabited areas formally called 'excluded areas.'⁵⁵

⁵³ *Central YMA Conference, Vawi 61 na*, 24th- 26th October 2006 p.30

⁵⁴ *Vanglaini*, A daily newspaper Vol XXIII No. 143 Dt 28th June 2008 p.1

⁵⁵ During the British rule, some tribal's areas of north eastern India were given special protection against the plain people. The Crown directly administered them through the Superintendent. They did not have representatives in the state government, at the same time the state administration also did not included cover their area/district. That was called excluded area. If some part of tribal district was under the state government and other part was administered by the superintendent, which was called partially excluded area.

Central YMA could not accept the interim suspend order and prayed Gauhati High Court to revoke the order.⁵⁶ On the initiative of Central YMA, a special delegation including CYMA representatives like J.H. Zoremthanga, President and Lalruatkima, General Secretary were sent to the two ILP affected states Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland from 14-19 July 2008.⁵⁷ As the prayer to withdraw 'Interim Order' to G.H.C. was to come into smoke, the CYMA invited NGOs to discuss how to organize protest day and fixed the 26th June 2008 as a protest day. The CYMA and the representatives of NGOs requested all Mizo to observe 'Protest Day' and hoist a black flag in every house. They also informed all institutions, offices, shops and private workshops to close down on that day. CYMA requested Young Lai Association, Mara Students Organization and Lai Students Association etc. to work for the success of the Protest day under peaceful environment. But they gave exemption to police, magistrates, pressmen, medical duties, Public Health Engineering workers, milk suppliers and newspaper distributors. They also requested all the Mizo to unite strongly against the removal of ILP.⁵⁸

The Protest Day of the 26th June 2008 was successfully observed under peaceful atmosphere. All NGOs Coordination Committee was happy for receiving the full cooperation and thanked the public. Other NGOs such as Tuivawl Constituency Youth Convention, All Mizoram Graduate Unemployment Association, and All Mizoram Farmer Union etc also opposed the Interim Order passed by the High Court for suspension of ILP.

⁵⁶ *Vanglaini*, A daily newspaper Vol XXIII No. 137 Dated the 22nd & 23th June 2008 p.1

⁵⁷ *A General Conference Report* by Lalruatkima, General Secretary, Central YMA Conference Report, VI, B 2) 2008.

⁵⁸ *Vanglaini*, A daily Newspaper Voll. XXIII No 137 Dated the 21st June 2008, p.1

Additional Advocate General for Mizoram, Mr. Nelson Sailo, had 19 sessions during 118 days in the Gauhati High Court. On the 27th August 2008, the Gauhati High Court made a judgment order over the case of NEPTYF PIL No.19/2008 Union of India & others Vs. North East Plain Peoples Traders and Youth Federation. The verdict came out in favour of the Union of India and others. That meant the High Court set aside the case to be considered as PIL.⁵⁹

In short, it can be said that YMA is one of the biggest NGOs in Mizoram. The area of operation covered almost the whole state of Mizoram and some part of other neighboring states like Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura. Its contributions for the peace talk during the MNF insurgency period had a great effect not only for the restoration of peace and normalcy in Mizoram but also for the formation of Mizoram state.

The efforts of YMA for making electoral roll of Mizoram a genuine one and its services rendered for the calming down of political tension during election campaign and on the polling days were highly appreciated. The strong YMA pressure on Government for the prevention of foreigner's infiltration reduced illegal immigration from Myanmar and Bangladesh. The pressure of YMA to the Government for the strict maintenance of Inner Line Regulation and its voluntary works for the discouragement of illegal traders and the pushing back of non ILP holders reduced free movement of foreigners, illegal traders and non tribal ILP holders in Mizoram. Therefore, it can be said that a

⁵⁹ *Vanglaini*, A daily Newspaper Voll. XXIII No 207 Dated the 18th September 2008

voluntary organization like YMA works hard for the peace and the development of Mizoram.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT ORGANISATIONS AS PRESSURE GROUPS IN MIZORAM: MIZO ZIRLAI PAWL & MIZO STUDENTS UNION

PART I

MIZO ZIRLAI PAWL (MZO)

Students have been one of the most important strata in society whether in the developed or developing countries. Students of different parts of the world usually work for the articulation of their interest. But there might be variations due to social, economic and political environment. Extremist attitudes and actions occur frequently among highly politicized students.

Altbach divided student's movement into two categories, conservative and radical. The conservative is mostly seen in developed countries and the radical in developing countries.¹ In developing countries students' objectives are often taken seriously by the government officials and the students organizations also expect to be given a serious hearing by the government. In many Asian and African countries students were leading in the struggles for independence. But American students, on the other hand, have never been particularly active politically and they are not generally expected to participate actively in their society.² In the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America students are often instrumental in political, social and cultural development.³

¹ Philip, G. Altbach and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Students Politics and Higher Education in United States* in Seymour Martin Lipset, ed. Students Politics in America (A Historical Analysis) McGraw Hill Book Co. New York. 1974. p. 7

² *Ibid.*, p. 241

³ Philip G. Altbach, *Students and Politics.*, p. 74.

Students and politics constitute an interesting and relevant field of study in social sciences especially in a state where the student sensitisation have just started to emerge and establish itself. It can be traced back to Mizo students' activities even before independence of India. But the role of students in Mizoram politics has become more important only after the up gradation of Mizoram District Council into Union Territory. The increase of students in number and the influence of political party affected the birth of more students' unions in Mizoram.

The first students association called Lushai Students Association (LSA) was established in 1924. The LSA was formed by Mizo students who had studied in Culcutta (Kolkata), Gauhati and Shillong.⁴ It is opined that the life span of the first Mizo students association was so short.

In the month of October 1935, Mizo students of Shillong revived student movement and formed a new association called Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association). It seems that they used Aizawl, the capital of the then Lushai hill as their headquarters. However, as a matter of fact, the 27th October, 1935 is being regarded as the rising day of MZP.⁵

The World War II badly affected the activities of MZP and made it dormant for 5 years. The association was renewed only with effect from 1947. It was reconstituted in 1959. The fading away of peace and tranquility caused by the MNF insurgency and the counter insurgency of Government of India resulted in the silent functioning of the MZP in Mizoram. During this time Mizo students of Shillong formed MZP Joint Headquarters at Shillong in 1968; and also rewrote the constitution.

⁴ *MZP Dan Bu* (Constitution) published by the MZP Gen. Hqrs. Mizoram: Aizawl p.1

⁵ *Mizo Zirlai Pawl Tobul* (Genesis of MZP) published by the MZP Gen. Hqrs. MZP Constitution p.1

Objectives of MZP

The objectives of MZP included the unity of the Mizo students and to safeguard their shares and rights. MZP strives to build up students for the nation and also encouraged them to respect the manual labour and any good position of Mizo life style. MZP attempts to protect the Mizo against assimilation. Other objectives are to help the state for the development of the country, to resist corruption and selfishness, to prevent the down fall of the Mizo community, to unite all Mizo tribes and place the contiguous areas occupied by their forefathers under one administrative unit.⁶

Structural Organization of MZP

The broad structural organization of MZP is as given below:

General Headquarters: The General Headquarters of MZP is situated at Aizawl, in the state capital of Mizoram. There are five elected office bearers such as- President, Vice President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer and Finance Secretary.

In addition to elected office bearers there are Secretaries in charge of different fields, Executive Members not exceeding 50 and 8 Advisers and 2 Legal Advisers.⁷

⁶ *MZP Constitution*, Art.3

⁷ *MZP Constitution*, Art 7 'A'

Headquarters: There are 12 Headquarters of MZP.⁸ Headquarters offices are run by the elected and non elected leaders. Elected office bearers are – President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Secretary, Appointed Secretary, Executive Members not exceeding 30, advisers not exceeding 5 and 2 Advisers and Legal advisers are the unelected office bearers of MZP Headquarters.⁹

Sub-Headquarters: There are 43 Sub- Headquarters in MZP.¹⁰ Like the General Headquarters, the Sub-Headquarters too have elected and non elected office bearers. Elected office bearers are-¹¹ President, Vice President, General Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Treasurer.

In addition to the elected office bearers and Secretaries, Executive Members not exceeding 15 and advisors not exceeding 5 are appointed in the Sub-headquarters.

Branch: Direct and Indirect Branches are there in MZP. There are 16 direct branches related with General Headquarters while the rest are run through Sub-Headquarters.¹²

⁸ *MZP 2005-2007 General Report and Financial Reports* published by MZP General Headquarters Mizoram, Aizawl. P.43

⁹ *MZP Constitution* Art. 7 ‘B’

¹⁰ *MZP 2005-2007 General Reports and Financial Reports* Published by MZP General Headquarters. Mizoram, Aizawl, p. 44

¹¹ *MZP Constitution* Art 7 ‘C’. Headquarters: According to 2005-2007 MZP Conference report there are 12 Headquarters in MZP such as-Saitual, Khawzawl,Lunglei, Mamit, Zawlnoam, Serchhip ,Biate, Champhai,Ratu ,Kolasib, Beliangchhip and Churachanpur.

¹² *MZP 2005-2007 General Reports and Financial Reports* Published by MZP General Headquarters. Mizoram, Aizawl p 44

Affiliated Organizations

The following 8 organizations are affiliated to MZP.¹³ Siamsinpawlpi (SSPP). Mizoram Bawm Students Association (MBSA). Ralte Students' League (RSL). Lai Students' Association (LSA). Mara Students' Association (MSA). Hmar Students' Association (HSA). Ranglawng Students' Union (RSU). Thado/Kuki Students' Union (TKSU).

The main aim of MZP was to work for the welfare of students. Their motto is "Union is Strength."¹⁴ Their slogan is Mizo students for the nation.¹⁵ The increasing educational facilities and the dramatic change in higher education produced more students in Mizoram. The later part of 1970s and 1980s witnessed the increase of students' unions like All Mizo Students' Federation (1971) Mizo Students Union Shillong (1980), Students' Joint Action Committee (1986), Mizoram College Students' Union (1988) etc.¹⁶ Students are a sensitive group facing enormous temptation in political games. In fact, students' body and their leaders are easy prey to political involvements.

In many instances students' organizations have just been organized as cultural societies for the promotion and development of their culture and language. From the students' organization demands like formation of state, seat reservations for Mizo tribals in technical education, especially engineering and medical colleges, etc. had sprung

¹³ *Op.cit.*, p. 44-45

¹⁴ *MZP Constitution*, 1977, Article XIV p.4

¹⁵ *MZP Constitution* Art.I Section 4.

¹⁶ J.Lalsawmliana, *Students Politics in Mizoram (A Case Study of MZP)* M.Phil Dissertation, NEHU, 1992, p.22.

up and consequent upon those demands, the students always indulge in pressurizing the government authority to full fill their demands.

Role of Students for the Formation of State

On the 2nd March 1966 the then Mizo District was declared as a 'disturbed area' under the Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 along with the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act 1958.¹⁷ The first attempt to official peace talk between MNF and Government of India which was started on the 26th December 1971,¹⁸ was followed by a series of talks culminating in the famous Calcutta National Emergency Convention popularly known as Calcutta Convention held on the 24th March to the 1st April 1976. As a result of the conference the 1st July 1976 agreement (later referred to by Laldenga as Memorandum of Understanding) was signed by the MNF and the Government of India.¹⁹

From its inception to 1970s, MZP kept in mind their policy to help government for the progress and development of Mizoram administration. During this period there was no important students' activity in opposing government policies. The influence of MNF politics was in the mind of students during the latter parts of 1970s to the first half of 1980s.

¹⁷ The Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 is an Act which is used for the identification and declaration of the areas where law and order are failed. Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act, 1958 is a criticizing Act. This Act is used for the combating of armed rebellion. It gives special power to the armed forces in their working of searching and fighting of unauthorized armed groups. It also empowers to detain a doubtful persons and even using arms to the alleged militants.

¹⁸ R. Zamwia. *Zofate Zinkawngah-(Zalenna Mei a Mit Tur a Ni Lo)*, Lengchhawn Press, Khatla, Aizawl 2007, p. 845

¹⁹ R. Zamawia, *Op.cit.*, p. 997

The first notable students' movement against government policy took place during the process of the up gradation of Mizoram District Council into Union Territory (UT). All Mizo Students' Convention (AMSC) strongly opposed government intention of sticking to upgrade Mizo District Council into U.T. and organized a procession at Shillong, the State capital of Meghalaya on the 31st July 1971.²⁰ They submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister on the same day and pointed out that only changing the status of Mizoram alone could not solve the political problem of misunderstanding between the government of India and the MNF underground. The memorandum says "Permanent peace and settlement in Mizoram could be attained only through peace talk and negotiation between the central government and the underground Mizos".²¹ Meanwhile with the implementation of the North Eastern Re-Organisation Act (1971), the Mizo District was up graded into a Union Territory and renamed Mizoram in 1972.

During the MNF underground movement 'peace and tranquility' was the centre of Mizoram politics. The opposition party such as Congress (I), Mizo Convention and MZP vehemently blamed the ruling Peoples' Conference ministry led by Brig.T. Sailo as the stumbling block against peace talk between MNF and the Central government. The talk between MNF and the Central Government was terminated on the 12th January 1982.

²⁰ J. Lalsawmliana, *Students Politics in Mizoram (A Case Study of Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students' Association) 1972-1986*, M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of Political Science, NEHU, Shillong, 1992, p. 44

²¹ *Memorandum* submitted to the Prime Minister of India by All Mizo Students' Convention on the 31st July, 1971, Shillong.

According to PC party, the demand for full sovereignty launched by the MNF since 1966 was followed by sufferings and miseries of the Mizo people. As per the agreement reached on the 1st July, 1976, MNF accepted Mizoram as an integral part of India and also accepted a settlement of problem within the constitution of India and to abjure violence. The agreement was followed by the suspension of operation by both sides, that is, MNF and Indian Security forces. PC party therefore could not understand the incidents such as the new slogan of ‘Nothing short of full sovereignty’ from MNF cadres. This was ‘Non Mizo must quit Mizoram by the first July 1979’ issued by MNF headquarters on the 1st June 1979. In the execution of their quit Mizoram order R.C. Chowdhury, Sub-Divisional Officer, PWD was killed on the 13th June 1979 at Saitual. Subsequently in their attempt to kill the SDO (Civil) Kolasib, the MNF killed two CRP men guarding the SDO’s bungalow. One man of Mizoram Armed Police guarding the State bank was injured by the MNF.²² Besides these, a number of violent incidents occurred throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram. Therefore, PC ministry under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo said that “ during the period of one year when the peace dialogue was held at New Delhi, it is clear to everyone that Mr. Laldenga aimed at political power for himself only. His sole aim during the course of the negotiation was to become the Chief Minister of Mizoram without going through election, regardless of the political status of Mizoram, be it Union Territory or Statehood. In other words all that the MNF, under the leadership of Mr. Laldenga, cared for was to gain political power in Mizoram. And what the worse thing was that they had been trying to gain self interest

²²Brig. T. Sailo, *Speech and Writing of Brig. T. Sailo AVSM (RETD) Chief Minister of Mizoram*. Published by Director, Information, Public Relations & Tourism, Government of Mizoram. 1981, pp. 39,40.

political power for themselves through violence, by the use of weapons.”²³

The victory of Congress (I) in the fourth MLA Union Territory election on the 25th April 1984, set a new hope for peace in Mizoram. Congress got 19 seats, P.C party obtained only 9 seats and the other two seats were won by the Mizo Convention party and an independent candidate.²⁴ With the initiative of the formal MZP leaders, leaders of different students’ associations established Students’ Joint Action Committee (SJAC) on the 7th May 1985. On the 22nd November 1985 the Congress Education Minister declared to lift the ban on MZP which had been operating since 1980.²⁵ Since the Congress during the election campaign, had promised peace settlement there was a new hope of peace under the leadership of Lal Thanhawla who subsequently became Chief Minister of Mizoram. With the initiative of Lalthanhawla, Laldenga was called back from abroad to India on the 29th October 1984, but due to the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; peace talk process was delayed, the new talk was started with the new Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi on the 17th December 1984 in New Delhi.²⁶

Regarding the new talk, the contribution of students was very important for the speedy success of peace talk. Since the process and progress of peace talk was not smooth and speedy as per the expectation of SJAC, they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister on the

²³ Brig. T. Sailo. *Op.cit.*, pp. 118,119

²⁴ R. Zamawia, *Zofate Zinkawngah- (Zalenna Mei a Müt Tur a ni lo)* Published by R. Zamawia “Beer Sheba” Mizoram University Road. Tanhril (Tuivamit), 2007 p.921

²⁵ J.Lalsawmliana *Op. cit.*, p 61

²⁶ R. Zamawi *Op. cit.*, pp. 925,926

14th February 1986 and urged him to make peaceful agreement with the MNF as soon as possible.²⁷

The students were in a good mood and had high hopes for peace. In his personal letter addressed to Sangkhuma one of Congress leaders of Kolasib village, the then President of the ruling Mizoram Congress (I) party, Mr. Lalduhawma (who was at that time in New Delhi) blamed the Congress (I) Ministry for delaying peace talk and making artificial incidents to stop cease fire so as to retain the ministry.²⁸ The news shocked students union, the story was spreading like a wild fire and was published in the different local newspapers. As a reaction of the news, SJAC organized a procession with the support and accompaniment of opposition MLAs at Aizawl and declared: “We, the Mizo people condemn and disown whoever are acting against the interest of peace, and hereby declare that we are fully prepared to remove any impediment in the way of peace”.²⁹

Since the delaying of peace was attributed to Mizoram Congress Ministry the SJAC emergency committee alleged that Lalthanhawla’s Congress (I) Ministry was the creator of obstacle against the signing of settlement between the Government of India and the MNF; and requested the Chief Minister to vacate his ministry before the first June of 1986.³⁰

²⁷ Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by SJAC on 14.2.1986, Aizawl Mizoram.

²⁸ J.Lalsawmliana *op. cit.*, p. 61

²⁹ S.J.A.C. Procession held on the 12nd March 1986, Resolution no.4.

³⁰ S.J.A.C. General Secretary letter Dated the 28th May 1986, to all Political Parties and organizations,

The students who were thirsting for peace eagerly waited for the stipulated time. As their appeal was not effective, students called for a 24 hours long total *bandh* from the 3rd June, 1986 at 5.00Am. The *bandh* was successful in the state capital, Aizawl and the big towns such as Lunglei, Champhai etc. Then they launched mass relay fasting, from the 23rd June 1986, in front of the Civil Secretariat office at the state capital.³¹ Changing their pressure tactics they called off fasting and continued agitation by organizing *bandh* at Aizawl, Lunglei and Champhai. During the *bandh* around 83 students were arrested by the security forces but were released later.³² It was only when a historic accord known as ‘Memorandum of Settlement’ was signed on the 30th June 1986, by the representatives of the Government of Mizoram and the MNF, then the *bandhs* and other form of agitation activities were no longer organized by the students.

MZP and Technical Education through Mizoram Quota

Independence of India was accompanied by the progress of Indian education, no doubt; but in reality there is paucity of technical education. The required marks for admission are also very high in almost all technical institutions. Tribal students admitted from general quota were very rare in the past. Understanding the problem which may be faced by the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) students, the constitution of India directed every state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the SC and the ST, and also to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.³³ Consequently engineering and medical colleges of different parts of the country

³¹ J. Lalsawmliana *op.cit*, p. 64

³² *Vanglai Ni*, Daily News paper Dated the 28th June 1986.

³³ *Constitution of India*, Chapter IV Directive Principle of State Policy, Art.44

provided reserved seats for ST and SC students. Filling up of the reserved seats and the selection of students are put in the hand of the concerned states. In the case of Mizoram, before 1980s there was no problem in the selection of reservation due to less number of qualified students. But after the rapid increase of qualified students and the emphasis on professional course of study, MZP understood the problem of students and became very alert in the selection of students to study technical courses. At the initial stage the method of selection of students was only through interview. Later on as a result of the activism of the students' union, written test are conducted by the Education Department. We can study some important interaction between MZP and the Government on the issue of the selection/examination of students for undergoing technical courses to fill up the quota allotted to Mizoram.

CASE I

MZP and the Selection of B.Sc. (Agriculture) Students, 1981

In 1980 some student leaders met Laldenga, the MNF President, in New Delhi during the peace talks. Laldenga had then asked the students to launch agitation in Mizoram to fasten the peace dialogue. But agitation could not be launched without any genuine excuse.³⁴ Keeping the message of the MNF chief in mind, the MZP sensitized the Mizo students about their rights. Therefore, MZP General Conference held in 1980 passed a resolution for exclusion of non-Mizo students from the Mizoram state quota/seat reservation. In the next year during the regime of People Conference (PC) party Ministry led by Brig. T. Sailo, Agriculture Department selected three non Mizo students for

³⁴ J.Lalsawmliana, *Students Politics in Mizoram (A Case Study of MZP)* M.Phil Dissertation, NEHU, 1992, p.117

B.Sc. (Agriculture) course.³⁵ One of the candidates was the son of the Director of Agriculture department, who was working on deputation basis.

Since the selection of non Mizo students for technical course was violated the previous year's resolution "Non Mizo students should not be given seats in technical studies sponsored by the government of Mizoram", MZP leaders met Agriculture Director on the 21st January 1981 and requested him to select from among the Mizo. Instead of reselection of students, the government arrested on charge of the three leaders forcefully collecting money from the non Mizo traders, on the night itself and kept them in police custody. The following day, many students demanded the unconditional release of their leaders and came together in the premises of Aizawl Police Station, where the student leaders were kept.

After the failure of constant requests of the magistrates and the security officers to vacate the police station, the students sitting in front of the police station were dispersed with lathi charge and emission of tear gases. As a result, 14 students were injured and admitted to the Civil Hospital. On the 23rd June 1981, the desperate students who were continuing agitation (around 150 in number) were arrested and sent to camp Jail, Tuirial, while some of them were kept at an improvised Jail at Government High School.³⁶

³⁵ J.Lalsawmliana, *Op.cit.*, p.22

³⁶ MZP, *General Secretary Report* of 1980-1983

On the 24th July 1981, MZP continued the agitation by organizing picketing in the Civil Secretariat complex, Aizawl. For the clearance of the blockage against government servants, public and private vehicles the police dispersed picketers with stick and tear gas. The panic students came together in the afternoon at Dawrpui Middle School. All of them alleged that the then ruling Peoples' Conference party led by Brig. T. Sailo as the good supporter of non Mizo. P. Siamliana, MZP leader blamed the government policies against students, and also blamed Chief Minister as the stumbling block of peace between the underground MNF and the Government of India. He also sarcastically pointed out that they had good support from the MNF.³⁷

Conceding to the demand of MZP the detained students were released on the 25th July 1981, and the remaining three MZP leaders were also released unconditionally on the 26th July 1981.³⁸

The MZP convened a public meeting at Dawrpui Middle School and demanded immediate withdrawal of cases against students who tried to rescue their leaders. They also claimed compensation for the injured, loss and damage of properties amounting to Rs 10,000.00 and Rs.1, 000.00 respectively. The meeting allegedly M.N. Malik, the Agriculture Director on deputation (allegedly as the main cause of agitation) and warned him to leave Mizoram within a week. Besides these, they also called for the withdrawal of the non-Mizo students to study B.Sc. (Agri)

³⁷ J.Lalsawmliana, Op.cit., p.53

The meeting passed the following resolutions -1).The unconditional release of all student prisoners; 2) The withdrawal of Section 144 of the Cr P.C. 3) Students should not be arrested any more. 4) The government should stop any more condemnation of students through radio broadcasting and press release.

³⁸ *Tawrh Bawm* (A Mizo Daily Newspaper), Dated the 27th July 1981, Aizawl.

from Mizoram quota and the stepping dawn of the P.C. ministry led by Brig. T. Sailo.

As soon as the MZP organized agitation at Aizawl town, Government of Mizoram pointed out that the seat reservation list which had been prepared for ST and SC might also include any child of Central Services who are posted and deputed in different parts of backward areas. And also warned students that such kind of agitation against the sons and daughters of Central Government official may lead to the cut in the quota in the next academic year.³⁹

The Chief Minister and his party understood that the students were instigated by the MNF. The ruling party (PC party) opined that the MNF and its allies were 'anti-national'. The Chief Minister described the students instigated by the MNF as 'anti national'. During this time the political tension between the government and the students was debated and was a burning topic in Mizoram. In his speech on the 24th July 1981, in front of High School and College teachers, the Chief Minister ordered them to take disciplinary action against the misguided and mischievous students.⁴⁰ Therefore, the establishment of MZP branch in High Schools and Colleges were banned. In his press conference the then Education Minister F. Malsawma also alleged student leaders were misguided youth who tried to take political advantage.⁴¹

³⁹ *Pre Release*, issued by Information and Public Relation, Government of Mizoram on the 26th July 1981

⁴⁰ J.Lalsawmliana, *Op.cit.*, p.55.

⁴¹ *Harhna* (Daily Newspaper) Dated the 25th July 1981

MZP alleged Brig. T. Sailo as a stumbling block in the peace talks between the MNF and the Central Government. They charged him as disregarding the students and also called them as ‘anti- national.’ About the suffering of the students, MZP blamed CM and accused him a of torturing and threatening the students by using security forces. They also declared him as the one who supported of non Mizo instead of the sons of the soil (Mizo).⁴²

The release of all student prisoners from police custody on the 29th July 1981 could not solve the confrontation between the students and the P.C ministry. In his speech in front of High School and College teachers at Aizawl Club on the 24th July 1981, the Chief Minister ordered to take disciplinary action against the misguided students.⁴³ The gulf between MZP and the Government gradually widened many teachers did not allow to establish MZP branch in their schools and the students could not use government school building for students’ organization activities.⁴⁴

Since the problem between the government and the students was not solved, the displeased students refused to attend the main celebration of Independence day at Assam Rifle Ground, Aizawl. MZP arranged separate Independence day function at Khatla Kawn, Aizawl. In this ceremony, MZP leaders ventilated their grievances and harped on the urgent need of peace talk between MNF and government of India. They also submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister of India on the 11th

⁴² MZP. *General Secretary Report* of 1980-1983

⁴³ *Harhna*, Daily Newspaper, Date 24th July 1981

⁴⁴ J.Lalsawmliana, *Op.cit.*, p.56.

August 1981. The eight pages long memorandum was full of condemnation of Brig.T. Sailo's ministry.⁴⁵

The students charged M.N.Malik Director of Agriculture as the main responsible person in the selection of non Mizo in B.Sc. (Agri.) students from Mizoram quota. They launched picketing at the Agriculture Directorate till the end of August 1981. Many students were arrested in different confrontations. On the 1st September 1981, MZP organized procession shouting their slogan "We don't want Malik, let him go home", and "We don't want Brig.T. Sailo, let him resign". On the 2nd September, the students organized total *bandh* it was dispersed with several tear gas shells and some were arrested. Since the tension between the students and the government turned from bad to worse, the MZP public meeting held on the 3rd September 1981 at Dawrpui Middle School called for the procession.⁴⁶ At the request of students all shops were closed and town buses also did not ply on the 7th September 1981.

Hoping to achieve success, the MZP gave some time to the government and then suspended agitation from the 26th - 29th September, 1981.⁴⁷ As a result, the student leaders and the Chief Secretary started talks and decided to release all students who were put behind the bar on the 16th October, 1981.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *Memorandum* submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the MZP General Headquarters on the 11th August, 1981.

⁴⁶ J.Lalsawmlian, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁷ *Press Release*, Published and issued by MZP General Headquarters on the 26th September, 1981

⁴⁸ J.Lalsawmliana *op.cit.* p.58

After the recess of students activities around one and a half month, Pachhunga University College Library and other five High Schools of Aizawl town were burnt down on the 4th November 1981, around 1.00 am.⁴⁹ The shocking news renewed the hatred between the government and the students. The MZP General Secretary and the Magazine Editor were arrested in connection with the incident.⁵⁰ After the failure of unconditional release of their leaders, MZP restarted their agitation of picketing with effect from the 7th November 1981. On the 24th November 1981, the Police entered MZP office by breaking the lock and took away some articles from the office.⁵¹

Since the government could not tolerate all kinds of student agitations, some student leaders were dispersed to different places including neighboring states. As the branchless headquarters leaders were scattered here and there, according to F. Chalgenga acting Vice Chairman in 1981, most of them joined political parties, among them 60 % joined Congress (I).⁵²

General people understood that there were political games behind the interaction of MZP and the Government on the issue of the selection of B.Sc. (Agri) students. It is known that the then MNF underground really hated the ruling PC Ministry because of their policy to stop MNF movement. They wanted to change the government and therefore engaged young and energetic students for overthrowing the ruling P.C. party. It can also be said that the excessive involvement of MZP in politics resulted in the bad image of the association itself.

⁴⁹ *Harhna* (Daily Newspaper) Dated 6th September, 1981

⁵⁰ J. Lalsawmliana, *Op.cit.*, p.58

⁵¹ MZP *General Secretary Report* of 1980-1983.

⁵² J.Lalsawmliana, *Op.cit.*, p.61.

CASE-II

Demand for Technical Entrance Exam and Re-selection of MBBS students.

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The MZP is meant to safeguard the rights of Mizo students as one of their objectives, and do their level best for the welfare of the students. Almost every year they used to watch and see technical entrance examination and the result, and pressed the government to serve their interest. From the beginning up to 1997, the Government of Mizoram Higher and Technical Education (H & TE) Department never conducted examination, but simply selected technical students only on the basis of marks. From the study of different universities of the country, MZP felt that there were high and low standards of marking/grading of students. Therefore, for the better assessment of the candidates' capacity, in 1997 they pressed the government to conduct technical and non technical entrance examination instead of selection on the basis of marks.⁵³

In the next year 1998, withstanding the pressure of MZP, the Higher & Technical Education department still used the existing rule called 'The Mizoram (Selection of the candidates for Higher and Technical Courses) Rule 1993' for the selection of MBBS students for different medical and engineering colleges of the country.

Regarding the selection of MBBS students between from the 1st – the 3rd June, 1998, MZP vehemently criticized the government.⁵⁴

⁵³ K. Romawia Secretary i/c Information MZP General Headquarters *letter* No C-93/MZP/97-97/07 Dated the 20th May 1997 to the Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of Mizoram.

⁵⁴ MZP *Circular* No of 1998.

According to MZP there was acceptance of late application form and the use of fake mark sheet in the interview board. The very simple question of asking only the telephone contact number in the very important interview board annoyed the student association. Besides these, leakage of the result, taking home of the selection file, modification of results after publication and the denial of preferential choice to the students shocked the MZP.

The selection of technical students could not satisfy MZP; they wanted to shift MBBS student's selection work from the hands of H & TE to Mizoram Public Service Commission. For the fulfillment of their demand they organized total *bandh* on the 13th August 1998 and requested all branches of MZP to detail students for duty.⁵⁵

As the total *bandh* was not effective, they organized indefinite hunger strike with effect from the 28th September 1998, 3.00 pm at Treasury Square Aizawl. They demanded government to make new rules and reconstitute selection committee for the selection of MBBS students. Besides these, they also blamed the choice of non Mizo in the

MZP blamed the government with the following points- (1) The admission opened period was up to the 16th June 1998. 12 students submitted application form before the 16th June, 1998. (2) Zodingsangi (the 26th position in the selection result) told MZP that she had faced interview board without marks sheet. (3) Importance was not given to interview; some candidates were asked only their contact telephone number only. (4) There was leakage of selection list before the declaration the result on the 16th July, 1998. (5) The Director and his staff Rajesh Nath took home the file to Director's residence on 6th July 1998, and worked on the 7th July, 1998 and backed to office on the 8th July 1998. (6) Use of fake marks sheet in the interview. (7) Modified result after publication. (8) No preferential choice given to students.

⁵⁵ Lalmuanawma Mathipi Secretary i/c Information *letter* No. 93/MZP-HQR//97-99/14 Dated 10th July 1998.

selection of engineering students. etc.⁵⁶ According to MZP, while the Chief Minister was agreeable to their demands, the Chief Secretary was not. The Chief Secretary commented that those who had been dropped were dropped on the basis of personal interview in which they had failed. But the students countered Chief Secretary's statement and pointed out that the unfairness of the selection was due to fake mark sheets and leakage of selection result as well as the unfair activities of the Director, and the so called *Pachau Group*.⁵⁷ (The director said that it may be Pachau group, as the then H & TE Minister was Zosiama Pachau). MZP concluded that what they had done was for the present and next generation of the Mizo people.⁵⁸

Due to the endless demand for reselection of MBBS students, the Government of Mizoram set up a one-Man Inquiry Commission to look into the matters. Lalngheta Sailo Commissioner cum Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Mizoram was appointed in this commission. The term of reference of this commission included to enquire into the alleged irregularities in the selection of candidates for MBBS with particular reference to the points raised by the MZP in their Circular No I of 1998, date 8.8.1998. He was authorized to find out the responsible person(s) engaged in irregularities; and also was entrusted to make remedial measures and recommendation for the avoidance of such problems in the future.

⁵⁶ Lalmuanawma Mathipi Secretary i/c Information and R. Vanlalvena, Chairman Action Committee *letter* No. 93/MZP-HQR//97-99/25 Dated 10th July 1998.

⁵⁷ Pachau is one name of the Mizo clan. At the time of the selection of the MBB students the then H & TE Zosiama was belonged to this clan. It seems that the government especially the concerned Minister secretly offered a list of students to be selected in the Selection Committee. Without knowing such thing the MZP approached the Director and asked him why did they selected some students getting less marks than the others. Then simply the Director said that it may be Pachau group. It means that is the group of Zosiama Pachau. The saying of the name of Pachau in this connection does not mean it dominated other clans like Sailo, Khawlhing etc.

⁵⁸ MZP General Headquarters *Circular No 2 of 1998*

The Commission was required to submit the report to the government within 10 days from the date of issues of its constitution.⁵⁹ On the 17th August 1998, the Commission met MZP leaders and discussed the matters relating to the selection of MBBS students at his office between 4-5 pm.⁶⁰ The Inquiry Commission submitted the report in time. Consequent upon the report the Government suspended the process of allotment of seats for MBBS courses with immediate effect.⁶¹

The Government issued order for the reselection for nominating candidates in the admission to MBBS on the 4th August 1998. Women's Polytechnic, Zarkawt, Aizawl was selected as the venue scheduled date to the 17th August 1998 (Thursday) 10.00 am for interview period. The order clearly mentioned that it was made only for those who had faced interview and also informed them to bring original certificates and marks sheets.⁶² Further, it was mentioned that it was done "on the basis of the agreement between Government of Mizoram and MZP in their meeting held on 31st August 1998".⁶³ After serving the urgent notice by the Director & Member Secretary of Higher and Technical Studies, the reselection of candidates for MBBS course was held on the 17th August, 1998 at Women's Polytechnic, Zarkawt, Aizawl.⁶⁴ This process of change in the official position in response to the demand of the young students calmed down their tension.

⁵⁹ **Government Notification** No A 420121//93-EDN (THE) Date 11. 8.1998

⁶⁰ Commission **letter** to MZP President on 17.8.1998

⁶¹ **Government Notification** No A 420121//93-EDN (THE) Date 13. 8.1998

⁶² Director, H & TE **letter** No. A 33024/13/98-DTE (HTE) Date 4.8.1998

⁶³ Director, H & TE **Notification** to students candidates No. A 33024/13/98-DTE (HTE) Date 4.8.1998

⁶⁴ **Urgent Notice** No. 33024/13/98-DTE (THE) issued by the Directorate of H & TE on 4th September 1998

Pursuing the pressure of MZP, the government of Mizoram amended the existing rules called 'The Mizoram (Selection of Candidates for Higher and Technical Courses) Rules 1993 on the 19th February 1999 at the office chamber of Minister i/c Higher and Technical Education.⁶⁵ However, there was selection of non Mizo students for the study of Master of Computer Application (MCA) at the University of Hyderabad. MZP vehemently criticized government, but at the same time the officials also pointed out their privileges. The tension was ended with some points of agreement including the suspension of the concerned officer and withdrawal of the case filed against MZP leaders.⁶⁶

From the study of the interaction between MZP and the Government of Mizoram on the issue of the quota of MCA in the Hyderabad University, it can be understood that the students were firm enough in their argument. Thus an agreement reached which revealed the strength of the students association in Mizoram.

From a general and critical study of how the Government of Mizoram, Higher and Technical Education Department conducts examination, it was found that something wrong was there in the process. It is also evidenced that until and unless support base organization like MZP took part, individual complaint and public criticism would have been of no avail to change the unusual practices resorted to by the government.

⁶⁵ Under Secretary to the Government of Mizoram *letter* No.C.11011/1/93-EDN (THE) Pt Date the 17th February 1999.

⁶⁶ MZP General Headquarters *Press Release* issued by C. Lalrokhuma General Secretary MZP General Headquarters No E-93/MZP-GHQ/99-2001/38 Dated Aizawl the 19th.October.2000

From what have been discussed above, it may be said that the MZP, the oldest and biggest Mizo students association did contribute to the speedy peace talk and for the formation of state. Following one of their objectives “to safeguard the shares and the rights of the Mizo students” MZP strongly campaigned to have full share in the technical and non technical quota of Mizoram. They were involved in the modification of the selection method of the candidates for admission to technical education.

PART II

MIZO STUDENTS’ UNION (MSU)

After 1970 some student unions, like All Mizo Students’ Federation (1971), Students’ Conference For Action Programme (1982), Students’ Joint Action Committee (1986), Mizoram College Students Union (1988) etc appeared in the Mizoram students associational scenario. At present most of them are disappeared, though, of into, one of the organizations named Mizo Student Union (MSU) has came up with a wider representative and has got its numerous branches across the state.

When the 66-year old MZP actively involved for the welfare of the students and their extension works, there was dissatisfaction among some members : “MZP was more interested in extension work than the students welfare”, and also blamed the MZP in their relationship with

the existing Government of Mizoram.⁶⁷ In general, after the annual election, MZP Headquarters used to appoint the loser candidates as the executive members or as the nominated office bearers. Unlike other years the successful candidates of MZP election in 2000 neglected the loser candidates and did not offer nominated seats and executive membership to them. Therefore, a group of people thought that it was necessary to form a new students union for the welfare of the students.⁶⁸ Then the new students' union called Mizo Students Union was formed on the 12th February 2001 (Sunday) at the residence of the founder President Laldinpuia, Khatla, Aizawl.⁶⁹ There were some efforts to assuage the feelings of those leaders who formed the MSU. With the initiative of some mediators the two student groups MZP and MSU organized 3 meetings for the reunification of the associations but it was not successful.⁷⁰

The emergence of MSU has significance in student activities; it not only stopped the single organization dominance of student union activities in Mizoram but also gives impetus to work for the welfare of students. The working of the two student groups with competitive mind is beneficial for the Mizo students.

On the basis of Firms and Societies Registration Act, 1976, Government of Mizoram registered MSU on the 27th January, 2003.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Interview* with P.Lalruatsanga Ex. Office Bearer of MSU and Founder member on 17th June 2012 at his residence Dawrpui Vengthar, Aizawl.

⁶⁸ An *interview* with David Lalmuanpuia, Treasurer MSU General Hqrs. Aizawl at MSU Hqrs. Office on the 18th February, 2012.

⁶⁹ Lalrosanga, MSU ex Office Bearer *article "Nghihl Loh Nan"* MSU Gen. Hqrs. Tin Jubilee Souvenir 2001-2011, *Khiangkawi*. Published by MSU Gen. Hqrs. 2011 p.11

⁷⁰ An *interview* with David Lalmuanpuia, Treasurer MSU General Hqrs. Aizawl at MSU Hqrs. Office on the 18th February, 2012.

⁷¹ The registration no. SR/MZ-210 of 2002-2003.

The motto of MSU is “ A good beginning makes a good ending”. Their emblem is a bird called *Vakul* (Black Drongo).

Aims and Objectives

MSU strives to prepare students to get maximum development, to be a good citizen and to help them in time of needs and give rewards to the deserving students. It also aims to safeguard the rights of Mizo students, and work hard for their welfare. Besides these, MSU attempts to unite all Mizo students and also ready to sacrifice their services for the safeguard of Mizo Society.⁷²

Regarding the membership, all Mizo Students are entitled to become MSU member. They empowered Sub Headquarters and Branch to collect member fee not more than Rs 5.00.

The organizational structure of the MSU from the top to the lowest are – General Headquarters, Regional Headquarters, District Headquarters, Headquarters, Sub-Headquarters and Branch. Like the General Headquarters of all other organizations, it has 6 elected office bearers such as President, Vice President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer and Finance Secretary. Besides these, secretary, executive members and advisers are there in every organization.

⁷² *The Constitution of Mizo Students Union Revised and Enlarged 2009*. Published by MSU Gen. Hqrs. Aizawl Mizoram p.4

From a series of interactions of MSU activities with the authorities during the last decade, the role of MSU can be studied with the following- MSU and Scholarship, MSU and Selection of MSIC Staff, MSU and service extension, MSU and the recruitment of RMSA and SSA staff, MSU and Mizoram University.

MSU and Scholarship

One of the aims of MSU was to urge the government for the release of Post Matric scholarship to the students in time.⁷³ Beside this, they touched other scholarships which are applied from other sources like UGC, NEC etc. In 2007, NEC could not release the scholarship to the students in time. MSU demanded the government to issue the holding of scholarship and discussed the matter with the Chief Minister on the 2nd February, 2007. Then the scholarship was released on the 7th February 2007.⁷⁴

Since the Post Matric Scholarship and other scholarships are entitled to Mizo students, at most all Mizo used to apply with necessary document such as Mark sheets, educational qualification, tribal certificate and income certificate. Meanwhile Government of Mizoram demanded 'Affidavit Non Judicial Stamp' for applying for the scholarship.⁷⁵ MSU clearly knew that this kind of extra burden may

⁷³ *MSU Tin Jubilee Souvenir 2001-2011, "Khangkawi"* Published by MSU Gen. Hqrs, 2011 p.3

⁷⁴ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/24 Dated Aizawl; the 8th February, 2007.

⁷⁵ Government *Order* No. A.33023/5/2004-05/(HTE/SCHO)

create problems for student in terms of time and money, and requested the government to withdraw the order.⁷⁶

In pursuance of their Executive Committee resolution MSU office bearers met Dr. Lalzama Minister Higher & Technical Education on the 22nd May 2007. The Minister told the students' union leaders about the cancellation of the said order. Aizawl city students appreciated the success of MSU and also acknowledged to the Minister and Higher and Technical Education Department for his role.⁷⁷

MSU was very alert in the release of the first and the second installment of scholarship. Earlier the Mizoram Scholarship Board did not distribute scholarship in time and used to complaint to the government. Scholarship is awarded on monthly basis. According to the practice, scholarships were given only for 10 months. In this connection MSU met the Parliamentary Secretary in charge of Finance and Planning and requested him to give for 12 months.⁷⁸ But the demand and aspiration of MSU was still hanging in the air.

In normal times, the MSU was not much involved in the issue of scholarship. But they were involved in abnormal situations such as delay and rejection of scholarships. At the same time they also appreciated government for the fulfilment of their demands.

⁷⁶ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/34 Dated Aizawl; the 21st May, 2007.

⁷⁷ Aizawl City College Joint Students' Union, Gen. *letter* No. nil. Dated Aizawl the 23rd March 2007.

⁷⁸ Zodinpuia, MSU General Secretary *letter* No. D.1011/MSU-GHQ/2008-010/087 Dated Aizawl the 29th June 2009.

MSU and the Selection of Mizoram State Information Commission staff

Right to information Act was passed in the Parliament, and then the Government of India, Ministry of Law and Justice ordered Mizoram government to make right to information rules. Therefore, the government of Mizoram passed the Right to Information Rules, 2006 and established Mizoram State Information Commission (MSIC).

After the establishment of the office of MSIC, DP & AR, the Government of Mizoram permitted them to recruit the following staff. UDC 3 nos. @ Rs.5000.00 Contract Basis. LDC 3 nos. (Skilled II) @ Rs 120 per day, Muster Roll. IV Grade 10 nos. (Unskilled) Rs 91 per day Muster Roll.⁷⁹

Right to Information Rules 2006, 9 (b), said that the MSIC staff are to be recruited as per the method of recruitment used by the Mizoram Secretariat rules or Service rules of any other equivalent part of the state government. The MSIC recruited its staff and also issued appointment order on the 24th December 2007.⁸⁰ After studying how the selection of MSIC staff were recruited, the MSU felt that there were something wrong in the process of appointments and complained to the authority, and pointed out that the recruitment of the MSIC staff did not follow the government rules. There was no proper advertisement for the general people, and also that the appointees were the near relative of the CIC. According to the MSU, there was favoritism in the process of the appointment.

⁷⁹ DP&AR *letter* No.B.16012/1/2003-PAR (ARW) Dated Aizawl 5.8.2006

⁸⁰ MSIC *order* No.A 120130/1/06-MSIC Dated Aizawl the 21st Dec. 2006

The MSU pointed that the original appointment order did not mention the term/duration of employment. But in his local TV interview the Chief Information Commissioner on the 24th January 2007 said that the staff were to be employed only for 2 months. Therefore the Chief Information Commissioner issued another appointment order on the 21st January, 2007.⁸¹ The MSU said that according to the Pay roll of the 4th January 2007 Dearness Allowance which they were not entitled was given to the newly recruited staff.

Because of the pressure of the MSU, the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary issued show cause notice to the MSIC. On the 14th February 2007, the MSU met the Governor of Mizoram at his office chamber and requested him to cancel the MSIC appointment order. The Governor informed them that he would request the concerned authority to fulfill their demand and also inform them not to make law and order problem.⁸² On the 27th February 2007, the MSU met again the Governor at Raj Bhawan and urged him to find out the truth. The Governor told the students that it would require 2/3 days to fulfill their demand. In this regard, the MSU Executive meeting was held on the 1st March 2007, and it passed a resolution for the cancellation of the selected staff and for the dismissal of the CIC himself on or before the 15th March 2007. And added that the union would take appropriate measure if action was not taken.⁸³

⁸¹ MSIC *order* No.A 12080/1/06-MSIC Dated Aizawl the 24st Jan. 2007

⁸² H.Lalthapua, President MSU Gen.Hqrs. *letter* no.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/25 Dated Aizawl the 15th February 2007

⁸³ L.Daniela Gen.Secretary MSU Gen. Hqrs. *letter* no A 1013/MSU Gen.HQR/2006/27 Dated Aizawl the 1st March 2007

As the urgent demand of the MSU was not fulfilled they convened the Executive Committee on the 15th March 2007, and demanded again the dismissal of the CIC and his newly recruited staff and also informed them not to attend office with effect from 16th March 2007.⁸⁴ They started picketing and demonstrations. On the 20th March 2007, the MSU met again the Governor and requested him to make fresh recruitment of MSIC staff according the norms and rules on or before 20th April 2007. Then they waited for the Governor's decision.⁸⁵ At last, the appointment order was cancelled; the MSU declared that the cancellation of the appointment order newly the recruited MSIC staff was the sign of justice against the wrong doers.⁸⁶

The MSIC conducted fresh recruitment according to the norms and rules, the written test examination papers were also checked in the beginning of June 2007, but the result was not published for a long time. While the MSU was very alert in the movement of MSIC, the CIC cancelled the Government recommended DPC with minor reasons. Then they formed another DPC. The MSU could not trust the new DPC formed by the CIC and asked the Government to cancell again and also told the students not to appear before the DPC.⁸⁷ After the proper formation of the DPC, the MSU mentioned that the result of DPC decision was not declared due to the mischievous staff in the office of the MSIC and the CIC himselfes. Then they requested the Governor to

⁸⁴ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/29 Dated Aizawl, the 15th March, 2007.

⁸⁵ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/30 Dated Aizawl, the 30th March, 2007.

⁸⁶ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/39 Dated Aizawl; the 9th June, 2007.

⁸⁷ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/75 Dated Aizawl; the 4th April, 2008.

take initiatives for the earlier publication of the result.⁸⁸ After a long process, a fresh appointment for the MSIC staff was published. The dropped staff of MSIC also moved to the court in search of justice, but they were not successful.⁸⁹ From this it can be said that the MSU is looking after the welfare of the students and for doing justice in the appointment of the MSIC office.

MSU and Re-employment of Pensioners

In consonance with the aims and objective of their association, the MSU tries to find out employment opportunity in the various government departments. The MSU understood that the practice of the re-employment of pensioners in the government had a great effect in the student employment opportunity. They approached the Chief Minister and requested him not to re-employ pensioners in the future.⁹⁰ And also requested the Chief Secretary not to re-employ and extend the service of the pensioners.⁹¹ Following the request of the MSU, the Government of Mizoram stopped service extension and re-employment of pensioners.⁹²

Regarding the increase of the retirement age of the government servants from 58 to 60, the MSU vehemently criticized the government and organized a *total-bandh*. Since the government did not pay attention

⁸⁸ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/134 Dated Aizawl; the 28th December, 2008.

⁸⁹ An *Interview* with the General Secretary MSU Gen. Hqrs. On the 18th June 2012 at MSU Gen. Hqrs. Office.

⁹⁰ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/80 Dated Aizawl, the 30th May, 2008.

⁹¹ Zodinpuia, Gen. Secretary, MSU Gen.Hqrs. *letter* No.D.1011/MSU-GHQ/2008-010/161 Dated Aizawl the 7th Nov. 2009.

⁹² An *interview* with David Lalmanpuia, Treasurer MSU Gen. Hqrs. At MSU Hqrs. Office on 18th June 2012.

to their demand they also organized blockade in 2005.⁹³ The demand of MSU on service extension is very important for the new students who are searching employment in the government office.

MSU and the recruitment of RMSA and SSA staff

Like other states of India, Central government introduced Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abihyan (RMSA) and Sarva Shiksha Abihyan (SSA) in Mizoram. In the past under the guidance of the Mizoram Education Mission Society (MEMS) many staff were recruited for RMSA and SSA.

The MSU carefully examined how the government of Mizoram recruited RMSA and SSA staff in 2011. In the beginning of 2011, the Government of Mizoram, Education department recruited more than two hundred staff for RMSA and SSA. After the appointment orders were issued to the selected candidates, the MSU thought that there was something wrong in the process of recruitment, and complained to the Education Minister and demanded to verify whether the selection of the staff was really fair or not. The official said that the selection of the staff was done according to the guidelines of MEMS. Then the MSU openly criticized government and alleged them as using unfair means in the selection of staff under RMSA and SSA and also demanded to cancel their appointment orders.⁹⁴ After several discussions, the Government of Mizoram and the MSU signed agreement on the 20th April 2010, at the office Chamber of Education Minister. The agreement was signed in the presence of the Acting Chief Minister R. Lalzirliana, Home Minister,

⁹³ MSU *Tin Jubilee Souvenir 2001-2011, "Khangkawi"* Published by MSU Gen. Hqrs, 2011 p.4

⁹⁴ *Op.cit.*, p.6

Lalsawta, Education Minister, Chawngthanga, Parliamentary Secretary Education and MSU Officials by the President MSU General Headquarters and Esther Lalruatkimi, Education Secretary, Government of Mizoram.

According to the agreement, the Government of Mizoram would appoint a Verification Committee in which the MSU would also be one of the members. The MSU was not satisfied with the existing framework of RMSA and SSA, and therefore agreed to modify the existing guidelines for the better working of MEMS. Both of them accepted to fill up all the vacant posts under RMSA and SSA as early as possible. At the same time MSU also agreed to cancel their action plan.⁹⁵

As a result of the agreement the government of Mizoram formed Verification Committee in the month of May 2010, and MSU was included in the committee.⁹⁶ After checking all the documents of the applicants, 44 selected candidates, 39 from SSA and 5 from RMSA were dropped.

It can be said that MSU was deeply involved in the fair solution in the recruitment of government jobs. From the study of the interaction between the government and MSU it can be opined that the MSU is one of the important factors for the modification of mistake committed by the Government.

⁹⁵ *Mizoram Sorkar leh MSU Inremna* (The Agreement of MSU and the Government of Mizoram. Dated Aizawl the 21st April, 2011.

⁹⁶ Government of Mizoram *order* No.A.11011/4/2011-EDN(SSA)/Loose Dated Aizawl the 13th May 2011.

MSU and Mizoram University

Since Mizoram University is one of the most important educational centers in Mizoram, it has a number of relationships with the students and the students union. At the time of his joining the Vice Chancellor of Mizoram University, was welcomed by MSU at Lengpui Airport. The acronym of the Mizoram University, 'MZU' is the composed of MSU.⁹⁷ The MSU took up the problems of MZU and requested the Chief Minister to solve the problems of water and power supply.⁹⁸ They requested the state government to repair and maintain the University approach road not only at the time of the coming of VIPs but to have a perfect road.⁹⁹ As the government did not yet repair the University road and met the Chief Secretary on the 10th April 2008 and discussed how to repair the University approach road. Without delay the MSU met the Chief Minister on the 15th June 2008 and requested him to repair it soon, and also told him if it was not repaired they would take necessary action.¹⁰⁰ The government repaired the road but due to paucity of fund it was not maintained properly.

MSU General Conference of 2008 passed a resolution to propose the opening of MZU Campus at Lunglei. In pursuance of their resolution the MSU submitted the proposal to the Vice Chancellor, MZU.¹⁰¹ Further, the MSU requested the Chief Minister and Higher & Technical Education Commissioner to help them for the establishment of MZU

⁹⁷ *Op.cit.*, p.8

⁹⁸ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/63 Dated Aizawl, the 4th February, 2008.

⁹⁹ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/70 Dated Aizawl, the 13th March, 2008.

¹⁰⁰ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/80 Dated Aizawl, the 3th May, 2008.

¹⁰¹ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/69 Dated Aizawl, the 28th January, 2008.

Campus at Lunglei, the second city of Mizoram situated in the southern part of Mizoram.¹⁰² Besides these, the MSU is also involved in the matter relating to setting of examination questions etc. In 2008, the MSU blamed MZU as setting of BA alternative English exam questions not from the syllabus and submitted complaint to the University authority.¹⁰³

MSU and the recruitment of Mizoram University staff.

In 2009, there were 117 vacant posts in the University. The MSU opined that it was a great opportunity for Mizo and tried to get maximum employment. They requested the Government of Mizoram to involve in the filling up of the vacant posts.¹⁰⁴ Actually the Central University like MZU is an independent body having separate ordinance, norms, rules and regulation, even then the MSU tried to have a big chunk in the employment.

The MSU tried to pursue the Minister Higher and Technical Education, and requested him to take action for the induction of more number of Mizo in the University. According to the MSU version there was 27 % of posts reserved for Other Backward Classes in the employment. There were only few OBC in the north east India. According to their calculation, the 94.5 % of the north eastern tribal had only 7.5 share in the employment. Then they requested the Minister to press the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India and University Grant Commission for the increase the share of

¹⁰² L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/63 Dated Aizawl, the 4th February, 2008.

¹⁰³ L. Daniala, Gen. Secretary, *letter* No.B.1011/MSU-GHQ/2006/65 Dated Aizawl, the 13th March, 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Zodinpuia, Gen. Secretary, MSU Gen. Hqrs. *Letter* No. D.1011/MSU-GHQ/2008-010/097 Dated Aizawl the 29th June 2009

north eastern tribal people.¹⁰⁵ The MSU themselves also visited Kapil Sibal, Union MHRD Minister at his office and told about the employment problem in MZU.¹⁰⁶

Regarding the recruitment of the teaching staff, the MSU had difference of opinion relating to the career marking in the screening of applications. Since the University had not responded the MSU demand and submitted ultimatum to Prof. A.R. Rai, the Vice Chancellor of Mizoram University, and told him to leave the University and Mizoram state. MSU opined that there was favoritism and nepotism in the appointment of teaching staff and also further said that especially the candidates from Banara Hindu University were given preferences. Regarding the administration of the University, the MSU blamed and alleged him as dictating in the meetings of various statutory bodies like Executive Council, Academic Council, Finance Committee and other bodies. It also opined that the existence of the atmosphere of groupism among the University family was the sign of the weakness of the Vice Chancellor. After much deliberation the MSU found no reason for Prof. AN Rai to continue holding the prestigious office of the Vice Chancellor and informed him to leave Mizoram on or before the 16th September 2009.¹⁰⁷ After a long discussion between the MSU and the authorities of MZU, they signed a 9 points agreement on the 15th September 2009. Some of the points of agreement signed by the representatives of MSU and the authority of Mizoram University are-

¹⁰⁵ Zodinpuia, Gen. Secretary, MSU Gen. Hqrs. *Letter* No. D.1011/MSU-GHQ/2008-010/0121 Dated Aizawl the 4th September. 2009

¹⁰⁶ *MSU Tin Jubilee Souvenir 2001-2011, "Khiangkawi"* Published by MSU Gen. Hqrs, 2011 p.5

¹⁰⁷ Zodinpuia, Gen. Secretary, MSU Gen. Hqrs. *Letter* No. D.1011/MSU-GHQ/2008-010/012 Dated Aizawl the 8th September, 2009

- 1 In the selection of various posts of Asst. Professor under MZU screening and interview should be conducted in such a way that local (Mizo) candidates would be given preference. A minimum of six local candidates would be called for interview in one post.
- 2 Arrangement would be made for appointment/selection of local candidates (Asst. Professor) against the vacant post of the Associate Professor and Professor.
- 3 The documents of applicants belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) etc. should be examined/verified carefully, and the vacant posts of SC/OBC would not be necessarily filled-up unless there are good candidates for the said posts.
- 4 The appointment made in the MZU statute in which the Vice Chancellor would be eligible for the re-appointment for another one term should be revoked in the Executive Council.
- 5 The various Non Teaching posts in the MZU should be filled up as soon as possible in which there would be no favoritism and nepotism which are seen in earlier.
- 6 Fresh advertisement would be made at the earliest to fill up the posts of Finance Officer and Controller of Examination in Mizoram University.
- 7 The opinion of Senior Mizo teachers would be listened in the Executive Council and Academic Council etc. while making important decisions and the opinion of the Pachhunga University College (PUC) representatives should be respected while making selection of candidates for teachers in Pachhunga University College.

- 8 MZU campus should be set up at Lunglei to cover the Southern part of the state.

If the agreement was accepted and fulfilled by the MZU authorities. The MSU will consider its ultimatum submitted to the Vice Chancellor of MZU. If not, the MSU will be bound to promptly act upon its ultimatum.¹⁰⁸

After watching the working of the University MSU charged Prof. A.N. Rai, Vice Chancellor of MZU and submitted again the ultimatum and reminded him the points of agreement and warned him to leave Mizoram on or before 19th May 2010.¹⁰⁹

From the study of the above, it can be opined that the MSU and the MZU have been interacting with each other concerning the education and campus development. However, there was a misunderstanding on the issue of the recruitment of teaching and non teaching staff. MZU is a Central University and autonomous body no doubt, but the MSU tried to influence the University and also requested the state government to influence in the administration of the University. This means that in the way of pursuing their demands to the University, MSU used the strength of state government for the success of their demand.

¹⁰⁸ Points of Agreement signed by MSU and the Mizoram University authorities on the 15th September 2009 at Pachhunga University College, Aizawl Mizoram.

¹⁰⁹ Zodinpuia, Gen. Secretary, MSU Gen. Hqrs. **Letter** No. D.101/MSU-GHQ/2008-010/027 Dated Aizawl the 9th May, 2010

The MSU is also involved in trading regulation, Inner Line Permit, allocation of funds in Education budget, Education Act, 2003 and Education Rules 2006, etc. From the study of its aims and the general study of their activities, it can be concluded that the MSU is one of the important pressure groups for influencing the government decisions.

CHAPTER VI

NATIONAL TRADE UNION OF MIZORAM (NTUM) AS A PRESSURE GROUP IN MIZORAM

The emergence of Christianity from the beginning of the 19th century in Mizoram was accompanied by the gradual widening of the gulf between the rich and the poor. Before 1986, according to Lalnunfela, the lower job workers were totally under the control of their masters. During this time, Government muster roll workers had no security and fully depend upon the mercy of the concern controlling officers. In the middle of 1980s there arose class-consciousness among the Mizoram workers.¹ On the 26th April 1986, Muster Roll labours coming from the different departments of the Government of Mizoram, formed Muster Roll Workers Association at Dawrpui Middle School, Aizawl. Latter on for the inclusion of all workers of Private Sectors the name was converted into National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM).² NTUM is a voluntary organization of workers formed to promote and protect the interest of the workers through collective action. Mizoram is the operational area of the union. The Central Working Committee is entrusted to alter the coverage area as necessary.

NTUM is a non-political organization, registered under the Trade Union of Act of 1926 on the 10th September 1987; which bestows legal status to all registered unions in India. NTUM is affiliated to Bharatya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), though the ideology of the two is not the same

¹ H. Lalnunfela, *Trade Union History*, NTUM, the 20th Anniversary (1986-2006) Souvenir, 2006, p. 66

² *General Secretary Report of NTUM*; NTUM the 20th Anniversary (1986-2006) Souvenir, 2006, p. 9

in all respects.³ The BMS was formed by the Jana Sangh (now Bharatiya Janata Party) in 1955. It is the biggest trade union in India with 31.17 lakhs members, which constitutes about 39.20 percent of the total work force in the country.⁴ Unlike BMS, the NTUM is not controlled and influenced by BJP. It is a non-political organization but having freedom to support any political party in the political playground of catching votes.

Aims and Objectives

The NTUM is established with the aim to fulfill the welfare of labours and the people. It aims to maintain brotherhood and fraternity among the members, good relationship between the employers and employees, and also tries to fully enjoy all the privileges permitted by the Laws, Acts and its rules. It commits to provide more profitable and useful works for the country. It also intends to narrow the gulf between the rich and the poor, and to achieve self sufficiency for Mizoram. It also attempts to stop flaring from amongst membership, and encourages its members to take care of government and public property as privately owned. They attempt to pacify communal tension in Mizoram. It also aims to serve for the nation with firm faith in the principle of justice, to safeguard the rights and privileges of the poor and to uplift the status of the sons of the soil.⁵

³ Vanlalnggheta Hnamte, *What is NTUM*, issued by NTUM Hqrs. Aizawl, 2002, p.2

⁴ U.R. Ghai, *Indian Political System*, New Academic Publishing Company, Jalandhar, 1995, p.226

⁵ *Constitution of NTUM*, (As Amend on 28th November, 2001) pp. 1,2.

Membership

The NTUM membership is open to all temporary workers below group 'C' under government, factory, industry and contractors and individuals who are interested in the union. Those kinds of people who give annual membership fee may become the member of NTUM.⁶

Structure of the Organization

The General Headquarters of NTUM is situated in the state capital Aizawl and named the Registered/Head Office. Sub-Headquarters, Divisional Headquarters and Branch Headquarters and Units are the hierarchical organizations of NTUM.⁷

General Assembly:

It is the highest authority constituted by all the members of NTUM, and the meeting of General Assembly is to be held at least once in a year. Special Assembly was also be convened as and when necessary.

Central Working Committee (CWC)

The CWC is the second highest authority next to the General Assembly. In case of emergency and extreme necessity it can enjoy the power of the General Assembly in decision making. But the decision is to be approved in the next General Assembly. Central Working

⁶ *Article 5 of the Constitution of NTUM, 2001.*

⁷ *Article 6-14 the Constitution of NTUM, 2001.*

Committee Members are- Executive Committee members of Headquarters. Sub-Headquarters and Branch Headquarters office bearers. Divisional Headquarters President, Vice President, Treasurer, General Secretary etc. Branch and Unit Presidents of Aizawl city or their representatives.

Executive Committee

This is the third authority next to CWC. It is a standing committee having power to establish unit within the area of sub-headquarters. Formation of budget and policy and enforcement of disciplinary action etc, are the responsibilities of Executive Committee. Executive Committee members are- Office bearers of General Headquarters, President, Vice President, Treasurer and General Secretary of the Sub-Headquarters. President and five (5) members appointed by the President of their respective branches.

General Headquarters Office Bearers

All the decisions and resolutions made by the General Assembly, CWC and Executive Committee are carried out by the General Headquarters Office Bearers. It looks after the day to day duties and the functioning of the union. Office Bearers of the General Headquarters are- President, Vice President, Treasurer, Working President, General Secretary, Asst. Gen. Secretary, Financial Secretary, Secretaries (less than 4) Joint Secretaries (less than 6) and Advisers (less than 4).

Branch Headquarters

For the smooth functioning of the organization, General Executive Committee permits workers of different departments to form Branch Headquarters at their respective department. Conference, Executive Committee and Office Bearers are the important bodies under Branch Headquarters.

Sub-Headquarters

After clearing the boundary of the proposed Sub-Headquarters, the Executive Committee may establish Sub-Headquarters. Conference/Special Conference, Executive Committee and Office Bearers are the significant bodies of this Sub-Headquarters.

Divisional Headquarters

At the time of necessity to form Divisional Headquarters, the Executive Committee of the General Headquarters is empowered to establish Divisional Headquarters with clear boundary lines. Divisional Conference, Divisional Executive Committee and Divisional Office Bearers are the important bodies under Divisional Headquarters.

Branch

If there is more than one unit in a place, a branch may be established with the prior permission of higher organizations. Like other organization there are General meetings, Executive Committee and Office Bearers meeting in this Branch.

Unit

This is the lowest organizational body. More than 10 members of NTUM may form a unit. Unit General Meeting, Unit Committee and Office bearers are there in this unit.

The functioning of NTUM

The gradual process of class consciousness among Mizoram muster roll workers made it necessary to have unity for safeguarding of their rights against the employers. An important means which had been used for the publicity were - Press Release, Circular, *Rinawmna* (the NTUM official monthly Magazine) and the NTUM 20th Anniversary (1986-2006) etc.

In an editorial of *Rinawmna*, (NTUM official monthly Magazine) Lalnunfima, the editor wrote that how shameful it is to work without knowing the legal status of workers. He said that everyone has rights, but the rights which are given to the workers are not available due to the arbitrary carelessness of the employers, especially government officials. He also added that the workers may avail such rights only through the unity of workers in the country.⁸ L.Hnamte informed his colleagues that the ensuing NTUM General Assembly to be held on the 14th – the 15th December 1990 would discuss how to make Muster Roll *crowd* (ie. the implementation of labour law). He presumed that the making and the implementation of Labour laws and rules would relieve them against the fear of - termination without reason, warning to terminate, demotion of

⁸ *Rinawmna*, NTUM official Monthly Issue No 9 Voll. II. November, 1990

skill, over time work without extra wages, arbitrary rule of the masters against the workers, etc. He opined if the government could not safeguard labours' rights it would be necessary to go to High Court in search of justice. He concluded that the ability to elbow their ways depends upon their unity which will be testified by the affinity of the enrolment in the NTUM.⁹

The bond of loyalties among the workers who are members of the NTUM is quite impressive. The members work in cooperation with each other. In a particular incident the Power and Electricity Department removed in mass some muster roll workers from employment. On receiving the information, the members of NTUM sacrificed 10 days wages in favour of their colleagues as mark of solidarity with their fellow workers. They requested the concerned department to resume their employment. Although the authority did not accept the proposal, the move testifies the sense of fellow-feeling.¹⁰

When the southern part of Mizoram was ravaged by the natural calamities such as flood, land slide and cyclone, NTUM members contributed their one day wages for the suffering people.

NTUM continuously requested their members not to stray way but to maintain unity in their organization. They encouraged workers to establish unit in any government department and organization where there is none.¹¹

⁹ L.Hnamte, *Trade Union Tlangau*, an article published in Rinawmna (Trade Union) Monthly Issue Vol.II 1990

¹⁰ President, Electric Branch Hqrs. *Letter* memo No E/Bhq/A-2/92-95 File No HQ-2 of Dated 22/6/1995.

¹¹ NTUM *Circular* issued by President and Gen. Secy. Gen.Hqrs. Memo no. NTUM/A-4/89/125 Dated Aizawl the 8th January 1996

For the strengthening of NTUM one labour union known as Mizoram Labour Union was merged into NTUM on the 17th October 2001 and requested Registrar Trade Union, Government of Mizoram to cancel Labour Union Registration.¹² From the general study of the NTUM it can be understood that it was a union having many problems to be solved for their survival and the betterment of their status. Some of the important activities of NTUM as a pressure group may be studied in the following manner.

ACTIVITIES OF NTUM

Engagement of M/R labour at Employers' Residence

The temptation for misuse of labour force was so strong, and officials were usually prone to it. Engagement of workers in private work has been rampant throughout the length and breadth of the state. The absence of workers' union and the lack of knowledge among labour help the officials to take advantage of the situation. After the formation of trade union, there has been a change in the management of labour in Mizoram. Since the inception of the union, NTUM has vehemently been opposing the employment of M/R labour at the employers' residence to do private jobs.

To avoid such kind of malpractices, NTUM General Conference held at Khatla Hall Aizawl on the 28th August 1989 passed a resolution

¹² NTUM and MLU *Joint Letter* Memo No.NTUM/Pre/PB/2001/14 Dated 17th October 2001 to Registrar, Trade Union, Government of Mizoram.

to take steps on that matter.¹³ In pursuance of the pressure of the union, the government of Mizoram became more vigilant against employment of M/R labour to do private jobs at residence, but their demand for complete ban on employment of M/R worker for private jobs are yet to be achieved.

Demand to Reinstate Dropped Labours and to stop employment of Fake Muster Roll Workers

Workers known as Muster roll labours are not the regular/permanent employees of Government. Frequent picking and dropping of Muster roll labour was one of the obvious practices indulged in by the official in matters of employment of labour in Mizoram. The absence of labour union before the middle of 1980s could not unite labour. As a result they simply suffered due to their superiors' arbitrary orders. After the formation of union, labour became conscious and they gained more knowledge as to how to fight for the avoidance of frequent dropping of labours and for getting regularisation.

In the middle of 1998, due to the strong pressure of Federation of Mizoram Government Employees and Workers (FMGE&W), the Government of Mizoram started the implementation process of the 5th Pay Recommendation in the state. Financial constraint and the paucity of funds to meet the new expenditure impelled the authority to economize government money. Therefore, the state Cabinet decided for 50% cut of M/R labours and Work Charge workers, and the meeting of Secretaries held at the chamber of Chief Secretary Government of

¹³ *The 4th General Conference of NTUM Gen. Headquarters, held on 27th-28th September 1989, Resolution No. 6 (2)*

Mizoram on the 18th May 1998, decided to terminate some Muster Roll labourers and Work Charge workers who were employed in different Department.¹⁴ According to the NTUM, the sacrifice of lower/poor labours' jobs for the gain and satisfaction of FMGE&W was partial and unjust. In a reaction to the government's decision, NTUM appealed on the 8th June 1998 to all the Heads of Departments not to implement such order and also requested them to understand if they resist such kind of termination order and also told them that the focus and target was the government not the officials.¹⁵ On the same day, they also requested to the Chief Minister not to drop even a single M/R labour as a result of adaptation of the 5th Pay Recommendation.¹⁶

The dormant reply from the Government forced the NTUM to react, and they convened a Special Assembly on the 16th July 1998, and passed a resolution to observe '*Lungngaihna Ni*' (Sorrow Day) on the 24th July 1998. Then they informed the government that all M/R labours were full of sorrow, and requested the government to withdraw the decision of reduction of 50 % of M/R and Work Charge labours working under the Government of Mizoram.¹⁷

Muster Roll workers felt that the officers used to add fake names in the muster roll register and used to draw money from the office. Such kind of the corrupt practice was called '*M/R Thlarau*' literally it means 'the spiritual Muster roll'. Such bad practice was heinous crime of

¹⁴ Government of Mizoram, GAD **Letter** No. F. 23012/1/97/-GAD Dated the 25th May 1998

¹⁵ NTUM Gen.Hqrs. **Letter** Memo No.NTUM/F-1/89/148 Dated 8th June 1989 to All Head of Departments, Government of Mizoram.

¹⁶ NTUM Gen.Hqrs. **Letter** Memo No.NTUM/F-1/89/149 Dated 8th June 1989 to Chief Minister, Government of Mizoram.

¹⁷ NTUM Gen.Hqrs. **Letter** Memo No.NTUM/A-1/89/186 Dated 20th July 1998 to Chief Minister, Government of Mizoram.

wastage of government fund, and the main cause of the decision to cut down the employment of workmen in Mizoram. Therefore, the NTUM earnestly tried to stop it, and passed a resolution to take necessary action in this regard.¹⁸

In pursuance of the report of NTUM, the Government of Mizoram started operation for searching of fake M/R labour in the different departments. During this time Chalhminglina, Finance Secretary, NTUM General Headquarters, said that Trade Union leaders were warned by some department officers.¹⁹ In this case executive officers manipulated their powers and showed list of Muster Roll to the head of their respective departments. In the beginning of 1999, as a result of checking of M/R list, many M/R labours lost their jobs and requested the Minister i/c Labour and Employment to reinstate all the dropped labours.²⁰ This means that the checking and the finding of fake workers from muster roll list could not change NTUM policy of retaining the position of M/R labours.

NTUM and Miscellaneous Demand

On the 10th October 2006, the representatives of NTUM met the Chief Secretary and discussed how to organize training on a large scale for the youth of Mizoram. The topic deliberated upon in the meeting are- filling up of the post of labour and employment officer, changing the designation of the District Employment Officer as District Labour and Employment Officer to be able to effectively check labour works

¹⁸ The 4th General Conference of NTUM Gen. Headquarters, held on 27th-28th September 1989, **Resolution No. 7 (3)**

¹⁹ Lalhmingliana Ralte, *The Welcome Speech of NTUM 15th General Assembly* at Vanapa Hall Aizawl on the 21st November, 2000

²⁰ NTUM Gen.Hqrs. **Letter** Memo No.A-1/2000/NTUM/31 Dated the 21st Nov. 2000.

within their respective jurisdiction, implementation of Muster Roll Regularisation Scheme which had been published in the Government Gazette in 2000; and inclusion in the cabinet memorandum of a scheme for condoning over age in respect of M/R labours.²¹

Besides these, NTUM leaders and Vanlalnghaka, Joint Secretary Finance Department discussed how to implement Employee's Provident Fund Scheme (EPF) for M/R labours. Generally their demand was implemented excepting the last one, EPF scheme, which is yet to be realised.

NTUM and Electoral politics for the success of their demands.

The NTUM is a non-political organization no doubt. But it is affiliated to the Bharatya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS). Originally the BMS was formed by the then political party known as the Jana Sangh, now called the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) in 1955.²² While the BMS is controlled and influenced by the BJP, the NTUM is not controlled and supported by a particular political party. From the inception, the political behaviour of this union is to maintain political neutrality. Even then, they boldly declared that they did not mind to support any party if it is for the welfare of the labour organization. The General Conference of 1989 entrusted their leaders to circulate words of support in favour of the ruling party in mass media such as radio, newspapers etc.²³

²¹ *NTUM Thuchhuah* (NTUM Press Release), Aizawl Observer Bi-Weekly Magazine Vol XVIII Issue No. 45 Date 18th-21st August 2006.p 10.

²² U.R. Ghai, *Indian Political System*, New Academic Publishing Co. Jalandhar, 1995, p.226

²³ *The 4th General Conference of NTUM Gen. Headquarters, held on 27th-28th September 1989, Resolution No. 4*

When the Mizoram state was intending to hold MLA election in the month of November 1993, political debates and campaigning had started in the length and breadth of the state. H. Lalnunfima, General Secretary, NTUM General Headquarters, highlighted that the NTUM is the poor labour union trying to develop the welfare of all kinds of labour as well as the government of Mizoram too. He also suggested that the suffering of labour was due to low esteem against the workers. He urged the government to make reliable and viable schemes for the survival of all workers including farmers, gardeners etc. He also focused on the MLA election and appealed to the electorate in the name of NTUM General Headquarters to choose only a party who love labours.²⁴

On the 2nd November 1993, L. Hnamte, General Secretary issued a ‘Press Release’ by pointing out the picture of ruling Congress (I) Ministry on the issue of labour welfare.²⁵ According to him, the NTUM demand, for the establishment of Labour Wing/Department was looked into but after taking it into consideration; they could not realize it during their five years term. Three labour laws were passed but no agency was entrusted by the laws to take necessary action. He also alleged Congress as having illegally formed a Special Committee without representative of labour. He further explained that the corruption eradication programme initiated by the labour union was totally rejected and also charged Congress leaders as having failed to look into the steps to be taken for the welfare of labour recommended by the special Committee. At last, he pointed out that the NTUM had been observed hunger strike, procession and non working for the success of their demand during the

²⁴ *Press Release* issue by General Secretary, NTUM Gen. Hqrs. On the 4th.October,1993

²⁵ *Press Release* issue by L. Hnamte, General Secretary, NTUM Gen. Hqrs. On the 2nd. November,1993

Congress ministry, Press release was concluded with the appeal to the people to elect the party who loved the country and the people only.

In addition to the Press Release on the 4th November 1993, the General Secretary told their members that their hunger strike and procession did not work for the realisation of their demand for higher rate of wages through the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. He further blamed the government saying that the government promised them to increase the wages but did not take any action and failed to fulfill their promise. Thus he appealed to all electors and members not to choose dishonest government in the Assembly election.²⁶

On the 28th September 1995, NTUM constituted one committee called 'Political Affairs Committee' for the interest of the trade union. It also requested all members to pay attention to the decision of Political Affairs Committee for the MP election. They enthusiastically expressed that the absence of politics does not bear good fruit; and also opined that while casting vote the sole aim should be the welfare of labours.²⁷ This means that NTUM did not yet mind to involve as an organization in parliamentary election as well.

On the 14th April 1996, the central working committee of NTUM reviewed the decision of Trade Union Political Affairs Committee (PAC) and decided to help one of the M.P. candidates F. Lalremsiama of MNF party without thinking about party affiliation. They also declared that the NTUM was not affiliated to any political party and did

²⁶ *Press Release* issue by General Secretary, NTUM Gen. Hqrs. on 4.11.1993

²⁷ NTUM *Circular* issued by Secretary NTUM PAC Memo no.NTUM/C-2/87/50 Dated Aizawl the 29th September 1995

not hate any party; but they appealed all members to cast vote unanimously.²⁸

Around one month and half ahead of the Parliamentary elections, (which was held on the 23rd February 1998), the NTUM pointed out 6 points of demands to the Government of Mizoram, and also mentioned that if the ruling Congress party fulfilled their demands, then they would support their candidate J. Lalsangzuala in the MP election at that time.²⁹

The NTUM demands included labour service matters such as reinstatement of the dropped M/R labours after the 19th July 1997, and the reinstatement of demotion skilled 1 labours. To make proposal for the permanent post and regularization scheme for M/R labours with 10 years' service. Taking steps for the creation of separate Labour Department/Labour Wing before the completion of September 1998. For the uniformity of all departments they also demanded creation of M/R skilled 1 posts in PWD department.

After one month, it seemed that NTUM lost their confidence on the ruling Congress party and circulated another press release in favour of the Citizen Common Front (CCF) candidate Dr. H. Lallungmuana. The NTUM clarified that they were non political party, free to support any political parties, and pointed out their arguments in support of Dr. H. Lallungmuana.

²⁸ NTUM *Circular* issued by President and Secretary NTUM Gen. Hqrs. Memo NO.NTUM/C-2/87/55 Dated 13th April 1996

²⁹ NTUM *Circular* issued by President NTUM Gen. Hqrs. on 14.1.1998

In the previous MP election, NTUM supported F. Lalremsiama, the MNF candidate, and then they wanted to help another person as they were non political organization. NTUM thought that the Congress party did not really want their MP candidate to be successful in the election. Therefore, they wanted to support a party candidate who really wanted to get victory in the election. They also opined that the degree of earnestness of Congress party leaders and their candidate J. Lalsangzuala were different. The revision of rate of wages, finalized on the 10th July 1997, resulted in the termination of workers. NTUM requested the government to reinstate the dropped labours but the answer was the non availability of money and the necessity of dropping some more M/R labours. Therefore, the NTUM was disappointed with the Congress party. NTUM expressed concern with the non-uniformity of labour opportunity in different departments of Mizoram and requested the authority to make uniform rules on that matter, but the government did not fulfill their demand. e.g. while Public Health Department and Power & Electricity Department employed M/R Skilled 1 labour, Public Works Department and Local Administrative Department had no such kind of post. They opined that it was one of the weaknesses of the government. They regarded the failure to establish Labour Department/Wing during their long office for two consecutive terms as their negligence of labours. In rural area M/R labours working in Public Health Department who distributed water in the villages were dropped. As a result it became necessary to employ untrained villagers with the funds collected from Village Council and other voluntary organizations. They pointed out that such kind of employment may create problem in the department, and also opined that the fresh employees are not fit to look after the technical works.³⁰ Their press

³⁰ NTUM *Press Release* issued by H. Lalmalsawma, National Trade Union of Mizoram Political Affair Committee on the 14th February, 1998

release was concluded with the earnest appeal to all members to follow their prayers.

In the parliamentary election of 1998, the NTUM supported Dr. H. Lallungmuana a candidate of Citizens Common Front, who won the election. But the Union Government led by A.B. Vajpayee was prematurely dissolved in 2004. Therefore, it seemed that the expectation of the working class failed one more time to be materialized.

From the study of the NTUM electoral behavior it can be said that NTUM did not mind to support any political party candidates who would support them after winning elections.

Appeal for the increase of holiday

NTUM tried their level best for the increase of paid holidays in addition to the existing important national holidays and Sundays. They requested the government to declare *Remna ni* (i.e the 30th June, the day on which the Mizoram accord was signed) and May Day as M/R labour holidays.³¹ After the declaration of May Day as M/R holiday, the NTUM appealed again to the authority to declare *Remna Ni* (the 30th June) and Missionary Day (the 11th January, the date of arrival of the first Christian Missionaries in Mizoram) as their holidays.³²

³¹ *The 4th General Conference of NTUM Gen. Headquarters, held on the 27th-28th September 1989, Resolution No. 7(1)*

³² NTUM Gen. Hqrs. *Letter* Memo No. A-I/2000/NTUM/31 Dated Aizawl the 21st November 2000 to the Labour and Employment Minister, Government of Mizoram.

As per the desire and demand of the workers, the Government of Mizoram declared 12 days as holidays. Workers other than the clerks, peons etc. working in the office, enjoy the paid holidays in addition to the Sunday benefit as enjoyed by the workers, provided they work continuously for 6 days in a week.³³ At present the paid holiday is cut short by 2 days, that is, State day the 20th February and May Day the 1st May.³⁴

Demand for the increase of Minimum wages Rate

From the general point of view it seems ‘minimum wages’ applies to the wage of M/R labour only. But according to the Industrial Dispute Act, section 2 (J) it includes the direct or indirect workers under industry, namely, the development and welfare workers in tea stall, restaurant, cinema hall, hair cutting saloon, taxi driver, truck/bus driver and furniture/motor/bike workshop, etc.³⁵ From the study of the history of wages of labour in Mizoram, it seems that the first minimum wage rates were fixed by the British and the Assam government. In case of Mizoram, the first Minimum Wages Rate (MWR) was fixed by Public Works Department in 1984.³⁶

³³ Government of Mizoram, Labour and Employment *Notification* no.B.11015/1/2007-L & E Dated Aizawl the 17th July, 2007 p.2

³⁴ Government *Notification* No. B11015/1/2009-L&E Dated Aizawl, the 3rd November 2009 p.2

³⁵ *Minimum Wages Chungchang* (The story of Minimum Wages) issued by Vanlalngheta Hnamte, Secretary in charge of Information and Publicity, NTUM General Headquarters, Aizawl. Dated 20th June 2002.

³⁶ Government of Mizoram, PWD order No. PWM.92/81/196 Date 10.2.1984
According to 1983 order, workers’ minimum wages per day rate in different categories were-

Sl/No	Classification of Works	Minimum Rate of Wages per Day
1.	Unskilled Worker	Rs. 12.00
2.	Semi-Skilled Worker	Rs. 14.00

It was retrospectively effected from the 1st December 1983. The second and the third revisions of wages were done by the government without prior pressure or resistance. The regular revision of MWR was irregular from the fourth revision period. The NTUM demanded revision of minimum wages due to the soaring prices which concerned the workers.³⁷

After several verbal discussions, the demands were submitted to the Government of Mizoram. A committee known as Special Committee was formed to deal with the rate of labour wages. The 5th and the last meeting of this Special Committee finalized their recommendation on the 22nd April 1993. Unluckily for the muster roll labour, the Chairman of Special Committee, Shri. Denghnuna was ill and could not attend the office from the 22nd April 1993 to the 3rd May 1993. He, therefore, could not prepare the Cabinet memorandum of labours' wages for consideration in the Cabinet meeting held on the 3rd May 1993. Afterwards NTUM leaders urged the Chief Minister to call upon the Cabinet Meeting to fulfill their demand.³⁸

To press their demand, the NTUM submitted ultimatum to the Chief Minister to fulfill the recommendation of the last and final meeting of the Special Committee on the 22nd April 1993. They warned the government that they would organize strike if order for increase of

3.	Skilled Worker Class II	Rs. 17.00
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4.	Skilled Worker Class I	Rs. 20.00
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³⁷ *The 4th General Conference of NTUM Gen. Headquarters, held on the 27th-28th September 1989, Resolution No. 7 (2)*

³⁸ *Circular*, issued by President and Secretary of NTUM Gen.Hqrs.to all Units of NTUM on 26th May 1993

wages was not issued before the 10th June 1993 5.00 PM.³⁹ In pursuance of the ultimatum submitted to the Chief Minister, the NTUM Central Working Committee held on the 8th June 1993, requested all the members to be alert and wait for the ultimate date and time of the 10th June 1993 till 5.00 pm; and also informed them to start agitation if there was no new order. They also further informed them to chalk out new action plan if things were becoming worse. At the same time they also requested all the departments and the public to understand that their action plan was not simply a demand for a higher wages, but a claim for obtaining labours' rights and justice.⁴⁰ Since the NTUM did not receive any satisfactory response from the authority even after crossing the date line, then, they started hunger strike for five consecutive days and remained absent from duty.

At last the representatives of NTUM and the Government agreed on two points. That is, the government would retrospectively fix the 1st April 1993, as the effective date of raising the wages of M/R workers. Secondly, the government of Mizoram promised to pay the wages of five days of the strike period.

While NTUM eagerly waited for the implementation of the NTUM-Government agreement, the following two Cabinet Meetings did not discuss their demand, and this act of negligence added fuel to the fire.⁴¹

³⁹ *Ultimatum*, submitted by the President and the Secretary of NTUM Gen. Hqrs. to Chief Minister Government of Mizoram. On the 7th.May.1993

⁴⁰ *Prease Release* issued by J. Lalrosanga Secretary Information and Publicity NTUM Gen. Hqrs. Aizawl Dated Aizawl the 8th June 1993

⁴¹ *Prease Release*, issued by Lalnunfima, General Secretary NTUM Gen. Hqrs. Dated 4.11.1993

Therefore, L. Hnamte Secretary, Political Affairs Committee of NTUM openly criticized Congress Ministry led by Lal Thanhawla. He said that the government could not establish Labour Department within five years. The Ministry passed three resolutions without making the implementation for the creation of the department. As a result of the struggle of NTUM by means of hunger strike, procession and non working etc. the government formed a Special Committee; but it was formed without including the representatives of Trade Union. Corruption eradication programme initiated by the labour union was totally neglected. He also vehemently blamed Congress Ministry as one who could not fulfill the labour welfare provisions recommended by the previous Special Committee.

Keeping in mind the interest of the working class, NTUM General Headquarters said that the very low rate of minimum wages may result in, beggary, robbery, corruption, prostitution, dishonesty, violation of Christian value and the widening of the gulf between the rich and the poor; therefore it would be positively necessary to fix MW at a reasonable rate.⁴²

In response to the voice of the labour union, the government of Mizoram fixed minimum wages rates. The NTUM was very happy and also thanked God and the Government. At the same time, according to the trade union the new M.W. rates were still very low to bind together soul and flesh in the prevailing Mizoram economy. For organising demand for higher wage rates and further movement they appealed to all members to contribute funds in proportion to their wages. i.e. Rs.

⁴² *Circular* No. NTUM/C-2/89/26 Dated Aizawl the 5th June 1993.

100.00 for Skilled I & II, Rs 50.00 for Semi-Skilled and Unskilled.⁴³ But the desires or wishes of NTUM was still hanging in the air till next revision of 1995.

The NTUM members were looking forward to the 1st April 1995 i.e. the time for next revision of the rate of wages for M/R workers. They requested the government to revise their wages rates in time. But due to financial constrains faced by the debt-ridden government the revision could not be done in time. On the 20th November 1995, NTUM General Headquarters submitted ultimatum to the Chief Minister.

NTUM pointed out that workers had been suffering due to the existing MW rate which was below subsistence level. According to the standing rules minimum wages rate is to be refixed after every two years, even then the government could not abide by the rules. NTUM opined that wage is the main cause of their work. Therefore, they urged the government to fix minimum wages rate to casual labours who were working in private firms such as Printing press and Handloom sectors etc. They strongly demanded the government to revise MW rate on or before the 1st December 1995, and also informed the government if their demand had no meaning they would start hunger strike with effect from the 4th – the 8th December 1995. They also added that if their hunger strike was not effective they would chalk out a programme for the widening of hunger strike in the whole state.

⁴³ Gen. Secretary, NTUM *Letter* Memo No.NTUM/C-2/89/27 Dated Aizawl the 6th July 1993 to All Muister Roll Labours.

They concluded that although unwilling to take steps by launching hunger strike, circumstances compelled them to do so. At the same time they also appealed to people to understand their stand and causes of action.⁴⁴ The NTUM General Headquarters requested all their members to follow any direction which would come from the headquarters. They further mentioned that their programme was not designed against the concerned departments, but the inevitable means to convey their appeal to the Government for the fulfillment of their demand.⁴⁵

While applying watch and see policy on the ultimatum, NTUM found out that there was no response or gesture from the government till the coming of the date line i.e. the 1st December 1995. Therefore, NTUM leaders started hunger strike which was scheduled from the 4th December 1995 till the 8th December 1995. At the same time, they requested department officers to understand the inevitable course they had to take for the revision of MWR.⁴⁶ Being thus pressured by the NTUM, the government began to process their demand and fixed the new rate in 1997.

After the due date of the formation of Minimum Wages Board in the last quarter of 2000, i.e. on the 21st November 2000, B. Hrangthanga, President and F. Lalhuzama, General Secretary of NTUM requested the Hon'ble Minister to review Minimum wages rate for the

⁴⁴ NTUM **Letter** Memo no. NTUM/C-2/87/51 Dated Aizawl the 20th November 1995 issued by President and Secretary of NTUM Gen.Hqrs. to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Mizoram.

⁴⁵ NTUM **Circular** Memo No. NTUM/C-2/87/51 Dated Aizawl the 20th November 1995 issued by Assistant Secretary and Secretary i/c Information NTUM Gen. Hqrs.

⁴⁶ NTUM Gen. Hqrs **Letter** No. NTUM/c-2/89/53 Dated Aizawl the 4th Dec 1995

maintenance of labour subsistence level standard.⁴⁷ In response to the request, the Government formed Minimum Wages Board (consisting of government officials and representatives of the Trade Union) on basis of the existing rules.

The Minimum Wages Board started the revision of MWR with effect from the 25th June 2001. During the long session of Minimum Wages Committee, NTUM applied lobbying and other means for the pursuance of officials to make decision in the interest of the workers. After a careful study of the proposal for the increase of MWR and looking at the issue from different corners, the board decided not to increase the existing rates. Representatives of NTUM reported the matter to their Central Working Committee (CWC). The CWC opined that failure to raise the present M/R wages Rs 84.00 per day was an insult to the down trodden labours. Therefore, they submitted *Ultimatum* to The Hon'ble Minister, Labour and Employment Department, Mizoram and gave a chance for the revision of the said rate with effect from the 16th October 2001 to the 23rd October 2001, and also added that they would take necessary action if their demands vanished in the air.⁴⁸ After 6 (six) times deliberations, Minimum Wages Board revised MWR on the 19th October 2001. The effective date was fixed as 21st October 2001.

Due to the long process of the government procedure and the problem of financial constraint, the government, especially the Finance

⁴⁷ President and Gen. Secretary, NTUM Gen. Hqrs. **Letter** No.A-1/2000/NTUM/31
Date 21st November 2000 to Hon'ble Minister in charge Labour and Employment.

⁴⁸ NTUM **Letter** No. D-1/NTUM/200/93 Dated Aizawl the 16th October 2001 to Labour and Employment Minister, Government of Mizoram.

Department delayed and could not implement the decision even after crossing the tentative date of the 21st October 2001. Then they requested the Chief Minister to issue payment order at new MWR that would be effective from the 21st October 2001 on or before the 20th December 2001.⁴⁹

With the festive mood of 2001 Christmas and the New Year, M/R labour unionists were eagerly awaiting payment order from the Government. Since there was no response from the government, the NTUM informed the Chief Minister that they had started hunger strike with effect from the 21st December 2001, and also added that if the hunger strike did not bear fruit by 23rd December, the union would launch indefinite strike with effect from the 24th December 2001.⁵⁰ Therefore, the NTUM launched state wide strike on the 23rd December 2001 at 5.00 pm, and informed their entire members not to work, but to join the agitation, and also told them that there was a compensation provision to those labours who lost their jobs and became handicapped due to the agitation of the trade union. On the 25th December 2001 another NTUM General Headquarters office bearers joined the hunger strike.⁵¹ In other parts of the state like N. Vanlaiphai (from 26.12.2001), Hnahthial and Lunglei (from 27.12.2001) also chalked out programme to follow General Headquarters. In addition to these they also requested all churches and people of Mizoram to pray to God for the deliverance of poor labours from the suppression of the Government.⁵²

⁴⁹ NTUM *Letter* No. NTUM/FN-2/2001/17 Dated Aizawl the 18th December 2001 to Chief Minister Government of Mizoram.

⁵⁰ NTUM *Letter* No NTUM/Pre/PB/2001/14 Dated Aizawl the 21st December 2001 to Chief Minister Government of Mizoram.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² NTUM *Mipuite Hnena Thuchah (A Message to the People)* issued by P.B.Lalsawmliana, President NTUM General Headquarters, Aizawl, Mizoram.

Since the issue became a public debate in the last part of 2001, Labour and Employment Minister highlighted the government position that they were not in a position to solve NTUM problems due to the long continuous festival holidays. In reply to the query made by an All India Radio, correspondent the Minister said “the Minimum Wages Board is the government approved board to review MWR, but the decision for increase was taken not on the basis of the availability of funds but on the basis of market price index.” He also added that in other states, they sometimes revised MWR 2/3 times in a year.

Replying to the excuse of the Minister, i.e, “no time to satisfy the labour demand due to long festival holidays,” the NTUM asserted their position and said that sufficient time had been there since beginning of December 2001. They tried to meet Labour and Employment Minister at first in the early part of December, but the Minister was out of station and then they approached Mr. Aichhinga who took the of charge of Labour and Employment Minister. Minister Aichhinga could not solve the problem and directed them to see the Chief Minister and fixed the 14th December 2001 as a meeting day. Since they could not meet the Chief Minister as arranged by the Cabinet Minister, the NTUM leaders opined that there was no alternative except hunger strike. They also said that the silence of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 18th December 2001 on the issue of labour problems was the sign of negligence.⁵³

In the evening of the 28th December 2001 under the Chairmanship of L. Tochhong, Labour & Employment Commissioner of Mizoram, there was a joint meeting comprising the Government

⁵³ NTUM *Press Release* issued by Lalchhuanawma General Secretary and P.B. Lalsawmliana President NTUM General Headquarters Date 28.12.2001

officials such as Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl District. Lalthansanga Joint Secretary Finance (Budget), Superintendent of Police, Aizawl. Superintendent of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, Aizawl. H. Darzika Sub-Divisional Officer (Sadar), Aizawl and the representatives of NTUM like P.B. Lalsawmliana President, Lalchhuanawma General Secretary, F. Lalawmpuia Assistant General Secretary K. Biakmawia Secretary C. Malsawma Secretary and Lalhruitluanga Joint Secretary.

This joint meeting held at the Chamber of Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl, discussed the burning topic of Minimum Wages Rate. At first, without considering the interest of the labour and their demand, the government officials requested the NTUM to call off the existing strike for the opening of the discussion on the subject matter. The representatives of the union put up the suggestion of government officials to the General Body meeting. Over this issue, the General Body meeting opined that it would be better to continue hunger strike until and unless they got positive response for the success of their demand. Therefore, more members joined their leaders' hunger strike with effect from the 29th December 2001. From the rural area Mamit Branch, also joined the strike on the same day.⁵⁴

To make their pressure harder, five NTUM General Headquarters' leaders started hunger strike without water with effect from the 30th December 2001. At the same time for the proper mobilization of the organization and to communicate the Government some leaders and active members too observed hunger strike with drinking water.

⁵⁴ NTUM General Meeting *Resolution* on 29th December 2001

On the last day of 2001, NTUM convened emergency meeting of all members of Aizawl town at their General Headquarter Office, Khatla. After hearing speeches on the condition of the labours and their demand from the organizational ring leaders; they decided to have a direct and immediately personal contact with the Chief Minister at his bungalow, McDonald Hill, Aizawl around 2 kilometres north of NTUM General Headquarters. In the evening all the workers of the assembly marched to the Chief Minister's bungalow. But the long procession was resisted by security forces with lathi charge. The muster roll workers could not reach the destination; some were beaten and injured with bloodshed. Then automatically NTUM called off hunger strike with effect from 4.00 PM on that day itself.

At night around 7.00 pm. one of the leaders Lalhrunitluanga Joint Secretary who was admitted was discharged from the Hospital and the others such as Lalchhuanawma, General Secretary, K. Biakmawia, Secretary and Lalrengpuia member of the Executive Committee were released with some preliminary treatment around 4.00 pm on the New Year day, i.e. 1st January 2002.

On the next day i.e. the 2nd January 2002, while NTUM leaders were checking whether their programme of 'No Working' was observed by their members or not; they received a call from the government to have a meeting at 2.30. Pm. at the Chief Minister's bungalow. The Chief Minister was accompanied by the Superintendent of Police and Additional Superintendent of Polices, Aizawl.

After a long discussion, representatives accepted the last recommendation of Minimum Wages Board and also agreed to give effect from the coming financial new year of the 1st April 2002. Regarding the effective date of previous recommendation i. e. on the 21st October 2001, both party agreed to discuss it next time. All the absentee labourers during the agitation period were exempted and also permitted to draw their wages as usual.

As a result of the meeting, the NTUM called off the strike with effect from the 2nd January 2002, 5.00 Pm.⁵⁵ The NTUM circulated their thanks to all media including daily newspapers, local cable operators and all the members and their supporters during the protest period.⁵⁶

The Government of Mizoram formed a State Level Committee on Minimum Wages Board consisting of the Secretary and the Director of Labour and Employment (L&E) as the Chairman and the Secretary respectively. Other members were Chief Engineer, PWD. PHED, and P&E, Director Economics and Statistic, Director Industry, President Joint Contractor association; Manager, Bezalel Industry and 4 members from the NTUM. On the 19th October the Board fixed the new rates.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Vanlalnggheta Hnamte, *Minimum Wages Chungchanga N.T.U.M. Hunger Striker Inkhaichhawn Dan*. Date 3th January, 2002.

⁵⁶ NTUM *Press Release* Memo No. NTUM/FU-2/3/4/2002 Date 4th January 2002. issued by C. Malsawma i/c Information and Publicity.

⁵⁷ Vanlalnggheta Hnamte, *Minimum Wages Chungchanga N.T.U.M. Hunger Striker Inkhaichhawn Dan*. Date the 3rd January, 2002.

The new rate were as follow:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Unskilled | Rs 84/- per day |
| 2. Semi Skilled- | Rs 94/- per day |
| 3. Skilled II | Rs 117/-per day |
| 4. Skilled I | Rs 149/-per day |
| 5. | |

The new rates were accepted by the Chief Minister on the 2nd January 2002, and approved by the Cabinet Meeting on 24th March 2002.⁵⁸

The increase in expenditure of labour wages incurred from the non revised existing state budget led to financial constraint, and as a result some M/R labour were demoted in their skill while others were aborted from their works. Therefore, relentless action against the victimized workers came again from the back door.

On the 25th July 2002, M/R labour under the government of Mizoram stopped their works and organized an annoyance procession at the state capital, Aizawl. At the end of the procession, P.B. Lalsawmliana, the NTUM President, asserted their position, and said that they unwillingly declared 'no work' and organized procession only after several attempts to meet the authority had failed on the issue of labour problems. He further said that they were happy as they got full support from different branches of NTUM in the length and breadth of Mizoram.

At the end of the programme around 600 demonstrators demanded the government to allot more funds for labour wages, and to reinstate all the retrenched M/R labours, or to compensate them at least with Rs. 1 lakhs for rehabilitation. They also reminded the government to establish state level Labour and Employment Department to look after the labour welfare, and reiterated that the government should implement the revised minimum wages rate with effect from the 1st April 2002.

⁵⁸ Government's Notification No. B.11015/1/2002-L&E Dated Aizawl the 15th May 2002

Regarding the retrenchment of M/R labours, the government Mizoram said that it was a misunderstanding; there was no reduction of labours due to increase of labour wages. But some workers who had been employed during the high demand for work forces were dropped after the working season was over, and added that they were still reserved for employment whenever the need arises.⁵⁹

On the 27th July 2002, Tawnluia, Minister i/c DP & AR, told NTUM leaders that the government had been carefully watching the status of M/R labour and formed a Study Group led by the Chief Secretary to study and solve their problems. Finally, he requested the NTUM to stop agitation and to resume their respective works immediately.⁶⁰ As a result of this confrontation the trade union was limping back to normal life with the partial fulfillment of their demands.

After receiving a number of demands for the increase of minimum wages rates, Government of Mizoram revised the Minimum wages rate on the 7th June 2005.⁶¹ The order was retrospectively made effective from the 1st January 2005.

⁵⁹ *Hnehtu*, A Daily Newspaper Volume – XIII. No.161 Date 26th July 2002. p 1.

⁶⁰ *Hnehtu*, A Daily Newspaper Volume – XIII. No.162 Date 29th July 2002. p 1.

⁶¹ Government of Mizoram, Labour and Employment *Notification* no.B.11015/1/03-L & E Dated Aizawl the 7th June, 2005
The Minimum Wages Rates of 2005 were-

1. Unskilled	Rs 91.00	per day
2. Semi-Skilled/Unskilled Supervisory	Rs 101.00	-do-
3. Skilled Grade II	Rs 126.00	-do-
4. Skilled Grade I	Rs 161.00	-do-

Realizing the deficient condition of the daily wages rate, the government of Mizoram approved the MWR revised by the State Minimum Wages Board. The notification was issued on the 17th July 2007.⁶² The new rate was retrospectively made effective from the 1st April 2007.

On the 10th September 2009, the State Level Committee on Minimum Wages recommended the interim rates of Minimum wage to have effected retrospectively from the 1st April 2009.⁶³

The continuous demand of the NTUM, and the impending payment according to the recommendation of the 6th Pay Commission in the state urged state government to increase minimum wages rate in Mizoram. On the 21st October 2009, Lalthanhawla Chief Minister of Mizoram declared the government proposal of new MWR.⁶⁴

⁶² Government of Mizoram, Labour and Employment **Notification** no.B.11015/1/2007-L & E Dated Aizawl the 17th July, 2007. The Minimum Wages Rates of 2007 were-

1. Unskilled	Rs 103.00	per day
2. Semi Skilled/Unskilled Supervisory	Rs 115.00	-do-
3. Skilled Grade II	Rs 143.00	-do-
4. Skilled Grade I	Rs 183.00	-do-

⁶³ FOMTU **Press Release** No. FOMTU/GHQ-MZ/2009/IP-1/19 Dated Aizawl the 11th Sept 2009

The interim Minimum Wages Rate were-

1. Unskilled	Rs 132.00	per day
2. Semi Skilled	Rs 148.00	-do-
3. Skilled Grade II	Rs 184.00	-do-
4. Skilled Grade I	Rs 235.00	-do-

⁶⁴ Vanglaini **Daily Newspaper** Vol-XXIV No. 242 Date 21st October 2008 p.1

The following are the MWR declared by the Chief Minister on 21.10.2009.

M/R Worker.	No.of M/R	Existing Rate	New Rate
Skilled I	533	Rs. 183.00	Rs. 235.00
Skilled II	2904	Rs. 143.00	Rs. 184.00
Semi Skilled	1082	Rs. 115.00	Rs. 148.00

The declaration of MWR by Chief Minister was followed by the revision order of the minimum wages rates of workers employed in different scheduled employments in the government, Semi-government etc. with effect from the 1st April 2009.⁶⁵

The fixation of new wages rates pleased the general workers, but the NTUM charged that the government did not yet follow the norm mentioned in Supreme Court's Judgment and Government of India Notification.⁶⁶

Thus, from the study of the NTUM's appeal for the increase of MWR and government reactions, it can be concluded that the government of Mizoram could not properly follow minimum wages rules especially due to financial constraint. But for the pressure from the NTUM, it seems that the authority might neglect the welfare of workers in general and the timing of revision of MWR in particular.

NTUM and Labour Laws

To the benefit of a trade union, it is necessary to register labour union under Trade Union Act of 1926. According to the Act, the union

Un-Skilled	3260	Rs 103.00	Rs. 132.00
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⁶⁵ Government's **Notification** no. B.11015/1/2009- L & E, Dated Aizawl the 3rd November, 2009

The approved new MWR were-

Classification of Works	Minimum Wages Rate	
1. Unskilled	Rs 132.00	per day
2. Semi Skilled	Rs 148.00	-do-
3. Skilled Grade II	Rs 184.00	-do-
4. Skilled Grade I	Rs 235.00	-do-

⁶⁶ FOMTU **Press Release** No. FOMTU/GHQ-MZ/2009/IP-1/19 Dated Aizawl the 11th Sept 2009

must concern a trade or business along with a combination of workmen or employers. The main objective of the union also must impose restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business.⁶⁷

The registration of union or association under the The Trade Union Act is not mandatory. However, if the union or association is registered under the Act, it will get the immunities, privileges and other rights contemplated under the Act.⁶⁸ According to Section 3 (2) of the Act, it is necessary to appoint the Registrar of Trade Unions for each state. If the state thinks fit, additional or Deputy Registrars also may be appointed with specified territorial jurisdiction.⁶⁹

There are a number of laws and acts which are made for looking after the workmen in India. Some of them are- Industrial laws. Trade Union Act, 1926. Industrial Dispute Act, 1947. Industrial Employment (Standing orders) Act, 1946. The employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923. Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. Employees Provident Fund (Family pension fund and Deposit Linked Insurance Fund) Act, 1952. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. Payment of Bonus Act, 1965. Minimum wages Act, 1948. Payment of wages Act, 1936. Factories Act, 1948 etc.⁷⁰

There are various acts, rules and schemes for safeguarding workers in India. Many things may be there in the Acts and rules, but the problem which the Labour Union confronts is the non realization or

⁶⁷ K. Madhvan Pillai, *Labour And Industrial Laws*, Published by Allahabad Law Agency, 9, University Road, Allahabad, 1994. p. 17

⁶⁸ *Op.cit.*, p. 18

⁶⁹ *Op.cit.*, p. 19

⁷⁰ *Op.cit.*, p. 11-500

embodiment of the laws, acts, and rules. Regarding the implementation of social security, economic and welfare legislation the state and union government had the same responsibilities. Actually labour is included in the concurrent list. Since financial constraint is rampant everywhere, it is difficult to implement all the welfare schemes of labour in the country.

From the very beginning, the NTUM worked hard for the formation of labour welfare rules to be applied in Mizoram. It was always discussed not only in the Executive meeting level but also in the General Conference. In pursuance of the resolutions adopted by the meetings a number of demands have been submitted to the Government of Mizoram; but the government has been slow in responding for a long time. Without being despaired and keeping optimistic ideas, the NTUM leaders pursued to make way for the formation of Labour laws, Rules and Regulations and used to approach the Ministers and offices of the concerned Department on that matter.⁷¹

To urge government on the issue of their demands, the meeting of Central Working Committee of NTUM held on the 5th December 1991 made the following action plans.⁷² They demanded government to make two or three more rules to add to the final draft which had been made by the Labour & Employment Department on basis of the rules and regulations of the Central Government. They also warned the government that if their demands were not pushed through in the Cabinet meeting on or before April 1992, they would organize hunger

⁷¹ *NTUM Circular* issued by Biakthansanga Joint Secretary, NTUM Gen. Hqrs. Aizawl on 7.3.1992.

⁷² Gen.Secretary and President *Letter* No,NTUM A-1/89/99 Dt.20.4. 1992 to Chief Minister, Government of Mizoram.

strike with effect from the 1st May 1992. They also appealed to the Government to create the post of Labour Officers and supporting staff which had been included in the budget estimate of 1990-91 and 1991-92.

On hearing the S.O.S. voice of the workers in Mizoram, the Government of Mizoram looked into their necessity and showed positive sign to them. The green signal gave impetus to the NTUM. At the same time, they also expressed that they had eagerly been waiting for the tabling of labour rules in the coming March Legislative Assembly Session, 1992.⁷³ Biakliansanga, Joint Secretary, NTUM General Headquarters informed all their members that if the said rules were passed and implemented it would be highly welcomed against the random employment of superior officers and commanders. He further, said that if the rules are practised there will be no more frequent termination of muster roll labours and also appealed all members to unite more firmly than before.

As the fruit of the long struggle waged by the NTUM, the Government of Mizoram passed the following legislations concerning labour welfare on the 8th June 1992.⁷⁴ The Mizoram Minimum wages rules 1992, The Mizoram Payment of Wages Rules 1992 and The Mizoram Trade Union Regulation Rules 1992. On the 17th August 1992 the NTUM General Headquarter Committee resolved that they were very thankful to the declaration of the three rules and also chalked out how to organize celebration of labour rules at Vanapa Hall on the 19th August 1992, they also agreed to invite Chief Minister and Labour

⁷³ **Circular** issued by Biakliansanga Joint Secretary NTUM Gen. Hqrs. On 7.3.1992.

⁷⁴ **Circular** issued by the President and the General Secretary of NTUM on 8.7.1992

Minister in the ceremony of welcoming the new rules. In pursuance of the resolution passed by the General Headquarters Committee all muster roll workers were requested to pay membership fee regularly and also were encouraged to form unit in every department where not yet formed.⁷⁵

The articulation of labour interest gave impetus to the NTUM, and on the occasion of celebration of labour rules on the 19th August, 1992, they highlighted the nature, aims and advantages of the rules for all Muster Roll (M/R) labours.

Regarding the implementation of labour laws, NTUM requested the authority to waste no time in processing the existing draft labour laws in the interest of M/R labours.⁷⁶ In 2004, The Mizoram Contract (Regulation & Abolition) Rules 2004 was passed to be effective from the date of the publication of the rules in the Government Official Gazette.⁷⁷ With regard to the labour laws, it can be said that even before independence of India some laws had been practised within the jurisdiction of British India. After the independence of India many laws, acts, rules and regulations had been framed from time to time, but all of them are not yet practiced in Mizoram. But as a result of hard pressure from NTUM who let no stone unturned to get justice and fair treatment, some of the basic laws have now been implemented in Mizoram.

⁷⁵ **Circular** issued by President P.C. Lalngakliana and General Secretary H. Lalnunfima NTUM on 1.7.1992

⁷⁶ NTUM Gen. Hqrs. **Letter** Memo No. A-I/2000/NTUM/31 Dt.21st November 2000 to Labour and Employment Minister, Government of Mizoram.

⁷⁷ **Kut Hnathawktu Enkawl Dan Tlangpuite**, published by Centre of Indian Trade Union Mizoram (CITUM), Aizawl 2008, p. 33

Up-gradation of Labour and Employment Department

The NTUM felt that the small number of existing staff of Labour and Employment (L&E) Department which was established in 1990 was not enough to handle the heavy departmental works and a series of demands from the trade union. As such they requested the government to create some posts of Labour Officers and the supporting staff as the expenditure for that purpose had been included in the last budget estimate of 1990-91 and 1991-92.⁷⁸ After looking into the working of the system and the strength of the staff in L&E Department, the Trade Union realized that the wing dealing with the labour welfare known as Labour Wing consists of an Assistant Employment Officer and only one Lower Division Clerk (LDC) which was too small to deal with the heavy work and of labour welfare. Then, they demanded the government to upgrade Labour Wing/Department along with the post of Labour Commissioner and sufficient supporting staff.⁷⁹

The slow process of the government towards labour's aspiration resulted in repetitions of their demand. On the 22nd November, 1993, the NTUM appealed to the state government to establish a separate Labour Department within 1994 with a Commissioner having relevant judicial powers as its head. In addition to these, they also demanded the establishment of Labour Court/Tribunal in Mizoram.⁸⁰ In addition to the previous demand, the NTUM appealed to Labour and Employment

⁷⁸ President and Gen.Secretary **Letter** No,NTUM A-1/89/99 Dt.20.4. 1992 to Chief Minister, Government of Mizoram.

⁷⁹ President and General Secretary **Letter** No.NTUM/A-1/89/33 Dt 17th Nov. 1990 to The Hon'ble Minister L&E Department, Government of Mizoram.

⁸⁰ NTUM **Letter** No.A-4/89/107 Dated Aizawl the 22nd Nov. 1993 to His Excellency, Governor of Mizoram.

Minister to upgrade the existing Labour Department to be a full-fledged Labour one.⁸¹

In the prevailing situation, it is not possible to impose the labour condition until and unless the monitoring L&E Department was not first improved. On the 10th October 2006, the NTUM leaders called on the Chief Secretary and discussed how to improve and reform Labour & Employment Department. In this meeting they agreed to change the name of District Employment Officer into District Labour and Employment Officer; so that the officer may get authority over all the labours within his jurisdiction.⁸² Even then the aspiration for full-ledged Labour Department was not yet fulfilled as the extension works took time.

Considering the above situation, it can be said that NTUM is the outcome of labour consciousness operation covered the whole state of Mizoram. It came into existence only with the definite aims, objectives and programmes. It aimed at the securing of employment status, economic development of the working class. The association is politically neutral, but sometimes takes sides during elections. They maintained brotherhood and try their level best for securing maximum wages and speedy improvement of working conditions. In cases of misunderstanding, they used to settle the disputes with the government authorities through negotiations. It is clear that NTUM, the product of labour movement; having proper organizations in different departments,

⁸¹ NTUM Gen. Hqrs. **Letter** Memo No. A-1/2000/NTUM/31 Date 21st November 2000 to Labour and Employment Minister.

⁸² *NTUM Thuchhuah* (NTUM Press Release), Aizawl Observer Bi-Weekly Magazine Vol XVIII Issue No. 45 Date 18th-21st August 2006.p 10.

have played a positive role for the improvement of workers in Mizoram. They identified their areas of problems such as – engagement of labours at employers residence doing private jobs, frequent termination of workers and inclusion of fake names in Muster rolls; demand for more leisure times, up gradation of Labour and Employment department, demand for the increase of Minimum Wages Rate, improvement of labour law etc. There is a good relationship among them and have a capacity to mould public opinion. The tactics which they used for the fulfillment of their demands are- submitting proposals, communicating directly to the Ministers and officials. No work, hunger strike and procession are the other importance means which they used for the achievement of their interest. Although all the demands which had been submitted to the government have not been successful, the importance of the role played by the NTUM in the labour administration of Mizoram can in no way be over emphasized or belittled.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The product of the long process of human development called 'pressure group' politics has occupied a very important place in the study of the political process of modern states. Pressure group is a group of people having common interest that tries to influence government decision maker to make policies for the benefit of themselves. The nature and function of pressure groups are not same in every country. In this study of pressure groups in the political process of modern complex society reveals how the interest articulation as well as aggregation existed in the states. Pressure groups occupy important position in the political process of Mizoram. Pressure groups may be classified on the basis of the interest represented by them, some are permanent and some are temporary, it also may be national, state, district and local level organization. Pressure groups use different techniques and methods for the fulfillment of their demands, sometimes they don't hesitate to use violent means. Pressure groups and political parties are closely related, but they are not same in nature, objectives and scope. The two terms, 'pressure groups' and 'interest groups' are often used interchangeably, but for the purpose of the study of interest articulation and political process in Mizoram, the term 'pressure groups' is more often used than the term 'interest group'. Pressure groups contribute important services not only in the democratic states but also in the totalitarian states. Sometimes, the compulsions of the party in power, to adopt groups' interest

may be detrimental to the general interest. This means that the role of pressure groups is not free from criticism.

In the case of India, pressure groups have come into prominence only after independence. It can be traced back the historical background of Indian pressure groups from the British period. The introduction of western education in India has changed the mind of Indian and gave rise to the emergence of pressure groups. The development of interest groups and interest articulation in India political process is one the important factors for the political modernization of India.

The political process of Mizoram which is the object of study in this research work is a hilly area, situated in the north eastern corner of India between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Its population is comprised of numerous sub-ethnic tribes though, *Duhlian* being the common language unites them. There are some minorities who live peacefully here compare to in the neighbouring states.

During the British rule, the north Lushai Hills was administered under Assam while the southern half remained under Bengal. Both these parts were amalgamated in 1898 into one district called Luhsai Hills District under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. After independence of India, Mizoram the then (Lushai Hills) was upgraded into the status of autonomous District Council, Union territory and the present statehood.

The study of pressure groups in Mizoram reveals that the nature and function of pressure groups are not exactly same with those of other Indian states and other countries. The support base organization of religion; youth and students such as Church, YMA and MZP which are covered in this study are the pre independence era organizations. But the National Trade Union of Mizoram is a recent one established only in the latter part of 1980s. Mizo Students' Union, which is a recent growth, has emerged as an offshoot of MZP.

Role of the Church

From the study of the church it can be found out that the Church, a Christian organization is generally concerned with the spiritual life, at the same times it is also involved in social and political reforms too. The two major churches of Mizoram, Presbyterian and Baptist church initiated taking part in the peace making process between the MNF underground and the government of India in the name of Christian Peace Committee (CPC). The CPC had a great contribution for the advent of normalcy in Mizoram during the disturbance on account of insurgency movement launched by the MNF.

The role of the church for the prohibition of liquor from the British period to the present day is really substantial. The voice of the church in Government Liquor Licensing Policy had a great influence. It can be said that the enforcement of Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act of 1995 is a result of an appeal made by the church to the Government of Mizoram.

During the election campaign of Assembly and Parliamentary elections, major church organisations like Presbyterian, Zoram Baptist, United Pentecostal church used to publish messages to the electorates, the political parties and the candidates. It can be said that churches in Mizoram really hate use of money power and violent means for the election campaign. Electorates were requested not to elect a candidate indulging in corruption, wine and any kind of bad activities. They also used to pray for the existence of free and fair elections. In fact, due to the strict principle of the church leaders, every party has been very careful in the selection of candidates. Even after election, the church always pressed the government to make policies in favour of their ideas.

The combined church organization called *Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee* (Mizoram Church Leaders Committee) was formed on the 15th June 1982. MKHC has been working very hard for the settlement of peace between India and MNF. They consulted all Mizoram political parties and prepared common table to have one voice. At the same time they also tried to convince the MNF and the Government of India to settle down their problems for the existence of permanent peace in Mizoram. The efforts of the church leaders finally led to the signing of the peace accord which took place on the 30th June, 1986.

Another church organization called Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was formed on the 21st August 2007. Eleven church dominations and four associations are affiliated in this organization. From the study of previous elections, MPF understood that there were excessive use of money power, and use of violent means, then they realized that only circulating message was not enough to do substantial and concrete

works. To carry out their objective, including establishing democratic government through free and fair election, reformation of electoral process, to make transparent, accountable and responsible government, to counter any form of violence, use of arms and terrorism etc., the MPF tried their level best for the fulfillment of their vision and policies. From its inception to the present the MPF played active role in more than ten elections. In these different levels of elections the MPF tried their level best for the fulfillment of their policies. The cooling down of tension during election campaign and bringing down election expenditures were the important results of the effort made by the MPF.

Church, a Christian organization, is strictly speaking concerned with spiritual and heavenly world. They are supposed to refrain from temporal and worldly things, but the inseparability of spirit and the flesh sometimes compels them to exert pressure on the political process of Mizoram state. It is found that the Church in Mizoram is composed of more than 46 different Church denominations. In proportion to their respective strength of Church members the role of major churches like Presbyterian and Baptist churches and those of other lesser church denominations are very different. In any case, no Church denomination wants to be called pressure group. But in case of violation of Christian teaching like indulgence in wine, use of violence, practice of corruption etc. churches are of one unanimous in disapproving such conduct and in the name of MKHC. Church actions and reaction in the political process of Mizorm politics however, had come to flourish only after the attainment of Mizoram Union Territory. In short, it can be remarked that the role of church is very much vital in the political process of Mizoram.

Role of the YMA

Christian missionaries and some church members formed Young Lushai Association later called Young Mizo Association (YMA) on the 15th June 1935. The three mottos of YMA are- to make leisure profitable. To seek progress and upliftment of the Mizo society and to uphold the honour of the practice of Christian value. There is no doubt that the YMA is a non political organization standing on the commitment of helping the needy persons.

Since inception to the present, YMA is known as a non political organization and they never call themselves as a pressure group. Regarding the enrolment of the Central YMA, office bearers in political parties are deemed to be unsuitable though, the CYMA General Conference held at Khawzawl seriously discussed the issues of dual membership in the YMA and a political party. This meant that there were problems in drawing a clear demarcation line between the youth organization and political affiliation of individual members. In any case, looking back to its 75 years old service, it is found that YMA is involved in the political matter including peace talk, preparation of electoral roll, election, foreigner issue, ILP and social matters including the operation against social evils.

YMA always puts pressure on the government whether it is a state government or a central government. After the armed revolt waged by the Mizo National Front (MNF) that broke out on the 1st March 1966, the YMA understood the problems faced by the Mizos, and submitted a complaint against the activities of the Indian army to the Prime Minister of India on the 23rd November 1974. On the same day the YMA and Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Student Association) resolved to organize silent

processions against the then prevailing lawlessness and the suffering of innocent people. It can be said that the first YMA procession was one of the important steps for the advent of peace in Mizoram.

The first Chief Minister of Union Territory of Mizoram, Mr.Ch. Chhunga requested the Central YMA to attend the peace research committee held on the 8th November 1974, at Aizawl club. This meeting resolved to constitute 'Peace Advisory Committee.' As per the request of the committee itself the YMA also became the member of the said committee. The Central YMA used to advise the peace committee to bring peace and normalcy between the MNF and the Government of India.

During the peace talk between the Government of India and MNF, the Central YMA pressed both the parties to make peace and settlement in Mizoram. Understanding the importance of peace in the society, the YMA General Conference which was held in 1976 at Kolosib town passed a resolution for peace and tranquility in the state. The long process of peace talks between the Government of India and the MNF faced several problems. It seemed that the political matter was to be solved with political means no doubt. But in case of Mizoram political parties and the MNF itself also needed voluntary organizations like the YMA to cooperate in the peace talk. In order to celebrate the Mizoram accord signed by the MNF and the Government of India on 30th June 1986, the YMA lighted torch on the night of the 30th June 1986 throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram.

In short, it can be said that YMA is one of the important instruments for the success of peace and normalcy in the state.

The Central YMA gives importance to safeguard Mizoram against the illegal immigrants especially from the neighboring countries and states. For this purpose, they formed a committee known as 'Ram leh Hnam Vengtu Committee' which means a watchdog committee of the state. Since 1996 in the name of CYMA, *Ram leh Hnam Vengtu Committee* initiated action to perform the assignments allotted to them. They took active part for the deletion of illegal enrolments from the electoral rolls. They organized seminars on electoral roll and assisted the Election Commission for the interception of foreigners and for testifying the authenticity of Voter Identity Card.

YMA learnt that the inclusion of foreigners may have bad effect on the socio economic and political life of the Mizo. Therefore, the Central YMA (CYMA) demanded to have genuine electoral roll that will be acceptable to every party. Then at the initiative of the CYMA a joint meeting, with political parties was held on the 15th September 1998. The meeting, having set aside party feeling, could prepare an acceptable E/Roll under the guidance of YMA. Since then YMA has actively been participating in the preparation of electoral roll.

Therefore, it can be said that the YMA is the social and political guardian of Mizo society. As a matter of fact, the YMA has become the most influential association to press the government for obtaining genuine electoral roll in Mizoram.

Mizoram experienced several elections such to the legislative Assembly and Parliament as well as Village Council and Autonomous District Councils. Amidst a series of works assigned to them, YMA spared their time for the betterment of Mizo Society during election and election campaigns. From the study of the first two state MLA elections, it is found out that Central YMA issued direction to the electorates, political parties and candidates. They requested all the parties not to write election slogan with indelible ink in the street. They also discouraged serving of public feast and excessive use of party flags. At the same time, they also encouraged all parties not to select drunkards, men of loose character and corrupt people as their candidates. The YMA regarded purchasing of votes as the beginning of corruption and strictly prohibited it. They also stopped the usual practice of serving tea separately at the different party camps. Instead, on the day of polling, they prepared tea for serving all the electorates.

From the study of the YMA and elections it can be said that the YMA has earnestly been taking part for the success of holding free and faire election as well as for the formation of a good government.

Mizoram inhabited by the Mizo, is also not free from the foreigners' problem. Since independence of India, foreigner's infiltration started in Mizoram. The main cause of the incoming of foreigners are mainly economic and secondly socio and political. Foreigners entering Mizoram can be divided into two categories, viz. foreigner belonging Mizo tribe and other nationals who are totally different from the Mizo not only in their appearance but also in life style.

YMA is conscious of the presence of a number of illegal traders and infiltrators in Mizoram. YMA recorded the particulars of illegal immigrants and requested the authority to delete them from electoral roll. If those persons were found doing business and holding government jobs they used constitutional means to stop their works.

Another important step taken for the detection of foreigners and other nationals is to maintain Village Census Register. In pursuance of the resolution adopted in the 54th General Conference (2000) the CYMA requested the government to construct good road communication and international border fencing for the safeguard of the Mizo people. The Government of Mizoram informed the CYMA that the work would be started soon. At present the work is going on.

In 2003, the YMA tried to find out foreigners and illegal immigrants and reported to the government to take necessary action. Following their General Conference resolution, 'Let the government is moved to make foreigner check gates wherever necessary,' the YMA requested the Home Minister to fulfill their desire. As a result, the Government of Mizoram issued 'Guideline for Regulation Entry of Myanmareses and Non tribals into Mizoram' on the 5th November 2003. In pursuance of this order 4 check gates were established at Zokhawthar, Thingsai, Phura and Lungbun.

In the next year, i.e. in 2004, the CYMA pressurized the government to be more strict on the maintenance of foreigner rules and regulations. They also circulated an appeal on the 6th March 2004 to the public and requested them to discourage free entry of foreigners, illegal

traders and non ILP holders. According to their appeal all people were informed not to provide residence and shop to outsiders having no valid permit.

According to the CYMA, the number of Myanmarese refugees and immigrants were estimated between 60000-70000 in 2008, among which only 400 were proper refugees. The YMA felt that the free flow of foreigners across international boundary had a bad effect on the Mizo society such as illegal drug trafficking and increase of smuggler and crime rate. Since 1997, the YMA always urged the Mizoram government to pay attention to safeguarding international border. At present the Indo-Bangladesh border fencing is going on. The establishment of Police Check Point in the main gate of Indo-Myanmar border at Zokhawthar may rightly be counted as the outcome of YMA pressure.

Thus, the YMA is one of the most important associations for the prevention of illegal immigrants from the neighbouring countries.

In the light of the General Conference theme to safeguard the Mizo nation and the state, the YMA supported the government, and also cooperated in the proper operation of Inner Line Regulation which was enacted by the British government for the protection of Mizos against the plain people. Before the operation of Inner Line Regulation (5 of 1873) in Mizoram, the then Lushai Hills District on the 28th August, 1930, a similar Regulation called Chin Hills Regulation V of 1906 and Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, had been operating for the

protection of indigenous tribal cultures and customs in the north east India.

Even after independence of India, as permitted by the constitution itself, the Inner Line Regulation has been operating in Mizoram and the Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl is authorized to issue inner line permit.

According to the ILP rules all the permit holders are legally bound to do only the work mentioned in the permit itself. At the same time any person who sponsored labourers are also bound to send them back after the completion of the work. In practice, when the work against the sponsorship was over the sponsorer never sent back the labours to their home land and the permit used to be renewed by the labourers themselves who were thus free to work at any other place where they got employment. Such kind of practices led to the increase of illegal workers and traders in Mizoram.

Another problem is the use of tribal names in the business run by plain people. This means that tribal and non tribal traders had a secret agreement to run business in the names of tribal in Mizoram. According to the survey report of *Zoram Vengtu* Co-ordination Committee, the number of such kinds of illegal traders at Aizawl town alone in 1993 was 236. During this time, the murder of a Mizo gentleman at Silchar and its consequences intensified communal tension between the Mizo and the non Mizo that led to the withdrawal of a number of non Mizo traders.

According to the YMA, there were 6590 registered ILP holders in the middle of 2002. Besides these, a number of illegal infiltrators are available in the length and breadth of Mizoram. The name of those illegal traders and labourers were reported to the authority. YMA General Conference held on 24-26 October, 2006 at Saitual passed a resolution to move the government for the strict implementation of Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act. Central YMA office bearers and the Central Executive Committee meeting opined that the existing rule is still enough, but it is necessary to apply it in an effective way. They also made a plan to discuss the matter with the magistrates. The CYMA used to convene joint committee with other NGOs like Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Association), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (Mizo Women Federation) and MUP (Mizo Senior Citizens Organization) etc. and discussed how to safeguard Mizoram against foreigners and outsiders.

The North East Plain Peoples Traders and Youth Federation (NEPTYF) submitted Public Interest Litigation (PIL) to the Gauhati High Court on the 2nd June 2008 for the removal of the ILP in some northeastern states. The Gauhati High Court informed the Government of Mizoram to give para-wise comment on that matter within 10 days, i.e. June 2-12 2008. There was no proper correspondence from the Mizoram Government in time. Then, the Gauhati High Court issued interim order for the suspension of ILP; which meant free movement of plain people was allowed in the tribal inhabited areas formally called 'excluded areas.'

The Central YMA could not accept the interim suspension order and prayed to the Gauhati High Court to revoke the order. At the

initiative of the Central YMA, a special delegation was sent to the two ILP affected states Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland from 14-19 July 2008. As the prayer to withdraw 'Interim Order' to the Gauhati High Court was of no effect, the CYMA invited NGOs and decided to organize protest day, and fixed the 26th June 2008 as a protest day. The Protest Day of the 26th June, 2008 was successfully observed under peaceful atmosphere.

However, the Gauhati High Court made a judgment order over the case of NEPPTYE PIL No.19/2008 Union of India & others Vs. North East Plain Peoples Traders and Youth Federation. The verdict came out in favour of the Government of Mizoram. That meant that the the High Court set aside the PIL.

In short, it may be said that the YMA is the most active and biggest community based organization in Mizoram that has played active role for the success of the peace talk between the MNF and the government of India. It also made ample contributions for the prevalence of free and fair elections in the state; and also did work for the strict control of foreigners and the enforcement of the Inner Line Regulation in Mizoram.

Role of the MZP

The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (the Mizo Students Association) which had existed during the British period, as early as 1935, was almost dead during the II World War. The inactive of association was revitalized by the new generation since the upgradation of Mizoram District into

Union Territory. The areas of operation covered the whole of Mizoram as well as the adjoining area where Mizo students are studying.

The main purpose of the association was to develop education in the hill state of Mizoram. The role of the MZP was very complex, exhaustive and varied. The main activities of MZP were concerned with the attainment of better education, infrastructure, quality education and higher rate of scholarship etc.

The MZP is known as a non political organization without having any linkage with a particular regional or national political party. But the individual students usually could not stand against the strong force of political temptation, sometimes they bowed before political leadership. In 1980, students leaders met Laldenga, the MNF President, in New Delhi during the peace talks. Laldenga told students to launch agitation in Mizoram to fasten peace dialogue between the MNF and the government of India.

From the study of MZP activities it can be said that the MNF underground influenced MZP during the first half of 1980s.

The seed of Mizo nationalism was sowed in the mind of MZP activists. The MZP General Conference held in 1980, strictly prohibited to select non Mizo students against the state quota/seat reservation for technical course. In 1981, The People's Conference (PC) Ministry led by Brig.T. Sailo selected three non Mizo students for B.Sc. (Agriculture). Consequently, the students launched movement against

the P.C. Ministry in 1981, and organized agitations, picketing, demonstrations, processions and other anti government activities in the length and breadth of Mizoram. This study revealed that it was stimulated by the opposition party and the MNF underground. It is also known that the underground MNF wanted to pull down P.C. Ministry and instigated the MZP. At the same time, the Chief Minister remarked the MZP as misguided students and also banned to form union of MZP branches in the Government institutions. The continuous stimulation of the MNF underground and the pro-MNF wave in the over ground influenced the innocent students, resulting in the criticism of P.C. ministry and organizing the anti-government activities.

In brief, it can be said that such kind of students' activities defamed the government and also led to the down fall of PC Ministry in the next MLA election in 1984.

Since some MZP leaders and the outlawed MNF had a deep relationship, the students followed MNF propaganda and also moved forward for the attainment of peace in Mizoram. In the new ministry of the Congress in 1984, however, the MZP enjoyed more freedom than the previous ministry. Along with political parties and NGOs, MZP also tried their level best for the pursuit of peace in Mizoram. They pressurized the ruling Congress party to vacate seat for the MNF in the proposed interim government, and at the same time they also appealed to the Central government to make peace with the MNF as soon as possible. In the middle of 1986, they organized fasting to urge the Government of India to resume the peace talks and to make final settlement soon. The MZP understood the agreement between government of India and MNF would result in the formation of

Mizoram state. When a historic accord known as ‘Memorandum of Settlement’ was signed on the 30th June 1986, Mizoram became a separate state on the 20th February, 1987.

The MZP was thus one of the important actors for the formation of Mizoram state. This work reveals that the MZP movement of 1986, however was purely instigated by the MNF.

For the avoidance of partiality and maintenance of free and fair selection of technical students from the Mizoram quota/seat reservation; the MZP demanded entrance examination. Previously, selection of technical students was done only through interview mainly based on their marks. This means that up to 1997, the Government of Mizoram did not conduct written examination. From the study of results, MZP understood that the same marking system was not followed by different universities. Therefore, in 1997, they demanded the Government to conduct technical and non technical entrance examination instead of selection done from marks sheet and personal interview alone. In the next year 1998, withstanding the pressure of the MZP, the government still used the existing rule, called *The Mizoram (Selection of the candidates for Higher and Technical Courses) Rule 1993*, for the selection of MBBS students.

Since the selection result could not satisfy the students they demanded to make new rules and to reconstitute selection board for MBBS students. MZP vehemently blamed the government as they accepted the unfair results. Due to the endless demand for proper reselection of MBBS students, the Government of Mizoram set up One-

Man Inquiry Commission to look into the matters. Lalngheta Sailo Commissioner cum Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Mizoram was appointed as one man commission. The Inquiry Commission submitted a report in time. Consequent upon the report of One-Man Inquiry Commission, the government suspended the allotment process of MBBS seat with immediate effect. On the basis of the agreement between the government of Mizoram and the MZP the reselection of candidates for MBBS course was held on the 17th August, 1998 at Women's Polytechnic, Zarkawt, Aizawl. This settlement calmed down the students' tension.

Understanding that the first and foremost thing for the conduct of technical entrance examination was to amend the existing rules, the Higher and Technical Education Minister convinced a meeting of officials and non officials such as the President and the General Secretary of MZP on the 19th February 1999 at his Chamber. In consequence of this meeting, the said rules of 1999 and modalities for conduct of examination was adopted. Thus, the introduction of written examination for the selection of technical students was the result of MZP pressure.

From the general and critical study of how the government of Mizoram, Higher and Technical Education Department conducted examinations, it seems that all is not well in the process. It is also evident that until and unless the support base organization like the MZP takes part, complaint from individuals and public criticism would have been less effective to move the government from its stand.

Role of the MSU

The Mizo Students Union (MSU) recently established in 2001 is the offshoot of the MZP. All Mizo students are entitled to become the member of MSU. The emergence of MSU has significance as it provides more forums for the excesses of the students. Their motto was 'a good beginning makes a good ending.' MSU aims to safeguard the rights of students, and also attempts to unite all Mizo students and also ready to help them in time of needs. The area of operation covered the whole of Mizoram.

The main aim of MSU was concerned with the attainment of better education, higher rate of scholarship providing more employment opportunity, They also involved in the recruitment of Mizoram State Information Commission, RMSA, SSA and Mizoram University.

Remembering their objective included safeguarding the rights and shares of Mizo students, MSU tried their level best for sharing and getting of any kind of scholarship to the deserved students as early as possible. In case of delay and reject of scholarship, MSU used to pressed government for the earlier release of scholarship to the students. Beside this, they also pressed other sources of scholarship like UGC and NEC etc. through the government of Mizoram. When the government of Mizoram insisted the enclosed of 'Affidavit Non Judicial Stamp' in the scholarship application form, MSU felt that it was an extra burden for the students and pressed the government to revoke the order. Consequent upon the pressure of MSU the government withdrew their proposal. The scholarship is calculated monthly basis; it is calculated for 10 months, in this connection they requested government to increase by two months. But their demand aspiration is hanging in the air. In case of

the smooth functioning of the Mizoram Scholarship Board and other scholarship agencies MSU was not much involved on the issue of scholarship, but they involved in case of the insisted of extra burden, delaying and rejection of scholarship.

In case of the selection of the Mizoram State Information Commission (MSIC) staff in 2007, MSU thought that there was something wrong and complaint to the government and also requested to enquire the matter. MSU pointed out some point such as: the recruitment of the MSIC staff did not followed government rules. There was no proper advertisement for the general people, the appointees are the near relative of the CIC. There was favoritism in the process of the appointment. Dearness Allowance which they were not entitled was given to the newly recruited staff etc.

In pursuance of the pressure of MSU, Chief Minister and Chief Secretary issued show cause notice to the MSIC. MSU met the Governor of Mizoram two time and urged him to find out the truth. In this regard MSU Executive meeting was held on the 1st March 2007 and passed resolution for the cancellation of the selected staff and for the dismissal of the CIC himself on or before the 15th March 2007.

As the urgent demand of the MSU was not fulfilled they started picketing and other agitation from the 16th March 2007. At last, the appointment order was cancelled; MSU declared that the cancellation of newly recruited MSIC staff appointment order was the sign of justice against the wrong doers. After a long process, a fresh appointment for the MSIC staff was published. The dropped staff of MSIC also moved to

the court in search of justice, but it was not success. From the study of the interaction of the MSU the government of Mizoram it can be opined that MSU is work hard for the welfare of the students and for the existence of justice in the appointment of the MSIC office.

MSU understood that the practice of the re-employ of pensioner in the government had a great effect in the student employment opportunity. Then they approached Chief Minister and requested him not to re-employ pensioners in the future. Government of Mizoram stopped service extension and re-employment of pensioners.

Regarding the increase of the retirement age of government servants from 58-60, MSU vehemently criticized government and organized total *bandh*. Since the government did not pay attention to their demand they also organized blockade in 2005.

The demand of MSU on service extension is very important for the new students who are searching employment in the government office. It was success in general, but some government servants who had special knowledge and the recipient of award in the state and national lever were given special privilege.

Like other states of India, Central government introduced Rashtrya Madhyamic Shiksha Abihyan (RMSA) and Surva Shiksha Abihyan (SSA) in Mizoram. In the beginning of 2011, Government of Mizoram, Education department recruited more than two hundred staff for RMSA and SSA. MSU thought that there were something wrong in the process of recruitment, and complained to the Government. After several discussions, Government of Mizoram and the MSU signed

agreement on the 20th April 2010 and formed Verification Committee, the committee checked all the documents of the applicants, as a result the 44 selected candidates were dropped.

In short, it can be said that MSU is work hard for the prevalence of justice in the recruitment of government jobs. From the study of the interaction between government and MSU it can be opined that MSU is one of the important factors for the modification of mistake committed by the Government.

In 2009, when the Mizoram University planning to fill up 117 vacant posts in the University. The MSU tried to get maximum employment requested the Minister, Higher and Technical Education, Mizoram and MHRD Minister to help them.

Regarding the recruitment of teaching staff, the MSU had a different opinion in the screening of the applications. They demanded the University authority to cancel their criteria on or before the 21st August, 2009. University did not respond the MSU demand and submitted ultimatum to Prof. A.R. Rai, the Vice Chancellor of Mizoram University, and told him to leave the University and Mizoram state.

MSU opined that there was favoritism and nepotism in the appointment of teaching staff and also alleged the Vice Chancellor as dictating the meeting of various bodies like Executive Council, Academic Council, Finance Committee and other bodies. They also opined that the existence of the atmosphere of groupism among the

University family was the responsibility of the Vice Chancellor and warned him to leave Mizoram on or before the 16th September 2009.

After a long discussion, the MSU and the authorities of MZU signed 9 points agreement on the 15th September 2009. The points of agreement include- giving preference to local (Mizo) candidates in the selection of teaching staff, recruitment of Associate Professor against the vacant post of Associate Professor, not to fill up the vacant post of SC/OBC unless there are no good candidates in the vacant posts, the revoke of the eligibility of re-employment of Vice Chancellor, early advertising and filling up of the post Finance Officer and the Controller of Examination, no favoritism and nepotism in the selection of the staff, listening of the opinion of the senior teacher in different committee while making important decision, setting up of new campus at Lunglei etc.

If the agreement was fulfilled by the MZU authorities. The MSU will consider its ultimatum submitted to the Vice Chancellor. If not, the MSU will be bound to promptly act upon its ultimatum. After watching the working of the University MSU charged Prof. A.N. Rai, Vice Chancellor of MZU and submitted again the ultimatum and reminded him the points of agreement and warned him to leave Mizoram on or before 19th May 2010.

From the study of the above, it can be opined that the MSU and the MZU had been interacting with each other concerning to campus development and higher education. Meanwhile there was misunderstanding on the issue of the recruitment of teaching and non

teaching staff. This meant that the MSU tried to involve in the administration of the University through the power of the students and the state government.

Role of the NTUM

The discontented and unorganized labours working in different departments of Mizoram formed Muster Roll Workers Association on the 26th April 1986, at Dawrpui Middle School, Aizawl. Later on for the participation of all workers of Private Sectors the name was converted into National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM). This NTUM is a voluntary organization of workers formed to promote and protect the interest of the workers through collective action. The operational area of this organization covered the whole of Mizoram.

From the general point of view, it can be said that the perceptible activities of the NTUM was started only from the last quarter of 1980. From the study of NTUM it is known that the main centre of their activities was to increase minimum wages rates.

From the inception trade union leaders understood that the common saying of “Labour has no rights” was not correct and tried to stop this misconception of labour. Through their official magazine called *Rinawmin* they used to inform their members about labours’ rights and legal status. They tried to maintain unity and sometimes offered aid to the suffering people.

The NTUM is sensitive to the misuse of labour force by the official employers, and vehemently opposed the employment of M/R labour at the employers' residence to do private jobs. Several steps had been done to stop such kind of malpractices.

Another important service of NTUM was to reduce the frequent picking and dropping of muster roll labour and adding of fake workers in the muster roll list.

During the implementation of the 5th Pay Commission recommendation, financial constraint and the paucity of funds to meet the new expenditure compelled the authority to economize government money. Therefore, the government attempted to cut down 50 % of muster roll labours and workcharge employees in different departments of the Government of Mizoram Government.

In a reaction to such policy, the NTUM requested the Chief Minister not to drop or withdraw even a single worker due to adoption of the 5th Pay Recommendation. At the same time they also requested all heads of department not to implement the government order.

The discontented Muster Roll labourers requested the government not to drop the real muster roll labours but the fake muster roll labours (intentionally and illegally included by the officers in the worker list) called *M/R Thlarau*, literally it means 'the spiritual/ghostly of M/R labours'. The NTUM thought that if such kind of fake M/R labours are dropped there will be no suffering of their members. In

pursuance of the pressure of NTUM, the operation of searching fake M/R labour was done in different departments. In the beginning of 1999, as a result of checking of the M/R list; many M/R labours lost their jobs and requested the Minister i/c. Labour and Employment to reinstate all dropped labours. This means that once checking and finding of fake workers from muster roll list is done, it is the firm stand of the NTUM to eliminate the fake names and to retain the existing genuine workers.

Besides the focus of this study, NTUM submitted to the government such demands like opening of a mistiri training for labour and implementation of the scheme for regularization of muster roll 2000, exemption of over aged labour, etc. All the demands which they laid before the government were not successfully fulfilled, though, due to financial constraints and other reasons. The success was partial.

The NTUM is a non-political organization, from the inception the political behaviour of this union is to maintain political neutrality. Even then, they boldly declared that they would support any ruling party for the development of the labour organization.

In 1993, when Mizoram state faced the Assembly election the NTUM highlighted that the suffering of labours was due to the low esteem against the workers, and requested the people to choose only a party who respected labour. They alleged that the Congress ministry did not want to satisfy their demands like- upgradation of labour department, implementation of labour laws, etc. They further blamed the government saying that it did not care to take action for fulfilling their promise to increase the wages of M/R workers. Thus, they appealed to

all electors and members not to choose dishonest candidates in the MLA election.

On the 14th April 1996, The Political Affairs Committee of NTUM decided to help one of the M.P. candidates, F. Lalremsiama (MNF) without thinking about party affiliation. They also declared that trade union maintained political neutrality, but they appealed all members to be united and cast their votes unanimously.

Before 1998 MP election, the NTUM pointed out 6 demands to Government of Mizoram and also mentioned that if the ruling Congress party fulfilled their demands, they would support their candidate J. Lalsangzuala in the MP election. The six demands were: reinstatement of dropped labours, the proposal for the permanent employment of M/R labours, regularization of M/R labours, creation of separate Labour department and creation of M/R skilled I post in PWD and Local Administrative Department.

After one month, it seemed that the NTUM lost their confidence on ruling Congress party and circulated another press release in favour of the Dr. H. Lallungmuana, a candidate for Citizen Common Front. The NTUM clarified again that they are non political party, and so free to support any candidate.

The following are the main points for the support of Dr. H. Lallungmuana. The NTUM felt that the Congress party did not really want their MP candidate to be successful in the election. They also

opined that the degree of earnestness of the Congress party leaders and their candidate J. Lalsangzuala were different. The revision of wage rate on the 10th July 1997 resulted in the termination of workers. The NTUM requested the government to reinstate the dropped labours but the answer was the non availability of money and the necessity dropping some more M/R labours. They regarded the failure of establishment of Labour Department/Wing during the long two terms of the Assembly, Government of Mizoram as the negligence against labours.

In the MP election 1998, Dr. H. Lallungmuana, (a candidate of Citizens Common Front), who was supported by NTUM, won the election. But the Union Government led by A.B. Vajpayee was prematurely dissolved in 2004. As such, the expectation of the working class from the MP seemed to have vanished in the air.

In matters of its involvement in politics, the NTUM wanted to maintain neutrality. At the same time it seems they did not mind to involve in politics if it is for the interest of workers.

The NTUM wanted to have more holidays in addition to the existing 9 national holidays and all the Sundays. They requested the Government to declare *Remna ni* (i.e the 30th June, on which MOU was signed between MNF and Government of India) and May Day and Missionary Day (11th January, the anniversary of the advent of the first two Christian Missionaries in Mizoram) as M/R labour holidays.

As per the desire and demand of the workers, the Government of Mizoram declared 12 days as M/R holidays, two days of which unfortunately had to be cut short as result of the increase of MWR. However, the demand for more holidays was not in vain. It was as a result of their demand that they enjoy more holidays.

In case of Mizoram, the first fixation of Minimum Wages Rate (MWR) was started only in the last quarter of 1983. According to this order, workers were classified into four categories such as unskilled worker, semi-skilled worker, skilled worker II and skilled worker I'. According to the rules the daily minimum wages rate of workers are supposed be revised in every two years. MWR revision was smoothly moved up to the third revision of 1987. Afterward, all other revisions of minimum wages rates were done as a result of the pressure from NTUM in the face of objections from the government.

Regarding revision of MWR, it seems that the Government of Mizoram clearly knows the exact timing of revision, but it could not revise in time due to the financial problems of the state. At the same time, the soaring price of essential commodities in the local markets compelled the workers to claim higher rates of wages from the Government. From the study of the dealings between the Government of Mizoram and NTUM, it can be said that from the fourth revision of 1989 to the present (MWR of 2009) there is no revision/fixation of MWR without strong pressure of NTUM.

The NTUM has been making use of different techniques and methods to achieve their objectives. The common means which they

used for the success of their interest are direct contact and submission of petitions to the authority. Other important tactics are - lobbying of officials, molding public opinion, procession, demonstration and picketing etc.

The NTUM was registered under the Trade Union Act of 1926. The Trade Union Act does not make it mandatory that every union or association must be registered under the act. However, once the union or associations is registered under the Act, it entitles to get the immunities, privileges and other rights contemplated under the Act.

There are a number of laws and acts which are made for looking after the workmen in India including Industrial law, Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, The Employees' Insurance Act, 1948, Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, Minimum wages Act, 1948, Payment of Wages Act, 1936, etc. Many things may be there in the paper, but the problem which the NTUM confronts is the non realization of the these laws, Acts, and rules. Regarding the implementation of social security, economic and welfare legislation, the state and union government had the same responsibilities. Actually labour is included in the concurrent list. Since financial constraint is rampant everywhere, it is difficult to implement all the welfare of labour not only in Mizoram but also in the whole country.

From the very beginning the NUTM tried their level best for the application of the said Act in Mizoram. It was always discussed not only in the Executive Committee level but also in the General Conference too. In pursuance of their committee resolutions several demands in

black and white had been submitted to the Government of Mizoram; but the union demands always reminded dormant for a long time.

After a long struggle of NTUM, the Cabinet Meeting, the Government of Mizoram passed the following labour welfare legislations on the 8th June 1992. The Mizoram Minimum wages rules 1992, The Mizoram Payment of Wages Rules 1992. The Mizoram Trade Union Regulation Rules 1992

The NTUM examines the different labour laws, and considering the urgent need of workers in Mizoram, they request the authority to implement the concerned rules in Mizoram. There are some laws which are still being processed in the government. Regarding the implementation of labour laws, the NTUM requested the authority to process the existing draft labour law for the utilization of M/R labours. In 2004, The Mizoram Contract (Regulation & Abolition) Rules 2004 was passed to take effect from the date of the publication of the rules in the Government Official Gazette.

Regarding labour laws, the NTUM leaders understand the advantages of different laws which are applying in different parts of the country. But the non fulfillment of the prerequisite conditions by the state government and the NTUM itself render problem in Mizoram.

The NTUM felt that the small numbers of existing staff of Labour and Employment Department established in 1990 was not enough to handle the heavy departmental works and a series of demands from

trade union. They requested the government to upgrade Labour Wing/Department along with the post of Labour Commissioner and sufficient supporting staff.

The slow process of the government towards implementing the rule to serve the aspiration of the NTUM compelled them to repeat their demands for the enlargement of Labour department to government. On 22nd November 1993, they appealed to the state government to establish a separate Labour Department within 1994 with a Commissioner as its head who will be vested with relevant quasi-judicial powers. In addition to this, they also demanded the establishment of Labour Court/Tribunal in Mizoram.

On the 10th October 2006, NTUM leaders called on the Chief Secretary and discussed about how to improve/reform the Employment Department. In this meeting, the NTUM leader suggested change of designation of the District Employment Officer into District Labour and Employment Offices; so that the officer may get authority to enforce laws within his jurisdiction. At present the aspiration for full-ledged Labour Department is not yet received. Even then the extension works and the endeavor their goals are still going on.

From the study of the above facts and circumstances, it can be said that the NTUM, did contribute to labour consciousness in the whole state of Mizoram. It comes into existence only with the definite aims, objectives and programmes. It aimed at the securing of employment status, and economic development of the working class. The association was conceived to be politically neutral, but does not dealing with

sometimes touching politics during election. They maintained brotherhood and try their level best to secure their living, wages and the speedy improvement of the working condition. They used to settle the disputes with the government authorities through negotiations.

The NTUM has branch organizations in different departments of Mizoram. They identified their problem areas such as – engagement of labours at employers' residence doing private job, practice of frequent dropping of workers, inclusion of fake names in Muster roll, demand for more leisure time, upgradation of Labour and Employment department, demand for the increase of Minimum wage, improvement of labour law etc. There is a good relationship among them and have capacity to mould public opinion. The methods which they used for the fulfillment of their problems were: making proposal, communicating directly with the government and its officials, no work, hunger strike and procession etc. Although all the demands submitted to the government have not yet been fulfilled, the undeniable fact is that the NTUM has been playing a very important role in the political process of Mizoram.

The study of five organizations such as church, YMA, MZP, MSU and NTUM reveals that each of them has certain discontent accumulated from time to time due to political, social, economic and other factors of environment. Each of them tried their level best for the fulfillment of their interest under a free democratic set up in India. In fact, a study of pressure groups in Mizoram reveals that interest articulation as well as aggregation has begun in the latter part of 1960 and came to flourish only after 1980. The nature of pressure group activities in Mizoram is generally peaceful. But it does not mean totally free from violence. The effectiveness of group activity depends upon the

quality of leadership and public support. From the general point of view interest articulation depends upon the attitude of the government, but in reality it also depends upon the limited capacity and financial condition. Thus, it can be concluded that voluntary organizations acting as pressure groups played a crucial role in the political scenario of Mizoram.

ABSTRACT

**INTEREST ARTICULATION AND POLITICAL PROCESS:
A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF PRESSURE GROUPS IN
MIZORAM**



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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The study of Interest groups is a recent phenomenon, which came from the understanding that there are various groups within the political arenas besides political parties that influence policies of government. These groups were numerous and for the academic convenience they were brought under one umbrella called pressure groups. The term was first used by Arthur F. Bentley in his book, "The Process of Government," published in 1908 and later by David B. Truman's book, "The Governmental Process," published in 1951.

Like other terms of Political Science, it is not an easy task to define pressure group precisely; though the expression appears to be simple and self explanatory. From the study of the definitions of different scholars it can be said that pressure group is a group of people having common interest that tries to influence government decision makers to make policies for the benefits of themselves.

In the mid twentieth century, it seems that the important role played by pressure groups in influencing government policy has captured the interest of many researchers and scholars resulting in a plethora of studies and researches in this field. The USA is one such example; with the kind of the politics of "Checks and Balances" in place it provides just the right environment for such studies. In Britain, due to the strong unitary form of government, pressure groups are seen only as a necessary means and not an end to achieve political goals. In totalitarian state pressure groups are used as agencies to transmit government policies to its members. However, the role of pressure groups in a democracy is to translate group interest into government policies.

Pressure groups make use of different techniques and methods to achieve their objectives. The most familiar form of technique in the political arena is that of lobbying to influence legislature. Mobilizing public opinion, promoting campaign, dispensing legislative advice, endorsing candidates, publishing opinions, and so forth are the familiar techniques of influence used by pressure groups.

In India, like other countries, there are a number of pressure groups, which exercise a profound influence in policies and actions of government. Indian pressure groups have come into prominence only after independence, but due to the influence of caste, language and religion, pressure groups do follow not only the peaceful methods of lobbying but their activities often gets manifested in the ugly form of violence. This leads to the feeling that pressure groups are not a healthy part of the democratic system; instead they are channels of expressing anti-national feelings, which are eroding into the fabric of national unity and integrity, Nonetheless pressure groups in India tend to influence policies to a great extent.

In case of Mizoram too, the politics of pressure groups is a recent phenomenon. However, there exists a number of non-governmental organizations in Mizoram that are emerging which has been studied from the pressure groups perspectives in this present thesis.

Statement of the Problem:

In this research work an attempt is made to study the role of five organisations such as the church, the Young Mizo Association (YMA), the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Mizo Student Union (MSU) and the

National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM) and their influence in Mizoram politics.

The church is a Christian organization concerning spiritual life of human being. Alongside the religious function it is also involved in social and political life of Mizoram. It appears, other organizations have more or less similar objectives and in recent years, they seem to be using some pressure tactics like procession, band, picketing and hunger strike etc. to influence the policies of the government of Mizoram. These pressure groups influence the policies of the government to a large extent. The present study has been undertaken to examine the role of different organizations on issues, like peace, election, inner line regulations, foreigner's issues and the selection of technical students, scholarship, recruitment of teacher and staff in the government etc. It is interesting to study the reactions of these organizations to certain government policies as well as influence on government that constitute a striking feature of politics of pressure groups in Mizoram.

Methodology:

The present study is based on empirical analysis made from primary and secondary sources. The primary data are collected from interview with leaders of the church, YMA, MZP, MSU and NTUM, as well as memoranda and demands submitted to the government from time to time. The secondary sources include books in Mizo language, newspapers, journals, magazines, articles, and letters such as press release, circulars, orders, etc. by the associations and the government etc.

Objectives:

This work attempts to study the activities of church, youth organization, students and labour organizations as pressure groups in the political process of Mizoram. The present study analyses and examines

how much these groups had been able to achieve their goals. The objectives have been undertaken to fulfill the following:

1. To assess the contributions of church, YMA and MZP during the MNF underground movement.
2. To examine the techniques and strategies of the pressure group organizations
3. To analyse the role of Church, YMA, MZP, MSU and NTUM and their influence in Mizoram politics.
4. To examine the contributions and achievements of their various organisations as pressure groups and the government response and reactions to their demands.

Hypotheses:

1. From the research work it is known that in Mizoram pressure groups are a form of linkage and communication of the masses and the elites. These groups used to penetrate the state and central authority to fulfill their interest. *The failure of the government to fulfill the particular and common problems of pressure groups led to the present complex activities of the groups in Mizoram.*
2. *The demands made by the church, youth, students and labour organizations were always reflected in the policy or the decision of the government.* The failure, the achievement and the effectiveness of pressure group are evaluated.
3. It is known that the last two decades witnessed by the rapid increase of interest group activism. *The main causes of pressure groups activities were due to negligence and slow process of government against their demands.*
4. *Role of pressure groups in political arena occupies a very significant place and also become one of the important steering wheels in Mizoram politics. The popular tactics*

which pressure groups employed for the success of their demands are- lobbying, publishing opinions, procession, picketing and uses of mass media etc.

Review of Literature:

The research work is done in the light of the hypotheses that the role of pressure groups in political arena occupies a very significant place. The study is divided into the following seven chapters.

The first chapter begins with the ‘*Introduction.*’ It includes the conceptual understanding of interest groups,’ statement of the problem, review of literature, methodology, objective, hypotheses, significance of the study and limitations. It also provides a brief profile of Mizoram such as geographical location, topography, climate and rainfall, demography, economy, occupational structure, industries, vegetation and administrative development.

The second chapter, ‘*Church: Peace talks and Elections,*’ deals with the role of church in the peace talk between the MNF and the government of India and the election of the representatives of the people in Mizoram.

The emergence of Christianity in Mizoram was followed by the increasing of different church denominations. The Mizo National Front (MNF) formed in 1961 declared Mizoram independence on the 1st March 1966. As a result the Government of India declared Mizoram as a disturbed area. During the MNF underground movement from 1966-1986 in the name of Peace Mission committee Baptist and Presbyterian Church leaders initiated to settle down the political problems between the MNF and the Government of Mizoram. Later on the problem was

taken by the bigger church organization known as Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (Mizoram Church Leaders' Committee).

This chapter also deals with the involvement of church in the elections of Assembly and Parliamentary seat in Mizoram. A special reference was given to the first state MLA election held in 1987. Major church denominations such as Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church and the United Pentecostal Church used to issue election messages to the people. Their election messages are divided into 1) Peaceful election 2) Selection of candidates 3) Election Campaign and for the electorates. Latter on, in addition to the regular election messages of different churches, the new forum called Mizoram Peace Forum consisting of different church denominations and NGOs were deeply involved in the election of people's representatives.

In the third chapter '*Church Reaction on Certain Government Policies,*' an attempt has been made to study church reaction on certain Government policies such as liquor licensing policy.

Mizoram Churches strongly prohibited drinking, manufacturing and selling of wine and therefore vehemently reacted on Governments' liquor licensing policy. In pursuance of the pressure of Church the government of Mizoram passed Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act in 1995.

The fourth chapter '*Youth Organisation as a Pressure Group*' examines the role of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in the peace talk, in the preparation of electoral roll, elections and in the safeguarding of the state.

During the MNF underground movement YMA earnestly took part for the restoration of peace in Mizoram. The YMA actively involved in the making of genuine electoral roll in Mizoram. During the election, YMA used to publish election messages for the Political parties, candidates and the electorates. Besides these, in pursuance of their General Conference theme *Ram leh Hnam Vengtu* (The safeguarding of the nation) YMA actively works for the safeguarding of sons of the soil against foreigners and outsiders.

The fifth chapter '*Students Associations as Pressure Groups in Mizoram*' is divided into two sections MZP and MSU.

The first section 'Role of MZP as a Pressure Group' deals with the role of the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) in the formation of Mizoram state, selection of technical students from Mizoram quotas. After the fading away of peace and tranquility in Mizoram MZP urged Government of India to have peace talk with MNF leaders. Understanding the agreement between the MNF and the Union Government would make Mizoram UT into State MZP earnestly work for the continuation of talk and demanded the final settlement with hunger strike and other activities.

Regarding the selection of technical students to be studied in different colleges and universities in the country from Mizoram quota, MZP started reaction from the selection of B.Sc students in 1981. With the instigation of the opposition parties and the MNF they fought for the down fall of the then PC ministry. In reaction to the attitude and its activities Government of Mizoram banned MZP. It was revived only after the forming of Congress Ministry in 1984.

Since the dearth of seat for admission in technical colleges so much in Mizoram MZP also pays attention to the Government annual selection of technical students from Mizoram quota. In pursuance of the demand of MZP the Government of Mizoram amended “The Mizoram (Selection of Candidates for Higher and Technical Courses) Rules, 1993.” In case of mistakes and errors in the publication of technical students exam results students’ association several times reacted against the Government sometimes which resulted in the suspension of government servants.

The second section ‘Role of MSU as a Pressure Group’ examines the role of MSU on the issues of scholarship, it also analyses how the MSU was involved in the recruitment of staff in the government office and the service extension pensioners.

The Mizo Students Union (MSU) recently established in 2001 is the offshoot of the MZP. Their motto is ‘a good beginning makes a good ending.’ The main aim of MSU was concerned with the attainment of better education, higher rate of scholarship, providing more employment opportunity, offer of rewards to the high ranking of Mizo Students in Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate and Bachelor degree. They also involved in the recruitment of Mizoram State Information Commission, RMSA, SSA and Mizoram University.

MSU tried their level best for sharing and getting of any kind of scholarship to the deserved students as early as possible. In case of delay and denial of scholarship, MSU used to press the government for the early release of scholarship to the students. Beside this, they also pressed for other sources of scholarship like UGC and NEC etc. through the government of Mizoram. When the government of Mizoram insisted the enclosure of ‘Affidavit Non Judicial Stamp’ in the scholarship

application form, MSU felt that it was an extra burden for the students and pressed the government to revoke the order.

In case of the selection of the Mizoram State Information Commission (MSIC) staff in 2007, MSU thought that there was something wrong and complained to the government and also requested to enquire into the matter. MSU pointed out some point such as: the recruitment of the MSIC staff did not follow government rules. As a result of the pressure of MSU, Chief Minister and Chief Secretary issued show cause notice to the MSIC. As the urgent demand of the MSU was not fulfilled they started picketing and other agitation from the 16th March 2007. At last, the appointment order was cancelled. After a long process, a fresh appointment order for the MSIC staff was published. The dropped staff of MSIC also moved to the court in search of justice, but it was not successful. MSU felt that the practice of the re-employment of pensioners in the government could create serious problems on futures jobs prospect of the youth.

Then they requested the Government of Mizoram to stop service extension and re-employment of pensioners. Regarding the increase of the retirement age of government servants from 58 to 60, the MSU vehemently criticized the government and organized total *bandh*. Since the government did not pay attention to their demand they also organized blockade in 2005.

In the beginning of 2011, the Government of Mizoram, Education department recruited more than two hundred staff for Rasthriya Madhyamic Siksha Abihyan (RMSA) and Sarva Siksha Abihyan (SSA). MSU thought that there was something wrong in the process of recruitment, and complained to the Education Minister and demanded verification to know whether the selection of the staff was really fair or

not. While the official said that the selection was done according to the guidelines of MEMS, the MSU charged them as using unfair means and demanded the cancellation of the appointment orders. After several discussions, the Government of Mizoram and the MSU signed agreement on the 20th April 2010. According to the agreement, Government of Mizoram formed Verification Committee in the month of May 2010 in which the MSU was one of the members. The existing framework of RMSA and SSA also modified for the better working of the MEMS. Verification Committee checked all the documents of the applicants, as a result 44 selected candidates were dropped.

In 2009, when the Mizoram University was planning to fill up 117 vacant posts in the University. MSU requested the Minister, Higher and Technical Education, Government of Mizoram, to interfere in the process so that more member of local candidates might be resulted in the University. According to the calculation made by MSU, 94.5 % of the north eastern tribal had only 7.5 % reservation in the vacant posts of the MZU which was unjust according to them. They also requested the Minister to make a request to the Ministry of Human Resources Development Government of India and University Grant Commission for the increase of the reservation of posts for the indigenous people. The MSU themselves also met Kapil Sibal, Union MHRD Minister at his office and submitted their demand for the enhancement of posts reserved for the local people.

The MSU also considered that the criteria for the screening of application was unsuitable or irrelevant for the local candidates, and demanded relaxation of some of the criteria for the local candidates by fixing the date for the cancellation of the order which had been issued by the University in this regard. Since no positive action was taken by the MZU authority, the MSU submitted what they called Ultimatum to

the Vice Chancellor, MZU, and asked him to leave the University and the state of Mizoram immediately. It was only after a long deliberation that the MSU and the MSU authority signed 9 points agreement on the 15th September 2009.

The points of agreement include- giving preference to local (Mizo) candidates in the selection of teaching staff, recruitment of Associate Professor against the vacant post of Associate Professor, not to fill up the vacant post of SC/OBC, unless there are no good candidates in the vacant posts, revoke of the eligibility of re-employment of Vice Chancellor, early advertising and filling up of the post of Finance Officer and the Controller of Examination, no favoritism and nepotism in their selection of the staff, listening of the opinion of the senior teacher in different committees while making important decision, setting up of new campus at Lunglei etc.

If the agreement was fulfilled by the MZU authorities, the MSU would consider its ultimatum submitted to the Vice Chancellor of MZU. If not, the MSU would be bound to promptly act upon its ultimatum. After watching the working of the University MSU charged Prof. A.N. Rai, Vice Chancellor of MZU and submitted again the ultimatum and reminded him the points of agreement and warned him to leave Mizoram on or before 19th May 2010.

From the study of the above, it can be opined that MSU and the MZU had a good measure of impact in the matter relating to campus development and higher education. Meanwhile there was misunderstanding on the issue of the recruitment of teaching and non teaching staff. This meant that the MSU tried to influence the Central University through power of the students and the government to involve in the administration of the University

The sixth chapter '*National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM as a Pressure Group)*' deals with the formation of the National Trade Union of Mizoram (NTUM) and their demands such as stopping of the engagement of Government M/R labour at private residence, reinstatement of dropped labours, higher rate of Minimum Wages and more holidays, implementation of some labour laws and the up-gradation of employment department etc. and the government decisions against their demands.

The seventh chapter '*Summary and Conclusion*' is the concluding chapter and it summarizes and concludes the study undertaken in the other chapters.

The study of five organizations such as church, YMA, MZP, MSU and NTUM reveals that each of them has certain discontent accumulated from time to time due to political, social, economic and other factors of environment. Each of them tried their level best for the fulfillment of their interest under a free democratic set up in India. In fact, a study of pressure groups in Mizoram reveals that interest articulation as well as aggregation has begun in the latter part of 1960 and came to flourish only after 1980. The nature of pressure group activities in Mizoram is generally peaceful. But it does not mean totally free from violence. The effectiveness of group activity depends upon the quality of leadership and public support. From the general point of view interest articulation depends upon the attitude of the government, but in reality it also depends upon the limited capacity and financial condition. Thus, it can be concluded that voluntary organizations acting as pressure groups played a crucial role in the political scenario of Mizoram.

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