CHAPTER 3
MANIPUR ADMINISTRATION
UNDER THE RAJA AND THE DARBAR

Installation Of
Raja Churachand Singh

The Regency Rule in Manipur was nearing its end as the minor Raja attained majority in April 1906. Therefore, the question of placing Raja Churachand Singh in direct charge of the state administration was discussed by the British authorities since 1905. However, Lieutenant Colonel Maxwell, the then Political Agent and Superintendent of State, viewed that the Raja was not fit by then to be entrusted with the state administration. Hence the matter was deferred.

Major J. Shakespear succeeded Maxwell as the Political Agent and Superintendent of State. In 1907 Major Shakespear reported to the Government that it would be expedient to hand over the state administration to the Raja as he had already attained majority. The Government of India approved the proposal. As regards the installation ceremony, it was considered that an official visit of the Viceroy to Manipur for the purpose at the state expense would be quite expensive for a small state like Manipur. To save the state expenditure,

1. F.D.P., External A, August 1907, No.18 and No.23.
2. F.D.P. Secret E, August 1905, No.458 (Enclosure).
3. ibid.
Sir L.Hare, the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, was instructed to perform the installation ceremony, on behalf of the Viceroy, in April 1907. Pending the official ceremony, Sir L.Hare authorised the Political Agent in Manipur to perform the formal installation ceremony. Accordingly, Major Shakespear handed over the charge of the state administration to the Raja on 15 May 1907. The official ceremony was performed by Sir L.Hare at Imphal on 6 February 1907.

The immediate effect of the transfer of the state authority from the British to the Native Raja was that: (a) the operation of the powers and functions of the Superintendent of State attached to that of the Political Agent in Manipur ceased; (b) the post of Assistant Superintendent of State was abolished; and (c) a new body known as the Manipur State Darbar was formed.

**Manipur State Administration Rules, 1907**

It had been a constant British policy that the Government should pay close attention to the Raja until his rule in the state was firmly established. Side by side with this, the rule of the Raja had to be popularised without losing any control of the Government over the state administration.

4. F.D.P. Political A, October 1907, No. 44.
5. F.D.P. External A, February 1908, Nos. 103-105.
6. F.D.P. External B, October 1905, Nos. 210-211.
Influenced by these ideas, the Government of India, on the recommendation of the Local Government, enforced a set of rules called the Manipur State Administration Rules, 1907, with the following provisions:

(a) The administration of Manipur was vested in the Raja assisted by a Darbar of which the Raja was to be the ex-officio President. The Raja was to have direct charge of the armed police and his bodyguards. He was given the power to appoint all village officials and to confer the State titles. The Raja was also empowered to call any case, before or after disposal by the Darbar, for his own decision or for a revision of the decision of the Darbar. But he had no jurisdiction in cases involving the tribes or the British Indian subjects.

(b) A State Darbar was to be formed consisting of, in addition to the Raja, one Vice-President, three Ordinary Manipuri members and three Additional Manipuri members. The Vice-President was to be selected and appointed by the Local Government from amongst the members of the Assam Provincial Service Cadre; while the Ordinary and the Additional Manipuri members were to be appointed by the Local Government on the recommendation of the Political Agent in Manipur. The Darbar had jurisdictions, both administrative and judiciary, in all matters involving Manipuris. It had, however, no jurisdiction in cases involving the hill tribes and the British subjects (the British Indian subjects).
(c) The Vice-President of the Darbar was vested with the charge of the hill affairs, finance and revenue of the state. He was to prepare the state budget. After obtaining the opinion of the Darbar on the budget, it was to be sent to the Local Government for final sanction.

(d) The Political Agent in Manipur was responsible for the administration of the British Reserve and the British Indian subjects in Manipur. All cases arising within the British Reserve and involving British subjects were to be settled by the Political Agent. However, cases within the British Reserve involving only Manipuris were transferred to the Manipuri courts for disposal. Cases disposed of by the Darbar could be referred to the Political Agent. The latter could ask the Darbar for reconsideration of its decision. In the event of no change in the earlier decision of the Darbar, the matter could be referred to the Local Government for a final decision. The Local Government could pass any decision as it considered proper.

(e) The State funds were to be deposited in the State Treasury. The Accountant General of the Eastern Bengal and Assam was to act as the auditor. 7

The first meeting of the Darbar was held on 17 May 1907 with the Raja as the President. 8 The portfolios of the State...

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7. F.D.P., Political A, June 1908, No.6.
8. F.D.P., Political A, October 1907, No.44, loc. cit.
departments were distributed as follows:

(i) His Highness the Raja ............ State Works, Medical, Armed Police and the bodyguards.

(ii) Ningthoujam Gokul Singh ........ Police (Civil).

(iii) S. Ibochou Singh ............ Jail and Education.

(iv) R.K. Dumbra Singh ............ Judicial matters.

The administrative rules stated above show that the Raja was not given any individual power. It was viewed that the Raja could not be safely entrusted with plenary powers. The British authorities, therefore, considered that the best way out would be to establish a Darbar. More powers were given to the Darbar. Final control of the whole of the administrative affairs was retained with the Government of India and the Local Government. The Raja and the Darbar were entrusted only with minor affairs concerning the Manipuris. They were completely devoid of any power in respect of hill administration and cases involving British Indian subjects. Such exclusion was a calculated move to prevent formation of a union between the Manipuris and the hill tribes.** It had been presumed by the Local Government that under the terms of the Sanad, the State Government was bound to accept any rules framed by the British authorities.

11. F.D.P. External A, August 1907, No.23.
** For details see Hill Administration (Chapter 4).
Revised Rules For Administration
Of Manipur State

The Manipur administration rules implemented in 1907 underwent two main revisions: one in 1910 and the other in 1916. The period between 1907 and 1910 was regarded by the British authorities as the probationary period for the Raja to test his competence in conducting the administration of the state. 13

In 1910, as the Raja's performance during the probationary period was found satisfactory, the Manipur Administration Rule was amended. Under the new arrangement there was no drastic change in the relationship between the Government and the Raja or the Darbar. However, there was a change in the relative powers of the Raja and the Darbar. The Raja was made more responsible for the executive functions. The powers and authority of the Darbar were reduced to the position of a simple committee. As a rule, the Darbar had to submit a copy of the proceedings to the Raja who had the power either to approve of it; or send it back for reconsideration; or even veto the resolution of the Darbar. However, the powers of the Darbar to act as the highest Court of Appeal in cases involving only the Manipuris were still retained. 14


14. ibid.
The above change was introduced with the idea that it might foster the relation between the Government and the Raja by granting the latter a greater amount of power. It was also considered that it would be easier to control a single authority, the Raja, than to handle a composite body, i.e., the Darbar. However, the basic structure of retaining control and supervision of the Government over the state administration was left unchanged. The undermining of the role of the Darbar in the administration, thereby giving more weight to the Raja, was against the policy of the Government of India to encourage development of the Native Darbar in sound lines.

The second revision of 1916, initiated by the Raja, had sought further increase of the Raja's powers. It had been contended by the Raja that even in the absence of the Darbar he could run an equally efficient government. A subsequent revision prepared by the Political Agent in consultation with the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam and the Vice-President of the Manipur State Darbar and approved by the Government of India was introduced. It provided that:

(a) The Raja should cease to act as the ex-officio president of the Darbar. He was given revisionary powers over the Darbar proceedings subject to the approval of the Political Agent. The Raja had also been empowered to frame rules for

15. ibid.
guidance of the Manipuri Courts subject to the approval of
the Political Agent. (b) The post of the Vice-President of
the Darbar should be abolished. The former rule for appoint-
ment of the Vice-President should be applied in the case of
appointing the President of the Darbar. The President of the
Darbar had been entrusted with the responsibility of adminis-
tering the hill tribes of Manipur on behalf of the Raja. All
the powers previously enjoyed by the Vice-President had been
transferred to the President. In addition, the President was
to consult the Raja on all important matters concerning the
hill tribes. The President would preside over all meetings of
the Darbar except when the Darbar was sitting in a judicial
capacity; and that (c) The Chief Commissioner of Assam was to
be the controlling authority on behalf of the Government of
India. 17

It would be seen that the above proposal further increased
the powers of the Raja as against those of the Darbar. To be
precise, no mention was made in the revised rule of 1916 about
the role of the Darbar in the state administration. The most
important change was that, at least nominally, the Raja had
been incorporated in the affairs of the hill administration
of the state, from which he had been barred ever since the
transfer of administration in 1907.

The revisionary powers over the Darbar resolutions bestowed upon the Raja had further dwindled the relative powers of the Darbar. Such undue increase in the powers of the Raja, in apparent violation of the Government of India's earlier policy, was made possible by the fact that among the administrators (the Raja and the members of the Darbar), the Raja was found to be having an English education to his credit which the other members of the Darbar did not have. The Raja's credibility was further increased by the fact that he had exhibited undoubted loyalty to the British crown during the first World War. On the other hand, the British control over the Raja and his administration was all the more tightened by subjugating the Raja's actions to the approval of the Political Agent in Manipur, who in turn, was supervised by the Government of Assam.

Proposal For Increasing The Powers Of The Maharaja And The Darbar

The Maharaja and the Manipur State Darbar were not satisfied with the revised rules of 1910 and 1916, the reason being that the State Darbar was completely excluded from exercising any powers in the hill administration. Further, the powers extended to the Raja in this respect in 191 were only nominal. The executive functions were carried out...

18. M.S.L., Manipur State Darbar Resolution No.1 dated 12.8.1914.
* The Raja was conferred hereditary title of Maharaja in 1918.
by the President of the Darbar; the Raja being consulted only as a matter of course. It was also not appreciated that the decision of the Raja should be subjected to the approval of the Political Agent.

In 1928 the Indian States Committee, popularly known as the Butler Committee was formed to review the relations of the Government of India with the Native States. It was taken as an opportunity for the Maharaja and the Darbar to make a representation seeking extension of more powers and authority to them in the administration of the state. Thus, the Darbar, in consultation with the Maharaja, adopted the resolutions covering the following points:

(a) Handing over of the entire hill administration to the Maharaja; (b) bestowing of more powers and authority to the Manipur State Darbar enabling the Darbar to select and appoint a permanent President of the Darbar; (c) decisions of the Maharaja should not be subject to the approval of the Political Agent; (d) the old palace site should be retumed to the State; (e) adjustment of Manipur boundary as per the existing records; and (f) removal of the trade restrictions imposed by the Government of India.

19. F.D.P. Political A, June 1928, No.37 (members were : Sir Hercourt Butler, Governor of Burma, Chairman, Colonel Hon'ble S.C.Peel, member, and Prof.W.S.Holsworth, member.

It may be noted that though the above resolutions were prepared for submission to the Indian States Committee, in view of the good relations between the Government of Manipur and the Government of India, the proposals were submitted to the Government of India through the Political Agent in Manipur.  

The proposals, however, failed to receive favourable recommendations from Mr. J.C. Higgins, the Political Agent. Mr. Higgins, touching only the important issues, commented that: (i) it would be unsafe to entrust the entire administration of the hills to the Maharaja and the Darbar; (ii) on the selection of a permanent President of the Darbar, he viewed that it was not the right time for such a change; (iii) in respect of retroceding the old palace site, the Political Agent stated that leaving aside political views, the State was not in a position to construct a new palace. Mr. Higgins, however, recommended bestowing upon the Maharaja powers of reviewing the hill cases keeping the decisions subject to the approval of the Political Agent.  

The Government of India, on further recommendation from the Government of Assam in line with what the Political Agent had suggested, finally decided that no drastic change in the

22. ibid. No.136.
rules was called for. It was, however, conceded that the Maharaja should be entrusted with revisionary powers of all hill cases; his decisions being subject to the approval of the Political Agent in Manipur. On the issue of selecting a permanent President of the Darbar the Maharaja was consoled that he would be consulted in making such appointments.23

A critical study of the above proceedings would show that the Government of India was never ready to part with any control over the administration of Manipur. In spite of his greater credibility after the end of the first World War, the Maharaja was not invested with further discretionary powers. The Political Agent was to continue to be the direct controlling authority over the Maharaja in the affairs of both the hills and the valley. The Manipur State Darbar, which was considered a necessity at the beginning, was neglected by degrees till it was reduced to the position of a mere formality while the Maharaja was given the powers to review the decisions of the Darbar.

Regarding the retrocession of the old palace site, it appears that if the proposal were made before the construction of the new palace, not far from the old site, it might have carried the desired weight. But, the political set up till 1907 was such that there was no one to advise the

23. ibid. No.138.
Political Agent and Superintendent of State to construct the new palace at the original palace site. The Maharaja was a minor and the Manipur State Darbar had not been formed by then. All the high officials being British officers did everything without taking much care of the state interest as such. When the proposal for handing over of the old palace site to the State came up, a new palace had been already built at state expense and, therefore, the proposal did not receive consideration at the hands of the Government of India.

On the question of selection of a permanent President of the Darbar, no power of the State Government could have any hand in the matter of selection and appointment of the President. Though the President was to be considered as a State Official, it was the British authority which selected and appointed the President. The mere assurance to the Maharaja that he would be consulted on matters of such appointment was of little significance.

Besides the points raised above, it was evident that the Political Agent did not care to comment on all the matters raised in the proposal of the Darbar. He left the points on the readjustment of the Manipur boundary and the lifting of the trade restrictions unattended to. On the whole, the Maharaja and the Darbar could not receive any favourable

24. F.D.P. Political A, June 1908, No.4.
treatment from the British authorities in spite of their good gesture. A better result could have been expected had the matter been placed for consideration before the Indian States Committee. It only proved that the Maharaja and the Darbar had taken a wrong step in submitting the proposals to the Government of India instead of the Indian States Committee. However, it was a matter of appreciation that, for the first time, the Maharaja and the Darbar could move in unison, the Government of India on matters of state interest.

**Maharaja's Power To Review Darbar Resolutions**

Since the amendment of the Manipur administration rules in 1916, the Maharaja had been given the revisionary powers over the Darbar resolutions. It became, therefore, a practice that all the resolutions of the Darbar should obtain prior approval of the Maharaja before implementation. But, at times it happened that, in those cases wherein the Maharaja did not favour a quick implementation, the matters were kept pending for an undue period. There were cases of resolutions not implemented for a long time for want of the Maharaja's decision.

The Political Agent in Manipur took it as a retarding element in the smooth administration of the state. With a view to removing such hurdles, the Political Agent informed
the Maharaja that if such resolutions were kept pending for more than 14 days since the receipt of the Darbar resolutions, these resolutions would be deemed to have been approved by the Maharaja. The Government of Assam also concurred with this procedure.

But the above procedure appeared derogatory to the position of the Maharaja vis-a-vis his relations with the Manipur State Darbar and the Political Agent. However, it was a necessary working device to ensure efficient administration of the state. Since the day the above procedure was prescribed no resolution of the Darbar remained unimplemented for more than 14 days.

**Direct Relation Between The Government Of India And The Maharaja**

The relations between the Government of India and the Maharaja, as a normal practice, were maintained through the Political Agent in Manipur. The Maharaja was, however, allowed to correspond directly to the Government of India on matters relating to the boundary issues and also those which affected the relations between Manipur and Burma. The Government of Assam served as the connecting link between the Government of Manipur and the Government of India.

27. F.D.P. Political A, June 1929, No.70.
In 1931 Lord Irwin, Viceroy, visited Manipur. Taking advantage of the Viceroy's visit, the Maharaja raised the issue of allowing him to have direct communication with the Government of India in matters of state affairs. Lord Irwin suggested that the matter might be moved through the proper channel. Accordingly, the Maharaja moved on the issue through the Political Agent in Manipur who sent it to the Government of Assam. In support of his argument the Maharaja stated that: (a) it would enhance the status of Manipur State in the eyes of the ruling Chiefs of the Native States in India; (b) Manipur would be able to play a more prominent role in the affairs of the Indian Empire; and that (c) a more stable line of policy might be expected from such a direct relation than could otherwise be had through the Provincial Government of Assam.

After considering the views of the Local Government from the point of the benefits of keeping the local knowledge at the disposal of the Government of India, the Government of India decided that the earlier practice of communication between the Maharaja and the Government of India through the Government of Assam should continue. It was, however, conceded that the Maharaja should be allowed to have direct communication with the Government of India in his personal matters as in the cases of Cooch Behar and Tripura.

29. ibid.
30. ibid. No.924.
Sri M.K. Priyabarta Singh, as a senior member of the Darbar, tried again in 1939 to revive the issue of having direct communication between the Maharaja (representing the Government of Manipur) and the Government of India; but he failed. Thus, the same practice, as stated above, remained in vogue even after the merger of the state administration with the Central administration in 1949.31

The interests of the Maharaja in having direct relations with the Government of India in matters of the state were not served. In taking the above decision, the Government of India was more influenced by the impending constitutional changes in the States of India than by the recommendations from the Local Government. The Chamber of Princes, in those days, had adopted resolutions demanding introduction of peoples' representative governments in the States of India.33 So the Government of India thought that a hasty change might necessitate another change in the event of introduction of a representative government in Manipur.

Administrative Changes After The Installation Of The Raja

Since the installation of the Raja, the dual authority of the Political Agent in Manipur came to an end in 1907. The

33. F.D.P. Political B, June 1931, No.924, loc.cit.
Political Agent regained purely as an agent to the Government of India; the responsibilities of the state administration being transferred to the Raja and the Manipur State Darbar. It had been shown in the preceding paras that rules for administration of the state were framed and subsequently revised specifying the relative powers of the Raja, the Darbar and the controlling powers of the Political Agent in Manipur and the Government of Assam. Since 1907 the main tasks of the State Government and the Government of India were to improve the administrative measures already adopted during the Regency Rule.

Financial Rule of 1908: - The financial powers as provided for in the Administration Rules, 1907, were not considered sufficient, and hence, the Accountant General of the Eastern Bengal and Assam and the Political Agent in Manipur made a joint effort to frame rules for financial administration giving appropriate details. The Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam accorded sanction to the rules and enforced the same from 1 October 1908. The main provisions were as under: -

(a) Budget: - The Vice President of the Manipur State Darbar would prepare the state budget and place it before the Darbar for approval. The budget, with the comments of the Darbar, would be sent to the Local Government for final approval. No new appointment carrying a monthly salary of 50 rupees or more could be made without the prior approval
of the Local Government. The Darbar was given the power to create and appoint posts with a monthly salary of rupees. The Darbar could also sanction pension and gratuity for the retiring employees as per rules given in the Civil Service Regulations. If the amount was below rupees 500, the prior approval of the Political Agent was necessary; for amounts above rupees 500, prior sanction of the Local Government was to be obtained. (b) Receipts:— The Vice-President would receive all the monies due to the state, and remit them to the State Treasury. Land Revenue receipts were to be credited to the Treasury by the Land Revenue Officials for which challans were to be issued. (c) Payments:— All amount of monies required for the State would be paid by the Vice-President by cheques drawn from the State Government Treasury. In respect of amounts required for the State Works, the State Engineer would countersign the bills and payments would be made by the Vice-President.²⁴

With the revision of the Manipur Administration Rules, the financial rules were also amended in 1916. But, there was no major departure from the earlier rules. The changes effected were as follows:—

(i) The post of the Vice-President that occurred in the former rules had been substituted by the post of the President of the State Darbar. (ii) The powers of the Political Agent were increased insofar as new appointments to posts

²⁴. F.D.P., External A, July 1908, No.47.
were concerned. Under the revised rules the Political agent could create posts carrying a monthly salary of not exceeding 100 rupees instead of 50 rupees.\(^{35}\)

**Introduction of Local Audit:** In 1915, the examiner of Local Fund Accounts, Assam, recommended that an annual local audit of the State accounts should be carried out in addition to the Central audit. However, the Chief Commissioner of Assam did not approve of the proposal.\(^{36}\)

In 1924 and 1928, two cases were detected involving defalcations of State money. The Manipur State Darbar, to check such defalcations, resolved that the accounts of the State should be subjected to a periodical local audit in addition to the annual Central audit.\(^{37}\) The idea was appreciated by the Comptroller of Assam and also by the Controller of Civil Accounts, Assam. The Government of Manipur was ready to bear the expenditure for the additional establishment estimated at about 7300 rupees.\(^{38}\)

With the approval of the Government of India, a system of local audit of the state accounts by a resident auditor was introduced with effect from 1 April 1931. The duty of the Resident Auditor was to audit not only the expenditure of the

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35. *Political Proceedings, August 1918, No.17.*
36. *Foreign And Political Dept. File No.52-A/1931, No.1.*
37. ibid.
State but also the receipts of the State and the stock and stores of the State Engineer. The whole expenditure for the local audit was to be borne by the Government of Manipur.

Though the introduction of the local audit system was a little more expensive, it could claim the advantages of:
(a) detecting any case of defalcation and misappropriation at the source; (b) proper checking of irregularities in the expenditure on public works; and (c) regularization of the general accounts and also educating the local staff with the purpose of rectifying errors at the source.

Land Revenue:— The administration of land revenue under the new administration rules was entrusted to the Vice-President (later the President) of the Manipur State Darbar. The Vice-President was responsible to the Darbar. The whole of the land revenue establishment, including the Sub-Deputy Collector, was placed under the Vice-President of the Darbar.

The Darbar simply accelerated the wheels of the land revenue administration already set in motion during the Regency rule. The land revenue establishment was subsequently revised for purpose of increasing the revenue yield and completion of the works of cadastral survey.

The most important development, after the Darbar took over the land revenue administration, was the granting of rattas...
to the foreigners in Manipur State. Under a resolution of the Darbar a foreigner could be granted *patta* of land measuring not more than 15 *paris*. Mutation applications were also to be submitted to the Darbar for orders. All such applications were, however, to be submitted through the Political Agent.

The Vice-President of the Darbar was to hear appeals from the decision of the Sub-Deputy Collector in revenue and fishery cases.  

The rate of land revenue was raised in 1913 consequent upon the abolition of Lalup system. Since that year, the officials of the state were to be paid tour allowance during their tour in the villages on state duty. To meet the increased expenditure the land tax was increased from 5 rupees to 5 rupees and fifteen annas (3 annas per rupee).

The Manipur State Darbar pursued a policy of extension of more facilities to the state subjects to get training in survey works and land assessment. The employees were given instructions in these works under the guidance of the Sub-Deputy Collector. Young educated persons were also sent for training to the Jalukbari Survey School.

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41. ibid. Resolution No.4 dated 22 May 1907.
It was due to the above policy of the Darbar that the Government of Manipur was successful, in the years to come, in employing experienced Manipuris in the land revenue establishment. Even the post of Sub-Deputy Collector was held afterwards by the Manipuris.

In the month of June, 1922, Sri S. Nadia Singh, a Manipuri, after completion of his training in the Jalukbari Survey School, was appointed Sub-Deputy Collector, on probation, to assist the Land Revenue Officer. The purpose behind this appointment was to allow the Manipuris to gain experience in land revenue works so that the post of Sub-Deputy Collector might not, in the future, go to a non-Manipuri. Side by side with this, promotions were also given to the experienced Amins to the posts of Kanungos and to the posts of Amins from the lower grades.

In 1935 one post of Second Sub-Deputy Collector was also created; Sri A. Ibotombi Singh, a Manipuri, was appointed to that post. The year 1940-41 marked the bifurcation of the Land Settlement Department into the Settlement Office and the Revenue Office. Sri Saratchandra Barua, a Sub-Deputy Collector from Assam held the post of Settlement Officer; while Sri M.N. Setu Sana, a Manipuri, held the charge of Revenue Officer.

42 Manipur Administration Report, 1922-23.

** Replacing Nadia Singh who became the Superintendent in the State Office.
The revenue collection staff consisted of 5 Lakpas, 5 Clerks, 25 Muhorirs and 43 peons; while the settlement staff consisted of 5 Kanungos and 31 Amins.  

The department was further expanded by the establishment of the State Claims Office in 1945-46. Sri W. Yumjao Singh, a Manipuri, was appointed as the Rental Officer and Sri Manisana Singh as the Assistant Rental Officer. The staff strength of the State Claims Office consisted of, in addition to the above, 5 Claims Clerks, 6 Rental Amins and 3 Chaurasis.

The overall results of the measures adopted by the Land Revenue Department were that: (a) it could increase the state revenue to the tune of 7,51,115 rupees in 1944-45, after a remission of 96,736 rupees; (b) it had opened more and more employment opportunities for the Manipuris and made them feel that they were also taking active part in the state administration; (c) it also promoted expansion of trade. It may be noted that to enable the people to pay the increased rate of land tax in 1913-14, the Political Agent encouraged export of cattle which further increased the state revenue.

Military Police: The general administration of the Manipuri Military Police, since the inception of the Military...
State Darbar in 1907, was placed under the charge of a member of the Darbar who came to be known as the Police member. The command and control of the Military Police, however, was vested in the Raja. The former powers enjoyed by the Assistant Political Agent and Superintendent of State in relation to the Military Police ceased its operation.

There appeared no change in the duties of the Military Police. As usual, it mounted the guards at the Palace, the Quarter Guard, Jail, etc. During the collection season, they were posted as the guards at the Land Revenue Office. The Manipuri Military Police also provided for escorts when the Raja was on tours, and also for the prisoners sent to Silchar.

Better Arming of the Military Police:— The Manipuri Military Police was equipped with muzzle loading rifles. As the arms were issued as early as 1893-94, they became outmoded and time-worn by 1920, and hence, almost unserviceable. In 1925 the Manipuri Military Police had 75 Martini Rifles and about 61 serviceable muzzle loaders, while the strength of the Military Police was 233 with 24 bandsmen. Such a situation reduced the effectiveness of the Military Police.

In the month of December 1925, Maharaja Churachand Singh, Commandant of the Manipuri Military Police, requested the
Political Agent in Manipur to move the Government to supply the Manipuri Military Police with better arms, preferably Lee Enfield Rifles. It was further suggested that if 200 rifles could not be supplied, at least 25 Lee Enfield and 175 Henery Martini rifles might be supplied to replace the unserviceable rifles. 49

The Government of Assam informed that it would not be possible to issue Lee Enfield or Henery Martini rifles as the stock was already exhausted. The Political Agent was asked if the Darbar would be ready to buy .303 rifles at a cost of 57 rupees eight annas each. 50

The Manipur State Darbar, anxious to purchase improved weapons, had sanctioned in September 1926 a sum of 60,000 rupees for purchase of 100 rifles the same year while it was also planned that another 100 rifles should be purchased the next year. 51

The Government of India sanctioned the purchase of numbers of .303 rifles from the arsenal at Allahabad on the condition that: - (a) only 10 rounds of ammunition per rifle were to be kept in possession of the Manipuri Military Police; the remaining 30 to 40 rounds were to be in the safe custody.

49. F.D.P. Political A, September 1927, No. 85 a.
50. ibid. No. 88.
51. ibid. No. 90. (Resolution No. 4 of the Manipur State Darbar dated 8 September 1926.)
of the Commandant 4 Assam Rifles at Imphal; (b) as a precaution, all indents of ammunitions and replacement orders were to be checked by the Commandant of the 4 Assam Rifles; and (c) two Manipuri Military Policemen meant for the armorours' duties might be deputed at Kirkee for training.

It would be evident from the facts stated above that even in 1925 the Government of India were not free from suspicion of the Manipuris for their rebellious nature. In reservations on the part of the Government of India in issuing the full quota of the ammunitions to the Manipuri Military Policemen and the instructions to the Commandant of the 4 Assam Rifles for a regular inspection of the arms and ammunitions issued to the Manipuri Military Police were nothing but measures to ensure that the arms and ammunitions so issued were not misused against the British.

A study of the activities of the Manipuri Military Police shows that the British suspicion of the Manipuris was, however, unfounded. Right from the days of the first World War, the Government of India had given recognition to the loyalty of the Raja of Manipur and his subjects.** The Manipuri Military Police had been rendering immense assistance to the

52. ibid. No.98.

** It was in recognition of such services that the Raja was conferred with C.B.E. in 1917 and hereditary title of Maharaja in 1918.
British authorities. The Manipuri Military Police had performed the outpost duties during the Kuki Rebellion in 1919. Their services were utilised by the Government of India during 1920-22 when the Non-Co-Operation Movement was launched. Besides this, the force was used in quelling internal disturbances and in preserving peace and order. All these show that the alien authority used the forces against the local people and their interests.

In 1941 there appeared a major change in the policy of the Government of India as far as maintaining the Manipuri Military Police was concerned. The Government by then decided on disbandment of the force. To fill the gap so caused, the Civil Police was to be further strengthened by adding to it an armed wing. Such a policy was adopted because (a) any further raising of the Manipuri Military Police to the rank of a full-fledged fighting force was not considered desirable; and (b) the troubles both in the hills and the valley became far and far between. It was, therefore, felt that the strengthening of the Civil Police, with an armed wing attached to it, would be able to tackle easily any civil uprising.

With the winding up of the Manipuri Military Police, the Maharaja of Manipur relinquished the responsibility of commanding the military police since 31 May 1941. From the same day Mr. E.E. Hughes Hughes, I.P.S. was appointed Superintendent of

53. F.D.P. Political A, September 1927, No.84, loc.cit.
Police and took over the charge of commanding both the armed and the unarmed wings of the Civil Police. The new Superintendent of Police was made responsible to the Maharaja through the President of the Manipur State Darbar.

It was the duty of the Superintendent of Police to train the Civil Police and raise the personnel of the armed wing. At the request of the Darbar, the nomenclature of the Manipuri Military Police was retained. The strength of the military police (armed wing) was fixed at one Subedar, 2 Jemadars, 8 Havildars and 100 sepoys. The personnel of the former Manipuri Military Police were given preference in recruitment to the new military police subject to their medical fitness. In the same year a new branch of the police force known as the Prosecution Branch was also opened with Sri E. Tomcha Singh, a Manipuri, as the Officer-in-Charge. The change in the designation of the Commandant of the Military Police to that of the Superintendent of Police was to emphasise the civil character of the force.

Civil Police:— Earlier discussions had shown that the Civil Police was an off-shoot of the military police. It was meant mainly for the purpose of dealing with the civilians. The Civil Police, as in the case of the military police, was placed under the Police member of the Darbar. Its command and

55. ibid.
56. ibid.
control was also attached to that of the military police. The Police Member of the Darbar was given the powers of 1st Class Magistrate.

In 1910 the strength of the Civil Police was increased. On the actual roll there was one Sub-Inspector, 3 Head Constables and 23 Constables. In 1911 a second Police Station was opened at Jiribam in addition to that at Imphal. By that time the ratio of the policeman to the valley population was calculated at 1:924. There was one policeman for every square miles of the valley. In 1916-17 one post of Inspector of Police was created and Sri Raj Babu Sharma was appointed to the post.

The feeble strength of the Manipur Civil Police was best felt in 1939 when the second Nupi Lan took place. To cope with the situation, The Government of Manipur increased the strength of the Civil Police by an additional 74 Constables. Since 1941, as the Military Police had been replaced, the Civil Police was given more importance and an armed wing was attached to it as discussed above.

Manipur Police During The Second World War And After: Manipur was bombarded by the Japanese on 10 and 16 May 1944. Consequently most of the police personnel deserted their posts.

57. ibid. p.15.
58. ibid. p.17.
59. ibid. p.18, loc. cit. (Second Nupi Lan is discussed in a succeeding Chapter, Chapter 5).
The Superintendent of Police, by then, even thought of suspending the functions of the police during the war. But, as they reassembled on 27 May the situation could be retrieved. However, the police administration was at sixes and sevens because all the buildings of the Police Department had been occupied by the armies of the Allied Forces deployed in Manipur. The police offices were temporarily shifted to the residence of Sri Khomdram Dhanachandra Singh, Inspector of Police, at Kwaneithel, near Imphal. Due to the incessant inflow of the army via Imphal-Kohima road to the Burmese frontier, the Police Outposts at Mao, Sekmai, Palel, etc., became defunct, and consequently, were abandoned.

On 11 July 1942 Mr. Hughes Hughes, Superintendent of Police, handed over charge to Mr. T.A. Sharpe, the President of the Darbar. The duty of the police then reduced to simply guard the Manipur Palace. Since 1943 the office buildings occupied by the army were gradually vacated and police administration became normal once again. There followed the opening of more police stations: one at Wangjing on the Indo Burma road (later shifted to Thoubal). Another police station at Koirang was opened in 1944. Mayang Imphal and Bishenpur were retained as police outposts. The abandoned outposts at Mao, Sekmai, Palel, etc. were reopened.

60. ibid. p.19.
61. ibid. p.20.
In 1946 Sri Kh.Dhanachandra Singh, Inspector of Police, was promoted to the post Superintendent of Police in an officiating capacity. The year was all the more remarkable for the fact that Sri Karam Yaiskul Singh, Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police, and Sri Ch.Khogendra Singh, were awarded Indian Police Medals; for their meritorious service. Sri Yoma Singh, Havildar, was awarded Indian Police Medal for gallantry.

On the eve of the transfer of power in August 1947, the strength of the Manipur Police was:

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The above stated police force was supported by 248 Village Choukidars who were counted in the strength of the police. The ratio by then was 1:926.39 as compared with the earlier ratio.

Sri P.C.DasGupta of Assam Police took over charge of the Superintendent of Police from Sri Dhanachandra Singh in the last part of 1947. With the fresh start of the popular agitation against the ruling Government in Manipur in 1947-48, a small nucleus of the Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.) was formed and it started functioning under the Police Head Quarters at Imphal. Since 1948 the military wing of the police was renamed as the Manipur Rifles. In 1949 Sri DasGupta handed over

62. ibid.
63. ibid.
over charge to Sri S.C. Palit. At the time of merger of the State with the Central administration in 1949 October, Manipur had five Police Stations and seven Police Outposts. The strength of the unarmed Civil Police was:

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while in the armed wing there were:

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A major section of the armed wing was maintained separately as the Manipur Rifles. 64

The Manipur Police, with a humble beginning, was expanded and strengthened to handle the law and order problems of the state. During the periods of popular agitations since 1947, the C.I.D. branch of the police had to perform important duties including arrest of the agitators by giving information connected with the agitationists. The police personnel in combination with the Central Bureau of Investigation (C.B.I.) succeeded in collecting information and records with the help of which the situation could be brought under control.

64. ibid. p. 26.
Judiciary :- Consequent upon the transfer of administration to the Raja and the Darbar, there were some changes in the hierarchy of the state courts. The powers previously exercised by the Superintendent of State were inherited by the Darbar. The State Darbar became the highest court of appeal against the decisions of the Cheirap and the Panchayat Courts. The responsibility of superintending the judicial administration was vested in a member of the Darbar known as the Judicial Member.

The Muhamadan Panchayat and the Foreigner Panchayats at Kangpokpi and Kanglatongbi continued to function with their respective jurisdictions.

In 1916 with the revision of the administration rules the Raja was given revisionary powers over the decisions of the Darbar, as stated before. This, however, did not affect the Darbar's position of being the highest court of appeal. In spite of such revisionary powers of the Raja, it was decided that confirmation of sentences of imprisonment for more than seven years and capital sentences by the Chief Commissioner of Assam would still be retained. The President of the Court could process such matters as usual without a reference to the Raja.65 This process was resorted to just to avoid a conflict of opinion between the Maharaja and the Chief Commissioner and also to avoid delay in settlement of cases.

65. M.S.L. Cabin No.39, File No.67, (letter No.1106/63/64 dated 11 Sept. 1933 from Cosgrave to Political Agent.)
The relative powers of the Sadar Panchayat Court at Imphal, as against those of the other Panchayats, were also increased in the year 1934-35. It was purported to relieve the Cheirap Court of some of its jurisdictions. As a result, the Sadar Panchayat Court at Imphal was allowed to take up (a) all cases within its jurisdiction in which one of the litigants was a resident of Imphal; (b) all cases in which the parties belonged to different Panchayats; and (c) all cases within the powers of the Sadar Panchayat, but beyond the powers of the Rural Panchayats. 66

The Mauzadar at Jiribam, who previously performed executive functions and took up revenue cases only, was also given judicial powers equal to that of the Sadar Panchayat Court. 67

The Foreigners’ Courts at Kangpokpi, Kanglatongbi and Irung Valley were brought under the jurisdictions of the Manipuri courts and thereby, empowering the latter courts to try cases involving British non-European subjects. 68

The Manipur State Darbar ceased to be a judicial body of the state since the establishment of the Chief Court at Imphal in 1940-41. The powers and functions of the Chief Court were made more elaborate with the passing of the Manipur State Courts’ Act in 1947.

67. ibid.
68. ibid.
Rule For Confirmation Of Death Sentence

There was no rule as such regarding the confirmation of death sentences before the Raja and the Darbar were entrusted with the administrative responsibility. The administrative instructions to the Political Agent and Superintendent of State on the matter sufficed for the purpose. However, after 1907, it was considered necessary to frame guidelines. In 1908 a rule regarding the procedure to be followed in matters of confirmation of death sentences by the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam was framed providing for: (i) The proceedings of death sentence should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam. No death sentence should be executed unless confirmed by the Lieutenant Governor; (ii) the Lieutenant Governor might give any decision; the Political Agent and the Darbar should act in accordance with such decision; (iii) the Darbar should fix the date, time and place of execution; the time so fixed should not be less than 14 days and not more than 25 days; and (iv) no execution should take place in the month of Mera (September-October).

The above procedure was designed to give a chance to the convicts to get a fair trial. It also precluded the dangers of a hasty prosecution. It gave them room for annulling the earlier conviction or even order fresh trial.

69. F.D.P., Political A, August 1908, No.2. The provisions in (iii) and (iv) were made as desired by the Darbar.

** Assam became a separate province since 1924.**
Mercy Petition: Persons under death sentence were given, as a general rule under the British Judiciary, a chance to submit a mercy petition as the last resort before the execution of the death sentence. The same process was also extended to the Native States in India. The Government of India, under a general circular, informed the Native States that the opportunity for mercy petition should be open to all convicts. Such appeals for mercy should be forwarded to the Supreme Government and that the date fixed for execution should also be postponed till the disposal of the mercy petition.

Wakheisel: Paying of Wakheisel was a long standing practice of the Manipuris in which the winner party in any case used to give certain amount of money to the members of the court. The amount to be given depended on the financial position of the person concerned; there was no fixed amount. It was an open payment before the public as evidence of the person having won the case. The British authorities did not make any attempt to abolish it. But the common people grumbled against such a practice of giving Wakheisel and called it an abusive one.

During the popular movement of 1939-40 there were demands for abolishing the evil of Wakheisel. The Manipur State government.

70. Foreign Dept. Proceedings, October 1906, No. 1.
taking it to be unfair burden on the people, abolished it in 1940 in the Cheirap and the Sadar Panchayat Courts.\textsuperscript{72} In the Rural Panchayats the Wakheisel was abolished in 1941. However, to compensate the supposed losses to the members of the courts caused by the abolition of the Wakheisel, the salaries of the staff were increased by 20 rupees per month with effect from 1st July 1942.\textsuperscript{73}

The changes in the judicial administration of the state enumerated above brought about a sense of satisfaction among the common men. The Manipur State Darbar, consisting of six Manipuri members as against one British officer, the President, was definitely a better court of appeal than the Court of the Superintendent of State. The conferment of judicial powers to the Mauzadar of Jiribam opened to the Manipuri subjects of Jiribam easy access to the court of law. They could get their disputes settled without taking the trouble of going to Imphal for the purpose. The abolition of the practice of giving Wakheisel was another relief to the litigants.

Jail:- The administration of Manipur State Jail was entrusted since 1907 to a member of the Darbar known as the Jail Member. Among the changes brought about in the administration of the State Jail, the following may be mentioned:

(a) The Anthropometric system of identification of the

\textsuperscript{72} Manipur State Darbar Resolutions, No.2 dated 7.1.1941.

\textsuperscript{73} ibid. Resolution No.6 dated 23.9.1941.
criminal prisoners was substituted by the Finger Print system. The Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 was also introduced in Manipur.\(^7\) (b) In 1907 arrangements were made for detention of Manipuri prisoners sentenced to long term imprisonment in jails in British India. The Government of Manipur was to bear the charges of transportation of the prisoners and also the expenditures incurred in connection with such detention.\(^7\) (c) The Manipur State Council decided in 1947 to extend to Manipur the Reformatory School Act,\(^6\) for admission of juvenile prisoners from Manipur to the Reformatory School at Hazaribagh in Bihar. The scheme was also approved by the Government of India.\(^6\)

The above steps taken by the Government of Manipur for better handling of the criminal prisoners in jails proved to be a successful measure for deporting the dangerous and troublesome prisoners out of the state. In 1915 alone the Darbar resolved to send as many as 17 such prisoners to the Sylhet Jail.\(^7\)

**Education** :- The educational affairs, like other departments, were entrusted to a member of the Barber, known as the Education Member. The Raja, having obtained English education in the Mayo College at Ajmer, and also having joined

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74. ibid. Resolution No.10 dated 20.3.1929.
75. F.D.P. Political A, October 1907, No.18.
76. Ministry of States, File No.43-P/47 (letter of 14.4.1948.)
77. Manipur State Darbar Resolutions. op.cit. Resolution No.2 of 31.3.1915 and Resolution No.2 of 14.4.1915.
the Imperial Cadet Corps in his boyhood days, fostered education of the children of the State.

The Manipur State Darbar took up various steps for improvement of education. A Committee consisting of Sri S.Bolmacheouba Singh, Education Member, Sri R.K.Digendra Singh, Tral-rakpa, etc., was formed to assist the Political Agent in managing the affairs of the Johnstone School. Later, in 1928, the Johnstone School was converted into a State Government School.

In 1928 a Standing Committee on educational affairs was formed comprising of seven members with full powers to recommend to the Darbar any matter regarding educational reforms.

The Darbar encouraged meritorious students to continue their studies outside Manipur as there was no facility in the State. Schemes for awarding of scholarships to the deserving students were instituted. Even the cost of their journey to outside institutions was borne by the State. Thus, students were sent for higher studies like, Intermediate Arts, Intermediate Science, B.A., B.Sc. and other technical courses like Medical, Engineering, Land Survey, etc., with the state scholarships. The Darbar, however, considered the Master Degrees and the Law Degrees as 'more ceremonial than necessary'.

78. ibid. Resolution No.5 dated 12.6.1907.
79. ibid. No.7 dated 7.1.1920.
80. ibid. No.4 dated 8.2.1928 and No.2 dated 22.2.1928.
81. ibid. No. 4 dated 23.8.1922.
Since 1920 the affairs of higher education in the State achieved remarkable progress, both horizontal and vertical, while primary education also progressed. With the appointment of Mr. Fillepotts, an Englishman, as the Head Master, and the graduate teachers, the Johnstone School was granted recognition up to Class X by the Calcutta University in 1921-22.

For appearing in the Matriculation Examination the examinees had to go outside the State as there was no Matric Examination Centre in the State. Such examination centre was opened in the State with effect from 1929-30 as per the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Educational Affairs. From 1931-32 with the opening of more number of private High Schools in the State, the education facilities became more and more extensive.

The establishment of a College in the State, a long cherished desire of the public, was effected in 1930-31. A private college, the Dhanamanjuri College, was established. The college was named after Maharani Dhanamanjuri Devi in recognition of her generous donation for the establishment of the college. With the passing of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh took a serious view that there was not a single State College, 'in a sovereign State'. This, the Maharaja thought, was derogatory to his prestige. The Maharaja, therefore, appreciated the decision.

82. ibid. Resolution No.11 dated 4.9.1929.
of the Manipur State Council for taking over the Dhanamanjuri College by the State. Thus, the management of the Dhanamanjuri College was taken over by the State Government with effect from 1 July 1948, by a resolution of the State Council to that effect.

Tuition Fees:—Tuition fees in the Primary schools in Manipur were imposed in 1914. Till 1913-14 the school students in Manipur, with the exception of the students in the Johnstone School, were given free education. But consequent upon the abolition of Pothang System in 1913, the former practice of maintaining school buildings by the villagers came to an end. The Education Staff like, Sub-Inspectors, Deputy Inspectors, etc., were to be given tour allowances. As a result, a school fee at the rate of 1 anna per month per student in the town and a ½ anna per month per student in the villages was imposed. The rate varied because the parents at Imphal town were comparatively well off than those in the rural areas. Besides this, in those days education had become so popular in the urban areas that the imposition of such a fee was not considered to produce any denying effects. On the whole, it proved to be a right

++ Middle School education was made free in Assam in 1914.
86. A.S.P., Political A, May 1913, No. 45.
decision. In 1922 an admission fee of 2 rupees per student was imposed in the Johnstone School just to keep out boys who really had no intention of taking advantage of the education facilities. In the Upper Primary Schools the fees were 4 annas for class III, and 5 annas for class IV students. The Manipur State Darbar, however, refused to impose equal rates of fees for the boys and the girls students in the schools of Manipur.

Education Office Staff:— The State Education Department came into existence in 1910 under the supervision of the Education Member of the Darbar. The posts of Inspecting Pandits were redesignated as Deputy Inspector of Schools. The posts of Sub-Inspector of Schools were also created for regular inspection of the schools. In 1947 there were in the school staff only one Deputy Inspector of Schools and three Sub-Inspector of schools in the valley.

For the schools in the hills, the entire management was in the hands of the Political Agent and the President of the Darbar. The inspection of schools was carried out by these officers and the Sub-Divisional Officers in the hills. Rev. W. Pettigrew, a member of the American Baptist Mission, had undertaken voluntarily all the works of inspection, specially for the schools in the eastern Hills. Thus, no specific officer for inspection of schools in the hills was appointed.

87. Manipur State Darbar Resolutions, No. 3 dated 25.8.1941.
88. ibid. Resolution No. 3 dated 13.8.1941.
89. Singh, Mangoljao, Th., loc. cit.
90. ibid.
Missionaries: The American Baptist Mission under Rev. W. Pettegrew, as already stated, was allowed to perform his works during the Regency Rule in the hills only. The matter, after a long lull, was revived in 1915. Rev. Pettegrew had submitted in the same year an application to the Maharaja requesting that he might be allowed to stay at Imphal. The Maharaja, suspecting that he might indulge in religious preaching in the plains, did not comply with the request. He was ordered to work only in the Ukhrul areas in the eastern hills.

There was another Christian Missionary: the North East India General Mission under Mr. Roberts. It came to the hills of Manipur in 1910 with a permission from the Political Agent in Manipur. They were allowed to work in the western hills of the state. But, it was reported that Mr. Roberts was an undesirable person. He was prohibited from entering the state. The Maharaja even declined to have any relation with him. Mr. Roberts, however, resumed his works in the western hills as the Political Agent did not object to it.

There were, thus, two rival missionaries in Manipur: the American Baptist Mission working in the eastern hills; and the North East India General Mission working in the western hills. These missionaries contributed much towards the development of the hill areas and the hill tribes in the state; and showed the dawn of civilization to the tribes.

92. Foreign and Political Department, File No. 145-P/1928, Appendix C.
and above their religious preaching, they devoted themselves to establishment of schools and health centres for the inhabitants of the hills.

In the absence of clear evidence, it is doubtful if the missionaries were involved in alleged incitement of the tribes for secessionist movements in the hills. In 1949 Major General Rawal Amar Singh, the Dewan of Manipur, observed that the Christian missionaries in Manipur had exercised a baneful influence politically among the hill tribes of Manipur. He alleged that the idea of secession and formation of an independent hill state outside India was the brainchild of the missionaries. He stressed the importance of weaning away the hill tribes from the influence of the missionaries. As a device, he suggested the creation of a "Mission Of India" with sufficient funds to take over the schools and the medical care centres from the missionaries maintaining the continuity of the services. It is known how the Government of India reacted to these suggestions.

Administration Of Jiribam

A study of the administration of the valley would remain incomplete without a discussion on the administration of Jiribam. Jiribam (Jiri in short) became a part of Manipur after the Jiri Treaty in 1833, as discussed already. Thus,

the administration of Jiribam became a responsibility of the Government of Manipur. The administration of Jiribam demands a separate discussion because of the peculiar nature of the relationship between the British Government and the Government of Manipur in respect of the territory and its population.

There was no confusion about the territorial rights of Manipur over Jiribam. The British also recognised it. The Government of Manipur was the sole authority for the granting of settlements in Jiribam. The Political Agent in Manipur, acknowledging such right, forwarded the applications from the Muslims regarding the settlement in Jiribam to the Darbar. There was, however, a great controversy regarding the nationality of the settlers at Jiribam. Most of the Manipuri settlers of Jiribam, but for the original tribe, had migrated from the Surma Valley in Cachar. They were mostly the descendants of the fugitives from the British territory during the Burmese invasion in 1818-19. Till the beginning of this century neither the British Government nor the Government of Manipur paid any particular attention towards the settlers at Jiribam as their number was a negligible few. But, as the number increased, both the Governments directed their attention towards the administration of Jiribam and its settlers.

94. Manipur State Darbar Resolutions, No. 13 dated 22.1.1906.
95. F.D.P. Political A, March 1910, No.18.
The Government of Manipur claimed and treated the Manipuri settlers of Jiribam as the subjects of Manipur State. Those who were not Manipur State subjects were called foreigners. A foreigners' tax was imposed on such 'foreigners' at Jiribam.

The British India Government, on the other hand, contended that it was impossible for the British subjects to become naturalised subjects of the Native States. The rulings as laid down in the Political Practice strongly advocated the principle that jurisdiction over British subjects should never be surrendered. It was also viewed that the Manipuris born in Cachar or other British territories should be treated as British subjects even if they went back to Manipur. Guided by such views, the British Government contended that the settlers at Jiribam would not be amenable to the jurisdiction of the Maharaja and the Manipur State Darbar. Thus, Jiribam was, in a sense, regarded as a British Reserve or a British Colony.

The British position on the issue put the Maharaja and the Darbar in doubt as regards their rights and powers in matters of revenue and the general administration of the Manipuri inhabitants of Jiribam. Such views had even contradicted the already declared decision of the Government of Manipur State Darbar Resolutions, No. 4 dated 6.4.1908.

96. Manipur State Darbar Resolutions, No. 4 dated 6.4.1908.
97. ibid. No. 1 dated 11.11.1908.
98. F.D.P. Political A, November 1909, No. 2.
99. ibid. May 1919, Nos. 16-36
100. ibid. March 1910, Nos. 18-19.
Eastern Bengal and Assam allowing Manipuris of Cachar to become naturalised subjects of Manipur State if they so desired and if the Manipuri community were ready to accept them.  

In 1908 the Political Agent in Manipur clarified the position by informing the Darbar that the powers of the Vice-President of the Darbar would remain unabated in the revenue matters of Jiribam. He further declared in 1910 that the settlers of Jiribam whose original language was the Manipuri language should be treated as the subjects of Manipur State. This, apparently, was accepted by the Government of Manipur as well.

The Government of Manipur had appointed Manipuri Mauzadars to administer the Manipuri subjects in Jiribam. A civil Thana was also established at Jirighat. Later on, for the sake of convenience, Rai Sahib Bipin Chandra Deb Lasker, the honourary Magistrate of Cachar was appointed Mauzadar by the Maharaja with the consent of the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar. In 1917, by a resolution, the Manipur State Darbar brought directly the Mauzadar of Jiribam under the President of the Manipur State Darbar.

101. Orders By the Political Agent, No.30 dated 20.3.1907.
102. F.D.P. Political A, May 1919, No.35.
104. F.D.P. Political A, May 1919, op.cit. No.16.
Under Rule 13 of the Manipur Administration Rules, the Political Agent in Manipur was solely responsible for the administration of British subjects in Manipur. There was no provision under which the Political Agent could delegate his powers to any agent. The inclusion under his charge of the British subjects of Jiribam, more than 200 kilometres from Imphal without proper communication facilities, meant an additional responsibility to the already busy office of the Political Agent in Manipur. The inevitable result had been insufficient exercise of powers over the British subjects of Jiribam.

To cope with the problems, the Political Agent proposed in 1910 that all the settlers near Jirighat, where the Jirighat population was concentrated, should be treated as Manipur State subjects; the Darbar and other Manipuri courts of justice should have jurisdiction over all those subjects.

The above proposal meant that (i) all the foreigners of Jirighat would be exempted from the Foreigners' Tax; (ii) they would apply for allotment of land for cultivation which would increase the land revenue and the production of food crops; and (iii) the Political Agent would be relieved of additional responsibility. In spite of the advantages, the Government of Assam did not approve of the proposal. They suggested that petty disputes might be settled by a local

106. F.D.P. Political Agent, March 1910, No. 18, loc. cit.
Panchayat at Jirighat. 107

In 1917 another proposal for efficient administration of Jiribam was made by Mr. J. C. Higgins, the President of the Darbar and Officiating Political Agent. He suggested that the honorary Magistrate of Cachar, who was also the Mauzadar of Jiribam under Manipur State, might be empowered to try petty cases involving British subjects at Jiribam, his decisions being subjected to the approval of the Political Agent.

The Government of Assam rejected the above proposal on the ground that there had been no precedent to such an act of bestowing of jurisdictions over British subjects to Native officials. It was further held that the Mauzadar, being a servant of the State of Manipur, conferment of such powers to him would be ultra-vires of the decision of the Government of India. 109 Mr. W.A. Cosgrave, who had taken charge from Mr. Higgins, in his capacity as the Political Agent, proposed a modified formula. He suggested that the Mauzadar at Jiribam might be appointed Assistant Political Agent in Manipur with the powers of a Third Class Magistrate to settle disputes involving British subjects. It was possible, he argued, as the Mauzadar was a British subject. 110 This proposal was also rejected by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam. It was, however, agreed that a Panchayat consisting

107. ibid. No.19.
108. F.D.P. Political Agent, May 1919, No.16, loc.cit.
110. ibid. No.28.
of five Manipuri Headmen of Jiribam might be constituted with one of them as the Sarpanch to try petty civil and criminal cases without any formal authority. It was reiterated that the earlier decision of the Government about transfer of jurisdiction still held good.

The case stated above about the administration of the settlers of Jiribam would make it clear that there was a dual administrative authority. The Maharaja and the Darbar administered, through the Mauzadar, the Manipur State subjects, the Manipuris and the Manipuri Muslims. The Political Agent, through the informal Panchayat, was responsible for the administration of the British subjects. It might be noted that in Manipur proper there were three administrative authorities. They were: (i) The Maharaja and the Darbar for the Manipur State subjects; (ii) The President of the Darbar, on behalf of the Maharaja, to administer the hill tribes of Manipur; and (iii) The Political Agent to administer the British subjects in Manipur. The tribal population in Jiri, being a negligible few, did not pose any administrative problem as such. But, even a lone case, if any, was to be taken up by the President of the Darbar as per the Administration Rules.

A set of administration rules for the general administration and the administration of accounts were framed. The various agents of administration, under these rules, were entrusted with separate and limited powers in executive and judicial

111. Ibid. No.36.
matters. The powers of overall supervision in all matters of administration were still retained with the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam (later Government of Assam) representing the Government of India. With a view to ensuring justice to the criminals, sentences of death and imprisonment for more than seven years were required to be confirmed by the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

The separation of the administrative authorities into those of the hills and the valley during the Regency had still continued even after the transfer of power to the Raj and the Darbar. This created a political division among the hill and the valley population of the state. The later amendments to the administrative rules providing for administration of the hill tribes by the President of the Darbar on behalf of the Maharaja could not satisfy the Maharaja and the Darbar. It did not give any extraordinary power to the Maharaja as his decisions were subjected to the approval of the Political Agent, both in matters of the hills and the valley. There were earnest requests from the Maharaja and the Darbar to get both the hill and the valley administrations transferred to them. The Government of India was not, however, ready to accede to such requests for the apparent reason that it was not free from apprehensions of a future revolt by a united force of the hills and the plains.

There were some cases of public discontent during the
rule of the Raja and the Darbar. So was the case in matters of hill administration under the President of the Darbar, on behalf of the Raja. There occurred a number of popular uprisings, both armed and unarmed, against the Government to get their grievances redressed. Among such agitations, mention may be made of the Agitation For abolition of Pothang System in 1911, the Kuki Rebellion of 1917, the Bazar Boycott of 1920, the Naga Unrest of 1930-31 and the first Nupi Lan of 1937, the second Nupi Lan of 1939. These agitations form the subject matter of a subsequent chapter in our study.

It might be noted that the policy of the Government of India to transfer the state administration to the Raja and his subjects was gradually fulfilled. The constitution of the Darbar gave opportunities to the Native population to have a share in the government of the state. The appointment of Manipuri judges in the local courts of the Cheirap and the Panchayats was another step for appointment of Manipur State subjects in the local offices. The education policy of the State was framed aiming at educating the State subjects, both in the hills and the plains, to enable them to hold responsible posts in the administrative offices. Owing to such a policy, more and more number of State subjects attained

* The practice of supply of free food and service by the villagers to the State Officials on tour.
** Women's war or Women's movement.
higher education and education in technical lines. The re-
result was that Manipuris filled in the State Offices in a
greater number and in higher grades. Sri Nadia Singh was
appointed Sub-Deputy Collector at the beginning; later on
he was appointed Superintendent in the State Office. A good
number of State subjects were employed as Kanungos and
Amins over and above those employed in lower grades. Even
in the Hill Office, Sri R.K. Atompishak Singh was appointed
Superintendent under the President of the Darbar. 112 The
posts of Private Secretary to the Maharaja and Personal
Assistant to the Maharaja, which were held earlier by the
British Officers, were also held by the Manipuris. Such
cases were to be found in the Police department and other
departments as well.

In the case of Hill administration an increasing number
of hillmen were appointed Lambus. Even the school teachers
were appointed under the principle of Kukis for the Kukis
and Nagas for the Nagas. All the school teachers in the hills
were mostly Nagas and Kukis. 113

In the ultimate analysis such a policy contributed much
towards the principle of self government and self determina-
tion for the Manipur State subjects.

112. Manipur Administration Report, 1929-30, Appendix I (i).
113. F.D.P., Political A, July 1920, No.38; Note by the
Chief Commissioner of Assam dated 31.5.1920.