We have already dealt with the circumstances leading to the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. The war came to an end with the defeat of the Manipuris. The British troops occupied the Manipur palace on 27 April 1891. The Government of India adopted various punitive measures against the State and her people in retaliation of the loss of British lives and property in Manipur as a result of the war. To have a full perspective of the war, it is necessary to refer to the actions taken up in Manipur by the Commander of the Manipur Expedition Forces.

In compliance with the instructions from the Government of India to the General Officer Commanding of the Manipur Expedition Forces, Brigadier General H. Collett, the General Officer Commanding, took up a number of steps to punish the State and the persons actively involved in the revolt of 1891, and the murder of the British officers in Manipur.

1. Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1891, Vol. 59, East India (Manipur) No. I7II, Tele. dated 29 April 1891 from Viceroy to Secretary of State for India.
2. ibid. Tele. dated 6 April 1891 from Foreign Secy to Graham.
* General Graham was appointed G.O.C. at first, but later on General H. Collett was appointed.
The steps included :- (a) The General Officer Commanding, by a public announcement, declared that the State of Manipur was guilty of rebellion against the Government of India. By a proclamation dated 19 April 1891 it was made clear that the reign of Kulachandra Singh, the Raja of Manipur, had come to an end; and that the general administration of the state had been taken over by the Commander of the British forces in Manipur; (b) To remove all doubts regarding the subordination of Manipur State to the British all previous treaties were repudiated; (c) Manipur State was to pay to the British Government a tribute of 50,000 rupees per year; (d) A pecuniary penalty of 2,50,000 rupees was imposed on the Manipur State subjects, however, the incidence of paying the fine was later shifted to the state; (e) The lineage of the Manipuri kings before 1891 was precluded from their right to reign the state and the use of the word 'Royal' in regard to the family of the Maharajas of Manipur was also dropped.

Among the actions taken up to punish the individuals the following may be mentioned :-

3. F.D.P., Secret E, October 1891, No.142.
5. F.D.P. Foreign A, December 1892, No.8.
7. ibid. No.2.
9. ibid. April, 1891, No.280.
(a) A special court was constituted to try the Raja, Kulachandra Singh (British called him Regent) and other officials of high ranks, while the Chief Political Officer, Major Maxwell, tried those in the lower ranks; (b) The ring leaders who were found guilty were sentenced to death by hanging, and those who escaped death penalty were punished with life imprisonment; The properties of the convicted persons were confiscated to the Government of India; (c) The Manipuri soldiers who obeyed the orders of the Manipur-State authority were not seriously punished. They were, however, arrested and used for carrying of ammunition and baggage for the British troops from Kohima and Tamu to Imphal; and (d) Sale and possession of arms by the Manipuris were strictly prohibited; even carrying of thick sticks were forbidden.

The war of 1891 was significant in the history of Manipur because the sovereign status of Manipur terminated with it; Manipur became a state subordinate to the British. The subjects of the state suffered great hardships after the war. In addition to the sufferings on account of the punishments stated above, the people had to live a difficult

10. F.D.P. Secret E, June 1891, Nos. 48-58. (The members were Colonel Mitchel, Asstt. Q.M. General, Major Ridgeway, Commdt. 44 Gurkhas, and Major Maxwell, Chief Political officer of Manipur).


14. M.S.L., Orders By The Political Agent, Manipur, (order No. 16 dated 28 August 1893.)
life owing to scarcity of food and increasing prices of the essential commodities. They had to face a reign of terror at the hands of the British troops who made it a point to look down upon the common people.

The hanging of persons after the war for their active involvement in the rebellion was an excessive use of authority on the part of the British officers. The Government of India had earlier issued clear instructions to avoid penalties of death because of the return to tranquility without great loss of British lives and property. But, in spite of such directions, given in May 1891, Tikendrajit Yuvaraja and Thangal General were hanged in August 1891 as an examplary punishment. No wonder than that a British officer exclaimed that the British ruled India 'only by the sword.'

However, the other side of the picture, that of acts of benevolence may also be viewed. A sum of 84,651 rupees, being the value of the labour of the Manipuri soldiers used for transport of ammunition and baggage for the British troops during the war was adjusted against the sum of 2,50,000 rupees as the fine. A Military Court of Inquiry

16. F.D.P. Secret E, June 1891, No.45.
18. ibid. October 1893, No.1.
presided over by Colonel G. Evans fully investigated into the actions of the British military officers in Manipur just before the revolt, while those of the civil and political officers were investigated by Major Maxwell, the Chief Political Officer of Manipur. These actions, in part, were influenced by the desire to find out whether some of the British officers in Manipur were responsible for generating a sense of revolt.

It was due to the role of Gambhir Singh and his men during the Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-26 that Manipur escaped British annexation in 1826. However, different was the situation following the Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891, regarded by the Manipuris as a war of independence. A defeated Manipur was easily annexed by the British following the pattern established earlier: the annexation of lower Assam in 1826 and upper Assam in 1836, Cachar in 1832, and the annexation of Burma in 1886. These

annexations were carried out in spite of the British promise that the Government did not contemplate to annex any state. But, Mr. W. E. Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, strongly recommended annexation of the state.

A prolonged debate on the political future of Manipur took place in the British Parliament. As against the recommendation of Mr. W. E. Ward favouring annexation of the state, there were also views like those of Lord Ripon and Lord Northbrook, the ex-Viceroys of India, who disfavoured it. Lord Derby also expressed his view that the policy of annexation would create mistrust of the Natives towards British rule. Major General Sir James Johnstone, the former Political Agent in Manipur, also expressed himself against the policy of annexation. Moreover, public opinion in England and in the native press were unanimous against annexation.

In his decision, Lord Landsdowne, the then Viceroy, while appreciating the British right to annex the State of Manipur, completely dropped the idea of annexation of the state as a mark of clemency.

27. Reid, Robert, op. cit. p. 67.
29. ibid. October 1891, Nos. 123-147.
30. Reid Robert, op. cit. p. 69.
A principle of subordination without annexation in the form of Regency administration under British officers was also gaining popularity. This was characterised as a 'half-way house' to annexation. Such a practice proved very helpful in solving the Manipur problem. Thus, the state was placed in charge of a minor Native Raja with a British officer as Regent.

The rendition of the state of Manipur to a Native Raja was a departure from the trend of the British policy pursued in regard to the eastern Indian states and Burma. However, it was not a singular instance in view of the fact that there were also instances of regranting the state to the Native Raja as in Mysore in 1881 and Mayurbhanj in 1888.

The device of regranting the state to the Native Raja served little purpose for the Natives. The political machinery set up to administer the state, after the regrant, was such that the Native officials had no role to play in the administration of their own state. During the minority of the Raja, a large number of British officers, Europeans or

British subjects, manned almost all the departments. The Raja was left only with his titular dignity. Every care was taken to establish British control over the whole sphere of state administration, both civil and military.

The Provisional Administration

The British Government of India, based on a pragmatic approach, adopted the normal practice of placing the administration of the occupied areas provisionally under the charge of the Commander of the expedition forces. Such was the case in Burma after the British victory in the third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885-86. The occupation of the Shan States took place under General Prenturgust. Thus, the administration of the occupied Shan States, by then, was kept under the charge of General Prenturgust. In Manipur the same practice was repeated.

Since April 27, 1891, the date of occupation of the Manipur palace by the British forces, the general administration of the state was placed under the charge of the British military authority in Manipur. By a proclamation of 19 April 1891, General H. Collett, the Commander of the British forces in the State of Manipur, had announced the cessation of the rule of Raja Kulachandra Singh and assumption of the general administration by the British Military Command in Manipur. The political administration of the state was entrusted to Major

34. F.D.P. Secret E, October 1891, No.142.
Maxwell, the Chief Political Officer of Manipur, under the supervision of General H. Collett.\textsuperscript{35} Thus, for the first time in its history, Manipur was placed provisionally under the British military rule.

The new military government in Manipur was busy in bringing back a state of normalcy. Side by side with it, great care was taken to stamp out any manifestation of revolt. All efforts were made to disarm the people. Even carrying of thick sticks was declared a punishable offence.

**Transfer Of Administration**

**From Military To Civil Authority**

The prolongation of the provisional administration of Manipur under the British military authority in Manipur was not considered desirable. The period of such administration lasted from 27 April 1891 to 13 September 1891. General Collett, who was in supreme command of the military as well as the political authority in Manipur, made a proposal to the Government of India recommending that Major Maxwell, the Chief Political Officer of Manipur be allowed to carry out civil and political duties independent of the military command in Manipur.\textsuperscript{36}

General H. Collett, in anticipation of the Government of India's approval of the above proposal, left Manipur in the

\textsuperscript{35} F.D.P. External B, September 1892, No.29.

\textsuperscript{36} F.D.P. Foreign A, October 1891, No.2.
month of September 1891 after entrusting the civil and political administration of the state to the care of Major Maxwell. The Government of India conveyed its sanction on 13 October 1891 to the transfer of authority. But the change had little impact on the common population of the state. With the British officer at the head of the state administration and with the same show of British forces, the mere technical change from the military authority to the civil authority meant very little. The British officers could not remove from their minds that the Manipuris were not well disposed towards the British interests. In the midst of all these, however, as time passed, people gradually returned to their normal lives.

The Regency Rule

Regranting of the state to its ruler did not mean restoration of the status quo before the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. The proposal from the Local Government (Government of Assam) regarding Regency rule in Manipur was accepted by the Government of India. Churachand Singh, a minor from a collateral branch of the Manipuri kings was appointed Raja of Manipur under a Sanad to be honoured with 11 Salute Guns. This selection of a Raja, denouncing the former line of the kings of Manipur, partly meant a rebuff to the Manipuri

38. ibid. No.1.
princes for their involvement in the last rebellion in 1891; it also displayed a show of British authority and power which could change at will the ruler of the state of Manipur.

The British policy had the following implications:
(i) Lapse of the administrative authority of the British political Officer; (ii) appointment of a Political Agent to represent the British authorities; and (iii) appointment of a Regent to the minor Raja to run the administration in his behalf.

A fresh arrangement was made to fulfil the above condition. The designation of the Chief Political Officer of Manipur was changed to that of the Political Agent in Manipur. On recommendation from Mr. W.E. Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, the Political Agent himself was made Regent to the minor Raja. A special designation of Superintendent of State was added to that of the Political Agent so as to enable the Political Agent to administer the affairs of the state. Thus, Major Maxwell, the former Chief Political Officer of Manipur, combined the two posts and became the real administrator of the state.

With the above arrangement, on 29 April 1892 the civil and political administration of Manipur was nominally restored

41. ibid.
to the Native ruler of the state with the investiture of the minor Raja, Churachand Singh, on the condition of a Sanad issued by the Government of India. This brought to an end the provisional military Government of Manipur.

It may be noticed that the change in the administrative agency of Manipur was only nominal in that the British agents practically exercised all the functions of the civil and political authority in the state. Under the new rules for administration of the state, the Raja, or for that matter, any Manipuri official occupied a titular position. The Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of State had been empowered to introduce any change in the interest of good government. However, he was to pay due regard to the customs and traditions of the people of the land and to interfere the least in the then existing institutions.

Administrative System

Under the new rules for the administration of Manipur during the minority of the Raja, the civil and political administration of the state was vested in the Chief Commissioner of Assam, the Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of State. These were supplemented by the Assistant to the Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of State and the Native authorities like the Cheirap and

42. F.D.P., External A, K.W., July 1892, No. 241, loc. cit.
43. ibid.
Since the British occupation of Manipur, arrangements for future government of the state were designed: (a) to remove disorder in the state and avoid recurrence of revolt and conspiracy; (b) not to allow the state to disturb the peace and order in the neighbouring British districts; and (c) to establish an effective British control over the state. With these aims in view, Major Maxwell, the Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of State, brought about, with the approval of the Government of India, a set of administrative changes in the state as discussed hereunder.

Judicial Administration:— The first attention was towards the judicial reforms in the state as it was considered that the immediate contentment of the people could be achieved by a quick and judicious settlement of the disputes among them which would ensure peace and order. Thus, rules were framed providing that (a) a rural policeman called Choukidar would be appointed for every 100 houses to be kept under a Circle Panchayat with the duty that he should report to the Panchayat all important matters taking place in the village; (b) a Circle Panchayat with 5 members would be constituted for every 1000 houses and would be given both civil and criminal jurisdictions in cases involving Manipuris only; while the Muslim Panchayat would try cases involving
only the Muslims.* They could try cases of the value of not more than 50 rupees; above it, the case was to be referred to the Cheirap Court. The Panchayat Courts could award punishments with a fine of 50 rupees; but no power of imprisonment was given. Appeals from the Panchayat Courts would lie to the Cheirap Court. (c) The Cheirap Court would consist of 5 magistrates. They took up cases, under their original jurisdiction, which were beyond the jurisdiction of the Panchayat Courts, excepting cases of murder and rebellion against the state. The latter cases could be tried only by the Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of State. If the cases were of a severe nature, it would be referred to the Court of the Political Agent and Superintendent of State.44

There could be no appeal against the order of the Cheirap Court as a matter of right. However, the Political Agent and Superintendent of State might call back any civil or criminal case that might have been disposed of by the Cheirap Court. He could himself try the case de novo, or issue orders as he might think proper. But the Cheirap Court had only the powers to inflict punishments to the tune of 2 years' R.I. or 500 rupees as fine or both.

Both the Cheirap and the Panchayat Courts had no jurisdiction over the British Indian subjects in Manipur in both civil

* A Muslim Panchayat was established at Lilong.
and criminal cases. The Courts of the Political Agent and the Assistant Political Agent tried all cases involving the Europeans and the British Indian subjects in Manipur.

(ii) The Court of the Assistant Political Agent: - The Assistant Political Agent exercised the powers of a First Class Magistrate as laid down in the Indian Criminal Procedure Code and may try all cases except murder and rebellion against the state. An appeal against the order of the Assistant Political Agent exceeding six months R.I. or fine exceeding 500 rupees would lie to the Political Agent.

(iii) The Political Agent's Court: - The Political Agent could try any case brought before his court and pass sentence accordingly. However, sentences of death or imprisonment exceeding seven years were subject to confirmation by the Chief Commissioner of Assam to whom the records were to be submitted. The action in such cases was to be deferred till the decision of the Chief Commissioner of Assam was received. The Chief Commissioner might call for any case and pass such judgement as he deemed fit. 45

Cases within the British Reserve at Imphal involving only Manipuri subjects were handed over for trial to the Manipuri Courts. If either party was a British subject, the case was tried by the Assistant Political Agent or the Political Agent.

45. ibid.
Finance and Revenue:— Before 1891 Manipur State had, more or less, a barter economy, though a state currency of a very negligible value, called Sel, was in circulation. Taxes were paid in kind and payments for services were also made in kind, mostly in the form of land. However, from the financial year 1892-93, the state economy had switched over from barter to monetary economy.\textsuperscript{46} The preparation of the annual budget for the state, which was not known before, was also introduced. The Political Agent and Superintendent of State functioned as the State Treasury Officer.

A question arose by then as to whether the state accounts should be maintained separately, or it should be amalgamated with the accounts of the Government of India. On recommendation from the Government of Assam, the Government of India sanctioned approval to the amalgamation of the two accounts.\textsuperscript{47}

All budgets for the state and the Government offices were to be prepared by the Political Agent and approval obtained from the Government of Assam. On all important matters involving a major expenditure, the Finance Department, Government of India, had to be consulted and sanction obtained before the expenditure was actually incurred.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} F.D.P., Secret E, May 1895, No. 12.
\textsuperscript{47} F.D.P., External B, May 1892, No. 189.
\textsuperscript{48} ibid. June, 1895 Nos. 60-67.
On the revenue side, the practice of contributing labour by the people to the state for the state services was totally abandoned. Instead, payment of a house tax at the rate of two rupees per house for the valley and three rupees for the hill was ordered. The reason for imposition of the house tax was simply to raise tax in cash in line with the British Indian system.

In respect of land holdings, the old notion that the land belonged to the king had been replaced by that the land belonged to the state. A more secure system of land holding was introduced. Kacha patta was issued for every individual land holdings with the right to transfer, sell or inherit the land. Land tax was fixed at 5 rupees a pari (2½ acres) irrespective of soil. Ingkhols (land used for homestead) were not taxed.

In the year 1894 various devices for better collection of land revenue and house tax were adopted. For the purpose of land revenue collection the whole of the valley was divided into four sub-divisions, called Panas. They were: the Ahallup Pana, the Naharmp, the Khabam and the Laipham Pana, each being placed under a Pana-Lakpa (Sub-Divisional Officer). They were to collect all the revenues and to be credited to the State Treasury. Each Pana-Lakpa was remunerated at 10% of his

49. F.D.P. Secret E, January 1893, No.5. (the reason why hill House tax was more than the valley house tax is not clear. Probably it was based on the consideration that the valley settlers had to pay land tax in addition to it while the land tax was not imposed on the hill tribes.)

50. ibid.
amount collected. In respect of collection of House Tax, the whole of the valley was again sub-divided into three:
Division A, Division B and Division C. Division A would consist of all the houses between Imphal river and Kongba river; and would be under the charge of Ahallup-Lakpa. The second, Division B, would consist of all the houses between Imphal river and Nambul river; and it was placed under Naharup-Lakpa. Division C was to consist of all the houses to the west and south of Nambul river; and was placed under Khabam-Lakpa. 51

In addition to the Pana-Lakpas, a central office, called the Office Of The Amin-Lakpa was also established, specially meant for survey and settlement. It consisted of one Amin-Lakpa, 8 Amin-Purela and 8 Chain-men. The Office of the Amin-Lakpa was placed under the direct control and supervision of the Superintendent of State. 52 Maximum efforts were also made for up to date realisation of the House Tax and land revenue with the help of the police in the valley and the Lambus in the hills.

Revenue year was fixed from 1 April of the year to 51 March of the following year. Measurement of land in Manipur was to be performed in terms of Pari (108,000 square feet) and Sangam (27,000 square feet).

52. ibid.
53. ibid.
In 1897-98 the services of a trained and experienced officer, Babu Raj Kumar Rai, Sub-Deputy Collector of Assam, were requisitioned on the state expense. All the previous establishments connected with land revenue and house tax were transferred under the charge of the Sub-Deputy Collector who was to function under the supervision and control of the Superintendent of State. Under his guidance, a general survey of the land was undertaken. Since 1899 Ingkhols, which were previously tax free, were declared taxable at a rate of 2 rupees irrespective of size.

The Sub-Deputy Collector was also given the power to try revenue cases while cases of land settlement were taken up by the Political Agent and Superintendent of State.

In addition to the above duties, the Sub-Deputy Collector was entrusted with the task of collection of Foreigners’ Tax and Grazing fees which were handled earlier by the Inspector of Police. He was also made in charge of valley census while that of the hills was to be done by Mr. Hodson, the Assistant Political Agent. Imphal town formed a separate Pana and was delinked from the Ahallup-Pana.

Military Police:— After the defeat of the Manipuris in 1891, the Manipuri soldiers were completely disarmed and

55. M.S.L., Orders By The Political Agent, No.3 of 5.8.1897.
56. ibid. No.16 dated 4 November 1900.
57. ibid. No.10 dated 29 August 1900.

* The Hill Tribes were exempted from the Ingkhol Tax.
liquidated. The general law and order situation in the state was maintained by the British forces stationed in Manipur. After the Manipuri soldiers were disbanded, the task of the British forces was left to that of quelling the tribal feuds which was better to be handled by the police and not by the regulars. It was not considered fair to use the military force even for minor matters which they had to do in the absence of a police force.

To overcome the difficulties and also to spare a portion of the regulars for active service elsewhere, Major Maxwell, the Political Agent and Superintendent of State, made a proposal in 1891 for raising a Manipuri police force of 500 men. These men were to be armed to enable-to face any rebellion. While giving approval to the proposal, the Government of India, as recommended by the Chief Commissioner of Assam, reduced the strength to 400. In respect of arming of the military police, the Government of India allowed them to use an inferior weapon, i.e., carbine muzzle loading or smooth bore rifles.

By August 1892 the progress report of the Manipuri Military Police showed an enrolment strength of 320 of all ranks while the sanctioned strength was 400. Even in 1904 the actual strength rose to only 377: 1 Commandant, 5 Subedars, 7 Jama­
dars, 28 Havildars, 24 Naiks, 309 Sepoys and 3 Buglers.

The sepoys were given training in drill and weapons for which six numbers of military police from Naga Hills were employed. A new police line within the British Reserve at Imphal was maintained for the accommodation of the Manipuri military policemen. For command and control, it was kept under the Assistant Political Agent till the Raja took over the administration in 1907.

In 1904 the Government of India suggested that Manipuri Military Police should be substituted for the regulars deployed at Manipur. But, the Political Agent in Manipur and the Chief Commissioner of Assam opposed the proposal and insisted that the regulars should be garrisoned for at least another five years thence.

Civil Police: A Civil force was raised since 1893-94 as a peace keeping force among the civil population in the valley. The authorised strength was 1 Sub Inspector, 2 Head Constables, and 30 Constables. But the actual strength was only 1 Sub Inspector, 1 Head Constable and 11 Constables. With its Head Quarter at Imphal, the jurisdiction of the Civil Police extended throughout the valley inclusive of the civil population of the British Reserve. The Choukiers in the villages were taken over in the strength of the Civil

60. ibid. No.30.
62. ibid. No.4.
Police. For command and control, the Civil Police was attached to the Manipuri Military Police.\textsuperscript{63}

Jail: The British took due care to give the prisoners good accommodation and better amenities of life. The system of maintaining records of the specific charges for the detention and duration of the detention was also introduced. Jail was regarded not only as a place for confinement of the convicts but also as a place for reforms.

Forest: With a view to increasing the state revenue and proper tapping of the forest resources, the management of the state forests, specially the western forests adjoining Cachar, was given on lease to the Government of Assam. It was agreed that 75\% of the income should be given to Manipur, while the remaining 25\% should go to the Government of Assam. The lease was for a period of three years at the beginning and it was to be managed by the Divisional Forest Officer at Cachar. It may be mentioned that in 1904-1905 Manipur received an income of 34,870 rupees as forest revenue. However, the condition of lease was modified allowing the Government of Assam to administer the forests of Manipur till such time as one of the parties denounced the arrangement giving one year's time, distribution ratio of the revenue remaining the same.\textsuperscript{64}


\textsuperscript{64} F.D.P., Political A, February 1906, Nos.2-7.
Education:- The British Government considered education of the citizens to be very important to inculcate the principle of sound morality. Even before the British occupation of Manipur, the British Political Agents made all attempts to establish a school in the state. The first of its kind could be materialised by Major General Sir James Johnstone in 1885 by establishing a school with the permission of the Maharaja. It began its humble start as a private school in the Residency compound (now Raj Bhavan), but later on, it was shifted to a place near the Khwairamband Bazar (now Lakshmi Bazar) and then to the present place near the Raj Bhavan. The school got a grant of 30 rupees each from the Government of India and the Government of Manipur per month. This was increased to 50 rupees each.65

After the British assumption of the administration of the state the number of schools increased by leaps and bounds. In 1906-07 the number of schools came up to 52 Lower Primary schools with a strength of 2595 students.66 They were taught reading, writing and arithmetic in Manipuri. However, later on, in most cases British Indian subjects were employed as teachers in the schools. No tuition fee was imposed on the students except in the Johnstone School (named after the then Political Agent in Manipur).67

65. F.D.P., Political A, March 1930, No.131.
67. ibid. p.5.
Attention was also drawn towards the establishment of a girls' school right from 1894-95. But due to the non-availability of lady teachers, it could not be done. Only in 1899-1900 a girls' school could be established. However, it had to be closed down for want of students and want of support. Another girls' school was started in 1906-07.

The administrative reforms, cited above, were mainly purported to establish the British rule and to strengthen the British control over the state. The financial control exercised by the Government of Assam over the state budget rendered it possible to drain the surplus state revenue into the Government account into which the State account was also merged. The administration of the state was subdivided into that of the valley and the hills, placed under two different political authorities. Two separate budgets were prepared thereby splitting the state into two political divisions. The Political Agent administered the hill areas while the administration of the valley was carried out by the Superintendent of State, though the two capacities were combined in one. The establishment of the Manipuri Military Police was aimed at relieving the regular force from their engagement in the state. However, complete substitution of the Military Police for the regulars was not deemed practicable at that time. The Manipuri national were not given a fair chance to enter the Manipuri Military Police in spite of the fact that it was raised in Manipur for Manipur.
The reason was that the British officers suspected the Manipuris in general. In the case of any trouble in the state, they thought that Manipuris in the military police force could not be employed as it was feared lest they side with the public.\textsuperscript{68} Even after the force was raised, the Government of India was reluctant to furnish them with Snider rifle, which was discarded by others. Only the outmoded Smooth Bore rifles were issued to the Manipuri Military Police force.

The imposition of the house tax and the land tax was another burden to the people. It was difficult to pay the tax for the reason that they were accustomed to the new change and also that they had no ready money, the British currency, due to their limited means of earning. The result was that huge arrears piled up. The British Government adopted rigorous steps for collection of the tax arrears. Even personal property was sold by auction irrespective of reasons for the default.\textsuperscript{69}

The lease for the management of Manipur forest to the Government of Assam was another evidence of their trying to increase the income of the Local Government at the cost of that of the state. It meant a loss of 25 \% of the state forest revenue which the Government of Assam gained with

\textsuperscript{68} F.D.P., Foreign A, August 1904, No.25.
\textsuperscript{69} M.S.L. \textit{Orders by the Political Agent}, op.cit.
Order No.23 dated 27 January, 1899, (note by Maxwell).
no extra establishment charge. A forest office establishment of the state could have been organised not only for the western forest but also for all the forests under the state. It could have accrued even double the forest revenue under the then existing arrangement.

In spite of the above facts, it remains to be appreciated that all these administrative changes served as the nucleus of the modern administrative set up in the state. It had put the state on the path of civilization and progress on the same footing as in other states of India. The opening of education facilities in the state, which was not taken care of in the former days, had opened new avenues to the subjects of the state to make themselves fit for taking up responsible offices in the state and elsewhere.

Foreigners' Tax :- A foreigner in Manipur was defined as a person who was not a Manipur State subject by birth. It also covered persons born of Manipuri parents but were residents of cachar or Sylhet. 70 A foreigner, on his first entry in the state, had to report at the Imphal Police Station. He was allowed to stay in the state only with the expressed and written permission of the state authority. Choukidars in the valley and Khullakpas (Chiefs) in the hills were strictly warned not to allow any foreigner to reside in his beat without proper permission. They were further instructed to

70. Political Department, IB Branch, File No. 11(12)-IB/46
Enclosure to No. 1. (Rules On Foreigners' Tax).
report to the State Office the case of any such person when detected.\textsuperscript{71}

A Foreigner's Tax at the rate of 5 rupees per male adult per annum was imposed on all the foreigners who were allowed to stay in Manipur. They were to pay a grazing fee at the rate of 1 rupee per cattle per year if they possessed any cattle. If any foreigner failed to pay the dues, he was to pay, on conviction as per rule, double the rate of tax including fine.\textsuperscript{72}

It may be mentioned that the Maharaja of Manipur and his Darbar, as stated earlier, did not allow any foreigner to enter Manipur without their expressed permission. There is no trace, however, to evidence that any form of foreigner's tax was imposed before the establishment of British power in Manipur. Foreigners' Tax, therefore, was an imposition on the foreigners in Manipur, mainly the British subjects, after the British assumption of administrative power in the state.

It would be questionable as to why the British authority in Manipur imposed such a burden as Foreigner's Tax on their own fellow British subjects in Manipur, while such a tax was not imposed on the Manipur State subjects in other parts of British India.\textsuperscript{73} The plausible answer to such question was that the Foreigners' Tax was a double edged sword. It was a

\textsuperscript{71} M.S.L., \textit{Orders By Political Agent} op.cit, No.12 dated 10.4.1902.

\textsuperscript{72} Political Dept. I.B.Branch, File No.11(12)-IB/\textsuperscript{73} M.S.L.,\textit{ Ibid.} No.2.
measure to increase the state revenue. It was also a measure to identify and locate the ever increasing British subjects in Manipur which numbered about 3074 by 1901 census. Such a step facilitated the state authority in making their protection reach the foreigners at the earliest. The Political Agent in Manipur had even declared that the test of claiming the state protection would be the production of the Foreigner Tax payment certificate.

Certain categories of foreigners were exempted from the payment of the Foreigner's Tax. They were:– foreigners in the active service of the Government of India and the Government of Manipur and their legitimate servants; shop owners and lessees of shops in the Sadar Bazar; those who were living in the Cantonment and were trading only in the Cantonment; all traders coming temporarily to Manipur for trade and living at the Sarai; and those who were below 18 years of age. However, in respect of the traders, a modified order of the Political Agent stated that any trader coming to Manipur for trade and staying for more than a week should pay the Foreigner's tax.

On the issue of the British subjects in Manipur claiming for exemption from the payment of the Foreigner's Tax, the

74. F.D.P., External A, January 1903, No.66.
75. F.D.P. Political A, April 1907, No.1.
76. Political Dept.,IB Branch, File No.11(12)-IB/46, Enclosure to No.1, loc.cit.
77. M.S.L. Orders By Political Agent, op.cit. No.13 dated 1.9.1906.
Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam ordered that:— (i) in the case of persons born of Manipuri parents, they could be exempted from the tax if they declared to reside permanently in Manipur. They would also be required to sign a document abandoning all claims to be treated as British subjects. (ii) Persons not born of Manipuri parents could be exempted from the tax if the Manipur State Darbar was ready to accept him as a Manipur State subject. The person concerned should sign a document abandoning all claims to be treated as British subject. 78

The above exemptions, if effected, practically meant conversion of the British subjects into Manipur State subjects. Because of the large scale exemptions enumerated above, the revenue yield from the Foreigner's Tax was not of a considerable amount. Had there been no exemption, the contribution from the Foreigner's Tax to the State income would have been even ten times of the yield.

The Maharaja of Manipur and the Manipur State Darbar had no jurisdiction over the foreigners in Manipur. The Political Agent in Manipur was the sole authority on all matters concerning the foreigners even after the installation of the Raja. The foreigners, however, could purchase and possess land in the state. All applications regarding allotment of lands to the foreigners were to be addressed to the Darbar through the

78. Political Department, External A, April 1907, No.2.
Political Agent. Cases of mutation of land, in the case of purchase of land by foreigners, had also to be referred to the Manipur State Darbar. The Darbar, however, discouraged allotment of land to the foreigners even from Khas lands.

In the ultimate analysis, the Foreigner's Tax in Manipur was reduced to a nominal tax without any substantial contribution towards the state revenue. Nevertheless, it remained as a measure to detect the entry of British, so called 'Foreigners', in the state. In spite of the fact that majority of the foreigners in the state were exempted from payment of such tax, they could still claim the protection of the State Government and the Political Agent as and when needed.

The British Reserve And The Cantonment

A reference to the British Reserve and the Cantonment in Manipur may be made in view of its peculiar mode of acquisition and the importance of the location: occupying the site of the former palace of Manipur before 1891.

The occupation of the state by the British garrison was supposed to be only a temporary measure. The strength of the British forces in Manipur, inclusive of those deployed at the outposts, was about one and a half regiment. General

79. M.S.L., Manipur State Darbar Resolutions, Resolution No. 3 dated 25.9.1907.
80. ibid. Resolution No. 11 dated 2.6.1915.
81. F.D.P. External A, September 1892, Nos. 6-62.
82. F.D.P. External B, March 1892, No. 145.
H. Collet, the Commander of the British forces in Manipur, concentrated his attention on selecting a central place in the state which could be utilised for stationing of troops not directly employed. As immediate evacuation of the state by the British forces was not contemplated, General Collett devised a plan to select a site at Imphal, the capital of Manipur, for the lines of the army stationed at Imphal. Because of the fact that the former palace campus was most strategically located at a central place protected by walls and trenches all around, General Collett had a premeditated plan for garrisoning the forces at the palace campus.

A military committee was constituted and assembled on 1 September 1891 by order of the Field Commander, General Collett. The committee had conducted a spot inspection. It recommended selection of the old palace campus as the Cantonment area. With the approval of the Government of India, the campus was converted into a Cantonment area.

It may be recalled that, while awarding punishment to the State of Manipur for the rebellion of 1891, the punishments included subordination of the state to the British authority in India and imposition of fine and annual tribute. But there was no sort of punishment effecting to the forfeiture of any portion of the territory of the state by the British. However,

83. A.S.P. Foreign A, December 1891, No.22.
84. ibid. No. 18.
the central portion of the state including the palace site was acquired without any formal process and declared it as the British Reserve and Cantonment in Manipur. The enforcement of the Cantonment Act, 1889 and the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890 were also extended to the area.  

The Government of India did not constitute any Cantonment Board during the period 1891 to 1907. The statutory appointment of the Cantonment Board Magistrate was also not made. Because of these reasons, the Station Staff Officer contended that the Manipur Cantonment was not a recognised one. With the regranting of the State to the Native Raja, it was even suggested that the notification in respect of Manipur Cantonment might be cancelled. But, it was not done.

There was another problem for the British authority in Manipur about how to give a secure shelter for the British subjects in the state. Numerous colony of Europeans and Eurasians had gradually developed concentrating in and around the Imphal town. As there occurred frequent frictions between the British subjects and the Manipuris, it was felt necessary to make sufficient arrangements for accommodating the British subjects in a safe area.

The maintenance of a British Reserve in Manipur, the British authorities thought, would be a proper solution to

86. ibid. April 1907, No.6.
87. ibid. October 1907, No.33.
MAP
OF
BRITISH RESERVE
WITHIN TOWN OF IMPHAL
SCALE, 6 1 MILE.

1. STATE ENGINEER OFFICE
2. STATE ENGINEER'S BUNGLOW
3. APA'S BUNGLOW
4. RENIGE'S BUNGLOW
5. NAGA GERMAT
6. ZAK BUNGLOW
7. CAST BERNH
8. STATE HOSPITAL
9. JOHNSTON SCHOOL
10. MORNING MARKET
11. SAGAR BAZAR
12. CEMETERY
13. RESIDENCE
14. JAIL ROAD M/K NO. 1
15. TARA MARKET
16. STATE OFFICE
17. LAND REVENUE OFFICE
18. T.P.S. OFFICE
19. RAJA'S PALACE
20. RAJA'S BUNGLOW HOUSE
21. NOORTAM FUKKIRI
22. RAJA'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
23. HUMAMANGAN BURIAL GROUND
24. RAJA'S PARK
25. BENGAL ROAD

References:
- British Reserve Boundary
- Cememnt's Boundary
- Military buildings
- River
- Road

Proceedings of the Honble. the Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal & Assam
October 1907. Political Dept. No. 35.
the above problem. The idea was to gather the scattered British subjects in Manipur in a compact settlement for the sake of security and administrative convenience. The materialisation of the plan was facilitated by the fact that the British forces, at the time of occupation of the state, had reserved a large area of the town for Government purposes. No Manipuri had been allowed to settle within 500 yards of the British Reserve. 88

The reserved area measured about 310 acres. It includes almost all the important installations in the state like, the Cantonment, the Residency, the State Thana, the Post and Telegraph Office, the Civil Hospital, the State Treasury, the Jail, the Civil Bazars, etc. However, the offices and Bazars were excluded from the British Reserve for technical reasons; the balance was declared as the British Reserve in Manipur. 89 In addition to it, the land which the British had purchased at Kangchupkhul, 10 miles west of Imphal, was also included in the British Reserve. 90 The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam gave its approval to the maintenance of the British Reserve. 91 Thus, by September 1907 both the British Reserve and the British Cantonment were maintained at Imphal.

88. F.D.P. Foreign A, December 1891, No.18.
89. F.D.P. Political A, October 1907, No.1, No.1.
90. ibid. No.3.
91. ibid. No.4.
* It was purchased to be used as health resort or resting place of the Political Agent and other British officers in the state.
The Government of India, in view of their unfair acquisition of the British Reserve, feared that the Raja, after his assumption of administrative power in the state, might not respect the British interests and installations in the British Reserve and the Cantonment. Therefore, due care was taken in this respect. To make it doubly sure, the Government of India, before transfer of power to the Raja, had ordered that the British rights and practice would be reserved in the British Reserve and the Cantonment even after the handing over of power to the Raja.\(^92\)

The Raja and the State Darbar, after their assumption of administrative powers, made several attempts to get the area of the British Reserve and the Cantonment retroceded to the state. The regaining of the area was very important as it included the former palace citadel and as it was at the centre of the main town. Memorandums and representations were also submitted to the British Government as early as 1909 by the Maharaja and the Darbar for the purpose. This issue was one of the subjects of discussion between Mr. A.C. Lothian, Viceroy's Special representative, and the Maharaja Churachand Singh in 1937 at Calcutta.\(^93\) In spite of all the attempts, the Government of India proved to be quite irresponsible to the urge of the state.

In 1947 with the ensuing lapse of British power in India

\(^{92}\) M.S.L. Darbar Resolutions, op.cit. No. 1 dated 4 Sept. 1907.

the question about the transfer of British possessions in Manipur to the State authority cropped up. Mr. C. Gimson, the Political Agent, officially proposed handing over of the British possessions to the State. But no agreement could be arrived at between the British Government and the State authorities as the former demanded the market value while the latter were ready to pay only the book value of the possessions. The matter, therefore, remained unsettled. Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh, the son of Maharaja Churachand Singh, also pleaded for retrocession of the British Reserve area. In respect of the Cantonment, the Maharaja expressed that the State would be ready to provide a suitable place in Manipur for the purpose. But all were in vain.

On the lapse of the British Paramountcy, the Government of India inherited the British Reserve and the Cantonment in Manipur consequent upon the transfer of power. It was treated as a part of the Dominion of India. However, the hold of the Government of India on the British Reserve area had become loose gradually excepting that on the Cantonment. By 1949 with the merger of the State in India, the whole of the problem lost sight of. Till this day the 4 Assam Rifles occupies the former palace site which was converted into Cantonment area.

94. M.S.L. Cabin 29, File No. 8, letter No. 8/177 MS dated 20.7.1947 from Political Agent to P.F. Adams.
95. ibid. Memo No. 2225 P II-I dated 14 May 1947 from the Maharaja to the Political Agent.
It would not be out of place to cite an episode connected with the re-entry of the foreigner merchants in the British Reserve after the second World War. The Political Agent, on the recommendation of the Darbar, cancelled all the pattas in the names of the foreigners, the British Indian subjects, in Manipur on the ground of non-payment of tax and deplorable desertion during the days of crisis. Their re-entry in the state was forbidden. The foreigner merchants, taking help of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce and the Indian Chamber of Commerce, submitted a representation to the Governor-General of India seeking redress of their grievances.

The pertinent questions were:-(i) whether or not the Darbar had the right to recommend cancellation of the pattas in the British Reserve; (ii) to flee the State at the time of war when lives and securities of individuals were threatened could be treated as desertion; (iii) foreigners in Manipur could be classed as those of Burma or other independent states free from British control; (iv) whether there was any law in Manipur for externment of foreigners; and (v) whether it was lawfully correct to exclude persons from the State on the executive orders of the Political Agent.

On inquiry it was found out that the Manipur State Darbar had no jurisdiction over the British Reserve areas at Imphal wherein the pattas were located. Further they had no jurisdiction over the British subjects in the state. Further there was no law in Manipur for externment of foreigners. It was not
lawfully correct to exclude the persons by an executive order of the Political Agent. The Government of India, therefore, instructed the Government of Assam to issue orders so that the foreigner merchants concerned might set back their rights. Accordingly, the Government of Assam issued orders providing for:—(i) foreigner merchants were allowed to enter Manipur; (ii) they should get their pattas revived subject to clearance of arrear tax; (iii) applications for lease of lands should be considered sympathetically if the same land was not required for state purpose; and (iv) only one shop site should be settled with each trader with an additional site for garage where required.

With the above order from the Government of Assam, the earlier order of the Political Agent was set aside. The foreigner merchants re-entered Manipur and held their lands as usual.96

The declaration of the British Reserve and the Cantonment was a clear act of promoting and strengthening the imperial interests in the state. It proved a great thrust on the Native population. It was a cruel and unjust act to eject the persons who were the original settlers from their personal holdings to accommodate the new comers with a view to promoting the latter a secure life at the cost of that of the Natives.

96. Political Department, IB Branch, File No. 13(14)-IB/45, Nos. 1-35.
The above British policy had produced a tremendous economic effect in the state favouring the foreigners while disfavouring the Native subjects. The Bazar at Imphal town, the main business centre fell into the hands of the foreign merchant, the British Indian traders. The Native traders were consequently driven out from the centre to the outskirts. Thus, economic control in the state was added to the political control by the foreigners. The lasting effects of such policy are still discernible in the Imphal town.

The Government of India's refusal to restore the old palace site to the State was an unsympathetic act; devoid of any respect to the royal rituals in the state. The Maharaja had to obtain permission from the British authorities for any ceremonial rites to be performed within the palace compound occupied by the Cantonment, (known as Kangla). It may also be mentioned in this context that the palatial buildings of the Farhat Baksh, the Chhattar Manzil and the Jalwa Khana at Lucknow were restored, with due respect to the royal rites, to Wazid Ali, the Navab of Oudh by the British authorities. There could be no reason as to why the restoration of the old palatial site to the Maharaja should be refused in the case of Manipur. Apparently, by refusing to do so, the British Government wanted to retain a memory of the British victory.

and Manipuri defeat of 1891 by continuing the occupation of the old palace site by the British. 98

The cruel and indiscriminate hanging of Manipuris involved in the rebellion was evidently an excessive action. The death punishments could have been reverted, as was done in the case of rebellion in Assam, to that of life imprisonment as it was the first instance of revolt against the British. Even the demonstration by 8 to 10 thousand women and the show of public feelings could not save their lives as the armed British forces cordoned the area of execution. 99

Another thrilling punishment was the total exclusion of the former line of rulers from becoming kings of Manipur. The people was very much displeased with such a policy of the British Government. 100

The British authorities always doubted the Manipuris for another uprising to avenge the British for the atrocities they had suffered in the hands of the British. Their minds were always engaged in remembering the prophecy made by Major General Sir James Johnstone that the British 'had not seen the last of Manipur.' 101 Though the Manipuris could not muster strength to revenge the British, the suspicion had a lasting effect. The Manipuris became an undesirable stuff for

recruitment in the police battalions of the Naga Hills, the Lushai Hills and Lakshimpur. 102 Foreigners were preferred to the Manipuris for enrolment in the Manipuri Police Force, a para military force, as it was viewed that the Manipuris would not obey or serve under the Indian officers. 103

It was unfair on the part of the British Government to separate the hills and the plains administrations which, in the earlier days, were one. The British also acknowledged that the Manipuris included the hill tribes of Manipur. 104 It was, in sort, simply a policy to shatter the unity of the hills and the plains, the valley.

The mode of acquisition of the British Reserve and the British Cantonment was quite improper. The area belonged to the state; not to the British. There had been no formal procedure for transferring the area to the British authorities. It was only the greater or power of the British that had bestowed them the claim over the British Reserve the Cantonment in Manipur.

A number of administrative changes were introduced during the Regency Rule mainly in matters of finance, revenue, judiciary, education, etc. The changes, in general, might be

102. F.D.P. Political A, June 1916, No. 5.
103. F.D.P. Foreign A, August 1904, op. cit. No. 10.
104. F.D.P. External B, September 1892, No. 28.
characterised as measures for better British control over the state administration and for promotion of imperial interests. The financial control and the judicial powers enjoyed by the Political Agent in Manipur and the Chief Commissioner of Assam enabled them to shape the state affairs according to their wishes. All the state employees, at the beginning, were non-Manipuris. The Manipuris, because of their failure to command British confidence in them, and also their lacking in English education, could not get any responsible office work of the state. The Bengalis and other British Indian subjects, being the trusted agents of the British Government, filled in the state offices.

It may be noted, however, that Major Maxwell, the Political Agent in Manipur, observed that the appointment of the foreigners in the state offices would defeat the purpose of the Government of India to entrust the administration of the state to the Raja and his subjects as the minor Raja would attain majority. He even ordered that no foreigner should be appointed in any office without his prior consent. Due attention was paid towards educating the Raja and the state subjects to enable them to discharge their responsibilities in a befitting manner when they assumed the charge of the state administration.

105. M.S.L., Orders by the Political Agent, No. 101 dated 29.1.1899.
It will be proper to mention how the Manipur State subjects estimated the Regency Rule which lasted for about 16 years. In spite of the displeasure about the change of the line of ruler, the new Raja became gradually acceptable to the people of the state. The people, in general, were satisfied with the British arrangement for restitution of the local institutions, specially, the Cheirap and the Panchayat Courts. The appointment of the local people as the judges of these courts instead of appointing foreigners who spoke languages different from that of the Manipuris, was a great consolation to the common people. As for the hills, there was practically no change excepting the change in the centre at Imphal which they felt the least.

The Manipuris and the Muslims, however, felt that the land tax of 5 rupees per pari was too much. In a memorandum to Excellency the Viceroy, they requested that the land tax might be reduced to 3 rupees, instead of 5 rupees. But, the request was not complied with. Apparently the reason for the refusal was that with the opening of more trade and communication facilities the Manipur State subjects would be able to export rice profitably to other parts of India. This, in turn, would enable them to pay the land tax easily.

It remained, however, for consideration that the administrative system during the Regency Rule had served as the

106. M.S.L. Cabin No.29, File No.28, No.9, Memorandum by the Hindus; and No.10, Memorandum by the Muslims.
foundation of the modern administrative system in the state. It had initially brought in a form of a constitutional government where the people are ruled according to the codified rules of the state. It had opened avenues for enhancing the revenue resources of the state. In the line of judiciary, a person was to be punished without a proper trial by a competent court of law. The facilities in the field of education extended to the subjects had enabled them to become qualified citizens fit to hold any responsible post in the administration.

Thus general progress of the state, besides the above facts, was marked by the increase in the state revenue from 1,70,000 rupees in 1892 to 2,73,000 rupees in 1907. The number of schools increased from only one Primary school in 1891 to one Middle school and 52 Primary schools in 1907. Over and above, there were more roads constructed and the old roads were improved. There was also progress in the trade and commerce, opening of hospitals and dispensaries for public health and sanitation. Steps were taken up for supply of pure drinking water in the town and digging of public ponds in the villages for drinking purposes. It may be concluded that the Regency Rule had sowed the seeds of prosperity and progress in Manipur to make the future Manipur of today.