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Chapter-4

Mizoram: A history of the socio-political scenario, institutions and means of communication

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss about the state of Mizoram in general, its history, the society and will also mention about its experience under the British rule, the role of the missionaries, their introduction of the alphabet and its political dynamics. We will also examine about the changes that the technology has in the socio-political scenario of the State alongside its institutions as a means of communication

Mizoram is a beautiful state in the North East of India inhibited by people called the Mizos. It became the 23rd Indian state on 20th February 1987. The landscape can be described as rolling hills. It is a very peaceful and harmonious land. Mizoram covers an area of 21,087 sq. kms. and the tropic of cancer runs through the State. It is bounded on the North by Cachar district of Assam and the state of Manipur, on the east by Manipur state and Burma and the south by Burma and Bangladesh. The land is very rich in many natural resources. Its forest area being 7,127.22 sq. kms., accounts for about 34% of the total area. Many of the forests have been destroyed by large scale jhuming practiced by the Mizos over the years without any attention to plantations. The soil is composed of sandstone and slabs of tertiary age,


thrown onto long folds.\textsuperscript{119} There is no valuable mineral deposit which has been discovered so far.

The climate of Mizoram is very pleasant. It has a cool summer and a temperate winter. In summer the temperature ranges from 20 to 29 degree Celsius and in winter it ranges from 7 to 21 degree Celsius. But it has a very heavy monsoon. The year is divided into four seasons. From May to August it faces a very heavy downpour under the spell of the south-west monsoon. The average state rainfall is 254 cm. From September to November the people of Mizoram enjoys the most pleasant time where it is neither too hot nor too cold. From December to February, it is winter but the winter here in not freezing cold. It is bearable. And from March to May is what we can say warm summer. The climate of Mizoram is not extreme at all.\textsuperscript{120}

The people of Mizoram are very sociable by nature. The word ‘Mizo’ means ‘hill-man’ and it is a generic term which includes the different tribes or clan scattered over a vast block of hills in eastern India and western Burma. The cultures, traditions and dialects etc are very similar and are commonly designated by the term ‘Mizo’. According to the 2011 census, the total population of Mizoram is 10,97,206 The density of population is 52 per sq. km. The total population growth in this decade was 23.48 percent while in previous decade it was 29.18 percent. The population of Mizoram forms 0.09 percent of India in 2011. In 2001, the figure was 0.09 percent. Among them, the percentage of literacy is comparatively high. Literacy rate in Mizoram has seen upward trend and is 91.33 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 93.35 percent while female literacy is at 86.72 percent. In 2001, literacy rate in Mizoram

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p.4.

\textsuperscript{120} Government of Mizoram; Enchanting Mizoram, Aizawl, November 1977.
stood at 88.80 percent of which male and female were 92.53 percent and 86.75 percent literate respectively.\footnote{http://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/mizoram.html} accessed on 12.12.2012.

By nature the Mizados are very peaceful. They value self-reliance, honesty, courage, self-discipline, mutual help, a readiness to organize and be organized were all highly appreciated and it is largely summed up by a word ‘\textit{Tlawmngaihna}’. This is a virtue which was and is highly prized, and has certain elements in common with courtesy and chivalry.

The main means of occupation was agriculture. About 90 percent of the population is engaged in cultivation. The method of cultivation was mainly ‘jhum’ cultivation. But since scars were left by this method of cultivation of “slash and burn” the government today, has strives to do away with this type of cultivation. Rice is the staple food of the Mizados. The main crops grown by the Mizados are rice, ginger, pineapple, sugar-cane, orange, bananas and maize.

There is no stratified structure initially but with the growth of development and modernization, the system has given way to such structure.\footnote{R.N Prasad and A.K Agarwal, Modernization of the Mizo society, published and printed by Naurang Rai for Mittal Publications, New Delhi. First edition 2003, preface.} Initially the Mizo society was very much based on egalitarianism. The Mizo living was simple and by nature they are happy and very sociable. They like to sing and dance. They were easily contented and very independent. Slowly with capitalism creeping into the society, the people realized that power is the only permeating factor in the Mizo society was the rule of the chiefs. But the Chieftainship was also abolished when the Britishers left the country. The Chieftainship was one of the main political institutions among the Mizo. Another important institution was the Zawlbuk which we will discuss later in detail in this chapter.
4.2 The Mizo origin, society and institutions prior to the British rule:

The Mizo folklore says that the Mizos came from Chinlung. The Chinlung of folklore is believed to be a place called Silung in China which is situated in China bordering the Shan state of Burma. The history of the Mizos can be traced for about five hundred years. Since there were no written documents, it is not possible to be sure as to how the Mizos came to settled in this part of the country but it can be speculated that they came from the southern part of China and slowly moved down south ward. This history of migration was long, slow and steady. Due to this they were known as being migratory in nature as they settled in many areas. In the fifteenth century they lived in hill tracts of Burma. Their main villages were in the valley between the Run and the Tiau rivers. The Tiau river is in Burma bordering Mizoram and the Run is further inside Burma.

The Mizos has entered into this present settlement in three different groups. The ‘Old Kukis’ were the first to migrate from Chin Hills to Mizoram and then to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and from there North Cachar. The second group were the ‘New Kukis’ when driven out by the ‘Lushais’ went directly and settled in the present Tripura towards the close of the first half of the twentieth century but eventually joined their bothers in the North Cachar. The last group was known as the ‘Lushais’. They were the dominant tribes of the Mizos and they were prosperous. It is believed that they came to their present habitat in the 18th century. They were comprised of various clans one of the most prominent was the Sailo Clan.123

The Mizos had an egalitarian society and initially, they did not have any Chief. Supremacy amongst the people belonging to different

villages used to be decided by the physical fights between the strongest man of one village and that of another. The village of the victor would win the command of the village where the vanquished belong. Beginning in the sixteenth century these villages were often raided by the Pawi or the Chin tribes.\textsuperscript{124} The structure of the Mizo society is similar to any other tribal society. Different clan followed different systems; they had different dialects, sacrificial rites. Before Christianity, the Mizos were animist when it came to religion or Sakhua as they called it. Due to this belief they were in constant fear and were very insecure. Until the existence of ‘Chiefainship’ they did not have a proper ground rules to follow as a group or village.

Natural as it is family was the only real institution that they had. It was patriarchal but in the Mizo society the women in the house also played an important role. Since men were expected to hunt and search for food the women stayed home and they had to manage the household which gave them authority at the home front. Marriage amongst the Mizos was a civil contract, soluble at the will of both parties concerned. The system of marriage from the beginning was a marriage by purchase where the man has to pay ‘Bride Price’ for his wife. The amount of how much one has to pay differs from one tribe to another. Sometimes it is by cash and sometimes by kinds or sometimes by both. As marriage was by purchase the groom’s side would engaged two friends called ‘palai’ to settle the bride price. Ultimately, a settlement was reached at and the date of the marriage was fixed. The position of woman in the society was subordinate and wretched. The woman took care of everything in the household yet her status was insignificant and she does not possess anything in case of divorce. Therefore, her place in the society was full of plight. In case of inheritance, the youngest son was considered to have the right to inherit the property as he was to

\textsuperscript{124} The Pawi and the Chin were their neighbouring tribes in Burma.
look after his parents in their old age. The decision of inheritance was in the hands of the father, if he disinherits his son it was his right to do so. The chance of inheritance of a daughter or a widow was bleak, though this seldom happens when there is no availability of male line. In case of death, the Mizos believed that every living and non-living object have a soul. So, when a man dies his soul leaves his body and goes to Mithikhua or Pialral.\textsuperscript{125} Natural death are called awmlai, death of infant below one year is called hlamzuih in this case no formal ritual is performed. A sudden and unnatural death is called sarthi. The corpse of the deceased was buried and not cremated. Since they did not have graveyard in those days, when a man died he was buried near his house.

Prior to the British rule and Christianity in Mizoram, The major institutions were that of the Chieftainship and the Zawlbuk.

\textbf{4.2.1 The Chieftainship}

The Mizo Chieftainship was an integral part of the Mizo political life. In course of time it became hereditary. The right to succession was reserved only to those sons who have potential and were gifted with capacity.\textsuperscript{126} The story of how chieftainship came about amongst the Mizo tells that of an interesting tale. As mentioned above the Mizo society is an egalitarian one; so no one would aspire to become a chief as they all feared that the chief would be the target of attack of the ‘Pawi’ and other hostile tribes. But the need for a chief arises and the people persuaded a certain unwilling man by the name Zahmuaka to become the Chief. His rule became that of a prosperous one among the Lushai people. He had six sons- Sailo, Zadeng, Thangura, Palian, Pialral: It was an abode where the soul of thangchhuah persons were believed to end up. Here they are more free, they no longer have to work nor do they suffer from any hardship anymore.

\textsuperscript{125} Sangkima, op.cit., p.34.
Rivung and Rokhum. The Mizo chieftainship was divided amongst these six sons of Zahmuaka.\textsuperscript{127} Thangura’s grandson Sailova started a lineage which provided great chiefs to the Lushais.\textsuperscript{128} There were also Chiefs from other tribes such as Fanai, Pawi, Paihte and Hualngo but they were sub-ordinate to the Sailo Chief.

In ancient days each independent village was ruled by their own chief. His main business was to lead raids on the other clans and to protect his clans from being raided. In theory, he was the despot within his own jurisdiction. The entire village was under his jurisdiction; his words were the laws in his territory, all disputes cases were decided by him. But, in actuality he was a compassionate ruler. He treated his subjects with respect and even they respect him back and kept him on a high place. Though it was ruled by the Chief nobody was forced to be under him. It was even called “democracy tempered by despotism”.\textsuperscript{129} He had to be very careful in exercising his power, as men had the right to transfer allegiance from one Chief to another. His existence as a chief depends upon the loyalty of the men he ruled. He was assisted by his council of advisors called the Upas. The chief had the reserve right to choose the ones he favored. He also had the right to dismiss anyone of them. They discuss any matter which was brought forth before them whether it is civil or criminal matter. The council was the ones who conducted the trial. They even collected fee for the hearing and they even imposed fine on the guilty party. The fee was called Salam.\textsuperscript{130} Since it was a time before the British introduced the money economy,

\textsuperscript{127} Animesh Ray, Mizoram, published by Director, National Book Trust, New Delhi, India. Second Edition, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{128} J. Shakespeare; Lusei-Kuki clans, Part I., Tribal Research Centre Institute, Aizawl reprint, 1975, pp. 2-5.

\textsuperscript{129} T.H. Lewin, Progressive Colloquial, in the Dzo or Kukilanguagewith vocabularies and popular tales, 1874, Calcutta Central Press Company Ltd, Calcutta. p. 79.

\textsuperscript{130} Salam was the rate of the fee which is equivalent to five rupees.
most of the fines were given in the form of *mithun*, a pig and a fowl. But the worst form of punishment is imprisonment. The Chief also entitle to some dues from their subject in the form of tax. The Chief did not maintain a standing army or a police force. Every man in the village and the young man in the *Zawlbuk* were all ready in the event of any need.\(^{131}\)

### 4.2.2 Zawlbuk

The British Rule has not brought in so much change as compared to the changes that the Missionaries have brought into this area. The social practices were mostly prohibited and very few social customs survived even today. One of the most important social institutions was the *Zawlbuk* and since it was the nerve-centre of the Mizo-society, it is worth learning about it. *Zawlbuk* is a dormitory or a bachelor’s house as some may say. It is where the traditions of the society were taught among young men. In *Zawlbuk* many etiquettes and manners were taught by the elder members to the younger members. *Zawlbuk* shaped the youth into a more responsible adult of the society.\(^{132}\) The origin is not known, yet we have seen that such kind of institution is very common among the many tribes, even the Nagas of the state of Nagaland have it and are known as *morung*. Even in China we find the existence of a house known as the communal house and such bachelor house is also found in South China; so it is apparent that it is a tradition which they brought down along with them as they were migrating. *Zawlbuk* was maintained under the leadership of an elder known as the *Valupa*.\(^{133}\)

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\(^{131}\) Sangkima, op.cit., pp. 34-38.

\(^{132}\) N. Chatterjee; ‘*Zawlbuk as a social institution in Mizo society*, Tribal Research Institute’, Aizawl 1975. p. 3.

\(^{133}\) Valupa is an elderly person of the village.
The *Zawlbuk* was situated in the prime area of the village. It is like a big hall and in the centre of the hall there is a smoldering fire. In the entrance there is an elevated log called the *Bawhbel* where one has to slide over the log in order to get in. In the evening after work the young men would gather in the *Zawlbuk*. It was big enough to accommodate all the young men of the village. They would wrestle, sing and tell each other story. Travelers would halt in the *Zawlbuk*, the young men of the village were available in the *Zawlbuk* if any emergency arises. Boys *naupang* (children) until they attain the age of puberty would live with their parents yet they were required to do odd jobs for the young men in the *Zawlbuk* like collecting firewood and helping in digging graves by carrying bamboos and stones. The *naupang* were looked after by a *hotu* (leader), they were to follow his command. If there were any one who went against the *hotu* they would be punished. The defaulter would therefore be allotted extra work. No one was to interfere in the enforcement of discipline in *Zawlbuk* except for the Chief. He can even tell them not make too much noise at night. *Zawlbuk* has a strict system of discipline. Therefore, the Lushai people are more disciplined as compared to other tribes.\(^{134}\)

### 4.2.3 Other Institutions under the Mizo society

**Bawi:** Bawiship was one of the oldest institutions of the Mizo society which appears to have existed from time immemorial. A person surrendered himself to a Mizo chief for any reason was commonly called *Bawi*. Basically it was a man entering into servitude by choice. It basically means a person who has lost the right to live as a free individual. There are different circumstances which makes an individual a *bawi*. When a man committed a crime, he can take refuge by touching the chief’s *sut*.\(^{135}\) He becomes a *bawi* to the chief. But they

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\(^{134}\) Animesh Ray, op. cit., pp. 74-76.

\(^{135}\) A post inside the house supporting the ridge pole.
could work for the chief and buy their freedom. Usually, they can buy their freedom by a Mithun or by working for them for a certain number of years.

Sal: Sal is a Mizo term for slavery. As we have mentioned before, there were many raids that the villages faced from their enemy clans or their enemy tribes. So, as a result the victors take the vanquished as their slaves. Like bawi even they could buy their freedom by paying a huge amount of ransom. The big difference was that the sal was kept even by different households but the bawi were kept only by the chiefs. Slavery was common among the different tribes but among the Mizo, they were never ill-treated.\textsuperscript{136}

4.2.4 Tlawmngaihna

Besides Chieftainship and Zawlbuk the one that the Mizo value deeply was a virtue called Tlawmngaihna. Many have tried to define this very word. It is a word which cannot be summed up in one English word. It is used to mean many things. It means to talk about positive quality in a human being. It means to be unselfish, zealous, courteous, considerate, courageous, industrious, kind, generous, persevering. Tlawmngaihna can be practiced in many ways. There are many to practice Tlawmngaihna, everyone would try to surpass others in unselfishness and cooperation. Example can be given for instance, while travelling together, if one of the parties would fall sick, all would wait for him to recover and would then resume the journey together. Another example could be, during hunting expeditions, one would be taking less than one’s share, chasing the wounded animal, building shelter for the night’s rest, collecting firewood for the camp and otherwise giving priority to the needs of one’s fellow hunter rather than his own. Tlawmngaihna among girls was mainly measured by the way

\textsuperscript{136} Sangkima, op.cit., p. 41.
they received and welcomed their *inleng* (suitors). They had to chat with them and make them feel welcome even if the suitors stayed on till late night and the girls had to get up at dawn to do their home chores. This moral conduct was taken very seriously. Those who possess such qualities the most were often rewarded and feast were organized where persons with such qualities were offered a cup called ‘*tlawmngai no*’ the cup made of the biggest horn. He was made to take the first drink followed by the chief and the rest. Such ‘*No*’ was the highest award in those days. It was a value taught in the *zawlbuk*.

With the advent of Christianity the institution of *zawlbuk* gradually lost its hold. Though it is not entirely dead, the practice of *tlawmngaihna* is also slowly vanishing. The reason for the diminishing of *tlawmngaihna* is believed to be that when people turned away from their old beliefs, the customary network of duties and obligations also started to lose its value. One no longer felt obliged to help and cooperate with one’s fellow being, as customary code of conduct was one way or the other linked with the old religion, which was totally obliterated.

The new religion changed a lot of practices whether good or bad. But on the other hand new structures and institutions started mushrooming like village churches, schools, medical centers and administrative centers etc. The *Mizo* people started to depend on the Church and the Government for guidance and help. And slowly by slowly *Zawlbuk* started losing it hold on the Mizo community. The Church emerged as a strong civil society. In the next chapter we shall discuss the working of Young Mizo Association (YMA) which was thought to have been set up as a society which will inherit the functions, role and duties of a *Zawlbuk*. But in reality it is the Church which has carries on the many functions of the *Zawlbuk*.
4.2.5 Mizo Festivals

In Mizoram there are three major festivals. Since the economic life of the Mizo people circle around farming and agriculture so did the social life. These festivals are Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut and Pawl Kut. The very word kut means festival.

- **Mim Kut:** This kut is the oldest Mizo festival. It can be said that this festival is celebrated in honor of the dead. This festival takes place before the hard work of jhuming was over usually during the month of September. It is believed that the spirit of someone who had died a year ago would revisit their house. This festival takes place in honor of the safe departure of the dead. This festival eventually faded with the Mizo people becoming Christians. The Mizo district council tried to revive this important traditional festival of the Mizo people in 1953 and since then September 11 is celebrated throughout the state.

- **Pawl kut:** This Kut is a Kut of celebration. Some say that it is a festival of thanksgiving as it is celebrated after the harvesting. The legend of its origin claims that, in the olden days when the Mizos were migrating from Burma and were living in between Kabow Valley in the east of Burma there was a severe famine which lasted for three years. In the fourth year they were relieved of the disaster. The chief told the people that they were blessed by Chung Pathian. It was customary to eat meat and eggs. The children were dressed in their best attire and they

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137 It is a method of cultivation in Mizoram. It is when the land is burnt and slashed so that crops can be grown as required.

138 Supreme God.
gather together on a platform and they perform what was called *Chhawngnawt*.\(^{139}\)

- **Chapchar kut**: This kut takes place after the completion of the jhum. It was the celebration of the safe completion of the jhum as the harvester has faced a lot of problem during the cutting down and burning of trees. It takes place mainly in the month of March. This festival usually lasts for about a week. Each family is supposed to prepare *zu* which is to cover the whole feast.\(^{140}\)

  On different days, there are different programmes which are followed. On the first day the *lusei* clan kills pigs, fowl and offer *zu* and the next day it was done by the *ralte* and other clans. On the third day a *chhawnghnawt* was performed and in the fourth day was known as the *zupui ni* which was a whole day of drinking and dancing the *chai*.\(^{141}\) This *kut* is the happiest occasion of their social life. No squabble in the family was permitted and no couple would quarrel. It was a belief that it would bring bad luck if one would go to the jungle during this festival and therefore it was a public holiday.

  With the advent of Christianity, festivities have gradually lessened however in 1953 this festival was acknowledged by the Mizo District Council and declared 20\(^{th}\) March of every year as *Chapchar Kut* holiday. But the drinking of *zu* is now prohibited.

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139 Chhawnghnawt was a feast where people gather in the village square. The feast was eaten merrily children, also men and women would stuff one another’s mouth with meat and rice.

140 Mizo Rice Beer.

141 It is a dance where they form a circle; the young men would have their arms across the girls who would alternate between the boys. In the middle there would be a drummer who would chant and the young people would sing and move slowly with the song.
4.3 The nature of British Rule in Mizoram

The Britishers have made their impact in Mizoram and they have been the ones who changed the Mizo in more ways than one can imagine. They ruled India for two centuries and during their rule they have explored every nook and corner of the land they occupied. They have even pushed their occupation to land far beyond their knowledge. Mizoram as a state did not exist in the 18th century but the Mizo people have been migrating from Burma towards the southern part of Burma moving close to British India. The political contact between the Mizo people and the British began following the British occupation of Bengal their victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757 The British territory now touched the Cachar (Assam) and the Chittagong frontier. The Mizo were in the habit of raiding the plains which were in continuation of the hills of their habitat. There were not many raw materials and natural resources to be obtained from the hills but there were timbers and teak trees. The teak tree was the best in making furniture and this was very much valued by the British. The Vice-Regal in Shimla has much teak furniture and the cascading stairs in the Vice-Regal is also made by the teak which was brought down from Burma. The demand for such timber has pushed the people living in the plain adjacent to the hills to enter into an occupation of cutting trees. They were the wood-cutters employed by the British. But the British knowing that the hill was covered with thick jungle did not intend to annex it. The Mizo people and the plain people have a common understanding that for the price of the wood that they acquire from their forest, the plain people would give presents and gifts in return. But when the wood-cutters fail to pay them, the hill people would raid the villages in the plain and even kill the wood cutters. Many raids were conducted that after the British Government occupy the nearby frontiers it became a problem for their government and they started taking action towards the Mizo people living in the hill area nearby. Not only were the wood-cutters disturbed
but also the Tea-planters. Under the British Government there were many tea-plantations which were close to the hills. For the fear that the plain people would come up to their land and occupy them and annexed their land completely, the hill people would raid the nearby tea plantation every now and then. Due to the constant occurrence of these raids, the British government also started expedition in those villages which caused problems for their administration in the plain areas. The reason of these raids was not only because of the failure of payment though that was often the immediate cause; it was also to make known to the plain people that there were fearsome people living in the hills who valued their privacy. It was a way to revolt against the power which could take over their beloved land. The *Mizo* people were formidable fighters when it came to safeguarding their independence and freedom. They chose to fight in order to maintain their pride and dignity. When raiding the plain areas, the *Mizo* would kill the occupant of the village that they raid and would even take their head.¹⁴²

For a long time the British government did not fight back the hill people. They continued to raid the villages at the adjoining valleys, but they never attack the white people. But the real expedition came about when they attacked and killed the White folks. Even after they had occupied the Mizo land the Britishers did not impose harsh authority on them. They showed respect for the chiefs and they did not want any hostility between them. They did not abolish the Chieftainship rather they had used the existing system of administration to further their governance.¹⁴³

4.3.1 Raids and Expedition in Mizoram

The earliest report of the *Lushai* came in 1777 when the British chief of Chittagong complained to Warren Hastings, the then Governor of Bengal when a tribal by the name of Ramu Khan refused to pay revenue to the British along with other supporter. The Kukis as they were initially known to the Bengal people were denied access to the market place in the Chittagong area. The Kukis used to visit the plains for trade and barter. The frontier zamindars would give them annual presents which were source of inducement to bring down their forest products to the plains. These were the kind of payment for protection for wood-cutter who would go into the hills to get timber. Yet, failure of payment would result in bloodshed. In 1784 the British had already enquired if the hill men could be appeased and if they could become peaceful subjects. The earliest real raid of the Mizos then known as the Kukis was in 1826. A wood-cutter was attacked and killed near Chhimluang River in Sylhet. This Massacre was organized under the leadership of Chief Bengkhuaia. Even then, the British Magistrate sent two messengers to make enquiry to the cause of the outrage, they were detained and the chief demanded ransom. The government not wanting to create more problems authorized the payment of the ransom. From this period till 1890, the Mizos became a constant source of problem. In 1844 Lalsuthlaha son of Bur raided Sylhet, in this raid they killed 29 people and they took their heads as well as took 6 people for captives. Because of this raid an expedition was conducted by Capt. Blackwood who captured Lalsuthlaha who was transported for life. Even after this event many more raids took place in the nearby British area of Sylhet and Cachar.

In 1850 the British government decided to send an expeditionary force into the Mizo hills to prevent further raids. The commander was Lt. Col Lister. On 4th January 1850, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Lister started with a light infantry from Silchar and arrived at a Sentlang Village on the 14th of January 1850, 150 km into the jungle. The Chief of that Village was known as Mullah (Ngura). The village had about 1000 houses. The houses were full of grain and cotton. They took the village by surprise and burnt it. And then he returned back in a hurry.\footnote{Sangkima, op. cit.}

The Mizo were also under attack by the Pawi clans from the south so they did not want much problem with the Britisher and so the raids slowed down for sometimes. In the 1950s, tea garden started flourishing in the Cachar area and there was a growing fear among the Mizos that the British would move further up and they would annex their land completely. Therefore, the raids started again. In 1862 under the leadership of Sookpilal (Suakpuilala) the Sylhet valley was raided. In 1868 further raid took place in the Tipperah frontier by the people of Suakpuilala, they attacked the villages at the plain and even burnt them. Following this raid, the Deputy Commissioner Mr. W. Edgar received an order from the Government to follow the raiders into the hills with available forces and punish them. In December of 1869 Mr. Edgar arrived and he made peaceful settlement with the other Village Chiefs. In 1870 he came again to make peaceful settlement with Sookpilal (Suakpuilala) but while he was still in their village, the village people were planning a raid on the tea garden in Cachar area. On 1st January 1871, a tea garden in Alexanderpore was raided by Chief Lalbura and his men. In this raid the manager of the tea garden Mr. Winchester was killed and they took his 6 years old daughter Mary Winchester as captive. After the attack on Alexanderpore many other raids were
conducted in tea garden nearby the following days. This angered the British Government as they had taken British subject as captive. An expedition was planned with two column, one from Cachar to be led by Brigadier General G. Bourchier and the other from Chittagong led by Brigadier General C.H. Brownlow.

**Expedition of 1871:**

This expedition was organized by the British to show the Mizo people their power and supremacy over them. This expedition was to establish in a permanent peaceful relationship between the British government and the Mizo people.

- **The Cachar column:** This column was led by Brig. General Bourchier. The objective of this column was to reach the Village of Lalbura which held the British subjects as prisoner and the person guilty to be punished. It was not as easy as had expected; they were attacked by other chiefs who were the ally of chief Lalbura. The column marched towards Champhai which was the headquarter of Lalbura and reached on 17th February 1872. On reaching they found that it has been deserted but the neighboring villages surrendered. During their 3 months expedition, the force constantly being on foot cut roads as there was no proper trail to follow. As they faced the hostile tribes, they burnt houses, destroyed their crops. As they returned the column left behind hundred of mountain trails to Champhai.

- **Chittagong Column:** This column was under the command of General Brownlowe. Their main objective was to reach the village of Chief Lalsunga who was a part in the raid of Alexanderpore and other areas in western Cachar. Its four
months expedition was a success. It resulted in the surrender of fifteen chiefs of two powerful tribes.\textsuperscript{146}

A large number of *lushai* chief submitted and promised lasting friendship and peace. Mary Winchester and many other captives were released. The *Lushai* were undoubtedly impressed by the fact that their villages were no longer inaccessible. Bazars were started at Changsil and Tipperah. The expedition had brought peace at least for a whole decade.

**Expedition of 1889:**

After 16 years, the peace obtained by the previous expedition was again disturbed by the Mizos. The cause of this trouble was mainly due to a quarrel between a married couple. On being mistreated by the husband the wife left him and went to her father’s house. The father of the wife agreed to let her return to her husband only after he delivers two heads who must not be a Kuki or a Mizo. In his attempt to get two heads, Hausata (the husband) killed Lt. J.F. Steward along with his two English body-guards and one sepoy on 3\textsuperscript{rd} February, 1888 at a place called Rangamati in the Chittagong hill tracts, now in Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{147} On the 15\textsuperscript{th} another raid was perpetrated in which 6 persons were killed and 2 were wounded, and 23 were captured. In order to avenge these killing, an expedition was planned. This Expedition was to be named ‘The Lushai Expedition’ which would consist at least 1100 men under the Command of Colonel Vincent Tregear. The objective of this expedition was -

1. To construct road in the direction of the Shendu (Lakher)
2. To punish Hausata and Zahuata for the murder of the late Lt. Steward.

\textsuperscript{146} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{147} Sir Robert Ried; *the Lushai Hills*, Firma KLM, Calcutta, reprint, 1976, pp 1-2.
3. To establish an advanced post to be garrisoned by the British troops during the season.

The military expedition of 1889 had not much effect upon the Mizos. But it did make a forty one mile good hill road from Demagiri to Lunglei, where a stockade post was established. Accommodation for 200 men, 4 officers, hospital, godowns, magazines and a telegraph office was provided. Five chiefs gave an undertaking of loyalty to the British.

**Expedition of 1890:**

The British was considering another expedition and while the plan was being made for the expedition Lianphunga and Zahrawka sons of Suakpuilala raided the Changri valley on the Chittagong frontier killing 101 and captured 91 men. After this attack, on 11th September 1889 the Government of India then decided on a more aggressive expedition called the ‘Chin-Lushai Expedition’ under the overall command of general William Penn Symons. This expedition was to consist of about 3380 officers and men from various regiments. Their main objectives were, firstly, to punish the perpetrators, secondly to subjugate the neutral tribes, thirdly, to explore the unknown part of the country between Burma and Chittagong and lastly, to establish a semi-permanent posts so as to ensure complete pacification and recognition of British power. There were three columns. The first column was commanded by Colonel Tregear making Demagiri as his base where he established fort Tregear. He has succeeded in making roads which connected India and Burma. The second Column was under the Command of W.W Daly he started from Silchar to recover the captives taken in and to punish Lianphunga for the raid on the Changri Valley, and to punish Vuttaia’s son for raiding of Pakuma Rani’s Villages and

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148 He was the General officer commanding Burma.
to establish permanent post in Lianphunga’a village. The last column, the Burma column and the northern column was commanded by G.J. Skinner. He was on the same mission as Daly; he was also accompanied by C.S. Murray as political officer. When they arrived at Lianphunga’s village, he had already escaped. His village was burnt down along with the village of Chief Nikhama and his brother for raiding, Pakuma Rani’s village. Daly reached Aizawl on 4th February and built a stockade on the site which became a permanent headquarters of Mizoram.

The British expedition led to the establishment of four garrisoned post in the Mizo Hills. Two posts were in the south Mizo hills fort Lunglei and Fort Tregear and two in the North Mizo hills Fort Aizawl and Changsil. From then on the British annexation of the Mizo hills commenced.

4.3.2 Administration under the British rule:

The annexation of Mizo hills to their dominions was only a part of the extension of the British political sphere of influence. One of the officers wrote “you force us to occupy your hills, we had no wish to come up here but you would raid our villages, so we had to come”. The Government of Assam was in favor of complete and permanent occupation. It even suggested that each province should undertake the administration of its own tracts with which it merged as it was too big to be administered by one officer. This was approved by the Government of India and the hill was divided into two administrative units. The northern tract was placed under the administrative jurisdiction of Assam with Capt. H.R. Browne as Political Officer; He

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149 Major J. Shakespeare openly justified their demands for the coolie labor. It was a way of saying that they should openly render help to the British by supplying them coolies when they needed. Sangkima. op.cit., pp. 78-79.
assumed his office on May 1890 with Aizawl as his headquarters. The administration of the southern tract was placed under the Bengal with Charles Steward Murray of Bengal police as in charge with the headquarter in Lunglei.

Peace did not take place immediately after the annexation of the British government. Political officer, Browne held a Durbar of Chiefs at Aizawl on 14 June, 1890. He tried to introduce tax which was to be given at a nominal rate per house. He also wanted that every village should supply minimum number of porters to officers while on tour or for other government work. He did not succeed in either. Rather than submitting to him some Mizo Chiefs retaliated against them. Many uprising took place some under the leadership of the chief Lalbura, the southern Chief ruled by sons of Bengkhuiaia and Savunga rose to oppose the advance of Capt. Shakespeare. These uprisings were subdued and these Chiefs submitted to the authority of the British Government. Many punitive expeditions were carried out to subdue the uprising of the rebellious Chiefs. The Political officer gave a lot of effort into bringing the whole of Mizoram under their jurisdiction with the policy of pacification. The Mizo hills were formally brought into British India by the proclamation in 1895.

Initially, The British government did not want to bring too much change in the administration of this particular area. It was not really out of choice that they occupied the hills. They knew that for an effective and cheap administration in the unknown harsh terrain of the Lushai hills, and for political reasons the British thought it fit and expedient to continue the indigenous system of village administration through the Chiefs. They wanted to have a minimum interference, respect for tribal laws and customs. They allowed the Chieftainship to continue where

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150 Durbar Meaning Court.
the Chief would take care of their own village to exercise their authority on all local matters as before. They established their regime just to maintain the law and order, administration of justice and the assessment and collection of revenue. The British officers were to concentrate mainly on their police duty of preservation of peace and giving free hand to the chief regarding the administration of their own villages even in the matter of criminal, civil and social justice.\textsuperscript{151} Though the Lushai chiefs were given more responsibility and duties, their positions was reduced to a subordinate position and were forced to recognize the British supremacy. The British administration brought with it various changes. The duty of the overall supervision was vested in the hands of the ‘Superintendent’ and his assistants. Though initially that was not the intention, gradually as they started exploring the hills, they went deeper into the administration and brought many changes to the land. The Hill administration was divided into two subdivisions. One which was under the North with the headquarters at Aizawl and the South at Lunglei, it was difficult to administer it and it was more expensive. Finally, the two Mizo hills were amalgamated into one district and brought under the Assam administration from 1\textsuperscript{st} April, 1898. Capt. Shakespeare was appointed the first superintendent of the united district and Aizawl became the headquarters of the united district.\textsuperscript{152}

\textbf{Areas of change}

- **System of Government:** After the occupation of the British, though the chieftainship was not abolished, the position and the power of the Chief deteriorated. When the British occupied Mizoram, there was much opposition from the northern side.

\textsuperscript{151} J. Zorema, ‘\textit{Indirect rule in Mizoram 1890-1954’}, Mittal Publication, first publication 2007, pp. 58-59.

\textsuperscript{152} Animesh Ray, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 42-44.
whereas there was not much resistance from the southern area of Government. The government allowed the chiefs to continue their rule in accordance with the order that they issued from time to time. Before, the chief was the absolute authority of his village but now, the Government was supreme. The land that the chief possessed could be taken away from him as a punishment if he disobeyed the government. Some of the rights that the Chiefs possessed previously were also taken away. Such rights were:

1. Right to order capital punishment
2. Right to seize food stored and property of villagers who wished to transfer their allegiance.
4. Right to tax traders who are doing business within the chief’s jurisdiction as the government now reserves the right to open trade marts.
5. The inheritance Right of Chieftainship.
6. Rights to help bawis who were, by custom, not open to redemption.
7. Right to freedom of action in relation to others kinds of bawis who used to constitute the means whereby the chiefs could cultivate and acquire the ability to sustain their villages in peace and in war.
8. Right to attach the property of their villagers when they wished or deemed fit with or without fault on the part of the villagers.

The government prescribed the details of the function and duties of the chief in 1898, the specific duties of the chief has been laid down:
1. The chief was responsible for all that went on in his villages. All orders, etc. affecting his village would be sent through the circle interpreter.

2. The chief would adjudicate all civil disputes between people of his village. He would also dispose of all criminal cases except serious ones. His orders would not be interfered with unless he has acted in badly or despotically.

3. The chief was responsible for keeping records on the following matters: (a) all births and deaths (b) All movement of people in to and out of the villages (c) All changes in licensed guns.\(^\text{153}\)

- **Taxation:** The immediate result of the British administration upon the mass population was the imposition of tribute and taxation. There were many suggestions made and ultimately the Lyall’s proposal was accepted, Re 1/- as a house tax and a liability to deliver 10 seers of rice from each house at a rate of Re2/- per mound, together with free labor for six days in a year. This was approved of by the government.

- **Impressed Labor:** The British had done many works and they needed number of coolies to help them with their work for which they paid 4 annas but they still had a problem getting number of coolies. This was resisted by some chiefs and therefore it was revised. There were many suggestion made by various political officers. C.W Bolton, Chief secretary to government of Bengal suggested that each house should be liable to supply one Coolie to work for only 10 days per annum and that the enforcement to be in the hands of respective political officer, and that the rate should be 8 annas. This rule was applyed all over Mizoram.

\(^\text{153}\) Sangkima, *op.cit.* pp.116-118.
• **Economic development:** The initial economic impact that was brought about when the British occupied Mizoram was the introduction of money-economy. Previously, the system of exchanging good was by barter system. The main source of income and sustenance was farming, jhum cultivation. During this time, Industrial economy or credit economy did not have much meaning with reference to Mizo economy as majority relied on cultivation. With the inflow of money there were a lot of change and Barter system became disuse. There was opening of mart was one of the major development. The general report for 1894-1895 says

‘Three bazaars have been established in recent years in the Lushai Country, beyond our border, which are supplied with goods by native traders from Cachar. They are increasing gradually in size and importance, but their growth is somewhat checked by the exactions imposed on the traders by the chiefs.’

Rubber was the main article which was sold by the people and it was their main source of income. Other articles such as cotton, wax-ivory etc were also sold and the good which they bought in return were items such as glass, beads, brass, iron-pots, axe-head, Dao etc. The mart proved to be very useful for the Mizo people it enabled the Mizos to acquire the items that they needed. They wanted to keep the Mart open and this was one reason why they wanted to maintain a cordial relationship with the British. In Aizawl also there were some shops which were kept mostly by the Bengalis from Silchar. The system of agriculture was also affected. Jhuming was found to have harmful effect on the land and therefore the Government encouraged wet-rice cultivation which was first experimented in Champhai. To encourage
the cultivators, they were given plough, cattle and other implements.\textsuperscript{154} The Government did not do much to encourage the growth of economy in Mizoram. But in 1936 A.G. McCall developed cottage industries and financed it by himself from his salary and also by borrowing from the government along with his wife. It was to encourage the Mizos to have an alternate source of income and also to encourage the use of their skills.\textsuperscript{155} They produced rugs and table mats. Their producers were indigenous Mizo designs. Marketing arrangement was even made at Shillong, Calcutta, Bombay and Silchar. The introduction of Industries had many advantages.

- It improved the material condition of the people and it was a good way to use their free time.
- It brought about progress among the Mizo which made them proud
- It improved the character of the people as a whole.
- It developed the spirit of cooperative world.
- It provided many activities for the people. It was also an honest way to earn a living.\textsuperscript{156}

- **Social Changes:** With the British Government’s occupation, there were many changes which came about. When the British came in, the missionaries had followed them. One can say that the contribution of the missionaries has changed the Mizo society as a whole. We will study the contribution of the missionaries in detail further in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{154} W. Kennedy, "note on the moral and material progress of the Lushai hills district during the last ten years", A note to the commissioner Surma Valley and Hill district, Silchar no 1382, dated Aijal the 15\textsuperscript{th} March 1912.
\textsuperscript{155} A.G. McCall, Lushai Chrysalis
\textsuperscript{156} Sangkima, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 116-118.
One of the major changes was that the institution of Zawlbuk started losing its status. With the introduction of schools, village churches, administrative centers, medical facilities the institution of Zawlbuk and the customs of tlawnngaihna gradually died.\footnote{Animesh Ray, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 76-77.} The Christians in the village would not join a Zawlbuk and hence when the majority became Christians, the zawlbuk in village became extinct. The old beliefs and values were losing its meaning. The people were now depending more on the Church and the government for guidance and leadership. Thus, the zawlbuk and the tlawnngaihna eventually became a part of history. One can say that another reason for the abolition of zawlbuk was the powers of the chiefs were deteriorated. The system of Bawiship also changed. To abolish this system, the missionaries also played a major role. There was a huge controversy while this issue was being tackled between the superintendent H.W.G. Cole and Dr. Fraser.\footnote{Sangkima, \textit{op. cit.} p. 130.} Bawiship was eventually abolished. There was a gradual change in the society. The Mizo society was a free society as there was not much of social prohibition among the Mizos. With the zawlbuk out of the picture, there was something lacking. An institution which will cater to the social need had to be set up. The spirit of tlawnngaihna was to be revived. This resulted in the formation of “Young Lushai Association” (YLA) and later as “Young Mizo Association”. It was inaugurated on 15\textsuperscript{th} June 1935 with Rev. L. Evan. A Presbyterian Missionary as its first President. It was a non-political group which later inspired the birth of a political
party. The political development in Mizoram will be studied in detail in this chapter.

- **Means of communication:** One of the major changes that the British administration brought to Mizoram was the roads and the development of telegraphs and postal services. The villages earlier had no connection with the outside world. They had stayed secluded and had no contact even with each other. When the British came to Mizoram, they had to find ways to explore the villages within Mizoram. The reason was to bring the Mizo under their rule and to send the expeditionary forces whenever there was revolt or uprising. Initially the roads which were made during this time were paths and cart-roads which was the immediate need of the administration. The construction of roads was eventually put in the hands of the Public Work Department. The work was fast and immediate. By 1893 the construction of 75 miles of road to a width of 8ft was complete.

Along with the development of the roads, an introduction of posts and telegraphs in Mizoram was also introduced. In the beginning of 1890 there were two post offices, one at Changsill and the other at Aizawl. The mails from Changsill were carried over to Changsill and the other at Aizawl. The mails from Silchar were carried over to Changsill and then were dispatched to Aizawl by runners. In 1894, the telegraphic line was carried to a point near Kolasib, half way between Aizawl and Silchar. Slowly and gradually the services were improved upon day by day and the people realized its importance. Thus, by 1947 there were about 14
branches of post office all over Mizoram.\textsuperscript{159} The telephone line connection also connected \textit{Aizawl}. Besides roads and postal communication we also find water way within the territory. The communication system of Mizoram was very well settled and they started having contact with the outside world mostly traders. Mail was naturally slow. It was carried on a bridle-path from Silchar to Aizawl. Heavy goods and parcels went up by country boat as far as Sairang.\textsuperscript{160} From there they were brought by slow ox cart to their destination. These were the mail and transport arrangement up to the time of Second World War, unchanged for forty years. Silchar had become a railhead at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The journey of the country boats carrying heavy goods from Silchar to Sairang was most uncertain and several boats sank annually. Constant work was done on the river to clear it and make navigation easier.

- **Education**: Education played an important role in the development of the Mizo people. As mentioned above the coming of the British Government was followed by the missionaries in Mizoram. The first missionary who set foot in Mizoram was William Williams who was working in the Khasi hills. The work of the missionaries will be studied in detail in this chapter. He stayed a very while in Mizoram. After him, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge had come into Mizoram and they were the ones who had made the Mizo alphabet. These two missionaries stayed in Mizoram for 4 years and during this time they made the Mizo language. There was no formal education among the


\textsuperscript{160} A point 14 miles north west of Aizawl.
Mizo before the British arrived. The Zawlbuk was the main institution where the Mizos were educated and taught about manners and etiquette. However, the government did not do much in educating the Mizos; it was left in the hands of the missionaries who were obliged to do so. The work of educating the Mizo was one of the main agendas of the Missionaries. Many schools came up and there was a rapid progress in education both in the Aizawl sub-division and the Lunglei sub-division. Female education was also encouraged. In Mizo society, the female did not have much importance in the home front or in the society. It was a patriarchal society. But girls’ education was started with the effort of Mrs. Jones of the Welsh Mission in northern Mizoram. This paved way for the entrance of more lady missionaries into Mizoram. It is with education that the Mizo people started to know how to express themselves on paper. Formerly, books were written by outsiders and that was one of the main reasons why Mizos did not write records for a long time. It is with the coming of the Missionaries and making of the Mizo alphabet that changed the history of the unknown world to a known world. Till 1947, there were 259 primary schools at both the sub-divisions and there were 11 Middle English school in each sub-division of Aizawl and Lunglei.\footnote{Zoram Thirma, \textit{op. cit.}}

4.4 Role of the British Missionaries in Mizoram:

One of the most important factors which contributed to the modernization and change of the Mizo people was the arrival of the missionaries. The missionaries played an important role among the
Mizo society which could not be denied. They changed almost every aspect of their lives. The work of the Mizos had not been only of spreading the gospel but also of reforming the society. They knew very well that to start any kind of reform or to make the Mizos see the light. It was important to educate them. Education is the key to open the mind of the people and to help them see the light. Since India was occupied by the British the Churches of London somehow felt that they were in charge of India’s moral welfare. They felt that it was their mission to introduce the gospel to the land that they occupied. The first missionaries who came to India were Ziegenbalg and Plutschau in 1706.\(^\text{162}\) There was growth of the missionary zeal in the nineteenth century. The North East India was also no exception. They were fortunate to get the mission enter their land. When the mission entered Lushai hills, the nearby hill tribes had already received the gospel. The missionaries had already established their works in the forms of schools and evangelical centres. As for Mizoram, it was unexplored and still unknown to world even after the British had occupied other parts of the North East India. The British expedition had paved way for the coming of the Christian missionaries. One Mizo man by the name of Darphawka had made a prediction that there would be white people coming into Mizoram who will bring with them a message and this message would be accepted and obeyed. To prove this he also added that by the time these people will arrive all his daughters would have been married. This proved to be true because when the missionaries appeared, all his daughters have been married.\(^\text{163}\)

4.4.1 Quest of the British Missionaries:

The first missionary who came to the Lushai Hills was Rev William Williams of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission

\(^{162}\) L.S.S.O’Malley, Modern India and the west, p. 16.

\(^{163}\) Zatluanga, Mizo Chanchin, p. 192.
who had been working with the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills. On hearing about the people he wanted to survey the land and the people to see if there would be scope of bringing the gospel there. On 15th February, Rev. William Williams left from Shillong and after travelling more than a month he arrived at Aizawl on the 20th March, 1891. The reason of his visit was to explore the place and while doing so, he preached the gospel through his interpreter. He was exited to come back and he had developed a great interest for the Mizo people. He left for the Khaisi hills on the 17th of April, 1891 in the hope of coming back. When he was back in Khasi hills he tried to persuade his mission to adopt the Lushai hills as a mission field and that they send him there. But he met with an untimely death due to typhoid and this shattered the hope of a new missionary field among the Mizos. It was from his reports that the church leaders came to know of the Mizos or the Lushais. His visit constituted an important landmark in the history of Christianity in Mizoram.

4.4.2 Education

The first step of reformation was education, universal education. The launching of the modern missionary movement spread reformation ideas on education to the far corners of the earth. Now, from experience, the missionaries of Mizoram learned that mere religious preaching would not bear much fruit and it would not be able to take deep root in the mind of the Mizos. Unless the people were educated they would always be ignorant and primitive. This was looked upon as one of the major obstacles to win them over to Christ as the primary object of the missionaries was to convert the people into Christianity. The conversion of the new Christians and educating the people was to go side by side. “Education was to be the Preparatio Evangelica, a leaven in the midst of this non-christian land and an instrument for

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164 V. Hawla, Zoram Hmanchan Zosapte Chanchin, pp. 7-8.
bringing the kingdom of God to this nation”. Education imparted by the missionaries was an easy access to the people to preach them.\footnote{World Missionary Conference, 1910, Report of Commission III, p 18, cited by S.M Pathak, American Missionaries and Hinduism.} Starting Schools was also important. Being a convert was not the goal in itself to grow in faith one has to be able to read the scriptures and therefore, it was important that one knows how to read. For the same reason mentioned, the missionaries were also compelled to introduce printing press to print scriptures and other Christian literature in the local language.\footnote{Ibid., p. 142.} In Mizoram, the first school was started in 1893 at Aizawl. This school was meant for children of the sepoys and its teacher a Military Havildar. The language taught in this school was hindi. This school was not meant for Mizo children. Similar school was opened at Lunglei and Demagiri, followed by Mission school. A British political officer by the name of A. Porteous played an important role amongst the British officials in introducing proper education in Mizoram though the real ground work of educating the Mizos was done by the missionaries. He even recommended that the medium of teaching and the language to be taught would be Bengali as this language may prove to be benefiting the Mizos in area of trade and official interaction\footnote{AR; letter no. 211 dated Fort Aijal the 22\textsuperscript{nd} June 1896, and no. 277 dated the 17\textsuperscript{th} July 1896. From Porteous to the secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.}.

**The introduction of Alphabet:**

When the British missionaries came to Lushai under the Arthington Mission, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge were very much welcome and appreciated by the Mizos. Their mission was to spread the gospel and giving education to the people was not their main objective. But it was obvious that without giving education it would not be possible to go further with their mission. The Mizo people gave them
Mizo nickname to J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge i.e Pu Buanga and Sapupa respectively. When they arrived they were very much respected by the Superintendent Lieu. Col .G.H. Loch. At first they acquainted themselves with the Mizo language and they became fast learner.\textsuperscript{168} They wanted to develop a script which would befit the Mizo people. An attempt to make use of the Bengali character was not a success and thereore, the missionaries tried to use alphabet based on the Roman alphabet “the phonetic hunterian system of orthography” as Lorrain called it. This proved to be a success for a medium of learning for the Mizo.\textsuperscript{169} Few of the first Mizo scholars were Pu Suaka (who latter on became the chief of Durtlang) , Thangphunga (Chief of Chaltlang) and Khamliana (Lungleng Chief). They are the first Mizo scholars in amongst the Mizos. They learnt the language through the English Alphabet that the two missionaries made. They made some changes to suit the Mizo language.

The Duhlian was the name commonly given to the language. Foreigners called it Lushai. But the people themselves refer to it as Mizo. It was scattered over a large and rugged area of the north east. The Mizos were one of the few lucky tribes to have a script which acquire them the Bible. Since the missionaries had come under the Arthington Mission and the millionaire who was financing the mission was interested in financing the mission as long as the gospel was being spread quickly. He wanted the workers of the gospel to keep themselves busy solely proclaiming the word of the lord. They were not to spend time or be too attached with one tribe. They were expected to move around and preach to many tribes. Therefore, taking care of the school could not be concentrated. They knew that they could not stay at one place for a long time so, they spent most of 1897 translating the

\textsuperscript{169} J.M. Llyod, op.cit., p. 126.
Gospel St. Luke, St. John and the books of Acts which they presume will help the newly converted. At the same time they were also writing the “Grammar and dictionary of the Lushai language”. The translation of the Bible was completed only in 1955. The Grammar and dictionary was published by the Royal Society. It was seven thousand word dictionary and Lorrain published it in 1949. It is a fascinating commentary on the life and culture of the Mizo society. The Mizos had a passion and an appetite for learning. From the very beginning they were gripped by the power of printed pages. The missionaries after J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge also mentioned that the pioneers had done a great work in laying down the foundation of education on the soil of Mizoram.

4.4.3 Literature and Printing press:

For as long as fifteen years school text books and other books had to be sent away for printing, for there was no printing–press within the borders of Mizoram. Mail was naturally slow. Runners carried it in three days along the bridle–path from Silchar to Aizawl transferring the mail bags at a like “dak” bungalows. It was a rather efficient system and reliable. Its existence was for the benefit of the government and its various departments, and was hardly convenient for business and commerce.

The Government had its own press at Shillong and this town was also the mission headquarters. So, D.E Jones had some of his first books printed there. Later, books for Mizo schools and churches were printed in five other publishing centres in various parts of India viz. Sylhet, Dacca (both not in Bangladesh), Calcutta, Allahabad and Madras. Despite the many works that the mission did the Lushai Hills on a limited budget, it is clear that the production of literature was

largely neglected apart from translation. Rev D.E Jones and the readers were aware that making the people literate alone was not enough; they needed to feed the minds of the people with new and interesting books. The advantages of literacy were that it enabled the men to read agricultural pamphlet, instruction on medicine bottles and government posters etc. The missionaries knew that if the mind of the people were not fed there was a possibility of mass reversal back into illiteracy. This was averted by a regular quantity of good, useful books being available in Mizo. For a long time printing was a problem. And finally, in 1911 the new missionary, Dr. Fraser, brought to Aizawl a small hand-press. It was the first press ever seen within those hills. It was used to print appropriate scriptures verses on labels.

**Christian Monthly:** With arrival of Dr. Fraser’s little press in Aizawl, it led to the publication of a monthly church magazine. Every Village had its Village ‘Tlangau’ or ‘Village Crier’. Everyone knew that the ‘Tlangau’ did not speak in his own name but in that of his chief. The new magazine was called The ‘Krista Tlangau’ - Herald of Christ. The Krista Tlangau was soon renamed ‘Kristian Tlangau’.

**The Loch Press:** With the arrival of Dr. Fraser and his little press, there was a new hope of publishing new literature. There was even a new scope of setting up a press. Rev D.E. Jones was really excited and with the hope of setting up a press, he even sent the son of one of the newly converts, Kailuia, to learn to be a compositor and bookbinder at the mission press in Sylhet. Sylhet was one of the earliest stations to be established by the Welsh Mission on the plains. It is now in Bangladesh. Kailuia was in Sylhet, traning for four years. The plans

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171 He was one of the village officials and whenever a chief wanted to make an announcement or send out a command to the villagers he would dispatch the Tlangau to announce it. The Tlangau would go round the village till everyone had heard the announcement.
that D.E. Jones had not been known or what kind of machinery he was planning to acquire. Fraser’s press was small. Unfortunately when he had to leave Mizoram in 1921 for Lakhipur, he took it with him. The loss of this press was a blow to D.E. Jones’ hope. When Col. G.E. Loch, the local commander heard about the press, he offered to help pay Jones for a new press out of his own pocket for new machinery but there were some condition that he applied to it. The condition was that this machine and type would never be removed from Aizawl. This generous gift had enabled D.E. Jones to obtain a foot-treadle machine quick, light and easily operated. The total cost of the press was 100 pounds.

With the setting up of the new press, Kailuia was summoned home from Sylhet where he had received a thorough grounding in his future work. He had mastered the art of composing, printing and book-binding. When the new press machine arrived, he had no difficulty in assembling it. This little press was named Loch press. This name was kept from the time it first began till the electrification of the press in 1958. It was the property of the Mission. Mostly the work that D.E. Jones did was translating the Christian books and printing them. These books were bought by the converts and they were very much treasured. These books were window opener and the message of these books as they came from the press made an impact which can hardly be overemphasized. Kailuia proved to be very important and useful in this press. He was the main person who handles the work. He even taught others. Eventually, there were about thirty trained workers. Every worker was very excited about the work. They would reach the workplace at six in the morning and would not leave till nine at night but D.E. Jones had to reduce the working hours as he was concerned about the health of the young boys and girls who were under him as they were not used to the enclosed room and the constant smell of ink,
paper and oil. He tried to emphasize the laws of health and hygiene on them.\textsuperscript{172}

**Synod Press and Bookroom:** Eventually, the press grew and then the sales along with it. Books were printed and they were sold. Many villagers, who made their visit to Aizawl after the harvest to sell a few goods, use their money to buy items that they did not possess. But the ones who knew how to read were likely to go from the market to D.E. Jones house to see what new books were available. After purchase the treasured book would be kept in safe and driest area in the bamboo home, often wrapped in its own separate cloth. Along with the press, the need for a book room naturally grew up to deal with the sales. It was equally necessary, the books printed were to be sold and circulated and the more the turnover the more useful the books will be. Advertisement was by word of mouth or a mention in Kristian Tlangau (Herald for Chirst). Sales were steady, production increased, but the profits were always slender. Initially the books were stored in a room of the bungalow where D.E. Jones resided but as the business increased the need for a new place became necessary where the thousand of books could be easily seen. They also had to be protected from the depredations of white ants. In 1926 a building was constructed which was just enough to store the books. The building was divided into three sections, one room was used for storing and selling, the other room at the end was for translation and for meeting and the one in the middle for reading. Later on, this building was replaced by a more modern and commodious building. With the help of the later missionaries Rev and Mrs. E.L. Mendus, who were in charge of the printing and publishing work, a new building was set up opposite the main Mission Veng Church.

\textsuperscript{172} J.M. Lloyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141.
4.5 The Socio-Economic Condition and Political development of the Mizo people:

Many British officers were kept by the Government to administer the Lushai hills. Most Officers had impact in the hills one way or the other. The political awakening was brought about by the British officials as well as the British missionaries. With the spread of education and literacy, the Mizo people started to reason the human existence and the missionaries started to make the people aware of their rights. During this time, we have seen how the British rule was being resisted in different parts of the mainland India but in the Lushai hills we witness many reforms taking place. There are few incidents which could be cited as an example which led to political awareness of the people. The customary law that is being in use today was made for the Mizo people by the Britishers. Though the laws had existed even then there were some practical changes made by the Britishers to suit the Mizo people as a whole. The social life of the Mizo people had changed considerably with the coming of the missionaries. Education had also brought about many changes in the society. There were many factors that led to the social change and one such factor may be setting up of schools and churches in the village. But as far as the economy of the people was concerned, the people had depended entirely on agriculture. Even this started to change. The government started creating jobs for the educated and the people started turning towards education for it provides secure job to the people.

4.5.1 The Economic development

To have a decent society a state must be economically developed. Before the British came to Mizoram the only system available was the barter system. With the coming of the Britishers and the introduction of money, people began to use money as well as earning it through selling goods especially to the English and the
traders who were mostly Bengalis. Before money was used, the main source of income and occupation was farming, Jhum cultivation. The economic development was seen after the native people made contact with the traders. Industrial economy and credit economy does not have much meaning with reference to Mizo economy. With the inflow of more and more money the barter system had fallen disuse. The development of the economic condition of the Mizos was found in trade as promoted by the British administration. The economic furtherance of the people was possible only through the opening of more trade marts within and without the land. The Tipaimukh bazaar on the Barak river was established after the expedition of 1871-1872 but did not thrive well. Rubber was the chief article that was sold by the people and hence their main source of income. By selling this article as well as some quantity of cotton, wax, ivory etc the Mizos obtained cornelian, glass beads, cloth, brass, iron-pots, axe-head, dao etc. But unfortunately in 1888, all the trades had ceased and the bazaar at Tipamukh was abandoned. The Sonai Market on the Sonai river was set up more or less at the same time as the Tipaimukh market but due to events like raiding the market had to be closed down in 1894 but it was re-opened in 1889. The Changsilm Market on the Tlawng river although protected by Suakpuilala, also suffered from the oppression meted to the traders as other two trade marts. The traders sometimes closed down their trades and sometimes reopened them again. Comparatively the Changsilm Market enjoyed more importance because the majority of the traders flocked to this market due to its nearness to Silchar and it was on the road to Aizawl, the District headquarters. Besides these trade marts, Aizawl had a few shops which were mostly owned by the

Bengalis from Silchar. The whole trade consisted almost entirely of the sale of goods like salt, brass pots and colored yarns to the Mizos.\textsuperscript{174}

The market was the main source of revenue for the chiefs and it also helped the Mizos to acquire useful articles they wanted at low cost. It also did maintain to keep cordial relationship with the British. This development of economy not only helped to develop more markets but also influenced the system of agriculture. As mentioned earlier the system of agriculture was mainly Jhuming. This system of farming was found to be harmful to the soil. A change in the agriculture was also introduced, wet-rice cultivation. This was first experimented by Col. Shakespeare in about 1989. This was followed by Major Cole, Dundas and Col. Loch. To encourage this type of farming, the cultivators were given plough, cattle and other tools. In the last century of the nineteenth century another type of cultivation was introduced to improve the economic condition of the people. This was potato cultivation and it proved to be successful. Pulse (dal) was also grown and experimented along with wheat. This was also proved to be very much encouraging and successful. The economic betterment of the Mizo people was very much encouraged by the British officers and most of their policy was focused in this direction. But so far most of the attempt made the Government was mostly agriculture based.\textsuperscript{175}

Later on in 1936, Superintendent A.G. McCall along with his wife developed small-scale industries and cottage industries. These industries were financed by himself from his salary and the government also loaned it to him. This was done so that the people would find a use for their skill and they would use it for commercial purpose. Another reason for introducing such industry was in case there was a failure in the production of the rice cultivation. Since farming had a season it was

\textsuperscript{174} Sangkima, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 95-96.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
also to make use of the free time they had in between farming season. Superintendent Mc Call bought from the weaver the *Puan*.\(^{176}\) He stored the finished product at the storehouse he constructed in the name of Larsap Ried and called it ‘REID HOUSE’. He even kept a manger by the name Pu Chuauthuama.\(^{177}\) The local products were being encouraged by the Government. At the beginning, they produced rugs and table mats. The mats gave further scope for the preservation of indigenous *Mizo* designs. Market arrangements were obtained for these products at Shillong, Calcutta, Bombay and Silchar. There were many advantages of the industries which included improvement of material condition of the people by the sale of their skill and use of their spare time. The people also started having pride for their skill and their art. There was a unity among the people to improve their work and the team work also started having meaning. For the welfare of the village people, economically and the other wise Village Welfare Committee was set up. This committee was operated under the guidance of a Red Cross District Committee at Aizawl.

4.5.2 Political Development in Mizoram 1889-1959

Before the British came into the Lushai hills. The political set up was very simple. In every village there was a Chief. The Chief was the head. What he said was the law; there was no other law which was above him. As mentioned already in this chapter, after the expedition of 1889 the British government started to set their hegemony in the Lushai hills. They had no proper plan other than to avenge and punish the chiefs who had killed or carried away the British subjects. On his arrival at Aizawl in 1890, Capt Brown held a durbar of the Chiefs.

\(^{176}\) The cloth woven by the Mizo people which is wrapped around the waist.

where he announced that Lengphunga (lianphunga) and Jarak (Zahrawka) who were held responsible for the crime were to be deposed for term of four years and were fined 15 guns. Another outcome of the expedition was that the whole tract was divided into two administrative units. The proclamation was made only in 1895. Simultaneously, the plan to amalgamate these two units and to place it under the Assam district was still going on. The sub-divisions composed of (a) the Aizawl sub-division and (b) the Lunglei sub-division. In a Chin-Lushai conference held in December 1896 a recommendation was made that the amalgamation of the two sub-divisions was not to be delayed any further. Finally on 1st April 1898 the Governor-in-council accepted the proposal. A notification was published and the whole of Mizoram was placed under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The Superintendent of south Lushai hills was abolished and the Political Officer was renamed as the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. The proposal, that the Officer-in-charge of the amalgamated area should be called ‘Superintendent of the Lushai Hills’ was approved and accepted by the Government of India. According to the Government of Assam, by proclamation No. 977 P, Major J. Shakespeare was to be the first Superintendent of the Lushai hills.

The administration of the whole Mizoram was indirectly vested in the Chief Commissioner of Assam but directly the Superintendents and his Assistants were responsible. The internal control of villages was still retained with the Chiefs. The Superintendent and his Assistants upheld the authority of the Chiefs and respected it to the best of their ability. In case of litigation, the Superintendent should not admit appeals against the Chiefs to the Superintendent. The Superintendent had a lot of power vested in him. The Superintendents or the Political Officers were known as the Bawrhasap. In case of
deceased Chiefs, the Superintendent also had the power to regulate succession of the village. He also had the right to partition the existing villages or the formation of new villages. He was also empowered to determine the boundaries of lands occupied by Chiefs and to settle disputes between them regarding such land. The Superintendent even had the right to punish the Chiefs and headmen, and to depose them for misconduct subject to the approval of the chief Commissioner. The Superintendent and his Assistants were authorized to levy tribute and extract labor. The criminal justice was administered by the Superintendent and his assistant. The Superintendent was to keep record of the crimes and submit returns whenever the Chief Commissioner demanded. In the administration of civil justice the Superintendent had to be well-versed with the Mizo customary laws. The court was guided by the spirit of the code of civil procedure. He was competent to pass death sentences or to transportation and imprisonment. All sentences of over three years were appealed to the Chief Commissioner within sixty days. His decision was final. The Governor-General-in-Council reserved the right to review the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner. The post of Chief Commissioner continued till 1952 and S.N. Barnataki was the last Superintendent as well as the first man who was designated as Deputy Commissioner of the Lushai Hills in the same year.

The Political officers had a lot of contribution to the development of Lushai Hills. One of the major contributions of J. Shakespeare was the ‘Land Settlement’. In 1898, he demarcated the land of each Chief within which he and his people could move freely and could Jhum according to their convenience. The scheme was successfully carried out and it was the system on which the present day land demarcation of each village is based. In later years for the

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betterment of administration, the whole district was divided into two sub-divisions of Aizawl with 12 circles and of Lunglei with 6 circles. In each circle one interpreter was appointed as a link between the authorities and the Chiefs.\textsuperscript{179} The British officers had made various changes in areas that they think was appropriate but at the same neglected a lot of issues which they considered petty and kept those minor issues under the jurisdiction of the village Chiefs. The Mizo chief became the most important link between the people and the Superintendent. The people were very loyal to the Chief. They gave the Chief their newly harvested crops and the animals that they shot or trapped. One of the main demands of the government was that the subject of the villages may transport the luggage of the officials. Each village chief had the duty of contributing such labor to carry the luggage of the travelling government servant on nominal wages and also they were served as free labor in construction of the Chiefs house. Though there were some sections of the people who were exempted by the Chief, the plight of the people in general was mounting up.

Slowly the people became aware of their condition. The education system that the British allowed was just enough to make the people literate; but high school was allowed to the ones, who could send their children to schools in Shillong and other nearby areas where they can get higher education. There was a growth of political awareness. By 1926 the institution of Zawlbuk had been disintegrated. The Superintendent N.E. Perry was of the view that Zawlbuk should be revived. The attempt made by N.E. Perry started causing discontentment amongst the people as the common people thought that this meant that the Superintendent had a special spot for Chiefs. There was a growing tension amongst the Mizo people. The common people wanted to take action against the rule of the Chief and

\textsuperscript{179} Sir Robert Reid; \textit{‘The Lushai Hills’}, Firma KLM, Calcutta, Reprint, 1978, pp. 1-2.
the Superintendent and so they started collecting information secretly to know the means by which they can participate in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Representatives were sent to Shillong and then to Assam. The representatives sent there were told that action could be taken only if they could enlist at least 1000 members or supporters expressing their desire to participate in the Assam Legislative Assembly. When they returned to Aizawl they started a drive with the view to getting the support of the required numbers. As political movement was totally banned by the district authority they did everything secretly. Unfortunately there activity came to the notice of the superintendent; some of the leaders of this movement were arrested.\textsuperscript{180}

Their Secretary, Laldela was deported to Chin Hills of Burma. This movement came to an end until it was revived some twenty years later. This political setback was followed by a period of political lull for more than a quarter of a century. Two reasons may be attributed to the failure of the movement. Firstly, the authority had a free hand to control any political movement that was not palatable to the administration to the administration. Secondly, the movement was not deeply rooted in the minds of the masses in the midst of uncertainties. The traumatic fear of the British still haunted the people and prevented them from taking any steps against the arbitrary rule of the British.\textsuperscript{181} In 2006 the people of Kulikawn erected a monument in honour of the first six ‘freedom fighters’ on the 28\textsuperscript{th} of October. These men saw the jail walls for the cause they cherished, the sufferings of the common man at

\textsuperscript{180} They were – 1) V.Z. Biaka of Kulikawn. 2) Telela Pachuau of Kulikawn. 3) Saikunga Vangchhia of Kulikawn. 4) Thuama Ralte of Kulikawn. 5) Liansiama of Kulikawn.

\textsuperscript{181} Dr. Sangkima, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 109-111.
the hands of the chiefs. These men became the first ‘political torch bearers’ of Mizoram.\textsuperscript{182}

Under the Government of India Act 1919, the Governor General-In-Council declared the Lushai Hills, including the other hill district of Assam, as backward tracts. The Assam Legislature had the authority to legislate for these areas but such laws were implemented only after the Governor General or the Governor agreed to such extension and with modification, if necessary. The subject of backward areas was kept a reserved subject for the Governor’s special interest. Thus the elected Ministry of Assam which came up after the Government of India Act of 1919 did not have any authority over the Lushai Hills.\textsuperscript{183} The Lushai hills along with the other hill districts of Assam became Excluded Area under the Government of India Act, 1935. The Governor of the Assam was the sole administrative and legislative authority for the Excluded Areas. This kept these hills out of jurisdiction of the elected of the elected ministry. The Governor was authorized to make regulations for peace and good government of such an area. This had two effects. First, the Mizos were kept out of the mainstream of the national life. The political process which was developing in the rest of the country did not touch the Excluded Areas. Secondly, the funding for the areas being from the provincial budget there were very limited resources available in these areas. The economic activities were almost absent in the excluded areas.

In 1935 the first ever associations were formed YLA (Young Lushai Association) and MZP (Mizo Zirlai Pawl). The YLA is now known as the YMA (Young Mizo Association). Slowly there were development in the society and associations started coming up. Though the chiefs were still in existence and the Superintendent was the

\textsuperscript{182} P. Lalnithanga, ‘Political developments in Mizoram’, Aizawl 2006, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{183} Animesh Ray, \textit{op.cit.} pp. 149-150.
absolute head. In those days their words were the law. On 14\textsuperscript{th} January 1946, McDonald convened a District Conference of Chiefs and commoners to advise him on administration and future political set up of the hills.

A plan was formulated involving adaptation of a constitution for the Lushai Hills with legislature, ministry, judiciary and other usual organs of a full-fledged Government. The constitution drafted in this regard was popularly known as the McDonald’s \textit{Rorel Khawl} (decision maker).\textsuperscript{184}

\textbf{Mizo Union: The First Political Party}

The Mizo people slowly started gaining political awareness. On April 25, 1946, the first political party was born. The man who conceived the idea was R. Vanlawma, a matriculate, brilliant and one of the educated Mizos available in those days. Even matriculates were scarce and few unlike now. R. Vanlawma was a forest clerk in the office of the Superintendent in those days. Others associated with the formation of Mizo Union were Hrangaia, Lalbuaia and V. Rosiama. Initially, the association was called the ‘Lushai commonners’ Union’ and the first ad hoc office bearers were Pachhunga - President; Lalhema - Vice President; R. Vanlawma - General Secretary; Thangthura - Treasurer and Lahlmingthanga - Financial Secretary. The first General Assembly was held at the Aizawl Boys’ ME School on September 24, 1946 where fresh elections of office bearers were held. Lalhema became the President, R. Vanlawma, Secretary and Lalbuaia, Treasurer with Aizawl as the headquarters, Lunglei as Sub-Headquarters and Lakhipui as Division. The Mizo Union councilors appointed for Aizawl area were pastor Chhuahkhama, Brigadier Kawkhuma (Salvation Army), Telela, Zotuawnga, Kaptea, H.Khuma, Dawla, Pasina.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
Chawngnuia and Pahanga. The Lunglei Area Councillors were Ch. Saprawnga, R. Dengthuama, Hauhthanga, Chhingkawnga, Papuia and Aithura. From Lakhipur Division, the Councillors were H.K. Bawichhuaka and Dr. Rosiama. This was the time when the Superintendent and Chiefs were very powerful and to confront and defy them called for extraordinary moral courage rather than being a graduate or a post degree holder. To have such a man as Lalhema who was not afraid of either the Superintendent or the Chiefs as leader the Mizo Union people were most inspired reassured and encouraged. During the formation of the Mizo Union, the Superintendent was A.R.H. Macdonald, constituted District Conference which was the brain child of none other than Macdonald himself.

In the formation of the District Conference which was supported by the Superintendent himself, it would have 40 members, 20 would represent the chiefs and the remaining 20, the commoners. The Mizo union was already in existence when the conference was being held. On hearing that during the conference which was held on January 10, 1946, the superintendent had said that the land did not belong to the Chiefs but to the people, they were very motivated and somehow, started their onslaught against the regime of the Chiefs. But on seeing that the District Conference was the body where the Superintendent reigned supreme and the Chiefs being at his beck and call, they boycotted it and did not like to associate with it. In the meantime, the Mizo union was divided into two parts, the Mizo Union Right Wing and the Mizo National Council. But like any other political party and the real political issues started popping its head in the Mizo society. Feud between the Superintendent and the Mizo union even took place. Mention may be made that during this messy period a new typewriter which was ordered by the Mizo Union had arrived and the Superintendent had asked Rev. Zairema who was the member of the other side of the Mizo union to
take care of it and which he did. We find that politics and political parties started emerging in the Mizoram scenario during this time.

Post-India Independence 1947:

At the time of independence, the anti-Chief movement was building up. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1947 the Constituent Assembly appointed an advisory committee on minorities, tribal areas etc. The north-eastern tribal areas, the excluded and the partially excluded areas’ situation were also to be looked upon. There was a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi. The members who co-opted for the Lushai Hills were Ch. Saprawnga, Khawtinkhuma who were the representatives of the Mizo Union. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1947, the district conference, under McDonald passed few resolutions for submission to the Bordolai Sub-Committee. They were:

- Should the conference decide that Mizoram be within Assam, there should be three members to represent Mizoram in Assam legislature and they should be given all powers over local matters.
- All matters of land tenure, agriculture, education and social custom should be in the power of the local governing body of Mizoram. It should have authority to control immigration of people to Mizoram.

The Mizo union in its memorandum submitted to the Bordolai Sub-Committee demanded the following:

- The Mizo inhabited areas of the neighboring districts should be included in the Lushai Hills District.
- Lushais should be called Mizos.
- Internal administration should be left to the Mizos.
- Liberal financial assistance should be given.
As the independence was drawing near there was a sharp differences of popular opinion about the future of the Lushai Hills. It was obvious that the Mizo Union was in favor of staying on with India but there was another group which wanted to join Burma. On 5th July 1947, a new group was formed by the chiefs called the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO). The Mizo Union on the 22nd April, 1947 decided to submit their plan for the Mizos to the advisory sub-committee and the memorandum so submitted was signed by Khawtinkhuma and H. Vanthuama. All the proposals made were substantially accepted and incorporated in full since most of their propositions found places in the sixth schedule to the constitution of India and following that the District council was created.

**District Council:**

Six autonomous districts with District Councils came up in Assam and the Lushai Hills being one such district. A regional Council was set up in the Pawi-Lakher Region in the Lushai Hill. The Election to the District council was held on 4th April 1952. The total strength of the Council was 24, of which 18 were to be elected and 6 nominated. There were two parties which contested for the election such were Mizo Union and UMFO. The Mizo union won 17 seats out of 18 seats. Dr. Rosiama was elected as the first Chairman. The District council was inaugurated by Bishnuram Medhi, the chief minister of Assam in Aizawl on 25 April 1952. The District Council had the power of Constitution of Village Councils and court at different levels. A year after the District Council was formed, the Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Mizoram. He was accompanied by his daughter Indira Gandhi and the Chief Minister of Assam, Bishnuram

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185 Ibid.
186 Ibid
Medhi along with some officials. It may be mentioned here that a good number of journalist and pressmen had also followed him in this visit.

**Abolition of Chieftainship:**

The abolition of Chieftainship was the main aim of the Mizo Union who had won the majority seat in the District Council election. They had constantly put pressure to the Assam Government to pass a law against Chieftainship. Finally, on the 16th August 1954, the rights and interests of 259 chiefs in the District Council area were taken over by the District Council. The Village Councils were constituted to perform the functions earlier performed by the Chiefs and the *khawnbawi*.\(^{187}\)

Politics have now taken root among the people of Mizoram. One of the resolutions made by the Mizo Union on entering the Assam Government was that the *Lushai Hills* was to be known as Mizoram. Everyone was involved in the politics and politics became the main concern of the people. The feeling of discrimination grew and the people started demanding for a separate hills state. In 1954, the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) visited Assam, the Mizo union and the District Council put forth their demands. They had demanded for a separate hills state, an integration of Mizo inhabited areas of Manipur and Tripura along with the District Council. The SRC in their report stated that the reason behind this demand was due to secessionist feeling and partly due to economic backwardness. The SRC recommended the continuation of the Hill districts in Assam. This recommendation made many tribals very unhappy and with this objective a new political party was formed Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU).

\(^{187}\) The Elders and the Nobles who served the Chief.
Famine in Mizoram and the Birth of Mizo national Front:

In 1959, a worst calamity in the history of Mizoram took place which was a wide-spread famine—Mautam. The state relief efforts were inadequate. The Mizo Union had been very helpful and came to the aid of the people during this time. As a result, in the Village Council election held in 1960, the Mizo Union won 280 village councils as against 83 of the EITU. The Mautam brought forth in the relief front a number of voluntary social welfare organization. One such organization was the Mizo National Famine Front. Young volunteers of the front collected relief contributions from door to door and came forward to help the distressed in all villages including the remotest ones and thus the front gained popularity in the district. On 22nd October 1961, the front gave up the word famine and it became a political party with the name Mizo National Front (MNF). The newly established Political Party, under the charismatic leadership of Laldenga, an ex-serviceman and an ex-clerk of the District Council, declared achievement of an independent sovereign Mizoram as its goal.

Insurgency in Mizoram:

On 5th December 1961, Prime Minister Nehru came out with a formula called the Scottish Pattern, for solution of the political problems in Assam. The plan was that a committee of the MLAs from the hill areas in Assam would be formed. The ministers for the hill areas in the Assam Cabinet would be appointed on the recommendation of the committee which would advise on legislations and administration of the Hill areas. The APHLC (All Party Hill Leaders Conference) accepted this formula. The Mizo boycotted the commission as they wanted a separate state for the Mizos, consisting of Mizo Hills and

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188 In 1958, there was flowering of bamboo, field rats multiplied very fast which ate up the bamboo flowers and after that they started eating the crops which resulted in famine.
neighboring Mizo populated areas. In the Mizo Hills large scale disturbances started on 28 February 1966. Armed MNF force, simultaneously attacked different Government places in Aizawl, Lunglei, Vairengte, Chawngte, Chhimlung and other places. On March 1\textsuperscript{st} 1966, the MNF declared independence for Mizoram. This was a hard time for the people of Mizoram. The Mizo people suffered a lot. This period is called the ‘Rambuai lai’ (troubled times). This period went on for 20 years. There was a lot of political development.

The media grew very much during this period even though they suffered a lot during this period. A lot of newspaper came during this period, Tawrh Bawm (1968), Mizo Aw (1972), Romei (1973), Zoen (1972), Leitlangpui (1973, Harhna (1975), Youth Herald (1975), Chhawrpial (1976), Zobawm (1977), Varparh (1978), Hunthar (1979), Thuthar (1979), Vanglaiuni (1978), to name a few. The journalists and the newspaper people were said to be in an ‘anvil and hammer’ situation as they had to be cautious from both the Indian Army and the MNF party.\textsuperscript{189} There was even an incident where that the Chhawrpial Editor Z.A. Kapmawia was asked to step out from his house in Khatla and the MNF armed forces shot him and the editor who was kept in his place Pu Thawmvunga was also shot while he was campaigning for 1984 MLA election as he was a candidate of People’s Conference Party. Sometimes the editors of newspapers were even summoned by the officials for publishing articles that were Anti-Indian and sometimes they got into trouble with the MNF armed forces for writing articles which was Anti-Mizo. But in the midst of insurgency the All India Radio Station was established in Aizawl and Lunglei. The radio which was accessible to all became a major means of entertainment and means for broadcasting the government’s policy. It was an important

\textsuperscript{189} Lalkhawliana, Mizoram journalist association (MJA) Completes 40 years, MJA Souvenir, 2012, p. 47.
instrument for the government and this was very much disliked by the MNF. The role that the Radio played will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

**Union Territory:**

The union territory of Mizoram was inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Aizawl on 21 January 1972. It ceased to be a part of Assam and it was given two seats in the parliament— one to be elected in the Lok Sabha and the other to be elected in the Rajya Sabha. The High court of Assam was redesigned as Gauhati High Court with jurisdiction over all the five states and two UTs in the north-eastern region. The first election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly took place in April 1972 and the Assembly constituted on 29th April 1972. Of the 27 elected MLAs, 21 belonged to the Mizo Union, 6 to the congress and 3 were independents. In the place of the three who were to be nominated, the administrator appointed a Nepali to represent the minorities, a woman, as there was no woman elected and a business man to represent trade and commerce. Mr. Ch. Chhunga, the president of Mizo Union was the first Chief Minister of Mizoram. Mizoram was facing a difficult time with the underground movement and political instability. In the course of event the MNF leader had to even seek asylum in UK. He stayed at Surrey London. On 15th March 1986 Laldenga arrived at New Delhi from London to attend the peace talks on the invitation of the Central Government. On arrival he said that all the issues had already been settled accepting the interim arrangement.

**Peace Accord:**

On 30th June 1986 Laldenga amended the constitution of the MNF making it a political party. As a party, it gave up violence as a method to be adopted. There were hectic activities. Lalthanhawla who
was the Chief Minister, saw the Prime Minister and the Home minister. There were last minute discussions on the nature of the amnesty and withdrawal of pending criminal cases. At nine thirty in the evening the Mizoram peace accord was signed.

With the signing of the peace accord Mizoram entered into Statehood and the process of democratization and development became the integral aim of the government. This chapter dealt with the history of Mizoram with regard to the socio and political set-up. There are many factors which played an important role in the political development of Mizoram which are being studied in this chapter. We shall conclude this chapter by drawing a line at Mizoram gaining statehood. In the next chapter we shall study the important roles that the media played in development and modernization of Mizoram.