CHAPTER–IV

Responses of Mizoram Government and Young Mizo Association
Before we examine the responses of Mizoram government and Young Mizo Association (YMA) to the autonomy demands of the Hmars in Mizoram, it would be appropriate to briefly discuss how and under what circumstances the Sixth Schedule was adopted for Mizoram. The Bordoloi Sub-Committee visited Aizawl in April 1947 to study the minds of the Mizos, their administrative problems and their desire to have autonomy for their area. The Mizos were not represented in the Constituent Assembly and so, the committee co-opted Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma to represent the Mizos. To know the opinion of the Mizo people, the Sub-committee met the representatives of a Women’s Organisation called Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl, the Chief’s Council, the Churches, the officials and ex-servicemen. Meanwhile, the Lakher Chief, Mr. Chhohmo, requested to have a separate Regional Council to safeguard the identity of the Maras (Lakhers) claiming that the Maras were a distinct tribe and entirely different from the Lushais and also occupied a compact area. But, his request was rejected because the Mara population was too small to have a Regional Council.

The Pawi leaders met the Lakher Chief, Mr. Chhohmo, and suggested that the Pawis (Lais) and Lakhers (Maras) would be in one Regional Council as they were birds of the same feather. To pursue their demand for an establishment of Regional Council the Pawis (Lais) and Lakhers (Maras) formed a common political party known as Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) on the line of the Mizo Union. In the meantime, the Bordoloi Sub-Committee asked the Mizos whether they wanted to remain with the Central legislature or with the Provincial legislature and whether they wished to have representatives in the Ministry in order to safeguard their interest. Subsequently, the Bordoloi Sub-Committee recommended the creation of the District Council administration for the Lushai Hills and Regional Council for the Lakhers (Maras) and Pawis (Lais). Following the recommendation, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council and Pawi-Lakher Regional Councils were set up in 1952 and 1953 respectively.\(^{205}\)

Finally, the Lushai Hills District council was inaugurated on 26th April 1952 at Aizawl by Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief minister of Assam. The Lushai Hills District came to be known as the Mizo District as per the Lushai Hills District Act.

1954 of the Indian Parliament. The first General Election of the Lushai Hills District Council was held on 4th January 1952 and the Mizo Union won 15 seats, out of 18 seats. Consequently, the Lushai Hills District Council also came to be known as Mizo District Council since 1954.\textsuperscript{206} On the other hand, a Regional Council called the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) with Headquarters at Saiha was inaugurated by Saprawnga, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam on 23rd April 1953.

The process for the abolition of the Mizo District Council began with the formation of Union Territory of Mizoram. As such, the Mizo District Council was deleted from Part III of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India with effect from 15th February 1972. However, the ruling Party (Mizo Union) of the then Mizo District Council was scheduled to continue as the caretaker government till the formation of the Legislature of the Union Territory of Mizoram. Contented not only with the dissolution of the Mizo District Council, leaders of the erstwhile Mizo District Council, namely Ch. Chhunga, Dengthuama and other leaders even persuaded leaders of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council for abolition of the PLRC as well as to halt the demand for District Council for better integration of the people of Mizoram. However, the leaders of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council undauntedly adhered to their demand for higher Political status in the form of District Council.

Finally, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was further trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely Pawi Regional Council (PRC), the Lakher Regional Council (LRC), and the Chakma Regional Council (CRC) on 2nd April 1972 as per the Administration of Mizoram Notification No. CCMP/3/72-77 of 01-04-1972.\textsuperscript{207} These three Regional Councils were subsequently upgraded to the status of full-fledged Autonomous District Council on 29th April 1972. The three Autonomous District Councils were placed under the administrative jurisdiction of Chhimtuipui Revenue District till August 1998, and Chhimtuipui District was bifurcated into two new Revenue Districts, namely, Chhimtuipui West District with Headquarters at Lawngtlai.


and Chhimtuipui East District with Headquarters at Saiha by the Government of Mizoram.

The realisation of the power of the state, the growth of modern communications, the growth of factionalism, the principle of democratic decentralisation of power and administration have contributed to the political consciousness of some tribal communities in Mizoram. Like many tribal groups, the Hmars have, lately, asserted their separate identity and demanded the creation of a separate Autonomous District within Mizoram. In short, the Hmars in Northern part of Mizoram demanded a separate political administrative unit like those of the Maras and Lais in the Southern and Chakmas in the Western parts of Mizoram. It was a matter of surprise to the Mizo people as to the birth of three new Autonomous District Councils within Mizoram and simultaneously the existing Mizo Hills District Council was abolished. In the words of C. G. Verghese and R. L. Thanzawna, it was like the “Freedom at midnight” giving birth to two nations-India and Pakistan. The creation of these three Autonomous District Councils were very much disapproved by all political parties and the educated people of Mizoram because they believed that the creation of Autonomous Districts after the name of each tribe would bring about eventual breaking up of Mizoram on communal line. The proof was that when Mizoram was accorded a full-fledged statehood on 20th February 1987, the Hmar tribe inhabiting the North and North-eastern parts of Mizoram had anticipated to parcel out the new political arrangement by forming a separate Autonomous District Council for themselves.

In spite of them being a sizeable population, communal based political consciousness among the Hmars in Mizoram developed very late. It was only after the birth of Mizoram statehood in 1987, the Hmars had raised their demand for autonomy. Though one of the largest Mizo clans, the Hmars had never heretofore claimed any political advantage on communal lines. It was evident that the demand for Autonomous District in the North of Mizoram was to some extent an imitation of the three Autonomous District Councils of the Maras, Lais and Chakmas in the South of Mizoram. In the late 1980s, the Hmars came to realise that their political rights were

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denied them for the cause of Mizo politics. As a strong and unified community, the ethnic based political consciousness of the Hmars had partly caused the disunity of the Mizo community. Most of the Hmar and Mizo historians believed that the Hmars were the first settlers in Mizoram and many villages where they lived earlier are still in existence. They agreed that the Hmars had settled Mizoram before the Lushais. Claiming to be original settlers of the present Mizoram, the Hmars, without any hesitation, demanded that it was their political right to create a separate political administrative unit for safeguarding their unique culture and traditions from the mainstream Mizo culture.

In fact, the demand for an Autonomous District in Northern Mizoram by the Hmars was started only after the surrender of MNF volunteers to the Government of India in 1986. During these days, there was a strong feeling of ethnicity among the Hmar leaders in Mizoram, along with the desire to safeguard their language and culture from complete absorption. It was on 18th December 1986, the Hmar People’s Convention (HPC) was formed by the Hmar leaders to initiate the demand for an Autonomous District Council for the Hmars in a non-violent manner. The Hmars quoted the examples of the political favour given to the Lais (Pawis), Maras (Lakhers) and Chakmas in the form of a separate Autonomous District Councils.

**Responses of Government of Mizoram**

In the early days of the Hmar People’s Convention (HPC), there was no proper structure of organisation of its Units and Branches in various Hmar villages. The biggest obstacle to the smooth functioning of the party was lack of proper organisation and administrative structure. Moreover, lack of political awareness of the majority of the Hmar population in Mizoram was a drawback for the progress of the party movement. Thus, the party leaders felt it necessary to give political training to the newly recruited volunteers, mostly of Hmar youths and youngsters by organising camps and seminars at various villages.

In the beginning, these political trainings given to the youths and youngsters were not much heeded by the Government of Mizoram and Young Mizo Association (YMA). When the same method of political training, under the leadership of Malsawma Ralchhun, was organised in the jungle of Khawbawn in 1988, the Government of
Mizoram started to believe that HPC had undertaken military exercise and training to counter the Government by arm revolt. There was such rumour among the public as well. The political training was joined by a large number of youths from different villages of Mizoram. The Government of Mizoram secretly gave close attention to the political activities of HPC and it regarded the political training organised in the deep forest of Khawbawn as potent enough to incur adverse consequences on the politics and peaceful atmosphere of Mizoram, if unchecked. Thus, the political training of HPC was considered as a military training by the Government of Mizoram. The HPC, however, claimed that the political training was nothing but a mere workshop and seminar on political and social identity awareness in an organized manner so as to influence its members within the party. The training was a great success for the party.

When the political training was over, the participants began to campaign among their family members, friends and neighbours. The message of their campaign was on the idea that Hmar is a separate tribe having its own culture and identity different from any other Mizo tribe. They also claimed that they had a distinct culture, rich traditions and customs and spoke a common language called Hmar which was different in accent and tune from the Lushai, Pawi, Lakher and Chakma. Thus, the ethnic and cultural differences eventually gave birth to the feeling of Hmar nationalism and the formation of HPC. Within a short period of time, the political awareness campaign became very successful and people were politically awakened and the HPC party soon became the most powerful political organisation among the Hmars. However, the birth of the HPC party was obviously not a sudden development. In fact, there were several factors responsible for the late formation of HPC party in the 1980s in Mizoram.

To strive for its political objective, HPC leaders, for the first time, met the then Chief Minister, Laldenga, in 1988. The Chief Minister guaranteed them that the Cabinet will discuss their political grievances at the earliest possible. Before it had taken any action on the Hmar issue the Laldenga ministry was defeated in the House and the Congress ministry under the Chief Ministership of Lalthanhawla was formed. The Congress ministry could not fulfil the Hmar demand of creating a new Autonomous District Council in Mizoram. The Congress Government was not interested in solving the Hmar political problem. The Government felt that the creation of new Autonomous District Council for the Hmar community alone will provoke several communities to
demand for the same. On the other hand, the Government of Mizoram was very much concerned over the voice of YMA which opposed the formation of a Hmar District because YMA felt that the creation of Lai (Pawi), Mara (Lakher) and Chakma Autonomous District Councils by the Government of Mizoram had already weakened the spirit of Mizo unity. The Government thus chose to be totally indifferent to the political aspiration of the Hmars.

To pressurize and draw more attention from the Government of Mizoram, HPC launched its first ever agitation in the form of peaceful bandh throughout HPC demand area on 28th March 1987. Thousands of bandh supporters came out to join the non-violent peaceful bandh which lasted for twenty four hours. They blocked moving vehicles along the national highway 150 at Sailutar village. The Government of Mizoram sent Mizoram Armed Police (MAP) to counter the bandh supporters by force. The physical clash between the Mizoram Armed Police and the Hmar people ushered in the beginning of bloodshed and many bandh supporters were wounded in the confrontation. To react to the action of the Government, HPC again called for a second phase of forty eight hours non-violent peaceful bandh on 18th-19th April 1989. The bloody counter measures and operations adopted by the Government of Mizoram had prompted the bandh supporters to flee to the forest and take up arms in revolt against the Government. The conflict erupted due to counter-mobilization against each other. The repressive measures taken up by the Government of Mizoram within the HPC demand area was an unforgettable episode in the history of the Hmars in Mizoram.210

With a view to maintain law and order situation night curfew was imposed in the villages throughout the HPC demand area by the Government of Mizoram from 22nd December 1992 to 5th January 1993. The imposition of such a long night curfew had crippled public life in the whole of HPC demand area. It was also compulsory for any traveller or stranger to report himself to the nearest police outpost. Such a counter measure enforced by the Government extensively checked the movement of HPC volunteers. Meanwhile, Special Force of Mizoram Arm Police, formed under the leadership of a certain man named Mr. Lalchung, was one of the effective measures to counter the violent movement of HPC volunteers in Mizoram, Assam and Manipur.

210An interview with Hmingchunghnung, former President HPC and existing Chairman, SHDC on 24th August 2017, Aizawl.
Once, Lalchung was one of the Commanders of HPC but due to some misunderstanding within the leadership of HPC, he, along with some sections of HPC volunteers, secretly went over to Mizoram in 1991 and joined the Mizoram Armed Police in the operation against the HPC volunteers. The Government of Mizoram welcomed Lalchung and his followers with open arms provided them with sophisticated weapons to hunt down HPC volunteers. This Special Force was effectively used by the Government of Mizoram wherever HPC volunteers operated.

The armed confrontation lasted till the signing of Accord on 11\textsuperscript{th} August 1994. The Accord was signed by Lalfakzuala, Chief Secretary, the Government of Mizoram and Hmingchunghnung, the President of HPC, leading to the creation of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC). In contrary to their initial demand of the creation of Hmar Autonomous District Council, the Hmars were given a small administrative Council known as Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) and its headquarters at Sakawrdai. The Hmars in Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Tripura were far from being satisfied with the outcome of the long-drawn movement of HPC that had claimed a number of lives for the creation of Hmar District. It was agreed in one of the provisions of the Memorandum of Settlement that the Government of Mizoram would take immediate steps for the upgradation of SHDC to a full-fledged Autonomous District Council for the Hmars within two years of interim period, as clearly written in Para 5.5 of the Memorandum of Settlement. But the Government of Mizoram had chosen to ignore the matter till then.

According to the Accord, the President of HPC would be Chairman of the Council during the interim period of two years. The Memorandum of Settlement reserved the right of preserving and promoting Hmar culture and identity. The Government of Mizoram recognised Hmar language as one of the major languages of the State of Mizoram and a medium of instruction up to primary level in the schools within the jurisdiction area of the Sinlung Hills Development Council. The existing Primary Health Centre at Sakawrdai would be upgraded to Community Health Centre with thirty beds. The Government of Mizoram will open a new Civil Sub-Division at Sakawrdai including Sub-Divisional offices of different departments at convenient locations within the Council area. The Government of Mizoram agreed to the payment
of ex-gratia to the next of kin of HPC cadres killed in armed confrontations during insurgency and facilitate rehabilitation of the HPC undergrounds.

Unfortunately, it was only after three years from the date of the Accord was signed that the SHDC was incepted by the Government. The reason why SHDC functioned so late was mainly due to the controversial issue of boundary demarcation. Unresolved boundary issue between the Government of Mizoram and HPC leaders hindered any progress for the smooth functioning of the Council. Had there been bilateral agreement on the question of demarcation of boundary during the peace talks, such boundary issue could have been avoided and it would never be the core problem between the Government and HPC even today. The Government of Mizoram unilaterally issued a notification by forming a Four-Member Committee chaired by Hmingthanzuala to review the verification of Hmar population within the whole of HPC demand area which had been verified by the Three-Member Committee chaired by H. Raltawna. The intention of the Government of Mizoram was vague, and the HPC flatly rejected the unilateral decision of the Government, accusing it of trying to defile the three-member commission reports submitted by H. Raltawna.

The unfavourable atmosphere over the question of SHDC boundary between the Government of Mizoram and HPC leaders has been the bone of contention that impedes every point of implementation of the Accord even today. Since there was no common ground to resolve the boundary issue, the Government of Mizoram tried its best to avoid confrontation with the HPC General Headquarters, and it was quick to welcome the break-away faction of HPC leaders as genuine representatives of HPC party. By observing the Government of Mizoram’s low profile upon the HPC General Headquarters, the party repeatedly lodged a complaint to the Government. But all such grievances turned out to be futile efforts for the HPC General Headquarters. In spite of repeated protest from HPC General Headquarters, the Government approved the break-away faction to be the legitimate representatives. The Government also held talks with them in pursuance of the previous stalemate over the controversial SHDC boundary demarcation. As a result, the Government of Mizoram, unilaterally issued a Gazette notification concerning description of the boundary line of SHDC on 17th April 1997. In protest against such notification, HPC General Headquarters launched a demonstration programme on 6th May 1997 at Sakawrdai. Many people came out and
joined a procession with black shawls and shouted out their points of objection over the Government’s notification and the people took resolutions against the matter. The resolution of the people was submitted to the Government. However, there was no improvement on the matter.

Subsequently, the Government of Mizoram issued another Gazette notification in regard to the inception of the interim period of SHDC on 25th August 1997 notifying that the two-year interim period of SHDC should be calculated from the date of formal inauguration of the Council at Sakawrdai. Thus, the SHDC was officially inaugurated on 27th August 1997 by the then Honourable Home Minister, Liansuama. To administrate the Interim Council, the Government of Mizoram installed Mr. Lalrosiem and Mr. Khunte, members of the break-away faction of HPC as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. Along with five other members, Lalrosiem started functioning SHDC Interim Council with a lump sum allotment of fund amounting to Rupees Ten lakhs only. In the words of Hmingchunghnung, ‘this was a gross violation of para 5.7 of the Memorandum of Settlement which clearly states that the Chairman of the SHDC would initially be the President of HPC. This means that Hmingchunghnung himself who was the then President and signatory of the Accord 1994’ was to be the chairman.211 The actual financial position of SHDC can be assessed from the following table of fund allotment and requirements of fund for the initial establishment of SHDC put forward to the 10th Finance Commission of India by the state Government of Mizoram.

Statement showing requirement of Fund Non-recurring and Recurring and Year-wise for the implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) between Government of Mizoram and Hmar People Convention (HPC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recurring</th>
<th>Non-recurring</th>
<th>Total (Rupees in Lacs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>120.00</td>
<td>142.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>121.00</td>
<td>230.00</td>
<td>351.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>136.00</td>
<td>184.00</td>
<td>320.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>148.00</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>206.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

211 An Interview with Hmingchunghnung, former President HPC and existing Chairman, SHDC on 24th August 2017, Aizawl.
The Government of Mizoram had allotted Fund for SHDC as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fund Allotted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>Rs.10.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>Rs. 23.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>Rs. 56.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>Rs. 55.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Rs. 65.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>Rs. 78.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>Rs. 80.00 lakhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>Rs. 89.00 lakhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>Rs. 107.00 lakhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>Rs. 125.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>Rs. 141.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>Rs. 196.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Rs. 250.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Rs. 247.16 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Rs. 235.10 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>Rs. 299.59 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Rs. 300.00 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>Rs. 134.31 lakhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>Rs. 189.43 lakhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Rs. 212.47 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Rs. 197.65 lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table shows the incumbency of SHDC Chairman and how the Government of Mizoram appointed them from time to time:

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\[^{212}\textit{Ibid.}\]
As mentioned earlier, the Accord signed by the government of Mizoram and HPC was not accepted by some members of HPC. On 6th June 1994, just before the surrender of HPC to the Government of Mizoram, Lalhmingthang Sanate rendered his resignation from the membership of HPC to Hmingchunghnung, President, HPC, and formed another party known as the Hmar People’s Convention-Democratic (HPC-D) and continued the demand of Hmar Autonomous District in Mizoram. The party was an offshoot of HPC which was left behind and never surrendered to the Government of Mizoram. It was a militant group active in Mizoram, Manipur and Assam which did not accept the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the Government of Mizoram and HPC in 1994.

It would be worthwhile to distinguish the HPC-D party from the recognised political party of HPC. The party was formed in 1995 by a few former leaders of HPC who were left behind. The party was mainly committed to continue the demand for a full-fledged Autonomous District Council from Mizoram. In short, HPC-D felt that the entire Hmar political problem was viewed only from a law and order angle by the Government of Mizoram and the political aspects of the Hmar were more or less ignored in the peace talks. As a result, the implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement was still the demand of the HPC-D. It was also said that the party was formed to safeguard the Hmar people from various militant groups operating in North-

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Ibid. 213
East India. The party also claimed that it was the vanguard of Hmar nationalism movement.

Owing to the failure of the Congress Ministry of Mizoram in fulfilling its obligation on many agreed points, the Mizo National Front (MNF) and HPC party signed an agreement on 17th February 1998 to work together and had a common candidate, Dr. R. Lalthangliana, in the coming election of Member of Parliament. It was also agreed that the Accord of HPC and Government of Mizoram would be completely fulfilled without any delay provided that MNF formed ministry in Mizoram. This agreement was signed by Lalrorel, the President of Hmar Volunteer Welfare Association on behalf of HPC party and Tawnluia, the Senior Vice-President of MNF on behalf of MNF party. But the MNF ministry also breached the agreement which had been signed on flimsy ground and the Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) was not up-graded to the status of Sixth Scheduled and there was no political development in the position of the Council, and so it remained the same during the two terms of MNF ministry. During these ten years, there were many talks on the question of proper implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement which had been signed more than decade back between the Government of Mizoram and HPC, but no concrete steps had been taken for complete solution of the Hmar unrest. While HPC was working over-ground as a registered political party for the legitimate functioning of SHDC, the HPC-D, on the other side, acts as underground outfit to press the Government of Mizoram to implement the Accord signed with HPC. In order to negotiate the demand of HPC-D, the Government of Mizoram had been pressurised by HPC party and many Hmar organisations in Mizoram.

Some regional parties like Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), Mizoram People Conference (MPC) also used to express their support to resolve the Hmar issues based on the Memorandum of Settlement. Lalduhawma, one of the MLAs and the President of ZNP party, expressed his support to resolve the Hmar political problem and to fulfil the implementation of the HPC Accord by the Government in the state Assembly floor.214 Mention may be made of the press note of MNF General Headquarters Aizawl, on 5th January 1998 duly signed by Zoramthanga, President of MNF declared that MNF

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214 Proceedings of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, eleventh Session of the Sixth Assembly held from 16th July 2012 to 2nd August 2012, Mizoram Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Aizawl, p. 407.
party promised to accomplish and fulfil the Memorandum of Settlement 1994 between the Government of Mizoram and HPC if they won the State Assembly election. Many Politicians and eminent leaders used to question on what ground and what reason the Lalthanhawla Congress Government had signed the Memorandum of Settlement with HPC when it had no intention of keeping the promises it had made. The Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) accused the Lalthanhawla Government playing double standards to appease the Mizo people on one side by preserving and propagating the unity and integrity of Mizoram and its people and on the other side it promised to fulfil the Peace Accord with the Hmars. Due to pressure from various sides, the Government of Mizoram initiated the first reconciliation process to hold a peace talk with HPC-D on 3rd August 2001. However, before the actual date of peace talk was declared, there was a deadlock on the question of the venue. Both sides accused each other for the failure of the proposed peace talk.

The HPC party felt that the MNF Ministry too was not at all interested in solving the Hmar political problem. Since, the peace accord was signed between Congress Government of Mizoram and HPC, the unfinished work left by the Congress Government for the fulfilment of Memorandum of Settlement was neglected and ignored during the ten year ministry of MNF also. Since then, HPC lost confidence in the MNF government and it was inclined towards working with the Congress Party in the forthcoming Assembly election of 2008.215 It was on 24th October 2008, the Congress party of Mizoram and HPC party made a declaration to have common candidates in the MLA General Election. The following points of declaration were jointly made by both the parties.

1. The Memorandum of Settlement signed between the Government of Mizoram and HPC on 27th July 1994 will be fully implemented
2. The SHDC Rules 2008 passed by MNF Government was not accepted by both the parties but the proposed SHDC Rules 2006 will be accepted
3. New Land Used Policy (NLUP) and any development work within the SHDC area will go through SHDC and they will be co-ordinated jointly by both the parties

215An interview with Lalrosiem, President, HPC and former Chairman SHDC on 12th June 2015, Aizawl.
4. At least one member (representative) from HPC party will be included as a Board member of MKVI (Mizoram Khadi and Village Industries) and ZIDCO (Zoram Industrial Development Corporation)

5. The present SHDC budget will be increased to the maximum possible level

6. All the three Congress candidates within the SHDC area be voted by all the Hmars

7. It was agreed that the SHDC boundary which had been discussed in 1995 by a Cabinet meeting based on Hmar community in majority be reviewed and a new Commission be created to finalise the boundary line

To ensure the above agreed points, Lalthanhawla, the former Chief Minister of Mizoram and the President of Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee and Malsawma Darngawn, the Chairman of SHDC, who represented HPC party, respectively signed their names. Moreover, the three candidates of Congress party within the SHDC area, namely, Chawngtinthanga, 8-Chalfilh A/C, R.L. Pianmawia, 7-Tuivawl A/C and K. Lalrinthanga, 6-Serlui A/C had made a separate agreement with HPC leaders on 9th November 2008 to fulfil the Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of Mizoram and HPC if they were elected. They also promised to fulfil and abide by the agreements made between them and to favour the Hmar people in all the Government schemes for their development. To keep the agreement, the HPC leaders canvassed only for the Congress candidates to the Hmar people in SHDC area and thus, all the three candidates were elected in their respective constituencies.

In the 2008 Mizoram assembly election the MNF party was badly defeated by the Indian National Congress (INC) led by Lalthanhawla. The new ministry led by Lalthanhawla was welcomed by the Hmars with high hopes to be the saviour of their community from the politics of uncertainty, and HPC party also believed that all the Hmar political problems could be resolved with the Congress. Yet again, the implementation of the Accord was not taken very seriously by the Congress Ministry. Even the three sitting MLAs from SHDC area remained silent on the Hmar issues. The negligence of the Government for the implementation of Accord compelled the people of Sinlung Hills to adopt and form Sinlung Hills All Party Leaders Committee (SHAPLC) at Sakawdai on 25th August 2011. The All Party Leaders Committee consisted of the following members:
The SHAPLC submitted a memorandum and appealed to the Government of Mizoram for the early implementation of the HPC Accord and initiate the ground rules for talks with the HPC-D undergrounds. The formation of SHAPLC was meant to increase pressure on the Government of Mizoram to not engage further in delay politics on the implementation of the Accord and it also urged the Government of Mizoram to seriously take up the development of the Hmar area. In order to show unity and solidarity of the people in support of bringing amicable solution of the Hmar political problem, the All Party Leaders Committee organised Peace Rally at the three villages of Sakawrdai, Saiphai and Suongpuiawn on 25th August 2011. The main motive behind the conduct of Public Rally by the APLC was to give more pressure to the Government of Mizoram to keep its promises and fulfil the implementation of the Accord signed between the Government and HPC on the 27th July 1994. The APLC claimed that the gap of seventeen years of non-implementation of the provisions as enshrined in the Memorandum of Settlement was the root cause of the establishment of the party. The unfaithfulness of the Government of Mizoram in the implementation of HPC Accord and half-hearted political measures for the Hmar dominated areas of Mizoram compelled the people to organise one political platform to relieve the grievances of the people. Moreover, due to intermittent disruption of peace and the existence of violent activities from HPC-D outfits, the people of HPC demand area experienced constant fear and social insecurity. The APLC also appealed to the HPC-D undergrounds not to indulge in any act of violence and not to create a sense of fear and insecurity in the minds of the Hmar people.

In order to prevent further deterioration of law and order situation and for the existence of lasting peace and tranquillity in the HPC demand area in particular, SHAPLC was compelled to organise a Peace Rally in those three villages mentioned

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above. The SHAPLC had unanimously decided to appeal to the Government of Mizoram and the Government of India on the following points:

1. We, the people of Sinlung Hills, are pained and disheartened by the fact that more than seventeen years after the signing of Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of Mizoram and the Hmar people’s Convention (HPC) on the 27th July 1994, the Accord has not been implemented in letter and spirit

2. We strongly feel dissatisfied with the 1994 Accord which was devoid of lasting peace and harmony and the HPC-D is up in arms thereby creating disruptive atmosphere in the HPC demand area. We, therefore, appealed to the State Government and the Central Government to initiate ground rules for a political dialogue with the HPC-D for the existence of lasting peace and harmony in the area

3. While Mizoram is celebrating the 25 years of Peace Anniversary (1986-2011), the people of Sinlung Hills area are living in constant fear and insecurity because of HPC-D movement. In order to have peace and harmony prevail throughout Sinlung Hills, we, the people strongly appeal to the Government of Mizoram to take up all necessary measures for the permanent peaceful settlement of all issues

It was on 29th August 2011, the representatives of SHAPLC met Lalthanhawla, the Chief Minister of Mizoram and they submitted their Memorandum. Moreover, they also appealed to the Chief Minister to initiate peace negotiations with HPC-D so that permanent peace and harmony would prevail throughout the SHDC area. At the same time, the Village Council Coordination Committee (VCCC) of Sinlung Hills area also appealed to the Government of Mizoram to create a conducive atmosphere for peace negotiations with the HPC-D. In order to bring an amicable solution to the Hmar political problem in Mizoram the APLC had sincerely looked into the plight of the people and expressed the voice of the people through this resolution and took all necessary actions in resolving all conflicts and circumstances arising out of the demands of HPC-D.

On the other hand, the Home Minister, R. Lalzirliana reiterated that the Hmar’s demand for ADC could not be materialised because the Government of Mizoram would
not support the creation of a new ADC and other related demands. The Home Minister also mentioned that the three ADCs namely, Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Councils had been created in Mizoram without the consent of the Mizo people during the time of Mizoram Union Territory. Owing to short-sightedness in politics, some politicians in Mizoram had supported the creation of these Autonomous Districts for their political benefit. He directly stated that the Government of Mizoram did not entertain the creation of any more ADC’s for any particular community. Moreover, the creation of ADC under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India was not a state subject, but of Indian Parliament. The Hmars complained that its continuous demand for ADC was mainly due to the failure of the Government in implementing the Memorandum of Settlement signed on 27th July 1994 between HPC and the Government of Mizoram.

The 1994 peace agreement resulted in the creation of SHDC and it also clearly stated in one of the five points agreement the Government of Mizoram would take immediate actions for inclusion of an area to be specified within the HPC demand area of Mizoram and the other Non-Scheduled areas of Mizoram in the Tribal area of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India so that the above mentioned agreed points are safeguarded under the Sixth Scheduled to the Constitution of India. The Government of Mizoram also assured that the SHDC would be elevated to a full-fledged Autonomous District Council (ADC) after an interim period of two years. However, not a single assurance of the Accord was fulfilled and Accord was never implemented.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had pressurised the Government of Mizoram to resume peace talks with HPC-D for a peaceful solution of the Hmar political problem. On 22nd December 2011, the Ministry of Home Affairs sent a letter to the Chief Secretary, the Government of Mizoram, instructed the state Government to make immediate arrangement and workout the modalities for the resumption of peace negotiation with HPC-D. The Suspension of Operation (SoO) had been signed bilaterally on 11th November 2010 with an agreement to continue the negotiation for another six months. But the Suspension of Operation did not last long.

due to lack of understanding between the two parties on the question of foreigner issue for the representatives of HPC-D in the proposed peace talks. Rev. Dr. Rochunga Pudaite, an American citizen was said to be one of the delegates of HPC-D in the proposed peace talk. Thus, the Government of Mizoram refused to resume peace talk due to the proposed involvement of Rev. Dr. Rochunga Pudaite as the Government of Mizoram called him a foreigner. In fact, Rochunga Pudaite was born and brought up in Manipur and he got dual citizenship of India and the US. The reconciliation process to solve the Hmar political problem once again failed.

HPC-D denied the allegation made by the Government that their delegation team included a foreigner and the war of words continued between the Government of Mizoram and HPC-D leaders which drifted further apart from the peace talk. The Government of Mizoram also accused the HPC-D cadres of involving in illegal activities during the Suspension of Operation and the Government of Mizoram had informed the Ministry of Home Affairs about the matters so that it would take appropriate actions.

Meanwhile, owing to leadership crisis, HPC-D party was broken up into two parties in 2011 over the controversial merger with Kuki National Organisation (KNO). It was on 31st August 2011, the representatives of KNO and HPC-D expressed their willingness to share the umbrella of KNO and the Deed of Agreement was hereby signed by Mr. Lahlmingthang Sanate, the President of HPC-D and Mr. P. S. Haokip, the President of KNO. According to the Deed of Agreement HPC-D would fully support KNO to achieve its political objective of statehood for the Kuki people comprising all their ancestral lands. Moreover, in the noble endeavour for Kuki statehood, the leadership of KNO was fully authorised to represent the organisation in all political negotiations with the Government of India and, where required, to facilitate talks between HPC-D and the Government of Mizoram to settle the Hmar political issue in Mizoram.

Due to misunderstanding over the Deed of Agreement within the leadership of HPC-D, majority of members led by Mr. Zosangbera, revolted against Mr. Lahlmingthang Sanate, the President who signed the Deed of Agreement. Lahlmingthang Sanate was impeached from the Presidency, but this impeachment
charge was not accepted by him. He strongly dismissed his impeachment as baseless and unfounded.

Subsequently, HPC-D party broke up into two groups as HPC-D (President’s party) and HPC-D (Chairman’s party) led by Lalthmingthang Sanate and Zosangbera respectively. The split of the party into two camps had far-reaching consequences to the on-going negotiation with the Government of Mizoram. The Government of Mizoram took a chance for the delay of a peace process which has been initiated. The Government also accused the HPC-D of violating the Suspension of Operation (SoO) signed with the central Government by indulging in underground activities whereas HPC-D was supposed to hand-over arms and ammunitions in the specified designated camp. Moreover, the Government of Mizoram also complained that it did not know with which faction, that of Lalthmingthang Sanate or Zosangbera, to resume the on-going peace negotiations because both the parties claimed to be the genuine one. The Government of Mizoram was in a state of confusion between the two parties. Meanwhile, H. Zosangbera, Chairman, HPC-D was arrested from Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi by a combined team of the Mizoram Police and Delhi Police on 17th July 2012. Lalropui Famhawite, Army Chief, HPC-D, and Biaknunga, Deputy Army Chief were also arrested a few days back from Silchar Airport by the Mizoram Police.218

After two years of stalemate, the Government of Mizoram continued peace talks with the Zosangbera’s faction on 31st January 2013 at State Guest House, Aizawl. In the talk, the Government of Mizoram was represented by Lalbiakzama, Joint Secretary, Home Department, H. Ramthlengliana, S.P. CID (SB), Lalthriatpuia, Deputy Secretary, Home, David H. Lalthlangliana, Home OSD and Laltanpuia Sailo, Inspector, CID (SB). The HPC-D was represented by Lalbeisei, Public Relation Officer (PRO), Hrangneikunga, two consultants Lalthalien and Francis Songate. The representatives from both the parties agreed to sign another six months of cease fire agreement.219 Talk continued on 19th April 2013 and 18th July 2013 at State Guest House, Aizawl. In the talk, the seven representatives of the Government of Mizoram were led by Lalbiakzama, Joint Secretary, Home Department and the representatives of HPC-D

218The Aizawl Post Daily on 19th July 2012, Aizawl.
219Vanglaini Daily on 31st January 2013, Aizawl.
were led by Lalthanglien, Working Chairman, HPC-D. Peace talk was smoothly held and the delegates of HPC-D expressed their stance on the demand of Autonomy under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. The same year, on 14th August 2013, another peace talk was held again at State Guest House, Tourist Lodge, Chaltlang, Aizawl. The delegates from Government of Mizoram and HPC-D were led by B. Lalhmingthanga, Secretary, LAD and Lalthanglien Hmar, (L. T. Hmar) respectively. On the question of Suspension of Operation (SoO), the Government of Mizoram proposed another six months of cease fire but the HPC-D side did not agree the proposal. Moreover, the HPC-D also proposed the talk to upgrade to Political level so that the demands of HPC-D would be deliberated thoroughly. The talk failed due to disagreement on both the proposals. Both sides could not come to term for further talk because there was no mutual understanding for the peace talk.

While the bargaining peace proposal was in process, the Governor of Mizoram had notified the Mizoram Gazette upon the decision of the Council of Ministers by circulation on the 26th September 2013 and notified Delimitation of the Constituencies of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) so as to enforce the SHDC (Election) Rules, 2008 with immediate effect as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Village Covered</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Tlangnuam  4. Daido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Phuaibuang Constituency</td>
<td>1. Phuaibuang - I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Phuaibuang -II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Suangpuilawn Constituency
   1. Suangpuilawn - I
   2. Suangpuilawn-II
   3. Zawngin

4. Vanbawng Constituency
   1. Vanbawng
   2. Lamherh
   3. Khawlekd

5. Ratu Constituency
   1. Ratu
   2. Sailutar
   3. Sunhluchhip

6. New Vervek Constituency
   1. New Vervek
   2. Lungsum
   3. Damdiai

7. Sakawrdai Constituency
   1. Sakawrdai ‘S’
   2. Thingsat
   3. North Khawdungsei

8. Vaitin Constituency
   1. Vaitin
   2. Sakawrdai ‘N’
   3. Khawpuar
9. Zohmun Constituency  
   1. Zohmun  
   2. Mauchar  
   3. Palsang

10. Tinghmun Constituency  
   1. Tinghmun  
   2. Zokhawthiang  
   3. Upper Sakawrdai

11. Saipum Constituency  
   1. Saipum  
   2. Chawnpui

12. Saiphai Constituency  
   1. Saiphai  
   2. Phainuam  
   3. Saihapui ‘V’

Although, the delimitation of the constituencies of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) had been notified by the Government of Mizoram, no election of the Council members had been conducted so far. One very surprising for the people of Sinlung Hills Mizoram is that SHDC was created by the Notification of Mizoram Official Gazette upon the agreement between the Government of Mizoram and HPC on 27th July 1994. Thus, the creation of SHDC was not under the Bill or Act of Parliament or Mizoram Legislative Assembly.\(^\text{222}\)

It was on 28\(^{th}\) March 2015, the Chairman of the Mizoram Assembly Committee on Government Assurances, R. L. Pianmawia and two other members of the Committee, Lalthanlian and Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu were ambushed by the HPC-D militants between Tinghmun Village and Zokhawthiang village in Aizawl District, Mizoram, bordering Manipur. The team was on official tour to that area for inspection of developmental works. Battalion of the Mizoram Armed Police (MAP) Sub-Inspector Zoramthara Khawlhring, Driver Lalchualoiva and Constable Hmangaihmawia were

\(^{222}\text{Proceedings of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly on 20th March 2013, Aizawl, p. 277.}\)
killed and five other were injured in the confrontation.\textsuperscript{223} The incident was one of the major and fatal strike of HPC-D after the peace talk failed on 14\textsuperscript{th} August 2013. The action of HPC-D was very much condemned by the State Government. Political parties like ZNP, MNF, MPC etc. and CYMA also expressed their condemnation to the action of HPC-D. All the political parties also agreed to demand to the Government that HPC-D be declared as an unlawful organisation in Mizoram. R. Lalzirliana, Home Minister also informed all the political parties that the State Government was processing and drafting Disturbance Act against any unlawful organisation and activities.\textsuperscript{224} Moreover, the Government of Mizoram also proposed the HPC-D demand area to be declared as disturbed area. But this proposal was not accepted by many political parties because the people of that area will be very much affected. Especially, the Peoples’ Right to Information and Development Implementing Society of Mizoram (PRISM) has strongly criticised the Government of Mizoram’s decision to declare the Hmar dominated area in Mizoram bordering Manipur ‘Disturbed Area’.

The negotiations between the state government and HPC-D had fizzled out due to a deadlock on the extension of period of Suspension of Operation (SoO) in August 2013. After two years of stalemate, the first round of peace talk was conducted on 10th August 2015 at Tourist Lodge, Chaltlang, Aizawl. In the peace talk, the HPC-D representatives submitted their five-point charter of demands to the Government of Mizoram. The second round of peace talk was held on 5th June 2016 at State Guest House, Aizawl. During the talk, the six HPC-D delegates were led by Lalthanglien Hmar. Lalbiakzama, Additional Secretary, Home Department was the leader of the Government Delegation. Talks were held in a cordial atmosphere and mutual trust. Another third round of peace talk was held on 16th December 2016 at State Guest House, Aizawl. The delegates of HPC-D submitted their demands to the Government’s delegations and HPC-D also proposed the level of the current talk to elevate to the political level. The Hmar delegation had reiterated their demand for creation of a separate Autonomous District Council in the Hmar dominated area in the North of Mizoram. But the Government’s delegates strongly asserted that conceding of the demand for the creation of Autonomous District Council for the Hmar people is not possible for the Government of Mizoram. However, other matters regarding the

\textsuperscript{223}Vanglaini Daily on 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2015, Aizawl.
\textsuperscript{224}Vanglaini Daily on 15\textsuperscript{th} April 2015, Aizawl.
The implementation of HPC Accord were widely discussed in the talk. In this talk, the HPC-D delegates handed over the arms and ammunition taken away from the Mizoram Police in an ambush on 28 March 2015 while the Government of Mizoram reciprocated by releasing the outfit’s self-style Army Chief Lalropui Famhoite on bail who had been arrested on 16th April 2015 at Silchar by the Mizoram Police.

To fulfil and implement the main objective of the Memorandum of Settlement, Sinlung Hills Accord Implementation Demand Committee (SHAIDC), which was formed on 9th February 2016, submitted Memorandum to the Chief Minister on 12th February 2016. The memorandum, signed by Vanlalsiama and Lalparkunga, Chairman and Secretary respectively, asked Lalthanhawla, Chief Minister, the government of Mizoram, to implement the provisions of HPC Accord and take immediate measures to conduct Council election as per the Sinlung Hill Development Council (Election) Rules, 2008 of the Mizoram Official Gazette. Unfortunately, the Government of Mizoram could not conduct the Council election because the Sinlung Hill Development Council (Election) Rules 2008 was yet to be reviewed by the Government.

Moreover, Mr. Vanlalsiama and Mr. Lalparkunga, Chairman and Secretary of SHAIDC respectively, sued a court case to the Guwahati High Court on 25th May 2016 against the Government of Mizoram for not fulfilling and implementing the HPC Accord. The Guwahati High Court Aizawl Bench summoned the Sinlung Hills Accord Implementation Demand Committee on 22nd June 2016. On 4th September 2017, the Guwahati High Court Aizawl Bench judge Mr. Michael Zothankhuma issued an order to the Government of Mizoram to implement clause 5.1 and clause 5.3 of the Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of Mizoram and HPC within one year i.e from the date of court order. According to the above clauses of the Memorandum of Settlement, the Government of Mizoram will initiate measures for use of Hmar language as a medium of instruction up to Primary level and recognition of the Hmar language as one of the major languages of the State of Mizoram.

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225 An interview with Darrosang, President, Mizoram Hmar Students’ Association on 2nd March 2015, Aizawl.
226 Memorandum submitted to Lalthanhawla, Chief Minister, by the SHAIDC on 10th February 2016, Aizawl.
227 An interview with Hmingchunghnung, former President HPC and existing Chairman, SHDC on 25th August 2017, Aizawl.
The Mizoram Gazette Extra-Ordinary Published by Authority Notified on 18th September 2017, the Governor of Mizoram pleased to make the rules of the Mizoram (Election to Sinlung Hills Development Council) Rules, 2017. According to the notification, the Rules would come into force from the date of publication in the Official Gazette. This was one of the important developments for the fulfilment of the implementation of the Memorandum of Settlement.

The next round of peace talk was again held on 28th April 2017 at State Guest House, Aizawl. Both sides were hopeful and confident of coming to final stage of agreement for the solution of the Hmar political imbroglio. The Congress Government under the chief ministership of Lalthanhawla strongly asserted that conceding of the demand of Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Scheduled to the Constitution of India was not negotiable in the ongoing peace talk. Mizoram government put forth a precondition that the demand for an ADC under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution should be dropped in all the talks. Thus, the peace talk mostly revolved around how to give more autonomy and more power to the Sinlung Hill Development Council (SHDC) based on the Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of Mizoram and HPC on 27th July 1994.²²⁸ R. Lalzirliana, Home Minister also said that there was no intention of giving or creating a new autonomous district council to any part of the State.²²⁹ Both sides agreed that the Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) should be renamed as Sinlung Hills Council (SHC). Both sides agreed that the next round of peace talk be held as early as possible.

The next peace parley with H. Zosangbera faction of HPC-D would be hopefully the last official level talk as it would be elevated to the political level. At the same time, the Government of Mizoram felt that the exclusion of the HPC-D faction led by Lalthanhawla in the peace talks would not bring a good result in the ongoing peace talks. Thus, the Government of Mizoram invited the HPC-D faction led by Lalthanhawla for a separate peace talk without any pre-condition. However, Lalthanhawla faction proposed pre-conditions like the establishment of Hmar Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in

the Hmar dominated area and Tripartite talks by inclusion of a senior officials from the Central Government. The proposed pre-conditions demanded by the HPC-D faction led by Lalthalangthang Sanate for peace talk was rejected by the Government of Mizoram. Since, the peace talk with the HPC-D faction led by Lalthalangthang Sanate was not possible, the ongoing peace parleys with the major faction led by H. Zosangbera was resumed on 21st-22nd September 2017 at State Guest House, Chaltlang, Aizawlas programmed. The delegates from the Government of Mizoram were Lalbiakzama, (Leader) Additional Secretary, Home, Lalthamangthangthu, SP, CID (SB), Lalthazual, Under Secretary, Home, and David H. Lalthangliana, OSD, Home. The delegates from the HPC-D were Elder Lalthalien, (Leader), Working Chairman, Lalthangliana Hmar, Dr. John Pulamte, David Buhril, Lalthlamuana Hmar, and Lalrammuanpuia. This peace talk was the final peace talk in the official level and it was also agreed both the parties that the next round of peace talk would be elevated to the political level. In the talk, both the parties thoroughly deliberated the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) Bill 2017 drafted by the Government of Mizoram and they also discussed about the power and functions of the SHC clause by clause. They also talked about how the peace Accord would be signed and how to arrange the surrender of HPC-D cadres along with their arms and ammunitions and to rehabilitate them in over-ground. It was agreed that the next round of talk would be held under the leadership of R. Lalzirliana, Home Minister, Government of Mizoram.

Over ten rounds of official level talks and two rounds of political level talks have been held since 2010 to reach memorandum of settlement between Government of Mizoram and HPC-D in the following dates and places.

1. 11th November 2010 at State Guest House, Aizawl
2. 31st January 2013 at State Guest House, Aizawl
3. 19th April 2013 at Tourist Lodge, Aizawl
4. 18th July 2013 at Tourist Lodge, Aizawl
5. 14th August 2013 at Tourist Lodge, Chaltlang
6. 10th August 2015 at Tourist Lodge, Chaltlang
After several rounds of official level talks were held, the first round of political level talks between Mizoram government and the insurgent outfit HPC (D) began on 07\textsuperscript{th} and 08\textsuperscript{th} March 2018 at State Guest House, Chaltlang, Aizawl. The political talks circled around finalisation of the draft memorandum of settlement which would give more autonomy to Sinlung Hills Development Council constituted following the Accord signed between Government of Mizoram and the erstwhile underground HPC in 1994. The talk recommended that Sinlung Hills Development Council should be changed into Sinlung Hills Council and a bill for the recommendation would be introduced in the state legislature to become act.

**Accord of Government of Mizoram and HPC (D), 2018**

The delegation from the Government of Mizoram was led by Political Adviser to Chief Minister, Lalrinmawia Ralte, while the delegation of HPC (D) was headed by the Working Chairman of the party, Lalthanglieni Hmar. Thus, the first round of political level talk was concluded under a cordial atmosphere and mutual trust.

On 02\textsuperscript{nd} April 2018, the Government of Mizoram and HPC (D) signed a Memorandum of Settlement at the state guest house at Chaltlang, Aizawl by Chief Secretary, Arvind Ray, Government of Mizoram and HPC (D) Chairman, H. Zosangbera in the presence of government officials and the outfit’s leaders. As a result, HPC (D) which had been demanding for the ADC in Mizoram was determined to end

\[\text{Vanglaini Daily} \text{ on 16\textsuperscript{th} April 2017, Aizawl.}\]
\[\text{Vanglaini Daily} \text{ on 22\textsuperscript{nd} September 2017, Aizawl.}\]
almost two decades of hostilities with the government by establishing Sinlung Hills Council. The terms of the agreement were thoroughly discussed in detail and agreed upon by both sides.

The main objective of the Memorandum of Settlement was to give enhanced autonomy in the manner of Administration within the framework agreed upon by both parties, in the sphere of socio-economic, political and cultural development of the people under the jurisdiction of the Sinlung Hills Council. In terms of the aforesaid objective, the Sinlung Hills Development Council came to be thus envisaged to be rechristened as the Sinlung Hills Council by an Act of State Legislature.

The Government of Mizoram had to consult and give due regard to the views of the Sinlung Hills Council before the implementation of any law in the Council Area on the subjects like religious and social practices of the people living in the Sinlung Hills Council Area. The customary laws and procedures of the Hmar Community. The Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) on their part agreed to undertake, within the agreed time-frame, all necessary steps to end all underground activities, to bring all activists of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) with their arms, ammunition and equipment to ensure their return to civil life.

The accord mentions that Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) should take immediate steps to amend or restructure whatever might be if needed, its guiding rules and constitutional articles so as to make them conform to the provisions of Law.

The Government of Mizoram also should take steps for relief/rehabilitation of all Hmar People's Convention-Democratic underground personnel hailing from the State of Mizoram coming over ground and an ex-gratia/rehabilitation scheme would be implemented by the State Government from its own resources or by exploring avenues for availing the rehabilitation package from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Rewards should also be given for surrendered arms and ammunitions by the Government of Mizoram, at the scale to be prescribed.

It was also agreed that the Hmar People's Convention-Democratic should no longer indulge in any anti-social activity or extending support to any insurgent group by supplying arms or providing protection or training or help in any manner. It was also
highly expected to do its best to fully implement all provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding in order to bring about a lasting peace in the Sinlung Hill Council area.

**Power and functions of the Council**

The council as part of its power and functions should undertake to formulate plan and schemes for Sinlung Hills Council area, set priorities and determine plan, policies and thrust areas and forward the proposed plan to the State Government for approval. It should execute and implement Sinlung Hills Council area plan, out of the outlay earmarked as discretionary and incentive fund/separately earmarked to meet the local aspirations. It must, from time to time examine all plan proposals under normal State Plan, CSS and other funding agencies within the Council area and forwarding the same to the State Government. More importantly, the council should make its own budget stating the specific head for expenditure and bring forth for government approval.

On fulfilment of the stipulations contained in Para 4.1 no member of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) now coming over ground should be prosecuted for offences committed in connection with underground activities. Investigation of all cases registered in Mizoram which are in progress currently against Hmar People’s Convention (Democratic) personnel should be dropped forthwith and those convicted of any such offence should also be granted remission of sentences.

The Government of Mizoram should take steps to give enhanced authority to the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) immediately after the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) and in furtherance, the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between the Government of Mizoram & the Hmar People’s Convention (HPC) on 27th July 1994 would be superseded.

The Government of Mizoram and HPC (D) agreed that laying down of the outfit’s arms and ammunitions and home coming ceremony would be held on 13th April 2018. Accordingly, more than 100 HPC (D) rebel members handed over forty eight different sophisticated arms and ammunitions on the said date at Central Training Institute, Sesawng, Aizawl District.
To fulfil the Memorandum of Settlement signed on 2nd April 2018, the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) Bill on 27th June 2018. The formation of SHC and the Act or Bill passed on its behalf was the result of peace accord signed between Government of Mizoram and HPC (D). The then, Home Minister, R. Lalzirliana introduced the Bill and said that the Bill of SHC envisaged establishment of an authority in the name of SHC which would be given more autonomy and power than the earlier SHDC. The Home Minister also said that SHC should be in accordance with the framework of the Constitution of India. According to the Bill, an interim Council would be formed for a period of six months and after which formal elections would be held.

**The Sinlung Hills Council Bill, 2018**

In order to fulfil the Memorandum of Settlement signed on 2nd April 2018, the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) Bill on 27th June 2018. Thus, Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) was changed into Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) since then. The formation of SHC and the Act or Bill passed on its behalf was the result of peace accord signed between Government of Mizoram and HPC (D) on the 2nd April 2018 at State Guest House, Chaltlang, Aizawl. The then, Home Minister, R. Lalzirliana introduced the Bill and said that the Bill of SHC envisages establishment of an authority in the name of SHC which would be acceded more autonomy and power and functions than the earlier SHDC. The Home Minister also said that SHC should be within the framework of the Constitution of India and they were also confident that the peace accord between the Government of Mizoram and HPC-D would bring a lasting peace and harmony to Mizoram.

According to the Sinlung Hills Council Bill 2018, an interim Council would be formed for a period of six months and after that formal Council elections would be conducted by the Election Commission. The Bill started as to provide for the establishment of an authority in the name and style of “The Sinlung Hills Council,” and for certain matters incidental thereto and connected therewith. It further said in the preamble of the bill that it was expedient to provide for the establishment of the Sinlung Hills Council within the State of Mizoram with autonomy to some extent under the State Government.
In the Preamble it clearly asserts that it is expedient to provide for the establishment of the Sinlung Hills Council within the State of Mizoram with autonomy to some extent under the State Government. It was settled that the bill would be an act in the Mizoram state legislature in the Sixty Ninth year of the Republic of India. The council would be called Sinlung Hills Council within the State of Mizoram which included the areas of the Village Councils as might be notified by the Government, from time to time in the Official Gazette. It would be within the constitutional framework having general council and an executive council as well.

The General Council headed by the chairman would be composed of 14 (fourteen) members of which 12 (twelve) being directly elected by the people and the Government in consultation with the Council would nominate the other two members. Executive Council should be headed by the elected Chief Executive Member and the executive Members should be nominated in accordance with the provisions laid down in the act.

As stated earlier, the Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) was signed on 2nd April 2018 at the State Guest House, Chaltlang, Aizawl, by Mizoram Chief Secretary Arvind Ray and HPC (D) Chairman H. Zosangbera in the presence of high officials from the Government of Mizoram and the Hmar leaders. Both sides were confident that the peace accord would bring a lasting peace in the State.

Many organisations whether political organisations or Non-governmental organizations within the Hmar community had advocated a peaceful approach to address the fundamental root causes of the Hmar political grievances in Mizoram. The induction of conflict at the political, social, economic spheres along with the ethnic identity, are instrumental for separatist or autonomy movements.²³² The need of the hour was trust and understanding of each other’s position. In order to remove the twenty years old Hmar political turmoil in Mizoram, it would be worthwhile to acknowledge and understand how to remove the root causes, instead of just treating and dealing with the symptoms. The Government of Mizoram needed to understand and focus on the fundamental issue of the Hmar problems and pursue economic development of the

Hmar area at the same time because economic development was the key to solving all the socio-political problems. In the society, conflicts usually arise when there is serious unequal distribution of economic and political resources. In this regard the view of Karl Marx needs serious attention. He has drawn attention to class struggle and the way in which political power supports the rich against the poor. If conflicts in society are to be avoided it is essential that there should be political, economic and social equality. Social movements emerged when a section of the population in a polity experiences deprivation—objectively or subjectively.

Thus, it would be the duty of the Government of Mizoram and Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) to intensify its efforts in addressing the root cause of the Hmar political unrest and at the same time, strive to eradicate poverty, backwardness and social injustice in the HPC-D demand area. It is also the primary obligation of the state government to provide its citizens socio-political and economic security.

Responses of Young Mizo Association (YMA)

The Young Mizo Association, popularly known as YMA is the oldest and largest non-profit non-governmental organisation in Mizoram. It was formed on 15th June 1935, originally as the Young Lushai Association (YLA), which was later renamed as Young Mizo Association (YMA) in 1947. This organisation was initiated by one Englishman, Rev. David Edward and it is a non-political, socio-cultural organisation with its central office in Aizawl. There was one sub-headquarters at Lunglei and about four hundred branches throughout the state. This organisation is spread out not only in Mizoram but also has branches in Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura. The main aims and activities of YMA are humanitarian work like building of houses for the poor, the disabled, organising various cultural activities, construction of village roads and paths, improvement in water supply, improvement and maintenance of cemeteries, construction of public urinals and latrines, construction of school buildings, running adult literacy centres, preservation of forest and wild life and

tree plantation programmes, provide the villagers with useful occupations for their spare time.\textsuperscript{235}

YMA has successfully emerged as a strong social organisation by identifying itself as a true social organisation in which every section of the Mizo community willingly and unhesitatingly became a member. Being a voluntary and philanthropic organisation, it is, generally, found in every village in Mizoram. Generally all young boys and girls from all sections of people irrespective of caste, sex or religion of the village are members of YMA. It is now estimated that YMA has more than 340,000 members and 747 branches in Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Meghalaya. By virtue of its enormous membership it has now emerged as one of the strongest voluntary organisations in Mizoram. It has now assumed the status of a vigilant group, which together with the Church, shows no hesitation to exercise their authoritative control of the state decision-making apparatus on some issues.\textsuperscript{236} Now, it is by far the most influential organisation in Mizoram. YMA is striding forward by doing what it ought to do and by opposing what it considers harmful and detrimental to the healthy existence of the Mizo society.\textsuperscript{237} Since the formation of the organisation, YMA has been doing philanthropic and charitable work to the general public by launching a campaign called ‘war on drugs’. The organisation has been working for the whole community to work for the liberation of thousands of young men from drug addiction.

In regard to the HPC-D movement and the implementation of the peace Accord, the Units and Branches of YMA in different villages within the SHDC area had expressed their support for peace and normalcy. Several Groups of YMA in SHDC requested the Government of Mizoram to take a concrete step to bring about an amicable solution to the Hmar political unrest and grievances. While exerting pressure to the Government of Mizoram to fulfil its part for a lasting settlement of the Hmar political issue, the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) at the same time, cautioned the Government of Mizoram to solve the Hmar political problem only within the purview of Mizo unity and integrity.

\textsuperscript{237}Sangkima, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 257.
The 25th Tuivai Group YMA Conference held on 10th March 2010 at Phullen village resolved a resolution to give more pressure to CYMA to take initiative and persuade the Government of Mizoram for initiating a peace negotiation with HPC-D at the earliest possible for a permanent settlement. More than fifty representatives from Group Office Bearers - Vanbawng Branch, N. Khawlek Branch, Zawngin Branch, Suangpuilawn Branch, Plullen Branch, Luangpawn Branch, Phuaibuang Branch Khawlian Branch, N. E. Tlangnuam Branch, Daido Branch and Lamherh Branch came to the Conference. Moreover, the 2nd Serlui Group YMA Conference which was held on 17th March 2010 at Saiphai Community Hall, also appealed to the CYMA to take appropriate actions for the peace talk between HPC-D and the Government of Mizoram. The Conference also unanimously resolved to ask the State Government for the construction of inter-village roads and settle the boundary issue of Assam and Mizoram at the earliest possible.

The 13th Tuisualral Group YMA Conference was held on 5th April 2010 at Tinghmun village under the leadership of Mr. Lalkhawmawia and Mr. Lalrokima, President and Secretary of Tuisualral Group YMA respectively. Representatives from seventeen units and branches within the Tuisualral Group YMA attended the Conference. The Conference passed a number of resolutions to give more pressure to the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) Headquarters in Aizawl and the Government of Mizoram to take immediate action for the development works which have been stopped for the last many years in Sinlung Hills Development Council area. In one of their resolutions, the Tuisualral Group YMA also requested the CYMA leaders to take immediate action for peace and normalcy in Sinlung Hills area so that CYMA would take initiative by appealing the Government of Mizoram for arranging negotiation with the armed group, HPC-D. They asked the Government of Mizoram to initiate a peace negotiation with the HPC-D and resolve the Hmar political problem as per the Memorandum of Settlement.

Therefore, on 24th February 2016 at Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl, the leaders of three Group YMAs namely, Tuisual Group, Chalfilh Group and Tuivai Group YMAs called a joint meeting and made a joint resolution asking the CYMA to take immediate action for the peace talk between the Government of Mizoram and HPC-D. As per the joint resolution, the CYMA held Executive Committee meeting on 24th March 2016 and
resolved to make request to the Government of Mizoram for initiating peace talk in the earliest possible with the HPC-D.\textsuperscript{238} The Government of Mizoram and HPC-D held official level peace talk on 5th June 2016 at State Guest House, Aizawl. Since then, a number of peace talks had been held from time to time. So far, no political level peace talks had been held between the Government of Mizoram and HPC-D.

In fact, CYMA did not accept the solution of the Hmar political problem at the expense of Mizo unity and integrity. The creation of any new Autonomous District Council or Regional Council based on the name of particular tribes or communities was objected strenuously by CYMA. The CYMA felt that the creation of new Autonomous District Council for the Hmar in Mizoram would cause Mizo disunity because this might arouse communal feeling among the other tribes like Ralte, Paite, Lusei etc. Thus, the creation of Hmar Autonomous District in Mizoram was resolutely objected by YMA as it considered that the creation of such Autonomous District Council would automatically produce adverse effect on the unity and territorial integration of Mizoram in the near future.\textsuperscript{239}

According to the Hmars, the creation of Hmar Autonomous District in Mizoram does not signify the creation of preconditions to partition and disintegration of Mizoram, but they feel that the creation of Hmar Autonomous District is needed to begin progressing towards building social security, stability, economic development and prosperity even in the remote villages. In fact, to preserve and maintain Mizo unity is one of the objectives of YMA. Territorial disintegration of the State of Mizoram is not the agenda of the Hmars in Mizoram. They are claiming autonomy within the state of Mizoram. In the words of Stefan Wolff and Marc Weller, Autonomy was re-discovered as a potential remedy to self-determination claims. It was now no longer seen as the secessionists’ stepping stone towards independence, but instead, in a 180-degree reversal of the previous position, autonomy was now considered as a possible tool in accommodating separatist movements without endangering the continued territorial integrity of the existing state.\textsuperscript{240} In fact, the Hmars’ movement has been

\textsuperscript{238} An Interview with Lalhmachuana, General Secretary, Central YMA on 23\textsuperscript{rd} August 2017, Aizawl.
\textsuperscript{239} An interview with Lalbiakzuala, President, Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) on 23\textsuperscript{rd} August 2017, Aizawl.
nothing more than the demand for district autonomy within the existing state of Mizoram. In short, it is to be conceptualised as a quest for identity. Majority of the Mizo people did not understand the intention of the Hmars autonomy movement and therefore, YMA has been always in the way of this movement and also in logger-heads with HPC-D. YMA claims to stand for the preservation and protection of Mizo unity. Since its inception YMA has been working for the unity of Mizo and conservation of Mizo culture and heritage. In order to avoid such an unwanted result, the CYMA also strongly pressed the Government of Mizoram not to compromise with HPC-D on the question of autonomy movement of the Hmar in Mizoram.

Knowing the attitude of YMA towards the HPC-D demand for Hmar Autonomous District Council, HPC-D reacted against the policy of YMA and dictated to all office bearers of YMA units and branches in their demand area to quit their official work and to submit YMA office seals to the YMA Headquarters within a stipulated time. HPC-D warned that any violation of its order by any unit and branch of YMA within the HPC-D demand area would entail dire consequences. On 18th April 2012, HPC-D served a dissolution order to all the YMA branches in the HPC-D demand area in north and north-eastern Mizoram. The HPC-D accused T. Sangkunga, the then President of the Central YMA of making derogatory remarks against the Hmar community in Mizoram and of opposing the up gradation of the SHDC to ADC status and asking the Chief Minister of Mizoram not to entertain the HPC-D demands and asserted that CYMA did not accept non-Lushai speaking people as Mizos. The accusation was flatly rejected by T. Sangkunga. The CYMA had never discussed the affairs of SHDC in the executive meetings and also never interfered in the ethnic politics.241 The CYMA informed all the YMA units not to abide by the dictates of HPC-D but seventeen branches of YMA within the Tuisualral Group YMA organised a meeting at Sakawrdai Community Hall on 21st April 2012 and resolved to obey the order of HPC-D and to submit seals and letter heads of YMA to the Central YMA before 25th April 2012.242

As claimed by HPC-D, the immediate cause of the dissolution of all the YMA units and branches within their demand area was in reaction of the speech delivered by

the then President of CYMA, against the demand of HPC-D, on the occasion of YMA Rising Day at Ramhlun Sports Complex on 26th January 2012. YMA, in general, opined that the creation of Autonomous District Council will threaten Mizo integrity. HPC-D argued that the Lai, Mara, Chakma tribes had been enjoying the fruit of democratic decentralisation of power in the form of Autonomous District Councils in the southern and western parts of Mizoram since many years back. HPC-D also accused the YMA of instigating Lusei speaking against non-Lusei speaking thereby promoting Mizo communalism. It would be worthy of note that YMA has interfered on many occasions in the Government’s decision making. The Government of Mizoram too takes heed of the words of CYMA on many occasions. The Hmars had accused of the YMA of promoting suzerainty of the Lusei speaking people over the non-Lusei speaking community.

In the year 2006 at Khanpui village in Aizawl District, ten Hmar families who migrated from Manipur and Assam were forced to give their signatures on bond because they were not welcomed by the villagers to reside in the village. All the ten family members were given an ultimatum by the village leaders to leave the village within a stipulated time. In connection with this matter, the leaders of the Hmar Students’ Association (HSA), Jt. Headquarters, Aizawl, rushed to Khanpui village and investigated the ground reality of the matter. It was found that the dominant Lushai speaking humiliated those new migrants in defiance of human rights because the dominant Lusei speaking folks in the village did not welcome non-Lusei speaking people for fear of being outnumbered. Moreover, it was later learned that the village leaders were instigated by some YMA branch leaders of the village to do such discrimination against the new migrants. On 4th September 2006, the HSA, Jt. Headquarters, Aizawl, thus, appealed to the Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl District, to interfere in the matter and take immediate actions for the settlement of the problem. Due to the timely interference of some Hmar leaders from Aizawl, the matter was peacefully solved and the ten families were allowed to remain at Khanpui village. Since 2002, communal feeling between the dominant Lusei speaking and the Hmar speaking groups in the village of Khanpui had been at cross-purposes when Lalhluochieng Hmar was severely beaten up by some youths for the fact that he was speaking in Hmar dialect in the street.
There have been several such instances in various villages of Mizoram. Once there was an altercation at Bawngkawn market place over the use of Hmar dialect by one stranger. However, the dispute was peacefully settled by the Bawngkawn Village Council Court. Some years back at Zemabawk, Aizawl, the communal feeling once reared its ugly head when Zemabawk YMA branch reportedly resolved in its meeting not to allow the use of Hmar dialect in the social gatherings, streets and market places. That incident created unhealthy atmosphere between the Hmar speaking group and Lusei speaking community. The dispute was later settled with the goodwill mission of Central YMA and the Hmar leaders in Aizawl. Another untoward incident happened again on 31st May 2001 at Ramhlun South, Aizawl, when one old man Elder. V.L. Ringa, eighty years old of Ramthar village was severely beaten up and knocked down by Liankunga, a former boxer just because the Elder spoke in Hmar Dialect. There were several such incidents in many places because some fanatics want to strictly impose the use of Lusei dialect on the minority communities. The communal feeling of Lusei speaking folks had an adverse effect on the Hmars because the suffering of some Hmars led to the awakening of communalism against the dominant Mizos (Lusei speaking). It would be the duty of YMA in every village to organise workshops and seminars to spread awareness on communal harmony among different tribes of Mizo community. In order to have peace and harmony prevail in the Mizo society, it is the need of the time for the leaders of YMA and different NGOs to be properly equipped with human rights awareness. The need of the day is trust and understanding of each other’s position.

In this regard, the role and actions of YMA seems to be multi-dimensional in action and thought on matters relating to the socio-political as well as cultural life of the Mizo people. In this way YMA, as a social organisation, has been very instrumental in defending the unity of the Mizo society. Besides YMA, some other social organisations like the *Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhwam Pawl* (MHIP), *Mizo Zirlai Pawl* (MZP), Mizo Students’ Union (MSU), *Mizo Upa Pawl* (MUP), the Village Defence Party (VDP), the Church and some other organisations have also been making remarkable contributions in bringing about changes in the Mizo society and political unity as a whole. In fact, these non-governmental organisations are also functioning hand in hand with the Government to prevent deteriorating law and order situation in the Sinlung Hills area in particular and the whole state of Mizoram in general. It was
on the 11th May 2012 that the Superintendent of Police, Aizawl District appealed to the members of YMA units and branches in different villages within Aizawl District to identify any stranger or unknown person in their respective villages because there was an intelligence input from the Police Department that Power line from Manipur to Mizoram which was from Loktak Hydel Project was targeted by the HPC-D outfits. There was also an intelligent report that all the bridges and culverts on the National Highway-54 (Silchar to Aizawl), the lifeline of Mizoram, would be destroyed by HPC-D. In order to counter any activity which would be harmful for the people of Mizoram, the Government of Mizoram used the power of YMA in different ways. As mentioned earlier, undoubtedly, YMA is the most powerful social organization in Mizoram. Due to this fact, the directives of YMA, especially relating to the observance of social mores in the society, are readily followed in every walk of life without any question. In short, YMA is for all sections of the society in Mizoram. Though CYMA claims that it is not their policy to interfere in the state politics and ethnic politics, but its influence partly restricted state administration and ethnic politics in many occasions.

In the midst of strong opposition from the YMA, all Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram organised a Convention on 15th May 2013, at Sakawrdai in order to promote good relationship and solidarity among various Schedule Tribes of Mizoram and to fight for their political rights and to promote their culture, customs and traditions in Mizoram. Though the Convention was strongly opposed by the CYMA, it was successfully organised and concluded. The Convention passed the following resolutions:

1. The Convention agreed that the formation of any organisation in the name of tribes or communities does not disturb the peaceful co-existence of all communities in Mizoram. Instead, it is useful for the peace and harmony of Mizoram

2. The Convention fully supported the initiative of the Government of Mizoram to give more power to the Autonomous Districts Councils in Mizoram

243Sangkima, op. cit., p. 260.
244An interview with H. Zosangbera, Chairman, HPC-D on 26th December 2015, Shillong.
3. The Convention supported Paite Tribe Council (PTC) demand for ADC and requested the Government of Mizoram to entertain their demand

4. The Convention appealed to the Government of Mizoram and HPC-D to initiate a peaceful negotiation at the earliest possible and it also asked the Government to fulfil the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the Government of Mizoram and HPC

5. The Convention made a declaration that different tribal groups who came to the Convention will unitedly stand together and continue to fight together any unfair treatment against their political rights

6. The Convention unanimously resolved to form Mizoram Minority Co-ordination Committee (MMCC) to co-ordinate and champion the rights of all the tribals in Mizoram

To confirm and approve the declaration above, all the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram namely Hmar, Mara, Lai, Paite and Chakma signed their names. In fact, All Mizoram Scheduled Tribes Convention was mainly organised with the aim to share and deliberate their political rights to meet their respective needs and objectives.

Here, an important question to be addressed is, why in the Convention, the representatives of all the Mizoram Scheduled Tribes felt it necessary to take such resolutions in the midst of opposition from YMA. We can easily conclude that the ethnic minority groups in Mizoram are in need of certain safeguards and protection of their political rights and ethnic identities from the dominant ethnic group. The emergence of ethnic movements may be traced to a number of factors. First, to the gradual erosion of the traditional normative framework and an increasing impetus to the ideologies of democracy, equality and distributive justice, with the perception and projection of the ruling regimes as being discriminatory and oppressive in ethnic terms.245 The increasing intervention of YMA as a spokesman of the dominant Lusei speaking people in the affairs of the decision making body of the Government of

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Mizoram paved the way for many ethnic groups to fight for their political security. Though the existence of YMA in the Mizo society is very significant for the Mizo unity and integrity and for philanthropic activities but their increasing intervention in the administration of the state Government has certainly caused a lot of regional feelings and ethnic tensions between the non-Lusei speaking people and the dominant Lusei speaking group.