CHAPTER – II

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES AND REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN NORTH EAST INDIA
Political parties are the backbone of democracy. Political parties and democracy go hand in hand. Both are inseparable and interlinked. Democracy without political parties are unworkable, and political parties without democracy cannot grow. It is the political parties that provides the leadership and direction without which the power of "Sovereign" people would remain ineffective. Democracy rests on the power of people. In fact, political parties supply the motive and power. Without political parties, says Maclver, "there can be no unified statement of principles, no orderly evolution of policy, no regular resort to the Constitutional Parliamentary elections, nor of course any of the recognised Constitutions by means of which one seeks to gain or to maintain power".\(^1\) The social environment of the political process in the state is very important for functioning of the political system. It performs the input functions in the whole political system. In the words of David Easton "political system is the subsystem of the social system and can be described as the legitimate order maintaining and transforming system in the society".\(^2\)

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Political Party:

A political party may be defined as a group of citizens, more or less organised, having agreement on broad principles of national policy, and trying to capture the government through constitutional means. In India party system is not like that of former Russia, China or any Communist countries which have possessed a single party system and again, not a biparty system like Great Britain. There is multi party system in India. Though the very word “Party” presupposed participation in power, but the other parties do not share power because of their inability to get majority of votes.\(^3\)

Different writers and political philosophers gave different views on political party.

Gettle defines a political party as “a group of citizens more or less organised, who act as a political unit and who by the use of their political power aim at controlling the Government and carrying out its general policies”.

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\(^3\) Aggarwal, R.C., *Indian Government and Politics*, S. Chand and Company (Pvt.) Ltd., 1987, p.3.
Neumann defined political party, "as the articulate organisation of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of government power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holdings divergent views. As such, it is the great intermediary which links social forces and ideologies to official government institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community".

Finer defined a political party as "an organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power".

Edmund Burke defined a political party as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavour the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are agreed".

Leacock defined: "Political Party means more or less organised group of citizens who act together as a political unit. They share or profess to share the same opinions on public questions, and by exercising their voting power towards a common end, seek to obtain control of government. They constitute something like a joint stock company, to which each member constitutes his share of political power. They are thus collectively able to
acquire the strength which it would have been impossible for them acting singly to obtain”.

Brewster defined: “a political party in a free society is an organised group of citizens having the purpose of controlling the government through shared consent, by placing some of its members in public office”.

Austin Renny writes, “politics is generally a contest among human groups for influence over the policies of government. Political parties are a kind of political groups. A political party is an autonomous, organised group that makes nominations and contests election in the hope eventually getting and exercising control of the personnel and policies of government”.

Maclver defined a political party “as an association, organised in support of some principle or policy which by constitutional means endeavours to make the determinant of Government”.

Gilchrist observed: “a political party may be defined as an organised group of citizens who profess to share the same political views and who by acting as political unit, try to control the government. The Chief aim of a

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party is to make its own opinions and policy prevail. To do so it is necessary to control the legislature in the state. To control the legislature means that party representatives must be in a majority in the legislature. Parties are, therefore, highly organised in order to manage elections, the more members they can command the more control they have over legislature".\(^{(a)}\)

Mr. Schulz defined a political party "as an organised and presumably durable association, either of individuals or of distinguishable groups of individuals, which endeavours to place its members in governmental offices for the purpose of bringing about the adoption of favoured policies".\(^{(b)}\)

J. Blondel defined: "political parties are groups that aim at taking power. Political parties can be viewed as the only associational groups that are both open to all and have very wide interest".\(^{(c)}\)

Friedrich: "a political party is a group of human beings, stably organised with the objective of securing or maintaining for its leaders the control of government, and with the further objective of giving to members of the party through such control, idea and material benefits and advantages".\(^{(d)}\)

\(^{(a)}\) Ibid; p.357  
\(^{(b)}\) Ibid; p.357  
\(^{(c)}\) Ibid; p.357  
\(^{(d)}\) Ibid; p.358
Max Weber, however, believes that parties are specialized associations whose purpose is to secure power within a corporate group, for their leaders in order to attain ideal or material advantages. They may spring up within trade unions, corporations, universities, parliaments, or the state itself—and in the latter case they are political parties.\(^5\)

Burke defined political party as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours upon some particular principles in which they are all agreed".

Political party is a means for the maximisation of political participation. It is one of the axioms of the contemporary science of politics that political party has become an indispensable factor in the working of a representative form of government.\(^6\)

Thus a political party should possess the following characteristics:

(a) It should be more or less organised. Organisation gives strength to a political party. Without organisation a political party cannot remain in

\(^5\) Ibid., p.358.

constant touch with the masses and as such it cannot popularise the policy it pursues.

(b) The members of the political party must agree on the broad principles of public policy adopted by it. A general agreement must be there as regards its main objectives.

(c) A political party must be national in character. It should have a nationwide appeal.

(d) Every political party must have a clear aim to capture the power of the government.

(e) A political party should seek to carry out its policy by peaceful and democratic means. It is the ballot box which should decide the fate of a political party and its claim to form the government.

(f) The leaders of the party must endeavour and struggle for maximising their base of popular support and minimising their circle of decision makers.

(g) There must be closed and intimate relationship among all members of the party. Men and women duly organised should formulate a
clear and specific programme which they could place before the electorate to win their support and devise all possible means to maintain it.

**Role of Political Parties:**

Political parties perform the following functions in a modern democratic system.

1. The most important role of political parties is that of uniting, simplifying and stabilising the political process. Political parties tend to provide the highest common denominator. They bring together sectional interests, overcome geographical distances, and provide coherence to sometimes divisive government structures.

2. Political parties struggle for power and they strive to form order out of chaos. They seek to widen the interest they represent and harmonise these interests with each other.

3. Political parties provide a link between the government and the people. They seek to educate, instruct and activate the electorate. They use the mass media and local organisations to maintain contacts with the relatively inactive and lead them to the awareness and acceptance of various
policies. Thus political parties are an important agency for the formulation of public opinion.

(4) Political parties provide political education to the masses and help the people to feel that they are the master of their own destiny. They arouse public spirit and prompt the masses to take active interest in public affairs.

(5) Another essential role is to secure a large number of seats in the legislature to form the government. The ruling party always supports its policy and action in the legislature. The opposition parties criticise the policies and functions of government. Political parties are not only essential as the conductor of government but also as a critic of government.

(6) The party system introduce candidates much in advance of the actual date of election. The voters came to know the candidates and their levels. Hence they get sufficient time to consider their comparative worth as representatives and evaluate the policy of their respective parties. Moreover, political parties helps the candidates to secure election through their collective strength. Thus party organisation and funds help the election

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of poor but able politicians who otherwise would have no chance of entering the legislature.

(7) In a presidential government which is based on separation of powers, political parties serves as co-ordinating factors between the executive and the legislatures.

Thus the role of political parties in a democracy is of immense significance. Even in a totalitarian state political parties play a very important role. The importance of political parties can best be adjudged from the fact that without them no democratic government would be able to run smoothly.

Political Parties in India:

India being a democratic country many political parties and regional have grown in the political horizon of India. The political parties have their separate programmes, aims and objectives. The growth of some of the political parties in India may be discussed.

Indian National congress (INC): The Indian National Congress was founded by A.O. Hume in 1885. This was the first political organisation in India. Though numerous political groups existed prior to its establishment
they only served as a forum for discussion and debate on various political and public issues. Most of them were largely sectional in character. The first national forum which concentrated on the various political issues at national level was the Indian National Congress. During the initial years the Indian National Congress did not possess the objectives of a political party. Over the years the Indian National Congress fought for Indian Independence from the British Rule. With the return of the century the Indian National Congress came to be divided into two groups - the moderates and the extremists. The moderates like Dababhai Naoroji, Feroz Shah Mehta and full faith in the British and tried to get its objectives through peaceful means. The extremist groups like Balgangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal did not believe in that and believed in building the national spirit through pressure on government. With the coming of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene, the Indian National Congress adopted “Non-violence” as the main means of achieving independence. The struggle culminated on August 15, 1947 when India became a free country.\(^8\) Since the enforcement of the Constitution of India on 26\(^{th}\) January, 1950 the Indian National Congress enjoyed power till 1977. The Janata Party came in power in 1977. In the seventh and eighth Parliamentary elections i.e. 1980 and

1984 the Congress was able to capture power again. In the ninth Parliamentary election i.e. 1989 the Congress enjoyed dominant position even though there were conflicts among party leaders. The national Front headed by V.P. Singh with the support of B.J.P. did not last long. In the tenth Parliamentary election 1991, the Congress (I) once again came in power.

The Congress party stands for non-violence, non-alignment. Its main objectives are to remove poverty, to solve unemployment problem, to develop agriculture, industry, water supply, transport, electricity, to eradicate illiteracy, etc. Further, the party aims at economic development, international friendship and good will. Besides there were many more programmes which are related to the development of the people of India as a whole.

Janata Party: The Janata party was formed on the eve of sixth Parliamentary Elections, 1977. The party had the blessing as well as support of late Jaya Prakash Narain. Opposition parties like the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Congress (O) and the Socialist combined to form a Front against the Congress (I) led by Smt. Indira Gandhi. The party was able to defeat the Congress (I) severely in the 1977 elections. The
party for the first time formed a non-Congress (I) government at the centre in the form of Janata Government. However, the constituent groups were not able to unite among themselves. Personal ambition among the leaders led to the fall of the government much before the expiry of five year term.

The main programme of the Janata Party was to end the state of emergency and restore to the people their fundamental rights. The party was committed to uphold independence of judiciary and freedom of the press. It promised to look into the matters of reducing the election costs and find out the possibility of reducing voting age from 21 to 18 years of age. The party favoured right to work and also stressed on decentralised economy, employment, agriculture, industry, irrigation facility and introduction of family planning programme. Further the party worked for the abolition of corruption and for safeguarding the weaker sections of the population. In foreign policy, the party opposed colonialism and racialism and tried to develop friendly relations with foreign countries.

Communist Party of India (CPI): The Communist Party of India was established on 26 December, 1925 by the ardent young patriots inspired by the Socialist revolution in Soviet Russia. The party could not grow due to the repressive policy of the British Government. In the first general
elections 1952, the party won 27 seats in the Lok Sabha and 181 seats in the State Assemblies. In 1953, the party was recognised as national political party. There was split into C.P.I. and C.P.I.(M) in 1964. The C.P.I.(M) is contesting elections under its independent identity since 1967 and onwards. Kerala and West Bengal are the two states where the parties have their stronghold.

Some programmes of CPI are :-

CPI 1) The party stands for freedom of press;

2) Implementation of land reform measures;

3) Opposition of bank credit for wholesale purposes;

4) Encouragement of wholesale trade in food-grains;

5) Nationalisation of jute, textile, sugar and other industries;

6) To reduce taxes;

7) Maximum wages, guaranteed bonus, collective bargaining;

8) Protection of minority rights;

9) Improvement of peasants, worker’s condition;

10) The party stands for non-alignment, friendly relation with foreign countries etc.
In most of the cases, the political programme of the CPI(M) are equal with the CPI. However, there is striking difference between CPI and CPI(M). The CPI(M) believes in the idea that revolution in India can be brought by working classes and the CPI believes that the purpose can be achieved by co-operating with other democratic forces. The CPI(M) believes in dislodging existing government, whereas CPI does not believe in that. The CPI(M) does not believe that the existing powerful class will voluntarily give up power but CPI has full faith in peaceful means.

**Bhartiya Jana Party**: The Bhartiya Jan Sangh was formed as a political party on October 21, 1951 under the leadership of late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherji. It was one of the most important political parties both at the national as well as at the state level. This political party was considered by many political observers as the political wing of the Ratriya Swayam Sevak Sangha, a cultural organisation believing in One Country, One Culture, One Nation. The electoral performances of the party were not well till 1967. The party merged itself with the Janata Party in 1977. But some political leaders like Charan Singh, Raj Narain raised the issue of dual membership. Both Jan Sangha and Janata Party refuted this theory. The Bhartiya Lok Dal, a constituent unit of Janata Party made it an issue and left the party.

The Bharatiya Janata Party came into being as a result of the split in the Janata Party in April, 1980 on the issue of dual membership. This led the erstwhile Jana Sangh members of Janata Party and some others to leave the Janata Party and formed a new party called the Bharatiya Janata Party with Shri Atul Behari Vajpayee as its President.\footnote{The Annual Register of Indian Political Parties 1980, A.M. Zaidi, S.Chand & Company Ltd., Ram Nagar, New Delhi-55, pp. 599-603.}

The party is committed to furthering national integration, democracy, positive secularism, Gandhian socialism and value based politics. The party stands for decentralisation of economic and political power.

The party believes in secularism and democracy. It stands for eradication of corruption, cheap and speedy justice. It believes in independence of judiciary. It wants economic democracy, nationalisation of industries, mining. It wants compulsory education and minimum living standard. In the foreign affairs, it wants cordial relation with the neighbouring countries. Every step should be settled by peaceful means. Its performance in the 1984 parliamentary election was dismal. By 1989 it had
consolidated its electoral base and had 85 members in the Lok Sabha. In 1996 the party had 161 members in the Lok Sabha and in 1998 the party consolidated its position and had 179 members in the Lok Sabha.\footnote{Organiser, Vol. XLIX, No. 36, New Delhi, March 29, 1998, p.61.}

**Regional Political Parties:**

The following are some of the regional political parties in India:

**Akali Dal:** Shiromani Akali Dal is the most important political and social organisation of the Sikh community. The party was organised under the dynamic leadership of Master Tara Singh. Later, it became a political party. The party demanded a separate Sikh state. Afterwards it left its demand for a separate homeland but continued to fight for a Punjabi speaking Suba. However, Akali Dal was split up into two groups, one led by Master Tara Singh and another by Sant Fateh Singh. After the death of Master Tara Singh, the two groups were reunited. It demanded a Punjabi speaking state. In 1967 Akali Dal and BJS formed co-alition government in Punjab. In 1971 under Indira wave, Akali Dal lost majority in the State Legislature but emerged as single largest group in the state. In 1977 it was returned to power in the state and formed co-alition government with Janata Party. The
party had its members holding Cabinet post in Janata Government from 1977-79 under the Prime Ministership of Moraji Dasai. In 1980 elections the party could not return to power, but it was the single largest party in the Punjab Legislature Assembly. The Akali Dal captured power in Punjab in September 1985.

The main objective of the party is to give more powers to the states. It also wants that financial resources of the country should be so divided that the states becomes less dependent on the centre. The party also wants that the centre should least interfere on the affairs of the state.

However Akali Dal suffered a split. The two groups are led by Surjit Singh Barlala and Prakash Singh Badal. The Operation Black Thunder in the Golden Temple complex in May 1988 has intensified in fighting among various factions. Later, the Dal was again split into two factions, i.e. Mann group and Simaranjit Singh group. Both these groups contested in the elections, 1989.

**Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.)** : The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam is a regional party having its influence mainly in Tamil Nadu. This party is commonly known as D.M.K. It is the successor to the Justice Party of Madras. The D.M.K. was found by E.V. Ramaswamy in 1944.
Soon the party started entering political area. The party has been recognised by the Election Commission and a separate symbol have been allotted to it. In the Assembly elections, 1957, it won 15 seats in the State Assembly. The party rose its strength to 50 in 1962. The party captured power in the State. After coming into power, the differences of the D.M.K. with the Congress Party were softened down. In fact there were for sometime greater amity between the centre and the Government of Tamil Nadu headed by the D.M.K.

When there was split of the congress Party in 1969, the D.M.K. supported Indira Congress at the centre. Later on, there was a split in D.M.K. after the death of C.N. Anna Durai.

M.G. Ramchandran, a prominent leader of D.M.K. had organised a separate party known as All India Anna D.M.K. In 1971 elections D.M.K. again gained absolute majority in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. In 1977 when Janata Party came to power, its members held ministerial posts in the Union Council of Ministers.

The party championed the course of the poor, illiterate, down-trodden in Tamil Nadu. The party opposed to the imposition of Hindi on the people of the South. It favours free press and ending of regional imbalances. It stands for industrialisation which could end poverty. The party is against
confrontation with the centre, but does not like deployment of police or armed forces by the centre in the states without state’s consent.

Regional Political Parties in North East India:

Meghalaya: Meghalaya was declared an autonomous state within Assam on 2 April 1970 and was given full statehood with effect from 21 January, 1972. Meghalaya is composed of three ethnic groups like Khasis, Jaintias and Garos – who together constitute more than 80% of the total population of the state.

In 1946 a Khasi-Jaintia Political Association was formed. The Association submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission 1946, demanding a Federation of Khasi states. In 1946 another organisation, the Hills Union did come up with a demand for a Hill State. This was the beginning of the manifestation of a growing identity consciousness among the tribals. In 1946 itself the Garo National Conference was formed which demanded a district administration with full political autonomy. The Bordoloi Committee of the Constituent Assembly could not fulfill the aspirations of the people of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills. The leaders

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formed the Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU) in 1954 to press the demand for a hill state. However, their demand did not draw any encouraging attention from the State Re-Organisation Commission. In the mean time, the Official Language Bill (Assamese) was to be introduced in the Assam Legislative Assembly. As a first step, the leaders formed the All Party Hill Leaders conference (APHLC) in July 1960 to press the demand of a Hill State. But a section of APHLC, primarily youth section did not like this idea and as a protest they decided to come out of APHLC and to form Hill State Peoples Democracy Party (HSPDP) in 1968. HSPDP was the first offshoot of APHLC followed by Public Demands Implementation Convention (PDIC) formed in 1974 under the leadership of G.G. Swell. Before the Parliamentary Elections 1984, the APHLC and the HSPDP decided to work out a practicable formulae for their merger and consequently the Hill People Union (HPU) was formed. The party put up its own candidates in the elections. The APHLC was in power from 1970 to 1976. And the Indian National Congress ruled the state from 1976 to 1978. A coalition ministry formed by the APHLC-HSPDP-INC was in power from 1979-1983. In 1983 after the Assembly Elections APHLC-HSPDP-PDIC again formed government. It could not survive for only one month. The

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12 Ibid, p.96.
Indian National congress (I) with the help of large number of defectors from the regional political parties managed to form the new ministry.13

The APHLC Constitution mentions that “the objects of the party shall be to promote (a) the well-being and the advancement of the people of Meghalaya and the establishment in the country by peaceful and constitutional means, a welfare state based on parliamentary democracy, (b) the preservation of the identity of tribal people and the development of their democratic institutions, languages, customs and culture, (c) to protect the political, economic, social and religious rights of the people, and (d) to play a constructive role in the affairs of the nation.14

The Hill People Union formed in 1984 by the Union of APHLC and HSPDP states its aims – (i) to safeguard and preserve the identity of the tribal people and to protect their interests, especially in respect of land, their democratic institutions, language, customs and culture, and (ii) to promote the economic development of the tribal people in particular and the state in general.


The election manifesto of Hill People Union declares among others that "the Hill People Union is deeply concerned with the fact that under the regime of the congress (I) as a ruling party, the style of functioning in recent years has been to concentrate real authority and power at the centre. This has eroded the federal structure as envisaged in the constitution of India to the determinent of the autonomy and the interest of the states. The Hill People Union believes in the strengthening of the federal character of the Constitution, to enable the communities of different regions to have an adequate share of freedom of responsibility."

Mizoram: In Mizoram the emergence of middle class under the British rule posed a challenge to the traditional elite as early as 1946. The Mizo Union, the first political party was formed to oppose the traditional rulers. The issue of chieftainship, initiated by the Mizo Union culminated in the abolition of chieftainship by the district Council in 1954, and their political power were taken over by the District Council and the village councils. The Mizo Union then took an active part in the Hill State movement under APHLC of Meghalaya in order to safeguard its dominance in Mizoram. But the relatively lenient view of the APHLC on the proposed Direct Action on

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15 Election Manifesto of HPU, 1984 (Shillong, General Secretary; HPU).
October, 1962 caused the Mizo Union to dissociate itself from the APHLC and to adopt full fledged state of Mizoram as its policy and demand.\textsuperscript{16}

It was during this period in 1961, that the Mizo National Front designed for Greater Mizoram and secession from India was formed. Since then the MNF had become the symbol of group solidarity. The existence of MNF had resulted in the reconstruction of inter-group relationship on the basis of group identity.

Some twenty parties based on ethnicity came into existence in Mizoram. Most of them had existed for a short period. Of the major ones, we can mention the name of the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO), the Mizo Nation Front (MNF), the Mizo National Union (MNU) formed in 1946, the People's Conference formed in 1975, etc. Even though their dominance was felt at different levels and at different periods, they had more or less the same character, most of them having adopted regionalism. They had the common feature of being "regional in character but having positive national outlook" and fully committed to the integrity and solidarity of the Indian Union.\textsuperscript{17}

The aims of the MNF was basically to arouse the consciousness of Mizo 'nationalism' which in the categorisation of academics, may fall under such concept as 'sub-nationalism' or infra-nationalism.¹⁸ The concept of Mizo nationalism with ethnic and religions rapidly gained popularity among the Mizos with the MNF movement.

Originally, the MNF spelled out three main objectives. They are as follows:¹⁹

(i) Integration of all the Mizo ethnic groups under one government possessing higher degree of freedom.

(ii) Upliftment of status, and the development of the economic conditions of the Mizo people.

(iii) Safeguard of the Christian Religion. With these objectives in view, the MNF declared that Mizoram was free and independent with effect from the midnight of February 28, 1966.

¹⁸ S.M. Dubey, Inter-Ethnic Alliance..., Tribal Movement in India., p.19.
¹⁹ MNF Pawl Thiltumte Hrilhfiathna, Commentary on MNF Party’s Aims and Objectives, Published by the MNF, Nov. 1972, p.1.
Regionalism played a dominant role in Mizo politics. The regional political parties along with the national political parties had contested in the Assembly and parliamentary elections. When there are a number of regional parties, the one dominant regional party could still sweep the elections inspite of the disunity of regional forces. This had been true in the elections of 1972, 1978, 1979 and 1982 i.e. the Mizo Union in 1972 and the People's Conference in 1978, 1979 and 1982. A national political party coming to power due to the disunity among regional forces or due to the absence of one dominant regional party was seen in the elections of 1984 while Congress (I) captured 66.67 per cent of Assembly seats while polling only 39.84 per cent of valid votes.

Arunachal Pradesh: Arunachal Pradesh formerly known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) is a new name added to the States and Union Territories of North-Eastern Region. There were 3257 tribal villages and 6 towns approximately in Arunachal Pradesh. The All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) established in 1947 under the name of NEFA Students Union used to voice regional sentiments from time to time and put forward demands of local nature much before a regional party was formed. This organisation played an important role in Arunachal Pradesh.
The Parliamentary (Lok Sabha) Elections and Assembly Elections were held in Arunachal Pradesh in 1977 and 1978 respectively. Arunachal Pradesh was made a Union Territory in 1972 and was granted a full fledged Statehood in 1975.  

There were no regional political party in Arunachal Pradesh at the time of Parliamentary Elections 1977.

Soon after the 1977 Elections, the newly elected Independent M.P. Bakin Pertin convened an All Leaders Conference at Pasighat in April, 1977. The Conference was attended by leaders from all areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Conference decided to form a regional political party and named it ‘The Peoples Party of Arunachal Pradesh (PPA)’ with ‘mithun’ as its electoral symbol. It had adopted the Constitution of the party on 10th April 1977. The Convenor of the Conference, Bakin Pertin, M.P. was elected President of the Party and Wanglat Lowangcha a student leader was elected its General Secretary. The party was registered as a regional political party and was recognised by the Election commission of India.

21 The Constitution of People’s Party of Arunachal, W. Lowangcha, Khonsa 1977, Article 1(1) and (2).
In August, 1979 the PPA changed its name to United Peoples Party of Arunachal (UPPA) in order to accommodate defectors from the ruling party. But apart from the name, nothing in the party was changed. The Constitution, the symbol and the office bearers of the party remained the same. The new name was not recognised by the Election Commission.

Ideologically the PPA believes in a 'welfare government'. It pledges to the people to work ceaselessly for the good of many and for the happiness of many.\textsuperscript{22} Its Election Manifesto in 1980 and in 1984 promised to endeavour "to build an egalitarian society reflecting the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru where all can alive in peace and harmony."\textsuperscript{23} The slogan of the PPA for the December Parliamentary and Assembly Elections 1984 was: "poverty must go, inequality must diminish and injustice must end."\textsuperscript{24}

Its Election Manifesto also expressed faith in democracy, secularism, socialism and national integrity.\textsuperscript{25} A pamphlet published by a member of its

\textsuperscript{22} Election Manifesto, United People's Party of Arunachal, Dibrugarh, 1980 and Election Manifesto of PPA, Tagang Taki, Dibrugarh, 1984, p.2.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p.2.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p.2.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p.2.
Election Committee claim that the PPA has full faith in national unity, integrity, culture and tradition. It is against any kind of distinction on the basis of caste, religion, language and province. It stands for all round development of the people and is determined to achieve secularism, equality, social progress, utilisation of natural resources, development and expansion of transport and communication, agriculture and education.\(^{26}\)

The aim and object of the party as listed in Article II of its Constitution includes peaceful co-existence of different tribes with a fraternal understanding, safeguarding the individual freedom, spirit of democracy and rule of law; upholding the wishes of the people to preserve the distinctive inherent culture of the state; top priority to be given to the interest of the people of the state; speedy economic development of the state, bringing Arunachal Pradesh to the mainstream of national life and upholding of Gandhian ideology. The Constitution of the party mentioned that any person of the party must be an Indian citizen and must have faith in the aims and objectives of the party.\(^{27}\)

\(^{26}\) An Appeal to the people of Arunachal, Tagang Tako, Dibrugarh, 1984.

\(^{27}\) The Constitution of PPA, p.1.
The party maintains regional character with national outlook. It professes to work for accelerated socio-economic development of the people of Arunachal and to maintain regional identity at the state level but at the national level. It floats in the mainstream of national life and works for the integrity of the country. The party worked and proposed to work in collaboration with a national party with policies and programmes acceptable to it in the interest of the nation and Union Territory. The PPA described itself as a party, regional in character but having national outlook. The main objective of the party is to fight backwardness of Arunachal Pradesh and to bring the State at par with the rest of the country. It believes and works for building a strong Indian nation. The PPA contested in Assembly and Parliamentary elections since 1978.

**Tripura**: Tripura is a tiny state situated in north-east India. It is a homeland of 19 tribes. Tripura acceded to the Indian Union in 1949. For a period of 8 years (1949-1956) Tripura was a part ‘C’ state. And on the recommendation of the State Reorganisation Commission, 1956, it become a Union Territory with a Council. The Council was converted into an

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28 Election Manifesto of UPPA, 1980, p.3.
Assembly in 1963. The status of a full fledged statehood was given in Tripura in 1972.

The politics of Tripura is characterised by multi-party system. Before 1949 there were many political parties which are regional in character. We may examine some of them.

In 1935, there was one party called the Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad. It was succeeded by the Indian National Congress, Tripura Branch in 1946 after 11 years.

In 1938, another party called the Tripura Jana Mangal Samiti came into existence. Other regional political parties were the Tripura Jana Siksha Samiti 1945, the Tripura Rajya Praja Mandal, 1946 and the Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad, 1948. Later on all these parties merged with the Communist Party of India subsequently.²⁹

There were also Muslim organisations e.g. the Anjuman Isamia 1945, the Tripura Rajya Moslem Prajya Majlish 1946, the Jameet-Ulema-Hind 1949, etc.

When there were elections to the Territorial Council in 1957, many political parties both national and regional contested in the elections. The Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India were the two major parties which contested in all the constituencies. Other major regional political parties were:

1. Tripura Ganatantri Sangh (TGS);
2. Praja Socialist Party (PSP);
3. Sanjukta Socialist Party (SSP);

Out of the above regional political parties the Tripura Upajati Juva samiti (TUJS) was the latest regional political party.

**Reasons for the growth of TUJS:** The economic and cultural imbalance between the tribals and non-tribals, the general lack of development in the state, the disillusionment of a certain section of the tribals with the national political parties including the CPI(M), their traditional ally championing tribal causes and the fear of the better-off among the tribals that economic and political interest will not be served by their traditional ally led to the birth of the TUJS.
The Communists had championed the cause of the Tribals of Tripura and had a strong following amongst them. But due to discontent, some of the tribal educated youths started thinking along a different line. They decided to form a regional political party exclusively for the tribals. Thus Tripura Upajati Juva Samiti was born on 10 June, 1967.\textsuperscript{30}

The objectives of TUJS were four fold:

i) The creation of an autonomous district council in the hill tribal areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution;

ii) Restoration of illegally tribal lands from the non-tribals;

iii) Recognition of the Kakbarak language; and

iv) Adoption of the Roman Script for their language.\textsuperscript{31}

Thus the objectives of the party centered around regional and tribal issues; national and international issues were not so important to them. The party contested in the Assembly and Parliamentary elections. In 1972 Assembly elections TUJS contested in 5 constituencies but defeated. In 1977 the party contested in 27 constituencies and won 4 seats. In


Parliamentary elections too the party contested in 2 constituencies in 1977 but no one was elected.

**Assam:** Both national and regional political parties played active role in the electoral politics of Assam. Among the regional political parties, we may mention the name of Asom Gana-Parishad. This party grew out of the political circumstances of Assam during the period 1961-1971.\(^{32}\)

The AAGSP was formed at an all party Convention held at Karimganj in Assam in February 1961 to launch peaceful and non-violent Satyagraha movement for recognising Bengali as one of the official language in the state. During the agitation over the language issue in 1972-73, the AAGSP and ASSU were fighting for different causes.\(^{33}\)

The AAGSP and AASU joined hands and launched the agitation over the “foreigners” issues in September, 1979. The immediate provocation then was the Parliamentary elections, 1980 and the agitationists wanted the deletion of names of foreigners from voter lists and the revision of voter lists. The agitation took a violent turn. The agitation took nearly six years.


\(^{33}\) ibid., p.18494.
There had been fifteen rounds of talks between the Central Government and the agitating All Assam Students Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangam Parishad (AAGSP). In between there were informal talks at the State-level too.

The Centre initiated new moves in Assam on January 6, 1985. The final round of talks at the Central-level was held in August, 1985. It led to the successful conclusion of an agreement between the Central and the State Government and the agitation leaders. The settlement was signed on August 15, 1985.34

In 1985, an Accord was concluded between the Government of India and AASU which led the Government against the foreigners. The Constituent parts of the AGP were the Assam Jatiya Badi Dal and the Assam Students Union. The main programme of the party is to protect the interest of the indigenous Assamese, detect and deport all foreigners who entered without a valid permit.35 Under this Accord fresh Assembly elections were held in 1985 and the Assam Gana Parishad secured 64 seats out of 126 seats

34 Ibid., p. 18495.
in the Legislative Assembly. The Congress (I) emerged as the second largest group securing 27 seats. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta along with twenty of his Council of Ministers was sworn in as Chief Minister at a public function held at the Nehru Stadium in Guwahati on December 24, 1985.36

Nagaland: The idea of a separate state of Nagas can be traced back as early 1929 when the Simon Commission had visited Kohima. A few leaders of the Nagas formed an organisation in 1918 with a view to fostering the welfare and the social aspirations of the Nagas under official patronage. This organisation was known as the Naga club. The aim and object of this organisation was to safeguard their rights against all encroachment from other people of Naga hills district directly under British protection.

On February 1946 the educated Nagas developed the Naga Club into a social and political organisation known as Naga National Council (N.N.C.) to put forward the demand for a special status for the Naga hills district.37 The stand of the NNC on 19 June, 1946 was:

36 Ibid., p.117.
(a) This Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of Naga tribes, including those in the unadministered areas;

(b) This Council strongly protests against the grouping of Assam with Bengali;

(c) The Naga hills should be constitutionally included in an Autonomous Assam in a free India with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas;

(d) The Naga tribes should have a separate electorate.\(^{38}\)

This Naga Nations Council had been formed by Charles Pawes, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills district.\(^{39}\) There was no political party in Nagaland other than the Naga National Council till 1956. In the beginning this party was dominated by the Nationalist and moderate Nagas but later the party was led by Phizo in 1950. The party boycotted the First General Election in 1952.\(^{40}\)

Even though there were ill feelings between the moderate and Phizo group, the party was organised under the Chairmanship of T.N. Angami.


\(^{40}\) Ibid.
The party contested the general elections held on February 1957. After a series of negotiations and agreements with the Government of India, Nagaland became a full fledged state on 1st December, 1963.

Naga Nationalist Organisation (N.N.O.) : The Naga Nationalist Organisation was formed by the moderate Nagas in August 1957. This was the second regional political party in Naga hills. This party favoured a peaceful solution of the Naga problem within the framework of the Indian Union.\textsuperscript{41} The leaders of the party took party in Naga Peoples convention.

After Nagaland attained statehood on 1st December, 1963 the first Election of the Naga Legislative Assembly was held in January 1964. The party contested in Assembly and Parliamentary elections and the party came out successful in the bye-election of 28 May, 1965.

The party contested in the second Assembly elections held from 6 to 10 February 1969. The manifesto of the Naga National Organisation made several promises to the Naga people. The party assured that it would work

\textsuperscript{41} Asian Recorder, February 16-22, 1957, p.1307.
for modernising the agriculture of the state so that self-sufficiency in food might be achieved.\textsuperscript{42}

It also promised to improve the communication system for the rapid development of the state. It stated that the N.N.O. if voted to power would not only provide a stable and clean administration but would also work for providing free medical facilities, better education and increased employment opportunities to the Naga people.\textsuperscript{43} It further assured the people that it would make sincere efforts for integrating all the Naga inhabitate areas. In the elections, the N.N.O. emerged as the single largest political party in Nagaland.

In the third general elections held on 1974, the N.N.O. pledged to provide a stable and good government. The party emphasized on the rehabilitation of the rebels who had surrendered. It also promised to provide employment opportunities to the youths of Nagaland. Unfortunately, the party could not get majority in the Assembly. However after a break of one year the N.N.O. again emerged as the ruling party.

\textsuperscript{42} Election Manifesto of the Naga Nationalist Organisation, English Press, Dimapur, 1969.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
United Front of Nagaland (U.F.N.) : On the eve of second General Election 1969 a new regional party called the United Front was formed. Kevichusa was the President of the party. The objective of the party were (1) to work for unity among the Nagas on the principle of justice and equality; and (2) to take steps to bring about a political settlement through peaceful means. It also gave the assurance that if voted to power, it would work for economic development of the state.44

In the third General Election held in 1974 the party under a new changed name i.e. the United Democratic Front contested in the elections. In the election manifesto, the United Democratic Front gave the assurance that it would make sincere efforts for a negotiated settlement of the Naga problems.45 Further, the party pledged to restore civil liberty and to release all political prisoners.46 Zizol Angami was unanimously elected as the leader of the UDF. He was sworn in as Chief Minister of Nagaland on 26 February, 1974.47 In the fourth Assembly elections held in 1977, the UDF affirms its faith in Shillong Accord and in its election manifesto claimed that

44 The Assam Tribune (Gauhati), January 18, 1969.
45 The Statesman (Calcutta), February 3, 1974.
"it unreservedly stands committed to the Constitution of India. It believed that the Constitution provides peaceful legitimate means for realising the aspirations of the people of Nagaland". ⁴⁸

The United Democratic Front pledged "to help in finding a solution of the political problems in the spirit of reconciliation, to work for integration of the contiguous Naga areas, to expedite settlement of boundary issues with neighbouring states, to suitably rehabilitate the injustice, to strengthen Naga democratic institutions, tradition and cultural heritage and usagages by appointing a Cultural Board in which the educated youths will be associated to undertake comprehensive and pragmatic educational programmes". ⁴⁹

The United Democratic Front further assured the people that if voted to power it would achieve self-sufficiency in food production within ten years by stepping up development activities in agriculture, soil conservation, animal husbandry, fisheries and other allied subjects and provide marketing facilities. ⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.1-5.
⁴⁹ Ibid.
⁵⁰ Ibid.
National Convention of Nagaland (NCN) : A new regional party called National Convention of Nagaland was formed in August, 1977. In its manifesto the party pledged to make sincere efforts towards achieving greater autonomy for the state of Nagaland and promote the welfare of students and minority communities. It also assured the people that if given the mandate of the people it would work for them. The party pledged loyalty to the Constitution of India but also promised to encourage socio-economic development in the state.

Naga National Party and Naga Nationalist Democratic Party (NNP and NDP) : The Naga people went to polls in January 1980. When a mid-term poll was held all over the country due to the failure of Charan Singh’s Government and the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Many candidates contested the election. The ruling party and United Democratic Front tried to won the voters. The elections were held on 2\textsuperscript{nd} January, 1980. When the result were out Chingwang, a consensus candidate of the opposition parties was elected.\textsuperscript{52}


Meanwhile, a new regional political party named the Naga National Party came into being under the leadership of J.B. Jasokie, the former Chief Minister of Nagaland on 30th March, 1980. The members who joined the new party were none other than the leaders of NCN and the Congress including some independent MLAs. Tochi Hanson, Ex-MLA and M. Vero, Ex-M.P. were elected Vice-Presidents, Tajen was chosen General Secretary of the party. Jasokie said that his party would work for the people of Nagaland to safeguard their social, political, economic and religious rights.\footnote{Assam Tribune (Guwahati), 31 March, 1980.}

**Federal Party of Manipur**: The Federal Party of Manipur was established on the 21st October, 1993 as a political party of Manipur under the Presidentship of Prof. Gangmumei Kamei. It is a regional party based on national outlook. The first meeting for the establishment of this party was held on the 21st October, 1993 at Major Khun Community Hall. The meeting discussed about the rapid growth and development of the party with an objective of federalism and autonomy in particular in this small tiny state of Manipur. Later, a Drafting Committee drafted the constitution of the party and it was presented to and approved by the special session of the
General Assembly of the Federal Party of Manipur held on 9th November, 1993 at Imphal.\textsuperscript{54}

The constitution clearly specify the objectives of the party, formation of organisational structure at the State level, District level, procedure for membership, function of General Assembly, Central Committees, working Committees, District and Kendra Committees, Office bearers with its functions, procedure for election voting, Discipline and Amendment procedure of the constitution.\textsuperscript{55}

The objective of the party are:

(i) To build up a free and democratic society with overall development of the political, social, economic and cultural life of Manipur;

(ii) To create a political and administrative structure in Manipur so as to facilitate the participation of all social and ethnic groups in the democratic process and nation building task in the state;

\textsuperscript{54} Interview with Prof. N. Joykumar Singh, of History Department, Manipur University on 7.4.99.

(iii) To restructure the relationship between the Union Government and the State of Manipur, based on federal principles and more autonomy for the State with full recognition of the historical prerogative of Manipur.

(iv) To promote economic development through planning, free from exploitation, with social control over the natural resources, encouragement of private enterprises, involvement of foreign capital and with full participation of the people in the process of planning and implementation of development process of the State.

(v) To promote the common heritage of the various sections of Manipur's population and protect their cultural and ethnic identity and territorial integrity of the State.

(vi) To promote the welfare of the tribals, minorities and other weaker sections of the society including women and physically handicapped persons;

(vii) To take up suitable steps for the attainment of the objectives by social and political action through democratic, constitutional and peaceful means;
(viii) To establish fraternal contact with other regional political parties of the country and with those groups and organisations which believe in the federal base of Indian Policy.

The Federal Party was registered with the Election Commission of India under Section 29-A of the representation of the People Act, 1951 as a political party with effect from 22.12.1993 vide No.56/164/93/J.S.II dated the 23rd December, 1993.

The first convention of the party was held on 21st October, 1994 at Gandhi Memorial Hall, Imphal and was attended by 1150 delegates from the Districts, Kendra Committees and Frontal Organisations. Prof. G. Gangmumei Kamei presided over the function and the following resolutions were adopted unanimously:

i) Equal representation of the state in the Parliament;

ii) More power for the states in the Union list, Concurrent list and State list;

iii) Abolition of Article 356;

iv) Strengthening of Finance Commission, National Development Council and Planning Commission;
v) Autonomy for the States, District level, Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayats;

vi) Establishment of Inter Ethnic Council for peace, Human Rights Commission, New Economic policy, trade and commerce;

vii) Equality of Status, Cultural identity, Social harmonisation, protection of ethnic minorities and Human rights etc.

Keeping in mind, the Federal Party of Manipur contested the tenth Assembly election held in 1995. As many as 22 candidates contested in the election. Two candidates, Prof. G. Gangmumei Kamei and Dr. W. Thoiba Singh were successful in the Nungba and Heingang Assembly Constituencies.

In 1996 Parliamentary Election only two candidates (I) N. Pahari Singh and (ii) Shimareigam Shaiza contested the election in valley and hill constituencies. Unfortunately they were not elected.

**Manipur People’s Party**: The Manipur People’s Party is one of the regional political parties in Manipur. The party was born on the 26th December, 1968, out of extreme necessity to have a regional political party to safeguard
the ethnic identity of the people, to protect the territorial integrity, to check economic decadence and to promote the regional interest in general.\textsuperscript{56}

On 26\textsuperscript{th} December 1968, there was a joint meeting of some prominent leaders of the Congress party namely, L. Chaoyaima Singh, Y. Yaima Singh, Kh. Chaoba Singh and S. Tombi Singh in a lobby of the Manipur State Legislative Assembly. Some other prominent leaders also attended the meeting.\textsuperscript{57} Shri L. Chaoyaima Singh of Thoubal presided over the meeting. The members discussed about the step motherly attitude of the then Central Government in social, political and economic fields in Manipur. Over and above, they discussed for the formation of about a regional political party in Manipur like the D.M.K. in the then Madras. It discussed about the political situation of Manipur arising out of the conferment of statehood in Nagaland, for which it was felt necessity to safeguard and to uphold interest of Manipur politically, economically, culturally, educationally and linguistically. The meeting took the decision to form a regional political party under the name and style of the Manipur People’s Party in Manipur. It is a voluntary

\textsuperscript{56} Kumarjit Ng., Emergence of regional political parties in North East India, Vol. 1, p. 37 published by MPP, 1986.

\textsuperscript{57} Interview with Shri Y. Yaima Singh, Ex-M.P. on 10.4.99.
organisation for the upliftment and welfare of the Manipuries who reside in Manipur and outside. The party belongs to all sections of Manipur irrespective of hill and valley, caste, creed and community.\textsuperscript{58} The party adopted its constitution in the year 1969. The preamble of the Constitution runs as follows:

The goal of the Manipur People’s Party is to establish by democratic and peaceful means an egalitarian society. The Manipur People’s Party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy, and would uphold the Sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

**Objectives:**

To achieve politically, socially and economically by democratic and peaceful means the wellbeing and advancement of the people of Manipur and to establish an egalitarian society based on democratic socialism and in particular (i) to safeguard the territorial integrity of Manipur and ethnic identity of the people, (ii) to safeguard the interest of the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, and other minorities for their development according to their own capabilities, (iii) to preserve and promote the different arts, culture and tradition of the hill and valley people in Manipur, and (iv) to take

\textsuperscript{58} MPP Annual Conference Issue 29th, 30th July 1987, p.4.
greatest contender of the Congress party in Manipur, S. Tombi Singh was the first President of the Manipur People's Party. The party was recognised by the Election Commission as a political party with a permanent symbol of bicycle. The party has been contesting all the Assembly and Parliamentary elections since 1992.

Seats won by the Manipur People's Party in the Assembly elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Manipur People's Party came in power three times during the period 1972 to 1995. Md. Alimuddin was the Chief Minister for the period from 23rd March, 1972 to 28th March, 1973 and 4th March, 1974 to 8th July, 1974. R.K. Ranbir Singh was the Chief Minister from 23rd February, 1990 to 6th January, 1992. Y. Yaima Singh represents Manipur in the House of the People of Indian Parliament in 1991. During his tenure the greatest achievement was the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the VIII Schedule.
of the Constitution of India. Some of the achievements of the Government run by the Manipur People’s Party were:

1. the establishment of the Board of Secondary Education Manipur in the year 1972.
2. the establishment of the Regional Medical College at Lamphel in Manipur.
3. the opening and establishment of the Centre of Post Graduate Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University in Manipur.
4. the establishment of the Manipur Public Service Commission.
5. the establishment of the Khansari Sugar Mill, Wangbal, Manipur.
6. the establishment of Spinning Mill, Loitangkhunou.

The Presidents of the Manipur People’s Party were:

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<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>S. Tombi Singh</td>
<td>26.12.68 – 1.2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>L. Jugeshwor Singh</td>
<td>2.2.77 – 31.3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>H. Nilamani Singh</td>
<td>1.4.74 – 22.12.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>L. Manaobi Singh</td>
<td>1.4.78 – 3.3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ch. Manihar Singh</td>
<td>4.3.86 – 11.4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>H. Bhubon Singh</td>
<td>12.4.89 – 15.2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Y. Yaima Singh</td>
<td>16.2.91 – 8.1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>O. Joy Singh</td>
<td>8.1.96 –</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

60 Interview with O. Joy Singh, President, Manipur People’s Party on 25.3.99.
The Manipur People’s Party has been striving at its best to serve the interest of Manipur with emphasis on the protection of the territorial integrity of the state of Manipur.

**Manipur State Congress**: The Manipur State Congress was an offshoot of Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha, the first political party formed in 1938. Many members of the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha admired the objectives and ideology of the Indian National Congress. On 15th August, 1946, the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha held a Conference at Imphal. There were two groups in the Conference – one supporting the ideology and policy of the Indian National Congress and the other supporting the policy and ideology of the Communist party. Again on 18th September 1946, there was another Conference of the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha at Aryan Theatre. The Conference adopted to form a political party under the name “Manipur Praja Congress”\(^{61}\).

On October 4, 1946 all political parties in the state namely Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha, Manipur Praja Sangha, Krishak Sabha and Praja Sammelani held a conference at Aryan Theatre. The members of the

\(^{61}\) Interview with Shri L. Jugewor Singh, Ex-M.P. on 7.4.99.
Krishak Sabha walked out as H. Irabot Singh, leader of the party was not given an opportunity to speak in the Conference. The remaining persons of the conference constituted a permanent interim body known as Manipur State Congress which was later affiliated to All India State Peoples Conference. R.K. Bhubonsana Singh elected the first President of the Manipur State Congress and Y. Khoimacha Singh as General Secretary\textsuperscript{62}.

R.K. Bhubonsana Singh held his office of presidentship from October 1946 to August 1947. E. Tompok Singh was the President from July, 1947 to April, 1949. During his time Congress was split into two – one faction was led by him and other by P. Tomal Singh. P. Tomal Singh was the President from August 1947 to April 1949. The Congress was reunited under the presidency of S. Krishnamohan Singh who held his office from April 1949 to December 1950.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>R.K. Bhubonsana Singh</td>
<td>October 1946</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>August 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>E. Tompok Singh</td>
<td>July 1947</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 1949</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>P. Tomal Singh</td>
<td>August 1947</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 1949</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>S. Krishnamohan Singh</td>
<td>April 1949</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>December 1950</td>
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\textsuperscript{62} View of Phungzathang Tonsing, President of the MPCC, Imphal.
The Manipur State Congress contested elections held in 1948 under Manipur State Constitution Act 1947. The party secured 14 seats. Manipur merged into the Indian Union on 21st October, 1949. Consequent upon the merger, the first general elections (Assembly and Parliamentary) were held in 1952. The Manipur State Congress was changed into Indian National Congress in the election 1952. The Manipur State Congress as a separate political identity was not seen since the parliamentary elections, 1952. Most of its leaders and political workers worked under the banner of Indian National Congress.

**Kuki National Assembly**: This is a regional political party of the Kukis of Manipur. It was established in 1947 under the name of Kuki National Assembly. The Kukis are in majority in the southern part of Manipur. Since its formation, the party participates in the political process of Manipur.

The party stands for preserving and improving the culture of the Kukis, freedom from external exploitation and unification of their geographical areas into a political homogenous political unity. The party were established solely to protect the interest of a ethnic community. The party stand for regionalism.

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63 Seminar Paper “The Changing Political and Demographic Trends in North-East India”, organised by Department of Political Science, Manipur University, April 10-12, 1985, pp.10-12.
The party contested both Assembly and Parliamentary elections since 1952. In the first Parliamentary election held in 1952 the party contested one seat in the hill. But the candidate was not elected. In the Electoral College election held in 1952, the party put up seven candidates and two candidates were elected. The party did not put up candidate in the Parliamentary and Territorial Council elections of 1957, 1962, 1967 and Assembly elections, 1972. In a later development, the party contested six seats in the mid-term Assembly held in 1974 and two seats got elected. In 1980 Assembly election, the party contested seven seats but two candidates came out successful. The party put up four candidates in 1984 Assembly elections but only one candidate got elected. In 1990 Assembly elections, eight candidates contested in the election. Two were elected. It is a great surprise that inspite of having put up six candidates by the party in 1995 Assembly elections, no one was elected.

To conclude the Kuki National Assembly contested elections particularly in the hills of Manipur since 1948 till 1995 Assembly elections. It may be noted that the Kuki National Assembly is able to survive as a regional political party since 1948 till to-day while other regional political parties appeared on the eve of elections and disappeared just after the elections.