CHAPTER-II

POLITICAL PARTIES
General Feature of Political Parties

A] Why Political Party?

Political parties have indispensable connection with democracy. They go hand in hand and are interlinked. They are complementary to each other. Democracy is unworkable without political parties while political parties cannot grow without democracy. Political parties are moulders of public opinion in representative government. No representative government can function without a party system and so, a representative government may be called a party government. The reason behind the operation of modern democracy with political parties is that political parties maximize political participation of people. This demonstrates their faith in the mythical maxim, “the voice of the people is the voice of God”. Emphasizing the value of political parties Maclver says, “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 recognized constitutions by means of which one seeks to gain on to maintain power.\textsuperscript{1}

B) Political Party Defined

There are various definitions of political party put forward by eminent political thinkers. To E.E. Schattschneither, "A political party is first of all an organized attempt to set power."\textsuperscript{2} He further says that any organization becomes a major party or real party when it is in control of the government or is able to create and maintain a widespread expectation that it will take over the government. To McDonald, political parties are "determinant organizations". In his word, "to regard political parties as determinant organization with reasonably defined boundaries which are potentially capable as formations of taking over the government much as a contractor would take over a construction task is a rather natural way to consider such a social formation."\textsuperscript{3}

Ostrogorsky, in his pioneering work, \textit{Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties} regards parties ideally as bodies deliberately organized to mobilize and express mass opinion in connection with public questions. "A fundamental difficulty about the term political party is that it is applied without discrimination to many types and near groups."\textsuperscript{4} Thus, the meaning to be given to the term political party is extremely varied. In fact, Duverger did not like to define the political parties and that he limits himself to saying that "a party is a community with a particular structure."\textsuperscript{5}

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Thus political parties are defined in various ways. However in the overall analysis, by a “Political Party”, we mean an organized body of people which stands for certain principles and policies in the political life of the country as a whole.

Edmund Burke defines a political party as “a body of men units for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they all agreed.”

R.G. Gettell defined political party as, “a group of citizens more or less organized who act as a political unit and who by the use their political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.” Disraeli defined political party as, “a groups of men banded together to pursue certain principles.” Benjamin Constant said that a party is “a group of men professing the same political doctrine.” According to W. Munro, political party means a group of people thinking alike on public questions. It expresses more an ideal than the realities of political life.”

Finer defined a political party as “an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power.” Leacock also defined political party as “means more or less organized group of citizens who act together as a political unit while Neumann defined political party as “the articulate organization of society’s active political agents.

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9 Maurice Duverge., n. 5, p. xiv.
Brenster was of the view that “a political party is a free society in an organized group of citizens having the purpose of controlling the government through shared consent, by placing some of its members in public office.” To Austin Renny, “a political party is an autonomous organized group that makes nominations and contest elections in the hope of eventually getting and exercising control of the personnel and policies of government.”

Gilchrist defined a political party as, “an organized group of citizens who prefer to share the same political views and who by acting as political unit, try to control the government.”¹¹ Mr. Schulz defined a political party as “an organized 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.”¹²

J. Blode also defined “political parties as 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.”¹³ Friedrich was of the view that, “a political party is a group of human beings, stably organized with the objectives of securing or maintaining for its leaders the control of government and with the further objectives of giving to members of the party through such control, idea and material benefits and advantages.”¹⁴

Max Weber, however, believes that “parties are specialized associations whose purpose is to secure power within a corporate group, for their leaders in

¹² Ibid.
¹³ Ibid., p. 358.
¹⁴ Ibid.
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.\textsuperscript{15}

By analyzing all the various definitions mentioned above we have come to the commonly acceptable meaning of political party that it is a kind of instrument or machinery for capturing a legitimate power in representative government or democracy. People express their opinion and principles only through party. Every political party should possess some basic characteristics as shown below:

a) It should be more or less organized. Otherwise, it cannot remain in constant touch with the masses.

b) It should command a general agreement of its members on the broad principles of its public policy and main objectives.

c) It should be national in character.

d) It should have a clear aim to capture the power of the government.

e) It should carry out its policy by peaceful and democratic means \textit{i.e.} secret ballot to stack claim to form government.

f) The leaders of the party must endeavour to maximize their base of power support by minimizing their circle of decision makers.

g) There should be an intimate and close relationship among all members of the party to have a unified endeavour to get support of the masses.

h) When returned to power it should try to implement its policies and programmes.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}
i) Non-homogenous membership and size of political parties have shown three categories of membership as tax paying ordinary member, whole time order and notable or the real leader or the elite.

j) The members of the political party must have faith in the top leadership.

C) Emergence of Political Parties

"The term political parties emerged in the nineteenth century with the development of representative in the institutions and the expansion of suffrage in Europe and the United States."\(^{16}\) The emergence of political parties can be seen as a useful institutional index of the level of political development. Political development implies among other things a measure of political participation by large number of people who do not belong to the dominant political elite."\(^{17}\) Lapalombra and Weiner suggested three types of theory of party origins, firstly, the institutional theories focusing on the relationship between early parliaments and the emergence of parties. Secondly, historical situation theories that focuses on the historical crisis or task which systems have encountered at the moment in time when parties developed and thirdly, developmental theories that relate parties to the broader process of modernization. But, Duverger emphasizes on a particular origin of parties and suggests that party grows out of political assemblies as their members felt the need of political assemblies as their members felt the need of a group to act in concert. Duverger also observed that parties originate from two distinct aspects of the electoral process viz. parliamentary and extra parliamentary. D.B. Brogan termed it as 'interior' and 'exterior' parties."\(^{18}\)


\(^{18}\) Maurice Duverger, n. 5, p. vii.
In fact, political parties emerged with a view to participation by a large number of people in the government. Further it emerged with development of representative government. Besides, there are also various determinants which influence in this development as given below:

(i) **Human Nature**: As people's temperaments are different they incline towards differences. Some want to form conservative party by retaining and maintaining their old institution while those desiring rapid and sudden change in the society form radical parties.

(ii) **Religious Communal Sentiments**: Because of very strong sentiment for their religious and communal order political parties like Kokka Gakkai of the Buddhists in Japan, Christian Democrats in Switzerland, Hindu Mahasabha, and Muslim League in India, etc. came into existence. "Moreover, some people have very strong attachments with this community or caste for political parties on that basis such as Mizoram National Front, Jharkhand Parties, etc."

(iii) **Environment**: Environment has an important role in establishing and determining of political party. There are political parties based on the environment.

(iv) **Economic Interest**: People have their divergent economic interest so they form and join different parties. If some desire economic freedom, other prefer more and more state control and some advocate for Laissez-faires while others desire socialism.

(v) **Ideology**: Differences of ideology among the people lead to the formation of different political parties. For examples, those who wanted to profit and promote the interest of the capitalists formed the Fascist and the Nazis while those who wanted to give benefits to the unprivileged sections of society formed socialism and communism.

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Role and Functions of Political Parties

Political parties play the following roles in a democratic system:

(i) Political parties unite, simplify and establish the political process. They patch up sectional interest, overcome geographical distance and sometimes provide coherence to decisive government structures.

(ii) Political parties strive for power and form order out of chaos. They try to widen their interest and harmonise different interests.

(iii) Political parties bridge up the gap between government and the people. They seek to educate, instruct and activate the electorate. They form an important agency for the formation of public opinion.

(iv) By educating the masses political parties arouse their spirit and prompt the masses to take active interest in public affairs.

(v) Political parties play the role of conductor of the government as well as the critic of the government.

(vi) Through political parties voters come to know the candidates much in advance of the actual date of election and hence get sufficient time to consider their comparative worth as representatives. Besides, political parties help the candidates to win election through their collective strengths. Party organization and funds help the election of poor but able politicians who otherwise would have no chance of entering the legislature.

(vii) Political parties serve as co-ordinating factors between the executive and the legislatures in presidential government.

(viii) Political parties manage succession of power as well as participation in the process of getting public approval to the course of any public policy.

(ix) According to V.O. Key Jr., "Political parties are lineal descendants of two sorts of groups that recur in the annals of
governance those that conspire to overthrow the government and those that rally around to defend and maintain the regime.”

(x) C.A. Beard also regards “parties as mainly agencies of interest but also capable of drawing interest together in such a way as to become a motor or an independent force.”

Thus political parties perform functions essential to the operation of a democratic order. But the structure of party may remain constant while the mode of functioning may vary from one party to another. This has made the necessity to discuss the different kinds of political parties which function in a democratic polity.

E] Nature of Parties

McDonald differentiates parties between ‘doctrinal’ and ‘non-doctrinal’. A doctrinal party “is characterized by the fact its leaders and its basis of appeal function largely in the realm of principles and moral argumentation. Whereas parties whose appeal and organizing basis rest upon a shared interest or identity constitute the bulk of party based which may be regarded as essentially non-doctrinal in nature.”

Duverger distinguishes “parties in terms of direct and indirect structured. Parties with direct structure are those whose members are related directly i.e. parties having individuals as members. Parties other than these may be termed as indirectly structure. He also classifies parties into three different types on the basis of strength: (a) Parties with a majority bent, that is, parties which command an absolute majority in parliament, (b) major parties and (c) minor parties.”

20 V.O. Key Jr, n. 4, p. 69.
21 C.A. Beard in Niel A. McDonald, n. 3, p. 27.
22 Ibid.
23 Maurice Duverger, n. 5, p. 283.
Parties can also be characterized in terms of the region or state where they operate. State level parties are quite different from national level parties. The first category is local in character while the second is broad based and national in character.

F] Types of Party System

Party system in polity can be classified into three major categories: one-party, two-party and multi-party system. One-party system signifies a system where there is only one party that represents a cleavage between those who are regarded as being within the party and all others. Two-party system signifies a system where two parallel parties work simultaneously, one become the ruling while the other, opposition. If more than two political parties are active in the political sphere of a country, it is called a multi-party system. Multi-party system is a classification that does not classify, for virtually all party system fall under it. To Duverger, it arises either from splits or overlapping in a natural two-way division. It is a complex phenomenon in itself indeed.

REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

A] Important Regional Political Parties of India

(i) Akali Dal

Shiromani Akali Dal is the most important political and social organization of the Sikh Community. This party became a political party under the leadership of Tara Singh. Initially it demanded a separate Sikh State. Later it turned to fight for a Punjabi speaking Suba. At the beginning 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 united again. It continued to demand for a Punjabi Speaking State.

In 1967 Akali Dal and BJS formed a coalition government in the Punjab. But in 1971, under Indira wave, Akali Dal lost majority in the State Legislature but emerged as the single largest group in the state. In 1977 it formed a coalition government with Janata Party. The party had its MP’s holding the Cabinet Posts in the Janata Ministry, 1977-79 under the Prime Ministership of Moraji Desai. Again in 1980 election the party could not return to power, but it became the single largest party in the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Once again in September, 1985 the Akali Dal captured power in the Punjab Legislative Assembly.

The Akali Dal had its main objective on giving more powers to the states by the centre. It also wanted that financial resources of the country should be so distributed that the states become less dependent on the centre. The party also wanted that the centre should interfere with the affairs of the states in the least possible extent.

But there cropped up a split in the Akali Dal. Two groups led by Surjit Singh Barnala and Prakash Singh Badal respectively, came out. The Operation Black Thunder conducted in the Golden Temple Complex in May, 1988 has intensified the fighting among various factions. Afterwards, the Dal was again split into two factions as Mann Group and Simaranjit Group. Both these groups contested in the 1989 elections.

(ii) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam is a very powerful regional political party having its influence mainly in Tamil Nadu. This party more known as
DMK succeeded the Justice Party of Madras. The party was founded in 1944 by E.V. Ramaswamy. It was given recognition as a political party by the Election Commission of India and a separate symbol had been allotted to it. In the 1957 Assembly election, it won 15 seats. But in 1962 the party strength in the state Assembly rose to 50. The party captured power in the state and soon the differences between the DMK and the Congress Party were toned down. But for quite some time there was enmity between the government of Tamil Nadu headed by DMK and the centre. When there was a split of the Congress Party in 1969, the DMK supported Indira Congress at the Centre. Later on, there was a split, after the death of C.N. Anna Durai, in the DMK.

A prominent DMK leader, M.G. Ramchandran, had organized a separate party known as All India Anna DMK. In 1971 elections the DMK won absolute majority in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. In 1977 when the Janata Party came to power at the Centre, some AIADMK members were given the posts of minister in the Union Cabinet.

The party championed the cause of the poor, illiterate, down trodden and the deprived in Tamil Nadu. “The party opposed to the imposition of Hindi on the people of the South. It favoured free press and ending of regional imbalances. It stood for industrialization 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 state without state consent.”

(iii) The National Conference

This well-organised regional party in Jammu and Kashmir started as the “All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference” in 1932 as a protest movement

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against the personal laws and the autocratic rule of the Dogras. The Muslim educated youths were very angry with the oppressive rule of the Maharajas. Their anger culminated when they witnessed the appointment of “Dogra Rajputs” of “mediocre abilities” to high state posts.\textsuperscript{25} This also caused a great dissatisfaction to the middle and lower class Muslims.\textsuperscript{26} Under the administration of the Maharajas the mass-media were suppressed and strict vigil was kept to subscribers of newspapers or magazines from outside the state. But the people could launch a mass movement against the monarchical rule due to the want of an able leader and low political consciousness. Young educated people started to organize themselves in the name of “prayer meetings”. A set of youths named “Reading Room Party” took strong measures for the “prayer meetings” and Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, a fresher from the Aligarh Muslim University with a M.Sc. Degree took the lead of the Party.

A public meeting was convened in the compound of the “Khanqah” of Shah Hamadan on 21\textsuperscript{st} June, 1931 to select a delegation to present petition to the Maharaja Hari Singh. One Abdul Qadir delivered provocative speech at the end of the meeting. The government took the speech a seditious one and so Abdul Qadir was arrested. This resulted in the anxiety and excitement of the Muslim population. A huge crowd thronged at the court complex on the trial day, the 13\textsuperscript{th} July, 1931 demanding withdrawal of Qadir’s case. While controlling the crowd, police opened fire and killed 21 persons and injured many and arrested hundreds of people including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. This incident caused widespread political consciousness among the masses. “It

was from that date the people took upon themselves the task of securing for themselves the right of democratic self-rule."27

Very soon after the incident the "All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference" was formed with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as its President. The new party organized its inaugural session from 15 to 17 October, 1932 in Srinagar.28 Sheikh Abdullah expressed the need for uniting Hindus and Muslims as early as 1935. But the conference turned into a more secular party by allowing people of different communities to become its members. A special session of the Muslim Conference held in Srinagar on June 11, 1939 resolved: "From this day the name of the Muslim Conference is changed into the National Conference and all those who believe in the objective of responsible and democratic government in the state can become its members irrespective of caste, creed or religion."29

In such a secular way the National Conference started its reign in the state in 1952 and it lasted for a decade. But the party merged with the Congress Party just after the assuming of power by G.M. Sadique after the State Assembly Election, 1962. But a small faction of "Bakshi-Rashid" combined later on revived the National Conference Party.

In 1975, Mr. Qasim, the then Congress Chief Minister in the state under the "Indira-Sheikh Accord"30 stepped down and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

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27 P.N.K. Banzai, n. 25, pp. 715-716.
29 Quoted in D.E. Lockwood, Ibid., p. 50.
became the Chief Minister. Then Abdullah wanted to revive the National Conference. The Congress support was withdrawn. The Assembly Election, 1977 was won by the National Conference.\textsuperscript{31}

**Ideology, Policy and Programme**

The National Conference seemed to be influenced by the Communist Party of India at the beginning. It adopted, “Socialist pattern of society” in its “New Kashmir” manifesto in 1944 for an all-round advancement covering agriculture, industry, transport, distribution, utility services, currency and finance in the state. Mr. Abdullah announced a drastic and sweeping land reform measures from the National Conference platform.

Sheikh Abdullah government adopted the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the primary schools. The government established arts, science and practical classes in handicrafts. In the Assembly Election, 1977, Mr. Abdullah raised the issue of “honour and dignity” of Kashmir.\textsuperscript{32} The party’s election manifesto of 1983 promised to ensure safeguard and unity of the state, reformation of the electoral laws, universalisation of elementary education, improvement of sanitation, abolition of dowry system, development of regional languages and authors, improvement of irrigation facilities, development of (large and small) industries, development of fruit and tourism industries, etc.

The party believed in the democratic principle of responsible government starting from the village level to the national level. The party also makes efforts to achieve secularism, socialism and democracy. It also supported the Indian National Congress in the freedom movement. “On the whole the National Conference Party’s own ideology was never sharply

\textsuperscript{31} P.NK. Bamzai, n. 25, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 789.
differentiated from that of the Congress." Farooq Abdullah reiterated that National Conference was committed to the stand of accession of Kashmir to India as final and irrevocable and that the only thing the party wanted was the restoration of autonomy that Kashmir once enjoyed. He has been pressing for the pattern prior to 1953.

Electoral Performance

Election before 1977 in Jammu and Kashmir was a phenomenon with the massive unopposed return of the candidates of the ruling party as there were no rival candidates due to mass rejection of their nomination papers. Thus the National Conference won 75 out of 75 seats in 1951 State Constituent-cum-Legislative Assembly Elections. Of the 75 seats, 73 were unopposed. This was due to the boycott of the election by the next biggest party, the Praja Snagha on the ground of its dissatisfaction with the mass rejection of the nominations of its candidates.

It was the claim of the National Conference that its government could earn strength and ability in the state after the attack of "Pakistani raiders" in 1947, in the State Assembly Election, 1957. This time again, the National Conference could win 68 seats, of the remaining 7 seats, the Praja Parishad got 5, the Harijan Mandal 1 and another 1 seat went to an independent candidate. The early feature of uncontested return was not changed in the Assembly Elections of 1962 and 1967 even though those were conducted under the strict supervision of the Election Commission of India. In the 1962 election, the

34 India Today, February 15, 1994, p. 48
National Conference begged 70 out of 75 total seats, of which 32 were unopposed. In the 1967 elections, the Congress got 61 seats of which 22 were unopposed returns.

The 1977 Assembly Election was conducted with a keen contest among the three equally strong contending parties, the National Conference, the Congress and the Janata Party. In the election, Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference expressed that Kashmir would secede from India if the state was not given a position of honour and dignity. The National Conference captured 47 seats of which 39 were from the valley, 7 from Jammu region and 1 from Ladakh. In 1987 Assembly Election, the party won 47 seats while in the 1987 Assembly Election, it captured 40 seats. On the other hand, the BJP and the INC sent up 29 and 31 candidates respectively and the two parties could succeed in 2 and 26 seats respectively. In the 1996 Assembly Election the National Conference captured 57 seats out of the total seats of 87 in the Assembly.

Conclusion

The National Conference emerged as a protest movement against the autocratic rule of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah with its first title. “All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference” in 1932. The party embraced “regionalism”. Later on the communal element in the nomenclature was removed and the party became a secular one with the title, “The National Conference”. The party has been successfully participating in the State Assembly Election since 1951 upto the time it suffered due to factionalism in it.

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(iv) The Telegu Desham

The Telegu Desham, most popular regional party in Andhra Pradesh, was founded by the late "matinee-idol", Nandakumari Taraka Rama Rao (popularly known as N.T. Rama Rao) in March, 1982. The party could capture power in the state after 1983 Election. Factionalism cropped up inside the Congress Party in Andhra Pradesh before 1983 State Assembly Elections. The factionalism and repeated change of ministries of the Congress Party in the state conceived a strong discontent among the people in general and the followers of the party in particular. The Muslim supporters no longer wanted to remain themselves as "blind followers" of the Congress Party.\(^{40}\) By the time the Communist Party of India gained support of the Telengana region. But it lost its popularity due to successive party splits. The Janata Party had no organizational base except in some small pockets of Telengana. On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party could gain its support only in a constituency.\(^{41}\) In the midst of such political embroilment N.T. Rama Rao emerged as a crusader to restore aspiration and hopes of the Telegu people.

Ideology, Policy and Programme

The Telegu Desham embraces similar values and ideals as other regional political parties of India. It stands for protection of Telegu culture, language and tradition; and "regional autonomy."\(^{42}\) N.T. Rama Rao, the leader of the party, made many promises like a "corruption-free government, integration of the Telegu speaking people, etc." He also promised to establish "Ram Rajya in the state. As a part of his economic programme, N.T. Rama Rao promised distribution of rice at Rs. 2/- per kilo and providing of free mid-day meals to

\(^{40}\) *India Today*, October 15, 1982, p. 60
\(^{41}\) *India Today*, January 31, 1983, p. 24
the children reading in primary schools.” On the swearing-in-ceremony day, N.T. Rama Rao circulated a “ten-point commandment” to his cabinet colleagues. It pointed out that his colleagues must keep a close touch with the people, they must not interfere with amendment and transfer matters of officials and they must co-operate and make strong measures in removing corruption, in keeping a smooth administration and in uplift of poor and backward people.

Electoral Performance

With the main promises of abolition of corruption and unemployment, supply of rice at Rs.2/- a Kilo, etc. N.T. Rama Rao won the sentiment of voters in the State Assembly Election, 1983. The party captured 282 seats including 4(four) Sanjay Vichar Manch, of the total 287 contested. During his first rule N.T. Rama Rao took up measures to lower superannuation age of government employees to 55 and to implement decentralization policy of Panchayats. In 1985 mid-term Assembly Election the Telegu Desham Party modified its election slogan “Telegu self-respect” as “Telegu welfare” and won 202 seats out of its total contested 249.

The Telegu Desham lost out of its self in the State assembly elections in the hands of Congress (I). The Congress (I) won 182 seats as against 74 seats of the Telegu Desham Party.” The effect of the murder of Vangaveeti Ranga in the coastal district and repression over the masses in the Naxalite strong hold district of Telangana were the main causes for the distrust of people against the party.”

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47 *Frontline*, January 27, 1995, p. 44.
Telegu Desham Party became more active in the 1994 Assembly Election by organizing "Praja Sadasus" (People’s conventions). Many people’s conventions were organized to file a “90 point charge sheet” against the “misrule” of the Congress (I). It also organized meetings and demonstrations against the failures and misdeeds of Congress (I). The manifests of the party included total prohibition, free schooling upto standard-X, completion of pending irrigation projects, protection of women and effective maintenance of law and order. The 1994 election was mainly a fight between TDP and the Congress (I) Party. The leadership race was among the then C.M., Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, the then Union Minister of Textiles, G. Venkataswamy, the Cudappah M.P. Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and former Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee(I) Chief, Hanumantha Rao. N.T. Rama Rao managed to keep his possible rivals away from him. His sons-in-law, D. Venkataswara and N. Chandrababu Naidu, who were rival centres of power of the party, were sidelined by the party chief. In the election T.D.P won sweeping majority of 214 seats while only 26 seats were secured by the Congress (I).

Conclusion

The Telegu Desham Party was born out of the breakdown of the values of the Congress Party in the state. People lost confidence in the Congress Party in the state due to the repeated change of the leadership. The party was started in 1982 by N.T. Rama Rao, the much celebrated film hero with many promises containing regional values and sentiments.

The above survey of the regional political parties in different states of India other than the north-eastern states shows that the D.M.K., the Akali Dal

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49 Ibid., p. 136.
and the National Conference emerged in a common period of time and situation. Though there were slight differences according to local situations among these three regional political parties, all of them stood against the superiority of the minority rule in the respective states. On the other hand, some regional parties emerged as a result of the dismantlement of coalition of forces and interest under the so-called “Congress System” in both national and in the levels resulting in the emergence of the Telegu Desham with a strong regional ideology and objective.

In the course of maintaining position and strength, a regional political party sometimes changes its strong belief in communal sectarian stand to a more secular and democratic stand. However, factionalism and defection in different forms are largely responsible for the weakening and downfall of regional political parties.

B] Regional Political Parties in North East India

1. Arunachal Pradesh:

Arunachal Pradesh comes very late in the political spectrum of North-East India. Arunachal Pradesh, formerly known as the North-Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA), was made a Union territory in 1971.”50 By that time “there were 3257 tribal villages and 6 towns approximately in Arunachal Pradesh.”51 The All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union (AAPSU) which came into existence 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 organization played an important role in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh.

50 North-Eastern Areas (Re-organisation) Act, 1971, Section 7.
51 O. Kulabidhu Singh, n. 29, p. 63.
Soon after the first 1977 parliamentary (Lok Sabha) elections, the newly elected independent M.P. Bakin Pertin convened an All Leaders’ Conference at Pashigat in April, 1977. This conference, attended by leaders from all parts of Arunachal Pradesh, decided to form a regional political party named “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 recognized by the Election Commission of India.

The first general Election in the state was held in 1978 when there were two main political parties, the Janata Party which secured an absolute majority of 17 members and the People’s Party of Arunachal (PPA) with 8 members – besides the Independents which got 5 seats in the house of 30.  

In 1979, the PPA changed its name to United People’s Party of Arunachal Pradesh (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 recognized by the Election Commission. In the 1980 General Election, the PPA and the Indian National Congress (INC) were seen as serious contenders for power. Interestingly both parties secured 13 seats each with 4 Independents. The Congress Party however engineered defection of some members including the Independents and formed the government.

headed by Gegong Apang. Ever since this election, the Congress Party had been able to retain its dominance.\textsuperscript{54} Ideologically PPA believes in a "welfare government." It pledged to the people to work ceaselessly for the good of many and for the happiness of many.\textsuperscript{55} The PPA in its Election Manifestoes of 1980 and 1984 promised to endeavour "to build an egalitarian society reflecting the vision of Mahatama Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru all can live in peace and harmony."\textsuperscript{56} The PPA slogan for the Parliamentary and Assembly Elections of December, 1984 was "Poverty must go, inequality must diminish and injustice must end."\textsuperscript{57}

The election Manifesto of PPA also expresses faith in democracy, secularism, socialism and national integrity.\textsuperscript{58} The fact that the PPA has full faith in national unity, integrity, culture and tradition has been evidenced by a pamphlet published by a member of its Election Committee. It stands 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, utilization of natural resources, development and expansion of transport and communication, agriculture and education.\textsuperscript{59}

Regarding the aims and objectives of the PPA, Article II of its Constitution mentions peaceful co-existence of different tribes with a fraternal understanding, safeguard of the individual freedom, spirit of democracy and rule of law; upholding the wishes of the people to preserve the distinctive


\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{An Appeal to the People of Arunachal}, Tangang Taki, Dibrugarh, 1984.
inherent culture of the state; giving top priority to the interest of the people of the state; speedy economic development in 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."60

The party keeps its regional character with national outlook. By professing to work for accelerating socio-economic development of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and to maintain regional identity at the state level, it floats in the country.61

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 describes itself as a party, regional in character but national in outlook. It mainly aimed to fight backwardness of Arunachal Pradesh and to bring the state at par with the rest of the country. The PPA contested in both the Assembly and Parliamentary Election since 1987. In fact, it worked for building a strong Indian Nation.

2. Assam

In the electoral politics of Assam both regional and national political parties played active role. Asom Gana Parishad is remarkable among the regional political parties. This party emerged as the offshoot of the political circumstances of Assam during the period 1961-1971.62

The All Assam Gana Sangam Parishad (AAGSP) was constituted at an all party convention held at Karimganj in Assam in February, 1961 to launch a

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peaceful non-violent Satyagraha movement for recognizing Bengali as one of the official languages in the state. During the agitation over the language issue in 1971-72, the AAGSP and AASU were fighting for different causes.\footnote{Ibid.}

The AAGSP and the AASU collaborated in launching the agitation over the "foreigner" issue in September, 1979. The immediate provocation to them was the Parliamentary Election, 1980. The agitators wanted to delete the names of foreigners from voter lists and the revision of voter lists. With a violent turn the agitation took nearly six years. 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). The centre initiated new moves in Assam on January 6, 1985. The final round of talks of the Central level was held in August, 1985. It brought an agreement between the central and state government on the one hand and the agitation leaders on the other. The settlement was signed on August 15, 1985.\footnote{Ibid.} In 1985 the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was born at Golaghat on 5th October and as a response to the political challenge posed by the formation of AGP, the United Minority Fronts (UMF) was launched on November 10 the same year at Hojai, a sub-division town in Nowgaon district. The constituent parts of AGP were the Assam Jatiya Badi Dal and the Assam Students Union. The main programme of the party was to protect the interest of the indigenous Assamese, to detect and deport all foreigners who entered without a valid permit.\footnote{D. Sundaram, \textit{Role of Opposition in Indian Politics}. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1992, p. 117.}

Under the accord mentioned above fresh Assembly Elections were held in 1985 and the Assam Gana Parishad secured 64 seats out of 126 seats in the
Legislative Assembly. The Congress (I) emerged as the second largest group securing 27 seats. Prafullo Kumar Mohanta, a 32 year old bachelor and still a student became the leader. He along with twenty of his ministers to be in council was sworn in as the Chief Minister at a public function held at the Nehru Stadium in Guwahati on December 24, 1985.\(^{66}\)

3. **Meghalaya**

The state of Meghalaya is composed of three ethnic groups: Khasis, Jaintias and Garos – who together constitute more than 80% of the total population of the state. It was an autonomous state within Assam till 21 January, 1972 when it was upgraded to a full-fledged state under the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.\(^{67}\) The year 1946 is the base year in which many political parties grew up in Meghalaya. The Khasi-Jaintia Political Association was formed and it submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission 1946, demanding a Federation of Khasi State. Another organisation, the Hill Union also came up with a demand for a Hill State. The Garo National Conference was also formed to demand a district administration with full political autonomy. The Bordoloi Committee of the Constituent Assembly could not fulfil the aspiration of the people of Khsi, Jaintia and Garo Hills.

In 1954 the Hill leaders formed the Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU) to press the demand for a hill state. But their demand could not draw any attention from the State Reorganisation Commission. In the mean time, the Official Language Bill (Assamese) was to be introduced in the Assam Legislative Assembly. At first step, the leaders formed the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) in July 1960 to press the demand of a Hill


State. But the youth section of this party did not like this idea and as a protest they decided to come out of APHLC and to form the Hill State Peoples Democratic Party (HSPDP) in 1968. HSPDP was the first offshoot of APHLC followed by the Public Demand Implementation Convention (PDIC) formed in 1974 under the leadership of G.G. Swell. The APHLC and the HSPDP decided to work out a practical formula for their merger before the 1984 Parliamentary Election. The result was the formation of the Hill People Union (HPU). The APHLC was in power from 1970 to 1976. It was succeeded by INC to last upto 1978. A coalition ministry formed by the APHLC-HSPDP-INC was in power from 1979 to 1983. After the 1989 Assembly Election APHLC-HSPDP-PDIC again formed government. It could not last even for a full month. With the help of a large number of defectors from the regional political parties the Indian national Congress (I) managed to form a new ministry.

Regarding the objectives of the party, the APHLC constitution mentions that the party shall be a party (a) to promote the well-being and the advancement in the country by peaceful and constitutional means, a welfare state based on parliamentary democracy, (b) to preserve 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.

The aims of the Hill People Union formed in 1984 by the union of APHLC and HSPDP are -- (i) to safeguard and preserve the identity of the tribal people and to protect their interests, especially in respect of land, their

69 O. Kulabidhu Singh, n. 24, p. 59.
democratic institutions, language, customs and culture and (ii) to promote the economic development of the tribal people in particular and the state in general. As regards the election manifesto of the Hill People Union, it is declared 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 areas has been to federal structure as envisaged in the constitutions of India to the determinant 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.”

4. **Mizoram**

Mizoram formerly known as Lushai Hills was given full statehood on February 20, 1987. The traditional Lushai administration centered the village which had a hereditary Chief. However, with the spread of education and Christianity, the anti-Chief sentiment ran high and “the commoners consolidated themselves and by a resolution of a meeting on 9th April, 1946 the first political party under the frame, the Mizo Union (MNF) was born”.

It was formed to oppose the traditional rulers. The Chieftainship was abolished by the District Council in 1954 and the Power from the Chief was taken over by the District Council and the village councils. The Mizo Union took part in the hill state movement under APHLC of Meghalaya in order to safeguard its dominance in Mizoram. But in October 1962, the Mizo Union dissociated itself from APHLC to adopt full-fledged state of Mizoram as its policy and demand. Around the year 1961 the Mizo National Front (MNF) was

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formed under the Presidentship of Laldenga to design for a greater Mizoram and its secession from India. 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. There were also around twenty parties based on ethnicity cropping up in Mizoram. Among them important ones were the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO), the Mizo National Front (MNF), the Mizo National Union (MNU) and the People’s Conference formed in 1975. Most of them existed for a short period. They had more or less the same character of adopting 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.\(^{73}\)

The MNF aimed basically at arousing the consciousness of Mizo “nationalism”. Originally, the MNF spelled out three main objectives. They are as follows: \(^{74}\)

(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.

Keeping these objectives in view, the MNF declared that Mizoram was independent with effect from the midnight of February 28, 1966.

Ever since Mizoram became a Union Territory in 1972 there were ups and downs in the fortune of the regional as well as the Congress Parties. From

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\(^{74}\) Commentary on MNF Party’s Aim and Objectives, 1972, p.1.
1972 to 1984, the regional parties, Mizo Union and People’s Conference, had an edge over the Congress Party. The Congress could capture power only in May, 1984 but was soon replaced by MNF, another regional party. Since 1989 General Elections the Congress Party had been commanding confidence of Mizoram. But on December 3, 1998, a coalition government of two regional parties, MNF and Mizo People’s Conference (MPC) was formed with Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister.\textsuperscript{75} Though the regional parties continued to take the centre-stage in the politics of Mizoram, “the Congress was given a clear mandate to rule Mizoram in 1984 elections.”\textsuperscript{76} Over and above these, the politics of the state centered around personality and community considerations rather than on political ideology.

5. **Nagaland**

The idea of a separate state of the Nagas originated as early as 1929 when the Simon Commission visited Kohima. In 1918 a few Naga leaders formed an organisation known as the Naga Club. The aim and object of this organisation was to safeguard their rights against all infringement by other people of Naga Hills District directly under British protection. In February 1946 some educated Nagas turned Naga Club into a social and political organisation known as Naga National Council (NNC) to put forward the demand for a special status for the Naga Hills District.\textsuperscript{77}

The objectives of the NNC on 19\textsuperscript{th} June, 1946 were as follows:

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

\textsuperscript{75} B. Pakem, n. 54, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{76} B.P. Singh, n. 67, p. 88.
(b) The 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 interest of the Nagas;

(d) The Naga tribes should have a separate electorate.\(^7\)

The Naga National Council had been formed by Charles Pawery, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills District.\(^7\) It was the only political party in Nagaland up to 1956 and was dominated by the Nationalist and moderate Nagas. But in 1950 the party was led by Phizo. The party boycotted the first general elections in 1952.\(^8\) Inspite of the ill-feelings between the moderate and Phizo group, the party was organized under the chairmanship of T.N. Angami. The party contested General Election of 1957. After a series of negotiations and agreements with the central government, Nagaland was made a full-fledged state on 1\(^st\) December, 1963 with a population of 0.3 million only.

**Naga Nationalist Organisation (NNO)**

This was the second regional political party in Nagaland and was formed by the moderate Nagas in 1957. This party favoured a peaceful solution of the Naga problem within the framework of the Indian Union.\(^9\) Leaders of NNO took part in Naga Peoples Convention. The party contested in both the Assembly and Parliamentary Elections in 1964 and it came out successfully in the bye-election of 28 May, 1965. The party contested in the Second Assembly Election of 1969.

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The manifesto of the Naga National Organisation made several promises to the Naga People. The party assured that it would work for modernizing the agriculture of the state so that self-sufficiency in food might be achieved.\textsuperscript{82} It also promised to improve the communication system for the rapid development of the state. It stated that the NNO, if voted to power, would not only provide a stable and clean administration but also would work for providing free medical facilities, better education and increased employment opportunities.\textsuperscript{83} Further, it assured the people that it would make sincere efforts for integrating all the Naga inhabited areas, this party emerged as the single largest political party in Nagaland in the Second General Elections.

The NNO pledged to provide a stable and good government on the eve of the third General Elections held in 1974. It emphasized on the rehabilitation of the surrendered rebels. It also promised to provide employment opportunities to the youths of the state. Unluckily, the party could not get majority in the Assembly. But after a break of one year it again emerged as the ruling party.

**United Front of Nagaland (UFN)**

This party was formed on the eve of the second General Elections of 1969. Kevichusa was the president of the party. The objectives 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.\textsuperscript{84} This party contested in the third

\textsuperscript{83} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{84} *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, January 18, 1969.
General Election of 1974 under a changed name – the United Democratic Front (UDF). In the election manifesto the party gave the assurance that it would make sincere efforts for a negotiated settlement of the Naga problems. Further, the party pledged to restore civil liberty and to release all political prisoners. Vizol Angami was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Nagaland on 26 February, 1974. In the fourth Assembly Election held in 1977, the UDF affirms its faith in Shillong Accord and in its election manifesto claimed that, “it unreservedly stands committed to the Constitution of India. It believed that the constitution provides peaceful legitimate means for realizing the aspirations of the people of Nagaland.”

The UDF pledged “to help in finding a solution of the political problems in the spirit of reconciliation; to work for integration of contiguous Naga areas; to expedite settlement of boundary issues with neighbouring states; to suitably annihilate the injustice; to strengthen Naga democratic institutions, traditional and cultural heritage and usage by appointing a cultural board in which the educated youths will be associated to undertake comprehensive and pragmatic educational programmes.”

The UDF further assured the people that if voted to power it would achieve self – sufficiency in food production within the years by stepping up developments activities in agriculture, soil conservation, animal husbandry, fisheries and other allied subjects and provide marketing facilities.

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88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
National Convention of Nagaland (NCN)

This regional party was formed in August, 1977.90 The party in its manifesto mentioned that it would 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."91 The party not only promised to encourage socio-economic development in the state, but also pledged loyalty to the Constitution of India.

Naga National Party and Naga Nationalist Democratic Party (NNP and NNDP)

On the failure of Charan Singh’s Government and consequent dissolution of the Lok Sabha a mid-term poll was held all over the country in 1980. The Naga people went to polls. Many candidates contested the election. There was a keen between the ruling party and the United Democratic Front to win the election. When the result was out Chingwang, a consensus candidate of the opposition parties was elected.92

In the meantime, the Naga National Party, a new regional party came into being under the leadership of J.B. Jasokie, the former Chief Minister of Ngaland on 30th March, 1980. Most of its members were the leaders of NCN and the Congress including some independent MLA's. Tochi Hanson, Ex-MLA and M. Vero, Ex-MP were elected Vice-President while Tajen was chosen as the 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.93

90 Ibid.
92 Chandrika, n. 77, p. 219.
93 The Assam Tribune, Gauhati, March 31, 1980.
6. **Tripura**

A small state in the North-East India, Tripura is the homeland of 19 tribes. It became a part ‘C’ state in 1949 and continued to be so upto 1956 when it become a Union territory under the administration of Council. This Council was converted into an Assembly in 1963. The status of full-fledged statehood was given to Tripura in 1972.

There had been multi-party system in Tripura. Before 1949 there were many political parties in Tripura having regional character. In 1935 there was one party called Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad. It was succeeded by the Indian National Congress, Tripura Branch in 1946.

In 1938, another party named Tripura Jana Mangal Samiti came into being. After this many regional parties like Tripura Jana Siksha Samiti (1945), the Tripura Rajya Praja Mandal (1946) and the Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad (1948), etc. came up. But all these parties merged with the Communist Prty of India subsequently.⁹⁴ Some Muslim organisations like the Anjuman Islamia, 1945, the Tripura Rajya Moslem Praja Majlish, 1946, the Jameet-Ulema-Hind, 1949, etc. also came up. In the year 1957 territorial Council election, many political parties, national and regional, were in the fray. But the INC and the CPI were the major parties contesting in all the constitutions. Some other major political parties were the following:

1. Tripura Ganatantri Sangha (TGS)
2. Praja Socialist Party (PSP)
3. Sanjukta Socilaist Party (SSP)
4. Tripura Upajati Juva Samiti (TUJS)

Among the above regional political parties the TUJS was the latest party and there are some reasons for the growth of this party.

Reasons for the Growth of TUJS

The economic and cultural imbalance between the tribal and non-tribal, the general lack of development in the state, the disillusionment of a certain section of the tribal with the national political parties including the CPI(M), their traditional ally championing tribal causes and the fear of the better-off among the tribal that economic and political interest will not be served by their traditional ally, led to the birth and growth of TUJS.

In fact, the CPI had championed the cause of the tribal of Tripura and had a strong support by the people. However, due to discontentment, some of the educated tribal youths began to take a side line from them. They decided to form a regional political party exclusively for the tribal. Thus, the Tripura Upajati Juva Samiti was born on 10th June, 1967.\(^{93}\)

Objectives of TUJS

The party had the following four-fold objectives:

i. The creation of an Autonomous District Council in the hill tribal areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution;

ii. Restoration of the illegally occupied tribal lands from the non-tribal;

iii. Recognition of the Kokborok language; and

iv. Adoption of the Roman Script for their language.

In this way the objectives emphasized on regional and tribal issues. The party contested in the Assembly and the Parliamentary Elections. In 1972

\(^{93}\) O. Kulabidhu Singh, n. 24, p. 70
Assembly Elections TUJS contested in 5 constituencies but defeated. In 1977 the party contested in 27 constituencies and won 4 seats. In the 1977 Parliamentary Elections also the party contested in 2 constituencies but lost both the seats.

7. Manipur

Manipur People’s Party (MPP): The Manipur People’s Party (MPP) is one of the prominent regional political parties of Manipur. It was formed mainly to safeguard and uphold the interests of the state and to upgrade her politically, economically, socially, culturally, educationally, religiously and linguistically. The party was born on 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.96

In this connection a meeting attended by some Congressman like Salam Tombi (Speaker), Kh. Chaoba (Deputy Speaker) and Yumnam Yaima was held at the residence of Salam Gambhir at Sagolband. The meeting resolved to set up a regional political party in view of bringing much development in the State. Kh. Chaoba proposed the name of the party to be the Manipur People’s Party (MPP), which was accepted by the other members. Thereafter, those three Congressmen quitted the Congress and a second meeting was held at the shop of Salam Gambhir at B.T. Road, Imphal on 26th December, 1968. A formal announcement of the formation of MPP was made and L. Chaoyaima Singh of Thoubal presided over the meeting. Prominent leaders like M. Nilachandra Singh also attended the meeting. Afterwards, the party was joined by a former leader of the Manipur People’s Convention Laishram Manaobi and Congress defectors like Sinam

Krishnamohon, Laishram Jugeshwor, H. Dwijamanidev Sharma, Md. Alimudin and Salam Gambhir and thus the party was strengthened. The first conference of the party was held at the Aryan Theatre at Imphal on January 27, 1969. On July 13, 1971, the Election Commission of India recognized the MPP as a State Party allotting the bicycle to be the reserved symbol of the Party, on the performance of the votes polled by the Party in the 1971 Lok Sabha Election.

Policies and Programmes of MPP

This party stood for the welfare and development of the state. The party adopted its constitution in the year 1969. The preamble of the constitution read as under:

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 by a law established and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy and would uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

The MPP has been recognized by the Election Commission of India as a political party bicycle as its election symbol. Shri Salam Tombi Singh became the first President of the party.

Objectives of the Manipur People’s Party

The objectives of the MPP are to achieve politically, socially and economically by democratic and peaceful means the well being 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 and Scheduled Tribes and other minorities for their development according to their own capabilities;

III. to preserve and promote the different arts, culture and traditions of the hill and valley people of Manipur and

IV. to take initiative for strengthening the regional harmony.

The Manifestos of the Manipur People’s Party (MPP)

The manifestos of the Manipur People’s Party pledged maximum autonomy by amending the constitution, the improvement of agriculture, development of Manipuri language, establishment of cordial relations between the hills and plains, electrification of all villages, release of the youths now in jail, connection of Manipur with the mainland by rail road, removal of the Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958 and establishment of one regiment of Manipur. The party also stands for development of industries like paper mill, cement factory, tasar, sugar mill, electronic industry, rubber industry, film industry, upgradation of academic standard of university and college, improvement of tourism and sports. The party also promised to review the Merger Agreement, 1949 and to transfer Kabo Velley to Manipur, increase of Lok Sabha Seat of Manipur from 2 to 3 and political solution to the insurgency.

Table No. 3
Seats won by the Manipur People’s Party in the Assembly Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The MPP held power three times during the period from 1972 to 1995. Md. Alimuddin became 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 C.M. from 23rd February, 1990 to 6th January, 1992. Y. Yaima Singh represented Manipur in the Lok Sabha in 1991. During his tenure the greatest achievement was the inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII-Schedule of the Constitutions of India. Some of the achievements of the Government run by the Manipur People’s Party were:\[98\]

I. the establishment of the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur in the year, 1972;

II. the establishment of the Regional Medical College at Lamphelpat in Manipur;

III. the opening and establishment of the centre of Post –Graduate Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University in Manipur;

IV. the establishment of the Manipur Public Service Commission;

V. the establishment of the Khansari Sugar Mill, Wangbal;

VI. the establishment of the Spinning Mill, Loitangkhunou.

The Presidents of the Manipur People’s Party in chronological order were:\[99\]

Table No. 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>L. Jugeshwor Singh</td>
<td>02.02.1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>L. Manaobi Singh</td>
<td>01.04.1978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\[99\] Interview with O. Joy Singh, President, MPP on March 25, 2005.
The MPP has been striving at its level best to serve the interest of Manipur with emphasis on the protection of the territorial integrity of the state of Manipur.

The Manipur State Congress

The Manipur State Congress was set up on 4th October, 1946 at a meeting of the representative of different political parties. The meeting was convened by a coordinating committee consisting of Yumnam Khoimacha Singh as convenor and others, Sagolsem Indramani Singh, Sinam Krishnamohon Singh, Loitam Yaima Singh, Rajkumar Maipaksana Singh and Sarungbam Ibohal Singh as members at the Aryan Theatre, Imphal. The meeting was presided over by Rajkumar Bhubonsana Singh. In the meeting, H. Irabot Singh was branded a Communist. Irabot was insisted to declare himself as a Communist. H. Irabot Singh and his followers walked out from the meeting. After the departure of H. Irabot Singh and his group from the meeting, the remaining members in the meeting formed the Manipur State Congress Party with Rajkumar Bhubonsana Singh as its first President. The members of the Manipur State Congress were mostly former members of the Nikhil

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102 Ibid., p. 137.
Manipur Mahasabha. It was controlled and manned by the elites of the state in those days. There was intra-party factionalism in the party. The following Table 5 shows the different Presidentships of the party.\(^\text{105}\)

**Table No. 5**

President of MSCP before 1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>R.K. Bhubonsana Singh</td>
<td>October, 1946-August, 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>E. Tompok Singh</td>
<td>July, 1947-April, 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>P. Tomal Singh</td>
<td>August, 1947-April, 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>S. Krishnamohon Singh</td>
<td>April, 1949-December, 1950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Manipur State Congress followed the ideology and policy of the Indian National Congress. It was also recognized as a branch of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee by the Indian National Congress.\(^\text{106}\)

The Manipur State Congress contested election held in 1948 under Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the party secured 14 seats. Consequent upon the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union on 21\(^{st}\) October, 1949, the first general elections (Assembly and Parliamentary) were held in 1952. The Manipur State Congress was changed into the Indian National Congress in the election, 1952. Afterwards, most of its leaders and workers worked under the banner of the Indian National Congress. So, the Manipur State Congress was not seen as a separate political identity after the Parliamentary Election, 1952.

\(^{105}\) O. Kulabidhu Singh, n. 24, p. 90

\(^{106}\) General Secretary, AICC's Letter No. PS.II/7604 of November 28, 1948.
The Manipur Praja Shanti Sabha

The Manipur Praja Shanti Sabha was one of the oldest regional political parties in Manipur. But its existence was short. It started as a voluntary “Peace Force” constituted by a group of people who do not like the leadership and the quarrel of the two Congress factions. The “Peace Force” was headed by N. Ibomcha Singh and W. Radhamohon Singh.\textsuperscript{107}

The main cause of the formation of the Manipur Praja Shanti Sabha was the denial of the compromise formula initiated by the “Peace Force” by the Tompok Congress.\textsuperscript{108} The party did not have a specific programme and good leadership. The party also could not see the future of the state, it failed to provide a clear-cut alternative path of the state and as a result of which the party declined.\textsuperscript{109}

The Manipur Praja Sanmelani

The Manipur Praja Sanmelani was formed on 7\textsuperscript{th} January, 1940 at Police Ground, Imphal in a meeting organized by a few (former) members of the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha.\textsuperscript{110} The members of the Mahasabha differed their opinion on the question of lending support to the women after the women agitation of December, 1939. A faction of the Mahasabha headed by Khwairakpam Magha Singh, Lalitamadhop Sharma and Bankabihari Sharma, wanted the Mahasabha to extend their help to the wounded and suffering women. However, H. Irabot Singh and his followers wanted to start a political movement to fight against the autocratic feudal and colonial administration of

\textsuperscript{107} Ksh. Bimola Devi, “Regional Political Parties in Manipur: A Brief Review”, appeared in commemorative publication of the Seminar \textit{Changing Political and Demographic Trends in North-East India}, April 10-12, 1985, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, Imphal.
\textsuperscript{110} L. Ibobi Singh, n. 101, pp. 71-72.
the Maharaja and the British Political Agent in Manipur.\textsuperscript{111} On 7\textsuperscript{th} January, 1940 in the Working Committee meeting, the then President of the Mahasabha, H. Irabot Singh and his followers were reduced to a minority in the issue of the course of action to be taken up following the women agitation of 12 December, 1939. The walked out of the meeting and afterwards formed the Manipur Praja Sammelani on the same day in a separate meeting held for the purpose.

A working committee consisting of 26 members was constituted. H. Irabot Singh and Elangbam Tompok Singh were President and General Secretary respectively.\textsuperscript{112} The working committee passed resolutions like the starting of civil disobedience movement and non-cooperation movement in Manipur.\textsuperscript{113}

**The Manipur Praja Sangha**

A joint meeting of the members of the Manipur Praja Sanmelani and the Manipur Praja Mandal, erstwhile political parties, held on 21\textsuperscript{st} August, 1946 at the Mandop of Gouramani Sharma at Kwakeithel, Imphal, formed the Manipur Praja Sangha. R.K. Bhubonsana presided over the meeting.\textsuperscript{114}

The meeting in its resolution No. 1 passed that the two political parties had similar aims and objectives and that to make a powerful political party in Manipur, they merged and formed the Manipur Praja Sangha. Bhubonsana Rajkumar, Gouramani Sharma and Irabot Singh were elected as President, Working President and General Secretary respectively. The party reiterated the earlier appeal of all political parties to the Maharaja of Manipur to announce

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} *Ibid*, pp. 69-71.
\item \textsuperscript{112} *Ibid*, p. 72.
\item \textsuperscript{113} *Ibid*.
\item \textsuperscript{114} *The Resistance*, Imphal, February 1, 1977, p. 7.
\end{itemize}
the establishment of a Legislative Assembly and formation of a Council of Ministers.\textsuperscript{115}

With the formation of the Manipur State Congress on 4\textsuperscript{th} October, 1946, one half of the Manipur Praja Sangha joined it and the remaining half elected H. Irabot Singh and T. Ibotombi Singh with a decision to survive their party, as the President and the General Secretary respectively in a meeting held on 6\textsuperscript{th} October, 1946.\textsuperscript{116} The Manipur Praja Sangha organized the first Nupeelal Memorial Celebration at Keisamthong on 12\textsuperscript{th} December, 1946.\textsuperscript{117}

The Manipur Praja Sangha convened a meeting of representatives of various political parties and organisations like the Tangkhulong, the Kuki National Assembly, the Kabui Association, the Kuki Union, the Mizo Union, the Krishak Sabha, the Manipur Praja Sangha, etc. to form a coordinating body in November, 1947 for demanding a full responsible government in the state.\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{The Manipur Krishak Sabha}

The rural-based political party, the Manipur Krishak Sabha, was a new name of the Krishi Sanmeloni. The changeover of the nomenclature of the party took place in 1946 at Nambol. H. Irabot Singh was its first President and M. Madhumangol Singh and Oinam Imomocha Singh were the General Secretary and the Secretary respectively.\textsuperscript{119}

The main purpose of the Krishak Sabha was to uphold the cause of peasants.\textsuperscript{120} Collaborating with the Manipur Praja Sangha, the Krishak Sabha

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} L. Ibobi Singh, n. 101, pp. 138-39.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 139.
\textsuperscript{118} The Resistance, Imphal, November 19, 1977, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{120} N. Ibobi Singh, Elements of Public Administration in India, Imphal: Rajshtree Books Store, 1974, p. 44.
made efforts to spread social and political education to the people, particularly those in the villages and rural areas.

The Hill Political Parties

Since the time of Indian Independence the hill people participated in the state politics. In the north, under the leadership of A. Daiho, “Naga People’s Leagues” was formed. He launched a movement for integration of the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur into the Naga Hills of Assam.\(^{121}\) The movement was very strong in the month of August, 1948.\(^{122}\)

In the south-west Manipur also another movement was made by the Mizo Union. The Mizo Union demanded for the merger of Mizo inhabited areas of Manipur with the Lushai Hills, Assam. As a result, the party boycotted the Manipur Assembly Election, 1948.\(^{123}\)

Manipur Assembly Election, 1948

The first election to the Manipur Assembly was held in June, 1948. It was to be conducted under the “Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947” and the “Hill People’s Regulation Act, 1947.” As per the election rules only the literate, bonafide resident or non-government servants were eligible to contest the election. The main contesting parties of the election were the Manipur State Congress, the Krishak Sabha, the Socialist Party and the Manipur Praja Shanti Sabha. The party-wise position in the result of the election is shown in Table No. 6.

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\(^{121}\) G. Satradhari, n. 119, p. 54.
\(^{122}\) *The Shillong Times*, September 3, 1948.
Table No. 6  
Party-wise Position of the First Manipur Assembly Election, 1948

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Manipur State Congress</td>
<td>Two bullocks with a plough</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Manipur Krishak Sabha</td>
<td>Hut</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Hill Areas (Independent)</td>
<td>Two leaves</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Manipur Praja Shanti Sabha</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The United Naga Integration Council

The United Naga Integration Council was formed just before the Assembly election of 1972. Rishang Keishing, a veteran hill leader of the state, was the founder leader of the newly formed political party.¹²⁴ This hill-based political party contested in the 1972 State Assembly Election.

To fight the Assembly Election, 1972 in the hill areas, the United Naga Integration Council highlighted two major issues in its election manifesto.¹²⁵ The first issue was that the party stood for an immediate integration of all contiguous Naga inhabited areas of Assam, Manipur, NEFA and Nagaland. The second major issue was the party’s support to the formation of a Mizo state comprising of all contiguous Mizo areas. The party also expressed that it would support the demand of statehood for the “valley areas of Manipur.”¹²⁶

The three candidates of the party contested from the Phungyar (S.T.), the Kamjong (S.T.) and the Chingai (S.T.) constituencies in the 1972 Assembly Elections in the state and won the elections.¹²⁷ But the Party failed to get

¹²⁶ Inid., pp. 35-36.
¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 39.
ministerial post in the first Alimuddin Ministry in 1972-73. The party merged with the Congress in 1972.\textsuperscript{128}

The Manipur Hill Union

The Manipur Hill Union, another hill-based party, was formed by seven MLAs in the Manipur Legislative Assembly in December, 1972.\textsuperscript{129} The party took a significant role in Manipur State politics upto 1976 since its inception. The party was a partner of the MPP in the mid-term election of 1974. The party won 11 seats and took part in the formation of the second Alimuddin Ministry. Yangmaso Shaiza, another veteran Tangkhul Naga leader, was the leader of the party. Just before the swearing in of the Alimuddin ministry, a faction of the Manipur Hill Union led by Yangmaso Shaiza left the United Legislature Party (ULP) on the plea that Shaiza was not given leadership in the U.L.P.\textsuperscript{130} Both factions of the M.H.U. claimed themselves to be the real Manipur Hill Union, but on 10\textsuperscript{th} July, 1974 the leader of the Manipur Hill Union, Yangmaso Shaiza, formed the Progressive Democratic Front by a coalition of the Congress, M.H.U. and C.P.I.\textsuperscript{131} In July, 1976, Yangmaso Shaiza and Somi A. Shimray defected from M.H.U. and joined the Congress. Thus, the Manipur Hill Union which had eleven elected members in the mid-term Elections, 1974 became extinct.\textsuperscript{132}

The Nationalist Socialist Democratic Party

The Nationalist Socialist Democratic Party by a few members resigned from the Samyukta Socialist Party in 1966. N. Tompok Singh and L. Jugeshor Singh, two former Congressmen were also founder members of the party.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{129} Simanta Pratika, December 20, 1972.
\textsuperscript{130} Th. Gokul Singh, n. 124, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 56.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 65.
Other prominent members of the party were Th. Iboyaima Singh, Aribam Surendra and I. Tompk Singh. As its leaders joined other political parties, this party had a short life.

**The Kanglei League**

Tough short-lived, a one time very popular and active regional political party in the state, the Kanglei League, came into being in 1973. It was formed by a group of people coming out from the then Pan Manipur Youth League, a socio-cultural organisation, led by late Nandalal Sharma and Tejen Yambem together with some other members like late Major (retd.) Nilakamal, N. Sarat, etc.\(^{133}\) Later on, A.K. Sanaton joined the party in the second phase and many other members also joined the party.

Though active during 1974-76, none of its candidates could win in the mid-term State Assembly Elections, 1974. The party merged with the MPP on 16\(^{th}\) June, 1976.\(^{134}\) The party aimed at protection of the unique identity of the Manipuris by a peaceful and consensus method and to bring an all round advancement and development in the state and to establish a democratic, socialist and secular nation.\(^{135}\)

The major issue raised by the party was that the government of India suppressed Manipur and the people of Manipur. So, the party in its second convention in 1974, listed 3 (three) different categories of demands as political, economic and social. The political demands included a strong Manipur as a unit of a strong India by granting autonomy, removing all suppressive laws, taking up strong measure to stop using money power in politics and restoring the Kabo

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\(^{133}\) Interview with A.K. Sanaton, General Secretary, MPP, September 11, 2002.

\(^{134}\) *Ibid.*

Valley to Manipur. Under the economic demands, the party highlighted that the Central Government should take up measures to meet the requirements of the people of Manipur by the state's own income. It also mentioned that medium size industries should be established and the amount of money given for the development of the state should be enhanced. As social demands the party highlighted that Manipuri should be included in the VIII Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the Bengali Script should be replaced by the Meitei Script and measures should be taken up to uplift and use the language of the hill people at the levels of lower primary classes.

**Federal Party of Manipur (FPM)**

The Federal party of Manipur is a regional political party formed under the Presidentship of Prof. Gangmumei Kamei on October 21, 1993. It is a regional party with a national outlook with firm commitment of federalism and autonomy which are basic features of the Indian political system; which are being consistently and deliberately sidelined and eroded by the Indian ruling classes. Regionalism is a healthy and constructive force to protect regional interests in the body politic of a multi-nationality nation like India.

The Federal principles and ideology and the policy and programme for regional development will be able to solve the problems and challenges faced by a pluralistic state of Manipur which had a long and continuous history of more than two thousand years.

**Policies and Programmes of FPM**

The ideologies of the Federal Party of Manipur are federalism, autonomy and self-government, development with social justice, social

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136 Interview with N. Joykumar, General Secretary, Federal Party of Manipur. October 17, 2002.
federalism and protection and preservation of basic human rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and International Covenants. F.P.M. reiterates its commitment to its well known objectives namely:\(^{139}\)

i) Federalism;

ii) Regionalism with commitment to autonomy and self-government;

iii) Social Federalism;

iv) protection of Human Rights;

v) development with Social Justice.

Objectives of FPM:

The FPM stands for the following objectives:

i) To build up a free and democratic society with over all 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 national building task in the state;

iii) To restructure the relationship between the Union Government and the state of Manipur, based on federal principles and more autonomy for the state;

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 implementations 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;

\(^{139}\) Ibid., p. 2.
vi) To promote the welfare of the tribal, 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 parties of the country with those groups and organizations which believe in the federal base of Indian policy.

The FPM got its registration with the Election Commission of India under the 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.H dated the 23rd December, 1993.140

The party held its first convention on 21st October, 1994 at Gandhi Memorial Hall, Imphal. More than 1150 delegates from different levels of its organizations attended the convention. Prof. Gangmumei Kamei presided over the function. The convention adopted the following resolutions:

i) equal representation of the state in the Parliament;

ii) more power for the state 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 State, District level, Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayat;

140 O. Kulabidhu Singh, n. 24, pp. 82-83.
vi) establishment of Inter Ethnic Council for peace, Human Rights Commission, New Economic Policy, trade and commerce; and

vii) equality of status, cultural identity, social harmonization, protection of ethnic minorities and human rights, etc.

The FPM contested the Assembly Elections held in 1995. As many as 22 candidates contested in the election. Two candidates, G. Gangmumei Kamei and W. Thoiba Singh were successful in the Nungba and Heigang Assembly Constituencies respectively. In the 1996 Parliamentary Election only two candidates (i) N. Pahari Singh and (ii) Shimareigam Shaiza contested in the valley and hill constituencies. Unfortunately they could not return.\textsuperscript{141}

Kuki National Assembly (KNA)

The Kuki National Assembly (KNA) is the only regional political party surviving till today among the pre World War II political parties in the hills of Manipur. The KNA held its genesis as a regional political party in 1946. The educated Kuki elite groups gathered and founded the Kuki National Assembly on April 24, 1946 to meet the growing demands of the Kuki Community and also with an objective to safeguard the interests of the Kukis in the rapid changing political atmosphere in the hills. At the beginning, it was a social organization, but later it took the form of a political party. The KNA is the only tribal political party in Manipur recognized by the election Commission India.

Ideology

The KNA stands for binding together of all the Kukis living in different states of India and establishing a homeland for the Kuki tribes. It stands for composite culture of the Kukis and freedom from external exploitation. The

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 84.
party supports the idea of regionalism.\textsuperscript{142} The Kukis are the major tribal people in the southern part of Manipur. Since its inception, the party has a solid and stable support from the Kuki voters.

**Electoral Performance of the K.N.A**

The K.N.A. contested for the first time in the Assembly Election of 1952. The party put 7(seven) candidates in the fray and could secure 2 seats.\textsuperscript{143} The party remained dormant after 1952 elections till late 1960’s. After the 1967 elections the party became very active. But in the 1972 Assembly Election the two candidates contested but could not win. In the next mid-term Assembly Election, 1974, the party made ally with the MPP and the MHU. The result was quite positive. The KNA won less than three seats (2 out of 6) in the hills contiguous to the Central Valley. The average vote received by the KNA was 2,932.

The KNA contested in 7 constituencies in the 1980 Assembly Election. But it retained only 2 seats. The KNA’s share of popular votes was 2.81 percent. The KNA received the highest average votes per candidate \textit{i.e}, 2,943. In the Assembly Election of 1984, the party had contested in 4 constituencies but only one candidate got elected. In the 1990 Assembly elections, 8 candidates contested in the election, two were elected.\textsuperscript{144} The KNA joined in the formation of the government and one candidate of the party \textit{i.e}, T.N. Haokip got a Cabinet Minister’s post. However, in the Assembly Election, 1995, the party sent out 6 candidates but none was elected. In the Assembly


election of 2000, the party had contested in only one constituency i.e., Saikot Assembly Constituency with D. Jongkhongam Hangsing as its candidate. The party, however, failed to retain the seat.\footnote{Government of Manipur, \textit{Election Index Card}, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 2000.}

The Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP)

The MSCP was an offshoot of the split of the ruling Congress (I) which was the result of the political crisis within the Rishang Keising Ministry. Consequent upon this, under the leadership of Wahengbam Nipamacha Singh the defected Congressmen formed the MSCP on December 5, 1997.

The MSCP constitution clearly specifies the Preamble of the party, the objectives of the party, formation of the organizational structure at the State level, membership of the party, discipline and amendment procedure of the constitution, etc. The MSCP Preamble runs as follows:

\begin{quote}
We the members having subscribed our signatures hereto, having resolved to constitute a political party in the state of Manipur, do hereby enact and give this constitution to ourselves to achieve the aims and objects herein under incorporated. This political party shall be called “The Manipur State Congress Party” with its registered office at Babupara, Imphal.
\end{quote}

The objectives of the Manipur State Congress Party are as follows:\footnote{\textit{The Constitution of the Manipur State Congress Party}, Manipur, Imphal, October 1998.}

i] to achieve honest and true faith and allegiance to the people;

ii] to secure harmony and co-existence of all the people;

iii] bring welfare and justice – social and economic, to the people irrespective of caste, tribe, religion, creed, etc.;

iv] to propagate and bear true faith and allegiance to the constitution of India;

v] to uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India and also the principles of Socialism, Secularism and Democracy.
Policies and Programme of the MSCP

Prior to the Assembly Election, 2000 the party issued its policies and programmes which had already been accomplished and mentioned in the Agenda of the United Front, Manipur. They were as follows.\(^\text{147}\)

i] Solution of Kuki-Zomi clash in Churachandpur;

ii] The 5\textsuperscript{th} National Games was not only hosted by Manipur with success but also Manipur emerged as National Champion;

iii] Construction and improvement of roads and transport system for the hill and plain;

iv] A project namely, Vision 2020 has been taken up in consideration of a better future for Manipur;

v] Heavy fuel-based power project at Leimakhong, adequate power will be supplied to the people of Manipur in a short time;

vi] Various schemes have been launched to supply good drinking water to the people;

vii] Establishment of an Engineering college;

viii] Establishment of Manipur Human Rights Commission;

ix] Establishment of the 5\textsuperscript{th} Pay Commission;

x] Construction of the Khuman Lampak Sports Complex;

xi] Establishment of various schemes regarding water supply, and food grains etc. to scheduled castes and tribes.

Performance of the MSCP

Since its inception, the MSCP has been actively participating in all political activities in Manipur. The first MSCP led ministry was sworn in on

\(^{147}\textit{Agenda of United Front, Imphal, 2000, pp. 2-5.}\)
December 16, 1997 under the Chief Ministership of W. Nipamacha Singh. Thus the MSCP led United Front Government of Manipur had successfully responded to the aspiration of the people to have a non-Congress government in the state at the end of the 20th Century. 148

In the Assembly Election of 2000, the MSCP won 23 seats and the second MSCP led Government was formed under the Chief Ministership of W. Nipamacha Singh. The performance of the MSCP is quite satisfactory until February, 2002. The MSCP is the second regional political party next to the MPP which could establish a non-Congress government in Manipur. But in the 2002 Assembly Election MSCP won only 7 seats and the party is declining day by day after joining, the SPF government led by Shri O. Ibobi Singh in 2002.

Democratic Revolutionary People’s Party (DRPP)

The Democratic Revolutionary People’s Party (DRPP) was formed in a meeting held on July 12, 1999 at 9:00 a.m. at the residence of Mr. Udoi Thongam at Canchipur popularly known as “Thongam Cottage.” 149 The meeting was attended by 84 members representing different groups of people and various sections of society. The meeting was presided over by Dr. M. Jitendra Singh, Professor of History, Manipur University.

The meeting discussed the then political scenario of Manipur; the deteriorated social conditions and financial crunches; the working and conditions of the Regional Parties of the state; the problems facing the people; the misrule of a series of political regimes without long vision; lack of peoples’ confidence in political leaders and parties; the rising trend of corruption and

148 Ibid., p.1.
149 An Interview with Mr. Udoi Thongam, President and R.K. Anand, General Secretary, DRPP (DPP), April 14, 2006.
violation of human rights; dwindling of the significance of democracy, etc. Besides, challenges to the territorial integrity of Manipur from different directions, communal politics and divide and rule policy of some political leaders were also minutely discussed.

Discussion on the unworthiness of the prevailing political leaders and parties of Manipur which do not think for the people, existence of bankruptcy in political ideology, political vision, credibility, accountability, etc. and the need for a new regional party to establish a clean political culture, to fulfil the desires of the people and to stand for the public in the 21st century and after, has resulted in the birth of DRPP. The first office bearers of DRPP were: 1. Dr. M. Jitendra Singh, President, 2. Renghang Chothe, Vice-President, 3. Udoi Thongam, Vice-President, 4. R.K. Anand, General Secretary and 5. L. Subhaschandra Secretary.150 A committee headed by R.K. Anand drafted the constitution of DRPP. The first General Body meeting of July 19, 1999 inducted some more office bearers. As a representative of the party, Advocate Sapam Biswajit Meitei submitted relevant documents for registration of the party to the Election Commission of India. The DRPP was recognized as a political party by the Election Commission of India under section 29A of the Representation of Peoples’ Act, 1951 on October 5, 2001. On October 20, 2001, R.K. Anand, General Secretary despatched the resolution of the special session of the General Council held on 7.10.2001 for changing DRPP to DPP to the Election Commission of India. But the proposal for change of Party’s name from DRPP to DPP by removing “R” from DRPP was not accepted by the Election Commission. It was mentioned in the letter151 sent to R.K Anand

151 Ibid.
by the then Under Secretary to the Election Commission Mr. K.F. Wilfred which reads as:

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter dated 20.10.2001, regarding change of name of the party to “Democratic Peoples Party”. There is a registered party named “People’s Democratic Party”. Therefore, the name of party proposed by you, i.e., “Democratic Peoples Party” has not been accepted by the Commission as the two names would be similar to each other and hence confusing.

You are, therefore, advised to retain the present name of the party.

Yours faithfully

K.F. Wilfred
Under Secretary

Inspite of such non-acceptance of the change of party’s name, all correspondences were made in the name of DPP in place of DRPP with effect from October 7, 2001.

Objectives of DRPP

The objectives of the DRPP are as follows:

i] Reconciliation amongst the people of different communities;

ii] Sustainable economic development in the state by providing 50,000 jobs;

iii] Conflict resolution through political dialogue;


v] Women Empowerment by setting up State Women’s Commission;
vi] Promotion of Centre-State relations with maximum state autonomy;

vii] Adoption of a new Education Policy and conversion of Manipur University into a Central University;

viii] Eradication and CONTROL of HIV/AIDS;

ix] Control of Environmental Pollution;

x] Protection of Territorial Integrity of Manipur.

Policies and Programmes of DRPP

Before the assembly Election, 2002, the party issued its policies and programmes which may be summed as shown below:152

i] The DRPP (rechristened as DPP) will work for reconciliation among the people of valley and hill by removing the artificial communal barriers;

ii] To strive for a sustainable economic development by providing 50,000 jobs; launching of five year plans; improving of roads, bridge, etc.; seeking funds from World Bank and Asian Development Bank and tapping the South-East Asian Market via the Indo-Myanmar Free Trade.

iii] The DRPP (DPP) will strive to resolve conflicts through political dialogue by protecting the interest of all the communities.

iv]. Preservation and protection of human rights by establishing State Human Rights Commission for realizing:

a) Bringing of quality education,

b) Improving of infra-structures, i.e., health care system, safe drinking water, good roads and communications and foods and shelter.

v] Establishment of State Women’s Commission for women empowerment.

vi] Demand for maximum autonomy and promotion of Centre-State relations.

vii] Adoption of a new education policy to provide quality education and converting Manipur University into a central University along with an Advance Centre for South-East Asian Studies.

viii] Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS through all possible means.

ix] Control of environmental pollution.

dx] Protection of territorial integrity of Manipur.

Besides, the above, the party also mentions the following slogans:

\[
\begin{align*}
Let \text{ us join hands together} \\
All across the land \\
So that we may give ourselves \\
\text{A new Manipur where there will be} \\
\text{Freedom from fear and poverty} \\
\text{Where we will live with pride and dignity} \\
\text{And that is what} \\
The \text{Democratic Peoples’ Party promises.}^{153}
\end{align*}
\]

Electoral Performance of DRPP (DPP)

In the 7th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election there was no candidate from the DRPP but the party General Secretary Mr. R.K. Anand fought the election as Independent candidate from Naoriya Pakhanglakpa Constituency. But he could not return. In the 8th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election held in February, 2002 DRPP projected 23 candidates including one woman and fought the electoral battle in all the 23 seats out of total 60 seats of the state.

\[^{153}\text{Ibid.}\]
There were 21 candidates in the valley while only 2 were in the hills. There was no Naga candidate among them. Smt. Oinam Bimola Devi secured 73 votes in Oinam Constituency; a Muslim candidate secured 115 votes at Lilong Constituency and in the hills, Mr. Manglianthang got 7 votes in Chandel Assembly Constituency. Two candidates won the election at Konthoujam Constituency by Dr. T. Meinya Singh (securing 5,152 votes) and Heingang Assembly Constituency by N. Biren Singh (securing 5,869 votes) respectively. Dr. T. Meinya Singh was a Reader in Imphal College, Imphal for quite a long time, while N. Biren Singh worked as the editor of Naharolgee Thoudang, a local daily. Among the defeated candidates, N. Sanajaoba Singh of Bishnupur AC stood second by getting highest number of votes, 9,548 while R.K. Anand also got the second position by securing 4,990 votes in Naoriya Pakhanglakpa AC.154

After the general election the two DRPP MLAs joined the opposition group Democratic People’s Alliance on March 11, 2002, Shortly after it, on 5-4-2002 it withdrew itself from DPA and joined Secular Progressive Front (SPF) led by O. Ibobi Singh under an MOU of six points signed on the side of DRPP by Kh, Mani Singh, President; Udoi Thongam, Working President and R.K. Anand, General Secretary while on the side of SPF by O. Ibobi, C.M., Rishang Keishing, Chairman, Steering Committee, SPF, Ph. Parijat Singh, Secretary, Steering Committee, SPF and C. Doungel, leader, N.C.P. Legislature Party. On December 10, 2002 Dr. T. Meinya was sworn in as Minister of State (Independent Charge) and held the portfolio of Higher Education while N. Biren was sworn in as Minister of State on April 21, 2003.

154 Ibid.
Manipur National Conference (MNC)

Shortly after Shri W. Nipamacha Singh, Ex-chief Minister, Manipur withdrew from the Manipur State Congress Party, there held a grand meeting at his residential quarters at Bubupara, Imphal on 5th October, 2001. The meeting was participated by many political leaders of Manipur even including young leaders newly initiated into politics. In that meeting was formed The Manipur Peoples’ Conference (MPC) as a new Regional Political Party.

Actually, this meeting, attended by more than 800 people, formed the said MNC by putting forward the objectives: to protect, preserve and maintain the 2000 years old history of the hill and plain people of Manipur; to form and establish a harmonious society of equalities; to bring in a transparent and corruptionless administration to enable us to sacrifice today for a better and more secure Manipur of tomorrow, to establish a secular society; to root out suppressive, oppressive, subversive and tyrannical rule or rule of force; not to destroy the age-old productive land of gold, Manipur, etc.

On this day, an Adhoc Committee comprising of 21 (twenty one) members was formed with Shri W. Nipamacha Singh as the Chairman. The following persons were members:

1. Shri L. Lalit Singh (Former Minister) (Keisamthong A/C)  Member
2. G. Joykumar Sharma (Yaiskul A/C)  Member
3. B.D. Behring (Chandel A/C)  Member
4. S. Bijoy Singh (Jiribam A/C)  Member
5. Holkholet Khongsai (Saitu A/C)  Member
6. K. Babuudhon Singh (Langthabal A/C)  Member

155 An interview with Shri Deben Thingujamba, General Secretary – MNC, February 12, 2005.
7. Shri L. Lala Singh (Khundrakpam A/C)
8. Shri Deben Thingujamba (Keirao A/C)

Besides these, some former MLAs also joined the committee as members.

A meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee held on 13th October, 2001 resolved to draft and adopt Party Constitution and to acquire/acquisition “house’ as the party symbol. Consequently, by holding a party convention on 26th October, 2001 the Party Constitution was approved. Along with this Shri W. Nipamacha Singh, Ex-Chairman was elected as the President of the Party. The same meeting also nominated Shri L. Lalit Singh as the Working President of the party, Shri G. Joykumar Sharma and Haokholet Khongsai as Vice-Presidents; and Shri Deben Thingujamba, Maulana Abdus Salam and B. Shanti Sharma, as General Secretaries.\textsuperscript{156}

A meeting of the Central Executive Committee of MPC held on 14-11-2001 changed the name of the Conference into The Manipur National Conference (MNC). It was done so as the Election Commission of India hinted to the party to modify its name while scrutinizing the documents submitted to the E.C.I. by L. Lalit Singh, Working President of the party, for registration of the party. Accordingly the modified name of the party was newly submitted to the E.C.I. which, after due consideration, conceded its registration on 19-12-2001. Consequently, a formal order was issued to this effect on 20-12-2001 and the matter was intimated to W. Nipamacha Singh, Party President. Henceforth, it was unanimously agreed to celebrate Foundation Day of this party on 20th December of every year.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
Objectives of MNC

The following are the objectives of the Manipur National Conference:

i] To protect and maintain the 2000 years old history of the hill and plain people of Manipur.

ii] To form and establish a harmonious society of equalities which also will be a secular society.

iii] To make an all out effort to improve economic backwardness.

iv] To root out the rule of force.

v] To form Manipur, the age old productive land of gold by joining hands workers and farmers.

vi] To lay effort on rooting out corruption and unfair deal.

vii] To make effort to bring in a changed society (new social order) by joining hands with honest leaders who think for the posterity.

viii] To stand today for a better and more secure Manipur of tomorrow by bringing in a clean and transparent administration.

ix] To try best to give the taste of living to the people of Manipur who have been deprived of this taste of living.

Policies and Programmes of MNC

The following are the policies and programmes of the Manipur National Conference (MNC).\textsuperscript{157}

a] Territorial Integrity and Unity Of Manipur

To create a New Social Order by preserving the 2000 years old History and Territorial Integrity of Manipur and to maintain Unity among people of Manipur irrespective of the ethnic affiliation, religion, profession, language, etc. will be the prioritized agenda of the party.

\textsuperscript{157}MNC Manifesto, Imphal, 2002.
b] **Safety and Security of Citizens:**

Ensuring safety and security of all citizens within the state will be the goal of the party. For attaining this goal, the party will try to create a riot free and terrorism free Manipur.

c] **Revolutionary Movements in Manipur**

To solve the revolutionary movements in Manipur a peaceful dialogue between India Government and the Parties concerned will be proposed. Steps for conflict resolution will be taken up.

d] **Social Justice and Empowerment**

To empower people to ensure speedy economic development, functional and financial autonomy shall be given to the concerned local-self governing bodies of the valley and the hills.

e] **Agriculture and Allied Sectors**

To achieve self-reliance at the nation/state level and generate income to reduce poverty a State Agriculture Policy will be framed and adopted in line with the national Policy on Agriculture.

i] The Policy will seek to actualize the vast untapped growth potential of agriculture in the state.

ii] The policy will seek to promote technically sound economically viable, environmentally non-degrading and socially acceptable use of country’s /state’s natural resources – land, water and genetic endowments to promote a sustainable development of agriculture.

iii] Concrete efforts will be made to pool, distill and evaluate traditional practice, knowledge and wisdom and to harness them for justifiable agricultural growth.

iv] The facilities provided under the Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) and the Technology Missions on Integrated Development of Horticulture in the North Eastern State including
Sikkim will be fully availed to enhance food supply, exports and generating employment in the rural areas.

v] Rational utilization and conservation of the state’s abundant water resources will be promoted. Participatory community irrigation management will be encouraged.

vi] Development of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries will receive a high priority in diversifying agriculture.

vii] Mainstreaming gender concerns in agriculture will receive particular attention to empower women and build their capabilities.

f] Tourism

In tourism new destinations will be promoted by developing Loktak Lake and Pumlen Pat with hillocks in the water bodies to make tourism an industry. Steps will be taken to relax the Restricted Area Prohibition to enhance the flow of tourists in Manipur.

g] Indo-Myanmar Border Trade

Steps will be taken up to enhance the progress of the Indo-Myanmar Border Trade to export Potential of India/Manipur.

h] Administrative Reforms

Arrangement will be made for constituting an Administrative Reforms Commission.

i] Human Resource Development

To ensure qualitative improvement in education the following measures will be taken:

a] Frame a policy of transfer of teachers of Schools and Colleges;

b] Entrust the recruitment of teachers to autonomous/independent body;
c] Expedite the conversion of the Manipur University to a Central
University; and

d] Solve the problems of appointment of teachers of Secondary
Schools/Colleges now pending with the Government.

j] **Transport and Communication**

The road connectivity will be enhanced through linking of all District Head
Quarters by a circular Highway, increasing frequency of bus services, providing
rope ways, rope trucks and rope cars in the hill areas and improving the National
Highways by converting them to 4 lane Roads.

k] **Power**

To generate more power Loktak Down Stream Project and Tipaimukh High
Dam Project, now providing finalization, will be given top priority. Power tariffs
will be rationalized to remove the heart burns of the people.

l] **Major and Medium Irrigation Projects**

Major and medium irrigation projects, completed and incomplete, will be
looked into and top priority to enhance crop production to bring about a stable
economy in the state.

m] **Sports in Manipur**

a] Provision of one playground to each and every village;

b] Setting up one Sports Academy in the Khuman Lampak Sports
Complex with the financial assistance of the Central Government.

c] To constitutes one Sports Council for revival and development of
indigenous games of Manipur.
n] Eradication of HIV/AIDS

Eradication and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Manipur will be an important agenda of the MNC.

o] Information Technology (I.T.)

Promotion of activities on I.T. will be made through opening of I.T. Parks, participating in manufacture of parts of machines, etc.

p] Women’s Empowerment

Ensuring gender equality by removing gender discrimination will be a key agenda of the MNC. To this effect, social and economic empowerment of women will be made a prioritized agenda of the party which will be secured through an empowered State Women Commission.

q] Problem Solving Process

All important problems will be addressed through public dialogue wherein every citizen will have an opportunity to participate in the decision making process of the state.


In the 8th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election held in February 2002 the MNC put 23 (twenty three) Candidates out of 60(sixty) Assembly Constituencies of these 17 were in the valley while 6 were in the hill constituencies. Shri S. Achou Singh who was a candidate of this party at Sugunu A/C was the candidate winning the least number of votes. He won only by 6 (six) votes. While the party president and former C.M., Shri W. Nipamacha Singh of Wangoi A/C secured 6,911 votes and was the candidate scoring the highest number of votes among the party candidates. But he got defeat in the hands of MSCP candidate Y. Mani Singh. The defeated MNC
candidates were former Ministers. Md. Helanuddin of Lilong A/C, A. Biren Singh of Jiribam A/C and former Assembly Speaker K. Babudhon Singh of Langthabal A/C. all of them stood second in the election. But S. Natum Singh party candidate of Sagolband A/C got elected by defeating Dr. Kh. Loken Singh by securing 5,394 votes. He was the lone M.L.A. of MNC.  

After this election MNC supported the Secular Progressive Front Government (SPF) led by Shri O. Ibobi Singh which was sworn in on the 7th March, 2002, from outside. Consequently, Shri S. Natum Singh was sworn in as Minister of State (Independent Charge) on 12th March, 2002. He held the portfolio of Transport and Science and Technology until his removal from Ministership on 21st April, 2003. After some time Shri S. Natum Singh resigned from the membership from the S.P.F.

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