Chapter - IV

HMAR PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT
4.1 SITUATION LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF HPC:

The people who call themselves Hmar are scattered over Manipur, Mizoram and Cachar district of Assam. They are the original inhabitants of the northern portion of Mizoram and the present south-western parts of Manipur. The Hmars themselves claim that historically and culturally they are different from other tribes and they have a distinct language. Such claim is more pronounced among the Hmars who live in the border areas or outside Mizoram.

Outside Mizoram, the Hmars as a group are politically active. Those Hmars who are living in the border areas of Mizoram are keeping themselves abreast about the activities of the political party called the Hmar National Union (HNU) which clamours for the creation of an Autonomous Hmar Hills District comprising portions from Mizoram, Cachar, North Cachar Hills District and Manipur. The HNU was born out of the Hmar Literary Association, started in 1921 by the Christian Missionaries. The Hmars living in Mizoram are divided into two groups: those who refused to be entered themselves as Lushai(Mizo) and those who introduced themselves as Lushai(Mizo). Bulk of them, however, introduced themselves as Lushai(Mizo).

1. B.B.Goswami : The Mizo Unrest p.57

2. A Memorandum Submitted to the Chief Minister of Manipur by the Hmar Students' Association, (Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura) Gen. Hqrs. Churachandpur, Manipur. Dr. 21.7.1980. p.2

3. B.B.Goswami : The Mizo Unrest p.57
themselves as Mizo (Lushai). Yet the 1961 Census reports say that many among
the Hmars did not enter themselves as Mizo. One would, however, note that the
Hmars living in the central part of Mizoram, have forgotten their own language.
Inter-tribal marriages and Christianity have merged them with the Mizos. These
Hmars do not appreciate their political alienation from the Mizo population.
Therefore, such Hmar people have identified themselves with the Mizo aspirations
and many of them have been involved in the MNF movement. J.F. Manlianu,
founder of the Mizo National Famine Front (1959) was one of them.4

Other Hmars who often demand for Autonomous Hills District have
been neutral to the MNF movement. Let us therefore, briefly look into the
genesis of the party.

Until 1949 the Hmars wholeheartedly supported Mizo and the
Mizo Party of Mizoram. The first political party formed on 9th April, 1947 called
‘Mizo Union’ was joined by the Hmars in Manipur. The Manipur Mizo Union
was initially formed as a part of the Mizo Union of Mizoram. Though other
ethnic groups also joined the party, the Hmars initially joined in a substantial
number in the Manipur area thinking that the party would look after the interests of

4. Ibid p. 18
5. K.M.Zakhuma: Political Development in Mizoram, p. 87
the Hmar people of Manipur. The reason behind such a great support to the Mizo Union was that the tussle between the chiefs and the commoners perpetuated in the Hmar inhabited area of Manipur also. In the words of L.B. Thanga, 'The popular slogans which used to rent the air night after night in Aizawl, Mizoram by the volunteers of the Mizo Union were—'

"What do we want?"

"To join Indian Union".

"Why?"

"To abolish the chiefs".  

In line with their brothers in Mizoram, the Hmar people in Manipur were not happy with the system of chieftainship, probably, for most of the chiefs belonged to Thadou/ Kuki tribe. A movement was launched to redress their political grievances. Then there arose a serious trouble between the Kuki chiefs and the Hmars in 1947-1948. As the movement went beyond control and was carried to such a dimension that the law and order situation was seriously affected, police forces were rushed to the Hmar Area to enforce law and order. To see for himself the worsening law and order situation, the then Chief Minister of Manipur, P.B. Singh visited Parbung in 1948 and made an account of his visit available to the Hmar students recently. The text of his account runs as follows:


7. A Memorandum Submitted to C.M. of Manipur by H.S.A. op cit. p...
"When I toured the South Areas of Manipur in 1948, I found that the South-West area contained nearly all Hmar villages. Even in Parbung 3000 Hmars turned out to meet us." 8

Chief Minister P.B. Singh offered the Hmars ‘Regional Council’ provided they quitted Mizo Union party. 9 But, the Hmar people totally rejected the offer. They openly sung the newly composed song -

"State Lalher P.B. Singh-an-
Union kawng a dal thei lo;
Union pheisen chhim thlang thli ang,
Kan la hrang ngei ngei dawn e." 10

(Chief Minister of the State, P.B. Singh -
Could not block the way of Union;
Just like the south-west winds,
We the Union volunteers would surely move).

The Hmar people also expected that re-demarcation of the Mizo District be made in such a way that the Hmar inhabited area of Manipur were included in Mizo District. Their long cherished hopes were inscribed in the form of songs such as-

10. L.Keivom : Zoram Khawvel - 2 p.247
"State thuneihna bo a ta,
Mizo Sawrkar la ngir a tih;
Lenruol dit le ei chi ei hnamhai leh
Sappui nun ngai lova ei lengna ding"

(The Government for the Mizos will be set up-
To integrate all the Mizo inhabited areas,
Not envying the English;
For all our kindred tribes..)

But, contrary to their expectation, during the demarcation of the boundary of the Mizo District in 1948 the Mizo Union is said to have not pressed the case of the Hmars to get the Hmar inhabited areas included in the Lushai Hills District. Since then they have dissociated themselves from the Mizo Union. According to B.B. Goswami, "The rift between the Mizo Union supporters of Mizoram and Manipur started when the Mizo Union could not do anything in this matter, for the Mizo people had accepted the Manipur-Mizoram boundary, as it was, during the rule of the British. The Hmar people, out of frustration, withdrew their support in bulk from the Mizo Union."  

The detachment of Hmars from Mizo Union Party was absorbed by Lalsawia the first C.E.M. of the Mizo District Council, in his book ZOR AN.

11. Ibid p.245
12. B.B. Goswami: The Mizo Unrest p.74
Hming Hmeli by saying that "the uprising movement of the Mizo Union Party had been spreading in and around Mizoram rapidly. But the political aspirations of the Mizos living outside the erstwhile Lushai Hills, during boundary demarcation, were completely neglected..." He himself fully confessed and felt deep regret that the leaders of Mizo Union of Mizoram were completely wrong in neglecting their brothers from outside Mizoram who had fought and suffered a lot for the cause of Mizoram and Mizo Union Party.13

In 1950, The Hmar Mongolian Federation was formed. In 1954, Rochunga Pudaite (now President of Partnership Mission Society and educated at Allahabad, he with his family lived in United States of America) called a Convention at Parbung village. He changed the name of Hmar Mongolian Federation to Hmar National Congress and requested the Prime Minister to include the tribe Hmar as Scheduled Tribe in Manipur. In 1956, a Convention was again called at Parbung village to motivate the Hmars who were supporting the Mizo Union to join their party. A compromise was reached but the name of the Party again had to be changed to the Hmar National Union.14

The Party since then started asking the Government of India to carve out a district for them. In 1968, they pointed in a memorandum, submitted...

14. B.B.Goswami op cit. 58
to the Prime Minister of India as follows: “We are taken by surprise that the Government of India ignored and neglected the just and legitimate demands of the peace loving Hmar people and paid more attention to the development and welfare of some people who have indulged in activities prejudicial to the peace and security of the country”. The party subsequently requested the Home Minister, Government of India, on 18th August, 1969 for the demarcation of the tribal areas and also for constituting autonomous districts. It appears that after the attainment of statehood of Manipur in 1972 and the President of the Hmar National Union being elected to the Assembly, it did not raise the issue of integration of contiguous Hmar areas.\footnote{Ibid pp.55-56}

The exclusion of the Hmar area of Churachandpur District of Manipur from the Mizo District had repercussion in Mizoram also. In 1954, some prominent citizens of Aizawl Town like Lalbuaiia Khawlhring (Ex. M.P.), H.Raltawna I.A.S (Retired) and others belonging to Hmar ethnic group at Aizawl formed a political party called ‘Hmar Fengo Federation’ for the people of Hmar living in erstwhile Lushai Hills District.\footnote{Hmingchungnunga : Aw Kan Hmar Ram (1999) : Published by Hranglenkhum Sinate at the Kimboi Press, Hill Town, Churachandpur, Manipur. p.52} This was, however, not welcomed by some politicians from the mainstream Mizo ethnic group as a whole. They requested the leader...
of the newly formed ‘Federation’ to put an end to the party and its activities. In conforming to their request, the Hmar leaders sacrificed their party for the cause of Mizo integrity and stopped instantly their political activities.

However, the feeling of political insecurity rose again in 1950. Under the leadership of Manliana Pudaite, Hmar National Union, Mizoram Area was organised. But before performing important activities, the party ceased to exist after two or three years of its formation.

The demand for Hmar District to be carved out of portions from Manipur, Assam, Mizoram and Tripura got momentum during 1965 and 1966. The Hmar National Union (HNU) leaders of Manipur advised their brothers in North Mizoram to set up party units. Accordingly, many units of HNU were established in villages of North Mizoram. But due to the uprising movement of MNF, those units had to stop functioning. It is reported that one of the activists of HNU, H Thanga Keivawm of Palsang village was killed by Mizo National Army Volunteers as HNU Party and its activists were against their movement. Rohringa Pulamte and his friend hailing from Vaitin village were caught and kept under arrest for about 15 days. They were, then released on assurance of not conducting any activity in the name of Hmar National Union. On hearing the news of coercion and intimidation method applied by the MNF on their brothers in

17. *Hmingchungnenga* *Ibid* *p.53*
Mizoram, the Hmars living outside Mizoram, especially those who were living in Manipur, were very much furious and tried to oppose the MNF movement openly. But, fortunately, before things had gone wrong in 1969 hundreds of MNF personnel, under the leadership of L. Malsawma Colney, Senator, Northern Area (or Run Area), by chance, visited Senvawn village, the biggest village of Hmar concentration in the South-West of Manipur. He delivered lecture in a public meeting for complete three hours. In his speech, among many other things he invited the Hmar people not to organise any political party other than MNF. "Since MNF is the sole political party in which the rights and solidarity of all the Mizos and territorial integration of all the Mizo inhabited areas into one administrative unit could be achieved, there would be no question of establishment of other political parties" he added. His speech was so touching that then grievances against the MNF activists were substantially cured and many Hmar youths enrolled in the MNF volunteers. One of them was Capt. Laizova Hnamte (L), Saikawt Village, Churachandpur, Manipur.

Things had been going normal for more than a decade (1968-1978). However, by strictly observing the political situation of Mizoram and other Mizo inhabited areas under MNF movement during the whole course of their activities, the Hmars in North Mizoram had strong impression that their

18. Ibid p.53
long cherished hope- 'Integration of all the Mizo ethnic groups under one Government possessing the highest degree of freedom' could never be achieved. As such, sympathizers of Hmar politics, under the initiative of Mr. L. Sumte, hailing from Vaitin Village, North Mizoram, revived Hmar politics and formed the Hmar National Union Mizoram in 1979. This was also banned by the Mizoram National Army Maj. Chalrikhuma Hmar and party at gun point requested them to wait patiently for the home-coming of the MNF with TROPHY. Thus ended again the feeble Hmar politics to be renewed after the signing of the Historic Mizo Peace Accord.

4.2 BEGINNING OF INSURGENCY MOVEMENT IN NORTH MIZORAM

After bringing about an end to the disturbed conditions in Mizoram caused by the MNF Insurgency Movement and when peace and harmony have been restored, the scattered Hmars in the North-east realised that their long cherished hope- the unification of Mizo-inhabited areas of other states with Mizoram, to form one administrative unit, was completely turned down for the second time, the first being during the time of Mizo Union Party’s regime. In the Memorandum of Settlement (between MNF & Government of India) 4.11, it is

19. Ibid p.54
20. Ibid p.54
clearly stated thus; “The question of the unification of Mizo inhabited areas with other states to form one administrative unit was raised by the MNF delegation. It was pointed out to them, on behalf of the Government of India, that article 3 of the Constitution of India describes the procedure in this regard but that the Government cannot make any commitment in this respect.”

Out of frustration of being neglected by their kindred tribes in Mizoram, Hmar People’s Convention (HPC) Party was formed.

On 19th July, 1986, a few sections of Hmars, viz. J.Laldinliana, Thanglianchhunga, L. Sungte, J. Thanzuala, Suoklien and some others had a secret meeting at Mana & Sons Building, Dawrpui (Bara Bazar, Aizawl). The meeting decided to hold Mizoram Hmar Conference at Vuthial Village, North Mizoram on 19th October, 1986. The theme of the proposed Conference was “Hmar Political Future.” An adhoc body of the Organising Committee was formed and the following were the Office-Bearers:

22. L. Keivom : Zoram Khawvel - 2
23. Hmingchungnunga : Aw Kan Hmar Ram
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
1. Chairman: J. Laldinliana
2. Secretary: Thanglianchhunga
3. Treasurer: J. Thanzuala

THE MIZORAM HMAR CONFERENCE was attended by hundreds of delegates from the length and breadth of Mizoram. The theme of the Conference, “Hmar Political Future” was effectively moved by Mr. I. Sungte. After the speech, long deliberation took place and the following resolutions were passed unanimously:

Due to the growing political tension and pressing demand of the representatives of the Hmar inhabited areas of Mizoram who attended the Conference, a convention of Hmars had to be organised at Sakawrdai, a village of Hmar concentration, situated in the north of Mizoram, Aizawl District on 9th December, 1986. The Convention was held accordingly. The Convention changed the newly formed non-political organisation, “The Mizoram Hmar Association” into “The Hmar People’s Convention (HPC)” a Political Party on ethnic lines. The following were the elected office-bearers of the Party:

26. Ibid p. 57
The H.P.C. Party contested the MLA Election in 1987 for the first time in three Assembly Constituencies of Mizoram: 27

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<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of Candidate</th>
<th>Name of Constituency</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>J. Laldinliana</td>
<td>Suangpuilawn</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Thanglianhhunga</td>
<td>Ratu</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Malsawma Ralchhum</td>
<td>Bilkhawthlir</td>
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In the election all the three candidates of HPC were defeated forfeiting their security deposits. After the announcement of Election Results the President of the party Mr. Hmingchungnunga, when asked about his party’s contest for MLA election and their landslide defeat, “Mobilisation of the Party Policy to the people of the so called Demand Area, at the time of the election, was the main motive of the involvement of my Party in the Mizoram Politics and not mere success in the election,” was the reply. “Even before the time of election, we were sure that we would be certainly defeated in the midst of such big parties like Congress, M.N.F. and M.P.C.” 28 he added.

27. Ibid p.57
28. Interview with Hmingchungnunga, the newly elected President of the H.P.C. by the writer on 20th April, 1988
The Hmar People’s Convention Party revived their Political campaign even after the 1987 election was over. They preached about the gospel of the Autonomous District Council in which the sons of the soil in the concerned district would get their due share from both the State and the Central budgets. Unfortunately, the President of the party, J.Laldinliana was caught by the Mizorat Police and put behind the bar on the allegation of forming an outfit called Mizoram Liberation Army (M.L.A) which was secessionist in character. Immediately he resigned from the Presidentship of the H.P.C. J.H.Thanzama of Sakawrdai Village took the charge as President. Under his Presidentship, the Hir Memorandum of H.P.C., demanding the Hmar Autonomous District Council was submitted to the Governor of Mizoram on 5th October, 1987. This was published in the local daily newspapers and popularised the H.P.C. Party and its demand.

The first General Assembly-cum-General Election of the Hmar People’s Convention was convened at Sakawrdai Village on 12th & 13th April, 1988. The following were the elected office-bearers:

- President : Mr. Hmingchungnunga
- Vice President : Mr. Thanglianchhunga
- General Secretary : Mr. T. Thangtluong
- Treasurer : Mr. Thansung

Since Mr. T. Thangtluong declined the post of General Secretary, Mr. Malsawma Raichhun was instantly appointed the General Secretary of the Party. In view of the absence of public awareness of the H.P.C. Party and its policy, the leaders felt the need of political training so as to aware the people of their political ideology and mobilise them for their support in the so called 'demand area'. Hundreds of Hmar youths, under the leadership of Mr. Malsawma Raichhun, were enrolled to undergo political training in the thick forest of Khawbawn bordering Manipur and Assam. The training camp was known as 'Sinlung Political Training Centre/Camp'. The news of training conducted in the Centre was heard by the Government of Mizoram, through newspapers and C.I.D. reports. Many a time the Government of Mizoram warned the H.P.C. leaders charging them of their activists' cessationist character. At first, most of the people in the Hmar concentration did not have confidence in the H.P.C. Party apparently due to the failure of political demands under 'Mizo' or 'Hmar' appellation for the Hmar people in the past.

After completion of the course, the first batch of the trained Hmar youths started political campaign in the H.P.C. Demand Area. By the end of the year, 1988, most of the people in the Demand Area, according to their version, paid heed to them and showed their interests in the said Party.

30. Ibid p.59
31. Ibid p.59
On 20th June, 1988, the leaders of Hmar People's Convention met Pu Laldenga, Chief Minister of Mizoram, in connection with their Memorandum submitted earlier demanding Hmar Autonomous District Council. The Chief Minister agreed to discuss their demand in the near future. However, unfortunately, the M.N.F. ministry collapsed on 7th September, 1989. Hope for political settlement under MNF ministry ended in smoke. In 1989 Election, the Congress Party rose to power. On 21st February, 1989, the new Chief Minister Mr. Lal Thanhawla was met by the leaders of HPC. The Chief Minister promised them that the matter would be discussed in the forthcoming Cabinet Meeting and after that formal talk would be conducted. It was reported that their demand was not discussed in the two successive Cabinet Meetings. This was much resented by the HPC and took it as a sign of negligence and deception to make their effort a futile.

To show their discontentment as well as press the Government, a 24- Hour Peaceful Bandh was organised on 28th March, 1989. Thousands of Hmar youths (young men and women) gathered together at SA-UI-TAN KAWN, along the line of Aizawl-Tipaimukh Road, somewhere in between Darlawn and Sailutar, the boundary of the proposed ‘demand area’ in North Mizoram, to block plying of vehicles there. To counter the processionists, the Mizoram Armed Police (MAP) rushed to the spot. Since, the so called Bandh was PEACEFUL BANDH, the HPC volunteers expected decent treatment and leniency from the police.32

32. Ibid pp. 59-60
On the contrary, they were treated as if they were unlawful activists. The MAP allegedly lathi-charged and dao-charged the unarmed H.P.C. Volunteers. Many of them (around 500) were arrested, more than a hundred were injured and 20 including girls were seriously injured and hospitalised in Churachandpur.

It is stated that since the HPC leaders had committed themselves to the policy of non-violence, they had no intention of employing any other means to achieve their political demand. However, the news of the atrocities of the MAP spreading to the inhabited areas of Hmars in different parts of the country, especially in the North-east, roused the feeling of the Hmars as a whole. Such strong pressures from every nook and corner were heard. The leaders found themselves at the point of no return and reluctantly resorted to violence.

4.3 MOBILISATION PROGRAMME FOR HMARS AND THEIR KINDRED TRIBES/SUB-TRIBES: UNAU SOUPUI CULTURAL MEET.

To bring about unity among the kindred tribes/sub-tribes of Hmar in North East India, a Cultural Meet called, "UNAU SOUPUI CULTURAL MEET," the first of its kind, was held on November 10-13, 1994 at Hmarkhawlien, Cachar District, Assam. The Meet was organised under the initiative and leadership of HPC President Hmingchungnunga and TNV (Tripura National Volunteer President B.K. Hrangkhawl. 34

H.A.Lalrohlu, Editor, SHAN (Hmar daily) hailing from Churachandpur, Manipur reported about the Meet as follows:-

"The occasion was marked with much enthusiasm and gaiety. Different Sub-Tribes from Hmar presented their traditional cultural dances to enhance the festivity of the occasion.

"The Hmar People's Convention (HPC) movement is known to play a key role in reforming one oriented tribe. This tribe is not Naga, Kuki, Mizo, Zomi or Chin. In most of the Hmar history books, it is specified as Hmar Oriented Tribe (HOT). But, when Assam State was divided to make state boundaries..."
for Manipur, Tripura, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya, the boundary lines crossed the Hmar compact area. This resulted the Hmars scattering in different States of North East India."

"Though speaking their non dialect (Sub-tribe dialect), the way of living of this tribe is influenced by the states they live in. Hmar Tribe was registered under the Indian Constitution in 1956."

"These Hmar Sub-tribes believe that if they could carry out their identity as oriented Tribe, a better integration would surely be developed in the North Eastern States of India. This is the main reason for this oriented tribe to reform once again, their origin being the "Sinlung".

"Different Sub-tribes of the Oriented Tribe that participated in the cultural Meet are: from Assam-Chorai, Biete, Faihriem, Darlong, Chiru and Hmar; from Manipur-Kom Chiru, Aimuol (Aimol), Koireng, Purum and Hmar; from Mizoram-Hmar (Non-Mizo/Lushai Tribe); from Meghalaya-Biete, Hrangkhawl and Hmar; from Nagaland-Hmar (Non-Naga); from Tripura-Hrangkhawl, Darlawng, Hamalm, Kaipeng, Ranglawng (Langrawng), Muolsuon Marsophang, Langkai, Saihmar, Sakechep, Thangachep and Hmar. Besides these, the Bawng, Bawm, Chawthe (Chawhte) and Anan (Anal) are also among the Oriented Tribe....." 35

35. North East SUN December 17-23, 1994: p-17
4.4 A NEGLECTED SPARK-HPC, ON BODO LINES.

There are some interesting similarities between the Hmar Peoples’ Convention (HPC) agitation and that for a separate Bodoland in Assam. The Bodoland agitation too, which began under the auspices of the All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) way back in March, 1987, was not taken seriously in the beginning.

The demand made in the name of around 20 lakh Bodos (as in the case of Hmars, the precise number of Bodo’s and their identity itself are matters of controversy) living in one district and one Sub-Division of Assam was considered too outlandish to deserve attention. The threats of bands and blockades were not taken seriously under the erroneous assumption that these would only put the Bodo people to hardship. In the event, because of the command over the crucial supply lines by rail and road that pass through Kokrajhar district, a bandh called by the North-East was affected. The militancy, too, came as a surprise to the authorities, and by a judicious combination of bands and bombs ABSU leaders forced the state and Union Governments to admit that grievances exist and hold formal talks.

Now the HPC agitation is not taken seriously especially in Mizoram; indeed, the antipathy to the HPC demands is related to totally irreconcilable perceptions of the very concept of “Mizohood”. However, the HPC appears to have convinced the Mizoram Government of its capacity to make things extremely difficult. The control of even a few kilometres of the Silchar-Aizawl road and the power to disrupt traffic on this route are enough to create havoc in the rest of the State.

Above all, like the Bodo leaders who have rejected the ideology of assimilation propounded by the mainstream Assamese (or, more accurately, Assamese-speaking) leadership and are determined to chart out a separate denominational and political destiny, the Hmars too are in essence fighting against the very concept of absorption, of the subsuming of the various Kuki-Chin people under the common appellation of Mizos. This, the HPC leaders feel as simply a subterfuge, a mere nomenclatural trickery indulged in by the Lushai leadership.

Finally, such agitations by people, often described by their own leaders as 'marginal nationalities,' for recognition of their 'identities' cannot be dismissed as exercises in identity-fetishism. Even if it is assumed that the genuine anxieties are being exploited by an amoral political leadership, these attempts to

37. Ibid p.46
assert more and more restricted and exclusive identities only reflect the failure of the Indian state to assuage these anxieties. In other words, the centralising tendencies of the Indian state, even while being resisted by the constituent units, are themselves being replicated at the level of the constituent states with a view to absorbing smaller, distinct groups within them.

Indeed, this process of replication extends even to organisations now resisting the absorptionist tendencies in the states, like the leaderships of Bodoland agitation or the agitation for the creation of an autonomous state within Assam comprising the two autonomous hill districts. The process seems to go ad infinitum.38

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38. Ibid p.46
Chief Minister Lai Thanhawla, sitting in his office next to his residence at Tuikhuahtlang in Aizawl, spoke to M.S. Prabhakara at length on tape, on several issues concerning the State, specifically the agitation by the Hmar people's Convention (HPC), the complaints by the Mizo national Front (MNF) about lack of progress in the implementation of the Mizoram Peace Accord, his own dissatisfaction with the North Eastern Council, the agitation by the Mizoram Chamber of Commerce on the issue of trading licences to non-indigenous traders and sales tax, the problems posed by the influx of political refugees from Myanmar, and the overall political situation in the state. Excerpt from the March 31, 1992 conversation:

What do you have to say on the MNF charge that the accord has not been fully and satisfactorily implemented?

I do not know what their grievances are, which part of the accord they maintain has not been implemented. Rehabilitation grants for the MNF personnel, including money for housing, have been given. There is now a bench of the Guwahati High Court in Aizawl. We have been pressing the Centre to establish a Central University in Mizoram. I know there have been complaints about the location of the house sites. But the place was chosen by MNF personnel. A road to this area was supposed to have been constructed by them, but the task
has not been completed. I have now asked the Public Works Department to complete the road and sanctioned Rs.12 lakh for the work. The work too will be undertaken by those who are Ex-MNA. What else can I do?

The MNF leaders' complaint does not appear to be about money, they maintain that the political part of the accord has been violated by you since you secured defections from the MNF and toppled their Government. In fact, Zoramthanga told me: "If we could turn the clock back, we would never have signed the accord."

I understand the allegation about the toppling of the MNF Government. Such allegations are common in politics. But more seriously, the remark about not signing the accord if they had a chance now is unfortunate. All through the negotiations, which were not a very easy task, both sides exercised a lot of restraints, observed a policy of give-and-take, and ultimately came to terms with each other. So, now if they have any grievances, with all the humility and sincerity at my command, I am ready to do whatever is possible (to mitigate those grievances). I know they complain of discrimination, discharge from service of Ex-MNA personned and all that. But I have assured them that as far as the Government of Mizoram is concerned, it makes no distinction between Mizo and non-Mizo, ex-MNA and non-ex-MNA, Congress and non-Congress and all that. Let them give me specific instances of such 'discrimination': but till now not as single specific complaint has been made.
Do you think insurgency can be revived in Mizoram? Will the MNF be able to come back in some form or other as an insurgent group?

I do not want them to be frustrated or become desperate. I have asked the MNA leaders to come for a discussion. Now I have formed an Account Implementation Committee of which all the ex-MNA personnel are members. Mr. Tawnluia (the MNF's Defence Minister) is also a member. But unfortunately the first meeting was poorly attended; both Tawnluia and the President of the Ex-MNA Association were out of station. I will be calling another meeting of the committee soon.

I am asking about the possibility of a revival of insurgency because now the HPC is making news. Everyone in Aizawl scoffs at the HPC demand but the MNF too began in a small way.

You see, unlike in Nagaland or in Manipur, in Mizoram we are all Mizos. There are no differences based on clan or sub-tribe or anything among us Mizos. We all speak the same language. A Mizo, whatever he is, whether in Mizoram or in other parts of the country, or even in Burma or Bangladesh, feels like and is a Mizo. In Mizoram, there is no differentiation along clan lines. But unfortunately, the Chakmas, the Lakhers and the Pawis have been given District Councils.

Do you think that was a wrong decision?
Had we been in power then, and had we had our way, we would not have given these Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) under clan names. If at all, we could have granted district councils identified with area names, not Pawi District Council but Saiha District Council, not Lakher (Mara) District Council but Lawngtlai District Council, and so on. Giving ADCs under clan names have been very divisive. That is why I am opposed to the concept of Hmar Autonomous District Council. As I said earlier, in Mizoram, we are all Mizos. The ADCs are given in the case of those minorities who are in danger of being swamped by a majority. But in Mizoram, such fears are not justified because we are all Mizos.

But it is precisely this concept of the Mizo people being a single people that is being challenged by the HPC.

Let me tell you, in Mizoram today, the biggest business houses are owned by Hmars. My Finance Minister is a Hmar. So many top officials are Hmars. Further, Hmars do not live in any compact area; and in the area claimed by them they are not a majority. All the MLAs elected from area claimed by the HPC are non-Hmar while the Hmar MLAs in the Mizoram Assembly have all been elected from outside that area. In fact, the Hmars in Mizoram do not share the views of the HPC. The Hmars in Mizoram face no problem being Hmars.

However, I also do not want that any desperate feelings among the Hmars in Mizoram should continue. So, all along, I have offered to hold talks...
The offer stands even now. But the only condition is that we will speak to Hmars in Mizoram, only to Hmars who are permanent residents of Mizoram.

I am not at all against tripartite talks. If the HPC leaders can convince Delhi, let us by all means have tripartite talks. And if they want these to be held in Delhi, let them be held in Delhi.39

4.6 STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL:

The Hmar People’s Convention (HPC) demanding a Hmar Autonomous District Council in North Mizoram has not yet been banned. But the recent arrests of its activists with firearms in Mizoram, Manipur as well as in Assam has certainly made the Mizoram Government more apprehensive. This has led to the HPC leaders going into hiding making it difficult to obtain their viewpoint on the development within and outside Mizoram. When asked for an interview, exclusively for the North-East SUN correspondent Jishnu Dutta, they opted to give written answers to the questions, signed by Thanglianchhunga, Vice-President HPC, but refused point-blank to be photographed.40

39. Interview with Chief Minister Lal Thanawala by
M.S. Prabhakara on 31.3.1992; Frontline, June 5, 1992 p.48
Will you give a brief history of the Hmars in Mizoram?

The Hmars are the first and foremost settlers of Mizoram. Nothing is traceable about human settlements before the coming of the Hmars in the area. In about 950 AD, due to the invasion of the north-west of the present Burma by the Burmese, the Rajas of Hmars had taken refuge in the hills where most of the areas were uninhabited. The Hmar Rajas firstly set up a capital in South Vanlaiphai in present Mizoram. There were four minor rajas in the following places: 1) Saitual-Fiengpuilal Biete, 2) Jampui-Tusing Faihriem, 3) Sawrtui-Neithel Thiek, 4) Champhai-Hriler Zote. All of the above mentioned capitals are situated in present Mizoram except Jampui hills. Till today, the names of places, villages, rivers and hills indicate the fact that the Hmars were the first settlers in Mizoram.

Your party is not yet banned. But, it seems you have gone underground, why?

Apparently, the Mizoram Government is not getting any reason to ban us as we are fighting for a just cause within the frame work of the Indian Constitution. But when the Government itself is interested in breaking laws and where no distinct separation of the executive and the judiciary exists in the state, plus with the absence of a strong Press, we have been left with no other options.

It seems, there is a common feeling of insecurity among the Hmars in the wake of alleged Mizoram Police atrocities. Could you give a list of recent incidents, if any?
Rape of five girls in Tinghmun Police camp on July 23, '89 by Lalthakima, MP and his subordinates; (ii) murder of three Hmar youths near Tipaimukh in the last week of July, (iii) the Mizoram Armed Police (MAP) going on the rampage in at least 30 Hmar villages, injuring hordes of villagers in Churachandpur District of Manipur and Cachar District of Assam, (iv) forced labour of Hmar villagers inside the Demand Area which continues today, (v) Murder of Lalniliana Hmar a store-keeper at Khawlian village in a Police lockup, in which case, of course, the Government suspended six low ranking police personnel.

How do you justify HPC’s killing constable H. Thangzela of the Mizoram Armed Police?

He was not killed by the HPC as a party but by some extremist elements in society, who are beyond our party’s control. The Mizoram Government with its Police involved in various acts of atrocities is responsible for creating such extremists, whose number will multiply if the police continues to harass innocent people.

Lal Thanhawla said: “The Hmars do not require Autonomous District Council as there is no racial discrimination in Mizoram. Moreover, they are not in a majority in any of the villages within the Demand Area, except one.” What is your reaction to the statement?

The degree of discrimination the Hmars faced in Mizoram was understandable to an outsider. The Hmars in Mizoram were forced to use Lusha...
literature and they were being driven to extinction, because they could not introduce their own language, culture, customs, a Hmar’s genuine name and the like. For example, a Hmar name—Bieksung, must be changed to a Lushai name—Biakchhunga to get jobs, loans, etc. Under such circumstances how could we expect correct census operations? We are sure that in the census enrolment list thousands of Hmars have been wrongly included in the Lushai list, and the Hmar population at least one-third of that of Mizoram is recorded as a few thousand (see Table 1 p. ). The correct figures would be known if and when the census operations were conducted on a clan-wise basis.”

“As per our estimates, the actual Hmar population within the demand area is as follows:

1. Villages and towns in which more than 85 per cent of the inhabitants are Hmars, are - (i) Khawlian (ii) Phuaibuang (iii) Khawlek (iv) Lamherh (v) Kani (vi) Tinghmun (vii) Mauchar (viii) Saiphai (ix) Saipum (x) Palsang (xi) Zohmun (xii) Sakawrdai (xiii) Vaitin (xiv) Khawpuor (xv) Nevaryek (xvi) Lungsum (xvii) Chiepui (xviii) Khawkawn (xix) Phainuom (xx) Damdiei.

41. Ibid. p. 26 V1
2. Where they are above 50 per cent - (i) Suongpuiiawn (ii) Vanbawng (iii) Ratu (iv) Sailutar (v) Bilkhwathlir (vi) Vairengte (vii) Kolasa (viii) N.E.Khawdungsei (ix) Bairabi with more than 30 per cent Hmars in (v) Thingsat (ii) N.Khawdungsei (iii) Darlawn (iv) Kepran (v) Sawleng (vi) Phaileng (vii) Phaisen (viii) Buhchang and (ix) Tengtong. 42

What is your stand on other ethnic movements, particularly in the north-east?

We lend out moral support to any oppressed community who are agitating for their rights.

What will be your line of action?

Of one thing we are sure, our movement will continue till the formation of the District Council. Our future line of action cannot be disclosed.

How do you react to Lai Thanhawla’s assurance to have a political dialogue with the HPC if you give up violence and surrender arms?

Nobody, but his government practices violence. We believe in the solution of political problems over the table. The HPC do not think Lai Thanhawla is really interested in having a dialogue, otherwise, he would have given us a formal invitation. Anyway, we do not think any meaningful negotiations could take place until he is ready to fulfil our Demand.

42. Ibid p.26 VII
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42. Ibid p.26 VII
4.7 POLITICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS FOR HMARS' UPRISING:

4.7.1 THE AGE-OLD GRIEVANCES:

The Hmars are vaguely known to the general public in India, and in some current newspapers and anthropological or linguistic works some misleading statements or interpretations have been made about them to be a big ‘Clan’ either under the Lushai (Mizo) tribe or under the Kuki tribe. Lt. Col. J. Shakespeare had describe some of their social customs under the head “Old Kuki Clans”. But evidently, Shakespeare misunderstood who the Hmars really are, and it is likely that he borrowed the term “Old Kuki” unwarrantedly from Dr. Grierson’s writing in the “Linguistic Survey of India” in which was placed the Hmar language along with other languages of neighbouring tribes under “Old Kuki” group. Similarly, some English writers who wrote about the Lushais also took the Hmars to be a big ‘Clan’. In this way some misleading statements are often found in the works of some writers like A.G. Mc-Call, J.H. Hutton, and others who put these Hmars either under the Lushai tribe (in the case of Mizoram) or under the Kuki tribe (in the case of Manipur, Cachar and North-Cachar Hills of Assam and Tripura). 43

They claimed that they are the ‘original or first settlers of these areas and are as big as the other tribes like the Luseis, Garos, Mikirs, etc.’

This tribe, however, was mercilessly divided and placed in the far ends of the adjoining districts by the Britishers when the boundary lines were, for the first time demarcated, thus making the Hmars minority and voiceless in those districts.

The Hmars have a number of grievances. These grievances are due to the long neglect of the tribe by the Central Government, in spite of their repeated legitimate demands for various upliftment. In the spheres of education and economic welfare also the Hmars could not fully share, like their brother tribes, the privilege of our long awaited Independence. The compact whole of Hmar area is still divided up and mercilessly placed in the far end of each of the adjoining states. For this reason, the Hmars are lagging behind in the fields of education, culture and economy since there could be no proper unity to evolve out the desired united strength. Being so divided and placed in the far end of every state mentioned above, the Hmars are left out in all social and economic plan of the country and have no political freedom to determine and work out their future destiny, which is a privilege to all other hill tribes in free India.

44. A Memorandum Submitted to the Prime Minister of India by The Hmar National Union Manipur, Assam and Tripura (1960). Pherzawl Manipur Printed at Cachar Press, Silchar.

45. Ibid
The Constitution of India also enjoins upon the President of India and the Union Government to protect and uplift the minorities in different states. But, to their surprise, the Hmars are still placed, despite their protest-prayers, in different contiguous states so as to make them minority always in each of those states.

The Hmars are having and will always have complaints and grievances unless and until some sort of Administrative Unit for their own is given by the Government. In the various states where the Hmars have been rendered minority there is an odd mixture of tribes in different stages of cultural and economic development and naturally, the minority suffers and feels mental unrest. Such mentality among the people belonging to the artificial minority group in those small units is bound to shake the very foundation of our freedom and, therefore, this kind of morbid mentality should immediately be eradicated root and branch. The Hmar, therefore, used to pray that the Government should no more play the passive role of a mere spectator while the minority is oppressed or is being put in inconvenience by the majority community or communities but instead, should come to their immediate help. The Hmars being rendered minority in each of the states where they have been living from time immemorial have been the political victims until this day and, therefore, the freedom-loving Hmar people shall ever cry for their earliest rescue. This long-drawn deliberate negligence on the part of the Government has created a great commotion which still remains to be resuscitated. It has fully awakened the political consciousness of the people and has caused a great political unrest.
4.7.2 FEAR OF EXTERMINATION:

The Hmar tribe is broadly divided into two Big Groups or Phratries- Khawsak (Eastern Group) and Khawthlang (Western Group) - and these two Groups embrace as many as 53 Pahnams or Clans or Sub-Tribes. The various clans are sub-divided into sub-clans or families, and some clans consist of as many as fourteen families (see Chapter 3.3), each family being composed of hundreds of members who, for the sake of convenience, divide themselves into household families generally of 8 to 10 members each. These clans or sub-tribes speak or understand a common language called 'Hmar' which is different in accent, composition and tune from the Lushai, Kuki and similar other people. The fluidity of the language and the copious senses of some words render their grammatical rules somewhat complex and even reduce the number of their vocabularies. And now-a-days, due to such hated 'artificial' boundaries, some clans have become slightly deviated not only in language but also in some sociological features from the main stock being isolated or subjected to the absorption by the neighbouring customs like those of Luseis, Karbis, Cacharis, Khasis and Manipuris with whom they have been mixed up for years together. It is, therefore, feared that unless the Government takes necessary steps, as early as possible, so as to safeguard and promote the interests of the Hmars as per Articles 29 and 46 of our Indian Constitution, the Hmars will soon be exterminated.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{46} A Memorandum Submitted To The Prime Minister of India by the Hmar National Union (Manipur, Assam & Tripura) : 1960: Pherzawl, Manipur.Printed at Cachar Press, Silchar. p. 6
4.7.3 **WRONG NOMENCLATURE:**

In the former Censuses of India, the Hmars were wrongly classified as Kukis in the case of Manipur, Cachar and North Cachar Hills Districts of Assam and Tripura, as Lushai in the case of Mizoram (erstwhile Lushai Hills) and as Hadems in the case of Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. However, this wrong nomenclature had been generously removed by the Central Government in the year 1956 as a result of the modification of the Lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India. Some of this group of people in Tripura, however, were collectively recognised as Halam. What the Hmar leaders, now, strongly objected to is that in some areas where the Hmars are not in majority, they are normally recorded as ‘other tribes’- being assimilated by other tribes. This they take it seriously. The strong desire of Hmar leaders, therefore, is that the Government should see that the Hmars are classified and recorded correctly in whichever states they are living, in the successive All India Censuses, under a separate column of the Census Register of India.

In 1959-60, there was serious trouble between the Hmars and the Kukis of Manipur mainly due to ‘wrong nomenclature’. Many dear friends and relatives lost their lives and many more were rendered homeless. The sole creation of this trouble, on careful examination, was found out that the Kukis tried to compel, by force, the innocent Hmars to be Kukis - the much smaller tribe. For this purpose, the Kukis attempted to levy the Kuki fee of Rs.10/- per house among the Hmars, which, however, was strongly protested by the Hmars.
This strange attempt on the part of the Kukis was not a wonder in one sense because the Kukis thought that the Hmar tribe, which had been rendered minority by the Britishers, was a very small and negligible tribe that could be easily suppressed and made into a mere clan under Kuki tribe. The aspirations of the Hmars, in this connection, is that the Central Government should undertake special Census of the Hmars in the various states of North-East India so as to ascertain the actual strength of Hmar tribe.47

4.7.4 LACK OF RADIO COMMUNICATION:

While appreciating the schemes of the Government of India for the development of the radio communication, particularly the free distribution of Community Receiving Sets in Tribal Areas, the Hmars have to say to the Central Government that due to the non-compliance with their repeated demands for a Separate(full-fledged) Radio Programme, all the privileges which are being enjoyed by their brethren tribes like Lushais, Khasis, Garos, Mikirs(Karbis) and Dimasas, are not enjoyed by the Hmars yet, and that they would very soon be far lagging behind in the field of cultural development and progress. In respect to population and cultural(tribal) matters, the Hmars have no hesitation to say that they are equally strong, if not more, as the above-mentioned tribes, upto this day. However, due to the discriminating treatment of the Government, the Hmars.

47. Ibid pp.9-10
are now not in a position to keep equal pace with them and therefore, their song and culture would seriously suffer as the natural consequences. Therefore, the Hmars now find very difficult to understand as to why they should suffer doubly - politically due to the merciless division of their area, and culturally on account of the non-compliance with their repeated demands for a Separate Radio fledged Programme.

4.7.5 HMAR AREAS NEGLECTED:

Coming again to the point of merciless division of the Compact Hmar Area into so many negligible fragments and the much hated maintenance of the ‘status quo,’ the Hmars feel strongly the necessity of immediate nullification or removal of the shameful ‘traces’ of the ‘Divide and Rule Policy’ of the British due to which the freedom loving Hmar people have been suffering a number of untold miseries and difficulties. Since the Compact Area was thus sub-divided and placed in the cornermost part of the present adjoining states, the present Hmar occupying areas are now secluded and are outside the reach of the responsible Government Officials, except for the local Sub-Divisional Officers. In Manipur, for instance, the Hmar area was never visited in the past by any Government Officials above the rank of S.D.O.\(^48\)

\(^48\) A Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the Hmar National Union (Manipur, Assam and Tripura), Pherzawl. Manipur. Printed at Cachar Press, Silchar. p.12
Thus the whole area and population of the Hmars were subjected to merciless sub-division and segregation, and the people are now seriously neglected by the local Governments concerned. The Hmars, therefore, find their future gloomy and hopeless since in each of the adjoining states, they claimed that they were the most neglected and the least cared for.\

4.7.6 ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES:

The Hmars, like their brethren tribes, mostly agriculturists of the primitive type, cultivate rice, their staple food, mainly by shifting method of cultivation known as ‘Jhuming’. They also thrive, in large quantity, oranges, pineapples, bananas, gingers and the like, meant mainly for transport. But after the achievement of Independence of India, the Partition greatly hampered their economy, since most of their trade was with East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Now their produce in huge quantity of oranges, pineapples and other cash crops does not give them adequate return. Besides the difficulties created by the Partition, there was another serious set-back, namely lack of communication in their occupied regions. Because of the absence of proper communication, market gardening could not fetch them any profit and therefore, many were now inclined to give up this kind of non-remunerative jobs.

49. Ibid p.13
SERIOUS FAMINE IN HMAR AREA:

A very severe famine known as ‘Mautam’ swept Hmar area across Manipur and Lushai Hills (Mizoram) in 1958-60. The poor helpless Hmar people suffered to the greatest extent possible. Although this ‘Mautam’ affected the whole of Lushai Hills and Southern Manipur Hills, the politically unfortunate Hmar people became the worst victims only because they were the cornered people in each of these Districts. The Hmar - occupied areas, as stated above, were the most neglected areas because of their situational inconveniences and lack of communications. Except for the foot-paths through the steep mountains, there was hardly any road worthy of communications. The Hmar areas had never been visited by the Administrative Officers to see the ‘things’ on their own before 1960.50 Due to the lack of communications, adequate supply of rice could not reach the far end areas, and, therefore the people were compelled to live on roots and leaves. Besides this, many people could not buy even the small amount of rice supplied to them, since they had already exhausted their meagre incomes.51 This famine greatly hampered the overall development of the area till even after ten years of its occurrence.

50. Ibid p.13

4.7.8 IDENTITY CRISIS:

The Hmars claimed that their culture, tradition, custom and language found no Government patronage for its development in Mizoram. Therefore, the rich culture and language of the Hmars were on the verge of virtual extinction in their own homeland. The economic imbalance was so much that there had been rampant poverty in the Hmar areas. The educationally and economically advanced mainstream Mizo society dominated over administration and other fields which created a fear psychosis in the minds of the Hmars lest their identity was wiped out. They also felt that they were neglected and treated as aliens by their (Mizo) kindred tribes and the Government of Mizoram. "The problem of identity crisis virtually challenged the ethnic homogeneity in Mizoram." 52

The introduction of the District Council in Mizoram paved the way for realising the goal of autonomy under the cover of management of socio-economic affairs in their own way without disturbing the spirit of unity of the country as stressed in the Constitution. The tribals with their various clans were working hand-in-hand in various capacities in the District Council or Regional Council in Mizoram without any feeling of subordination and negligence by any dominating tribe. The minority tribes, in general, were fighting along with the

52. Ibid p. 126
dominant tribe for the cause of tribal welfare and development. The Hmars did not think differently from the other tribes of Mizoram.\textsuperscript{53}

The tribal administration under the Sixth Schedule as envisaged by the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution did not realise and recognise the spirit of Autonomous District Council as a symbol of emergence of ‘supra-tribal entity’ in the process of articulation within a national society. The administration treated the Autonomous District Council as subordinate organisation of the state and its operation at various stages belied the hope of the planners. It, rather, widened the gulf of suspicion on ethnic lines which finally gave birth to identity crisis.\textsuperscript{54}

In the meantime, the implementation of the North-East Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 raised the status of Mizoram as Union Territory. Accordingly, three District Councils, viz, the Lakher District Council, the Paw District Council and the Chakma District Council were created. The Hmars felt let down and some sort of ‘psychology depression’ grilled them. Subsequently, inter-tribal feeling and subdued rivalry gave birth to clan based politics, which was responsible for fomenting political tension in Mizoram. The minor ethnic

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid p 126

groups resented over the attitude of discrimination of the dominant tribe towards minorities groups dotting the periphery.\textsuperscript{55} The Hmar tribe living in the northern fringe had no other alternative but to form an outfit, called the Hmar People’s Convention (HPC), on the ethnic lines of the Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Marak), and Takam (Chakma) on 18th December, 1986. Its first President was Laldinlian Jongte and General secretary, Malsawma Ralchhun.\textsuperscript{56}

4.7.9 CENSUS ANOMALIES:

The Hmar People’s Convention strongly objected the census irregularities which transpired from the fact that the census figure of the Hmar was 10,411 in 1901 but it came down to 3118 and 4524 in 1961 and 1971 censuses respectively (see Table I). “We are sure that in the census enrolment list, thousands of Hmars have been wrongly included in the Lushai list, and the Hmar population at least one-third of that of Mizoram is recorded as a few thousand.” Thanglianchhunga, Vice-President of H.P.C.

\textsuperscript{55} North-East SUN(Weekly), Guwahati, July 29, 1989 p. 26
\textsuperscript{56} Vishwa Bandhu Gupta (ed) : The North-East SUN : December 2, 1989 : An article - HPC - Struggle for ADC to Continue by Jishnu Dutta:
\textsuperscript{57} Hmingchungnunga : Aw Kan Hmar Ram.
According to the 1971 census, 38,207 returned themselves as speakers of the Hmar language (all India), and the figure for Assam was 15,167. Hmar leaders claimed that Hmar in Tripura were classified as Halams, and in 1971 the total number of Halams recorded in Tripura was 19,076.

As per the estimate of Hmingchungnunga, President of HPC, the Hmar population in 5 states of N.E.India was as follows: 58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>3,00,000 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>60,000 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>6,000 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>80,000 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>70,000 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,16,000.00 (approx)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Hmar population, according to him, including those Hmars who identified themselves as other tribes, in all India should not be less than 6 lakhs. In the version of Darliensung, "The present Hmar population is about 2 lakhs." But according to Government Census of 1971, most of the Hmars in Mizoram were enrolled simply as Mizo tribe without mentioning particular name of the

58. *Darliensung/The Hmars* p.85
59. *Ibid* p.85
tribe. In Tripura, the Hmars are recorded as Halam or Old Kuki. Only in North Cachar and Manipur, they were recorded as Hmar. According to the statistical Handbook of the North East India, the whole population of the Hmars was hardly forty thousand. Actually, this figure was completely wrong. The Hmar Students’ Association (HSA) tried to collect an information about the actual Hmar population of the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. But it was very difficult to get the exact figure of Hmars. It is mainly due to the fact that those Hmars who spoke languages other than Hmar were always taken as non-Hmars by others and even they regarded themselves as other tribes. However, it was said to be roughly two lakhs.60

Since no census was carried out in Assam in 1981, the figures of Hmars in Assam were not available. But in Manipur, 23,312 returned as Hmar (by tribe) in 1981, and the number of Halams in Tripura, according to the 1981 census was about 32,000. The problem, of course, was in Mizoram where even though Hmars along with Lakhers (Maras) and Pawi (Lais), were listed as a separate Scheduled Tribe, official documents did not provide the separate figures of these groups. The 1987 Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, most grudgingly, as it were, provided what was obviously a ‘processed’ table of the population of the Scheduled Tribes in the State.61 According to this, the largest

60. M.S. Prabhakara : The Frontline, June 5, 1992. p. 46
61. Ibid p. 46
component was classified as 'Mizos' numbering 421,798 out of a total population of 4,93,757. (85.43 per cent). The only other significant segment of Scheduled Tribe population listed separately were the Chakma (39,638... 8.03 per cent). Other ‘recognised tribes’ whose presence was accounted for were Dimasa, Kachari (18), Garo (33), Khasi (330), Naga (12) and Unclassified (84). There was no mention of the Lakher, Pawi or Hmar people separately since it was assumed that these were now part of the ‘Mizo’ community. Indeed, the 1980 edition of the Handbook failed to provide even this kind of details and omitted entirely any account of the Scheduled Tribes population.

The census anomaly which had been increasing, from census to census, since 1961 was sharply reacted by the leaders of HPC62 (see interview with Mr. Thanglianchhunga, Vice President. HPC pp.152-154).

4.7.10  OTHER GRIEVANCES:

There are people among those who speak Duhlian or Lushai language, who consider all those who do not speak Lushai or Duhlian language as Non-Mizo. Mr. Thangridema Fanai who even once held the speakership of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram also stated ‘Hmars’ as ‘Non-Mizo’. The Mizo Historians also included in the Mizos, those of the ‘Luseis’ only. For example, the book written by V.L. Siama which is used for a School text book in Mizoram said, “In the year 1700 A.D. the Mizos began to enter Mizoram. They often fought with the Pawis and the Mizos were defeated.”

“When the Luseis entered Mizoram there were Hmars and Hrangkhawls in the north; Bawmzos, Khiangtes, Dawns and Chawrais inhabited the south. As they were afraid of Mizos, they scattered.”

From the above lines, we came to know firstly that the ‘Mizo’ and ‘Lusei’ were used alternately. The method of using the words is the same. What he said was that the Mizos were Luseis and vice-versa. Secondly, among

63. The Hmar Students’ Association : LUNGHAMBANGNA : H.S.A. Leaders’ Retreat : an outcome of Articles, 15-16 February, 1988; Published by Dr. Rochunga Pudaite of Bibles for the World, Inc. p. 63

what he called ‘Mizos’ except for the Luseis, all others like Hmars and Pawi
were excluded. Thirdly, much before 1700 A.D. (which he believed the era the
Mizos entered Mizoram), Hmars did enter Mizoram and scattered throughout
Tripura, North Cachar Hills and Chitagong Hill Tracts. Many places in Mizoram
were named by the Hmars after their own clans before the Luseis entered
Mizoram. Fourthly, the books which claimed to be the Mizo History are mostly
the history of the Luseis. The writers also tried to deal within that paradigm.
When they included the stories of other tribes, they did it simply for the sake of
appearance. Among the historical characters of the Mizos, the patriots of Hmars
such as Chawnhmanga (Rengpui), Luahpuia, Zingthlova, Zamthatvungaa,
Neihrawia, Tuchhinga, Fiangpuilala, Chawnhawihtlura and Haudara were ex-
cluded.

Social histories are also mainly dealt with Lusei culture. Sikpu
Ruoi (Winter festival), one of the oldest festivals of Hmars, Darlam, Hranglan,
and Buh-tuh-khuanglawm were not included among the various Mizo Festivals.
In the discussions of the Mizo folk songs, Lamkhawzoai, Liandang zai,
Hرانчhawn zai, Chawngngo zai, Zawllai zai, Tuani zai and Semruk zai were let
out.

For example, according to Mizo Historians, Mizos have three major
festivals called Kut such as (1) Mimkut (2) Chapchar Kut and (3) Pawlkut.

65. Pastor Challiana : PI PU NUN : Published by The Trio-Book
Zatluanga, one of Mizo Historians, listed down the various Mizo folk songs as follows:\textsuperscript{66}

1. Buang khaw zai
2. Darthlalang zai
3. Tlangphei zai
4. Liankawlchhuni zai
5. Darlenglehi zai
6. Aikhiangi zai
7. Nilen zai
8. Tlang khaw zai
9. Hniarvungpa zai

(Hniarvunga was the younger brother of Lalbuta. Their father was Lalkham, who composed folk songs. The songs composed by him were known as Hniarvungpa zai-Songs of Hniarvunga’s father)

10. Sailo zai
11. Thlek zai
12. Puma zai
13. Tlanmg lam zai
14. Saikuti zai
15. Lalawithangpa zai also called Hmarlutvunga zai

L. Keivom also lists down the different Hmar folk songs.

1. Sikpuizai
2. Hranglam zai
3. Darlam zai
4. Chawngngzo zai
5. Zawllai zai
6. Zawlchang zai
7. Tuanni zai
8. Hrangchawn zai
9. Liandang zai
10. Semruk zai
11. Saiketet zai
12. Buanthawh zai
13. Hranthli zai
14. Lamtluong zai
15. Buhtuhkhuanglawm zai

Out of the above listed folk songs of Hmars, none of them were included in the aforementioned list of Mizo folk songs. If Hmars were to be Mizo, then their dance must have been the Mizo dance, their festival, Mizo festival.

and their language also Mizo language. Among the Hmars’ present generation, the idea that was and their language also gaining ground was that if ‘Mizo’ means ‘Lusei’ then there was no reason for the Hmars to be identified as Mizos.

In deeper analysis, it was found that the feeling of being different was based on the ‘reality’ of being different. The simple fact that Hmars and their kindred tribes who speak their own dialect were often taken to be non-Mizo by the general public among the Mizo speaking people. It may be due to lack of communication, interaction and understanding among the various groups of people.

‘Though the Hmars are recognised as scheduled tribe in Mizoram it is next to impossible to get Tribe Certificate in the name of Hmar,’ said an informant from the Demand Area.

68. *Hmar Students’ Association: LUNGKHAM BANGNA op.cit* p. 88
70. *Ibid*