Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION
1.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:

The collective movements propounded, in succession, by different ethnic groups of Mizoram for certain autonomy and the efforts to tackle their problems and solutions within the framework of the Indian Constitution are the main topics of discussion in this Thesis. The term 'autonomy' means self-government or self-rule. It also means a kind of emancipation from socio-cultural and economic deprivation of ethnic groups having a distinct culture, language and common traditions in a given territory. It occurs when a fairly large number of people, or an otherwise identifiable segment of the population, deliberately band together for collective action in order to change, reconstitute, reinterpret, reframe, protect, supplant or create some portions of their culture or social order or to better life chances by redistributing the power or control in a society.

Autonomy is a particular form of external relation, its need is felt at a particular stage of internal development of a community and can never be an independent demand. The frustration, estrangement and feeling of deprivation coupled with the instinct of preserving distinct culture, language and traditions on the part of the people of a defined region or particular nationality (or sub-national group) prove to be the prime motives for autonomy movement. The demand for autonomy is raised from a wide spectrum of political commitments. In a political system which

2. L.K. Mahapatra: Social Movements Among Tribes of India in the tribal areas, K.S. Singh Ted: Situation in India, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass (1986)
has a written Constitution, some of the norms of the political system are laid down in the Constitutional law itself and the political structures are, to a large extent, shaped by the Constitution. Likewise, the Constitution of India has also spurred the growth of several new political structures in the country. The formation of the Autonomous Mizo Hills District Council for the Mizos and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council for the major tribes (Pawi, Lakher and Chakma), the elevation of the Mizo Hills District to the status of Union Territory and finally as the State of Mizoram may be regarded as a result of the Mizo autonomy movement and political structure.

The present study may be considered as an authentic document dealing objectively with a theoretical concept of autonomy movement of the major tribes - Mizo (Lushai), Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Mara), Takam (Chakma) and Hmar - during the pre and post Independence period. The dissertation not only provides policy insights for the future, but also places the problem of Mizoram in a historical perspective and traces its evolution through successive political and cultural vicissitudes. It will also help us to know the Mizos, the Pawis, the Lakhers, the Chakmas and the Hmars better and appreciate their problems in the proper perspective.

The people now called Mizo occupy a wide belt of territory, mainly hilly, which lies between 21° - 24°N and 92° - 94°E besides a fairly large concentration of their population in the state of Mizoram, and in large pockets in Manipur.
Assam's North Cachar Hills District and in the state of Tripura, considerable areas in western Myanmar and eastern margins of Bangladesh extending forward in the Arakan Range to about 18°N are inhabited by them. A number of Mizos also live in the Irrawaddy from 18° to 20°N.

For a long time they have been known to the different peoples and regions by different names but mainly by three well documented nomenclatures viz. Kuki, Lushai and Chin. The Kukis are conventionally grouped into 'Old Kuki' and 'New Kuki'. 'Kuki', 'Chin' and the 'Lushai' by which names Mizos as a whole are called, are foreign words used in to the languages of Zomis (Mizos). Therefore, following the creation of Mizoram, the word Mizo gained in popularity and wide acceptance.

The word 'Mizo' is a blanket term having a political undertone. The word 'Mizo' means (Mi = Man or people and Zo = 'a cold place at a high altitude' 'a people from a cold place'). Among the people themselves the Mizo are sometimes spoken of as 'Duhlian' and the general population of the state spoken of as Mizo. They may be broadly classified into two groups. The first group consists of the Lusei, the Ralte, the Hmar, the Paite, the Thadoi, the Pangkhua and the like with their various sub-tribes, clans and sub-clans who inhabit the northern and the middle parts of the state forming the bulk of the population. The second group is formed by the Pawi (Lai) and the Lakher Mizo with their different clans and sub-clans who are concentrated in the south and the south-eastern parts of Mizoram bordering Myanmar.
Besides the above mentioned groups, there are two more tribes who live in the south-west and the western belts of the state known as the Chakmas and the Riangs who come from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, now in Bangladesh, and Tripura state. They speak different dialects having no connection with the Mizos.

The Hmars came to India in the early part of the 14th century and claimed to be the first settlers of the present Mizoram state and many villages where they lived earlier are still in existence. These are: Khawbung, Zel, Khawzawl, Biate and Tualte which are virtually in the name of different clans. Subsequently, waves of migrants in succession came to Mizoram and drove out the earlier settlers westward or northward. The Hmars, at last, occupied a compact area in the north bordering Manipur and Cachar District of Assam.

The implementation of the North-East Area (Re-organisation) Act, 1971 raised the status of Mizoram as Union Territory. Accordingly, the Lakhmar (Maras), the Pawis (Lais) and the Chakmas, living in the southern part of Mizoram, were provided with Autonomous District Council. The Hmars felt down and some sort of psychological depression grilled them. They claimed that they were politically, socially, economically and perennially exploited and oppressed in their own land.
In the meantime, the Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe Mofication Act. 1956 enlisted the “Hmars” as a separate community and the Act clearly shows Mizo meaning “Lushai” (Corrupted form of Lusei, one of the tribes of Mizo). Besides, Article 1&9 of the historic Mizo Accord clearly promised the upliftment of minorities in Mizoram which include the Hmars, the Pawit (Lais), the Lakhers (Maras) and the Chakmas. Each of the above mentioned tribes have already got their own Autonomous District Councils within Mizoram excepting the Hmars.

Subsequently, inter-tribals feeling and subdued rivalry gave way to clan-based politics, which is responsible for formenting political tension in Mizoram. The minor ethnic groups resented the attitude of discrimination by the dominant tribes towards the minorities and the groups dotting the periphery.

The Hmar tribe living in the northern fringe had no other alternative but to form an outfit called the Hmar People’s Convention (H.P.C.) on the ethnic lines of Pawit Lai, Lakhir (Mara) and Chakma (Takam).

1.2 Need for the study:

It is felt that the study of the political problems of Mizoram with special reference to the Hmar People’s Movement, will open up a new field for further studies.

The Hmar People’s Convention (H.P.C.) demanded an
mous District Council in Mizoram within the framework of the Indian Constitution. They claimed that their culture, tradition, custom and language find Government patronage for their development in Mizoram. Therefore, the culture and language of the Hmar are on the verge of virtual extinction in their own home land. The economic imbalance is so severe that there has been rampant poverty in the Hmar areas. It is therefore hoped that this research work will be considered as a modest positive attempt to present relevant politics which concerns the Hmar as well as itself with the major challenges facing the Indian Society in shaping the future.

1.3 Purpose of Study/Objectives of the study:

The following broad objectives are placed before the research:

(a) To examine the ethnography of the Mizos;
(b) To attempt an analysis of the genesis of the Mizo politics and the political activities of the main ethnic groups in Mizoram;
(c) To find out the causes and effects of the political discontentment of the various tribes of Mizoram;
(d) To have comprehensive analysis of the grievances of the Hmar and as to how amicable solutions could be made and
(e) To evaluate the signing of the memorandum of Settlement between the Hmar People’s Convention and the Government of Mizoram and its implementation and impact.
1.4 **Hypothesis:**

The following hypothesis are taken for research:

(i) 'Injustice' done to the people by the Government or the ruling party may generate discontentment.

(ii) The feeling of political discrimination and economic exploitation are responsible for the growth of a separatist tendency in this region.

(iii) The political problems of Mizoram could be solved if proper steps are taken at the right time.

(iv) Whenever there is a feeling of continuous political, social, cultural and economic oppression and exploitation among any section of the community or communities, an uprising of the oppressed could surface.

(v) Any insurgency and counter-insurgency problems could, in the long run, be solved through peaceful negotiations.

1.5 **Scope of study:**

The scope of study will be limited to the North East region concentrated mainly in Mizoram. The study would be political problems arising out of the autonomy movements along the ethnic lines of the major tribes of Mizoram viz. Mizo (Lushai), Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Mara), Chakma and Hru during the pre and post independence period. These problems would carefully
be studied in the light of the Hmar People's movement.

Till now not many research works have been done of the Hmar. They are vaguely known to the general public in India, and in some central newspapers, books and anthropological or linguistic works. Some statements and interpretations have been made about them to be a big ‘Clan’ either under the Lushai tribe or the Kuki tribe. One misfortune among the Hmars is that they were too clanish and often referred to be identified by the name of their clans, lineages and this continues to be so till today. Even their migrations and settlements were based on clan or lineage considerations. However, with the dawning political consciousness by the beginning of the 20th century, the term ‘Hmar’ gradually gained more popularity and wider acceptance. They are scattered over Manipur, Mizoram and Cachar and North-Cachar Hills Districts of Assam, and they are the original inhabitants of the northern portion of the Mizo districts.

The Hmar people have their own literary society, which started with the publishing of Mark's Gospel in 1917. In 1954, an organisation called the Hmar National Congress submitted a memorandum to the State Organisation Commission seeking the merger of the Hmar areas in Manipur with those in Assam and Mizoram. After 30 years, the Hmar People's Convention demanded the creation of Autonomous District along the lines of those in Chhimtuipui District which are all identified by their respective denominational names, not as Chawngte, Lawngtlai and Saiha but as Chakma, Pawtai and
Lakher (Mara) District Councils. The area claimed for the putative Hmar District Council were the five Assembly Constituencies in the north-east of the then Aizawl District: like Ngopa, Suangpuilawn, Ratu, Kolasib and Bilkhwathlin which had, however, been reduced to four Assembly Constituencies affecting as many as 38 Villages.

1.6 Area of study:

The selected area of study consists of two parts: 1) the whole region of the state of Mizoram with neighbouring states as an extensive area or 2) the so called H.P.C.'s ‘Demand Area’ in the north-east of the then Aizawl District of Mizoram as an intensive area.

The study area is chosen primarily aiming at finding out the causes and effects of the political discontentment of the different tribes of Mizoram as to maintain ‘unity in the midst of diversity’.

Mizoram before 1954, was known as the Lushai Hills District, was one of the districts of the state of Assam till its formation into an Autonomous Territory in 1972. Sandwiched between Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh, Mizoram occupies an area of great strategic importance.

Mizoram is a hilly area. The hills in Mizoram run from...
south. The average height of the hills is about 900 meters. The highest peak in Mizoram is the Blue Mountain (Phawngpui Tlang) with a height of 2165 meters. The hills in Mizoram are steep and are separated by rivers, which flow either to the north or south, creating deep gorges between the hill ranges. The hills are covered with forests.

Mizoram is located in the North Eastern part of India. It has an area of 21,087 kms. and population of 6,89,756 according to 1991 census. Aizawl is its capital. It was divided into three districts, Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimtuipui. Now it is divided into eight districts viz. Aizawl, Lunglei, Kolasib, Saiha, Champhai, Serchhip, Mamit and Lawngtlai.

The climate in Mizoram is pleasant. It is generally cool in summer and not very cold in winter. It rains heavily from May to September. Winter is free from rains. About 80% of the Mizos are agriculturists. But the Mizoram culture is of primitive type-jhuming. Since the Mizos are rice eaters, padd is the main crop of Mizoram.

In 1901, the population of the Lushai Hills District was 82,600. It increased to 1,96,000 in 1951; 4,93,757 in 1981 and 6,89,756 in 1991. The over all density of population in Mizoram is 33 persons per sq. km.
Mizoram occupies the 2nd position in the matter of percentage literacy in the whole country. The percentage of literacy is 82.27 which is the highest in the whole of North-East India.

There are various tribes in Mizoram, such as Lusci, Hmar, Paite, Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Mara), Chakma (Takam), Paite, Riang and others. Besides these tribes, there are many sub-tribes. All these tribes are distinct from another. The Lusci tribe is the dominant one. Each of these tribes has its own culture and language. However, all the inhabitants of Mizoram can be called ‘Mizo’ and the Lingua franca is also Mizo language.

The region has experienced a large scale violence and the problem of insurgency in the past. In the meantime, as per the provision of the North East Area (Re-organisation) Act, 1971, the Mizo District was upgraded into a Union Territory on January 21st, 1971. Accordingly, the three District Councils viz. the Chhimtuipui District viz. the Pawi (now Lai) District Council and the Churachandpur District were created. The growing feeling of deprivation, neglect and frustration of the Hmar community formed an outfit called the Hmar People’s Convention along the ethnic lines.

The H.P.C. submitted a memorandum to the Union Government demanding a Hmar Autonomous District Council under the VIth Schedule of the Indian Constitution which consists of the following villages and sub-towns in North Mizoram:
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<th>N.E.Khawdungsei</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>Chiahpui</th>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Suangpuilawn</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Lamherh</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Vanbawng</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>N.Khawlek</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>N.E.Tlangnuam</td>
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<td>Daido</td>
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<td>Lungsum</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Tinghmun</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Zohmun</td>
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<td>N.Khawdungsei</td>
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<td>Mauchar</td>
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<td>Thingthelh</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>N.Hlimen Parsenchhip</td>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Rengtekawn</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Bairabi</td>
<td>30.</td>
<td>S.Chhimluang</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Meidum</td>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Pangbalkawn</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Builum</td>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Bilkhawthlor/Chhimluang</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Vairengte</td>
<td>36.</td>
<td>N.Chawnpui</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Saiphai</td>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Saipum</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Phainuam</td>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Saihapui</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>N.Thinglian</td>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Bukvannei</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Buhchangphai</td>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Phaisen.</td>
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The above demand area is the chosen intensive area of the research.
MAP OF MIZORAM SHOWING THE ORIGINAL DEMAND OF HPC FOR HMAR AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL
1.7 Methodology:

The methods adopted for the proposed research is analytical, empirical and historical. It is carried out both from the primary and secondary sources. Materials are collected from secondary sources such as newspaper reports of governmental and non-governmental organizations and the like. After gaining the knowledge from the available literature, a few seminars were attended and field work was also carried out. The study also includes field interviews and questionnaire method undertaken with various eminent persons such as the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister of Mizoram, the President and Vice President of HPC and others who are involved directly or indirectly in the insurgency or counter-insurgency problems.

The research intends to analyze the political activities of the male ethnic groups as mentioned in different years of census and tries to find out the causes and effects of disunity among the tribes, the reasons to why the plan-term ‘Mizo’ has not been whole heartedly accepted by the Hmars since 1947 and other minorities in Mizoram from time to time, are carefully analyzed.

The analysis of pattern of political problems are undertaken at various levels. These are:-

(a) State

(b) Districts and

(c) H.P.C. Demand Area
Careful attempts are made to study the undesirable effects of the under estimated but the growing unrest in the Hmar Area and the use of force to suppress the movement.

Will the memorandum of settlement between the leaders of the HPC and the Government of Mizoram have promising impact on the Hmars and other minor ethnic groups? This question could be answered satisfactorily only after finding out the pros and cons of the movement.

The Geo-political aspect of the Hmar unrest is much more significant, whose far reaching consequence may threaten the entire solidarity of the Kuki-Chin groups of people. Its long term impact on the body-politics of Mizoram in particular and India as a whole in general, foretells significant points, which are linked up with the security and stability of the region.

The data collected from both primary and secondary sources are analyzed, evaluated and interpreted in the correct perspectives to draw useful lessons for the future. These are given as Recommendations at the last chapter of the thesis.