Chapter II

EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRATIC POLITY IN MANIPUR

Monarchy was the form of government in ancient Manipur. The early literature indulged in speculation about the origin of monarchical form of government. There is no regular history before 33 A.D. Manipur was ruled by several chiefs. Each of them was independent of one another. Hills belonged to various tribal chiefs.¹

Origin of Clans and Clan Principality

Historical evidences clearly shows that there were many ethnic groups in Manipur valley, such as the Angom, the Luwang, the Mangang, the Khaba, the Sarangthem, the Leishangthem, the Chenglei, the Hourok Konthou, the Lokha-haokha, the Chakpas, the Moirang, the Urok Usoi etc.² These ethnic groups in their pre-Meitei social formation moved into the valley from different directions. They have their different stages of social,

cultural and political development. They were said to have originated from Tibet-Burman. But, the "Mei" and "tai" tribes belonged to ancient China. According to L. Iboongohal Singh, "original inhabitants of Manipur were the Kiratas."

It is not certain about how these different tribes of Manipur emerged as seven Clans or Salais. In the legendary period there were no Salais. But in the historical time in 33 A.D., the Meitei were found to have been divided into seven Clans established in a separate regions of the valley. The seven Clans are the Ningthoujas, the Angom, the Khumal, the Moirang, the Luwang, the Sarang Leishangthem and the Khaba Nganba.

McCulloch assumed that, the Meitei of the valley and the hills tribes were the descendants of the same ethnic group. According to him, social and cultural practices of the particular tribes, the Khaba nganba and the Angom, have their close relationship with that of Tangkhuls, Khuman have the relationship with the Anal and the Maring. The Luwang and the Moirang has close relationship with the social life of the Kabui and the old Kukies like the Chiru, the Kom, and the Koireng. However, a small

---

3 L. Iboongohal Singh, n. 1, p. 70.
5 L. Iboongohal Singh, n. 1, p. 10.
7 Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 20.
section of the Manipuris strongly believed that they were of western and Hindu descent. But it is uncertain due to lack of provable historical materials.\(^8\)

Modern Manipuri race is a composite one formed out of several tribes. From time immemorial, the Nagas, the Kukies, the Shans, the Chinese, came and settled in the valley of Manipur and assimilated themselves into the Manipuri community.\(^9\)

In course of time there were frequent struggles among various chiefs of the valley or Manipur for suzerainty. They occasionally revolt each other. In about 33 A.D., there were three chiefs in the valley, viz., the Khuman, the Moirang, and the Mitaya. Mitaya become politically superior to the other two. Since then the regular history commenced in Manipur.\(^10\)

Thus the emergence of the Meitei kingdom was probably the outcome of the struggle between various ethnic groups in the valley. Since the emergence of the clan, Manipur had a lineage-based social system and lineage-based political unit which ultimately emerged as the principalities.\(^11\)

---


\(^10\) L. Iboongohal Singh, n. 1, p. 165.

\(^11\) Gungmumei Kamei, n. 2, pp. 70-71.
Originally the chief of the village or a group of villages was the protector of the land and the people within the clan. He became the chief of the principality. Performing ritual act and ceremonies were responsible by him. Thus the chief became both social and political head of the principality.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Political Vacumm in Manipur Valley}

The existence of small tribes and sub-tribes which speak similar or different languages and dialects is indicative of the fact that Manipur is one of the migration and trade routes between South Asia and South-East Asia. Each tribe and sub-tribe has their own different social and cultural practices.\textsuperscript{13} These were in course of time divided into seven clans. They established their political supremacy at different places of Manipur valley.

It is believed that whoever occupied the Kangla exercise supremacy over other principalities.\textsuperscript{14} Before the advent of Nongda Laien Pakhangba the throne of Kangla was once a bone of contention between the Mangang and the Khabas. They were said to be superior among the seven clans.\textsuperscript{15} However, the absence of central or capable clan which could established its

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{12}] Ibid., p. 71.
\item[\textsuperscript{13}] Gangmumee Kamei, n. 2, p. 70.
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] Ibid., pp. 70-71.
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] Ibid., p. 71.
\end{itemize}
supremacy over the people in Manipur created a political vaccum in Kangla principality.\textsuperscript{16}

Besides, some ancient texts referred to a devastating flood for several year in Manipur valley due to a land-slide. The current of Leimatak was blocked near Ngara Chingjeng. So the people was to settled much higher up on the hills. In course of time Manipur valley was drained and became dried first from the north.\textsuperscript{17} The people came into existence there. But there was no organized state in Kangla and there was political vaccum and anarchy. There was constant fear in the mind of the people of Manipur valley on account of absence of their capable ruler to govern them.

During the period of political anarchy, according to Gangmumei Kamei "there was struggle between different ethnic groups and tribes who sponsored rival candidates both from the inside and outside the land to the throne of Kangla".\textsuperscript{18} Pakhangba was invited by the king of Angom to be the ruler of the Kangla kingdom. After some fighting with the Khaba tribe with the help of Angom, Nongda Lairen Pakhangba emerged successful and ascended the throne in 33 A.D.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{17} L. Iboongohal Singh, n. 1, pp. 10-11.
\textsuperscript{18} Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{19} R.K. Jhaljit Singh, n. 6, p. 36.
Reign of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba

Nongda Lairen Pakhangba also known as Yabistha (33 A.D. to 154 A.D) was the first ruler of Manipur who ruled for 120 years. According to the early historical texts he ruled Manipur for the longest length of time among the ruler of Manipur.

Background of Pakhangba before he become the ruler of Manipur was comparatively unknown. Perhaps, he was believed to have connection with superior culture of civilisation. He had a high level of awareness in the field of social, religion and cultural affairs. The reform he introduced during his reign laid the foundation of social, political structure, cultural, religion, etc. of the people of Manipur.

Council of Ministers

Council of Ministers traditionally known as Ningthou Pongba Tara and 64 Phamdous was structured by Nongda Lairen Paknangba.\textsuperscript{20} Ningthou Pongba Tara means ten regional chieftains namely\textsuperscript{21}:

1. Nongthongba  
2. Pukhranba  
3. Wangkheilakpa  
4. Khwailakpa  
5. Yaiskulakpa  
6. Khurailakpa

\textsuperscript{20} Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 86.

7. Hiyangloi Hanjaba
8. Chongthong Hanjaba
9. Naharupakpa and
10. Ahallupakpa.

Appointment of Ministers

Minister were appointed by the Raja from the 64 Phamdous. Once appointed minister could not be removed by the Raja at his own wisdom. The practice is believed to have continued till 1891. At the time of appointment the Raja took great care to equally represent from different regions. Minister was not based on hereditary but on individuals concerned.

Ministers were responsible for different departments. The Prime Minister who was the head of revenue department was known as Nongthomba. Next to him was Pukhranba and Khurailakpa, the incharge of food and confidential matters respectively.\(^22\) Then the next important was Awapural, the minister in-charge of war. All the others were of equal rank. However varied from time to time and person to person concerned.\(^23\)

Strength of Council of Ministers

The strength of the council of ministers varied from time to time.

The Ningthou Pongba Tara were selected from the 64 Phamdous, who were


the ministers of the Raja. Therefore, generally the strength was ten. It was continued up to Loiyamba (1074-1122) A.D. Later on it was reduced to nine. But during the reign of Garibniwas the strength was increased to 12. During Chandrakirti Singh, Pandit Achouba was also included in the Ministry, but during emergencies only.  

Ministers were men of talent, capacity, integrity and well experienced. So they were called Ningthou Ngamba Angamba. They controlled even the king. Generally the king had no power to vote a decision of the council of Ministers. In exceptional cases the Raja might request his ministers to reconsider the particular decision. Thus the Raja was the constitutional head who always relied upon the advise of his ministers. He was not an autocratic ruler.

Tribalism to Feudalism

The establishment of Pakhangba's kingdom at Kangla laid the foundation of Ningthouja (Royal) dynasty in Manipur. His strong and stable government influenced those primitive tribal groups to centred around the dynasty. This process of social, economic and political

---

24 Ibid., p. 64.

25 Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 95.

26 RK. Jhalajit Singh, n. 6, p. 3.
changes introduced during the reign of Pakhangba in no doubt marked the genesis of the creation of primitive tribal state to a feudal state in the 15th century A.D.\textsuperscript{27}

**Successors of Pakhangba**

Since 33 A.D. till the last ruler of Manipur, Okendrajit Singh, Manipur was ruled by 77 (seventy seven) rulers.\textsuperscript{28} Of these after Pakhangba the first six rulers were said to be his immediate successors who ruled Manipur successively. They are: Khuyoi Tompok, Taotthingmang, Khui Ningomba, Pengsiba, Kaokhamba and Naokhamba. However, according to R.K. Jhalajit Singh, "His descendent in the male line ruled Manipur till 1891. The Maharaja appointed by the British during their paramouncy was also a descendant of Pakhangba".\textsuperscript{29}

Though six successors did not contribute much towards the evolution of Ningthouja dynasty, some remarkable achievements had been introduced during their respective reign. Such as invention of Pung (Drum) during the reign of Khuyoi Tompok, Bronce making, printing of design and dying

\textsuperscript{27} Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 95.


\textsuperscript{29} R.K. Jhalajit Singh, n. 6, p. 37.
were developed during his reign. Draining of Imphal river in a proper regular ways were developed during the reign of Taonthingamg. 30

As the historical records of Manipur provided, these 7 godly kings ruled in Manipur and none could say where they disappeared. The disappearance of Naokhamba in 518 A.D, according to Gangmumei Kamei, ended the traditional line of divine rulers of Manipur. 31

Even after the death of Naokhamba, the last of the seven divine rulers in 428 A.D., the rule of succession was uniform and was governed by the principles by which the title or the property passed to the eldest son. This principle was abided by Naophangba the successor of the last devined rulers. This was continued upto Loitangba the successor of Loiyamba. But after the death of Loitangba (1112-1150 A.D) succession of the throne was not respected. Sometimes the strongest men ascended the throne and sometimes the adopted son was considered to be qualified for kingship of Manipur For instance, according to S. Barmani Singh, "Atom Yoiremba in the thirteen years of his reign was driven out by his brother Iwanthaba with the help of nobles". 32

30 L. Iboongohal Singh, n. 1, pp. 165-166.
31 Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 100.
Political Institution (Prior to 1891)

With the coronation of Loiyamba to the throne of Kangla in the beginning of 12th century, we have many historical evidences in framing administrative system of Manipur. R.K. Jhalajit writes, "Loiyamba was a great reformer. He definitely put an end to a social order prevalent before his time and ushered in a new one". He further says, "In our view with the accession of Loiyamba, an ancient Manipur came to an end and medieval Manipur begin". However, Gangmumeei Kamei gives different opinion who said that, "The ancient period does not end with the reign of Loiyamba. It continued upto the middle of 15th century".

No one can deny, however, that during the reign of Loiyamba (1098-1122 A.D) many written laws were introduced. Of these "Loiyamba Sillen" which we can considered it to be the first written Constitution of Manipur was the most important one. This constitution, though there were some amendment from time to time, was in force upto 1891.

---

33 R.K. Jhalajit Singh, n. 6, p. 68.
34 Gangmumeei Kamei, n. 2, p. 130.
35 L. Iboongohal Singh, n. 1, p. 35.
Development of Administrative Division: Panas

To improve the administrative system, Manipur was divided into division called "Panas". Each Pana consists of a number of families and clans. The Panas were like district or division in modern state of India. Scholars say that the exact date of establishment of Pana is uncertain. Different scholars hold different opinion regarding the establishment and origin of Pana system. According to T.C. Hodson, Pana occurred in the reign of Koirengba (1508-1512 A.D).\textsuperscript{36} Some scholars refers to Ahallup, Naharup, Khabam and Potsangba Pana which were supposed to have been introduced by Pakhangba. The opinion of Gangmumei Kamei is that "Loiyamba systematized the administrative division of this kingdom by creating six Lups viz., Khongchalup, Nongmailup, Angoubalup, Leichalakpa Tolong, Khamba lup, Khurailup and Lipphanba lup. The six Lups were perhaps the basis for the development of the Pana system at a later historical period."\textsuperscript{37} He further said, "We do not find any source to indicate that Loiyamba introduced the Pana system."

During the reign of Kyamba (1469-1508) Pana system was recognised by establishing two revenue or administrative districts or circles known as Ahallup and Naharup Panas. Two persons were also appointed as

\textsuperscript{36} T.C. Hodson, n. 4, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{37} Gangmumei Kamei, n. 2, p. 125.
supervisors or Lakpas of the Panas. In order to suit the need of the time Kyamba further modified the six Panas introduced by Loiyamba in the early part of 12th century.\textsuperscript{38}

**Lallup System**

There were six administrative division in ancient Manipur. They are Ahallup, Naharup, Laipham, Khabam, Hidakphanbam and Potsangbam, of which Ahallup and Naharup are considered as the first two to be established.\textsuperscript{39} Historical records provide confusing materials regarding the line and the concern ruler who developed the Lallup system. However, the establishment of six division as mentioned above is believed to be the basis for the development of Lallup system in the future.

Different scholars offered different opinion about the term Lallup. According to Gangmumeei Kamei "Lal" means "War" "Lup" means Organisation. Therefore to him Lallup means war organisation.\textsuperscript{40} In the opinion of T.C. Hodson, the Lallup was a military organisation. This organisation was also responsible for the economic life of the country in time of peace only.\textsuperscript{41}


\textsuperscript{39} T.C. Hodson, n. 4, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{40} Gangmumeei Kamei, n. 2, p. 126.

\textsuperscript{41} T.C. Hodson, n. 4, p. 59.
According to R.K. Jhalajit Singh "Lallup is a term of workers who works for the state"\textsuperscript{42} He further says that" those who worked in the Lallup were paid nothing". According to T.C. Hodson, Lallup is the duty of attending the kings office (Loishang) for ten days and to remain 30 days at home.\textsuperscript{43} The assumption is that, Lallup was based on the duty of every male between the ages of 17 to 60 to render for ten days in every 40 days. N. Sanajaoba gives different opinion which says "Lallup Kaba" as 20 days compulsory military service. For women and child below 17 years, physical disabilities or illness Lallup was exempted. But imposed punishment on those who did not inform the concern officers of his illness or disabilities to attend the Lallup.\textsuperscript{44}

Still different scholars expressed differently regarding the origin, meaning and the practices of the Lallup system. But if one takes the opinion of the majority of the scholars discussed above, Lallup was a group of people organized for the purposed of war or battle to defend the state. Because during those time there were frequent fighting among the clans or

\textsuperscript{42} T.C. Hodson, n. 4, p.59.

\textsuperscript{43} R.K. Jhalajit Singh, n.4, pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{44} T.C. Hodson, n.4. pp. 61-62.
Salais. In time of peace Lallup was to perform manual duty at the king's office.  

**Lallup in the Hill Areas**

According to the royal chronicles of ancient Manipur Lallup was imposed in the valley as well as in the hill villages of Manipur. It was to symbolised the direct control by the king. The hill tribes did not favoured this system. However, they had contact with the king. During the Burmese invasion in 1723, 4000 (Four thousand) hill tribesmen joint the Manipuri forces under the command of the king. It is said that Loiyamba Sillen also laid a decree to render a tribute by the tribes who were under the suzerainty of the king. The tribute was mainly in the form of mineral resources like salt lime, iron, gold, etc., produced in the particular area. Salt was obtained from the various salt springs located at Shikhong, Ningel, Chandrakhong, Waikhong, etc., in the plain areas which were of lower quantity to manufacture.

The proportion of salt went to the Raja as his due was 30p.c. of the quantity manufactured. It might be a very high quantity at that time.


46 Gangmumei Kamei, n.2, p. 262.

47 N. Ibobi Singh, n. 21, p. 153.
Because the manufacturing method was not based on scientific method. Perhaps, most of the hill tribes rendered tribute to the king reluctantly.

The development of Lallup system was the manifestation of the emergence of feudalism in the social, economic, administrative and political system of Manipur. Lallup system played the very important role before the separate military institution was established. L. Iboongohal Singh says that Lallup system was abolished by Major Maxwell, the political agent during the reign of minor Churachand Singh.\textsuperscript{48} According to N. Ibobi Singh it was abolished in 1898-99.\textsuperscript{49}

**Military Organisation**

Military organisation occupied a very important place in the history of Manipuri since time of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. The idea of well trained and well organized army had existed since his reign. Later on separate military organisation and different posts were created by different rulers.

In the beginning the strength of the army was not fixed but maintained a regular army under Lallup system. The military service became compulsory for every male. Infantry used shields, spikes, spears

\textsuperscript{48} L. Iboongohal Singh, n.1, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{49} N. Ibobi Singh, n. 21, p. 154.
arrows, etc. Making of Gun was started during the reign of Khagemba (1595-1652).\textsuperscript{50} Then from the Chinese merchants visits to Manipur as late as 1630 Manipur learnt the art of manufacturing Gun Powder.\textsuperscript{51} The king was the commander-in-chief of the army. Khagemba was the first ruler who introduced a regular army other than the Lallup.\textsuperscript{52} During the reign of Gambhir Singh a separate organisation for military service called "Manipur Levy" was introduced with different posts.\textsuperscript{53} During the reign of Chandrakirti Singh (1834-1844) villages were divided into military village (i.e., all the valley villages) and the civilian village (i.e., hill villages overlooking the valley) Military villages were responsible for defense of the state, Civilian village usually carried the work which were not assigned to the military villages. Every able man used to attend the place if 5(five) alarm guns were fired which symbolized as emergency.\textsuperscript{54}

Civilian villages in the interior hills remained quite except paying a house tax of 2 rupees once a year. But the chiefs were to attend the capital

\textsuperscript{50} N. Ibobi Singh, n. 21, pp.131, 133.

\textsuperscript{51} N. Sanajaoba (ed.), n. 44, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{52} B.S.M. Sharma and Kaoba Singh, \textit{A Brief History of Manipur} (1508-1509), Imphal, Manipur Students' Emporium, 2001 pp.48-49.

\textsuperscript{53} T. C. Hodson, n. 4, p.59.

\textsuperscript{54} L. Iboongohal Singh, n.1, p.37.
once a year in the month of Mera and celebrate Mera Haochongba, the festival of the tribe.\textsuperscript{55}

In ancient Manipur the size of the empire was not constant. It was mainly depended on the capacity of the ruler. The work of consolidation of his kingdom occupied the most important one for the ruler. Consolidation of hill village began during the reign of Iwanthaba (1163-1195).\textsuperscript{56}

To assert Meitei suzerainty over the tribal villages in the hills, Mungyamba sent out several military expeditions towards various tribal villages. He also captured many tribal chiefs of the villages of southern and south eastern hills.\textsuperscript{57} According to Gangmumie Kamei "Khagemba also strengthened the internal political control over the hill tribes and villages in the hill areas of the Kingdom,"\textsuperscript{58} Pakhomba took up a minor expedition over the tribal villages in eastern hills inhabited by Tangkhuls, Anal, Moyons, and Lamkang. The Maram in the north, Sakang and Nungkong in the south.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p.38.
\textsuperscript{56} R.K. Jhalajit Singh, n.6, p. 63.
\textsuperscript{57} Gangmumie Kamei, n. 2, pp. 205-206.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 227.
King Bhagyachandra (1763-1762) paid his attention towards the hill tribes of Manipur. His suzerainty was accepted by most of the tribesmen. During his flight to Assam for military help during the Burmese invasion, Zeliangrong people of Tamenglong gave him a lot of help. He was also friendly with them. There are relics in many major villages like Tamenglong, Noney, Awangkhul, Nungang, Taijijang village, etc. which have connection with King Bhagyachandra.\(^60\)

The people of Tamenglong also gave protection to the Manipuri princes and their followers during the seven years devastation (1819-1826). The king and people fled to the western hills and Chachar. However, Gambhir Singh (1825-1834) subjugated the Kabui villages and conquered Khoupum village in 1825 and other Tangkhul villages of Ukhrul.\(^61\)

Oral traditions which have been handed down from generation to generation indicated that the hill tribes of Manipur were badly treated by the officials sent by the Raja of Manipur. Iboongohal Singh states that, "it was an open secret in those days that Lambus and Kompaks oppressed the innocent hill people in order to extract money from them." It was during the period of 1891 to 1907 when hill peoples were administered by irresponsible and illiterate Lambus and Kompaks. The big officials could

\(^{60}\) Gangmumei Kamei, *Tamenglong: A Brief History*, Imphal, p. 16.

not check everything they had done. So the big officials of the office approved their reports.  

Political Situation in Manipur During the British Rule  
(1891-1947)  

Before the outbreak of the great Anglo-Manipuri war, Manipur was independent princely state between the two frontiers of British and Burma. It was again for some period of time existed as a buffer State between the two rival powers. Treaties were signed between the Maharaja of Manipur and the British government. The treaties signed between the Maharaja of Manipur and the British government were mainly for dual purpose. For maintaining trade relationship with the British and another was military alliance. For this purpose government appointed Lt. Gordon as the political agents in 1835.  

It was for the first time that the British government appointed political agent for maintaining relationship with the British and the Maharaja of Manipur. In the beginning the political agent paid due honour to the independent state of Manipur in their alliance. However, in course of time the political agent directly interfered with the affairs of the state.  

---

62 L. Iboongoval Singh, n. l, p. 36.  
64 Ibid.
In this way the British which once maintained friendly alliance became bitter enemy which was consequently responsible for the outbreak of Anglo Manipur war 1891.

Manipur entered into alliance with the British by signing treaties between Jay Singh, King of Manipur and the British in 1826. We may study the Anglo Manipuri relation into two phases.

The first phase can be traced back from the signing of treaty in 1826 upto Anglo-Manipuri war 1891. It was the period when Manipur existed as an independent sovereign state.

The second and the most important period in which Manipur became a protectorate began from the defeat of Anglo Manipur war of 1891, upto the passing of Indian independent act, 1947.\(^{65}\) Again the second phase can be subdivided into three heads as follows:

1891-1907 (Regency period)

1907-1919 (Regency to Durbar)

1919 to 1947 (The beginning of democratic experience)

**Regency Period (1891-1907)**: The Anglo Manipur war of 1891 brought about tremendous changes in the history of Manipur. It marked the end of

---

independent status losing sovereignty of Manipur. On 27 April 1891 administration of Manipur was in the hand of general Collett under him Major Maxwell was appointed as the Chief Political officer. But soon he was authorized to discharge both civil and political duties in the state.⁶⁶

There were divergent views in the British Parliament regarding the annexation of Manipur. Though majority recommended, Lord Derby, Ex-Viceroy strongly objected by expressing his views that annexation would worsen the Anglo Manipur relationship. Both British and Indian public supported his views.⁶⁷

On 18th September 1891 Lord Landsdowne, the Viceroy made his final statement on the controversial issue of the annexation. He declared that the British had a moral right of annexation of the state. Lord Landsdowne further said that. "I am on principle strongly opposed to needless annexation and I would have a scrupulous regard for the independence of the native states in subordinate alliance with us, as long as they remain loyal and do nothing to forfeit."⁶⁸

---

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.107.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Thus the state was permitted to re-established native rule under the five year old Prince, Churachand Singh under strict condition. As he became the new ruler, Lord Lansdowne, the British Viceroy entitled him Raja.\textsuperscript{69}

The administrative power permitted by the British to the native ruler was only nominal. All civil and political powers were directly administered by the British officer.\textsuperscript{70}

The British government did not allowed any Manipuri to be the regent of minor Raja. The Political agent of Manipur, Maxwell, was nominated as the regent. He held the charge of civil and political duty and continued till the amendment of administration rule in 1907.

From regency to Durbar (1907 to 1919):- When Raja Churachand Singh attained the age of maturity, the administration of the state was handed over to the Raja on 15 May 1907 assisted by a Durbar called Manipur State Durbar.\textsuperscript{71} It consisted of the Raja as the President, who was only the nominal head. The Vice-President of the Durbar was an English

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{70} Bimal J. Dev. and Dilip K. Lahiri, \textit{Manipur Culture and Politics}. New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1985, p. 97.

\textsuperscript{71} N. Sanajaoba (ed.), n. 65 p. 109.
I.C.S. officer who was directly responsible for administration of the state. Besides, the British officer seven other Manipuri members were also appointed to look after the state.

Different portfolios were assigned to the Manipuri members. Whereas the President of the Durbar held the charge of education, medical and state police, the Vice-President of the Durbar was given the charge of administration of the hill tribes, finance and state revenue. Moreover, foreign affairs, post and telegraph, etc. were also in the hand of the Vice President.

The administrative rules of both plains and hills were amended in 1916. The amendment was perhaps mainly to concentrate all powers in the hands of the British. The Vice-President of the Durbar was made the President. The Raja was given no right in the hill administration. It may be considered as an example of the British policy of divide and rule. Also, due to isolation of hills from the plains the Raja could not look into the affairs of the hill people. Further, perhaps, the British acknowledged that the hill tribes had their distinct identity which was different from the plain people.

74 Lal Dena, n. 68, p. 80.
The outbreak of the Kuki Rebellion (1919-1920) introduced still more far reaching changes in the administration of the hills. The most significant result of the rebellion was the overall re-organisation of the administration. W. A. Cosgrave, the political agent was of the view that "the whole administration of the hill tracts should be handed over to the exclusive management of the political agent". The Chief Commissioner of Assam preferred to place the hill tribes under the government of the Maharaja. However, in all things connected with the hill men, the Maharaja was to be guided by the advice of the political agent. He further suggested to the Viceroy to establish British Sub-divisional Officers at suitable places in the hills. In October 1919, Sir Nicholas Dodds Beatson Bell, Chief Commissioner of Assam visited the state. In an open Durbar he declared the decision of India to grant the state financial concession to carry out the scheme for the better administration of the hill people. Under the new scheme three subdivisions were formed - Churachandpur, Tamenglong and Ukhrul. Each sub-divisions was place under the charge of the European Sub-divisional officer who was directly accountable to the president of the Durbar.

---

75 Ibid., p.132.
76 Ibid., p.134.
Various changes were introduced. Amendments had been done and many acts were passed during the regency period. Moreover, Mr. William Pettigrew's attempt to establish Baptist mission in Manipur since 1891 was successfully carried out. He was given permission to visit hills and plain as he had duty to do census at the government expenses.

Mission schools were established particularly in the backward areas in the hills. Prior to the coming of Christianity there were no mark of literature of any kind for the hill tribes.

The Government of India Act 1919 brought great changes in the field of administration in the Central Level, Provincial Level and also in the constituent parts of India. At the Central Level, the Central Legislative Assembly was replaced by a 'bicameral Legislature' consisting of the council of states (upper chamber) consisting of the not more than 60 members and the Legislative Assembly (Lower chamber) consisting of 143 members. At the provincial level, the most important feature of the Act was the establishment of Dyarchy (Dual Government). The executive of the council was divided into two subjects the Reserved subjects and the transferred subjects. The Reserved subject were in the hand of Governor and his executive council. The Transferred subjects were in the charge of the Council of Ministers. The Act also introduced direct election and
extended the franchise. The introduction of Dyarchy in the Provincial Level was intended to be the first instalment towards the establishment of responsible government in India.77

On the part of Manipur, in the same year 1919 the Government of India approved some rules known as the "Rules for Management of the State of Manipur".78 Under the rules the administration of the state was responsible by the Maharaja assisted by the Durbar. Durbar became the highest original and appellate court to discharge both criminal and civil cases except in case of hill areas.79 The administration of the hill was in the hand of the president of the Durbar on behalf of the Maharaja.

For smooth functioning of the administration of the hill areas, in 1920 the hill administration was separated from plain.80

Around the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War, there were serious political unrests among the hill tribes in the north-East India particularly the Naga hills. Formation of the Naga club in Nagaland in 1918 was the first political organisation of the


79 Ibid.

80 N. Basanta, Socio-Economic Change in Manipur (1891-1947) Imphal, 1919, pp. 85-86.
Naga tribes. Among the Hill tribes of Manipur, the Kuki rebellion (1917-1920) and the Zeliangrong movement under Jadonnang and Rani Gaidinlu (1930-1940), were the important events.

The first political organisation in Manipur was the "Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha" (NHMM) in May 1934. Maharaja Churachand Singh was the president and H. Irabot was the Vice President of the organisation. Their first two important demands were "full administrative powers" in Manipur and "combined administrative unit" of hills and plain.\(^{81}\)

**Manipur Under the Government of India Act 1935**

The Government of India Act 1935 also introduced big changes in the administration of India. It abolished Dyarchy at the provincial level but established at the central level. Autonomy was given at the Provincial level. It consists of the plan to established federation of all Indian states.\(^{82}\)

The Government of India Act 1935 empowered the government of Assam the charge of hill administration. In Manipur the direct charge of hill administration was given in the hand of the President of the Darbar assisted by officers of Assam civil services. In 1937 when the issue of


\(^{82}\) U.R. Ghai, n.77, pp. 230-231.
federation of Indian states was discussed administration of hill tribes in Manipur became the important matter. However, the Government of Assam reaffirmed the stand that "If the state takes over the hills it will both neglect and oppress the hill men."\textsuperscript{83} The government of Assam further suggested that "it will not be in the interest of the hill tribes to hand them over the administration of His Highness and the Darbars, and it almost certain that it would not be to the interest of the paramount power or of the Manipur itself, because the commotion that will arise would inevitably have serious reactions in Manipur and among the hill tribes of British Indian". Separation of plains and hills administration continued till the lapse of British paramouncy in 1947.

\textsuperscript{83} Bimal, J. Dev, n. 70, p.103.