CHAPTER-VI

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
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The ancient Tangkhuls had no written records. Our knowledge as to how the highly democratic system of village administration evolved and developed in the remote past is very obscure. Although unrecorded, yet it had survived through oral traditions, songs, stories, legends etc. and its practical continuance of the same system of administration is more than a written record. Though Tangkhuls were head hunting tribes like most of the head hunting tribes of the world, yet, they practised a refine system of democracy in their village administration. Every village was a self-governing unit ruled and administered by the village Awunga (chief) and his councillors. Though small it may be, yet the village administration was indeed a model of pure democracy. The chief-in-councils were the real administrators, lawmakers and chief judge. However absence of common ruler for the whole areas of Tangkhul and national government made them weak to withstand the attack of more organised enemies of other communities, e.g. the Meiteis and the Britishers. As the time rolled by, the Tangkhuls political system and activities underwent a metamorphosis.

Relation with the Meitei Kings:

The history of the Tangkhuls became more enlightened by the beginning of the 13th century owing to cultural trade and sometimes turbulent relation which had developed with the people in the valley. We find a reference to the Tangkhuls as early as the 13th century during the reign of Thawanthaba (1195-1231) of Ningthouja Meitei dynasty. The chronicles
refer to the frequent raids in many tribal villages.¹ Thawantha raided
Chingsong village (a Tangkhul village) which was defeated and burnt
down.² The village was located in the upper reaches of the Iril River in the
Tangkhul area and used to supply timber for making boats for the king. The
control over Chingsong was an important strategy of any powerful Meitei
ruler.³

During the reign of Charairongba (1697-1709), he confined his
military expeditions to a number of tribal villages in the surrounding hill
areas. There was constant vigil as the Meitei kings did not impose any direct
administration over the hill tribes. The Lallup labour was extracted from the
villages, which were situated near the valley or near the main trade routes.
Any tribe who refused to pay the tribute was punished by sending military
expeditions. In the year 1700 A.D. the king Charairongba organised a big
festival on which the hill chiefs from the eastern hills were invited to make
friendship with all the nobles of his court.⁴ He also established ‘Hao Macha
Loishang’, (Department of Hill tribes) during the last days of king
Chairairongba (1706-1709) when his long lost son Pamheiba (Garibaniwaz)
was found from Thangal village and was restored to the throne.⁵

2. Gangmumei Kabui – History of Manipur, National Publishing House,
   N. Delhi, 1991, P. 133.
3. Ibid., P. 196.
4. Ibid P. 234.
During the reign of Garibaniwaz, the king’s forces invaded the Tangkhul village of Hundung in 1719 and sixty-eight prisoners were captured. In 1733, the king sent another expedition and invaded Ukhrul. The expeditions incurred heavy casualty on the king’s forces and the royal chronicle records the death of seventy Meitei soldiers. The defeat of these two big villages was a landmark in the establishment of the Meitei political hegemony over the Tangkhul hills which soured their relationship. The Ningel inscription of king Garbaniwaz refers to the Khullakpa of Okhrul (Ukhrul). In 1735, Garbaniwaz introduced the lallup system in hill areas and recognised the hill chiefs as Khullakpas.

In 1779 king Bhagyachandra established a new capital at Langthabal about seven kilometers South-East of Imphal. He engaged many Tangkhul and Kabui Nagas in the digging of moats around the new capital of Langthabal. Some of the Tangkhul chiefs, namely the Khullakpa of Hundung and Ukhrul made friendship with the king. He settled the Tangkhuls at Purupat, the Kharam at Wakok.

The Chief advantage of the Meiteis over the Tangkhul was the use of fire-arms and gunpowder. Otherwise, the Tangkhuls were a formidable warrior. In the words of Major General Sir James Johnstone, "the Burmiese tried in vain to subdue the Tangkhuls and in one case a force of seven hundred men that they sent against them were entirely annihilated".

6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
Secondly, the Meiteis had well established themselves as a nation with a common king possessing an organised and trained army while the Tangkhuls like the other hill tribes were still living in their village states.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Nature of Administration:}

During the pre-colonial era, the hill villages of Manipur were autonomous units. There was an occasional military and political control by the kings of Manipur valley. However, regular administration was not carried out and no tax was imposed, only tribute and service were given to the monarch. The hill villages had for their own administration.

\textbf{Hill Administration during the British Period:}

With the defeat of Manipur at the hands of the British in 1891, Manipur came under British Paramountcy. By a proclamation dated 21\textsuperscript{st} August, 1891 and a notification dated 18\textsuperscript{th} September 1891, native rule was established in Manipur.\textsuperscript{12} The British made Shri Churchand Singh, Raja of the Native State of Manipur at the age of six (6) on 29\textsuperscript{th} April, 1889. During his stay at Mayo College for study, Major Maxwell the then Political Agent took the responsibility of the administration as the Superintendent of the state. In 1908 the administration of the state was entrusted to His Highness the Raja assisted by a Darbar, which consisted of an officer specially selected by the Government of Assam designated as the President and other Manipur members appointed by His Highness, the Raja in consultation with

\textsuperscript{11} Horam, M., Op. cit. P. 64.
\textsuperscript{12} L. Budha Ranjan – Political Status of Manipur (1826-1891), Manipur to-day, 1992, P. 22.
the Political Agent of Manipur. No member could be removed without the
consent of the Political Agent. The state Darbar could exercise both
executive and judiciary powers subject to the approval of His Highness the
Raja.\(^{13}\)

Regarding the administration of the North Eastern states, the British
had a different plan. When the British first came in contact with the Hill
tribes of N.E. India, they found that the hills and valley could not be ruled
under the same administrative system as there were striking differences in all
aspects. Many British officials strongly opposed the inclusion of the Hill
Districts in the reformed scheme. The most notable opponents among them
was Mr. Hutton an eminent social anthropologist. He spent long years in the
Hill Districts particularly in the Naga Hills as D.C. and made a thorough
study of the problem relating to the tribals. He categorically stated that the
interest of the hill district would not be served best by their inclusion in the
scheme of the constitutional reforms. They would rather suffer by joining as
they would be in contact with the people of an irreconcilable culture in an
unnatural union which would ultimately harm both the parties.\(^{14}\)

Hutton further clearly stated that "there was the danger that hills
brought under the reformed council might suffer acutely at the hands of
self-seeking persons in influence, in popular government in which the vote

\(^{13}\) Legis News – Manipur legislative Assembly, Vol. 1 No.1 August 15,
1980, P. 41.

\(^{14}\) Rao Venkata – A century of Tribal Politics in North East India
1874-1974, P. 61.
would be of no importance. The danger of exploitation by plainsmen of the hills was not a chimera. This was borne out by the experience in the Manipur state.”

Regarding the hill administration in Manipur, the British had no full administrative control over the hill areas. The British Political Agents allowed the hill villages to retain their traditional system of village administration. They wanted to control the hill areas with the least expenditure as most of the hill areas were inaccessible due to bad communication and inhospitable and rugged terrain.

In the year 1894, Manipur was divided into two administrative units, hills and valley. The hill areas were put under the British administrator and Valley under the Maharaja.

One significant development of the colonial administration was the introduction of the system of ‘Lambus’ in 1892. Altogether there were 42 Lambus and below them there were again a number of Lam Subedars. The main duty of these ‘Lambus’ was to act as interpreters and to carry out the orders of government to the people. The whole hill territory was divided into five Sardars. Each Sardar was looked after by a number of Lambus and Lam-Subedars who investigated all cases within their respective Sardars. They were supposed to hold a position of trust and dignity in the administration of the hill areas. At the beginning, the Lambus did not get any

15. Ibid., Pp. 67-68.
salary. As a result, the Lambus plundered and pillaged the common villagers. Under the existing system, there was little or no scope for the development of personal relations between the rulers and the ruled. Robert Reid was of the view that these Lambus were partly responsible for the Kuki rebellion of 1917-1919.

Sir Robert Reid, a famous historian wrote about the hill administration of Manipur. He wrote -

"even after 1891, there was no proper administration of the hill tribes and no proper permission for them in the budget. The expenditure on them was only one quarter of the amount they paid in taxes. Neglect of their interests and lack of touch between them and administration came to a head in the Kuki Rebellion of 1918, which cost the government of India nearly twenty lakhs of rupees and the hill tribes and the forces engaged a large number of lives. After the rebellion had been quelled, proposal for the future administration of the Manipur state including the dependent hill tribes were submitted to the government of India. Under the Rules approved in the Government of India letter No. 4326 dated the 1st October, 1919, the Political Agent and the President of the Manipur State Darbar were given the control over the hill tribes which they now exercise. His Excellency, after careful consideration, has reached the conclusion that the present control should in no way be lessened."\(^16\)

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The British administrator fully aware of the loose administrative control over the hill people, decided to introduce effective administrative system among the hill tribes. In this respect, the Political Agent W.A. Cosgrave, was of the view that the whole administration of the hill areas be handed over to the exclusive management of the Political Agent. But the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir, Nicolas Beatson Bell preferred to place the hill people under the personal control of the Maharaja of Manipur provided the rules made it clear that in all things connected with the hillmen, the Maharaja be guided by the advice of the Political Agent. Thus, the Chief Commissioner gave a fresh proposal at an open Darbar held at the Palace on the 16th October 1919. In his letter to the Viceroy, the Commissioner wrote thus, “we must establish British Sub-divisional officers at suitable places in the hills. These men working under the president, Manipur State Darbar (PMSD) would reside in the areas all the year round, open up roads, administer simple justice, set up schools and hospitals and gradually act as father to the hillmen and restore their confidence in the British Raj.”

The proposal was accepted and under the new scheme of administration, the state was divided into four sub-divisions, one sub-division in the valley and three sub-divisions in the hill areas of Manipur. Each hill division was put under the control of British Officer who was responsible only to the President and the Political Agent. One sub-division

for the south-west area inhabited by the Chin-Kuki (Zomi group of people) with head quarters at Churachandpur (named after Maharaja Churachand Singh's name) was under B.C. Gasper's charge, another one for the north-west area with headquarters at Tamenglong under William Shaw and the north-east area with headqwuarter's at Ukhrul under L.L. Peter. To assist the state and to meet the expenses of the new arrangement, the British Government in India recruited a sum of Rs. 50,000/- on condition that the amount would be spent on the hill areas. This proposal gave a great satisfaction to the Christian missionaries and the British officials who were working among the tribals.

However, a large area in the north and in the south-east continued to be administered from Imphal by the President of the Darbar. Under the new rules, the president had powers equivalent to those of a district magistrate and the sub-divisional officers had power equivalent to those of sub-divisional magistrates who were also magistrate of first class under the Indian Criminal Procedure Code 1898. Appeals in civil and criminal cases against the order of an SDO when admissible lay with the President, and appeals against the order of the president in criminal cases lay with the Political Agent. So far as the civil cases were concerned, the President's order was unquestionable. The administrative arrangement continued till 1935 when the earlier sub-divisions were slightly modified by adding Sadar sub-division in place of Churachandpur which was amalgamated with the Tamenglong sub-division.18

Under the British rule, the internal administration of Manipur state was carried out by the Maharaja with the help of the Manipur Darbar. When Maharaj Churachand attained adulthood, he took over the rein of his state administration from the British on 15th May 1907 and constituted Manipur State Darbar to assist him.

Maharaj Churachand Singh later on decided to modify the constitution of the Darbar as he did not want to waste most of his time in presiding and deliberating the Darbar as the President. After making modification, the British ICS Vice-President became the President of Manipur State Darbar (PMSD). The first President of Manipur State Darbar (PMSD) was W.A. Cosgrave I.C.S (1907-1910). The President of the Manipur State Darbar administered the Hill areas designated as the President of the Manipur State Darbar (Hills), which was abbreviated as PMSD(Hill). There were twenty-two Presidents of the Manipur State Darbar, the last being Major F.F. Pearson, IPS (Indian Political Service) M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire (1946-47).

**Administrative Changes in Manipur, 1947-1950:**

After the Second World War, some changes were introduced and an interim Government of India took office on the 2nd September 1946. Under the changing circumstances, Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh decided to change the nomenclature of the state Darbar under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. He dissolved the Manipur state Darbar on 30th June 1947 and the post of the President, Manipur state Darbar(PMSD) was also
abolished. Mr. F.F. Pearson, IPS (India Political Service) became the first Chief Minister.\textsuperscript{19}

During the early part of 1947, a Constitution Making Committee was set-up vide Palace order 30 P, 1946. Accordingly, under the chairmanship of F.F. Pearson, the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the Hill People’s Regulation Act, 1947 were drafted. The drafting committee of Hill People’s (Administration) Regulation 1947 consisted of the following members: \textsuperscript{20}

1. Mr. F.F. Pearson - Chairman.
2. A. Ibotombi - Member.
3. Suisa Rungsung - Member.
4. A. Daiho - Member.
5. T.C. Tiankham - Member.
6. Teba Kilong - Member.
7. Mr. Lairen Singh. - Member.\textsuperscript{21}

After a minute discussion and deliberation these two drafts were approved by His Highness, the Maharaja-in-Council. The administrative system in the hill continued till Manipur got merged into the Indian union in 1949. And when British Paramountcy lapsed, the administration of the hill areas was in the hands of the Maharaja of Manipur. \textsuperscript{22}


\textsuperscript{20} H. Bhubon Singh - The Merger of Manipur, P.60.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} M. Horam - The Rising Manipur Manas Publication Delhi-2000, P.175.
Two days before independence, the Maharaja dissolved the council on 13th August 1947 and an Interim Council was brought into existence on 14th August, 1947. Shiri M. K. Priyobrata the Maharaja’s Younger brother was appointed as the Chief Minister. Thus the existing Manipur State Darbar was converted in to the Council of Ministers in July 1947.

From 14th August 1947 to 17th August 1948, an Interim Council of Ministers (care-taker Government was constituted by means of nomination by the Maharaja of Manipur Budhachandra singh. In this Interim Council of Ministers, three were two ministers representing the hill tribes. Although the care-taker Government was by nomination yet an element of democracy in a sense was introduced by having legitimate representation of the different communities of Manipur. This was the first in the annals of Manipur that the tribals of Manipur were included in the administration. The two tribal ministers were Major R. Khathing, a Tangkhul-in-charge of Hill Affairs and Mr. T.C. Tiankham representing the Chin-Mizo group was given the charge of Forest, Agriculture and Veterinary.

**Political Development in Manipur:**

When India became independent on August 15, 1947, the paramountcy of British rule over Manipur lapsed and the Maharaja of Manipur became the head of the state. In the meantime, the demand for the introduction of democratic government in Manipur increased. In order to introduce democratic system, the Maharaj enacted the Manipur State

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Constitution Act, 1947. Under this Act, there were three categories of constituencies, i.e. General, Hill and Mahammedan. The seats among them were in the ratio's of 30:18:3 respectively with an additional two seats for the representative of Education and commercial interest. The whole valley was divided into 29 constituencies and the entire hill area into 18 constituencies. The Assembly was unicameral legislature and the members were elected by the people on adult franchise and on the principle of joint electorate. 24

Accordingly, the first ever Assembly election in Manipur was held in 1948 under the Manipur Constitution Act 1947. A coalition government was formed comprising the independent group known as the Praya Shanti. Shri M.K. Priyobrata Singh, younger brother of Maharaja assumed the office of Chief Minister. Shri T.C. Tiankham and Shri T. Bokul Singh were unanimously elected as speaker and Deputy speaker.

The following were the elected representatives of the constituencies inhabited by the Tangkhuls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Elected M.L.A.s.</th>
<th>Name of the Constituencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relengnao Khathing</td>
<td>Sadar Hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Laying Hungyo</td>
<td>Phaisat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thisan Luikham</td>
<td>Ukhruil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Suisa Rungsung</td>
<td>Tolloi Hills 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Amongst them Major R. Khathing was included as Minister of the cabinet rank.

The executive power of the state was vested in the Maharaja-in-council and the Maharaja was assisted by the Ministers and the Chief Minister. But the constitutional monarchy established in 1948 did not last long. Many political parties in Manipur organised a mass campaign demonstration for the establishment of real democratic government in Manipur. Meanwhile the socialist party demanded the merger of Manipur with the Indian Union. The Maharaja signed the Merger agreement on 21st Sept. 1949 and the state was amalgamated with the Union of India on 15th October 1949, which resulted in the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. On adoption of the Constitution of India on January 26, 1950, Manipur was placed as a part C state. The Union Territories (Law) Act 1950 came into force on the 16th of April 1950 and the Chief Commissioner became the Administrator of the state.

Re-organisation of states, 1956:

After the re-organisation of States in 1956 the status of Manipur as Part C State ceased to exist and in its place Territorial Council was established under the Territorial Council, Act 1956. Accordingly the election of 30 members to the Territorial council was held in 1957 with a Chairman as the chief functionary in the Territorial Council. Besides 30 elected members, there were two nominated women members. 26

With the enactment of the Government of Union Territories Act 1963, Manipur got a Legislative Assembly having 30 elected members. A council of Ministers consisting of 3 members was formed. The state however continued to be administered by the President through a Chief commissioner appointed by him. 

**Statehood for Manipur:**

After the general election of 1967 discontent against the Territorial status and demand for statehood started in Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura. The North Eastern Areas (Re-organisation) Act 1971 was passed by parliament during the December session in 1971. Soon after the confirmation of Statehood to Manipur, the then Prime Minister of India Late Smt. Indira Gandhi formally inaugurated Manipur State on 21st January 1972 at Imphal. The strength of the legislative assembly was fixed at 60 members. Thus, after a long journey of more than 20 years through a process of constitutional evolution from Advisory Council, of Territorial Council to Territorial Assembly and centrally administered Territory, Manipur had finally emerged in the political map of India as a full fledged state. In view of the special nature of the problems of the hill people, Hill districts have been granted Autonomous Councils under the District Council Act 1971. After the general election in 1972, Md. Alimuddin, leader of the Manipur People’s party (MPP) formed the MPP led coalition government in the state.

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Political Development in the Hill Areas:

The hill areas of Manipur had undergone political changes. Let us examine the various political changes that took place during the period 1947 to 1972.

Manipur State Hill Peoples (Administration) Regulation, 1947:

Under the Manipur state Hill Peoples (administration) Regulation Act 1947, the responsibility for administration in the Hills was vested in the Maharaja in council and exercised in accordance with the constitutional Act of the state and the provisions of this Regulation amended from time to time. The Regulation has 78 sections; it lays down in detail regarding the administration of the tribal people in civil, criminal and revenue matters. Subject to the provision of this Regulation, the Minister-in-charge of Hill Administration could delegate such powers and functions of the sub-divisional officer and to the circle officer as might seem suitable.

According to this Act, there is two-tier system of local self-governing bodies for the Hill areas. The hill territory was thus divided into circles and sub-divisions. The Act provided for the establishment and regulation of village authorities in the hill areas. In every village of 20 tax paying houses or above, there was a village authority, which replaced the traditional village council. The village authority consisted of the village chief (Khullakpa) and elders nominated in accordance with the custom of the village. The primary function of the village authority was to maintain law and order. The village authority has been authorised to arrest certain criminal offenders without any order from a magistrate and without a warrant. The sub-divisional magistrate
should be informed immediately of every unnatural, suspicious or sudden death or any case of a heinous crime in the village.

The court of the village authority settled cases relating to theft. Cattle theft, the illegal slaughter of animals, simple hurt, assault or use of criminal forces, etc. It had the jurisdiction over civil as well as criminal cases. It has also the power to try cases, which did not exceed Rs.500/- and could also impose a fine not exceeding Rs. 200/- and has the power to award payment of compensation.

**Circle Authority:**

Another notable feature of the Hill Peoples (Administration) Regulation Act 1947 was the constitution of Circle authority over the village authority. The circle authority comprised of one circle officer and a council of five members elected by the village authorities falling within the circle. All the villages inhabited by the Hill people were grouped into village circles. There was one circle authority for each circle. A circle authority consisted of a circle officer and a council of five members elected by the village authorities within the circle. Thus the democratic system of election was introduced for the first time in the hills to elect the members of the circle authority.

The election to the circle authority was held after every three years. A village having less than 20 tax paying houses is not eligible to note. The village having more than 20 tax paying house were allotted votes according to the member of tax paying houses.
1. 20 – 50 tax paying houses – One vote
2. 51 – 100 tax paying houses – Two votes
3. 101 – 200 tax paying houses – Three votes
4. 201 – 300 tax paying houses – Four votes
5. 301 – 400 tax paying houses – Five votes.

The circle authorities had the authority, to execute power over law and order, levy assessment or collection of taxes on houses, produce of land, lower and upper primary education, the construction of bridle paths and bridges, the supply of drinking water, the improvement of terrace cultivation, to reduce jhum cultivation, the maintenance of land records, public health, personal hygiene, the preservation of forests, both ordinary and reserve, etc. criminal justice was administered by the court of the village authority, the hill bench at Imphal and the chief court of the Manipur state as constituted for the trial of hill cases under the Manipur state courts Acts, 1947.

The circle authority had criminal cases whose value did not exceed Rs.1, 000/-. It also heard appeals against the decisions of the village court. The circle bench (the court of circle Authority) exercised the power of a magistrate of the first class as defined in the criminal procedure code. It consisted of the circle officer and any two members of the circle council. It also heard appeals against the decision of the village authorities on the suits of the value not more than Rs. 35/-.

Appeals against the decisions of the circle authority were taken to the hill bench and then to the chief court. The decision of the chief court was
final. The chief court could set aside the decision of the hill bench and the circle authority.

This administrative system in the hills continued till Manipur got merged into Indian Union in 1949. Even after the merger, the administrative system under the Hill peoples Regulation Act 1947, continued to remain in force though the hill bench and hill courts were abolished in 1950. The circle bench was also abolished in 1956. 28

The Manipur village Authorities (in hill Areas) Act, 1956:

In the year 1956, Manipur (village authorities In Hill Areas) Act 1956 was passed by the Indian Parliament for the administration of the hill areas of Manipur. It was implemented in 1957. The Manipur (village authorities in hill areas) Act 1956 instills democratic elements in the constitution of the village authority. Under the earlier regulation, the village authorities were nominated but the Act of 1956 for the first time introduced the election of the members of the village authority on the basis of adult franchise by repealing the hill peoples’ (Administration) Regulation of 1947. The Manipur (village Authorities In Hill areas) Act 1956 has 58 sections; sections 3 to 18 deal with the constitution of village authorities, section 19-56 deal with administration of justice by village authorities.

There were 725 village authorities constituted under the Manipur village Authority (in the hill areas) Act 1956, in seven areas of the hills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL.NO.</th>
<th>Name of the Division / circle</th>
<th>No. of village Authorities</th>
<th>No. of elected Members.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sadar Hills</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tengnoupal sub-division</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tengnoupal circle</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mao</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jiribam</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 525 2640<sup>29</sup>

The composition of the village authority was found as follows:

(1) For every villages having twenty or more tax paying house, there shall be a village authority consisting of –

(a) Five members, where the number of tax paying houses in the village is not less than twenty but is not more than sixty;
(b) Seven members, where the number of tax paying houses in the village is more than sixty but is not more than hundred;
(c) Ten members where the number of tax paying houses in the village is more than one hundred but is not more than one hundred and fifty.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. P.176.
(d) Twelve members where the numbers of tax paying houses in
the village is more than one hundred and fifty.\textsuperscript{30}

A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a member of a village
Authority unless he

a) is a citizen of India,

b) is not less than twenty-five years of age, and

c) in case of membership of one elected village Authority is
registered in the electoral roll as a voter for the election of a
member of the village Authority.

A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as and for being a
member of a village authority.

(a) If he is a member of any village Authority

(b) If he is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent
authority.

The term of office of members of the village Authority shall be three
years from the date appointed for its first meetings. The election of members
of the Village Authority of a village shall be on the basis of adult suffrage.
He should be a resident of the village and is not less than twenty-one years
of age.\textsuperscript{31}

According to the Act, the chief as Khullakpa in a village shall be the
Ex-officio Chairman of the Village Authority of that village. In case there is

\textsuperscript{30} Handbook of Manipur Hill village Authority, Government press, Manipur,
Imphal. P.1.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
no such chief as Khullakpa in the villager, the chairman of the village
Authority of that village shall be elected by the members of the village
Authority from among themselves.

**Power to remove members of village Authorities:**

(1) The Deputy Commissioner may remove any member of a village
Authority from his office.

(a) Who is convicted of any non bailable offence:

(b) Who \\textit{refuses} to act, or becomes incapable of acting or is declared to
be insolvent; or

(c) Who, has been declared by notification to be disqualified for
employment in the public service: or

(d) Who, without an excuse sufficient in the opinion of the Deputy
commissioner, absents himself from six consecutive meetings of
the village Authority: or

(e) Who has been guilty of misconduct in the discharge of his duties,
or of any disgraceful conduct, if two thirds of village Authority at
a meeting recommends his removal.

No person who has been removed from his office under clause (a) or
clause (c) sub-section (1) shall be eligible for renomination or re-election
except with previous permission of the chief commissioner obtained by such
person in the prescribed manner.
According to this Act, the village court had jurisdiction both in criminal and civil cases as specified in the code of criminal procedure of 1898 and the code of civil procedure of 1908. The main function of the village authority was to maintain law and order and for this purpose, it could exercise the power and duties generally vested in the police as provided in the Police Act 1861. On certain specific offence within the limits of its jurisdiction, the village authority could also order to arrest persons without any warrant from the magistrate. 32

Before the introduction of the Act, the village Chief and his councillors formed the village court. But under this Act, certain limitations were made on the position and powers of the Chief. According to this act, the head of the state was authorised to appoint two or more members of the village authority to act as the village court. If the Chief were not a member of the court, he could not preside over it. The court selected one of its members as the chairman of the court. 33

There are different views regarding the introduction of the system of election in the village authority. One important view is that the present system of election in the hill areas of Manipur is a great departure from the accepted customary clan-wise representation is rational, acceptable, useful and effective. The present system of election neither serves public interest nor demanded by the people. The consequent effect of this imposition is domination of large clans over small clans and thereby opened the gate of

33. bid. P.177.
trouble. Though the Act was passed, many villages do not adopt it. In some Tangkhul villages, there is the system of elected headman but the village authority members are sent from their respective clan as the clan representatives. They still practise their traditional system of administration. The village court settled the cases of both criminal and civil basing on the unwritten customary laws.

Another view is that the power of awarding sentence to the offender by village court under the tribal customary law was unlimited. It could impose a sentence to the extent of capital punishment or deportation form the local village. As such the law and order situation in Tangkhul villages were of peace and prosperity. The present limit of fine not exceeding Rs. 200/- prescribed by the Act has no practical utility and defeats the purpose of sentence.

So far, the laws in enforce for the Hill areas are the Hill Regulation (Administration) act 1947 and the village Authority Act 1956. These two laws have never been amended so as to suit the changing circumstances nor fully practice as laid down.

**The Manipur Hill Areas Acquisition of Chiefs Right Act, 1967:**

The state legislature passed the Manipur Hill Areas (Acquisition of Chiefs Rights) Act, 1967, on 14\textsuperscript{th} June 1967, which authorised the Government to acquire the rights, title and interest of Chiefs in and over land in the hill areas of Manipur\textsuperscript{34} The hill Chiefs raised a strong objection to the

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., P. 165.
bill but the government without considering their appeal passed the bill with the assent of the governor and become an Act. However, the Act could not be implemented and remained only on the paper. Chieftainship continues to exist with all its rights and privileges in the hill areas of Manipur as before.

**The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act of 1971:**

On the eve of granting statehood to Manipur in 1971, the Manipur Hill Areas District Council Act, 1971 was enacted by the Parliament to provide for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill Areas of Manipur. The Act extends to the whole hill areas of Manipur. The Act laid down that all the hill areas of Manipur shall be divided into six autonomous Districts, each endowed with a District Council consisting of 18 members elected and two nominated members. The Autonomous District Councils are the Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council, the Manipur North Autonomous District Council, the Sadar Hills District Autonomous Council, the Manipur South Autonomous District Council, Manipur East Autonomous District Council and the Manipur West Autonomous District Council.

The Act was finally implemented on August 1973. The Manipur East Autonomous District Council Ukhrul was born on 1st August 1973 with its headquarter at Ukhrul covering an area of 9,744 square feet kms. with 221 villages and a total population of 62,229 according to 1971 census. There are 18 District Council constituencies in Ukhrul District. They are (1) ChingaiKhullen, (2) Chingai, (3) Tolloi, (4) Somdal Kasom, (5) Tuinem, (6) Tungou, (7) Zelembung, (8) Sangsak, (9) Choither, (10) Ukhrul Headquarter, (11) Khamasom, (12) Chatric Khullen, (13) Kamjong, (14)

According to this Act, all the tribal areas included in any municipality, contontment and town committee shall cease to be a part of the autonomous District council. Further, the administrator may in any case diminish the area of any autonomous district, he may unite two or more autonomous districts and form one autonomous district. He may also define the boundaries of any autonomous district. There shall also be a district for each autonomous district from the date as the administrator may by notification in the official Gazette appoints in his behalf. Regarding the composition of the District Council, the total number of seats to be filled in the District council are chosen by direct election on the basis of adult franchise from the constituencies which shall not be more than eighteen (18) members. The administrator may also nominate two members who are not in the government service.

The administrator may also determine the constituent units into which an autonomous district council shall be divided for the purpose of election of members to the District Council and the extent of each constituency. The administrator may from time to time by order, alter or amend any order made under Section 5.

To be elected as a member of a District council, he must be an elector for any District council constituency. A person is also disqualified if he is a chosen member of either House of parliament or held any office of profit under any district council. For the purpose of election, the electoral roll for
the election of members of Lok Sabha relating to the area was also the electoral roll for the election of members of the district council.

Every person whose name is entered in the electoral roll of a constituency has the right to vote. He is entitled only one vote. Elections of members shall be held in accordance with the rules made under section 21. The Administrator may by notification in the official Gazette announces the names of all persons elected or nominated to be members of a District council and shall be published by the Administrator in the official Gazette. The term of office of a member shall be five years.

A District Council has a chairman and a Deputy chairman elected by the members of the District Council from among themselves. It has the power to remove a chairman at any time by a two third majority of the total strength of the council.

The District Council had no legislative powers or judicial powers. It was entrusted with executive power only. They did not levy all the taxes, which they were authorised to levy and collect. The collection of taxes was very poor, rather there was no collection at all. They depend mainly on grants in aid from the government.\(^{35}\)

It is also the duty of the Chairman of a District Council to furnish to the Deputy Commissioner, a copy of the proceedings of all the meetings of the council and such other information as the Deputy Commissioner may

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require. The Deputy Commissioner has the power to give instruction to the District Council as he may consider necessary in respects of subjects, curricula, text-books, and standard of teaching in schools vested wholly or partly maintained by grants payable from the council fund and the council must comply to such directions.

The District Council functioned independently of the state government for the efficient administration of the District. Their only contact with the state government is to demand for more grants and financial support as the fund allotment to the District Council is very meagre and cannot function efficiently due to financial crunch.

**Ukhrul District Council:**

In Ukhrul District, the first District Council election was held on 22\textsuperscript{nd} May, 1973. The second election of the District Council was conducted on 14\textsuperscript{th} November 1978.

The followings are the names of the candidates who were elected to the 18 constituencies with two nominated members in November, 1978.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of Councillors</th>
<th>Name of Constituency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shri. Ningther Angkang</td>
<td>Shingkap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shri H. Pamlei</td>
<td>Tolloi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>B. Sholun</td>
<td>Zalengbung.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Reading Luikham</td>
<td>Ukhrul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Joyson A. Shimray</td>
<td>Chingjarai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kongsui Luithui</td>
<td>Choither</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. David Shimary  Chingai Tharmi
11. Z. Suisa  Tuinem
12. K. Benjamin  Tungou.
13. R. Yarshang  Laotei Riha
14. Asung Keishing  Kasom Khullen
15. N.K. Benjamin  Nambashi Khullen.
17. Ringkhahao Nakhadei  Kamjong
18. A.S. Yarteo  Chatric Khullen.
20. Thongkhongam Haokip  Nominee. 36

According to Administrative Report 1981-83, Published by the Government of Manipur Autonomous District Council Ukhrul, Late, Shri Ningther Angkang was the Chairman and Late, Shri A.W. Vaorei, M.C.S. was the Chief Executive Officer-cum-officio Secretary to the Council up to 23-11-81. Shri A.R. Khan, ADM of Ukhrul was the Chief Executive Officer-cum-Secretary to the Council up to 13th Dec, 1981. Later on, Shri A. Ibocha Singh, M.C.S. was the officer-cum-Secretary to the council.

During the year 1981-82 under report, Shri H.L. Pamlei and Shri B. Sholun, continued to be the Deputy Chairman. The Council has a Finance

Committee consisting of the following 6 members including the Chairman of the Council who was also the Chairman of the Committee:

1. Shri H.L. Pamlei - Deputy chairman.
2. R. Yarshang - Councillor.
3. N.K. Benjamin - Councillor
4. Tuishim Hengyo - Councillor.
5. David Shimray - Councillor.
6. S.W. Tharmi - Councillor.

The Council also formed an Adhoc Committee consisting of the following members:

1. Shri Reading Luikham - Councillor.
2. Shri A.S. Yarteo - Councillor.
3. Shri Dvid Shimray - Councillor.

**Meeting:**

During the period 1981-82 the Council held 4 sessions and the Finance committee and the Adhoc/Building committee held one meeting each.

**Headquarter:**

During the year 1981-82 under report, a sum of Rs. 3,63,417.80 was sanctioned by the Government as grant in-aid to meet expenditure of the pay
and allowances of the headquarters staff, including chairman, Deputy chairman and councillors and any contingent expenditure.

**Education:**

During the year 1981-82 under report, 197 lower primary and Union Basic schools with 292 teachers, two school mothers and 1 chowkider were functioning under the Council. A sum of Rs. 26,73,606.01 had been sanctioned for payment of pay and allowances of the education staff.

**Medical:**

In the year 1981-82 a sum of Rs.1,55,732.00 was received from the Government to meet the expenditure on pay and allowances of the Medical staff. During the year 5 civil Dispensaries continued to function under the council.

During the year 1981-82 under report, drugs and medicines worth Rs.70, 000/- was purchased and distributed to Civil Dispensaries of the District Council.

**Veterinary:**

According to Administrative Report 1981-82, there were 7 Veterinary dispensaries, with 7 field Assistants, 7 attendants and 9 M.R. Attendants under the control and management of the Council.

A sum of Rs. 2,35,363.00 was received from the Government against the expenditure for pay and allowances of the Veterinary staff.
P.W.D.:  

Under the report 1981-82, one Assistant Engineer, one S.O three M.R Road Mohorors, one M.R. Tracer and one Chainman, M.R. are continued to function.

A sum of Rs. 1,27,169.00 was sanctioned for pay and allowances of P.W.D. staff.

A sum of Rs. 38,700/- was sanctioned by the Government for payment of pay and allowances to one Agriculture Officer, two Field Assistant and one Chairman.

The workings of District council in Ukhrul District has not been satisfactory as most of the functions enumerated in the District Council Act are not put into practice due to financial constraints. The government does not sanction adequate fund to implement or execute all the functions and programmes as laid down in the District Council Act 1971. Over and above this, the Ukhrul District Council does not enjoy autonomy in the real sense of the term as the State Government always controls its financial matters. The payment of salaries of the District Council Urkhol workers and staffs are always irregular. There are also instances of running schools under district council without having schools buildings, adequate furniture and shortage of teachers thereby causing untold sufferings and hardships to the students. No fund was granted for the supply of medicines, construction and repairing of buildings, which are under district council undertakings.

The working of District Council will be more successful if the 6th Schedule is extended to the hill areas of Manipur and enjoy the full autonomy of a District Council. Since the District Council is working at the
local level, it can better understand the problems of the local people and bring all round development and enhance the living standard of the people at the quicker pace from the grassroot level. It is imperative on the part of the government to give special attention towards the successful workings of the District Council for the welfare of the Hill people.

Thus the people of the Ukhrul District have experienced many political changes in the process of development. From the traditional political system of chieftainships, the people now have an elected body in the form of District Council consisting of elected members. For the real development in the Political process of the District, it is very much necessary to frame a clear cut Policy adjusting the relationship between the two local political bodies. It is also necessary to examine and find out the reasons why the District Council Ukhrul is not working efficiently in order to promote the welfare of the people of Ukhrul District. The failure is due to meager fund allocation. There is no separate budget for the District Council.

To make the workings of the Council efficient, the Council should be given autonomy and empowered in the fields of administration, legislation, finance and judiciary.