CHAPTER - VII
The degree of the political participation by the people reflects the extent of maturity of political consciousness, awareness and intelligence of the people of the State. This is expressed through the participation in political activities sponsored by the political parties, pressure groups, press and association highlighting the socio-economic and political aspirations of the people.

**Meaning of the Political Participation.**

Political participation generally means direct or indirect involvement in political or decision-making process by exercising franchise rights or sharing power. The political scientists hold opinion that the participation includes "orientations" or attitudes such as knowledge of an interest in politics, identification with a political unit, sense of political behaviour as well. It is associated with political awareness i.e. actual knowledge of affairs - National, Regional or local. It also reflects the intention of the participant whose activity aims at influencing the

selection of government personnel. It embraces voluntary (autonomous) and manipulated (mobilised) action².

**Nature of Political Participation in Mizoram.**

The political participation in Mizoram is deeply engrained in socio-economic condition of the people and its level of development. Political development and political participation move alongwith economic development which is the part of modernisation and operation of Nation State³. In Mizoram political participation is rural-based where responsive involvement or hero worship is identified and the villagers vote en-block out of deference to their traditional leaders. Hence, it is called differential participation.*

* Political participation depends on four kinds of motives - differential, solidarity, instrumental and civil. Differential participation springs from the actors deep respect for the traditional leader. Solidarity participation is motivated by a strong desire to support loyalty to larger group such as village, clan, tribe, ethnic, and religious community. Instrumental participation is in hope of some material gain (cash payment, various favours, school, road, club etc. concession) Civil participation depends upon moral obligation or duty to participate. In other words it is an ideological participation.(H.H.Das, Ibid,p.158)


⁴H.H.Das,n.1, p.158.
The political participation here is influenced by the environment which interacts with the individuals.\textsuperscript{5}

The geographical environment as discussed in chapter II has a profound impact upon Mizos in their sense of involvement in political activity. There are smaller ethnic groups localised in small groups and have promoted separate ethnic entity.

The political participation in Mizoram like other areas, is influenced by the psychological factors in which the people feel themselves neglected by others. This has coloured their perception about power. The participation is also influenced by the political environment of Mizoram, circumscribed by its size, remoteness and complexities of modern political system\textsuperscript{7}.

Like other States the most single factor facilitating the political participation in Mizoram is the political parties, National or Regional which have the capacity to arouse affection, devotion, sacrifice on the part of its

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5} L. Milbrith, 1965. \textit{Political Participation}, Chicago,
\item \textsuperscript{6} Das, n.4, p.159
\item \textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid} p.159
\end{itemize}
members. Like other Hill States of North-East India, political participation in Mizoram was exceedingly poor due to its socio-economic backwardness. The British policy intended to keep these people isolated from the mainstream of national life by creating artificial barriers of 'Inner Line regulations' which prohibited free exchange of views between the Hill people and the Plain people. As a result, the growth of political organisation through which an ordinary man can express his views, did not take place. The oldest organisation was Jaintia Durbar (1900 A.D.) followed by Khasi National Durbar (1923), the Naga Club (1918) and the Mizo Union (1946). It seems that the political organisation in this region is a post-war phenomenon. The Act of 1919 enabled the Governor General in Council to declare the Lushai Hills as 'Backward Area' (on 3rd January, 1921). The Government of India Act 1935, put this district under 'Excluded Area' which was excluded from the jurisdiction of popular ministry of Assam. This arrangement adversely affected the early growth of political activity in the Lushai Hills District. The British did it intentionally to isolate the Hill people from the Plain people.


who were moving with the mainstream of National life. In fact, the spread of universal franchise for all elections (Lok Sabha, Assembly and District Council) paved the way for popular participation in the remotest village of the country located either in the Hill region or the desert.

The regional political parties thus sprang up after independence to articulate the aspirations of the Hill people and the democratic process started penetrating the society. Such democratic process created political differentiation between the social groups and political parties.

**Background and Development of Political Parties:**

In a modern democratic society the political parties have been acknowledged as a wider as well as the least expensive platform to ventilate grievances and easiest method to articulate feelings and aspirations of the masses. In Mizoram too, the political parties (although mostly regional and clan-based) have achieved the goal for which it originated. Before going into details about various political parties in Mizoram parties in Mizoram it would be better to analyse the background and development of the political parties in Mizoram.

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12. Ibid. p. 4.
The first political activities started in 1925 when a section of Mizos under Telala of Ralte community sought permission to take part in politics of Assam. This was contrary to the provision of Government of India Act 1935. There was no representation from the district in the Assam Assembly which was resented by a section of educated and politically conscious group of Mizos. The British did not like that the Mizo should be involved in Indian politics and wanted to keep them away from the political waves surging inside the country and thereby kept these areas as primitive as possible. But the educated Mizos were keeping watch on day to day happenings in India which was not liked by the British. Commoners also voiced their demands for representation in the Provincial Assembly of Assam in 1937 but the movement was suppressed. The British authority did not allow any political organisation till 1935. But the surging aspirations of the Mizo people forced them to organise a political party which marks the beginning of new political life in Mizoram.

1. Mizo Union (M.U).

This is the oldest regional party in Mizoram born on April 9, 1946 under the leadership of R. Vanlampa (Ralte).

Laluaia and Brangaia. The main cause of its emergence was the resentment against the despotic rule of the Mizo Chiefs. Secondly, the British administrator's reluctance to allow the Mizos to take part in political activities. In the beginning the party was named as 'Mizo common peoples union'. These leaders later on realised that the chiefs should be assured to join the party but chiefs later on objected that they were not commoners. Accordingly, Vanalawma changed the name of the party. In order to honour the sentiments of the chiefs whose help was essential to consolidate the grass-root level base the new name was given as 'Mizo Union'. But even then, the chiefs did not join the party.

The important aims and objectives of the party were:

(i) To protect the Mizo identity.
(ii) To promote cordial relation between the chief and the commoners.
(iii) Integration of all Mizo living outside the the present boundary in a harmonious unit.
(iv) To improve the status of the women.
(v) To improve the standard of living of the Common

15. Mizo Union Memorandum, April 26, 1947(J.V. Hlunchurch and Political upward in Mizoram, 1985 Appendix-v).

(vi) To ventilate the grievances of the masses through constitutional methods.

(vii) To modernise and codify Mizo customary laws.

(viii) To enrich the Mizo language.

The aims and objectives of the political organisation highlighted the inherent potentialities of political values and their capability to participate in the political activities within Mizoram. Secondly, most of the party members were surcharged with sub-regional sentiment aiming to promote the sectional interest of the Mizos which transpired from the socio-political objectives of the party mentioned above.

The party made spade work in the rural areas and stimulated interest in the educated section of Mizos. When Bordoloi sub-committee visited Aizawl on April 17, 1947 the party submitted memorandum and reiterated its demand for independence. While a faction of the party desired to be associated with India for a period of ten years and thereafter they would decide their future. After independence the political scenario changed and the Lushai-Hill District was integrated with Assam. In 1950, with the introduction of the constitution, a new life began and first election of Assam Assembly took place in 1952. The district was allotted three seats which were captured by Mizo Union securing 75% of vote. The main plank was the abolition of the chieftainship.
2. **Tribal Union.**

The United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO's) President Lalmawia took initiative to organise a party in the name of the tribal union in 1950 in order to project the demand of a regional council for Pawi-Lakher region within the framework of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Its genesis began in 1947 when Saprawnga, a powerful Mizo leader paid visit to the area and encouraged them to demand either separate regional council or adequate representation in the District Council which was under the process of formation. The superintendent of Mizoram (erstwhile Lushai Hills District) also helped in the organisation of Paw-Lakher Tribal Council (PLTC) Thus, the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union was formed in 1948. The main aim of the party was to integrate the Pawi-Lakher tribes as one administrative Unit and to obtain a regional council for the tribes in order to preserve their customs, culture, dialect and ethnic identity. Their united efforts achieved the success and the regional council for Pawi-Lakher area was inserted in the Sixth Schedule.

3. **Mara Freedom Party (MFP).**

The Lakhers (Mara) felt that the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council is dominated by the advanced Pawi tribe. Hence, they...

wanted to organise a separate regional party for the upliftment of the Lakhers only. Thus, the party was virtually born as a reaction against dominance of Pawi in the Pawi-Lakher region. This is the common phenomenon in Mizoram. The Lushai always dominated the other tribes. Most of the chiefs were the Sailos of Lushai group who had powerful hold in the villages. Consequently, these differences laid the formation of the party.

The aims and objectives of the MFP was to secure a separate Lakher District Council for the development of the land and the people. It also aimed at uniting all the Lakhers into a single administrative unit for the sake of preserving distinct culture, tradition and customs and to promote 'Mara' dialect. This induced them to promote 'Lakherisation of politics' within Lakher land. 18


The Mizo integration party was formed in December, 1971 with the objective of uniting all the Mizos under a single administrative unit. Among the followers of the party were mostly the MNF rebels who had surrendered arms after general amnesty. This party was centering round a

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personality who exploited the discontented people on parochial sentiments. The party was without any socio-economic programme for the uplift of the masses. Finally, the party merged into the Mizo labour Party in 1972.


On the initiative of a splinter group of the Mizo Integration Council led by H. Kiautula, Lalzawta and others, the Mizo Labour party was formed in January, 1972 at Lunglei. The aim of the Party was to provide better life condition of the workers, peasants and weaker section of the society. The Party also opposed the status of Union Territory and supported the demand of Statehood within the framework of the constitution. It also aimed at ethnic unity and socio-economic programme. The party participated in 1972 election and secured 13.4% votes in Mizoram Assembly. The party finally merged into the Indian National Congress.


Like the CNF, the Kalai National Council was one man party. The man behind the party was Chhohmo, a Lakher supporter of L.Chinzah, the Chin leader. He was instigated by his master and formed the party in 1964. The members of the party were mostly the employees of the Lakher regional Council and were the Lakhers. The party was based on narrow consideration.
It was to weaken the unity of the lakhers so that it should not pose any trouble in future. The party did not establish its base in the area. So most of the members drifted towards Mara Freedom Party and finally the KNC became defunct.

7. **United Pang Peoples Party (UPPP).**

The Pangs living in midst of the pawis and Lakhers were also inspired by the educated section of the tribe to organise a clan-based party. Thus, the United Pang Peoples Party was formed on January 10, 1974 to promote the interest of the tribe. The Party was short-lived and could not survive long.

8. **Chakma Jatiya Parishad (CJP).**

The Chakmas are basically a distinct tribe and differed from the Mizos culturally and traditionally. They are treated as outsiders or refugee settlers. Being aggrieved from such feeling, the Chakmas formed a party of their own in order to preserve their separate ethnic, cultural and religious identity.

9. **Mizo National Union (MNJ).**

The Mizo National Union was born as a reaction to the development leading to grant of Union Territory for
Mizoram under the leadership of Bawichhuaka and C. Pahliva, powerful members of Mizo Union who left the party on disagreement with Saprawnga and Chalchhonga. The party aimed at achieving full-fledged State-hood for Mizoram and integration of all Mizo speaking population into the administrative unit. The party was without any socio-economic programme. So, it could not make any headway and finally it merged with Indian National Congress in 1970.


The Paite National Council is also a clan-based party with its headquarters at Churachandpur (Manipur) to promote the interest of Paite Tribe located in the vicinity of Saibilal range and its surrounding areas in the north eastern part of Mizo Hills. The party aimed at uniting the Paite tribe scattered both inside Mizoram and the neighbouring Manipur State.


The formation of the Mara Freedom Party led sharp reaction on the inter-ethnic relationship and sharp cleavage between Pawi and Lekhers surfaced. Consequently, the Pawis formed a party of their own in 1965. The primary aim was to re-unite the Pawis beyond the boundary of India. In other
words the party wanted to integrate all Chins (Pawis) of India and Burma. It also aimed to check the advancing influence of MNF in the Pawi dominated area which posed a great threat to Pawi. The man behind the party was L. Chingah who was chief executive member of the Pawi-Lekher Regional Council.

12. **Mizo Democratic Party (MDP)**.

This party was formed by the young educated Mizos living outside Mizoram (Shillong) on December 9, 1969. The main objective of the party was to integrate the Mizo Hills District with Meghalaya for better and faster economic development of the territory. The Party leaders encouraged the Mizo people to join the party but the response was very poor and embarrassing.

13. **Peoples Conference (PC)**

The excessive harassment of the Mizos by the security force in Mizoram during the insurgency gave birth to a non-political organisation named 'Human Rights Committee' in Aizawl with a view to protecting the freedom of the Mizos which had been disturbed by the atrocities of the

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Security forces. The man behind the organisation was Brig. T. Sailo (Retd.) who subsequently, formed a party in the name of the Peoples Conference on April 17, 1975. The basic aim of the party was a peaceful settlement of the Mizo problems within the framework of the Indian Constitution and to integrate all Mizo inhabited area into one unit. It also aimed for preserving and protecting the Mizo culture and language and finally to eradicate mass poverty by undertaking economic development programme in rural areas. The party aroused regional sentiment and good response from the people came. The party came to power in 1978.

14. **Mizo Janata Party (MJP).**

Some opportunists and disgruntled politicians taking the advantage of the Janata Government in the Centre formed the Janata Party in Mizoram in March, 1977. The party contested in 1978 and secured only two seats out of total thirty six and secured 15.35% votes only. The fall of the Janata Ministry in the Centre in April, 1982, the party met similar fate.

15. **Mizo Convention (MC)**

On 3rd April, 1982 three political parties i.e. P.U.C and Mizoram Democratic Front dissolved themselves
and formed a new party called Mizo Convention. But the party did not last long. When the MNF party came over ground the Mizo Convention party merged into it.


The great Mautum (Famine) in 1959 was a turning point in the history of Mizoram. A voluntary organisation named Mizo National Famine Front (MNF) came into being. After the famine was over, the front was converted into a political organisation named Mizo National Front (MNF). Laldenga was the first president of the Party.

The Party adopted catchy slogans in order to attract the attention of the common Mizos. These were:

1. The Mizos are Mongoloid and ethnically different from the Indian. The British kept the Mizo Hills District separate.

2. More foreign aids for economic development would flow to this country (Mizos) than India.

3. Independence would bring more prosperity to the Mizos.

4. Exploitation of the natural resources would enrich Mizo people.

(v) The settlement of Chakmas uprooted from East Pakistan in Mizoram is intentionally done to upset the Unity of the Mizos.

(vi) The Christianity is ruthlessly being suppressed by the Hindu dominated India.

The emotional appeal in the name of 'independence', sovereign, hatred towards Indians attracted the young Mizos to join MNF party. Consequently, many unemployed youths and exservicemen joined the party. The party became popular and contested District Council election but lost the battle. However, in the Bye-election of Assam Legislative Assembly in 1963 the party candidates were successful. Subsequently, the party established strong footing in Mizoram and launched revolt in 1966.

17. Indian National Congress (INC).

The regional consideration and parochial feeling did not allow the National political parties to fix their footing in Mizoram. This is also due to the fact that National parties concentrated their activities in plain areas. It was as late as 1961 when the Indian National Congress established a branch in Mizoram, but the unit of the INC met a rough weather. The common people in
Mizoram regarded this organisation as the organisation of outsiders (Vais) Mizos have common notion that the Indians are outsiders. The popularity of the Mizo Union and the MNF did not allow the INC to stabilize its footing in Mizoram. Further, the language policy of Assam Government (1960) had adverse impact on Mizos population. As a result the Congress party suffered a major setback in Assembly election in 1962 and 1963 (Bye-election). However, the party became popular after the formation of the Union Territory in 1972 and became stronger after the merger of Mizo Union in the party.

From the above discussions it is crystal clear that most of the political parties in Mizoram are short-lived with infant mortality. Secondly, the regional issues and the parochial sentiments have been used as raw materials by the parties. The economic programme is also narrow and confined to the region only. The growth of the regional parties in Mizoram is also attributed to geographical factors (physiography and locational factor) which kept the people isolated from the mainstream of national life. This physiographic elements retarded the socio-economic advancement. This resulted into mass frustration which

crept into insurgency. This insurgency paved the way for mushroom growth of regional parties in Mizoram (after 1960). These political parties stimulated interest among the people to participate in political activities.

**Electoral Behaviour.**

It is true that political activities and mass participation in the decision-making process was completely dormant in Mizoram during Pre-Independence days. But with the dawn of independence and introduction of the new constitution in 1950, the road to people's participation at different levels was opened in Mizoram. The universal franchise right was also applied in Mizoram. The first election of Assam Legislative Assembly was held in 1952. Three members were elected from Mizoram. Subsequently, the election of the members of the District Council and Regional Council as per the provision of Sixth Schedule was held in Mizoram and the same electorate participated in the election. This enabled the people to participate in the election as well as express their views on all political issues.

With the creation of Mizoram as a Union Territory in 1972 the political participation of the people was extended both vertically and horizontally. The entire
territory in Mizoram was divided into 30 constituencies. The number was further extended to forty after attaining statehood. Out of 40 seats 38 was reserved for S.T and two were opened for general (Non-tribal). The number of electorates is of ascending order beginning from 1952 (Table 32).

**Table - 32**

**Number of Electorates (Male and Female): 1952-84**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>No. of Electors</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>196000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1,21,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>196000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1,08,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>266000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1,26,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>266000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1,26,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>332000</td>
<td>76,315</td>
<td>80,533</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,56,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>400000</td>
<td>1,11,076</td>
<td>1,11,150</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,22,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>400000</td>
<td>1,22,457</td>
<td>1,21,096</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,43,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>49000</td>
<td>1,27,991</td>
<td>1,28,539</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,56,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>49000</td>
<td>1,68,570</td>
<td>1,65,163</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,33,733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chief Electoral Officer, Aizawl, Mizoram
Also see. I.V.Lao 1987, A Century of Govt and Politics of North-East India vol.III Mizoram, p.111.

23. Collected from Election Office, Aizawl, Mizoram.
This indicates that there is marginal increase in the number of electorate from the preceding elections. Secondly, the female voters are more or less equal to their male counterparts. It has been observed that in some of the constituencies the female voters exceed male voters.24

Table - 33

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>No. of male voters</th>
<th>No. of female voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chhimtuipui</td>
<td>Tuipang</td>
<td>3370</td>
<td>3565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Sangau</td>
<td>3303</td>
<td>3321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunglei</td>
<td>Hnathinal</td>
<td>3451</td>
<td>3486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aizawl</td>
<td>N. Vanlaiphai</td>
<td>3177</td>
<td>3325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Champai</td>
<td>5446</td>
<td>5756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Khawzawl</td>
<td>3422</td>
<td>3489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Suangphilawn</td>
<td>3123</td>
<td>3135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Thus, it seems that female education and their political participation are equal to their male counterparts. But their representation in the decision making body (Assembly or District Council) is inadequate.

As regards the public response to the election, participation marked a great enthusiasm which is evident from the percentage of poll in an average constituency. Despite natural hazards the voters had to walk on foot for several miles, the response was exceedingly good. The turnout of voters varied between 63.74% in Aizawl Bart-I Assembly constituency and 86.55% in Saitual Assembly constituency. The overall percentage of voters during the assembly election of 1987 was 72.63%. The average number of voters in Mizoram in each polling station is less than 500. This is due to low density of population and geographical constraints.

The political participation in Mizoram is very significant. It reflects the true character of ideal democracy which is found nowhere in India. It is reflected through the conduct of free and fair election without any case of impersonation, false voting, booth capturing, intimidation or class or Caste/Clan conflict.

which are rampant in the rest of the country. Rarely the case of imposition upon minority group by majority has been noticed. Even a father or his sons or daughters are free to exercise their franchise according to their conscience. The whole political atmosphere during election time in Mizoram is free from tension or group rivalry. Election campaign, mass meeting political demonstration and propaganda, and street corners meetings are held on conventional lines without any disturbance. Both National and regional parties enter into the election fray. The performance of the parties during election indicates the people’s faith in their ideologies and their programmes. They are not misled by or bribed by the political parties. However, the huge money has been pumped into the remote constituency by the parties (INC., P.C., M.N.F.,) to woo voters.

The sixth general election in Mizoram (1989) depicts the growth of clan-based communal group participation in the election. The Hmar Peoples Conference and the Chamka Jatiya Parishad have appeared on political horizon of Mizoram and started projecting their demands in various forms. This has allowed a feeling of their separate identity. Although the defeated badly, they have managed to get the support of 1804 and 975 voters respectively.  

27. Collected from Election Office, Aizawl, Mizoram.
The political participation is easy everywhere through the political parties either national or regional which stimulated interest among the electorates by drawing attention towards national, local, or regional issues (Table-34). During the election the political parties promised to strive for the reunification of Mizo inhabited areas of India, Burma and Bangladesh. Though it has emotional appeal to allure all the inhabitants for immediate gain in the election, the demand is practically redundant, secondly each party in Mizoram including Congress party emphasized upon the Christian identity or the Mizo which was against the secular principle. Even the Indian National Congress party had to adjust with the local situation against their secular ideology.

Table- 34
1989 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Seat contested</th>
<th>Seat captured</th>
<th>P.C of Pol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian national Cong.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>54.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.N.F.(Lal Denga)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.N.F.(D)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizo National Union</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakma Jatiya Parishad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( 975 votes only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmar P.C.(1804 votes only)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Office, Aizawl, Mizoram.

The political parties in general highlight the programme of socio-economic development of Mizoram. Thus the manifesto of the political parties are purely regional with national outlook, and The M.N.F. took credit of peace accord, criticised publically during the election campaign that the Congress Party is the party of 'vais' (Non-Mizos) although Congress members in Mizoram are mostly Mizos.

Political participation does not end with the participation in election either as voter or a candidate. It is also concerned with erecting the Government and operating the Government machinery in different capacities. Since 1972, political participation by the Mizo people has become smooth. The first Ministry led by Ch.Chhunga included representatives of Lushi, Páí and Lakher Sub-tribe. The participation of local tribes has already been discussed in chapter VII (Political Institution). Subsequent ministries followed the same principle.

In this connection it would not be out of place to mention the role of opposition members either belonging to the Congress or the MNF or PC. They usually pointed out the drawbacks of the ruling party through debates, discussion, or raising questions during zero hour. In Mizoram the opposition members discharged their duties with high appreciation and

co-operated the Government in dignified manner. No rowdy situation developed at any time in the house which compelled the speaker to adjourn the house or call the marshal to remove any member from the house for his misconduct. Political stability is inter-twined with the stability in economy. The quality of efficiency of the political Institutions and the quality of political life of people depend upon the economic viability of the state. Adversely too, the non-viable state cast gloomily picture upon the growth and expansion and function of the political life of the people. The society which is groaning under poverty can not think of higher political organisation and its multiple functioning.

So far as Mizoram is concerned, its economic foundation is weak and deplorable. The agro-economic backwardness due to poor soil and rugged topography can not sustain five million mouths. Nearly 4,000 metric tonnes of rice is annually imported from outside Mizoram besides other essential commodities like oil, pulse, sugar and luxury goods are brought from outside state. The infrastructure is in a bad shape. Most of the regions of south-west Mizoram is inaccessible. The Chakma and Riang areas are not connected with road communication. Industrially also, Mizoram is a most backward state. Even a medium or small scale industries are economically non-viable. The cost of
production is high as such the industry has no bright prospect in the competitive market. The per capita income is poor and the price index is steadily on increase.

Under such economic hardship the political participation of the Mizo is mostly localised without any interests to look into external matters. The regionalism or sub-nationalism get priority at every stage. The local institutions like District Council or Regional Council functioned in regional parameters. The mass poverty of the people spares little time for political participation except a handful political elites who energises the dormant spirit of the common people.
Mizo Perception

Chakma Vs. Mizo.

The Chakmas as referred in Chapter III belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of people. They have their distinct culture. They are Buddhist, and speak a dialect (Chakma dialect) which is the corrupt form of Bengali. Over the years and their cultural interaction with the people of other races they have lost much of their originality. Even then they are very near to South Eastern Bengali, both culturally and traditionally which differ from the Mizo culture in all respects. The Chakmas are at present inhabiting the most inaccessible hilly area of South West Mizoram. (map) They also occupy area across the border in the Chhitagong Hill Tracts. All along the Western border of Mizoram and the Eastern border of Tripura State are inhabited by the Chakmas. Thus their habitation has geo-political significance, as Chakma inhabited area covers India, Bangladesh and Burma. The Chakma problem has become more acute no-a-says. Its root, in fact, lies in the partition of India in 1947 when the predominantly Chakma inhabited area of Chhitagong Hill Tracts (with 90% population) were transferred to Pakistan. This was a great geo-political blunder for which the posterity would not excuse the National leaders for their lack of farsightedness. As a result, the Chakmas had to cross the Indian border of Mizoram.

and Tripura where their kith and kin used to inhabit earlier and they were branded since then as refugees, foreigners and trespassers (Takam)*.  

Since then, remarkable political vicissitudes have occurred across political horizon of Mizoram. Before insurgency, they were the worshiper of Union of Government and maintained a neutral policy during the insurgency. The Lushais were hostile to the Government of Assam and Government of India. Hence, these Chakmas were not trusted by the Mizos. These stranded their social relationship. In the eyes of Mizos, Chakmas are vias (Takum in Mizo), although they have been living in that state from generations. They argue that ethnically, culturally and linguistically they are quite different from us and hence they maintain distance from them.

After the birth of the Union Territory of Mizoram, 1972 there was conspicuous change in the perception of the Chakmas. While the negotiation of Mizo leaders with the Central Government was in progress and the prospect of demand of Union Territory became a foregone conclusion, the Chakmas made representation to the Central Government in December, 1971 for a District Council for the socio-economic uplift of the Chakma tribe and had also

*Takam (an object to be strangulated or butchcred) (in Mizo)
Taikuk (for Riangs) - means one who lives nearby water.*
pressed for a Union Territory comprising all contiguous Chakmas inhabited areas.

The genesis of the present demand might be traced into the neglect of Pawi-Lekher (Chakma also included). Regional Council by the successive Government of Mizoram. The continued neglect and paucity of fund because of the traditional bitterness of the State Government towards the minority tribals, especially the Chakmas, is the root cause of change in the attitude of the Chakma people towards the State Government controlled by the majority tribe (Lusei).

The present Chakma District Council (CDC) covers the Chakma population of 27,000 heads only and the rest 35,000 are left out. They are outside the jurisdiction of the Chakma District Council. This has aroused a feeling of neglect of the Chakma tribe and thus are forced to uphold their separate entity. Their perception and political behaviour are clear. They are a neglected lot of the State of Mizoram which can be gauged from the fact that the Chakma area is not having better communication (no black toped road in the Chakma areas). The shortest road linking Kamlanagar, C.D.C. headquarters is a three days journey on foot from the point of Lunglei-Demagiri metalled road. The Chakma area with in the District Council is

32. The Telegraph, Calcutta, March 24, 1987 (article of Sekhar Dutta- (District Council likely become major issue in Mizoram).
33. Ibid.
without electricity or any health centre. One would be surprised to know that the first primary School, started in 1959, is followed by first M.E. School, (1972) and High School in 1979. Thus the area is having 1% literacy. At present there are 42 Primary Schools and 2 High Schools but no College in the whole District Council area. There are only 12 graduates followed by 18 P.U. passed and 138 Matriculates out of total 60,000 Chakmas in Mizoram. Although the literacy p.c. is very high in Mizo society but the p.c. is very low in Chakma areas due to religious stigma. The Christianity spread education in Mizo society and converted them into Christianity but the same Missionary did not penetrate in the Chakma area. Consequently, the Chakmas remained educationally backward tribe.

The Mizos, in general, are apathetic towards the Chakmas who are socially, traditionally, culturally or otherwise linked with the mainstream of National life. Consequently, they are the eye-sore in Mizoram.

The Chintuipui district head quarters, Saiha lies in the Lakher District Council area. The District level offices of all Departments are concentrated in Saiha which is geographically far away from the Chakma inhabited area. The fruit of all technical departments is swallowed by the Lakher and Poi tribes. Nearly 60% of the grants of the
district is utilised for the Lakhers followed by another 30% to the Pois living a small P.C. for the Chakmas, whose population is more than double of these tribes. Consequently, there is a deep seated ill-feeling in the Chakma people against the Mizoram Government.

Politically, five seats have been allotted to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly from Chhimtuipui District. Out of 5 seats, 2 seats have been allotted to the Lakhers, two to the Pois and only 1 to the Chakmas whose population is higher than the other two. This has added to their resentment against the Government.

The Chakmas now demand the consolidation of all Chakma inhabited areas of Lunglei and Aizawl District within Mizoram under the jurisdiction of Chakma District Council, so that they can take all possible measures for socio-economic uplift. Secondly, for better advancement they are contemplating to demand a Union Territory, so that the Government of India may take special care for their socio-economic advancement. The Mizos, on the other hand, are afraid of their escalating population due to increasing infiltration in Mizoram along Bangladesh

34. Researcher's interview with Nilmoni Chakma and Nil Baran Chakma, Leader of the Chakma Jatiya Parishad.

35. Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister on July 15, 1990 by Chakma Jatiya Parishad. (also) Interview with educated youth of Chakma Community at Kamalanagar.
- Mizoram border. Thus a strip of land along the border has been made into a Chakma District Council to accommodate the foreign National coming from Chhitagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The Mizo leaders headed by the Congress (I) Chief Lalthanhawla and his predecessors Brig.T. Sailo (Rtd.) repeatedly remarked that the area round Demagiri is increasingly inhabited by the Chakmas from C.H.T. of Bangladesh and after the election his first task would be to detect and deport the Chakmas. Refuting the general Mizo allegation of infiltration from neighbouring Bangladesh, the Chakma leaders pointed out that "the Demagiri area included in Western Mizoram following the amalgamation of the North and South Lushai hills by the British as far back as 1893 for administrative convenience had originally been a Chakma inhabited area of the Chhitagong hill tracts. Later on, the boundaries were revised and a strip on the East including Demagiri with a population of 1,500 was transferred to Lusei Hills District".

Thus, there is a mass feeling among the simple and docile Chakmas that they are neglected and shall remain so unless they rise to the occasion and press their demand for the recognition of identity and of regional autonomy in form of a Union Territory.

As referred to earlier in Chapter III, it has been stated that the Pois from a small tribe confined to Sangau and Lawngtlai C. D. Blocks of Chhintuipui District in Mizoram. The population is estimated to be over 30,000. As a reaction against the regional politics of the Lakhers and the Luse, the Poi elites led by L. Chinzah, formed a clan-based party, viz., the Chin National Front in 1965 in order to unite all the Pois living in different pockets of Mizoram and also the neighbouring areas of Burma.

The Pois have also a wide political vision. They were very critical of the M.N.F. role in the Poi inhabited area. Internally the Pois were not happy with the Mizos and their dominance in internal activities particularly the Pawi-Lakhar

39. Prasad, n.16 pp. 204-205.
Regional Council. L. Chinzah, the chief executive member of the Council, wrote in 1967 that the M.N. F only earned hatred in P.L.R. Apart from this, the Pois have feeling of being cornered by the Lusei. It is true that they are not advanced educationally and politically like the Lusei and its ruling clan the Sailos, who were famous chiefs. But the Pois are very conscious of their culture, language and traditions, and they have enthusiastically evinced interest to promote their language and culture. They are also proud of their distinct identity. Whenever they are called "Mizos" they react sharply and say "No we are Pois". The same is the case with the Lakhers who never brand themselves as 'Mizos'. Of course, they call themselves as Mizo when they are at Aizawl and feel shy to call themselves as Poi. So they have psychological fear of being dominated by the Lusei. Hence, there is an under feeling of hatred against the Luseis for being looked down upon them. This feeling is increasing with the crystallisation of ever-ground politics in Mizoram where the mechanism of political power is controlled by the Luseis, and the financial resources are also utilised for their benefits.

Pois Outside Mizoram.

Like other tribes of the Mizos, Pois are also scattered outside Mizoram. There is a sizable population of Pois

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41. Researcher's interview with Officers of Poi Tribe.
(Kukis) in Bangladesh who inhabit in Chittagong Hill Tracts which is claimed to be the motherland of Lais (Pawis) since the time immemorial. The partition of India caused a barrier to the efforts of ethnic unity among the Pawis Community. Some of them were forced to be in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and some in Burma. But now there is an emerging movement to unite them together within a compact geographical domain. A memorandum on behalf of the Pawis (led by L. Damngama) was given to the Prime Minister of India on 11.02.88 stating therein that the tribal King named Vanhnuaitlirh of Rengtlang had collected land tax from the people living between Satikang river near Chittagong to Cox's Bazar (i.e. Bay of Bengal).

after the death of Vanhnuaitlirha his son Liankung became the king at Bandarban village. He also collected the land taxes upto Bay of Bengal from Chittagong to Cox Bazar. After the death of Liankung, we (Hill tract tribal) paid taxes to Zahan, the King of Lawngtlai upto February, 1947. After Independence in 1947 we (Pawis) were divided into India, Burma and East Pakistan (Bangladesh).

During the Bangladesh liberation, assurances were made by the leaders particularly Muzibur Rahman that the hill tract tribal could choose India or Bangladesh but the assurance were not fulfilled and the Pawis living there had to remain as slaves in Bangladesh. There are some other tribes along with the Pawis whose number is less. They are Bawm, Brun, Moak-Maria etc.

42. Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister by Damngama on behalf of Sea Wind Party on 11.2.89 Sunday Weekly, June 3, 1989.
These people have expressed their desire to live together in India and want to retain their lost sea-shore (i.e. between Satikang river near Chitagong to Cox bazar port) liberating their motherland. These people have formed a party named Sea Wind with a view to liberating Poiland lying in Bangladesh. A National Volunteer Force (Hill Tract Tribal Freedom Liberation Organisation - HTPLO have also been raised.

Hmar's Perception

Since the days of early migration of the Mizo tribes, there had been inter-tribal feuds and head-hunting was the normal phenomenon which was considered as the sign of bravery. The earlier tribes which settled in the eastern part of the present Mizoram, were later on driven out by the successive waves of migrants (Lusei). The earlier tribes which were driven out and later on settled in the northern fringe of the present Mizoram or the neighbouring Cachar district of Assam or Manipur, were the Hmars and the Thados. As discussed in Chapter III the Hmars and the Thado belong to Kuki-Chin ethnic stock of Tibeto-Burma race. They are at present living in the outer fringe of Mizoram and in neighbouring area of Assam (Cachar) and Manipur. These Hmar were in regular contact with the plain people of Cachar or Manipur.

The Hmars inhabit the northern region of Mizoram, particularly in northern Blocks of Aizawl district whose
population is 13,102 (81 census). It shows that Hmars were branded as Mizo in general by subsequent census operation and the Hmar did not object to it. These Hmars, apart from its geographical area of Mizoram also inhabit in the neighbouring villages of Manipur and Cachar (see Map 16) in compact area, North Cachar District of Assam, Tripura and North Western part of Burma. (The 1.5 lakh strong community is scattered in contiguous areas of Manipur, Assam (Cachar district, North Cachar). Fulertal is principal centre of the Hmars in Cachar (map 16).

The Hmars played vital role in the early political activities of earstwhile Lushai Hills District politics. They travelled widely and were in contact with the educated people of the plains area. In the Mizo Union Council meeting of 1946, Banichuaka became Secretary. He was a Hmar. Another Pachhunga played a significant role in organising public meetings and giving a shape to the Mizo Union. Both were the destiny makers of Mizoram before the independence.

After independence the political situation was changed. The Hmars were cornered and the fruit of independence was

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43. According to Census of 1901 Hmar population was 10411 but reduced to 3108 in 1961 and 4524 in 1971.
MIZORAM
PROPOSED AREA FOR HMAR AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT

40 0 40KM

AIZAWL DISTRICT
LUNGEI DISTRICT
CHHIMTUJIPUI DISTRICT

HMAR AREA

Map No 16
mostly shared by other Mizo Tribes (particularly Lushai). This created schism in the well-knit Mizo society. After the formation of U.T. and subsequently, the attainment of statehood, the seat of power was captured mostly by the Lusei and other tribes. This is the main reason which caused ill-feeling between the Hmars and other Mizo clans. After the attainment of statehood, the political scenario changed, and now the clan-based politics raised their ugly heads. Every tribe started politicking in their own way which was likely to threaten the Mizo solidarity and unity. The Hmar politics is the most important developed in Mizoram, which was a great geopolitical significance due to its strategic location. This has escalated the ethnic tension which may threaten the stability of the state.

A clearly perceptible unrest among the Hmar community has been surfaced these days. The Hmar youths, out of their growing frustration have developed a separatist tendency. They have recently formed the Hmar People Convention (HPC) and placed the community's demand for an autonomous region comprising the Hmar inhabited area in Manipur, Mizoram and Cachar (see map ). The HPC has attracted a large number of

youths and a group of 50 volunteers were undergoing physical and political training at New Vervek, a Mizo village adjoining Cachar. The Hmar militants are demanding an autonomous homeland for minority ethnic community in north Mizoram. They have come down to war path. The Hmar people Convention (HPC) and the Hmar volunteer Cell (HVC) observed 120 hrs. band in support of their demand. The Mizoram Government chased the militants but easy hide outs in S.W. Manipur in the vicinity of Chaurachandpur area. The militants have a plan of some subversive actions in Mizoram as transpires from the plan found in possession of young Hmar leader Leichhung Hmar. The Hmar also expressed desire to establish an identity separate from that of Mizo. Their demands also include an autonomous district dominated council in Hmar area of North Mizoram under 6th schedule. The HPC adopted agitational path for its demand of district council status and had threatened to wage a 'civil war against the Mizoram government, which took regerous steps to lynch innocent Hmars'. Mr. S. Khuma, the publicity Secretary of H.P.C reiterated that the Mizoram police is responsible

47. The Telegraph, Calcutta, Jan., 4, 1990
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. The Telegraph, Calcutta, April 8, 1990.
for the death of Vanlalliana in police custody on March 14, 1990 although the police claimed that Vanlalliana, an Hmar activist committed suicide.

The H.P.C. had sent a top-level team to New Delhi to meet National Front Government to press for their demand of autonomous District Council for the Hmars under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The delegation was sent on the initiative of Hrangchal, a Hmar from Manipur, who is member of Manipur Legislative Assembly from Tipaimukh constituency (Hmar dominated area of SW Manipur). Tipaimukh and nearby Thenlon area of Manipur are the Hmar majority area where H.P.C. leaders and nearly 200 activist have found the sanctuaty facilities.

Nearly 6000 Hmar residents of Fulertal, a foothill village (30 miles from Silchar) are also aggrieved of the Assam Government’s alleged dithering in implementing an order issued by its former Chief Secretary, Ramesh Chandra, on December 24, 1982, giving the Hmars in Cachar, the Schedule Tribe status. This feeling was expressed by L.T. Buhril, a member of Silchar Mohakuma Parishad from Fulertal. He also expressed, "Hmars are being deprived of much economic, educational and employment benefits accruing to a Scheduled Tribe."  

51. The Telegraph, Calcutta, April 8, 1990.
The H.P.C. did not deviate from the agitational path and gave a 10-days blockade of Silchar-Aizawl National Highway (54) to press their demand for an Autonomous Hill District Council comprising Hmar dominated area of North Mizoram in close proximity to Cachar border in Assam. Moreover, firebrand Hmar youth, armed with weapons also planned the destruction of vital installations like bridges, culverts and other subversive activities. These activists have taken to torturous hilly paths through Tipaimukh to evade confrontation with Assam or Mizoram police.

The Mizoram Government deployed three Armed Police companies along N.H. 54 near Vairengte to stop the entry of Hmar and thwart the blockade. The militant Hmars are trained in warfare which is being given to the Hmars youth in wooded area on the trijunction of Manipur, Mizoram and Assam. The Government of Mizoram is aware that H.P.C is in a position to establish a nexus with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). The deep and inaccessible jungles of Cachar as a safe passage for assault in Mizoram and retreat to Manipur. In course of road blockade the Hmar

54. Ibid,
militants clashed with Mizoram police in Maniarkhal border village of Cachar and in which two Hmar extremist and a Sub-Inspector of Police were killed.

The rebel outfit of Hmar has been encouraged by Thanglein Khuma a Hmar elder close to former Chief Minister of MNF leader Laldenga. H.P.C President J.H.Jhanzam, now in Manipur is listed as a moderate leader of Chaurachandpur district of Manipur has been organising the Hmars for armed struggle to strike to Mizoram Government for autonomous District Council.

The Hmar National Union (HNU) an association of 20,000 Hmars scattered in Barak Valley and North Cachar met at Fulrtal on June 28, 1989 under the president of T.L.Vuriel which was attended by the representatives of Cachar, Karimganj, North Cachar Hills and Manipur who expressed their support to H.P.C. in their struggle.

The Government of Mizoram has ruled out the possibilities of conceding to the demand for autonomy but expressed his willingness to sort out the genuine grievances of the Hmars. Lalthanhawla, the Chief Minister of Mizoram while

55. Ibid.
rejecting the Hmar demand for a district-level autonomous pointed out that the Hmars except in one village have no majority in North Mizoram. Thanzam, the H.P.C. president, on the otherhand reacted that the State Government has judged the census figures to manipulate the Lushai majority in North Mizoram in a bid to forestall the Hmar claim for five blocks (comprising 13 Hmar villages) in North Mizoram into an autonomous district.

Five H.P.C. volunteers who were later identified as Leichung Hmar, Thansal Hmar, Langlakta Hmar, Lalthungsen Hmar and Lalramlion Hmar were arrested at Lalpani on Cachar-Manipur border by a joint raid conducted by Assam Police and village Defence Party of the locality on September 13, 1989. From the interrogation of the arrested persons it appeared that the militants were receiving training under an Ex-Indian Army Major Zuale. The H.P.C. activists had to shift from Mankachar village under Darilawn P.S in Mizoram.

The Hmar rebels adopted a tactical move from Kuklan Hmar village in the North Cachar Hills near Cachar border to the hilly tracts and dense woods of Bhuban Hills Bashakhal to reach Lalpani. The rebels have been recruited to H.P.C. quite recently and have been trained in handling weapons.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Ibić.
The Mizoram Government is willing to have a dialogue with the H.P.C. on the autonomous question provided its members surrender the arms and ammunition and give up violence before any meaningful talk. The Hmar students Union (HSU) are also active now-a-days to stimulate interest among the students on the Hmar problem.

Whatever may be the pros and cons, on the Hmar agitation and its demand for autonomy, it is clear beyond doubt that the Mizo homogeneity is a myth now. The question of identity of more than one lakh strong Hmar may fuel similar urges among the Lakhers and Pawis who are other minority tribes among the Mizos (a genetic name for a conglomeration of different linguistic Tribes belonging to Kuki-Chin ethnic family.)
The demarcation of the boundary of the erstwhile Lushai Hills district (now Mizoram) was made by the British for their own convenience and strategy. Consequently, the demographic structure of the Mizo tribes underwent changes. The Mizos, who were on the outskirt of the demarcated boundary came under the administrative jurisdiction of different states (of either in Burma or in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The educated Mizo populace and leaders of different political outfits raised their voice from time to time to amalgamate the entire Mizo inhabited area into one administrative unit. This is but a natural corollary. It is also said to be the reflection of ethnic chauvinism.

Brig. T. Sailo (Retd.), former Chief Minister of Mizoram and founder President of the Peoples Conference, a regional political organisation in Mizoram has demanded the amalgamation of all the Mizo inhabited contiguous areas in India, Burma and Bangladesh within the Indian Union. The areas brought under the proposed land of Mizos are:

1. Mizoram (area 21087 Sq. Km. with population of nearly 5 lakhs.
2. Lakhipur area in east Cachar district of Assam (area 50 Sq. Km. with population of 25 thousand).


4. Chin Hills area in Burma in Western Burma adjoining eastern Mizoram (area 35,000 sq. miles with a population of about 9 Lakhs).

5. Chittagong Hills track in Bangladesh adjoining Western Mizoram (area 300 sq. miles and population 5000).

6. Mizo inhabited areas of Manipur (Sadar hills, Tengou Pal and Churachandpur areas also to be brought under the proposed 'New State').

The Mizo leaders hold opinion that the splitting up of the Mizo area and their eventual parcelling out into different Indian as well the neighbouring country of Burma and the CHT (Bangladesh) is a British legacy. The Mongoloid Mizos who came in herds from south west China refer to chapter III came into the present habitat during 15th century and later on they migrated to the contiguous territorial limits because of the colonial policy of the British. They are known as Zomis in Burma while the British variously labelled them as
Lushais and Mizos in India and Kukis in Chittagong Hills tracts.

T. Gougin, the president of the Zomi National Congress (ZNC) with headquarters at Churachandpur (now Lanka) has also advocated the unification of all the Mizos into one administrative Unit. He has also emphasised the urgency of an insurrection by the Burmese Mizos for the amalgamation of their land with India. The Burmese Mizos have an organisation named Burmese Zomi liberation Front (B.Z.L.F.) under the leadership of its Bangkok exiled President Mangkhanpan. It is also planning for struggle to achieve the target. Gougin had a preliminary talk with Mangkhanpan and the former agreed to prefer the generic name of Zomi to the present Mizo to identify their community. The word Zomi carries the idea of common ethnic oneness of the Mizo speaking people.

The demand of T. Sailo and Gougin is similar in nature to the greater Mizoram demand of M.N.F. led by Laldenga who reiterated his demand during the peace talk with the centre in June, 1986 to which the Centre did not make any commitment. Gougin is hopeful of getting support for his mission of forming the Zogan state to carry out of the Chittagong Hills of Burma.

the northern part of the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh, Mizoram in India and other area inhabited by the Mizo Kuki in the North-East. While in Bangkok in July, 1989 Gougin met many rebel outfits and their leaders. He came in touch with Saw Reh Meh, the Karen National Front (KNF) and the President of the National Democratic Front of Burma (NDFB), a member organisation of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) which include 23 rebel outfits. But the negative reply given by Saw Reh Meh on the question that 'whether tribal guerilla groups in Burma want to join India'. However, Meh added that if the Chin Group decided to do so, the DAB would not object. Meh also requested Gougin to exercise his good offices to influence India to take interest in Burmese affair to pressurise Rangoon Government to open dialogue with DAB. Gougin addressed memorandum to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi about the decision of the Chin Hills people to secede from Burma (now Myanmar) and join India. 62

The Zomi reunification issue has come into limelight and political speculation is moving fastly under some leaders of Zomi Reunification Organisation (ZORO) or (ZOGAM) in Manipur and Mizoram which aims at reuniting all Zomi inhabited area

62. Memorandum by ZNLP to the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi.
in India, Burma and Bangladesh under one administrative set up. Unlike other tribal people of north east India who are blamed for secessionist sentiments the Zomi leaders only want to enlarge the territory of India.

Brig. T. Sailo whose party suffered badly in Mizoram Assembly election in 1987, showed a tactical move to gain popularity in Mizo society by advocating the Unification of Mizo tribes into one unit and on his initiative the first world Zomi convention was held on May 20, 1988 near Champhai closed to Mizoram's with Burma which was attended by several thousand delegates from Mizoram and other Mizo inhabited areas both inside and outside India. The net result of the convention was the formation of Zomi reunification Organisation (Zoro) which accommodated different political parties and individuals for their common goal (reunification of Mizo inhabited areas within India as well as outside into a larger zoram as a constituent state of the Indian Union.

**Mizo Youths in Tripura.**

Mizo youths and students are aware of the development inside Mizoram and outside activities sponsored by various organisations aiming at reunification of the Mizo/Zomi ethnic line. These youths have threatened militant agitation

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to press their demand for Mizo autonomy in the Zampui Hills of north Tripura were nearly 5000 Mizo population exists.

The Tripura Government reacted sharply and has rejected the demand for Mizo Regional Council at Jampui, very closed to Mizoram. The Jampui based Mizo convention is agitating quite sometime for the Mizo Regional Council. The protagonists of the Greater Mizoram from Aizawl want to exploit the sentiment of the people of Zampui. They demand for 'we shall prefer the merger of Jampui Hills with Mizoram unless our demand for Regional Council is fulfilled'.
Impact of Political Participation in Crisis Development.

It is true that the political participation in Mizoram is a post-Independence development. This was not permitted by the British during the colonial period. It started practically from 1946 when the first political party named Mizo Union was formed with an object to emancipate the common people from the chief's exploitation. The traditional institution of chieftainship was abolished in 1952. The discontented chiefs joined United Mizo Freedom Organization with an object to secede from India and join Burma. This aggravated crisis in Mizoram.

The degree of participation which was confined to the elites of upper-strata began to percolate downward and the common people started taking interest in political matters confronting the district. This transpires from the arguments placed before the Bordoloi Sub-Committee by the different cross-sections of Mizo society. The committee recommended the formation of District Council and Regional Council for Hill Tribes of Assam in order to manage their socio-economic affairs. The constitution of India incorporated sixth schedule containing therein the composition, powers and functions of these councils. This provision paved the way
for mass participation in the democratically constituted district council and Regional Council. The election of these councils and also Assam Legislative Assembly (3 members from Mizoram) enabled them to participate in the election and to handle the machinery of government in various capacities.

The impact of participation has also a negative effect. It promoted the dormant spirit of separatism and regionalism in naked form which increased the crisis. Their regional aspirations were multiplied and many regional parties subsequently, emerged.

The development during mid 1960's aggravated the crisis. This was in form of great famine (Mau tam) that caused great havoc in the Mizo Hills district. The district council failed to tackle the situation with corresponding failure of the Assam Government to send the relief measures. As a result, the Mizo national famine front (MNFF) composed of member of the Lushai traditional elite and others in the society, emerged to resolve the crisis. However, as the relief measures could not affect resolutions ease the problem, M.N.F.F. gradually transformed into an active political organization, (Mizo National Front) (M.N.F.).

One thing was apparent that geographical phenomena continued to impede relief measures, lack of effective accessibility...
condition and highly dispersed nature of settlement made the relief measures totally inadequate. Neither the District Council nor the state Government (as subsequent events indicated) were adequately given to tackle such problems. Moreover, the political differences between the District Council and the Assam State Government gradually worsened. The matter came to its height when the Assam Language Bill was passed and was implemented in stages. The M.N.F.F took the advantage of strained relation to reinforce and mobilise its position at its grass root level. This can also be said that given the condition under which the district and state administration functioned in the Mizo Hills (this condition can be identified as primarily isolation, inaccessibility and low level of economic development) the emergence of crisis particularly in the form of insurgency was perhaps an obvious conclusion. The latter aspect was clearly clarified when Mizo insurgency broke out in 1966.

The subsequent events after 1966 highlight the deep political cleavages that strengthened by geographical and economic factors. Although counter insurgency operation gradually restricted the scale, scope and content of insurgency, it made absolutely clear that geographical implication of politico-economic crisis faced by the district tend to be
be treated on priority basis. It was with this view that the administrative status of the Mizo Hills district was upgraded to the Union Territory Status.

The geographical factors particularly the location and physiography have influenced the formation of crisis (aggravating socio-economic crisis to insurgency situation). Mizoram is located at the periphery of the country and the peripheralization has been accentuated by the distance factor. Added to its location in the strategic area in the close proximity of Burma and Bangladesh (earlier east Pakistan) as they provided safe sanctuary for the discontented elements.

**Generalisation.**

During the Pre-Independence period political participation in Mizoram was conspicuously absent. This was due to the British Policy which excluded the Mizos from participation in the national body politics. Partly it is also due to geographical isolation, dispersed population and lack of adequate transport and communication infra-structure.

But the elites of the Mizo society who were conscious of regional and national development (largely located in Cachar District of Assam) formed first political party i.e. the Mizo
Union which aroused consciousness among the common people against the dictatorial rule of the chiefs. Chieftainship later on was abolished in 1952 and democratization of institution took place. The power of the chiefs were transferred the District Council (i.e. village Council). As a reaction (a rift between the chiefs and the commoners resulted into the formation of other political parties and the chiefs later on sided with MNF which was mainly responsible for insurgency.

Political participation changed their earlier perception which was narrow and confined to village level only. But participation through the modern institutions including political party promoted a sense of involvement in local as well as national activities. But the formation of political party in Mizoram was totally regional and clan-based which ultimately promoted sub-nationalism (even separatism).

Under these circumstances of political and economic stability, the MNF was able to mobilize the population in its favour. This enabled the activists of MNF to transform a relief organization into a full-fledged political organisation. This organization in order to admire its political objectives relegated the socio-economic aspect to the background. In other words it can also be said that the socio-economic
background was used to project the political objectives. Military means became the chief source of achieving the MNF's political objectives. Besides ideology of this organization gave a little or no importance to the distribution of geographical phenomenon. As a result in MNF was able to mobilize the people towards insurgency but it was not able to sustain it for long.

Mizoram is the land of innumerable tribes and sub-tribes each occupying a definite portion of territory inside Mizoram (see Map in chapter III). Their socio-political relations reflect geopolitical dimension. Apparently it seems that there is a harmonious relationship among the tribes and they aspire for common goal but in reality they are the victims of narrow parochial and clan based politics which dominated the Lushai landscape. There is growing resentments among the Tribes who are in the minority. It is the common beliefs of the non-Lushais (Pawis, Lakhers, Chakma and Hmar) that they are dominated by the Lushais in all socio-economic and political activity of Mizoram. Even the Chammas are treated as 'Takam' (an object to be killed). This feeling has forced them to express their desire for autonomy and are aspiring for greater freedom of participation.
Correspondingly, other elements of his Mizo society who were the moderates enough to resort to non-violence means began to propagate the need for creation and unification of greater Mizoram. Like the People's Conference (P.C.). This was the first time when serious efforts were contemplated to unify all Mizos inhabited area into one unit. Inadvertently, this increased a sense of hostility within the region particularly in the state of Manipur, Tripura and Assam as well as increased fears in Burma-Bangladesh (due to the location of contagious Mizo inhabited area in these countries).