

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENTIST

(A National Refereed Journal - UGC Approved)

Vol :X-1

Summer 2018

ISSN No: 2230 - 956X



Prof. Zokaitluangi

Editor in Chief

Dean, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University

&

Professor, Department of Psychology, Mizoram University

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)
TANHRIL, AIZAWL – 796004
MIZORAM, INDIA
e-mail : cssmzu@gmail.com**

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENTIST

(A National Refereed Journal)

Vol :X-1

Summer 2018

ISSN No: 2230 - 956X



**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
(A Central University)
TANHRIL, AIZAWL – 796004
MIZORAM, INDIA**

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENTIST

(A National Refereed Journal)

Vol :X-1

Summer 2018

ISSN No: 2230 - 956X



Prof. Zokaitluangi

Editor in Chief

Dean, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University

&

Professor, Department of Psychology, MZU

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)
TANHRIL, AIZAWL – 796004
MIZORAM, INDIA
e-mail : csmzu@gmail.com**

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENTIST

(A National Refereed Journal)

Vol :X-1

Summer 2018

ISSN No: 2230 - 956X

**School of Social
Sciences- Convergence**

Editors

Editors

Patron: Vice Chancellor, Mizoram University, Aizawl, India

Guidelines

Editor in Chief: Professor Zokaitluangi, Dean , Shool of Social

Sciences, Mizoram University, Aizawl, India

Archives (hard copy)

Editorial boards:

Vol: I - 1
Vol: I - 2
Vol: II - 1
Vol: II - 2
Vol: III - 1
Vol: III - 2
Vol: IV - 1
Vol: IV - 2
Vol: V - 1
Vol: V - 2
Vol: VI - 1
Vol: VI - 2
Vol: VII - 1
Vol: VII - 1
Vol: VIII - 1
Vol: VIII - 2

Prof. J.K. Patnaik Department of Political Science, MZU
Prof. Srinibas Pathi, Head Department of Public Administration, MZU
Prof. O. Rosanga, Department of History & Ethnography, MZU
Prof. Lalrintluanga, Department of Public Administration, MZU
Prof. Lalneihzovi, Department of Public Admn, MZU
Prof. C. Lalfamkima Varte, Head, Dept. of Psychology, MZU
Prof. H.K. Laldinpui Fente, Department of Psychology, MZU
Prof. E. Kanagaraj, Department. of Social Work, MZU
Prof. J. Dounge, Department of Political Science, MZU
Prof. C. Devendiran, Head, Department of Social Work, MZU
Prof. K.V. Reddy, Head, Department of Political Science, MZU
Dr. Lalngurliana Sailo, Head, Dept of Hist and Ethnography, MZU.
Dr. R.K. Mohanty, Head, Department of Sociology, MZU

National Advisory Board Members:

Prof. A.P Singh, Department of Psychology, 2Banaras Hindu University, Ph : 09415222327, Varanasi - 221005
Prof. Pardeep Sahni, Chairman and Professor, Department of Public Administration, School of Social Sciences, I.G.N.O.U. Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110068. Mb : 9810039877
Prof. Amareswar Mishra, Former Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, Utkal University. 38. O.H.B Colony, Lewis Road. Bhubaneswar – 751002, Odisha Mb : 9437018200.
Prof. Asok Sarkar, Department of social Work , Visva – Bharati Sriniketan. Dist – Birbhum, West – Bengal – 731236, Email : asoksarkar2001@yahoo.co.uk / Asok.sarkar@visva_bharati.ac.in, Mb : 09434001807, 08670799172
Prof. Rekha Pandey Department of History, University of Hyderabad. Hyderabad, Telengana. Email : panderekha@gmail.com. Ph : 09849428030
Prof. Paramjit S. Judge, Affiliation: Professor of Sociology, Editor, Sociological Bulletin. Guru Nanak University, Amritsar Punjab-143001, Contact Numbers: 0183-2257828(R), 0183-2258802-09 PABX 3381. E-mail: paramjit.judge@gmail.com
Prof. Krishna Menon, Department of Political Science, Dept of Gender Studies, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University, Lothian road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006
Email: menonk@hotmail.com
Mob: 9810526046

Editorial



As the old adage goes ‘a citizen that does not respect the values on which his community is built is not a citizen anywhere,’ we begin this journal with an analysis of Democracy and its entailing ideas on which our Indian society is built. The challenges Democracy poses is a gift that keeps on giving and hence we play our part as democratic academicians in analyzing the currently-recurring coalition governments, added with our study on the Scheduled Castes and where our academic assumptions on their empowerment went wrong. We supplemented our analysis into Democracy with a historical study of how the Partition played its eventful part in the regions of North Bengal along with a deep analysis of the Autonomous District Councils under the V and VI Schedule of the Constitution.

We then shift our focus to the local when we undertake a study of how the British Annexation of Mizoram and the consequent Missionary activities shaped the education field in Mizoram. We will then understand how the Chieftainship system still prevalent in the 18th and 19th Century Mizoram shaped our current political scenario. We followed this up with a study of the Paite struggle for autonomy and the traditional beliefs of the Hmar people. We also looked into how the NGOs of YMA and the Church shaped the current Mizo Scenario.

The occurring mental health problems in Mizoram has also been included in the radar of this journal, wherein studies have found that females are more prone to the problem irrespective of residence. The need for psychological intervention in cases of Depression has also been brought to the fore by another study. The prospect of Mizoram adapting settled cultivation has been added in hopes that it will make an impact to a more vibrant Mizoram.

The topics are an array of academicians going about their hope of achieving a utilitarian end and it is in the spirit that I dedicate this yet-another edition of the Contemporary Social Scientist to the future of whomsoever lives it may touch, and more.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zokaitluangi'.

ated Aizawl,
The 13th July 2018

Zokaitluangi
Editor-in-Chief

CONTENTS

SL NO	TOPIC	AUTHOR	PAGE
1.	Understanding the Origin of European Democracy	Babu.G	1
2.	Governor, Missionaries and Colonial Education in Mizoram: A Contextual Analysis	B Lalzarliana	6
3.	The Paite Movement for Autonomy in Mizoram	Lalmalsawma Khiangte & J.K. Patnaik	13
4.	Empowerment of Scheduled Castes in India: A Retrospective Reading	K.V.Reddy	18
5.	A Comparative Study of Mental Health in Urban And Rural Young Mizo Adults	Rinpari Ralte	23
6.	Contextualizing Coalition Politics in Mizoram	Lallianchhunga	29
7.	The Northern Bengal Districts during the Partition of Bengal, 1947	Monorajan Sarkar	36
8.	Autonomous District Councils under The Sixth Schedule: Distinctiveness and Dissimilarities with Other Councils	Jangkhongam Dounel	42
9.	Traditional Belief Systems of The Hmars	Vanrammawii Inbuon	52
10.	Chieftainship and Mizo Polity in the 18th & 19th Centuries	Lalngurliana Sailo	56
11.	Depression and Psychological Wellbeing among Mizo Youth Drug Dependents	Lalremruati & Zokaitlaungi	63
12.	The Church & YMA: The Harbinger of Peace and Development in Mizoram	JC Zomuanthanga	68
13.	Information Revolution and Empowerment of Women: A Gender Perspective	R.K.Mohanty	76
14.	Dances of Mizoram: Understanding Sawlâkia	K. Robin	90

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENTIST

(A National Refereed Journal)

ISSN No. 2230-956X

About the Journal

Contemporary Social Scientist is the journal published by the School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University. It is published twice a year-in Summer and Spring. It aims at advancing and disseminating knowledge, principles and practices in the field of Social Sciences. It encourages research, innovation and new ideas in the field of social sciences with a view to promoting human and sustainable development. Besides research based papers, the journal also publishes Review of Books, etc on various areas of interest in the field of Social Sciences.

For the Contributors

Articles are invited from authors/researchers, which must be a significant original work (either theoretical or empirical) and should be normally between 8-10 A-4 size printed pages with 1.15 line spacing and 11 point Arial font in the following manner:

- The contributors are requested to submit their articles, papers, reviews, etc in standard format both in soft and hard copy, preferable in MS Word format.
- An abstract about 100 words should also be submitted along with the main articles/paper and the body should not be more than 2000 words.
- All non-commissioned book reviews must be submitted along with a copy of the Book for the consideration of the Editorial Board.
- The decision of the Board will be final with regard to publication of any material in the journal. Editorial Board reserved the right to publication.
- Each manuscript should be accompanied with a declaration that the material has not been published elsewhere and that has not been for publication in any other journal.
- Footnote should be listed in the appendix and not typed on the bottom of the manuscript page in which they appear.
- Biography – APA model may be adopted.
- The Peer review will take care these points: *Inadequate review of Literature, In appropriate citation, Unclear introduction, Ambiguous research question, Insufficient methodology, Incomplete describe measures, Unclear statistical analysis and Inappropriate (for who employ statistical analysis), Poor conceptualization of discussion, Discussion goes beyond data, Poor writing style, Excessive length, Plagiarism, Duplicate publication data (repeating) , Bogus authorship, Publication ethics, Declaration by the author on authenticity, Contented with brief (title, abstract, keywords, objectives, method, result, Discussion, references, tables/ figure).*
- The author (s) of the selected research article for publication should contribute: (a) Rs. 1000 by the first author, (b) Rs. 500/- from other author (s).
- Payment for printing charges should be made only by the author of selected article.

The article has to be submitted both by e-mail and hard copy to the following address:

csmzu@gmail.com and 'The Dean, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University, Tanhril, Aizawl – 796004.

Subscription Rate in Rupees:

Individual - Annual - Rs. 500/-, Single Issue – Rs. 300/-

Institution/Library – Annual – Rs.700/-, Single Issue – Rs. 400/-

(Amount may be paid by cash or DD in favour of the Dean, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University, Aizawl)

Understanding the Origin of European Democracy

Babu.G*

Abstract

Democracy is developing with new dynamics, dimensions and directions. There are extensive theories, debates and criticisms on this very idea from political philosophers, scholars and students at different times and from different regions. The origin of this concept is always contested and is confusing. The questions such as, who invented the term democracy or where was it first appeared as political ideology or system or is Europe the inventor of the term democracy need to be readdressed. Therefore, this paper makes an attempt to find out the European origin of democracy and tries to end the confusions that surround its birth. Thus, this paper is descriptive. The available books, articles published in journals, documents, internet search engines and blogs are used for this purpose .

Key words: Democracy, Dimensions, Theories, Origin.

Introduction

Today's dynamics of 'Democracy' is the result of the glorious past. The source of the idea and concept of democracy cuts across various epochs of the European history (such as, Ancient, Medieval and Modern), hence, Europe takes the credit for its invention and dissemination across the world. The debates and discussions over the concept of democracy always has the genealogy of Europe in general and Ancient Greece in particular. Throughout the history philosophers, scholars, writers, leaders and students have referred extensively and quoted the works of European political scientists in their writings about the idea of democracy. No doubt that there are confusions over the origin of the term democracy, even though ancient Greece is credited for its discovery. In this line, the following writing tries to clarify and makes an attempt to find out by tracking the genealogy of democracy whether Europe is the true inventor of the term and idea of democracy.

Ancient Greece and the Idea of Democracy

The concept of democracy was first visualized in the European continent. Even if there was any trace of the idea of democracy, other than Europe it either is not so strong or simply neglected. The visibility of democratic idea in the political thought of Europe and its further enrichment throughout the history is remarkable and appreciable. The current democratic world reached this point by obtaining its roots from ancient Greece. The Athenians of ancient Greece take the credit for recognizing their political system as democracy before any state did. The Athenian democracy branded as world's oldest well-documented democratic polity (Rothchild, 2007:5) is acknowledged for the invention, inspiration and dissemination of ideas and values of democracy across the world (Loughlin, 2001:7). For this reason, the Athenian democracy has been taken as a

model of democracy. Theories that are constructed in the later part of history in the field of democracy has profound influence of Athenian democracy. At some point of time, Athenian democracy came under discussion and criticism by the writers and residents of Athens; this also led to extensive debate and censure by the political thinkers and leaders on democracy in the succeeding centuries (Raaflaub, et.al., 2007:2). Despite of certain vicissitudes, halts and hurdles Athenian democracy is well secured today (Rothchild, 2007:7).

The academic debates commencing with classical writings of Plato and Aristotle in ancient world revolve around the term democracy under the Greek political thought, subsequently inspired the intellectuals in this area of study in the coming centuries. Plato viewed democracy dubiously. Aristotle theorized the emergence of democracy by analyzing it with various steps. The democracy in Greece reached its zenith in Athens, this era experienced remarkable bloom of intellectual life and arts that remains today. Different forms of democratic institutions, systems and practices existed in Greece in general and Athens in particular. It has been noted that the Athenian democracy flourished in fourth century with the refinement of laws. In addition, Athenian democracy, along with constitution or system of laws, recognized for organized community that mattered all the aspects of communal life and politics. This provoked scholars of ancient Greece to challenge works of history, oratory, philosophy and political theory, comedy and tragedy, political pamphlets that surround in reaction to democracy or sway on politics and social life (Raaflaub, et.al., 2007:13).

Furthermore, ancient Greece of fourth and fifth century also witnessed the upward movement of certain elements such as, institutions, practices, mentalities, and

eventually, ideologies. Involvement of the citizen for choosing their representatives, participation in decision making and drafting of laws were extraordinary and remarkable in the ancient Greece. One can refer to the archaic Greece literary document that explains the system of popular assemblies, measure of speech, a strong sense of community, and mentalities including egalitarianism, personal independence, self-worth and a refusal to be cowed by the rich, powerful or well born to understand the democratic system of that time. Ancient Greece with this historical account of democracy and its practice in various forms has to be acknowledged without any dispute.

Medieval Europe and the Idea of Democracy

Medieval Europe is a landmark era for numerous reasons. The greatest happenings have been Enlightenment, Reformation, Advancement of Science and Art and Architecture and also prosperous period of intellectual uplift. New political ideas emerged with the foundation of ancient Greece political thought. The hostile developments in the political arena of Europe pushed for the emergence of Citizen-State antagonism. The actual questioning of the authority of the state which was against the wish and will of the people, resulted in reformation movements across the medieval Europe (Ziablatt, 2006:3). In the race to enrich political philosophy between ca. 1200 to ca. 1800 the scholars undoubtedly made references to the works of Aristotle's *Politics* and Plato's dialogues (especially the *Statesman* and the *Republic* books 8-9) and in Polybius Book 6 (Hansen, 2005:7). The reference is made for the fact that in their works democracy was the most common form of constitution. Later this aided the rise of history in its modern sense in the beginning of the 19th century.

Hansen (2005:9) quoting from Jean Bodin's books on *Commonwealth* (1576) wrote: —there are only three types of state, or commonwealth, monarchy -power is vested in one person and the rest have only one to obey, aristocracy- minority collectively enjoy sovereign power and impose law on the rest, generally and severally; and democracy- all the people, or a majority among them, exercise sovereign power collectively. Ancient scholars accepted these three types of commonwealth. Others added a fourth that look like a mixture of other three. In addition, Plato also added a fourth type, or rule of the wise and did not approve the mixed state. Aristotle by accepting Plato's rule by the wise and mixed state paved

way for fifth one. Polybius¹ distinguished seven, three good, three bad and one composed of a mixture of the three good.”.

The above description of democracy as one the three forms of government matches with works of Thomas Aquinas², Mar-silius of Padua³, Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Pufendorf⁴, Blackstone⁵, James Mill, and many others. Hence, it is wrong to say that the tradition of Athenian democracy was an important part of the 18th-century revolutionaries' intellectual background. Whether the Rome or Greece that inspired the American and French revolutionaries and the English radicals both located in Europe. These eminent Western political philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, J.J. Rousseau, Thomas Paine, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and others had profound influence and history of democratic Athens in their thought, writings and propagation that resulted in the transition and establishment of today's democratic world (Ober, J. 2003:4). They had their own views and took sides with regards to the idea of democracy. Some accepted it and some highlighted its lacunas.

The debate over, referred sources of democratic idea between Plato, Aristotle, Polybios, Plutarch and Herodotus indicates that it was the European scholarship that contributed to build democratic idea. The renowned historians such as, George Grote (English) (was a leader of the small group of radicals in the House of Commons), Victor Duruy (French) (was minister of education during Napoleon 3) and Ernst Curtius (German) (was private tutor to the Prussian crown prince, Frederick Wilhelm I) dwelled upon the new understanding of Athenian democracy in their works (Hansen, 2005:17). These three historians were liberals, and they had a positive view about Athenian democracy, particularly democracy in the age of Pericle⁶. Due to the new approach adopted by these historians, the description of ancient democracy in political thought and philosophy has changed remarkably during the last century and a half.

Even the Marxism that emerged in Europe has its own view of democracy that approves liberty and equality are the basic values of democracy (Hansen, 2005:19). Tocqueville⁷ was the first European to write about the triangle _democracy- liberty-equality _in his work *De la Démocratie en Amérique*. He was of the opinion that ancient and modern democracy were completely different forms of

constitution, and the only thing they had in common was the name. In addition, he had mixed belief with regard to democracy and inclined to stress that democracy might be favorable to equality but certainly a challenge to liberty. He positively prophesied that democracy would finally be the constitution and as a way of life is embraced by all the nations. Gradually the picture changed in which democracy emerged as an acceptable concept well-suited with both liberty and equality in the 19th century.

With this influence, the waves of democracy soon travelled throughout the Europe at different intervals. Here, it is necessary to make reference to European nations such as France, England, Scotland and Sweden that emerged during eleventh and twelfth centuries along with these nations it is appropriate to mention the existence of the concept of states in China, Egypt, and (Loughlin, 2001:7) India. The historical account of feudalism, absolutism, the era of revolution, industrialization in Europe stand as predecessors of democracy and that clearly indicates that the road to democracy in Europe was hard though achieved (Zia blatt, 2006:3). Therefore, it is true that 15th and 18th century European political thought was greatly influenced by the Greek political thought. Later in 19th century, Athenian democracy was taken as positive model by the political thinkers (Ober, 2007:4).

Modern Europe and the Idea of Democracy

Democracy of modern period varies from that of the ancient Greece. However, the Athenian democracy impresses the modern scholars to a great extent. Modern democratic theorists keep democracy of ancient Greece as foundation and develop it further that suites current world affairs. The eighteen-century enlightenment philosophers take the credit for shaping ideas of democracy. Eminent scholar like Rousseau was recognized for the advocacy of the citizens' rights against the absolute power of the Church and the State, which is evident in his work *General Will* (Loughlin, 2007:1). The transformation of Enlightenment ideas into doctrine of the Rights of Man and the Citizen during French Revolution stands as foundation for modern liberal democracy. Marx and Engels welcomed liberal democracy, in their understanding, it is the progression from feudalism and they opined that it would be disregarded by the emergence of socialism and communism.

Liberal democracy as basic form of political organization grew along lines of nation-states

in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nation-state gave rise to modern democratic institutions such as political parties contesting in free elections and get elected to assemblies, political masters accountable to representative assemblies; public administration system of Weberian model, and freedoms of speech, of assembly, of the press, of movement. In contrast, the diverse philosophical contribution with respect to democracy has generated several ambiguities and made it contestable concept. And the concept of nation-state is also tormented with obscurities and has been challenged throughout its existence. In Europe people rebelled against the arbitrary monarchical authority in 18th century and upheld the need for constitution that shape government organization and also can bring down the arbitrary acts of the monarchs. (Markoff, 1999:6).

France took lead in Europe in the exercise of the diffusing constitutionalism by altering its regime with new constitution (in 1791, 1793, 1795, 1799, 1802 and 1804). In addition, France in 1790s was able to induct and force its satellite states to opt constitution (Markoff, 1999:8). The first ever in modern democracy the constitution of 1793 paved way for legislated universal manhood suffrage through voting to elect delegates to higher bodies with the option given to citizen to choose between oral and written voting. These developments culminated in the increased accountability of executives to elected national parliaments, and the institutionalization of civil rights in a way the happenings reordered the political authority in Europe's democratic age (Raaflaub, et.al. 2007:12).

According to late 17th century dictionary, democracy flourished only in the republics of Rome and Athens of Europe. The literate Europeans were aware of democracy for a long time before. But, People from various continents started to speak of democratic form of government in the late 18th century, this century also witnessed for and against sentiments towards democracy (Markoff, J.1999:5). However, the usage of the term democrat was pictured in the late 18th century, during the revolutions that broke out to challenge existing political and social order in the name of democracy and also the Europeans and the North Americans experienced their countries separated in to two camps. The German revolutions of 1848 showcased the political ideas of democracy.

In the case of French political thought it was Vacherots's in his book *la Democratie* of

1860, expressed the rosy view towards the triangle democracy, liberty and equality. John Stuart Mill through his essays *On Liberty* and *On Representative Government* was of the opinion that ancient political liberty was totally varied from that of the modern individual liberty (Hansen, 2005:27). Taking cue from this workable later developments forced countries to draft their own constitutions (such as Haiti and Spain). In one way or the other, this led to adoption of new constitutions as against the arbitrary monarchs who ruled at the voice of the mouth and this ultimately generated a notion of democratic political system in the late 18th century Europe. Because of French revolution, by 19th century the Europeans tried to resolve monarchical and aristocratic institutions with the newly dominant idea of democratic legitimation, they started a prolonged history of struggle between legislatures that had some degree of democratic legitimation and some recognised power, and those whose power derived from birth, tradition, and God. It is evident that some sort of parliament, under the control of the monarchs was in existence in 19th century (Markoff, J.1999:15).

Some self-identified democrats in Europe had acknowledged the notion of party as a better form of organisation in 19th century rather than corruption of some ideal. Europe, for some period witnessed the emergence of opposite ideologies to democracy such as Fascism, Nazism and other matching ideologies that did not accept democracy, instead dismantled free elections, political parties and representative parliaments. But these opposite ideologies did not prolong for a longer period, due to the larger approval and historical events that facilitated democracy (Loughlin, 2001:2). The concepts of ‘_Nations’ and ‘_States’ had also facilitated the idea of democracy wherein, the European nations such as France, England, Scotland and Sweden stand as examples of these concepts which goes back to eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this line the concept of ‘_Nation-State’ advanced from French Revolution. Ultimately helping the idea of democracy to pass through these Nation-States. It is evident through the history of democracy that it is a moving target, not a static structure. Current world is facing end number of challenges and dilemmas, but the successful occurrence of democracy in the Western Europe at end of nineteenth century is remarkable. The Athenian genealogy of democracy is contested by some scholars may generate a second thought among the scholars

who refer the origin of democracy to ancient Greece and Europe as a whole. This new thought process of genealogy or ancestry of democracy attracts further research. However, it is widely accepted that Athenian democracy of ancient time has been widely researched and used by the eminent political philosophers throughout the history and it is evident that Athenian democracy of ancient period created a space for scholarly thirst towards democracy, which is been put to discourse even today.

Conclusion

Thus, the lineage of democracy in all the eras such as Ancient, Medieval and Modern revolve around Europe in General and Western Europe in particular. The political philosophers and scholars who contributed through their thought and expanded the understating of democracy in Ancient, Medieval and Modern period such as Plato, Aristotle, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes, J.J. Rousseau, and others are natives of Europe. Although, there are similarities and dissimilarities between the ancient or classical idea of democracy and modern one, the traditional idea of democracy stands as background for the modern idea of democracy (of the 19th and 20th century). Without the classical reference, one cannot write anything with regard to democracy. Democracy originated and practiced in ancient Greece, located in Western Europe travelled in entire Europe in different times had success, failure and rebounces. England, Italy, France, Scandinavia and the Eastern European countries with variety of experience upheld democratic political system. This democratic experience of entire Europe considered as the model and inspiration to the subsequent democracies across the world.

Post-WW II era witnessed democratisation of the Third World, once part of European colonial rule. After decolonisation that resulted in the independence of many nation states in the Third World, these countries adopted Constitutions with some modifications and democratic political system more or less close to the European model. Democracy is alive through Ancient, Midlevel and Modern periods as a political idea, even with innumerable turbulences and threats. Although there are divergences and disputes with regard to the origin of the concept of democracy, the fact continues to go undisputed duly corroborated through the extensive available literature that Europe is the inventor and developer of the celebrated and widely accepted democratic political system.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Email: bengalurubabu2212@gmail.com

References

- Fleck, R. K., & Hanssen, F. A. (2002). *The Origins of Democracy: A Model with Application to Ancient Greece*. Bozeman, Montana, United States.
- Gascoigne, B. (2017). *History of the World. From 2001, ongoing*. Retrieved from <http://www.historyworld.net> Retrieved from <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=ghr>.
- Hansen, M.H. (2005). *The Tradition of Ancient Greek Democracy and its Importance for Modern Democracy*. Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. pp.1-78.
- Korsgaard, *History of Democracy*, Retrieved from <https://www.daea.dk/themes/other-themes/educate-democracy/history-of-democracy/>
- Loughlin, J. (2001). *Subnational Democracy in the European Union Challenges and Opportunities*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press.
- Markoff, J. (1999). 'Where and When Was Democracy Invented?' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41(4), 660-690.
- Ober, J. (2003). Conditions for Athenian Democracy. In T. K. Rabb, & E. N. Suleiman, *The Making and Unmaking of Democracy Lessons from History and World Politics* (pp. 1-14). London: Routledge.
- Ober, J. (2007). What the Ancient Greeks Can Tell Us About Democracy?. *Annual Reviews in Political Science*, 1-5.
- Raaflaub, K. A., Ober, J., & Wall, R. W. (2007). *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rothchild, J. A. (2007). *Introduction to Athenian Democracy of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE*. 1-45.
- Ziablatt, D. (2006). 'How Did Europe Democratize?' , *World Politics*, 311-38.

Governor, Missionaries and Colonial Education in Mizoram: A Contextual Analysis

B Lalzarliana*

Abstract

The Mizos first came to the attention of the British due to their frequent raids in the Cachar and surrounding area of Assam which they considered their 'elephant hunting area' and thus theirs by right since time immemorial. The colonial education system represented by the Church run schools has their particular agenda and curriculum. Their latent agenda was teaching the religious ethos of Christianity and debunking of traditional Mizo beliefs. Sunday school as an additional schooling and learning institution in addition to normal formal schooling led to an increase in the number low level higher learning but higher rate of literacy.. A previously oral society was brought into a literate society with many repercussions, among which the rise of an educated class of commoners who tried to challenge the traditional elites, is acknowledged as one of the most far reaching consequences.

Keywords: Traditional, missionary, Christianity, colonial, education, etc

Introduction

The Mizos first came to the attention of the British due to their frequent raids in the Cachar and surrounding area of Assam which they considered their 'elephant hunting area' and thus theirs by right since time immemorial. However, the British regarded them as not worth troubling as they discern nothing of value in the hills. Rather, they look at it as just a nuisance and interference to their smooth functioning in the Assam plains. The immediate cause for the first inroad to Mizoram was the raid of Alexandrapore.

In 1871 January, Bengkhuaia, a Mizo chief and his braves attacked the tea plantation at Alexandrapore in Cachar area of Assam and killed the British manager there. Not only that, they took capture of his young daughter Mary Winchester in Mizoram. Moreover, two Mizo chiefs, Lalburha and Thanhranga took thirteen army guns in their raid to the plains of Assam. The two actions combined angered the British administration and started two expeditions to Mizoram (Zawla: 1989). However, they returned back without making any permanent settlement after they achieved their aim-get back the guns and punish the chiefs responsible for them and get back Mary Winchester.

For fourteen years, the Mizos didn't bother the British territory again because of internal strife as well as the agreement signed in the first expedition (Lalthangliana: 2001). The aftermath of it led to a slack in the raids to the plains. However, this resumed again after a brief period. Consequently, the second Lushai Expedition came to Mizoram in 1899. By, 1890, the expedition was more or less over. So, 1890 is usually taken as the year of annexation of Mizoram.

The trajectory of colonial education system follows certain similarities across the world.

This is especially true in the case of countries colonized by the British Empire. Political and ideological annexations were done through many avenues among which the most prominent was education system. Most of the countries that were annexed already have their traditional education systems which evolved from rudimentary to highly developed stage. However, these were different from western education system with its emphasis on so called secular and scientific education. Scholars and academia tend to reconstruct the role of Governors, Missionaries and Chiefs in spreading such colonial form of hegemonic education which penetrated deep into the indigenous tribal societies including Mizoram in North East India. And as such a need is felt to consolidate the evidences pertaining to western, mission oriented colonial education system in Mizoram. In the light of the above short description, this paper tries to attempt a survey of the work of the Christian missionaries in the context of education in Mizoram during the colonial times. It will begin with an introduction with a narrative of traditional Mizo educational institution, the *zawlbuk*. Then an attempt is made to delineate the various developmental issues and the implications of western, mission oriented education system on a previously oral society. The scope of the paper is descriptive in nature where reliance has been placed on wide variety of colonial and current literature including census data and reports of agencies. Accordingly, the paper divides itself into six parts commencing with an introduction along with an overview at the end. In the second part of the paper, the Mizo dormitory system *Zawlbuk* is examined from the point of its relevance as a traditional education institution followed by a historical analysis of the establishment of schools and subsequent

takeover by the missionaries in the section next. The fourth section of the paper deals with the concept of *Preparatio Evangelica*. The penultimate section attempts to look at policies and implication of the Sunday school movement in Colonial Mizoram.

Zawlbuk- Mizo Traditional Educational Institution

The Mizo boys' dormitory was known as *Zawlbuk*. Depending on the size of the village, there may be two or more *zawlbuk* in the village although most villages usually have one. The *Zawlbuk* was a singularly important social institution in every Mizo village, with the exception of the Maras (Kipgen: 1997). It serves as a common dormitory for all the young men in the village. Except the children who were below ten years of age, all the un-married males in the village were under the discipline of *zawlbuk*, their lives being almost completely shaped according to the practices and convention prevailing therein (Hluna: 1992).

According to Hluna (1992), it serves three important functions. It served as sleeping quarters and recreational centre for un-married and as well as young married men. It imparted training and disciplined the young boys. It also served as an inn for visitors from outside the village. *Zawlbuk* was, therefore, a powerful institution which exercised the greatest sway in establishing social norms and customs among the Mizo people.

Beyond these, Kipgen (1997) identified two other points. First, it served as a defense ground for the village. In a society like the Mizos in which the villages were perpetually threatened by human enemies and wild animals, it served as an important rally point for defense against them. Secondly, it also served as an information centre for the village. All the young as well as old gathered there at the end of the day to share with one another the news of the day about things seen and heard, activities that merited either appreciation or criticism, and any matters of interest. Information was given as well as received pertaining to the affairs of the village as well as of other villagers brought by travelers. When any male stranger came to any village, the *zawlbuk* was the first place they visited. Here, they were usually challenged by the local youth for a wrestling match. Only after bouts of wrestling they were conducted to their lodging for the night.

The *zawlbuk* has no formal arrangement for the kind of education and knowledge it impart, but the senior members in the dormitory took it among themselves to teach the youngsters about the social mores and values so that they can later

on survives by themselves. So, at the *zawlbuk* the inmates learn the traditional handicrafts and arts, stories of bravery, valor and other values deemed worthwhile were taught as well as how to conduct oneself among others and in society. Chaterjee (1975) regarded the *zawlbuk* as 'the crucible wherein the Mizo youth, the marginal man was shaped into the responsible adult member of their society'.

Establishment of Schools and Missionary Takeover

A proposal for the sanctioning of a grant for the establishment of one school for the benefit of Mizo children was submitted in 1896. A. Porteous, the then political officer requested the sanction to employ one school master and one servant. He also proposed that the language taught should be Bengali as he felt that very soon Bengali would make its way into use as the language of trade and official intercourse (Hluna: 1992).

As a result of the proposal, a government school for Mizo boys was established on 21st August, 1897. The curriculum was basically reading and writing and simple arithmetic. Etiquette was also incorporated to teach the boys how to conduct themselves when in the presence of their teachers and when officers visited the school. The teacher Kalijoy Kavyatirtha strongly recommended the usage of Bengali as the medium of instruction. He argued that, since literature on science, philosophy and other subjects were available in that language, the students could study by themselves to improve their knowledge. This would also enable them to read newspaper in Bengali to have an idea of the civilized world. Reference of this is available in AR, File No. 3, Misc. Collection-III-Political (General Branch) From Kalijoy Kavyatirtha to the Political Officer, 5th April 1898. However, in spite of the arguments put forward, the government did not prescribed any regular course of studies and the chief attention was paid to introducing rudimentary education among the Mizos. The text used was *Zirtanbu* (Primer Book) in Mizo and the arithmetic was usually limited to the strength of the student comprising of compound addition, simple division and simple addition.

In 1904, the development of education underwent a significant change. Sir Bamfield Fuller, the then Governor of Assam came to Mizoram. He visited both the Government School and the school run by the missionaries. Impressed by the mission school, he handed over the education implementation to the missionaries and gave them the grant which was earlier enjoyed by the government school

(Saiaithanga: 1969). As a result, the government school was closed and amalgamated with the mission school. From this moment till the attainment of Indian independence, the actual designing of education system was left in the hands of the Christian mission. The role of the government was just relegated to the provider of funding for the various educational initiatives. Immediately on their arrival, the missionaries started school. After finishing a rudimentary form of alphabet and rules of grammar, the pioneer missionaries of the Arthington Mission, Lorrain and Savidge prepared with the new alphabet *Zirtan Bu* (Lushai Primer), *Hlabu*

(Hymn Book) and *Zawhna leh Chhanna* (Book of questions and answers) in 1896. Soon after, according to the dictates of the Arthington Mission, they again had to shift to Arunachal to work among the Adis. So, it was left to the new foreign mission – the Welsh Presbyterian church to continue the job.

The administration of Mizoram was under one centre, viz. Aizawl. However, the missions have two centers-one at Aizawl and one at Lunglei. The missionaries from both the Welsh Presbyterian and the Baptist Church were given the title of Honorary Inspector of Schools by the British government in Mizoram.

Table 1.1 Census Data of Population, Religion and Literacy

Census	Population	Christian	Literate
1901	82434	45	761
1911	91204	2461	3635
1921	98406	27720	6183
1931	124404	59123	13320
1941	152786	98108	29765

Source: Census of India.

The Baptist Church was in the habit of selecting a small number of bright young men, intelligent and capable to continue the mission. These selected few were groomed beyond the normal education given to the masses. As a result, the Church in the south produced several luminaries who are well known in the state all over for their vocation. The number of schools that they maintained was also far less than the northern side. The main one at Serkawn was well known all over the area, but there is no one single school which stands out in the north. This ultimately led to a debate over which one was the better. The following dialogue by a Presbyterian elder and Pastor during the period well illustrates the point:

Elder Laihnuna: We are not on par with the south. The intellectuals our land can boast of are always from the south.
the north for their individual capacity.

Rev. Saiaithanga: The southern church established one place where they carefully groom a few selected students where discipline and studies are maintained properly. As a result, these selected few are well known all over Mizoram. We, in the north take the whole land as our goal while the south concentrates on one point. If you look at one point only, the south is shining brighter, but if you take the land as a whole, the north is brighter. Which one is the better? (Lalhmuka: 2000)

The difference in this can be seen from the intellectuals and leaders that came out of the south. All the early politicians are from the south. In fact, the Mizo Union (the first Mizo political party) got its impetus from the south only. But, hardly anyone was known from

Table 1.2 Growth of School

Number of Schools		
Year	Welsh Presbyterian Church	Baptist Mission
1898	1	-
1899	3	-
1903	15	1
1906	n.a.	4
1915	49	n.a.
1920	53	13

Source: Rokhuma (1988)

The above figure illustrates the growth of education in Mizoram. It can be seen that there existed differences in their focus in the northern and southern part of the country. The number of

school in the north increased exponentially because of the way they conduct the schools. The mission usually established the schools as one major way of winning converts. Schools

were usually opened with the initiative of the village chief who wanted to have a school. Tacit agreement was necessary as the school building was constructed by the village free of cost (Rokhuma: 1988). The practice of using the educated local students started when the educated ones went back to their villages, they started teaching their friends what they learnt in the schools. Capitalizing on these, the missions started schools in the villages employing the students who already passed out from the schools at either Aizawl or Lunglei.

The concept of Preparatio Evangelica

Preparatio Evangelica (Even though this is a popular term, reference is taken from Gauri Viswanathan's book — *Mask of Conquest* where this author encounters it for the first time) is a common term used as preparation for gospel or evangelizing. In the context of education, it is used to mean the usage of education or educating the non-Christian populace prior to preaching of the Gospels. Involvement in education entered into the discourse of the missionaries as an essential and even leading characteristic of the mission to win soul and consolidate their social base. The importance attached to education was not only the issue of getting them young but the notion that in India, it might be necessary to proceed by stages and that educating the young one might prepare their minds for later receptiveness to the Word of God. So, everywhere they went, the missionaries were almost always the precursor of modern education.

Paving the way thus, education proved a fruitful tool for the process of winning converts. Even chiefs who were not Christian and who didn't even have sizeable population of Christian in their villages started demanding the opening of a school in their territory. Where there was a school, the missionaries usually organized a Sunday School where preaching and sermon were practiced. So, it was in a way more successful than mainland India where it was first mooted.

The school curriculum in Mizoram had to be started from the scratch as there was no prior education system as that of the official which more or less followed the main Indian pattern and medium of instruction being Bengali (Lalhmuaka: 2000). With this, the alphabet was first of all based on the Roman script, the Bengali script being rejected due to its failure to properly represent all the tonal language of the Mizos (Lalhmuaka: 2000).

The curriculum in the primary school consisted basically of Mizo grammar which was just formulated. Christian education played an

important part in the course. Since the Bible and portions from it were among the first text available to the Mizo student, they constituted an important component of the curriculum. Another important component was the book prepared by the missionaries where they tried to include Mizo saying and proverbs and parts of Mizo culture which do not clash with Christian ethics, but which in fact supports it. Accordingly, the first Mizo textbook published in 1901 (2nd Edition) (quoted in Lalthangliana: 2004) contained the following:

Ru ma ta che

Mi te do shuh

Chi a to lo ve

I nu leh pa zah roh

Mi an dem ngai lo

An at mu an lem

I nu leh pa chawm roh

Kawm shuh

Mite bum shuh

Tih mawh suh

Lal ngai lo lal a na

Do not steal

Do not fight with others

Seeds don't grow

Respect your mother and father

Do not rebuke others

They pay for their foolishness

Look after your mother and father

Do not be miserly

Do not cheat others

Do not be stubborn

A new ruler is unjust (Translated by author)

The first Mizo Grammar and Dictionary was printed in 1898 barely four years after they created the alphabet. This helped to a large extent in the introduction of formal education. In the curriculum, as presented above, more emphasis was laid to Biblical teaching and other subjects of elementary education were considered only of secondary importance (D E Jones reports, 1894). To attract the sons of Mizo chiefs and their representatives to the mission schools, who prior to 1904 were sent to government school where Bengali was taught, English was introduced (D E Jones reports, 1894 Ibid). Mizo was the medium of instruction.

After the students increased, in 1900, the mission school was divided into two sections—elementary and advanced. The advanced students were taught more advanced subjects like Lushai Composition, Geography, Arithmetic, English, Reading Methods and the

Acts of the Apostle (a book from the Bible) of Edwin Rolands Report of 1900, Lushai composition comprised of writing of the Mizo traditional religion such as spirits, demons, gods, etc. and also on Christianity. Both sections are also taught about Scripture, learnt verses, catechism and tonic solfa (Hluna: 1992).

Another important aspect of the curriculum was devoted for eradicating the superstitions of the people. As a result, the *Zirtirh Bu Thar* (New First Primer) published in 1929 contained the following:

Lunglian leh thing lianin huai an nei lo.

Sakei leh samak tihlum mah ila thih kan tura bik lovang.

Sih a hlauhawm lova, tui bawlhhlawh in erawh chu a tha lo.

Lova inthawi hi engmah a sawt lova, hna thawk ila, Pathianin mal a sawm zawk ang.

Big rocks and tree don't have spirits.

We will not die even if we kill tigers and rhinos.

Springs are not dangerous, but drinking dirty water is unhealthy.

Performing sacrifices in the fields are useless, work diligently and God will bless you.

The motives behind these were mainly to impart Christian teachings and enabling the believers to read the Bible as well as to allay the fears and superstitions of the people. However, the hegemonic influence of the Church can be seen in the construction of the curriculum. Taking cue from Kumar's line, 'What is worth teaching?' the education whereby the material considered worth teaching can take plenty of bias (Kumar: 2001). He (2001) further elaborates that 'English administrators of the mid-nineteenth century answered it in terms of their perception of what Indian society lacked'. The kind of curriculum that was produced was formulated according to what the administrators construed to be the need of the people.

In 1935, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills along with the two Honorary Inspectors of Schools revamped the Middle School course. The preamble of the draft paper contained the following clauses:

1. Complete co-operation between the Honorary Inspectors in the North and South with regard to curricula, examinations, publication of vernacular text books, etc.

2. Limitation of the number of entrants to the middle English course, which is principally a stepping stone to the High School

3. Provision of an alternate Middle Vernacular course of education, more suited to the needs of a predominantly agricultural population.

4. Location of a High School within the Lushai Hills. (Report on Education 1934-35, Educational Policy in the Lushai Hills, BCM Archive Serkawn).

By this new education policy, the mission and the government tried to arrest the increasing number of educated people who could not be absorbed properly by both in their pool of available job. So, anticipating the possible future educated unemployed, they developed a course more suitable for self-employment and self-farming. The coming of the middle vernacular thus shifted the direction of knowledge and education from the original emphasis on providing literacy to a more utilitarian value.

Beside the above discussions, two important themes in the curriculum need to be look into which have great repercussions in the society. Firstly, in *Zirtirh Bu* the following sentence was included:

Hmanlaiin Mizo rama lal chi bik an awm love.

Hnam tin anmahni tawkin an lal.

Roughly translated it meant: There were no chief clan in Mizoram; all tribes are dominant in their own rights. This angered the Sailo chiefs to no end. They even tried to find out the author of the text to change it. But, the seed was shown for the demise of chieftainship in Mizoram.

Another text was:

—Khawva¹ mihring hnam nga, mi dum, mi buang, mi eng, mi hang, mi ngo an awm. Nimahshela chi khat kan ni." (Mizo *Zir Tir Bu*, 1901. p. 15)

To which the following italic lines (mine) were added in 1916:

—..Mihring hnam nga ropui tak an awm a- mi dum te, mi buang te, mi eng te, mi

sen te, mi ngo te nen. Nimahsela chi khat kan ni.

Mi eng an tam ber a, *mi ngo an*

fing ber a, an lal ber bawk."

(*Duhlian Zir Tir Bu*, 1921, 5th Edition. p. 32)

Translation:

—There are five races in the world, black people, brown people, yellow people, red people, and white people. But, we are all one people." (Mizo *Zir Tir Bu*, 1901. p. 15)

—There are five races in the world, black people, brown people, yellow people, red people, and white people. But, we are all one people. The yellow people are most numerous, *the white are cleverest, and they are also the most*

powerful.”(Duhlian *Zir Tir Bu*, 1921, 5th Edition. p. 32)

Looking at these, Lalthangliana (2004) posited that the imperialism spirit in the otherwise staid missionaries seemed to manifest itself in these school texts. The question is: whether these missionaries were also trying to hegemonise the brain of the young students. While the original text did not contain such words, revisions by another include those lines. However, in *Zir Tan Bu* published after Indian independence, these lines were deleted.

Sunday School Movement: Policies and Implications

Two educational movements in the eighteenth century England showed the powerful influence of the Church in institutionalizing certain kind of texts and excluding others (Viswanathan: 1998). These are Charity School movement and the Sunday School Movement. They both developed out of the Church concern about the rising of urban squalor and crime and out of conviction that unless the poor were brought back to Christian life, the social order would be damaged (Viswanathan: 1998). The instruction in sound Christian ethics was mooted as a way out of this problem and portions from the Bible which recommend “industry, gratitude, submission and the like virtues” were accordingly prescribed for the movement (Viswanathan: 1998).

The practice of Sunday School was imported to Mizoram by the missionaries to incorporate a different kind of Christian teaching. Popularly known as *Sande Sikul*, it was one of the major innovations brought in the hills. It was started from almost the beginning of the Christian mission in Mizoram since the 1890s. In the beginning, there was no demarcation between the children and the adult. It was mostly for the adults (Roberts: 2003). It worked in two major strands which we will delineate below.

Sunday Schools were basically worship services held in the Church on Sundays where some local leader or the visiting preachers would lead the service as well as teaching from the scripture and exposition. It is interesting to note here that most of the teachings were done from translation from the English Bible and most of the service was led by the local people. In the words of Lorrain:

—Ouin the districts these schools are conducted by the most intelligent Christian in each village, and the teaching is generally confined to passages of scripture, the catechism, prayers and hymns....some of the outlying schools are being so used to win the young for Christ that heathen parents have become alarmed and are trying to

get their chiefs to expel the teachers from their respective villages. We regard the Sunday school as a kind of spiritual thermometer which shows the state of the Christian community in the village. A thriving Sunday school generally indicates live Christians, and a dwindling one the reverse.” (The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938. Report for 19070.

The rationale behind the *Preparatio Evangelica* here is both interchanged here. So, education for the sake of further missionary activities and missionary activities for the process of education was practiced in return. Sunday Schools exhibit an important part of the tradition of imparting the Gospel within the realm of educating activities. Looking at the Sunday School curriculum, one can see a healthy dose of Christian texts which are used as the basis for the inculcation of religious doctrine. Rote learning and learning by heart for those who cannot read and write showed the nature of the religious discourse that is evident there. The singularity of the idea of the education process within the Sunday school framework limits the reach of the literacy in the secular sphere.

Besides the instructional policy of Christian ethics in the Sunday School, another important feature was the educating nature of the institution. As already highlighted, the School was taken as a mean for inculcation of the faithful, but it served a dual purpose. Unlike the normal school where Scripture was one of the subjects, in Sunday School, learning how to read and write was one of the subject taught. In fact, Hminga (1987) said that the —primary aim of the early Sunday School were 10 to make Christians, and 20 to make these able to read the Scriptures and the hymn book for themselves.” Lorrain again put it explicitly:

In 1905 there was but one organised Sunday School in the South Lushai Hills. To-day there are 55 scattered all over the district, with 1395 scholars on the rolls...The only barrier to the opening of new schools where there are Christians is the absence among them of anyone who can read. In the existing Sunday Schools, besides being taught the Scriptures, numbers of the pupils are learning to read, and not a few have already mastered the art. When any of the latter migrate to a village where there are only illiterate converts, their services are immediately requisitioned, and after a time there springs up a flourishing Sunday School which in due course has its own off-shoots in other villages. The nomadic habits of the people thus tend to spread the Gospel far and wide (The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938. Report for 1912).

From the above discussions, it can be clearly seen that Sunday School play an important role in the promotion of education among the Mizos. Lalhmuaka (1981) claimed that the Sunday School was the main centre of learning till 1922.

In the following table a usual constituent of a Sunday School is given. The way that the chart is organized clearly showed the bent on providing education.

Table 1.4 Attendance Rolls of Sunday School

Attendance Rolls	BOYS		GIRLS		Total
	Christian	Non-Christian	Christian	Non-Christian	
Learning to read	330	243	421	61	1055
Able to read	497	130	130	2	699
Unable to read and not learning	42	...	160	24	226
Total Scholar on Rolls	869	313	711	87	1980

Source: BCM, 1915.

Overview

Looking back to the issues raised in the beginning of the paper, we can see that the modes of education followed in Mizoram were for a particular purpose, that of educating the people more towards evangelizing and proselytization. The colonial education system represented by the Church run schools has their particular agenda and curriculum. Their latent agenda was teaching the religious ethos of Christianity and debunking of traditional Mizo beliefs. Sunday school as an additional schooling and learning institution in addition to normal formal schooling led to an increase in the number low level higher learning but higher rate of literacy.

The *Zawlbuk* as a young man dormitory and traditional learning institution was put into oblivion by the peace bought about by British annexation and its by-product, western education. A previously oral society was bought into a literate society with many repercussions, among which the rise of an educated class of commoners who tried to challenge the traditional elites, is acknowledged as one of the most far reaching consequences. Similarly, the action of the Governor of Assam, Sir Bamfield Fuller, in handing over the education system in Mizoram to the missionaries admittedly changed the landscape of Mizo society.

* Assistant Professor of Sociology, Mizoram University

References

Baptist Mission Society (1935). *Report on Education 1934-35, Educational Policy in the Lushai Hills*, Baptist Mission Society, BCM Archive Serkawn.

Baptist Mission Society (1907). *Report for 1907, The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938*. Baptist Mission Society. Serkawn. Mizoram.

Baptist Mission Society (1912). *Report for 1912. The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938*. Baptist Mission Society. Serkawn. Mizoram.

Chaterjee, N. (1975). *Zawlbuk as a Social Institution in the Mizo Society*, Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute

Hluna, J. V. (1992). *Education and Missionaries in Mizoram*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publication.

Hminga, C. L. (1987). *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*. Serkawn: Baptist Church of Mizoram.

Kipgen, Mangkhosat. (1997). *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, Mizoram: The Mizo Theological Conference.

Kumar, Krishna. (2001) *Political Agenda of Education*, New Delhi: Sage.

Lalhmuaka. (1981). *Zoram Zirna Lam Chhinchhiahna*, Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute.

Lalhmuaka. (2000). *Zoram Sikul Zirna Chanchin*, Aizawl: Author.

Lalthangliana, B. (2001). *Mizo Chanchin*. Aizawl: Remkungi.

Lalthangliana, B. (2004). *Mizo Literature*. Aizawl: M C Lalrinthanga.

Roberts, Gwen Rees. (2003). *Memories of Mizoram: Recollections and Reflections, Wales: The Mission Board*. Presbyterian Church of Wales.

Rokhuma, K. L. (1988). *Mizoram Zirnaa Mission leh Kohhran Rawngbawlina*, Serkawn: BCM.

Viswanathan, Gauri. (1998). *Mask of Conquest*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Zawla, K. (1989). *Pi Pute leh an Thlahte Chanchin*. Aizawl: Gosen Press.

Zosaphluia & Pasena, (1951). (26th Edition) *Zirtirh Bu thar*, Aijal: Loch Press

The Paite Movement for Autonomy in Mizoram

Lalmalsawma Khiangte*
J.K. Patnaik**

Abstract

The paper aims to study the genesis, process and goals of the Paite movement for autonomy in Mizoram with particular reference to the role of the Paite Tribe Council. The study is mainly based on historical and descriptive analysis. The north eastern region, the states therein as well as various areas within these states have witnessed autonomy movements of which a few have attained their logical and eventual goals. But most of such movements aim at preservation of the unique culture, identity, life style, tradition, custom, etc while striving for development of the people. The Paite movement constitutes one such significant movement that has generated interest among the academic community.

Key words: Autonomy, Paite, Paite Tribe Council, Mizoram

Introduction

North eastern region of India has been witnessing a series of popular movement for autonomy on the basis of identity preservation and assertion. The demands of these movements range from mild claims, like demand for expulsion of migrants to demand for self-autonomy within the existing political unit or of creation of a separate unit to one of total independence from India. In most of these movements, the modern educated elites and their organization play a crucial role in inculcating identity consciousness and mobilizing the masses in pursuit of certain demands (Khiangte, Lalmalsawma, 2015). In most of the cases, the elites mobilize the masses through the organization they set up and dictated.

The Paite are one of the major indigenous tribes of Mizoram. The political movement of the Paite in Mizoram mainly revolves around the demand for separate autonomous set up for the Paite tribe. Though there are significant number of literature on Paite in Manipur, academic work on Paite political movement in Mizoram is rather limited. Most of the existing works deals with the history, social and cultural aspect. Rosanga's seminar paper, 'the Paite Movement for Regional Council in Mizoram' deals mainly with the Paite demands for regional Council before the MNF declaration of Independence in 1966. An autobiography of Muana Hangsing (The present PTC president) named 'Tunnu Zogam leh Kei', written in Paite language, contains certain valuable information but lack academic insight. Considering this lack of academic work, the paper attempts to provide a descriptive study of the demand of Paite in Mizoram for autonomy with particular reference to the role of Paite National Council (later renamed as Paite Tribe Council).

Paite in Mizoram consist of around 69 sub tribes and there are about 10 Paite dialects, of which Dapza and Teizang constitute the major spoken dialects. Therefore the Paite are generally divided into two groups – Dapzar and Teizang. The Dapzar group entered Mizoram during the first half of the 17th century AD and they are mainly concentrated in and around Sialkal range consisting of villages like NE Khawdungsei, Kawlbeim, Vaikhawtlang, Khawkawn, Chiahpui, Mimbung, Teikhang and Selam. The Teizang group entered Mizoram by the late 1930's and are presently concentrated in the eastern corner of Mizoram adjacent to Myanmar inhabiting villages like- Vapar, Murlen, Ngur, Lailiphai, Ngaizawl, Leisenzo and Sesih (TRI, 2011).

Census of Lushai Hills conducted by the British has recorded the population of Paite tribe in Mizoram as 2,870 in 1901 and 10,460 in 1921. But in the subsequent Census operations Paite was not found in such records as 'Paite' until 2011 Census which recorded the number of Paite in Mizoram as 23,183 of which 17,878 are living in rural areas while 5305 are living in urban areas. Census of India 2001 recorded that there are 64100 Paite speakers in India, of which the majority are living in Manipur. The number of Paite speakers in Mizoram is 14367, that is about 22% of Paite speakers in India. Data on number of Paite speakers as per 2011 census is not yet published.

Genesis, structure and reorganization of Paite National Council (PNC): If one is to discuss the Paite political movement in Mizoram, there is a need to highlight Paite political movements in Manipur since Paite movements in Mizoram is to a very large extent influenced and dictated by the Paite in Manipur. The first Paite organization in India, Siamsinpawlpai (formerly known as Paite

Students Association) was formed in 1947; and the Paite National Council (Renamed as Paite Tribe Council in 2003) in 1949, Paite Literature Society in 1950 and Young Paite Association in 1953 are all founded in Manipur. Hence, the general headquarters of these organizations are located in Manipur. The Paite National Council is the most politically vocal among these organizations and it would not be wrong to call it as the political wing of the Paite.

The constitution of PNC as amended in 2004 has the following objectives (Ngaihte, 2015).

1. Reunify the Zo people under one political administration.
2. Establish government of the people, by the people, for the people.
3. Achieve social, economic and cultural development.
4. Achieve the betterment of their political status for their land and the nation
5. Preserve and develop their customs, culture, language and literature.
6. Strive unitedly with other cognate Zo communities for the development and security of the Zomi.

In 1947-48, the Paite of Sialkal range (the north eastern part of Mizoram where the Paite are in majority) nominally formed the 'Paite Federation'. But due to lack of proper organization and competent leadership and undoubtedly due to the influence of stronger movements like the Mizo Union, the Federation did not survive for long (Rosanga, 2015). In 17th-19th October, 1963 a special Assembly of the Paite people was convened under the initiative of the Paite National Council of Manipur at Selam Village. The Assembly resolved to form Paite National Council (PNC) in Mizoram with the objective of having a proper organization embracing all the Paite community in Mizoram. At the time of its emergence, the PNC of Mizoram has no direct intention of joining PNC of Manipur (SIB report, 1963). The Emergency Block Conference of Sialkal Block PNC held at Teikhang in 12-13 March 1964 resolved that all member of Paite tribe should contribute funds to the PNC and ban all other political parties except PNC (SIB report, 1964). But, mainly due to the opposition of MNF, the PNC became virtually defunct during Rambuai.

After 20 years of Rambuai, the MNF underground movement for independence ended with the signing of Mizoram Peace Accord in 1986. The environment of peace emboldens the Paite leaders to revive their movement. Some Paite leaders in Sialkaltlang and Aizawl had discussed the need to revive the Paite

organization and movement for autonomy. In their third meeting on 17th July 1990, they formed an Adhoc Body of Paite Federation. They also resolved to convene Assembly of the Paite at Mimbung on 12th Oct. 1990 so as to get the approval of the Paite people and elect the Paite Federation Executive members. At the same time, PNC headquarters Manipur had set up PNC unit at Mimbung and convened Paite Assembly on 20th February 1991. Hence, two Paite organizations, Paite Federation having headquarters at Aizawl without unit and PNC having unit without headquarters in Mizoram have emerged.

After a joint meeting of the PNC at headquarters Manipur and Paite Federation of Mizoram, North East India Paite Nam Khawmpi Lian (Paite Assembly for North East India) was convened on 6-8 March 1991. Some of the resolutions passed by the Assembly are.

1. All Paite should be unified in Paite National Council.
2. All Paite should resign from other political party or any other communal organizations including Mizoram Paite Organization, Mizoram Paite Federation, Adhoc Paite National Council Unit etc.
3. The Assembly selected adhoc office bearers of the PNC Mizoram Headquarters with H Zathuama, Aizawl as the President.
4. Mizoram PNC headquarters shall be Aizawl and Mimbung shall be sub headquarters.
5. PNC unit should be constituted in every Paite inhabited area.
6. The Assembly also resolved to demand for Sialkal Autonomous District Council.

Apart from having a separate headquarter, the PNC Mizoram has its own constitution. However, the objectives of the Mizoram PNC are more or less similar with the objectives of Manipur. PNC In the meantime, the PNC of Manipur by formally subscribing to the idea that the Paite together with other cognate Zo tribes form the 'Zo Nation' and by getting Tribe recognition in Manipur has rechristened itself as Paite Tribe Council in 2003 (Ngaihte, 2015). The PNC of Mizoram also changed its name into Paite Tribe Council in 2004 and the headquarters of PTC was shifted from Aizawl to Teikhang (Hangsing, Personal interview, 2017)

Demand for autonomy under the Mizo District Council:

Right from the start till date, the Paite people raised their demand for autonomy in a peaceful manner with the exception of certain sporadic incidents. It was said that the Paite Federation has submitted memorandum to the Prime

Minister of India when he visited Mizo Hills District in 1953. But there is no document proof of submission of the said memorandum (Hangsing, personal interview, 2017). In December 1963, the PNC of Manipur and Sialkal PNC jointly submitted a memorandum to B.P. Chaliha, Chief Minister of Assam for the constitution of Paite Regional Council within Mizo Hills District of Assam State. The memorandum justified the case of the Paite on grounds of being a distinct tribe with sufficient number of population inhabiting a compact areas of 2,500 square miles and being neglected by the Mizo dominated District Council and comparatively underdeveloped. However, both the District Deputy Commissioner and the Mizo District Council opposed the demand. In the words of the Deputy Commissioner, K Saigal —to concede to the demand for a separate Paite District by slicing some portion of the district...may ultimately result in the complete disintegration of the Mizo District...therefore strongly opposed to measures which are likely to divide up the district by granting separate set ups for the tribes on communal basis (Saigal, 1964)

In February, 1965 the PNC of Manipur submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Assam demanding the early creation of the Paite Regional Council in the Mizo District. They strongly condemned the Government of playing ‘a delaying tactic’ and ‘regionalism’ and ‘communalism’ of which the Paites considered them to be the worse victims (as quoted by Rosanga, 2015). As there were no positive responses, The PNC Mizoram special Assembly at Selam Village on 2nd August to 3rd August 1965 resolved for boycott of Mizo District Council and the order was solemnly released on 5 August 1965. The boycott would be by means of refusing to pay house tax and district council fund. The members of the Village council within the area were also ordered to resign. The report of Political Assistant and ADC Champhai stated that village council members especially near Champhai were not enthusiastic about resignation and the leaders of PNC in Mizoram had taken cue from the leaders of PNC Manipur. But the MNF declaration of Independence in 1966 disrupted the Paite National Council as well as their movement for autonomy as the Rambuai situation does not allow to assert particular tribe identity not to mention raise political demands.

Formation of Mizoram Paite National Council and Demands under the State of Mizoram:

In 1991, as per the resolution of North East India Paite Nam Khawmpi Lian (Paite Assembly for North East India), Paite National Council Mizoram was constituted with Aizawl as the headquarters. The PNC dictated the Paite in their dominated areas to resign from their existing party and formed PNC units in their respective villages. The PNC candidate Paul TK Dawnga contested election to Member of Parliament General Elections (Lok Sabha) held on 23.5.1991 as independent candidate and lost by securing only 4159 votes in his favour. However, In the 3rd Mizoram MLA election held in 30th November.1993, H Zathuama, the President of PNC, who contested from Ngopa constituency as independent candidate supported by the PNC was elected, securing 54.36% of total votes polled. H Zathuama contested the 1998 MLA election from the same constituency as Congress candidate and lost the election. In the same MLA election, Dalngova of PNC leaders contested from Ngopa constituency as independent candidate and lost the election securing 18.02% of votes polled (all MLA election results are adapted from Vanlahruaia, 2004). During these years of PNC dabbling itself in electoral politics, it managed to form Village Council only in limited villages, mostly within Sialkal Range like- Mimbung, Hrainghmun, Teikhang, Kawlbem, Selam, Vaikhawtlang and NE khawdungsei etc. The PNC eventually repealed their resolution of not allowing other political party to function within their demand area in 30th June 2000 (Hangsing, Personal interview, 2017).

The PNC of Mizoram has submitted a memorandum to Shri R Venkataraman, President of India in March 1991 and to the Governor of Mizoram in August 1991, reiterating their demand for the formation of Paite Autonomous District Council, but received no positive response. At the same time, it took a cue from the way the Mizoram government handled the Hmar People’s Convention armed struggle for Hmar Autonomous District Council which ended in 1994 with the formation of Sinlung Hills Development Council. The PNC 4th Assembly held at Vaikhawtlang on 5-6 April 1995 resolved to accept the offer made by Congress ministry for the formation of Paite Area Development Council in principle and submitted the charter of demands (as quoted by Hangsing, 2004). But the Congress party was replaced by the MNF ministry in 1998 and the offer made by the Congress ministry was put on hold. On the eve of Mizoram Assembly Election 2008, the PNC made an electoral

alliance with Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee, which agreed for the formation of Sialkal Tlangdung Development Council. When the Congress came to power in 2008 election, The PTC (PNC was renamed as Paite Tribe council on the 18th June 2004) has submitted memorandum for the constitution of SRDC and special economics package. Eventually Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board was set for six villages within Sialkal Range- Mimbung, Hrianghmun, Teikhang, Kawlbem, Selam and Vaikhawtlang in 2012.

Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board: As per the manual of STDB, the Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board, has its headquarters at Mimbung and it composed of:

Chairman

: Sitting local MLA (21- Lengteng ST)
Assembly Constituency.

Vice Chairman

: VCP of the area on rotation.
Members

: All VCP of the area and DC, Champhai or
representative of DC
Member- Secretary

: SDO (C), Ngopa
Joint –Secretary

: BDO, Ngopa

The term of office is 2 years and the Board shall meet at least once in six months.

The main function of the Board shall be formulation, execution and monitoring of development works/projects within the allotted fund involving 15 assigned areas like – drinking water, improvement of inter-village path, Public toilets, roads, water harvesting, construction of Godowns, construction of retaining walls and drains, Public halls and sports infrastructure, construction of market sheds, construction of public library, construction of Anganwadi and crèches centers, afforestation and improvements of public parks etc.

Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board was changed to Sialkal Range Development Council (SRDC) and Lalthanhawla, the Chief Minister of Mizoram inaugurated the Council on 20th January 2015. However, the PTC found the existing structure and operation of SRDC unsatisfactory. They submitted the Draft Sialkal Range Development Council Act to the Government of Mizoram for its approval in 2017 (Memorandum of PTC,2017).

The Draft Sialkal Range Development Council Act dealt with three main issues. Firstly, it seeks to expand the council to all Paite dominated area, namely, Mimbung, Hrianghmun, Teikhang, Kawlbem, Selam, Vaikhawtlang, Khuangphah, Ngur, Vapar, Hnahlan, Tualcheng, Murlen, Leisenzo, Zokhawthar, Sesih, Ngaizawl, Lungphunlian, NE Khawdungsei, Khawkawn, Chiahpui, Daido, NE Tlangnuam, Vanbawng, Suangpuilawn and North Khawlek. Secondly, empowering the council through the mandate of the people. The Draft proposed for setting up of General Council consisting of 30 members, of whom 25 are to be elected and the constitution of Executive Council consisting of Chairman, Vice Chairman and three Executive Members to be elected by the General Council amongst themselves. Thirdly, increase of the power and functions of the council by means of giving power to:

1. Prepare and execute short and long term development plans/projects.
2. Supervision and monitoring of projects taken by the Government of Mizoram within the Council area.
3. Issue administrative approval of proposal and selection of executing agency.
4. levy and collect fee for the service rendered by it
5. Create and fill up group C and D posts.

In short, the draft Act seeks a kind of Autonomous District Council for the Paite dominated areas by means of expansion of the existing Sialkal Range Development Council. Till now, the Government of Mizoram has not rejected nor accepted the Draft Act.

Conclusion: The Paite movement for autonomy is mainly based on the issue of relative deprivation of the Paite inhabited area and protection of their identity. Raising their demands without resorting to violent means is noteworthy and their wish for development and protection of their identity is nothing but natural. The above study reveals three main interrelated issues that have a deep significance on the whole process of Paite identity assertion and their movement.

Firstly, the Paite in Mizoram are dispersed and their dominated area is limited to around 12 villages. Territorially, they are divided by urban towns like Ngopa, Champhai, Khawzawl and their adjoining areas where they are in minority. There is also a gap between the Paite in Leisenzo and nearby villages, who are leaning towards their brethren in Myanmar and the Paite in Sialkal range and adjoining areas are leaning towards Manipur. Hence the PNC movement is

limited to Sialkal and adjoining area which weakened the movement to a great extent.

Secondly, The Paite movement in Mizoram is to a large extent influenced by the Paite in Manipur. At the initial stages, the Manipur PNC leaders took the initiative of drafting and submitting memoranda. Even after the PNC Mizoram was formed in 1991 having a separate constitution and headquarters, the fact remains that they were functioning under the shadow of PTC General Headquarters of Manipur since the PTC general Headquarters had a power to deliberate the constitution of PTC of Mizoram (PTC General Assembly, Manipur Resolution, 2014) and intervened when the PTC of Mizoram faced serious internal problems. These realities of outside state influence seem to cause apprehension on the part of the leaders of Mizoram.

Thirdly, The Paite Movement is weakened by internal conflict for position and influence of political party. The PTC attempt to wield more political bargaining power through election has proved more or less futile. While, the formation of SRDC could be considered as the achievement of the Paite, but the main political goal of the PTC - upgradation of SRDC so as to make it function as an autonomous council is still a distant dream.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Govt. Zawlnuam College and Research Scholar, Department of political Science, Mizoram University.

**Professor, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University.

References:

Census of India (2001), **Distribution of the 100 Non-Scheduled Languages**

Declaration to boycott of the Mizo District Council by the PNC dated 5th August, 1965, Selam

Siamsinpawlpi Hangsing, Muana. Tuunnu Zogam leh Kei, (2004) *Draft Sialkal Range Development Council*, C Zolawka Publication, Aizawl,

Khiangte, Lalmalsawma (2015), *Elites in the process of Ethnic Identity Formation and Assertion: A study of Mizo Identity*, paper presented at National Seminar on *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in NEI* organized by Dept of Pol.Sc, MZU

Manual of Sialkal Tlangdung Development Board (2013) Planning and Programme Implementation Department ID no G.28014/56/2023-14/PLG(RDB)dated 19.04.2013

Memorandum submitted to Shri Lal Thanhawla, Chief Minister Mizoram for up gradation of SRDC by PTC Mizoram dated 18th February 2017

Memorandum jointly submitted by PNC Manipur and Sialkal Paite National Council. Mizoram Sate Archive CB 114. G 1379

Ngaihte, S. Thianlalmuan, (2015). *Elite, Identity and Politics in Manipur*, Mittal, Delhi, p. 46.

Resolution passed by NEI Paite Hnam Khawmpui Dated 6-9.3.1991

Report of Political Assistant and ADC Champhai to Deputy Commissioner, (1965) Mizo District dated 11. Oct.

Rosanga,O, (2015) *Revisiting the Paite Movement for Regional Council In Mizoram*, paper presented at National Seminar on *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in NEI* organized by Dept of Pol.Sc, MZU

Census of India Report(2011) Scheduled Tribe Population.

Saigal,K(1964). *Letter to AC Ray, Deputy Secretary to the Government of Assam*, Mizoram Sate Archive CB 114.G 1379 dated Aizawl 29.6.1964

Tribal Research Institute (2011) *Paite in Mizoram*, TBI, Aizawl, reprint, pp. 1-.10

Vanlalhruaia. (2004) Mizoram MLA leh MP inthlan Result 1972-2003, Lengchhawn Press,Aizawl, , P133.

--

(2014)<http://www.imphaltimes.com/news/item/1188-ptc-general-assembly-dated-17th-October>

Empowerment of Scheduled Castes in India: A Retrospective Reading

Prof.K.V.Reddy*

Abstract: This paper is aimed at reading the main problems that affected the single largest community of Scheduled Castes (SCs) that suffered the social exclusion across the country. It is also intended to study their socio-economic progression at the macro-level in India. Although it's a comprehensive study of their socio-political empowerment, the paper identifies the role of various institutional actors that were responsible for their existing predicament. Moreover, the paper tries to explore a few retrospective strategies that were tried to address the problem of their disempowerment for over several decades. Based on some micro-level studies, authored by academics as well as social activists in the country, the paper exposes their abstract views of the caste problem. This paper argues that the approaches adopted by those state and society, who were essentially accountable for the caste problem, seem to be superficial and hardly beneficial. Since the socio-political empowerment is very crucial for the overall empowerment of the SCs this paper has focused on some socio-political dimensions. The paper has also focused on caste and its multiple repercussions on the disempowerment of SCs. Eventually the paper argues that the Ambedkarite position had become reasonably helpful towards achieving the objective of their overall empowerment.

Key words: Empowerment, Social Hierarchy, Schedule Castes, Dr.BRAMbedkar, Reservations, Political power

At the outset, this paper is aimed at understanding the main problems that affected the Scheduled Castes (SCs) that constitute the significant chunk of Indian population. And, the paper is an effort to study the process of their socio-economic progression retrospectively, at the macro-level in the country. Incidentally, being the single largest community that suffered the social exclusion the most, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) are spread across almost all the states in India. According to an old estimate they constitute more than 15% of the Indian population. It's a comprehensive study of their socio-political empowerment. Yet, the paper identifies the role of various actors, both at the institutional and individual levels that were responsible for their existing predicament. Also, the paper tries to explore various strategies that were tried to address the problem of their disempowerment for over several decades. Based on some observed findings that stem from a few micro-level studies, authored by academics as well as social activists belonging to several states in the country, the paper exposes their notional approving of the caste problem.

This paper argues that the strategies adopted by those state and civil society, who were actually liable for the genesis and evolution of the caste problem, seem to be superficial and hardly beneficial. Despite the tactic of reservations that offered certain economic opportunities to a

fraction of SCs, socio-political empowerment has not been achieved. Since the socio-political empowerment is very crucial for their overall empowerment this paper has focused on socio-political dimensions. The paper has also focused on caste¹ and its multiple implications on the disempowerment of SCs. Besides, it deals with the politics of reservations in the context of increasing globalization in the country. The paper eventually argues that the Ambedkarite position² had become reasonably supportive towards achieving the objective of their socio-political empowerment to an extent.

Social Hierarchy: The Indian caste system can be described as an elaborately stratified social hierarchy, distinguishing its social structure from any other nation. The caste system is multifaceted and complex. Caste is a social evil and the untouchability is the product of caste based social system. Many social reform struggles were launched against its practice. Under the gifted leadership of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, this evil effect of untouchability was widely exposed to the Western world. Thus the casteist society was compelled to the social pressure and thereby untouchability was abolished legally. Since 1950, as per the constitution, Indian government had enacted numerous laws to benefit the SCs. Yet, the governments were hushed up when these laws were hardly implemented. Obviously, more than

the other weaker sections, the SCs were disempowered for over centuries.

In view of the casteist social hierarchy, the SC community has been placed at the bottommost of social ladder that was founded on merely the birth of an individual. Once born in such compartmentalized social system, the SCs were compelled to continue as such and thereby degraded as the 'lowest caste'. Since degraded in the uneven social spectrum, the community was deprived of all human rights, civil or otherwise. Thus, it was kept at a social distance individually and community-wise even in the remote areas of habitation. Evidently, any sort of natural resources viz., land, housing, assets and water that were very basic to one's livelihood were denied to them customarily. Besides, the community was barred from getting educated, due to predominance of casteist code of social conduct. Those SCs who tried to infringe such unsocial code were dealt with severely and boycotted socially and thereby exploited economically. Failed to secure any bearable advance, the community could not improve its livelihood. In other words, the community that suffered the most social and economic exclusion was in no position to stand up on its feet, leave alone getting empowered.

However, thanks to the scheme of reservations, a section of SCs had become educated as well as employed. Despite their rise in economic and education levels, caste discrimination acquired a new form that continued to persist. And, an overview of different forms of untouchability that denied the SCs an access to basic public services as was observed by a study³ vindicates the point. Besides, certain routine media reports of non-SC children refusing to eat midday meals, cooked by SCs in states like the Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, expose the gravity of problem of casteist discrimination. Even today, news of casteist violence⁴ and discriminatory practices stare one in the face, despite the inclusion of anti-untouchability provision (Article 17) in the fundamental rights. Besides, numerous other enactments 'within' and 'without' the Indian constitution were hardly applied. For instance, even after passage of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in 1989, the safety and protection of SCs is left to their fate, as there is a rise in crime rate against them.

According to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) report in 2002, —Under-reporting (atrocities) is a common phenomenon and the police resort to various machinations to discourage SC/ST (persons) from registering

their cases, to dilute the seriousness of the violence to shield the accused persons from arrests and prosecution". In a way, this report reflects the ineffectuality of the Act that was elevated beyond all proportions! Even, the judiciary can be held accountable for the police lapses, as most of the accused under the IPC Act, have been acquitted under the SC/ST Act. According to the National Bureau of Crime Report (2006), 27070 crimes were committed against SCs, though many more go unreported. Evidently, data on the civil rights cases shows that out of the total cases registered in 1991, only 1.56% was convicted⁵. Less said the better about latest instances of atrocities against the SCs in several states including Gujarat. Irrespective of one's abilities and skills, the SCs have been subjected to suffer from untouchability as usual and thereby excluded socially and otherwise.

Empowerment Issues: A common notion of 'empowerment' has been assumed as 'strengthening capacities', which can be achieved through the people's 'full participation'. Of course, strengthening of capacities is crucial to the emancipation of any oppressed group. But one has to see if it is possible to achieve that without removing the structural social restrictions on their capacities. Such a definition does not imply liberation from the burdens which have traditionally and caste-wise constrained fuller realization of human potential in the case of SCs. Such pressures do operate at various levels including socio-economic structures and political process which the multidimensional concept of 'empowerment' does not capture. Thus, the term 'empowerment' implies formal rather than substantive power and it involves an external agency to grant power rather than people below seizing it in the course of struggle.

Moreover, the concept of empowerment is very loaded and its multiple dimensions need to be kept in view. Empowerment is about making one powerful, based on one's inherent individual abilities. It is about creating an environment wherein one can empower oneself. In other words, once an educational environment is created then one can achieve an educational qualification, for instance. With an educational achievement one can become empowered educationally. It is not to be understood as 'giving something' externally to those like the SCs for being empowered socially or otherwise. For, since the community was deprived of its right to demonstrate its capability and prove its mettle due to the external agencies like the

upper castes, it was disempowered over the years. Yet, it was the instance of Dr. Ambedkar and many other SCs who having had high profile educational qualifications swimming across the currents could still emerge as the top-ranking Indians abroad.

Process of Social Inclusion: Notwithstanding the reluctance of the civil society, the state and its governmental agencies had inaugurated a new era of affirmative action in the independent India. Despite many a limitation, the scheme of reservation, aimed at reverse discrimination, has certainly helped lakhs of SCs to be educated and thousands of them to be employed in the Public sector. Certainly, very many of them had become significant part of our political leadership at the Centre and in several states. Overall, a small fraction of the community had become economically uplifted slowly and gradually. Yet, their social empowerment was incomplete. Unless social empowerment is achieved, their inclusive empowerment will still be a distant dream. For, empowerment is a potential concept that could uplift any community including the SCs from their prevalent predicament.

Because of social crusaders like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Sant Ravidas and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the evil of untouchability was interrogated over a period of time. Dr. Ambedkar was more forthright in his struggle against casteism at home and abroad. Owing to his serious efforts of educating and organizing the untouchable communities, process of social liberation was initiated long before India attained Independence. In consequence, he was instrumental in getting certain safeguards assured for the disadvantaged sections from the British government. Be it settlement of land or separate electorate for the purpose of his community was approved off in the Round Table Conferences held at London. At home, certain attempts were made to bring back these discriminated communities into the mainstream⁶. Thus, the alien rulers had also enacted a few social policies whereby the untouchables and others were liberated from the age-old clutches of caste-discrimination.

Thanks to Dr. Ambedkar again, political equality has been achieved ever since there surfaced a political situation of, 'one man-one vote, and one vote-one value' in the country. Since the SCs have got their proportional strength, politically if not otherwise, the political parties had to cultivate their electorate on a regular basis. Thus, the rise of 'vote bank' politics had been witnessed for over a few decades after

independence. However, due to their rising political awareness, the SC votes could not be taken for granted any more, as was the case for so long. In fact, one could witness rise of social movements that were organized by the SCs and also a few political parties under their leadership in various states.

Incidentally, various political parties and pressure groups have endorsed accordingly the will of state that is reflected in the preamble of Constitution. Numerous Constitutional provisions are there clearly safeguarding the interests of this community. Suffice it to cite the case of such provisions like the Fundamental Rights (FRs) as well as the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP). Besides, several acts and enactments were formulated at various points of time in several states. Theoretically speaking, the community is the most protected one in the country. However, contrary to that is the experience of SCs under various regimes so far.

Further, it is the state and government that launched a few programmes of socio-economic nature in the country. Yet, the state and government cannot initiate any radical programme that would undermine the interests of dominant stakeholders like the upper castes in the Indian society. Even if there was one, that could not be implemented to its logical end. Thus, one observes a design of frequent acts and enactments that were aimed at manipulating the SCs. Series of schemes and programmes were notified and introduced. Yet, none of them were fulfilled to any extent so that the SCs could be benefitted. This is what one could observe from the cases of SC-oriented socio-economic programmes as per the Plans and Sub-plans⁷. In consequence, the SCs had always been at the mercy of those political regimes that acted contrary to their interests.

Politics of Reservations: Thanks to B. R. Ambedkar's instrumental role in the Constitution-making, the reservation policy has been devised to undo the prevailing/age-old reservations to the upper castes from times immemorial. The policy was conceived as a short-term measure to promote social justice on the basis of principle of distributive justice and compensation for past disadvantages. In a way, it was described as a measure of 'reverse reservation'. And, the governments were bound to implement the policy of reservations only in the public sector areas like education and employment, which employed not more than 10% of workforce in the country, in any case!⁸ Even such little gesture or tokenism as of

reservation policy was half-heartedly implemented in the public sector that had been shrinking over a period of time due to liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) policies in the country. As part of continuity of privatisation process, the state has pursued the policies of more privatisation since 1990s. In the wake of two-decade-long globalisation (1990-2010), the Indian state practised the policies of LPG, whereby public sector became under the weather. Still, the private sector was persuaded to take over and own such, the so-called sick units that were under public sector, at a throw away prices!

In the context of the remaining 90% of the job market, it was always controlled by the private sector. Several studies⁹ on Labour Market reveal that insignificant percentage of these communities was employed, while excluding large majority of them by way of discrimination. Whereas those near and dear or kith and kin of the private managements were given jobs beyond their population percentage! In any case, vast majority of private institutions were rarely queried on providing jobs to the candidates of the SCs. Understandably, the private sector was under no obligation to fulfil the constitutional requirements. More than the private sector, the casteist and elitist bureaucracy were reluctant to implement the same. Of course, the 'Economic Reforms' in the wake of globalisation, had slowly shaken the economic foundations of the SCs and STs. Thus, the concept received a setback as these governments retreated on the issue. In consequence, more than anyone else it is these who were the first ones to be affected very adversely as there was no reservation in private sector⁴.

Besides, these reservations were extended to the political field as well, of course in proportion to their population size. Due to the notorious 'Poona pact'¹⁰, the political reservations have been scarcely gainful to the SCs and STs. Still, the upper castes had devised different methods of sabotaging even these political reservations. For instance, those spineless and selfish representatives belonging to these lower castes will usually be selected and picked up so as to get them elected as 'reserved' legislators! In other words, the existent territorial constituencies cannot represent/safeguard the SCs or their community interests at all, as bulk of the voters invariably belong to the non- SCs. As Kanshiram¹¹ termed as stooges in the hands of upper castes, such reserved legislators who had no other option but to dance to the tunes of their non-SC (upper caste) masters.

Political Power: While some of the inclusive strategies were initiated by the state and governmental agencies, some others were introduced by the civil society organizations that were associated with the SCs and other marginalized communities in some states in the country. Consequently, the remedial measures that were offered by the state and governmental agencies have hardly uplifted them economically, leave alone socially. Rather, the SCs have been subjected to multiple ways of embarrassment in several states. The politics of reservations that helped a small section of SCs in securing some living opportunities in terms of education and employment in the public sector hardly elevated their socio-cultural identity. Correspondingly, the strategies and methods that got underway by some non-state actors like the Ambedkarite groups, SC organizations and SC-based political parties were helpful to some extent, leave alone their empowerment!

Incidentally, Dr. Ambedkar had campaigned many an occasion that if the SCs were to enjoy the benefits of their constitutional and legal rights, they were to connect together all the marginalized groups on the basis of unity and fraternity, bring them on a strong political platform and capture the 'Master Key' of political power. To cite a few lines from what he said on such occasions, 'Understand our ultimate goal. Our ultimate goal is to become the rulers of this country. Write this goal on the walls of your houses so that you will never forget. Our struggle is not for the few jobs and concessions but we have a larger goal to achieve. That goal is to become the rulers of the land'.

As part of continuing his struggle against casteist exclusion, Dr. Ambedkar appealed to his fellow communities, "Politics should be the life-blood of the Scheduled Castes." Since politics of the congress party, the mouthpiece of the dominant castes was considered detrimental to the interests of marginalized, Dr. Ambedkar tried to form a broad-based movement of all the victims of Manu-wadi social system, who came to be described as bahun samaj, later on, by Kanshiram. Taking cue from Ambedkar and his appeal of capturing political power, various SC groups and parties that subscribed to the Ambedkarism started organizing their pressure groups along political lines. Thus, what Dr Ambedkar had declared at once the political goal of his struggle had ultimately laid the foundation of bahun samaj movement in the country, in a way.

Of late, emergence of the SC- oriented political parties has been noticed in some states. Even some SC leadership-based parties had surfaced on the political horizon of the country. Certainly, through the efforts of Kanshiram, one witnessed the rise of a SC missionary movement that came to be known as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984, for instance. Kanshiram's socio-political movement of Bahujan Samaj is a case in point. In retrospection, as a movement and party, it has raised the confidence levels among the SCs and other marginalized communities towards empowerment in the country. Within a short span of three decades, the socio-political gathering had become the third largest national party in the country. Owing to its innovative ideas and distinctive strategies, the party became a ruling party in the largest state of India, the Uttar Pradesh on a couple of occasions. Perhaps, this seems to be an important way forward that could help them achieving the SC Empowerment in the country.

To conclude it, due to the divisive role of caste in Indian social hierarchy, castes and sub castes played critical role in diverse ways. For, on the basis of one's birth in a social category alone, one's lifelong achievements would be assessed in the country. Even after one's death one's place in the history would be situated accordingly, indeed! Incidentally, it is one's caste in the social ladder that undermines or elevates an individual either way. Owing to Dr. Ambedkar's leading role in the Constitution making, the reservations were included for the SCs and STs. Thus, the governments were bound to implement them on the basis of principle of positive discrimination and reimbursement for past disadvantages. Despite many an initiative, constitutionally and otherwise, this single largest community of SCs had hardly benefitted socially. Leave alone developing on account of various schemes and programmes, the SC community remained stagnant economically.

Viewed retrospectively, it is the political empowerment of SCs that would become pivotal to their achievement of socio-economic empowerment in the long run. In other words, political empowerment of the marginalized SCs alone could perhaps clinch the issue in their favor. This could be the basic tactic for formation of Bahujan political systems at the centre and in states. Perhaps, only such regimes

and governments could enforce the constitutional and legal rights in favor of the SCs and other marginalized. And it would eventually provide needed socio-economic and political opportunities to their moving forward in all spheres of life, besides enabling the other weaker sections to lead a life of self-respect and dignity in the state and society.

*Authored by Prof.K.V.Reddy, Head, Dept of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl-796004; Email: kvidyasagarr@gmail.com

References and Notes:

1. An eminent sociologist GS Ghurye observed, 'Case in India is a Brahminic child of the Indo-Aryan culture cradled in the land of the Ganga and Yamuna and hence transferred to other parts of the country'.
2. As part of ensuring social transformation of Indian social hierarchy, Dr Ambedkar had launched many a struggle and achieved partial success. Yet, his dream of 'annihilation of caste' could not be realized during his time. Thus he had appealed to his fellow Dalits to be part of a struggle for political empowerment so that their numerous problems could be addressed. Accordingly, his slogan of 'political power as master key' that was assumed by a few political institutions like the BSP can be contextualized with the prevalent urge of Dalits for empowerment.
3. An Action Aid-conducted intensive survey of 555 villages in 11 states in 2000 provided the data on the subject. Denial of access to basic public services like water facilities, barbers' services, carpenters, potters, village shops/hotels, health centres and public transport has been observed quite glaringly.
4. Of late, Anita's suicide in Tamil Nadu, and Rohit Vemula's death in Hyderabad are fresh incidents of SC atrocities.
5. Thorat, Sukhdeo, 2013 Op. Cit.
6. Chatrapathi Sahuji Maharaji was responsible implementing certain reservation schemes whereby the non-Brahmins were employed in his Kolhapur state for the first time.
7. The Scheduled Caste Plans (SCP) and Scheduled Tribe Sub Plans (STP) were conceived and initiated in some states so as to financially benefit the SCs and STs in proportionately to their populations.
8. Countercurrents.Org.dated August 14, 2005
9. Sukhdeo Thorat and others (ed), Op.cit.
10. As part of Poona pact, Dr.Ambedkar yielding to the hunger strike pressure of MKGandhi had compromised on his earlier stand of 'separate electorate' on September 24, 1932.
- 11.Kanshiram (1982), 'The Chamcha Age: An Era of Stooges', New Delhi: Bahujan Publications.

A Comparative Study of Mental Health in Urban And Rural Young Mizo Adults

*Rinpari Ralte

Abstract: Mental health is a very relevant issue in the contemporary world. The present study examines the mental health of young adults living in urban and rural areas. The main objective of the study is to assess gender differences in mental health. It is also hypothesized that residence (urban and rural) would also have an effect on mental health. One hundred twenty nine participants (61 from urban area and 68 from rural area), both males and females, aged 20 to 40 completed the Mental Health Checklist. Results indicated significant correlations between the subscales. Results also revealed significant gender differences in mental health and that females significantly reported more mental and somatic symptoms than males. However, no significant independent effect of residence (urban and rural) as well as a significant interaction effect of gender and residence was found.

Keywords: mental health, mental, somatic, young adults

Introduction

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (WHO, 2014).

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The WHO constitution states: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. It is related to the promotion of well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, and the treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders.

Determinants of mental health: Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time. For example, persistent socio-economic pressures are recognized risks to mental health for individuals and communities. The clearest evidence is associated with indicators of poverty, including low levels of education. Poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, and unhealthy lifestyle, risks of violence,

physical ill-health and human rights violations.

There are also specific psychological and personality factors that make people vulnerable to mental disorders. Lastly, there are some biological causes of mental disorders including genetic factors which contribute to imbalances in chemicals in the brain.

Urban living and Mental Health: In India, it is expected that 50% of the population will live in urban areas in the next two decades. Urbanization brings deleterious consequences for mental health through the influence of increased stressors and factors such as overcrowded and polluted environments, dependence on a cash economy, high levels of violence, and reduced social support (Shah, Parhee, Kumar, Khanna, & Singh, 2005).

Living in an urban environment has long been known to be a risk factor for psychiatric diseases, such as major depression or schizophrenia. This is true even though infrastructure, socioeconomic conditions, nutrition and health care services are clearly better in cities than in rural areas. Higher stress exposure and higher stress vulnerability seem to play a crucial role. Social stress may be the most important factor for the increased risk of mental disorders in urban areas. As for the impact on mental health, social stress seems to outweigh other urban stressors such as pollution or noise. A recent meta-analysis showed that urban dwellers have a 20 per

cent higher risk of developing anxiety disorders, and a 40 per cent higher risk of developing mood disorders (Adli, 2011).

Rural Mental Health: Gray (2011) has contributed a comprehensive description of issues and directions in rural mental health research. Wagenfeld (2003) described rural populations as differing from urban populations in that they have a larger proportion of elderly persons, but a smaller proportion of minorities than urban areas. Rural areas have lower incomes and slightly higher unemployment rates. Rural residents have lower levels of insurance coverage, lower likelihood of receiving prescription drug coverage, and a higher likelihood of receiving Medicare, and lesser benefits. Rural residents self-reported health status tends to be fair or poor and the prevalence of physician-diagnosed chronic conditions were higher. Also, rural areas had fewer and less well-trained health care providers and greater numbers of suboptimal healthcare facilities. Rural residents face significant problems, including high unemployment, poverty, low educational levels, out-migration of youth, and loss of community (Campbell, Kearns, & Patchin, 2006; Wagenfeld, 2003).

Mental Health of Young Adults:

Mental disorders account for a large proportion of the disease burden in young people in all societies. Most mental disorders begin during youth (12-24 years of age), although they are often first detected later in life. Poor mental health is strongly related to other health and development concerns in young people, notably lower educational achievements, substance abuse, violence, and poor reproductive and sexual health. The effectiveness of some interventions for some mental disorders in this age-group have been established, although more research is urgently needed to improve the range of affordable and feasible interventions, since most mental-health needs in young people are unmet, even in high-income countries (Patel., Flisher., Hetrick., & McGorry, 2007).

In the era of an ageing population, young adults on medical wards are quite

rare, as only 12% of young adults report a long-term illness or disability. However, mental health problems remain prevalent in the younger population. In a recent report, mental health and obesity were listed as the most common problems in young adults (Jurewicz, 2015). In a study of perceived social support and mental health among single vs. partnered polish young adults, single individuals reported lower emotional well-being than partnered individuals. No differences emerged between single and partnered individuals in regard to social and psychological well-being, as well in total well-being. Results also revealed no differences between single and partnered individuals in regard to somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction, severe depression, and total mental health problems (Adamczyk & Segrin, 2015). Das (2105) examined the mental health scenario of women population in Kamrup district of Assam with respect to their urban-rural family background and marital status. The study reveals that a large majority of women have possessed average mental health. There is a significant difference between the urban and the rural women in mental health but no differences are found between married and single women on this area.

In the light of the existing literature, it is hoped that examining the mental health of young adults per se and the impact of rural and urban residence on mental health would provide knowledge and contribute extensively in the field of mental health in the Mizo population. Furthermore, the study is expected to provide positive implications in terms of bridging the gap between rural and urban mental health resources, and suggesting provisions for mental health services to those in need of psychological help.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be significant gender differences in mental health.
2. Females will have more mental and somatic symptoms than males.

3. Urban young adults will exhibit poor mental health than rural young adults.

Method:

Sample: The sample consists of 129 participants (61 urban – 31 females and 30 males; and 68 rural – 37 females and 31 males). Following incidental sampling method the urban sample were selected from Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram and rural sample belonged to Phulpui village, a small village located in Aizawl district. The age of the selected sample ranged from 20 to 40 years ($M = 29.43$ years).

Tools: Mental Health Check-list (MHC; Kumar, P, 1992): The check-list is used to identify persons with poor mental health and in need of psychodiagnostic help. It contains 11 items and it has two parts, 6 items representing mental symptoms and 5 items representing somatic symptoms. The check-list is presented in a 4-point rating format. The total score varies from 11 to 44, showing the highest to the lowest (poorest) mental health status of the person.

Background information/ personal details like educational qualification, occupation, monthly income, as well as marital status of the participants are also included in this check-list.

Results and Discussion: The study aimed to assess the mental health of young Mizo adults living in urban and rural areas, and also to see the effects of residence in an urban and rural area on mental health. It was hypothesized that there would be significant gender differences in mental health. It was also expected that urban and rural residence

would have some effect on mental health of the target sample.

A preliminary psychometric analysis (Table-1) was first done and it manifested the trustworthiness of the scale for the target population, and the variables have shown significant positive relationships. Results depicted that gender has a significant independent effect on mental symptoms, somatic symptoms, and mental health, contributing (Eta square) 31%, 42%, and 52% each on the behavioral measures respectively. Mean comparisons (Table-2) depicted greater mean scores in mental symptoms among females ($M = 19.97$) than males ($M = 18.16$); greater mean scores in somatic symptoms among females ($M = 9.50$) than males ($M = 8.56$); greater mean scores in mental health among females ($M = 19.97$) than males ($M = 18.16$). Higher means in females revealed that females have poor mental health as compared to males. They may be under great mental strain which manifests itself in mental as well as somatic symptoms. Thus, the first and second hypotheses were supported. Findings support a study by Mehar & Sekhri (2013) where they found a significant difference between mental health of male and female teacher trainees. Findings also support a study of mental health among young adults (customer care executives) in call centers, wherein they were found to have moderate to high depression and also manifested moderate anxiety which they attribute to the increasing stressful life in the metropolitan cities (Kumar, Sharma & Singh, 2007).

Table 1: showing the means and standard deviations for gender, pearson's correlation coefficients with the reliability index (cronbach alpha) for the whole sample

Variables	Mean	SD	Mental	Somatic	Mental Health
Mental	10.05	2.41	(0.63)		
Somatic	9.05	2.31	0.43**	(0.54)	
Mental Health	19.12	3.98	0.85**	0.84**	(0.70)

** correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Note: Values in the diagonals (parentheses) are the reliability coefficients (cronbach alpha) of the psychological measures

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA for gender on mental health

Gender	Statistics	Variables			ANOVA				
		Mental	Somatic	Mental Health	Source	Variable	F	Sig	Eta ²
Female	Mean	10.46	9.50	19.97	Gender	Mental	4.08	0.05*	0.31
	SD	2.38	2.46	4.21		Somatic	5.56	0.02*	0.42
Male	Mean	9.61	8.56	18.16		Mental Health	6.93	0.01**	0.52
	SD	2.39	2.02	3.50					
Total	Mean	10.05	9.05	19.12					
	SD	2.41	2.31	3.98					

From Table 3, it can be seen that the mean mental health score for urban and rural young adults were 19.62 and 18.66 respectively, indicating poor mental health in urban youth as compared to rural youth. Higher levels of mental symptoms (M= 10.21 in urban, M= 9.91 in rural) and somatic symptoms (M= 9.39 in urban, M= 8.75 in rural) are also observed in the urban samples. However, this difference is non-significant. One study from data collected through the 2007 U.S. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicated that those from urban areas had an adjusted 17% greater incidence of psychological distress than those in rural

areas (Dhingra, Strine, Holt, Berry, & Mokdad, 2009).

After controlling for the demographic variables as covariates, results of ANCOVA revealed that gender still has a significant independent effect on mental symptoms, somatic symptoms, and mental health, contributing (Eta square) 4%, 4%, and 6% each on the behavioral measures respectively. Although it was hypothesized that significant effects of residence would be seen, no significant independent effect of residence (urban and rural) as well an interaction effect of residence and gender was observed.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and ANCOVA of the behavioral measure for the whole sample.

Residence	Gender	Statistics	Variables			ANCOVA				
			Mental	Somatic	Mental Health	Source	Variable	F	Sig	Eta ²
Urban	Female	Mean	10.65	9.71	20.39	Residence	Mental	0.49	0.48	
		SD	2.76	2.47	4.61		Somatic	3.53	0.06	
	Male	Mean	9.77	9.07	18.83		Mental health	2.29	0.13	
		SD	2.45	2.27	4.14					
	Total	Mean	10.21	9.39	19.62	Gender	Mental	5.19	0.02*	0.04
		SD	2.63	2.38	4.42		Somatic	4.78	0.03*	0.04
Rural	Female	Mean	10.30	9.32	19.62		Mental health	7.24	0.01*	0.06
		SD	2.03	2.48	3.88					
	Male	Mean	9.45	8.06	17.52	Residence x Gender	Mental	0.06	0.81	
		SD	2.36	1.63	2.66		Somatic	1.46	0.23	
	Total	Mean	9.91	8.75	18.66		Mental health	0.68	0.41	
		SD	2.21	2.22	3.51					

Mean comparisons (Table-3) also depicted greater mean scores in mental symptoms among urban females (M=10.65) than urban males (M=9.77), as well as rural females (M=10.30) than rural males (M= 9.45); greater mean scores in somatic symptoms among urban females (M= 9.71) than urban males (M= 9.07), as well as rural females (M= 9.32) than rural males (M=

8.06); greater mean scores in mental health among urban females (M= 20.39) than urban males (M=18.83), as well as rural females (M= 19.62) than rural males (M= 17.52). However, these differences are not statistically significant. Research studies have found that adolescents and young adults who were born in and grew up in the same rural community were

at lower risk of being diagnosed with acute reaction to stress and depression compared to their matched controls who were not born in and did not grow up in the same rural community. This study provides some compelling evidence of the protective role of rural environments in the development of specific mental health conditions like depression, adjustment reaction, and acute reaction to stress (Maggi et al., 2010).

To conclude, it may be stated that females differ significantly than males in mental health, reporting more mental and somatic symptoms. This indicates that they have poor mental health as compared to males. A number of factors may be linked to poor mental health, and this implies that remedial measures in terms of proper mental health services be provided to promote well-being in the said population.

*Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Psychology, Pachhunga University College

References

- Adamczyk, K., & Segrin, C. (2015). Perceived Social Support and Mental Health Among Single vs. Partnered Polish Young Adults. *Curr Psychol*, 34, 82–96. doi: 10.1007/s12144-014-9242-5
- Adli, M. (2011). Urban Stress and Mental Health. *Cities, Health, and Well-Being*, Hong Kong
- Campbell, C. D., Kearns, L. A., & Patchin, S. (2006). Psychological needs and responses as perceived by rural and urban psychologists. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 37, 45–50. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.37.1.45
- Das, S. (2015). Study on the Mental Health of women in a district of Assam, India with special reference to their urban-rural family background And marital status. *The Clarion- International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 4, 1, 127-133.
- Dhingra, S. S., Strine, T. W., Holt, J. B., Berry, J. T., & Mokdad, A. H. (2009). Rural-urban variations in psychological distress: Findings from the behavioral risk factor surveillance system, 2007. *International Journal of Public Health*, 54 Suppl 1, 16-22. doi:10.1007/s00038-009-0002-5
- Gray, J.S. (2011). *Rural mental health research white paper*. Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.
- Jurewicz, I. (2015). Mental health in young adults and adolescents - supporting general physicians to provide holistic care. *Clinical Medicine*, 15, 2, 151- 154. doi: 10.7861/clinmedicine.15-2-151
- Kumar, D., Sharma, V., & Singh, T. B. (2007). A Study of Mental Health among Customer Care Executives in Call Centers. *Amity Journal of Behavioural and Forensic Sciences*, 3, 2, 22-29.
- Maggi, S., Ostry, A., Callaghan, K., Hershler, R., Chen, L., D'Angiulli, A., & Hertzman, C. (2010). Rural-urban migration patterns and mental health diagnoses of adolescents and young adults in British Columbia, Canada: a case-control study. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 4, 13, doi: 10.1186/1753-2000-4-13.
- Mehar, R., & Sekhri, A. (2013). Study of Life Satisfaction of Teacher Trainees in relation to their Mental Health. *Academicia: An International Multidisciplinary Research*, 3, 6, 183-190. doi: 10.5958/j.2249-7137.3.6.016
- Patel, V., Flisher, A.J., Hetrick, S., & McGorry, P. (2007). Mental health of young people: a global public-health challenge. *Lancet*, 14: 369(9569), 1302-1313.
- Riding-Malon, R., & Werth, Jr, J.L. (2014). Psychological practice in Rural Settings: At the Cutting Edge. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 45 (2), 85-91. doi: 10.1037/a0036172
- Shah, B., Parhee, R., Kumar, N., Khanna, T., & Singh, R. (2005). *Mental Health Research in India*. Indian Council for Medical Research, New Delhi.
- Wagenfeld, M. O. (2003). *Portrait of rural and frontier America*. In B. H. Stamm (Ed.), *Rural behavioral health care: An interdisciplinary guide* (pp. 33– 40). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/10489-002
- World Health Organization. (2014). *Mental Health: A State of well-Being*. Accessed May 13, 2015 from

http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/
World Health Organization. (2014). Mental Health: strengthening our Response.

Accessed May 13, 2015 from
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/>

Contextualizing Coalition Politics in Mizoram

Lallianchhunga*

Abstract: *In the Indian political system, coalition politics has become an indispensable phenomenon ever since the Fourth General Elections in 1967, which brought to an end twenty years of 'one-party dominance' system. In fact, this General Election had brought about a sudden and radical change in the political spectrum of the country. The rise of a multi-party non-congress governments both at the centre and in 'majority of the states' till date as an alternative to one-party dominant situation is a case in point. Hence, the paper will explore the concept and evolution of coalition politics at the national level in India. Attempt will also be made to highlight the emergence of coalition politics at the State level, especially the State of Mizoram in the post-Peace Accord period. The focus of the paper, however, will be on Mizoram, where some serious experiments of coalition formation among political parties have not yet made impressive and convincing results, leading to the arrangement of a stable coalition government in the state. The paper will look into the reasons for the failure of coalition formation.*

Key Words: Coalition politics, Elections, National Democratic Alliance, Mizoram, Political parties

I

Coalition Government is generally described as —a cooperative arrangement under which distinct political parties or at all events members of such parties came together to form a government or ministry” (Ogg, 1963). It is also “a parliamentary or political grouping less permanent than a party or a faction or an interest group” (Riker, 1968). The need of coalition arises where legislation requires a majority to pass, but no one party controls as many as half of the seats in the legislature (McLean, 1996). Thus, coalition government is an off-shoot of competitive multi-party politics in the event of the inability of any single party “to form a ministry commanding a working majority” in the legislature (Ogg, 1963). Coalition Government is usually visible in a country which adopts parliamentary democratic form of government where various political parties compete with one another in order to win majority of seats to run the government. Coalition Government is possible because of the existence of multi-party system in a democratic set up. It is, in fact, a phenomenon of a multi-party government where a number of political parties join hands for running the government, which is otherwise not possible in a parliamentary democracy where there is a truncated mandate from the people in the election (Fadia, 1984). Thus, coalition government is formed when many splinter groups in the legislature agree to join hands in a common platform by sinking their broad differences and cobble a majority in the Lower House.

TPOLOGY OF PARTIES: Broadly speaking, coalition governments are of three kinds, such as Grand coalition, Stable coalition and Unstable multi-party coalition government. The “Grand

Coalition” existed in Britain during the First and Second World Wars, in Austria from 1945 to 1966 and in West Germany particularly from December 1966 to 1969. The “Stable Coalition” can be found in the Scandinavian countries, Holland and Belgium, Ceylon and also sometimes in India, especially from 1999 to 2004 under the National Democratic Alliance. A third variety of coalitions, that is the Multi-party coalition government, is frequently found in France (under the Third and the Fourth Republic), Italy and now in India as well.

Besides, another three types of coalition governments have been brought out by Lane and Ersson depending on how large the parliamentary support is (138). These are: (I) Minority or less than 50 percent support; (II) Small minority or more than 50 per cent and less than 60 per cent support; (III) Grand coalition or over-sized governments with more than 60 per cent support. The minority model tends to prevail in the Scandinavian countries, whereas the grand coalitions are to be found in the consociational countries in Central Europe on the one hand and in the new democracies in the Eastern Europe on the other (Lane & Ersson, 1996). Minority coalition governments have existed in India both at the centre and in some states, but majority coalition governments have been the rule rather than the exception (Chander, 2004).

It is generally accepted that the coalition governments, by their very nature, are bound to be transient. In the *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government*, Lawrence C. Dodd presents the arguments of eminent scholars who have opined that coalition governments were bound to be unstable (14). In his *Governments and Parties in*

Continental Europe (1896), A. Lawrence Lowell argued that parliamentary system tends to produce a strong and efficient government only if the majority consists of a single party. His argument has been re-affirmed subsequently by several political scholars in their work. Lord Bryce, in his *Modern Democracies* (1921) opined that a government formed by a conglomerate of parties is bound to be weak because of the unstable and conflicting character of the compromise involved.

In the *Parliamentary Government in England* (1938), Harold J. Laski was of the opinion that stable government requires a majority party system. He further argued that the multi-party system either results in a coalition with its —inherent erosion of principles” or provides a minority government which is likely to be weak. Maurice Duverger, in his *Political Parties* (1951) asserts that multi-partyism weakens the government in a parliamentary system. This, according to him, is because the absence of a majority party necessitates the creation of heterogeneous cabinet with —limited objectives” and —lukewarm measures”. Jean Blondel says that the duration of cabinet governments is always influenced by the type of party system prevailing in the country and that one-party government is the most important factor for the stability of governments (Dodd, 1976). He also argued that coalition government, howsoever small or large, appears directly antagonistic to constancy.

Every government is faced with a set of problems but when it is a single party government, decision-making is easier and less controversial. It is also a proven fact that stability in a single-party government is undoubtedly greater than that under a coalition of parties. Conflicts cannot, however, be ruled out even within a single-party government. While discussing the conditions of political instability, Myron Weiner aptly points out that —stability in a government.....is a condition not of the degree of conflict within the system, but rather of the relationship of the conflicting groups” (Weiner, 1968). Dodd himself studied the politics of seventeen European countries from 1919 to 1974 and observed that while some multi-party parliaments produced stable cabinets, other multi-party parliaments produced transient cabinets. This automatically brings to light the importance of a variety of factors that played their part in the durability of a cabinet. These factors are what constitute the political culture of a country. —So, whether a coalition

government will be durable in a multi-party system or depends on the political culture of the country concerned” (Chander, 2004).

MODELS OF COALITION: As coalition implies co-operation between two or more political parties, this cooperation is usually established at one or more of three different levels—electoral, parliamentary and governmental (Chander, 2004). Electoral coalition occurs when two or more parties agree to fight the elections jointly against a common enemy. This may range from electoral alliance between national parties and state level parties or between two or more state parties against national parties. Electoral coalition need not last beyond the elections after which the parties may consider themselves free to make new alliance to form the government with another party. Parliamentary coalition is formed when no single party gains a majority and the party asked to form the government prefers to rule as a minority government on an understanding with another party for external support.

When the United Progressive Alliance at the centre under Congress leadership ruled on the support of Communist Party of India (Marxist) from outside, it was a parliamentary coalition. The governmental coalition is a —power sharing” coalition and it takes place when two or more parties, none of which is able to win a majority of seats on its own, combine to form a majority government. The parties forming such coalitions need not join together in an electoral pact; they may continue to fight elections at different levels with their coalition partners. This sort of power sharing coalitions is generally familiar to continental Europe, but comparatively unknown to the British politics (Lane & Ersson, 1996).

Stanley Henig and John Pinder in their work *European Political Parties* have also worked out three models of coalition based on European party system such as bipolar, unipolar and multipolar. They have defined the three models as follows: —In bipolar systems, the legislature and government are dominated by two parties. Neither can dominate to the exclusion of the other, although one may enjoy long periods of being the governing party. Nonetheless, government will be dominated either by the two parties singly with at least the possibility of alternation, or by both together in a —big coalition! In a unipolar system, on the other hand, there is one large party which can be considered dominant. Occasionally, all its smaller rivals may coalesce to produce a temporary alternative government. However, the

norm is for one party to be easily the largest legislative group and to dominate the executive. In the multipolar systems, neither of the parties is dominant even to the extent of emerging as the strongest from succeeding elections.

Coalitions can also be classified as (1) Office Seeking Model of Coalition, (2) Minimum Winning Model, (3) Policy Pursuit Model, and (4) Large Size model based on strategy. W.H.Riker is more or less associated with the office-seeking strand of coalition, and he focuses on the strategy adopted by parties when they try to gain admission to any coalition that may form. He predicts that players will try to create a coalition as small as is strictly necessary for winning a simple majority to form a government in order to maximize the payoffs to each coalition members. He calls this model a ‘minimum winning coalition’. A minimum winning coalition stands on the assumption that the total gains won by the party coalition can be distributed in large shares for each coalition partner participating in the coalition. William Gamson also argues that parties are intending on entering the ‘cheapest winning’ coalition. He further opines that parties prefer to be in a relatively large partner in a small coalition than a junior partner in a bigger coalition, even when the benefits of doing so are broadly comparable. Robert Axelrod builds upon office-seeking model and introduces a policy dimension. He asserts that parties regard formation of coalition as a secondary formation criterion. According to him, since office-seeking remains the central strategic goal of all players, parties of the left and right can ideally adjacent to one another unmindful of their ideological differences, by minimizing their conflicts of interest. In other words, a coalition which combines both leftist parties and rightist parties appears to be a complicated proposition. But, on certain occasions parties and individual legislators may be interested in the pursuit of power or office in total disregard of ideological considerations. This is mainly because of power which is an effective instrument for pursuing policies. Power is what matters the most in politics.

The office-seeking, minimum winning coalition model is more theoretical and practical, and it distances itself from political reality or circumstances. In a country where factors like ethnicity, cultural, communal or other divisions play an important role and existence of parties representing them, grand or large sized coalitions appear to be more pragmatic. In India, for instance, both at the centre and in the states, the tendency is to make coalitions large and

broad based and therefore the leading parties try to accommodate into their fold even feeble parties that are not sure of their post-electoral survival. This, according to N.Jose Chander, is necessitated by three factors: one, the leading parties want to ensure such a large majority as to be representative of vast sections of people in the country. Two, the lack of discipline and cohesion among party legislators fail to ensure the continuance of a minimum winning coalition. Thirdly, the factional character of all parties, including the major parties, does not rule out the possibility of defection of members in spite of anti-defection laws that may exist in the country.

II

Incidentally, the period since 1977 can be termed as an era of intermittent coalitions. There have been five coalitions of different lives in a span of more than 30 years viz Janata Party rule (1977 – 79), Janata Dal-led National Front rule (1989 – 91), United Front (National Front & Left Front) (1996 – 98), BJP-led NDA Government (1998-2004) and Congress –led UPA (2004 – 2014) and now the BJP led-NDA (2014-On going) Each of these six coalitions constitutes a category both qualitatively (in terms of the ideological basis of coalition partners) and quantitatively (in terms of the number of coalition partners). The six coalitions also show different patterns. The 1977-1979 coalition was unique in itself as far as several coalition partners merged their individual identities and united under one banner. Thus, for the first time in thirty years the Congress Party was functioning as a party of the opposition at the Centre (Rathore, 1995). The success of the Janata Party and the defeat of the Congress (I) in the sixth general elections of 1977 were mainly due to the reaction against the excesses committed during the National Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi between 1975 and 1977 (Grover, 1995). Thus, the formation of the Janata Party had created a viable alternative to the congress party. But this experiment of coalition politics proved a disaster and soon the Janata Party split in 1979 on the question of communalism and double loyalty of one of its constituents, which paved the way for the rise of congress (I) party into power with a clear majority (353/542). Thus, one party rule was restored in 1980, which continued even after 1984 general elections where the Congress (I) led Rajiv Gandhi won a record victory (415/542)

The 1989 coalition experiment was somewhat different. V.P. Singh who resigned from the Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet on the issue of

corruption led this coalition. He launched a new party named Jan Morcha, which became the nucleus for the unity of all non-congress parties. In the 1989 general elections, no single party got clear majority. Though Congress (I) was the largest single party winning 197 seats, it failed to get enough support to be able to form the government. Consequently, a Janata Dal, having 143 seats formed the government with V.P.Singh as the Prime Minister which was supported from outside by BJP on the one hand and the Communists on the other (Bhambhri, 1992). However, shortly V.P. Singh's government was reduced to a minority in a short span due to factional fights. The Samajwadi Janata Party led by Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal constituted a minority government, which was assured outside support by the Congress (I). It also went away when Congress (I) withdrew its support after a few months. In the ensuing general elections held in 1991 the Congress (I) improved the position by capturing 232 seats, even though it was 40 short of majority. It, however, formed the government and survived the full term with the support of some smaller parties; it was one-party rule, at last.

The verdict in 1996 general election was fractured again. The BJP, being the largest party with 161 members in the Lok Sabha formed the government but lasted only 13 days. The fall of BJP government paved way for the emergence of what came to be known as the United Front which consisted of non-BJP and non-congress (I) political parties and groups. The CPI (M) was a part of their UF-LF but it did not join the government. The UF-LF government was supported from outside by the Congress (I), but later withdrew its support and the coalition fell through. As in 1996, the verdict on 1998 again created a hung parliament. The BJP not only retained its position as a largest single party but also improved its tally to 182 (Ahuja 227-229). Unlike 1996, several regional communal parties joined hands with the BJP to form a coalition government under the banner of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) based on a common minimum programme and policies. Thus, the BJP led-NDA government enjoyed full term of government in spite of the withdrawal of some regional parties due to difference on some critical policies.

The result of General Elections of 2004 is quite different from the previous one. The 2004 General Elections saw, for the first time, a contest at the national level between two serious coalitions, the National Democratic Alliance led

by BJP and the United Progressive Alliance led by Congress, though the latter was named only after the elections. The Congress party for the first time put together a broad pre-election coalition covering several major states to take on the NDA coalition. It is a coalition of 19 different political parties with leftist support from outside (Sridharan, 2004).

The General Elections to the 15th Lok Sabha in 2009 again witnessed the victory of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Indian National Congress (INC) by obtaining the majority of seats from states such as Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. This time, the UPA was able to put together a comfortable majority with support from 322 members out of 543 members of the House. Though this was less than the 335 members who supported the UPA in the last Parliament, UPA alone had a plurality of over 260 seats as opposed to 218 seats in the 14th Lok Sabha. Hence, the government appeared to be more stable than the previous one. Besides, the UPA Ministry was extended external support by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Janata Dal (Secular) (JD(S)), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and other minor parties.¹

The General Elections to the 16th Lok Sabha in 2014 was remarkable in several ways. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was voted out of power with a thumping majority by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by Bharatya Janata Party (BJP). The sweeping victory of the NDA had almost decimated the Indian National Congress (INC) which won only 44 Lok Sabha seats across India. This Lok Sabha elections was also notable for the transformation of Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi into the Prime Minister of India. Another interesting point is that although the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) managed to form a government on its own by winning as many as 282 Lok Sabha seats, it decided to respect the pre-poll alliance and formed a coalition government under the umbrella of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with several regional political parties.

Based on above account, some aspects of coalition politics in India need to be noted. First, the number of partners in the ruling coalition has been steadily rising. If in 1997 it was 6; in 1989 it rose to 7; in 1996 to 11, 1998 to 16 and in 1999 to 23 which was later reduced to 20

different political partners. In the case of United Progressive Alliance led by the Congress, it is more than two dozen parties forming the coalition. Secondly, each coalition had different ideological mix and different set of crutches on whose support it survived. While in 1977 it was an amalgamation of parties of right, center and some elements of left directed against Congress (I); in 1989 it consisted of centrist and leftists constituting the main opposition and in 1998 and 1999 the coalition comprised of rightists, communal and regional outfits including some fringe progressive groups. On the other side were the parties of the left and the center. Thirdly, as one moves from 1977 to 1989 to 1998 and to 2004 and then to 2014 the nature of ruling coalition became more and more complex and one begins to lose track of who went with whom and for how long and why.

III

Five days prior to the signing of Memorandum of Settlement (popularly known as Peace Accord) on 30th June, 1986, an agreement was signed on 25th June, 1986⁴ between Arjun Singh, then Vice President of Indian National Congress (INC) and Laldenga on behalf of the Mizo National Front (MNF) to form an interim coalition government in order to enable a smooth and orderly transition of power. Coalition politics is not a new phenomenon in Mizoram politics. It has been gaining currency ever since the agreement between the two political parties, leading to the signing of Peace Accord brought to end twenty years of insurgency in the state. The end of insurgency brought about a sudden and radical change in the political spectrum of the state as well. Every election since 1989 witnessed the formation of alliance and counter alliances among political parties to provide an alternative to the ruling party.

Although the era of single party dominance may seem to be over at the national level, the political process in Mizoram is quite different. While Indians were struggling hard to drive out British from the sub-continent, the Mizos were firmly under the British administration having a limited political consciousness. The then British rulers in the Lushai Hills tried to suppress political consciousness, as they feared that the politically conscious people might understand the nature of their dictatorial rule. In spite of this, the few Mizos who were conscious of the independence movement in India felt the need to form and establish a political organization that could unite all Mizos in order to push forth their demands for the future cause of Mizoram. Then,

with the permission of Lushai Hills Superintendent, Ramsay Mac Donald, R. Vanlawma formed Lushai Commoners' Union on 9 April 1946, which later changed its name into the Mizo Union. There was no looking back since then, and different political parties sprung up in the small state of Mizoram.

The term 'Coalition' has not been common in Mizoram until the State Legislative Assembly Elections of 1989. Earlier, the Mizo Union Party had dominated the political scene of Mizoram till it merged itself with the state Congress Party in 1974. All the opposition parties put together were no match for the organizational and political abilities of the Mizo Union. Even when it ceased its separate political identity on 24 January 1974 the merger with the congress party did not affect the then existing Mizo Union-led ministry headed by Ch. Chhunga, excepting the induction of two congress MLAs, Lalsangzuala and Zalawma into the ministry (Lalchungnunga, 1994).

However, an era of coalition governance in Mizoram began first on the 18th August, 1986. The Congress (I)- MNF coalition interim Government was formed under the Chief Ministership of Laldenga and Lalthanhawla (Cong) as Deputy Chief Minister along with seven other ministers- four from the congress (I) and three from the MNF. When the Third election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly was held on the 30th November, 1993, no party secured majority in the legislature. After exploring various possibilities, the Congress (I) and Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) formed the coalition government with the Congress (I) President Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister. This was the first full-fledged coalition government in Mizoram. In the subsequent year, the Congress (I) managed to cause a split in the MJD and formed its own-party ministry by inducting some splinters from the MJD into the ministry that lasted full term.

In the 1998 Assembly Elections, both the MNF and the MPC worked out a pre- poll alliance based on seat adjustment and captured majority of seats in the 40 member Legislative Assembly (Lalnithanga, 2005). 12 members of the MPC were, however, dropped from the ministry in 1999, as the MNF was able to form its own government due to the addition of one seat in the 1999 bye -election of Khawbung constituency held in 1999. Again, in the Legislative Assembly elections held in October 2003 the two regional parties – ZNP and MPC formed a

pre-poll alliance with seat adjustment in order to run a coalition government in Mizoram. Although they did not work out the details of the plan, it was established that the electoral adjustment between the two parties posed a problem to the congress and the ruling party.

The State Legislative Assembly Elections in 2008 again witnessed the attempt to form a coalition government by United Democratic Alliance (UDA), consisting of Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), Mizoram People Conference (MPC) and Zoram Kuthnathawktu Pawl (ZKP) without much success, although it managed to win 2 (two) MLAs from each party in the Legislative Assembly, while the Indian national Congress won 32 seats out of 40 seats. As a result of this failure, No political party seems to have interest in the pre-poll alliance in the Legislative Assembly Elections in 2013, and the ruling Congress was able to improve its seats tally from 32 to 34, thereby enjoying an absolute majority in the current Mizoram Legislative Assembly.

IV

It has been opined that coalition politics promotes consensus based politics and reflects the popular mandate of the electorate. In order to have stable coalitions, it is necessary that political parties moderate their ideologies and programmes. They should be more open to take others' point of view as well. They must accommodate each other's interests and concerns. But this is not what is happening in the state of Mizoram. The coalitions in Mizoram are not based on constructive ideology but on petty and selfish interests. This has not only encouraged the politics of survival, opportunism and corruption, but also led to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness in governance. The endemic instability makes the state unable to undergo healthy experience of coalition politics and governance.

The major issue that has to be settled in Mizoram is whether there should be a pre-electoral alliance or post-electoral alliance. In the pre-electoral coalition alliance, there may be understanding regarding the sharing of seats, but the post electoral alliance is also a marriage of convenience and may break off soon; both are actually depending upon the maintenance of power equilibrium among the political parties who joined the coalition. Besides, the terms of coalition are not always explicit. Therefore, when the coalition ministry is formed, it naturally comes under the pulls and pressures of the largest political party whose strength is

indispensable for the stability of the coalition ministry.

Another important issue in the context of Mizoram relates to the existence of multiple regional centres of power in the state. It has been strongly argued that two major regional political parties cannot co-exist side by side; survival of one major regional party is always at the cost of another regional party. The emergence of new regional party in the state always witnessed the decreasing role of another regional party. Meanwhile, survival of one national level party hinders the surfacing of another national political party in the state. Therefore, one national political party and one major regional party have always provided an alternative government in the annals of state politics in Mizoram, thereby diminishing political space for other political parties.

Attempts have been made to forge pre-poll political alliance in the coming State Legislative Assembly elections of 2018 under the umbrella of Zoram Peoples Movement (ZPM), consisting of Mizoram People Conference (MPC), Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and Zoram Exodus Movement with an aim to form non-Congress and non-MNF ministry²; later on, Zoram Reformation Front led by H.Zosiamliana and Advisory Board members led by Rev.Darchungnunga of Zoram Decentralization Front joined this new political umbrella on 8th Sept,2017; Mizoram Peoples Party led by C.Laltanpuia also merged with Zoram Peoples Movement⁵. Lastly, any attempt to gain political space from the losses of another party, especially regional party by this new political organization will be met with stiff resistance. It is not yet clear whether coalition politics will be a regular phenomenon in the politics of Mizoram in the years to come, but it may be rightly assumed that coalition culture has been nurturing slowly in the state.

*Asst Professor, Deptt of Political Science,
Mizoram University

Notes:

1. "Smooth sailing for UPA, parties scramble to support". CNN-IBN. 19 May 2009. (Retrieved on 4th Aug 2016)
2. As per the terms of agreement, the first coalition government in Mizoram was formed between 21st Aug, 1986 – 15th Feb., 1987 by MNF and Congress (I) as an Interim Ministry, with Laldenga, MNF leader as Chief Minister, Lalthanhawla (Cong) as Dy.Chief Minister.

Members of this Coalition Government were Tawnluia, Rualchhina and Zoramthanga from MNF Party, and C.L.Ruala, R.Thangliana, Sainghaka and Vaivenga from Congress (I).

3. <http://www.vanglaini.org/tualchhung/74916> (Retrieved on 31.01.2018)

4. <http://www.vanglaini.org/khawthlir/75195> (retrieved on 31.01.2018). It was clarified by Rev.Vanlalduha that this factional group was not with Zoram Decentralization Front. (<http://www.vanglaini.org/tualchhung/81474> Retrieved on 28th Feb.,2018). But, according to this author, Rev.Darchungnunga was an Advisory members of Zoram Decentralization Front (ZDF), but changed the name of Zoram Decentralization Front into Zoram Democratic Front (ZDF) before they joined ZPM.

5. <http://www.vanglaini.org/tualchhung/81475> (Retrieved on 28th Feb.,2018)

References:-

1. Ahuja, M.L. (1998). *Electoral Politics and General Elections in India (1952-1998)*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, Pp 227 – 229.
2. Bhambhri, C.P. (1992). *Politics in India 1991-92*. Delhi: Shipra. Pp 15 – 16.
3. Chander, N.Jose (2004). *Coalition Politics: The Indian Experience*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company p 3.
4. Dodd, Lawrence C. (1976). *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. p 9.
5. Fadia.Babulal. (1984). *State Politics in India*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers. p 401.
6. Grover, Verinder. (1995). 'The Defeat of Both of Totalitarianism and The Coalition Experiment' in Verinder Grover, Ranjana Arora's *Multi-Party System of Government in India: Defeat of*

Totalitarianism and Coalition Development. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications. Pp 739 – 740.

7. Henig, Stanley and John Pinder, (Eds.) (1969). *European Political Parties*, London: George Allen, p 502.

8. Kamal, K.L. (1984). *Democratic Politics in India*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited. Pp 84 – 95.

9. Lalchungnunga. (1994). *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, Pp 73 – 78.

10. Lalnithanga, P. IAS (Retd). (2005). *Emergence of Mizoram*. Aizawl: Mizoram Publication Board, p 221.

11. Lane & Ersson. (1996), *European Politics: An Introduction*, New Delhi:Sage. p 149.

12. Mclean, Iain. (1996). 'Coalition', *Concise dictionary of Politics*, Oxford:OUP. p 78

13. Narang, A.S. (1998), *Indian Government and Politics*. New Delhi: Gitanjali Publishing House. Pp 392-395.

14. Ogg, Frederick A.(1963) —'Coalition', *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. III, New York: Macmillan. p.600

15. Raj, Hans. (1996). *Indian Political System*. Delhi: Surjeet Publications. Pp 130 – 177.

16. Rathore, L.S. (1995). 'The Sixth Lok Sabha Election Politics in India:A Panoromic Study' in V.Grover,Ranjana Arora's *Multi-Party System of Government in India*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, p 215.

17. Riker, William H. (1968).—'The Study of Coalition', *International Encyclopaedia of Social sciences*, Vol.II, NewYork: Macmillan Press. p 527.

18. Sridharan, E. (2004). —'Electoral Coalitions in 2004 General Elections: Theory and Evidence' *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol XXXIX No 51, December 18-24, Pp. 5418 – 5419.

19. Weiner, Myron. (1968). *State Politics in India*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. p 52.

The Northern Bengal Districts during the Partition of Bengal, 1947

Monoranjan Sarkar*

Abstract: India's 'freedom at midnight' spelt more gloom than joy in the Bengal as well as in North Bengal, which was partitioned with the transfer of power in 1947. The present article is a humble attempt to discuss the construction or reconstruction of the Northern Bengal districts after the declaration of Radcliffe's Award. The frivolous situations of the Northern Bengal districts emerged on the eve of partition. The people of the districts were not sure that whether they will remain in India or merged with Pakistan. In Balurghat, Malda the Pakistani flag was hoisted, but they included in India. The effects of the Radcliffe's Award on North Bengal have been discussed. The article also discussed about the history of the inclusion of princely state of Cooch Behar and the inferior positions of the peoples of the enclaves situated in the districts of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri.

Key words: partition, north Bengal, uncertainty, replacement, dissatisfaction, enclaves.

On 3rd June as planned, Mountbatten and Attlee simultaneously announced that India would be partitioned and power would be transferred to two separate states on the basis of dominion status, 15th August was the only plausible date for a transfer of power (Ayasa Jalal, 1985). Meanwhile two boundary commissions had been appointed, one for Bengal and one for Punjab, both presided over by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a British jurist. For Bengal the other members were Justice A.M. Akram and justice S.A. Rahman from Muslim League, Justice C.C. Biswas and Bijan Mukharjee from National Congress. Radcliffe arrived from England on 8th July, 1947 (Nitish Sengupta, 2011). The Award of Bengal by Radcliffe was submitted to Mountbatten on 9th August and the one on Punjab after few days. He sailed for home on 15th August, having accomplished his task in less than five weeks, for which he did not accept any fees. Mountbatten chose to publish the reports after Independence Day i.e. 15th August. Thus on the midnight undivided Bengal disappeared from the map of the world and its place the new provinces of West Bengal (India) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) came into being. On the day of Independence there was a sort of notional division in Bengal. All the Hindu majority districts hoisted the Indian tricolor to celebrate the Indian's Independence Day and all the Muslim majority districts hoisted the Pakistani flag. On 17th August the

Radcliffe Award of 16 pages was released, of which 9 pages were devoted to Bengal. It is said that, he was bound to cut a town from its river, a village from its fields, a factory from its storage yard, a railway station from its goods- yard.

The article attempts to make a discussion on pre partition North Bengal and its aftermath. The concerning area concern in my discussion included the Rajshahi Division as a part of undivided North Bengal with its eight districts – Rajshahi, Rangpur, Pabna, Bogra, Dinajpur, Malda, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and the princely state of Cooch Behar. Generally this area is a Muslim majority region (A.G. Ghosh, 2009). If we look into the district wise population of North Bengal we notice that Rajshahi, Rangpur, Pabna and Bogra consisted of Muslim majority while the Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and princely state of Cooch Bihar were Hindu majority, again Malda, Dinajpur consisting of 51 to 60 per cent Muslim population. This is a broad description of the demographic picture of the North Bengal before the partition or declaration of the Radcliffe's Award. Radcliffe declared that the unit for partition should be the Thana or police station, being a smallest administrative entity for which there was public census figures (See memorandum on the partition of Bengal presented on behalf of the Indian National Congress before the Bengal Boundary Commission, p.6.).

Religion was the central basis to demarcate the country, but the population of a municipality or a town never been raised as a unit of demarcation, it must benefitted the Hindus. Because the cities of North Bengal were largely inhabited by the Hindus except Dinajpur and English Bazar town of Malda, consisted the ratio of Hindu- Muslim is almost similar. Essentially the Muslims of North Bengal occupied the rural area of with agriculture.

One of the chief features of the demography of North Bengal was the existence of the scheduled caste population in larger proportion than the caste Hindus. This may be seen in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur. The tribal people also lived there in the district of Jalpaiguri, Malda, Dinajpur and Darjeeling. In several census reports the tribal people were identified as the non- Hindus, others and nature worshippers. The census report of 1941 shows the following religious arrangements of population in the district Jalpaiguri---

Total Population:	10, 89,513
Muslims :	2, 51, 460
Caste Hindus :	2, 26, 943
Scheduled Castes:	3, 25, 504
Others or Nature	
Worshippers :	15, 300

A process started by some leaders to adopt the others and Nature worshippers into Hindu fold in the Northern Bengal Districts. One best example is the movement of Jitu Santal in Malda. Some local Swarajist leaders at that time were also seriously involved in what they called ‘redaiming’ aboriginals and untouchables into the Hindu fold through ritual purification (*suddhi*) and social reform. One such Swarajist was Kashiswar Chakravarty, a pleader from the neighboring district of Dinajpur, began to tour Malda from 1925, and Jitu and Arjun Santal spread his word around Habibpur, Bamongola and Gajole Thanas in *Barind*. Chakravarty was known as ‘*sanyasi baba*’ and Jitu his local agent or preacher; organized a *sanyasi dol* and defied police orders to perform a *kali puja* to proclaim its new Hindu status(Tanika Sarkar, 1985)This tradition was followed by the congress

leaders of Jalpaiguri, they also started the process to initiate the Santals into Hindu fold and they boycotted the census report of 1931. Thus Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, Srinath Hore, Satish Chandra Lahiri resigned from National Congress and joined in the Hindu Mahasabha to raise the demand to commence the other and nature worshiper with the Hindus. In the early 1940s the Mohasabha had also some support among the scheduled castes through its *Suddhi* (purification) and *sanghatan* (consolidation) campaign(Joya Chattarjee, 2008)

We may talk about frivolous situations of the North Bengal peoples during the day, 15th August, 1947. Because the Radcliffe Award declared on 17th August so they could not enjoy the pleasure of independence, as they did not know what is waiting for them on 17th August. While the whole country celebrates the Independence Day, the inhabitants of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, Malda spent their time with great uncertainty. The Sub divisional officer of Balurghat in Dinajpur hoisted the Pakistani flag at Balurghat. The Pakistani military appeared in the Balurghat High School. Jillur Rahman and Moja Choudhary attempted to embrace Balurghat in Pakistan(Kali Kar, 1907). So on 15th August Balurghat’s peoples were in a ambiguous position. It is said that Kaliaganj police station will be attached with Pakistan, the Muslim League supporters rallied there with the Pakistani flag(Dhananjay Roy, 1988) On the eve of independence and partition confusion arose involving the future of Malda-whether it would fall in the Pakistani territories or remain in Indian Union(Ashok Mitra, 2000). In addition to eleven Hindu majority districts (Burdwan, Midnapore, Birbhum, Bankura, Howrah, Hooghly, Calcutta, the 24 Parganas, Khulna, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri) the Hindu Mahasabha and New Bengal Association wanted West Bengal to have two Muslim majority districts, Malda and Murshidabad. In August 15, 1947 the Pakistani flag was hoisted at Malda and for the next two days Malda was being administered by the District Magistrate of East Pakistan. (Abul Hasim,1974). There is a rumor that

Jalpaiguri will be included in Pakistan. The people talk much about the issue because Nawab Musaraf Hossain of Jalpaiguri was the most powerful and a member of the Surhabardi cabinet, who was the supporter to absorbed Jalpaiguri with Pakistan.

The remit of the Bengal Boundary Commission was to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of [the province] on the basis of ascertaining contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non Muslims. On 17th August, 1947 the Radcliffe Award on the boundaries of Bengal was announced. It contained some surprises. It divided the Bengal into West Bengal which covered 28,000 square miles and had a population of just over 21 million and East Bengal, a territory of 49,000 square miles with a population of 39 million. Over 5 million Muslims were left in West Bengal and about 11 million Hindus found them stranded in the Eastern wing of Pakistan (Saroj Chakrabarti, 1974). The Award gave East Bengal a population which was 71 per cent Muslim and West Bengal a population which was 70.8 per cent Hindu. Some of the districts of North Bengal remain undivided and some divided into two or more parts (the author used such words in two or more parts because there are *chit mahals* also in the districts of Cooch Bihar and Jalpaiguri. It discussed in the latter part of this article).

Darjeeling was a Hindu majority district so it merged with West Bengal. (Manmohan Chakrabarti, 1999). It also got Jalpaiguri except five Thanas (Tetulia, Boda, Panchagarh, Debiganj and Patgram which were Muslim majority) containing the area of 672 square miles (Ranjit Dasgupta, 1992). When the Radcliffe Commission's Report was published it was seen that among the 15 Thanas of Malda district Sibganj, Bholahat, Nachol, Gomastapur and Nababganj were included into Pakistan and remaining 10 Thanas English Bazar, Kaliachak, Malda, Habibpur, Ratua, Manikchak, Kharba, Harishchandrapur, Gajole and Bamongola were incorporated with India. Accordingly the administration of Malda was handed over to the District Magistrate of West Bengal (Asim Kumar Sarkar, 2008). Dinajpur divided into two parts, 2/3 of the district included into

Pakistan with the name of Dinajpur, 1/3 included into India, with the title Paschim Dinajpur containing 10 thanas Balurghat, Kumarganj, Gangarampur, Tapan, Raiganj, Hemtabad, Bangsihari, Kushmandi, Kaliaganj and Itahar (Manmohan Chakrabarti, 1999).

Now it appeared that whole Darjeeling, 10 Thanas of each districts Jalpaiguri, Malda and Dinajpur i.e. only one third of the Rajshahi Division included into West Bengal. Dimensionally it is harmful for North Bengal further North Bengal separated from rest of West Bengal in communications. Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling disconnected with Dinajpur and Malda in road ways and rail ways transportation, because Tetulia connected the Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling with Dinajpur. After the inclusion of Tetulia in Pakistan, thus the West Bengal divided into three parts ---- a) South Bengal; b) Malda, Dinajpur region, there is no connection with these parts with the other part i.e. c) Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling. Thus this part is connected with the rest of West Bengal through Bihar. This problem not occurred in the scene if Tetulia included in India. Thus the partition created three pieces West Bengal and two pieces North Bengal. Radcliffe was not familiar with this harmful matter. The ratio of Hindu Muslim population of Tetulia was 49:50; still some Thanas were included in West Bengal which contained more Muslim population than Tetulia (A. G. Ghosh, 2009). The people of Tetulia contravene the inclusion of their ancestor's house with Pakistan. Thus we commit to memory the *'Ganonayok'* of Satinath Bhaduri. A Rajbanshi priest of this area asked, *—Bajarga pakistane Jachenato; bap pitamer amal theke amra rayechi bajargaye; gelei halo, jalpeswarer elaka o mahakaler rajya chalejabe Pakistane*” (is Bajarga included with Pakistan? and it is not possible that our ancestors live here, this is also the area of Jalpeswar and the kingdom of Mahakal). Charu Chandra Sanyal states that, the present West Bengal consists of three parts. One has no direct connection with another. To arrived Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling from Malda and West Dinajpur we are to cross Bihar. How this partition affected the communication system of north

Bengal is mentioned in the District Handbooks of West Dinajpur in 1951. According to this report, —In 1947 the partition of the district left the present districts roads and means of communication grievously cut in all directions. The use of the Punarbhaba, Atrain, and Jamuna was suddenly and entirely stopped, these rivers following through Pakistan territory for the rest of their southward passage. The Gangarampur —Hili road stopped at Hili. Before the partition was little occasion to use the Malda-Gazole-Bansihari-Balurghat road. After the partition this road became the lifeline of the district. The Katihar-Raiganj-Radhikapur-Dinajpur-Parbatipur meter gauge line was cut by the partition line at Radhikapur... thus in 1947 after the partition the district started its career with a most lamentable disorganization of communication.[A. Mitra,Census, 1951, West Bengal District Handbooks, West Dinajpur] Same was the position in case of Cooch Behar. Upendra Nath Barman in his autobiography mentioned, the lamentation of CoochBehari people for their inclusion with Indian territory, Before 1950 there was a small kingdom namely Koch Bihar. People crossed over the kingdom in a day walking. From 1950 the name of the country became India or Hindustan.

In which basis the 20 Thanas of Dinajpur and 5 from each Jalpaiguri and Malda included with Pakistan by Radcliffe is not clear to us. Mention has been made that Thana would be the basis of demarcation. But dividing the North Bengal this policy was not adopted. We can mention the Dinajpur for example. Among the 10 Thanas of Thakurgaon subdivision three (Bodaganj, Birganj, Banharul) were Hindu majority, but included into Pakistan. Regarding Malda among the 5 thanas included in Pakistan Nachol was Hindu majority. On the other hand Kharba, Kaliachak, Ratua and Harishchandrapur were Muslim majority and included with West Bengal. The worse outcome is that Malda is now a Muslim majority district. Jalpaiguri has been discussed earlier. Thus the demarcation of North Bengal was not properly introduced by Radcliffe. However, it is a question that how the activities of

Radcliffe affected on North Bengal as well as Bengal. It is to be noted that the most harmful effect was the influx of the refugees in North Bengal as well as Bengal. The census of 1951 discovered that, before 1951 there were 1, 15, 000 refugees settled in West Dinajpur, 1, 00, 000 in Cooch Behar and 99, 000 in Jalpaiguri(Jaya Chatterjee, 2008). The terrible condition of the refugees has been discussed and examined by many scholars elsewhere.

The Indian Independence Act (1947) declared that the British domination would be concluded from the princely states and they should join either in India or in Pakistan. Maharaja Jagaddwipendra Narayan of Kochbihar princely state agreed to unite with India yet he signed in the Instrument of Accession, two years later(Ashok Mitra,1951) Hitsadhani Sabha, a political association of Kochbihar opposed Maharaja to join with India; they were the supporter to joined Kochbihar with Pakistan. The members of this party were also the member of the state Council. Thus revenue minister Khan Choudhary Amanatullah Ahmed and education minister Satish Singh proclaimed in a mass meeting at Mekhliganj that Kochbehar will remain outside the Indian union and Kochbihar state Congress must be destroyed(A.G. Ghosh, 1986) Mahaja of Kochbihar was familiar with the activities of his minister but remained silence. The anti Indian tricks were opposed first by the citizens of the state; they informed to Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel that Maharaja of Kochbihar meet with East Bengal prime minister and agreed to join with Pakistan (Abbasuddin Ahmed, 1999) Later Koch Bihar Peoples Association, State Congress, Communist party, Forward Bloc and others declared that Kochbihar is an inseparable part of India. Thus Sarat Chandra Bose, Prafulla Ghosh, Bidhan Chandra Roy interfeered to solve the problem. After a long confrontation Kochbihar joined with Indian Union in December, 1949; from first January, 1950 Kochbihar organized as a district of West Bengal (Manmohan Chakrabarti, 1999) It is significant that the destiny of the Kochbihari people was determinate after three years of independence.

The princely state of Kochbihar joined India but the problem never ended. In the fifties of twentieth century a linguistic state movement emerged around India. The government of India introduced State Recognition Commission to mitigate the problem. The West Bengal Government demanded to this Commission for combining some Bengali speaking area of Bihar with West Bengal. Chief Minister Bidhan Chandra Roy assumed that, incorporation of some Bengali speaking area of Bihar with West Bengal is necessary to unite the Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri with the rest of Bengal. A corridor is necessary to connect the Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling with the rest of Bengal through Dinajpur. They demand the Purnia district of Bihar to merge with West Bengal. In 1955 Upendra Nath Barman declared in the parliament that the Muslim majority people of Kisanganj can joined with West Bengal, if they wanted to learn the Urdu, the government will take care (Manmohan Roy: 1389) But the Urdu speaking peoples of Bihar were against it. They were supported by Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. Finally, in 1956 according to the recommendation of SRC and Bihar-Bengal Transferred Territory Act, Chopra, Karandighi, Goalpukur and Islampur absorbed with Dinajpur (J.C. Sengupta, 1965) Thus the report of SRC disappointed the inhabitants of North Bengal because to communicate or unite South Bengal with North Bengal Kisanganj subdivision is required for West Bengal.

We can conclude with a short discussion about the enclaves situated in the two district of North Bengal (Cooch Bihar and Jalpaiguri). This is an endless problem. The enclaves or *chitmahals* is a small territory inside the Bangladesh border. There are 128 such Indian *chitmahals* inside Bangladesh. They cover 20, 95, 707 acres of land. Bangladesh has 95 *chitmahals* inside India which cover 11, 00, 000 acres. A few of this such as Angropota, Dahgram *chitmahals* covering 56, 15, 85 acres within India, were connected to Bangladeshi mainland by a corridor known as Tinbigha corridor in 1992. Peoples who live in these enclaves are recently joined with the country of India or Bangladesh on 6 June 2015. Indian Prime

Minister Narendra Modi ratified the agreement during his visit to the Bangladesh capital Dhaka. In the presence of Modi and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Shekh Hasina, the foreign secretaries of the two countries signed the instruments of the land exchange ("India, Bangladesh ratify historic land deal, Narendra Modi announces new \$2 billion line of credit to Dhaka". *Times of India*. 6 June 2015).

But earlier to this agreement for all intents and purposes, they did not belong to anyone India or Pakistan. India did not want to have anything to do with its citizens who live in *chitmahals* inside Bangladesh and vice versa. If they were robbed, if the women were raped (and are a common occurrence), they could not go to the police, for that it mean crossing the border into India to file a report and getting the police to cross the border into Bangladesh to take the action. It was always followed that, how could the police of one country take action against the people of another country? (Urbasi Batulia, 2003). These were the legacy of partition and Radcliffe's boundary. Berubari is a *chitmahal* of this like. In 1958, the then prime minister of India Jawahar Lal Nehru signed an agreement (popularly known as Nehru-Noon Agreement) to return this territory to erstwhile East Pakistan. But the residents of berubari protested. They formed a resistance group Dakshin Berubari Pratiraksha Samity, one of their key slogans was, *"Rakto dim-pran dim, Berubari charim na"* (well shed blood, well give up our lives, but we will not let Berubari go. Also See, Dakshin Berubari Simanto Samasya o Samadhaner Path, Pamphlet published by the Dakshin Berubari Pratiraksha Samity).

High court raising objections to Nehru's plan to transfer the South Berubari to Pakistan. Supreme Court also ruled that according to the constitution, the prime minister of India did not have the right to give away any territory controlled by India, for this a constitutional amendment was needed. In 1974 the prime ministers of India and Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi and Mujibur Rahman signed another accord – this time after a constitutional amendment had come in (although the Nehru-Noon Treaty had still

not been ratified by the parliament) but the people of Berubari refused to accept this too. So the substitution of Berubari did not solve and still existing. Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh in his book *Swadhinata Sat: Prosanga Chere Asa Mati* state that, the central or state no government can properly understand the problem of Berubari. It was very much hindrance to the unity of North Bengal. Though it is a matter of international relations but the Northern Bengal districts (Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri) facing this problem. North Bengal was the only region of the world where this kind of *chitmahal* problem existed. Thus we remember a few lines from the text of Urbasi Batulia, —Partition is difficult to forget and dangerous to remember.”(Urbasi Batulia, 1985).

*UGC Senior Research Fellow, Department of History, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, West Bengal-734013

References:

1. Ahmed, Abbasuddin, 1999, *Amar Silpi Jiboner Katha*, (in Bengali) reprint, Cooch Behar.
2. Batulia, Urbasi, 1985, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, New Delhi.
3. Batulia, Urbasi, 2003, *Now Where People* in J. Bagchi & S. Dasgupta (Ed.) *Trauma and Triumph*, Stree Publications, Kolkata.
4. Chakrabarty, Manmohan, 1999, *A Summary of Changes in The Jurisdiction of Districts of Bengal* (1757-1916), (Ed.) Kumud Ranjan Biswas, Kolkata.
5. Chakravarty, Saroj, 1974, *With B.C. Roy and Other Chief Minister, A Record Up to 1962*, Calcutta.
6. Chatterjee, Joya, 1999, *Fashioning of a Frontier: The Radcliffe Award and Bengal Border Land Scape, 1947-52*, *Modern Asian Studies*, 33(1).
7. Chatterjee, Joya, 2008, *The Spoils of Partition, Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi.
8. Dasgupta, Ranjit, 1992, *Economy, Society, Politics in Bengal District Jalpaiguri 1869-1947*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
9. Ghosh, Ananda Gopal, 2009, *Swadhinata Sat: Prosanga Chere Asa Mati* (in Bengali), Sahitya Bhagirath Publication, Mathabhangra.
10. Jalal, Ayesha, 1985, *The Sole Spokesman Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, New Delhi.
11. Kar, Kali, 1907, *Harano Sei Diner Katha Ebong Balurghat* (in Bengali) Uttaradhikar Balurghat.
12. Mitra, Ashok, *Census-1951, District Hand Book, Cooch Behar, 1951*.
13. Mitra, Ashok, 2000, *Tin Kuri Dash* (in Bengali), Vol.III, Dey's Publication, Kolkata.
14. Pal, Ratna, 2004, *Deshbivagottor Paschimbanger Uttarangser Punargathan Janito Samasya – Ekti Samiksha, Itihas Anusandhan-18, Paschimanga Itihas Samsad, Kolkata*.
15. Roy, Dhananjay (Ed.), *Kaliaganj Barta* Kaliaganj, November, 15, 1988.
16. Roy, Manmohan (Ed.), *Jalpesh* (a fortnightly paper) 4th Year, Jalpaiguri, Chaitrya, 15, 1389 (Bengali Year).
17. Sarkar, Asim Kumar, 2008, *Changing Profile of a Bengal District Malda, 1932-1953*, Kolkata.
18. Sarkar, Tanika, 1985, *Jitu Santals Movement in Malda 1924-1932: A study in Tribal Protest*, in Guha Ranjit (Ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV*, OUP Delhi.
19. Sengupta, Jatindra Chandra, 1965 *District Gazetteer of West Dinajpur, Government of West Bengal*.
20. Sengupta, Nitish, 2011, *Land of Two Rivers* New Delhi.

Autonomous District Councils under The Sixth Schedule: Distinctiveness and Dissimilarities with Other Councils

Prof. Jangkhongam Doungel*

Abstract: *The desire for autonomy of the tribals is responsible for incorporation of Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule in the Constitution of India. Tribals under the Sixth Schedule are facilitated with Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) and ADCs have the three organs of government. As a result of demand for autonomy, ADCs without autonomy have been created in Manipur, two Hill Development Councils have also been created in Jammu & Kashmir, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration has been created in West Bengal and six satellite Autonomous Councils and thirty three satellite Development Councils have been created in Assam. However, ADCs, Autonomous Councils, Development Councils and other councils outside the provision of the Sixth Schedule are different from ADCs and other councils under the Sixth Schedule. Thus, ADCs under the Sixth Schedule are unique and different from other ADCs and other councils.*

Key words: Autonomy, ADC, Autonomous Council, Development Council, Development, Ethnicity, Fifth Schedule, Sixth Schedule, Tribal, Tribal Area.

Introduction: The desire for political autonomy originated in the quest for preservation of identity and ethnicity as well as enhancement of socio-economic development. The evolution of the Sixth Schedule provision in the constitution of India is due to the tribal desire for political autonomy and their quest for socio-economic development as well as preservation and protection of their ethnic identity. The word autonomy is derived from two Greek words, “~~auto~~” and “~~nomos~~”. “Auto” means “~~self~~” and “~~nomos~~” means “~~law~~”, thus, combination of the two words indicates facilitating a sub-political system of social set-up with their own laws on the basis of moral and political philosophy. Its earlier use involves reference to self-rule or self-government in Greek city-states. In moral and political philosophy, autonomy is often used as the basis for determining moral responsibility and accountability for one’s actions, choices, mistakes, failures etc.¹ Thus, “autonomy” means self-government and self-rule. It also means a kind of emancipation from socio-cultural and economic deprivation of ethnic groups.

Movement for autonomy is always equated with fair treatment and multi-dimensional equality. So, the incorporation of the provision of the Sixth Schedule in the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly could also be described as the outcome of the desire of the tribals for fair treatment for remaining in the Indian Union. Further, the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India facilitate the tribals of undivided Assam (present Northeast India) to govern themselves through constitutional body and to initiate necessary steps for preservation and protection of their ethnic identity, custom, culture and tradition and they can also usher socio-economic development works under the provision of the Sixth Schedule.

Emergence of the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) under the Sixth Schedule:- The hill tribes of North East India were not exposed to other cultures of the country until the advent of the British rule. The British Administration followed the policy of isolation of the hill tribes of the North East India (erstwhile Assam) from the plains by enactment and enforcement of the

Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 later known as the Inner Line Permit system. The Inner Line Permit system had been adopted for maintenance of status quo in the tribal social set-up as well as to protect them (tribals) from exploitation and assimilation of the plain people. As a matter of fact, the British administration did not interfere at all in the social and other internal affairs of the tribes. The main concern of the British Administration was the maintenance of law and order but they were left to themselves in managing their internal affairs.

Thus the tribal inhabited areas were termed as —Scheduled District” by the Scheduled District Act of 1874, —Backward Tract” by the Government of India Act of 1919 and the terminology —Backward Tract” was changed into Excluded Area and Partially Excluded Area by the Government of India Act of 1935. Excluded Area means backward most tribal areas which were under the direct rule of the Governors and districts which were categorized as excluded area had no representation in the provincial legislature. Whereas, districts which were categorized as Partially Excluded Area were under provincial government and they also had representatives in the provincial legislature. As a result, the hill districts in Assam were classified as Excluded Areas and Partially Excluded Areas.²

A great fear psychosis was created in the minds of tribals of Assam on the eve of India's independence. The tribals thought that they might be subjected to exploitation and assimilation by the plain people with the exit of Britishers from India. They were also fearful of losing their land, autonomy, ethnic identity, language, traditional tribal practices, custom and culture. Accordingly, the British Administration was also quite concerned about the future of tribals of Excluded Area and Partially Excluded area. As a matter of fact, the Cabinet Mission,

sent by the British Parliament under Sir Stafford Cripps had made a public statement on 16 March, 1946 and had suggested for formation of an Advisory Committee, to study upon the rights of minorities and tribals of excluded area. Subsequently, an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Area was set up with Vallabhai Patel as the Chairman on 24th January, 1947 by the Constituent Assembly of India. The main task of the committee was to work out a modus operandi in the constitutional arrangement for tribals of Excluded and Partially Excluded Area and to enable them to safeguard their ethnic identity and culture in a democratic way. Subsequently, on 2nd February, 1947 the Advisory Committee set up three sub-committees which are listed as given below.³

1. North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee.
2. North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan Tribal and Excluded Area Committee.
3. Excluded and partially Excluded Areas in provinces other than Assam.

Gopinath Bordoloi was Chairman of the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee and other members of the committee were Rev. JJM Nichols Roy, Rup Nath Brahma, A.V. Thakkar and Mayang Nokcha. Mayang Nokcha replaced Aliba Imti, the previous member who was from Naga Hills. The Committee was also popularly known as Bordoloi Committee after the name of its Chairman and the then Chief Minister of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi. A.V. Thakkar was Chairman of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Area (other than Assam) Sub-Committee. The draft schedule was submitted to the President of the Constituent Assembly on 21st February, 1948 and the matter was discussed in the Constituent Assembly on 5, 6 and 7 September 1949. After three long days debate in the Assembly and after certain amendments

were made, the Sixth Schedule finally emerged⁴ and was incorporated in Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1) of the constitution of India. Article 244 (2) in the original constitution on 26th January, 1950 stated about the application of the Sixth Schedule in Tribal areas of the state of Assam (Undivided Assam) but now Article 244 (2) states about the application of the Sixth Schedule in Tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram; whereas, 275 (1) states about the funding pattern of the Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule provision. As a result, tribal inhabited areas under Fifth Schedule are known as —Scheduled Area” and tribal inhabited areas under the Sixth Schedule are known as —Tribal Area.”⁵ It is clearly incorporated in the constitution of India that even if an area is exclusively tribal dominated area, it cannot be called a Tribal Area if Sixth Schedule provision to the Constitution of India is not enforced in that area. The Tribal Areas, as listed in the Sixth Schedule in the initial stage of the enforcement of the original constitution of India are given below.⁶

Part A

1. United Khasi – Jantia Hills District.
2. Garo Hills.
3. Lushai Hills.
4. Naga Hills.
5. North Cachar Hills.
6. Mikir Hills.

Part B

1. North East Frontier Tract (Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap frontier Tract, Abor Hills District and Mishmi Hill District).
2. Naga Tribal Areas.

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India has undergone many changes since India's independence. The Sixth Schedule which was listed as Part A and Part B in the original Constitution of India have now been listed as Part I, Part II, and Part III since the

enactment of the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act of 1971. Part I listed the Territorial Council and Autonomous Councils of Assam, Part II listed the District Councils in Meghalaya and Part II A has been added in the list with the extension of the Sixth Schedule in Tribal Areas of Tripura.. The latest list of the different councils in the sixth Schedule to the constitution of India shall be shown as given below⁷

Part –I

1. North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council
2. Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.
3. Bodoland Territorial Council.

Part-II

1. Khasi Autonomous District Council
2. Jantia Autonomous District Council.
3. Garo Autonomous District Council.

Part-IIA

1. Tripura tribal Areas District Council.

Part-III

1. Chakma Autonomous District Council.
2. Lai Autonomous District Council.
3. Mara Autonomous District Council

The ADCs, Development Council, Autonomous Councils and other Councils outside the Sixth Schedule: There are some ADCs, Autonomous Councils, Development Council, Hill Development Council, Hill Council and other councils which are outside the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. In fact, these different types of councils are different from ADCs under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Even some academicians unknowingly mix up ADCs under the Sixth Schedule with other councils which are outside the Sixth Schedule. Therefore, it should be noted that ADCs under the Sixth Schedule cannot be put in the same categories with ADCs in Hill Areas of Manipur, satellite councils of plain tribes of Assam and other councils in other parts of India. Different councils

outside the Sixth Schedule shall be analyzed as given under the following heads.

Fifth Schedule: Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas in provinces other than Assam Committee was one of the Sub-Committee, formed by the Advisory Committee to conduct ground survey and to submit constitutional scheme for tribals in Mainland India. A.V. Thakkar who was also member of the Bordoloi Committee was Chairman of this sub-committee. The coverage of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas in provinces other than Assam Committee included all the tribal dominated areas of Mainland India and it was very vast. As such, the committee could not tour all the tribal dominated areas of Mainland India like what the Bordoloi Committee did in the hill tribe dominated areas of Assam. Subsequently, the report of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas in provinces other than Assam Committee was incorporated in the Constitution of India in Article 244 (1), Article 275 (1) and Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Article 244 (1) states that the provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any state other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Article 275 (1) states that money from the Consolidated Fund of India shall be paid in the form of grant-in-aid through the State Government for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in the state or raising the level of administration in the Scheduled Areas.

The Fifth Schedule states that all tribal dominated areas under the Fifth Scheduled are known as Scheduled Areas. The Governor shall submit report concerning Scheduled Areas either annually or whenever the President of India ask for it. Further, the Fifth Schedule incorporates provision for administration and control of

Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes and it also enshrines law applicable in the Scheduled Areas. Scheduled Areas are the areas which are declared as Scheduled Areas by the President of India. The Fifth Scheduled has only 7 paragraphs but the Fifth Schedule does not provide for any self-governing constitutional body like ADCs under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.⁸ The Scheduled Areas are historically the areas constituted as the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas under the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas order, 1936. Scheduled Areas are found in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan. The object of the Fifth Schedule and regulations, framed under it is to preserve tribal autonomy, culture and economic empowerment so as to ensure social, economic and political justice. The system of Panchayati Raj as per the provision of Constitution Seventy Third Amendment Act, 1992 shall not apply in Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas but Panchayati Raj was extended to Scheduled Areas under Fifth Scheduled by the Panchayat Extension in Scheduled Areas (PESA) in 2006.⁹

ADCs in Hill Areas of Manipur: The Indian Parliament enacted the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 to provide for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill Areas of Manipur. As per the Act, Six Autonomous District Councils were established on the basis of the Fifth Schedule to the constitution of India but not under the provision of the Sixth Schedule contrary to the wishes and expectations of the tribals of Manipur. The six Autonomous District Councils are:

1. Churachandpur Autonomous District Council,
2. Chandel Autonomous District Council

3. Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council
4. Tamenglong Autonomous District Council
5. Senapati Autonomous District Council
6. Ukhrul Autonomous District Council.

The District Councils were not given legislative and judicial powers, whereas, they were given only little executive powers. Little powers which are enumerated for the District Councils in the act are maintenance and management of movable and immovable properties, institutions; construction and repair of roads, bridges, channels, buildings, primary schools, dispensaries, cattle pounds, markets, supply of water for all purposes, public health, sanitation, ferries, and regulation of jhumming and allocation of land for house sites. The District Council is also authorized to levy certain taxes, such as, tax on profession, trade, calling and employment, a tax on animals, vehicles, boats, a tax on entry of goods into market and tolls on passengers as well as tax for maintenance of dispensaries, schools or roads. The District Council has a Chairman and Deputy Chairman who were elected from among the members themselves, and the District Council was placed under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner.¹⁰ The District Councils, established under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 were powerless and they had no power at all with regard to the preservation and protection of the tribal land because they were not enshrined and protected under the Sixth Schedule provision to the constitution of India.

Over and above that, even the little powers which were enshrined in the Act were also not properly given to them by the Government of Manipur. Thus, the six District Councils of Manipur only became paper tigers which in reality could not do any useful and productive works for the Hill

Areas. As a matter of fact, the tribals resumed their demand for inclusion of the District Councils of Manipur in the Sixth Schedule provision to the constitution of India but they could not achieve any desired result. As a matter of fact, All Tribal Students Union of Manipur (A.T.S.U.M.) boycotted the District Council election and election could not be conducted for more than two decades i.e. from the late eighties till 2009. Thus, A.T.S.U.M. and the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee of Manipur (S.D.C.M.) intensified their demand for extension of the Sixth Schedule provision in Hill Areas of Manipur under the provision of Article 244 (2) & Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India.

However, they cannot achieve the desired result till now. As an appeasement measure, the Government of Manipur enacted the Manipur Hill Areas Autonomous District Council Act, 2008 which should be stated as little improvement of the Act of 1971. As such, election was conducted after a gap of more than two decades for the six District Councils in 2010 but there is no much improvement in the power and status of the District Council because the Sixth Schedule provision has not yet been implemented. The said act repelled the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 and the present act increased the number of Members of the District Council (M.D.C.) to 24 elected and 2 nominated members from 18 elected and two nominated members of the 1971 Act in each District Council.¹¹ As the Sixth Schedule provision to the constitution of India is not yet extended in the Hill Areas of Manipur, District Councils also have no much power with regard to issues for preservation of the land, custom and culture of the tribals, as such, chieftainship and Village authority are still the relevant instruments for protection of the tribals of Manipur.

Satellite Councils of Assam: There are two Autonomous Councils for hill tribes and one Territorial Council for the plain tribes in Assam under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. The incorporation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under the provision of the Sixth Schedule ignited the demand for autonomy and ADCs among the plain tribes of Assam. The reason being, the inclusion of Bodo, the plain tribe, under the Sixth Schedule provision awaken other plain tribes of Assam to fight for autonomy and ADCs, however, the different plain tribes of Assam are scattered in different areas and it is not feasible for them to create territorial council as people of the same community are not settling in compact area. The different plain tribes of Assam, namely, Rabha, Mising, Tiwa, Deori, Sonowal Kachari and Thengal Kachari demanded Autonomous Councils in their own ways and pressurize the Government of Assam for creation of Autonomous Council for their respective community. The Government of Assam seriously considered the demand of the plain tribes and created Autonomous Councils for them through Acts of the Legislative Assembly of the State.

Subsequently, Assam began to have two different types of Autonomous Councils, such as, Statutory Autonomous Councils under the Act of Assam Legislative Assembly and Territorial Councils under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council and Bodoland Territorial Council are constitutional councils with definite geographical areas, created under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. As such, councils under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India are beyond the legislative control of the State Government and even minor modification in their status

requires legislation of the Parliament. However, non-territorial and satellite Autonomous Councils are created by Acts of the Assam Legislative Assembly and they can be created and abolished by legislation of the Assam Legislative Assembly. As the different plain tribal communities do not inhabit compact geographical areas, satellite Autonomous Councils is created for them. It should also be noted that territorial council under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and satellite councils should not be grouped under the same category and they should never be written in the same list as list of Autonomous Councils or ADCs. Thus, the different satellite Autonomous Councils of Assam shall be listed separately as given below¹²

1. Rabha Autonomous Council
2. Mising autonomous Council
3. Tiwa Autonomous Council
4. Deori Autonomous Council
5. Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council
6. Thengal Kachari Autonomous Council

The satellite Autonomous Councils are provided with executive powers but not legislative and judicial powers. They are entrusted with 34 subjects but they totally depend upon their functioning at the mercy of the State Government. The reason being, their status, privileges and powers can be changed by the State Government at any time. The Autonomous Councils have General Council which comprised of elected and nominated members, and the term of the General Council is five years. A cabinet like status known as Executive Council is formed which comprises of the Chief Executive Councilor as the head and there are Executive Councilors to assist him. The Executive Council meets at least once in every three months for transaction of business and it is convened by the chief Executive Councilor. The jurisdiction of the Autonomous Council extends in all the

villages, inhabited by the community or more than fifty percent of the community. The Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council consists of 30 members in the General Council which comprise of 26 elected and 4 nominated members. It also has a satellite administration which scattered in 7 districts and 22 Sub-Divisions. It also has one Chief Executive Councilor and 10 Executive Councilors.¹³

Other than the two different types of Autonomous Councils mentioned above, the Government of Assam also created 33 satellite Development Councils. Notification to this effect was published in the Gazette of Government of Assam in May and June, 2010 and January 2011. It is mentioned in the gazette that for socio-economic, educational, cultural and ethnic advancement of people of the community, Development Council should be created for different communities in Assam. It was also issued vide notification No. TAD/BC/105/2013/6 dated 7.3.2013 that each Development Council should have council body with a minimum of 15 members and maximum of 25 members which should be headed by a Chairman who shall be elected by Members of the Council. The satellite Development Councils are listed as given below¹⁴:

- 1) Moran Development Council
- 2) Mottok Development Council
- 3) Maimal Development Council
- 4) Moria Development Council
- 5) Gorkha Development Council
- 6) Chutia Development Council
- 7) Adivasi Development Council
- 8) Nath Jogi Development Council
- 9) Koch Rajbongshi Development Council
- 10) Bishnupriya Manipuri Development Council
- 11) Tai Ahom Development Council
- 12) Mech Kachari Development Council
- 13) Manipuri Development Council

- 14) Sadharan Jati Development Council
- 15) Singpho (Man Tai) Development Council
- 16) Amri Karbi Development Council
- 17) Sarania Kachari Development Council
- 18) Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council
- 19) Tea & Ex-Tea Garden Development Council
- 20) Schedule Caste Development Council.
- 21) Chaodang Development Council
- 22) Madahi Development Council
- 23) Kumar Development Council
- 24) Hajong Development Council
- 25) Sut Development Council
- 26) Gorla Development Council
- 27) Barman Kachari Development Council
- 28) Development Council for Karbi people residing outside Karbi Anglong
- 29) Hindi Speaking Development Council
- 30) Bengali Speaking Development Council
- 31) Jolha Development Council
- 32) Brahmin Development Council
- 33) Kalita Development Council yet to be notified

Other Councils: There are also some other councils in different states such as, Shingling Hill Development Council (SHDC) in Mizoram, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) in West Bengal, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil (LAHDC-K) and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh (LAHDC-L) in Jammu & Kashmir. All the above mentioned Development Councils are created by the Acts of the respective State Legislative Assembly. However, the above mentioned Development Councils are territorial in nature which is different from 33 non-territorial and satellite Development Councils of Assam.

Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) was formed way back in 1988 with headquarters at Darjeeling and it was changed into Gorkhaland Territorial

Administration (GTA) as a result of agreement signed by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), Government of West Bengal and Government of India on 18th April, 2011. GTA administrative jurisdiction extends to the three hill Sub-Divisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and some areas of Siliguri Sub-Division. The administrative jurisdiction of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil covers Kargil administrative district and it was established in 2003. Likewise, the administrative jurisdiction of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh covers the administrative district of Leh and it was formed in 1995.¹⁵

Shinlung Hill Development Council (SHDC) was officially inaugurated on 27th August, 1997 as a result of accord signed between Hmar People Conference (HPC) and the Government of Mizoram on 11th August, 1994. It is also a territorial Development Council with definite boundary but it still functions as interim body till now.¹⁶ After the signing of agreement between the Hmar People Conference (Democratic) (HPC D) and the Government of Mizoram in April, 2018, it is planned that the Shinlung Hill Development Council should be changed into Shinlung Hill Council.

Distinctiveness of the ADCs under the Sixth Schedule: The ADCs, Autonomous Councils and Territorial Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India are unique because they are constitutional bodies and their status and privileges can be altered only by amendment of the Parliament. Further, the State Legislative Assemblies have no legislative powers with regard to the ADCs and councils under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. As a matter of fact, ADCs under the Sixth Schedule are unique and different from

other councils because the ADCs under Sixth Schedule are constitutional bodies whereas other ADCs and councils are created only by the Act of the State Legislative Assemblies. The Scheduled Area under Fifth Schedule is also recognized by the Constitution of India but it does not have the three organs of government like ADCs under the Sixth Schedule. It should also be noted that Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in Hill Areas of Manipur, Satellite Autonomous Council of the plain tribes of Assam, satellite Development Councils of Assam, Shinlung Hill Development Council of Mizoram, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) of West Bengal, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil (LAHDC-K) and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh (LAHDC-L) of Jammu & Kashmir are all created by Acts of the respective State Legislative Assembly of the state. As such, they can also be abolished by Act of the State Legislative Assembly which created them.

The uniqueness of the ADCs and other councils under the Sixth Schedule is that they are facilitated with the three organs of government. As constitutional bodies, they are created as per the provision, provided in Article 244 (2) and they can get financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid through the State Government from the Consolidated Fund of India as per Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India. Over and above that, the legislative powers of the ADCs are incorporated in Paragraphs 3, 3A, 3B, 8, 10 and 11; judicial powers in paragraphs 4 and 5, executive powers in Paragraphs 6 and 7 and financial power in Paragraph 13 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. It is evident that the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the ADCs under the Sixth Schedule provision are incorporated all in the

Constitution of India.¹⁷ Therefore, any modification and amendment in this regard can be done only the Parliament but the State Legislative Assemblies have no constitutional responsibilities at all to legislate the privileges and status of the ADCs under the Sixth Schedule. As a matter of fact, the ADCs, Autonomous Councils and Territorial Councils under the Sixth Schedule are unique and different from other ADCs, satellite Autonomous Councils, satellite Development Councils, territorial Development Councils and other councils outside the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Conclusion: The desire for autonomy is one of the most important factors for emergence and incorporation of the Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule in the Constitution of India. Tribals of the Scheduled Area under the Fifth Schedule are also constitutional safeguarded and protected but they are not facilitated with self-governing constitutional body like ADC under the Sixth Schedule. Whereas, ADCs under the Sixth Schedule are facilitated with three organs of government, namely, legislative, executive and judiciary. The inclusion of Bodoland Territorial Council under the Sixth Schedule encouraged other plain tribes of Assam to demand for autonomy which led to the creation of six satellite Autonomous Councils and 33 satellite Development Councils in Assam. Moreover, ADCs began to function in Manipur but they are neither under the Fifth Schedule nor Sixth Schedule. In fact, ADCs of Manipur are created by legislation of the State Legislative Assembly and they are given limited executive powers. However, they do not have any legislative or judicial powers.

The ADCs in Manipur, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration in West Bengal and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil (LAHDC-K) as well as

Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh (LAHDC-L) in Jammu & Kashmir are all territorial council but their status and privileges cannot be compared with ADCs under the Sixth Schedule. Over and above that, the Shinlung Hill Development Council in Mizoram, the 6 satellite Autonomous Councils and 33 satellite Development Councils of Assam are also all created by the legislation of the respective State Legislative Assembly. As a matter of fact, ADCs, Autonomous Councils and Territorial Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India are totally different in status, powers and functions from ADCs, Autonomous Councils, Development Councils and other Councils outside the Sixth Schedule provision which are created by the legislation of the State Legislative Assembly.

Therefore, ADCs and other councils under the Sixth Schedule should not be grouped together and they should not be listed together in the same category with any other council outside the provision of the Sixth Schedule. Even in North East India, there may be ADCs and councils in states like Manipur and Assam, however, it should be noted that they should not be listed in the same category with ADCs under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Listing of the ADCs and Councils under the Sixth Schedule with other ADCs and councils only amounts to ignorance of the constitutional provision. As a matter of fact, the ADCs and other councils under the provision of the Sixth Schedule is unique and different from other ADCs and councils.

*Professor, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University

References:

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autonomy>, accessed on 21st October, 2013.
2. P. Chakraborty, Fifth and Sixth Schedules to the Constitution of India, Capital Law House, Delhi, 2005, p. 5.
3. S.N. Singh, Mizoram, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 1994, p. 113.
4. B.L. Hansaria, Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India- A Study, Jyoti Printers, Gauhati, pp. 9-10.
5. Government of India, The Constitution of India (As on 1st June, 1996), Department of Publication, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 148, 151 & 162.
6. Op.cit, pp. 28-30.
7. P.M. Bakshi, The Constitution of India, Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, 2006, pp. 342 & 346-347.
8. Ibid, pp. 216-217, 234-235 & 338-340.
9. Suwa Lal Jangu and Babu Lal Meena's 'Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas in Indian Constitution: A Comparative Study of PESA and ADCs' in Jangkhongam Doungel's (ed) 'Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India', Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 2016, pp.247-
10. Rao, V. Venkata Rao, T.S. Gangte., & KSH. Bimola Devi , A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India, Vol. AV: Manipur, S. Chand & Company LTD, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 58-61.
11. Government of Manipur, Manipur Gazette Extraordinary, No. 250, Wednesday, October 21, 2009, Imphal
12. <https://wrtbc.assam.gov.in/portlets/autonomous-development-council>, retrieved on 2.5.2018.
13. Atul Chandra Gogoi, A Study of Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council and Socio-Economic Impact, Ph. D Thesis, Department of Political Science, Assam University, Diphu Campus Karbi Anglong, Assam, 2017, unpublished, pp. 56-59.
14. Op.cit.
15. D. Pulla Rao, 'Status of Autonomous District Council's in India: An Overview' in Sukanta Sarkar and Suman Kalyan Chaudhury (eds) 'Autonomous District Council and Tribal Welfare (North East India)', Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2014, pp. 218-219.
16. Chalsung Sungte, Autonomy Movement of the Hmars in Mizoram, Ph.D Thesis, Department of Political Science, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 2018, unpublished, pp. 106-108.
17. P.M. Bakshi, op.cit, pp. 344-354.

Traditional Belief Systems of The Hmars

Vanrammawii Inbuon*

Abstract: The Early Writings on Hmars traditional belief systems is no more than a replica of the Colonial Administrators and European Missionaries accounts that are Eurocentric and biased. Moreover, Christianity completely annihilated it leaving a wide room for speculation, supposition and wishful thinking. In this paper, both Primary and Secondary sources are employed at an attempt to understand and analyze the traditional belief systems of the Hmars.

Keywords: Hmar, Traditional, Religion, Spirits, Christianity, Super Natural Being.

INTRODUCTION

The Hmars, one of the first settlers of present Mizoram, belongs to the *Kuki-Chin-Mizo* group of the *Sino-Tibeto-Burman* family of the *Mongolian* race. The Traditional Belief Systems of the Hmars can be understood as their indigenous religious beliefs and practices prior to their absorption within the fold of Christianity.

Religion is a blanket term that cannot be compressed into a single meaning. Ember and Ember, both an American Anthropologist in their *Anthropology* defined

Religion as any set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices pertaining to Supernatural power, whether that power be forces, gods, spirits, ghosts or demons.(1999:421)

Belief in a Supernatural and Superior Being: The Hmars believed in the existence of a Supreme being, the creator and sustainer of all living beings dwellings in the heaven above. Besides believing in a pantheon of traditional gods such as *Vanhrlil/Vanhrik* (a god of fertility), *Hnuoihmangpa* (god of the underworld), *Simbak* (god of nature), *Khuonu/Khuopa* (god of nature), and *Khawzing* (a benevolent and merciful god). The supposed Superior, creator and benevolent being is called *Pathien*. One of their incantation ...*Hei Chibai, Chunga Pathien, Hnuoia Pathien* (equivalent to saluting or paying tribute to god from the heaven and the earth) strongly suggested Transcendental

nature of *Pathian*. Early writer portrayed *Pathien* as a detached and remote being. However, this seems doubtful considering the common saying among them such as *Pathien a um annawm* (there is Go), *Pathien thu thu* (God's will be done) and the like in times of desolation. Their ultimate hope is expressed to *Pathien* hoping for his aid and helping hand. Moreover, it seems impertinent and irrational to invoke a being that seem detached and isolated.

The Hmars never invoke the Super Natural beings other than *Pathein*, that too, for important communal events such as *Khawthar Sat* (to settle a new village site), *Tuikhur Siem* (to fashion a village water source usually from a nearby Spring) and *Khawser*.

The Belief in Spirits: The Hmars belief in a cluster of spirits who are either benevolent or malicious. *Khuavang, Lasi* and *Pheisam* bring good fortune to human. While, *Khawhri, Khawchawm, Phung, Khawmu, Zasam, Ramhuoi* and *Tulum* constituted a malicious being. The Hmars believed that they dwelled in places such as *Hmawng Kung* (Bunyan Tree), *Rawlpuk* (a cave in a precipice), *Thing zik bul* (a branchless tree), *Si* (a salty water-hole), *Leiruongtuom* (a mound that looks like a grave) and *Thingsairawkher* (a hollow tree trunk) to name a few. They choose to avoid these places by any means, as upsetting them could lead to sickness and ill-health. In fact, they constantly attempt to appease them. The invocation of the supposed Supreme being and the attempt to appease the malevolent spirit are

often confused to be two sides of the same coin. Early writings on the subject concluded that traditional religion involves the worship of malevolent spirits (Hranglien Songate; J Batlien; Saiaithanga). However, the sacrifices were nothing more than an appeasement purposes to get rid of a sickness, just like consuming modern allopathic medicine to cure sickness. Moreover, the malevolent spirits were not revered is evident from their share in the sacrifices, which comprises of the grotesque portion, unpalatable and distasteful for humans. What keeps them from turning to the supposed superior being for protection against the wrath of the spirit, while believing in a superior and a benevolent being with a little concern for human, at the same time offering sacrifices to a scores of evil spirits whom they fear yet did not revered. Perhaps, religion gave them assurance, the belief in the Superior and Supernatural being must have made existence less obscure. The supposed knowledge of the causes of sickness and ways and means of curing it must have made life less frightening and less uncertain, and made them more in command of their life. Or Perhaps their belief is the binding force.

The belief in the existence of *thlarau* (spirit or soul): *Thlarau* can be defined as a soul or spirit of human being. The Hmars believe in the existence of *Thlarau* in human being. When a person dies, *Thlarau* leaves the body for *Pielra* or *Mithikhuo* depending on the conduct of this world.

According to the Hmars, the welfare of the after-life is dictated by this world, so does Abrahamic religion. Abrahamic tradition too holds that the death goes to a specific place of existence after death, as determined by god, gods or other divine judgment based on their actions or beliefs during life. But the deciding factor of the Hmar's afterlife is plagued by social division and gender inequality. For instance, *Pielral* is accessible only to the *Thangsuo*, where only the affluent and *braves*

are capable of giving the required feast, and hunting the required wild animals respectively. For a female, the only way to access *Pielral* is to marry a *Thansuopa* (*Thansuo* man). In a way, the Hmar concept of life after-death reflected the subordination of women in the society.

***Sakhuo*:** *Sakhuo* is a combination of two words, *Sa* and *Khuo*, where both *Sa* and *Khuo* are the name of gods or deities. The validity of defining *Sa* and *Khuo* as a being/entity and not a religious institution is supported by the popular saying in Mizo that if a person/family are constantly afflicted with sickness or misfortune, people would said, ~~“In~~ *Sa biak hi a dik lo a niang*” (the *Sa* you invoke must not be appropriate for you). In course of time, the term *Sakhuo* was no longer understood as the name of deity or god. It began to be understood as *the belief in and worship of Supernatural Beings*, that is, *Sakhuo* came to be perceived as signifying a *Religion*, reflecting colonial overtone.

The Hmars worship *Sa* first and then *Khuo*. When they invoke *Sa* they slay *Vawk* (Swine/Pig), while *Siel* (Mithun) is used to invoke *Khuo*.

The Hmars system of worship and sacrifices can be divided into three main parts, viz., *Sungbing Inthawina* (family worship and sacrifices), *Khawtlang Inthawina* (corporate worship and sacrifices) and *Mimal Inthawina* (Individual worship and sacrifices).

The Hmars different rituals and ceremonies can be perceived as their attempt to understand the unknown and tame nature to make their life less uncertain and live with ease. For instance, the believed that *Thiempu* are endowed with the skill in identifying the causes of a disease and the fact that they are ready with the panacea would no doubt make life less obscure and less intimidating.

Aisan (Divination): The Hmars are known to be an exceptional diviner, greatly favored by their kindred tribes in unbinding a magic spell. The first known Hmar *Aisanthiem* was *Thairanchawng*, wife of *Sura*. Her magic spell is called *Thairan Dawi*, which was usually performed to ascertain the success of a hunters. Other prominent ones are *Lalruong (Ralngam)* and *Hrangsaipui (Dawikungpui)*. Divination is performed in *Khawthar sat*, *tharlak*, *Fang ko daw*, *Thuite ko*, etc, albeit with a different rites and rituals for each performance.

A *Thiempu* was an ambassador, a go-between the spiritual beings and human, whose success count not on mere memorization of charm nor luck, rather on skill and thorough knowledge of their eco-system, the poisonous ant the healing herb, the behavior of the animals, along with the ingenuity to utilize that knowledge. For instance, in an *Aisan* for *Mankhawng*, to ensure the success of the trap, the *Thiempu* made a concoction in such a way that the ingredients, which he sprinkle on the *Mankhawng* was irresistible for the wild animals and hence a positive outcome. To dramatized it, the whole procedure is accompanied by a chant, *Tuktin-Samtaw-Manphit-Mantal*, which simply comprised the ingredient he used in the concoction.

The Colonial administrators and European missionaries mainly produced Eurocentric, pre-determined Christian point of view, and hence very few positive elements in the traditional religion of the *Mizos*. The early writers on Hmar traditional religion follow suit and characterized the traditional religion as animistic. E B Taylor, 19th century anthropologist defined *animism* as a doctrine of Spiritual Beings, that characterizes tribes very low in the scale of humanity, a primitive people. An element of *animism*, no doubt, is visible in the traditional religion of the Hmar, However, a part definition of every religion?

For instance, even Christianity sees —Godas spirit.

Conclusion: The Hmar Traditional Religion is completely extinguished by Christianity today, thus analyzing it posed a great challenge. The colonial ethnographer cum administrator and the Christian Missionaries, whom we can labelled as the first authority on the subject were subjective and biased in their treatment and understanding of it. The Native writers that follows too, were themselves a Christian convert. And as such, one should approach the subject with caution and be alert of imposing foreign terminology and concept. The fact that there is no scripture like the Christian's *Bible*, the Muslim's *Quran* and the Hindu's *Gita* did not help much. Their folk songs, recitals, liturgies and saying only insinuated their belief system, thus leaving a wide scope for speculation, supposition and wishful thinking. Curiously, the indigenous religion of the Hmars has no known founder, nor neither the practitioner possessed a missionary zeal to propagate or proselytize it.

*** Research Scholar, Dept. of History and Ethnography, Mizoram University**

References:

- Thiek, Hrilrokhum, *History of the Hmars in North East India (with special reference to Assam)*, First Edition, Bhabani Offset Private Ltd., Hastisila Panikhaiti, Guwahati-26, 2013.
- Ember, Carol R and Ember, Melvin, *Anthropology*, Prentice-hall Inc., 9th Edition, New Jersey 07458, 1999.
- Bapui, Vanlal T, *Oral Traditions of the Hmars*, First Edition, Publ. by Directorate, Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Khanapara, Jawaharnagar, Guwahati-22. 2011.
- Vara, H V, *Hmar Nunphung (The Hmar Culture)*, First Edition, L & R Printing Press, Lamka, Manipur, 2000.

- Shakespeare, J, *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, 3rd Peprint, Published by Tribal Research Institute, Dept. of Art & Culture, Mizoram, 2008.
- Kipgen, Mangkhosat, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, Mizo Theological Conference, Jorhat-785014, 1996.
- Batlien, J, *Hmar Chronicles*, First Edition, Printed at Smart tech Offset Printers, Churachandpur, Manipur, 2007.
- Vanlalruata, Albert, *Rethinking Mizo Belief System*, a paper presented in the Mizo History Association Conference, 2016.
- Bapui, Vanlal T, 'The Hmar People of Assam', *Asamar Janagosthi*, Edited by Basanta Kumar Doley, 70th Session of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Feb. 2009. Pp.236-254.
- Saiaithanga, *Mizo Sakhua*, Second Edition, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 1994.
- Songate, Hranglien, *Hmar Chanchin*, L & R Printing Press, Churachandpur, 1977.
- Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui & Mizo Mil eh Thil Hmingthangte Leh Mizo Sakhua*, LTL Publications, Mission Veng, Aizawl-796001, 2008.
- Kneale, Mathew, *An Atheist's History of Belief*, Published by Vintage, Random House, London, 2014.
- Seiwert, Hubert, 'Theory of Religion as Myth; On Loyal Rue (2005), Religion is not about God', in Michael Strausberg (ed), *Contemporary Theories of Religion; A Critical Companion*, Routledge, NY 10016, 2009, pp-224-241.
- Zatluanga, *Mizo Chanchin*, reprinted, Royal Press, Aizawl, 1997.
- Keivom, L, *Hmar Hla Suina*, First Edition, L & R Printing Press, Churachandpur, Manipur, 1980.
- Tylor, Edward B, *Primitive Culture; Researches into the development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, Vol-1, Sixth Edition, John Murray, London, 1920.
- Awolalu, J O, 'What is African Traditional Religion?', *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol-10, No-2 (Spring 1976).
- Interview with Vanlal Luonga Bapui, Halflong, Assam on 24th Jan. 2017 at 10:20 a.m.

Chieftainship and Mizo Polity in the 18th & 19th Centuries

Lalngurliana Sailo*

Abstract: *The Mizo polity has evolved from a tribal segmentary system and by the turn of the 18th century it has crystallized into competing territorial chieftaincies with overlapping territorial claims and resources. The power base of the Mizo chieftaincy was dependent on mutual accommodation between the authority and the subject and the control and access of resources in the 18th and 19th centuries in the context of Mizo society a very crucial factor in the emergence of power and authority.*

Key words: *Chieftainship, tribes, resource, control, ethnicity etc*

Introduction

The Mizos are an ethnic group native to north-eastern India-Mizoram, previously called Lushai Hills, western Burma (Myanmar) and eastern Bangladesh; this term covers several ethnic peoples who speak various Mizo languages. The term Mizo is derived from two Mizo words- Mi and zo. 'Mi' in Mizo means 'person'. Though the term Mizo is often used to name an overall ethnicity, it is an umbrella term to denote the various clans, such as Lusei (Lushai) Lai, Paite, Mara, Ralte, Hmar people etc. A number of dialects are still spoken under the umbrella of Mizo; some of them are Mizo language (which is an official language of Mizoram), Hmar language, Gangte language, Paite language, Lai and Mara languages. In this essay the term Mizo and Lushai are interchangeably used to focus on Mizo chieftainship as the Lushai (Lusei) by far outnumbered the other clans.

The institution of chieftainship was a vital constituent of the Mizo political life in the past. In fact it was deeply rooted in the traditional society of the Mizo. Regarding the origin and genesis of the institution of chieftainship, it is presumed that in the beginning, the privilege to govern the people was possessed by those persons who wielded the power and capability to command a certain group of individuals and to repulse any onslaught by their enemies and foes. Accordingly, the institution of chieftainship evolved in the physical prowess, intrinsic quality, and intellectual caliber of an individual. It is, thus apparent that those persons who had the capability and flair to gather and organize a competent militia became a chief. In the early days chieftainship among the Mizo was fought for, however with the passage of time it became hereditary.

On the basis of the inferences drawn from folk tales and song, it can be surmised that prior to their arrival in Mizo Hills, the various clans of Mizo had already acquainted themselves with the institution of chieftainship (Liangkhaia, 1976, p.33-35)¹. Rev. Liangkhaia, one of the first educated Mizo presumed that for about 200

years, from 1540-1723 A.D. Mizo lived in the present day Chin Hills area of Burma and they were already accustomed to having chiefs Liangkhaia, 1976, p.33-35). However, after their entry into Mizoram, presumably in the first quarter of the 18th century, due to the pressure from a more powerful kindred tribe, the Pawis or Lais, the Sailo clan emerged as the predominant ruling clan (Lalthangliana, 1992, p. 15; Makenzie, 1999, p. 287). Some authors have attributed this prominence of the Sailo clan mainly due to their organizational skill, benevolence and, above all their strong bond of cooperation (Lalthangliana, 1992, p. 15). By the end of the 18th century there were very few chiefs, except the Fanai, Pawi and Lakher chiefs who could stand against the Sailo chiefs. A.G. McCall, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills from 1931-1943 supported this view when he said: —chieftainship among the Lusheis, with very rare exception, was looked upon as the prerogatives of the Sailo.” (McCall, 1977, p. 96). He further added that —There was no recognised system by which a commoner could raise himself to the status of chieftainship through industry. Munificence in public feasts, as well as general bravery, could, with the help of sacrifices, earn distinction and some few privileges.” (McCall, 1977, p. 96). The right to succession was reserved only to those sons of the chiefs who were potent and gifted with capacities (Lewin, 1974, p. 79; Parry, 1988, p.3-4).

Each village was an independent entity, ruled over by its own chief or Lal. John Shakespear the first superintendent of the Lushai Hills had noticed one great difference between the Lushai system of government and the Poi (Pawi) or Chin system. He observed that among the Lushais every chief, however small, acted on his own responsibility, declined to be ordered about even by his own father and no chief pay tribute to another chief. He noted that only on rare occasions, in case of such chiefs as Sukpilal (Suakpuilala), the father's influence may be supreme over all his sons, but at the time of the

British arrival in the 1890s there were no such chiefs.

The chief's status in the village was certainly that of a benevolent one. Neville E Parry, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills between 1924-1928 mentions: —The chief is the father of his people, he helps them when they are in distress and if he falls into difficulties, they also help him in return.” (Parry, 1988, p.1). All the villagers were considered as his children and he was liable to help them in their hard times, advise them in their sticky situation, reward them in their accomplishments, and punish them when they were convicted of offending and infringing the established customs and practices. Indeed, he was the guardian and custodian of his subjects, commander, and protector in times of raids by the enemy (Lewin, 1870, p.131-132). Moreover, he was the provider of foodstuffs in times of scarcity. His house was a refuge for the poor and the needy. In this connection, it may be worthwhile to mention the account of a frontier officer posted in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in his dealing with the Lushais in the Southern Lushai Hills. He recounted the power and authority of the chief by saying, —If any man is in want, he walks into the chief's house and takes what he needs. ‘He is a chief,’ they say, ‘and will receive plenty more gifts. All we have is his; so also his goods are ours. Who should give to us if our chief does not?’ ” (Lewin, 1977, p. 243).

Theoretically, the chief was the supreme authority and an overlord in his village. In fact his power and hegemony was unlimited within the jurisdiction of his territory. However, the chief was not an autocrat, and indeed, could not afford to be so, if he aspired to maintain his chiefship. Because recourse was provided for by the custom that if the subjects perceived their chief as autocratic and tyrannical they had the option to desert him and take refuge under another chief. It was common for a Mizo to migrate, to another village if he did not get along with his chief or had a bad harvest. People were allowed to migrate without any restriction (Parry, 1977, p.14). The potential loss of followers, and correspondingly power and tributes, discouraged the chief from taking unpopular decisions. In comparison, the Mara chief had greater scope for being uncompromising, as migration was not an accepted practice (Parry, 1976, p. 256-260). Hence the wise chief was absolutely aware of this constraint and was very careful in discharging his powers and functions in the administration of the village. Therefore, the authority and de facto command and control of

the chief considerably rested on the personal trait and quality of the incumbent.

Control of resources

In the primitive society, the primary source of wealth and possession was land and labour. The system of land holding is a reflection of the social structure of these societies and usually the allocation of land results from the operation of the system of kinship, inheritances, and marriages, rather than through contracts or transactions between economic units. The nature of land relation in the pre-colonial Mizo (the period prior to 1890 can be taken as the pre-colonial period in Mizo) history society was a rather simple one where the chief owned all the land. Their lands were hereditary and succeeded by their sons. It was a custom for the chief to allot each of his sons a tract of land and establish a village for him right after he got married (Parry, 1988, p. 3-4). In this regard McCall mentioned, —To satisfy hot-headed sons the chiefs were in the habit of sending them out to command outpost settlements, the aim of all chiefs being to exercise dominion over sufficient land to accommodate their eldest and successive sons, the youngest falling heir to his father's stronghold.” (McCall, 1977, p.96-97).

Access to basic resources were opened to all, however, in a differential manner in the sense that people were free to cultivate, to collect their needs from the forest for construction of their house and for firewood but at the expense of paying rent to the chief. The chief was at the apex and all the directives and usages of the resources were at his discretion.

However, there are viewpoints, which question the legitimacy of the chiefs' claim of ownership of all the land. H. Thangmawizuala has maintained that land in Mizoram belonged to the community from time immemorial (Thangmawizuala, 1981). However, this statement cannot be accepted at its face value because the author does not make any serious effort to support his position. He gives no explanation for arriving at this conclusion and as such it cannot be taken as a valid statement.

B. K. Roy Burman and P. S. Sharma while examining the impact and influence of shifting cultivation in the Northeast arrived at a generalized conclusion by claiming that shifting cultivation is frequently associated with communal ownership. Yet, they at the same time duly acknowledged the temporary nature of holding that the cultivators had upon the land they cultivated by saying, —very frequently individual households do not have absolute right

over the lands cultivated by them; their rights are of the nature of usufruct. They can hold the land so long as they make effective use of the same. As soon as they stop their operations their right ceases.” (Burman & Sharma, 1070, p. 150).

Meanwhile, Lianzela has claimed that land, the basic source for economic activities was owned collectively by the community and the chief only acted as distributor of land for the people (Lianzela, 1994, p.12). The contention by writers, like Parry that the land was all held by the chief can find some basic support when a careful scrutiny is made on the relationship which existed between the chief and his subject and the corresponding tributes or taxes which the subjects had to pay to the chiefs for using the land and other resources, which came from the land.

Cultivation of land was done through an allotment system in lieu of a fixed tribute called Fathang. The chief allotted the land to his subjects at the beginning of the year well before the clearing of jungle had to be commenced and he was to receive a portion of their produce in kind, i.e. in paddy. However, there was no permanent patta system or holding. This may be traced to the following factors : (a) Frequent migration and relatively recent settlement (b) Practice of jhumming and nomadic type of living. Sometimes a whole village moves from one place to another where sufficient jhum plots were available (Bondopadhyaya, 1987, p. 185).

The nature of land holding in the pre-colonial Mizo society has shown a rather different picture as compared to their neighbouring hill tribes, viz. the Chins in Burma, the Nagas etc. While on the one hand we find the existence of communal ownership of land in most of the tribal societies in the North East of India, on the other we also find the existence of private landholdings other than the chiefs in the case of the Chins (Stevenson, 1980, p. 85-92), and amongst the Nagas (Davis, 1891, p. 194). Yet, there were no such holdings so far as the recorded and oral tradition of the Mizo history is concerned. The nature of agricultural practice and settlement pattern in the Mizo society may be attributed to this lack of individual rights in land ownership. The various branches of the ruling Sailo family were frequently at war, the cause almost invariably being a dispute over land (Shakespeare, 1987, p.7).

Social Hierarchy

The transition from a tribal form of organization to chiefdom represents a critical stage in the evolution of culture, because it marks the emergence of political centralization and discrete social hierarchies (Winifred & Jonathan, 1985, p. 738). In the context of the Mizo the chief was supported and assisted by a coterie of elders and other functionaries of the village, which were directly appointed by him. The chief and his village officials formed the privileged group in the village. A brief assessment of the village officials may be useful so as to gain some insights for a better understanding of existence of a crude form of social stratification. Foremost among these categories were the Upas or the council of elders who assisted the chief in the exercise of his power and authority. They were appointed by the chief and could be dismissed by him at any time. All matters of village governance were decided and executed by the chief on the advice of his Upas. The Upas enjoyed a fair number of privileges, among which the exemption from paying fathang (or paddy due) could be the most important one. They were also given the right to select their jhum field ahead of the ordinary village folk (Parry, 1976, p. 1).

The village priest or Puithiam occupied a position of due importance in the village set up. There never was any selection or appointment done to become a Puithiam. A person who was well versed in the ceremonial chants and incantations on the occasions of sacrificial ceremonies and festivals had every chance of becoming a Puithiam (Saiaithanga, 1997, p.10). The Sadawt was the personal priest of the chief who conducted the chief's sacrifices. He was assisted by the Tlahpawi, who was usually a friend of the chief (Singh, 1996, p.4). Only the common people availed the service of the Puithiam (Parry, 1976, p. 8).

Another category of officials was the Zalens, who were mainly appointed from the Upas, and the better-off families. They were committed to bail out the chief when short of paddy or in other difficulties and even in time of public distress, the chief was free to distribute the paddy of the Zalens to the distressed families. They had priority in selecting jhum plots and were exempted from paying fathang (Parry, 1976, p. 9).

There was certain group of people who used to render their advice to the chief where to cut the jhum each year. This group was called the Ramhuals. They were allowed first choice of fields to cultivate. They, however, had to pay heavier fathang than ordinary people due to their

getting first choice jhums before the allotment for the public was made (Parry, 1976, p. 7). Usually, people having better labour force than the ordinary folk were selected as Ramhuals with the hope of their producing more than the common villagers. They had to pay the fathang in proportion to the order in which they had chosen their jhum plots. As such, the first Ramhuals might have to pay ten baskets of paddy as fathang the second eight baskets of paddy, the third six, and the fourth four baskets of paddy and so forth. The Ramhual was considered a man of position in the village; hence, there were plenty of candidates for the posts although they had to pay heavier fathang (Parry, 1976, p. 8).

The next category of privileged people was the Thirdeng or the village blacksmith. There was usually only one official village blacksmith in each village, although there could be one or two private Thirdeng who performed their service on a part time basis. The service and skill of the official village Thirdeng could be availed of by anyone in the village and in exchange for his service; the Thirdeng got a basket of paddy from each household per annum. He was also entitled to receive a small share in every animal shot or trapped by any villager (Government notification, 1937). The nature of his work was mainly to repair the agricultural implements, guns and other weapons.

The Tlangau or the village crier was another privileged person in the village. At night, he used to walk down the street and announced the chief's orders giving details about the nature of work to be done. The payment of remuneration or fathang to the village Tlangau in lieu of his service differed from village to village and it depended entirely on local arrangement. Normally he used to receive a basket of paddy as fathang (Parry 1977, p. 7).

These people formed the privileged group in the pre-colonial Mizo society. However, the dividing line between the privileged and the non-privileged group was relatively slim. It has been maintained by some scholars that the notion of purity of blood of a chief by tracing descent from another great chief was considered a strategy for establishing superiority and that the privileged Zalen also used to emphasize that the chief was their kinsman (Goswammy, 1987, p. 323).

Power

The power and authority of the chief deserve to be examined in order to understand how the available resources were controlled and manipulated. The manner in which resources

and labour were controlled in the pre-British Mizo society depended heavily on the power and authority of the chief. In the traditional Mizo society the chief appears to have been the de facto ruler and he had absolute power to exercise his freedom, although the absolute power of the chief appears to have been more of a theoretical assumption since the chief had to take every caution and be sagacious in the exercise of his power. He had the power to impose death penalty on any of his subject (Parry, 1977, p.2). The chief had the power to confiscate the entire properties of those who did not obey his orders and appropriate the properties of those who planned to migrate to another village controlled by another chief, which was known as Ram (Parry, 1977, p.2). Although, the Mizo chief had enormous freedom and authority, he had to be cautious in exercising these rights, for the ordinary villagers were also free to emigrate to another village of a different chief. This could lead to the weakening of the power and respect for the chief, for his greatness and popularity depended heavily on the size and number of village under his control and authority. At the same time McCall state, —The chief and his Upas had powers limited only by the temper of the people they ruled. Until they overstepped the mark the people had no other course open than to submit; for if villagers did try to escape from one chief to another they risked their lives in the process and might easily lose their lives at the hands of the very chief they sought in refuge.” (McCall, 1977, p.96).

Economic foundation

The Mizo chiefs received tribute from each household in the form of paddy in lieu of cultivating the land. The tribute or contribution from the village folks was called fathang. This was to be paid to the chief by every family from his own village and even by those of another village who had cultivated his land. —When a man cultivates the land of a chief other than the chief in whose village he resides, his own chief cannot claim fathang as it is payable only to the chief whose land is cultivated.” (Parry, 1977, p. 12). The quantity of paddy to be paid to the chief as fathang varied from village to village and it was paid in terms of baskets of paddy (Chatterji, 1975, p. 10). During the British administration, the maximum amount that could be levied was fixed at six-snowflake kerosene oil tins of unwinnowed paddy heaped up full (Parry, 1977, p. 12).

The existence of paying fathang is an indication that there was concrete evidence to show that

the system of redistribution was functioning in the pre-colonial Mizo society despite some of the features seen in the Mizo context may have been different from what have been observed in other tribal groups. The Mizo chief acted as the central source to whom the public rendered their products, paddy, meat, honey, salt, etc., which on some occasions were returned back to the public in the form of feast; rewards to those who had excelled in the display of valour and Tlawmngaihna or the Mizo ethos of sacrifice, and selfless service Challiana, 1978, p. 1-12); and rehabilitation to those who had fallen into misfortune. Through fathang, the chief was able to maintain a stable and sound economic status and could offer a continuous flow of zu or rice beer to guests and other dignitaries, which was a rather difficult thing to do for the ordinary villagers.

The chief was also entitled to receive a due on every animal shot or trapped within his territory. Any villager who shot or trapped an animal had to pay due in meat to the chief, which consisted of the animal's left fore leg, called a dar. This practice of paying animal's due was called sachhiah. This due was payable to the chief in whose village resided the man who had shot or trapped the animal (Parry,1977, p.5). This practice is indicative of the extent of the power and authority that the chief had wielded in the pre-colonial Mizo society. It appears that the land along with all its resources belonged to the chief and those who had exploited them had to render a portion of what they extracted from it in return.

Another due payable to chief was the chichhiah. Some chiefs had salt wells inside their territories and the local people used to collect salt for home consumption and for sale. The chief was entitled to receive a due or chichhiah on all the salt collected inside his territory. The chief used to get half seer of salt out of the total amount collected and in addition, each member of the party, who had gone to collect the salt, had to pay him a due of half a seer out of his share (Parry, 1977, p. 12). The villagers, however, were not allowed to collect the salt without the permission of the chief (Parry, 1977, p.5), which substantiated the notion that the chief held ownership of the land. It is also indicative of the fact that even the mineral wealth of the land belonged to the chief and strengthened the assumption that he was the owner of the land.

The chief used to exact dues on honey, called khuaichhiah, when his villagers extracted it. The due was applicable only to the extraction of the honey of the large bees, which made their hives

on the side of the high cliffs and were regarded as the property of the chief if found inside his territory. Only with the consent of the chief the villagers could take the honey and wax but the chief was entitled to an equal share with each of the persons who took the honey and wax, when it was divided up (Parry, 1977, p.5). If anyone was found guilty of extracting the honey without the permission of the chief, he was liable to be fined a full-grown mithun, which was the heaviest fine in the pre-colonial period (Parry, 1977, p.5)

The wealth of a person was calculated in terms of the number of domesticated mithun or sial he had in his possession and if a person possessed a big herd of sial he was regarded as a wealthy man. When a villager sold his sial to a person residing in another village, he had to pay a young pig to the chief. This due on the selling of a sial was called sechhiah. Under the British administration villagers were given the option of paying Rupees 2 (Lalremsiamia, 1984, p. 72) The existence of sechhiah showed that the chief had enormous authority over the resources, which even had covered the property of his subjects. The sale of sial within the village, however, did not invite the chief's penalty as it did not amount to the slackening of animal resources and therefore, did not require to pay sechhiah to the chief.

It was one of the prerogatives of the chief from early on that, whenever deemed necessary the villagers had to construct the chief's house on the site selected by the chief himself free of cost (Lalremsiamia, 1984, p. 73). The ability to control and manage of labour within his village put the chief in a high social standing in the traditional Mizo society. This aspect of the power of the chief was one of the most valuable, which emphasized his status in the society, and the level of respect that he wielded in his village. While dealing with the Mizo in the 1860s and 70s, T. H. Lewin thus writes, —For public purposes, such as feast days, receptions, the entertaining of quests, etc., the chief sends for anything that may be required to whoever has it. His house is built for him and his land cultivated by the unpaid labour of his followers.” (Lewin, 1977, p. 243). However, as a token of appreciation it was customary for the chief to give a feast for the villagers.

As a mark of respect, the village chief was also accredited to a special privilege while undertaking journey. If the chief undertook a journey, some of the elders had to escort him and carry all his belongings. Whenever the chief and his elders adjudicated a case of discord, they

were to acquire a fee known as *salam*. As a rule, the party losing the case had to pay *Salam*, equivalent to rupees five to the chief and his elders who normally consumed the same for feast (Parry, 1977, p6).

Besides the above privileges that the chief had been entitled to, he had the right to select his *jhum* plot every year before anyone. The people who resided in his village also used to cut his *jhum*, which, however, was discontinued by the British administration. The chief also protected some fruit bearing trees nearby the chief's village and no one was allowed to pluck the fruits without the permission of the chief. The house of a person who migrated to another village was at the disposal of the chief, who might pull it down and use it for firewood or give it to somebody else. He also had the right to claim half of the paddy of a person who migrated on the condition that he resold it at the village price rate (Parry, 1977, p. 14 & 15).

Bawi or Retainer

Apart from being able to control and utilize the labour of the ordinary villagers, the Mizo chief had enjoyed the exclusive service of an institution called the *Bawi* system. The term *Bawi* has different connotations in the context in which it was applied for. The Dictionary of the Lushai Language, authored by J.H. Lorain rendered the term *Bawi* as slave, a retainer, a bondman, a vassal, or a serf. (Lorrain, 1975, p. 31). It could also mean a pauper, a servant, or a refugee. A *Bawi* was an individual who was dependent upon the Lushai chief (Mc Call, 1977, p. 121). There were three categories of *Bawi*, (a) *InpuichhungBawi* (b) *ChemsenBawi* and (c) *TukluhBawi*. The first category, *Inpuichhungbawi* was applied to a person who in poverty, sickness, or distress, had sought, and received, protection at the hands of the chief (McCall, 1977, p. 121). This kind of *Bawi* could be termed as servant or pauper as they earned their livelihood by serving the chief and even enjoyed the various prerequisites common to most chiefs' establishments in the shape of a more lavish table, generous supplies of *zu* or rice beer, and meat from the chase or from customary sacrifices.

The *ChemsenBawi* was a murderer who sought sanctuary with the chief, no matter at what cost, in return for protection in the face of certain vengeance from the victim's family. They were under no obligation to serve the chief. However, the chief acquired the right to the marriage price of the *ChemsenBawi's* daughters, when they attained marriageable age.

The last category of *Bawi* was a person, who surrendered to the chief along with his family after having been defeated in a battle or war. He was called *Tukluh Bawi*. He enjoyed more freedom in comparison to the other types of *Bawi*. Under this category fell any captives in the war. According to the traditional custom of the Mizo, they could, however buy back their freedom by paying a *mithun* or *sial* or its equivalent value of gongs or beads (Shakespeare, 1987, p. 48). There were slight variations of the institution of *Bawi* in the context of the *Pawior Lai* clan when compared with that of the *Lushai* or *Lusei*, that where as the *Sailo* chief cannot sell his *Bawi*, the *Pawi* chief had the right to sell his *Bawi* (Bawitlung, 1996, p. 172). The *Bawis* were important possessions and acted as an additional source of work force for the chief. Through their services, the chief could gain more wealth and surplus production, which could be obtained only by having an additional labour force as their method of cultivation required heavy labour.

In addition to these types of *Bawi*, there was a certain group of people called *Sal*. These were persons captured in raids and their position was quite different from that of any other category of *Bawi*. They were the personal property of their captors, and were sometimes traded for guns. As a rule, only children and marriageable women were taken captive, and the latter were disposed off in marriage, the price of which was claimed by their captors (Bawitlung, 1996, p. 49). The captors looked after the captive children as their own and they were treated so well that they did not want to return to their native places even when they got the opportunity.

These rights and privileges enjoyed by the chief are indicative of the solid and stable economic base of the Mizo chief. In the context of the pre-colonial Mizo society, where shifting method of cultivation was the only option for agricultural undertakings, the most important possession of a person was none other than having enough work forces to enable him to accrue more than bare subsistence. The ability to make surplus production rendered a person respectable and facilitated his ascent on the social ladder.

The trajectory of the Mizo polity throughout the 18th century was towards a more or less centralized form of social organization as evident from the transition from segmentary lineage polity to a chiefly polity from the mid 18th century. However, the process was inhibited by the ecological and other factors preventing it from evolving into a more advanced form of socio-political organization. The level of

sociopolitical organization that the Mizo had experienced in the 18th century may have conformed to the simple chiefdom or petty chieftainship typology developed by anthropologists and archaeologists. (Shalim, 1968, p. 21& 22).

* Dr. Lalngurliana Sailo is the Head and Associate Professor, Dept. of History and Ethnography, Mizoram University, Aizawl-796004.

References

- Bandopadhyaya, P.K. (1987). 'Land Relations and Land Use Pattern: The Mizo Dimension,' in B.B.Dutta and M.N. Karna (Ed.) *Land Relations in North-East India*, (New Delhi, 1987), p. 185
- Barpujari, S.K. (1987). Naga attitude towards Land and Land Revenues in B. B. Dutta and M.N Karna (Ed.) *Land Relations in North East India*, New Delhi. P. 194.
- Bawitlung, V. (1996). *Vanlalringa Bawitlung, 'Chieftainship and the Processes of State Formation in Mizo Society'*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis), Department of History, NEHU, (Shillong, 1996), p. 172
- Burman, B.K. R & Sharma, P.S. (1970). 'Tribal Agriculture in India', in *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol-XXV, 1970, RESEARCHCO REPRINT, p. 150
- Challiana, Rev. (1978)., *Pi Pu Nun*, (Aizawl, 1978), p. 12
- Chaterji N (1975). *The Mizo chief and His Administration*, (Aizawl, 1975), p. 10
- Goswamy, B.B. (1987). 'The Mizo in the Context of State Formation' in SurajitSinha (Ed.) *Tribal Politics and State Systems in Pre-Colonial Eastern and North-Eastern India*, (Calcutta, 1987), p. 323
- Government Notification (1937). Government Notification No.2530 (a) A.P. dated 25.3.1937
- Lalremsiama.F. (1984). 'The Traditional Political Institutions of the Luseis,' (Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation), Department of History, NEHU, (Shillong, 1984), p. 72
- Lalthangliana, B. (1992). *Hmakhawsangnu* (Studies in Mizo Culture, Tradition, and Social Life), Aizawl, p. 15.
- Lewin, T. H. (1977). *A Fly on the Wheel*, Aizawl. P. 243.
- Lewin, T. H. (1870). *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, (London, 1870), pp. 131-132
- Lewin, T. H. (1874). *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the "Dzo" or Kuki Language with Vocabularies and Popular Tales*, (Calcutta, 1874), p79
- Liangkhaia. 1976. *MiLO Cluvichin*. Mizo Academy of Letters, Aizawl; p. 21.
- Lianzela, (1994). *Economic Development of Mizoram*.Guwahati. p. 12
- Lorrain, J. H. (1975). *Dictionary of Lushai Language*, (Calcutta, 1975), p. 31
- Makenzie, A. (1999). *The North East Frontier of India*, Mittal Publication, p-287.
- McCall, A. C. (1977). *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, p-96.
- McCall. (1977). *The Lushai Chrysalis*. Aizawl.
- Parry, N. E. (1976). *The Lakhers*, (Aizawl, 1976), p.259-260
- Parry, N. E. (1988). *A monograph on Lushao Custom and Ceremonies*, Aizawl
- Sahlins, M. D. (1968). *Tribesmen*, (Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968), pp.21-22
- Saiaithanga. (1997). *Mizo Sakhua*. Aizawl.p.9-10.
- Shakespear, J. (1987). *Lushai-Kuki Clan*, Aizawl. P.7.
- Singh.D. (1990). *The Last Frontiers People and Forest in Mizoram*, New Delhi. P.4.
- Stevenson, H.N.C. (1986). *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*, Aizawl. P. 85-92.
- Thangmawizual, h. (1981). *Land Reforms in Mizoram*, in Majuli Bose (ed.) *Land Reforms in Eastern India*, (Jadavpur, 1981), pp. 28-30
- Winifred, C & Jonathan, H. C. (1985). 'Trib versus chiefdom in Lower Central America,' in *American Antiquity*, 1985, Vol. 50, Issue 4, p. 738

Depression and Psychological Wellbeing among Mizo Youth Drug Dependents

Lalremruati* & Zokaitlaungi**

Abstract: The study examines the level of depression and psychological wellbeing among 400 samples of Mizo youth drug dependents and control group with equal representation of male and female by employing the Beck Depression Inventory and General Health Questionnaire. The results provided that different levels of depression and psychological wellbeing for drug dependents as well as female and male samples. It was also highlighted the independent ‘gender’ and ‘drug dependency’ effects with interaction effects of ‘gender x drug dependency’ effect; negative correlation was also found between the depression and psychological wellbeing. The results portrayed the needs of psychological intervention for drug dependents especially for female dependents.

Keywords: drug dependent, psychological wellbeing, depression, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Over the ages drugs of all sorts have been used. Their variety, their frequency of using and their users have been constantly increasing. Psychoactive substance use poses a significant threat to the health, the social and economic structure of families, communities and nations. The WHO estimated that the extent of worldwide psychoactive substance use will be around 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million drug users. The percentage of total life lost due to these substances account for 8.9% worldwide in 2000 (WHO, 2018). The harmful use of alcohol results in 3.3 million deaths each year, injecting drug use reported in 148 countries, of which 120 reports HIV infection among this population (WHO, 2015).

Youth: Youth is often referred to as those persons between the ages of 15 to 24 yrs. (www.un.org 2018). According to WHO, youth is also referred to as those persons between 15 to 24 yrs. age group (www.searo.who.int). An adolescent is defined by the World Health Organisation as a person between 10 and 19 years of age (WHO, 2018), a developmental period and attainment of physiological or psychological maturity (Ruber & Ruber, 2001), a turning point, a time for change in a number of life’s domains (Crockett & Crouter, 1995); and a period of cognitive, biological, physiological and psychological transition. Furthermore, they argue that adolescence is a period in which one’s existing behavioural orientations have a chance of becoming enduring traits (Crockett & Petersen, 1999). The period of early adolescence has several specific physical and social changes and has been described as especially stressful phase of development (Mahon et al., 2003); that leads to stress, anxiety and depressive mood on adolescents’ health risk behaviour (Callas et al., 2004; Weiss et al., 2005).

Drug dependency- The *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD-10; www.who.int/ 2016) define ‘Drug dependency’ as a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state. The dependence syndrome may be present for a specific psychoactive substance (e.g. tobacco, alcohol, or diazepam), for a class of substances (e.g. opioid drugs), or for a wider range of pharmacologically different psychoactive substances. The Tenth Revision of the *International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems* (ICD-10) defines the dependence syndrome as being a cluster of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive phenomena in which the use of a substance or a class of substances takes on a much higher priority for a given individual than other behaviours that once had greater value (www.who.int/substance_abuse).

Psychological well-being is a self-regard, interpersonal relationships, independence, problem-solving, assertiveness, reality testing, stress tolerance, self-actualisation and happiness (Bar-On, 1988). It has often been used interchangeably with the term “mental health” and when done so it designates one who is functioning at a high level of behavioural and emotional adjustment and adaptiveness, and not one who is simply not ill (Reber & Reber, 2001). However, the term “psychological well-being” is the preferred option and it refers to one’s overall psychological health. Studies

provided that those adolescents who have lower levels of psychological well-being, use drugs to a greater extent than those who report higher levels of psychological well-being (Visser & Leigh-Anne, 2007) which goes with Barlow and Durand's (1999) theoretical opinion that individuals often use substances as a means to escape when life poses too many challenges or whether drug use leads to a deterioration in overall psychological well-being, remains an area of blurred opinions; the prior option seems to have gained more weight in recent years (Armstrong & Costello, 2002).). Adolescents who used drugs had significantly lower levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Visser & Leigh-Anne, 2007).

Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy and poor concentration. These problems can become chronic or recurrent and lead to substantial impairments in an individual's ability to take care of his or her everyday responsibilities. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide, a tragic fatality associated with the loss of about 850,000 thousand lives every year (WHO, 2018; http://www.who.int/mental_health).

Many of the heroin-addicted patients were found to have strong depressed feelings that 75% of all psychiatric hospitalizations are depression cases (Robbins, 1974). Twelve per cent of the non-dependent population were assessed as having any psychiatric disorder compared with 22% of the nicotine-dependent, 30% of the alcohol-dependent and 45% of the drug-dependent population (Ferrel et al., 2001). Mood and anxiety disorders are among the most common co-occurring psychiatric conditions among women with substance use disorders and it has been found to be significantly higher among women than in men (Brady and colleagues, 2009), and the most common mood disorder among women with alcohol and drug abuse is a major depressive disorder (Goldstein (2009). Studies provided that men typically showed higher rates of substance use disorders (Kessler et al., 1994), and women, higher rates of depression (Kessler et al., 1993) but no clear gender differences in comorbidity. Results showed that positive correlations as being present between psychological well-being and substance abuse in Thai drug user (Tuicomepee & Romano, 2005). Several studies portrayed that a negative correlation between depression and total well-being showed negative

significance that low depression with high in total psychological well-being (Tiwari Tripathi, 2015); and co-relation between depression and psychological well-being revealing 0.70 negative correlation among old aged abusers (Dhara & Jogsan, 2013).

In India, problems relating to substance abuse have seen an increasing rise over the past few years. A 2012 survey by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry statistics of boys aged between 15-19 yrs. shows that a shocking 28.6% reported tobacco use and 15 % were addicted to alcohol and injectable drugs and which also seem to be popular amongst children, with 88.6% children from Mizoram, followed by Meghalaya and Rajasthan at 25%. In Maharashtra, this number stands at 23.5%, in Punjab at 13%, in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Madhya Pradesh at 11% (MSD&RB, 2015). Therefore, the present study tried to bring out the psychological adjustment of Mizo youth drug abusers to provide theoretical and methodological foundations for the design of prevention strategies and treatment programs and to provide bases for further in-depth studies.

Objectives:

Given the theoretical and methodological foundations pertaining to drug dependency as explanations, the present study has been designed with the following objectives:

1. To study the level of depression and Psychological wellbeing of drug dependence as compared to non-dependents;
2. To highlight the relationship between dependent variables – depression, psychological wellbeing
3. To elucidate 'gender' and 'drug dependent' effect on depression and psychological well-being.
4. To study the interaction effects of 'gender and addiction' on depression, and psychological well-being;
5. To study the predictability of psychological well-being from the level of depression.

Hypothesis:

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were framed for the present study. It was hypothesized that:

1. There will be differences in the level of depression and psychological well-being among the comparison groups.
2. There will be negative significant relationships between dependent variables – depression and psychological well-being.

3. It was expected that there will be gender and addiction effects on depression, and psychological well-being.
4. It was assumed that interaction effects of gender and addiction will be present on depression and psychological well-being.
5. It was expected that predictability of depression on psychological well-being will be present.

Methodology:

Sample - The sample will consist of 400 Mizo youth (200 drug dependents and 200 non-dependence x 200 males and 200 females), from the age group of 18 to 30 (NYP, 2003) to represent Mizo youth, and will be selected by using multi-stage random sampling procedure at Aizawl, but well representation of Mizoram was attempted. The drug-dependent subjects were selected from hospitals and various non-government organizations (NGOs) from Aizawl city by using ICD-10 diagnostic criteria for psychoactive substance which was used to diagnose the drug-dependents. The socio-demographic profile was framed for cross-checking of the sample inclusion criteria such as age, sex, family size, occupation, educational qualification, marital history, area of domicile, sibling size and position, family type, crime history, and drug-taking history (first drug use, age of first use, frequency, introduced by whom, route of use, type of drug used and currently used, treatment sought, whether currently under treatment or not including OST, treatment found most useful, test of hepatitis and STIs with HIV/AIDS). All these shall be recorded with the objectives to obtain a truly representative sample for the study as per design.

Design of the study – The design would be a 2 x 2 factorial design {2 drug dependence (drug dependence and non-drug dependence adolescents) and 2 gender (male and female)} of Mizo adolescents (who were representing different parts of Mizoram), four cells of comparison groups as it aims to elucidate the differences between the comparison groups on the selected psychological measures of depression and Psychological wellbeing. In addition, correlational design to determine the predictability of drug dependence from the measured variables of depression and psychological well-being was carried out separately under each cell of the main design (levels of analyses).

Test materials to be used: To meet the objectives of the present study on drug

dependency among Mizo youths; the following psychological measures shall be incorporated:

(1) **International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems-10 (ICD-10)** given by World Health Organization (WHO) that the criteria for dependence syndrome which includes strong desire or sense of compulsion to take the substance, impaired capacity to control substance-taking behaviour, physiological withdrawal state, tolerance effects, preoccupation with substance use and persistent substance use despite clear evidence of harmful consequences.

(2) **General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; Goldberg, D., 1972):** The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) constructed by Goldberg is a self-administered screening tool with 12 items which measures overall psychiatric disorder (psychological well-being) of the respondents. The GHQ is a screening tool which was used to identify the severity of psychological distress experienced by an individual within the past few weeks.

(3). **The Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI II; Beck, A. et al, 1961):** The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), constructed by Beck, A. et al (1961), is a 21-item test presented in a multiple-choice format which purports to measure presence and degree of depression in adolescents and adults. The statements are rank ordered and weighted to reflect the range of severity of the symptom from neutral to maximum severity. Numerical values of zero, one, two, or three are assigned each statement to indicate the degree of severity.

Results:

Results revealed that there was different level of depression and psychological well-being among the comparison groups on Psychological wellbeing and Depression as expected under Hypothesis -1; there was negative correlation between Psychological wellbeing and Depression as expected under Hypothesis -2 ($r = -.82$); ANOVA showed significant independent effect of gender and drug-dependent effect on Psychological wellbeing (gender effect was $F=147.63^{**}$, $Eta\ sq. = .54$; drug-dependent effect was $F=80.51^{**}$, $Eta\ sq. = .38$) and Depression (gender effect was $F=80.51^{**}$, $Eta\ sq. = .38$; drug-dependent effect was $F=185.94^{**}$, $Eta\ sq. = .33$) confirming the hypothesis-3; the significant interaction effects of gender and drug dependent on depression was 54% ($F=4857.38^{**}$; $Eta\ sq. = .54$) and psychological well-being was 39% ($F=80.51^{**}$; $Eta\ sq. = .39$) which supported the hypothesis-4; and the

prediction of depression on Psychological wellbeing was 72% ($R^2=.72$) confirming the

hypothesis -5 of the study.

Variables		Statistics							
Dep. Vars	Independent Variables	Mean	SD	SEM	ANOVA			Corrln.	Regsn.
GHQ	Male Dependant	18.59	6.40	0.64	Sex F=147.63 **, Eta Sq.= .38	Dep. F=295.56 **, Eta Sq.= .33	S X D F=4857.38 **, Eta Sq.= .72		
	Female Dependant	26.00	6.46	0.65					
	Male Non- Dependant	10.86	4.40	0.48					
	Female Non- Dependant	11.51	5.25	0.53					
	Total Male Dependant	15.04	6.77	0.50					
	Total Female Dependant	18.76	9.34	0.66					
	Total Dependant	22.30	7.41	0.52					
	Total Non-dependant	11.21	4.87	0.36					
	Total samples	16.97	8.40	0.43					
Depression	Male Dependant	11.82	8.12	0.88	F=80.51 **, Eta sq.= .38	F=185.94 ** Eta sq.= .33	F=80.51 **, Eta sq.= .39		
	Female Dependant	14.05	12.26	1.23					
	Male Non- Dependant	23.87	10.12	1.01					
	Female Non- Dependant	32.80	10.83	1.08					
	Total Male Dependant	18.34	11.02	0.81					
	Total Female Dependant	23.43	14.88	1.05					
	Total Dependant	28.34	11.37	0.80					
	Total Non-dependant	13.03	10.59	0.78					
	Total samples	20.98	13.40	0.68					
**= significant at .01 levels									
*= significant at .05 levels									

The present study has revealed that there was significant differences in the level of depression and psychological well-being among the drug-dependents and non-drug dependents as well as between male and female samples. There was negative correlation between psychological wellbeing and depression; the significant independent effect of 'gender' and 'drug dependent' effect on Psychological wellbeing; the significant interaction effects of 'gender and drug dependency' on depression psychological well-being were portrayed; and depression predicted Psychological wellbeing among the subjects. The results revealed that drug dependent youth showed higher depression with lower psychological wellbeing similarly more psychological problems are present in female than male which indicated that psychological intervention for drug dependents and more attention for female drug dependents is needed.

*Lalremruati, Asst Professor, Department of Psychology, Government Aizawl West College, Aizawl.

**Zokaitluangi, Professor, Department of Psychology & Dean SSS, Mizoram University, Aizawl-796004.

References:

- Armstrong, T.D. & Costello, E.J. (2002). Community studies on adolescent substance use, abuse or dependence and psychiatric comorbidity. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 7 (6), 1224-1239.
- Barlow, D.H. & Durand, V.M. (1999). *Abnormal psychology* (2nd ed.). Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Bar-On, R. (1988). *The development of an operational concept of psychological well-being*. Rhodes University, South Africa: Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Beck, A.T., Ward, C.H., Mendelson, M., Mock, J. & Erbaugh, J. (1961). An inventory for measuring depression. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 4, 561-571
- Callas, P.W., Flynn, B. S., & Worden, J.K. (2004). Potentially modifiable psychosocial factors associated with alcohol use during

- early adolescence. *Addictive Behaviors*, 29, 1503-1515.
- Crockett, L.J., & Crouter, A.C. (1995). *Pathways through adolescence: an overview*. In Crockett, L.J. & Crouter, A.C. (Eds.). *Pathways through adolescence: an individual development in relation to social contexts*, 1-12. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.
- Crockett, L.J., & Petersen, A.C. (1999). *Adolescent development: health risks and opportunities for health promotion*. Promoting the health of adolescents: new direction for the twenty-first century, 13-37. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Dhara, R.D & Jogsan, Y.A. (2013). Depression and Psychological Well-being in Old Age. *Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 3:117.
- Farrell, M., Howes, S., Bebbington, P., Brugha, T., Jenkins, R., Lewis, G., Marsden, J., Taylor, C., & Meltzer, H. (2001). Nicotine, alcohol and drug dependence and psychiatric comorbidity: Results of a national household survey. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*. 179():432-437
- Goldberg, D. (1972). *The detection of psychiatric illness by questionnaire: A technique for the identification and assessment of non-psychotic psychiatric illness*. London, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goldstein, B., Kemp, D.E., Soczynska, J.K., & McIntyre, R.S. (2009). Inflammation and the phenomenology, pathophysiology, comorbidity, and treatment of bipolar disorder: a systematic review of the literature. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2009 Aug;70(8):1078-90.
- Kessler, R.C., McGonagle, K.A., Swartz, M., Blazer, D.G., & Nelson, C.B. (1993). Sex and depression in the National Comorbidity Survey: I. Lifetime prevalence, chronicity, and recurrence. *J Affect Dis*. 1993;29:85-96.
- Kessler, R.C., McGonagle, K.A., Zhao, S., Nelson, C.B., Hughes, M., Eshleman, S. and Hans-Ulrich, W. (1994) Lifetime and 12-month prevalence of DSM-III-R psychiatric disorders in the United States, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 51, 8-19.
- Mahon, N. E., Yarcheski, A., & Yarcheski, T. J. (2003). Anger, anxiety, and depression in early adolescents from intact and divorced families. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*. Volume 18, Issue 4, August 2003, Pages 267-273
- Mizoram Social Defence and Rehabilitation Board (2015) *Report on one day training on pmmvy guidelines and use of pmmvy-cas for all dpc and dpa under social welfare deptt*. Social Welfare Department Government of Mizoram. <https://socialwelfare.mizoram.gov.in>
- National Youth Policy (2003). *Final Draft National Youth Policy 2003*. National Centre for Youth Development, Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture. Government of India, 1-43.
- Reber, A.S & Reber E.S. (2001). *The Penguin dictionary of psychology*, (3rd ed.). Penguin Books Ltd.
- Robbins, P.R. (1974). Depression and drug addiction. *Psychiatric quarterly*, 48(3).
- Tiwari, P., & Tripathi, N. (2015). Relationship between Depression and Psychological Well-being of Students of Professional Courses. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*. 2, 3, 139-133.
- Tuicomepee, A & Romano, J.L. (2005) Psychological Well-Being of Thai Drug Users: Implications for Prevention. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 27, 3, 431-444.
- United Nations Organisation (2018). www.un.org
- Visser, M & Leigh-Anne R. (2007). Substance Abuse and Psychological Well-being of South African Adolescents, *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37,3, 595-615.
- Weiss, B., Caron, A., Ball, S., Tapp, J., Johnson, M., & Weisz, J.R. (2005). Iatrogenic effects of group treatment for antisocial youth. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73, 1036-1044
- World Health Organisation (WHO), (2002). *The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders*. Geneva:
- World Health Organization (2018). *Adolescent Health* <http://www.who.int>.
- World Health Organization (2018). www.searo.who.int
- World Health Organizations (2008). *Principles of Drug Dependence Treatment*, www.who.int/substance_abuse

The Church & YMA: The Harbinger of Peace and Development in Mizoram

Dr JC Zomuanthanga*

Abstract: *The history of Mizoram has been punctuated with many historical changes. In fact, it had seen a series of politico-economic and social upheavals the impact of which can be seen in the transformation of the society across various spectrum. In this respect, the role of the Church and the YMA as an institution in bringing peace to the state, and as an institution in which all the Mizos could demonstrate and express themselves with the spirit of 'tlawmngaihna' has particularly manifested the role and significance of the Civil Society in Mizoram.*

Keywords: Civil Society, Church, YMA, aloofness, tlawmngaihna (Mizo ethic/moral force), agent, neutrality, Pasaltha

Introduction

The region that is now named Mizoram underwent a series of historical changes during the last one hundred years. In fact the region has witnessed a dramatic transformation from animism to the faith of Christianity. Due to the lack of political education and inadequate experience, the Mizo people were not ready to decide their political future at the time of India's independence. At this critical juncture the role and significance of the civil society in Mizoram as a sphere apart from the state, as well as in dialogue and support of the state needs to be looked into. At the same time it can also be seen as an "agent" that interacts with and indeed opposes the state. In this paper, I shall trace the role played by the civil society in Mizoram with particular reference to the Church and the association called Young Mizo Association (YMA) as it penetrates deep into the social and political life of the Mizos and reinforced the spirit of collaboration. The purpose of this essay is to reassess the foundations of the concept of civil society in Mizoram and thereby to examine its potential for reviving/democratizing the decadent Mizo society.

I. Civil Society: the Concept

Civil society is gaining importance not only at the local and national, but even at the global level. The term has been used to define the challenges of a democratic transition from a statist regime. It is an associational life through which citizens are imbued with an ethic of —self-interest, rightly understood,— in which an —enlightened regard for themselves constantly prompts them to assist one another and inclines them willingly to sacrifice a portion of their time and prosperity to the welfare of the state.”¹ Thus, for de Tocqueville they were local association of citizens —acting together in the affairs of daily life”.² And for Locke, it is a source of resistance to the state³ i.e. a limited

state with a self-directing society. Thus from this argument we can state that civil society is simply the coming together of citizens voluntarily in associations. According to Carolyn M. Elliott, —they have a life in society outside the political structure, but they are also important constituents of the political system, dispersing power and providing a basis for representation of social diversity”⁴. Jurgen Habermas enlarged the notion of civil society as —a site where public opinion is formed through discourse in which private individuals forge a common understanding about public goals and exercise scrutiny over the state”;⁵ —a terrain” according to Gramsci, —where rising social groups may challenge the power of the state and the dominating classes associated with it”.⁶ Thus, Civil Society is that space between the family and the state where people associate across ties of kinship, aside from the market, and independent of the state. It includes both relative and formal organisations and the informal array of friendships and social life outside the family. As such, it is in this context that we shall study the role of civil society in the peace and development in Mizoram.

II. Civil Society in Mizoram: An Overview

II.1 The Church: A Socio-Political-Religious Centre

Religion can be a strong basis for civil society. The Mizos consider themselves to be cent-per-cent Christians. In fact, the mass conversion of the whole tribes to a new religion is a peculiar phenomenon and the conversion of the whole of Mizo tribes into Christianity is regarded by many as God's miracle.⁷ The story of this phenomenal conversion to Christianity is taken as very significant —because it is also in a way the story of the political and administrative development of the people in the region.”⁸ Having become the only religion of the Mizos,

Christianity acted as a strong agent of modernisation. It brought about changes to their primitive customs, gave them formal western education and indirectly made them socio-politically conscious. Indeed it gave them a new sense of common identity which later came to dominate the politics of the region. Keeping in mind the origin and development of the new sense of identity, we now turn to examine the church's historical role as the harbinger of peace and development in Mizoram.

Church, as an institution concerning practice of Christian faith and principles perform three fold functions in the Mizo society: Religious, Political, and Social.⁹ In its religious functions, it tries to bring about spiritual growth and religious consciousness so as to strengthen the faith of the people. It organizes regular Church services, Bible Study, Sunday School for both adults and children, Fellowship meetings, and also through preaching, devotion and prayers etc. Politically Christianity as stated earlier has been a strong modernizing factor among the Mizos. In fact the politicization of Mizo Christianity with a strong emphasis on their religious difference from the dominant group in India was at one point considered to be the main cause of secessionist movement of the Mizos. But, on closer observation, it will be seen that Christianity in its present form does not necessarily foster regionalism or secessionism, but communalisation or territorialization¹⁰ with ulterior political motives have been largely responsible for such movement. According to Saprawnga, —theMNF's plea _to protect your land, nationality and religion' powerfully stormed the people's heart. And the call _to protect religion' was felt more powerfully than the land and nationality".¹¹ In fact, the Mizo Church never encourages people to rise in revolt. Rather, it was the Church intervention in Mizo politics which paved the way for the settlement of Mizo problems within the Indian constitution.

In the earlier history of the development of Mizo politics too, even though some prominent leaders of the Presbyterian and Baptist churches were active, the churches themselves were never officially involved.¹² However, the rapid rise in literacy soon led to a new level of consciousness. Thus, political ideas and anticipation grew steadily and led to a challenge of the existing arrangement.

The Church's aloofness from politics proved judicious when the district faced a brutal insurgency and counter-insurgency movement. Maintaining an independent stand was

particularly crucial as the Mizo National Front (MNF) tried to capitalize on the Mizo Christian identity. In its —Declaration of the Independence of Mizoram,"¹³ The MNF accused India of —following a policy of exploitative measure in their attempts to wipe out Christianity, our sole religion, and no consideration has been paid to our natural way of life." However, the first critical objection to the violence of insurrection and counter-insurgency measure was raised by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church by issuing a proclamation dated 12th March, 1966 in which it condemned the acts of terror and violence describing it as —unfortunate and contradictory to the Gospel teaching".¹⁴

Following the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church issued two consecutive messages to its members in April and May of 1966 condemning violence committed by any party. The following year, the Presbyterian Church issued a relatively more detailed declaration dealing with the depravity of taking other's lives from a Christian standpoint, and condemned, inter alia, intimidation, persecution, torture and ethnocentrism¹⁵. These declarations incited a severe reaction from the MNF. The Churches, nonetheless, became firmer in their stance against violence and called on the MNF to change its strategy to one of persuasion.

Though aloof in some respect, three areas of the churches activities in the State's politics stand out. The first one is an ecumenical endeavour of the various denominations in seeking a peaceful solution to the political disturbance of the State. For instance, during the period of insurgency, it played a mediating role between the general public and the Indian government, and also between the MNF and the Indian government. Here mention can be made of the Christian Peace Mission Committee initiated by the Presbyterian Church at Aizawl. The members of the committee include among others, Rev HS Luaia of the Baptist Church, Rev. Zairema and Rev. LN Ralte of the Presbyterian Church. It appealed to the Indian government and the MNF to stop the armed fighting and to initiate peace negotiations. In July, 1982, the various denominations came together to form the Mizoram Churches Leaders Committee. Through numerous meetings with the government officials and different political parties in the state,¹⁶ the Committee helped to create an atmosphere in which no party could succeed without a promise to renew peace negotiations. That was the promise the Mizoram unit of the Indian National Congress gave to the people of Mizoram, and it culminated in the

peace talks which finally ushered in the much awaited peace in Mizoram.

The second concern was the efforts of some churches to impart morality in politics, especially during the State's elections. Since the first Legislative Assembly election in 1972, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church has been issuing "election messages" during each campaign.¹⁷ Each message urges the parties to carefully choose candidates of honourable and upright persons and to conduct the elections with integrity and decency.

The third concern was the activities of the Church in the social life of the Mizos. The Church plays a vital role in the field of social conduct. For instance, the Presbyterian Church involves the setting up of the "Synod Social Front" in 1978. Its task was primarily to give teaching and guidelines for Christian involvement in society and politics by means of seminars, booklets, campaign, etc. Also, if any member of a Church commits any social crime, he or she is discharged from that Church. It is a form of moral punishment. In this regard, the Church brings about a sense of equality, oneness, and brotherhood. Members of a Church, while attending religious services sit together in the Church without making any distinction between the rich or the poor, literate or illiterate, and pray together in the Church. Moreover the Church also comes forward to help the people in distress caused by natural calamity or otherwise at large. While its aloofness has presented the Church from having any meaningful voice or authority, it has also helped it to be in a neutral zone which was most needed at the time of emergency. The Church was the first to condemn the violence and the first and leading instrument in bringing the peace.

II.2. YMA: A School of Citizens

The advent of Christianity and its subsequent offshoot the introduction of formal education sounds the death knell for the eventual abolition of the *Zawlbuk* (bachelor's dormitory) system in the Mizo society. However, people began to feel the need of an institution which would serve many of their social needs under the changed situation, i.e., an institution in which all the Mizos could demonstrate and express themselves with the spirit of *tlawmngaihna*,¹⁸ This led to the founding of the "Young Lushai Association" (YLA) after the Young Welsh Association. The name was coined by Rev. David Edward, a Presbyterian Missionary.¹⁹ It was officially inaugurated on 15 June, 1935 with

Rev. L. Evans, also a Presbyterian Missionary as its first president. Later in October 1948, the association was given a new nomenclature as "Young Mizo Association" (Y.M.A.)²⁰.

Since its inception, YMA did remarkable work for the society.²¹ The leaders were all educated and because of these, the programmes were all up to standard. During the first few years of its existence YMA gave more attention to the subjects like debates, group discussions and drama. They did this to broaden the outlook of the Mizos in general and to evolve more progressive ideas among its members in particular. Every Monday they organised group discussions and debates (perhaps alternately) and through this regular feature they learnt the art of public speech.

The next foremost step taken by the YMA was in the field of public health and sanitation. It encouraged cleanliness and of helping their fellow-men, thus imbibing habits of mutual help and understanding. It taught its members how to keep utensils and their houses and the surroundings clean. Public sanitations were stressed by constructing public lavatories and pit-latrines at different places in Aizawl.

In the eyes of the people in general, the spirit of the so-called *tlawmngaihna*—a Mizo ideal of manhood, declined in the society. Therefore, efforts were made by YMA to make all its members realise the real value of *tlawmngaihna* in the society. It also stressed that every member should be a good and useful citizen by contributing the most for the society through his own effort. It urged all the members to work with dedication towards the preservation of the old good customs, practices and traditions of the Mizo which have relevance to their own time.

An analysis of the role and function of the YMA as a civil society group would also reveal three distinct aspects, viz. religious, political and social. Firstly, its religious aspect, as the motto clearly indicates, the founding leaders wished the association to work hand in glove with the Church. In fact the Y.M.A. confined its activities within the purview of the church organisation. Membership in the association was closed to drunkards and people who used rude and unchaste language. Again, it was through the initiative of the YLA the greatest revival, usually referred to as *Chanchin Tha Dak*²² (the Gospel Mail) of the 1940s broke out. Secondly, as the most recognised²³ organisation, it had the best access to and recognition from the administrative officials. Eventually it became instrumental in the formation of the first

political party viz. the ‘Mizo Commoner Union’ (later called the Mizo Union) in April of 1946. Thirdly, as a true social organisation its objectives include organising debates, symposiums, dramas, news letters, both outdoor and indoor games to promote the healthy growth of the Mizo youth, and also it encourages self-sufficiency, for which purpose it promoted crafts of different kinds and using Mizo agricultural products.

During the insurgency and the counter-insurgency movement in the early part of 1966, the YMA seems to have fallen into destitute. The political turmoil that ensued greatly hindered the activities of the association. In fact, it remains just nominal for about the ensuing decade. Consequently, the Mizo social life degenerated.

The year 1975 marks a new milestone in the history of the YMA. Indeed, it heralded a new beginning, a new lease of life for the YMA. It began to express its concern over the peace talk between the Government of India and the MNF leaders, which had hitherto broken down. In fact in 1976, the Central YMA issued a proclamation stating that, —the Central Y.M.A. fully support the current peace talk between the Government of India and MNF leaders with our best wishes that the talks brings an early success for the return of lasting peace and tranquillity in Mizoram”.²⁴ In the same year, it issued the guidelines for Chhiatni-Thatni²⁵ (funerals & marriages) practices to create uniformity and instil oneness in the community. Moreover in an effort to revive the indigenous Mizo culture so as to check the fast declining interests among the youths, the YMA organised choir competitions (Mizo Lengkhawm Zai) and cultural dance workshop etc. A seminar on *tlawmngaihna* was also held in 1988. The 1990 General Conference held at Darlawn had —Mizo *Tlawmngaihna*” as its main theme. Besides, it also took steps to minimize the bickerings among the various political parties, to act as a vital link with the Mizo Diasporas in Assam, Tripura, Manipur, and Myanmar. Moreover, it also took upon the moral and ethical task of safeguarding the land and the people of Mizoram. Thus, in spite of certain setbacks, the YMA, since its inception, has been able to maintain its neutrality as non-political body till the present day.

III. Declining Significance of “*Pasaltha*”: A Case Study

The postaccord modern Mizo society seems to exhibit a sense of loss with regard to its culture

and traditional ethos. The dwindling spirit of *tlawmngaihna* and its resultant moral and ethical decay is a clear example. With this view in mind, let us now examine critically the YMA as a civil society in Mizoram.

Mizo society centres on communitarian life. The community influenced all individual lives and binds them together and measures their norms of values. Therefore, it is useful to think of civil society as public sphere where the ideas, interests, values, and ideologies formed within [civil] society are voiced and made politically effective. However, one needs to look at the formative factor(s) that went in to the creation of the communitarian character of the Mizo society. Chieftainship, agriculture, and *Zawlbuk*²⁶ were the three major social institutions of traditional Mizo society. The politico-economic and social life of the people were regulated and shaped by these institutions which affirm communal rights and individual responsibilities. Its dominant themes are that individual rights need to be balanced with social responsibilities, and that autonomous selves do not exist in isolation, but are shaped by the values and culture of the community. Secondly, as each village was independent and ruled by their own chief they lived a very insecure life, always in a state of constant fear of possible and sudden raids, either from wild beasts or human foes. Therefore, it is in this background that *Pasaltha*, an embodiment of the spirit of *tlawmngaihna*, played a vital role in the administration of the society, in the community’s occupation of agriculture, in the communitarian life, and in the protection and upliftment of the society. In fact, *Pasaltha* formed the basis with which the community was guided, influenced, and made effective.

III.I. *Pasaltha*: Meaning and Concepts

Popular understanding of the term *Pasaltha* can be enumerated as an extraordinary male person who possesses supernatural ability, potentiality, and strength; with a daring, fearless, undaunted spirit and heroic deeds in defense of the community; maintaining selflessness, self-sacrifice, self-discipline, high moral, and rendering services to others based on *tlawmngaihna*. C. Nunthara has placed the character *Pasaltha* as —courageous, *tlawmngaihna*, endurance, hard-working, diligent, respect for elders, and strong commitment for the community”.²⁷ Thus from this definition we can conclude that *tlawmngaihna* being the chief characteristic of *Pasaltha*, is firmly embedded in the concept of *Pasaltha*. In other words, we can say that

tlawmngaihna is the very essence of *Pasaltha*. In fact, *tlawmngaihna* is the guiding and ethical principle of life in the Mizo society since it was the case with the *Pasaltha*. Bandyopadhyay also defines *tlawmngaihna* as —a compelling moral force—the core of the Mizo’s code of ethics. It enjoins everybody to be kind, hospitable, and helpful to others. In peace or war, or in dealing with individuals or groups the spirit of *tlawmngaihna* guides the Mizo’s thought and actions”.²⁸ Infact, Mizos ethos revolves around *tlawmngaihna* spirit. *Tlawmngaihna* is the dominant character of *Pasaltha*. So the very essence of *tlawmngaihna* embodies a *Pasaltha*. However, it should be noted that all *tlawmngai* person(s) are not *Pasaltha*, where as all *Pasaltha* are man of outstanding *tlawmngai*. As a whole Mizo society had a high regard for a person who is brave, fearless, and valiant. They are worshipped as heroes.²⁹ Right from their childhood, they are imbibed with this traditional ethos and virtues taking it upon themselves as their social obligations. Indeed a person can become a *Pasaltha* through his/her deeds and acts. It is non-hereditary. It is an honorary dignity in recognition of services rendered to the society. As a defender of the society as a whole, and a protector of the weaker sections of the society in particular, indeed they are the symbols of security and social justice in and of the society.

The fundamental guiding principle of the YMA is *tlawmngaihna*. It is through the spirit of *tlawmngaihna* that the YMA has been fulfilling its stated objectives of playing a leading role in affecting changes and reforms in the society. However, as pointed out earlier, in the eyes of the people in general, the spirit of the so-called *tlawmngaihna* has declined in the society. The reality is such that our society is now permeated by all kinds of social evils resulting in an acute sense of insecurity and homelessness. And the YMA as a source of security and good of the society is fast losing its relevance among the contemporary Mizo youths. This feeling of insecurity and helplessness has pervaded the consciousness of the emerging generation, and it constitutes a radical break with the assumption of the past. It replaces these with —respect for differences and a celebration of the local and the particular at the expense of the universal”.³⁰ Therefore, the need of the hour is to reconsider —*Pasaltha*”.

IV. Civil Society Reconsidered: The Relevance of “Pasaltha” for Mizoram Today

The origin of *Pasaltha* cannot be identified due to lack of document resources. However, it is a

fact that *Pasaltha* emerged out of a social necessity of the society. Firstly, to protect and help people from the odds of nature is a vital work of man-folk in the community. Secondly, to ensure the security and peace of the village against possible and sudden intruders from outside such as their enemies and ferocious wild animals. Thus, the Mizos were insecure because of wild-animals and enemies, and *Pasaltha* emerged out of the need of the context i.e. to maintain security within the village and to protect the people from wild animals and enemy intruders. Hence, *Pasaltha* played a very crucial role as the undaunting protector of the community.

Similarly, the YMA was instituted so as to be an undaunting protector of the community. Indeed a protégé of the Zawlbuk which was formally abolished on 1 January 1938 at Aizawl by an order of the then Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, Mr. A.G.McCall.³¹ Initially the YMA was able to live up to its role as noted earlier. However, the growing complexity of modernity and indeed Postmodernity had seems to leave its mark.

YMA has become primarily a recreation service provider. This decline can be attributed to the erosion of some of the essential citizenship enhancing functions of our civic institutions themselves, such as *tlawmngaihna*. How can this —essential citizenship-enhancing functions of our civic institutions” be revived? The answer lies in re-transformation of the civic institution viz, YMA as a vibrant *Pasaltha*, taking upon itself once again the responsibility of the undaunting protector of the community. Thereby providing the possibility of liberation,³² as a terrain where rising social groups may challenge the power of the state and the dominating classes associated with it.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, we can realize that growing complexity poses new challenges to governance, democracy, and autonomy in the world at large and in Mizoram in particular. Sometimes the nation state is seen as inadequate to cope up with the complex case of Mizoram, which resulted in the demand for more autonomy and even independence. However, it was with the work and influences of the civil societies that the state has seen the light of peace after a decade of political turmoil and hardships. In fact, it was the mediating role of the Church, which eventually heralded the dawn of peace in the trouble torn state of Mizoram. Even today,

the Church has been actively taking steps to further accentuate the development of the state.

Similarly, there has also been a resurgent YMA with its emphasis on the reformation of the society. Indeed mention can be made of the fight against drugs and alcohol through the SRS. At the same time, it is also trying to be more vigilant upon the government thereby acting as a source of resistance as well as support to the state. Thus, we can conclude with the words of Gordon White, —that civil society fosters democracy by limiting the state, providing space for protest groups, generating demands, monitoring excess, confronting power holders, and sustaining a balance of power between the state and society”.³³ The guardian and keeper for development and democracy.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

Notes and References

1. G. Sreedathan, *Western Political Thought and Theories* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt Ltd., 2006), p.372
2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol.II/2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p.521.
3. Cited in Charles Taylor, —*Modes of Civil Society*”, *Public Culture*, Vol.3. No.1 (1990), in Carolyn M.Elliott, ed., *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.95-118
4. Carolyn M.Elliott, ed., *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.6.
5. Cited in Ibid, *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.7.
6. Ibid.
7. Zairema, *God’s Miracle in Mizoram* (Aizawl: Synod Press, 1978).
8. Ray, *Mizoram: Dynamics of Change* (Calcutta: Pearl Publishers, 1982), p.70.
9. Chitta Ranjan Nag, *The Mizo Society in Transition* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd., 1993), p.165.
10. Fomenting regional feeling with religious overtones. In this context the concept of Mizoram being a —*Christia Land*” and the need for protection against assimilation by the majority Hindus.
11. Ch. Saprawnga was the longest serving Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Mizo District Union from 1954-65. He was a distinguish academician, sportsman, and a pioneer in the political movements of Mizoram.
12. Zairema, —*Kohhran leh Politics*,” in *Mizoram Politics*, ed. C. Biakmawia, Synod Social Front, No.8 (Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee, Mizoram Presbyterian Church, 1992), p.16. Also see Lalchungnunga, *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration* (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1994), p.52.
13. For the text of the Declaration, see C. Nunthara, *Mizoram: Society and Polity* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1996), 269-272, or J.V. Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram* (Aizawl: Mizo History Association, 1985), Pp.183-188.
14. A copy of the memorandum is reprinted in *Mizo Hnam tana Kristian Thuchah*, comp. F. Lalsangliana (Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee [Mizoram Presbyterian Church], 1991), p.1.
15. Ibid.
16. An account of the churches’ role in the peace negotiations that led to the political solution of insurgency in Mizoram has been provided by Lalsangkima Pachuau, *Ethnic Identity and Christianity* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), Pp.163-166.
17. All the election messages of the Presbyterian Church are compiled and reprinted in *Mizo Hnam Tana Kristian Thuchah*, Pp.16-40.
18. Tlawmngaihna is a traditional virtue, an ethico-moralistic concept/code of conduct which encapsulates a Mizo society. It is a wide and composite concept invoking different interpretations and definitions. It enjoins a person to be selfless and self-sacrificing, to be helpful and concern for others, to be persevering and hard-working. It also entails integrity and endurance, and always stood for the good of others and of the society. According to Sangkima, —*tlawmngaihna* means to be unselfish, zealous, courteous, considerate, courageous, industrious, kind, generous, persevering” in *Mizos: Society and Social Change, 1890-1947* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1992), p.43.
19. Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 2004), p.254.

20.Ibid., Pp.254-255 It pledges three objectives to its members, viz (i)To make the leisure profitable.(ii) To seek progress for Mizoram.(iii) To uphold and honour the practice of Christian virtues.

21.The Constitution of 1935 called Dan Bu elaborated the objectives: YMA will create an atmosphere so that may fully utilize their leisure in a profitable way and so that they live a life proper and healthy. Imitating Christian ways of living in every respect, it should be Christian-like Association. It should mainly aim at showing a manner that of Christ. This Association would organise debates, discussions and drama. It would encourage games like hockey, football, badminton etc. it would also inspires the members to have indoor games and books to read at home. Cited in C. Lalropuia, YMA Chanchin (Aizawl: CYMA, 1985), p.30. Aizawl is the headquarter, and it is manned by six office-bearers elected by the members during the General Conference for a term of two years. Together with the other members appointed by them they formed the Central Executive Committee (CEC) also known as the Central YMA and is the second highest authority next to the General Conference which is held every year. Every branch is affiliated to the Central YMA. The minimum qualifying age for membership is 12.

22.In this Dak, they collected books, text-books and old as well as new clothes etc. these were sent in boxes to Chin Hills in formerly Burma. As the boxes strapped to a bamboo poles had to be carried all the way by men, it caused many village people to be involved in it, and is accompanied by religious singing and dancing. It was like the Ark of Israel or the Ark of God, as every village entertained it and the carriers as if it were hosting a Church annual gathering, killing animals to make feasts. It may be said that the event led to a wholesale revival in Mizoram and an unprecedented evangelization of the Mizos in Burma.

23.YMA is the most recognised organization in Mizo society in the sense of being non-partisan and inclusive in terms of its membership which cuts across denominational divisions and political affiliations. An Organisation recognised by the people as a whole that represent their identity and cultural affinities.

24.This proclamation was sent to the Lieutenant-General, Chief Minister and Chairman of the Human Rights Commission vide CYMA letter No. 26/27 dt.22.3.1976.

25.General Conference Minute, 1976.

26.Each village was independent and ruled by its own Chief. His words were law in his own territory and all that was in the village belonged to him. The chief was assisted by his upas (elders) who formed his council of advisers. Together they administered the day to day life and activities of the people. Secondly, jhuming constituted the main basis of the economy of the Mizos. Thirdly, Zawlbuk is the bachelors' house or dormitory. It is the nerve centre of the Mizo society and it shaped the Mizo youths into responsible adult members of the society. It served as a sleeping place and recreational centre for unmarried as well as young married men. It imparted training and taught discipline to young boys and even the rude people in the village were disciplined and put under control. It also served as an inn for a man from another village.

27.Prof. C.Nunthara, —MizoPasalthate: Socio-Cultural Perspective,” a seminar paper presented on —Pasaltha Seminar” conducted by Arts and Culture Department, Govt. of Mizoram on the 22nd July 2004, 1.

28.P.K.Bandyopadhyay, Leadership among the Mizos: An Emerging Dimension (Delhi: B.R.Publishing Corporation, 1985), p.52

29.Among the Mizo Pasaltha, Khuangchera was especially noted for his bravery, Vanapa was reputed as a distinguished military tactician, Saizahawla was regarded as the ‘Mizo Hercules’, Zampuimanga was noted for his hunting prowess, Chawngbawla also for his bravery as a hunter. Taitesena was a man of valour in the face of enemies. In fact a dominant and common trait among these Pasaltha is their intrinsic desire and obligation to be a protector of the community in the face of wild beasts and enemies. In other words they were all men of outstanding tlawmngai person who puts the security and welfare of the community above their own. They were also especially known for their gentleness and pleasant manner.

30.Charles Jencks, ed. —The Postmodern Agenda,” in The Postmodern Reader (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1992), p.11.

31.Sangkima, Essays on the History of the Mizos, op. cit., p.135.

32.In this sense the idea of social justice – to act as a catalyst for the promotion of equal opportunity and equal distribution of wealth in the society.

33.Gordon White, —Civil Society, Democratization and Development (I),” Democratization, Vol.I/3, Autumn, 1994. p.382. Cited in Carolyn M.Elliott, Civil Society and Democracy, op.cit., Pp.13-14.

Information Revolution and Empowerment of Women: A Gender Perspective*

R.K.Mohanty**

Abstract: This paper presents the heuristic interlinkage between information revolution and empowerment of women from gender angle. Accordingly, the paper situates itself in five sections, the first part sets off with discussing the heuristic transformation from sex to gender. The second and third part analyse the process of empowerment of women in a gender perspective and the concept of information revolution respectively. The basic issue of the empowerment of women in the age of information revolution has been detailed out in succeeding section. The paper concludes with an overview of the issue at hand with a view to locate the scope for further research.

Key Words: Empowerment, Gender, ICT, ILO, Feminism,;

The past three decades have demonstrated the growing strength of the global women's movement in advocating issues of women's equality and empowerment. Among these issues is that of women's marginalization and invisibility in all aspects of technology. Knowledge on Women has no longer remained a mere study of the status of women under Sociology. It has stretched its scope and expanded its disciplinary boundaries in the age of information revolution. Men and women have partnered in the new trend to understand the lots and the cause of women. New developments and differences have led to a variety of viewpoints and perspectives. While feminists look at women as actors and looking at social reality from women's perspectives, there are those who prefer Sociology of Gender rather than feminism or Sociology of Women. Feminists and women activists refrain from using the word gender because it diverts focus from the specific problems of women (Chanana in Forward of Rege 2004). From sex to gender, from Biology to Sociology and from Women to gender, a lot of groundwork has been covered and still an unfinished task.

Now the concern has been to detail out the status dynamics and empowerment of women in the age of information revolution. There exists an array of literature that speaks to this topic. It began in the early 1980s with research into the effects of new technologies on women's jobs and developed into debates about the gender gap in technology. Most of this information is inaccessible, yet much of it is critically important to women's efforts to inform decision-making and guide actions.

This paper presents the heuristic interlinkage between information revolution and empowerment of women from gender angle. Accordingly, the paper situates itself in five sections; the first part sets off with discussing the heuristic transformation from sex to gender. The second and third part analyse the process of empowerment of women in a gender perspective and the concept of information revolution respectively. The basic issue of the empowerment of women in the age of information revolution has been detailed out in succeeding section. The paper concludes with an overview of the issue at hand with a view to locate the scope for further research.

From Sex to Gender: The Heuristic Transformation

Women represent a category under the broad sexist division of labour. Sexist division of labour relates to the analytical distinction between masculinity and femininity, women represent the half of the sexes as a biological category / half of the organic whole. These socially determined roles for men and women are culturally or socially created and are given the status of being natural and normal as if they "have always been" and "will always be". From these gender roles, certain characteristics are expected of men that are a reflection of what it means to be male or to be masculine while other characteristics are attributed to women as a reflection of their femininity. The notions of masculinity and femininity define how men and women must behave and how

they must look. They refer to physical appearance, psychological states, sexual orientations, intellectual capability and emotional states. For example, men are supposed to be natural leaders, decision makers and providers in society beginning within the family while women are the caregivers, supporters and followers of men.

Gender in common usage refers to the distinctions between masculinity and femininity. Judith Butler (1990) and Kate Bornstein (1995) say that gender is a social construction, that it is "performative," and that one is always in the process of becoming a gender rather than actually being a gender. Additionally, the social "rules" governing gender are always shifting with the culture, making one's "masculinity" or "femininity" a (tacit) agreement among members of a culture, rather than being derived from an innate set of predetermined characteristics. Although gender is often used interchangeably with sex, today many do not think that sex and gender are the same thing. The term gender has been increasingly used to distinguish a social role (gender role) and/or personal identity (gender identity) distinct from biological sex. The term 'gender,' on the other hand, refers to the different roles men and women play in a society or a community. (Game and Pingle, 1984). These roles are determined by cultural, social and economic factors and differ within and between cultures and countries. In fact, the term 'gender' has no single meaning, but is affected by a whole complex of social relationships. Gender roles are different from sex differences in that sex differences are biological, and for the most part, unchangeable. Gender roles are dynamic and change over time.

There is debate over to what extent gender is a social construct and to what extent it is a biological construct. One point of view in the debate is social constructionism, which suggests that gender is entirely a social

construct. Contrary to social constructionism is essentialism which suggests that it is entirely a biological construct. Others' opinions on the subject lie somewhere in between. By 1980, most feminist writings had agreed on using gender only for socio-culturally adapted traits. This becomes clearer when we discuss empowerment in a gender perspective.

Empowerment of Women in a Gender Perspective

Empowerment of women means drawing the women from margin to the mainstream with regard to their status in socio-political, economic and jural aspects. Empowerment of women, leading to an equal social status in society hinges, among other things, on their right to hold and inherit property. Several legal reforms have taken place since independence in India, including on equal share of daughters to property. Yet equal status remains illusive. Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Empowerment is variously known as a process of emancipation, development, upliftment, gaining equality and elimination of any form of suppression, oppression, discrimination and subjugation. Empowerment means uplifting women from margin to the mainstream with regard to their status in the socio-economic, political and jural aspects. The issue of empowerment of women has gone through three distinct analytical phases from the study of status of women to the growth of feminist ideology to now gender issues.

Studies pertaining to the status of women related to the conditions of life and living of women, which dominated the scene upto late 1970s. It is during this period that CSWI Report 1974 was published and 1975 was declared as the International year women. Women are multitaskers and are taken as invisible hands. Over a period of time the discrimination of women tended to increase both at the domestic and work front. In the Mexico Plan 1975, the

need was felt to improve their conditions socially, economically, politically and jurally and to guarantee a dignified status to them.

Post 1980s marked a swerving ideology and a paradigm shift with the growth of radical feminism towards empowerment of women as the central issue. Feminists and women activists started looking at social reality from women's point of view. Here the public private dualism was contested. Men operated at the public domain, outside the family and women operated at the private/and the domestic domain. There was tremendous spur of movements and a lot of literature was published this time world over and in India. Women were considered a distinct class. New transformational developments led to a variety of view points and perspectives. Even feminists were divided into several branches, opinions divided and theories grew. Feminists and feminism were divided into distinct categories: Radical feminism, liberal feminism and feminist essentialism.

Radical Feminism brought a sharp division between men and women by treating women as a separate class the most exploited, oppressed, suppressed, depressed, discriminated, alienated tortured and not being paid their due. Women are viewed as a special category in this approach deserving special treatment in order for them to enjoy equality with men. They rose against the so called male chauvinists. Liberal Feminism finds no difference between men and women with regard to abilities, capabilities and intellectuality. They argued for an improvement in women's access to the public realm and to make them self-sufficient. Essentialist Feminism is less close to liberals and more akin to radicals (Gilligan, 1982). They argue that the characteristics of women are essentially different from men. The perspective is close to phenomenology of Husserl (1910) and Heidegger (1949). Women are essentially caring with an authentic self and men practise exceptions for which women suffer and men freak out. There is a genuine feeling of motherhood in them making them tolerant and sympathetic.

A gendered perspective is concerned with ensuring a gender analysis with regard to policies, programs, planning strategy and evaluation. In other words, it looks at fundamentally transforming unequal power relations and changing society. The gender perspective looks at the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles and interactions. Successful implementation of the policy, programme and project goals of international and national organizations is directly affected by the impact of gender and, in turn, influences the process of social development. Gender is an integral component of every aspect of the economic, social, daily and private lives of individuals and societies, and of the different roles ascribed by society to men and women. This is what is now popularly known as 'gender mainstreaming'. UN report defines: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1997, UN, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II).

The Information Revolution

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) consists of computer hardware, software, Internet and other communication networks, and media used to collect, store, process and transmit information in the form of voice, text, data and images. In short, ICT deals with the use of electronic computers and computer software to convert, store, protect, process, transmit and retrieve information. ICT revolution is the result of integration of computer technology and communication technology. ICT industry includes all companies that are engaged in production and marketing of hardware, software, services and networking. ICT

offers flexibility of time and space. These attributes make ICT a valuable resource for women especially in developing countries who suffer from limited availability of time, social isolation, and lack of access to knowledge and productive resources.

The Information Revolution is considered by many to be an epochal shift in contemporary global economic, social, political and cultural history, comparable with the previous major shift of the Industrial Revolution. Scholars continue to explore and analyze the unparalleled rapid development of information and communication network technologies – most recently that of the Internet and World Wide Web. Information Age as it is so called today, is a name given to a period after the industrial age and before the Knowledge Economy. Information Age is a term applied to the period where information rapidly propagated, more narrowly applying to the 1980s onward. Under conventional economic theory, the Information Age also heralded the era where information was a scarce resource and its capture and distribution generated competitive advantage. Microsoft became one of the largest companies in the world based on its influence in creating the underlying mechanics to facilitate information distribution. One could argue, though, that it actually began during the later half of the 19th Century with the invention of the telephone and telegraphy. It is often used in conjunction with the term post-industrial society. The Knowledge Economy commenced when information ceased being scarce. The Knowledge Economy started around 1992 and continued to approximately 2002. The information revolution has flourished and is now evolving into a networking economy that is radically transforming the world of work. But the question remains as to: will this revolution be a powerful vehicle for gender equality, or the gender divide? Every aspect of the workforce and the work itself is being impacted by information and communications technologies, including most powerfully the Internet.

Information Revolution has added another feather to the ongoing process of

empowerment of women. Recent changes have brought in a new concept called the ‘feminisation’ of work which suggests moving from an old, male-centred concept of work to a new, more feminine work model. Following ideas can bring the argument on the ‘feminisation’ of work to order. All in all the analysis underlines the validity of the comment made by Microsoft founder and chairman Bill Gates in his latest book —*Business @ The Speed of Thought*” when he wrote : —“Here on the edge of the twenty-first century, a fundamental new rule of business is that the Internet changes everything”. For women – and, of course, for men – the Internet does indeed change everything.

Any technology that is not appropriate for women is not truly appropriate technology. The concern raised in this expression is applicable to all walks of life where technology is an eminent and powerful tool that can bring about a change (Goonawardena Chandra, 1995). The gender and technology concept comprises many dimensions. Information and Communication Technologies are for everyone and women have to be an equal beneficiary to the advantages offered by the technology, and the products and processes, which emerge from their use. The benefits accrued from the synergy of knowledge and ICT need not be restricted to the upper strata of the society but have to freely flow to all segments of the female population. The gamut of areas in which ICT can put a greater control in the hands of women is wide and continuously expanding, from man - aging water distribution at the village-level to standing for local elections and having access to lifelong learning opportunities. ICT in convergence with other forms of communication have the potential to reach those women who hitherto have not been reached by any other media, thereby empowering them to participate in economic and social progress, and make informed decision on issues that affect them.

Barriers to engendering knowledge networking processes with the inception of ICT and convergence technologies, it is possible to bring up a significant fraction of women communities in a more symbiotic digital network which focuses on localized

information and customized solutions, and works on the theme of Global Technologies for Local Use. Women, however, are still very much in a minority among the beneficiaries of knowledge networking. Women still face huge imbalances in the ownership, control and regulation of these new information technologies, similar to those faced in other areas.

There are a number of issues considering as barriers to number of women from participating in the IT work force and environment. Apart from literacy, education, language and geographical location of facilities, there are series of barriers derived from gendered bias in social and cultural structures. These are:

- The marginalisation of women in ICT needs to be considered in the context of women's general relationship to science and technology. The issues of what technology is and the way it becomes gendered are complex. It is the constantly recurring misperception of the role played by socialisation that technology is identified as part of gender identity.
- Crucial to gendered socialisation, there is a substantial research which indicates that men have dominated the co-ed computerised classroom. It is not uncommon to see boys of all ages actively seizing the machines, and physically pushing the girls away. This violence can be accompanied by taunts about how girls cannot 'do' computer, and how screens and controls are a boys' toys (Spender, 1995).
- It is also a factor of economic when the costs of purchasing a computer, training and time on the net are disadvantages for general women who have an average lower income. It is a case of information-poor getting poorer.
- In science and engineering, women lack mentors to help them along. Women faculties in engineering represent only small percentage of that population. Moreover, women have much less developed networks

than men in the business and high-tech industries. There is also not much body of research to find out an account of the growing gender gap in this sector.

- The contradiction between family and work balance can contribute to the women's barriers. Although it may be arguable, some employers in this competitive and highly intense field may perceive women as potentially less dedicated than men and more likely to be torn by family ties. In effect, the important responsibility such as raising children may undermine women in the IT workplace. Women and men experience sufficient time to use and become proficient with ICT differently. Women are much less likely to find time to use ICT, either as a work or as a leisure due to their given status in the gendered division of labour.
- Sexual harassment on the networks is a problem being reported by many women and many sites. The forms of sexual harassment vary from sexist jokes, abusive messages, pornography, violent games, virtual rape and sexual crime that flow through cyberspace. This type can be identified as violence against women that turns women off from the centre of ICT.
- Lack of regulations and forms of consumer protection especially framing laws for the control of sexual harassment can widen the gender gap. The difficulty of law-makers to keep track on the superhighway has allowed offenders to abuse women and children which, in turn, discourages women's involvement.

Empowerment of women in the Age of Information Revolution

Development circles such as the World Bank, the United Nation Development Program-UNDP, and United Nations Development Fund for Women-UNIFEM believe that ICT symbolizes an exceptional enabling instrument when deployed and used properly. According to

Abbasi (2001), ICT represents a unique —knowledge-based social Infrastructure” which can be of great help for women to evade marginalization. Ningbo (1999) argued that development cannot be achieved through ICT without taking gender issues into consideration. ICT can work as a novel opportunity to enhance women's access to information and knowledge, as women are the least educated and marginalized, especially in developing countries, Sharma (2001).

Several reports have discussed opportunities for gender empowerment through ICT, e. g. through education and knowledge creation, poverty alleviation, and employment generation. Among them are Mitter & Rowbotham (1995), Huyer (1997), Rathgeber and Adera (2000), Hafkin (2000), Marcelle (2000), Munyua (2000), Opoku-Mensah (2000). As a sign of importance, in 2001 the International Development Research Centre - IDRC published what can be regarded as a reference for gender and ICT, Rathgeber and Adera (2000). Hafkin (2000) published a review of the —gender and ICT” theme, and provided a historical perspective of how ICT, development and gender have emerged. Other key issues related to the subject were raised by Obijiofor (1998), such as; does ICT promote interaction of women within the society and open up new channels which allow women to discuss openly issues that are considered —taboo” using classical means, especially in traditional societies. The study of Rathgeber (2000) emphasized the need for national information-technology policies that take into consideration the attitudes and needs of female users, as it takes that of males.

However, the majority of women in the developing countries, as Odedra and Stroub (1995), and Huyer (1997) have argued, are living in economic and social hardships that act to hinder these technologies from being utilized. Additionally, the high degree of illiteracy inhibits use of ICT. Women in developing societies, including Palestine lack financial resources to purchase hardware, software, and to connect to the Internet. They also lack sufficient computer education and training facilities to develop the needed competences to seize the

opportunities opened up by ICT. Therefore, step number one would be to open up doors of access for women to ICT with user friendly systems and relevant indigenous content. One channel to achieve these goals, as Huyer (1997) noted, is via training centers that are built in cooperation with local institutions to which women have equal and open access, such as community, women and youth centers, clubs, public libraries, schools, and universities. This article discusses an initiative that provides access to ICT through community and women centers that are located in remote and rural Palestinian areas.

Judy Wajcman's book *Feminism Confronts Technology* concludes, "The time is ripe for reworking the relationship between technology and gender. The old masculinist ideology has been made increasingly untenable by the dramatic changes in technology, by the challenge of feminism ... Technologies reveal the societies that invent and use them, their notions of social status and distributive justice. In so far as technology currently reflects a man's world, the struggle to transform it demands a transformation of gender relations" (Wajcman, p. 166).

Technology and gender are socially defined. Historically, technology has been defined as exclusively male activities in such a way that many tasks women have traditionally performed (such as knitting) are not defined as technical despite involving a high degree of manual dexterity and computation (Cockburn, as quoted in Henwood, p. 40). Similarly, Game and Pringle point to distinctions such as —heavy/light,’ —dirty/clean,’ and —technical/non-technical’ which (they argue) are constructed to preserve a sexual division of labour (1984, p. 17). Thus, rather than arguing for women's inclusion in work currently defined as skilled and technical, this perspective suggests feminists should be arguing for a total re-evaluation of work so that many of women's traditional tasks are also recognized as skilled and technical and are given appropriate remuneration.

More recently, a number of feminists see the newly emerging cultural analyses of technology as a suitable framework for analyzing gender and ICT relationships. This framework understands both technology and gender not as fixed and given, but as cultural processes which (like other cultural processes) are subject to "negotiation, contestation, and, ultimately transformation" (Cockburn, as quoted in Henwood, p. 44). There is a fundamental difference between this 'technology as culture' perspective and the many studies of women and technology that talk of the masculine culture of technology and stress ways in which boys and men dominate the design and use of technologies, how the language of technology reflects male priorities and interests, and how women are excluded from full participation in technological work. In the cultural analyses of technology, technologies are 'cultural products,' 'objects' or 'processes' which take on meaning when experienced in everyday life. As Henwood says:

"Our theorizing of the gender and information technology relationship should not be reduced to the simple 'man equals technology literate, women equals technology illiterate' formulation. Technological meanings are not 'given'; they are made. Our task trying to transform the gendered relations of technology should not be focused on gaining access to the knowledge as it is but with creating that knowledge. By this I mean to be involved at the level of definition, of making meanings and in creating technological culture" (p. 44).

The work culture in the past and now have become totally different. As against earlier full-time jobs of men, a lot of new jobs now are part-time which, in some cases, is more convenient to women who wish to balance childcare with paid employment. The old manufacturing style of work encouraged people to work standard, fixed hours. However, work is now more information-based and the use of information technology enables people to work much more flexible hours which tends to suit especially women who wish to balance home and work.

Again, earlier the work was necessarily fixed in a particular location because of the machinery and processes involved. However, in the new information economy an increasing number of tasks can be performed anywhere provided suitable technology is available. This has led to the growth of call centers in various parts of the country, employing predominately female workforce. The new information economy is based much more on flexible skills and life-long learning. This model is more suited to women who may enter and leave the workforce on several occasions because of parental responsibilities. In the past, much work has been labour intensive. However, more and more work is now knowledge intensive and physical attributes such as strength are simply irrelevant. Again, this tends to work to the advantage of equal opportunities in the workplace.

Mitter's and Rowbotham's anthology (1995) *Women Encounter Technology* explores the impact of technology on women's employment and the nature of women's work in third world countries. Their observations provide an —authentic international perspective" on women and technology that can inform further research. They find that the degrees of exclusivity that arise from the information revolution sharply differentiate regions and communities. Gender is one of many factors that determine the impact of information technology on women's working lives. Technological changes affect the quality and quantity of women's work. Increased job opportunities bring new tensions in women's domestic lives. In *Women in Grassroots Communications*, Pilar Riano maps out women's contribution to the debates on gender in communication beginning with the subordinate position of women in the industry. The recurring themes here point to the lack of women's participation and representation in mainstream media, the sexist portrayal of women in the media, the absence of women in the news and current affairs, and women's disadvantaged access to new communication technologies (International Women's Tribune Centre, 1984; Dervin, 1987; and Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981 as quoted in Riano, p. 30). Early contributions to the gender in communications debates from women in the South, *Women of Colour*, and other marginalized groups emerged in the 1970s, according to Riano. Their debates

focused on the negative portrayal of these women in the mainstream media, demanded equity, and then moved to an emphasis on the qualitative differences these women make in democratizing communications. These collective perspectives suggest that gender identity and the ways women experience subordination are 'connected and mediated' by other variables such as race, class, sexual orientation, age and generation, history, culture and colonialism. Riano points to the creation of coalitions among women in communications as having made the most significant advances. These include women's information networks, women's presses, worldwide networks of independent women filmmakers and video makers, participation of women in journalism schools and mainstream media, and feminists works in media, cultural and communication studies (pp. 30-31). These networks create alternative communication channels that articulate other visions of women and act as a form of power that challenges the stereotypical representations of women as passive and silent (Anzaldua, 1990; Charnley, 1990 as quoted in Riano, 1994, p. 31).

A number of feminists offer new visions of technology and society that are non-exploitative, non-colonial, and non-patriarchal. Many of these initiatives draw attention to the need for qualitative changes in the economy and oppose the view that more growth, technology, science and progress will solve the ecological and economic crisis. Maria Mies (1986) offers one vision where technology is conceptualized from a perspective of subsistence based on the colonization of women, nature, and other peoples. This 'subsistence perspective' is based on and promotes participatory or grassroots' democracy in political, economic, social and technological decisions (Mies, p. 319). Like Eco-feminism, it recognizes that power systems and problems are interconnected and cannot be solved in isolation or by a mere technological fix. This necessarily requires a new paradigm of science, technology and knowledge that allows people to maintain control over their technology. Opposing the prevailing instrumentalist, reductionist science and technology, Mies' new paradigm is based on a multidimensional approach that incorporates ecologically sound, traditional, grassroots, women and people-based

knowledge systems. As Mies says, —such science and technology will therefore not reinforce unequal social relationships but will be such as to make possible greater social justice" (Mies, p. 320). Although some feminists such as Mitter and Rowbotham (1986) are not convinced of the practical feasibility of Mies' —critique of modernization", the 'subsistence perspective' shows a conceptual way forward for an alternative vision of gender and technology.

Others welcome modern technologies as long as women can have their say in the manner in which technology is adopted. These women are cautious of the so-called "critics of modernization" who "muffle the appeals and aspirations of many millions of less privileged women and men, who are 'hungry' for the information revolution and advanced technologies" (Ibid, p. 17). They argue that it is difficult for women to shift the balance of power if they are to use only indigenous social and knowledge systems in opposition to modernization and modern technologies. As Mitter and Rowbotham say, —women usually have insignificant power over decision-making when they are confined by traditions and constrained by the norms of behaviour in their communities" (Ibid, p. 17). Third world feminists from this perspective praise the liberating aspects of the information revolution and advanced technologies which, in some circumstances, —gives them economic power, autonomy and the chance to escape the tyrannies of traditional societies" (Ibid, p. 17). In their writings they demand knowledge of and access to technical know-how and business skills, and welcome international exchange of experience of organizing to counteract the pitfalls of the new technologies. As Rowbotham concludes, —a new relationship between technology and gender cannot be devised only in the seminar, it has to be created, by users and workers internationally, from the experiences of daily life" (Ibid, p. 66).

The ILO's *World Employment Report 2001* "Life at Work in the Information Economy", suggests that the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) offers many new opportunities for women. At the same time, the proportion of women joining the global labour market is expected to continue rising

as it has throughout recent decades. But these are to be supported by deliberate policies to ensure participation, ownership, education and ICT training for women - as well as family-friendly policies in the information economy workplace so that the old gender biases may decline. ILO's analysis of recent employment trends show that in spite of progress in some areas, women generally continue to earn lower incomes, suffer higher unemployment, and remain largely restricted to low-skilled, part-time, informal and unstable jobs.

Information and communication technologies have created new types of work that favour women because the technology enables work to be brought to homes and allow for better accommodation of work and family schedules. Women have also been able to capture a large proportion of jobs in ICT-enabled services because of the worldwide shortage of skills necessary for work in this sector. Thus far, the most promising potential for women is in the creation of new jobs at call centers and in work involving data processing. By the end of the 1990s, almost 5000 women in the Caribbean countries were employed in data-processing activities. The ILO Report adds that "in terms of numbers employed, the role of women in the digital economy has become more marked in on-line, export-oriented information-processing work rather than in telecommuting". The ILO reports that "telecentres and fax booths have created a quarter of a million jobs in India in the last four years alone, a huge proportion of which have gone to women".

Internationally outsourced jobs, such as medical transcription work or software services, do make a considerable difference to the lives and career paths of women in developing countries. In software, women enjoy preferences on a scale that they never experienced in any other field of engineering and science. Women in India occupy 27 per cent of professional jobs in the software industry, which is worth 4 billion US dollars annually. Women's share in the employment total in that industry is expected to rise to 30 per cent in 2010.

The ILO Report cites several examples where ICTs have enabled women to tap global markets for their products and raised

incomes. New technologies and networking are new means by which women are empowered to improve their economic and social status. Examples of this include: Sapphire Women, created by a woman in Kampala, Uganda, is an organization that supports women who have lost family members to AIDS, as well as supporting orphans created by the AIDS epidemic. The members of Sapphire weave traditional Ugandan baskets which are then sold on the Internet with the help of Peoplink, an American-based NGO with extensive experience in on-line sales of handicrafts. The Grameen Bank Village Phone project, which provides mobile cell phones to its mostly female members in Bangladesh, demonstrates not only the employment-generating impact of the women who collect fees for the usage of their mobile phones, but other positive spill-over effects as well. Mobile phones and access to the Internet have given rural Bangladeshi women access to learning, created new opportunities for autonomy and improved their position in community and public life.

SEWA, India's self-employed women's organization, which has been organizing women in the informal sector since 1972, and has a membership of over 215,000, was one of the first organizations in India to realize the potential of harnessing ICTs for the productive growth of the informal sector. By organizing computer awareness programmes and imparting basic computer skills to its team leaders and association members, SEWA has enabled many of its members to launch their own Web-sites and to sell their products in the global virtual market place.

These examples illustrate how technology can improve the lives of poor women by opening up opportunities they were previously excluded from. Electronic networking between women has led to new social and economic phenomena, such as e-inclusion, e-campaigns, e-commerce and e-consultation. The empowerment of women via technology in this way enables them to challenge discrimination and overcome gender barriers.

Again there is a darker side of the story as well exemplified with digital gender divide. Despite the enabling potential ICTs have to

improve women's lives, the ILO Report describes a digital divide within countries which broadly reflects the gender divide. The most striking digital divide relates to Internet use, with women being in the minority of users in both developed and developing countries. For example, only 38 per cent of Internet users in Latin America are women, 25 per cent in the European Union, 19 per cent in Russia, 18 per cent in Japan and 4 per cent in the Middle-east. The Report finds, however, that in countries where the Internet is used most, for example the Nordic countries and the United States, the gender gap is beginning to close.

Women's substantial under-representation in the core ICT science and engineering curricula in education systems, means that they are excluded from core ICT occupations. But the Report finds that the gender divide is not consistent across Europe. "While the UK, for example, has one of the lowest proportions of female university students in maths and computer science courses, female enrollment in Italy and Spain at university-level in these subjects is far greater, and women comprise around 50 per cent of their ICT workforces. In the UK and US, the proportion of women in IT courses is less than 20 per cent of all studying computer science courses at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels, and the percentage seems to be declining further still. Enrollment in Microsoft-certified training courses appears to confirm the industry stereotype in that it is dominated by young men, with only 11 per cent of the students being women." The report finds that educational differences underlie the different rates of ICT diffusion and Internet usage, leading to the conclusion that "the promotion of education and literacy generally - and digital literacy in particular - is the huge challenge facing all countries. Equipping workers with ICT-related skills will need to be specifically targeted to the needs of women."

The ILO Report finds that patterns of gender segregation are being reproduced in the information economy where men hold the majority of high-skilled, high value-added jobs, whereas women are concentrated in the low-skilled, lower value-added jobs. In addition, the report notes that "the diffusion

of the technologies has been skill-biased and thus accompanied by rising wage inequalities. Although pay inequality exists between those who have ICT skills and those who do not, pay polarization also exists within ICT use itself. This polarization is often gender-based."

Thus, men are more likely to be found in the high-paying, creative work of software development or Internet start-ups, whereas the workforce of single-tasked ICT work, such as cashiers or data-entry workers is predominantly female and low-paid. While both men and women may be users of the advanced technologies, and while both may share experiences of relative up-skilling, only male groups appear to be in positions in the organization where use of advanced technology is accompanied by greater discretion and responsibility on the job.

Moreover, as the traditional manufacturing industries that previously employed women gradually disappear, the women finding jobs in the new, often ICT-related industries are rarely the same ones as those who lost their jobs in the traditional sectors. New inequalities are therefore emerging between women, with ICT-related jobs skills versus those without. The Report cites a study in Vietnam and China which finds that digital globalization has brought new opportunities to young women, but has brought redundancies to women over 35 years of age, either because they are in declining industries or have outdated skills. Many features of the information economy can offer women the potential to strike a better balance between work and family responsibilities, or work and leisure. The increasing knowledge content of work has the potential to favour the equality of women and men in the workforce. Intelligence and creativity are also evenly distributed between industrialized and developing countries, or between the able and people with physical disabilities. The digital era's potential to improve the quality of work and life is clearly real.

However, there is also a genuine potential for negative effects on the quality of working life. Far from adjusting working needs to the needs of family life, there can be raising pressure to work everywhere and all the time. While teleworking has certainly

created new employment opportunities for women, the downside is that women can be excluded from better career possibilities, and instead of finding a balance; family responsibilities can be combined with paid work, so that women end up acquiring new tasks on top of the old. For example, ILO Report shows that women in Malaysia and India are reluctant to opt for home-based telework. But they have welcomed the opportunities of employment afforded by call centres because it combines the advantages of interaction with those of being close to home. Yet they are concerned about possible health hazards brought about by repetitive work in high-pressure working environments. And while wages and conditions of work in call centers appear to vary widely, in the worst instances call centres have been called the "sweatshops of the digital era."

An Overview

As has been argued by many specialists, accessing ICT resources does not guarantee attaining empowerment and development, there still exists the lack of suitable approach and indigenous content, through which women can

work to improve their conditions (Unwin 2008). The type of information being accessed, especially whether it is locally relevant, is central to the effectiveness and success of such initiatives. In most ICT projects, attention to technology implementation overwhelms contents presentation and acquirement of knowledge. The paper sheds light on this side of the initiative and examines how successful it has been in that regard. Yet if access, skills, technology and content are properly taken care of, the barrier of culture can still act to spoil the preset goals and potential of such initiative. Cultural issues are overlooked by most planners, and this paper explores how these affect women's abilities to benefit from such initiatives.

On the whole, Social transformation and change have a lot of explanations to offer. In the age of information revolution, a paradigm shift has occurred from biological sexist division of labour to consideration of status women to genderization of women's empowerment or mainstreaming gender. Such paradigm shift can be understood at a hypothetical level from the following Table.

Table 1
From Sex to Status to Gender: The Paradigm Shift

Sex	Status	Gender
Cooking	studying	Self-sufficient & independence
Give birth	rear	Build career
Kitchen Utensils	dolls	Machine
Subjugation	Empowerment	Mainstreaming
Helping	Sharing	Claiming Rights
Biology	Sociology	Interdisciplinary

The emphasis by parents to train their daughters as perspective mothers gradually changed to giving emphasis on their studies so as now they are marching ahead towards independence and self-sufficiency. Career building is on the priority agenda of women. As against sticks and dolls, they are now handling machines and in the process are claiming their rights. Although ICT is a new revolution, sexist division of labor continues to be deep rooted in the rural society in India. However, women are making their ways into certain levels including higher levels of the IT workforce. Present gender concern is mainstreaming as against empowerment or emancipation from subjugation. Gender mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending

programs, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination. It makes public interventions more effective and ensures that inequalities are not perpetuated. The holistic discourse has generated thinking across disciplinary boundaries in social sciences and literary studies.

Thus the impact of information revolution and gender relations on the empowerment of women has not been an unmixed blessing. They have been positive and negative, direct and indirect. It is a matter of fine judgment, laced with a touch of ideology as to whether or not the evidence points balance towards a positive or negative influence. While essentialists see on improvement in the lots of women, feminists expect much more to be done. An empirical study probably in its appropriate context may provide a causal clue to such differences in

opinion and varieties in points of view. The extent to which cultural issues have been taken into account is one of the issues that requires to be investigated.

* Paper presented in National Seminar of Mass Com Deptt, MZU 26-27 Feb 2018 entitled 'Media & Empowerment of Women'

** R.K.Mohanty is Professor and Head, Deptt of Sociology, Mizoram University

References

- Abbasi, Z. F. (2001). Pro-Poor and Gender Sensitive Information Technology: Policy and Practice.' Electronic Publication, <http://www.comminit.com/st2002/sld-6845.html>.
- Allen, Donna, Ramona R. Rush and Susan J. Kaufman (Eds.) (1996). *Women Transforming Communications -Global Intersections*. London: SAGE.
- Anzaldúa G E (1990) *Making Face, Making Soul: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, Aunt Lute Books.
- Bill Gates (2007) —*Busiess @ The Speed of Thought*”, E-books.
- Bornstein, Kate (1995) Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us, New York: Vintage.*
- Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Chafetz, J. S. (1978) Masculine/feminine or human? An overview of the sociology of sex roles. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
- Charnley, K. (1990). Concepts of anger, identity and power and the vision in the writing and voices of first nation women. In D.Gregoire (Ed.), *Gatherings: The En-owkin journal of first North American people* (pp. 10–22). Penticton, B.C., Canada: Theytus.
- Davidson, M J. and C L. Cooper (Eds.) (1987). *Women and Information Technology*, Toronto: John Wiley and Sons.
- Dervin, Brenda (1987), The Potential Contribution of Feminist Scholarship to the Field of Communication, *Journal of Communication*, Volume 37, Issue 4, pages 107–120.
- Game, A. and R. Pringle (1984). *Gender at Work*. London: Pluto Press.
- Giligan Carole (1982) In *a Different Voice*, Harvard University Press.
- Goonawardena Chandra (ed) (1995) *Report on Workshop on Distance Education Initiatives in Teacher's Education in South Asia with Focus on Primary and Secondary Level, 7-10, November*, OUSL Press.
- Hacker, Sally (1989). *Pleasure, Power and Technology*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Hacker, Sally (1990). *Doing it the Hard Way: Investigations of Gender and Technology*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Hafkin, N. J. (2000). Convergence of Concepts: Gender and ICTs in Africa. In E. M. Rathgeber and E. O. Adera (eds.) (2000) *Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Chapter 1.
- Hanson, Jarice and Uma Narula (1990). *New Communication Technologies in Developing Countries*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Heidegger, Martin (1949) "The Question Concerning Technology", in Heidegger, Martin, *Basic Writings: II Edition*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1993)
- Henwood, Flis (1993). —*Establishing Gender Perspectives on Information Technology: Problems, Issues and Opportunities*,” in Eileen Green, Jenny Owen and Den Pain (Eds.). *Gendered Design? Information Technology and Office Systems*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Husserl Edmund (1910) "Philosophy as Rigorous Science", translated in 1965 by Quentin Lauer, (ed), *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Huyer, S. (1997). *Supporting Women's Use of Information Technologies for Sustainable Development*. IDRC, . Ottawa.
- International Women's Tribune Centre (1984). *Women Using Media for Social Change*. New York: IWTC.
- Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva (1993). *Ecofeminism*. London: Zed Books.

- Marcelle, G. (2000). ICTs & development — making it happen. In D. Lush & H. Rushwaya (eds.) (2000) *Into or Out of the Digital Divide: Perspectives on ICTs and Development in Southern Africa*. Panos, Southern Africa.
- Mies, Maria (1986). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale - Women in the International Division of Labour*. London: Zed Books.
- Mitter, Swasti and Sheila Rowbotham (Eds.) (1995). *Women Encounter Technology: Changing Patterns of Employment in the Third World*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Moranga, C. and G. Anzaldúa (Eds.) (1981). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Mumford, Lewis (1970). *The Myth of the Machine*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Munyua, H. (2000). Application of ICTs in Africa's Agricultural Sector: A Gender Perspective. In E. M. Rathgeber and E. O. Adera (eds.) (2000) *Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Chapter 4.
- New Internationalist (1996). —Seduced by Technology: The Human Costs of Computers,” *New Internationalist*. No 286/December Issue.
- Ningo, N. (1999). *ICT and Sustainable Good Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Countering the Hegemonic Drive for Power*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Obijiofor, L. (1998). Future of Communication in Africa's Development. *Futures*, 30(2/3), 161-174
- Sharma, C. (2001). *Using ICTs to Create Opportunities for Marginalized Women and Men: The Private Sector and Community Working Together*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Spender, Dale (1995). *Nattering on the Net - Women, Power and Cyberspace*. North Melbourne, Australia: Garmond Press.
- Odedra-Straub, M. (1995). Women and Information Technology in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Topic for Discussion. In S. Mitter and S. Rowbotham (eds.) *Women Encounter Technology: Changing Patterns of Employment in the Third World*. London: Routledge, pp. 256-277
- Opoku-Mensah, A. (2000). ICTs as Tools of Democratization: African Women Speak Out. In E. M. Rathgeber and E. O. Adera (eds.) *Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Chapter 7.
- Plant, Sadie (1997). *Zeros + Ones - Digital Women + the New Technoculture*. New York: Doubleday
- Rabayah, K. (2008). Why do women in rural areas seek ICT training: An evaluation of ICT training initiative targeting women in rural area in Palestine. *IADIS ICT, Society and Human Beings 2008 (ICT 2008) Conference*, Amsterdam, Holland, 78-85.
- Rakow, Lana F. (Ed.) (1992). *Women Making Meaning - New Feminist Directions in Communication*. New York: Routledge.
- Rathgeber, E. M. and E. O. Adera (eds.) (2000) *Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
- Rege Sharmila (2004) *Sociology of Gender*, OUP New Delhi.
- Riano, Pilar (1994) (Ed.). *Women in Grassroots Communications: Furthering Social Change*. London: SAGE.
- Rush, Ramona R. and Donna Allen (Eds.) (1989). *Communications at the Crossroads: The Gender Gap Connection*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Stromquist N. (2003). *Women, Education and Empowerment. The Theoretical and Practical Bases for Development*, Google book, p. 45.
- Turkle, Sherry (1984). *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Turkle, Sherry (1988). —Computational Reticence: Why Women Fear the Intimate

Machine,” in Cheris Kramarae (Ed.), *Technology and Women’s Voices: Keeping in Touch*. New York: Routledge.

Turkle, Sherry and Seymour Papert (1990). —Epistemological Pluralism: Styles and Voices Within the Computer Culture,” in *Signs*

Journal of Women in Culture and Society. 16 (1), 128-157.

Unwin T. (2008). *Information and Communication in development practices. ICT4D: Information and Communication Technology for Development*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, Chapter 3, 39-69.

Wajcman, Judy (1991). *Feminism Confronts Technology*. London, Polity Press.

@@@

Dances of Mizoram: Understanding Sawlâkia

K. Robin*

Abstract

This paper attempts to showcase Sawlakia, one of the most popular dances of Mizoram, to wider audience by conceptualizing and historicizing Sawlakia. It also articulates the evolution of the dance and its place in contemporary period.

Keywords: Sawlakia, *Hraila*, Were-Tigers, Dance, Warrior,

Conceptualization of Dance:

Before the advent of language, speech and thought, it would seem that movement and gesture has already existed and it is the expression of life. In other words, they precede language and thought. (Sharon Chaiklin & Hilda Wengrower, 2009: p.3) The larger manifestation of human existence appears to be one of physical activities in the form of gesture and movement which then served as a medium of communication. It is in this context that human movement and gesture which otherwise may also be called ‘Dance’ becomes so much important area of study and for wider understanding of human culture. Sharon Chaiklin quoted Havelock Ellis, —“If we are indifferent to the art of dancing, we have failed to understand, not merely the supreme manifestation of physical life, but also the supreme symbol of spiritual life”. This explanation is indeed strongly ingrained in the cultural makeup of most of the tribal communities across the globe.

In so far as tribal cultural practices are concerned, there is an increasing fear that many of the traditional usages and attributes that are embedded in the tribal social fabric seemed to have gradually vanished from the cultural landscape. It is in this background that the need for appreciation of traditional customary practices like arts, crafts, songs and dances became even more heightened in contemporary times. For instance, though the population of a particular tribal community may be on the rise, however, there may not be a corresponding appreciation or an increasing practice on many of its existing cultural traits. Therefore, there is an alarming need for its protection and preservation from complete disappearance. This may be an acute

scenario for all tribal communities all across world.

Dances are an important part of tribal life and are intricately interwoven and embedded in the social and cultural life of different communities in Mizoram. It is through the dance that the people maintain their connection with their clans, kinship, tribes and ancestors, though it may be different from the practices of ancestral worship followed elsewhere, and also understand their immediate situation. In a more elaborative sense, dance may also have to do with the communities’ understanding of the cosmos and of their sojourn in this world and their philosophical thoughts on the notion and their comprehension of the afterlife.

Dance is about one’s natural instinct guiding one’s choices and actions inherently woven in the cultural makeup and thoroughly portrayed by the various stages found while in the process of dancing. In the context of Mizoram, dance, particularly traditional dance, played a very crucial role in the social and cultural transaction and statement of the tribe and their relationship with the ‘outside world’. For the Mizos, folk songs and dances are intricately intertwined and woven together and these exercises are considered natural and affecting the wellbeing of the community. Every social action would be considered incomplete without attributing it to, at least, one or more of the lively dances instituted within the community. In other words, to dance is to live in a way that is consistent with the communities’ way of life, so much so that even scholars and commentators have stated that the Mizos ‘love to dance as much as they love to sing’.

Understanding Sawlakia:

In Mizoram, most popular dances would include Cheraw, Khual lam, Chheih lam, Chai, Par lam, Chawn glaizawn,

Sarlamkai, Sawlakia etc, (LTL Khiangte, 2008: 35). In history, these dances may have been associated with a particular tribe but in contemporary times, it is performed by all within the Mizo communities cutting across tribes, clans or villages and towns. It emphasized the gradual unification of different tribes as a single whole and integration of the same within the larger Mizo community. In fact, Mizo is a generic term covering the entire people inhabiting present-day Mizoram, and with extension it would include even those living in the bordering areas of Myanmar, Bangladesh, Manipur, Tripura and Assam. (K. Robin: 2016)

In so far as the Maras are concerned, they are endowed with numerous kinds of folk dances such as Sawlakia, Dawh la, Chaochhipa la, Athih la, Bei la, Mathyu la, Azao la, Pakhupi la, Pazita la, Rakha tla, Awhta Pheichhua, Athairapupa la, Awpivyno la, Hmiakhupati la, Vao-ie tlo la, Saitlei la, Chakei lu ia la, and Awkhypa la. (John Hamlet Hlychho: 2009, p. 146) The Maras inhabit the southernmost corner of Mizoram and many of their brethrens are living on the other side of the international border, i.e., Chin State of Myanmar. They are analogous historically and culturally and akin to each other. On the Indian side, they enjoyed political autonomy under Mara autonomous District Council and guaranteed by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Of the myriad dances, Sawlakia occupies an importance place in the history and practice of folk dances in Mizoram. It is one of the most popular and celebrated dances of the Maras. The origin of Sawlakia is shrouded in mystery though tradition has it that it was a dance originally performed by the tiger men (Were-tiger) otherwise known as *hraila*. It was believed that long ago, in the Thlatla areas of present day Chin State in Myanmar, the Were-tigers or *Hraila* often attacked the villagers so much so that the people dreaded in fear to venture out beyond the village gate for weeks and months together. Soon, the villagers were left with very little supply of food and other items.

One day, the village chieftainess forcefully asked one of the female slaves to collect firewood from the forest. The slave soon rushes off, though in fear, wandering and collecting firewood and bolt from the blue came face to face with Were-tigers/*Hraila* at *Teisaiby*. (K. Zohra: 2013, p. 161) Surprisingly, the *Hraila*/Were-tigers did no harm to her and instead taught her a dance which she learnt pretty quick and on returning home, she divulged the entire incident to her mistress. (Zakhu Hlychho: 2009, p. 59) Once narrating the incident, she was asked to perform the dance which she had learnt from the Were-tigers/*Hraila* and also to teach the village folks. This was believed to be the origin of Sawlakia dance among the Maras.

In course of time, *Sawlâkia* was performed along with Chaochhipa and Dawhlakia dances during *ia* ceremony. *Ia* was a ceremony performed when raiding warriors brought home the head of their slain enemies in order to nullify the power of the spirit of their slain enemy called *saw*. (N.E. Parry: 1976, p.213) If *ia* ceremony was not done, it was believed that *saw*/spirits of the slain would render physical deformity or abnormality to the slayers or even to their children or grand-children. *Sawlâkia* was performed dancing round and round the head of the slain enemy. It was a practice in which rice and meat would be put in the mouth of the slain so that the dead man's spirits may not wander about the village while the ceremony was going on in the village. Others believed that putting rice and meat inside the mouth of the dead was a depiction of disrespect for the slain enemy. (N.E. Parry: 1976, p.214)

Sawlâkia technically means —the dance of the spirits of the slain—. (N.E. Parry: 1976, p.214) The Maras believed that whether the spirits like it or not, it will have to dance in the *ia* ceremony round the head of the slain along with the warriors who killed the enemies. This ceremonial exercise would also complete the successful transportation of the spirits of the slain to the afterworld called *athikhi*, wherein the spirits would serve the slayers permanently even in the afterworld, *athikhi*.

Traditionally, *Sawlakia* was led by the warrior who had brought home the head of the enemy wearing his best attire and also decorating his hair with *rabô* or the horsehair. He would lead the group by dancing to the tune of gongs, cymbals and drums and carrying gun or dao/*vaina* or sword/*zaozi* in one hand and shield/*vyphao* in the other hand.(P.T. Hlychho: 2007). The warrior who led the dance was followed by young men and women wearing their best attires and standing in alternate position would continue their dance round the head of the slain moving slowly, turning right and left, retreating and advancing in circular motion.

As the dancing party made their moves, the warriors would cut the air with *vaina* or *zaozi* and wave *vyphao* representing the warriors fight and blasting guns while others would beat drums, blow bugles and clanking cymbals. In this way *sawlakia* was performed dancing round the head of the slain as many as three times and ultimately brought to a close.

Conclusion:

What may be noted is the fact that pre-Colonial Sawlakia dance and Colonial and post-Independence Sawlakia dance had significant differences in terms of its bearing and orientations. For instance, during the pre-Colonial or pre-Christian period, the dance was performed during *Ia* ceremony accompanied with drinking of beers, and in fact, numerous pots of beer are guzzled and this stimulated the performers and absorbed them in a state of great exhilaration.(N.E. Parry: 1976, p.214)) However, in the post-Independence period, there is a significant departure from the earlier practice and the orientation considerably changed and the dance is now essentially performed for entertainment of important guests and also performed on events of public and social importance.

The advent of Christianity and the eventual conversion of the Maras to Christianity demand a new set of precepts which have to be adhered by all converts, and this social and religious change require them to reorient their entire understanding and perspective on dance and its related ceremonies. The social norms of the

community were adjusted and altered wherever and whenever necessary arises. Interplay of tradition and modernity is definitely visible when one carefully studies the whole notion and concept of customary practices and belief system of the Maras.

In this context, Sawlakia dance saw a definite transformation when it is now geared and staged, purely, for entertainment purposes. Guests are accorded a high degree of importance in Mara society, very much similar to the way in which guests are treated elsewhere in other parts of the world. For instance, to the Uzbekistan, ‘Guests are gifts from God’ or ‘A guest comes before even your father’. (Mary Masayo Doi: 2002, p.5) Therefore, all possible reception was accorded and to the Maras, the highest honour given to the guest is by performing Sawlakia dance, now that Sawlakia becomes synonymous with celebration and of good times.

* K. Robin, Associate Professor, Dept. of History & Ethnography, MZU

References:

1. Chaiklin, Sharon., Wengrower, Hilda., (ed.) *The Art and Science of Dance/Movement Therapy*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2009.
2. Hlychho, John Hamlet., *The Maras: Head hunters to Soul hunters*, J.P. Offset Printers, Aziawl, 2009.
3. Hlychho, Zakh., *Mara te tobul*, JP. Offset printers, aizawl, 2009.
4. Hlychho, P.T., *Maraland: Yesterday and Today*, Rhino Printers, Shillong, 2007.
5. Khiangte, Laltluangliana., *Mizos of Notheast India: An introduction to Mizo culture,folklore, language and literature*, L.T.L. Publications, Aizawl, 2008.
6. Masayo Doi, Mary., *Gesture, Gender, Nation: Dance and Social Change in Uzbekistan*, London, 2002.
7. Parry, N.E. *The Lakheres*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd, Calcutta, 1976.

8. Robin, K., *The Maras: History, Polity and Identity*, Scientific Book Centre, Guwahati, 2016.
9. Zohra, K., *The Maras: Indigenous traditions and folk culture*, Scientific Book Centre, Guwahati, 2013.

