

# **UNIFICATION MOVEMENT OF THE ZO PEOPLE**

**M. Phil**

**DISSERTATION**

**Submitted by**

**C. Lalhmingliana**

Department of Political Science

Regn. No: MZU/M.Phil./283 of 1.5.2015

In partial Fulfilment for the Degree of

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Supervisor**

**Professor Jangkhongam Doungel**



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY – 796004**

**2015**

## DECLARATION

I, Mr. C. Lalhmingliana, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science.

(C. LALHMINGLIANA)

(Prof. JANGKHONGAM DOUNGEL)

(Head of Department)

(Prof. JANGKHONGAM DOUNGEL)

(Supervisor)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I am thankful to the Almighty God for his blessing to complete this Dissertation.

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Jangkhongam Doungel, Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, for his invaluable guidance, help, support and encouragement which serve as the basis for completion of this Dissertation. Without his help, I would not have completed this work.

I also express my deep gratitude to my family for their help and support to complete my work.

I am very thankful to, Lalduhoma, President, Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), L.P. Biakdanga, Treasurer, Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO) Aizawl, Zoramthanga, President, Mizo National Front (MNF) and C. Chawngkunga, General Secretary, Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) for giving me their valuable time and for giving me many information which are very helpful for this Dissertation.

I sincerely extend my thankfulness to my senior scholar Lalnundika Hnamte, who helps me from the beginning, till the end of this work.

I sincerely thank to all the faculty and Non-teaching staffs of Political Science Department, Mizoram University for making a beautiful working atmosphere.

Last, but not the least, this research work could not be completed without the help and advice from Miss Chhuangi, Miss Mimi Lalhruaitluangi and from all my fellow research scholars – Lalengkima, Steffi C Beingiachhiezi, Lalthatluanga, Lalhualhimi, Melody Kawlramchhani, Zorinsanga Hmar, Zoramthanga.

Dated:

Place: Aizawl

(C. LALHMINGLIANA)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

Revised definition of the whole boundary of the Lushai Hills.

Vide A.S., Pol A, Dec. 1928, Nos. 12-3

#### BOUNDARY OF THE LUSHAI HILLS

**South;** Starting from Keukradong the boundary runs eastward to Mephurutong or Rengtlang, thence to the course of a small stream called the Varanglui whose source lies due east of the peak, down the Varanglui to its junction with the Kola or Sekul river where a boundary stone has been placed, thence up the Kola or Sekul river to the mouth of the Khawtlang or Zyucha river where a boundary stone has been placed, up the Khawtlang or Zyucha river to its source on the Samang range, thence southward along the Samang range, to the source of the Samal river where a boundary stone has been placed down the small river to its junction with the Kolodyne straight across the Kolodyne river to the mouth of the Khangza river to its junction with the northern branch of the stream; up this stream to its source in the KaisiTlang (the source is a saddle just north of the Kaisi Hill) from this saddle southward to the source of the Rale river, down the Rale river to its junction with the Sulla river. Thence northward along the Sulla river to the mouth of the Mipu river; up the Mipu river to its source on the saddle of Tongmual Hill known as Laikeikawn along the crest of the range northwards to the source of the small stream known as Chapi river. Down the

Chapiriver to its junction with the Kawlawh river. Up the Kawlawh river to the mouth of the Hosainu river. Up the Hosainu river to its source known across the Hosainukawn to the Tuipang river, thence up the Tuipang river its junction with the Bakhawnglui, thence up the Bakhawng river to its source on a saddle where a stone has been placed; thence across the saddle to the source of the thangtheiluite, down this stream to its junction with the Thangthei river and down the Thangthei river to its junction with the Tuisi. Up the Tuisi river to the mouth of the Luapariver, up the Luapa river to its source on the Mawma range (South of the peak Nizentlang) thence northward along the Mawma range to the source of the Loupi river to its junction with Kolodyne river.

**East;** Starting from the point at the junction of the loupe river with the Boinu, down the Boinu to its junction with the Tyao; thence up the course of the tyao to its source on the Vikotlang; thence eastward to the source of a tributary of the Tuimang river down the Tuimang to its junction with the Tuisa, down the Tuisa to its junction with the Tuivai river, down the Tuivai river to its junction with the Vangvumlui, up the Vangvumlui to its source at the saddle known as Bongkot where a boundary pillar mark ML (I) has been erected; thence crossing to the West side of this saddle to the source of Tuitei stream, down the Tuitei stream to its junction with Tuivai river, down the Tuivai river to its junction with the Barak river to its junction with Ruangdinglui.

**North;** Starting from the junction of the Ruangdingriver and the Barak river, the boundary runs due west to the Sonai river. From the Sonai river

westward up the course of small stream south of Bongkok Hill to its source; thence to the top of Bongkok range, and crossing the range down a small stream to its junction with the Rukni river, from the junction of Noburchera and the Rukni river the boundary runs northward to the point on the road from Aijal to Dwarbond where in 80<sup>th</sup> mile from AiZawl, the road crosses a large stream by a timber bridge, thence up to the course of this stream to its source; thence crossing the range in which the stream rises to the source of a tributary of the Baruncherra stream; thence along this tributary to its junction with another small tributary to its junction with another small tributary which rises in the Bahairabi range, up this tributary to its source on the Bahairabi range, thence westward to the source of a tributary of Dhaleswari, up the Dhaleswari to the mouth of Pakwa river, up the Pakwa river to the mouth of a tributary of Pakwa, up this tributary to its source; thence northwards to Chhatachura, from Chhatachura westward in a straight line to the point where the Sylhet boundary cuts the Longai river.

**West;** Starting from the point where the Sylhet boundary cuts the Longai river to its source at a point on the range 3 miles north of Betling Sib; thence along the range southward to Betling Sib (3083); thence continuing along the range southward to betling (2234); thence southward to the source of a tributary of Tuilianpui river down the Tuilianpui to the point opposite to the source of harinariver, from this point westward in a straight line to the source of Harina. Down the Harina river to the Karnafuliriver, up the Karnafuli river to the mouth

of ThegaKhal river to its source on the Waibungtlang, along the watersheds of Waibungtlang southward to the starting point of Keukradong.

## **Appendix II**

### **ZO-REUNIFICATION ORGANIZATION (ZORO)**

#### **GENERAL HEADQUARTERS: ZORAM**

##### **South and South East Asia**

To

The Prime Minister of Great Britain

The British Parliament

London (England)

Subject: Re-Unification of Chin-Lushai Land into one Administrative unit.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Sir,

Permit us (Representatives of Zo people) to request your honour kindly to give special attention to a long standing felt-need of ours as noted below for favour of an immediate action.

That before the advent of the British power in India and also before the domination of their great power over the Asian Sub-Continent (then India i.e India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon), the mountainous region lying between the Chindwin Valley in the EAST, the Southern Hills and plains of Manipur in the NORTH, the hills and plains of Cachar District (Assam), the Tripura domain of the then Maharaja, the Chittagong comprising its hill tracts in the WEST, and the ArakanYomas extending to the Sea in the SOUTH had been undisputed land of and inhabited by the people of the same ethnic stock-the Hill people- popularly known as Chin-Lushai-



Kuki. They have a common language with of course slightly different dialects, so to speak.

That within this area, the Zo people had lived their life happily and independently. No element of foreign power or force reigned over them till the spread of the British sovereignty over this area in 1890, so to speak. The people could solve variety of their problems independently such as economic, social, village administrative problems and many more without any sort of help from an external source.

That after the British power had made their conquest of the Asian Sub-continent and had established their sovereignty over this area, they thought of setting up administrative machinery over the area. They thought to have setup an administration according to their own convenience.

That after Chin-Lishai expedition 1888-1890, different column of British regime who had come from different provinces annexed each of their respective occupied areas to each of their based provinces from where they have started. Thus the Chin-Lushai land (ZO-Land) had been divided into three different provincial administrations.

- (a) The region lying east of river TIAU had been administered from Rangoon, the capital of British Burma.
- (b) The rest of this mountainous area referred to above be administered from Calcutta or Syhlet or Shillong as the case may be convenient by the British Indian Administrators.

This piece-meal division of the area had been done to meet the administrative convenience of the officers only. Thus the same ethnic group of people referred to here as Mizos or Zomis in British-India-Burma, were further divided into:-

1. Lushai Hills District (now Mizoram)
2. Chin Hills in Burma
3. Hills areas of Southern and Western Manipur
4. Jampui and Sakhan ranges in Tripura
5. Hill tracts of Chittagong
6. Arakan, and
7. Upper and Lower Chindwin including present Sagiang Division and Kalie-Kabo valley. Comprising up to Kachin Hills.

That it has been a fact that the piece-meal-division of this area into different administrative unit in Bengal, in Burma and in Assam have been working very much against the feelings and sentiments of the Mizos or Zomis or Zo people.

That on careful systematic observations made by the British officers on the feelings and sentiments of the Zo people for about two years, the British officers had an important meeting at Fort Williams, Calcutta on the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1892. The meeting was called "The Chin-Lushai Conference". The members of the conference were:-

The Hon'ble Sir Charles Alfred Elliot, KCSI Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

His Excellency Lt-General the Hon'ble Sir J.O. Dormer, KCSI Commander-in-Chief of Madras.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, KCSI, Chief Commissioner of Burma.

W.R. Ward Esq. CIS Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Sir Henry Mortiman Durand, KCSI, Secretary to the Government of India,  
Foreign Department.

Major- General EHH Collen, CIE, Secretary to the Government of India  
Military Department: and

Major-General Sir James Browns; KCSI CE R.R Quartermaster-General in  
India.

The following resolution were passed:

Res. No.1

The majority of the conference are of the opinion that it is very desirable that the whole tract of country known as Chin-Lushai Hills should be brought under one administrative heads as soon as this can be done. They also considered it advisable that the new administrative should be subordinate to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Sir J. Dormer and Sir Alexander Mackenzie would differ any final decision as regard to eastern part of the tract till further information is obtained.

Res. No.2

The conference is not prepared to assert that this step can be taken immediately. As matters now stand, the difficulty of communication, of supply, and of transport are very serious, and it will in any case be necessary to suspend action until after the close of the present cold season's operation in the Chin and Lushai Hills.

Res. No.3

The first thing to be done for the control of this tract is to improve the communications between the important places such as Cachar and Aijal, Aijal and Lungleh, Aijal and Manipur, and the posts situated respectively on the eastern and western side of the tract. The opening of these lines is a work of pressing importance.

Res. No.4

The conference is of opinion that the boundaries of the new administrative area should be generally speaking, the boundaries of the tract occupied by the savage newly brought under British control, but the details of those boundaries can only be settled after consultation with local officers.

Res. No.5

The conference is agreed that North and South Lushai with such portions of the ArakanHill Tracts as may hereafter be determined, should be placed under Assam at once on conditions that;

- (1) Complete transport and commissariat equipment for supplies from Chittagong to South Lushai, and from Cachar to North Lushai are provided.
- (2) Funds are granted for road and telegraph Aijal-Lungleh.

That after a lapse of 50 years since the progress of ZO Re-Unification process becoming so slow, the representatives of the Zo people once more mentions that Re-Unification of Zo people has been the heart burning wishes for the concerned. And their wishes had been represented to His Excellency Sir Robert Reid the Governor of Assam and High Commissioner of British India on his visit to Aijal in 1940.

The matters was also put forward to the British Parliament. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Sir Churchill also promised to consider the matter after the war. Being excluded area, the Lushai Chief's also declared war under the British Union Jack taking the side of the Allied Forces. Thus the Zo people got the privileges of Atlantic Charter after the war, as the war had been won in favour of the Allied Forces. Notwithstanding after the war Conservative Party lost in the Parliament election and the Labour Party vetoed the progressive process of ZO Re-Unification once more.

That now, after the lapse of complete century, (i.e from January 29, 1892 through January 29, 1992), the people of Chin-Lushai Land (now known as Mizoram and Chin Hills etc.) have been experiencing a feeling of hunger and sadness for immediate re-unification of this areas. In fact, we, the people of these areas (Chin-Lushai Land) have been looking for the day before the advent of the British power over us.

That now the main difficulties of communication, of supply, and of transport which have been mentioned in the resolution No.2 of the Chin-Lushai Conference held on the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1892 at Fort Williams Calcutta (that resolution being attached for easy reference) have now been made alright in fact, the communication between Cachar and Aijal (Aizawl), Aijal and Lungleh, Aijal and Manipur and the posts situated respectively on the eastern and western side of that tract have been constructed motorable all the year round. There has not been any sort of communications difficulty at the moment.

That further, we feel on careful observation of political situations and changes that have been taking place in Burma in particular and other neighbouring countries in

general, that the whole period of time from 1992-1999 looks quite exciting and even promising for an immediate re-unification of our Mother Lands (Chin-Lushai Lands) before the looming work of the present century is over.

Under the circumstances given above and more, we, the undersigned and representative of the tribal people of this area, have been praying that the CREATOR of this planet (the Earth) in general, and the tiny area of the Chin-Lushai Land in particular will stretch HIS MIGHTY HANDS through the Prime Minister of Great Britain for immediate RE-UNIFICATION of the Chin-Lushai Land- ZORAM- so as to enable the tribal people of the land to have only one Administration in the very near future.

Faithfully Yours,

(H. THANGLAWRA)

(R. THANGMAWIA)

General Secretary

Chairman

Zo Re-unification Organisation,

Zo Re-unification Organisation

General Headquarters, Zoram, Aizawl

Dated Aizawl

The 29<sup>th</sup> January. 1992

## CONTENTS

<i>Certificate</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Declaration</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>iv – v</i>
CHAPTER	Page No.
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	1 – 24
CHAPTER 2: Political and Social Status of the Zo people in Pre-British Era	25 – 46
CHAPTER 3: History of the Movement during British Era	47 – 66
CHAPTER 4: Unification Movement	67 – 105
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion	106 – 112
Appendices	113 – 123
Bibliography	124 – 126

## ABBREVIATIONNS

A.D	-	Anno Domini
APHLC	-	All Party Hill Leaders Conference
B.C	-	Before Christ
BA	-	Bachelor of Arts
Capt	-	Captain
CHT	-	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CIS	-	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNU	-	Chin National Union
COL	-	Colonel
EITU	-	Eastern India Tribal Union
ILP	-	Inner Line Permit
KCSI	-	Knights Commander of the order of the Star of India
KNU	-	Khulmi National Union
Maj	-	Major
MLA	-	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNA	-	Mizo National Army
MNC	-	Mizo National Council
MNF	-	Mizo National Front
MNFF	-	Mizo National Famine Front
MNV	-	Mizo National Volunteer
MPCC	-	Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee



MU	-	Mizo Union
MZ	-	Mizoram
MZP	-	MizoZirlai Pawl
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
PC	-	People's Conference
Prof	-	Professor
UMFO	-	United Mizo Freedom Organization
UN	-	United Nations
UNO	-	United Nations Organization
UNWGIP	-	United Nations Working Group on Indigenous People
YLA	-	Young Lushai Association
YMA	-	Young Mizo Association
ZNC	-	Zomi National Congress
ZNP	-	Zoram Nationalist Party
ZoRO	-	Zo Re-unification Organization
ZRM	-	Zoram Motor

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The term DZO or ZO which is used as an inclusive name for different tribes of the Zo ethnic group is believed to be originated in China. According to Vumson, the term Zo or Jo was used for naming the Indo-Burman people.<sup>1</sup> Vumson further said that, because of the frequent contact of the Zo people with their neighbours, it is confused about which people should be designated as Zo or other names. Some writers including Vumson prefer to use the term “Zo” whereas some writers including B. Lalthangliana used the term “Mizo” to refer to the ethnic group. Therefore the two words will be used interchangeably throughout the research. When the British took possession of Bengal, the Bengalis told that the Zo were Kuki, which in Bengali word means Savage or wild Hill people. But the British came to know that those people do not called themselves as Kuki and the British used the term “Loosye” which later became “Lushai” to mention the Zo people<sup>2</sup>. Tom Lewin, a British officers who tried to understand the people they are dealing with, after conducting a great research came to the conclusion that “The generic name of the whole nation is Dzo ”<sup>3</sup> According to H. Lalrinawma, the Zo people were one stock of the Mongoloids. Those Mongoloids were believed to be originated from China near the river of Yangtze and Hwang ho<sup>4</sup>. Those Mongoloid race at present scattered in different parts of the world like Assam, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand etc. Scholars have classified the whole human race into three broad races, such as the Caucasoid, the Negroid and the Mongoloid.

---

<sup>1</sup>Vumson. *Zo history. With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*, 1986, p.1

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p.1

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p.1

<sup>4</sup>H.Lalrinawma., *Hmasang Zofate Chanchin*, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, Mizoram 2000, p.43

Hence, Zo belong to the Mongoloid race because they are said to have fulfilled all the morphological characteristics of the Mongoloids as summarised by Bowels<sup>5</sup>. Another peculiar characteristic of the Mongoloid race is the birthmark on the pelvis of every new born child irrespective of male and female. Mark, however vanishes when the child attains two to three years of age. We do not know whether this bears some truth in other Mongoloid race but it is found through among the Zos<sup>6</sup>. Scholars have subdivided the Sino- Tibetan family into sub- groups and sub- sub- groups. In this various divisions the Zos are grouped as part of the Tibeto-Burman family.<sup>7</sup> They speak the Tibeto-Burman language. The home of these people is not accurately known, but it is believed to be located somewhere between Kansu and Burma. Thus the region between Kansu and Burma known as the “buffer states” form a part of Southern China and it occupies a significant position in the history of the tribal peoples because the provinces of Kwei-chou, Sze-chwan and Yunnan which lie in this region are found to be home of various tribal people. Kwei-chou was the original home of the Miao-Tze tribes, from whom the word ‘Mizo’ is believed to have derived.<sup>8</sup> Szechwan province has occupied a unique place in the history of the Zos, as they believed that Chhinlung/ Sinlung which is the original home of their ancestor is located at Szechwan Province.<sup>9</sup> But this theory of evolution is hard to believe, because till today, no one can say that this is the exact location of Chhinlung/ Sinlung.

Because of un-recorded history, it became really difficult to trace the exact origin of the Zo people. The most acceptable history that can be traced starts from China as far as the origin of the Zo are concerned. But there are also other theory

---

<sup>5</sup>Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati:Delhi, 2004, p.19

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.19-20

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p.20

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.20-21

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p.21

like the Biblical theory that trace more far than China. According to the Biblical theory, the Zo are one loss tribe of Israel, but this theory did not have a valid proof and also the Zos do not fulfil any genealogical test that would bring them close to the Israel people. Therefore this theory does not get momentum for the origin of the Zo people. The physical features of the Zo people, yellowish or brownish skin, brown eye, black hair, slanted eye, prominent cheekbone, wide nose and flat face suggest their relation to the Indonesian-Malay sub race of the Mongoloid race. By analysing Zo language and comparing with other languages, anthropologist concluded that Zo language is related to the Tibeto-Chinese languages and they (Zo) also have cultural relations with them.<sup>10</sup> According to anthropologist, Peking man whose bones found in the caves of Chou K'outien is believed to be the earliest known man in China and the Peking man possessed certain characteristics peculiar to the Mongoloid race. This led one to believe that Zo people originated in China.<sup>11</sup>

On account of frequent wars during those times, one cannot stay at the same place throughout his life, because the weaker people have to leave their place for protection and security. Likewise, even the ancestor of the Zo people have to leave their place. There are many reasons regarding the movements of the Zo people.

According to Eberhard, by about 2,500 B.C. the Ch'iang tribes, ancestor of the Tibeto-Burman, were found in Western China in the province of present day Szechuan and in the Mountain regions of Kansu and Shensi. During the Shang dynasty, (1600-1028 B.C.), the Ch'iang tribes were neighbours of the Shang people, with whom they were in a more or less constant state of war. During the Chou dynasty (722-481 B.C.), Ch'iang tribes were found in North West China

---

<sup>10</sup>Vumson., Op.Cit., pp. 26-27

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 1986. P. 27

between the sources of the Yangtse and Wei. The earliest Chinese records that came around the latter half of the second millennium B.C. states that, the Chinese hostility forced them to take refuge in North East Tibet.<sup>12</sup> During the rule of the Han dynasty the Ch'iang tribes appeared as the Tanguts-the Tibetan Tribal Federation. The Tanguts attempted to block the Chinese access to Turkistan, which the Chinese had conquered in 73 A.D. heavy fighting ensued and the Chinese, got the upper hand, driving the Tanguts to the South. This can be suggested as one reason for the Tibeto-Burman Southward migration.<sup>13</sup>

Some historians from Burma give various assumptions as to how the Tibeto-Burman tribes came down to Burma. They came down in part from groups that no single date can be assigned to their entry into Burma. They did not come as the social and cultural units because they cannot be identified with any particular groups of today. But their common heritage of words similar to one another indicates that they were certainly descended from a common stock of race.<sup>14</sup> As Arnold Dashefsky and Howard M. Shapiro defined an ethnic group as “An ethnic group maybe defined as a group of individuals with a shared sense of people hood based on presumed shared socio cultural experiences and/or similar physical characteristics”.<sup>15</sup> According to C.C. Lewis, since many centuries ago, the Tibeto-Burman groups had existed as a distinct tribe in the east of central Asian highland from where they come down to Burma following two separates routes. The western Tibeto-Burman group includes the Chins and the Kachins. The Eastern group include those Myanmarese (Burmese) who settled in the valley of Irrawaddy, and

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28

<sup>14</sup> Sing KhawKhai, *Zo People and Their Culture*. BCPW, 85-PDA Complex, Lamphelpat, Manipur, 1995. pp.34-35

<sup>15</sup> Arnold Dashefsky and Howard M. Shapiro., *Ethnic Identity in Society*. edt. Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1976. P.3

the Western group of Kuki-Chin are supposed to have entered first into Burma and spread in to upper Chindwin, the Chin-Lushai Hills down to the Rakhine Hills to the South.<sup>16</sup>It is believed that the ancestor of the Zo may have made their movements in at least two waves. The first wave could have been those whom Lewis supposed to have settled at the valleys of Irrawaddy and Brahmaputra, starting in the last few centuries B.C. this group was believed to be “Old Kuki-Chin” who called their King Shou. The second wave may have been those who entered into Burma in the first few centuries A.D.<sup>17</sup>

According to B. Lalthangliana, the ancestor of the Mizo moved southward from China and reached the border of Tibet and Burma. From there they moved to the South end of Burma and reached the valley of Hukawng. This period was believed to be the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Prof. Luce held the view that the Zo people already came across the word Tangka during that period and Tanka was said to have been derived from Sanskrit word.<sup>18</sup> As they continued to move down from the Hukawng valley, it is believed that they fought a war with Kantu who settled in the upper part of Assam, Manipur and Burma to occupy the Chindwin valley. The Burmese took the advantage of misunderstanding between the Zo and the Kantu and helped the Zo to defeat the Kantu. As a result the Zo and the Burmese built a good relation during their stay in Burma.

---

<sup>16</sup>Singkhokhai., Op. Cit. p.34

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.34-35

<sup>18</sup>B. Lalthangliana., *India, Burma leh Bangladesh-a Mizo chanchin*. Second edition. Gilzomoffset, 2015. P.62

The Zo people believed that they settled in the Chindwin valley in the early times. K.Zawla in his “Mizo Pi Put e leh an Thlahte Chanchin” suggested 996 A.D as the year in which Zo people arrived in Chindwin valley.<sup>19</sup>

The rise of the Chinese tang Dynasty (618-906 A.D) brought contact with the Zo people in the Chindwin. From the records of the Tang, there were three kingdoms in Burma, namely, the Pyus, the Pegus (Mon), and the Sak. The Sak kingdom may have been the settlement of the Zo of upper Burma.<sup>20</sup> When the Burmese moved to the plains of central Burma during the ninth century, the Zo people were already there in Chindwin valley. According to Luce, the Burmese fought against the other occupants of the area such as the Thet, Mon and Pyu, but they did not fight the Zo people. The Zo people crossed the Chindwin and settled in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha-Yaw-Valleys and Pandaung Hill. Asho traditions say that they lived in the Padaung hills and crossed the Irrawaddy and lived on the East bank of the Irrawaddy during the Burmese Pagan Dynasty.<sup>21</sup>

In 1368 A.D. Kyitaungnyo became the Sawbwa of Kale who was the relatives of Sao Saw ke, a Shan Sawbwa or Prince. In 1374, he built the palace of Kale where Zo people contributed to a very large extend. According to Zo verbal history, a cruel king and great famine killed thousands of people in the Shan country, as such, they migrated to the hill. The Sizang records the oppressive Governor of Kale as the cause of the migration. At the same time, people had to defend themselves against the Manipuris who invaded the Zo-Shan country constantly. They therefore could devote little time cultivating their fields and eventually famine struck the area. Therefore, the Zo then decided to leave the

---

<sup>19</sup>Vumson, Op.Cit., P.33

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid* p.33

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid* p.35

plains and migrated to the hills.<sup>22</sup> Whenever there was the possibility of assimilation, the Zo moved away, and it was time for them to move away from the Burman because some Zo people had already been assimilated by the Burman. They left behind the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valleys, a land they occupied for some centuries. They came back again and again for different purposes like hunting of wild animals. They came back when they need slaves and human heads for sacrificial purposes and they came back to trade with them. They were the friends of the plain people until they quarrel, and they were enemies until they agreed once more to be friends. When peace was established after the British invasion, they came back to settle and today they live peacefully together.<sup>23</sup>

According to B. Lalthangliana, the Zo people left the Kale-Kabaw because of the fear of the Shan people. In the history of Burma, the name Shan was mentioned in the Pagan period of 1193-1294. Shan people established Mong Kawng Khua at 1215 and Mong Mai at 1223. As they continued to move downward, the Zo people who were already well settled in the Chindwin were pushed out to the Southern hilly part of Chindwin.<sup>24</sup> So the Zo people left the plains and migrated to different parts of the hill. After they left kabaw valley, they migrated to different places and they moved in different directions. There are certain theories regarding the movement of the Zo people. According to B. Lalthangliana, during the reign of DhanyaManika (1490-1515), the name KUKI was clearly mentioned in the history of Tripura. As a result it is recorded in the history of Tripura, the Kuki's serve for the King of Tripura and they won many war in the name of DhanyaManika. Gaycag, who was the best general of

---

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid* pp.37-38

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid* pp.38-39

<sup>24</sup>B. Lalthangliana.,Op.Cit.,. pp.90- 91



DhanyaManika was Kuki. Therefore it is believed that the Zo people who settled in Tripura today crossed the TiauRiver by 1300-1350 and it is also believed that they reached Tripura by 1450-1500.<sup>25</sup>

Kuki, Khu-mi, Khiang (Khyeng), Bawm (Banjogi) and Pang (pankho) settled at Chittagong Hill Tracts presently known as Bangladesh. According to 1901 census, these people accounts for 4,340. The first Zo history was heard in Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1777. The Chief of Chittagong sent a letter to Governor General Warren Hasting mentioning that there were many people in the hill and these hill people had no Guns and wore no clothes, and these people are called as Kuki's. On 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1777, the Chief of Chittagong told Governor-General Warren Hasting that thousands of hilly people migrated to Chittagong from Arakan.<sup>26</sup> These people were also believed to be the Zo people.

There are many Zo people who settled in Manipur till today and their migration to Manipuris also different from one another. Due to that the term Old Kuki and New kuki have been used to classify the different tribes of Zo ethnic group on the basis of their early or late entry to Manipur. The people who reached earlier are known as Old Kuki and who reached latter are known as New kuki. The earliest Zo people found in Manipur are the Anal. From the records of Manipur Chronicle, we find that in 1545-1565, King Chalamba attacked lamphou which was the village of Anal, but the Anal fought back and he could not defeat them. Another source mentioned that, King Khagemba (1597-1652), visited the village of Chawhte (Chohte).<sup>27</sup> As mentioned earlier, the entry in to Manipur varies, some are

---

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.203-204.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid* p.205

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid* p.206

believed to be settled in Manipur as early as 1500, and some entry took place till very recently.

Biateram which means the land of the Biate people includes the state of Meghalaya, the upper part of Jaintia Hills district and North Cachar Hills District of Assam. It is around 200 square kilometres and consists of 26 villages, there are around 4,288 hilly people and according to 1971 census, out of 4,288 people, 4,044 are sub tribes of Biate. It is believed that the Biate people reached North Cachar Hills at around 1700-1790 A.D.<sup>28</sup>

The latest movement from Burma was made by the Lusei (Lushai) people, and it is believed that the Lusei people entered Mizoram at around 1700 A.D. and settled till today. They are the biggest group that entered Mizoram and their entry into Mizoram compelled other Zo ethnic tribes who already settled in Mizoram to move out.<sup>29</sup>

According to Vumson, the movements of the Zo people to different parts of the hill happened in different periods. The early migrants were Khumi/Khami, Masho (Vakeung), Khaungsu, Pawmnau, Anu, Myhn, Reaungtu, Yhp-py; in the Southern part of Zo country (South of Halkha sub-division). This group falls in to southern group as defined by Lehman and Luce.<sup>30</sup> The earliest migrants in to Zo country were the Masho group whose legends do not records settling down in the Kabaw- Kale or Yaw (Zo) valleys. Their migration was directly to the hills. Khami legends say they were ruled in olden days by a hill King. People moved in to the hill King's jurisdiction were called Mi. They were also called Khumi, meaning 'Village People' which latter changed to Khami. A group of Khami who moved

---

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid* p.207

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid* pp.116-117

<sup>30</sup>Vumson., Op,Cit., p.41

farther South are now called “Mru” which is Arakanese for Masho. Thus Masho is the Tribe name and Khami the clan name. The masho have been mentioned in Arakan chronicles since the eleventh century, and the chronicle record a Masho as the King of Arakan during the Fourteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

The late migrants were divided in to Southern group and Northern group. The Southern group includes Yaw (Zo), Asho, Matu; in the Yaw (Zo) country, Pandaung hills, Myittha Valley, and lower Chindwin Valley, whereas the Northern group includes Pawi, Lusei, Paite; in the northern Myittha, Kale-Kabaw and lower Chindwin valley.<sup>32</sup>

In literature Asho are mentioned as “Khyeng” or “Plains Chin”. Khyeng is an old Burmese word for Chin and Arakanese use it today. Asho traditions says that they move east across the Irrawaddy river during the time of Pagan and mixed freely with the Burmans. Eventually the Asho migrated into the Hills west of Pandaung area. They lived side by side with the Khami for about two centuries before separation into two groups. The date of their separation was estimated by Loeffler as between seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The largest body of Asho now resides between the crest of the ArakanYomas and the Irrawaddy River and are concentrated about Padaung, opposite Prome, and in the Vicinity of Thayetmyo, Henzada and kanaung.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the close affinity among dialects it maybe concluded that the Lusei, Pawi and Paite have always live close together. It is very likely that during settlement in the Chindwin valley the Zo people led a peaceful life without tribal conflicts. The rugged terrain and each migratory group’s suspicion of others led to

---

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid* pp.42-43

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid* pp.41-42

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid* pp. 43-44-45

limited contact with one another, there by developing different dialects and differing habits.<sup>34</sup>

From the plains of the Shan country, the Pawi settled down initially at Hmunli, where they found the Plum fruit. After eating the Plums, they drank the water and found it sweet and decided to stay there. From Hmunli, they moved to Lailun where possibly they first dwelled in a Cave. Pawi is a name given by Paite and Lusei to those who tie their hair on the top of their foreheads. The Pawi themselves do not call themselves Pawi but Lai, which stands for all Zo people.

The Lakhers or the Maras inhabit the South-eastern corner of the Lushai Hills. Traditions says that the Maras came from the North, and it is certain that they all came to their present homes from different places in the Halkha (Haka) sub division of the Chin Hills, presumably being pushed forward by the pressure from the East. The progress of their migration to the present territory can be traced fairly accurately. The Saiko and Siaha people are both Tlongsai, and say that they originated at a place called Leisai between Leitak and Zaphai. It is believed that their settlement in the Lusei Hills must have been between 200 and 300 years.<sup>35</sup>

The Lusei or Hualngo tradition records them as having migrated from the Shan country into Zoram. According to K. Zawla, Lusei migration to the Hills began in 1463, which is very close to the year 1475, when the Meitei (Meithei) under Raja Kyamba combined with the Pong (Shan) of Mogaung fought and overthrew the Shan Sawbwa of Khampat. Professor Luce estimate's the Zo migration might have taken place during the sixteenth century. The first settlements of Lusei and related clans were near Falam not far from Sunthla, and

---

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid* p.47

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid* pp.54-55

the close affinity of Duhlian and Sizang dialects suggests strongly their existence as a group in the Chindwin Valley.<sup>36</sup>

Paihte or Paite is a name given by the Lusei and Pawi to people living in Tedim, in the southern and eastern parts of Manipur district and in the Somra Tracts. The Paite trace their early settlement in the Tuikang or Chindwin valley, where they lived with the Khamang people. The Khamang people were believed to be Shans. VumKoHau said, the migration of these people to the hills was due to the oppressiveness of the Shan Sawbwa of the Kale. He dated the time of the Sizang's migration to the hills as 1374, the time when the Kale Sawbwa was building the Kale palace. The Paite claimed that they first settled down at Ciimnuai when they migrated from the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valley. They left the place because Ciimnuai grew so overcrowded. As some of the Paite moved south or down the hill side, they were called "Sukte", which means a people going south and they found their home in Mualbem. Sizang, Thado, Vaiphei and Yo said they lived together for many years, until the Sizang and Thado quarrelled. The reason for their quarrelled was "the tails of the Deer and a flying Squirrel."<sup>37</sup>

As we see from the above, we can say that the ancestor of the Zo were once at Burma, (Chindwin, Kale-kabaw valley). They settled at the plains for quite a long time, but they left the plains because of various reasons. They migrated to the Hill and their movement took several centuries and there is no sign that their movement is complete till today. Details of their movement could not be mentioned in this work, but it is clear that they migrated from the plains to the hills. As they moved in different periods of time, they settled in different parts of the hill. Some moved far down and reached Chittagong Hill Tracts, some are in

---

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid* pp.56-58-59

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid* pp.74-76

different parts of India and some still remain in the Chin Hills. But when the Zo people settled in different parts of the world, the size of the village and number of people was different, but each and every village had their own Chief and they were never ruled by outsiders.

Each and every Chief carried its own village administration with the help of his Ministers. The political, social and economic condition of the village deeply depends upon the responsibility of the Chief. But their system of administration needs to be change forcefully during British rule. Details of how British invasion changed the Zo administration will be seen in other chapters of this work. It should be recollected that the British came to the land occupied by the Zo people and they conquered the territory due to superiority of weapon and well trained army. Thus, the Zo people were helpless to effectively counter act superior weapons and well trained army of the British Empire. Yet different tribes of the Zo ethnic group in Chin Hills, Lushai Hills and Hills area of Manipur bravely resisted the British force though they were defeated. As a result the Zo traditional political structure was changed by the British administration in many ways which really dis-satisfies the Zo people.

As a result of the emerging political condition and to serve the British purpose, the Zo people were administratively separated in to different administration and some of them were taken as forced labour and some were compelled to work in Tea garden. The resistance against their force labour compelled Zo people in Hills area of Manipur to fight against the British authority which was known as Kuki Rebellion from 1917-1919.<sup>38</sup> Subsequently. The Zo people were separated in to three sovereign countries, namely, India, Myanmar and

---

<sup>38</sup>Dr. S.M.A.W. Chishti., *The Kuki uprising in Manipur 1919-1920*.Spectrum Publications 2004. P.10. Guwahati:Delhi.

Bangladesh. Even within India, Zo people are found in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura and Nagaland. Thus when the need for Unification was realised by the Zo people, it became a difficult task because they were already separated in to different sovereign countries without their consent. But they are aware that they came from one ancestor and they need to be unified for their survival. As such movement have been spearheaded so as to unify the Zo people. Subsequently the Zo people are now recognised by the United Nations (UN) as an Ethnic Minority where the UN provides a scope for their unification and claim for their indigenous right of survival. There are many problems for the Zo people to go through to achieve this unification because political problems, social problems etc. have to be taken care off. Therefore it is important to study the nature of Zo unification movement, what is their purpose to be unified, what is their present status and what are the different factors that trouble their way for unification.

The proposed study therefore will look to the main problem that is nomenclature issue as far as unification is concerned in the Zo ethnic group. The Zo people now settle in three sovereign countries, namely, India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Whenever they reached a new place, they were given a new name which could also be sited as the main factor for their nomenclature controversy at present. They were called Chin by the Burmese when they reached Burma (Myanmar), some who move far downward are called Kuki by the Bengalese and Kuki is further classified into New Kuki and Old Kuki depending upon their period of movement. The people who settled in the present Mizoram claim themselves as Mizo. Thus, the Zo people are identified as Chin, Kuki and Mizo generally depending upon the territory of their settlement. Therefore when there was the awakening for unification of all the Zo people, the nomenclature with which they

will be inclusively identified is the main hurdle. As they were given different names in different places, they somehow adapt to their foreign name and tussle for nomenclature developed within the ethnic group. However they are aware that they are the same and related in custom, culture, tradition, language, social way of behaviour and in economic aspect.

The term Zomi originated in Chin Hills in the early fifties. Many Church leaders advocated the unification of different Baptist Churches of Chin, Kuki ethnic group of Myanmar under a common umbrella with acceptable nomenclature. As a result Zomi was accepted by Church leaders at Saikah on 5-7 March 1953 and Zomi Baptist Convention was subsequently established. But the name Zomi was rejected by the Halkha (Hakha) people as they apply the word Zo to the most backward and most despicable people, instead they proposed the term “Laimi” for inclusive identification. Yet Zomi was accepted by the majority, however it should be noted that the term is not accepted by all because it relates with a Church organisation but not a social or political aspect. Further the term Zomi was replaced by Chin in a Zomi Baptist convention held at Kalemmyo in 2013. So the nomenclature tussle is between Chin and Zomi in Chin Hills, and Kuki and Zomi in Manipur. So far as Mizoram is concerned, Mizo is accepted as the common nomenclature of the Zo ethnic group. There are many contesting nomenclature which will be acceptable by all of the Zo, like Chin, Mizo, Chikim, Zomi and Zo in different areas of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo or Zo inhabited tracts in India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Earlier Khulmi was ushered as alternative to Kuki by different tribes of the Khul (Chhinlung) origin people in Manipur in early fifties and Khulmi National Union (KNU) was formed as a political platform. After that the term Chikim which is said to be the combination of three contesting



nomenclatures, namely, Chin, Kuki and Mizo evolved since the eighties and it is still adheres to as a suitable alternative by certain section.

It is not easy to integrate ethnic group of the same stock without commonly acceptable nomenclature and it is a valid fact with the Zo people. After the merger with India's union, we are called as Indian, but people of North East in general and the Zo people in particular sometimes felt it difficult to identify themselves as Indian because of the discrimination of North East people in different parts of India by the mainland people which can also threaten the unity and integrity of India. Thus, nomenclature issue is the main stumbling block of unification of the Zo people.

### **Review of Literature**

A book by Dr.Vumson, *Zo History- with an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma, and Bangladesh* is an in depth study of the people known as Chin, Khyeng, Kuki, Lushai and plains Chin. It assesses the effect of imposing several names to these people and deliberates how the Zo people migrated from Western China- Tibet to the valley of Chindwin and Irrawaddy and then to the Kale- Kabaw- Myittha valleys and why they migrated to the rugged hills which they occupy now. It also discusses the colonial rule and how they were divided into three countries hopelessly outnumbered by Indian and Burmans. The book also discusses how they struggle to survive and retain their distinctive identity.

A book by F. Rongenga, *Zo fate lo khawsakchhoh dan* (2000), is a book that highlights different types of natural resources in Mizoram. It also traces the

beginning of Zo people and how they moved to their present settlements. It also highlights the different cultures and customs which are practised by the Zo people in different occasion as well as the administrative set up of the Chiefs in different villages. It also talks about the coming of the British and their administration in Mizoram, the merger of North and South Lushai, the birth of United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO), and the condition of Mizoram after India's independence.

A book by Dr.Vanlalchhawna, *Zofate Economy- Hmasawwna Tobul leh Hmalam Thlirna* (2003) is a book where the author comparatively analyses the economy of Mizoram with other states in the North East India and the plan made by experts from US- Canada. The author also highlights the significance of proper administration in the Panchayati Raj Institution, empowerment of Mizoram Village Council and development of technology to improve our economy. The author also suggest improvement of education, agriculture etc by taking examples from other states that we may apply to improve our economy.

A book by B. Lalthangliana *India, Burma leh Bangladesh a Mizo Chanchin* second Edition (2014).Where the author analyses the genesis of the Zo. The author wrote this book with his experiences by travelling across the world and collect information which may be necessary for this book. There are two schools of thoughts regarding the origin of the Zo, one which traces to China and regard Zo people as one of the Mogoloids stock. The other School of thoughts are those who believe that Zo are one loss tribe of the Israel. This theory is mostly related with Biblical theory. The author in this book also highlights those issues. The author also highlights how the ancestors of Zo moved from China and classify different tribes of Zo ethnic group. It also discusses what kind of rules and regulations were

practised when they were ruled by their own Chiefs. It also deliberates upon the culture, customs, economy, and different festivals of the Zo people in different occasion. The author also deliberates how the Zo moved to different parts of the world and also states about the British rule and the condition of the Zo under the British rule. It also highlights the condition of the Zo people after British rule and in different parts of the world.

A book, edited by Priyadarshni (alias Tingneihoh) M. Gangte *Why Must we be Mizo*. (2006) traces the culmination of a long process of efforts for bringing about various ethnic groups of the erstwhile Kukis during the bygone days of the British India period, together into the fold of Mizo Nationalism. In this book, the author mentions that the warrior tribe called Kukis were used as buffer people by the British imperialist administration toward their enemies. This resulted in the widespread Kukis diaspora all over the North East region of India, Chin Hills in Myanmar and Chitagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. In the present democratic setup of the political system, it has been a great dis-advantage to them. So the author suggested that the erstwhile Kukis should come together under the political umbrella of Mizo Nationalism which has the most viable prospect for political survival.

A book by F. Hmingthanga, *Mizoram Politic Thlirlet-Na* (2002) is the book where the author highlights the birth of Indian National Congress and its activity and also it states about the Chakma and the birth and role played by different political parties in Mizoram. The contribution of various people for the development of Mizoram and what measures should be taken to save Mizoram and its people have also mentioned in the book.

*Zoram Politik* (1976-1986) is a book written by M.C. Lalrinthanga, where he reviews the beginning of the Mizo Freedom Movement, the way and how Laldenga live in exile, the talks between Laldenga and the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi. He also talks about the formation of Human Rights Committee and how that transforms itself into a political party. He also deliberates upon the internal fights within the People Conference (PC) and how the party splitted into PC 'A' and PC 'B'. He also narrates how Lal Thanhawla became the Chief Minister of Mizoram and how problems broke out within the Congress family. The book also suggests central measures for solving the political problems of Mizoram.

A book by R. Thangmawia *Zoram- zorampian to danlekhalmanglangpui* (2011) is the book where the author analytically assesses the period before the coming of the British and how rules and regulation were enforced. It also talks about the nature of the politics after World War II in Mizoram. He also talks about the working of the United Nations (UN), and it also mentioned that UN gave support for the survival of different ethnic tribes who are about to be extinct. The author also highlights the birth of Zo Re- unification Organisation (ZORO) and various steps taken up by ZORO as a non- governmental organisation. The author also talks about how and where Mizoram is heading and how to take care of its various natural resources.

In a book by C. Lalbiaknema, *Mizote leh Politics* (1998), the author analytically traces the history and the genesis of the Zo people. It also analyses the history of Zo people which were recorded in the history of China and Nepal. It also highlights the history of Zo people and the timing of their movement to Kabaw valley. The book also traces the period when the Zo people started to have Chief

and it also narrates the weapons which the British used in subducing Mizoram under their administration. It mentions the birth of Young Lushai Association (YLA) which now turns into Young Mizo Association (YMA), and different roles it played for the development of the people. It mentions about the birth of Mizo Union and different elections held under District Council era. The Birth of Union Territory and the merger of Congress and Mizo Union were also discussed. The Mizo Freedom movement and what kind of problems it caused and how did the people suffer as a consequence of the declaration of Freedom were also mentioned in the book.

A book by H. Lalrinawm, *Hmasang Zo fate Chanchin* (2000), the author mentions the tribes and clans which were grouped under the umbrella of Zo. It states that un-recorded history makes it very difficult to trace the origin of the Zo people. The book analyses the origin of the Zo people from different perspectives. It also mentions the downward movement of the Zo to the present Mizoram and how did the British come to this place and how did they fight back.

A book by Biakchhunga, *Hnam kalsiam* (1996), traces the social life of the Zo people when they were ruled by their own Chief. However their social behaviour changed after the British rule. It also mentions how the Zo Chief and their people fought back to defend their Mother land. It also analytically traces the birth of different political parties like Mizo National Front (MNF), People's Conference Party (PC) and Indian National Congress in Mizoram. The issue of Chakma is also mentioned. The achievement of Union territory and the political developments during those time were also mentioned.

An article by Dr. Jangkhongam Dounjel, *genesis and Functioning of the Zo Re-Unification organisation (ZORO)*. This article analyses the Chhinlung

theory of evolution and it also mentions different tribes of Zo including their settlement in different places. As they were separated in different places, they were given different names which led to the adoption of foreign name as their nomenclature. When the issue of re-unification evolved, this nomenclature issue became one of the main problems to re-unify the Zo people and the different names claims by different tribes of Zo are also mentioned in this article. It also briefly analyses different movement that took place for the re-unification of the Zo people and the birth of Zo Re-Unification Organisation (ZORO) and different movement taken by this Non- Governmental organisation were also mentioned. It also briefly talks about the present movement carried on by different organisation.

A book by Lian H. Sakhong, *In Search of Chin Identity: A Study in Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma*. This book analyses the background of the people called Chin. It talks about the origin of the word Chin, their ethnicity, their ways of living and their religion in details. It also talks about the effects of the influence of Christianity among the Zo people and how did the Chin react to Christianity. It also discusses the Anglo-Chin War. It also analyses the conditions of the Chin people in Independent Burma, what led them to join the Union of Burma and how Christianity did effects the identity of the Chin people.

A lecture delivered by Lalthlamoung Keivom at the 10<sup>th</sup> Arambam Somorendra Memorial at Imphal, where he talks briefly about where did the word Chin, Kuki came from. He also talks about the word CHIKUMI which is the combination of Chin/Kuki/Mizo/Zomi. He also talks about the origin of the Zo people starting from Chhinlung. The lecture also includes how the colonial powered effects the life of the Zo people even after de-colonisation and how the Zo became Christian in different parts. It also talks about the call for the

integration of the Zo people and highlights some movement and activities by different organisation. It also talks about the reaction of the people in different parts of the world as far as integration is concerned.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study and describe systematically the political history of the Zo
2. To understand and analyse the nature and growth of the movements for unification.
3. To explain the various problems faced by the Zo unification movement.

### **Research Questions**

1. Why is it important for the Zo people to unify at this juncture of history?
2. What are the factor that contributed for change in the process of unification of Zo people?

### **Methodology**

The study will be based on historical, interview and analytical methods. Data will be collected by primary and secondary sources. Government documents, circular and publication, journal, newspaper local as well as national, books, doctoral dissertation and other research publications maybe employed for collection of materials for the study.

## **Chapterization**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The first chapter introduced the purpose of the study. It also contains the brief understanding of the Zo history. It is also the analysis of how the Zo people moved from China and settled in Burma. It is an analysis of how they moved away from Burma and settled in different parts of India and Bangladesh.

### **Chapter 2: Political and Social Status of the Zo people during Pre-British Era**

This chapter discusses the political and social status of the Zo people in pre-British era. It discusses how the Zo people govern themselves through the institution of Chieftainship in their habited areas. It deals with their interaction with other people.

### **Chapter 3: History of the Movements during British Era**

The second chapter will discuss about the advent and rule of the British. It shall also analyse the struggle of the Zo people to defend their land. It will also discuss the mal administration practised by the British over the Zo people. It will also analyse the effects of British rule over the Zo people in post-colonial era.

### **Chapter 4 : Unification Movement**

This chapter will discuss various movements that took place for unification of the Zo people. It will also discuss the nature and achievements of the movements.



## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

This chapter will summarize the study and draw a conclusion from the findings of the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER 2

### POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STATUS OF THE ZO PEOPLE IN PRE-BRITISH ERA

The Zo people for a very long time were ruled by the Chief or Headman. The Chief had full control politically, socially and economically over the people and no one is above the Chief. The administration carried out by Different Chief's at different villages were not the same, but in most places, the Chief received the love of his villagers whereas the Chief also devoted everything he could for the welfare of the people. The Lushai system of administration consisted of three elements- Lal (Chief), Upas (Elder) and the people. The Chief was the supreme authority in his village, but he was benevolent. His house was a shelter for the poor and a refuge for someone who had committed a serious crime and thus escape vengeance.<sup>1</sup> Theoretically, all that was in the village belonged to the Chief. He could call upon people to furnish him with everything he needed.

#### **Powers and Functions of the Chief**

All disputes in the village were settled by the Chief. He selected sites for jhum land and a village.<sup>2</sup> Even though, the Chief had a full control over the people, most of the Chiefs do not misused their power, only few Chiefs were authoritarian which resulted in the crumbling down of the whole village in some place. The Chiefs therefore, tried his best to rule according to customary usage and resorted to democratic instrument of government.<sup>3</sup> A village was an independent unit, claiming land about seven miles or eleven kilometres in radius for its cultivation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lalrimawia., *Mizoram- History and Cultural Identity*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati: Delhi, 1995, p.97

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p.97

<sup>3</sup> F. Rongenga., *Zo fate lo khawsak chhoh dan*. Beraw Press, New Market, Aizawl, 2000, P.93

Zo people shifted their fields frequently due to rapid erosion of the soil and settlement was frequently moved from one place to another. Each village had its own government and the general duty and power of the Chief was similar among all Zo.<sup>4</sup>Stevenson said, “The Chief is the Lord of the soil”. However, there were Chiefs who did not completely owned the land. In the Sizang area the Chief and commoners own their own fields, which were handed down over generations from father to son. Chieftainship was hereditary. From clan to clan the custom differed as to whether the youngest or eldest son inherited the office of the father. In most cases, the youngest son inherited the Chieftainship. It was next to impossible for a daughter to inherit the office of the father. Some Chiefs conquered neighbouring peoples and typically sent their sons to rule over conquered villages.<sup>5</sup>

According to the prevailing custom, the Chief was succeeded by his youngest son both in regard to Chief ship of his father’s village as also his property. In respect of the elder sons, the Chief would set up a separate village when they attained maturity. This was done by transferring a certain number of households from his village to a new one established for his son. No tax was paid by the son to his father. He was left to himself to establish his position as a Chief through his ability. However, in times of stress and strains, he was supposed to help his father. The son would not hesitate to be disloyal to the father if the former managed to find sufficient following of his own.<sup>6</sup>

According to N.E. Parry on *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*, “Each village was ruled over by its own Chief. Most of the Chiefs belong to the Sailo clan, which had established itself as a ruling family before the

---

<sup>4</sup> Vumson., Op.Cit p. 8

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* pp.8-9

<sup>6</sup> Lalrimawia., OP, Cit, p.97

British took over the hills. In addition there were certain numbers of Chiefs, who do not belong to the ruling clan and who were known as *Hnamchawm* Chiefs. *Hnamchawm* means commoners Chief. Commoner Chiefs were mostly people who had been appointed as Chiefs over vacant lands by Government, usually as a reward for services rendered in the Lushai wars. There were also a few *Hualngo* and *Poi* Chiefs who formally held sub-villages under Sailo Chiefs and had since been recognised as Independent Chiefs. In Lungleh (Lunglei) subdivision there were many *Poi* and *Lakher* Chiefs whose forefathers have been Chiefs for generations and who had never fallen under Sailo influence. There were also a few Fanai Chiefs, most of whom followed Sailo custom. The Chief was the father of his people, he helps them when they were in distress and if he falls in to difficulties, they also helped him in turn.”<sup>7</sup>

Because of the constant inter-tribal raids; the most important duty of the Chiefs is to defend his people from the enemy. He also had to protect his subjects from wild animals. The Chiefs appointed some Young men to watch the village at nights. All the youth of the village slept together at *Zawlbuk* so as to counteract whatever danger may come in the night. *Zawlbuk* was one of the most important institutions where the Zo people learned different things which were important in the Zo social life. There was no regular army like today, all the men between the ages of 15-50 were the army of the village, and whenever required they all went to conduct raids under the command of the Chiefs. The Chiefs play the role of the leader in the raids. As their condition was like that, a person who had courage and

---

<sup>7</sup> N.E. Parry., *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1928, p.1

who was ready to give his life to save the lives of the people were always highly honoured.<sup>8</sup>

The second important duty of the Chief was to have enough rice in the village. It was always the duty of the Chief that his people need not go to other village to bring rice or any other eatable things, instead the Chief always encouraged his people not only to have enough to feed themselves but also to give to other village in time of need. If there was a family who could not work at the field because of being physically handicapped or because of illness, it was the duty of the entire village to help that family and solve their problems together. But in the Zo culture, every family tried to be self-sufficient and they worked hard to be able to help others.<sup>9</sup>

The third important duty of the Chief was to maintain law and order in the village so that everyone lives peacefully and freely without harming others. Whenever there was a problem in the village, the Chief and his Council of Elders always tried to come up with the decision that would not hurt both the party, judgement was done in a very systematic way and carefully.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Council of Elders**

The Chief had a council of Elders which the Zo called them as *Lal Upa*. With the cooperation of these elders, the Chief transacted the business of the administration of the village. The Elders were appointed by the Chief himself and

---

<sup>8</sup> B. Lalthangliana., Op. Cit, pp.355-356

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p.356

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p.357

the latter could dismiss the former as he chose. There was neither a fixed number nor a fixed term for the appointed Elders.<sup>11</sup>

### **Collection of Revenue**

As the Chief was the Lord of the soil, the Chief received a certain taxes from all products of that soil. Some taxes which were given to the Chief were:

#### **Fathang**

Fathang was the due payable to the Chief by any of his village or by anyone from another village who cultivate his lands. This due was payable in kind that is to say in paddy. If anyone does not have sufficient paddy to pay the due in kind, he can pay Rs. 2 instead. 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 was only payable to the Chief in whose land he cultivated. If a man cultivates in two Chief's land, he will have to pay Fathang to both Chiefs. Fathang was not payable for vegetables and other miscellaneous crops if grown in the same Chiefs land as the main rice crop but if a man has a Kochu or Maize plot in another Chiefs land, he will have to pay fathang for it to the Chief in whose land he had made the subsidiary cultivation.<sup>12</sup>

The amount of paddy to be given as Fathang varies in different villages but the maximum amount that can be levied was six snowflake kerosene oil tins of unwinnowed dhan heaped up fall. The rate at which Fathang is compounded was

---

<sup>11</sup> Lalrimawia., Op, Cit, pp. 97-98

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 12-13

always the same, namely Rs. 2. Paddy given in payment of Fathang must be delivered at the Chief's house.<sup>13</sup>

### **Sachhiah**

Anybody who shoots or traps wild animals has to pay the Chiefs a due, which consists of the animal's left fore leg, known in Lushai as 'Dar'. The Chief could not choose what part of the animals he prefers, he could only get the part he was entitled to by custom. This due was always payable to the Chief in whose village the man shooting or trapping the animal resides, even if he had shot or trapped it within another Chiefs land. No Sachhiah was payable on an animal which had been found dead having been killed accidentally or by other wild animals. If Sachhiah was not paid according to custom, the man failing to comply with the custom is to be fine Rs. 40 and SALAM as compensation to the Chief.<sup>14</sup>

### **Judicial System**

The Zo judicial system was the most transparent and fastest system in the world. If a man was murdered, the Zo judicial system does not prohibit the family of the death person to take revenge, but if the murderer runs to the Chief's house (the Zo people called this practise as *Lal sutpui vuan.*) After this, he could not be harmed by any one, but it also means that he sacrifices himself to be the slave of the Chief for his entire life.<sup>15</sup>

The popular element or the Village Council held its meetings in the Chief's house. It was presided over by the Chief. As a written record was not maintained due to illiteracy, case tried by the council was never put down in writing. They

---

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p.13

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.13

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p.354

tried both civil and criminal cases. Being the one and only Court of Justice in the village, there was no appeal from their decisions. Any person who had a case would bring before the Chiefs Council and the latter, after hearing from both sides would only come to final decisions. The losing party was fined a “*Salam*” which was received by the Chiefs and his Elders as a fee for trying case. This was a minimum punishment. A maximum punishment was a fine of female *Mithun* which was to be attended by a Salam. The most severe penalty appeared to be the seizure of all property of a man who was found to disobey the Chiefs orders. This could be inflicted on any villagers by the Chiefs and his Elders. The Chief and his Elders also could turn out any villager if the latter was found to be repeating an offence several times or made a nuisance of him in the village.<sup>16</sup>

No person other than the council members was allowed to listen the Chiefs Council. But anybody was allowed to the debate between young man and young woman over the question of their love affairs before the Council. The amount of control exercised by Chief depended largely on his personal character. A powerful Chiefs like Suakpuilala, Lallula and Sheebhoot (Sibuta) had a considerable amount of influence upon their Elders and subjects. In dealing with all types of cases, the Village Council was guided by traditional Lushai Custom. As already mentioned, any Council which did not take the customs in to consideration and oppressed villagers would soon lose its importance and popularity. This custom afforded a very salutary check on too arbitrary use of power on the part of the Chief.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Lalrimawia., Op, Cit, P.98

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* p.98



## **Bawi Custom**

The status of bawi maybe a little bit better than that of slaves. This system existed among the Zos for a great number of years. It was customary for a Chief to have certain bawis in their house-holds who were acquired in various ways. There were three kinds of Bawis, such as:

### **Inpui chung Bawi**

Those who were driven by hunger to take refuge in the Chief's house. Widows, Orphans and others who were unable to support themselves and had no one to support them formed the bulk of this class of Bawis. These Bawis were no means slaves in the accepted sense of the term. In fact, several clever Bawis had risen from Bawiship to the position of trusted advisers to the Chiefs. It was not unusual for a Chief to take a favourite Bawi into his own family by the ceremony called *Saphun*.<sup>18</sup>

### **Chemsen Bawi**

They were criminals who, to escape the consequences of their misdeeds took refuge in the Chief's house which the Zo people called it as *Lal sutpui vuan*. The Chief was the only one who could protect such a criminal and the avenger would be counted guilty or enemy of the Chief if he continued to make attempts of vengeance. Murderers, debtors and thief sought the protection of the Chiefs in order to avoid punishment at the expense of their own or their children's freedom.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* P.19-20

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p.20

## **Tuklut Bawi**

These types of Bawis were the persons who, during the war, had deserted the losing side and join the victors by promising that they and their descendants would become Bawi.<sup>20</sup>

The Sals were bond slaves captured in tribal war. They had no status and they were bought and sold. In times of war, they were given in exchange for guns and spears and during famine they were sold for food.<sup>21</sup>

## **Other Village Officials**

Besides the Chief and his Elders, there are some other village officials;

## **Thirdeng**

He is the village Black Smith. His duty is to repair the tools of the villagers and as remuneration gets a basket of rice from each house in the village after the harvest. The Thirdeng's remuneration varies however somewhat in different villages according to the arrangement that was made when he was appointed. Sometimes he only gets a basket of paddy from each villager whose tools he repairs. He is exempted from cooly (Kuli) labour. The Thirdeng also can claim a small share in every animal shot or trapped by a villagers, this is known as *Thirdeng Sa* and consists of the spine and three ribs. If this is not given he can claim Rs. 20 compensation.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p.20

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p.20

<sup>22</sup> N.E. Parry., Op, Cit, p.6

## **Tlangau**

He is the village crier. He goes round every night and proclaim the Chiefs orders, as to what village or other work is to be done next day. In some villages he gets a basket of paddy as *Fathang* in other he does not, the custom varies in different villages and is purely a matter of local arrangement. He is also exempted from cooly labour.<sup>23</sup>

## **Zalen**

Zalen is a person who is exempted from paying Fathang to the Chief in consideration of his helping the Chief if he runs short of paddy or falls in to any kind of difficulty. When all these people have had their choice of jhums, the common people are allowed to choose theirs. Ramhuals and Zalens are purely a village arrangement and are not exempted from cooly labour by Government.<sup>24</sup>

## **Sadawt**

The duty of Sadawt is equal with the duty of Pastor today. Whenever a religious ceremony is to be performed, Sadawt is needed. Each and every clan has their Sadawt, there are some clan that can use one Sadawt and are called *Dawi sa kilza thei*. The Chief had his own Sadawt and he is the biggest Sadawt of all. Whenever a community's duty is to be performed, the Chiefs Sadawt performed the duty.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p.6

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p.8

<sup>25</sup> *B. Lalthangliana., Op. Cit. p.350*

## **Bawlpu**

The duty of Bawlpu is equal to medical Doctors of today. Whenever a person has any sickness, they went to Bawlpu and by looking at the condition of the patient, Bawlpu can asked for pig, goat, dog, cock etc for sacrificial purpose. The Zo people had a deep trust over Bawlpu and they tried to perform whatever Bawlpu advised to get heal from their sickness.<sup>26</sup>

## **Valupa**

Valupa are one who arranged all the work to be done by the young men such as digging graves, carrying sick people to hospital or any other work that may be necessary. Special arrangement are made for fetching water at night in case the inmates of the Zawlbuk gets thirsty and boys are specially told off for this duty and are changed every week. These boys can claim water as of right from any of the house near the Zawlbuk, the householder is not entitled to refuse to give water and if he does so is fined a *Salam* of Rs. 2.<sup>27</sup>

## **Ramhual**

They are the people who advise where jhum should be cut each year and are allowed first choice of fields to cultivate. In consideration of their getting first choice of jhums, they have to pay heavier Fathang to the Chiefs than ordinary villagers. People who are good cultivators are always selected as Ramhuals and the number of Ramhual varies in different villages.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* pp.350-351

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p.351

<sup>28</sup> N.E. Parry., Op, Cit, p.7

## **Role of Zawlbuk**

Every Lushai village possessed Zawlbuk or a bachelor's dormitory. It was usually built near the Chief's house in the middle of the village and all the young men and boys slept there at night. The Zawlbuk was the centre of the village life and was most useful institution. The younger boys were disciplined to learn the social traditions and practises, the young men used it as a club and dormitory, travellers could put up in it for the night and the Chief used it as a meeting place where he could make known his orders. As all the young men were concentrated there, they were always available for any unexpected emergency or for any urgent work. It was here that the boys learned wrestling or any other games. Wrestling is compulsory for all the inmates and the smaller boys are first made to wrestle among themselves and no skrimshanking is allowed.<sup>29</sup>

If a leopard comes in to the village and kills a Pig or a wild Cat comes and kills fowls all the inmates of the Zawlbuk rushed out to protect their animals. The existence of Zawlbuk facilitates matters enormously if a grave had to be dug or a sick man be carried to a hospital, as the Chief then knows exactly where the young men are to be found. If there is no Zawlbuk and the young men are scattered all over the village, it was very difficult to get hold of them for these emergencies, not only because of the time it takes to find them but because when they were not under Zawlbuk discipline they were reluctant to respond when called upon for help.<sup>30</sup>

Zawlbuk was thus an important institution to discipline the young men. It trained industrious and keener hunters than in villages where there are none.

---

<sup>29</sup> N.E. Parry., Op, Cit, pp.8-9

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p.9

According to the Lushai custom, the most industrious young men and the best hunter among the young men in the Zawlbuk gets a special cup of Zu (liquor) as reward. These rewards were known as *Taima Zuno* and the *Huai Zuno* respectively and were given when *Sumdeng Zu* is distributed at the *Chawng*, *Sechhun* and *Khuangchawi* sacrifices and also when a party of hunters returned home and dranks *Zu* together.<sup>31</sup>

Zawlbuk had a regular system of self-government, very much in the same way as public School. The inhabitants were divided in to two classes, Tlangval or young men and the Thingfawm naupang or boys. The latter are the fags and had to carry woods for the Zawlbuk fire and do any odds jobs that the young men chosed to give them such as washing their shirts, going errands for them etc. They also had to carry wood, bamboos and stones when a grave is being dug.<sup>32</sup> Discipline was strictly enforced in the Zawlbuk and no interference from outside was tolerated. If a boy complains to his father that he has been ill-treated by a monitor and the irate parent in consequence beats or abuse the monitor, all the inmates of the Zawlbuk combine to punish the father of the sneak. They go off to the offender's house, sit down on the floor, catch hold of the post and away their body to and fro until the whole house sways with them and nearly falls down. After having thoroughly frightened the householder they go away. This punishment which was known as *Sawi* is intended to show the man they were punishing that they had no respect for him and do not care if he migrates to another village.<sup>33</sup>

Theft from Zawlbuk was regarded as very disgraceful and the punishment was Rs. 40, regardless of the value of the article stolen, which also must be

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p.9

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p.9

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p.11

returned. If a boy overhears a conversation between two young men in the Zawlbuk and repeats it outside, he was fined Rs. 5 unless he was so small as to be considered incapable of knowing that he had committed an offence. According to Lushai custom, only boys who are old enough to go and work in the fields were punished, no matter what offence they may have committed. The only person who may throw a stone on the roof of the Zawlbuk with impunity was the Chief. If any other persons throw stones on the roof, because there is too much noise or for any other reason, he is fined.<sup>34</sup>

### **Status of Men and Women**

The status of men and women were very different in the early days of the Zo society. Early Zo society was patri-centered, all property belonged to the males and they alone could inherit. In the absence of a male inheritor, female of the same family might be allowed to inherit under special circumstances. All young men slept in a Zawlbuk and they were ever ready for any emergencies such as, fires, enemies attack, conveying urgent message to other villages, digging of graves for a dead person, to run after a cattle-killing tiger etc. They collected all the necessary materials from the jungle for construction of a house, and tools and instrument essential for processing cotton, paddy etc. Mizo males were solely responsible for cutting jhum, burning and construction of small hut. Females helped them in weeding the jhum.<sup>35</sup>

Whereas Mizo women occupied a very low position in the society. Generally custom has not sanctioned ownership of property by women, except on very special and limited account. Only in very exceptional case could women

---

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* pp.11-12

<sup>35</sup> Lalrimawia., Op, Cit, p.18

inherit property in her own right. She might administer a property on behalf of her sons but if the family of her late husband could establish that she was frittering away the whole estate they could claim to inherit by dividing among them.<sup>36</sup>

Women were active participants in religious ceremonies and festival of any sort, but did not take part in war or hunting. They could not participate in the process of legislation and administration of justice. In spite of their low status, Mizo women figure prominently in the routine of domestic work and cultivation. Mizo women were always very hard working, and have much hard work to do. They have too little time available for leisure. They had to rise at dawn, while the men slept on, and starting up fire, they began to husk the rice and then make way down to the spring to fetch water with empty bamboo tubes. They collected the harvest rice from the fields and fire woods from the jungle. Apart from cooking, they looked after domesticated animals and birds like Pig and fowls. They prepared clothes for all members of the family. Their presence in the family was indispensable.<sup>37</sup>

Though women played a vital role in the family, men folk looked down upon and had a low opinion of them. At any time they could be divorced or driven out of the house on a family cause by their husband and empty handed. The prevailing custom and usages did not allow the women to make any claim on property. E. Champman and M. Clark made comments on the treatment of the Mizo women as follows;

A woman had no rights at all. Body, mind and spirit, she belonged from her birth to her death to her father, her brother, her husband. Her men folk could treat

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p.17

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p.17



her as they liked and a man who did not beat his wife was scorned by his friends as a coward. Women possess nothing not even the few clothes she wore. A women began her days work before dawn and continued it unceasingly until far in to the night.<sup>38</sup>

## **Marriage**

A Mizo young man could marry any women except his sisters, aunt or mother. There was no restriction to any particular clan or family. It was quite legitimate to marry first cousins, though some hold a certain amount of prejudice against marrying from the father's side. Among the Chiefs however, the desire to marry another Chief's daughter often resulted in first cousins marriage.<sup>39</sup>

Among the Mizos there were few instances of polygamy. Marriage was either arranged or settled after court-ship, and purely a civil contract. There were very few cases of marriage without parental consent. A bridegroom paid a price for a bride and celebrated the wedding. The price of the bride was paid in *Mithun* which varied from ten to three. It was divided among several members of the family in recognition to their contribution to the family life of the bride's parents. There were *Manpui* (Principal Price) that went to the bride's father, *Pusum* that went to the bride's maternal uncle, *Palal* that went to the bride's trustee, *Niman* that went to the bride's aunt, *Thian* that went to the bride's maid and *Nau Puak Puan Man* that went to the bride's elder sisters.<sup>40</sup>

The bind of matrimony was very loose. The couple simply separated if they disagreed. In the case of wife seeking a divorce *Sumchhuah*, her parents refunded

---

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p.18

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p.18

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* pp.18-19

the price they had received. In the case of husband seeking divorce or *Nupui ma*, he renounced the bride's price paid by him. There is no law or custom preventing widows to re-marry. Child marriage is not practised and sixteen years and above is considered marriageable age. If an unmarried girl becomes pregnant, the man responsible was to pay *Sawn man* the price of the bastard. The fine varied in different villages, but it was about Rs. 10 or a Sial (Mithun).<sup>41</sup>

### **Mizo village**

Generally the Mizos shifted from one place to another frequently in search of more productive jhuming land. The practise of jhuming system required shifting of the cultivation sites. The village was perched on the top of the hill or a ridge. The chief reason for this was the good defensive position it commanded in the days of a tribal war. Early village was surrounded by a line or more of stockades made of wood, with several rows of bamboo spikes outside it. The principal gates numbering about two or three were made of large slabs of timber. A block house was built at each gateway and other suitable place where enemies were expected to come. These were occupied by the village youth whenever an attack was apprehended. Repair and maintenance of the stockade was the responsibility of the village youth. The size of the Mizo village varied from 300 to 3000.<sup>42</sup>

The Mizo village was planned with a sense of orderly designs. As far as practicable, they arranged the houses in regular rows along the ridges or in two lines facing each other with a wide space or street in between. It was a practise that the Chief's house was built at the centre of the village. Near the Chief's house was built Zawlbuk. The house of Elders (Lal Upa) were clustered together nearly

---

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p.19

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* p.22

the Chief's. No person was allowed to build a house above the Chief's. A big Zawlbuk was built almost in every village. A large village with mixed clans was generally divided into several quarters or locality (veng) which were generally occupied by peoples of the same clan. Each veng had Zawlbuk built and operated by the whole village community. The Zawlbuk was similar to other houses in materials but different in shape and size. All unmarried visitors were required to sleep in the Zawlbuk. A friendly wrestling match was arranged and the visitor could not escape the match. Upon the village and tribal life the Zawlbuk had a very effective influence. Here youth were ever ready for any emergency such as fire; tribal raids etc. so great was their influence that even the Chief's and Elders were often subject to the wishes of the youth.<sup>43</sup>

### **Festivals and Dances**

The festivals of the Zo revolve around the jhum operation and were closely connected with their agricultural operations. The Zo people had three main festivals, Mim Kut, Chapchar Kut and Pawl Kut. These festivals or Kuts as they called them were in one way or the other are associated with jhuming. It is from this preoccupying day-to-day affair that the festivals had evolved.

### **Mim Kut**

This festival was normally celebrated during the month of August and September after the harvest of Maize was over. Though the festival was celebrated with great fanfare, by drinking *Zu* (Rice Beer), singing, dancing and feasting, there was a touch of solemnity about this festival; it was observed in a spirit of thanks giving. It was also dedicated to the memory of dear ones who were no more. A

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* pp.22-23

small portion of the year's first harvest was consecrated and offered at the *Lungdawh* or a platform built in memory of the dead or the departed soul of the community.<sup>44</sup>

### **Chapchar Kut**

This festival was held sometime in the month of March or at the beginning of spring. This was the time of the year when the Mizo finished jhum cutting, the most difficult part of the jhum operation. The respite between the jungle cutting operation and the burning of the jhum becomes all the more enjoyable in the spring time when the cold spell of the winter yields to the spring and the trees and the shrubs put out fresh leaves and flowers blossom. It used to be a festival of eating and drinking lasting for a week. The Christian Mission had in the past forbidden this festival for obvious reason. Mizos, young and old, dressed in their traditional colourful costume and distinctive "*Thihna*" (necklace made of amber), Puanchei etc. participate in the Chapchar Kut festival, now revived after independence of India. Both Man and Woman dance in joyous celebration. These were generally a group dances, with a lot of bonhomie. With certain modification with the changing Lye, Chapchar Kut is now the most popular festival among the Mizos.<sup>45</sup>

### **Pawl Kut**

This was a thanks giving festival after harvest. This festival is still celebrated sometime during December-January after the harvesting is over. This was, by far, the greatest Mizo Kut celebrated in a spirit of perfect happiness. With plenty of grain in their ban, all the labours of the year over, the villagers snatch a

---

<sup>44</sup> C.G. Verghese and R.L. Thanzawna., *A History of the Mizos Vol-I*, Vikash Publishing House Pvt Ltd. Bangalore, 1997. P.23

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p.24

rest and enjoyed the fruits of their labour. Pawl Kut was held with great enthusiasm with lots of dancing, singing and feasting. The Mizos were fast giving up their old custom, in favour of new ways of life under the influence of western culture<sup>46</sup>

### **Popular Dances**

The Mizos, blessed with beautiful environment and a rich culture are a vibrant and extremely sociable people. They love to dance, as much as they love to sing. They still have a number of folk and community dances which have been handed down from generation to generation through the ages. Some of the common dances are;

#### **Cheraw**

This dance is often referred to as bamboo dance, as bamboos are used in its performance. But Mizos insists on calling it as *Cheraw*. The dancers moved by stepping alternately in and out from between and across a pair of horizontal bamboos, held against the ground, by people sitting face to face at either side. They tap the bamboo open and close in rhythmic beats. The bamboos placed horizontally are supported by two bases, one at each end. The bamboo when clapped produced a sharp sound which forms the rhythm of the dance. It indicates the timing of the dance as well. The dancers step in and out to beats of the bamboo with ease and grace. The pattern and stepping of the dance have many variations. Similar dance as Cheraw are also performed by the tribal people of Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. The origin of Cheraw is uncertain. It is possible that the fore-fathers of the Mizos had brought it from their early abode in Central China.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p.24

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p25

## **Khual Lam**

This dance was originally performed on the occasion of “*Khuangchawi*”, the seventh and final of the rites performed for the attainment of the coveted title of “*Thangchhuah*”. This honourable title was the outcome of a belief of the Mizos in the life after death. According to this belief a man is entitled to go to paradise with his family, if he performs seven ‘ceremonies’ during his life time. Those who perform all the seven ceremonies were called Thangchhuah. To attain this title, a man had to be very rich and brave, both in the face of enemy and wild animals. The title was given to a man who had distinguish himself by killing a certain number of different animals in a chase, or by giving a certain number of public feast. This title was also shared by the wife of such a man. They and their children were allowed to wear a particular cloth called “*Thangchhuah Puan*”. Such man were held in high esteem and they used to enjoy many privileges in social ceremonies and were next only to the Chief’s.<sup>48</sup>

## **Chheih Lam**

*Cheih* in Mizo language means an exclamation of joy or ecstasy, used when one is in the act of making a big physical effort, to muster up strength or to boost up the morale as in getting on one’s feet with a load on one’s back and *Lam* means dance. This dance is of more recent origin, a dance that embodies the spirit of joy and exhilaration. Chheih lam is performed to the accompaniment of a song called Chheih Hla. It is three line stanza and the words used are very simple, yet spontaneous. The ideas conveyed are quite relevant to the occasion and indeed, some of them are thought provoking and they speak of the heroic feats, achieved by them and their ancestors. The song is sung to the beats of the drum or bamboo

---

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p.26

tube or clapping of hands. People squat on the floor in a circle while the dancer stands in the middle, reciting a song with various movements of limbs and body. An expert *Chheih* dancer performs in such a manner that the people around him leave their seats and join the dance. Anyone can try this dance, for it has no specific choreography. All that one has to do is to get into the mood and live it up.<sup>49</sup>

Beyond those mentioned, there were several dances that were performed in different occasions like, *Chai Lam*, *Rallu Lam*, *Solakia*, *Sarlam kai*, *Par lam*, *Sakei Lu Lam* and *Tlang lam*.

Those mentioned were some of the political and social status of the Zo people. It shows that before the British era, all the administration was taken care by the Chiefs with the help of his Ministers or Elders. But the Zo people were happy under their Chiefs and they do not need the outside world. When the British came to the area inhabited by the Zo people, all their administration was changed with the interest of the British which led the Zo people to fight to regain their status before the British invasion. How did the Zo people fought back to defend their land and their rights will be discussed in other chapters of this work.

---

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p.27

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT DURING BRITISH ERA

As already stated, the Zo people were separated from Burma and moved to different parts of the world, some of them still remain in Chin state of Burma. But the Zo people had their own Chief/ Head man in each village and were never ruled by outsiders. They were internally independent. None of the surrounding powers, such as the Bengali Indian or Burman, ever conquered the Zo inhabited territory or Chinram. As a result, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam had not reached the Chin people when they encountered Christianity.<sup>1</sup> According to Lalsangkima, while the fertile plains of North East were annexed one after another, the British authority was reluctant to touch the hill territories. The policy of non-interference was adopted in 1851, and excepting Khasi and jaintia hills, the government tried to avoid occupying the hills.<sup>2</sup> When the entire hills districts were finally occupied, from the government standpoint, the savagery of the tribal was to blame. In the efforts to end the frequent raids carried out on its subject by the hill tribes, the British authority sent numerous punitive expeditions with no tangible results.<sup>3</sup>

In 1866, a new policy to subjugate these hills by conciliatory means was introduced among the Garos and the Nagas by Sir Cecil Besdon. The stated aim of the policy was to lead the tribals towards *Civilization and Peace*. While this experiment was quite successful among the Garos, no

---

<sup>1</sup> Lian H. Sakhong, *In Search of Chin Identity*. NIAS Press, Thailand. 2003, P. 85

<sup>2</sup> Lalsangkima Pachuau., *Ethnic Identity and Christianity*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main. Berlin 2002, p.66

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p.66



immediate result was seen among the Nagas. It took the next fifteen years and immense efforts to subdue the Naga war for independence (1879-1880) to finally occupy the district in 1881.<sup>4</sup> With an aim to secure peaceful relationship with the tribes, the British India Government enacted the “Bengal Frontier Regulation I of 1873.” The regulation drew an imaginary line called the “Inner Line” to serve as a unilateral boundary with the frontier tribes. The government policy was to exercise political influence only without direct interference or administrative control on these border tribes; therefore, it prohibited all British subjects from going beyond the line without permission. In the case of Mizoram, the inner line was applied to its Cachar boundary in 1875 and continued to be in effect even after the official annexation in 1895 and the independence of India in 1947.<sup>5</sup> When the territories of the border tribes were annexed, they were administered separately by the policy of indirect rule. Based on the Government of India Act of 1919, the Governor General in Council declared a number of territories, including the territories of the border tribes as “Backward Tracts” which nullified the authority of legislature and vested the Governor General with special power. Along this line, following the recommendation by the Indian Statutory Commission (popularly called Simon Commission), the Government of India Act of 1935 (Section 91-92) made provision for the “Excluded area” and “Partially Excluded area.”<sup>6</sup> These areas were to be excluded or partially excluded from the operation of provincial and federal legislation. No Act of federal legislation or provincial legislature was applicable to such areas unless the Governor directed it. The people in the

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp.66-67

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p.67

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p.67

excluded areas could neither participate in the government nor elect representatives to the legislature, whereas in Partially Excluded Areas, the people could vote for members of the legislature. In 1936, the government declared the Lushai Hills (Mizoram), the Naga Hills District, the North Cachar Sub-division and the frontier tracts as Excluded Areas that led to different treatment with other hill areas like Garo Hills District, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and the Mikir Hills tracts as they were included in partially excluded areas.<sup>7</sup> The different treatment among the Hills led to dis-satisfaction in the government that led to more troubles in the future.

After the occupation of Cachar, Sylhet and the plains of Bengal, the Lusei, who inhabited the bordering mountain ranges, began to have unpleasant contact with the new administrator. Situation changed from bad to worse when the Raja of Tripura (Tiperra) claimed that all the outlying hills bordering Tiperra belongs to him. The Thado, Lusei and other Zo clans had regarded the hills as their own since about 1790. Their claim was reinforced by the fact that they received yearly payments from Tipperah's Frontier Police for bringing their forest products down to the plains, and Tipperah's wood cutters had to pay a fee for protection from the Zo. Failure to observe this procedure easily led to bloodshed.<sup>8</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, however, Chin society was quickly transformed by powerful outside forces of change. The British conquered the Chinram and Christian Missionaries followed the colonial powers and converted the people.<sup>9</sup> The occupation of Mizoram by the British India Government in 1890-1891 was followed closely by mission endeavours. A Welsh

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 67-68

<sup>8</sup> Vumson, Op, Cit., P.107

<sup>9</sup> Lian H. Sakhong, Op, Cit, p.86

Missionary in Khasi Hills, William Williams, visited the district in March of 1891 to explore the prospect of Mission work. With his zeal and commitment, he persuaded the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist's General Assembly of 1892 to adopt the district as its Mission field.<sup>10</sup> Williams' death in April of 1892 together with the difficulty in finding another suitable Missionary delayed the commencement of the project. In the mean time, two Missionaries of the Arthington Aborigines Mission, James Herbert Lorrain and F.W. Savidge entered the district in January of 1894 to pioneer Christian Mission works among the Mizos.<sup>11</sup>

In 1760, the first contact between the Chin and the British occurred in Chittagong region, but this was an indirect contact for their occupation. In 1777, Ramoo Khan, probably a Chakma Chief rebelled against the authority of the cotton farmers employed by the East India Company. He called into his assistance large bodies of Kuki (Kookie) men who lived far in the interior part of the hills. This is the earliest record of the direct contact between the Chin and the British. In 1761, the East India Company annexed the plains area of Tripura (Tipperah) but the hills remain unoccupied and became known as Independent Tipperah governed by Rajah until 1872. From 1785 to 1824, the Chin made several raids in to the territory of Tipperah Hills. The first recorded encounter between the Chin and British subjects occurred in 1824 when traders from Tipperah plains were killed in the Dhalleswari River while collecting Bamboo and Timber, they were killed because of refusing to pay tribute according to the Chin

---

<sup>10</sup> Lalsangkima., Op, Cit, p.71

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p.71-72

custom of levying taxes upon those who passed through Chin territory.<sup>12</sup> In 1824, the first Anglo-Burmese war broke out; as a result, a peace treaty between the British and the Burmans known as the ‘Yandabo Treaty’ was signed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1826. This treaty for the first time in history forced the Burmans to yield portions of their country namely- Arakan, Assam, Manipur and Tennesarim to foreign and non-Asian powers. After the first Anglo-Burmese war, the Chin could easily buy firearms from the defeated Kings, Rajahs and tribal Chiefs who were willing to sell their arms at virtually any price in order to circumvent the British policy of complete disarmament in the newly occupied territories. As a result of easy access of firearms, from 1826 onwards, the number of raids made by the Chin on British territory increased, culminating in what was called the ‘Great Kuki invasion of 1860’ in which fifteen villages in Tripura were burnt and plundered, 185 British subjects killed, and about 100 captives carried off. Between 1834 and 1854, the Chin made at least nineteen raids into Chittagong in which 107 people were slain, 15 wounded and 186 carried into slavery.

The British could not tolerate the challenge to their sovereignty.<sup>13</sup> On 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1844, Chief Lalsuktla for honouring the death of his father and for the preparation of his funeral, he took 200 men and attacked the Bengali village of Kochabari in Pertabgur. He returned with 6 captives and 22 heads, needed to accompany the dead Chief to his new world. As Bengal was in the hands of the British, the British dispatched Capt. Blackwood with a party of Sylhet Infantry in to the Hills. Chief Lalsuktla’s village was

---

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p.86

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.86-87

surrounded and his supply road cut off. Blackwood then summoned Lalsuktla to negotiate the terms of peace, but instead of negotiating Blackwood arrested and tried him. The British found Lalsuktla guilty of raiding the Bengali village and deported him for life.<sup>14</sup>

The British Indian government was forced to take steps for the protection of their territory; however, as they saw no opportunity for economic gain in administering Chinram, they first sought to control the raiding through the Tripura and Poang Rajas, who were made responsible for border defence. Moreover for the protection of their border from the aggression of the hill tribes in the east, the British form a district called 'Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)' and place a Superintendent in charge in 1859. According to T.H. Lewin, the reason for the appointment of Superintendent and the formation of Chittagong Hill Tracts was for the supervision of the independent tribes and the preservation of the peace of the frontier. But the Tripura and Poang Rajahs were ineffective in defending British territories against raids from the Chin. More raids occurred which were more systematically organized than before. From 23<sup>rd</sup> January to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1871, Chin conducted nine raids on the Cachar plain and attacked the British Tea planters who had intruded in to their territorial hunting ground. The Chin also attacked the Police station at Monierkhal and Nugdigram and took many weapons and ammunition. In fact by this time the Chin were highly motivated in their raids by the politics of nationalism not just economic and religious gain. The Chin retreated from the Cachar front only after sustaining the loss of 25 of their

---

<sup>14</sup>Vumson,Op,Cit, pp.108-109

own men. An accident connected with these raids in Cachar, which had significant influence upon subsequent British policy was the attack upon the tea plantation at Alexandrapore on 23<sup>rd</sup> January on which the planter, Winchester was killed and his six years old daughter, Marry carried off as captive.<sup>15</sup>

From the above mentioned, we saw many activities conducted by the Chin/Zo people over the territory of the British. But from the very early days of the Zo history, fighting for their survival is their way of living. But conducting many fights inside the British territory was not like the fight which they conducted in their early live. Beyond mentioned, there were many activities conducted by the Zo people that call for the British to interfere in the internal administration of the Zo people.

### **The First Lushai Expedition 1871**

This expedition is known to the Zo people by Vailen Vawikhatna. The word Vai is used to refer to the people other than the Zo people. In this expedition, most of the activities were carried inside Mizoram (Lushai Hills) and this expedition was carried in two columns, the right column and the left column.<sup>16</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> October 1871, Gen. Brownlow with his army and many Kuli (Koolies) from right column marched toward Mizoram from Chittagong and Col. T.H. Lewin known to the Zo people by Thangliana was the Political Officer. According to H. Lalrinawma, the main purpose of the expedition was to take back Marry Winchester which they took as captives during Cachar raids. Sailo Chief, Bengkhuaia released Marry

---

<sup>15</sup>Lian H. Sakhong, Op,Cit, pp.87-88

<sup>16</sup>H. Lalrinmawia., *Hmasang Zo fate Chanchin*. Lengchhawn Press, Khatla, Aizawl. 2000, p.316

Winchester on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1872 and the right column returned.<sup>17</sup> General Bouchier, assisted by Mr Edgar as the Deputy Commissioner and Mr Cachar as the Civil Officer was in charge of the left Column. The Cachar column which consisted of half a battery of artillery, a company of sappers and 500 rifles started on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1871. After encountering and overcoming considerable resistance and penetrating very difficult country, general Bouchier destroyed the Chief villages of the offending tribes and impose conditions of peace. Hostages were taken and a fine of arms and produce was levied. The column reached Cachar on its return on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1872.<sup>18</sup> According to Carey and Tuck mentioned in Lian H. Sakhong's book "In search of Chin Identity", "The objects of the expedition was not one of pure retaliation, but that the surrender of the British subjects held in captivity should be insisted on, and that every endeavour should be made to convince them that they have nothing to gain and everything to lose by placing themselves in a hostile position towards the British government".<sup>19</sup> The operations of both columns were successful and most of the Lushai (Mizo) Chiefs in west Chinram were reduced to submission. The Guns which had been taken at the police stations of Monierkhal and Nugdigram during the cachar raids in February 1871 were surrendered, hostages accompanied the forces on their return and a guarantee of free passage in the future of agents of the government was paid. Assam and Manipur enjoyed comparative peace until 1888-89. But in Chittagong the period of peaceful relations was already broken in 1882. A group of Chin warriors numbering 250 to 300, headed by a Lai Chief

---

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p.316

<sup>18</sup>Lian H. Sakhong, *Op,Cit.*, p.88-89

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p.88

named Huatsata attacked a village in Chittagong killing 29, wounding 7 and taking 92 persons in to captivity or slavery. Two more raids were conducted during the following five years.<sup>20</sup> As the Zo Chiefs broke their peace agreement, they left the British without no option except to conduct second invasion of the Chinram.

### **The Second Lushai Expedition 1888-1890**

The second Lushai expedition was known to the Zo people by Vai Len Hnihna. In November 1888, the British made plans for their second invasion of Chinram. The British invading forces were led by Sir George White, V.C., and general Faunce, and included Captain Raikes and his assistant Mr. Hall. The Coolies were obtained from Assam. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Gurkha Light Infantry, Assam Troops and Punjabi Military Police were sent through Manipur to the base of operations. The objectives of this second invasion were to deal first with the Zomi tribe of the Sizang and the Kamhau groups.<sup>21</sup> The Sizang who had return to normal life after meeting Captain Raikes were informed that the white men, *mirang/mikang* had advanced with a larger force and were building a stockade at Phatzang, about ten miles from the boundary of Kale and Chinram. The surprised information led the grouping of Khusak, Tiddim and Tlaisun to fight back. Khawcin, Chief of Tiddim immediately rounded up 400 warriors and this event in fact led the unification of the Sizang of the Zomi tribe and the Tlaisun of Laimi tribe by performing a sacrificial ceremony called *Sathintuh*, the most important religious communion in terms of war. After they did this, they became a collective unity of one people and the Chin could

---

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p.89

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p.94



put aside of their bitter quarrel and became as one nation even though they had fought each other in a major tribal war in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the Zo people in the present Chinram fought back to defend their land, but because of lack of weapon and proper training they realised that it was impossible to defend their land from the British.

According to B. Lalthangliana, the second Lushai expedition was conducted from two column, Chittagong column and Cachar column. Chittagong column was headed by Colnel Tregear and Capt. J. Shakespear served as the Field Intelligence Officer. 3,400 armies composed by 3<sup>rd</sup> Bengal Infantry, 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Gurkha Rifles, 9<sup>th</sup> Bengal Infantry, Bengal Sapper & Minner and Chittagong Frontier Police were along with them.<sup>23</sup>

Cachar column was headed by W.W. Daly. There were 400 Military Police from Surma Valley Battalion and three British Officers; Messrs J.R. Carnac, L. St. J. Brodic from Assam Police and Mr S.N. Walker from Bengal Police were with them and Dr. Patridge and Surgeon Coleman from 43<sup>rd</sup> Gurkha Rifles served as a medical officer. On 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1890, they reached Changsil village, a village near by Lianphunga's village. During their stayed in Chansil on 30<sup>th</sup> January, Lianphunga released 30 of his slaves to the British and on the next day, he again released 5 of his slaves to the hands of the British. On 8<sup>th</sup> February 1980, they reached the village of Lianphunga and Lianphunga gave 8 of his slaves to W.W. Daly and because of his co-operation, Daly did not arrest Lianphunga. Maj. Begbia along with 200 Gurkha army's burnt down Ruallam, the village of

---

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p.94-95

<sup>23</sup>B. Lalthangliana, Op.Cit.,p.520

Lungliana and Khawbel, the village of Nikhama. After this, the British mission sent to punish Lianphunga, Lungliana and Nikhama was completed and on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1890, they reached Calcutta.<sup>24</sup> Including these two expeditions, the British invaded Zoram six times and they divided Mizoram in to two parts, one head quarter at Lunglei under Bengol Government and the other at Aizawl under Assam Government.

### **British Administration and its Effects in Zoram**

#### **South Zoram**

As already mentioned Zoram was divided in to two parts and the British officials pay a visit to different parts of Zoram and tried to implement new rules that suit their interest. Capt. Browne visited different village and forced each Chiefs to pay Rs 1 per annum for tax and also give an order to provide Kuli as much as he asked for. This made the people worried about their future and the Chiefs with his Ministers had a meeting and decided to fight back to preserve their right at any cost.<sup>25</sup>

On 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1890, Capt. Browne was attacked by Thanruma's men at Ropaia-bawk, about two miles from Aizawl, where they killed two Kuli's. Saithawma, a Zo Chief shot Capt. Browne while he was on his Horse and Capt. Browne was hit by three bullets at three places in his arms and he died at Changsil. Aizwl due to continous bleeding. Changsil was under the control of the Zo, but reinforcement came from Silchar for the British forces that were under the Zo controlled territory. As the movement of the British forces was known by the Zo, they prepared to face the

---

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.520-522

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.522,526

advancing forces. They (Zo people) did not know that the British forces were just nearby. The British forces make a surprised move and Khuangchera and Ngurbawnga, who were the great warrior known by every Zo people, were shot to death.<sup>26</sup> The British army burnt Tanhril, Muthi, Hmunpui, Hnawmphiah, and even those people whose village were not burnt also fled to the jungle to save their lives. Because of the suffering of the people, some Chiefs like, Liankaia, Savuta and Hrangkhupa surrendered to the British force. Mr. R.B. McCabe and Capt. Williamson along with many armies marched towards Sentlang village and they killed many civilians and also they burnt their village. According to the British records many Chiefs like Liankunga, Lalhrima, Sailianpuia, Thanghulha, Lianphunga and kalkhama surrendered to the British authority in November to December 1890.

### **North Zoram**

When McCabe was about to move to Western part of Zoram, he asked Lalburha, Chief of Sesawng to give him one hundred Kuli, but Lalburha refused. As a result, on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1892, McCabe reached Sesawng along with many soldiers and the battle began in the same month. This battle took more than a month, but reinforcement o British army was sent from Aizawl to help the British forces and the Zo could not fight any longer. On 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1892, the British captured Pawibawia, Chief of Khawruhlian and on 7<sup>th</sup> May the same year, they captured Buangtheua. After Sesawng battle, there was no more such battle fought between them. However due to suspicious activities of the Zo Chiefs, the British burnt

---

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.526-528

Lalhruaia's village, Buangtheua's village and Maite. After that, the British reached Aizawl on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1982. According to the British records, they lost sixteen of their army and thirty of them got injured.<sup>27</sup>

### **West Zoram**

Mr. Murray the first Commissioner of West Zoram asked Zakapa, Chief of Khawhri to give a girl to sleep with him at night in his tour, but Zakapa replied that there was no single girl in his village. Then Mr. Murray asked for Zakapa's wife, but Zakapa tried to shoot him. However, Zakapa could be pressured by his elders not to shoot Murray. On the next day, Mr. Murray along with thirty of his army burnt Khawhri village, but they were attacked on their way back by Zakapa and his men. They killed many soldiers and Murray ran to Lunglei for his life. Because of his activity beyond the government assignment, Mr. Murray handed over the post of Commissioner of West Zoram to the hands of Capt. Shakespeare on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1891.<sup>28</sup> After Capt. Shakespeare became the commissioner, Zakapa surrendered himself to the hands of British and built a close relation with Capt. Shakespeare.

Most of the Zo Chiefs fought bravely against the invaders to protect their motherland but they could not resist the superior weapons of the British. However, there were two Chiefs who stood against the British till their last breath. They were Ropuiliani and Lalthuama. Lalthuama was the son of Ropuiliani and both of them ruled in different villages. Ropuiliani was the daughter of Chief Vanhnuailiana who happened to be one of the

---

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.533,534

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.537,538

biggest enemies of the British. Ropuiliani and his son refused to pay tax to the British government and they also did not give any of their men for Kuli to the British authority. She said that she was the Chief and she did not have to pay tax to any authority including the British authority. She also said that British were not the owners of Zoram, they came to take away our land. Many other Chiefs who were already surrendered to the British authority requested them to surrender to the British authority, but Ropuiliani and her son resisted the British till their last breath.<sup>29</sup> On August 1893, Capt. Shakespeare, Messrs Pugh and Hutchinson along with eighty armies set out to punish Ropuiliani under heavy rain. On 9 August, 1893 at almost dawn, they entered Ropuiliani's village and attacked them, the villagers had no time to fight back as it was surprised attack, Lalthuama visited his mother at that time and both of them were arrested and took them to Lunglei. Ropuiliani and Lalthuama were transferred to Chittagong jail from Lunglei on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1894. Due to old age, Ropuiliani died on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1895 at Chittagong Jail. After the death of Ropuiliani, all Zo Chiefs were subjected under the administrative jurisdiction. They still retained the title of Chief but things were done in the interest of the British.<sup>30</sup> So the British kept everything under their control and the Zo people were completely restless and worried about their future, because they were really concerned about their future. After the British kept Zoram under their control, the first and foremost things they did was about collection of tax. In this they follow how did Mr. McCabe did in Naga Hills, i.e. Each and every house should pay tax of Rs. 1 annually. They

---

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 542,543

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.543-545

should also pay Rice and Kuli to the British Government. Further the Commissioner would have the power to settle disputes between different villages and disputes between different Chiefs.<sup>31</sup> There were many forced labour employed by the British. Some of them will be focussed in the table below:

Name of works	Number of Kulis employed
1. Road Construction	30,150
2. House Construction	8,000
3. To carry ration to Serchhip	4,334
4. To carry goods from Sairang to Aizawl	500
5. To carry officers goods	2,750
TOTAL	45,734

Table No. I. Number of Kulis employed by the British

Kuli employed during 1893-1894 was about 45,734 and during 1892-1893 it was about 40505. Those numbers excluded the kuli employed in Southern part of Zoram.<sup>32</sup> As already mentioned, British had no intention of colonizing the Zo country. They needed teak, Elephant Tusk and revenue from their colonies. Zo land is barren and mountainous and the climate condition is also severe, as such it was not inspiring at all to occupy for the British. Yet, they were compelled to do it for protection of British Empire and British installation in neighbouring territories. Further Zo inhabited territories did not have good mineral resources and not fertile at all for agricultural crops too. McCall, one of the administrators stated that the

---

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.597,598

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.548,549

British annexed Zo country with the excuse of having to provide security for their enterprise in the plains and on the claims that the Zo people were savage, barbarous, backward and primitive. They had come to free the Zo country of slavery, but they instead oppressed the Indian subcontinent and created modern slavery.<sup>33</sup> One of the very important works done by the British administration for the Zo people is the creation of Inner Line Permit (ILP). In the beginning, it was not like an ILP of today. It was initiated by A.G. McCall on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1936. From his point of view, he really felt necessary to protect the Zo people because of their distinct nature from the Indians. He said the coming of the Vai (Indians) to Zoram should not be allowed because; they will take away all the work available to the Zo people. Therefore, every work available should be done by the Zo people themselves for their survival. In the mean time he was surprised that many Chiefs asked for his permission to let the Vai come to Zoram.<sup>34</sup> Before the British administration, when a Chief died, most of the Chief was replaced by their eldest son except Sailo clan and very few clans. But there was many a time when there was a problem arose for succession to Chieftainship. As such the British felt the need to make a permanent system for succession. On 17-18 January, 1936, L.L. Peters, Extra Assistant Commissioner of Lunglei circle called all the Chiefs of the area and told them that, British administration suggested them to accept the eldest son to be crowned as a Chief if a Chief died. There was no opposition from the Zo

---

<sup>33</sup>Vumson., Op, Cit, p.137

<sup>34</sup>B. Lalthangliana., Op,Cit, pp.643,644

Chiefs and on July 1936, Commissioner A.G. McCall makes a notification that the eldest son of a Chief should be accepted to replace his father.<sup>35</sup>

In the former days, the Lushai Chiefs received the tribute or revenue from their subjects either in kind or by labour. Each family of a village paid *Fathang* or a basket full of paddy to the Chief for the services rendered by the latter. The Chief was also entitled to a substantial share of all collection made from Salt Wells known as Chikhur. The villagers were bound to obey and render help to their respective Chiefs in all possible ways. This system continued even after the British annexed the District.<sup>36</sup> The local authority realised that the Lushai District suffered from economic disability. Though there might be resources of man power and stable crops which militate against starvation, yet there was no means to transform the resources into currency. The result was that economically the district was only sustained on its invisible imports in the shape of Public Works Department payment, salaries and battalion disbursement. Therefore, instead of currency levy, the local authorities adopted a system of labour by impressments as a part of people's reasonable contributions to the government in turn for services rendered by the government.<sup>37</sup>

No land could be exclusively owned by any party in these hills. It belonged to government and the Chief had no right in the land. Any revenue derived from holdings other than these covered by house tax was really a holding tax. The only revenue paying bodies were the Welsh Mission at Aizawl, London Baptist Mission at Lunglei and Lakher Pioneer

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.645,646

<sup>36</sup> Lalrimawia., *Mizoram- History and Cultural Identity*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati: Delhi, 1995, p.91

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p.91



Mission at Serkawn in the South Lushai hills. In the year, 1902-3 rupees thirty three was realised from thirty three acres and seventeen poles leased to the Welsh Mission. The land revenue from Missionaries and Shopkeepers mark a decrease in the year 1932-33 and this was due to certain amounts of land revenue being taken to house tax by mistake.<sup>38</sup>

Impressed labour was exacted from the inhabitants of the Lushai Hills as part payment of taxation by government. The scale of impressed labour was maximum of ten days per year per house. J. Needham, then Sub divisional Officer, Lunglei, felt that ten days labour per year per house might appear not a heavy load, but in actual practise, it was a very big burden to the poor villagers. These ten days labour did not merely mean ten days absent from home. When it was taken into account the great distance coolies have to travel to and from their villages to complete their days work, it was very heavy imposition indeed. He was of the view that this very seriously affected the crop outturn, because villagers were called away during important periods of jhum work.<sup>39</sup>

Zo country was divided into many administrative units. The British rule had created peace among the Zo people and therefore the people concentrated their energy on land cultivation, trade and to on western education latter on. The introduction of Police, administration, army, Schools and medical treatment brought new horizons to the life of the people. The introduction of education by the Christian missionaries allowed few men to become clerks, police men and army officers, and these men were to be regarded as emerging middle class. Many British administrators

---

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p.93

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p.94

did not wish to educate the people which resulted in the closure of Schools in East Zoram or in allowing only selected students such as the children of the Chiefs to go to Schools. Capt. Browne (1887-1890) made himself recognised as the Chief of all Chiefs. J. Shakespeare (1897-1898) united the north and south Lushai Hills District into one district. W.N. Kennedy (1911-1921) borrowed Rs. 800,000.00 from the British India Government and helped the Mautam Famine. N.E. Parry (1924-1928) was very popular because he encouraged the preservation of Zo culture and customs. He protected the common men from the Chiefs by limiting taxes paid by the commoners such as construction of Chiefs' house, and providing chickens and eggs to feed the visiting administrative officers. Bride price, which had no rules previously, was limited to a uniform basic price. Parry also freed older people from forced labour as coolies and he created the gun tax.<sup>40</sup>

In west Zoram, the Christian Missionaries were very active in educating the people. As a result a Lusei obtained a B.A. degree in 1924; whereas in east Zoram, the first Zo was graduated only in 1947. This was the result reverse policy of the British administrator like Superintendent Naylor, who closed down the Middle School in Tedim and reduced the High School in Falam to a Middle School. Many changes occurred in the period of Superintendent A.R.H. MacDonald (1943-1947). World War II broke out<sup>41</sup>, and this led to the formation of different international organisation. As a result, decolonisation was encouraged by different country through those organisations; therefore India took the advantage of the War as well as the formation of different organisations and fight for its

---

<sup>40</sup>Vumson.,*Op,Cit*, pp. 137-139

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, P.139

freedom. By 1947, British left India which on the other hand left the Zo people more confused about their future. Details will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### UNIFICATION MOVEMENT

The Zo people fought for their freedom since early days and they fought bravely against the British. Even before the birth of political party and politics, they fought for their right under the leadership of the Chiefs. Sometime, they fought as a group and sometimes they fought under the guidance of one Chief. The nature of the fighting maybe different from the latter part but their goal is the same, which was for the unification and freedom of the Zo people from the British. Many writers excluded the movement during the Chiefs as a freedom movement and always come to the conclusion that Mautam famine is a sole cause of freedom movement in Mizoram. But as mentioned in the previous chapter, we saw that during the period of the Chiefs, the mal-administration of the British over the Zo people caused a huge movement that resulted in the loss of life and destruction of properties of the Zo people as well as of the British subjects. Many of the Zo Chiefs surrendered themselves to the British but they surrendered unwillingly after experiencing the power of the British. There were some Chiefs who stood against the British till their last breath and many warriors sacrificed their lives to attain freedom from the British.

One of the oldest organisational movements regarding the unification of the Zo people was led by Than Pet Mang, a Sho tribe from Kanpetlet District of Myanmar. When he was at a very young age, he joined a Buddhist Monastery in the Yaw country and learned Burmese language; his education developed his consciousness in the field of politics as well. He was brought up in Zo country and he joined Burma Rifle, so, he was trusted by the British army officers. As such, he was asked to spy on the movements of the Burmese politicians who were instigating

against the British rule. His national feeling was awakened by the speech of a Buddhist Monk named Utama. Instead of reporting to the British, he made contact with the Burmese and eventually resigned from the army. He went back to his native village of Vuamthu and in the year 1933, he helped in founding the “Chin National Union. (CNU)” In 1933, the Chin National Union prepared a memorandum demanding self rule for Zoram and sent it to the British government in Rangoon. They also demanded independence as soon as Burma should get independence. No reply was received from the British government. In 1939, the executive members of the party were arrested and thrown to Gangaw jail and later got transferred in Falam and Tedim. In Falam and Tedim the prisoners received such widespread sympathy, contrary to the British wish, that they were once again transferred to Katha in Kachinland, where they were kept in prison until the Japanese invasion.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the movement against the British imperialism in different parts of India and as it was the periods of decolonisation in different parts of the world, the time had come for the British to leave India. However there were many unsettled problems in India because the process of integration of different caste, creed and religion was in the process. The fact that how India and its identity should be understood was always a highly controversial issue. As early as the freedom struggle there existed quite different ideas about the Indian nation, state and society, and these ideas continued to diverge after independence in 1947.<sup>2</sup> There are very few people today that would claim not to belong to a nation and not to have a nationality and the notion of national self-determination, the idea that each nation has the right to govern

---

<sup>1</sup>Vumson. *Zo history. With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*, 1986, pp. 141-142

<sup>2</sup> Michael Gottlob., *Changing Concepts of Identity in the Indian Textbook Controversy*. 2007, pp. 341-342

itself, is inseparable from the idea of the nation.<sup>3</sup> As a result, many problems arose even for the Zo people for their future regarding where they would be placed as a nation after the British left India. There were pro-British people who wanted to remain under the British, some of them demanded to revive the independence they once enjoyed in pre-British era. There were some who wanted to be an autonomous state under the Union of India while some talked of joining the Union of Burma. One of the main reasons for the problems regarding the decision of their future was that the Zo people at those time lacked political awareness and that led to a very short vision for the Zo people to decide about their future. Very few of them started to make their footsteps in the field of politics which could totally shift the future of the Zo people.

One of the oldest organisations formed to push for the development for the Zo people was Young Lushai Association (YLA). This organisation was formed in 1935 with the help of the Welsh Presbyterian missionaries, Rev. D. Edwards and Miss K.Hughes with the objectives of:

1. Utilize leisure constructively
2. Aim at the improvement of Zoram and,
3. Advocate the Christian way of living

The members of YLA soon realized however that the term Lushai included only one Zo tribe, to include all other Zo tribes, the name was changed to the Young Mizo Association (YMA) which mostly functions as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) till today.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Martin Sokefeld., *Reconsidering Identity*, 2001, p.533

<sup>4</sup>Vumson., op. Cit, pp.245,246

In the British system of indirect rule, the traditional Chieftainship became an important instrument. The loss of sovereignty by the Chief however, resulted in the decline of moral authority over his subjects, and his status came to be challenged by an emerging elite group.<sup>5</sup> Because the government wanted to use the monarchical system of the Chieftainship as its instrument of control, it maintained the Chiefs *status quo* and shut off all means of people's political activity by the Excluded Area Act. In 1926, a few individuals of Aizawl town lobbied political authorities of Assam for direct involvement in the districts political affairs. When the Superintendent found out about this clandestine activity, he arrested them and later released them on the condition that they never expressed such ideas again.<sup>6</sup> It was only on the eve of India's independence that the Superintendent permitted the formation of political party. This led to the formation of the first political party in Mizoram known as Mizo Union (MU).

### **Mizo Union**

By 1946, the political climate had changed so dramatically that the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District, A.R.H. MacDonald, encouraged the formation of political party by the Zo people. On 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1946, Vanlawma approached the Superintendent and received his blessing to start a political party. On the same day Vanlawma formed the Mizo Commoners' Union. The Primary objectives of the party were to protect and develop the interest of West Zoram. Subsequently, Pachhunga was elected as its first President and Vanlawma as its General Secretary. Latter the party was called the Mizo Union (MU).<sup>7</sup> According to Lalchungnunga, the principle objectives of the party were: to achieve a rightful status

---

<sup>5</sup> Lalsangkima., Op, Cit, p.81

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p.81

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.246,247

for the Mizo; to develop better understanding between Chiefs and commoners; to unify the common people; General upliftment of the Mizo people; to become the democratic representative and spokesman for the whole of Mizo people; and to popularise Mizo language.<sup>8</sup> Just after the formation of the party, the General Assembly of the MU was held from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1946 in Aizawl with the permission of the Superintendent. In the Assembly, the MU resolved to boycott the District Conference of MacDonald because the party wanted the Superintendent of the district not to be part of any representative body of the district. After a long discussion, the party resolved to join India with the right to review the merger after ten years. In addition, the party also demanded the removal or abolition of the privileges or oppressive practises of some of the Zo Chiefs.<sup>9</sup> Here, it is interesting to note that educated members began to aspire for leadership of the party from the hands of the common members on the ground that many of them lack leadership, calibre, stature and educational adequacy. As a result there was a sign of groupism taking place between the common members and the educated members on the issue of party leadership in the first assembly. So the General Assembly decided to elect the office bearers of the party. Lalhema was elected as President in place of Pachhunga, Lalbiakthanga was elected Vice-President, R. Vanlawma was re-elected as General Secretary, Lalhmingthanga and Lalbuaia were elected as Financial Secretary and Treasurer. Some of the members were for the first time elected councillors.<sup>10</sup>

So the differences between the commoners and the educated members resulted into change in leadership of the party many a time and that further led to the split of

---

<sup>8</sup>Lalchungnunga., *Mizoram Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi. 1994, p.73

<sup>9</sup>R.N. Prasad., *Government and politics in Mizoram*. Northern Book Centre, New Delhi. 1987, pp. 246,247

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p.247



the Mizo Union Party. Subsequently, the party broke into two groups, one led by R. Vanlawma, Lalhema and the other group led by Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma. The split created a lot of confusion and tension in the rank and file of the party. So the members were divided into groups, moderate and extremist. The moderate group (the one led by Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma) wanted Mizoram to be a part of India with autonomous district council to manage local affairs, while the extremist group (led by R. Vanlawma and Lalhema) wanted the territory to be outside India. These diversified opinions of the members were taken by the government into consideration. When the Bordoloi Committee visited Aizawl on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1947, the two groups submitted memorandum containing the view as above. The ultimate decision was that the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) became a part of Indian Union. Thus, the pro-independent or extremist group within the Mizo Union ceased to exist in the long run. Most of its members either defected from the party individually or reconciled with it gradually. <sup>11</sup>

The memorandums submitted to the Bardoloi committee by the MU were:

1. Mizos are a family of numerous tribes spreading over Lushai Hills, Manipur, Cachar, Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tract and Burma.
2. The creation of Lushai Hills comprising only Luseis, a Mizo tribe, was effected for the British administrative convenience, leaving other Mizo tribes outside it. Quoting various authorities like Shakespeare, Stevenson, Liangkhaia, Shaw, Kingdanward and Kim of the Statesman, they maintained that the Mizos within Lushai Hills and without it had strong solidarity.
3. The Mizos were distinct from the plains people as well as from the Nagas and the Manipuris.

---

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.247-250

4. Migrating from to their present habitats from the east, the Mizo villages lay within the areas covered by the border of the present Falam Sub-Division in Burma in the East.

5. The area occupied by Mizo tribes was as big as 15,993 square miles and the population was about 328,400.

6. It is, therefore, imperative that his majesty's government, the government of India and the Constituent Assembly do the "Just and proper thing" and grant the Mizo just demand for Territorial Unity and Solidarity.

7. The Mizos were never subjugated by the MahaRajas of Manipur, Tripura, Chittagong and Cachar. When the British annexed their land, they became loyal to the British, as proved by their willing participation on their side during the Two World Wars, Abhor Expedition and Kuki Rebellion.

8. The Mizos had efficient system of administration and discipline as a distinct group governed by their traditional laws, customs and organizations.

9. Mizos had never been under the Indian government and never had any connection with the politics of the various groups of Indian dominion. So, they could not be thrown on a common platform with the rest of India, because their ways were too different from those of others.

10. It is, therefore, important to the highest degree that the Mizos be given self-determination in its fullest form.

11. On account of all the problems and its strategic location, lack of development facilities, it is all the more imperative that Mizoram be given special financial provision by the centre while allowing them their territorial integrity as anything short of this will be detrimental to their upbringing.

12. The district shall join Assam through legislature with adequate representation and be also eligible to the provincial service with due reservation of post at the same time retaining her territorial integrity and self-determination; as otherwise thrown among forty crores of Indian, the 3,28,400 Mizos with their unique system of life will be wiped out of existence.

The memorandum was concluded with the following words: All the above items shall be subjects to revision according to the future trends of events even to the extent of seceding after ten years. For this end, it is to be understood that the democratic system of government in its purest form shall at the very outset be introduced. *A Draft Constitution of Mizoram* was also submitted along with the memorandum in line with the demands expressed in the memorandum.<sup>12</sup> As the fact remains true among the MU members or groups, there was no mark identification with the party but only loyalty to an individual leader. The MU further adopted new policies and programmes in addition to its earlier aims and objects. In 1960, the government of Assam introduced the official language bill in the Assembly to make Assamese the official language of the state which was objected by the Hill Leaders. Subsequently, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) came into existence to forge effective instrument of negotiation with the government of India for a separate hill state. The MU joined the APHLC for a separate Hill State. But differences on the issue of Hill State later arose among the prominent leaders of the MU.<sup>13</sup> So the party drifted away from the APHLC. Later in July 1963, the MU had a special General Assembly in Aizawl and demanded separate state for the Mizo within the frame work of the Indian Union. The party however succeeded in later part of 1971 in persuading central government to separate Mizoram from Assam. The Government granted the

---

<sup>12</sup>Lalchungnunga., Op,Cit. pp.74-76

<sup>13</sup>R.N. Prasad., Op,Cit, p.252

status of Union Territory that was also accepted by the General Assembly of the MU held in 1971<sup>14</sup>.

In 1972, the Mizo Union's programmes were realistic and progressive. The MU proposed that it would not be contented with the status of Union Territory and it would fight for statehood. It also promised the integration of territories, inhabited by the Mizo contiguous to Mizoram, eradication of corruption, favouritism and nepotism prevalent in the administration. It would take step to reconstruct villages, eliminate the existing grouping system, and provide enough land to the villagers for cultivation. The party also promised to provide better water supply, electricity, technical education, better market facilities for their cash crops, and preservation of forest wealth and introduce private ownership of land or permanent settlement of land. It promised to promote profitable relations with Bangladesh and Burma. Lastly the party would make an all out effort to bring about peace and tranquillity in Mizoram<sup>15</sup>.

However, there were many changes in the leadership of the MU and the unsatisfied section with the party's development and policies paved a way to form another political party, the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO).

### **United Mizo Freedom Organisation**

The decision of the MU to remain within the Indian Union was opposed which subsequently led to the formation of a new political party known as the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) by a dissident of MU, Mr. Lalbiakthanga on July 1947.<sup>16</sup> L.H. Liana was the first secretary. The party was backed or supported by the chiefs and their followers because they were hostile to the MU. In the meantime,

---

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p.252

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p.253

<sup>16</sup>R.N. Prasad., & A.K. Agarwal., *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*. Mital Publications, New Delhi. 1991. P.6

Lalmawia, an army officer of Burma (retired), came to Mizoram and join this new political party. In the beginning the party's aim was to merge Mizoram with Burma, to retain chiefship and to resist the growth of MU in the Mizo politics. So, Lalmawia emphasised the advantages of joining Burma on grounds of common customs, culture, dialect, common descent and common economic pattern. He further made the Mizo people understand that they would be better and more prosperous in Burma than India. Consequently, the pro-Burmese movement started by the UMFO began to gather momentum in the territory. But it also started declining because the Burmese government did not encourage the merger of Mizoram with Burma on the ground that the MU had already opted for the Indian Union. Ultimately, the movement withered away and the UMFO gave up the idea of joining Burma<sup>17</sup>. But the UMFO being the first district level opposition party also created a political consciousness and awareness among the Mizo people. The programme and policies of the party were not precisely defined. So most of the functions performed by the party were not politically oriented but were determined by the structural elements of the society. Further the party lacked democratic order in its organisation. So, after the party joined the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) in 1957, it disappeared from the political platform of Mizo forever<sup>18</sup>.

### **Mizo District Council**

Before the introduction of the Government of India Act, 1919, the Lushai Hills District was a 'Scheduled District' under the provision of a Scheduled District Act, 1874, because it was a hilly area inhabited by the primitive tribes with poor economic resources. Again, this district was put under the category of 'Backward Area' in 1919,

---

<sup>17</sup>R.N. Prasad., Op, Cit. p.255

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.256,257

on the recommendations of senior officers like Robert Reid, who favoured exclusion of the area from the reform scheme. As a result, the Governor of Assam was directly responsible for the administration of the backward area. Thus, the Lushai Hills remain un-represented in Assam Legislative Assembly till independence. Further, by the Government of India Act, 1935, Lushai Hills district, Naga Hills district and the North Cachar hills district were labelled as 'Excluded Area' while the Mikir Hills, Khasi-Jantia Hill, and the Garo-Khasi Hills 'Partially Excluded Area.' The British policy under the shadow of Excluded and Partially Excluded Area kept these hill people isolated from the General administration.<sup>19</sup>

The Cabinet Mission 1946 suggested that there should be an Advisory Committee on the right of the citizens, minorities and tribal's of excluded areas. The Chairman of the mission, Stafford Cripps suggested that a proper and powerful committee should be set up to make the proposals for the administrations of tribal areas. Accordingly, the Constituent Assembly set up an Advisory Committee, as per terms of reference of the Cabinet Mission Plan, on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1947. This committee appointed three sub-committees. The North Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi (the Premier of Assam), A.V. Thakkar, Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy (Khasi leader), B.N. Rao (Constitutional Advisor of the Constituent Assembly). Two co-opted members from Lushai Hills were Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma, both members of Mizo Union Party<sup>20</sup>.

The committee recommended for the Autonomous District Council to be constituted democratically with power of legislation over the occupation and use of land other than reserved forest and the cultivation of jhum. The District Council

---

<sup>19</sup>S.N Singh., *MIZORAM: Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative*. Mittal Publications, 1994. Pp.140, 141. New Delhi.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p.142

should have power to make law on the use of land, village forest and agriculture. It should be entrusted to provide administration of justice. The committee also recommended for the provision of Regional Council in the District to project the distinct culture and dialect of smaller tribes. However the committee was not keen to allow the Lushai Hills District to enjoy the status of being excluded area as it felt that there was much advancement of the area. Dr. Guha, a famous anthropologist giving evidence before the sub-committee, suggested that no attempt should be made at assimilation which could take place by a sudden breaking of tribal institutions. There should be gradual evolution and old foundation and the initiatives should come from tribes themselves. He further opined that the future of these Hills did not seem to lie in absorption of hill people but in political and social amalgamation<sup>21</sup>.

The report of the North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Sub-Committee was placed before the Constituent Assembly for discussion. There was a heated debate going on regarding the creation of the District Council and Regional Council in the hill district of Assam. Kuladhar Chaliha, a member from Assam criticized the draft of 'Sixth Schedule' as the product of the British to separate the Indians. He said it is a step to create Tribalistan like how Pakistan was created. Brejeswar Prasad, a member from Bihar also agreed on the same issue and he proposed to create a Municipal Act. He said if we keep them separate, they would combine with Burma. But Jaipal Singh, a member from Bihar and Rev. Nichols Roy, a Khasi member from Assam argued and said that it was an attempt to create a feeling of friendliness, mutual understanding and unity. Dr. Ambedkar also supported their arguments and observed that tribals in other areas were more or less Hinduised and were assimilated with the culture and civilisation of the people with whom they lived.

---

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.143,144

But this was not the case of Assam. The tribal's (including Lushais) occupied a position similar to that of Red Indians in the U.S.A. finally; the Constituent Assembly approved the provisions of District Council and Regional Council, which were inserted in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Accordingly, the government of Assam enacted the Assam Autonomous District (Constitution of District Council) Act in 1951. Consequently, the Lushai hills District Council (later on the Mizo District Council), and the Pawi-Lakher regional Council came into being in 1952 and 1953 respectively.<sup>22</sup>

### **Mautam and the birth of Mizo National Front (MNF)**

The Zo people who were unaware of their future chose to merge with India and Mizoram was included within Undivided Assam. But the Zo who became politically aware about their future if they remain in Assam, and they slowly began to realize that they were denied many of their rights and opportunities under Assam government. Moreover, unhappy with the Assam government, in October 1958, the Mizo District Council predicted the imminence of famine following the flowering of bamboos and passed a resolution to the government of Assam to take precautionary measures. It asked the Governor of Assam to sanction Rs. 1,50,000 relief money to be expended for the Mizo district, including the Pawi-Lakher region. The Assam government rejected the request, possibly assuming that the prediction of famine was a primitive people's tradition. But tradition proved right. Bamboo flowered in 1959, and the next year Rats multiplied in millions and ate up grains, fruits and everything else edible. The catastrophe occurred so suddenly and so completely that the Governor of Assam was taken by surprise, and relief measure was inadequate and slow in coming. The Riangs and the Chakmas had to eat wild Armi, a kind of grass,

---

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.144,145



and some people died trying to find relief<sup>23</sup>. This catastrophe swelled the anger of the Zo people. Pu. Vanlalbiaka, a member of the District Council, was quoted as saying, “If we continue to be neglected the people’s feeling will be for secession from Assam”. And as mentioned earlier it was said to be the main reason for the independent movement of the Zo people. But it was of course one of the reasons but not as a sole cause. All the mal-administration during the time of British including those issues which have been touched and not touched in this work and also mal-administration within the government of Assam since merger led to the outbreak of war against India. To help supplement the government’s weak relief measures, the Mizo cultural society formed a new group called The Mizo National Famine Front to render volunteer services to the people most affected by the famine. They helped the villagers to ascertain that they received their share of government’s aid. In doing so they became so popular that the villagers recognised them as their leaders.<sup>24</sup>

The Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) movement had enormously increased the fame and popularity of Laldenga throughout the Lushai Hills. In the mean time, former Chiefs had the zeal for freedom and they could not digest the abolition of Chieftainship through the initiatives of MU. At that time, Laldenga was also ambitious to form a political party and to fight for freedom of the Zo people. Therefore, Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed as a political party on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1961 at the residence of Laldenga in Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl. It should also be noted that some literature and some writer stated the MNF as a conversion in toto of the MNFF, however, this is wrong. C. Hermana who was one of the founding members of MNF states that some members of the MNFF were involved in the formation of MNF, but it was not a conversion in toto. The MNFF and MNF had no

---

<sup>23</sup>Vumson., Op,Cit. p.266

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*,p.267

link at all, he added.<sup>25</sup>The aim of the party as the name implies was to demand a union of all Zo nationals living in Burma, India and East Pakistan (Bangladesh)<sup>26</sup>. Two completely different racial groups, one of Aryan origin and the other of the Mongolian race were bound together by a piece of paper called Constitution. A constitution can be sincere and just, but it cannot merge age-old traditions nor can it cure old suspicions and beliefs. For Hindu Indians, the non-Hindu Zo people are regarded as equivalent to the lowest caste and in other words, as McCall put it “conveniently and typically un-touchable.” On the other hand, Zo people called the Indians Vai which means aliens. To make matter worse, the British brought Christianity to the Zo people, which made Zo people feel more at home with the Christian in far distant Europe or America than with their neighbouring Indians. The Hindu Indians on the other hand treated the hill people with contempt as Hindu beliefs, Zo people are lower caste.<sup>27</sup>

In the beginning, the MNF had a policy of:

1. Mizoram had all the freedom to unify all the Zo people
2. To preserve Christianity
3. To preserve and develop the Zo people.

By using those policies, the leaders of the M.N.F had campaigned in different villages of Mizoram, but the Zo people who are un-aware of politics during those times had a feeling that if Independent is achieved, everything will be very difficult starting from where they will get Salt to eat. But the party leaders made them understand that salt could be obtained from any other country other than India. Moreover, financial

---

<sup>25</sup> C. Hermana., *Zoram Politics Thli Tleh Dan*. Vol-I, PRESCOM (Production), Aizawl, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Vumson., Op, Cit. p.267

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.272,273

assistance from other country would be helpful to develop Mizoram. Laldenga, the party's President told the people that the natural resources of the land would be controlled by the Zo people and also he told them that how other country used their natural resources to develop them, the same would be done in Mizoram. Those speech made by Laldenga made the Zo people more thirst for freedom as they were not satisfied with the treatment from the Government of India.<sup>28</sup>

The leaders of the MU, who were pro-Assam and pro-India, were in control of the District Council after Independence. The MU popularity declined because of the rising popularity of the MNF movement. To regain their status and to counter the MNF campaign for Independence, they took a more nationalistic approach. The MNF splitted in 1962, because Laldenga and Vanlawma, the Secretary General differed over the tactics that should be used for achieving Independence. Vanlawma then formed the Mizo National Council (MNC). The MNF and MNC both advocated Independence; they differed in their approach to achieve their goal. The MNC advocated non-violence, while the MNF did not eschew violence if necessary to achieve Independence.<sup>29</sup> Laldenga accompanied by Lalnunmawia and Sainghaka went to Pakistan in the first week of December 1963 for talks with the Pakistani agents. They were well received and they were promised a base, guns and some money. A code for exchanging letters and a timetable for training MNF soldiers was also worked out.<sup>30</sup>

On their return to West Zoram, Laldenga, the MNF President and Lalnunmawia, the Vice President were arrested. The charges against them were of an attempt to rebel against the government of India. Laldenga confessed before the

---

<sup>28</sup>Col. Lalrawnliana., Op, Cit. pp.31,32

<sup>29</sup>Vumson., Op, Cit. pp.275,276

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p.276

investigative Police Officer that he was on political mission and that he had struck a military deal with the Pakistani authorities. There were also certain incriminating documents with them. Laldenga and his deputy were lodged in Silchar Jail. The charges against Laldenga were of a serious nature that he could not come out of the prison easily despite the legal and political pressure upon the government.<sup>31</sup> Laldenga wrote a letter from jail to the then Chief Minister of Assam B.P. Chaliha that, “The programmes and politics of MNF are not anti state and we should not take a course of action which is against the Constitution of India”. This was an assurance he appealed, “By releasing us from detention give us an opportunity to play a constructive role in the development of our district”. Chaliha was impressed by the intense emotion appeal of Laldenga and decided to set him free then and there. The release of Laldenga was opposed by MainulHaque Choudhury, the then Agriculture Minister who had been a successful criminal lawyer and Fakruddin Ali Ahmed, the most powerful man in the Assam Cabinet. But Chaliha took the fatal decision and the prisoners were freed that caused a strained relation between B.P. Chaliha and Fakruddin Ali Ahmed.<sup>32</sup>

After Laldenga’s released, the MNF formed a secret *Underground Mizo Government*. This was to make the demand for independence more effective, as with the underground government it was easier to organised violence. The members of the government were:

President	:	Laldenga
Vice President	:	Lalnunmawia
Finance Secretary	:	Lalkhawliana

---

<sup>31</sup>SuhasChatterjee., *Making of Mizoram; Role of Lalgenga*. Volume-2.MD Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi. 1994, p.183.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*,pp.183,184.

Defence Secretary : R. Zamawia  
Home Secretary : Sainghaka  
Chief Justice : J.F. Manliana

Meanwhile, the MU, which had performed badly in the 1963 by-elections to Legislative Assembly seats tried to capture the hearts of the people by advocating for a Zo state. To this effect in January, 1965, under the auspice of the MU, an all-party meeting was held at Lamka (Churachandpur) in Manipur. The conference was attended by different Zo groups and parties from Assam, Manipur and Tripura and an attempt was made to merge the MU and the MNF.<sup>33</sup> After three days of discussion, the meeting adopted a plan for direct action with the aim of securing a 'Mizoram State', comprising all the areas inhabited by members of the Zo tribes. The status of this state, whether it would be totally independent of India and neighbouring countries was not spell out. It was decided that a convention for this purpose would meet in April. Several talks were held between the leaders of MU and the leaders of MNF. But their aim, tactics, and policy and their nature of independence cannot be the same.<sup>34</sup>

The MNF submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1965. The memorandum said:

“The Mizos, from time immemorial lived in complete independence without foreigninterference. Their administration was like that of the Greek City State of the past. Their territory or any part thereof had never been conquered or subjugated by their neighbouring states. The Mizo are a distinct nation, created and moulded and nurtured by God and nature. The Mizo had never been under the government of

---

<sup>33</sup>Vumson., Op,Cit. pp.276,178

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.276,278

India.” “Therefore, the Mizo demanded the nation of Mizoram, a free sovereign state to govern itself, to work her own destiny and formulate her own foreign policy.....”

“Though known as Head Hunters and martial race, the Mizo commit themselves to a policy of non-violence in their struggle and have no intention of employing any other means to achieve their political demand. If, on the other hand, the government of India brings exploitative and suppressive measures in to operation employing military might against the Mizo people as is done in the case of Nagas, which God forbid, it would be equally erroneous and futile for both parties, as for a soul cannot be destroyed by weapons.” The memorandum was signed by Laldenga as President and S. Lianzuala as General Secretary of the MNF<sup>35</sup>.

The Mizo National Front therefore declared Independence on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1966.

The declaration of the Independent said:

“In the course of history it becomes invariably necessary for mankind to assume their social, economic and political status to which the laws of nature’s God entitle them. We hold this truth to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and that they are endowed with inalienable fundamental human rights and dignity of human person and to secure these rights, Government are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed and whenever any form of government becomes destructive to this, it is the right of the people to alter, change, modify and abolish it and then institute a new government laying its foundation on such principles and organize its powers in such forms as to them shall seem most likely to effects their rights and dignity. The Mizos created and moulded into a nation and nurtured as

---

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, pp278,279

such by nature's god have been intolerably dominated by the people of India in contravention to the laws of nature".<sup>36</sup>

The underground government sent twenty youth to Pakistan to work out the arms deal, Zamawia and Sainghaka were entrusted to prepare an arm base. At the beginning of 1965, a shipment of arms arrived from Pakistan and was hidden near Bungtlang. It was the first outfit for the Mizo National Volunteer (MNV), who were called the Vanapa or V battalion. The MNV also created a special force containing fifty tough men to function as the body guard of the MNF Chief Laldenga. In early 1966 the MNF was in frantic but secret preparation for taking over the military and civil administration of west Zoram. The MNV forces were commanded by General Sawmvela, and the Special Forces under Major Lalliana was doubled and organised meticulously. The army was 20,000 men strong and it was divided into four commands, the Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern.<sup>37</sup>

All the towns of West Zoram were encircled by the MNV to strike at the zero hour- one o'clock, 1<sup>st</sup> march, 1966. The MNF concentrated its military operation in Lunglei and Champhai so as to secure arms from Assam Rifles. In Lunglei, volunteers approached the Assam Rifles exactly at 1 a.m. 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1966 and shooting immediately commenced. The MNF arrested the sub-divisional officer of Lunglei and the government treasury was stormed and eighteen lakh rupees taken. In Champhai the post of Assam Rifles was easily taken and the entire armoury became the property of the MNF. In Aizawl, a hand grenade in the hands of captain Rochina exploded and was killed instantly, the explosion warned the Assam Rifles of the impending attacks. There was fighting between the Assam Rifles and the MNV till 3<sup>rd</sup> March and by the

---

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.276,277

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.277,280

evening of the same day, the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner was in the hands of the MNV and 300 prisoners were freed from Aizawl Jail.<sup>38</sup>

The MNF declaration of independence appeared to be similar in style and content that of American declaration of independence. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1966, the whole district was declared a Disturbed Area under the Assam Disturbed Area Act 1955, by the government of Assam. This Act of 1955 along with the Arm Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act 1958 had also been enforced in the area. On 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1966, government of India declared MNF as Un-lawful organisation and also banned it under the defence of India rules. Though, there was no declaration of Martial Law, yet the government entrusted the responsibility of law and order in the district to the army and issued strict instruction that the army was not to fight with an enemy power. The MNF parallel government also continued functioning and the security forces also maintain their strong pressures as well as intensified operations in all the sectors of Mizoram with a view to drive out the MNF rebels from their hideouts and meeting all threats posed by the MNF. Thus, the MNF insurgency, counter insurgency measures and pacifications went on simultaneously. The Mizo Hills District was elevated to the status of Union Territory on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972 by the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi and popular government was formed.<sup>39</sup>

The status of Union Territory could not satisfy the MNF, but problems arose within MNF that caused them a drawback for their movement. The MNF splitted into two groups, moderate/intellectuals and extremist which confused the rank and file of the MNF. There has been a considerable progress in political, economic, social and cultural aspect of the Mizo people since 1972 in spite the territory being disturbed by

---

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.280,281

<sup>39</sup>R.N. Prasad and A.K. Agarwal., Op, Cit. p.96



the MNF insurgency. Both the first and second ministries led by the Congress and People's Conference tried to bring the central government and the MNF leaders to peace dialogue in order to settle the vexed political problems of Mizoram. So there had been frequent peace talks/ meeting between the government of India and the MNF leaders. But the talks could not yield any tangible results. Even the July Peace Accord which was signed by Laldenga, the MNF President and the then Home Secretary, Government of India on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1976 could not be translated into practise in spite of the best efforts of both the sides. On 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1977, when Janata party came into power in the centre, July Peace Accord of 1976 was resumed, but because of the internal problems of the MNF, the talks were cancelled in 1978.<sup>40</sup>

With the return of the Congress (I) party to power in the 1980 polls at the centre, the Mizo Pradesh Congress (I) requested the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to resume the peace talks with the MNF. The talks were resumed and the Central Government withdrew all the pending cases and charges against Laldenga on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1980. But the talk between Laldenga and the government failed because of sharp differences on some of the demands, constitution of a state with safeguard on Jammu and Kashmir type and constitution of greater Mizoram including Mizo inhabited areas submitted by him. The central government however agreed to elevate the union territory to the statehood of Mizoram with certain constitutional safeguards. After the peace talked failed, the MNF and its arm wing, Mizo National Army (MNA) were banned on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1982.<sup>41</sup>

Peace and progress which the Mizo people had been longing for a long time became casualties in the atmosphere of revived violence, killing and indiscriminate

---

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p.97

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p.98

harassment. Even the appeal for peace and harmony made by the Church leaders failed and the loyal Mizo continued to suffer. Congress party headed by Lal Thanhawla came to power in the fourth election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly in 1984 and it was one of the main aims of the Congress (I) party was to bring peace in the disturbed area besides other development goals.<sup>42</sup>

On 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1984, Laldenga was called back from London and the peace talks were resumed between the Central Government and the MNF Chief. Laldenga had a series of discussion with the central officials, leaders and finally the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi. As a consequence, the historic memorandum of settlement was signed by the Home Secretary, R.D. Pradhan representing Government of India and Laldenga on behalf of the Mizo national Front (MNF) and Chief Secretary, Government of Mizoram on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1986 to ensure permanent peace and harmony in Mizoram.<sup>43</sup>

The peace accord was clinched both at the official (Govt. level) and the non-official and political (party) level. The memorandum of settlements incorporates some of the important issues like:

1. The MNF party agreed to end all underground activities, bring out all underground personnel with their arms to civil life and abjure violence within the stipulated time frame.
2. The MNF further agreed to delete its objective of “Independence and secession of Mizoram from the Union of India” from its constitution to ensure its working within the constitutional framework of India.

---

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p.98

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.98,99

3. The government of India on the other hand agreed to get the underground MNF personnel coming overground resettled and rehabilitated.
4. The government also agreed to confer statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram with certain safeguards to satisfy the desire and aspiration of the Mizo people.

After the memorandum of settlement was signed, the underground MNF and MNA personnel hand over their arms and ammunitions. The MNF party amend its constitution by deleting the party's main objective for a struggle of ***Independent Mizoram*** and other objectionable provisions to conform to the laws of land. The Mizoram State hood bill 1986 with Legislative Assembly of forty seats was passed by the Parliament in 1986 which was also known as Constitution Fifty-Third Amendment Act 1986. The President also assented the Mizoram Statehood Bill 1986 on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1986. The state bill became an Act but was not implemented with immediate effect, because it was politically agreed upon between the central government and the MNF Chief Laldenga to form a coalition government headed by Laldenga as the Chief Minister and Lal Thanhawla as the Deputy Chief Minister. The Congress Legislature Party in its meeting resolved to accept Laldenga as the leader of the Congress (I)-MNF coalition in the Legislative Assembly. So the Chief Minister, Lal Thanhawla resigned his post to facilitate the formation of the Congress (I)-MNF coalition government to ensure permanent peace and harmony in Mizoram. The Congress-MNF coalition government headed by Laldenga as the Chief Minister and Lal Thanhawla as the Deputy Chief Minister was sworn in on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1986.<sup>44</sup>

After struggling for more than twenty years and after many lives were lost, Mizoram attained the status of Statehood and this brings peace and harmony to the

---

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.98-100

state, but as far as the MNF was concerned, it was not their objectives right from the formation of the party. But the MNF had no option except to accept the offer from the central government, because the MNF at that time was not ready to fight for independence against the Union of India which was many steps ahead of the MNF. By looking at the suffering of the Zo people, the MNF choose to hand over their weapon and became overground political party.

According to Zoramthanga, the present President of Mizo National Front (MNF) on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015 during the interview states, “the precedent freedom movement organised by the MNF under the leadership of Laldenga was over and he expressed it is the time to replace *bullet by ballot*, it is always the wishes of the MNF party to be under one administration for all the Zo people who are living in different parts of the world, but today there are many political facts and as a result we could not interfere in the administration of other country. Regarding the unification of all the Zo people living in the present Myanmar and Bangladesh, the party has a policy of Irridenta Un-redeem land which means those region are parts of the Zo inhabitants and we are related ethnically or historically, but today they are politically controlled by others and the party could not intervene in the administration of other countries. Let the Zo people living in Myanmar be a good citizen of Myanmar and let them develop and in the same ways, let the people living in Bangladesh be a good citizen of Bangladesh and let them develop. For examples, like the birth of Telengana, it is still one of the objectives of the party to integrate all the Zo people living inside the Union of India but not across the border. ‘Article 3 of the constitution of India provides a scope for integration and demarcation of the state boundaries’. But it depends upon

the people who are living in different states of India whether they want to be a part of Mizoram; the party have no rights to impose to become a part of Mizoram”.<sup>45</sup>

Zoramthanga, MNF President further expressed, “The agreement between the MNF and the government of India states that the MNF delegation demanded that the Mizo inhabited areas contiguous to the present Union Territory of Mizoram should be formed in to one administrative unit as Article 3 of the constitution provides a scope for this. But the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi told the MNF leaders that those people who you claimed as your people in Manipur has no interest to be a part of Mizoram, they did not have any voice, as a result integration was failed. In this regard, the chapter of integration of the Zo people within the union is still alive; it depends upon the political exigency. But for integration, it should be contiguous, there are Zo people living in different parts of India and we could not claim each and every area where there is Zo settlement for integration, if Chakma claimed their settlement area inside Mizoram as their land, then what should the reaction of the government of Mizoram. After accepting settlement within the constitution of India, the open talk of complete freedom is prohibited and the moment we talk of complete independent will be the moment government of India declare us a terrorist, and from our precedent the party would not like this to happen again”.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding the nomenclature tussle, the party President said, “Mizo is the stand point of the party from the beginning, the word Zo is developed by the Paite’s who do not want to be called as Paite either Mizo and called themselves as Zomi. One of the leaders from Zomi organisation from Churachandpur, Manipur told me that they do not want to call as Zomi and I believe that this will pay a way for integration as Mizo,

---

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Zoramthanga on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*

many thousands lost their life and suffer in the name of Mizo and this name may not be changed”.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding the party’s activities for integration, the President states, “In the year 1968, the MNF underground administration went to Manipur and conduct a violent activities so that they may be consider themselves as Mizo which did not happen, therefore it is the wishful thinking of the MNF party not to impose any identity, let them have their own conscious to become a Mizo, for that reason we need to develop the present Mizoram to attract them, for this development the MNF party during its rule in Mizoram did many developmental works, and there are many more developmental works to be done if the party come in to power. The present controversial land bill passed in the government of Manipur led to the crumbling down of some particular names like Zomi, Kuki, and this led the consciousness of being Mizo, and I believe these events will also pave the way for integration of the Mizo people who are living in Manipur. The people in Manipur must have full awareness of the importance of being Mizo because they are bulk in number and after that other Mizo people in other states must be assimilated in to Mizo easily. Therefore the party is doing its best for the integration of the Mizo people living in different parts of India. If the party come in to power there are many thing to do which the present government did not do, and it is our divine right to be integrated as a nation”.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*

## **Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP)**

The Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), formed on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1997, under the leadership of Lalduhoma had a policy of one administration for all the Zo people across the world from the very beginning of the formation of the party. Lalduhoma, the party's President on 30<sup>th</sup>, September, 2015 during the interview expressed, "Regarding the nomenclature, the ZNP would like to refer to the people who are given different names in different places as Zo. The term, 'Mizo' is a recent term, even when the so called Mizoram was a Union Territory, all our vehicles had the number starting from ZRM which means Zoram Motor. It was changed to MZ which means Mizoram, only recently. But its origin is 'Zo'. For examples, our forefathers used the terms like, Zotuithiang, Zothlifim, Zoar, Zovawk etc. Therefore, the ZNP would like to use the nomenclature of Zo because the term Mizo is recently developed and is not accepted by other tribes who claimed themselves as Zo. In the meantime, the nomenclature is not the biggest problem of our party but our main concern is how to unify the Zo people. If unification is achieved, the party is ready to accept all the names given to the people."<sup>49</sup>

Regarding which and who will be included as Zo, Lalduhoma states, "In the beginning, the party's constitution includes eleven tribes as Zo and this includes all the subtribes and clans of Zo. They derived this constitution from the International seminar held at Aijal Press on the issue of Chin; History, Culture, and Identity organised by the Department of History and Ethnography, Mizoram University on 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2008. But their party adopted as eleven plus one (11+1=12), where they kept a space for those who are assimilated to the Zo tribes. He gave an example of those Nepalis and Tuikuk who settled here for such a long time even

---

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Lalduhoma, ZNP President on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

during the world war. These people have no place to claim as their land except Zoram; therefore, the party is ready to include those people as Zo. But recently the ZNP re-framed its constitution, because they felt that it is too early to clarify who are Zo and who are not, therefore they deleted the number of the tribes and ready to accept all the people who claim themselves as Zo”.<sup>50</sup>

Regarding the party’s view on the need for unification and the thirst for unification, Lalduhoma states, “The party feels that there is a need for unification and that is the reason why they included as one of the party’s main objectives. All the parties in Mizoram had a policy of unification of the Zo people, but only ZNP at present includes it in the party manifesto and other parties do not have enough desire for unification. People of the Zo ethnic group in Bangladesh, Myanmar and in different states of India do not have enough awareness regarding unification. Only ZNP as a political party and Zo Re-Unification Organisation (ZORO), as a Non Governmental Organisation take practical steps for unification”. for examples, the assistance in cash and kind, provided to Zo people of Myanmar who suffered in natural calamities and my visit to Churachandpur, Manipur. Tension cropped up in Manipur with regard to the three bills passed by the Manipur Legislative Assembly where interest of Zo people was affected. Therefore, the events integrated the Zo people psychologically”.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding the party’s activities for unification, Lalduhoma said, “On 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, when I was an opposition Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), during Mizoram budget session I have the agenda to accept 2007 UN resolution where UN gave forty six (46) rights to Indigenous people including right to self

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*



determination and India is a signatory to this rights. So I proposed to the Assembly House to pass a resolution and if it is passed in the House, we could put the resolution to the Parliament of India and to the UN. After that, we could form a body of meeting representing the central and representing Mizoram so as to have better future. Everyone in the House including the Chief Minister of Mizoram Lal Thanhawla accepted the agenda and it was to be passed as official resolution in the next session. Lal Thanhawla himself appointed me to draft the resolution. But if it is going to be an official resolution, it needs to be included in the government programme, which does not happen. I gave a copy to the statement made by the Chief Minister himself in the previous session, then asked the Chief Minister to pass as official resolution, but the Chief Minister do not give me any reply and that led to our present status today. Another activity is during the government of Mizo National Front (MNF), under the leadership of Zoramthanga. Zoramthanga, the then Chief Minister had the agenda of border fencing between Mizoram and Myanmar to pass as resolution, he further said that whenever he went to meet central official, he put up the need for border fencing and this agenda was supported by Lal Thanhawla's led Congress to be passed as resolution. But I exclaimed that the ZNP will not allow to create a wall inside our land. This is our land even though it is under the government of Myanmar today. We do not want to be separated with our brothers. The present boundary is created by the outsiders; there were no representatives from the Zo people nor they take the consent of the people, it is a forced boundary. The MNF for twenty years were in underground in fear of the Vai's (coloniser) and even today they are still living in that conditions which results in their supporting for creation of boundary. The ZNP made a clear statement that if the resolution is passed in the House, we would not involve and leave

the House and it was passed by the MNF and Congress. These are some of the issues where the party took steps for unification”.<sup>52</sup>

Regarding the nature of unification, Lalduhoma expressed, ”The ZNP aim for physical unification that requires re-mapping of geographical boundary. Different activities which were being organised by different organisation like Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and ZoRO like cultural meets and religious meets across international boundary is also very important to create awareness among the Zo people to achieve physical unification”.<sup>53</sup>

He further exclaimed, “The main back drop of unification is the government; the ruling government is not aware of this issue; it is never spoken about even in the House. So, all parties must be aware of the fact that we could put pressure to the Central Government to adopt the UN declaration. This is the right time to push the central government as India is one of the contestants who try to become UN security member. I prepare a memorandum to be submitted to the Prime Minister of India to adopt the UN declaration. We could also organise a peoples movements where we do not need to carry arms un-like the MNF did for twenty years. If the MNF do not organised those movement in the past, the status of Zoram may be much better than the present. Full independence may not be possible to achieve at once, but if we give pressure to the central government, the responsibility of controlling different ministries like natural resources, rail way, financial autonomy etc. may be given to us one by one, which paves the way for full independence. If ZNP comes to power, the situation will be very different”.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*

Regarding “why there is a need to be unified”? Lalduhoma expressed, “God create a nation and he gave them a land to occupy; Zo people are one of them and it is our right to claim for our land. During ancient and before the birth of UN, the big and strong nation colonised the weaker ones and the coloniser exploit their colony at the maximum. But after the birth of UN, 68 nations got independent from their coloniser and the next who should be de-colonised is the indigenous people. We are divided into three sovereign countries without our consent and we do not have any control over our natural resources; even our forest is under India’s Forest Act and the Zo judicial system, the fastest and most transparent judicial system also vanished because of the India’s judicial system. Therefore, we are different in every area and we cannot be treated as one. That is the reason why we need to be aware of the importance of unification and if we do not claim for our right, our identity, we will be a slave of others for our entire life.”<sup>55</sup>

### **Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO)**

Different Zo ethnic tribes are fighting for specific causes but inclusivity is lacking because most of the movement have geographical restriction. Efforts have been taken to integrate the different Zo ethnic group of India, Myanmar and Bangladesh but positive result in this regard could not be achieved. As a positive gesture, in the unification efforts, the Zomi National Congress (ZNC) of Manipur and People’s Conference (PC) of Mizoram at their meeting at Lamka (Churachandpur) on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1988 resolved to convene an international convention of the Zo ethnic tribes.<sup>56</sup> The First World Zo Convention was held on 19-21 May, 1988 at Champhai (Zokhawpui) and Zo people came to attend the convention from different places. The

---

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>56</sup> Dr. J. Doungel., Op, Cit, pp. 57-58

participants from Zomi National Congress, Lamka (Manipur), Ngaihban (Halflong), Zampui/Sakhan, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Arakan, Chin Hills and the People Conference party of Mizoram agreed the name for the whole ethnic group as Zo. They formed an organization called Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO), without adding any sentence after the word 'Zo' as they think Zo is the most inclusive of all the tribes.<sup>57</sup> Many significant agenda which could guide the destiny of the Zo ethnic group were passed in the convention:

- (i) The nomenclature of the Zo ethnic group of people who traced common origin from Chhinlung should be "Zo."
- (ii) Steps should be taken up to integrate the Zo ethnic tribes who are already scattered in territories of three sovereign countries.
- (iii) Appeal should be made so that accommodative approach should be adopted by various groups and tribes of better unification and integration.
- (iv) Political forum should be established so as to initiate necessary steps for speedy pursuance o unification campaign.

In pursuance of the declaration, a political forum known as Zo Re-unification Organisation (ZoRO) was formed with the following adhoc office bearers. Brig. T. Sailo as Chairman, T. Gougin and C. Chawngkunga as Vice Chairman, S. Thangkhengin Ngaihte and Lalhmingthanga as Secretary General and Thangmawia as Treasurer.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> ZofateLungkham Ram. Issued by: Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO) General Headquarters, Zoram. 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Dr. J. Doungel., Op, Cit, p.58

As ZoRO was formed with the help of political party, it began to work under the guidance of those political parties. From 1990, there was a feeling that ZoRO should be an independent body to exercise its objectives. Since 1991, it became full Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and is recognised as International NGO in 1999.<sup>59</sup>

R. Thangmawia (L), the then President, ZoRO (General Headquarters), Aizawl stated that the plan of the British Administration for integrating the Zo ethnic tribes as per the Chin Lushai Conference of 1892 could not be materialized because of the objection raised by some British officers of Chin Hills. However, the Chin-Lushai land was kept neither under India nor under Burma but under Foreign Department. And it was only in 1895 that the territory of the Zo ethnic tribes was trifurcated into three geographical areas of Lower Bengal (East Pakistan or present Bangladesh), Assam (India) and Burma (Myanmar). Thus R. Thangmawia emphasised that ZoRO stands and fights for reunification of the Zo ethnic tribes as per the spirit of the Chin Lushai Conference of 1892. Therefore, the Chin Lushai Conference anniversary is celebrated every year and the 122<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Chin Lushai Conference was celebrated at Saikul, Sadar Hills in Senapati District of Manipur on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2014.<sup>60</sup> The 123<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Chin Lushai Conference was celebrated at Kholmun, Churachandpur on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

With its transformation into social NGO, the ZoRO initiated different steps for reunification of the Zo ethnic tribes. The ZoRO submitted a memorandum to John Major, Prime Minister of United Kingdom stating that England was responsible for the trifurcation of the Zo ethnic tribes into three sovereign countries. Therefore, he

---

<sup>59</sup>ZofateLungkham Ram. Op, Cit

<sup>60</sup>Dr. J. Doungel., Op, Cit, p.59

(Prime Minister) should take the moral responsibility and initiate necessary steps for reunification of the Zo ethnic tribes. So, he should do the needful things for the damage which had been done a century ago by Great Britain, it was further added in the memorandum. The ZoRO also sent memorandum to Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the then President of India in April, 1992 urging him to take necessary steps for reunification of the Zo ethnic tribes in the like manner how he had declared support for reunification of the two Koreas in Seoul. Another memorandum was submitted to Bill Clinton, President of United States of America in 1994 and after that memorandum was sent to Dr. Boutros Ghali, Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) in 1995. ZoRO also raised the issue of Indigenous land ownership rights of the Zo people in 17 session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous People (UNWGIP) at Geneva from 26-30 July, 1999 and ZoRO delegate was allowed to participate in the UNWGIP session since 2000.<sup>61</sup>

L.P. Biakdanga, Treasurer of ZoRO states, “The term ‘Zo’ was used way back from 1988 which is the product of First World Zomi Convention. The word Zomi is used in the beginning, but it was not accepted by some people who claim themselves as Zo. They therefore deleted the word ‘Mi’ before and after Zo and even ZoRO as an organization used the term Zo. Mizo is recently developed, it was never known during the British era”.<sup>62</sup>

Regarding the categorization of who are Zo, Biakdanga expressed, “ZoRO is ready to accept anyone who ever claim themselves as Zo. We are sure that the people from the hilly part of Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chin Hills and even the Kachin who claimed themselves as the elder son among the Zo have no problems to be

---

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* p.60

<sup>62</sup> Interview with L.P. Biakdanga, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015

included as Zo. If unification is achieved, the name of the nation and the land should be named by the people. For example, Khasi and Jaintia Hills came to be known as Meghalaya as the people chose after they are unified”.<sup>63</sup>

“Two important activities conducted by ZoRO were, to make people aware about the oneness of the Zo people who are separated by the stronger force in the past, and it is our duty to unify; to prepare the Zo people to be ready to face whatever comes in the future as far as unification is concerned. Also convincing and giving information about the brotherhood of the Zo people who were separated in three sovereign countries to the UN. For this reason, the organization always sends representatives to the UN conference on Indigenous people. R. Thangmawia, who died on 2015 at Geneva Conference, went for fulfilling this purpose”.<sup>64</sup>

Unlike Lalduhoma, the President of ZNP, Biakdanga expressed, “There is a deep feeling for the need of unification among the Zo people in other countries and other part of India. The main back drop comes from the people living in Mizoram. As we are majority in the state and living in a peaceful condition, we do not realize how much our people need us. Bute the recent events of Myanmar and Manipur create lots of awareness among the Zo people in a positive way”.<sup>65</sup>

“There are many activities organised by different organisations like MZP which organised Zo fest at different places to develop our similar culture and the feelings of brotherhood among the Zo people who are separated by international boundary. But the main aim of ZoRO is to administer all the Zo people under one administrative heads”. Regarding one administration, Biakdanga quoted the speech of

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*

R. Thangmawia (L) in the UN conference as “We the Zo people were never ruled by any outsiders in the past before the coming of the British. When the British came and occupied the area inhabited by the Zo people, they divided us into different zones so that they can carry upon their administration easily. When British left India, they separated us into different states and countries; this resulted into the minority status of the Zo people who was a big nation before. Therefore, the aim of ZoRO is to keep all those area inhabited by the Zo people under one administration. The representatives of India to the UN does not say anything inside the conference hall, but after the meeting, he asked me that ‘If you try to be under one administrative head, does it mean that you try to be independent from India?’, then I replied that under one administrative head can mean different systems of administration: one administration for the Zo people under the Union of India, Myanmar, Bangladesh or full independent from those mentioned countries. It will be decided by the Zo people if UN gives sanction regarding the demand of ZoRO”.<sup>66</sup>

Nomenclature issue may not be the main back drop for unification because Zo as a nomenclature is already accepted way back in 1988 at the Zo International Convention. But the main problem seems to be with the government in the state. Let the UN Declaration of 2007 on indigenous people be adopted in the state Assembly and as India a signatory to the UN Declaration, we could push to the Parliament.

Regarding ‘what is the need for unification’? Biakdanga states, “Because of international boundary, Zo people became minority in different parts of the world. 1991 census shows that Zo people accounts for more than 80 lakhs. Therefore, if unification for all the Zo people is achieved, we could be a big nation. We could even

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*



become one of the powerful nations in the world; therefore, unification is very much needed to become what we are and what we will be in the future”.<sup>67</sup>

### **Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC)**

According to C. Chawngkunga, the present General Secretary (GS) of MPCC who is serving for the 18<sup>th</sup> Years as a G.S in an interview on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 states, “MPCC had re-unification of all the Zo people living in different parts of the world as one of its main policy, it is mentioned in number four of the party’s objectives. The word Zo is the most inclusive for all the ethnic tribes. Re-unification is a must because the Zo people were never ruled by any one, and for re-unification, the party includes all the people living in other countries, for this the party had the policy of Blood is thicker than Water. He expressed MPCC also believed that there will come a time when we will be re-united as one nation and the party is doing its best for the re-unification of all the Zo people, there are many peoples who contribute financially for the formation and proper functioning of Zo Re-unification Organization, where he himself paid Rs. 4000 per month for renting ZoRO office at treasury square Aizawl”.<sup>68</sup>

Regarding the problems for re-unification, C. Chawngkunga states, “The main problems lie within the people. we are not aware of the facts that we are one, for example, the problems caused by the Hualngo people at Myanmar for other Zo people and YMA as an organization that do not accept those Zo people who come from Myanmar as Zo in the present Mizoram. The government is doing everything it could for re-unification and it is the duty of the citizens to follow and be aware of the importance of re-unification. It is the wishful thinking of the MPCC party that a time

---

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>68</sup> Interview with C. Chawngkunga on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2015

will come when we shall be able to overcome all these troubles and the party deeply believes that we could form a strong nation as God created us to be nation. The party do not belief that the Zo people would be under the rule of others forever”.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The term 'Dzo' or 'Zo' which is used as an inclusive name for different tribes of the Zo ethnic group is believed to be originated in China. There are many theories regarding the origin of the people who are known as Zo, Chin, Kuki, Mizo etc. but because of un-recorded history, it is difficult to trace the exact origin of these people. But anthropologist held the view that these people are one stock of Mongoloid race.

It is believed that the Zo people moved down ward from China and entered in to Burma (Myanmar) where they got their name 'Chin'. The word Chin in Myanmar means those people who carry basket at their back. During their stay at Myanmar, they built a close relationship with the King of Myanmar and the Zo people themselves established their Kingdom at Myanmar. But after settling for a centuries, they were compelled to move away from Myanmar because of pressure from their enemy. They moved down ward from Myanmar in different groups and the movement continue till today. The Zo people who move far down ward are called Kuki by the Bengalese and there is a term of 'Old Kuki' and 'New Kuki' depending upon the time of their movement. Some of the Zo people made their settlement in what today we called as Bangladesh and some people reside in different states of India's North East. The present state of Mizoram is the state that concentrates the bulkiest group of the Zo people and many of them still remain in Chin State in Myanmar.

The Zo people were never rule by outsiders; they have their own Chiefs and the Chiefs had a full control over the people. Even the life and death of a person depends upon the decision of the Chief in many cases. Every administration was run by the Chief with the support from his Ministers and every decision was made under

the guidance of the Chiefs. But the Zo people who were free men in pre-British era experienced colonisation under the British imperialism. When the British invaded the area inhabited by the Zo people, the Zo people did everything they could to protect their mother land. However due to lack of sophisticated weapon and un-train army, the Zo people could not stand against the British force and surrendered to the British un-willingly. There were some Zo Chief who stood against the British till their last breath and Ropuiliani was one of the Zo Chiefs stood against the British force till her death. She died at Sylhet Jail because of not bowing to the British administration. After the death of Ropuiliani, all the area inhabited by the Zo people was under the administrative control of the British authority. Many lives of the Zo people were lost because of protecting their Mother Land from the invaders and many properties was destroyed by the British.

The British administered the Zo people in their own interest and all the administrative system of the Zo people started to disappear under the British rule. While there was introduction of mal-administrations for the Zo people, the coming of the British also surprisingly had some positive aspect for the Zo people. The introduction of Education by the English Missionary to the Zo people is one of the significant developments for the Zo people. Although the level of education in different places of the Zo inhabited area was not the same, some School were even closed down and some High Schools were reduced to a Middle Schools. Whatever be the case, Zo people began to have awareness in education. Had the Missionary been not doing this, the status of Zo people in the field of education today may have not yet achieved.

The British Government made its intention clear that the time had come to leave India by 1947. This made the Zo people more confused regarding their future.

The Zo people at that time had a very little experienced in the field of politics and they were in dilemma whether to be one state under the union of India or to go back to their former way of living as independence or to join British or Myanmar.

On 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1946, the Mizo Commoners' Union was formed under the leadership of Vanlawma and latter the party was renamed as Mizo Union. The development and protection of the interest of the Zo people is one of the main objectives of the party. The Mizo Union agreed to join the Union of India on the condition that their agreement of merger may be reviewed after ten years. They also demanded the abolition of Chieftainship. While making different demands, there arose problems within the Mizo Union regarding leadership. Some of the educated youth argued that the leader must be highly qualified educated person so that he can build better relationship with the Central Government. But there were some people who did not want to remain under India. In October 1958, the Mizo District Council predicted the imminence of famine following the flowering of bamboos and passed a resolution requesting the Government of Assam to take precautionary measures but the Assam Government neglected the request on the assumption that the prediction of famine was a false traditional belief. But, the traditional belief actually happened. Bamboo flowered in 1959, and the Rats population which multiplied in millions ate up all the crops. This catastrophe swelled the anger of the Zo people. Pu. Vanlalbiaka, a member of the District Council, was quoted as saying, "If we continue to be neglected, the people's feeling will be for secession from Assam".

The Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed by the Mizo Cultural Society to help the people who were most affected by the famine. Their works were so significant and makes them so popular that people recognised them as their leader. On 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1961, the Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed after the famine,

but it was not transformation of the MNFF into a political party as advocated by some people. The aim of the party was to demand unification of all Zo nationals living in Burma, India and East Pakistan (Bangladesh). Therefore, the MNF submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1965 stating that the areas inhabited by the Zo people were never under the Union of India and they demanded the Nation of Mizoram which is followed by the declaration of Independence on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1966. Army camps at different place of Mizoram were attacked by the MNF, but reinforcement from a Central Government was no longer a match for the MNF armed cadres. After fighting for many years which led to loss of the lives of many armed cadres, Peace Accord was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1986. As a result, Mizoram was upgraded to the status of statehood in 1987.

Zoramthanga, the present President of the Mizo National Front (MNF) states that, talking of complete freedom at present would be going against the government of India and therefore it is the aim of the MNF party to integrate all the Zo people in India under a single administrative system. Zoramthanga further states that, it is not convenient to frame any policy for the Zo people who are living in Burma and Bangladesh. He states that, Zo people who are outside the geographical boundary of India should be faithful citizens in their respective country whether they are in Myanmar or Bangladesh. It is not possible to cut down the areas inhabited by the Zo people from their present government if it is tried, that may lead us to war. The MNF President further states that impose identity may not unify the Mizo people living in different parts of India, therefore the MNF party's aim is to develop Mizoram as much as possible so that it would invite other Mizo people living outside Mizoram to be attracted towards Mizoram. If the MNF party come to power, all possible steps

towards development of Mizoram would be done which the MNF President feels that the present government does not do.

One of the oldest organisational movements regarding the unification of the Zo people was led by Than Pet Mang, a Sho tribe from Kanpetlet District. After retirement from the Burma Rifle, he went back to his native village of Vuamthu and helped in the foundation the “Chin National Union.” In 1933, the Chin National union prepared a memorandum demanding self rule for Zoram and sent it to the British Government in Rangoon. They also demanded independence as soon as Burma gets independence. In 1939, the executive members of the party was arrested because of their movements and imprisoned in Gangaw jail and then in Falam and Tedim. In Falam and Tedim the prisoners received such widespread sympathy, contrary to the expectation of the British. After that they were again transferred to Katha in Kachinland and they were kept in prison until the Japanese invasion.

Another secessionist movement was led by the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (U.M.F.O) which was formed in 1947, under the leadership of Mr. Lalbiakthanga who was the dissident of Mizo Union. The party was backed or supported by the Chiefs and their followers because they were hostile to the Mizo Union. In the mean time, Lalmawia, an army officer of Burma (retired), came to Mizoram and join this new political party. In the beginning the party’s aim was to merge Mizoram with Burma, to retain Chief ship and to resists the growth of Mizo Union in the Mizo politics. But the Burmese government did not encourage the merger of Mizoram with Burma on the ground that the Mizo Union had already opted for the Indian Union. Ultimately, the UMFO gave up the idea of joining Burma.

Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), which was formed on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1997, under the leadership of Lalduhoma had a policy of one administration for all the Zo people across the world. According to Lalduhoma, the party is always open to accept those who ever surrender their previous identity and ready to accept the identity of Zo. The party used the term Zo as they think it original than the term 'Mizo'. The party thinks that Zo is the most inclusive terminology for identifying the Zo ethnic group. In 2012, while he was an opposition MLA in Mizoram Legislative Assembly, he proposed a resolution for adoption of United Nations (UN) resolution where UN gives forty six (46) rights to Indigenous people including the right to self determination because India is a signatory to these rights. However, the resolution could not go through as Indian National Congress did not co-operate to support, he added. He further states that awareness in the unification of the Zo ethnic group should be inculcated more in the minds of the Zo people.

The First World Zo Convention which was held at Champhai on 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May, 1988 led to the formation of Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO). The terminology 'Zo' without any prefix or suffix is regarded as the most inclusive name which can integrate all the tribes of the ethnic group. ZoRO was formed with the help of political party in the initial stage in 1998 but it became full Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in 1991 and it is recognised as full NGO since 1999. According to L.P. Biakdanga, the present treasurer of ZoRO, there is a deep feeling for the need of unification among all the Zo people living in different parts of the world. The activities of the Zo people living in Mizoram for helping the Zo people in Myanmar and Manipur in the recent tragedies would be a great help for unification. He states that R. Thangmawia (L) who was the President of ZoRO went several times to represent the Zo people in the indigenous conference of the UN. He expressed that the



main problems has been with the government. He states that the government is not taking enough steps for unification and this creates un-awareness among the people.

C. Chawngkunga, the present General Secretary (GS) of the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) states that it is the dream of the party to be re-unified and the party is doing its best for this by mentioning the financial help for ZoRO. But he states that the main problems lie within the people as we are not aware enough about the importance of re-unification both inside and outside Mizoram. He also states that it is the wishful thinking of the MPCC party to overcome all those problems that block the way for re-unification of all the Zo people living in different parts of the world and form a strong Zo nation which they think it as the purpose of God's creation of this ethnic group.

There are many problems to go through for achieving unification of the Zo people living in different parts of the world. The importance of unification should be rooted in the minds of the people for their survival and this initiative should be taken up by the government and NGO's, but they are not performing their duties properly at present. Unity and solidary among the Zo people may lead to achieve their goals for Unification which seems to be impossible at present.

Beyond the initiatives from the Government and civil societies, the most important thing for achieving unification is awareness among the Zo people. Many people are of the opinion that those who ever claim themselves as Zo must be accepted. But there are certain groups which could not be accepted as Zo as those groups does not possess any blood relation with the Zo. Therefore it may be wise to accept those people who trace their origin to a cave called Chhinlung as Zo.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. Primary Sources

Interview with C. Chawngkungaon 16th November, 2015.

Interview with L.P. Biakdanga, on 30th September 2015.

Interview with Lalduhoma, on 30th September, 2015.

Interview with Zoramthanga on 23rd September, 2015.

### 2. Secondary Sources

#### A. Books

Chisti.,S.M.A,W. *Kuki uprising in Manipur 1919-1920*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati: Delhi, 2004.

Hermana, C., *Zoram Politics ThliTleh Dan*.Vol-I, PRESCOM (Production), Aizawl, 1999.

Lalchungnunga,*Mizoram Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994

Lalrawnliana, Col., *Zoram in Zailena a Sual*.Vol-1. R.M. Press, Khatla, Aizawl, 1995

Lalrimawia.,*MIZORAM; History and Cultural Identity*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati:Delhi, 1995

Lalthangliana, B., *India, Burma leh Bangladesh a MizoChanchin*. Second Edition. Swapna Printing Works (P) Ltd. Kolkata, 2014.

Pachauu, Lalsangkima.,*Ethnic Identity and Christianity*. PETER LANG, Frankfurt/Main, Berlin, 2002.

Parry, N.E., *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. FIRMA KLM PRIVATE LIMITED, Calcutta, 1928.

Prasad, R.N.&Agarwal, A.K., *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*.Mital Publications, New Delhi, 1991.

Prasad, R.N. *Government and politics in Mizoram*. Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987.

Rongenga, F., *Zo fate lo khawsakchhohdan*.Beraw Press, New Market, Aizawl, 2000.

Sakhong Lian, H., *In Search of Chin Identity: A Study in Religion,Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma*.

Sangkima.,*Essays on the History of the Mizos*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati. 2004.

Sing KhawKhai.,*Zo People and their Culture: A historical, cultural study and Critical analysis of Zo and its ethnic tribes*.Lamphelpat, Manipur. 1995.

Singh,S.N., *MIZORAM: Historical ,Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative*. Mittal Publications, New Delhi.

Vergheese, C.G., and Thanzawna, R.L., *A History of the Mizos*. Vol-I, Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.New Delhi, 1997.

Vumson.,*ZO HISTORY with an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. 1986.

*ZofateLungkham Ram*. Issued by: Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO) General Headquarters, Zoram. 2010.

## **B. Journal and Articles**

Dashefsky Arnold and Shapiro M. Howard., Ethnic Identity in Society.edt. Rand McNally College Publishing Company, USA,1976.

Dr. J. Dounjel., Genesis and functioning of the Zo Re-Unification Organisation. SKWC Journal of Social Sciences, Volume VI, Issue I, Nambol, Manipur, January-June, 2014.

Gottlob Michael., Changing Concepts of Identity in the Indian Textbook Controversy.BerghahnBooks, Pakistan, 2007. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43056794>, Accessed: 20-11-2015 07:19 UTC.

Sokefeld Martin., Reconsidering Identity, AnthroposInstitut, 2001, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40465555> Accessed: 20-11-2015 07:21 UTC .

**ABSTRACT**

**Unification Movement of the Zo People**

**Submitted by**

***C. LALHMINGLIANA***

**MZU/M.Phil./283 of 1.5.2015**

**Supervisor**

***Professor JANGKHONGAM DOUNGEL***

**Department of Political Science**

**School of Social Sciences**

**Mizoram University – 796004**

**2015**

The term DZO or ZO which is used as an inclusive name for different tribes of the Zo ethnic group is believed to be originated in China. According to Vumson, the term Zo or Jo was used for naming the Indo-Burman people. Due to lack of written record, it is really difficult to trace the exact origin of the Zo people. The most acceptable history that can be traced starts from China as far as the origin of the Zo are concerned. According to the Biblical theory, the Zo are one lost tribe of Israel, but this theory lacks authenticity because the Zos do not fulfil any genealogical test which would bring them close to the Israel people. The ancestors of the Zo people were compelled to leave China and moved downward south to different places on account of frequent wars and other factors. Some historians from Burma give various assumptions as to how the Tibeto-Burman tribes came down to Burma. Scientific dates could not be given with regard to the migration of Zo people in Myanmar, however, their common heritage of words similar to one another signify that they were certainly descendants of a common stock of race. Many writers wrote about the movement of the Zo people in different ways. It is believed that the ancestors of the people called Zo came from China; they further moved downward to Burma and after settling for several centuries, they were forced to leave Burma as they were the weaker section. Afterwards they migrated to different places in different groups. The downward movement of the Zo people from Burma continues till today. As they moved in different groups, they settled in different parts of the world. Some of them settled in different parts of India; while some of them reached Bangladesh and some of them still remain in Burma.

Therefore, the present study covers the history of the Zo people, their movement to different places and their further migration. The study also covers how they are affected by the British administration and how they struggled for freedom under British rule. It also covers the genesis of the nomenclature tussle and what may be the solution to this problem. The study also highlights

the awakening of the Zo people in the field of politics which gives them awareness about the importance of unification and it also analyse the unification movement of the Zo people.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study and describe systematically the political history of the Zo
2. To understand and analyse the nature and growth of the movements for unification
3. To explain the various problems faced by the Zo unification movent.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

1. Why is it important for the Zo people to unify at this juncture of history?
2. What are the factor that contributed for change in the process of unification of the Zo people?

#### METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The methodology used for the research includes schedule interview with three political parties of Mizoram. Those are: Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), Mizo National Front (MNF), and Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC). The representatives from those political parties expressed their views regarding unification movement of the Zo people. Representatives from Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO) as civil society is also interviewed regarding the organizations view on the unification movements of the Zo people. For secondary sources, various books and articles published concerning the topic are included.

The whole work is divided into four chapters.

#### Chapter I

Introduction of the Zo people, their movement from China to different parts of the world.

#### Chapter II

The political and social status of the Zo people in the pre-British era. What kind of administration was practised under the Chiefs

#### Chapter III

How did the British imperialist policy affect the Zo people and how did they fought back to defend their mother land.

#### Chapter IV

The birth of different political parties and civil societies and how did those agents fight for unification of the Zo people till today.

#### Chapter V

Conclusion.

#### Chapter I: **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the origin of the word Zo/Dzo. It also talks about different theories which are claimed as the origin of the Zo people. It is the analysis of why and how the Zo people left China and their settlement in Burma (Myanmar). It also highlights how they moved to different parts of the world after they left Myanmar. It also discuss about how the Zo people got their different names whenever they reached to a new place that led to nomenclature tussle today.



## Chapter II: **Political and Social status of the Zo people in Pre-British era**

This chapter discusses the political and social status of Zo people in pre-British era. It discusses how the Zo people governed themselves through the institution of Chieftainship in their inhabited areas. It deals with their interaction with other people.

## Chapter III: **History of the movements during British era**

This chapter talks about the coming of the British to the Zo inhabited areas and it discusses how the British forced the Zo people to be under their administration. It also talks about the Zo people struggle against the British to defend their mother land and to retain their political freedom. This chapter highlights how the Zo people surrendered to the hands of the British due to lack of sophisticated weapon and well train army. It is also an analysis of how the British practised mal-administration over the Zo people at different places of the Zo inhabited areas which led to freedom movement against the British during the Chiefs era.

## Chapter IV: **Unification Movements**

This chapter discusses the birth of political parties in Mizoram which led awareness among the Zo people about their future. It consists of different views of different political parties of pro-India and pro-independence. It talks about Mautam famine which struck Mizoram that swelled the anger of the Zo people to the Assam Government because of slow relief measure. The birth of Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) and their activities and the birth of Mizo National Front (MNF) that led the major freedom movement were also discussed in this chapter. It also highlights the struggle of the Zo people in the course of their freedom movement and how peace was established in the area. This chapter contents the analysis of personal interview representing political parties and civil societies about their views and suggestions regarding the unification movements of the Zo people.

## Chapter V: **Conclusion**

This chapter constitutes a brief over view of the above chapter and it is the analysis of what may be the possible solutions for different problems posed in the previous chapter.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **1. Primary Sources**

Interview with C. Chawngkunga . General Secretary, Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

Interview with L.P. Biakdanga. Treasurer, Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

Interview with Lalduhoma. President, Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

Interview with Zoramthanga. President, Mizo National Front (MNF) on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015.

### **2. Secondary Sources**

#### **A. Books**

Chisti.,S.M.A,W. *Kuki uprising in Manipur 1919-1920*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati: Delhi, 2004.

Hermana, C., *Zoram Politics ThliTleh Dan*.Vol-I, PRESCOM (Production), Aizawl, 1999.

Lalchungnunga.,*Mizoram Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994

Lalrawnliana, Col., *Zoram in Zalenna a Sual*.Vol-I. R.M. Press, Khatla, Aizawl, 1995

Lalrimawia.,*MIZORAM; History and Cultural Identity*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati:Delhi, 1995

Lalthangliana, B., *India, Burma leh Bangladesh a MizoChanchin*.SecondEdition.Swapna Printing Works (P) Ltd. Kolkata, 2014.

Pachuau, Lalsangkima.,*Ethnic Identity and Christianity*. PETER LANG, Frankfrutam Main, Berlin, 2002.

Parry, N.E., *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. FIRMA KLM PRIVATE LIMITED, Calcutta, 1928.

Prasad, R.N., & Agarwal, A.K., *Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*. Mital Publications, New Delhi, 1991.

Prasad, R.N. *Government and politics in Mizoram*. Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987.

Sakhong Lian, H., *In Search of Chin Identity: A Study in Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma*.

Sangkima., *Essays on the History of the Mizos*. Spectrum Publications, Guwahati. 2004.

Sing Khaw Khai., *Zo People and their Culture: A historical, cultural study and Critical analysis of Zo and its ethnic tribes*. Lamphelpat, Manipur. 1995.

Singh, S.N., *MIZORAM: Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative*. Mittal Publications, New Delhi.

Verghese, C.G., and Thanzawna, R.L., *A History of the Mizos*. Vol-I, Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1997.

Vumson., *ZO HISTORY with an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. 1986.

Zofate Lungkham Ram. Issued by: Zo Re-unification Organization (ZoRO) General Headquarters, Zoram. 2010.

## **B. Articles and Journals**

Dashefsky Arnold and Shapiro M. Howard., *Ethnic Identity in Society*. ed. Rand McNally College Publishing Company, USA, 1976.

Dr. J. Dounge., Genesis and functioning of the Zo Re-Unification Organisation. SKWC Journal of Social Sciences, Volume VI, Issue I, Nambol, Manipur, January-June, 2014.

Gottlob Michael., *Changing Concepts of Identity in the Indian Textbook Controversy*. Berghahn Books, Pakistan, 2007. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43056794>, Accessed: 20-11-2015 07:19 UTC.

Sokefeld Martin., *Reconsidering Identity*, AnthroposInstitut, 2001, Stable  
URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40465555> Accessed: 20-11-2015 07:21 UTC .