CHAPTER II: EMERGENCE OF STATE POLITICAL PARTIES IN MANIPUR

2.1. Emergence of Political Parties in Manipur:

Manipur had a long tradition of Monarchy since ancient times. As such, people's participation in the decision making process through democratic institutions and practices like political parties, elections, popular assemblies, etc. were not there during those times. The people became aware of these institutions and practices mainly during the period of British rule in Manipur. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the last one and half decade of the British rule in Manipur saw the emergence of a movement for social and political reforms in Manipur, and it was against the backdrop of these demands for social and political reforms that the emergence of political parties in Manipur took place. As such, an attempt to highlight the movement for social and political reforms during this period is being made so that the emergence of political parties inside the state can be studied against a proper historical backdrop.

2.2. Demands for socio-religious and political reforms in Manipur during the 1930s:

The social system in Manipur during the first half of the 20th Century was characterized by a number of evil social practices and feudal taxes. The socio-religious oppressions reached its apogee in the third decade of the present century. Lack of national finances had forced the despotic prince to experiment with a system of fiscal oppression unparalleled in social impact causing deep wounds in the body polity. The most notorious form of socio-religious exploitation was the practice of Mangba-Sengba (the practice of excommunicating a certain community or individual as polluted) which was
appropriately termed as "the Plague" by the then President of Manipur State Durbar, McDonald. Under this practice, the King and the Brahmashabha (religious council of priests) could declare a person or a whole community as polluted and ex-communicate them from the Vaishnavite Hindu society of the Meiteis. The dead bodies of such persons were not allowed to be cremated and no Shrada ceremony was allowed to be performed for them. Yet, such ostracized persons or locality could be re-admitted into the Hindu society after they pay a heavy fine. For salvaging themselves from the decree of ex-communication by the Ratan (an official in the administration), the Brahmashabha and the King, they had to pay fines worth Rs 50, Rs 85 and 23 paisa and Rs 500 respectively.\(^9\) Besides, the whole people in the valley were extremely burdened with feudal taxes and services. The people had to pay Chandan Senkhai (a tax for putting Chandan mark as a sign of Vaishnavism), Panchanapet (five anna levy), Peon Chakthak (ration for the touring peons and amins), Pothang (forced labor to carry the luggage of the touring officers), Dolaireng (carrying palanquins of the nobles), Khewa Lanba (ferry toll collected for crossing rivers though ferry was not maintained by the state), Yairek Santri (keeping vigil on the officials while on tour in the village), etc.

As destiny would have it, it was also during this time that the first generation of educated Manipuris surfaced on the social foreground. Naturally, they could not remain blind to such injustices as mere spectators. Of this new generation, the most prominent was Hijam Irabot Singh. Irabot and his followers revolted against the practice of Mangba-Sengba. Mortal remains of the ostracized persons that were forbidden to be cremated were cremated. Even the dead bodies which were forcibly buried were removed again and cremated. Shrada ceremonies for them were performed on

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Vaishnavite traditions where Irabot himself joined the rituals. The Brahmasabha boycotted them but more and more people joined the movement and made the measures of the Brahmasabha meaningless. Acutely aware about the implications of the developments, the Maharaja also started contemplating ways and means to control the directions of the developments and this led to the emergence of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha.

2.3. Formation of Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM), 1934:

In a move designed to keep Irabot under his control, the Maharaja established a socio-religious organization named the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM) in 1934 with himself as the President and Irabot as Vice-President. The Mahasabha had its first session on 30 May 1934. 100 The Mahasabha had its Second and Third Session on 30 January 1936 at Shilchar and from 28 February to 2 March 1937 at Mandalay respectively. One of the basic objectives of the NHMM was to serve as a common platform for all the Manipuris living inside and outside Manipur so that a sense of unity and oneness among them is strengthened and also to promote their overall welfare. 101 The very First Session of the NHMM passed a number of resolutions emphasizing the need for wide-scale socio-religious reforms for bringing overall development of the state and people living inside it. These resolutions also emphasized the need for women’s education. 102

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100 Loitam Yaima Singh & Rajkumar Maipkasaana Singh: Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha, published by the authors, Imphal, p. 1.
101 Resolution passed in the First Session of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha held on 30 May 1934.
102 Ibid.
2.4. The Manipur Krishak Sanmelani (MKS), 1936:

Soon, it became obvious that Irabot was far from bowing to the designs of the Maharaja. Instead he went just to the opposite direction. Taking advantage of the organization, he started giving awareness to the people about the evil social practices as well as the feudal taxes. Soon he established another social organization named Manipur Krishak Sanmelani in 1936 at Nambol. Irabot appointed Salam Herananda, a Panchayat member, as the President and Maimom Madhumangol Singh as Secretary of the Organization. The Organization revolted against economic exploitation of the common people. The Organization demanded the abolition of Yairek Santri, Peon-Amin Chak-thak, Pothang, Dolaireng, etc. It also demanded the withdrawal of auction system on hills, rivers and lakes. Further, it demanded that the peasants should be the owner of the land and a mound should have only 40 kg.\footnote{Soyam Satradhari Singh: Manipuri Itihastra Irabot, Soyam Publications, Imphal, 1972, p.51.}

2.5. The Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha (NMM), 1938:

The NHMM had its Fourth Session at Chinga on 29 and 30 December, 1938. In this session, all the delegates of NHMM unanimously selected Irabot as the President of the Mahasabha. They passed some very important resolutions which included the following demands:\footnote{Ibid., p.47.}

i. Self-government should be established in Manipur;
ii. Universal Adult Franchise should be introduced at the village level;
iii. Panchayat institutions should be established at the village level;
iv. Administration of hills and plains should be amalgamated;
v. Rani Gaidinliu should be released immediately from the jail;
vi. Yairek Shantri, Peon-Amin Chak-thak, Pothang, Dolaireng, etc., should be immediately abolished;

vii. Schools should be established in every villages;

viii. Free and compulsory primary education should be introduced;

ix. Public health centers, veterinary hospitals and post offices should be established in the villages;

x. Good irrigation facilities should be provided for the agricultural lands;

xi. Auction system on hills, lakes and rivers should be abolished; and

xii. Khewa (ferry) tax should be immediately abolished.

With the adoption of the above resolutions, the NHMM became a political party and no more a socio-religious organization. In this session, the word “Hindu” was also dropped so that the organization could have wider social base and became the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha (NMM) with the word ‘Manipur’ having been replaced by ‘Manipuri’. Soon, on 21 March 1939, A.R.H. MacDonald, the President of the Manipur State Durbar ordered the government employees either to leave their government job or the Mahasabha. As such the Maharaja and most of the government employees left the Mahasabha. However, Irabot and few of his followers, instead of leaving the Mahasabha, resigned from the government posts which they held.

As the first ever political party in Manipur, the NMM started demanding constitutional reforms. By the beginning of 1939, the Mahasabha collected 356 signatories to submit a petition to the Maharaja demanding the establishment of a legislative council in the state. But when the matter was referred to the Durbar, the Durbar decided that it “does not think that the

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105 Loitam Yaima Singh & Rajkumar Maipkasana Singh, op. cit., p. 171.
106 Soyam Satradhari Singh, op. cit., 47.
107 Maharaja’s letter dated 14 February 1939 from Rajbari, Nabadwip, to Mr. McDonald, the President Manipur State Durbar.
establishment of a Legislative Council would contribute anything to the solution of the present problems of Manipur." According to the Durbar, it was certain administrative reforms and not a legislative council that would solve the problems. The Durbar members submitted individually to the President of the Durbar suggestions for reforms. The suggestions included separation of executive and judicial functions of the Durbar, amalgamation of the hills and valley administration, codification of the state rules and regulations, creation of new subdivisions, appointment of a permanent Durbar President, reduction of the Maharaja’s Civil List, strengthening the state police, establishment of a Municipality for Imphal with some elected members as a preliminary measure.

There were two tests according to the President, which must be applied to every proposal of reforms before its advantages could be considered. They were: (1) Can the state pay for it? (2) If not, can the state supply the sort of officer who would be required to carry out this proposal and, if not would the Durbar agree to importing an officer of the required sort? Regarding the demand for some sort of elective representation to the Durbar, he did not feel that “this elective element would increase efficiency in the administration” and that it may have rather an adverse effect. But he said that if it would increase the public confidence in the administration, it might be a good thing and an arrangement with two elected members from Imphal and one from the four Lawai Panas* added to the then existing Durbar

108 Darbar Resolutions No. 8 of 22 February 1939.
109 Ibid.
110 Suggestions of S. Somorendra Singh, Durbar Member, vide his Memo. No. 613 R/1-1 dated 29 April 1939 to the President Manipur State darbar.
111 Memo. No. 3951 G dated 5 May 1939 from A.R.H. McDonald, President Manipur State Darbar, to other Darbar Members.
112 Ibid.
might be tried.\textsuperscript{113} However, the Durbar Members felt that the state will be able to meet the expenditure if the state was "properly developed and efficiently and sympathetically administered as the income of many smaller states in area and population is bigger than that of Manipur."\textsuperscript{114} Regarding the incompetence of the state officials, the Durbar Members put the blame squarely on the system of administration which used Manipur as "a laboratory and training ground for novices."\textsuperscript{115}

Thus, there were differences of opinion between the Durbar Members and the President. The President also objected many of the suggestions of the Durbar. For instance, he opposed the formation of new districts on the ground of being "expensive" and the amalgamation of the two units of administration saying that let the valley be properly governed first and then it will be possible to put up a case to the Central Government for some sort of administration to be extended to the hill men.\textsuperscript{116}

It may be mentioned here that by this time, the Durbar members have jointly agreed with the President that some sort of legislature must be established.\textsuperscript{117} It was in difference to what the Durbar had resolved earlier on 22 February 1939. Perhaps, it was due to the fact that the Durbar Members were beginning to be affected by the introduction of the system of elected representative governments in the provinces of British India, and having second thoughts about the stand they have taken earlier.

It took about two months for the Durbar Members and the President to realize that there was a basic disagreement between them about the nature

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Letter dated 16 May 1939 from A.R.H. McDonald, the President Manipur State Darbar expressing their joint opinion to the latter's Memo. No. 3951 dated 5 May 1939.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} Memo. No. 3951 G dated 5 May 1939 from A.R.H. McDonald, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{117} Letter dated 16 May 1939 from A.R.H. McDonald, op. cit.
of reforms to be introduced in the state. Besides, there was an atmosphere of mutual hostility between the two over an uncalled for remark made by the President about the administrative competence of the Manipuris. Thus, having failed to reach an agreement, the President referred the matter to the Maharaja. The Maharaja in turn reported the matter to the Political Agent. The Political Agent observed that the Durbar Members except the President feel that constitutional reforms were the need of the time. However, the Political Agent himself did not favor it on the ground of lack of finance to meet expenditure and that Manipur was not ripe for a large experiment with democracy. Therefore, he favored administrative reforms. He wrote to the Maharaja:118 "In my considered opinion an improvement in the standard of administration is far more likely to bring contentment to them. It may be that some constitutional reforms are desirable, but it is highly unlikely that any of those suggestions will have any effect in improving the administration".

On the other hand, the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha was demanding consistently for constitutional reforms since its Chinga Session of 1938. It finally submitted to the Maharaja an outline of the legislature which they demanded. It proposed for a unicameral legislature with 100 members out of which 80 will be elected and 20 will be nominated.119 The Mahasabha also organized a civil disobedience movement in Manipur in pursuit of its demands. They shouted slogans like "Bande Mataram", "Hills and Plains are one", "Stop Yairek Santri", "Stop Peon-Amin Chak-thak", etc. and demanded responsible government and election by universal adult franchise.120

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118 A confidential letter dated 11 July from Mr. C. Jimson, to the Maharaja.
119 An outline of the Legislative Assembly, enclosed in the Memo. No. 124, N.M.M, dated 2 November 1939 from the H. Irobat Singh, President, N.M.M.
2.6. Manipur Praja Sanmelani (MPS), 1940:

Just after the outbreak of Second Nupi Lan in 1939, the NMM split into two groups. One group led by H. Irabot Singh wanted to carry forward the struggle against the colonial exploitation while the other opposed the view. The group led by H. Irabot Singh was Communist in nature and the other one was Capitalist in nature. Because of these differences Irabot and his followers left the Mahasabha and formed a new political party on 7 January, 1940. The name of the Party was the Manipur Praja Sanmelani. The President and the General Secretary of the Party were H. Irabot Singh and Elangbam Tompok Singh respectively.\textsuperscript{121} A Working Committee consisting of 26 members was also constituted. The Working Committee passed resolutions like that of starting a civil disobedience movement and non-cooperation movement in Manipur to realize its objectives.\textsuperscript{122} The main objective of this party was the abolition of the colonial and feudal administrative system and the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur.\textsuperscript{123} Thus the party continued the struggle against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism; fought for the socio-economic and political rights of the oppressed people; and demanded a democratic form of government in a peaceful and non-violent way.

2.7. Manipur Praja Mandal (MPM), 1946:

On 7 January 1940 in a meeting, Irabot delivered an allegedly inflammatory speech in connection with the Second Nupilan movement in Manipur. Referring to the blood women shed during the Second Nupilan, he


\textsuperscript{122} L. Ibobi Singh: p.72.

\textsuperscript{123} N. Joykumar Singh: *Social Movements in Manipur (1917-1951)*, Mittal Publications, 1992, New Delhi, p.98.
said that in return of their demand for rice, the women were given blood. The members of the meeting unanimously selected Irabot as the leader of the Nupilan movement and decided to carry forward the agitation. As a result of these developments Irabot was exiled to Syhlet. During his sojourn there Irabot became a Communist. He also joined the First National Congress (meeting) of the Communist Party of India held at Bombay in 1943. In 1946, when Irabot came back to Manipur he realized that the organizations and political parties that were associated with him earlier were no longer functioning properly. He tried to organize the people again so as to start a movement against the British rule and also demand political reforms in Manipur. He formed a new political party on 7 March 1946 named the Manipur Praja Mandal. The main objective of the political party was to re-unite the earlier organizations and the political parties in the state which went defunct during his absence of six consecutive years from Manipur.

2.8. Krishak Sabha (KS), 1946:

The Manipur Krishak Sanmelani was a peasant organization formed in 1936. It stood for the welfare of the peasants. Irabot wanted to strengthen the activities of the organization and with this aim he joined the organization as a member. On 16 May 1946, the Second Session of the Krishak Sanmelani was held at Nambol. In this session, the name of the organization was changed to 'Krishak Sabha' and Irabot was elected as its President and Ibomcha Singh (Ibomcha Kabiraj) as its Secretary. The Krishak Sabha demanded along with many other things, responsible government,


125 Soyam Satradhari, p.62.

development of local self-government, amalgamation of the hills and valley administration, universal adult franchise, etc.\textsuperscript{127} Another objective of the Krishak Sabha was to uphold the cause of peasants.\textsuperscript{128} Collaborating with the Manipur Praja Sangha, the Krishak Sabha made efforts to spread social and political education to the people, particularly those in the villages and rural areas. The party also stood against the formation of a proposed North East Frontier Province. It was also against the increase of tax on agricultural land from rupees six to twelve. This was affected during the Second World War. The Krishak Sabha demanded the reduction of tax to its former rate. It further demanded daily consumable items to be made available to the people at a subsidized rate.\textsuperscript{129}

2.9. Manipur Praja Sangha (MPS), 1946:

Manipur Praja Sangha was formed on 21 August 1946 in a joint meeting of the Manipur Praja Sanmelani and the Manipuri Praja Mandal held at the Mandop of Gouramani Sharma at Kwakeithel. R.K. Bhubonsana presided over the meeting.\textsuperscript{130} The meeting in its resolution No. 1 resolved to merge the two parties and form a new one called Manipur Praja Sangha as the two had similar aims and objectives.\textsuperscript{131} Bhubonsana, Gouramani Sharma and Irabot Singh were elected as President, Working President and General Secretary respectively. The party reiterated "the appeal made earlier by all political parties in Manipur to His Highness, the Maharaja of Manipur to make an

\textsuperscript{127} Th. Bira Singh: \textit{Comrade Irabot}, published on the 78\textsuperscript{th} Birth anniversary of Irabot, Imphal, 1974, p.11.

\textsuperscript{128} N.Ibobi Singh: \textit{Elements of Public Administration in India}, Imphal: Rajshree Books Store, 1974, p.44.

\textsuperscript{129} Soayam Satradhari, p.70.

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{The Resistance}, Imphal, February 1, 1977, p.7.

announcement regarding the establishment of Legislative Assembly and the formation of a Council of Ministers in Manipur.\textsuperscript{132}

With the formation of the Manipur State Congress on 4\textsuperscript{th} October, 1946, a faction of the Manipur Praja Sangha joined it. The other faction led by Irabot decided to continue with the Manipur Praja Sangha, with Irabot and T. Ibotombi Singh elected as the President and the General Secretary of the Party respectively in a meeting held on 6 October 1946.\textsuperscript{133}

The Manipur Praja Sangha organized the First Nupilan Memorial Celebration at Keishamthong on 12 December, 1946.\textsuperscript{134} The party convened a meeting of representatives of various political parties and organizations like the Tangkhulong, the Kuki National Assembly, the Kabui Association, the Kuki Union, the Mizo Union, the Krishak Sabha, the Manipur Praja Sangha, etc. to form a coordinating body in November, 1947 for demanding a fully responsible government in the state.\textsuperscript{135} The party also criticized Mr. F.F. Pearson, the President Manipur State Durbar, for the undemocratic manner in which he tried to constitute a Constitution Making Committee for drafting a constitution for Manipur. It further refuted the self-proclamation of the Congress that it was a party supported by the people at large.

2.10. Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP), 1946:

On 4 October 1946, a joint meeting of the three political parties of Manipur namely - the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha, the Praja Sangha and the Krishak Sabha was held at the Aryan Theatre, Imphal.\textsuperscript{136} For this meeting, a

\textsuperscript{132} Resolution No. 3 of the Manipur Praja Sangha meeting held on 1 September, 1946, at 5pm at the Mandop of Damodar Paul, Keishamthong, with Bhubonsana Rajkumar in the Chair.

\textsuperscript{133} L. Ibobi Singh, p.138-139.

\textsuperscript{134} L. Ibobi Singh, p.139.

\textsuperscript{135} The Resistance, Imphal, November 19, 1977, p.4.

‘Conciliatory Committee’ was formed and all the representatives of the parties were the members of this committee. Actually, the meeting was called with the objective to form a common platform which could represent the general aspirations of the masses. But by the time the meeting started some participants criticized Hijam Irabot Singh because of his communist leanings. Irabot was asked to come out openly about his communist affiliation or otherwise. Not happy with the unexpected turn of developments, Irabot walked out of the party along with his followers. This meant that those who were left attending the meeting were mainly the members of the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha and they agreed to form another political party in Manipur. The new party so formed was the “Manipur State Congress Party”. Rajkumar Bhubonsana Singh was elected as the President and Y. Khoimacha as the General Secretary.

The Manipur State Congress Party stood for the removal of the discriminating socio-economic practices inside the then existing society and for the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur. The party remained as one of the major political parties during the pre-independence period in the state. It got two ministerial seats out of nine seats in the Interim Government under the Chief Ministership of M.K. Priyobrata Singh. In the 1948 Assembly Elections which were held under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947, the Manipur State Congress Party got 14 seats out of 53 seats, of which election was not held in one of the constituencies in the hills. Later, the Manipur State Congress Party became a unit of Indian National Congress.

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137 N. Joykumar Singh, p.100.
138 Views of Phungzathang Tonsing, former President Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee, Imphal.
2.11. Emergence of Political Parties in the Hills:

While the above discussed parties marked the emergence of political parties in the valley, the hills also witnessed the emergence of a number of organizations formed on lines of political parties. With the introduction of modern education and arrival of Christianity in the early 20th Century, the hill people became politically conscious and aware of their separate identity.140 This in turn contributed to the emergence of ethnic politics in the hill areas of the state. As a result, towards the end of the British rule in Manipur, a number of community or ethnic-based socio-political organizations emerged in the hills. Among them, mention can be made of the Tangkhul Long (Tangkhul Naga Long) 1919, the Kabui Samiti of Rongmei (later known as the Kabui Naga Association or Zeliangrong Naga Union) 1934, the Hmar Association 1936, the Vaiphei National Organization 1944, the Kuki National Assembly 1946, etc.141 However, most of them did not last long. Only very few of them emerged ultimately as political parties. The most important among them, perhaps, was that of the Kuki National Assembly.

2.12. Kuki National Assembly (KNA), 1946:

Under the British colonial rule, not only the valley people of Manipur suffered but the people of hill areas also suffered a lot. The evil practices such as ‘Pothang’ (forced labor) were also prevalent in the hill areas of Manipur during the British period. Besides, a new post named ‘Lambu’ was also created and appointed by the British. Initially, Lambus were appointed as interpreters and advisors to the British rulers. By and by, the Britishers started depending more on the Lambus than the Chiefs in administrative matters.142 The creation and appointment of this post in the hill areas was very much resented by the

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141 Ibid.
village chiefs who were heading the administration in their respective villages. So, in order to remove such unwanted things, viz. Lambu, Pothang, etc. the Kuki Chiefs formed an association called the Kuki Chiefs Association in 1935-36. However the association was not successful. Later to promote the interest of the Kukis, the Kuki National Assembly (KNA) was formed on 24 October 1946 at the Kuki Cooperative Society building at Imphal.\textsuperscript{143} The first President and Secretary of the party were S.M. Zavum and T. Kipgen respectively. It was started as a socio-political organization of the Kukis. The KNA, however, adopted its constitution only on 17 October 1969.\textsuperscript{144} It was recognized as a ‘State Party’ by the Election Commission of India and allotted its reserved symbol “Two Leaves” in 1975.\textsuperscript{145}

\textbf{Aims and objectives of the KNA:} The KNA was established solely to protect the interests of the Kukis in Manipur. The party aims at uniting all the Kukis living in different states of India and to stand united by organizing themselves for a political status.\textsuperscript{146} Since 1969, KNA has been working hard for the implementation of Manipur Hill Areas Act 1967, the Manipur Panchayati Raj Bill 1967, the Manipur Nagar Panchayat Bills 1969, etc. It has also been demanding the creation of a new district for Kukis. The party further pledged to improve the living and economic conditions of the Kukis, and to enhance the educational status of the Kukis. The party is committed to the socio-economic and political uplift of the Kukis and it stands for the preservation of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{143} A. Basanta Sharma: \textit{The Emergence and Working of the Manipur People's Party and the Kuki National Assembly in Manipur: A Comparative Study}, unpublished thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, Manipur University, 2003. p.111.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Preamble to the Constitution of the KNA, NE India, as amended at the General Assembly of the party held at N.K.T. Churachandpur from 19\textsuperscript{th} to 21\textsuperscript{st} March, 1986.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Vide Election Commission of India, Notification No. 56/75 – III dated 14\textsuperscript{th} April, 1975.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Preamble to the Constitution of the KNA, NE India, as amended in 1986.
\end{itemize}
Kuki National Culture.\textsuperscript{147} The Party also expresses a strong determination to make a homeland for the Kukis. In a meeting held from 9 to 11 October, 1969, Mr. Haokholet Ngailut, the then general secretary of the party moved a motion to revive the demand of a separate Kuki State within the Union of India, contending that the Kukis are the landless people of India having been ignored and neglected. They observed that the Kukis have suffered enough in the hands of different ethnic armed groups. The KNA has aspirations to mobilize and convince the authorities at the Centre to compensate the community by granting a separate state so that they can live a peaceful life. Hence, the Assembly unanimously resolved to revive and push forward the demand of the Kuki people for Kuki state within the Indian Union.\textsuperscript{148} However, in the 1970s the KNA discontinued the demand for Kuki State and started demanding a separate district for the Kukis in Manipur. It successfully organized a big demonstration on 5 May 1977 in the streets of Imphal demanding the creation of a separate Sadar Hills District.\textsuperscript{149}

Regarding the KNA and the electoral politics of the state, the party did not contest the 1948 Assembly Elections though it was already there by that time. It also did not contest the Territorial Council and the Territorial Assembly elections. It was only since the 1974 that the party joined state assembly elections in Manipur. So far the party has joined the 1974 State Assembly Elections contesting six seats and winning in two; the 1980 State Assembly Elections contesting seven seats and winning in two; the 1984 State Assembly Elections contesting four seats and winning in one; the 1990 State Assembly Elections contesting in eight and winning in two; the 1995 State

\textsuperscript{147} Aims and objectives of the KNA as stated in its Constitution of the KNA, NE India as amended in 1986, p.2.


Assembly Elections contesting six seats but winning in none and the 2000 State Assembly Elections contesting in only one seat and failing to win it.\textsuperscript{150}

Regarding the Lok Sabha elections, the party contested the first ever Lok Sabha elections in Manipur in 1951 from the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency (OMPC). Though it failed to win the seat, it won 15.67\% of the valid votes in the constituency.\textsuperscript{151} Later, it again contested the 1989 Lok Sabha Elections for the same constituency winning 22.9\% of the valid votes polled.\textsuperscript{152} All the Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies contested by the party were reserved seats in the hills of the state.

2.13. Growth of Political Parties in post-independence period of Manipur:

Most of the political parties which emerged in Manipur before independence ceased to exist by 1948. The Manipur State Congress and the Kuki National Assembly were two of the very few which continued to be there after independence. Soon the void left by the early parties was filled up by a number of new political organizations which may be described as forerunners of the present political parties. Mention among them may be made of the Gandhi Sevak Sabha, All Manipur National Union, Historical Research Committee, Achumba Pamba Congress, Naga National League, Mizo Union, Manipur Zeliangrong Union, Mao Maram Union, etc.\textsuperscript{153} There were also the Hmar Congress (1954), Paite National Council (1956), Gangte Tribal Union (1958).\textsuperscript{154} There were also the Hmar National Union (1962), Zeliangrong Naga

\textsuperscript{151} Statistical Report on General Elections, 1951 to the First Lok Sabha Volume I.
\textsuperscript{152} Statistical Report on General Elections, 1989 to the Ninth Lok Sabha Volume I.
Union, Paomei National Union (1962), etc. The year 1968 saw the emergence of perhaps the most important of all the regional parties of Manipur – the Manipur People’s Party. This was followed by the Manipur National Organization (1972), Manipur Hill Union (1974), Ereipak Leishemba Party (1980), Manipur Nationalist Democratic Party (1982), etc.


In spite of the considerable number of political parties emerging during the post-INdependence period, only few of them were both registered as well as recognized by the Election Commission of India like the Kuki National Assembly (KNA), Manipur People’s Party (MPP), Federal Party of Manipur (FPM) and Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP). They were all recognized

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157 Gokul. Th. Singh (197, p. 35.
160 Interview with Ksh. Biren Singh, Ex-MLA, MPP, former Minister of FCS, on 2 June 2005.
161 Constitution of the Naga National party, p. 3.
162 Interview with K K. Anand, Spokesperson, PRPP, on 20 June 2005.
164 The Sangai Express, an English local daily, Imphal, 30 April, 2001, p.1.
165 According to the Election Commission of India, to get recognition as a state level party, a political party must get atleast 6% vote of total votes polled in the Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha election and
as regional or state political parties. The socio-economic and political background of the registered and recognized regional political parties and some important registered but not yet recognised regional political parties of Manipur are being discussed hereunder.

2.14. Manipur People’s Party (MPP), 1968:

The Manipur People’s Party was born of an extreme necessity to have a regional political party to safeguard the ethnic identity of the people, protect the territorial integrity, check economic decadence and promote regional interests of state in general.\(^{166}\) Thus, the main purpose for the formation of the MPP was to safeguard and uphold the interests of the people of the state and for their advancement in socio-economic and political spheres. The Party stands for regionalism and greater autonomy of the state. The Party was formed on 26 December, 1968 at a meeting convened by Shri Chaoyalma Singh, Shri Nilachandra, Y. Yaima Singh and S. Tombi Singh.\(^{167}\) The Constitution of the Party defines the Party as “a voluntary organization of the people who live in Manipur”\(^{168}\) and that it was formed “to establish an egalitarian society based on democratic socialism”.\(^{169}\) It also stood for safeguarding the interests of Manipur, for its political, economic and social uplift and preserving its cultural and racial identity within the constitutional framework of the country. The Party is also committed to protect the territorial integrity of the state and ethnic and cultural identity of the people inside the state in consonance with

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\(^{166}\) Ng. Kumarjit Singh, op. cit. p.36.


\(^{169}\) Ibid.
the spirit of the Indian Constitution.\textsuperscript{170}

The First Conference of the Party was held on 27 January 1969 at the Aryan Theatre Hall, Imphal.\textsuperscript{171} In the early 1970s, the MPP attracted many students and youths. However, the number of students, former teachers and female members in other parties were negligible at that time. Like any other party, the MPP is supported by a combination of all sorts of sections of society. The social base of the regional political parties in Manipur including the MPP are subject to wide fluctuations and no political party can claim to have a clearly defined social support base valid for all parts and sections of the state.\textsuperscript{172}

Usually, a regional party is interested in the promotion of a certain group or groups' welfare. Its scope of operation is restricted to the articulation of a limited set of interest with its area of influence confined to a particular area. It also depends on the political support of the people who live in a relatively compact geographical area. All these features of a regional party will also be true for the MPP. So far as this Party's presence in the state assembly is concerned, it may be said that it has at times successfully represented the valley area of the state. However, its success in the hills has been much less. The non-Manipuri businessmen and traders view the party as an anti-outsider, overtly pro-Manipuri and biased against the non-Manipuri sections of the elite.\textsuperscript{173} The Party proclaims that it is the only alternative political party in the state that would work on the lines of regional aspirations that has been ignored by the national parties. The Party gained ground on the

\textsuperscript{170} Kshetrimayum Kenedy Singh, Parties and Politics in Manipur (1985-2000), unpublished M.Phil. thesis submitted to the Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi, 2000, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{171} Y. Yaima Singh, ‘Eikhoi! Wakhal, 8\textsuperscript{th} Annual Conference of MPP, 26 December, 1975, p.11.
\textsuperscript{172} Kshetrimayum Kenedy Singh, Parties and Politics in Manipur (1985-2000), unpublished M.Phil. thesis submitted to the Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi, 2000, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{173} S.K. Chauba, Electoral Politics in North East India, Delhi, University Press (India), 1985, p.131.
plank of regional character and claims that it alone could bring prosperity in Manipur. It demands greater autonomy for the state so as to enable it to struggle for safeguarding the ethnic identity and cultural heritage of the Manipuris. The MPP highlighted certain problems both in the society and polity by championing various issues from time to time even though the party could not bring any consistent and logical approach towards solving the problems. In the absence of any substantial issue, the Party performs like any other small party, confining itself to a particular sub-region because of its topographical and cultural legacies. Even though it has been trying to absorb dominant political groups, the Party itself is not free from the process of fission and fusion. S. Tombi Singh was the first President of the MPP. The party was recognised by the Election Commission of India as a state political party on 13 July 1971 with a permanent symbol of Bicycle, on the performance of the votes polled by the Party in the 1971 Lok Sabha Elections. ^174

**Objectives of the Manipur People’s Party:** The party adopted its constitution in the year 1969. As per the Preamble to the Constitution, the main objective of the party is “to achieve politically, socially and economically by democratic and peaceful means the wellbeing and advancement of the people of Manipur”. ^175 It also aims to establish an egalitarian society based on democratic socialism. ^176 Other basic objectives of the party may also be enumerated as follows: ^177

i) to safeguard the territorial integrity of Manipur and ethnic identity of the people;

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^175 Ibid.
^176 Ibid.
^177 Ibid, p.76.
ii) to safeguard the interest of the Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes, and other minorities for their development according to their own capacities;

iii) to preserve and promote the different arts, culture and tradition of the hill and valley people in Manipur; and

iv) to take initiative for strengthening communal harmony.

The Party emerged as the main rival of the Congress party in Manipur mainly during the period from 1972 to till around 2000.

The MPP has been contesting all the state assembly and Parliament elections since 1972. The Party led coalition ministries inside the state on three occasions during the period 1972 to 2000. They were -

1) from 23 March 1972 to 28 March 1973;
2) from 4 March 1974 to 8 July 1974; and

Md. Alimuddin was the Chief Minister on the first two occasions, and R.K. Ranbir Singh was the Chief Minister in the third phase. They were there in five more coalition ministries. MPP had also succeeded in getting the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency in the Lok Sabha Elections in 1991. The successful candidate was Y. Yaima Singh. During his tenure as an MP of the Lok Sabha, Manipuri language was included in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India. Some of the major achievements of the MPP while in power in the state have been as follows.\footnote{The Constitution – The Manipur People’s Party. Article-II, p.2.}

i. The establishment of the Board of Secondary Education Manipur in 1972;

ii. The establishment of the Regional Medical College at Lamphelpat;
iii. The opening and establishment of Post Graduate Studies centre of Jawaharlal Nehru University at Canchipur;

iv. The establishment of Manipur Public Service Commission;

v. The establishment of Khandsari Sugar Mill, Wangbal;

vi. The establishment of Spinning Mill, Loitang Khunou, etc.,

2.15. The United Naga Integration Council (UNIC), 1972:

The United Naga Integration Council was formed in 1972. This party was established under the leadership of Rishang Keishing, a Naga leader who was expelled from the Congress Party. After getting expelled from the party he along with some Naga leaders formed this Party on the eve of the 1972 State Assembly Elections.\(^{179}\) As the name of the Party itself suggests, it was a party meant for the promotion of the interests of the Nagas.

2.16. The Manipur Hills Union (MHU), 1972:

The Manipur Hills Union (MHU) was formed by seven MLAs from the hills in December 1972. These MLAs were elected from different political parties. The leader of the Party was Yangmaso Shaiza.\(^{180}\) The Party lasted hardly five years and it contested only one state assembly election – the Second State Assembly Elections, 1974. Yet, during its lifetime the party played a significant role in the state politics of Manipur as it was a coalition partner in four consecutive coalition ministries during the period from March 1974 to May 1977. The Party actually led a coalition ministry during the period from 10 July to 5 December 1974. It was a party committed to the promotion of the overall general interests of the people in the hills of the state. The Party also won as many as 12 seats in the 1974 elections. However, the Party disappeared completely from state politics by the middle of 1997 as all the


\(^{180}\) Ibid., p. 48.
MLAs of the party defected to other political parties, mostly to the Janata Party.

2.17. National People's Party (NPP), 1989:

The political developments following the merger of Manipur into India did not please many. For one, Manipur got reduced to that of a Part “C” State without a Legislative Assembly which basically meant the denial of the Right to Self-Government to the people. The politics in Manipur during the period of Territorial Council and the Territorial Assembly was also characterized by utter lack of stability due to the failure of parties to win a majority in all the elections before Manipur got statehood. This phenomenon continued after statehood as well. The resultant political instability led to further disappointment with the existing political trends in general and that of the Congress party in particular. Against the backdrop of such developments some Gandhians who were already active in the electoral politics of the state for quite a long time, started thinking about new ways and means to do something with a view to promote a healthier electoral politics inside the state which in turn will facilitate all round development of the state. The most prominent among them was Nongthombam Ibomcha Singh of Sagolband Tera (Patsoi Assembly Constituency) who was also popularly known as Tera Laimu. He was already a veteran of state politics and administration having served as a minister and an MLA during the days of the Territorial Council. He was joined by other like-minded persons like Wahengbam Iboyaima Singh (Teacher) of Sagolband Nepra Menjor (Sagolband Assembly Constituency) and Kongrailatpam Brajamohon Dev Sharma (Journalist) of Naoremthong Uripok (Uripok Assembly Constituency), etc.

Later, they together with some other leaders from both the hills and the valley discussed about the formation of a political party with a national
outlook. In fact, they wanted to bring a dynamic political culture in the state politics of Manipur. A convention was held on 13 January 1989 at K. Brajamohon Dev Sharma's Mandop, at Naoremthong Uripok, Imphal West District, for the formation of the new political party. It was attended by many people from both the hills and plains including academicians, social workers and journalists, and it was in this convention that the formation of the National People's Party was announced with N. Ibomcha Singh as its President. The registration number of the Party with the Election Commission is recorded as Regn.No.162/89 & 196/91, and the Party was included in the list of registered unrecognized state party.

**Objectives of the NPP:** The emblem of the party throws significant light on the basic nature and objectives of the party. It is a map of India with the words *Bashu Deibu Kutum Bakam* at the centre in Deva Nagri Lipi which means 'The world is a family'. The Constitution of the Party also describes these words in the emblem as a reiteration of the idea that we human beings are all brothers and sisters.

As per the Constitution of the party, the following are the main objectives of the party:

i. To strengthen secularism, Gandhian thought, truth and equality;

ii. To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity & integrity of India;

iii. To work towards improving relations among all the units of the Indian Union on the basis of the principle of mutual respect; and

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182 Ibid.,
183 In a circular of the NPP announcing the party performance issued by General Secretary of the party on the eve of state assembly election 1995 said "Our party (NPP) is revived from the Praja Shanti in the year 1948. This party was in the formation of government in Manipur in the year 1948"
185 Ibid.,
186 Ibid.,
iv. To save India from foreign aggression; and to protect its boundary and property; etc.

2.18. Naga Nationalist Party (NPP), 1999:

The Naga Nationalist Party (NNP) emerged from a sense of disillusionment on the part of certain sections of the Nagas due to the absence of effective and accountable government inside the state for a long time; rampant defection among MLAs which rendered politics inside the state utterly devoid of moral values; failure of the state government to address the problem of Naga insurgency justly; etc.\(^{187}\) They also condemned the then existing parties and their politicians for their lack of professionalism in all fields ranging from education to politics; their lack of honesty and integrity; etc. They also alleged that all the earlier governments have not given proper attention to the genuine voices of the Nagas. It was against the backdrop of such a sense of disillusionment on the part of these Nagas that the NNP emerged.

The Party was formed by Naga leaders from Manipur, Nagaland and Assam in a meeting held in March 1999 at Dimapur Townhall, Nagaland. Some of the prominent leaders among them were Ng. Hungyo from Ukhrul, Manipur and a former member Janata Dal and ex-Gen Secretary Samata Party of Manipur unit; Sumir Huska from Nagaland, ex-Minister of Nagaland Government and former member of Janata Dal (U) and Nagaland Peoples Council; Mr. Horangse, ex-Minister of Nagaland Government and former President of Dimapur Naga Council; etc.\(^{188}\) Ng. Hungyo was elected as the President of the Party. Area of function of the Party was to be the entire North Eastern Region. However, within no time the Naga leaders from outside the

\(^{188}\) Ibid.,
state withdrew away from the Party and it finally emerged as a regional party of the state.

**Objectives of the NNP:** The NNP is a party which proclaims true allegiance to the Constitution of India and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy. It also promises to uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India. It also believes that political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy which means a way of life that recognizes justice, liberty, equality and fraternity.\(^{189}\) It is also a party that will work as a political platform for all the Naga people in the North East region.\(^{190}\) Regarding the Nagas, the Party stands for the following:

i. to promote emotional integration and unity, and build up the spirit of oneness amongst all Nagas;

ii. to help in bringing a lasting and peaceful political solution to the age-old Naga political issue through dialogue; and

iii. to maintain Naga identity in letter and spirit.\(^{191}\)

Other important objectives of the Party have been to promote good neighborly relations with all the neighboring states in the North East region in particular and with all the other states in India in general; to work for the welfare of all the people in North East; to strive towards a corruption-free society; to establish a clean, transparent and effective administration; to secure decentralization of power from the hands of few to the people at large; etc.\(^{192}\)

2.19. Kanglei League (KL), 1973:

The Kanglei League was formed in 1973. It was an offshoot of a socio-

\(^{189}\) Ibid.,
\(^{190}\) Ibid.,
\(^{191}\) Ibid., p. 4
\(^{192}\) Ibid.,
cultural organisation called the Pan-Manipur Youth League. The Kanglei
League was led by Nandalal Sharma, Major Tejen Yambem, Major (Retd.)
Nilakamal, N. Sarat, etc.\textsuperscript{193} Later, A.K. Sanaton with many other members of
MPP joined the Party.\textsuperscript{194}

The Kanglei League stood for the protection of the unique identity of
the Manipuris by a peaceful and consensus method; and to bring an all round
advancement and development in the state; and to establish a democratic,
socialist and secular nation.\textsuperscript{195}

The Party alleged that the issues raised by the Party have been those
which have been neglected for long by the government of India and that
Manipur has been given a step-motherly treatment all the while. It also
alleged that the Central Government interfered with not only the legislative
power of the state but also with the customs and traditions and also in the
field of trade and commerce of the state. All these have adversely affected the
interests of the state and its people. So, the party in its Second Convention in
1974 listed three different categories of demands viz, a) political demands, b)
economic demands and c) social demands which were as follows:\textsuperscript{196}

i) Political demands: The political demands included, granting autonomy
to Manipur (as a unit of India); removing all suppressive laws; taking up
strong measures to stop using money power in politics; and restoration
of the Kabaw Valley to Manipur.

\textsuperscript{193} Interview with A.K. Sanaton, General Secretary, MPP, 11 September 2002.
\textsuperscript{194} A. Basanta Sharma: The Emergence and Working of the Manipur People's Party and the Kuki
National Assembly in Manipur: A Comparative Study, unpublished thesis submitted to the
Department of Political Science, Manipur University, 2003. p.86.
\textsuperscript{195} The Constitution of the Kanglei League, 1974, p.1.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
ii) Economic demands: Economically, the Party demanded that the Central Government should take up appropriate measures to make the state self-sufficient. It also demanded that medium-size industries should be established in Manipur and that the amount of money given for the development of the state should be enhanced.

iii) Social demands: Under this category of demands the party demanded the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the VIII Schedule of the Indian Constitution; replacement of the Bengali Script by the Meitei Script; the introduction of the studies of hill people’s language at the level of lower primary classes as a step to uplift the hill people’s languages. Lastly, it demanded that a government should be created to search the origin, culture and language of different communities in Manipur.

2.20. Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP), 1997:

The Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) was formed in December 1997. It was also an offshoot of the state unit of the Indian National Congress. There was one Congress regime led by Rishang Keishing inside the state about the time of its formation. It so happened that W. Nipamacha Singh, the then Speaker in the State Legislative Assembly along with some other Congress MLAs left the Party and formed the MSCP with Nipamacha as its President. The MSCP succeeded in toppling the Rishang Ministry.

Objectives of the Manipur State Congress Party: The important objectives of the Party were as follows:197

i. To achieve honest and true faith and allegiance to the people;

ii. To secure harmony and co-existence of all the people;

iii. To bring welfare and justice - social and economic, to the people irrespective of caste, tribe, religion, creed, etc.;
iv. To propagate and bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India; and
v. To uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India, and also the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy.

The Party was also committed to the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958, re-Introduction of the Inner-Line Permit System, bringing railways to Manipur, introducing capacity-building programs for the youths, formation of a women’s welfare policy, introduction of land reforms, devolution of power to Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads, formation of a welfare policy for the Scheduled Tribes in the valley, development of the hills, rooting out of corruption, etc. 198

Article-iii of the Constitution of MSCP describes about the flag. The party flag has three colours vertically arranged with saffron at the left, white in the middle and green at the right. Saffron represents sacrifice and service above self, White represents peace and harmonious co-existence of all the communities inside the state and Green represents harmonious progress towards maximum welfare of the people. The territorial map of Manipur, which is also the emblem of the party, is at the centre of the white portion of the flag representing territorial integrity and co-existence. There is also a wheel and a plough over it with the blade of the plough being shown downwards from the right. The wheel at the centre represents industrial

198 Election Manifesto of the MSCP, the 9th Manipur State Assembly Elections, 2007.
revolution for the labourers and the plough represents agricultural revolution for the welfare of the tillers.\textsuperscript{199}

**Electoral performance of the Manipur State Congress Party:** The Manipur State Congress Party became a very important regional political party in the state right from its inception. The Party ruled the State from 1997 to 2002. In 2000 State Assembly Elections, MSCP got 23 seats as the single largest party, and led a coalition government. But, in 2002 State Assembly Elections, the party got seven seats and became one of the partners of a coalition government i.e., the Secular Progressive Front led by the Congress from 2002 to 2007. The Manipur State Congress Party is one of the strongest local parties in Manipur, which could compete and even defeated the well established Indian National Congress in the State. One of the most remarkable achievements of the MSCP when it was ruling the state was bringing to a close the Zomi-Kuki ethnic violence in the Churachandpur District in 1999.\textsuperscript{200}

2.21. Democratic Revolutionary People’s Party (DRPP), 1999:

The Democratic Revolutionary People’s Party (DRPP) was formed in a meeting held on 12 July 1999 at 9.00 a.m. at the residence of Mr. Udoi Thongam at Canchipur popularly known as “Thongam Cottage”.\textsuperscript{201} The meeting was attended by 84 members representing people from different socio-economic and political backgrounds and various sections of society. The meeting was presided by Dr. M. Jitendra Singh, Professor of History Department, Manipur University.


\textsuperscript{200} General Secretary, MSCP, “The objectives and the achievement of Manipur State Congress Party, in 2\textsuperscript{nd} August 1999, Imphal, Manipur, p.3.

Objectives of the Democratic Revolutionary People's Party:

The objectives of the DRPP are as follows:\textsuperscript{202}

i. Reconciliation amongst the people of different communities;

ii. Sustainable economic development in the state by providing 50,000 jobs;

iii. Conflict resolution through political dialogue;

iv. Protection of human rights by forming State Human Rights Commission;

v. Women empowerment by setting up State Women's Commission;

vi. Promotion of centre-state relations with maximum state autonomy;

vii. Adoption of a new education policy and conversion of Manipur University to a central university;

viii. Eradication and control of HIV/AIDS; and

ix. Protection of the territorial integrity of Manipur.

Electoral Performance of DRPP: During its short life-span (1999-2006) the party contested only the $8^{th}$ State Legislative Assembly Elections in 2002. In that election, the party won two seats out of 23 candidates contesting the elections. The successful candidates were Dr. T. Meinya Singh from Konthoujam Assembly Constituency and N. Biren Singh from Heingang Assembly Constituency. Initially they were in the opposition group called Democratic People's Alliance. Later, Dr. T. Meinya got Cabinet Minister.

\textsuperscript{202} ibid, p.96.
2.22. Conclusion:

The closing years of the British rule in Manipur witnessed the emergence of a number of political parties inside the state. Their emergence occurred against the backdrops of demands for socio-religious and political reforms in Manipur during the 1930s and the mid-1940s. The main agenda of the political parties were those of establishment of a responsible government, right to self-government, a legislative assembly comprising elected representatives of the people through election on the basis of universal adult franchise, etc. There was proliferation of political parties under the leadership of one leader in particular, i.e. H. Irabot Singh. Overlapping of membership among different political parties was also there. Elements of conflict and competition were also to be found. Instances of merger and split of political parties were also seen during this period. The political parties gave awareness to the people not only about the discriminating socio-religious practices but also about their rights and liberties. Indeed, the credit for the adoption of the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and holding of elections based on the principle of universal adult franchise in 1948 goes to all the political parties which emerged during the pre-independence period in Manipur. The mushrooming of regional parties in Manipur continued after her merger into India and becoming a part of the Indian Union. The geographical features of the state and also the diverse composition of the people of the state had a significant influence on the formation of the regional parties of the state. Most of them remained confined to either in the valley or in the hills. The social and mass bases of many of these parties also remained confined to different groups of communities like either the Naga group of tribes or the Kuki-Chin-Mizo group of tribes. This has resulted in the limited appeal of these parties to the people of the state at large and significantly contributed to their
failure to sustain themselves over a long period of time, and also their failure the electoral politics of the state. Nonetheless, they helped in giving expression to the diverse aspirations of the different sections of the population inside the political system of the state.

It may also be noted that ethnicity have remained so far as the main pivot around which regional parties have been formed, and as such they emerged mainly with a view to promote the interests of these specific communities. It may also be noted that ethnicity have remained so far as the main pivot around which regional parties have been formed, and as such they emerged mainly with a view to promote the interests of these specific communities. Compared to them, the regional parties originating from the valley emerged with a much wider perspective of things in that their primary objective have always been the promotion of the overall interests of the state and people living therein.

There have also been a few regional parties like the MPP, the MSCP and the FPM which have made a significant impact in the politics of the state. They not only have had significant successes in the history of electoral politics inside the state but also have played a significant role in the formation of coalition ministry, and on many occasions they have led coalition ministries inside the state. In fact, in a state where no political party had ever won a majority in any of the assembly elections before the 2012 State Assembly Elections, they often played a crucial role in the formation or overthrowing of coalition ministries, a trend which continued till the coming of the 91st Constitution Amendment, 2003 which effectively prevented not only individual but also group defections. This in turn also marked the decline of regional parties inside the state.