

**FEDERAL PARTY
OF
MANIPUR
1993-2000 AD**

MOREM JOYKUMAR SINGH

7822542

P06-CL

7977

**FEDERAL PARTY OF MANIPUR
(1993-2000) A.D.**



Naorem Joykumar Singh

AKANSHA PUBLISHING HOUSE

NEW DELHI-110002

Call No.....324. 273225417
Acc. No.....7977

AKANSHA PUBLISHING HOUSE

4649-B/21, Ansari Road
Darya Ganj, New Delhi - 110 002
Email: ektabooks@yahoo.com
Ph.: 23263193/9811582579

FEDERAL PARTY OF MANIPUR (1993-2000)

© Author

First Published 2006

ISBN—81-8370-047-0

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior permission of the author.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

[The responsibility for the facts stated, conclusions reached etc. is entirely that of the Authors. The publisher is not responsible for them, whatsoever.]

PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by M.P. Misra for Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi
and Printed at Tarun Offset Press, Delhi

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	xi
1. Prelude	1
2. Parturition	19
3. Legitimization of the organization	34
4. Participation in the art of governance	58
5. Involvement in public issues.	81
6. New Frontrunner	105
7. Conclusion	115
Appendices	125
Bibliography	138
Index	141

PREFACE

Right from the beginning of 20th century the people of Manipur had enjoyed an opportunity to witness the nature of the working system of the political parties. It is a fact that the birth of political parties is a direct outcome of the maturity of the growth of political consciousness among the people of the state and it produced a very good substantial impact on the political life of the state. Manipur state is indeed, a creation of many trial and errors in the course of her history. To reach to the position of nation stage in the 18th century from a very fragmentary stage of tribalism is not a matter of sheer luck. It was a great contribution of the people of this state. From the last part of the 19th century she again witnessed a new system of colonial administration under British. Then with the introduction of new education system the people began to imbuse with the modern political consciousness and gradually the idea for a distinctive political identity was emerged in the minds of the people. Ultimately it led to the birth of political parties for the strengthening of a new political system based on democratic principle. Thus the political parties played a very important role in moulding the minds of the people for a better future of the state.

Many books have been published by different writers on the history of the political parties. From these writings people came to be aware of the objectives, ideologies, principles and participation of various political parties in

the governance of the state and their involvement in the welfare of the people. Thus through these books people are able to assess the positive contribution which they rendered for the strengthening of the moral standard of the common people in a democratic set up.

But so far, as Manipur is concerned unfortunately still people are not able to see any book written on the history of political parties in a more analytical way. It is true that Manipur has a very good experience of the working of the political parties but due to lack of documented paper works the common people are not fully aware of the nature of working of these political parties and their political participation in the governance of the state. Now a new trend has emerged in the state under which many young researchers are trying to understand nature of working of the political parties in the state with an objective to visualize the possible future course of political trend of the state and people.

Seeing the dearth of even the non-availability of well-research works on the history of the political parties and considering the immediate need for such kind of work I thought that if some attempt is made on this area which could be a great contribution to further research. Keeping this view into consideration I have selected the 'Federal Party of Manipur' as a topic of my work. So far as my knowledge is concerned, this party has a distinctive objective, ideology and agenda which are drastically different from other political parties. The objective and agenda of this political party is quite relevant to this present political scenario particularly in the context of the mainstream of Indian. I believe politics also that in future many research workers who intend to work on the same field would make a serious attempt to analyse working value of other political parties.

In the process of the preparation of this book I took help and suggestions from many close comrades of different disciplines. Specially I would like to express my

sincere thanks to the office assistance of Federal Party of Manipur for providing me all possible facilities. I also thank both the staff members of the Centre for Manipur Studies and the Office of the Dean of Social Sciences for their full co-operation. My thanks also go to Dr. S. Amal Singh, Shri K. Meghachandra Singh and Shri A. Koireng Singh for their physical contribution and moral encouragement in the process of the final preparation of this book. I am also fully convinced that without the sincere help of my family members I will not be able to complete my task. The successful completion of my work was made possible only with the help of my wife and children. Therefore, I also thank the members of my family for their sincere help.

Lastly, I also thank Shri M.P. Misra, the Proprietor of Akansha Publishing House whom I always consider a motivating force for my academic work for his kind acceptance to publish the book.

N. JOYKUMAR SINGH

CHAPTER ONE

PRELUDE

The first part of the twentieth century was a significant period in the political history of Manipur. Indeed, it may be treated as the gestation period for the emergence of the idea of the establishment of political parties in the state. The concept of political party was a direct outcome of the maturity of the growth of political consciousness among the common people of Manipur. The year 1934 may be marked as the year of the attainment of the maturity of the growth of political consciousness in the state. The birth of the 'Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha' as a socio-religious organization with an objective to promote the idea of pan-Manipuri identity may be treated as the foundation stone for the birth of political parties in the state. The concept of a distinctive identity of the Manipuri people was promoted by some young educated elites who were greatly influenced by the Indian national liberation movement. They strongly opposed the colonial and feudal system of administration. Their only dream was to establish a new system of administration and political concept based on democratic principle. At the same time they also tried to remove all sorts of social evils which were considered as an obstacle towards the establishment of social evils which were considered as an obstacle towards the establishment of social equilibrium among the different groups of people of Manipur.

The year 1938 was a great landmark in the history of the political parties of Manipur. It marked the beginning of the existence of political parties in the state. The birth of '*Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha*' as a political party with a basic objective for the 'establishment of a responsible government' in mNipur may be considered as a direct blow of the existence of the colonial and feudal system of administration in the state. Under the banner of this party, the people, who strongly believed in the democratic principles, have launched different types of political actions for the fulfilment of their demands like the 'establishment of responsible government' in Manipur and amalgamation of the administration of hills and plain etc. The demand for the establishment of a legislature of unilateral system with a hundred legislators of whom not less than 80 would be nominated by the Maharaja was a big contribution of this political party to the people of Manipur. These political parties were established in the pre-merger period of Manipur. The establishment of these political parties with political and social objectives has, undoubtedly laid a very good foundation for the emergence of other political parties with a new political concept based on social and economic reality.

Just after the merger of Manipur into India in the year 1949 the people of Manipur again witnessed political activities of different political organizations. The establishment of *Praja Socialist Party (PSP)*, *Nationalist Socialist Democratic Party (NSDP)*, *Kuki National Assembly (KNA)*, *Manipur People Party (MPP)*, *Kanglei League*, *Manipur Hill Union (MHU)*, etc. have produced a new political outlook among the people of Manipur. With the growth of these state based political organizations, the idea of regionalism within the framework of the national political mainstream also gradually emerged in the minds of the people. The assertion of local interest or regional political identity particularly in the context of Manipur was mainly due to the birth of these political organizations. Therefore the establishment of the Federal

Party of Manipur may be taken as a step towards the reassertion for the promotion of the political identity of Manipur within the framework of the national political arena.

Federal Party of Manipur was established as a state level political organization on the foundation of some historical facts. It was an outcome of a series of informal discussions and debates of some prominent academicians and social workers of the state. The focal point of their debate and discussion was based on certain key issues of political, social, economic and cultural conditions of the state which was developed just after the merger of Manipur into India in the year 1949. While discussing the overall issues of the state they also made an intensive critical study of the integrity, sincerity and political wisdom of the national level political parties particularly in their relationship with the political situation of Manipur. Apart from this they also studied very carefully the political concept and principle of some regional political organizations. After having a close observation of the political attitude of these existing political parties they came to a conclusion that in exercising their political wisdom in the state they had little degree of sincerity and honesty in their approach. Therefore they were not able to understand fully the feeling of the people of Manipur. On the basis of this conclusion they were of the view that the existing undesirable political situation in the state was the outcome of the relationship between the national political parties and common people.

Manipur was integrated into India through a rough political weather. As a result of this, a serious debate is going on among the academicians and social activists on the nature and response of the common people on the merger issue and the political motive of the leaders of the Congress Party of both the 'State' and the 'Centre'. But one point was very clear in the mind of the people particularly the younger generation that the merger of Manipur into India was not on the line of the policy and

principle of transparency. Therefore, they expressed their resentment to the blunder committed by the Maharaja of Manipur. The Indian Independence Act 1947 empowered the princely states of India either to join India or Pakistan or to become an independent state. But the Maharaja of Manipur did not opt for an independent Manipur. Instead of this he signed the '*Stand Still Agreement*' on the 11th August 1947 by which Manipur accepted the Indian suzerainty in respect of some key affairs like, 'Foreign Affairs, Finance, Communication, Defense', etc., The Maharaja also signed the Instrument of Accession Act on the same date. So, the signing of these two treaty documents produced a confusion in the political status of Manipur. Some writers made an attempt to project the political status of Manipur from 1947 to 1949 i.e. pre-merger period, as that of an independent state. This matter is still a subject of serious debate and further observations and interpretations may be required. Then on the 21st September 1949 the Maharaja of Manipur signed the merger agreement and on the 15th October Manipur was officially merged into India. A general feeling existed in the mind of the common people that the Maharaja of Manipur was compelled under duress to sign the '*Merger Agreement*'. This is of one of the most important factor for the growth of unhappiness among the people particularly towards the Government of India. Indeed, if we go a bit deeper into detail on the whole political drama which was going on in Manipur and the activities and policies of the leaders of the Indian government, we can come to a safe conclusion that the Maharaja of Manipur might have been compelled to sign the merger agreement due to a serious psychological torture inflicted on him by the Indian political leadership. Thus one silly mistake on the political decision of the government of Manipur or the ignorance of the ruler of the state had brought a drastic negative change to the future political status of Manipur.

The elements of the pro-merger group had strongly

advocated that the integration of Manipur into India would bring peace and development in the state. But when it comes to reality things began to change beyond expectation and desire. This stage was the most pitiable political position of Manipur. Even the leaders of the pro-merger elements was also quite taken aback to see the new political development. Instead of giving the equal political status with the other states of India, the central government abolished all the democratic institutions which were established under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 and entire responsibility of the administration was put under the care of a single bureaucratic officer. The refusal of the Government of India to establish the responsible government in Manipur was based mainly on the pretext of the lack of democratic experience. From the evidence it can be observed that their view was highly politically motivated because the people of Manipur had more political experience than the people of the rest of India. Then on the 22nd January 1950 the Government of India by an official declaration, granted Manipur the political status of a 'Part C' state under the Constitution of India. After twenty three years of central rule Manipur was granted 'Statehood' in 1972. That too happened after having witnessed a series of political agitations, which caused bitterness and mutual mistrust. The people, after getting the experience of unfair deal from of the Government of India, felt that the central leaders neglected them and gradually their sense of dissatisfaction and alienation were expressed in different forms.

The post-merger economic condition in Manipur was not to the satisfaction and desire of the people. After having a close observation of the economic trend in this state from the time of the integration the general people began to feel that Manipur had become a victim of neo colonialism. Though it is not required to go into detail it can be recalled that the present trend of economic growth in this state was the outcome of the removal of restriction

imposed on the non-Manipuri people on the 18th November 1950. If the merits and demerits of this system are to be analysed it can be suggested that it rendered a great help to the people of Manipur in general in the process of the protection of local people from all possible aspects of the economic exploitation from the capitalist elements of other areas. But just after the removal of this system the traders from outside the state began to enter into Manipur without any restriction and started to play a dominating role in the economic life of the state. To see these undesirable economic conditions of the state and the role played by the outside traders, the members of the 'Assembly Demand Co-ordination Committee' submitted a memorandum to the President of India in which they regarded the new administrative policy of the Central Government as a systematic practice for 'gradual-de-Manipurization'. These deteriorating economic positions of the Manipuri people were further intensified by the rampant corruption in the administration led by a highly irresponsible political leadership and manned by a non-committed bureaucracy. They were not ready to take any type of responsibility either for the development of the state or to take care of the feeling, aspiration and interest of the common people of Manipur. The developmental funds have not reached to the needy persons of urban, rural and tribal areas. They were not prepared to provide the scope for the promotion of a self-generating economy. There was no industry and no factory which could provide job facilities to the educated youth. The cheap money created by the ill regulated spending of the Government promoted a market consumerism. Instead of self-sufficiency in her economic position Manipur had become dependent heavily to the Central Government. Practically, the production level was very much far below the consumption requirements. All the state enterprises and undertakings have failed. The people in the Government also were not prepared to extend all type of possible help to promote the private enterprises. Rather they tried to kill the efforts of private enterprises

in collusion with the people from outside Manipur. As a result of this the opportunity for giving employment to the educated youth was completely stopped. There was no employment generating enterprises or undertakings. The state Government did not take any keen interest in the development of the state. They were not able to do anything for the welfare of the people and gradually they were acting as a salary giving agency only. There was no justice in the process of getting job and it depends entirely to the system of the highest bidder. All the financial institutions were not able to make any effective investment either for one reason or other. As a result of this, Manipur was under a situation of complete economic stagnancy. There was no capital investment. On the other hand the capital was fleeing from Manipur. Practically the Manipur State was not able to get much benefit under the New Economic Policy of the Government of India. In fact there was a complete financial bankruptcy in the state of Manipur. The political leadership and bureaucracy remained as a silent spectator as if nothing was happening in the state.

In the midst of this economic condition the state again witnessed a new social development, i.e. exploitation of poor by the rich and powerful groups. The gap between the haves and have-nots had widened beyond repairable stage. A new social class emerged in the state. This social class, i.e. neo-rich which was the creation of the new economic condition has controlled the Government and economy of Manipur. Under this non-economic trend and financial management the rural and tribal peasantry became a deprive group of the society. The helpless urban middle class people also began to depend for their existence on this new economic system. In the meantime a large scale influx of foreigners and the people from the other parts of the country have aggravated the economic situation of the state. The large scale influx of uncheck immigrants had caused constraints on land, natural resources, trade and commerce. Apart from this it also caused a serious demographic imbalances and social

tensions. This new changes became a serious concerned among the people. They thought that this new development was a threatening call for the loss of their identity. Indeed, the new economic trend that was developed just after integration had produced a serious social impact in the state. Due to the lack of facilities of income generating unit and absence of the provision for development, Manipur became an important market place for the finished products of the big industries of the other parts of the country. No doubt the central government gave certain amount of money annually to the state government mainly for developmental purposes. But the present system of financial administration in state did not make any positive room for developmental works. Therefore the money which they have given to the state for developmental purpose again went back to the centre. This system of policy was nothing but to change the money from right hand to left and vice versa without any concrete objective. The ultimate result was that the status of the people of Manipur was changed from the position of master to the level of beggars. Under this economic position the life of the people of Manipur was at the mercy of the central government of India. Such type of system was the practice of neo-colonialism. The coming of a large quantity of industrial products from the mainland India finally gave a good shape for a complete destruction of the whole economy of the Manipur state. From this economic condition many people of the state began to feel that the people of Manipur became a victim of the internal colonialism.

The frightful increase of the number of educated unemployment people was also an immediate outcome of the new economic policy. Since there was no employment generating enterprises or understanding, the educated youths had no employment opportunities. The state Government was not able to provide any type of self-generating employment opportunities. Rather they became purely a salary-giving agency. The apprehension

of the common people was that under this economic condition Manipur would be strangled to death economically.

Apart from these political and economic conditions the people of Manipur had also witnessed a series of violent type of separatist movement which vehemently emphasized for the establishment of a distinctive political identity of the Manipuris outside the political boundary of the Indian Union. The outbreak of such type of revolutionary movement may be treated as an immediate outcome of the deteriorating political and economic conditions in the state and a kind of expression of dissatisfaction to the integrity and sincerity of the leaders of Indian Government, which was developed since the integration of the state into India. On the other hand it also had greatly weakened the state and created a cause for a social tension among the ethnic groups of people. This trend of social tension was continuing for about two decades and it costs the life of the common people. However the state machinery did not make any serious attempt to protect the life and property of the common people. Rather in the name of maintaining the law and order situation they actively indulged in the act of state terrorism. Here lies a big question on the sincerity, integrity and motive of the people who were in the driver's seat of the administration. State terrorism is not the direct answer to the solution of the problem. Because of the lack of sincerity and unclear motive of the law enforcing mechanism like the military, para-military and police Manipur was made a police state. On the other hand the ruling group of the state which was constituted mostly by the opportunist politicians and selfish bureaucrats was not able to perform their duties effectively because in every inch of their work they were highly influenced by their selfish and opportunistic mentality. Thus due to the lack of political will and vision the people in the ruling clique was not able to see the real situation the same time they were not able to protect the life and property of

the people of the state. Finally it led to the outbreak of serious violation in the basic human rights of the people of Manipur.

To see this highly undesirable new political and economic situation which was witnessed after the integration, the people began to question the sincerity and wisdom of the national and regional level political parties in the state. One of the important questions was whether what type of role they have played so far to protect and maintain the historical identity of the people of the state from the clutches of the new economic and administrative policy. It is quiet obvious that just after the merger of Manipur into India and being a democratic state the whole responsibilities of the people and state was in the hand of political parties. It is also convinced that they were not able to act effectively to safeguard the interest of the people. In that case what was the most important reason which compelled them not to take any political decision in the interest of the people of Manipur? In this respect two issues can be discussed first they are not able to take any political steps to the desire of the people because of the lack of political wisdom of the leadership of political parties. Secondly they were compelled not to act freely by their ideological principles.

While analyzing these problems it became an imperative to reopen the chapters of the political history of Manipur which was developed from the merger of the state. In this respect the role played by the national level political parties at the time of the crucial political juncture of the state of Manipur may be recalled. Among the national level political parties the role of the Congress Party was the most important. It is a well-known fact that the Congress Party was the torchbearer of the pro-merger elements of the people of Manipur. Their strong view was that if Manipur merged into India there would be a significant development in all aspects of the life of the state and it would bring welfare of the masses. Most of the educated people of that time were in favour of the

integration. Taking the opportunity of the political environment of the given situation of that period the Manipur State Congress party in collusion with the Congress leaders of India brought Manipur state as a political unit of the Indian Union. However, its subsequent result was not to the expectation of the people of the state. Even the members of the State Congress party were not happy at the new political development. But they were not able to do anything on the tune of the desire of the people, as they were not able to go out beyond the boundary of the party principle. Their only duty was to act on the dictation of the Central leaders. Due to this limited position they were not able to represent the feelings of the desire of the people of Manipur. Another political parties of national level stature were Praja Socialist Parties and Samjukta Socialist Party. The local leaders of these parties also were not able to go against the interest of the outlook of other central leaders. Rather these parties made one step forward on the line of the Indianization principle. It was mainly from their demand that the government of Manipur have abolished all rules of restriction given to the non-Manipuri people. The removal of this system gave a good opportunity to the non-Manipuri people to enter into Manipur without any restrictions. They justified their demand on the ground that since Manipur was part of India there should not be any type of restriction to the other people of India while entering into Manipur. Free movement of people inside the boundary of India should be encouraged. The argument of the Socialist Party was also endorsed by the Congress Party. The removal of this system had rendered a great contribution in the process of the deteriorating economic position of Manipur. After the removal of this system many traders and businessmen from outside had entered into Manipur freely and started their business. The outbreak of a serious economic exploitation was the immediate outcome of this view policy. So far their political attitude to Manipur was concerned the Socialist Party as a main opposition political party of the state had severely

criticized the Congress Party for their deliberate refusal to grant a responsible government in this state. But because of their ideological and constitutional bindings the members of the Socialist Party in Manipur was also not able to speak much for a distinctive political identity of the state. The same trend was also in the case of the Communist Party of India. No doubt Manipur had an experience of left movement under the leadership of Hijam Irabot Singh in which they strongly advocated for the welfare of the peasantry in the state. They also strongly demanded for the abolition of feudal system of administration and existing class discrimination in the society. In addition to this Hijam Irabot Singh also emphasized to promote and foster the distinctive features of the identity of the people of Manipur. But in later years the political motive of the new leadership of Communist Party was quite contradictory to Irabot and their approach was not in the same political line of their one time leader. Rather their mind and political culture also were influenced by the political principles of their parent organisation. Therefore, like other national parties they also were not able to give much thought for a distinctive identity of Manipuri people.

Apart from the political objectives and characters of the various national level political parties Manipur also had enjoyed a very good experience of other local or state level political parties. Starting from the *Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha*, a local party of pre-independence period the people had witnessed the political activities of *Praja Sanmeloni*, *Praja Sangha*, *Krishak Sabha*, *Praja Mandol*, *Praja Shanti*, *Manipur National Union*, *Nationalist Socialist Democratic Party (NSDP)*, and *Manipur People's Party (MPP)* etc. In addition to this there were some local political parties which were based mainly on the ethnic line in the hill area like, *Kuki National Assembly (KNA)*, *Paite Union* etc. Among them the most important political party is *Manipur People's Party*. The main ideological foundation of this party is for the welfare and promotion of a

distinctive identity of the state. On the basis of this ideological plank even the people of Manipur had voted this party to power. But this party, though they had enjoyed the confidence of the people, was not able to come up to the expectation of the people so far as the unity move of all the different ethnic groups of people of Manipur was concerned. Indeed, from the experience of their long existence as a political party, it can be observed that though they were able to lead the people in the valley area they were not able to penetrate into the hill areas very successfully. It seems that there were some kinds of gap of understanding, so far the aspect of political agendas between the leadership of the party and hill people. Though it is very difficult to give a clear picture of the reason of the gap of understanding it was quite evident from their nature that the tribal people had some reservation to the political approach of this regional party. As a result of this the Manipur People's Party, in spite of their best possible attempt, could not penetrate into the interior hill areas.

After having a good experience of the political nature of both national and state level political parties and to see the undesirable political development in the state which caused a good reason for instability in the natural identity of the people and state, a large section of the people, who strongly believed in the democratic process of change began to look for a better alternative political platform which can represent the feeling of the masses of both hills and plains. As a first step they started to make a close observation about the inner feeling of the masses as they thought that the strength of their political activities would come out from them.

Then they also analysed the history of the political developments in the state from the time of the integration and its impact. At the same time they also discussed the position of Manipur in the 'Indian Federation'. The Indian Constitution is very clear on the question of federation. The Constitution mentioned that "India is a Union of

States” It provides a political structure which according to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is federal in normal time and unitary in extra-ordinary situation. In regard to the necessity of federal polity A.C. Kapur said “The constitution makers of independent India were in no doubt that a large new state, faced with the problem of establishing a central authority strong enough to govern a vast area inhabited by millions of people with different historical and linguistic backgrounds and interests, must inevitably be some form of federal structure. With the integration of princely states, the formation of federation had become a *fait accompli*”.¹

As we have mentioned above the undesirable and critical relationship between Manipur and the Government of India. Indeed to keep Manipur for 23 years under central rule was nothing but to violate the basic principle of Indian Constitution by the law enforcing agencies of the Central Government and breach of the basic fundamental right of the people of Manipur. To grant statehood in 1972 after several political agitations did not make any positive healthy atmosphere in the people to people relationship. Because during this long period of time people had witnessed a lot of undesirable and unexpected political scene which caused for the development of bitterness and mistrust mindset among the people particularly the younger generation group. Finally it led for the creation of a serious gap of understanding between the people of Manipur and Government of India. The people of Manipur had an impression that the central leaders had deliberately neglected the people of the state for reasons not known to them and a sense of dissatisfaction was developed to the attitude of the Government of India. Such type of attitude was regarded by the people as a policy of colonialism under the garb of democratic fineness'.² After having an experience of the nature of deliberate ignorance the people began to express their dissatisfaction and alienation in different forms.

Such type of development in the relationship between

the Central Government and state of Manipur was not a healthy political atmosphere under the democratic norms. Therefore the people who were the strong preacher for the growth of the value of parliamentary democracy had expressed their desire to re-examine and redefine the relation between the centre and the state. There was an impression among the political and social observers in the state that the problem of political, economic and psychological nature of Manipur would be able to resolve if the principle of federalism as provided in the Indian constitution were fully implemented. Apart from this the problem of the plural society is also another important feature which sometimes creates problem in the process of democratic functioning. It is believed that in order to operate the democratic principles successfully a cohesive society based on social justice and social harmony with full protection of the cultural identity of the people should be established. The concept of unity in diversity in social and cultural life should be encouraged because such a society will fulfil the social aspiration of various communities. So, it is said that the social chaos and social fissures which is now a problem in Manipur can be resolved and eradicated by a political system, based on ethnic pluralism and social federalism.³

In addition to this the people of Manipur also faced a serious problem of economic stagnancy which was created by the corrupt administration and unprincipled political leadership. As already been mentioned above the people of Manipur, particularly of the younger generation group, felt that 'Manipur is the victim of neo-colonialism' and Manipur's economy was at the mercy of the 'Capitalist economic system of mainland India'. This economic crisis in Manipur was caused by the rampant corruption in the administration led by a highly irresponsible political leadership and manned by a non-committed bureaucracy.⁴ While this was the situation in the state the people who witnessed a serious problem of instability due to the outbreaks of revolutionary movements. Such

type of development had greatly weakened the state and caused social tensions. On the other hand in the name of maintaining law and order situation the law enforcing machineries namely military, para-military and police forces are choking the state and they have made Manipur a police state.⁵ To see all these undesirable and unprecedented developments, it is observed that "the state as an 'institution' has declined in Manipur, if it has yet to wither away in the Marxian way".⁶

Finally it has come to a safe conclusion that the only possible way to pull out Manipur from the present political and social instability was to bring a positive drastic radical change in every life of the people of the state. In this respect a group of political activists and intellectuals felt that there are only two possible ways. One was violent type of political movement and another was non-violent type of political movement. But most of them were the strong believers in the democratic process. Therefore they opted for a non-violent political movement which is based on the basic principles of democratic process. They are of the view that since the Indian Government is enjoying the democratic principle of parliamentary form of government, a vision for a radical change of the Manipur state would be possible only through the ballot war. In this connection they also believed that the problem of Manipur could be highlighted very successfully through a platform of a political party which has a capacity to represent the feeling of the people. But they are not in favour of existing national and local parties. They thought that since they had an experience of the terrible failure on their basic duty it was not advisable to test them again. Therefore they preferred for a new party with a clear-cut ideology and basic political agendas. They also believed that regional party would serve the local interest better than other national parties.

It is said that the emergence of regional political parties in Indian polity is a "national expression of the democratic will of the people for extension of autonomy based on

federalist sentiments under the constitution".⁷ The expression of the democratic will of the people on the issue of the local interest is an outcome of the dialectical response to the hegemonic centralism of the government of India. It is a fact that the national level political parties who are now playing the major role in Indian policies and who controlled the government are the representatives of the capitalistic and chauvinistic vested interest of the Indian upper castes and classes.⁸ Apart from the political issues the disparity in the level of economic development is also another strong factor for the growth of regionalism in the minds of the people of the state. It is said that the greatest endogenous factor is the strong urge of the people to preserve their cultural, linguistic and ethnic identity.⁹ So those regional issues and aspiration are expressed through the political movements.

On the basis of this understanding and keeping in view of the immediate need for a democratic political change they have decided to form a new political platform which could represent all the feelings and aspirations of the people of Manipur. It is a fact that "a political party in a democracy is an instrument of social change". They were also of the view that this new proposed political party would be formed on the federal principle which aims at restructuring the relationship between the Federal Government and state. They also believed that this party would delivered the best alternative to redeem the people of Manipur from the present mess and built up a bright future.

REFERENCES

1. Kapur, A.C. 1985. *Constitutional History of India*. New Delhi: S. Chand and Co. Ltd. p. 406.
2. *Federal Party of Manipur (The Basic Issue)*. 1993. p. 1.
3. Ibid. pp. 3-4.
4. Ibid. p. 6.

5. Ibid. p. 6.
6. Kamei, Gangmumei. 1993. Emergence of Regionalism in North East India. Speech delivered at 3rd Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, N.E. Region held at Imphal. p. 11.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. p. 13.

CHAPTER TWO

PARTURITION

Just after the completion of the formation of ideological framework those political and social activists have prepared to translate their political objective into action for peaceful democratic change in the state. Accordingly a public meeting was convened by those groups of people on 21st October 1993 at 10:00 a.m. at Majorkhul Community Hall. The main objective of the meeting was to invite the opinion of the masses particularly the people who were the strong believer in democratic values and its norms and social workers of the state to give their opinion and suggestion in regard to the immediate need for the establishment of a new political platform through which the desire and aspiration of the people could be expressed without any exception. The public meeting was convened at the initiative of a group of conveners. Their names were (1) Dr. N. Joykumar Singh (2) Dr. M. Jitendra Singh (3) Dr. Vanlalnghak (4) Seipu Sitlhou and (5) Ashinpu Gangmei.¹ It was a well attended meeting. Some prominent personalities of Manipur were also present and actively participated in the deliberations. This public meeting was presided over by Shri Naorem Birendrakumar Singh, a well-known political activist, a noted journalist of the state and editor of 'Paojel' a Manipuri daily newspaper.

In order to have a more convenient atmosphere in the process of discussion and deliberation the organizers

have placed five basic issues. The 'Basic Issues' circulated by the organizers were (a) Manipur in the Indian Federation, (b) Ethnic pluralism and social federalism, (c) Economic stagnancy, (d) Insurgencies and revolution: Need for a dialogue and (e) Autonomy for Manipur.

(a) Manipur in the Indian Federation:

In regard to the question of the political status of Manipur in the Indian Federation, the basic issue paper, after giving a detail historical analysis of how the state had integrated into the political boundary of the Indian Union and its subsequent political developments, had categorically come to a conclusion that the merger of Manipur into India was not in a happy and harmonious way. At the same time though Manipur got statehood she was not able to get a fair deal from the India Government.² Therefore, the approach paper made a proposal to re-examine and re-define the relationship between the state and the Union of Indian Republic. It is also felt that the key problems of Manipur could be solved only with the by implementation of the principles of federation which is clearly provided in the Indian constitution. The paper also gave a critical observation about the nature of Indian federation. It pointed out that since federation implies division of powers and functions of the government between 'Federal Union' and 'Federating states', the interest of small state should be well protected. In this regard the paper strongly asserted that "The Indian polity and Indian nationhood with its pluralistic foundation are to be interpreted to maintain the Indian unity and integrity by protecting and accommodating the interest and aspirations of the minorities and of the smaller states like Manipur".³ It further pointed out that over centralization of power in the union government have greatly weakened the position of the states particularly the minority and smaller states. Therefore, it is felt necessary to re-examine the center and state relationship so that the small groups and their states would be made to feel secure and proud to be the

members of the 'Indian Republic and Nation'. In this connection the approach paper raised a basic point for an elaborate discussion on the center and state relationship. It strongly emphasized that there should be decentralization of the power. But this does not mean that the administrative position of the Central Government should be weakened. The positive argument, which was highlighted in the approach paper, was that by application of federal principles both the Federal Government and Manipur would gain in regulating their relationship. Rather Manipur state would be able to get an opportunity to harmonize the various sections of her population in their intra-state relationship.⁴ On the basis of these observation and in order to review the present polity of India, a strong political slogan i.e. 'Federalism is the need of the hour', was placed as a banner or a big stride of a political movement.

(b) Ethnic pluralism and social federalism:

It is also true that ethnic problem always influenced the body politic of every state and its society. The political stability of any given state is possible only when there is a less ethnic problem. India is a plural society and every different ethnic group of people has the privilege to enjoy their distinctive linguistic, religions and cultural affiliations. The same trend is also in the case of Manipur. The three major ethnic groups in Manipur are Meitei, Naga and Kukis. The small groups like Meitei Pangal (Muslim) and non-Manipuri etc. has been living together with other ethnic communities. Thus they represent a picture of ethnic pluralism with their homogeneity and heterogeneity. However it is felt that the social harmony among the different ethnic group would be possible only when there are mutual respect and honour among them. It is proposed that every ethnic community, whatever the size of the number of people may be, should have the privilege to protect foster and preserve their national identity. The approach paper proposed that a cohesive society based on social justice and social harmony with

full protection of the cultural identity of people should be built up⁵ so that it would greatly help in the process of the strengthening of political stability in the state. If this process is to be implemented definitely it would fulfill the social aspiration of the various communities. With these observations the approach paper proposed a new idea for discussion that in order to have a healthy political atmosphere a new political system should be initiated based on ethnic pluralism and social federalism. It is also believed that the present social chaos and social fissures could be resolved and eradicated only by this political system and at the same time it would be able to check the possibility of the emergence of dangerous 'Social Darwinism'.

(c) Economic stagnancy:

Indeed, the character of the present political development in a particular state is highly influenced by the nature of the economy. The economy is the backbone for the stability and strengthening of the body politic of any nation. In this respect the approach paper gave a highly scientific analysis about the economic position of Manipur and her relationship with other financial agencies of 'Central Government'. It has been already mentioned in the previous chapter about the stage of complete stagnancy of the economic position of Manipur. It was the outcome of the nature of administration created by the highly irresponsible political leadership with the help of non-committed bureaucracy. It is also true that just after integration the Government of India, as a part of their administrative responsibility, invested money in Manipur through massive development plans. But under the present system of administration the invested money, which was sent as a developmental fund, have not reached to the needy people, the urban poor, the rural and tribal peasantry.⁶ On the other hand the cheap money created by the ill regulated spending of the government has promoted market consumerism. So, this ill regulated economic system has brought no expected development

in the field of industry and agriculture. The dream of the self-sufficiency, which was enjoyed by the people of Manipur before integration, was completely shattered. So far the financial matter is concerned Manipur has become heavily dependent on the Central Government. It is also pointed out that all the state enterprises and undertakings have failed and 'what is going on is an uncontrolled state capitalism'.⁷ It is further mentioned that the quantity production was far below the consumption requirements, the per capita income of Manipur was extremely low at the present inflationary rate, there was a frightful increase in educated unemployment and there was no employment generating enterprises or undertakings. To get job also was difficult and it was possible only to the highest bidders. The capital was fleeing from Manipur and the financial institutions also were not able to make an effective investment. With these observations the approach paper concluded that under this financial position Manipur was under complete economic stagnancy and if this situation was to be continued further Manipur would be strangled to death economically.

It was also pointed out that this new economic system of India has laid a basic foundation for the exploitation of poor by the rich and powerful section of the society. A kind social situation, which was the creation of new economic system, also emerged in the state of Manipur. The neo-rich class has merged and they have controlled the government and economy of Manipur. The urban middle class has heavily depended on this new social and economic group. On the other hand the rural and tribal peasantry becomes a deprived section in the society. When this was the situation Manipur again faced a serious economic problem due to the large-scale influx of foreign national from her neighbouring area. Apart from the demographic imbalance the uncheck influx of foreigners had caused constraints on land, natural resources, trade and commerce. Therefore there was a serious apprehension among the thinkers that these accumulated

problems might give a serious threat to the national identity of the Manipuri people and to the conditions of the future economy of Manipur.

(d) Insurgencies and revolution:

On the question of insurgencies and revolutions it is also mentioned that the outbreak of these movements were directly or indirectly related with the growth of political and new economic development. Therefore it was also suggested that though it had produced a social tension among the people, it could be solved either by a natural course or through conscious efforts. It is true that no political problem is insoluble. However to terrorise the people was not the solution of the problem. It is also observed that the basic duty of the state is to protect the lives and property of the citizen. Whereas in the case of Manipur, opportunist politicians and selfish bureaucrats had compelled the state not to perform its duty. So the whole state machinery was totally failed in their basic duty. The biggest tragedy on their part, as pointed out in the approach paper, was that, these politicians and ruling cliques had neither the moral courage nor the vision to deal with the revolutionary situation in the state. In addition to this the outbreak of frequent ethnic clash among the tribal people had further deteriorated the law and order situation of the state. On the foundation of this existing situation it is observed that since these revolutionary organizations had launched the movement with a basic political social and economic objective which cannot be dealt with from the framework of Indian Constitution. It is necessary to initiate dialogue between the Federal Government and revolutionary group. It was felt that to have a dialogue with them would be able to pull out Manipur from this grim situation as well as from the clutches of the incompetent and selfish government. It was further proposed that the dialogue between the Federal Government and revolutionaries should be made through the service of some dedicated peacemakers.

(e) Autonomy for Manipur

As has already been discussed about the nature of integration of Manipur into India and its subsequent political development particularly in the context of Center and State relationship. From these historical facts it is quite evident that it was not a happy union and the subsequent relationship was also not to the desire and expectation of the people of Manipur. Under this existing constitutional and political system Manipur has been depending on the Federal Government for its own survival. The present existing relationship Manipur did not provide adequate autonomy to Manipur to deal with the complex socio-economic and political problems confronting the state. Every decision for the future of Manipur was always taken by the political leadership of Federal Government and the state government was just dovetail in their decision. It is also felt that every state in the Indian republic should have enough autonomy so that the people would be able to participate in the decision making concerning their future.

In the context of Manipur a proposal was made for a large scale debate on the question whether Manipur State should be restored to the status of internal autonomy under the Manipur State Constitution merger Act 1947 i.e. the administrative position which were in practiced from 1947 till the merger of the state into India and the terms of the Stand Still Agreement and Instrument of Accession between Manipur and the Indian Government signed on August 11, 1947 should be the basis of Manipur's autonomy and her relationship with the Federal Government of India".⁸ It is also said that this proposed idea was not meant to return to monarchy. The concept of feudalism and feudal system of administration was an outdated and rejected principle particularly in the context of Manipur. It is further proposed that the principle of autonomy should not be confined only to the center. It should be extended at the districts and village levels including the hill areas. In the context of Center and State

relationship and granting of maximum autonomy to the state, the approach paper also mentioned the relevancy of the recommendation of 'Sarkaria Commission'.

With this conceptual framework and broad observations the deliberation of the public meeting was initiated by the president. Each and every person who attended the meeting fully participated in the discussion. This was also an unanimous view among the participants that only a new local based political party alone would serve the regional and local interest better than other national political parties. They also opined that the state of Manipur and people as well required a regional based political party who possessed a high degree of political will having a strong commitment and determination to protect and promote the interest of the people. The members also felt that such type of political party alone would be able to solve the problems of Manipur. At the same time they also endorsed the critical observations of 'Basic Issue' placed for further discussion on the state of relationship between Federal Government and Manipur State. It was also an unanimous view of all the participants that in order to promote and protect the interest of the state a strong demand should be initiated for the restructuring of relation between Federal Government and Manipur State. Thus after having a detail discussions and deliberations all the members had unanimously agreed to establish a new political party with the following broad objectives: They were:-

- (i) To ensure freedom, democracy and human rights to the people of Manipur as enshrined in Indian Constitution;
- (ii) To build up a new Social Order based on social and economic justice, social harmony and cultural pluralism;
- (iii) To restructure the relationship between Manipur and the Federal Government of India on the federal principles and historical rights of Manipur based on the pre-merger political states.

- (iv) To promote and preserve the unity and common identity of Manipur within the canvass of ethnic pluralism and social federalism;
- (v) To provide autonomy in administration at the district and village levels both in the hill and valley of Manipur;
- (vi) To preserve and promote the common cultural heritage of the people of Manipur with proper respect for and protection of the ethnic and cultural ethos and religious beliefs of the different section of the population;
- (vii) To build up an economic system with the following features:
 - (a) Economic planning to promote development with social justice;
 - (b) Equitable economic development of various sections and regions of the state, free from exploitation of one group/class by the other.
 - (c) Proper utilization of and social control over the natural resources access to which shall properly regulated by the state;
 - (d) Encouragement of private enterprises for development.
 - (e) Involvement of foreign capital in the development plans of the state.
- (viii) To preserve the natural balance in the ecology and environment of the state and prevent pollution and other evil effects of development projects on the life of the people.
- (ix) To take up steps for the preventions of the alienation of land to the non-indigenous immigrants;
- (x) To frame suitable land laws for the hill areas of Manipur keeping in view the need for preparation of record of rights for tribal land owners and flow of institutional finance for tribal development;
- (xi) To take up measures for the upliftment of the position

and states of woman in respect of their role in the social economic and political life of the state;

- (xii) To establish fraternal contact with regional portion of country especially for those of the northeastern states and take up common steps on the problems of common interests. It shall be fraternal relationship with those groups and organizations which believe in then federal base of the Indian polity.⁹

It is very interesting to note that all the participants in the public meeting had an impression in their mind that the idea of the formation of a new political party with these ideological frameworks would certainly lay a big foundation for a large scale revolutionary change in the social, political and economic life of the people of Manipur. Some members even expressed that the conceptual groundwork of this new proposal was so comprehensive that it covers almost all the aspects of the life of a human beings. With great enthusiasm all the members have actively participated in the process of long deliberation.

Thus after having a detail discussion about the political scenario in Manipur right from the beginning of the integration into India and the subsequent relationship between India and Manipur under the existing system of Center-State relationship and its impact on the social and economic life of the people in particular, this public meeting unanimously agreed to form a new political party based on the commitment of regional character and local interest. The resolution of the public meeting runs like this:-

1. RESOLUTION ON THE FORMATION OF FEDERAL PARTY OF MANIPUR

This **PUBLIC MEETING** of political leaders, social activists and community leaders representing all sections and regions of Manipur, after having discussed the political, economic, social and administrative structure and its relationship with the Government of India under

the system over centralization of power with Union Government and inadequate autonomy for the state solemnly expresses:

ITS GREAT CONCERN over Manipur's current political, economic and social crisis and the failure of the state administrative machinery to cop with it;

THE NEED TO RESTRUCTURE THE relationship between Manipur and Government of India on the basis of federal principles which would ensure decentralization of power and autonomy to the state in administrative and financial matters;

THAT THE EXISTING political leadership and their parties have proved to be ineffective in solving the crisis in Manipur;

THAT THERE IS A NEED TO MOBILISE all the progressive secular and democratic forces under a common political forum to redeem Manipur from the present morass and build up a new Social Order in the state;

It is hereby solemnly resolved to form a regional political party under the name and style of **FEDERAL PARTY OF MANIPUR**.¹⁰ (Extract of the Resolution)

After taking the formal resolution of the formation of a new political party, this meeting adopted another resolution to constitute a drafting committee to prepare the constitution of Federal Party of Manipur and all the members of the office bearers of the party was made the members of the committee. Along with this the steps for the registration of Federal Party of Manipur to the Election Committee of India was also prepared.

Just after the completion of the frameworks for the establishment of a political party the meeting began to take special attention for the election of the party leader and other office bearers. In the process of discussion all the participants expressed their desire to put the responsibility of leadership of the party to a person having the character of integrity, sincerity and honesty. They

expressed this opinion after having a long experience of nature of the working of other political parties in Manipur. Keeping all the views particularly on the problems of social tensions and ethnic clash, majority of the participants was of the opinion that the leadership of the party should be given to a person who possess all the quality to see the totality of the whole problem in the state and who can see both hill and plan people together. On the basis of this logical observation some expressed their desire to give the responsibility of leadership to Prof. Gangmumei Kamei from Majorkhul, Imphal. Then the meeting finally elected him as the first and founder president of Federal Party of Manipur.

Other members of the office bearers were:-

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Vice Presidents | - Shri Ng. Nimai Singh
Dr. Lal Dena
Shri M. Maringa
Shri Kumar Singh |
| General Secretary | - Shri S.H. Sheipu
Dr.N.Joykumar Singh
Dr. M. Jitendra Singh
Dr. Van Lalnghak |
| Treasurer | - Shri Khelen Singh |
| Secretary | - Shri Asinpao Gangmei
Shri KameshwarSingh |

This meeting also authorized the president to constitute a Central Executive Committee of the party.

BACKGROUND OF LEADERS

Leadership is the most important aspect of every organization. It is true that the success and failure of any type organization is entirely in the hand of the leaders and the importance and credibility of the political parties

are measured from the degree of the quality and maturity of the leaders of any particular party. In one sense the leadership is the best measuring rode or scale of every common people to judge the political maturity and credibility of the party. This is the basic issue in the process of the selection of leadership. The participants were very much particular about the leader and the office bearers who has to act as the custodian of the ideology and objective of the party. Finally the members, after having a close examination of their sincerity and integrity, have unanimously agreed to give the responsibilities for the running of the party to the pfflowing persons.

Prof. Gangmumei Kamei, who was elected by the 'Public Meeting' as the founder President of Federal Party of Manipur was a Professor in the Department of History, Manipur University and a celebrated academician not only in Manipur but also to other parts of North-Eastern region. As an academician he had written a number of research papers and books on various aspects of the history of Manipur. Through writing he was able to bring a new revolutionary change in the process of writing and interpretation particularly in the study of regional history. Apart from his professional credibility he was a man of dedicated social worker. He was also one of the founder leaders of 'Cultural Integration Conference', a social organization which strongly advocated for the unity and harmony among the various section of the people of Manipur. Through this organization he enjoyed a privilege to have a close contact with different section of people. This is a rare experience and additional quality that is supposed to posses by every leader. He was also a dreamer and has a very good quality of farsightedness. In every work he was very critical and always makes a sound judgment and right decision. Another important quality he had possessed was that he was a man of very accommodative nature. He was able to make friendship with any person whatever the age, caste; creed and colour might be. On top of this he had a wonderful vast

experience about the ethos, culture, religion and history of the different ethnic community of Manipur. In addition to this he also had a good experience of the working of political organization in the state. From these vast professional knowledge, good political experience and art of social relationship he was considered by the members of the 'Public Meeting' as the right person to lead the party.

Shri Ng. Nimai Singh of Tabungkhok village in the Patsoi Assembly Constituency was a prominent leader of co-operative movement in Manipur.

Dr. Lal Dena from Churachandpur District was a prominent academician from Hmar community. He was a soft spoken man, who possessed the quality of sincerity and honesty. He was a social worker and actively involved in very social problems and issues of the tribal community in Manipur.

Shri M. Maringa a political activist. He was actively involved in many political activities of the state. He was also a worker and leader of MPP (Manipur People Party). He was also a Councilor of Imphal Municipal Board. Apart from his political involvement he was also a social activist. He was actively associated with many social and religious organizations of Zeliangrong Community.

Shri Kumar Singh was a social activist. Before he joined the party, he was in Government service. He was a man who possesses enough experience in the panchayat system of administration.

This four personalities, considering their political experience and social activities, were elected as the Vice Presidents of the newly formed party.

Shri S.H. Seipu was a social activist from the Sadar Hill area. Though he had little knowledge of the political activities, he was deeply involved in many social organizations. He was also a man of integrity and sincerity.

Dr. N. Joykumar Singh is a Professor of History in Manipur University. He is a social and political activist.

Right from the very young age he actively participated in various activities of political organizations and student movements. He was one of the founder members of Congress (I) in Manipur. He was very energetic and man of integrity. He was the most active spokesman of the new group of political thinkers.

Dr. M. Jitendra Singh was also a teacher in the History Department of Manipur University.

Dr. Van Valalnghak was a teacher in the Philosophy Department of Manipur University. He is a deeply religious man and a social activist. He is also involved in every social and religious activities particularly of Hmar Community. He is a man of integrity, honesty and sincerity. He is a very jolly man and very accomodative.

These members, considering from their educational and social backgrounds were elected as the General Secretaries of the party.

Thus with the formation of the body of the working committee the Federal Party of Manipur came into existence as state political party under the basic conceptual principle of federalism and autonomy.

REFERENCES

1. See Appendix No.1
2. 'Approach Paper' presented to and discussed at the public meeting at Imphal held on 21st October 1993-P.2
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Reproduced from 'Approach Paper'
10. Reproduced from the proceedings of Public Meeting held on 21-10-93 at Community Hall, Majorkhul.

CHAPTER THREE

LEGITIMIZATION OF THE ORGANISATION

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION

As per Resolution No. 3 of the Public Meeting the president of the party had constituted a 'Constitutional Drafting Committee' with all the office bearers as members. And on the 9th November 1993 at 1 p.m. a 'Special General Body' meeting of the party was convened at Majorkhul community hall to discuss and adopt the draft constitution of the party. It was a full pack session and all the formalities for deliberation was started formally with a welcome address given by Shri Ng. Nimai Singh the Vice President of the party.

In his opening remark, Prof. Gangmumei Kamei the president of the party said that Federal Party of Manipur is historically inevitable political party to redeem Manipur and forge a new and bright future. According to him "Federal Party is not a mere political party in a narrow sense of capturing power in a democratic set up. It is an instrument of social change. It is rather a movement expressing the long cherished desire and will of the people of the hills and valley of Manipur."¹ After giving a critical analysis of the political relationship between Manipur state and Government of India from year 1949 and by giving a detail explanation about the general feeling of the common masses he strongly asserted that the nature of the relationship between state and centre should be

federal. On the basis of this conceptual idea he declared that the principle of "Federalism is the need of the hour". He further said, "a nation or a political community cannot survive alone on the basis of its relation with the external agencies or forces. They should possess internal strength and determined aspirations concretized into a political and social structure. Such a structure called the state is to carry out the task of nation building."² With this argument he had categorically emphasized that Federal Party of Manipur had a clear social and political vision for the future of Manipur. It was a very forceful presentation, which contents full of emotional appeals to the common people of Manipur. Indeed it laid a foundation for the rapid growth of Federal Party of Manipur, as a major political one in the political soil of Manipur.

He further said, "We want a united Manipur, where there is respect for the dignity of human individual, where there is equality of all men, where everybody is entitled to a decent living, where there is a social and economic justice, where the ethnic and social minority will lead a life of dignity and security, where there will be no oppression, no exploitation and where the poverty will be eradicated."³ For a distinctive political identity of Manipur state he also strongly emphasized the immediate need to modify the nature of the Indian Union in Federal principles. He also encouraged the system of inner party democracy. He said, that Federal Party of Manipur had paid full respect to the constructive opinion of every section of the people of the state and it could be accommodated in the programme of action to be taken up by the party.

Just after giving a detail analytical objective he further said that "no constitution is complete and static. It has to grow and make changes to meet the political and social needs and aspirations of the people."⁴ In the course of his deliberation he also made an appeal to the entire liberal, progressive, secularist and nationalist elements to join Federal Party of Manipur. Indeed it was a historic

presidential address particularly for the members of the party. In his short speech he had successfully make an attempt to highlight the historical necessity of the establishment of Federal Party of Manipur as a new political party in the state.

NATURE OF PROPOSED DRAFT CONSTITUTION

The draft constitution was formally presented to the special session by Dr. N. Joykumar Singh, the General Secretary and seconded by Dr. Vanlalnghak, the another General Secretary. The whole body of the proposed draft constitutions was constituted by 24 Articles. Though it was not a lengthy one the draft constitution has included all the requisite infrastructure and principles which was required by any political party.

The preamble of the proposed draft constitution runs like this:-

“Whereas having solemnly resolved to constitute a voluntary political organization of the people of Manipur and in order to: Ensure Freedom, Democracy and Human Right to the people of Manipur, Create a Social Ordered based on Social and Economic Justice, Welfare and Social Federalism. FEDERAL PARTY OF MANIPUR has been duly constituted and the constitution thereof has been adopted. Whereas required by law, Federal Party of Manipur do hereby declare that it shall bear “its true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of Socialism, Secularism and Democracy and would uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.”

The preamble of the constitution had clearly expressed its desire to build up a free and democratic society with an essence of overall development in the political, social, economic and cultural life of Manipur. In order to materialize these ideas the proposed constitution had emphasized certain objectives which covered almost all the aspects of the issue of the state. They also assured that the party would strive to achieve these objects. The objectives were: –

- (i) To create a political and administrative structure in Manipur so as to facilitate the participation of all social and ethnic groups in the democratic process and nation building task in the state;
- (ii) To restructure the relationship between the Union Government and the state of Manipur, based on federal principles and more autonomy for the state with full recognition of the historical prerogative of Manipur;
- (iii) To promote economic development through planning, free from exploitation, with social control over the natural resources, encouragement of private enterprises, involvement of foreign capital and with full participation of the people in the process of planning and implementation of development process of the state;
- (iv) To promote the common heritage of the various sections of Manipur's population and protect their cultural and ethnic identity and territorial integrity of the state;
- (v) To promote the welfare of the tribal, minorities and other weaker sections of the society including women and physically handicapped persons;
- (vi) To take up suitable steps for the attainment of the objectives by social and political action through democratic, constitutional and peaceful means;
- (vii) To establish fraternal contact with others regional political parties of the country and with those groups and organizations which believe in the federal base of Indian polity.

The constitution also proposed two-tier system in the organizational structure i.e. State Level and District Level. It also proposed to have three important administrative branches of the party. They are (a) General Assembly (b) Central Committee and (c) Working Committee. The 'District Level' organizational structure proposed to have

three branches i.e.; (a) District Committee (b) Kendra Committee and (c) Primary Unit.

In order to have an opportunity to understand the grievances and problems of different section of the society the draft constitution also proposed to open 'Frontal Organizations and Cells' of the party. Accordingly the idea for the opening of youth front, women front, peasant front, minority cell, scheduled casts and schedule tribes cell, teachers' cell, economic advisory cell, etc and physically handicapped cell was also proposed in the Article 5 (five). Article 6 (six) of the draft constitution also proposed for two types of membership of the party i.e. Primary and Active membership. A person of 18 years old was allowed to be the primary member of the party by paying an annual membership fee of Rs.1/- (one) and any primary member could be an active member after the completion of one year and he has to enroll 25 (twenty five) membership fee of Rs.10/- (ten) for active membership.

'General Body' was the supreme authority in the party's organizational structure. Article 7 (seven) of the draft constitution provides the nature of the constitution of this body. The election of the party president, delegation of relevant powers and duties to the central committee and working committee and amendment of the constitution of the party are the most remarkable powers of the 'General Body'. Article 8 (eight) provides the nature and composition of the 'Central Committee' and its power and functions. The most important duty of the body was to elect the Vice Presidents of the party and this committee would implement and carry out the policy and programme laid down by the General Assembly. Article 9 (nine) explained the nature of the composition of the members of the body working committee and Article 10 (ten) provides the power and function of the body. Thus from article 7 (seven) to article 10 (ten) are the most important parts in the whole body of the draft constitution. That these articles provide the nature of power and duties to these bodies, which are the most important anatomy of

the whole body of the party as well as of the draft constitution.

The constitutions also mentioned about the nature of the composition, power and duties of the 'Districts', 'Kendras' and 'Primary Units' of the party. No doubt these bodies were the important feature of the proposed constitution and their basic duty was to play a major role with process of the expansion, and consolidation of the party. The detail information about the nature of these bodies was mentioned in the Article 11 (eleven) of the proposed constitution.

The power and function of the office functionary was mentioned very specifically in Article 13 (thirteen), 14 (fourteen), 15 (fifteen) and 16 (sixteen). Article 13 (thirteen) explained the position of the power of the President of the party. The constitution gives a supreme authoritative power to the president in the functioning of the party. Article 14 (fourteen) provides the power and duties of the vice President, Article 15 (fifteen) provides the duties of the General Secretaries and Joint Secretaries and Article 16 (sixteen) gave detail picture about the nature of the duty of treasure and auditor of the party.

Apart from this the proposed draft constitution also provides all the required features like nature of the meeting of the party and its quorum, election of party functionaries, nature of voting pattern, nature of disciplinary action to be taken against the party members etc. in different articles.

While presenting the draft constitution, Dr. N. Joykumar Singh gave a detail analysis about the existibg political and economic scenario in the state of Manipur. He also endorsed the view of the president that no constitution was complete and static. It has a big room to modify, amend and review. He also admitted that because of the demand of the situation the constitution of the party was prepared within a short possible time. With these few observations he also requested the members to discuss and adopt it formally.

After the presentation part was over the members of the 'Special General Body' began to give their observations and suggestions. However all of them agreed the spirit and also ideas expressed in the preamble of the constitution and welcomed the objectives given in the draft constitution. Thus after having a detail discussion all the members accepted the provisions of the proposed draft constitution and also agreed to adopt it as an official constitution of the party. With the adoption of party constitution Federal Party of Manipur began to launch its democratic revolutionary movement under the banner of her flag. The flag of the party had expressed different ideas. The orange colour, as explained in the constitution, represents, service, sacrifice and purity. 'Red Sun' represents source of life, energy, justice and victory. The General Assembly also proposed to request the Election Commission to allot one of the following symbols as mentioned below on the election symbol of the party. The proposed symbols were: - (1) Sangai, (2) A farmer holding a spade, (3) Two swords with a shield and (4) Pipal Tree.

One of the most dramatic and noteworthy events in the history of this party was that while the process of the adoption of constitution was about to complete the minds of the same of the members present perhaps were suddenly influenced by the believes of the traditional religious practices and they expressed their desire to take a vow at the sacred religious place of 'Kangla'. Accordingly all the members of the party took a long procession with banners and party flag to Kangla (inside the cantonment area) and reached exactly at 3:30 p.m. There was a 'Maibi' (an oracle) at Kangla. She made all the religious preparation to worship the deity. She said that it was the right time to worship the progenitor of Khuman clan. After the completion of religious ceremony the President gave a short speech and under his leadership all the members took a firm promise to work hard for the welfare of the people of Manipur and to protect and foster the distinctive political identity of the people

of Manipur. Such type of spirit was a unique feature in the character of the founder members of the party.

PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Just after the completion of all the process of the adoption constitution the Federal Party of Manipur approached the Election Commission of India with a formal request to recognize them as a state based political party. On the 10th November 1993 a formal application in the official Performa was submitted to the Election Commission for registration as a political party under section 29 A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. While submitting the application the party clearly stated that Federal Party of Manipur is based on 'National ideals, Democracy, Socialism, Secularism and Federalism, Regionalism and Social Federalism'. On the question of the policies, aims and objects the party categorically asserted that it would follow democratic constitutional and peaceful policy.⁶ Apart from this the party also placed all the necessary information desired by the Commission. It includes the name of the office bearers, the number of bodies and units and date of the formal establishment of the party. As a response to the application for registration Election Commission asked the President of the party to appear himself physically or authorized persons before the Commission on 22nd December 1993 at 3 p.m.⁷ Accordingly the party was represented by Prof. Gangmumei Kamei President, Shri M. Maringa Vice President and . Shri S.H. Seipu General Secretary.⁸ Again on 21st December 1993 Shri S.H. Seipu the General Secretary of the party again submitted another application with some more information about the number of primary and active members and number of 'District' and 'Kendra Committees'.⁹ He also requested the Commission to examine all the necessary information for a favourable action. Thus after the fulfilment of all required formalities the Election Commission officially permitted to give a provisional registration under section 29 A of the Representation of People Act, 1951, as a political party.

This was effected from the 22nd December 1993.¹⁰ However, in regard to the reservation of symbol the Commission stated that "the registration will not entitle to the party to the reservation of any exclusive symbol for it. However, the candidates duly set-up by the party at an election will be entitled to benefits of paragraph 12 of the Election Symbol (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968." Thus within a short days of its establishment the party was able to get provisional registration from the Election Commission of the Government of India.

FIRST CONVENTION OF THE PARTY 1994

The first political convention of Federal Party of Manipur was held on 21st October 1994. For the party it was a very important political development that it made a turning point in the history of the party. In the Special General Body meeting which was held in the previous year had laid a basic theoretical and ideological foundation for the existence as a political party. But this convention again brought a new dimension in the political activities of the party by consolidating and strengthening her ideology.

The meeting was held at Gandhi Memorial Hall. It was a well-attended meeting. About 1150 delegates from all the districts were assembled and participated in the deliberation. The convention was inaugurated by Prof. Gangmumei Kamei, the president of the party with a flag hoisting ceremony. The following resolutions were adopted.

Agenda No. 1:

The whole body of the resolutions was divided into three agendas. The first agenda was on political issues. The basic objective of the party as stated above is to restructure the Indian polity on the federal principle and autonomy for the state of Manipur. Therefore in the resolution the party again put a demand to restructure the Indian polity on Federal structure. In the process of discussion every delegates had expressed their concerned

at the dilution of the federal principle. They were of the view that this situation was created due to the control of Central Government by a highly 'Centralised and monolithic'¹² political party like the Indian National Congress. The members who participated in the deliberation also had pointed out that the policy of centralism of the Congress Party i.e., the ruling party had encroached upon the principle of 'Federalism' underlying the Indian polity and ultimately it led to the weakening of the state.

At the same time the delegates also bitterly criticized the Indian National Congress for their hegemonic and undemocratic ethos. They were of the view that this party represents the capitalist and chauvinistic interest and always protected the interest of Indian Constitution specially Article 356 which was taken by the convention as a serious instrument for the interference and encroachment in the autonomy of the states of the Indian Federation. The distortion and destruction of federal principle by creating a 'LEVIATHAN' known as Center was regarded by the members as an undemocratic policy.

On the other hand the members also expressed their happiness and satisfaction at the emergence of the idea of regionalism among the minds of the people. They felt that it would be a dialectical response to the 'hegemonic interventionist and interfering action of all Central Government.'¹³ It was a convincing opinion of all the members that regionalism was the healthy and constructive force in the body politic of the country. It was also believed that regionalism would strengthen the Indian unity and its multi-nationality nationhood. In this connection the meeting also put some observation about the role to be played by various ethnic, political and revolutionary movements in the process of the nation building. Therefore they expressed their positive view that they should be accommodated within the federal framework by giving autonomy and self-government to the people of the states and regions.

By recalling the whole history of the evolution of state of Manipur from small kingdom of Kangla to full fledged sovereign state in 15th century, an empire in the 18th century maintaining her sovereignty till the British conquest of 1891, and regaining her political autonomy under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 with a constitutional monarchy, followed by a long spell of Indian Government's rule and giving a statehood in 1972, the delegates put a strong observation in the unhealthy relationship between center and Manipur State. Therefore they expressed their desire to secure for Manipur a rightful and dignified place in the Indian Republic on the principle of federalism. They were of the view that the principle of restructure of relationship between Manipur and Centre would be based on federal principle and more autonomy for the state with full recognition of the 'historical prerogative of Manipur'.¹⁴

On the basis of these observations and arguments the convention also criticized the hegemonic and centralist forces threatening the democratic and federal base of Indian Polity. In addition to this the delegates, after having a detail discussion about the relationship between Centre and Manipur, had expressed their concern to the immediate need to review the present political trend. Accordingly this convention on the basis of the above mentioned nature of deliberation had adopted the following political resolutions. They were: -

(A) Equal Representation of the States in the Parliament

Federal Party of Manipur is of the view that since India is a union of States as mentioned in Article I of the Indian Constitution, there should be an equal representation of the states in the parliament, irrespective of their size and population. The party felt that if there is an equality in the number of a representation in the parliament there would be an equal voice among the states. The present system of representation which is on the basis of population was treated by the party as a serious violation

to the principle of federalism. It was also suggested that this chamber of the house should be made all-powerful. However, Federal Party of Manipur was not against the having of another chamber of legislative body constituted by the members which were elected on the basis of population. The adoption of this resolution was a major step of the party towards the demand for the restructuring of Centre and State relationship.

(B) More power for the State

The ideological foundation of the Federal Party of Manipur was to change the nature of relationship between Centre and State. Therefore they demanded to restructure the system centre and state relationship. This aspect was again raised in this convention. In the process of the adoption of this resolution the members pointed out the nature of the distribution of powers between the centre and state as set out in Part XI of the Indian Constitution specially Article 246 and Seventh Schedule. However, the party expressed their reservation to the control of the union over the states as provided in Article 356. Therefore the party demanded that this provision should be removed and the nature of the distribution of powers between Centre and State as mentioned in Seventh Schedule should be restructured.

In this regard the convention of the party proposed that the Union List with 96 subjects should be reduced and the subjects like, defence, foreign affairs, communications, Finance and Currency Central Legislative Affairs, Central Judiciary affairs and Union Public Service should be confined in List No. I of the Centre. It is also proposed that all the subjects given in the List No. II and those not covered in the Union List should be transferred to the states and 'List No. III' i.e. Concurrent 'List' should be abolished and all the subjects of this List should be transferred to the States list.

The demand for the abolition of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution was also another notable political step of Federal Party of Manipur. The party appreciates the

spirit of the provision of emergency power conferred on the Union Government under Part XVIII of the constitution. But the party felt that this provision was misused by the Union Government on narrow political considerations by the ruling parties in the Centre. The party thinks that this system is repugnant to the federal democratic ethos of the Indian polity. On the basis of this argument the convention strongly demanded to abolish Article 356 to ensure freedom, democracy and federalism in the Indian Union.

Federal Party of Manipur was also very much particular in the style of functioning of Finance Commission and Planning Commission. The party was of the opinion that the Finance Commission is a statutory body provided by the constitution of India whereas the Planning Commission is a body constituted by an executive decision of the Government of India. From the constitutional point of view Finance Commission should have more financial power than planning commission. But the planning commission has enjoyed the power of fund granting facilities. This body was managed and controlled by the Union Government. The party was of the view that under this policy the Central Government has established its own primacy and hegemony over the state by playing havoc with development plans and autonomy of the state. As a result of this the position of Finance Commission had been belittled by the Central Government. Keeping this view into consideration the convention unanimously resolved to propose that "the Finance Commission has to be strengthened and National Development Council and the Planning Commission should be made constitutional and statutory bodies with powers to decide and distribute funds and ensure planning on national basis to the states."¹⁵

(C) Autonomy of the State of Manipur

The style of the provision of autonomy as given in the Indian constitution was thoroughly discussed in the convention. The members were of the view that the

relationship and a sense of belonging among the people of Manipur the convention resolved to demand for the establishment of an 'Inter-Ethnic Council' in Manipur.

Then to protect the basic human rights of the people of Manipur the convention resolved to demand for the establishment of a state level 'Human Rights Commission' on the pattern of National Human Rights Commission.

Indeed, the idea for the establishments of "Inter Ethnic Council" and State Human Rights Commission was a remarkable political decision of Federal Party of Manipur. Before this no other political parties raised this issue for a positive social development in the state.

Agenda 2: Economic Resolutions.

The Federal Party of Manipur firmly believed that the political development or positive political changes would not be possible without strong economic foundation. And to maintain equilibrium in the plural society would be possible only when there is a social justice and equitable development. On the basic foundation of this understanding Federal Party of Manipur was firmly committed to build up an egalitarian society based on development with social justice and on equitable development in different regions.

In the context of Manipur, Federal Party of Manipur was of the view that despite the completion of several Five Years Plans the Manipur state was not able to reach to a stage, which could sustain itself. Due to this condition there was big developmental gap between Manipur and other states in widening over the years. On the other hand the unsystematic and bad planning since 1951 the state was not able to lay any foundation for long-term development. The failure on the part of plan efforts so far, had stopped the scope for additional resource mobilization in the state was shrinking. Therefore, the Federal party of Manipur, in order to have a capability to regenerate the economic position of Manipur, made a quite logical and reasonable proposal to make one time

huge financial investment. The party had categorically pointed out that such type of big push in the financial investment was necessary to the development of the State.

Besides this the convention also discussed the economic benefits given by the New Economic Policy to the state. It was also pointed out that this policy had two components. One component aims towards the stabilization of price and exchange rates and other aims, to endeavours to bring about structural transformation of the economy. The Federal Party of Manipur felt that during the interim period of structural adjustment the poor state tend to suffer. Therefore the party resolved to make a proposal to implement the principle of special programme for the state of Manipur during the adjustment period.

The party also thought that the opening of trade relationship between India and Myanmar through Manipur would be a great advantageous position for the improvement of financial condition of this state. Therefore the party proposed that the State Government should adopt specific short-term policies to reap the benefits of the border trade.

Agenda 3: Resolution on Social Federalism

It is a known fact that without stability and peace in the society no nation and no state could march forward to the progress of political development. Therefore in order to have a positive progress in the political life of the state there should be a social cohesiveness and spirit of co-existence among the people. However, to bring this idea is not an easy task particularly to the state where the pluralistic society exists.

The Federal Party of Manipur was also fully aware of the fact that Manipur society is a plural society where the different ethnic groups, cultures and languages flourished right from the early historical period. It is also true that this ethnic cultural and linguistic pluralism have played and will continue to play an important role in social

development. However, the party had fully realized that there were a lot of variations and social injustices in the process of the co-existence among the ethnic group of people. The feeling of the losing of their distinctive identity in the hand of big group is one of the greatest apprehensive factors among the small group of people. In this respect, the unanimous view of the party was that every ethnic group should have the privilege to preserve their identity within the framework of Manipuri society. And the bigger group should have the respect to the historical identity of the interest of small group.

Keeping these observations into consideration the Federal Party of Manipur was of the view that "social federalism can best ensure and safeguard the multiple interests of different ethnic groups."¹⁷ And in order to materialize the concept of 'social federalism' the convention had proposed some measures like "consistent application of the principle of actual quality, the granting of adequate autonomy, equal rights for all the ethnic groups big or small, suppression of any form of exploitation and discrimination, a truly democratic and federalistic state structure that generates the equal development of ethnic minorities, absence of compulsion in dealing with language question, respect for the other culture, customary and traditional practices, complete trust and mutual co-operation among all the peoples so as to prevent the internal and external reactionary forces from taking advantage of the pluralistic nature of the society."¹⁸

Then after having a detail discussion the members unanimously agreed to resolve for a united and resolute struggle to achieve the following conditions for the establishment of the idea of 'social federalism'.

The conditions were:

- (a) Equality at the individual and collective levels;
- (b) Cultural identity of all the ethnic groups;
- (c) Social Harmonisation;

- (d) Equitable Economic development;
- (e) Protection of ethnic minorities; and
- (f) Protection of basic human rights.

Indeed, the first convention was very significant political step for Federal Party of Manipur. That it pledged to secure a rightful and dignified place within the framework of Indian Constitution. The demand to recognize the 'historical prerogative of Manipur' was undoubtedly a great challenge to the attitude of the deliberate ignorance of the centralist elements of the Government of India. Apart from the political issue this convention also proposed to introduce an equitable economic distribution system on the basic of the need of the state whatever the size may be. The economic resolution adopted by the convention to provide one time a big financial investment for the regeneration of the economic position of Manipur and for having the capability of herself generating economic conditions indeed was a unique political step of Federal Party of Manipur. After having this idea, now it became a serious debatable issue among the social scientist and economists of the state. On the other hand it is also a big ideological contribution of the party to the future generation people of the state. The concept of 'Social Federalism' was also a new idea proposed by FPM. This social idea could be implemented in the larger context of Indian society. Therefore the first convention of 1994 was a very important political step of FPM because after this the party was able to penetrate even into the inner circle of the society with its basic ideological principles and objectives. Thus from this day the party began to plant the ideological trees of the ideas of 'Federalism and Autonomy' 'Self Generating Economic life' and 'Social Federalism' in the fervent political soil of Manipur.

GENERAL ELECTION OF 1995

For Federal Party of Manipur the election of 1995 was a very important political step. The participation in this

election was, in fact, a preparatory step for a long political journey of this party. It was also viewed that the participation of the party in this election was also another preparatory step for a new and social order in Manipur.¹⁹ On the other hand this election also was a great boon in disguise for the party because it laid a strong foundation for the recognition of this party as an important regional political force of the state. The ideological objective of the party was clearly mentioned right from the very inception. So the party participated in the election under the ideological banner of 'federalism and autonomy'. Besides this the party also put some important issues for the state of Manipur which were widely welcomed by the people and it became a serious debatable issue among the common people.

'FEDERALISM IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR, AND AUTONOMY FOR OUR IDENTITY' was the main slogan of Federal Party of Manipur in this election. Under this plank the party presented a manifesto on two important aspects. The first part of the manifesto dealt with the general ideological objectives in which the party strongly emphasized for the 'restructuring of the Indian polity' on the line of federalism and autonomy of the states. The second part was on some important issues of Manipur which was considered as the vital points for her future history. The whole resolutions which were passed by the 1st convention of 1994 was fully incorporated in the first part of the manifesto. The party placed give two issues as the focal points for the better life of future Manipur and also makes some other points, which were directly related with the developmental aspect of the state.

Territorial integrity and unity of Manipur was a very important issue for every social, political and voluntary organisation of the state of Manipur. Federal Party of Manipur was also fully aware of the fact that this issue was developed just after the completion of the merger of Manipur into India. A serious threat to the territorial integrity of Manipur and unity of the people was a very

apprehensive point in every mind of the people of Manipur. It is also a fact that every political, social and voluntary organisation was against any type of disturbances in the territorial integrity and unity of the people of Manipur. But the party felt that to make a continuous shouting against the possible danger of the threat of territorial integrity of the state was not a practical political step. It was an accepted view of all the members of the party that territorial boundary of any state would be properly guarded and protected only by the people not any other else. It was also believed that the people who have the sense of belongingness would be able to protect the territory and to preserve the unity. In this respect the party, in its manifesto presented a new and the highly thought provoking slogan i.e. 'LIVE FRONTIER POLICY'²⁰ to the people of Manipur for continuous debate among them. The justification of the party in the new idea was that if there were no proper administrative functioning, no proper attention to the people of border areas, no welfare policy adopted for the better life of the people, the possibility for the growth of the sense of belongingness among the people of border areas would not able to come up to a certain expectation level. Therefore the party in her manifesto strongly emphasized that they would initiate a 'Live Frontier Policy' by opening many avenues for the welfare of the people of border area. It was also mentioned that this policy would be able to protect the boundaries of Manipur.

Negotiation for solution of revolutionary movements was another important issue of focal points highlighted by the FPM in its manifesto. It is a universal law and historical truth that all form of conflict are resolved on the negotiation tables .It was the strong view of the party that since the objective of the revolutionary movements was for the establishment of a separate distinctive political identity outside the constitution of India, it was not practicable to initiate for a dialogue within the framework of the Indian Constitution. This was also the opinion of

the party that the talk with revolutionary movements should be initiated without any condition. Therefore in its manifesto the party proposed that there should be a negotiation between the Government of India and various revolutionary groups. It was also emphasized that in the process of peace the services of persons of good will and recognized credibility of national and international status will be sought and made available to the negotiating position.

In addition to this the party also strongly asserted its firm stands for the protection of basic human rights of the people. In this regard the party demanded the following issues i.e. the establishment of Human Rights Commission for the state of Manipur, withdrawal of draconian laws like 'Armed Forces Special Power Act, TADA and Punjab Security Act. The party also felt that the revolutionary movement aims for a political cause. Therefore the political prisoners status should be given for the insurgents of various groups arrested or imprisoned by the state.

Besides this the issues like the social unity and the cultural identity of the people of Manipur, the establishment of Inter-Ethnic Council to deal with ethnic and communal problems of the state, development with social justice etc. were also categorically pointed out with logical argument in the manifesto. One of the most important outstanding issues, which were clearly mentioned in the manifesto in connection with the developmental aspect of the state, was the idea for the expansion of National Highway No.53. FPM promised "National Highway 53 will be expanded to be the greater lifeline of Manipur as NH 39 is no longer dependable supply line for Manipur".²¹

Thus, with these specific issues and agendas the Federal Party of Manipur participated in this 6th General Election of Manipur Legislative Assembly. This was the maiden election battle of the party. Therefore the party was not interested to contest from every assembly

segments. However due to the absence of formal recognition from the Election Commission the candidates of Federal Party of Manipur was not able to contest under the same symbol. So, in order to get the opportunity to participate under a common symbol the party submitted a panel of symbol from among the reserve symbol of the Election Commission such as (i) Elephant (ii) Lion (iii) Rising sun behind the hills to the office of Chief Electorate Officer, Government of Manipur. The party had concentrated only in some assembly segments. Indeed, this election was a grand success of the party. In her maiden election battle the Federal Party of Manipur was able to open its political account by securing two seats and in most of the assembly constituencies the party candidates were defeated by a narrow margin. In fact, analyzing from the performance of the election it can be suggested that this election was a remarkable achievement of the party. In its victory meeting the president of the party expressed their gratitude to the people of Manipur for extending their full co-operation and for giving recognition to the party. At the same time the party also expressed their full satisfaction to the people for their warm receipt to the ideology and. They also asserted that Federal Party of Manipur is no doubt, a local party with national outlook. So, this election paved a very big way for having a long and bright future political journey in the body polity of the Federation of Indian Democracy.

FORMAL RECOGNISATION AND ALLOTMENT OF SYMBOL

After getting the result of the 6th General Election of Manipur and degree of their poll performance the party had submitted a formal request to recognize the Federal Party of Manipur as the political party under the provision of law. The action of the Election commission was so prompt that in an official notification dated 30th October 1995 the Commission formally recognized Federal Party of Manipur as a state based political party.

In their official notification the Commission said that while reviewing the poll performance of the political parties at the general election to the legislative assembly of Manipur held in Feb- March 1995 in the terms of paras 6 and 7 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment order 1968), the Election Commission was satisfied to the poll performance of Federal Party of Manipur. Therefore under the terms of Para 6(2) of the election symbol (Reservation and Allotment) order 1968 the FPM was eligible for recognition as a state political party with this observation the election commission allotted the symbol of 'Rising Sun' to FPM in the state of Manipur. The official notification of the allotment of recognized symbol was communicated on 31st Oct. 1995 to the General Secretary of party.

Thus, with this official notification Federal Party of Manipur became a state based political party.

REFERENCES

1. Presidential Address on Special Session of the General Assembly of Federal Party of Manipur, Imphal, 9th November 1993.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Proceedings of the Special Session of the General Assembly of Federal Party of Manipur held on 9th Nov. 1993.
6. Applications submitted to Election Commission for registration as a political Party end—section 29 (A) of the Representation of the people Act 1951.
7. Ref. No. 56/164/93 J.S. II/3019 dated 23rd November 1993 Letter from Sobon Lal Chand, Under Secy. (Legal) to Prof. Gangmumei President FPM.
8. Ref. FPM /RE/1-93-94 dated 10.12.1993 Letter to Under Secy. (Legal) from President FPM.
9. Ref. No. FPM/RE/i/93-94 Dated 12-12-93 Letter from General Secy. FPM to Secy. Election Commission