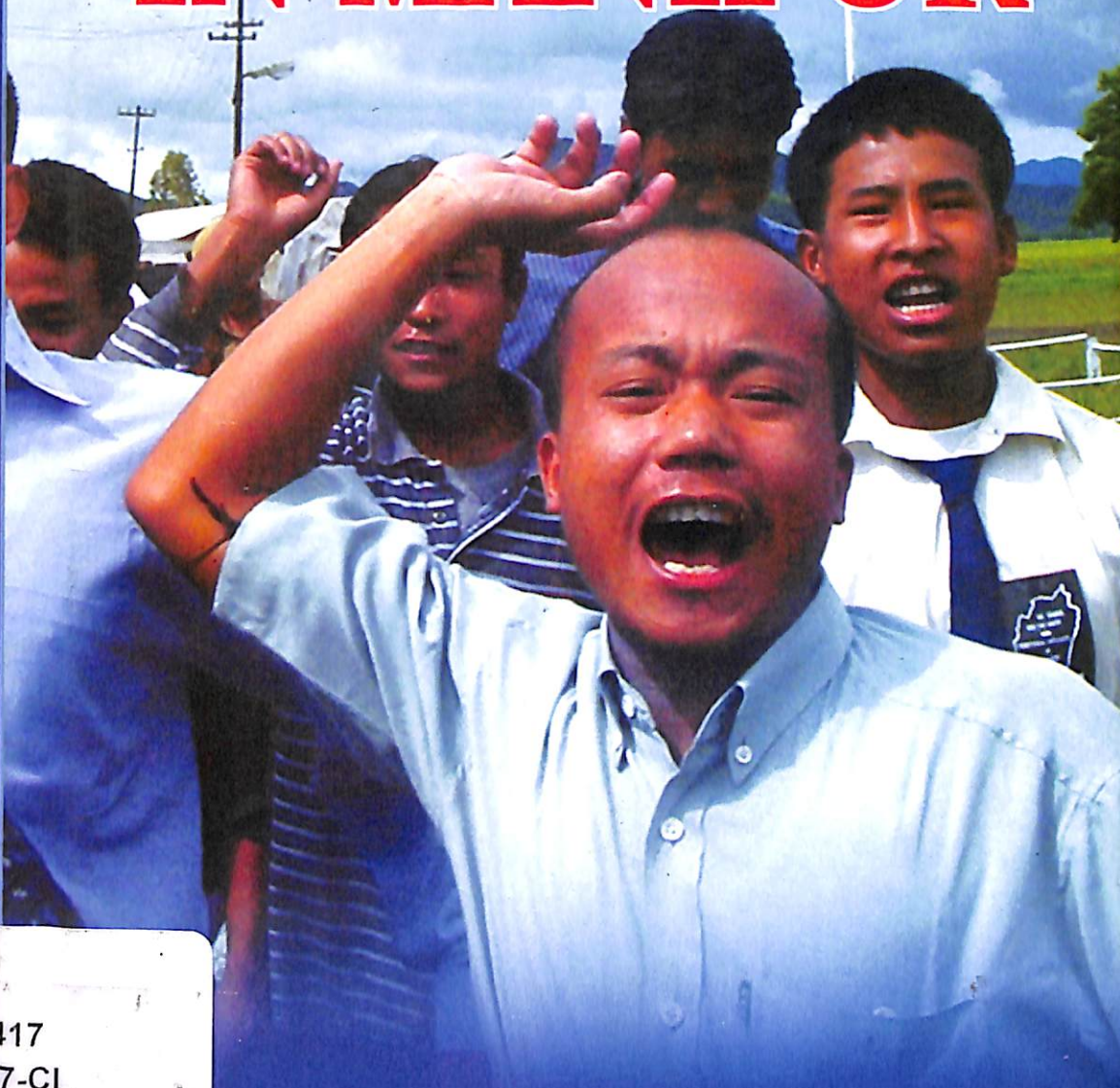


# THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN MANIPUR



417  
7-CL

Ningthoukhongjam Urmila

# THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN MANIPUR



Ningthoukhongjam Urmila

AKANSHA PUBLISHING HOUSE  
NEW DELHI - 110 002 (INDIA)

## AKANSHA PUBLISHING HOUSE

4649/21-B, Ansari Road

Daryaganj, New Delhi - 110 002

Phones: 23263193, 9811582579

E-mail: ektabooks@yahoo.com

*Student Movement in Manipur*

© Author

First Published, 2007

ISBN 978-81-8370-141-9

Call No... 371.815417

Acc. No... 7896

PRINTED IN INDIA

---

Published by Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi -  
110 002 and Printed at Capital Offset Press, Delhi

## FOREWORD

---

It is a great pleasure for me to have gone through the book, *The Student Movement in Manipur*, written by Dr. N. Urmila, a young promising researcher and academician. People are talking a lot about the different type of contributions given by the student community in the developmental process of the society and state. When we look back to history we are able to come across many evidences where the students have played a pivotal role in the changing process of the given society. In a sense the student life can be treated as a symbol of justice, bravery and enthusiasm. During this period the students, by taking the role of pressure group, always put forward a lot of enthusiastic ideas and suggestions for the betterment of the society. Such type of radicalist attitude in a positive direction is the significant contribution of the student community to their respective society.

Manipur is also not lagging behind in such type of social movement. Just after the merger of Manipur into India the people had enjoyed an opportunity to witness the activities of the student community. Apart from their academic activities they also played a major role in the social and political life of the state. As a student of social movement I am fully convinced that any type of positive changes in the political and social life of any given society could be possible only when the younger generations are involved actively in a positive way. Such type of character

---

was also very much prevalent in the case of Manipur. The participation of the students' community in the '*Statehood Movement*' of the '*State*' may be taken as a great contribution to the people. In addition to this their active participation against the large scale influx of foreign nationals also rendered a very significant contribution in the process of fostering promotion and maintenance of the traditional national character to the indigenous people of Manipur.

Here I am very happy to note that the author, with her analytical capabilities, have successfully analyzed the role of the All Manipur Student Union in more categorical way. She analyzed the whole activities of the student body within the framework of sociological approach. I always considered it as a very intelligent and mature approach. The student movement, in fact, is still an ongoing process. As mentioned above that without the participation of the students the progress of the society and state may not be able to go in a positive direction. While preparing this monograph, the author consulted all the important primary sources and information. Therefore I take it as an original research work.

I am quite sure that Dr. N. Urmila Devi will carry on her research and academic work in a more and more comprehensive way. I am convinced that the book will render a lot of contribution to the academic world of the state of Manipur and it will give a great help to the new generation of the state.

**N. Joykumar Singh**  
*Dean*  
School of Social Sciences  
Manipur University, Imphal

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

I would like to thank Professor Naorem Joykumar Singh who guided me in exploring the political actions of the students in Manipur. His advice, thoughtful suggestions, valuable help has always kept my line of enquiry in the right track. Without his critical examination, I would not have been able to complete the book.

I also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor M. Jiten Singh, Head of Department of History, Manipur University and Professor Kshetrimayum Bimola Devi, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Manipur University for their advice at times of need.

I sincerely would like to acknowledge the warm cooperation of the following persons and some others whose names were missing in my diary: Professor Naorem Sanajaoba, Mr Leihaothabam Sarat Sharma, late Mr Nongmeikappam Sanajaoba, Dr Kh Loken, Mr Lairenjam Gojendra, Mr Narumbam Achouba, Dr Ningombam Basanta, Mr Khangembam Kuleshwar, Mr Meisnam Khelen, Mr S Noren. Mr Salam Ibohal, Mr Loitongbam Iboyaima, Mr Arunkumar (Boyai), Mr Yenkokpam Priyokumar, Mr S Sarat, Mr Raj Kumar Bobichand, Dr Laimayum Bishwanath Sharma, Mr A C Netrajit, Mr L C Somorendro, Mr Raj Kumar Tenedy. I am very sorry for those whose names could not be mentioned here. It is all my fault.

---

I also like to express my sincere gratitude to all the staff members of the Criminal Investigation Department, Government of Manipur for allowing me to go through the police records of the student activities during the period under study.

I also like to acknowledge Mr Irengbam Arun, Editor, *Ireibak* for his careful and critical examination when the book is about to print. His editing technique is really useful in shaping the book in the present form.

Lastly but not the least, I express my thanks to Dr K Ibo Singh, Department of Political Science, Manipur University under whom I started my work and who had spared his valuable time from 1991 to 1999 to supervise my work progress. I shall remain ever indebted to him for his help and support.

**Ningthoukhongjam Urmila**

# CONTENTS

---

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>ix</i>
1. Introduction	1
2. Emergence of the Students' Apex Body	14
3. Political Actions of AMSU: First Two Phases	45
4. AMSU and Secularization of Education	62
5. Foreigners Issue	76
6. AMSU and Interest Accumulation for the Language Issue	124
7. AMSU in Manipur Political System	156
<i>Bibliography</i>	167
<i>Appendices</i>	171
<i>Annexures</i>	183
<i>Index</i>	187



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

---

### I

The lexical meaning of 'Student' is usually given at two levels:

1. anyone who is learning a subject matter;
2. anyone who is enrolled in a formal educational institution.

Generally, the 'student' is taken as of the second meaning. But, there are various other connotations of the word, 'Student'. In many works on the history of social conflicts, contemporary social problems, the *Students* are not as simple as its lexical meaning.

To Alain Touraine<sup>1</sup>, the students are a new force comparable to the labour class. He says, *If it is true that knowledge and technical progress are the motors of the new society, as the accumulation of capital was the motor of the preceding (industrial) society, does not the university then occupy the same place as the great capitalist enterprises formerly did? Thus, is not student movement, in principle, at least, of the same importance as the labour movement of the past?*

On the other hand, students are seen by some bureaucratic orthodoxy, as the 'traditional middle class'. To them, any

## 2 *Student Movement in Manipur*

---

separate student strategy or movement would merely reflect its petit-bourgeois provenance<sup>2</sup>.

These views are over-generalized. While defining students, we should consider (a) the origin, (b) the situation, and (c) the social destination. These factors are related with the historical experience of a 'historical bloc' (in the Gramscian sense). As the origin and destination of the students are similar in the developing countries, the student situation is more important. Except for a few student bodies functioning as wings of political parties, majority of the individual students in Manipur are rebellious by nature to the existing political authority, although without a long term political goal. Considering such historical realities, we can safely say, in a sense, *students are not a class, but a temporary occupation: they are apprentice workers who no sooner become conscious of themselves as a community they tend to be dispersed - and hence neutralized*<sup>3</sup>.

The students' role in the polity system emerged actively in the 19th century. The German student body of *Burschenschaft*, founded in 1815, sought to influence the government for liberalizing its machineries and for unifying the German states into one nation. It also aimed to eliminate the out-of-fashion medieval practices in the University so that an academic freedom in learning and teaching could be attained. Many student bodies came up in history with different aims and objects since then. Some of them were highly charged with political ideology; many other bodies acted as pressure groups or interest groups with or without a definite political ideology. *By the twentieth century the cumulative experience of generations of fighting students had produced a very high level of political consciousness in Latin American University students. It was they who succeeded in reforming their universities from 1918 onwards*

to a level which was unsurpassed during the following fifty years in America, Britain, France or Germany<sup>4</sup>. It was the Cordoba Manifesto of 1918 that had charged the students actively to act with political interest in twentieth century political scenario of Latin America.

The Manifesto was the first declaration of student rights. It denounced the old administration in which there was no reform of curricula, and no reform of rules, for fear that someone might lose his job because of the change and it announced: we want to eradicate from university organization the archaic and barbarous concept of authority which in university is a bulwark of absurd tyranny<sup>5</sup>. The movement soon gained momentum to spread across the South American countries — in Peru they were made in 1919, Colombia in 1924, Paraguay in 1927, Brazil and Bolivia in 1928, Mexico in 1929 and Costa Rico in 1930s<sup>6</sup>. All these movements were but a legacy of active political involvement of the students in 19th century politics. *Latin American University youth played a leading part in the wars of independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and have gone on struggling against tyranny ever since*<sup>7</sup>.

The students in United States have quite a different tradition. The first student union was established in 1896 at the University of Pennsylvania; but major unions came up only in 1930. *This growth is the result of general acceptance by educators of the concept that leisure-time activities have educational value - that much development of students takes place outside the classroom*<sup>8</sup>. In the 1960s, students started to demand and often get a much larger share in shaping policies than the Universities traditionally allowed them to. *Notable changes were evident in the scope of the student government. Nearly all US campuses have had for years some form of student government to help the*

#### 4 Student Movement in Manipur

---

*administration maintain effective relations with the student body and to give students direct experience in self-government.*<sup>9</sup>

The most radical student group, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) came into existence in 1960. Thomas E. Hyden, a student of the University of Michigan, published his famous **Port Huron Statement** in 1962; basing on the statement, SDS declared that *the American political system had failed to achieve social or international peace or end poverty and exploitation, and called for a **participatory democracy** in which individuals could share in social decisions that directly affected their lives*<sup>10</sup>. The SDS involved actively in Civil Rights movements at its initial stage; later, the group was in the forefront of the Anti-Vietnam War movement. It tried to mobilize the blacks, the poor, and the exploited to transform society by revolution and its ideology was direct confrontation with the American capitalist system.

*In 1969, SDS split into three factions. The Progressive Labour faction, a pro-Mao group, tried to divert campus members of SDS away from Campus politics and into the working-class movement. The Revolutionary Youth Movement-II sought to transfer the University into an area of Revolutionary action. The Weatherman faction, also known as Revolutionary Youth Movement-I, considered itself the vanguard of violent revolution, with students, workers, and blacks presenting a united front. They endorsed terrorism as part of an armed struggle and conducted workshops on explosives and sabotage. At its 1972 convention SDS was clearly controlled by the Progressive Labour faction, doctrinaire and disciplined but opposed to violence*<sup>11</sup>.

Many countries of the third world produced various

militant student movements in the twentieth century. In Cuba (1958), Czechoslovakia (1968), China (1919) students played vital roles in changing the existing political order. In 1933, the students in Cuba *were mainly instrumental in bringing down the Machado dictatorship in alliance with a group of rebellious army sergeants; and under Batista's second dictatorship, in 1952-58, they played a leading role in both the urban and the rural resistance movements. In March 1957, they organized an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Batista and several of their leaders were killed; subsequently they participated in sabotage in Havana and many went to the mountains of Oriente to fight with the Rebel Army*<sup>12</sup>. Even after the Castro's revolution, the students participated in every sphere of state politics.

The China scene is more interesting in the sense that students' action preceded the Chinese Communist movement. The Peking University, founded in 1898, was the academic centre of the Chinese Revolution. The Peking students staged a gigantic demonstration on 4 May 1919 against Japanese imperialism, its expansion into Manchuria. *In the civil war between the Koumintang and the Chinese Communist Party, the majority of the students opted for Mao Tse-Tung and supported the Chinese Revolution of 1949*<sup>13</sup>. *Upto 1925, the students were more powerful than the Party itself. The first Party secretary, Chen Tu Hsiu, was a professor at Peking University. Mao Tse Tung himself was initiated into politics through student movements in Peking and Changsha, and one of his first political experience was a student strike in sympathy with 4 May movement, in June 1919*<sup>14</sup>. The students in China too took major roles in carrying out Mao's unique cultural revolution<sup>15</sup>.

The Japanese experience is, however, slightly different from others. The Japanese students started to perform

political actions in an organized way in 1960. They rallied against the renewal of the Security Treaty between Japan and US. There were a series of demonstrations over this issue. In addition, there were two equally important issues in 1960s. The three separate issues of the struggle were the resignation of Kishi for his action of 19 May, the cancellation of Eisenhower's visit, and the prevention of the Security Treaty<sup>16</sup>. But, there was tension between the different student bodies in Japan. The most serious conflict was between Private Universities and National Universities. At the ideological front, though All Japan Federation of Student Self Government Association swept Japan for about 20 years in post war period, Japanese students started to leave aside the Communist Party in 1955-56, In 1958, two new organizations were set up which were to exercise a great influence over the students - the *Kakukyodo* (which was a political organization) and the *Shagakudo* (which was a purely student body... The JCP groups or **anti-mainstream** faction regarded the US as the main target; whereas the mainstream were more concerned with internal Japanese issues and the overthrow of the existing power structure<sup>17</sup>. In spite of these conflicts, the student movement has played a historic role in any world perspective. It pioneered mass revolutionary action in an industrialized country, years before it was achieved in Europe and America... it has demonstrated that students can forge effective links with the most oppressed classes in society - workers and peasants<sup>18</sup>.

Student movement in South-East Asia emerged out of the anti-colonial political movements. Though political consciousness of the students were shaped by the nationalist movements, the students in the region was not able to develop as a community. This is because of the fact that there were only a limited number of educational institutions. But they had been associated *with nascent political elements*

---

*outside the University community. The students were articulated in discussion groups, youth congresses, women's congresses and in politically oriented articles published in a variety of newspapers and journals<sup>19</sup>.*

In Burma, the students started taking part in political movements since the 1930s. The trouble was started by the announcement of Secretary Montagu in 1917-18. The Montagu-Chelmsfold *recommended that Burma's case should be reserved for special consideration, since her people were of a different race, having different problems. The storm of protest which suddenly arose in Burma when the nature of the alternative proposals for her political development became known took everybody by surprise. Burmese national sentiments flared up to a fever pitch<sup>20</sup>.* In the meantime, the opening of University of Rangoon in December, 1920 made room for a widespread student strike instigated by the politicians. *Discontent focused on the efforts of the British-appointed University governing agencies to stiffen preparatory standards and to free the University from political interference<sup>21</sup>.* But it was in 1930s, that the students could act for a movement of wider perspectives. By 1936 the Rangoon University Students Union (RUSU) became the headquarters of student agitation for the entire country. *The aggressive spirit of the student movement owed much to the frustration experienced by the vast majority of the students in their efforts to obtain diplomas and suitable employment... The sophisticated atmosphere of the University alienated many of Burma's youth from parental authority. The student movement was, therefore as much a product of an artificial and ill-adapted educational regimen as it was an expression of the rising tide of political disaffection. Many students developed a genuine interest in contemporary aspects of world affairs and in socialism, which were excluded from the curriculum<sup>22</sup>.*

Another force which helped shape the student movement in Burma was the **Dobama Asiayone** (We Burmans Association). This Association was formed by amalgamating two national student organizations, the Dobama group and the All Burma Youth League in 1935. The members addressed each other as **Thakins** in youthful defiance of British rule and an affirmation of faith that Burmese were destined to be masters in their own country. The Thakins were, as a rule, dedicated nationalists, disdainful of fellow students who aspired for entry into the civil service and also hostile to middle classes politicians who mouthed nationalist slogans for enhancing their own political fortunes<sup>23</sup>.

Though the memorable strike of February 1936 was led by the Rangoon University Student Union, it was precipitated by the Thakin leaders who had control of the RUSU. History tells that *The Thakin associates in the 1936 strike became the champions of Burmese nationalism against both the British and the Japanese, and they took over the political leadership of independent Burma after 1948* <sup>24</sup>.

After the military seizure of power in 1955, RUSU and ABSU acted in alliance with the Burma Communist Party (BCP). Many Karen, Shan and Kachin students left the university to fight with their respective insurgent groups against Burmese Government. This was the beginning of the student action in free Burma <sup>25</sup>.

In Indonesia, some students who had been educated in Holland became conscious of the disparity between colonized and free nations. *In the early 1920s, they consolidated their strength by transforming the existing Indonesian student organisation into a militant organization promoting unity and solidarity among people native to the Indonesian archipelago but stressing exclusiveness with respect to non-*



---

*Indonesian students. This small but highly active student association, the **Perhimpoean Indonesia** (Indonesian association) was one of the first organizations to openly advocate an independent Indonesia* <sup>26</sup>.

After the short drama of political powers in 1942-43 the Netherlands transferred sovereignty on 27 December, 1949. The political scenario of the independent Indonesia was dominated by a political confusion. *President Sukarno became in time an advocate of a centralized program of **guided democracy** in an endeavour to exploit the revolutionary fervour of Communist partisans, who also opposed particularism and multiparty rule. His **Pantja Sila** ideal included faith in Allah and devotion to nationality, humanity, democracy and social justice; but the precise meanings were unclear, and implementation was sadly lacking. Sukarno's attempt to bridge the chasm between Islam and communism incurred the inevitable-risk that he would alienate both sides and thus compromise the achievement of exposed objectives*<sup>27</sup>. His proposals were strongly objected to by the Muslim parties and thus started the chronic conflict between the Islamic and leftist groups. This had a strong impact on the student politics in 1960s.

The student politics in 1965 was dominated by the conflict between Islamic groups (especially HMI) and leftist groups (CGMI). *On October 25, 1965, a group of representatives from virtually all student associations (the major exceptions being CGMI and two other communist-oriented organizations) acted on the proposal of the Minister of Higher Education and Sciences and formed a new federative student organization. The new organization was called the Indonesian Students' Action Front or KAMI... The fate of KAMI assassinations carried out by the **30th of September movement** was revealed in the importance which students*

attached to the distinction between what they labelled the **older order** and the **new order** toward they were working. The three-fold demand of KAMI hinted at a broad reform orientation: (i) dissolution of the Indonesian Communist Party (ii) dismissal of cabinet members and formation of a new cabinet, (iii) reduction of prices<sup>28</sup>. This was the starting point of a new beginning of student politics in post independence era of Indonesia.

Indian students entered politics, like many other colonized countries, with the emerging and growing nationalist movement. In 1928, a student organization was formed in Punjab under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai. In the same year, an All Bengal Students' Association was presided by Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1936 an All India Students' Federation was established... The Congress leaders, in 1945, established... All India Students' Congress, In 1950, this organization was dissolved<sup>29</sup>. But after India got its sovereignty in 1947, student bodies were widely charged with different (even state-based) student organizations. Some notable national level bodies are All India Students' Federation, Students' Federation of India, National Students' Union of India, Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad. Assessing the present student politics, as quoted in Babul Fadia<sup>30</sup>, Philip G. Altbach says, *The student movement had lost its sense of militant unity and ideological purpose... The nationalist fervour of the pre-independence period has been replaced by generally unorganized and sporadic agitation usually aimed at specific grievances*. The four grievances are (a) demands upon non-university authorities on issues (b) Student demands by students upon universities on issues of special concern (c) sporadic, generally unorganized outburst by students only vaguely associated with concerned demands, (d) activities associated with larger political

movements in the areas surrounding the school, college or university.

There are many student organisations operating in Indian states, charged with regionalism or regional oriented ideology. For example, the student politics started in Assam was in nationalistic line during the colonial period. The pre-independent student organizations were affiliated to political parties. But, after independence, *a feeling was developed among the students to organize students more on no-party line. The Assam Students' Association which came into existence in September 1959 was organized on non-partisan, non-political and democratic foundation. It came to stand by the larger and collective interests of the students of Assam as well as to solve the problems common to the students of Assam as well as to promote the spirit of culture, literature, sports etc... (But) because of its participation in Refinery movement and Language movement it was branded as partisan and politically motivated. Therefore, there was mounting pressure for the organization of a student union whereby the students of all classes irrespective of language, religion, hills or plains could take a common platform*<sup>31</sup>. After this, a new student organization, All Assam Students' Union, came into being in 1967 with a different political colour.

Like other states of India, Manipur students have been engaging in their own political action. But, unlike many others, the student politics in Manipur did not originate from the nationalist or independence struggle. It was only in post-independence period that some political parties like the Manipur Pradesh Congress and the Socialist Party tried to rally the students in their party activities. But, during the mid-60s with the formation of All Manipur

students' Union, the state witnessed a new turn in student politics. The history of the All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) reflects not only the different activities of youth and students in the state, but also, the changing political ideas which have penetrated the collective mind and the psyche of the student community.

### REFERENCES

1. "Naissance d'un Mouvement Etudian" in *Le Monde*, 7 & 8 March 1968
2. see Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn, *Student Power*, Penguin, London
3. Alexander Cockburn & Robin Blackburn, *op.cit.*, pp.35-36
4. George Paloczi-Horath, *Youth Up In Arms*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1971:184
5. Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn, *Student Power*, Penguin, London, 1969:288-289
6. Fred Halliday, "Students of the World Unite", *ibid.*:289
7. George Paloczi-Horath, *op. cit.*:183
8. *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol.7: 255
9. *ibid.*: 254
10. *ibid.*: Vol. 25: 809
11. *ibid.*
12. George-Paloczi, *op. cit.*: 293
13. "Student Movement" in *Lexicon Universal Encyclopaedia*, Vol.18: 307
14. Fred Halliday in A. Cockburn and R. Blackburn, *Op.cit.*:299
15. see "Chinese Communist Youth League" in *China Quarterly*, No.12, Oct-Dec, 1962
16. see Fred Halliday, *op.cit.*:296-7
17. *ibid.*: 295-6
18. *ibid.*: 298
19. Stephen A Douglas and Harsja Bachtiar, "Indonesian Students:

- Generation of 1966" in Philip G Altbach, *The Student Revolution: a Global Analysis*, Lalvani, Bombay, 1970: 158
20. D G E Hall, *A History of South East Asia*, McMillan, London, 1968:740
  21. John F Cady, *South East Asia: Its Historical Development*, Tata McGraw Hill, New Delhi, 1976:509
  22. *ibid.*: 521
  23. *ibid.*
  24. *ibid.*: 522
  25. see Josef Silverstein, "Burmese Student Politics in a Changing Society" in Philip G Altbach, *op.cit.*
  26. Stephen A Douglas, *et. al., op.cit.*: 158
  27. John F Cady, *op. cit.*, see also, D G E Hall, *op.cit.*: 893-9
  28. Stephen A Douglas, *et. al., op.cit.*: 161
  29. Babulal Fadia, *Pressure Groups in Indian Politics*, Radiant, New Delhi, 1980: 61
  30. *ibid.*: 61-62
  31. Indrani Barua, *Pressure Groups in Assam*, Omsons, New Delhi, 1990: 20

## 2

# EMERGENCE OF THE STUDENTS' APEX BODY

---

### I

#### THE NATURE OF AMSU

The All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) was born in the aftermath of an incident in which police fired upon agitating students on 27 August 1965 at the Chief Commissioner's compound of Imphal. Four persons including three students died in the incident. The students were demanding price control of rice and introduction of ration cards in the public distribution system.

The AMSU is a student body having neither a specific political ideology nor a specific political responsibility in the society. Like many other student bodies in India, it is committed to act politically, whenever it feels necessary, in the interests of Manipur, Manipuri society and the student community. No one is certain of the relationship between the elite groups and the AMSU *vis-a-vis* its political interest and manifest actions. But there is a cybernetic relation, it seems, between the AMSU decision-making process and the general political interest of the elite groups which is anti-establishment in nature. A closer examination is needed, however, to conclude in a positive manner. As the student

community comprises more than half of the youth population, AMSU is the only body which could champion the cause of the common people's interest.

By the nature of its organizational setup, AMSU is not the student wing of any political party. It acts, in the existing socio-political environment, as a pressure group. Again, it has no particular political interest from which it would evaluate any issue or determine its political demands. The political interest of AMSU lies in the social system, as and when determined by its elected Executive Council. Here, theoretically speaking, a political fact may be perceived differently by two different Executive Councils of AMSU as there may be no common political interest between the two Councils.

According to **Encyclopedia Britannica**<sup>1</sup>, *An interest group is a number of people with a deep and continuing interest in a particular issue, who evaluate other current issues on the basis of their implications for this central interest.* Gabriel A. Almond et.al. are of the opinion that an interest group is *a set of individuals who are aware of these shared interests. The interest group may reflect only their occasional involvement*<sup>2</sup>. In this line of thinking, an interest group is a group having a more or less permanent shared interest. AMSU, theoretically, has no such permanent interest except the **aims and objects** embodied in its Constitution. The materialization of the aims and objects are not directed by a permanent ideological sanction or political interest. But, in praxis, AMSU develops a sort of interests which is linked with the **pride and growth** of Manipuri society. Hence, AMSU can be considered as a political body, when it carries out political action, and as a quasi-interest group having diffused responsibility and diffused power. In other words, AMSU is a non-institutional

interest group that articulate political interest from the commonly perceived interests in the larger social system. Non-institutional interest group is one, that is not a specialized organization, but that has a relatively continuous interest over time.

With the articulated interest, AMSU, in its role in the political system of the State, acts as a pressure group. As a body AMSU may, not doubt, have certain political interests at a particular point of time that do not need any governmental action to attain the desired goal. But, at large, AMSU acts as a pressure group to influence the governmental decision making process with demands or to alter the existing politics and programmes so that particular interest(s) may be materialized. Unlike other permanent pressure groups, AMSU cannot pursue the government with long term demands. Here we can use the definition given by Dack C.Plano and Milton Greenberg in their **The American Political Dictionary: An organized interest group in which members share common views and objectives and actively carry on programmes to influence government officials and policies.** While taking AMSU as pressure group, we consider the praxis attributes of the body.

The political demands of a pressure group are overt political action; many political actions are not necessarily manifested in public. When the activities are not related with the business of the government, AMSU organizes seminars and conferences etc. to find a way of attaining certain political goals. The body puts forward demands only when the goal involves governmental action. One would say **when AMSU disagrees with a decision taken by the state, it will bring up a demand; when it agrees, it does not act overtly.** So, the demands are, by and large, originated from public frustration out of the



existing political system. The major political demands in last 27 years are the Statehood, Secularization of educational institutions, inclusion of Manipuri language in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution, and the Foreigners' Issue. These demands are socially accepted and culturally sanctioned.

The All Manipur Students' Union always keep in mind the national pride and the societal interest while visualising its demands. The demand of price-control and the conversion of private colleges into government colleges etc. can also be seen in many of the AMSU resolutions. But demands of such nature have little value in the society. Whereas, cultural recognition and overwhelming societal response could be seen in the case of the Foreigners' issue, the Language issue, and the demand for repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers (Assam and Manipur) Act, 1958. Because, these issues could strike at the core of the collective sentiment of the society. The revivalist attitude of certain elite groups play a vital role in popular acceptance of the demands. The use of words like **Kangleipak** and newly coined words in some leaflets circulated by AMSU, indicate such a tendency. **Kangleipak** is the proposed name of the state by certain sections of the population against the present Sanskrit name of **Manipur**. But other names are also proposed by many other groups.

Many a times, the political attitude of AMSU is shaped by the spirit of regionalism in the society. AMSU is, on many issues, often caught in a dilemma between the pro-constitutionalist and anti-constitutionalist poles. The **public image** of the state government as being inefficient, corrupt and untrustworthy leads to general disillusion and an anti-establishment attitude among the youth and the general population. It also provokes political action from AMSU

and in its endeavour to **correct** the faults in the system, an anti-establishment attitude automatically seeps in. It again leads to use of violence in their agitations which in turn becoming a norm notwithstanding the nature of the demands. Another manifestation of this ambivalent attitude is observed in the frequent boycott of the Republic Day Celebrations on 26 January. Such attitudes are also observed in the actions of other political groups in the state. But, such political action does not necessarily find a reflection in electoral politics. For instance, an anti-congress attitude does not affect the return of Congress M.L.As. in the state elections.

### **Birth of AMSU**

There were student unions prior to 27 August, 1965. But those were mainly student wings of the political parties active in the state. As such, there was no apolitical forum of the students acting in the general interest of the students. The need of such a student forum was felt by some student leaders after the police firing on 27 August 1965, which left four persons dead and several others injured. Many student leaders were rounded up by the police in the aftermath of the incident and kept in jail.

On 27 August 1965, there was a mammoth procession of thousands of students demanding adequate availability of rice in the market and introduction of ration cards in the public distribution system. They had come to meet the then Chief Commissioner in his official bungalow. In fact, it was a continuation of several other processions staged during the last 10 days in Imphal. The first procession was on 18 August and it was mainly by the womenfolk, a replica of the **Nupi Lan of 1939** (a historic agitation of Manipuri women against the rice export policy of colonial British rulers). Their main demand was that, rice should be made

available and sold to representatives of each and every family against ration cards alone, which should be introduced quickly and that the number of rice shops should be increased<sup>3</sup>.

On the 27 August at 7 a.m., several people including some political leaders met the Chief Minister. During the discussion, the Chief Minister explained that the Government had already taken a decision on 23 August to introduce ration card system within 24 hours. At about 9.30 a.m. another group of about 300 persons had gathered at the Chief Commissioner's Bungalow. The Chief Commissioner accompanied by the Chief Minister had earlier gone to Kangchup, a village west of Imphal, to inaugurate a water supply system there. But the crowd waited till their return. They were able to meet the Chief Commissioner, the Chief Minister, and the Development Minister there at about 10.30 a.m. The crowd forcibly took away the Chief Commissioner to the nearby Johnstone School complex. While addressing the crowd, the Chief Commissioner explained that the food policy so far followed by the government had proved unsatisfactory. It was therefore decided to discard the old system and introduce ration cards within 48 hours from the date of submission of application. Cards would be issued through fair price shops, consumer shops, Panchayets and Panchayet Samities<sup>4</sup>. The crowd consisted of mainly grown-ups and elderly women in Chief Commissioner's bungalow. But on the highway, east of Johnstone School, a meeting consisting of women, young school and college students was also held.

At about 1 p.m. students from various schools and colleges organized a meeting at the Bir Tikendrajit Park. After the meeting at 2 pm, they proceeded towards the Chief Commissioner's Bungalow. They submitted a

memorandum which demanded among others, exemption of school fees for the students during the scarcity period; increase in the number of fair price shops and the supply of food grains to the shops; and seizure of rice and paddy from hoarders <sup>5</sup>. At about 3 pm, the demonstrators started lambasting the government with loudspeakers and there was a tussle after that. The students wanted Chief Commissioner's written assurance, which was bluntly denied. At about 3.30 p.m. the police began lathi-charge and started firing tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. In response, some students started pelting stones at the bungalow and nearby vehicles.

By 3.40 pm, the riflemen started firing directly among the crowd. A student named O. Nabakumar (aged 20) instantly died of bullet injuries in the Chief Commissioner's compound. A driver of All India Radio, Imphal named Waikhom Nilamani Singh was dragged down from the jeep (Regd. No. J & K 5790) and bayoneted by a rifleman. The AIR jeep was coming towards the Chief Commissioner's Bungalow. He died on the way to the hospital. A bullet hit the left hand of one L. Mangi Singh. Another two students, Laishram Chaobhal (19) and Nameirakpam Pramodini sustained fatal injuries in the lathi charge. Altogether nine civilians excluding Government servants were admitted to the Civil Hospital, Imphal. Of these, four women namely S. Angoubi Devi, K. Loitang Devi, Tombi Devi and T. Bimola Devi were admitted to the female surgical ward. Five persons namely H. Ibohal Singh, Kalachand Singh, Maipaksana Singh, N. Budhi Singh and L. Mangi Singh<sup>6</sup> were admitted to the male surgical ward of the Civil Hospital.

The four persons who succumbed to their injuries in the 27 August 1965 incident were Oinam Nabakumar, Laishram Chaobhal, Nameirakpam Pramodini and Waikhom Nilamani.

Oinam Nabakumar born 19 May 1945 was a resident of Sega Road Thouda Bhabok Leikai, Imphal. After passing Matriculate Examination, he was studying Pre-University (Science) course at the D.M. College of Imphal. He was admitted to the course in 1964. Seven months prior to his death on 27 August 1965, he had married one Tongbram Nungshi who bore him a son on 7 October 1965. He was subsequently named Sahidchandra.

Laishram Chaobhal, born 1 June 1947, was a resident of Khurai Ningthoubung Leikai, Imphal. He was studying class X in Lamphel High School when the incident occurred. He sustained serious injuries in the police Lathi charge of 27 August 1965 and ultimately succumbed to his injuries on 22 September 1965.

Nameirakpam Pramodini, born 1st February 1946, was a resident of Singjamei Thongam Leikai, Imphal. She was a BA student of Manipur College, Imphal when the incident occurred.

Waikhom Nilamani, born 1 December 1937, was a resident of Ningthoujam Leikai. He was a driver of All India Radio, Imphal at the time of his death on 27 August 1965. He had just fathered a daughter on 5 August 1965. His wife was one Khangembam Thambalngangbi Devi.

The day after on 28 August 1965, a group of student activists organised a meeting at 8 a.m. at the residence of Leihaothabam Saratchandra of Keishampat. Nameirakpam Madhusudan Singh, a student of D.M. College, was in the chair. The meeting adopted several resolutions which included demands like, (1) Availability of sufficient quantity of rice to the public; (2) A judicial inquiry on the police firing of 27 August 1965; (3) Due compensation should for the victims of the incident; (4) Unconditional release of all

the students arrested on 27 August. The most important resolution of the day was the proposal for formation of a student body at the state level, to press the above demands.

On 29 August, a second meeting was held at Uripok Tourangbam Leikai, Imphal at the residence of one Gurumayum Jatishwar with one N. Birendrakumar in the chair. In the meeting, the proposed student body was named as the **All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU)**. An Executive Body was constituted with 36 representatives from different schools and colleges. The meeting selected Th. Gambhir and L. Tombi respectively as the President and General Secretary. Twenty-one persons were selected as Joint Secretaries who were again divided into Seven groups. The persons were N. Birendrakumar, H. Joy, M. Manikumar (first group); Y. Brojen, Pukhrambam Kullachandra, Seram Mangi (second group); L. Ibohal, Y. Dijen, Ng. Shankar (third group); L. Sharatchandra, Shyamkumar, S. Mangi (fourth group); Loitongbam Kanhai, K. Damudor Sarma, R.K. Laksana (fifth group); Kshetrimayum Tiken, P. Ibohal, Khwairakpam Subhas (sixth group); and N. Sarat, Kshetrimayum Nabakumar, G. Yaima (seventh group).

The Executive Council was, however, reconstituted at a meeting held on 12 September 1965 at Manipur Dramatic Union Hall, Imphal, after the release of seventeen student leaders who were arrested in connection with the 27 August agitation. All of them attended the meeting and a new Executive Council were constituted after dissolving the Body formed on 29 August. No formal elections were held, as a proper constitution was yet to be adopted then. Important offices such as the President and the General Secretary were given to the student leaders who were in jail<sup>7</sup>. Sanajaoba Naoriya (General Secretary, D.M. College Students' Union),

Thiyam Gambhir (General Secretary, Imphal College Students' Union), G. Joykumar Sharma (Ex-Editor, D.M. College Students' Union), Loitongbam Iboyaima (Ex Finance Secretary, Imphal College Students' Union) and Meinam Manikumar (a student of D.M. College) were respectively selected as President, Vice President, General Secretary, Finance Secretary and Publicity Secretary of the new Executive Council, besides 14 Executive Council members. An Advisory Body of 4 members and a Civil Defence Board of 5 members were also formed to assist the Executive Council. The Advisory Board was headed by N. Ibohal as Chairman and the Defence Board by Saikhom Mangi.

A Constitution Drafting Committee was formed in a meeting held on 10 February 1966 at the premises of All Manipur Boy's Scout Union, Singjamei with Sanajaoba Naoriya in the Chair. The Committee consisted of 7 members, namely, Th. Gambhir, Y. Rajendra, A. Birendra, Kh. Joysakhi, Jadumani, N. Ibohal and Kshetrimayum Iboyaima. The Draft Constitution was passed on 26 December, 1966 in the 20th sitting of the Executive Council at Wangkhei Paradise Club, Imphal. The first AMSU elections were held on 1st January 1967 under the said Constitution. This marked the formal birth of the **All Manipur Students' Union**: a new symbol of student unity and solidarity in the state.

### **AMSU in the total political system**

The student community in Manipur became a more or less socio-political group, in late 1950's. This community, in spite of its class or political background, acts as a homogeneous body bound together by a sense of belongingness to the motherland. However, group behaviour was not influenced by the class background of the individual student in a significant way. In this context, we can consider

Seymour M. Lipset's view that "*Academic ecology, the social environment in which a student happens to find himself by virtue of his choice of University or academic field, tends to be more important than the class background in affecting his opinions.... Minority - majority social status also seems more important than the class background in affecting student propensity for action*"<sup>8</sup>. The role of academic ecology and that of class background is practically impossible because both of them are less differentiated in the social system of Manipuri society. The student composition in high and higher secondary schools, and colleges is more or less same. Further investigation may be made on the political behaviour of private school and college students. In the private schools, the students are mostly from the **privileged class** while students from **ordinary families** go to the government schools. On the other hand, the class background of the student in private colleges is relatively lower than that of leading three government colleges - D.M. College of Science, D.M. College of Arts and Commerce, G.P. Women's College; all of Imphal. The majority-minority aspect, too, subject to further investigation, had no obvious impact on the student politics. But some political differences were observed between the tribal and the Meitei (non-tribal) students over certain specific issues. The **Pangal** (non-tribal Muslim) students did not play a remarkable role as the number of students in high and higher secondary and colleges was very low.

The difference in political behaviour, political response to student actions among the students was visible remarkably at the topographical axis. The district-wise or locality-wise observations of the political behaviour will reveal such a difference. The proximity of a place to Imphal, the transport and media facilities and other geographical variations affect student's participation in a issue. This may be due to



the fact that the centre of student politics in Manipur was Imphal.

The students' community which acts independently of many socio-economic variations, however, cannot take up long term political action plans. Many demands, even issues, are generally short term ones. The agitation periods are also short in time. This disability of long term action is because of the time-bound student career and the short span of higher education. The short academic life *makes the existence of on-going organizations and sustained leadership almost impossible. This problem is further aggravated by the fact that student participation in a movement is sporadic, for extra-curricular activity becomes difficult to pursue when the pressure of examinations grows intense, or when official disapproval is manifested*<sup>9</sup>. It can be noted here that some issues can drag the students to extended agitations. Such issues usually are emotionally charged. The longest agitation in Manipur was, however, that of the Foreigners' issue in 1980-81. The Foreigners' issue found political sanction as it was perceived as a **struggle for survival** of the society.

Thus, the student composition and its characteristic political actions demanded a new type of leadership. The traditional concepts of leadership cannot hold the community in order. A student leader is not necessarily an elected President; he is not a charismatic leader nor an organized vanguard. As the student body is not in the cadre-based structure, the leader is not born out of a hierarchically arranged order. *The new type of young politician regards himself as one of many, always replaceable, and he is regarded as such by his followers. If he speaks, he does not voice his own unique opinions as an individual, but rather speaks as the mouthpiece of his fellow students*<sup>10</sup>. The role of

leadership in student politics may be further studied as to reveal the decision making process and to sort out the demands and/or supports in an existing system.

In an abstract system of polity, a student organization may be taken as a participant unit whose function is usually performed as a pressure group. The student body has a cybernetic relation with other units in power and responsibility, some student organizations may not be inclined to **support** any government; or they would simply remain silent on some issues which is not an unwanted one. So, they are often taken as an **agitating** body. In other words, they will supply the system with demand inputs, not in support. Among *inputs of a political system there are two basic kinds: demand and support. These inputs give a political system its dynamic character. They furnish it both with the raw material or information that the system is called upon to process and with the energy to keep it going*<sup>11</sup>. The student body while sharing only the demand input is specially taken as the **mouthpiece of the mass** against the **undemocratic** democracy. So the mass support to AMSU agitation is sustained even to its low-profile activities.

AMSU is not the lone student body; there are other student organizations like AISF, SFI, NSUI operating in the state. As the later groups are affiliated to political parties and committed to their respective political ideologies, they seldom represent public opinion and aspirations of the student community. In the political system, these bodies play a passive role of **criticizing and commenting** on particular and specific issues. But, AMSU as an active body, tries to create political situations in which the demands would transform into issues and then prepare the ground for launching movements. The body is, however, in a practical

sense, an agitating body in the political system. This fact, thus, evolves a unique relationship between AMSU and the government. Functionally, the relation is of diffused type. This type *is one that is more or less vaguely defined and delimited* <sup>12</sup>. The AMSU-Government relationship is defined only when a particular situation is evolved out of the unique whole of diffused power and diffused responsibility in the larger power and responsibility structure.

At another axis of the relationship. AMSU units in the socio-political environment are interacting in universal and neutral terms. Theoretically, the environmental information are processed and decisions are taken by Executive Council of AMSU. But groups like the Pan Manipuri Youth League, Insurgent groups, Meitei revivalists, no doubt, play vital roles in information flow to AMSU directly or indirectly. The decision taken is independent of the information units. The demands put forward by AMSU, are thus, functionally related with the socio-political environments through these units. The demands are shaped by the environment; but *not all demands originate or have their major locus in the environment. Important types stem from situations occurring within a political system itself*<sup>13</sup>. Among the major demands of AMSU inclusive of such **inputs** are less in number. This is because of the nature of AMSU which is characterized by its interests in societal **power and prestige**. The demands have direct or indirect link with the axiological and survival crises in the state. They are seldom nor-oriented. The difference between nor-oriented and value-oriented action is very thin. The former is concerned with specific goals and is more likely a product of an emotional response to a specific limited issue. But the value-oriented one has broader ideological issues and when it is usually linked directly to a broader concern<sup>14</sup>.

Demands are not equally weighed by the society as well as by the government. In Easton's words, *The occurrence of a demand, whether internal or external, does not thereby automatically convert it into a political issue. Many demands die at birth or linger on with the support of an insignificant fraction of the decision. Others become issues, an issue being a demand that the members of a political system are prepared to deal with as a significant item for discussion through the reorganized channels in the system*<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the main areas to be looked at while observing political actions of AMSU are the demands and their failure or success in the process of transformation into issues, the nature of the movements launched by this body.

AMSU, after agitation of a considerable period, usually sit with the government for negotiations. Many agreements or otherwise cannot give any significant direct output. This may be due to inability of the negotiator to convince the government or lack of political determination in implementing the agreements on the part of the government. Thus a number of agreements or otherwise vanish as wastepaper in the **bureaucratic dustbin**. The student action often cannot toughen the representatives of AMSU and the government. Or it may be sign of politicians' failure to handle the bureaucratic officers.

No doubt, some of the agreements are not implemented because of the terms of agreement themselves. The main reason of such a situation is lack of skill on the part of the negotiator representing AMSU. Here we can say, all good agitators are not good negotiators. Distinguishing the two, Harold Lasswell notes, *The essential mark of the agitator is the high value which he places on the emotional response of the public. Whether he attacks or defends social institutions is a secondary matter... The agitator easily infers that he*

*who opposes show bad faith or timidity. Agitators are notoriously contentions and undisciplined; many reforming ships are manned by mutineers. The agitator is willing to subordinate personal considerations to the superior claims of principle... The agitator sees **unworthy** motives there where others see the just claims of friendship... (He) trusts in mass appeals and general principles... live(s) to shout and write... (Agitators) conjoin away obstacles with the ritualistic repetition of principles. They become frustrated and confused in the tangled mass of technical detail upon which successful administration depends... They glorify men of outspoken zeal, men who harry the dragons and stir the public conscience by exhortation, reiteration and viterperation<sup>16</sup>.*

To it, Robert A Dahl adds *By contrast, the negotiator is compromiser. If the agitator feels contempt for **unprincipled** conduct of the negotiator, the negotiator is baffled by the intrasigence of the agitator, who sacrifices immediate gains for abstract principles. The negotiator is more concerned with an acceptable solution to a conflict than a just or perfect solution<sup>17</sup>.* The main trouble of the negotiators of AMSU is the internal conflict between the merits of issue and time consumption of agitations. This inherent weakness of a student body becomes the soft target of the government.

Knowing the weakness, the government takes its own time for implementation of any agreement or so. AMSU has no pressure in the circle except casual personal contact. Moreover, any second agitation for implementation is always ineffective as the number of supporters decreases.

A few outputs given out after implementation are of regulation and symbolic types. There are four types of outputs: (a) Extractions (b) Regulation, (c) Distribution and (d) Symbols<sup>18</sup>. The regulation of human behaviour is

related with the set of regulatory activities such as crime and punishment, enforcing duties and obligation. While the symbolic outputs include affirmation of values, displays of political symbols and statements of policies and intents.

## II

Students play an important role in shaping the course of history in our country and other developing countries. Being educated and easily available in larger groups, they can be organised more easily than the general masses. At the same time, they easily respond to the calls given by the politically conscious leaders. Moreover, the student life is a stage in which they are trained for future leadership. Many well known political leaders were formerly student activists. This is true in many societies and countries. In this respect, Manipur cannot be an exception.

While tracing the history of student's movement in Manipur we are naturally drawn to the evolution of modern education. For, educational institutions are the centres of their activities.

Manipur received modern education the British Indian way much later than the rest of India. When the first three Universities were established in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, Manipur had just established a high school. It was only in the first half of the twentieth century that high schools came into being in Manipur. The number of such institutions was limited. There was no facility even to go out of the state to appear in the matriculation examinations. Interestingly the first master's degree holder is still alive, while many of the first graduates are still alive though some of them are no more.

It is no wonder that, the youth went outside the state to receive higher education at the nearest centres of learning. Most of them went to Guwahati, Calcutta, Dacca, Syhlet etc. Though they went to these places in the hope of receiving higher education, it is no wonder that they were largely influenced by two things (i) western political ideals, institutions and practices and (ii) ongoing freedom struggle in the country i.e. India. Considering the first ones, they became aware of democratic ideals like liberty, equality, fraternity, democratic institutions and practices like parliament, election of peoples representations etc. Nonetheless, some of them also were impressed by leftist ideology e.g. Socialists and Marxist ideologies. At the same time the ongoing movement - Swadeshi movement, non-cooperation movement, Quit India movement etc. impressed them. These students who witnessed these movements were inspired by the tactics and strategy adopted by Gandhi and other leaders of the Indian National Congress. They were also politically aroused when Gandhi made his clarion call to the nation during the Quit India Movement in which he emphasised the importance of the role to be played by the educated youth. Gandhi even hoped that the leadership in the said context should come from the students who were more informed and enlightened than their elders who were less educated or illiterate. He cited the Chinese instance in which the educated youth were in the forefront of all reform movements. Gandhi's views were widely accepted and appreciated. His strategy to involve the students in the freedom struggle was considered to be correct and timely. It was not considered to be an attempt to wean them away from their schools and colleges aimlessly. They were rather inspired to lead the country to freedom. "When your house is on fire nothing can be more urgent than saving the house", he said.

Inspired and influenced by the strategy and tactics adopted by the Indian National Congress under Gandhi; and also supplemented by western democratic ideals, principles and practices, the young educated Manipuris started various socio-religious movements during the period (1918-1939). The protest against foreign goods was of political significance. Movement against monarchy and colonialism was another political activity. It is not possible to incorporate all those movements in this limited space. But all these socio-religious and political movements were spearheaded by the educated youths.

Apart from socio-religious and political movements there were other activities well connected with literary activities. Though, many of these educated ones either became politicians or government employees, other sections were involved in organising literary activities like debates, recitations, establishment of libraries, clubs, scout movements etc. However, these activities were interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War.

The end of the Second World War in 1945 leading to the reopening of schools all over the state following restoration of normal civil life brought with it a new political awakening among the students in the state. Students studying outside Manipur particularly in Gauhati, Shylet now in Bangladesh, Calcutta and such other prominent cities had their own unions engaged in extracurricular activities. They brought with them the new trend in Manipur under the students studying in the schools and the newly started Dhanamanjuri College (1946) responded with enthusiasm. Formation of the students union in the institutions began from the year 1946-47. The D.M. College Students' Union became a model by itself. The leading High Schools like the Johnstone, the Churachand, the Ram Lal Paul and the Tombisana had



soon started having students' unions one after another. The activities of the union had much wider social impact. Debating competitions became a very regular activity sponsored by one or the other union. The student activities during the period 1946 to 1956 besides their academic and extracurricular activities were critical against the establishment in general. The concept of the ruling party was not born then in the state. In 1946-47, the political situation was peculiar. Independence was attained on the 15 August, 1947.

Nevertheless, during the pre-Independence period the student activities were there with a political implication. Student meeting the Maharaja and the relevant members of the Manipur State Darbar to present their demand for printing of text books and improvement of school facilities were frequent. After Independence, the activities of the students wing of the political parties were considered the activities of their parent organisation. The regime of the elected assembly 1948 to 1949 saw student activity mostly against the government. The then ruling party known as the Praja Shanti did not have a student wing. The student organisations including the Congress wing were active against the then government. Manipur's merger with the Indian Union brought a spell of undemocratic government upto 1957. From 1957 to 1963 there was a spell of six years which saw Manipur split into two administrations namely the Chief Commissioner's Government and the Union Territory administration run by the representatives of the people. During this period also, student activity were mostly against the establishment. The Dhanamanjuri College students strike in 1951 became a state wide movement which rocked the administration. Students irrespective of their political affiliation joined the strike which demanded

the removal of the Principal who ultimately had to leave the college when the administration followed up the assurance given to the striking students.

At the state level, a students' organisation known as the All Manipur Students' Federation came into being in 1946. The organisation was represented by students belonging to various political parties - Congress, Communists and Socialists. On 30 October 1946, the body organised a conference at Churachand High School. The basic objective of the conference was to work for the "Unity of students, community of Meiteis, Muslim and of the Hills". The Federation organized five conferences. Such conferences became the beginning of students movement in Manipur. They demanded (1) Establishment of responsible government in Manipur; (2) Development of Imphal City and rural municipalities; (3) Free primary education system; (4) Establishment of new schools and colleges; (5) Proper facilities for students; (6) Combined administration of the hill people and the valley people; (7) Human rights.

The aforesaid students' federation could be regarded as the starting point of students' political activities. For about two years the organisation provided a democratic forum for future politicians, some of them are still active in the political arena both at the state and national levels. However, this forum did not survive in its original form. The Congress and the Socialists were separated from the federation which was left to communists. The Congress wing came to be known as Students' Congress. After one year the Students' Congress was split. The Socialists formed their own organisation - Young Socialist League. The then ruling party Praja Shanti did not have a students' wing. Almost all the activities of the students were controlled by the Congress, Communists and the Socialists. Penetration of

the socialists elements in the students community was significantly successful.

The period upto the formation of the All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) (1965) is a period in which socialist elements were very active. As the Congress party was the ruling party, student activists of the party had to struggle to make political impact on the society. During this period the Socialist elements controlled the Students' Union of the D.M. College. Communist supporters among students were also there but were less widespread with a sprinkling here and there in the state-wide student movement. They tried to contribute their share in the political awakening of the State. Now, it would be worthwhile to the circumstances which led to the formation of the All Manipur Students' Union.

### III

The Constitution was known as Constitution of **All Manipur Students Union or Akhil Manipur Chhatra-Chhatri Sansthan**. The word **Manipur Students'** meant all the students studying in Manipur. The Constitution took into consideration of only the place of study. It took a non-Manipuri student reading in Manipur as a member of the Union. On the other hand, a student from Manipur reading outside the state Manipur was not entitled to be a member of the Union. The Constitution clearly promised to follow democratic and secular principles; colour, religion, place of birth of the student are not requirements to its membership.

There was a Preamble and eleven articles in the Constitution. There are two categories of membership — permanent member and ordinary member. The representative of D.M. College, Imphal College, Manipur College and G. P. Women's College were recognised as the

permanent members. All other will be treated as ordinary members<sup>19</sup>. The classification was made to make a distinction between the government and non-government educational institutions of that time. Some founder members of the Union while giving personal interview to the author expressed that the political power of the students rest with the permanent members. Decisions were taken in their favour. The post of the President was reserved for the permanent members.

A draft constitution (Amendment) was published in a souvenir (Hunger Marchers Day Observation) circulated by AMSU (Khelen) in 1980 considering emerging objectives conditions in the state. But it was only when Mongjam Abhiram Singh took charge as President of AMSU in 1983 a major amendment was done. It can be said that a new constitution, came into existence after the major amendment.

In the new constitution there is the Preamble, the body and two Annexures. There are 21 (twenty-one) articles. The Preamble reads *We the students of Manipur determined to unite to cooperate and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in co-existence and to advance progress in all the aspects of life, have resolved to unite our efforts to achieve these ends ; Accordingly our Representatives from several Academic institution from different parts of this state of Manipur assemble at Imphal do hereby constitute a Union to be known as All Manipur Students' Union.*

Article III of the constitution declare that the All Manipur Students' Union shall have no alliance with any political party/organization and it shall stand to save the fundamental human rights, the aims and objectives as laid down in this constitution.

The increasing number of educational institutions in Manipur necessitated the amendment of the constitution. Personal interviews with ex-Executive Members of the union reveal that the new constitution tried to bring an integrated organization of the students community by removing the word permanent from the membership of the Union. Before the amendment, the post of the President was reserved for the permanent members of the Union. The amendment brought a new hope to the members of the Union. But the students favoured the student leaders who were in educational institutions of higher education. The elections, after the amendment showed that very clearly. Kh. Loken, the President of the Manipur University Student Council, became the President of the Union (1984-85). Since then the post of the President is seen as being practically reserved for the post-graduate student/university student. It continued till 1988. But Mr. Yenkokpam Priyokumar Singh of LMS Law College (President- LMS Law College Students' Union) became the President AMSU for the term 1988-89. Once more in the year 1989-90, Mr Lairenjam Gojendro Singh, President of Manipur University Students' Union became the President of the Union. This shows that the student of post graduate or higher studies have more potential to be President than the student reading in the schools and colleges.

The aim and objective of the Union, provided in Article IV of the constitution are as follows:

1. To achieve common ends through equality, fraternity and justice;
2. To protect and promote educational, social, cultural, physical. Moral, intellectual and scientific advancement on the general public and

students in particular through the spirit of unity, co-operation and selfless service;

3. To advance the practical significance of human welfare on the basis of democratic ideals;
4. To protect fundamental human rights.

Under Article VI of the Constitution there are four (4) classes of members. The student representative of the member institutions which participated and signed in the register of the general assembly meeting held on 12 September 1965 at Imphal shall be the **Founder Members** of the Union (Art.VI(1). Any *bonafide* representative of the educational institution right from High school or its equivalent upto the University level in Manipur which is affiliated to or recognised by AMSU shall become a member of the general assembly [Art.VI(2)]. University students were not members of the AMSU prior to the amendment of 3 May, 1984.

Article VI (3) says that any member of the General assembly if he/she is elected as a member of the Executive council shall automatically become a member of the Executive Council.

Any student of an affiliated/recognised educational institution shall be an ordinary member of the Union [Art.VI (4)].

Under Article VII the union shall have the following Administrative Organs namely:-

1. General assembly
2. Executive Council and
3. District Committees and such other committees

as may be formed by the Executive Council, from time to time.

Under article IX of the constitution provides that the administration of the Union shall be vested to an Executive Council consisting of a President, Vice-President, General Secretary, four Assistant Secretaries, Publicity and Information Secretary, Secretaries and one representative from each district committee.

Under Annexure-I(B)-(a) a candidate for any office of the Executive Council (i) shall be member of the General Assembly (ii) shall not be of unsound mind (iii) shall not be a member of any political parties or its students wing. Under annexure (B) - 9(b). A candidate for any office bearer of the President and the General Secretary of the Executive council shall in addition to qualifications mentioned in rule 9 (nine) above be student of Degree or equivalent or above.

Under article XI, the Executive Council shall meet as frequently as necessary with seven days notice and quorum of the meeting shall be one-third of the total members of the Executive Council. The term of the Executive Council as given under article XIV of the Constitution shall be one year in normal circumstances like occurrence of the National calamities, was, non-holding of school/college elections, its term shall be extend upto such time until a fresh election is held.

The power and functions of District Committee are given under article XIII of the Constitution as follows:-

1. There shall be a District Committee of the AMSU in each Administrative District of the state of Manipur consisting of a District President, a

District V.P., District Secretary, a Treasurer, Information Secretary and six other members its term shall be one year and shall be co-terminus with the term of the General Assembly.

2. The member of the District Committee shall be elected by the members of the General Assembly residing in the same district from among themselves. The word *residing* used in article XIII (2) signifies that the student should belong to the same district. It will also make easier to know the problem of the area if the student is a resident of the same district. The main function of the District Committee as given under article XIII (5) shall be to assist the Executive Council and the union for achieving its aims and objects. It also shall perform such other duties as may have the right to solve internal district problems in consultation with the Executive Committee by the new Constitution.

Under Article XIII (4) provides that the District Committee may meet as frequently as necessary and that its quorum shall be 1/5 of its total membership. The quorum given under this article is very small and any decision can be taken by 1/5 of its membership (without consulting the other members) Article XIII (6) of the Constitution it shall have the right to put forward proposals which are in time with the aims and objects of the union for consideration by the Executive Council.

The power and functions of the President are given under Article XV (1) of the Constitution (a) the President shall be the Head of the Union, (b) the President of the AMSU shall preside over all of the Executive Council, General Assembly and any other meetings of the AMSU.



Under Article XV (1) (d to h) of the Constitution, the President shall have the power to nominate observers in regard to the functioning of the District Committee/Sub-committee etc. In case of voting tie he/she have a casting vote. The president shall determine the items of business of the Executive Council in consultation with the Secretary General. The President may dissolve any committee or sub-committees etc. with the consent of the Executive Council.

The President and his Executive Council of 1985-86 took advantage of Article V (3) and Article VII (3) of the constitution by introducing Student Volunteer Committee to carry out their duties to solve the foreigner issue. They needed more units to mobilise and make the citizens or the students aware of the foreigners issue<sup>20</sup>.

Under Article V (3) of the constitution, the union shall take up any programme, that is, deemed to be carried out at demand from time to time in conforming with the objectives of the union. Kongkham Brogen, the then President AMSU followed the fundamental principles of the union. Further article VII (3) of the constitution provides the District Committee and such time to time. The Union introduced units and branches of AMSU in every corner of Manipur. Personal interview with some members highlight that they were not in favour of the opening of new branches and units in every locality.

Under Article XXI provided any amendment of advancement of the constitution may be made by 2/3 of the general assembly. During 1984-85 when Kh. Loken was the president of the Union it adopted the following resolutions in a joint meeting of the AMSU and North District Students' Union.

1. To amend the Constitution of AMSU and

2. To include 3 (three) executive members of ATSUM (All Tribal Students' Union Manipur) in AMSU (July 6, 1985 at D.M. College of Science - DSI 1985 - 1747). But any amendment could not be made during his tenure. It was a contradicting step to Article III of the constitution (Article III says - This constitution declares that the AMSU shall have no alliance with any political party/organization and it shall stand to save the fundamental human rights, the aims and objects as laid down in this constitution). And again it neglects Article VI (2) of the constitution. The tribal students too can become a member of the General assembly through their educational institutions. The membership of the union is open to all without any discrimination on the ground of caste, creed, colour, religion and place of birth. But he/she should be a student reading in any educational institution in Manipur.

Article XV (i) declared that the President shall be ordinarily be removed from his office without giving proper grounds. A 2/3 majority of the Executive Council or a 1/3 majority of the General Assembly may propose the removal.

The power and functions of the Vice-President is also provided under article XV (2) of the constitution. It says that the Vice-President will enjoy the power of the President in the absence of the President.

Election rules are given in annexure I (A) and (B) of the Constitution in detail, Annexure - I (A) (i) says there shall be an Election Committee consisting of (a) President of the Union (b) General Secretary (c) Two members of the Executive Committee) d) Three other members to be nominated by President of the union.

Annexure I (A) (i) of the Constitution vested veto power to the President of the union. The executive council of the union is elected for every academic year. Because of the limited time given, the union faced many problems while implementing the annual policy and programmes of the union. That is why the Union mostly followed convention rather than the Constitution.

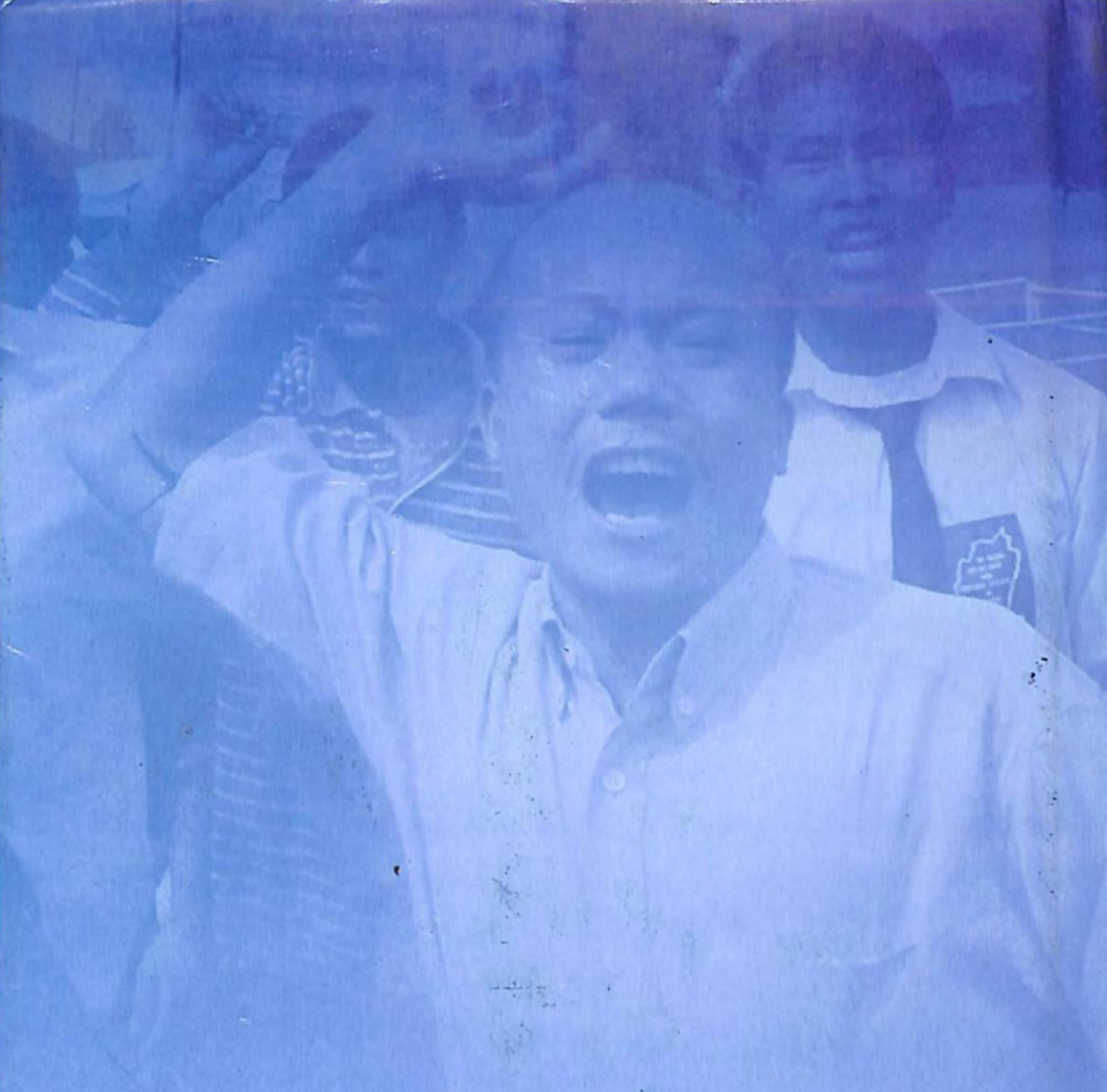
### REFERENCES

1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol.16:975
2. Gabriel A Almond and G B Powell, Jr, *Comparative Politics*, Little Brown, London, 1978: 170
3. A Mitra, *Report on Inquiry of Police Firing at Imphal on 27-8-1965*, Manipur Legislative Assembly, Imphal, 1968: 7
4. *ibid.*: 12
5. *ibid.*: 14
6. *ibid.*: 50
7. A C Netrajit, *All Manipur Silver Jubilee 1965-1990 Souvenir*, AMSU, Imphal, 1990
8. Seymour M Lipset, "Students and Politics in Comparative Perspective" in P G Altbach, *op. cit.*: 34
9. Philip G Altbach, "Students and Politics" in *ibid.*: 52
10. Julian Nagel (ed), *Student Power*, Merlin Press, London, 1969
11. David Easton, "An Approach to the Analysis of Political System" in Stephen V Monsma and Jack R V D Slik, *American Politics*, Holt, New York, 1970: 9
12. Marion J Levy, Jr. *Modernization and The Structure of Societies*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1966: 144
13. David Easton, *op. cit.*: 10
14. Neil Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior*, Glencoe, Ill., 1963: 491
15. David Easton, *op. cit.*: 10

#### 44 *Student Movement in Manipur*

---

16. Harold Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*, University of Chicago Press, 1930: 78-80
17. Robert A Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, PHI, New Delhi, 1989: 116
18. see David Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life*, John Wiley, New Delhi, 1965.
19. M C Arun, *Regional Integration*, Vol XVII-XIX, Imphal
20. Personal Interview with ex-members of the Union.



Rs. 600

ISBN 978-81-8370-141-9



9 788183 701419

## **AKANSHA PUBLISHING HOUSE**

4649-B/21, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110 002 (INDIA)

Tele/Fax: 011-23263193

Email: [ektabooks@yahoo.com](mailto:ektabooks@yahoo.com)