

Political Parties in Mizoram

Political Parties in Mizoram:

*A Case Study of the Mizo
National Front*

By

Zarzosanga

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



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This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-6259-X

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-6259-2

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Chapter I	1
Political Parties: An Overview	
Chapter II.....	37
Emergence and Role of Political Parties in Mizoram	
Chapter III	57
Formation of the Mizo National Front	
Chapter IV	100
The Mizo National Front and Electoral Politics	
Chapter V	134
Role of the MNF in the Socio-economic Development of the State	
Chapter VI.....	174
Conclusion	
Glossary.....	190
Annexure I.....	192
Memorandum Submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the Mizo National Front General Headquarters, Aizawl, Mizoram on 30 th October, 1965	
Annexure II.....	196
Volunteer Recruitment Form	
Annexure III	198
The Constitution of Mizoram	

Annexure IV	210
Declaration of Independence	
Annexure V	217
Summary of the Proceedings of the Rulpuihlim Cabinet Meeting	
Annexure VI	222
Letter Sent by Laldenga to Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India in 1975	
Annexure VII	228
February 18, 1976 New Delhi Agreement	
Annexure VIII	233
Letter Sent by Laldenga to Morarji Desai, the Prime Minister of India	
Annexure IX	235
Letter Sent by Laldenga to Charan Singh, Home Minister of India	
Annexure X	240
Confidential Agreement between the Indian National Congress (I) and the Mizo National Front, Mizoram	
Annexure XI	245
Memorandum of Settlement	
Bibliography	249

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe immense gratitude to all who have helped me in the process of writing this book.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my PhD supervisor Professor Ayangbam Shyamkishor in the Department of Political Science at Mizoram University for his valuable guidance and worthy suggestions. I am truly grateful to him for giving me the desire and inspiration to complete my work. He encouraged me and rendered all possible help whenever I need. It is due to his unwavering diligence and guidance throughout my research work that this book has become what it is now. I am also greatly thankful to the principal and staff of Government Serchhip College, who willingly allowed me to avail the college facilities – the library and computer centers – whenever I required, and for giving me the time and space to complete this book.

I am also extremely thankful to all the faculty members of the Department of Political Science, Mizoram University for their valuable suggestions and sincere cooperation in completing my research work.

My deepest appreciation also goes to all the interviewees: Mr. C. Rothanga, Mr. Lalduhoma, Mr. Zoramthanga, Mr. Zoramsangliana (L), Mr. R. Zamawia, Mr. Lalhmingthanga (L), Mr. Malsawma Colney (L), Mr. V.L. Khama, Mr. K. Khawlremthanga, Mr. K. Hrangchhunga, Mr. Kapliana Pachuau, Mr. Laldinpuia, Mr. R.L. Chhuanawma, Mr. R. Tlanghmingthanga, Mr. Chhawnvunga, Mrs. Lalbiakdiki, Mr. C. Darbiakthanga (L), Mr. Michael Lalremsanga and Mr. K. Lalrinchhana for sparing their valuable time and thoughtful and priceless insights for my research work. My heartfelt thanks also go especially to the staff of MNF *Hnam Run* (office of MNF General Headquarters) Aizawl for helping me and allowing me to access the required information and documents of the MNF, which were very important for the completion of my research work for this book. My sincere appreciation also goes to Mrs. Lalzarliani, wife of the late Mr. Biakchhunga, for giving me important and valuable MNF documents left behind by her husband. These documents greatly helped in my research work in many ways.

I am also greatly indebted to the helping hand lent by Mr. R. Lalrinkima, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Hrangbana

College, who sent me relevant copies of documents and a published thesis to be utilized for my research work for this book.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my uncle, Mr. C. Vanlalvena, MPS (Rtd) and his family in Chaltlang, Aizawl for letting me stay with them throughout the course of conducting my research work for this book with kindness and love, and also to my uncle Mr. Chhawnvunga, who is always there for me whenever I need his help and assistance.

I am also thankful to my colleagues in the Department of Political Science, Government Serchhip College, for their valuable support and precious cooperation for me to complete this book.

I am grateful to my parents – Mr. P.C. Lalremsiama, Associate Professor (Rtd) and retired Principal of Govt. Serchhip College, and Mrs. K. Laldinpuii, Associate Professor (Rtd) and also a retired Principal of Govt. Serchhip College – for all their moral, material and financial support and for their endless prayers. They have always been my true inspirations. I am also equally grateful to my beloved wife, Lalchhuanmawii Hnamte for all her moral support throughout the course of writing this book, attending to our two little children, Grace Lahmingsangi and Alan Malsawmhlua Pachuau, so that I could fully concentrate on writing this book.

My sincere thanks also goes to Mr. James Brittain, New Word Order, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom for rendering his professional services, meticulously and rigorously proofreading the contents of the book.

Last, but not the least, my sincere thanks and gratitude go to Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom for accepting my work for publication. Without them, this book would never have seen the light of day.

Dr. Zarzosanga
Serchhip, 31st August, 2022

ABBREVIATIONS

AGP	Asom Gana Parishad
APCC	Assam Pradesh Congress Committee
APHLC	All Party Hills Leaders Conference
BADP	Border Area Development Programme
BAFFACOS	Bamboo Flowering and Famine Combat Scheme
BBTS	Bir Bikram Tripura Sangha
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CJP	Chakma Jatiyo Parishad
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
ECI	Election Commission of India
EITU	Eastern Indian Tribal Union
EVMs	Electronic Voting Machines
HPC	Hmar People's Convention
IAY	Indira Awas Yojana
INBAR	International Network for Bamboo and Rattan
INC	Indian National Congress
IWDP	Integrated Wasteland Development Project
JD	Janata Dal
JDU	Janata Dal United
LPP	Lai People's Party
MNV	Mizo National Volunteers
MC	Mizo Convention
MCC	Mizoram Congress Committee
MCHCS	Mizoram State Health Care Society
MDA	Mizoram Democratic Alliance
MDCC	Mizo District Congress Committee
MDF	Mara Democratic Front
MDF ¹	Mizo Democratic Front

¹ Both the Mizo and Mara Democratic Front are known by the abbreviation MDF. Their use is clearly distinguished in the book to avoid confusion.

MHIP	Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl
MIP	Mizoram Intodelhna Project
MJD	Mizoram Janata Dal
MJP	Mizo Janata Party
MLPC	Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Control
MLTP	Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition
MNF(D)	Mizo National Front (Democratic)
MNF(N)	Mizo National Front (Nationalist)
MNF(U)	Mizo National Front (Unity)
MNF	Mizo National Front
MNFF	Mizo National Famine Front
MNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MNU	Mizo National Union
MPC ‘B’	Mizoram People’s Conference ‘B’
MPC	Mizoram People’s Conference
MPCC	Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee
MPF	Mizoram People Forum
MU	Mizo Union
MZP	Mizo Zirlai Pawl
NBCC	National Building Construction Corporation
NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
NCDC	National Cooperative Development Corporation
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NLCPR	Non-lapsable Pool of Central Resources
NLUP	New Land Use Policy
PMGY-GA	Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana Grameen Awards
PPVs	Progressive and Protected Villages
RJD	Rashtriya Janata Dal
REC	Rural Electrification Corporation
SASCI	Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment
SGRY	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
SGSY	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SIRD	State Institute of Rural Development
SRC	States Reorganization Commission
TRGP	Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad
UDA	United Democratic Alliance
UEPA	Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation
UMF	United Minorities Front
UMFO	United Mizo Freedom Organization

UNC	United Naga Council
YLA	Young Lushai Association
YMA	Young Mizo Association
ZKHC	Zoram Kohhran Hruaitu Committee
ZNP	Zoram Nationalist Party

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL PARTIES: AN OVERVIEW

Political parties are inseparable from democracy. In democratic societies, political parties are indispensable voluntary and informal associations of society, where people share commonly understood values, customs and attitudes to their role in politics.¹ However, once political parties contest and win elections, they get themselves in positions of power and thereby possess legitimacy to control the state and its resources. Hence, political parties are a very useful and effective link between the masses and the rulers. They are the major structures for performing the functions of interest aggregation and interest articulation. Political parties proved to be a key mobilizing device in the 20th century, drawing millions of people into the national political process.² In fact, political parties are the necessary instrument for shaping collective interests. They provide an opportunity for individuals who are not able to, or not interested enough to make independent decisions or engage in individual political acts to express their views and ambitions in the decision-making process. Such individuals join or identify themselves with a political party that seems closest to their views or interests. In short, they rely on the party to guide them in deciding their positions on specific issues and as a means of collectively expressing their viewpoints. Hence, political parties serve as devices for organizing and focusing political participation.³

¹ M.A. Mohamed Salih and Per Nordlund, *Political Parties in Africa: Challenges for Sustained Multiparty Democracy* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2008), 19.

² Rob Hague and Martin Harrop, *Government and Politics: An Introduction*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 203.

³ Frank L. Wilson, *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics: An introduction to Comparative Analysis* (New York: Pearson Publications, 2001), 77.

The Meaning of a Political Party

A political party may be defined as an organized group of politically conscious individuals, who have come together to propagate and promote their common interests and ideologies. They are complex, multi-faceted organizations with multiple linkages to organizations in civil society and the institutions of the state, typically spanning both.⁴ In other words, political parties are closely linked with the various institutions of civil society. However, they are legislative bodies and meant for legislature and hence, could not be identified as purely civil society organizations. In fact, they overlap the institutions of the state, if they are represented in the national, regional or local legislatures, and also overlap the executive branch of the state if they are in power at the national, regional or local level.⁵

Giovanni Sartori stated that political parties and party systems refer to complex social and political processes that go beyond individual leaders, societal associations, political groups and organizations, forming an intricate pattern with their interactions and interrelationships.⁶ In other words, a political party is a group of more or less likeminded people working together united on a certain ideology with a view to secure political power. A political party may also be described in terms of the purpose for which it was organized, the character of the membership, its structure or the functions it performs. Hence, Edmund Burke defines a political party as

“a group of men who had agreed upon a principle by which the national interest might be served.”⁷

In the same vein, a political party may be described as a body or group of individuals, united for the purpose of promoting and realizing their common interests through collective action for public interests and based upon certain agreed principles. Max Weber also defined a political party as

“a voluntary society of propaganda and agitations, seeking to acquire power in order to procure chances for its active adherents to realize objective aims or personal advantages or both.”⁸

⁴ P.R. deSouza and E. Sridharan, *India's Political Parties* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 15.

⁵ deSouza, Sridharan, 16.

⁶ Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis. Vol-I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 44.

⁷ Vidya Bhushan, *Comparative Politics* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2000), 95.

⁸ Bhushan, 95.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that a political party is an important component of a society, providing a platform for likeminded individuals to pursue and achieve their political goals and objectives.

The definition of a political party is significant, both scientifically and normatively. Scientifically, the definition of a political party specifies the range of organizations or groups to which generalizations are expected to apply and from which data to test those generalizations should be drawn.⁹ Normatively, in the process of specifying what a party is, the definitions of that party often also specify what the party is expected to do.¹⁰ This definition is particularly true, especially when the mechanisms of democracy are defined in terms of competition among various political parties. In modern democracies, the structure and organization of a political party are influenced by public perceptions and largely affected by the nature of its propaganda and principles, as well as its intended goals and objectives.

According to La Palombara and Myron Weiner, a political party does not mean a loosely knit group of notables with limited and intermittent relationships to local counterparts, but rather requires:¹¹

- 1) Continuity in organization, i.e., an organization whose expected life-span is not dependent on the life-span of current leaders;
- 2) Manifest and presumably permanent organization at the local level, with regularized communications and other relationships between local and national units;
- 3) Self-conscious determination of leaders at both national and local levels to obtain and to hold decision-making power alone or in coalition with others, not simply to influence the exercise of power; and
- 4) A concern on the part of the organization to seek followers at the polls, i.e., the organization is in some manner striving for popular support.

Again, a political party is defined by Professor Samuel J. as

“a social group engaging in patterned activity within the social matrix.”¹²

It means the structure, patterns and nature of authority and power distribution of political parties greatly rely on the level of participation, perception and political consciousness of the common citizens. In a nutshell,

⁹ Daniele Caramani, “Political Parties,” quoted in Richard S. Katz, *Comparative Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 294.

¹⁰ Bhushan, 95.

¹¹ Bhushan, 96.

¹² Bhushan, 96.

the definition and meaning of a political party within a democratic system could be summed up based on the concept of the “partyiness” of an organization or group, which is defined by three characteristics:¹³

- 1) Exhibiting team-like behavior;
- 2) Attempting to win control over all political power; and
- 3) Basing claims of legitimacy on electoral success.

Functions of a Political Party

The function of political parties is central for democratization and development. In modern democracies, the importance of political parties has greatly increased. Political parties provide the link between citizens and the government through their democratically elected representatives. It is through the process of political pressure exerted by different political parties (particularly the opposition parties on the ruling parties) that often changes the decision of a government. Hence, political parties are the core components in any democracy that keep the wheel of the administration moving, thereby enabling the entire administrative machinery and political system to move forward. They act as the catalysts for the growth and stability of a democratic polity; indeed, the successful working of modern democracy largely depends on the role and effectiveness of political parties. In other words, political parties are the backbone of modern democracy.

The functions of the political parties mostly depend upon the nature of the political system under which they operate.¹⁴ Hence, the functions and roles played by political parties in developed countries differ from that of an underdeveloped country and the role played by a political party in a totalitarian or communist states. Besides, even within the same country, political parties play different roles and functions. For instance, national parties have broader functions than regional parties.¹⁵ The functions of political parties and the roles that they play have been explained by different scholars from varied viewpoints. According to Finer, political parties perform six functions. They are: to bridge distance; to wrestle with the apathy of citizens who are least endowed with or convinced of an interest in politics; to seek to overcome ignorance; to set a priority scale of values for the fulfillment of the will of many diverse small publics; to select spokesmen and leaders; and to assume responsibility for these services.¹⁶

¹³ Caramani, 297.

¹⁴ Caramani, 101.

¹⁵ Caramani, 101.

¹⁶ Caramani, 102.

Richard S. Katz stated that the main functions that a political party performs include the functions of co-ordination with government and society, contesting elections, recruitment, and representation.¹⁷ The functions performed by political parties could be summarized as follows:

1. The function of co-ordination:

The first and one of the most important functions of political parties is that of co-ordination, within government, within society and between government and society at large.¹⁸ Political parties maintain discipline and communicate within the party organization. Hence, once a political party holds political power, the coordinating functions of the party become the functions of the government. Besides, political parties are one of the kinds of institutions that organize and channel the political activity of the citizens.¹⁹ In other words, political parties provide the platform and opportunity for citizens for political discussions, political education, political participation and collective action. Even in a presidential form of government, the domination of the legislature by the same party which controls the executive may create a degree of harmony between the executive and the legislature which the presidential system itself is incapable of realizing otherwise.²⁰

2. Recruitment function:

Political parties perform the functions of political recruitment. They recruit political leaders as well as future leaders of the society – the cadres of the party. They perform the important role of integrating citizens into the political fold by providing various collective activities and distributing responsibilities within the party organization. In fact, political parties contribute to the connection of citizens in the established political order through the provision of services, ranging from ombudsman-like intervention with the bureaucracy to jobs and social services.²¹ They help the people to be aware of the political process, nurturing interests among the citizens to enter politics, thereby providing an opportunity for the citizens to be involved in the administrative process. In short, political parties assume the dual functions of an agent for socio-economic development of the country on the one hand and an agent of political socialization for the citizens on the other.

¹⁷ Caramani, 298–301.

¹⁸ Caramani, 298.

¹⁹ Caramani, 299.

²⁰ Bhushan, 107.

²¹ Caramani, 299–301.

3. An instrument of policy formulation, political socialization and socio-economic development:

Political parties formulate and frame policies and programmes based on the philosophy and ideology of their parties. Hence, the nature and structure of political parties (whether liberal, conservative, socialist etc.) greatly affect the policy formulation and implementation of the objectives of a government. In fact, the philosophical base and ideology of a political party is important for the workers to justify their commitment to the party.²² Moreover, political parties are crucial for bringing political and socio-economic development, particularly in developing and under developed democracies. They help in the political socialization of the masses, and strive to maintain and strengthen the principles of democracy so as to mobilize the people to achieve socio-economic development as well as to shape and run the government.

4. Welfare functions:

Political parties are established to serve the welfare of the people and with the premise of working for the betterment of society. For instance, poverty alleviation, relief, maintenance of social ethics and values, and preventing discrimination and other social maladies are some of the important issues that are addressed by political parties, especially by ethnic or class-based parties.

Apart from the above-mentioned functions of political parties, Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond delineated four core functions of the political party. They are as follows:²³

1. Recruitment of political leadership: the recruitment of political leadership is considered as the most important function of political parties. It consists of candidate nomination and electoral mobilization to win elections for their candidates and for capturing power.

2. Issue structuration or the framing of what becomes issues and determining how these issues are viewed and debated in the public sphere, particularly during election campaigns.

3. Forming and sustaining governments in office.

4. A broader non-electoral function performed by political parties in civil society: societal representation or representing the interests of various social groups in the political sphere, interest aggregation – in which the diverse interests of different groups are aggregated into broader political programmes and policy platforms – and thirdly, social integration, in which parties enable citizens to participate effectively in politics so that citizens develop a sense of the efficacy of participation in the political process.

²² Bhushan, 105.

²³ deSouza, Sridharan, 16-17.

Importance of Political Parties

The importance of political parties lies in the fact that the political system of the world as a whole has moved on from the traditional political systems – monarchy and totalitarian regimes – to more liberal, democratic and egalitarian societies and political systems.²⁴ Social uprisings, political movements and mass protests have now become a common phenomenon not only in liberal democratic societies, but also in totalitarian and dictatorial states, where oligarchies or *de facto* governments have ruled for decades with strong hands. In modernized and advanced societies, traditional norms and values are breaking down and societies and political systems are moving forward towards non-traditional bases of legitimacy and political structures. Hence, a mechanism is needed to channel these transitional changes of societies and political systems to suit the changing needs of the people and the society. It is here that the role and importance of political parties are realized. Thus, all types of political systems rely heavily on political parties to mobilize support, especially in totalitarian societies, as a channel for interest articulation and demand aggregation in democratic societies, and as an agent for creating new norms of behavior in transitional societies.²⁵

Political parties have also played an important role in stabilizing and strengthening democracy during the period of decolonization in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. In fact, political parties play a crucial role in the decolonization process. During the de-colonization process (and also in transitional societies), large scale immigration took place as a result of political turmoil and social unrest. In such situations, political parties have played and continue to play a vital role in stabilizing democracy by integrating new citizens into the existing political system.²⁶ Political parties, along with various interest groups, are the institutions that sustain representative democracies. In a democracy, political parties are vital links between the people and their governors, while in authoritarian settings, they are often the vehicles of political control and even socio-economic change.²⁷ Thus, the importance of political parties transcends all types of political system, whether authoritarian, or democratic; it merely differs according to the political systems and structures within which they operate. As La Palombara and Myron Weiner rightly pointed out,

²⁴ Caramani, 299-301.

²⁵ Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Junior, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (New Delhi: Amerind Publishing Co.Pvt.Ltd, 1966), 117.

²⁶ Caramani, 314.

²⁷ Wilson, 103.

“The political party in one form or another is omnipotent.”²⁸

A political party may assume varied characteristics. The main characteristics can be summarized as follows:²⁹

1. A political party must have a certain measure of agreement on fundamental principles which can bind people together as a political unit. They may differ on some points, but there should be uniformity and agreement on the basic principles.
2. A political party is an organized association of individuals with similar views.
3. A good political party should be broad based, i.e., it should have a wide scope and space for adjustments, additions, reforms and rearrangement of policies.
4. Political parties constitute an upward channel of communication to communicate the interest they represent.
5. There should be quick and free flowing communication between local and higher levels of the party organization.
6. There must be a communication process both within the parties and from the parties to the community at large. Besides, there must be a clear distinction between principles and personalities. In other words, the life of the party should not depend upon the life of its leaders.
7. A political party must endeavour to promote national interests and not communal interests or sectional interests, which might result in a split or factional fragmentation of the party.
8. A political party must follow up its criticisms of the policies of other political parties with constructive action of its own. In short, a political party should not limit itself to theoretical criticisms.
9. A political party should seek to carry out its policies by peaceful and democratic means.

According to Rodee, Anderson, Christol and Greene, a political party has the following characteristics: membership, organization and administration, goals and objectives, and resources (including funds, talent, electoral strength, charismatic candidates and so forth).³⁰ Moreover, a political party is an association of likeminded individuals and its main purpose is to secure political power. Hence, the first and foremost characteristic that defines a political party is that of membership recruitment and political participation. Therefore, participation and formal recruitment of political elites is one of

²⁸ Bhushan, 94.

²⁹ Bhushan, 99–100.

³⁰ Bhushan, 100–101.

the defining characteristics of political parties.³¹ A political party is made up of individuals with different perspectives, outlook, background and character. Thus, it is the responsibility of the political party to accommodate different individuals and characters and shape them to play an active role in the political system and in the decision-making process. In short, a political party has the responsibility of combining political socialization and cultural values with political orientations to become an active and influential political organization.

Challenges of Political Parties

Political parties occupy an important and central position for democratic governments. However, political parties worldwide can face serious challenges to their legitimacy and influence, which has resulted in the decline of political parties and party systems to a great extent. A serious problem faced by many political parties is the decline of party membership due to social and economic developments. This trend of the waning membership base of various political parties has been forcing parties to become more dependent on financial contributions and other forms of support from corporations and organizations of special interests.³² This has adversely led to the increase in the influence and popularity of individuals or wealthy corporates who possess the finances to support their political involvement. Hence, even when political parties remain centrally involved in policy, their role is increasingly defined in terms of management rather than direction.³³

The role of political parties as representatives of the people, or as links between the people and the state, has also been challenged by the increasing range of organizations that compete with them as articulators of interest.³⁴ The rise and increasing influence of certain pressure and interests groups, the development of communication technology and social media, the improvement of communication and the diplomatic skills of modern day citizens have led to the emerging trend of people's preference for groups and associations, rather than identifying oneself with a particular ideology and policies of political parties. In short, many people have now found more diverse channels and ways of advancing their political interests outside the realm of party organization, structures and ideologies. The development of multi-party systems has also adversely affected the status of political

³¹ Almond, Powell Junior, 118.

³² Caramani, 314.

³³ Caramani, 314.

³⁴ Caramani, 315.

parties. The increase in the formation of coalition governments, which have often resulted in weak and unstable co-ordination and cooperation between different political parties on various issues, has resulted in political instability. Thus, multi-party systems with chronic governmental instability due to conflicts between political parties in a coalition paralyze public action and discredit democracy in the eyes of the citizenry.³⁵

Another critical problem faced by political parties is the charges and allegations of corruption against political parties and political leaders, as well as their alleged involvement in electoral malpractices. These issues of corruption and electoral malpractices are serious problems and challenges to democracy and particularly, to political parties. Changes in party organization and seemingly perpetual political scandals raise questions about the ability of political parties to continue the linkage function ascribed to them by theories of representative democracy.³⁶ Many people can no longer place their trust in the accountability of political parties due to such political scams and scandals, thereby threatening the very foundation of political parties as the legitimate representative of the people and society. This is particularly true in the political systems of the developing countries of the world. Hence, people's trust in attaching themselves to traditional parties and their leaders is questioned and, therefore, doubts surface about the ability of parties to serve as effective links between the voter and the polity.³⁷

There is no doubting the fact that political parties in many countries have been facing varied problems and challenges that undermine and adversely affect their status, existence and influence. However, the sustenance of democracy in general and representative democracy in particular still need the presence and functioning of political parties, because political parties have well-defined political ideologies and organizational structures, as well as systematic functional differentiations, and provide opportunities for all citizens to take part in the political process. Thus, they remain an important mechanism to sustain and advance the basic principles of democracy and representative democracies worldwide.

Classification of Political Parties

Scholars and writers on the subject classify political parties into different types. The Election Commission of India classifies political parties according to their vote share in different states (or a particular state), and also based

³⁵ Wilson, 85.

³⁶ Wilson, 87.

³⁷ Wilson, 87.

on the number of seats they obtain in various elections (general election, State Legislative Assembly elections etc.). The different classifications of political parties are discussed below.

Gunther and Diamond classified political parties into five broad classes:³⁸

1) Elite-based parties

Elite-based parties are weakly organized political parties which mobilize support through personal resources and make election nominations on the basis of loyalty. Such political parties were prominent in early democratic rural polities of the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as in some developing countries with fledgling democracies. These types of political parties are those whose principal organizational structures are minimal and based upon established elites and related interpersonal networks within a specific geographic area.³⁹ The Republican and Democratic parties of the USA and the Labour and Conservative parties of Britain are examples of elite-based political parties.

2) Mass-based parties

This type of political party is created outside the legislature. Industrial working-class parties, peasant parties and religious parties (among others) are examples of this phenomenon. They are also called cadre-based parties. However, a distinction is often made between cadre and mass-based parties. Cadre-based parties are loosely structured, elite-centered and are parties with minimal organization outside of the legislature, while mass-based parties have highly developed organizations which aspire to enlist a large percentage of their voters as party members.⁴⁰ These parties are well organized and have a mass membership with a variety of mass organizations which are used for resource mobilization. Organizationally, mass-based parties are characterized by a large base of dues-paying members who remain active in party affairs even during periods between elections. The party seeks to penetrate into a number of spheres of social life to propagate its ideologies and establish an active membership base. Hence, trade unions and other social and religious organizations serve as instrumental political allies.⁴¹ The Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union Party of Germany are examples of mass-based parties.

³⁸ deSouza, Sridharan, 17–18.

³⁹ Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, “*Species of Political Parties: A New Typology*.” <http://www.olwmiss.edu/courses/pol628/guntherdiamond03.pdf> (accessed on June 4, 2015).

⁴⁰ Gunther et al., *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 140.

⁴¹ Gunther, Diamond, 178.

3) Ethnicity-based parties

These types of political parties can be either mono-ethnic parties that follow an ethnically exclusivist or even polarizing strategy, or broad, multi-ethnic coalitional parties. What distinguishes an ethnicity-based party from that of a mass party is the political and electoral logics of the party.⁴² The goals and strategies of ethnicity-based parties are narrower than mass-based parties and are mainly confined to the purpose of promoting the interests of a particular ethnic group or coalition of groups. Ethnic-based parties may be well organized or weakly organized, but are internally democratic. On the other hand, mass-based parties are multi-ethnic parties following ideologies of national integration with the intention of securing benefits for a particular group or community. The Israeli Labour Party and the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iran (KDP) of Iran are examples of ethnic-based parties.

Based on the above classification, the Mizo National Front (MNF) party could be classified as an ethnic-based party. The membership of the party is confined only for the clans and sub-clans of the Mizo race. Besides, the principles and objectives of the party are also aimed solely at the socio-economic and political development of the Mizo society and polity.

4) Electoralist parties

Electoralist parties are organizationally thin, maintaining a low profile during post-election periods. However, during election time, these parties became fully active to perform their primary function, to contest elections.⁴³ These types of parties may be of personalistic, programmatic or catch-all parties. Personalistic parties are merely vehicles for the ambitions of their leaders and are purely election-oriented. The former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's party Forza Italia and the late Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party are prime examples. Programmatic parties are also election-oriented and thinly organized, but are more ideologically or programmatically coherent than a catch-all party. Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party is an example. The catch-all party is not a class party but essentially a political party which is oriented to winning elections. These types of political parties tend to cut across class and other cleavages and make direct appeals to voters through the mass media. Catch-all parties respond to a mobilized political system in which governing has become more technical and in which electoral communication takes place through the mass media.⁴⁴ Electoralist parties rely heavily on skillful

⁴² Gunther, Diamond, 182.

⁴³ Gunther, Diamond, 185.

⁴⁴ Hague, Harrop, 205.

professionals to carry out the campaigns, and the personal attractiveness of the party's candidates is an important criterion for nomination of the party.⁴⁵

5) Movement party

Movement parties, such as the Green Party in Germany, the Austrian Freedom Movement etc., are parties that have evolved from contemporary social movements. These types of parties tend to combine parties and movements and have distinct, issue-based programmes. Hence, most of the political parties in various parliamentary as well as republican democracies across the world fall under this classification of political party. Movement parties reject the paramount status of economic issues and are characterized by a negative consensus that the predominance of markets and bureaucracies must be rolled back in favor of social solidarity relations and participatory institutions.⁴⁶ Moreover, movement parties do not confine themselves to a single agenda, but rather address and concern themselves with various political issues. There are no barriers to membership in the party, making the social base and attitudinal orientation of activists even more diverse.⁴⁷ However, since movement parties give priority to direct participation and commitment, critics have often pointed out that such parties lack organizational stability, centralized control, formal institutional structures and coordinated action.⁴⁸ The People's Movement Party of Romania is an example of a movement party.

Apart from the above classifications, another scheme of classification has been developed for defining and analyzing coalition formations. According to this scheme, political parties can be classified as policy-seeking, vote-seeking and office-seeking parties:⁴⁹

1) Policy-seeking party

Policy-seeking parties are issue-oriented political parties and give priority to their policies. This type of party includes not only parties with well-defined or well-articulated programmes and ideologies, but also consists of single-issue and protest parties. In short, policy-seeking parties more often give greater priority to articulation or defence of their policies than to the maximization of votes or securing office. Liberal parties in Northern Europe such as the Reformist Movement party of Belgium, the Democratic Party of Germany, and the Liberal Democratic Party of France are examples of policy-seeking parties.

2) Vote-seeking party

⁴⁵ Gunther, Diamond, 185.

⁴⁶ Gunther, Diamond, 189.

⁴⁷ Gunther, Diamond, 189.

⁴⁸ Gunther, Diamond, 189.

⁴⁹ Gunther et al., 149–153.

Vote-seeking parties place primary emphasis on winning elections, rather than on policies or positions. They are regularly manipulated in order to maximize support. Vote-seeking parties are mostly successful in democracies with multi-party systems. In fact, vote-seeking parties could be considered as synonymous with catch-all parties in the sense that both types of parties seek to maximize support from a broad portion, if not all of the electorate. The Rally for the Republic Party, also known as the Gaullist Party of France, the Democratic and Republican parties of the USA, and the Christian Democratic Union Party of Germany are examples of vote-seeking parties.

3) Office-seeking party

The main emphasis of an office-seeking party is to secure government office, even if it is at the expense of policy goals or maximizing votes. An office-seeking party normally avoids policy commitments and electoral strategies which might make it undesirable to be an effective coalition partner. Hence, the main aim of the party is to win enough votes to ensure inclusion in coalitions. Office-seeking parties are more prevalent in democracies with a number of competitive political parties, in contrast to a political system dominated by a single political party. The Christian Historical Union of the Netherlands, which merged to form the Christian Democratic Appeal Party in 1980, and the Liberal Party of Italy, which merged with other liberal groups in 2004 to form the Italian Liberal Party are examples of office-seeking political parties.

A basic problem about the above classification of political parties is that since political parties are established mainly to secure political power through democratic and electoral means, it is difficult to conceive that a political party could conform completely to the above classifications. For instance, although a policy-seeking party might give priority to policies or programmes rather than widening its vote base, the party still wants to win sufficient votes to win legislatures and put forward its policies. Thus, the classification of political parties based on the above schemes could not be considered a coherent classification.⁵⁰

Above all, Maurice Duverger has identified four main basic elements of a political party: the caucus, the branch, the cell and the militia. According to Duverger, most existing political parties (at least, at the time of his writing) could be related to at least one of these basic elements.⁵¹ The elements that distinguish a political party, according to Duverger, may be discussed in detail as follows:⁵²

⁵⁰ Gunther et al., 153.

⁵¹ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964), 17.

⁵² Duverger, 17–40.

1. The Caucus:

The first characteristic feature of the caucus is its limited nature. It consists of a small number of members and seeks no expansion and does not indulge in any propaganda with a view to extending its recruitment. It is a closed group and membership is achieved only by a kind of co-option or by formal nomination. Its strength does not depend on the number of its members but on their quality. Moreover, the activity of the caucus reaches its peak during election times and is considerably reduced during post-poll periods.

2. The Branch:

Political parties founded on branches are more centralized than those founded on caucuses. The branch is extensive and tries to enroll members, increase its membership and thereby increase its total strength, unlike the caucus. In short, the branch appeals to the masses.

3. The Cell:

The cell has an occupational basis: it unites all party members who work at the same place. For example, workers of factories, shops, offices and administration cells. Membership in a cell is permanent since it is set up at the very place where the party members meet daily in their work. Organization, information and action tend to be efficient and coherent in a cell.

4. The Militia:

A party militia is a kind of private army whose members are enrolled on military lines and are subjected to the same discipline and the same training as soldiers. However, the members remain civilians and are not permanently mobilized nor maintained by the organization. On the other hand, they must always be ready to hold themselves at the disposition of their leaders. Nevertheless, no political party has ever been exclusively formed on the basis of a militia.⁵³

Duverger further identified two types of parties: cadre parties and mass parties. According to Duverger, mass parties replace the system of capitalist financing of electoral candidates through democratic financing. Duverger stated that instead of appealing to a few big private donors, industrialists, bankers or important merchants for campaign expenses – which makes the candidate dependent on them – the mass party relies on the contribution of its large membership base.⁵⁴ On the other hand, cadre parties consider quality as the most important factor. The cadre parties achieve by selection what the mass parties secure by numbers. In other words, the cadre parties rely on the selection of influential persons, experts and financiers for

⁵³ Duverger, 37.

⁵⁴ Duverger, 63.

electoral preparations, conducting campaigns and maintaining contact with candidates.⁵⁵

In India, the Election Commission of India classifies political parties under three categories: national parties, state parties and registered/unrecognized political parties.⁵⁶ At present, there are six national parties, namely, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) or CPI(M), Indian National Congress (INC) and National People's Party (NPP); 72 state parties; and 2,597 registered unrecognized political parties (RUPPs).⁵⁷

In India, a political party has to be recognized and registered under the Election Commission of India in order to participate in the electoral and political process of the country. Any political party is eligible to be recognized as a state party, if, and only if, any one of the following conditions is fulfilled:⁵⁸

i) At the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State, the candidates set up by the party secured no less than six percent of the total valid votes polled in the state; and, in addition, the party has returned at least two members to the Legislative Assembly of that State at that general election; or

ii) At the last general election to the House of the People from that state, the candidates set up by the party have secured no less than six percent of the total valid votes polled in the state; and, in addition, the party has returned at least one member to the House of the People from that state at that general election; or

iii) At the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State, the party won at least three percent of the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly (any fraction exceeding half being counted as one), or at least three seats in the Assembly; or

iv) At the last general election to the House of the People of the State, the party returned at least one member to the House of the People for every 25 members or any fraction thereof allotted to that state; or

v) At the last general election to the House of the People from the State, or at the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State,

⁵⁵ Duverger, 64.

⁵⁶ Hoveyda Abbas, et al., *Indian Government and Politics* (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd., 2011), 307.

⁵⁷ <https://eci.gov.in/candidate-political-parties/list-of-political-parties/> (accessed Aug. 3, 2023).

⁵⁸ Election Commission of India, *Notification No. 56/2005/Judl.iii, dated 14.05.2005*.

the candidates set up by the Party secured no less than eight percent of the total valid votes polled in the state.⁵⁹

A party could be recognized as a national party if and only if, any of the following conditions is fulfilled:⁶⁰

i) The candidates set up by the party, in any four or more states, at the last general election to the House of the People, or to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned, secured no less than six percent of the total valid votes polled in each of those states at that general election; and, in addition, returned at least four members to the House of the People at the aforementioned general election from any state or states; or

(ii) At the last general election to the House of the People, the party has won at least two percent of the total number of seats in the House of the People, any fraction exceeding half being counted as one; and the party's candidates have been elected to that House from not less than three States; or

(iii) The party is recognized as a state party in at least four states.

Based on the above classification of political parties stipulated by the Election Commission of India, the MNF could be categorized as a state party in the State of Mizoram.

The Origin of Political Parties

Political parties are of recent origin, in the sense that even the oldest have only existed for around two centuries. According to Maurice Duverger, there were no political parties in the modern sense of the word in any country before 1850, except in the USA. Duverger, in fact, propounded two theories on the origin of political parties:⁶¹

1) The electoral and parliamentary origin of parties, which refers to their growing out of political assemblies when their members felt the need, as a group, to act in an organized manner.

2) The extra-parliamentary origin of parties, which explains the emergence of political parties outside the purview of election and parliament. These are, for example, trade unions, churches and philosophical societies, among others, working outside election and parliament, which are capable of giving birth to parties.

⁵⁹ Election Commission of India, *Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II, dated 16.09.2011*.

⁶⁰ http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/RegistrationPoliticalParties (accessed Aug. 8, 2023).

⁶¹ Ayangbam Shyamkishor, *Party System in Manipur* (New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2012), 5–6.

At the same time, La Palombara and Myron Weiner suggested three types of theory of the origin of political parties:

1) The institutional theories focusing on the relationship between early parliaments and the emergence of parties.

2) The historical situation theories that focus on the historical crisis or tasks systems have encountered when parties developed.

3) Developmental theories that relate parties to the broader processes of modernization.⁶²

The origin of modern political parties lies, firstly, in the representative assemblies of the 16th century and the democracies of East and Central Europe in the 19th century (as well as in Western Europe and the Americas); and secondly, in the efforts of those who were excluded from those assemblies to gain a voice in them.⁶³ The earlier political parties were parties of intra-parliamentary origin.⁶⁴ These types of political parties developed recognizable leadership, became active in electoral campaigns and transferred the control of the executive away from the hands of the monarch, replacing it with the responsibility of the Parliament.⁶⁵ The British Parliament during the 17th century was a prime example. This could be regarded as the point of rise of parliamentary government. Modern political parties, particularly in Western Europe, came into existence with the growth of constitutional and representative government.⁶⁶ However, there was a need to mobilize and organize large numbers of those excluded from legitimate participation to support leaders advocating for reform. Generally, this extension of political rights gave rise to the development of parties of extra-parliamentary origin.⁶⁷ These types of parties were instrumental in the establishment of modern liberal democracies in the 21st century. Parties of internal and external origin tended to differ with respect to their social bases – those parties originating in Parliament representing the establishment of upper and upper-middle classes are of internal origin, while those of external origin represent the middle, lower middle and working class, opponents of old regimes etc.⁶⁸

Political parties in the third world grew up as national movements which sought to fight for national independence and to drive out the colonial

⁶² Shyamkishor, 6.

⁶³ Caramani, 297.

⁶⁴ Caramani, 297.

⁶⁵ Caramani, 297.

⁶⁶ Bhushan, 95.

⁶⁷ Caramani, 297.

⁶⁸ Caramani, 298.