

## Development and the Politics of North-South Divide: Accentuating the 'Geographies of Anger' in Mizoram

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### Abstract

Development, Progress or 'Changkangna' has been geared up in leaps and bounds through 'money-bags' politics in the now most peaceful state of the Northeast. A state almost obsessed with external and fast pace development, Mizoram serves as an interesting chapter in analyzing the various hues of development - it benefits and challenges. The Development projects in the post-peace era have been highly 'Aizawl-Centric' or 'North-Centric' and the Southern regions have continued to face the traditional stereotypes. The recent interest that the region has gained through the 'Look East Policy' has pumped in more flow of finances and development projects. Construing the Centre-led-dole-development and its promises, the paper unravels the complex relationship between 'Development and 'Politics of North-South Divide' in Mizoram.

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**Keywords:** North-South Divide, Geographies of Anger, Look East Policy, Development.

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### Introduction

A state of the North-eastern region, Mizoram is undergoing massive development. The 'Aizawl model' of development and town planning has been replicated elsewhere in other urban centres in the state.<sup>1</sup> However, Aizawl as 'the capital city' has caught the imaginations of the rural belt as being the seat of power, privilege and easy life, as compared to the tough life of rural Mizoram.<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the Development projects in the post-peace era have been highly 'Aizawl-Centric' or 'North-Centric'.<sup>3</sup>

1 A point to be noted is that Aizawl is being emulated not just at the level of development and planning. It is being emulated even at the cultural level in terms of media consumption-print, audio-visual and life-style. A casual look at the growing number of newspapers in Mizoram suggests that the earlier trend of newspapers only form the capital city will soon be replaced by an equally strong representation from the newer and smaller districts, erstwhile irrelevant spaces. Even at the level of television consumption the emulation effect is strongly visible. For instance the reality show bug that had smitten the Aizawl audience is gradually entering the living rooms of the districts. For details Cf. Hmar Sangzuala, "Eyeballs on Mizo Idol," *The Times of India*, Guwahati, 09 December, 2006; "Maraland Idol 2009 chu Pu. Donny Lalruatsang, BDO chuan ropui takin a hawng to," *Moonlight*, 2009, Saiha, "Saiha District Red Ribbon Youth Icon 2009-2010 Top Ten result puan a ni ta," *Moonlight*, 6 November, 2009.

2 Pu Zaliana, Senior Research Officer, 'Tribal Research Institute', Art & Culture Department, Government of Mizoram, McDonald Hill, Personal Interview. Zarkawt, Aizawl, 22nd, 23rd & 24th January 2008, Prof. Thangchungnunga, Department of Economics, Mizoram University, Main Campus. Personal Interview, Tanhril, Aizawl, 24th January 2008, also Pi Vanramchhuangi ('Ruutfelanu'), Director HRLN Mizoram, Social Activist. Personal Interview, Chaltlang, Aizawl, 28th & 29th January 2008.

3 *Ibid.*,

The Colonial encounter created difference in identity among the Northerners and the Southerners (*Mara*<sup>4</sup>, the *Lai*<sup>5</sup> and the *Chakma*<sup>6</sup>), through their administrative lines across the traditional homeland of the Zo people.<sup>7</sup> The long term impact of such a difference was the creation of a mental divide between South ('*Chhimlam mi*') and North (*Lusei-Hmar, Zo/Mizo*) in Mizoram. The group of tribes in the present day Aizawl circle, commonly referred to as the 'Lusei-Mizo group' believe that they are the real 'Mizo' and expect other peripheral and southern tribes and western tribes to accept the generic Mizo identity. They also expect the marginal tribes to speak the Duhlian (Mizo) dialect, which has been elevated to the position of the lingua franca of the state of Mizoram. In the process of identity-formation over the years, Mizo-ised the ethno-cultural proximates belonging to the larger or more amorphous Kuki-Chin groups in India and Burma with a majority of the 15-17 local tribes assumed a more distinctive Mizo identity by virtue of adopting Christianity, a Lushai dialect (*Duhlian*) with roman script.

4 The end of British Colonialism and the immediate partition of the Sub-Continent forced the Mara (earlier known as Lakher), to make a hasty decision to join either India or Myanmar taking purely the communications and transportation factors along the courses of the river Kolodyne, which flows through the middle of the Maraland. The people in the East of the river choose to be with Myanmar as it was more accessible for them to get their daily necessities from Hakka and Sittewa township, and those who lived in the west of the river choose to be with India as getting salt was easier from Tlabung town. The Mara have a distinct material culture and language though they are classed in the Kuki-Chin-Lushai group. Cf., Chawngthu, Dr. Chawngkhuma, *Mara Khawtlang Nun*, Aizawl, Mualchin Publication & Paper Works, 2005; Stephen Fuchs speculates that 'they were originally Naga who became Kukis through their close association with the latter; Cf. Fuchs, Stephen, *The Aboriginal Tribes of India*, London/Madras, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973 & 1977, pp.203, 215-16. My interaction with Naga Lecturers from Salesian College, Dimapur, Nagaland during the National Seminar on 'Historical and Sociological Impact of Migration on North East India,' Don Bosco College, Maram, Manipur, 27-28 September 2007', reaffirms Fuchs speculations.

5 The Lai/Pawi are the immediate neighbours of the Mara/Lakher and inhabitant the area 'Lai Autonomous District'. The Pawi/Lai story also speaks of similar experiences of the process of partition in the sub-continent. Though the Lai (Pawi or Chin) have close affinities to the Lushai group, their relations historically have never been cordial.

6 Traditionally the Chakma occupy the South-West and the western belts of the territory between Mizoram and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) now in Bangladesh and the state of Tripura. The Chakma tribes speak a language heavily influenced by the Eastern Indo-Aryan language group; it is closely related to the Bengali language. The Chakma in the CHT are known as '*Jumma*'/'*Jhumia*' used by the Chittagonian Bangalees, and has a derogatory element attached to it. They speak different dialects and their connection with the Mizo is still contested. Recent linguists' observations have found out that the modern Chakma language known as Changma Vaj or Changma Kodha is a part of the South-eastern Bengali stem, which is part of Eastern Indo-Aryan languages. For details Cf., Chakma, Suhas., "Chittagong Hill Tracts: Appalling Violence", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 10, October 17, 1992, 2295-2296, S.P. Talukdar, *The Chakmas: Life and Struggles*, Delhi, Gian Publishing House, 1988, Lalthara, Chakmate Hi Tutenge An Nih. Laisuih 1997-1998. Shillong, All Mizo Post-Graduate Students' Union HQRS, F. Lianchhinga, Chakma te leh Mizoram Politics, 1998, Laisuih, Shillong: All Mizo Post-Graduate Students' Union HQRS, 1997-1998.

7 Before 1898, the head of the Lushai District was called a Political Officer. At first there were two political officers-one for the South Lushai Hills and another for the North Lushai Hills. After the amalgamation of the two districts the designation of the head of the district was changed to Superintendent. Shakespeare was the first Superintendent of the Lushai District. The Superintendent enjoyed tremendous powers for instance he regulated the successor to the chieftainship, appointed guardians to the minor chiefs, partitioned the existing villages, formed new villages, appointed new chiefs, determined the boundaries of the villages and areas to be occupied by the chiefs etc. For details Cf. V. Venkata Rao, "The Sociology of Mizo Politics", Chapter 18, in S.M. Dubey (ed.), *North East India: A Sociological Study*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1978, pp. 215-232.

The relations of the 'southern' and the 'northern' tribes have always been laced with prejudice and stereotypes. The attitude of the north in the pre-statehood times towards the three prominent southern tribes the Lakher (*Mara*), the Pawi (*Lai*) and the Chakma, was that of selective targeting.<sup>8</sup> For instance, during the Mizo National Front (MNF) movement, the Lakher (*Mara*) and the Chakma were targeted as 'Others', for failing to positively respond to the call of the MNF. The inability of these two groups to affiliate themselves linguistically as well as ideologically with the several initiatives of the MNF such as reunification of the Zo hnahthlak, secession from the Union of India etc., further fuelled the feeling of otherness. The MNF throughout its secessionist movement targeted the Chakma as either the permanent or foreigners and the Mara as traitors in the reunification movement of the Zo hnahthlak. For instance, in 1972 when Mizoram became a Union Territory (UT), Laldenga gave a call for abolishing the Autonomous status granted to the Chakma. Laldenga at one time even mentioned that, 'it is totally wrong to grant constitutional autonomy to immigrants... Nowhere in the world are immigrants granted autonomy'.<sup>9</sup> Excepting the Congress<sup>10</sup>, the different political parties and students' body from the northern belt toed the lines of Laldenga. Interestingly, the Pawi (*Lai*) were spared the harsh treatment for the simple fact that they were linguistically affiliated to the MNF movement and Laldenga belonged to this particular group. So their claim for autonomy was justified and authentic.<sup>11</sup>

The South continues to be at the receiving end, and the grant of Autonomous Councils to the tribes in the south continues to generate much contentions and restlessness among the northerners.<sup>12</sup> Here it is important to focus on the geographies of identity and '*geographies of anger*'<sup>13</sup> and the ethnic consciousness rooted in the sense

8 Prati Ranjan Chakma, President of Chakma Students' Union, Aizawl Zone, Personal Interview. Chakma House, Veng Hunthar, Aizawl, 26th March 2010.

9 Brig. Verghese & C. L. Thanzawna, *A History of the Mizos*, Vols. I & II, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1997.

10 M.C. Lalrinthanga, *Mizoram Politik*, Aizawl, Lengchawn Press, 1976-1986, F. Hmingthanga, *Mizoram Politik Thlirlet-Na (Mizo Hnam him Nan)*, Aizawl, The Zo-Awm Press, 2003, C. Hermana, '*Zoram Politics*', in Thli Tleh Dan, Vol. 1, Aizawl, PRESCOM, 1999.

11 Personal Interview, Pu Zaliana. Op.cit., Pu Lianhmingthanga, Senior Research Officer, 'Tribal Research Institute', Art & Culture Department, Government of Mizoram, McDonald Hill, Personal Interview, Zarkawt, Aizawl, 21 & 22 January 2008.

12 Cfr Government of Mizoram, 1989, Mizoram District Gazetteers, Director of Art & Culture, Education and Human Resources Department, Aizawl, Government of Mizoram, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2008, Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Aizawl, Government of Mizoram, 2006, State Report Card Mizoram, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Rajya Mission Mizoram (DISE), Aizawl, 2005-06. Government of Mizoram, 2008, "Establishing of a one man Committee consisting of Pu. Tawnluaia, IAS (Rtd.) to examine and recommend how to solve the problem of duplicacies in the functions of the State Government and Autonomous District Councils." The Mizoram Gazette, Extra-Ordinary Notification No.F.13016/1/98-DCA, 13th February, 2008 vide Regd.No.NE-313(MZ), Vol. XXXVI, Aizawl, Monday, 03-03-2008, Phalguna 13, S.E. 1929, Issue No. 47.

13 Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2006.

of *relative deprivation*,<sup>14</sup> internal colonization and anti-outsider *psychology*,<sup>15</sup> in order to analyze the north-south divide in Mizoram. The uneven pace of development across Mizoram and in specific the slow pace of development in southern Mizoram evokes a strong sense of discontent among the Southern tribes. The southerners at large feel left out and at the receiving end 'tucked-off' conveniently in their Autonomous District Councils (ADCs). The Northerners in response feel that the ethnic cocooning of the Southerners in their ADCs is a reason sufficient to keep them out of developmental initiatives or developmental drives that are taking place in the state. The 'North-South divide' thus very well sums up and accentuates the 'geographies of anger' as eloquently outlined by Arjun Appadurai in 'Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger' (2006).

### **Regional Development in Mizoram**

Development projects which had been halted by the insurgency of the 60s were revived after the elevation of Mizoram to a UT in 1972. However, the economic development which took place in the post-1972 period reflected the desire of the Government of India to resolve the insurgency through distributive and structural changes, rather than purely military intervention. It is interesting to note that from the 5th Five Year Plan (1974-79) onwards, the North-Eastern States of Mizoram like Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh became the highest recipients of per capita public expenditure for development in the country. In fact, the development funds available to these States were four to five hundred percent more than those available to other States of the Union.<sup>16</sup>

The Centre had contributed a lot in reducing the economic imbalances between the more developed parts of the country, and the hill tribal areas of the North-East. This decidedly took the wind out of the secessionists' main grievance and propaganda. But internally within these States, the windfall money was not utilized properly. With 'easy money got in the form of relief, subsidies and loans,' Mizoram suddenly became one of the best markets for electronic and other consumer goods in the country. However, this was expected to be nothing more than a temporary bonanza, which created conditions for peace but kept the economy stagnant. Consumerism and a mad

14 W.G Runciman, *Relative Deprivation & Social Justice*, Berkeley, University of California Press, Gurr, 1966; Robert Ted, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970; John Rapley "Inequality & Instability", *Globalization And Inequality: Neoliberalisms Downward Spiral*, New Delhi, Viva Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005.

15 Myron Weiner, *Sons of The Soil: Migration & Ethnic Conflict In India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1978.

16 Cfr Government of India, 1981, "Report on Development of Northeastern Region", New Delhi, Planning Commission, National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas, Government of India, 1988; Commission on Centre-State Relations (Sarkaria Commission) Report, Vol. I. New Delhi, Government of India, Government of India, 1997; Executive Summary of the Report of the High Level Commission on Tackling Backlogs in Basic Minimum Services and Infrastructural Needs in the Northeast Region, New Delhi, Planning Commission, National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas, Government of India, 2000 in R. Radhakrishnan (ed.), "Report of Eleventh Finance Commission", Ministry of Finance, New Delhi; "India Development Report", Oxford University Press/ IGIDR, Mumbai, 2008.

rush for commodities and luxuries resulted in the birth of *commodity fetishism*<sup>17</sup> among the Zo/Mizo people.

The politician-bureaucrat-contractor nexus continues to control the Zo economy and the development process. The experience of 'money bag politics' and '*dole development*'<sup>18</sup> contributed to the growth of a 'paid holiday' attitude among the politician-bureaucrat-contractor nexus. It made integration with India, an overwhelming vested interest for the most vocal and influential segment of society. A government officer could build a house with a large government loan at low rate of interest, and then rent it out to a government department at the rate fixed by a colleague. A fifty percent advance would be given to a supplier "just having a semblance of access to the articles intended to be supplied," or to a contractor for constructing a building that would take five years to build. 'Fake subsidies in thousands of rupees for minor irrigation, contour terracing and plantations' were distributed rampantly. However, measures such as the reimbursement of three-fourth of the expenditure and the cost of air travel for anybody going 2000 miles to the Christian Medical College Hospital in Vellore in south India for treatment, brought about tremendous social good, individual happiness, and goodwill for India.<sup>19</sup>

The process of development had been slow in the North East Region (NER) for many reasons.<sup>20</sup> The whole of the North-East has been categorised as an industrially backward zone. Recognising the special requirements of the region and the need for significant levels of government investment, the North-Eastern States have been categorised as Special Category States, and Central Plan assistance to these States is provided liberally.<sup>21</sup> The present state of development in Mizoram is largely an outcome of the Centre's plan to make Mizoram a model of development. It is clearly the failure of successive ministries after the Accord that is to blame for the current dismal state of affairs in Mizoram. One is not concerned here with assigning blames on the various ministries for their evident failures and thereby takes advantage of the 'generosity' of the central government.

The recent interest that the region has gained through the 'Look East Policy' has pumped in more flow of finances and development projects,<sup>22</sup> namely the World Bank

17 Cfr Peter Brooker, *Cultural Theory: A Glossary*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.

18 Cfr Anjan Chakrabarti & Anup Shekhar Chakraborty, "Emergent Development Approach: A critique of 'Money-bags' Centre directed 'Dole-development' in North-East India", *Indian Journal of Political Science (IJPS)*, Vol. LXXI, No.2, April-June, 2010.

19 Personal Interview with Pu Zaliana, Prof. Thangchungnunga and Pi Vanramchhuangi ('Ruutfelanu'). *Op.cit.*,

20 National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas commissioned by Planning Commission in 1981 has identified three types of fundamental backwardness in the region viz. areas of tribal concentration, hill areas and chronically flood affected areas.

21 Government of India, Eleventh Five Year Plan, Vol. 1, New Delhi, Planning Commission, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 151-152.

22 Cfr Kongsam Ibo Singh, "Insurgency in the North East Indian and the Myanmar Connection", Chapter 22 in

Road Project connecting the capital Aizawl with Lunglei and beyond; and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project which intends to open the region to the world economy at large<sup>23</sup>. The state gradually realized the dilemma of keeping the southern regions as ethnic enclaves. In this respect the development project under the 'Look East Policy' helped to open up to the North and rest of the world. The two cases construed below accentuate the complexities of development initiatives in the contested north-south terrain of Mizoram.

### **World Bank Road Project Connecting North & South Divide in Mizoram**

The World Bank Road Project connecting more than 40 villages with Aizawl (the capital) was approved by the World Bank on 14th March 2002, and was estimated to cost 70 million US dollars. Although, the International Development Association (IDA) provided a credit of 60 million US dollars, and the Government of Mizoram as the implementing agency would meet the counterpart funding of 10 million US dollars by borrowing it from the Government of India. Till date, around 48 million US dollars have already been disbursed for the project. The World Bank visions that the project will improve road capacity, quality and safety through rehabilitation and maintenance. The World Bank also stated that,

[t]he project aims to expand or rehabilitate over 500 kilometres of the state's core road network which is around half of the state's total core network. So far, around 210 km maintenance of roads have been completed and opened to traffic, reducing travel time of about 50 percent. In addition, 42 percent of the core road network has been improved to good condition and maintenance backlog has decreased to 800 km from 1,000 km.<sup>24</sup>

The target date (of all financial activities related to the project) of the World Bank Project was kept as 31st December 2007.<sup>25</sup> During the inauguration of the Road project, the then Chief Minister Zoramthanga of the MNF led government promised that, 'the World Bank will be replacing the old run down road with a new road that will be smooth and sleek as a snake.'

In 2000, Cochin-based Bagheeratha Engineering Ltd. was given the contract to build the road, and it began its work from April 2002. Due to rampant corruption and

S.K. Agnihotri & B. Datta Ray (ed.), *Perspective of Security & Development in North-East India*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing House, 2005; Cfr Christopher Jaffrelot, "India's Look East Policy: An Asianist Strategy in Perspective", *India Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2003.

23 Cross Border Projects across the Indo-Myanmar borders such as Tamanthi Hydroelectric Project, the Rhi-Tiddim and Rhi-Falam Roads and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project have been all initiated and on the pipeline; Cfr India-Myanmar, Joint Statement, New Delhi, November 21, 2000, India-Myanmar, Joint Statement, New Delhi, October 29, 2004.

24 Lalremlien Neitham, (2007), 'A Slippery Road: The Case of the World Bank in Mizoram', [url.www.misual.com/2007/09/29/a-slippery-road-the-case-of-the-world-bank-in-mizoram](http://www.misual.com/2007/09/29/a-slippery-road-the-case-of-the-world-bank-in-mizoram), (accessed on 20 February 2008).

25 The financial terms and conditions for the financial credit is 35 years of maturity, including 10 years grace period. The World Bank's credit to the Government of India is at 0.5 percent interest and the Government of India's credit to the Government of Mizoram is at 12 percent interest.

negligence of the work the road conditions worsened; Bagheeratha Engineering Ltd. was decontracted in 2005. The authorities took time to select new contractors for the project. In November 2005, the Government announced the names of three companies, Valicha, Tantia and Raitani to resume the project. However, the companies did not begin their work even by March 2006. The indifference of the Government angered and disappointed the villagers. The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) took up the issue to begin a protest and demanded accountability and prompt action and therefore blocked the road on 30th March 2006. The state police picketed the protesters and five MZP leaders were arrested and jailed. On 31st March 2006, when MZP had a meeting with the Government officials, and the five arrested leaders were released and the Government promised to resume the road construction work by April 2006. The construction work was completed by the end of June 2008. Concerned over the slow pace of work and escalating costs, student and youth groups such as, the MZP, Young Mizo Association (YMA) branches and other groups from the affected villages appealed to the project director PWD (SE) K Sawmvela and submitted their petitions to the Chief Minister and other authorities to take prompt action. The local MLA pacified the MZP and requested them not to take up any action and promised to discuss the matter with the Chief Minister.

The Activist role that the MZP has taken on this particular project has opened the Pandora's Box of debates and counter-debates on such mega development projects, as well as, a renewed interest in the failure of mini development projects. For instance, the Bairabi Thermal Power Plant with a capacity to produce 22MW of electricity which was set up at a cost of Rs. 105 Crores, today lies idle not for want of fuel but because the estimated unit cost is too high to be introduced to public consumers. Around Rs. 9 Crores of compensation has recently been awarded for land and properties to be affected by a 12MW Hydel Project at Tuirial, making it almost certain that this mini project will also become cost-ineffective. The post-Accord governments have not been able to produce even one cost-effective infrastructure project so far.

### **The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project Connecting North & South Divide in Mizoram**

The Kaladan project has been projected as the panacea of all ills for the people of the backward southern regions of the state of Mizoram. Mani Shankar Aiyer for instance while addressing media persons vocally supported the project as:

'... multi-model project that will fulfill the 150-year-old prophecy of Pastor Chhawna, the well-known Mizo prophet, who had predicted that 'there will come a light from the south'. With 75,000 tonnes of goods moved to and through Mizoram annually, the project will make the state the economic gateway to India...While flying over the Kaladan river, it dawned on me that if we could build a railway track along the river, the Kaladan project would be of greater benefit.'<sup>26</sup>

26 "Chakmas, Maras and Lais most backward in Mizoram", DoNER Minister; 'Kaladan project will fulfil

The Kaladan project conceived more than ten years back could not be concretized due to the deterioration of Indo-Myanmar relations in the mid 90s. The Kaladan project, which will include shipping, river and road transport, has in blueprint the construction of roads in the border areas of Mizoram for instance a road from Kalewa to Saiha in Mizoram. This proposed road is to be connected with India's National Highway 54 in Mizoram. The project which is to be implemented by the Rail India Technical Economic Services (a public-sector organization) from 2009 onwards is gigantic both in scale and vision. Strangely enough no voice has been pitched against the possible uprooting of indigenous people that the proposed project would eventually lead to. The recipients or the direct and the indirect beneficiaries of the Kaladan project in Mizoram much like the implementing agencies seem to reverberate the enthusiasms of New Delhi. The following content of Mani Shanker Aiyar's address to the media persons during his visit to the region seems to convey the tone of New Delhi's hopes and aspirations:

I (Mani Shanker Aiyar) was grieved to see the backwardness of the three autonomous district councils of Mara, Lai and Chakma in the southern part of the state and the fact that the entire rural Mizoram was still reeling under Mautam (bamboo flowering famine) and acute food shortage... Once we get the Sittewa (proposed sea port at Kaladan) going, southern Mizoram will get sufficient rice, coming from Myanmar and Bangladesh ... I (Mani Shanker Aiyar) am disturbed to learn that the minority population (Chakmas, Mara and Lais) in the southern part had been deprived of development funds. It appears that only a very small proportion of funds have reached these people who constitute 15 per cent of the state's population. I can now understand why the minorities are demanding Union Territory status. Mizoram should remain one, but it can remain united only when all the sections of the people feel that they are equally treated'.<sup>27</sup>

The south continues to be relatively deprived of the benefits of development. But it has been recently incorporated into the framework of state led development regime in Mizoram. The discontent among the southerners needs to be understood within the framework of 'geographies of anger'<sup>28</sup> and ethnic consciousness, which is rooted in the sense of relative deprivation,<sup>29</sup> internal colonization and protests<sup>30</sup> and anti-outsider psychology.<sup>31</sup>

150-year-old prophecy'. (Mani Shankar Aiyar), Aizawl, Wednesday, February 13, 2008, [url.news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20080213/887989](http://url.news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20080213/887989), accessed on 20 February 2008.

27 *Ibid.*,

28 Appadurai, 2006, *Op.cit.*,

29 Runciman, 1966, *Op.cit.*,

30 Cfr A. William Gamson, "Part II Cultural Processes In Mobilization, Constructing Social Protest", Chapter 5; Cfr Hank Johnston, and Bert Klandermans, "Part I Conceptions of Culture in Social Movement Analysis, The Cultural Analysis Of Social Movements", Chapter 1, and Ann Swidler, "Conceptions of Culture in Social Movement Analysis, Cultural Power and Social Movements", Chapter 2, in Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (eds.), *Social Movements and Culture: Social Movements, Protest and Contention*, Vol. 4, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

31 Weiner, 1978, *Op.cit.*,



## Conclusion

The under-development of the region and the under-use of the potential resources of the region have often been cited by the southern tribes and other peripheral groups, as evoking a sense of being neglected and treated as step-children not belonging to the northern tribes group. My respondents argued that these feelings act as psychological variables on the whole process of identity-building in Mizoram. One can cite numerous instances of the social tensions and anxieties arising from the perception of the common people that the authorities present or past have not taken development seriously. For instance, there continues a decline in per capita success rate of young graduates in the national level competitions for jobs, owing to 'lack of quality education'. The 'Angry Young man syndrome,' seems to loom large in the society. Then there is the unsystematic approach to infrastructural development and rampant institutionalized corruption that has resulted in the distortion of the whole development process. On a similar note 'Agriculture,' the mainstay of the state's economy remained stagnant. The bulk of essential items need to be imported. The 'Private sector' is yet to take off, and the government service becomes the main stable source of employment, leading to surplus staffing of the government. Also there is a widening 'income gap' between urban and rural dwellers. The rate of growth of 'educated' 'unemployed' is rapid, nearly around one lakh in a population of less than one million. Coupled with the above issues, potable water crisis due to de-landscaping of the lush green belt in and around Aizawl city and the growing water mafia continues to be a problem. Thus, threats and pressures have become the most effective means of extracting group interests and concessions from the government. The Nexus of Patriarchy in the process have become unduly influential, not only in the discourse of policy issues but also of routine administrative matters.

Thus, underneath the Veil of Peace and external development, Mizoram is fraught with problems which require immediate attention. Therefore, within the realm of development economics, there is a need to search for a right combination of community, market and state, for promoting economic growth and to allow the trickle-down effect of growth to reach the grass root level. Any failure to reach out to the common people at the grass root level will result in a revolt against the misrule of their government and its agencies and also the vested interest groups in the state.<sup>32</sup>

The Development projects in the post-peace era have been highly 'Aizawl-Centric' or 'North-Centric', and the Southern regions have continued to face the traditional stereotypes. The response towards the three groups from the South continues to be seen

32 Cfr Vanlalruata, President PRISM, 'Corruption i do ang u', 2009, Vanglaini, Aizawl, 09 December, Pa Rinrini (ATC Durtlang), "Kohhran demawm em?", Vanglaini, Aizawl, 22 January, 2010; P.C. Nghaklianmawia, "Kan Work Culture hi", Vanglaini, Aizawl, 27 November, 2009; F. Malsawma, "Mizote hi Pathian Hnam thlan kan ni tak tak em? Pawm dan nghet neih a hun!", Vanglaini, Aizawl, 13 January, 2010; Nu Lalruatfela, "Tawngtai saktu aiin mi dik leh rinawm kan mamawh", Aizawl Post, Aizawl, 14 June, 2007; Nu. Lalruatfela, "Kan nihna pawm ngam lo hi hmasawn lohna a ni", Aizawl Post, Aizawl, 25 January, 2007; P. Lalnithanga, "I hlawhtlinna aiin Mize than Zelna kha a pawimawh zawk", Vanglaini, Aizawl, 07 January, 2010.

through coloured glasses, and the Chhimlam mi continues to be a subject of mockery in the everyday life of the North, especially Aizawl. The Mara due to their distinct language and cultural practices have remained as a distant tribe, yet to be encast into the capsule of the generic Identity 'Mizo' or the phonetic Identity 'Zomi'. The 'Lai' have always been the distant Zo hnahtlak, entrenched in the landlocked terrain of the Kolodyne (Kaladan) and the 'Blue Mountains' (Phongpui Tlang). In fact, the attitude towards the Lai (Pawi/Poi, Chin) has been traditional and more comfortable when compared with the Mara (Lakher), who today have been elevated to the position of an accepted distinct ethnic group for display purpose in the Chapchar Kut and other festivals. The Chakma continue to be branded as the foreigners within Mizoram. Many respondents felt that the desire or the compulsion to grant concession to the Lai (*Pawi*) in the South led to similar concessions being extended to fringe tribes and foreigner tribes in the South.<sup>33</sup>

The present paper, through a quick glance at projects aimed at the fact that in the absence of a competent agency to generate development and critique the same over time and space, peace per se 'does not' or cannot produce any meaningful or sustainable development. Construing the Centre-led-dole-development and its promises, the paper unravels the complex relationship between 'Development and Politics of North-South Divide', in Mizoram. In short, the uneven pace of development across the contested topography evokes a strong sense of discontent among the competing tribes in Mizoram.

33 Personal Interviews, *et. al., Op.cit.*, Pu Lalrinkima, Lecturer in Department of Political Science, Lunglei Government College. Personal Interview, Prof. Lalrinthanga, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, Lunglei, 1st February 2008. Personal Interview, Prof. F. Lalremsiama, Department of History, Johnson's College, Chaltlang, Aizawl, 19th January 2008; Personal Interview, Khatla, Aizawl, 26th January 2008.