

# HIJAM IRAWAT AND HIS MOVEMENTS IN MANIPUR

## - *A Humanistic Revolutionary*

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### ABSTRACT

Hijam Irawat was a nationalist before he was a Marxist so that he took many works for the society in all the aspects such as, socio-political-economic cultural activities etc. He was also the icon of the socialist revolutionary of northeast India. He was born on 30 September 1896 and died on 26 September 1951 so as his life span was very short lived, only 56 years old; born and died in September so that some interested political parties as well as civil social organisations (CSOs) celebrated as the 'September Thabum Palon' in and outside Manipur every year. He was conferred the title 'Jana Neta' by the graceful people of Cachar in honour of his wonderful and fearless social works and thought. The words 'Jana Neta' was originally derived from the Bengali words which means people leader or Manipuri we called Meeyamgi Luchingba. He studied at Johnstone School, Imphal, Manipur still existing located at Western side of Kangla fort till class VII. In 1913 he went to Dhaka with his cousin Sawaijam Somorandro and got admitted at Pugoji High School to study till class IX. In 1915 he dropped out due to shortage of money and some other reasons, he went to some places of Tripura who resided Manipuri which was the idea of thinking for the people service. Later that year he came back to Manipur and he found that his mother was no more so that he was roaming aimlessly here and there. It was the turning point of his life to go to the palace because his friend's father whose name was Maibam Shamdren who worked in the court of King Churachand Maharajah. It was then that he became in good relations with the royal family so as he got married with the King's elder brother's daughter Princes Khomdonsana due to his outstanding performance of art and culture, games and sports etc. He was then appointed a member of the Sadar Panchayat which was the high post in those days. As a member of the Sadar Panchayat, he visited and mixed with the people to know their problems. It was the best opportunities for giving message his thought and sharing his views and ideas to the people. Actually his contribution was a very great and significant because he took part as the very important role for the formation of Manipuri Mahasabha in 1934, second Nupi Lal, stood against the social ills such as, chanden shelkhai, peon chakthak, yarek santri, jal janabhumi sambhandhi (Water connection), Brahama Sabha, campaign for popular franchise and also further he expressed against the autocratic colonial master in the Rastriya conference Assam.

**Key words:** *Jana Neta', Manipuri Mahasabha, Nupi Lal, September Thabum Palon', Sadar Panchayat Member.*

### Introduction:

Hijam Irawat, poor orphan to people's hero, builder of Manipuri Freedom Movement as well as social activist was born in a hut during the feudal society in Manipur under the British rule. Irawat was the unquestioned leader of Manipuri people during those days and was regarded as a legendary hero in every Manipuri Home. His life became a metaphor of hut to temple and temple to hut as humanist, leader of the people against feudalism as an antifascist, introducing social political – literary movements with communist revolutionary ideals and religiously also for the unity and integrity of the people. He summoned as strike and demanded to ban the caning of pupils in the class which was his first revolt as a humanist. With the vision for that formal university degree was not necessary for him for the people's service so that he suddenly disappeared from Dacca and went to different places outside Manipur for the purpose of establishing links with the people of mainland Manipur so as to arise their spirit to preserve and developed their cultural identity and integration. His youthful enthusiasm was naturally diverted to literary movement for expressing patriotism with the spirit of cultural and emotional integration, feeling of oneness, unity of the people against feudalism. As a Panchay Member which was the high post of the state, he used his position to meet the people, studied their problems and organized them for mass campaign for socio-economic upliftment of the people, which was first of his kinds in Manipur. Irawat's movement can be divided into two different but interrelated categories namely the socio-political reform movement as a humanist during the period between early 1930s and mid 1940s and the revolutionary movement during the period between 1948 and 1951 so that title goes to "Hijam Irawat And His

Movements In Manipur- A HUMANISTIC REVOLUTIONARY” Irawat’s movements were against the social and economic injustice. A council of Brahmans known as the ‘Brahman Sabha’ used to oppress the people in the name of religion. The post of Ratan was created by the Sabha to vex the people. All the three such as, the king, the Brahman Sabha and the Ratan, could excommunicate any individual or groups of individuals, village/villages and declared them as Mangba (polluted/ unscared). The persons so declared would become untouchables, boycotted and finally socially out casted. However this practice of ostracisation of people, ammag-aseng(unscared), was such that those who were declared polluted could against become unpolluted sacred by payment of money. Here again there was no single fixed rate of payment. The fees were charged differently fifty rupees for the declaration of the Ratan, eighty five rupees and twenty three paisa for Brahma Sabha, and five hundred rupees for king respectively(Sotinkumar,L.2013:14). He rose against the social ill practices of Brahma Sabha, a strong religious body headed by the Maharajah. Not only this he campaigned for popular franchise, his struggle against the foreign rules as well as the autocratic Maharajah, imposing the taxes, his pioneering work in many fields, his tireless efforts for the downtrodden, introducing the second Nupi Lal under his guidance could not be forgotten by us.

Statement of the problem:

The genres of literatures produced so far discuss on nature which are biographic, socio-political, economic, cultural etc. The destiny of Hijam Irawat took a paradigm shift from elected person to an armed revolutionary movement after the incident of Pungdongbam, Lamlai Imphal East, Manipur in the period of 1948-1951. Hijam Irawat’s indepth in socialist thought that stood against the exploitation of man by man inspired me to study his crucial roles. Taking into consideration, the present research paper is being taken up to study “Hijam Irawat And His Movements In Manipur-A Humanistic Revolutionary”. This study is still lagging behind and quite distinct from others’ earlier works on Hijam Irawat and his works.

Review of Literature:

In most of the write ups on Hijam Irawat such as books, journals, research papers, documents, pamphlets available etc. claims that during the last phase of his imprisonment in the Sylhet District Jail, Hijam Irawat came in contact with many congress and communist political prisoners. After releasing from the jail he formally joined the communist as he found in Marxism the ways and means to end exploitation of man by man in those Manipuri society. We also find ample revolutional expression in his poetic book “Imagi Puja” that was written in 1942-43 when he was in the Sylhet District Jail for the safety and freedom of the motherland, for the peasant and the poor, for the women and the down trodden, for the countrymen. He became restless to fight against injustice and tyranny at the hands of the British imperialism and the feudal monarchy. Regarding the stand of Irawat as far as merger issue is concerned from the book entitled ‘Revolutionary Movement in Manipur’ written by professor N. Joykumar expressed that the question of preservation of national identity of Manipur should be left to the decision of the people. The professor interviewed Chhatradhari who was a close associate of Irawat and he viewed that Irawat received the information of signing of Merger Agreement by the Maharajah, who was a constitutional head, he expressed that the Maharajah could not do it without the comment of the people(Bhubon,H.1988:57). In Soyam Chatradhari Singh’s, book entitled “Manipur-Ki Itihasta Irawat in Manipuri Language” published by the Manipur Krishak Sabha, Imphal 1972. This book dealt on the life and politics of Hijam Irawat. The author opined that the Irawat was against the merger of Manipur in the union of India. He also cited that the reasons for Irawat’s visit to Burma were for seeking the help of the Burmese Communists for establishing an independent Socialist Republic of Manipur. In this way there is clear cut point that he was against the stand of merger agreement in the union of India. His view in this context that Manipur could be remains independence within the frame work of the independence of India.

In the book named “Hijam Irawat Singh and the Political Movement in Manipur” written by Karam Manimohan Singh included clarification of Hijam Irawat as a president of the Manipur Krishak Sabha made a press statement in the Shillong Times against the propoganda of Manipur State Congress Party and Manipur State Council that the Manipur Krishak Sabha was an independent organisation formed for the safeguard of the class interest but was not the tail of any political organisation. Hence it was unjust to say the Krishak Sabha was a Communist organisation. The eight months old infamous scandal of the proposed move for an inclusion of Manipur into Burma was finally brought to an end by Mr. Biresw Misra, Secretary of the Assam Provincial Organising Committee of the Communist Party of India when he issued a statement in the Shillong Times on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1947. In the book entitled “The Emergence of Meetei Nationalism” written by prof. Rajendra Kshetri indicated that Meetei Nationalism was two movements such as, first movement being focused as a background to and plausibly a causative of the second movement. It is an attempt to grasp the feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction among the Meeteis, analyse why, after 56 years of Manipur’s merger into Indian union, some sections of people are demanding to be separated from mainland India; examine the current underground movement in the light of the past movement; emphasize that the seeds of secessionists movements now in vogue in the state was sown in the pre-merger days and show that the Meetei movement cannot reduced to a mono-caused explanation. It traces the emergence of Meetei nationalism in Manipur.

## Historical background:

When referring to the historical background of Manipur on the eve of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba who has been considered to be the first historical King of Manipur who ruled from Kangla in 33AD. One may traced back Kangla was the capital of Manipur from the time immemorial, the history of Manipur from 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC down to 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD. There were seven important principalities or Kingdoms who ruled different areas independent of each other before Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. There were namely Mangang, Luwang, Angom, Khuman, Moirang-Chenglei, Sarangleishangthem, Khaba Nganba(Laiba,M.T.1988:199). There was a several legendary account popularly known as Puyas which provided us valuable information about the chronology of different dynasties and those who are concerning the origin of particular clans were kept under the custody of Piba-eldest male of a particular clan or pandit. From this account it came to highlight that which reign in Manipur in different ages. Manipur had long been a princely state independent kingdom under the Ningthouja dynasty till the year 1891. Manipur was known by different names in accordance with the different languages so the Burmese called Kathe, by the inhabitant of Cachar, it was called Moglie, by those who inhabitant of Assam, it was known as Mekhlee and Shans of Kabow, it was known as Cassay(Pandey,S.N.1985:52). Manipur is perhaps a latter name given to it after the Hindunization of the kingdom during the reign if the Vaighyachandra. When the British India defeated this small kingdom in 1891, Manipur lost its independent status, British India rule was imposed in Manipur. Manipur state Durbar system was created as sole administration jury of Manipur under the semi-feudal and semi-colonial rule. The people of Manipur were subjugated tremendously to a considerable degree. Under this circumstances Hijam Irawat was born on the soil of the autocratic imperialism and worked against the evil practices.

Frankly speaking after the defeat of Manipur in Anglo-Manipur War of 1891, the administration of the state was handed over to the Maharajah and his durbar, the British colonial rule deliberately supported the autocratic feudal system towards his population, thus the ruling class rudely imposed on series of impositions on the peasant class such as, Loushal, Chandal Senkhai, Amin Chakthak, Dolaireng, Yarek Sentry, Wakheisel, Mangba – Sengba etc. In those days only 5 to 6 % of the total population was literate and the rest are peasant class whose livelihood activities were based on agriculture(Laiba,M.T.1988:202). The ancient administrative machineries of the ruling monarchs of Manipur were changed into oppressive forces by Maharajah Churachand Singh who ruled during the period of 1891-1941 and then to Maharajah Bodha Chandra Singh's period of 1941-1949. The resentment against the king became gradually volatile. Hijam Irawat, a leader with Communist inclination came to the fore at the spur of the moment. His significant contribution to the Manipuri Society was in organising movement for responsible government to substitute the oppressive feudal society. Full responsible government – Sabhalak vote was for the first time raised by him. He started mobilising people especially the peasant class which formed the bulk of the population to fight against the oppression of the king in Manipur. Therefore to counter his rebellious activities, the king Churachand established the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1934, with himself as the President and Irawat was nominated as the Vice-President. But Irawat along with some his associates namely Ibomcha Kaviraj, Maimom Madhumangol, Salam Heramani and others formed a peasant organisation called Manipur Krishak Sanmeloni in 1935 at Nambol Awang Chandam to fight the injustice meted out to the peasants. The peasant class struggle took a paradigm shift after the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha which was held at Chinga Maidan on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1938. Earlier session were held at Imphal in 1934, Silchar in 1936 and Mandalay in 1937 respectively. With the opening of the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha, the history of Manipur entered into new era. It was because prior to this open session, there had been no political organisation in Manipur. This session brought into Manipur the first consciousness of a political party as well as the meanings of democracy and social justice to the public. Hijam Irawat presided this function demanding the abolition of the Manipur State Darbar and an introduction of electoral system to establish a full responsible government that gave a great challenge to the State Authorities. On 8<sup>th</sup> February 1939, Chingakham Pishak Singh who was the newly appointed General Secretary of the Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha forwarded an English translation of the resolutions passed on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1938 to the President of the Durbar for consideration and necessary actions. But very surprisingly the Manipur State Darbar had notified their resolution no.5 of the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1939 to all State Departments of Manipur and even the State Aided Schools declaring that all state employees should left the Mahasabha as it had become part of a political movement(Yaima, Loitam and Maipaksana,R.K.1983:49) . In response to the resolutions passed by the Durbar, among hundreds of the state servants only two people such as Hijam Irawat Singh and Elangbam Tompok Singh had resigned their state services. Irawat's resignation was notified in the Durbar resolution no.7 of 26<sup>th</sup> April 1939(Sotinkumar, L.2013:112). He had to sacrifice his life, slanded properties as well as his dignified membership of the Sadar Panchayat Court all for the sake of the Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha as well as masses of the Manipuri society. The period from the 1930s to early 1950s saw the emergence of several social movements in Manipur where most of them were Irawat's moments. Never in the history of modern Manipur has a single individual synthesised in himself all the urges, feelings, emotions and aspirations of a people as Irawat did. The world into which Irawat was born during the monarchical days under the colonial rule. The people were kept subjugated under two blended systems the foreign imperialism and the native monarchialism. While the subjugation has placed the entire population under sort of a siege, it also provided a rare opportunity to a few to rise up against the autocratic prince and His oppressive laws. Irawat was the pioneer of such group of people who stood end fought against the king. Irawat was initially a social reformer and then later, after the

lapse of British paramountcy, he became the founder of left nationalism in Manipur. In studying his struggle and thought, there are two-face of Irawat which have to be taken into consideration if we are to understand his works in its proper perspective. Actually Irawat was the reformist as well as humanist of his first chapter of his life and later part of his destiny went to the underground even though he was elected so that his understanding of thought went to the humanistic revolutionary. Here it may be referring that man was born at his ages and environment so he was the son of the soil. Even after the first elected government in Manipur, there was a lot of oppression to the poor peasants were undergoing in the name of suppression of the underground Communist activities. In reaction, there were intensive poster campaigns for launching by the revolutionists in the last part of December, 1950, in some parts of Yaingangpokpi, Changangei, Top, Khundrapam etc. propagating land should be given to the peasants, abolishing police government, and established popular government (Khetri, Rajendra, 2006:230). Not only this, under the unavoidable circumstances, he went to Burma and organized and convened the message of humanism, the feeling of oneness, arousing the mass movement against the imperialism with the full spirit of integration. Today he not only belongs to a particular political party but also to the entire people of the land.

Objectives of the present study:

1. Study the life history of Hijam Irawat.
2. analyse the role of Irawat in the movements for good governance and people. Service from the Maxian approach of social transformation.
3. analyse the role of Irawat in the second women movement in Manipur.
4. analyse the role of Irawat in armed revolutionary movement in the period of 1948-1951.

Methodology of the present study:

For this research proposal Marxist methodology based on Historical Materialism is primarily adopted to deal with the typical feudal society of the proposed period. Primary Sources: It includes proceedings, pamphlets, circulars, journals, newspaper etc. of different organisations. Notable works of Irawat such as Emagi Puja, Sheidam Sheireng, Anouba Yug. Oral interviews of some leaders of CPI, Manipur State. Some administrative records of both civil and police of the periods. Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci, B.R. Ambedkar, David Hardiman, and Mahatma Gandhi etc. Secondary Sources: Some books/theses concerned with Irawat are studied to know the earlier works on Irawat. Many journals, souvenirs published by CPI, Manipur State Council are also used.

Importance of the study:

Marxist philosophy and human society are closely related so that 'Hijam Irawat And His Movements In Manipur -A Humanistic Revolutionary' is very much important and necessary whenever human society is co-existence. As an example class conflict or another modern form of class struggle is required to transform the society because Irawatism is a legacy of Marxism.

Relevance of Irawatism:

Philosophers have so far only interpreted the world, in various ways; is to change it, says Karl Marx in his famous 11<sup>th</sup> and the last thesis on Feuerbach. There has been any philosopher in this world to which these words apply more than to Marx himself. It has been reportedly stated that Marxism has returned. In this connection, Irawatism is also a legacy of Marxism, only the difference is that Irawatism is based on *nationalism on the line of 'look globally and act locally'*. Keeping views of Marxism on his mind, he revolted against the autocratic-colonial masters in order to transform the society by the abolition of social ills such as Chandan Senkhai, Yarek SENTRY, Jal Sambhandi, Mangba-Sengba scandals, Amin Chakthak etc, reinforcement and reestablishment of games and sports, strengthening literary movement of Meetei Mayek script by publishing Meetei Chanu in 1922; establishment of free and fair universal adult democratic elections which is now still challenging and it is also demanding in the need of the hour in the present society as well as reawakening of Pan Meetei Movement which also hotbed demands and necessary in the present context of the society. Over and above Hijam Irawat's contributions to the society is very great and remarkable in the hearts and minds of every Manipuri people as a legendary hero and celebrated Irawat's Day on his birthday so Irawatism is still relevant in this contemporary society.

**Different facets of Irawat as a humanistic revolutionary:**

**(a) founder of first people's organization in Manipur**

As a Panchay Member which was the high post of the state, he used his position to meet the people, studied their problems and organized them for mass campaign for socio-economic upliftment of the people, which was the first of its kinds in Manipur. The result was the formation of Manipuri Mahasabha in 1934 mobilising all Manipuri inside and outside the state. Irawat rose against even the Brahma Sabha, a strong religious body headed by the Maharajah. Not

only this, he campaigned for popular franchise at the Mandalay Session of the Mahasabha in 1937. The same year, attending the Assam Provincial Rastriya Conference he exposed and stood against the extreme reactionary regime of the Manipur State dominated by the British Political Agent. Irawat continuously organized the first political mass campaign in Manipur for a legislature based on popular franchise and mobilized four thousand signatures to a memorandum. The Manipuri Mahasabha Conference elected him as President, defeating the Maharajah's candidate by seven hundred votes (Sanajaoba, R.K. (ed) 1998:59). In course of time the Manipuri Mahasabha, under his leadership, began to grow rapidly as an organization for winning freedom of the Manipuri in alliance with the Indian National Movement. The Feudal Court, instigated by the British Political Agent banned the entry of all officials into the Mahasabha condemning shooting of the Digboi Oil field strikers by the Assam Government Police. Knowing that sharp conflict with authorities was coming up; he resigned from the state service to give all his time to the people's service. As a result the mass movement for popular franchise grew in strength; a wave of patriotic awakening with khadar, Gandhi cap and the National Flag as its symbols swept Manipur, on the line of national integration. Understanding the need for organizing, thousands of Manipuri inside and outside the state he now realized the need of his dedicated service. So he visited Cachar in 1938 for the first time aroused the Manipuri masses there to work in co-operation with the local masses on the line of socio-political-economic-cultural integration. By that time he heard of the first mass movement in Imphal against the indiscriminate rice export by vested interests, with the connivance of the corrupt administration, when peaceful women deputationists were bayoneted and over a hundred wounded. He organized and guided the movement in democratic way so that four thousand volunteers would be picketing truck-loads to stop rice exports from Manipur even in the first night of his arrival. Subsequently he organized the Manipur Praja Mandal to raise the movement to a higher pitch and exposed the prevailing situation by publishing actual pictures in the Calcutta press the Political Agent's fabrications that there had been no police atrocities. He succeeded in linking the Manipur people's movement with democratic ideas and practices and secured the sympathy of the Congress for it. The movement became under the following banners:-i) boycott of foreign clothes, ii) non-payment of the forest tax, and iii) complete hartals in the bazars. Keeping in view the need of political integration in Manipur, Irawat met a number of hill leaders to find out a solution to keep the hill and plain areas of Manipur intact. Therefore, the Praja Sangha of Irawat convened a meeting at 5.00 pm on Sunday, the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1947 at the MDU hall in which representatives and members of the organizations from the hill and the plain areas of Manipur attended. In this meeting Mr. M.K. Simrey, the Chairman of Tangkhulong presided and represented all groups of leaders both hills and plains to demand for the formation of a United Front for joint action to press the demands of the hill and plain area to save Manipur from an impending danger and also to demand responsible form of government. Okram Ibomcha Kaviraj, the General Secretary of Krishak Sabha, Laishram Kanhai, leader of the Praja Sangha. Mr. Luneh, Chairman of the Kuki National Assembly, Mr. Kakhangai, Chairman of the Kuki Association and Mr Simrey, chairman of the meeting spoke on the occasion. Irawat contacted a number of concerned personages and organizations travelling here and there and thus his mission to keep the hill-plain Unity on a firm footing was successful on the line of social and political integration. Assembly elections were held in Manipur in 1948 under the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947. In these elections the Manipur Krishak Sabha contested by sending up 23 candidates. Irawat himself contested from the Utlou Constituency and won it by defeating the Congress candidate by a large margin. In that elections the symbol of the Manipur Krishak Sabha was a house.

(b) People's service:

The Brahma Sabha was the powerful body and authority in the matter of social, economic and religious aspects. It could declare whether a person was sacred or unsacred subsequent upon which he was disallowed to mix with others in social gatherings and public functions so that his social status was totally denied. Actually there was a fixed rate of monetary amount for one to become sacred after he or she had been declared unsacred, which posed a great challenge to Irawat. Moreover, the autocratic practices imposed by the authority such as, 'Chandan Senkhay', 'Peon Chakthak', 'Yarek Santri' were unbearable to the people (Sotinkumar, L. 2013:89). Even cultivators were not allowed to catch fish from their own paddy-fields, small trenches and canals if they did not pay tax to the leaseholders of lakes. There was one law called Jal Sambandhi; under this law it was postulated that all the fishers in the surrounding area of a lake belonged to the lease holder, because they had come from the lake when its water (Jal) had connection (Sambandhi) with that of the fields, canals etc, during the rainy season (Singh, N. Joykumar, 2005:97). Thus, under these circumstances, taxes were levied whenever people moved a step to catch fish. Besides there were many cases in which dead bodies could not be cremated as the dead person had been declared unsacred. Such dead bodies were compelled to be buried without burning against the normal custom so that people's right to practice Shorat Shonba or Sradha Ceremony was virtually banned during those days.

(c) second women movement:

The second women movement was one of the most important movements in the history of Manipur. The agitation against the export of rice had already started from the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1939. The spark naturally evolved into a movement for the constitutional and administrative reforms in Manipur. The vanguard was the suffering, yet fearless

women of the land, followed by the well organised socio-political movement well from the men under the leadership of Hijam Irawat Singh. In the feudal society of Manipur the agricultural product of paddy was the main source of livelihood as well as economic activities. A precarious situation was reached in 1939 when there was an all record of the highest export and excessive rain and hailstone affected the rice production. Even in the harvesting season, people inhabited in and around the capital Imphal could hardly find some handful of rice at the reasonable price due to the excessive export of rice from the state. The Marwaris encouraged by the British to control the economy of the state took full advantages of rice mills and motor vehicles. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1939, several womenfolk from the Khairamband Bazar were confined in the Telegram Office along with the President of the Durbar Mr.T.A. Sharpe to get reply regarding banning of rice from the Maharajah Churachand Singh who was then at Nabadwip. Major Bulfield of 4<sup>th</sup> Assam Rifles and Major Cummins the civil surgeons rushed to rescue Mr. Sharpe but the women blocked the road shouting slogans till they get a response from the Maharajah(Ibobi,A.(ed)1993:58). Out of the 21 women 5 were seriously injured by bayonets and gun butts of the Assam Rifles. Irawat himself was in Cachar during the outbreak of the second women movement but he was called back to Imphal by the women protesters to lead the agitation. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1940 Irawat and his followers defected from Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha and organised a new party called the Manipur Praja Sanmeloni to physically help the second women movement. On the same day he delivered speech at the Police Line Bazar which the darbar maintained that his speech was a gross "misinterpretation of fact" and it would successfully in bringing into hatred and exciting disaffection towards the State Authority. Irawat was arrested from his house on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1940 and sentenced to 3 years of simple imprisonment under section 124 A of IPC on the ground of inflammatory speech(Ritichandra,1996:38). Irawat was in Imphal Jail for the first one year of simple Imprisonment and later shifted to Sylhet Distict Jail. One of the reasons for his transfer to the Sylhet District Jail was due to launching of massive civil disobedience movement initiated by the newly formed Manipur Praja Sanmeloni under his leadership. The second women movement continued even after Irawat was sent to the Sylhet District Jail and slowly withers away by the outbreak of Second World War of 1942. During the Irawat's imprisonment in the Sylhet District Jail, he had to share prison space with several freedom fighters of different schools of thought Congress and Communist leaders in particulars. Irawat went towards the Gandhian programme and Vaishnavism with which he had already aquatinted. But during those days the struggle of the working class people and the down trodden for freeing themselves from capitalists and feudal exploitation and oppression carried more weights than the ideal of freeing the country from the burdens of the foreign rules alone. From the Sylhet went to Cachar almost six years of political exile where he plunged headlong into the peasant movement and also performed many theatre works and activities of Swadeshi Ganer Dal to develop cultural unity among peasants including Manipur peasants and non Manipuri peasants and tea labourers to liberate themselves from the yokes of the foreign rules as well as from the shackles of the feudal oppressors. After six years of political exile, Irawat was finally permitted to enter Manipur in March 1946; the Second World War has changed the entire landscape, so the people of Manipur were found unrecognizable to him. Therefore he organised a new party called Manipur Praja Mandal in April 1946 and Manipur Krishak Sabha on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1946 to continue struggle for establishing a responsible government(Karam Manimohan,1989:197). Manipur Praja Sangha was also formed by the union of Manipur Praja Mandal and Manipur Praja Sanmeloni being both of them has same objectives.

(d) revolutionary movement:

On 13<sup>th</sup> April 1947, Sunday, Irawat initiated a weekly journal called Anouba Jug after getting the permission under the durbar resolution no.25 of the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1947(Khetri Rajaendra, 2006:230). It was a handwritten cyclostyled journal having 8 pages. Irawat wrote in his serialised article, "Manipur State Constitution –Making Committee" to mobilise the masses for a full responsible government and to spread awareness against the proposed plan of segregation of hills and valley of the state. The much awaited elections to the first Manipur State Assembly from 11<sup>th</sup> June 1948 onwards and continued upto 27<sup>th</sup> July under the Manipur Constitution Act 1947(Sotinkumar, L.2013:107). Irawat himself contested from Utlou Constituency under the Manipur Krishak Sabha Party and won it by defeating the congress candidate by a large margin. Though, Irawat had indoctrinated in communist ideology, he and his followers decided to run their candidates in the name of Manipur Krishak Sabha and Manipur Praja Sangha because the term 'Communist' was a little repugnant to the average Manipuri. Even the Irawat was expelled from the Mahasabha by branding him as a communist who was once quit state service in the Sadar Panchayat Court for the sake of the Mahasabha and also the Maharajah Bodha Chandra Singh denied the entry of Hijam Irawat to Manipur after the Sylhet District Jail on the charge of being communist. When the idea of the Purbanchal Pradesh came to the knowledge of the people of Manipur, people thought it to a sinister move by the Bengalese to spread their influences over the areas. On the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1948 at MDU hall, Irawat on behalf of Manipur Krishak Sabha and the Manipur Praja Sangha called a meeting at the MDU hall to discuss against the idea of formation of the Purbanchal Pradesh. A scuffle took place when the Krishaks of the Lamlai Branch came to attend the meeting with the Manipur State Police under the command of Sub-Inspector Naran Singh at Pungdongbam, Lamlai. But unfortunately S.I.Naran Singh was mortally wounded and died instantaneously at the spot. On the same day, the Manipur State Council held a special meeting and declared that the Manipur Krishak Sabha and Manipur Praja Sangha were unlawful organisation without any proper investigation into the circumstances leading to the dead of the police officer. It was learnt that during the incident Irawat was in the MDU hall preparing arrangement for the meeting. Hearing the unfortunately incident, Irawat cancelled the meeting and rushed to Nambol on a bi-cycle(Sotinkumar,L.2013:69). On that day his destiny went to the underground even though he was elected to the State Assembly from the Utlou Constituency forcefully by the

circumstance of Pungdongbam incident. Before the occurrence of the Pungdongbam incident Irawat has been repeatedly pressurised by the Assam Provincial Committee of the CPI to establish a fully fledged Communist Party in Manipur; and he realised the consequences of his irresponsible against the directives of the higher authorities only after the Pungdongbam Incident. It was because there was big gap generated after the resignation of some hardcore members of the Manipur Krishak Sabha and Manipur Praja Sangha when Irawat became underground. His deficiency in political tactfulness was clearly revealed in his own self criticism which had been circulated in all the District Organising Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1949. On 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1948 under the Presidentship of Irawat, an underground communist party of Manipur was formed at Top village under a tight security and in a resolution Thokchom Boro Singh was appointed the first secretary of the Communist Party of Manipur (Khetri Rajendra, 2006:260). The Assam Rifles, the Manipur Rifles and the police personnel's were busy during day and night to locate and apprehend the armed communist members of whose existence definite proof came to light only on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1950. On this day, two government C.I.D constables who went to Top and Naharup to collect information were captured by the communists along with two villages who were suspected to be police informers. The government declared that a sum of Rs.10000 would be given to the person who could arrest Irawat(Sotinkumar,L.2013:120). Among Irawat's letter seized from Kshetri Ibohi Singh sending from Burma who was arrested on 25<sup>th</sup> November from Kongpal revealed that Irawat Singh had reached Burma safely on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1950. The Communist Party of Burma led by Mr. Thakin Than Tun, the Burmese Communist Party led by Mr. Thakin Show and the People's Comrade Party also known as Red Flag Communist Party were united after the successful negotiations performed under the guidance of Comrade Irawat. On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1951, Comrade Irawat left this world before could reach his motherland and communicate his achievement to his comrades on account of typhoid fever at the Tangbaw Village, Burma.

#### Major Findings:

1. Irawat was born during the crucial period of the British conquest being a poor orphan, due to his rebellious natures, the first student strike launched in Manipur for demanding a ban on the practice of canning students which was to refer that man was born his ages and environment.
2. Irawat has multi-facets as a humanistic revolutionary.
3. Irawat was the pioneer of all the fields during his time so he was called the first modern architect of Manipur
4. On the Pungdongbam incident his destiny went to the underground even though he was elected to the State Assembly from the Utlou constituency in 1949.
5. Irawat was a nationalist before he was a Marxist so he practiced look globally and act locally.
6. Irawat was the first man who introduced the idea of emotional integration between the hills and the plains.
7. His movements were against the social and economic injustice. It was mainly focused on the upliftment of the unprivileged section of the society.
8. There is a clear cut point that he was against the stand of merger agreement in the union of India accordance with the different views of the writers. In this context he mentioned that Maharajah could not do it without the comment of the people in respect of merger agreement.
9. Irawat campaigned for popular franchise against the autocratic-colonial masters at the first time in Manipur.
10. Irawat carried the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism more weight than the ideal of freeing the country from the burden of foreign rule alone in the vision of a socialist Manipur in socialist India free from imperialism, feudal and capitalist shackles had reached both his head and heart.

#### Conclusion:

The role in the country's liberation movement, his struggle against the foreign rule as well as the autocratic Maharajah, his pioneering work in many fields, his tireless efforts to better the downtrodden and his able leadership in the December 12, 1939 Nupi Lal that caused him imprisonment and exile in Cachar from where he worked restlessly among the Manipuri and Non-Manipuri peasants and workers could not be forgotten by us. Not only this, under the unavoidable circumstances, he went to Burma and organised and convened the message of humanism, the feeling of oneness, arousing the mass movement against the imperialism with the full spirit of integration. Remembering his remarkable words, we need to respect and honor his service for the mankind forever as a humanist. Today, he not only belongs to the Communist Party of India, but also to the entire people of the land. Indeed, he is a leader of the masses who sacrificed everything for the cause of humanism, building National Integration project in India and across the border i.e. in Burma. To conclude he was regarded as the Jana Neta as well as modern architect of Manipur.

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