

“Electoral Politics in the Hill Areas of Manipur- A Study of 2002 Assembly Elections”

ABSTRACT

By

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THESIS

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Introduction:

In a democratic political system, elections are the means of ascertaining the consent of the people on the choice of rulers. Elections legitimize the power exercised by government and make the representatives responsible¹. Elections have assumed significance as hundreds of millions of voters, living under conditions of illiteracy, poverty, backwardness, religious distinction, and inequalities based on caste were called upon to exercise their political right to choose their representatives at the central, state and local levels². To influence the choice of voters the political parties, candidates and campaigners have used varieties of techniques. However, the level of interest and involvement of the voters may differ, as not everybody has the time, energy, resources and interest to make direct and active participation³.

Studies on Indian elections acquired significance in the nineteen fifties. However, these studies were influenced by the work done in the field in the United States of America⁴. From 1969 onwards, the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) has been conducting regular election studies. By 1996, a group of social scientists came together under a CSDS programme called *Lokniti* and conducts massive surveys and analysis of survey and aggregate data from socio-economic perspective. From India's northeast a

¹ V M Sirsiker, *Sovereigns Without Crowns*, Popular Prakanshan, Bombay, 1973, p 152

² C J Baker, *The Politics of South India*, Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1976, p 143

³ Iqbal Narian, *Election Studies in India- An Evaluation*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p 3

⁴ A K Baruah and Rajesh Dev (eds), *Ethnic Politics and Democracy-Electoral Politics in North East India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p 5

group comprising A.K. Baruah, S. Goswami, K. Debbarma, P. Malngiang and Rajesh Dev among others actively participates in the Lokniti surveys.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

An attempt to study elections in India has been carried out by a number of scholars like Sirsikar⁵ who studied the Poona Lok Sabha constituency in the 1967 election using a questionnaire survey of 913 respondents. His analysis showed that the lower the level of education of the family, the higher the influence of the family-head on the voting behaviours of other family members. Moreover, influence of candidate, party loyalty, and caste loyalties influence voting. His analysis showed that the occupation, income, and age of voters, largely, do not influence voting behaviours.

Sachchinanda's *The Tribal Voter in Bihar*⁶, pointed out that in taking a decision to vote for a party or a candidate, the influence of family heads, village and religious leaders, friends, etc. was pronounced.

The political behaviour of Manipur provided by R. P Singh⁷ found that party ideology, community, ethnicity, personality of the candidates, role of money, caste and religion are factors of voting in Manipur. Electoral Politics in Manipur by Bhagat Oinam in *Ethnic Identities and Democracy*⁸ reveals the influential role of the insurgents in electoral outcomes. The paper also asserts that the election results are a reflection of the failure of the ruling power in the state to deliver the basic social and political goods to the people. However, none of

⁵ V. M. Sirsikar, *Sovereigns without Crowns - A Behavioural Analysis of the Indian Electoral Process*. Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1973.

⁶ Sachchidananda, *The Tribal Voter in Bihar*, National Publishing house, New Delhi, 1976.

⁷ R.P. Singh, *Electoral Politics in Manipur*, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981.

⁸ Bhagat Oinam, *Electoral Politics in Manipur* in A.K.Baruah & Rajesh Dev (eds.), *Opct*, p. 121.

these studies deals with electoral politics in the hill areas of Manipur. The present study is an attempt to understand elections in the hill areas of the state.

OBJECTIVES

- (a) To analyze the level of people's participation in the elections.
- (b) To study various issues as reflected in the manifestoes, programmes and election campaigns of various political parties.
- (c) To study the role of the church, youth and chiefs in mobilizing the people during elections.
- (d) To identify and analyze the various factors that influences the electoral process.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The research is based on primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources of information are collected from Government acts, rules, public documents, manifestoes, and party documents. To supplement the findings, interviews were carried out. Interviews were based on questionnaire, which reflected the general political perceptions, mobilization, and participation of the respondents. The survey was carried out during August to December 2006. The interviews are supplemented by participant observation and informal group discussion methods.

Secondary sources of information on the other are collected from books, reports, thesis, journals, magazines, internet, and other printed materials.

The study employs descriptive survey approach. Technique of purposive sampling is use in selecting the four constituencies (i.e. Tengnoupal, Saikul,

Kangpokpi, and Nungba). After selecting the constituencies, two polling stations are picked up from each constituency for the study. Eight polling Stations are sampled by employing the purposive sampling method. After selecting the polling stations, 25 respondents each from eight polling stations are selected. The electoral roll was used for sampling. Samples of 200 respondents are drawn. The sample is selected on purposive basis.

CHAPTERISATION

1. Electoral Politics and Background of Elections in Manipur.
2. Study of Political Parties, their Manifestoes, Programs and Issues.
3. The Role of Chiefs, Youth and church.
4. Issues and People's Reactions.
5. Analysis of Survey Data: Factors Influencing Electoral Behavior.
6. Conclusion.

CHAPTER 1 ELECTORAL POLITICS AND BACKGROUND OF ELECTIONS IN MANIPUR

Electoral politics is the study of human behaviour in the area of election politics, the results of various pressures and counter pressures operating on the voters at the time of elections⁹. Electoral politics in a participatory democracy assumes great significance since it is regarded as an index of popular consciousness, articulation and participation of the electorate in the decision making process¹⁰. Electoral politics, the ideas and actions behind the process of choosing by vote

⁹ Singh, S. Mangi. "Elections in the Context of Social Conflict" Manipur." *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol.XXXIX, No.15, December 18, 2004. p. 245.

¹⁰ V. Grover. *Opcit*, pp. 479-480.

among candidates to govern the state is a vital part of the democratic functioning of the state¹¹

This chapter deals with the analysis of assembly election results beginning with 1972 elections up to 2002. Main issues in each election and the formations of government are also discussed. Issues like inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII Schedule of the Indian constitution, establishment of a university and a medical college dominated election manifestoes of parties from 1972 to 1990 elections. Stopping human rights violations by the security forces, solving the problem of insurgency, protection of territorial integrity of the state and withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act- AFSPA, 1958 have been an important election issues since 1972 to present day. The analysis of 2002 election results in the sampled constituencies is also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER II STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES, THEIR MANIFESTOES, PROGRAMMES AND ISSUES

In this chapter, an attempt is made to study the manifestoes, programmes, and electoral performances of major political parties in Manipur. In the 2002 elections, the voters in the hill constituencies had extensive choice because except for the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India – Marxist (CPM), 13 other political parties fielded their candidates, besides the Independent candidates¹². Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) contested 46 seats and won four, two in the valley, and two in the hills. CPI fielded 16 candidates and winning 5 seats¹³. Congress fielded 58 candidates and won 20 seats, 10 in the

¹¹ Bishnu N Mohapatra, "Tribal-Dalit Conflict: Electoral Politics in Phulbani", *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol XXXI Nos 2 and 3 January 13-20 1996 p 160

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

valley and 10 in the hills, giving the party the largest legislative strength¹⁴. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) contested 31 seats and secured three seats. The Manipur People's Party (MPP), which is a regional party, contested 14 seats and secured just two¹⁵, making it the lowest party among the regional parties in terms of seats won in 2002. Federal Party of Manipur (FPM) emerged as the second largest party in the Manipur Assembly Elections, 2002. It fielded 48 candidates and secured 13 seats, 10 in the valley and 3 in the hills¹⁶. Samata Party (SAP) contested 31 seats and secured three seats. Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) fielded 42 candidates and won seven seats, five in the valley and 2 in the hill areas¹⁷. Three new regional political parties, yet to be recognized by the Election Commission of India (EC) participated in 2002 elections. These are - (i) Democratic Revolutionary Peoples Party (DRPP), Manipur National Conference (MNC), and Naga National Party (NNLP). DRPP set up 23 candidates out of whom two were elected¹⁸. MNC won one seat in the elections¹⁹. NPP fielded five candidates with no success.

All parties have their own party programmes, their objectives being to secure the welfare of the people, establish a social, secular, and democratic state, and preserve peace. Party programmes are contained in general terms, showing hardly any dividing lines between the parties. The breakaway groups from the Congress have no specific political agenda or ideologies. These are the Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) and the Manipur National Conference (MNC).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

A study of the electoral performances of the national and regional parties in the state elections shows that Manipur politics remain dominated by the Congress party²⁰. Since March 1972, Manipur mostly had Congress led coalition government²¹ under alternating leaders.

This chapter examines the election manifestoes of all major political parties contesting the Eight Assembly Elections. Almost all the political parties took up three issues: (i) law and order, (ii) financial crises and (iii) territorial integrity of the state. On the issue of economic failure, no political party came out with specific measures to tackle financial crisis, such as non-payment of salaries for more than three months to government employees, state overdraft, and generating state revenue. Yet every party included the same in its manifesto. There was not a single party, which did not promise to protect Manipur's territorial integrity. Almost all political parties blamed the BJP-led NDA government at the centre for the alarm felt by the people of Manipur on the question of the territorial integrity of their state. The BJP however, pledged to protect and preserve the territorial integrity of Manipur.²² Other issues like health care, unemployment, agriculture, industry, corruption, education and sports received only a routine mention without any clear blueprint for action. However, election manifestoes do not play an important role in the electioneering process of the hill areas²³. One important thing to note here is that the manifestoes were usually absent especially from the side of regional

²⁰ The Congress secured the highest number of seats in 1972, 80, 84, 90, 95 and 2002 Assembly Elections.

²¹ 1980, 1984, 1995 and 2002 elections.

²² The Election Manifesto of the BJP Manipur. Imphal, 2002, p. 1.

²³ R. P. Singh, *Opcit*, p. 75.

parties while the national parties do not care to translate these to the local language

An attempt is also made to study the efforts and activities of the candidates and political parties to reach the electorate while campaigning. In the sampled constituencies, the campaign devices that were adopted included community feasts, boiling tea in the chiefs' residence, door-to-door campaigning, wall writing\posters, and election meetings

CHAPTER III. THE ROLE OF CHIEFS, YOUTH AND CHURCH

In Manipur, apart from political parties, there are a number of other organizations and institutions that play an important role in mobilizing people during elections. This chapter examines and analyses the role of Chiefs, Church and Youth clubs in the political life of the people in the hill areas

The hill people of Manipur still preserve their traditional political system. The chief is the political head of the village and influences the entire socio-political life of the people under his jurisdiction²⁴. Manipur hill communities are divided into two main groups: Nagas and Kukis. In the Naga village system, the village chiefs enjoy little hereditary authority or rights over land. There usually is a council of village elders to govern the village and resolve disputes²⁵. The Kuki system, in contrast, is centralised with the chiefs being head of the village and owner of all its land²⁶. However, common to both the Naga and Kuki system is that the village chief is prominent at all social and religious gatherings and

²⁴ T T Haokip, *The Kuki chieftainship and its changing dimensions* PhD thesis, Department of Political Science, NEHU, 1995, p. 80

²⁵ T C Hodson, *The Meithei*, Macmillan, London, 1908, p. 540

²⁶ T T Haokip, *Op cit*, p. 83

festivals of the village. Village chiefs and council members are men of influence but not necessarily the wealthiest people²⁷

In the tribal belt, the electoral behaviors are more on community lines. The tribal chiefs influence the voters and in many cases, they put up their own candidates²⁸. During elections, candidates give importance to the chiefs whose houses are selected for election meetings. Sometimes, the chiefs dictate to his villagers the party or candidate they have to vote for. One popular mode of vote campaigning in the hill areas of Manipur is of 'Boiling tea' in the Chief's residence. Here it must be mentioned that 23% respondents cast their vote on the advice of village chiefs.

The hill tribes of the state were largely converted to Christianity in the 19th Century. There are influences on politics, which are caused by the church²⁹. The churches and pastors do not directly involve themselves in promoting the interests of a political party or a candidate. However, an implicit consent and support to the candidates of their choice, say of one's own tribe seems to be inevitable. The churches held prayer meetings for the avoidance of violence and use of unfair means in 2002 elections³⁰.

In the villages, the youth community known as youth club have their own way in politics though they usually declare that the concerned organizations will not make any alliance with any political party. During elections youth clubs carry out some election works. Leaders of youth clubs assist party workers in giving

²⁷ T C Hobson, *Op cit*, p 545

²⁸ R P Singh, *Op cit*, p 55

²⁹ Robin Lovin, *Religion and Politics* in Mary Hawkenworth & Maurice Kogen (ed), *Encyclopedia of Government & Politics*, Vol I, Longman, New York, 1992, p 502

³⁰ A night of fasting and prayer was called at Imphal on 29 January 2002 for all Christians irrespective of denominations

out manifestoes, shouting slogans, arranging vehicles, pasting of party posters and arranging election meetings. While conducting house campaigning the candidates are generally followed by leaders of the youth clubs of the locality. Sometimes during election campaign, candidates make promises to certain educated youths that they would be given well-paid Government jobs if they were elected. Therefore, the youth organizations take keen interest in the election campaign of some candidates. However, youth club as factor of voting is absent among the respondents.

CHAPTER IV. ISSUES AND PEOPLES' REACTION

Elections are largely influenced by several factors and electoral politics are shaped by the changing position and trends of these factors. Parties convert these factors into election issues and fight the elections³¹. Some issues are more important in elections than others are. Sometimes this happens by accident and sometimes by design. Local issues always influenced the choice of the voters³². Political parties try to identify themselves with local issues and thereby secure for itself popular local support³³.

This chapter examines how far the respondents are familiar with current issues of the locality, state and country. The chapter also attempts to know respondents' reaction on the issues and how far their positions on issues are related to voting choice. The data in table 4.1 show that 45% respondents mentioned the various local issues, which affect them directly. The local issues mentioned by the respondents are clean drinking water, insurgency, irregular

³¹ Harold F. Gasnell, *Why Europe Votes*, Social Science Study Vol 19, University of Chicago Press, University of Chicago, 1930, p. 103.

³² N.S.G.Kini, *Opcit*, p. 98.

³³ *Ibid*.

power supply and weak networks of transport and communication. As far as the state issues are concerned 49% respondents mentioned corruption, territorial integrity of the state, bandhs and blockades, AFSPA and insurgency as the most crucial issues that concern them. Concerning national problems, the responses of the respondents are very poor. Only 6% respondents reported corruption as the national problem that concerned them the most. It indicates the orientation of the voters towards the local and state problems.

However, issues by themselves are meaningless in a voting context unless they influence the electorate one way or another. The respondents were asked if the issues influence their voting decision. The study clearly shows that the position of a voter on issues is not related to his voting choice.

CHAPTER V Analysis of survey data: factors influencing electoral behaviour

In this chapter, an attempt is made to measure the degree of respondents' political participation, political awareness, exposure to the media of communication, timing of voting decision and voting preferences.

Political participation of the respondents is examined from different angles, i.e. turnout, attending election meetings, membership of political parties and campaigning for candidates. The investigation reveals that concerning turnout in voting (95%), the respondents has shown substantial mark of participation but in relation to other activities such as participating in election meetings (52%), canvassing for candidates (20%), and membership of political parties (9%), the vast majority of the respondents are found not participating. This is because not every citizen is a political activist and he may not be interested in

becoming a member of the political parties and other pressure groups. Further, he may not find it convenient to attend or organize election meetings.

An attempt is also made to measure the degree of political awareness among the respondents from various angles. Political knowledge about (1) the occupants of important public offices like- Chief Minister, Governor, Prime Minister and President, (2) Identification of the name of political parties, candidates and symbols, (3) the form of government India practices and (4) Knowledge of manifestoes/ideologies of the parties are the areas where the degree of political awareness of the respondents are measured. Table 5.9 shows that 75% respondents do not have the basic knowledge about the structure of government in India. Table 5.10 shows that 58% respondents know the name of the Chief Minister of Manipur, 11% of the Governor of Manipur, 15% of the Prime Minister of India and 6% the President of India. However, 7.5% respondents are not aware of any one of them. The table shows that the respondents are more aware of the head of government rather than the head of the state both at the centre and the state. Table-5.11 shows that 44% respondents could identify the candidates and their party symbol though they do not know them personally whereas 21% could identify the candidates, parties and symbols. About 30% could only identify the candidates. Table 5.12 shows that 25% respondents are aware about party's manifestoes.

The study shows that political awareness of the respondents is average. Poverty, illiteracy, low standard of education imparted at schools and colleges and weak networks of transport and communication may be the reasons for this phenomenon. The responses also show the failure of the political parties as agent of political socialization.

During elections, various media that give political information in general and election news in particular are in full operation. The respondents were asked to reply about the sources through which they receive the daily election news. It is seen that 24.5% respondents claimed that they used radio, television and newspapers as sources of political information. Table 5.14 shows that 44% respondents depend on the use of inter-personal media like discussion with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. The same table shows that the remaining respondents got information from election-specific media like public meetings, campaigners, candidates and publicity. The complete picture of the data in the table 5.14 shows that the inter-personal media have an edge of 14.5% over the election-specific media and 20% over the mass media.

As a rural society, the respondents are deprived of advantages of mass media largely. In such context, the inter-personal media dominates other forms of media as a source of political information. Even the information coming from mass media has to be interpreted through inter-personal media. Some of the respondents revealed that many people in the villages find it difficult to comprehend the messages- televised and broadcasted and most of the time there is no electricity. Moreover, newspapers are difficult to get in the hill areas and the people find it unnecessary to purchase it.

In the study of voting behaviour, one of the questions, is to find out when exactly the voters decide for whom he is going to vote. The timing of decision also depends upon the political commitment of the voter and his identification either with political parties or with candidates. The study finds that 34% respondents took their voting decision once the nominations were made and *are called committed voters. The rest of the voters who decided later or during*

the peak of the campaign comprised of floating voters. They are found to have decided for a candidate after getting campaign motivation.

The voting behaviour of individuals is determined by various factors. For a further probe, the respondents were asked as to what was the most important factor, which ultimately decided their vote. The study found that a considerable number among respondents (22%), who gave reasons of their choice, are influenced by the merits of the candidates. In the sample constituency of Saikul, C. DOUNGEL was elected repeatedly in 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002 Assembly Elections. This indicates that candidate's personality remained an important factor in attracting the voter's choice overall.

Considerations of tribe or clan of the candidates influences the largest numbers of respondents (30%). In the hills, ethnic loyalties play an important role as factors of voting³⁴. Going back to the social history of the tribal people in Manipur, villages were formed based on clan and tribe³⁵. Along with this, they occupied a particular geographical area demarcating their possession. This served the purpose of strengthening the bond between the members of the village society. In the political arena, this arrangement suited the tribal people to collectively support their own leader belonging to their own tribe. In the absence of major social forces capable of ideologically mobilizing the people, the election results reflect the preferences of the respective tribes in their own areas³⁶. From the above discussion, Myron Weiner's justification that tribal

³⁴ S.K.Chaube, *Op cit.* p. 156

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Binarani L. *Social and Political Change in Manipur: 1947-1987*, Ph. D Thesis, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, 1993.

people; in a core reserved tribal constituencies do vote as a bloc³⁷ and that the territorial cohesiveness of tribal people enhances their electoral potential³⁸ can be justified.

Only 5% respondents voted based on party consideration. Assembly Elections records show that the importance of party is largely downplayed by other factors like personality of the candidates and tribe affiliations. Loss of party base started in the mid '80s with new forces of money and muscle powers backing the trend of personal cult³⁹. This is borne home by the result of 2002 Assembly Elections. Most of the prominent leaders in the state returned in the Assembly but with a party tag different from their previous ones. In Kangpokpi constituencies, Thangminlen Kipgen was elected constantly from 1990 (INC), 1995 (MPP), 2000 (Nationalist Congress Party-NCP) and 2002 (Federal Party of Manipur-FPM) Assembly Elections.

Another 23% respondents took their voting decision on the advice of village chiefs. Further, 5% respondents are influenced by money in reaching their voting decision. Candidates, affluent ones are alleged to have offered money to the voters⁴⁰. Again, the head of the family influenced 10% respondents. In the tribal community of Manipur, the family- head enjoy a high status and extend a dominant influence on the family. To some extent, this set pattern of family relationship is transferred to the political life also.

³⁷ Mynor Weiner. *Electoral Politics in Indian States-Three Disadvantaged Sector*. Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1975, p.100.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Bhagat Oinam, *Electoral Politics in Manipur*, in A. K. Baruah & Rajesh Dev (eds.), *Opcit*, p. 122.

⁴⁰ Interview with respondents.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study.

A survey of elections in Manipur demonstrates that since the first assembly elections in 1972, every assembly election results have shown that the turnout was high and that there was hung assemblies. The percentage of turnout in 2002 elections was 90.38%. Since 1972 to 2002 only once did a political party get 30 out of 60 Assembly seats i.e., the congress in 1984. After each election, coalition government is the answer.

A significant aspect of electoral politics in Manipur is that it witnessed a small number of woman contestants in every election but female voters always outnumbered the male voters. Seven women candidates contested the 2002 assembly elections and just one was elected. In 2002 elections, 682661 females voted in comparison to 648599 male voters. Contributions from respondents suggested that the society has negative attitude towards women who are involved in politics especially as a candidate. Therefore, it is not very encouraging for women to take part in politics. Normally husband and relatives does not permit women to take part in election.

The study of manifestoes made in Chapter II shows that local issues dominated the 2002 election manifestoes. All the major political parties dealt at length on the same charter of programmes. The Chapter also shows that in the face of threats from insurgent groups, no party held big rallies or processions. The main medium in the campaign carried out by all the political parties was house campaign. Such campaign were held in the evening in order to contact as many as voters as possible.

Chapter III found that the tribal chiefs play an important role in mobilizing people during the elections. Here it must be mention that 23% respondents cast their vote on the advice of village chief. The chapter also found that the influence of church and youth clubs in the electoral politics of the state is not as significant as in other states like Nagaland.

Chapter IV shows that respondents are aware of the issues confronting the locality, state and country and hold opinion on it. However, it is seen that the respondents are more aware of the local and state issues than they are of national ones. Nevertheless, issues do not influence their voting choice. Precisely because of this election manifestoes do not matter in the hill areas.

After analysis of the data gathered from the respondents in the fifth chapter, following conclusions are arrived at:

- I. The respondents do not attach much importance to political activities like campaigning for candidates and attending election meetings other than casting votes (Table 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7).
- II. The respondents are not well aware of the ideologies and programmes of the political parties (Table 5.12) and are not much ideologically oriented, but have sufficient information about the candidates, parties and symbols (Table 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11).
- III. Majority of the respondents depend on inter-personal media as a source of political information during elections (Table 5.14).
- IV. Public meetings, wall-writings, election posters, flags, manifestoes, leaflets etc do not influence voting behaviour of the respondents (5.17).

- V. Majority of the respondents are not committed voters as they decided their voting choice only a few days before polling day (Table 5.16).
- VI. The respondents are influence by several factors in reaching their voting decisions. Tribe of the candidates, village chiefs, money, personality of the candidates and family head are important factor in the voters' mind (Table 5.17). As many as 49% respondents are influence by the tribe of the candidates. That is why all the elected candidates in the sampled constituencies belonged to the major tribe in their respective constituencies.

The study concludes that electoral politics in the hill areas of Manipur mainly revolves around tribe and clan linkages. This reality could be seen during 2002 elections in the hills. During elections, candidates and their campaigners try their best to influence their relatives first. Then there is continued interaction among the relatives to organize strength for their candidates.

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BY

TINNEIKIM HAOKIP

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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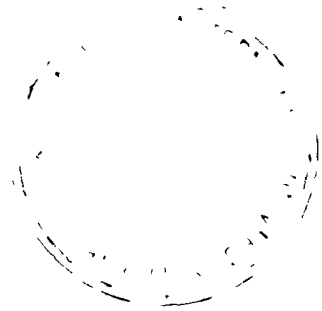
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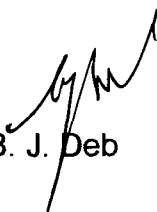
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I, Tinneikim Haokip, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me. The contents of this thesis did not form basis of award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university/institute.

This is being submitted to the North Eastern Hill University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science Department.



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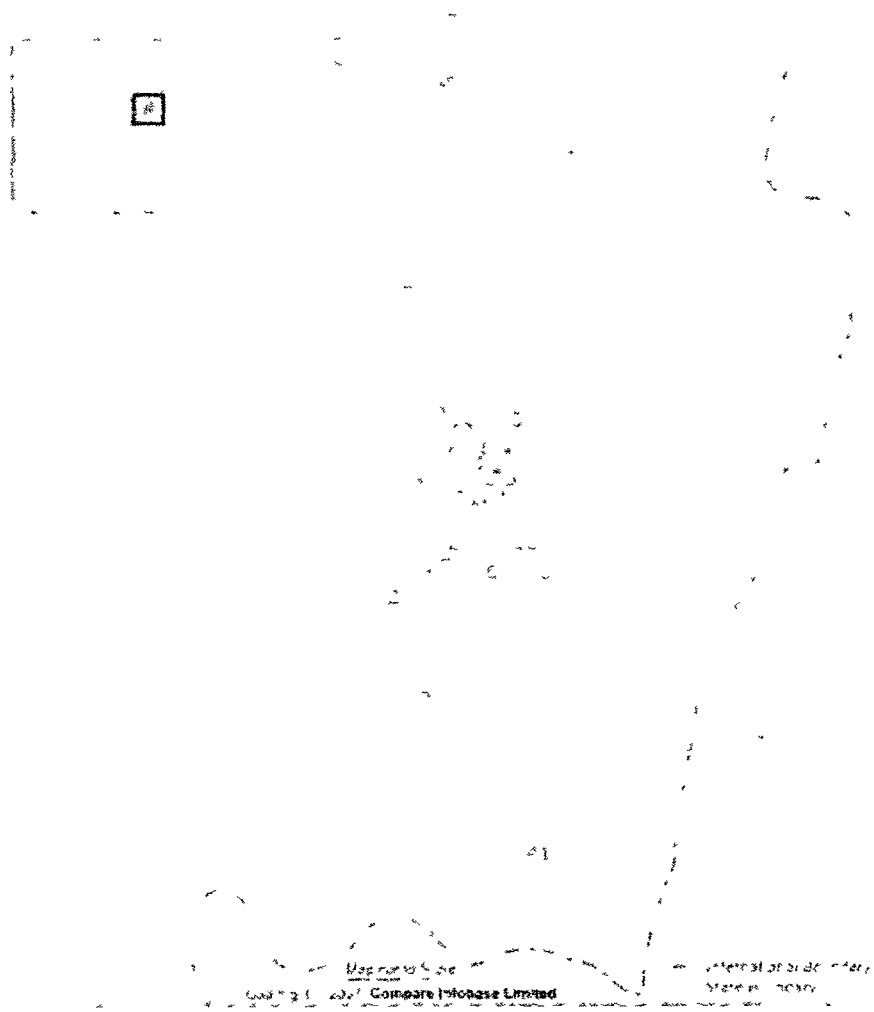
Without the support and cooperation of the respondents, I would have been unable to gather the data required and I take this opportunity to thank all the respondents.

I also express my deep sense of gratitude to my in-laws for their constant prayer, support and encouragement. Most of all I am extremely grateful to my mother and grandmother for being with me every step of the way throughout my life. I dedicate this work of mine to both of them as a tribute and in gratitude. I also take this opportunity to pay respect to the memory of my late father, mother and brother. They always took pride in all my achievements and they would have been very pleased with this one. A big thank you goes to my two sisters for their unfailing love and belief in me.

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Above all, I am thankful to God for giving me great opportunities, good health and sound mind to complete my work.

MANIPUR
Assembly
Constituencies Map



List of the Constituencies in Manipur

1 Khundrakpam	16 Sekmai (SC)	31 Thoubal	46 Saikul (ST)
2 Heingang	17 Lamsang	32 Wangkhem	47 Karong (ST)
3 Khurai	18 Konthoujam	33 Heirok	48 Mao (ST)
4 Khetrigao	19 Patsoi	34 Wangjing	49 Tadubi (ST)
5 Thongju	20 langthabal	Tentha	50 Kangpokpi
6 Keirao	21 Naoriya	35 Khangabo	51 Saitu (ST)
7 Andro	Pakhangiakpa	36 Wabgai	52 Tamei (ST)
8 Lamlai	22 Wangoi	37 Kakching	53 Tamenglong
9 Thangmeiband	23 Mayang Imphal	38 Hiyanglam	(ST)
10 Unpok	24 Nambol	39 Sugnoo	54 Nungba (ST)
11 Sagolband	25 Oinam	40 Jinbam	55 Tipaimukh (ST)
12 Keisamthong	26 Bishenpur	41 Chandel (ST)	56 Thanlon (ST)
13 Singjamei	27 Moirang	42 Tengnoupal	57 Henglep (ST)
14 Yaiskul	28 Thanga	(ST)	58 Churachandpur
15 Wangkhei	29 Kumbi	43 Phungyar (ST)	(ST)
	30 Lilong	44 Ukhrul (ST)	59 Saikot (ST)
		45 Chingai (ST)	60 Singhat (ST)

CHAPTER I

ELECTORAL POLITICS AND BACKGROUND OF ELECTIONS IN MANIPUR

Electoral politics in a participatory democracy assumes great significance since it is regarded as an index of popular consciousness, articulation and participation of the electorate in the decision making process.¹ Electoral politics are the primary mechanism of citizen mobilization in most democracies. The public regular choice of political leaders through elections is one of the bases of representative democracy, and the rationality of the public choices is a measure of the meaningfulness of the democratic process. Electoral politics, the ideas and actions behind the process of choosing by vote among candidates to govern the state is a vital part of the democratic functioning of the state.²

Election is one of the important components of democracy. Its instrumental character in democratic theory and practice ought to be recognized. Put simply, the right to vote is essentially an individual right. In an elections, it is the individual who is supposed to decide whom to vote and why without any compulsion whatsoever to make the reasons for a particular choice. The translation of the individual into an aggregate outcome, however, remains problematic. The study of politics, in general, and elections, in particular, tries to reveal the process and meaning of this translation. This is where the community, association, group, ideology, resources, language, symbols, communication, mobilization and local issues assumes significance as

¹ V. Grover. *Elections, Electoral Mechanism and Behavior*, Deep&deep Publications, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 479-480

² *Ibid.*

mediating factors which integrate the individual choice into a collective expression³ Elections open up channels between the polity and the society, the elites and the masses, the individual and his government They are the major agencies of political socialization and political participation⁴

Many election studies have been undertaken in the western countries, which seek to evaluate the working of their democratic systems Political behavior eventually gained focus in many of these studies The coming of behavioralism into the social sciences from the fifties has brought the transformation in the discipline of political science too These transformations have been incorporated into election studies, which include study of the nature of society, role of groups, classes, corruption, the reaction of various classes, etc Such a study in turn has to be undertaken in the background of an analysis of the nature of the state, if it has to yield meaningful analysis of the working of democracy in the nation Election studies attempt to understand and explain the social reality

The election studies are essentially a post-second world war development in Political Science and were born out of ideological factors The spread of Fascism in Europe through the electoral process severely challenged the assumptions of the inherent merits of democracy and elections and questioned the very faith in what the West viewed to be, the rationality of human behavior Democratic forms and elections, ironically became the very vehicles on which authoritarian rode to power, and held its influence Mass voting by the people

³ Bishnu N Mohapatra, "Tribal-Dalit Conflict Electoral Politics in Phulbani", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XXXI, Nos 2 and 3, January 13-20 1996, p 160

⁴ N Palmer, *Elections and Political Development*, K P Bagchi &Co, New Delhi, 1976, p 54

usually associated with the concept of participatory democracy led to the emergence of Fascism and demagoguery rule rather than to a healthy democracy. Why and how such parties and leaders manipulated the electoral process and the voters, who were otherwise politically ignorant and inactive, became an interesting poser before the political scientists.⁵ Elections were identified with democracy and the voting pattern with the strength and viability of western forms of democracy. Motivated by these ideological curiosities to test the viability of democratic system in the newly independent countries, many western scholars began to apply to the latter, the highly sophisticated techniques, which they developed in the west. The dynamics of human behavior and its fallout in their 'Political' behavior came to be the focus of many a study on the political system. The elections manifesting this periodic political behavior acquired a deterministic rule, in judging the strength and weakness of the political system and its future trends. The viability of the electoral reforms with their simple empirical data not merely made election studies more and more feasible and popular, but even helped to increasingly transform the orientation of political science towards mathematical statistics and computer technology.⁶

The first studies of voting behaviour were made by historians and political scientists seeking to explain past elections. Their basic data were election results, and information about the geographical units for which election data existed. The study of voting behaviour constitutes an important area of political science in which theory can be systematically and qualitatively measured and

⁵ Susheela Kaushik, *Elections in India-Its Social Basis*. K. P. Bagchi & Co, New Delhi, 1982. p. 44.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

tested. The voters' intention to vote is a dynamic changing and even fluid mental situation, which is subject to influence and manipulation by factors, which can be internal as well as external. The complex role of elections in the political system is underlined by an examination of the voting behaviour of electorates.⁷ Electoral behaviour is the behaviour, which indicates the voter's choices, preferences, alternatives, agreements, concerns, ideologies and programmes among others in respect of the various questions of issues on which the various elections are fought. Thus, the voting behaviour apart from being an individual choice and aptitude indicates the dynamic role that one plays in the achievement of a collective end. It implies the essential assertion of his rights and commitments to the society and the nation. It is concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public elections and the reasons why they vote as they do⁸.

Voting behaviour of the people is not uniform. It differs from place to place, culture to culture and time to time. It is very difficult to generalize about the way in which people vote in the elections. Political behaviour like all other human behaviour takes place in a certain context of social milieu, political structure, economic development, historical background, and cultural heritage of a society⁹. In any effort to build a theory, cognizance of these factors will have to be taken. This does not mean that the factors like ideologies, belief-system of a community or emotional issues are to be ignored. On the other hand, one could argue that all these factors are interrelated, continuously acting and reaching.

⁷ Allan R. Ball. *Modern Politics and Government*. The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1971, p.128.

⁸David L. Stills, *Voting Behaviour* in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol 11 and 12, Macmillan and Company and The Free Press, New York, 1972, p.524.

⁹ *Ibid.*

In this process of action and reaction, the political behaviour takes place to choose a new set of political elite to rule the masses for a specific period¹⁰.

Since elections in developing countries occur mainly within the context of agrarian and plural societies, electoral behaviour and thus electoral outcomes are shaped by different concerns than in the industrial democracies. More citizens in developing countries define their political interests based on where they live rather than in terms of what they do or their socio-economic status or class. Their interests are shaped mainly by their effective ties to their local community and the specific needs of these communities. Local issues are usually far more salient in the minds of most citizens than national issues. Ideological issues, especially when framed in terms of conventional left-right policy alternatives, are rarely the focus of political discourse.¹¹

Another defining feature of elections in the context of agrarian and plural societies is that political mobilization invariably occurs via patron-client organizations that in turn give rise to neo-patrimonial patterns of political authority¹². Because most citizens are rural dwellers who have limited access to print media or to broadcasting directed to their local communities, party agents working at the grass roots do the mobilization of rural electorates largely on a face- to- face and household-to-household basis¹³.

In a traditional society like India experiencing rapid socio-economic and political change, social structure assumes a new significance. The release of the

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ Richard Rose in *Election Studies* in Richard Rose (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Elections*, Macmillan Reference Ltd, 2002, p. 85

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ *Ibid*

individual from the traditional bonds of family, kinship, caste and neighbourhood is neither complete nor universal. If this sociological background could be forgotten, there is really no need of an independent theory of Indian politics or for that matter Indian political behaviour. From the studies conducted in the country it can be said that voting behaviour is not similar to that in western countries¹⁴.

The absence of a significant class-structure, apart from the caste-hierarchy, in the Indian society differentiated it from the western society. The class-consciousness, being absent or weak, does not make any noticeable impact on voting patterns. In constructing any theory of voting behaviour in India, class may not serve as an important variable. Weaker party strengthens itself by exploiting the caste feeling whenever it is convenient to do so. It gives rise to the mixed character of democratic politics being carried on with the help of traditional techniques and channels¹⁵.

Indian community is undergoing rapid social change. The social change affects the factors, which influence voting. The social change is neither spread nor does it has the same intensity for the different sections of the community. In addition, the effort to build a theory suffers from the absence of an average Indian voter. Any valid generalization has to be based on the concept of an average unit, which shares the general properties of the population. In India

¹⁴ Joel D. Barkan, *Elections in Developing Countries* in Richard Rose (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Elections*, Macmillan Reference Ltd, 2002, p. 94.

¹⁵ Russell J. Dalton, *Voting Behaviour* in Richard Rose (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Elections*, Macmillan Reference Ltd, 2002, p. 339.

with its heterogeneity arising out of languages, castes, region and customs, any effort to arrive at the average voter does not succeed¹⁶.

In fine, it could be said that there would be not one but many theories of Indian voting behaviour, depending on the region, community or the specific interests of the researcher. It is out of such efforts at theory building that a final product may emerge which may satisfy the methodological demands and adequately reflect the reality of Indian political behaviour¹⁷.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on Indian elections acquired importance in the nineteen fifties. However, these studies were influenced by the work done in the field in the United States of America¹⁸. From 1969 onwards, the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) has been conducting regular election studies. By 1996, a group of social scientists came together under a CSDS programme called *Lokniti* and conducts massive surveys and analysis of survey and aggregate data from socio-economic perspective. From India's northeast a group comprising A.K. Baruah, S. Goswami, K. Debbarma, P. Malngiang and Rajesh Dev among others actively participates in the Lokniti surveys.

Many studies of Indian elections are descriptive. They tend to be based on case studies or surveys of individual voters looking into various aspects. Such aspects include among others the selection of candidates, the electoral campaign process, actual voting behaviour of individual voters like political

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ V. M. Sirsikar, *Sovereigns without Crowns*, Popular Prakanshan, Bombay, 1973, pp 16-17

¹⁸ A. K. Baruah and Rajesh Dev (eds.), *Ethnic Politics and Democracy-Electoral Politics in North East India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p 5.

perceptions and party preferences, and socio-economic status. These studies are very useful for understanding the electoral processes of parties and the voting behaviours of individual voters such as who votes for whom, for which party, and how. Studies that were based on detailed surveys of individuals using large-scale sampling and conducted continuously for several elections did not emerge until the nineteen sixties.

Studies based on surveys of individual voters or case studies of election politics include Sirsikar¹⁹ studied the Poona Lok Sabha constituency in the 1967 election using a questionnaire survey of 913 respondents. His analysis showed following points: (1) the majority exhibited faith in the efficacy of elections and parties, but the higher the educational level of voters, the less faith they had in democracy. This may be partly related to the fact that there may be higher caste people, like Brahmans, in the category of the highly educated. (2) The higher the educational level of voters, the more capable they seemed to be in discriminating between political parties, especially the Congress party. (3) Minority, linguistic or religious voters, tended to support the Congress. (4) The lower the level of education of the family, the higher the influence of the family-head on the voting behaviours of other family members. (5) Influence of candidate, party loyalty, and caste loyalties influence voting. (6) Occupation, income, and age of voters, by and large, do not influence voting behaviour. Kini²⁰ studied the election in Nagpur during the 4th General Elections in 1967 using panel data collected from interviews of 281 respondents. He found various important psychological processes through analysis of the detailed

¹⁹ V. M. Sirsikar, *Sovereigns without Crowns - A Behavioural Analysis of the Indian Electoral Process*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1973.

²⁰ N. G. S. Kini, *The City Voter in India - A Study of 1967 General Elections in Nagpur*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1974.

questionnaire. Issues, whether domestic and foreign, were not important for those who voted for Congress. Identification with leadership was significantly related to voting choice. People who were exposed to higher level of party campaign tended to change their original vote intention. Nevertheless, there was remarkable stability in original voting intention. Socio-economic status such as gender, caste, religion, education, and income, were important in explaining political awareness, exposure to political propaganda, political involvement, caste identification, sense of personal effectiveness in politics, and exposure to modernization. Those who were ranked high in political awareness, exposure to campaign propaganda, political involvement, caste identification, sense of personal effectiveness in politics, and exposure to modernization, were more likely to vote for non-Congress parties. In addition, socio-economic status of voters was significantly related to choice of parties.

Eldersveld and Ahmed's²¹ study was based on the nation-wide sample survey of the 1967 and 1971 general elections. They first compared data in India with data in more developed countries. According to their analysis, the Indian voters were as perceptive and interested in political issues and parties in elections as were voters in developed countries. They also found: (1) Political cultures between rural and urban areas were basically continuous, but there were discernable differences between States. (2) Variables of socio-economic status, including education and castes, were important variables for the formation of political perception such as a sense of political efficacy. (3) Those who were more exposed to the campaign, more educated, and who voted regularly, were

²¹ S J Eldersveld and Bashiruddin Ahmed. *Citizens and Politics - Mass Political Behaviour in India*. University of Chicago, Chicago, 1978

more interested in politics and more likely to support multi-party democracy with a clearer sense of political efficacy (4) As in the USA, family was influential in the formation of party identification (5) Some degree of congruence was found between voters' party-preference on the one hand, and voters' concern for political issues on the other, especially among supporters of the Communist Party and Jangh Sangh (6) The formation of perceptions toward party was susceptible to voters' party identification, socio-economic status, exposure to political communication, and psychological orientations toward society (7) Those that were highly educated or in high castes were less likely to be politically involved and participatory

Aloo Dastur²² in her study of Parliamentary elections of 1967 in Bombay (based on interviews of 603 respondents in three constituencies) found that the Bombay voters had gained political consciousness and maturity through the passage of years. A percentage of women voters, the illiterate, the backward, and the scheduled castes, even in rural areas, had become conscious of their power to vote. A majority of women voted independently of men. The campaign was subdued, and voters were not easily impressed by propaganda. D N Pathak's²³ study of Gujarat voters (based on 698 respondents in three constituencies) had revealed that male, young, highly educated and higher caste voters made their voting decision earlier, while females, old, less educated and lower castes voters delayed their voting decisions.

²² Aloo Dastur, *The Bombay Voter 1967* in Aloo Daatur (ed), *Studies in the fourth General Elections* Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1972

²³ D N Pathak, *Political Behaviour in Gujarat with reference to the Fourth general elections* in Aloo Daatur (ed), *Studies in the fourth General Elections* Allied Publishers, Delhi 1972

The *People's Verdict* by G.G. Mirchandani²⁴ concludes that, the Indian voters, despite their educational, economic, and social constraints possess a measure of political sophistication, which is expected only in an advanced democratic society. C.P. Bhambhri, *The Urban Voter: Municipal Elections in Rajasthan*²⁵ shows that a very large percentage of the sample electorate showed preference for religious, caste and other primordial considerations. The result shows that the process of urbanization would not affect the population much, particularly in breaking the old barriers and loyalties to religion and caste. It also shows that the general population in the town area does not attach much importance to activities other than casting votes. *The Uncertain Verdict* by Ramesh Roy²⁶, focuses on the electorate located in different milieus and, through an exploration of their attributes, examines the implications of differential configurations of these attributes for the sustenance and preservation of democratic institutions in the states of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal. It also provides some materials that may help in understanding the complex process of interaction between socio-economic conditions, individual attributes, and democratic development. Sachchinanda's *The Tribal Voter in Bihar*²⁷, dealt with voting behavior with special focus on the tribal people in Bihar. It also studied the level of awareness of the tribal voters about the candidates, their party affiliation, and election symbols. It also pointed out that in taking a decision to vote for a party or a candidate, the influence of family heads, village and religious leaders, friends, etc. was pronounced.

²⁴ G. G. Mirchandani. *The People's Verdict*, Vikash Publishing House New Delhi, 1980.

²⁵ C.P. Bhambhri, *The Urban Voter: Municipal Elections in Rajasthan: An Empirical study*, National Publishing House, Delhi, 1973.

²⁶ Ramesh Roy, *The Uncertain Verdict*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1973.

²⁷ Sachchidananda, *The Tribal Voter in Bihar*, National Publishing house, New Delhi, 1976.

These studies, as a whole, are valuable in revealing various factors influencing voting behaviour on the electorate. They include socio-economic status like education, caste, occupation, and class, value systems, and other important characteristics of voters, as well as issues in the elections, ideological positions and strategies of mobilization on the part of parties. The scope and time-span for most of these studies are primarily limited to a few States or areas and cover a relatively short period. What is needed in order to understand the basic and long-term undercurrent in Indian politics is a database covering major parts of India over long periods. In this respect, the series of surveys by the Centre for Studies of Developing Societies (CSDS) are important in terms of coverage, consistency, and continuity.

A large-scale sample survey of electorate by the CSDS was started in the general election in 1967. Since then, CSDS has been conducting election surveys every major election, not only Lok Sabha, but also State Assembly elections. It has also published insightful articles and reports based on the surveys. The series of surveys and analyses by the CSDS has revealed various important facts through which the direction of the transformation of people's political perceptions can be understood. The series of surveys by the CSDS are valuable because of the continuity and consistency of methods and contents applied in the surveys. For example, the series shows that one of the major changes resulting in long-term erosion of the support base of the Congress party is the shift of allegiance of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from Congress to other parties, including the BJP. It also shows that although the situation is different depending upon time and place, castes and religions of voters are probably the most important determinants of party support.

Economic status is less important compared to these ethnic attributes. Other social attributes such as level of education are not significant in explaining voter party preferences.

India is a highly heterogeneous and fragmented sub-continental society. It is, therefore, impossible to ignore the problems of social cleavage based on language, caste, religion, class, and other such variables. It is usually very difficult to analyse these problems for ecological studies based on aggregate data. It is probably better to rely on the precise information that individual-based survey or case studies can provide. For example, such information includes data on who votes for which party. Individual-based or case study-based research can effectively check possible ecological fallacies in aggregate data based studies. Individual-based or case study-based research, as a whole, constitutes a rich depository of information on electoral behaviour. It would be very useful to utilise information to make up for the shortcomings of studies based on aggregate data and to check the possibility of ecological fallacy.

Studies based on statistical analysis of aggregate election data, especially those of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, began to emerge after the 1970's. Use of aggregate election data cannot be avoided if macro and long-term patterns of voting behaviour are to be understood. Fortunately, because of the efforts of the Election Commission, such aggregate data are almost complete in India. The web site of the Election Commission provides all the necessary data concerning both levels of elections²⁸. Constitution-wise voter-turnout, details of votes polled by each party, and other details of the Lok

²⁸ See, <http://www.eci.gov.in/ARCHIVE>.

Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections are available for analysis. Major studies include those of Elkins²⁹ research that was carried out on State Legislative Assembly election data and it was early pioneering ecological analysis in India. His study was based on data of four southern States from 1952 to 1967. It showed the importance of the State political context, literacy rate, the development of regional communication in explaining turnout, and the number of candidates. Dasgupta and Morris-Jones³⁰ tried to discover a socio-economic basis for electoral data and examined the relation between socio-economic data and election data of State Legislative Assemblies from 1952 to 1967. The latter included data on electoral participation, competition, and party preference. However, their study seems to have been unsuccessful in finding a meaningful correlation between socio-economic and electoral data, except in the case of electoral participation or turnout.

Dikshit's³¹ research on the Punjab Legislative Assembly elections for the period before 1980, using the ecological method, provided an interesting analysis of turnout and votes for Congress in relation to the variables of social development, reservation, and linguistic and religious factors. The correlations between electoral data and socio-economic variables are not stable in his studies. Other interesting ecological studies are those of Kondo³² who used multivariate as well as regression analysis in Lok Sabha elections for the period from 1957 to 1999 to examine correlations between electoral participation namely voter turnout, and number of candidates on the one hand, and socio-

²⁹ David L. Elkins, *Electoral Participation in a South Indian Context*, Vikas Publishing, Delhi, 1975.

³⁰ Biplab Dasgupta, and W. H. Morris-Jones, *Patterns and Trends in Indian Politics - An Ecological Analysis of Aggregate Data on Society and Elections*, Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1975

³¹ R. D. Dikshit, *Geography of Elections: The Indian Context*, Rawat Publishers, New Delhi, 1995

³² Norio Kondo, *Indian Parliament Elections after Independence: Social Changes and Electoral Participation*, Chiba (Japan): Institute of Developing Economies (JETRO), 2003.

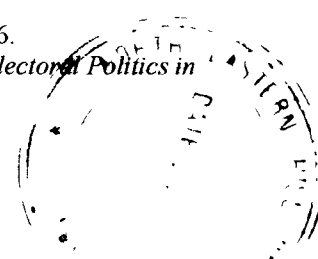
economic variables like literacy, agricultural development, and urbanization on the other. Kondo's analysis was conducted on data including both electoral and socio-economic variables. These studies correlate voter-turnout, votes polled by major parties, and other variables with various socio-economic aggregate variables. These studies are included in the category of "ecological studies". Although the aggregate data cannot reveal details of the voting behaviours of the electorate, they can show most accurately how voters behaved as a whole.

Almost all the studies of politics in India seem to touch upon the elections. Of course, all studies cannot be reviewed. However, some characteristic studies that analyse Indian politics are examined. *Indian Politics and the 1998 Election* edited by Rameshray Roy and Paul Wallace³³ emphasize the importance of regionalism in Indian politics. It also examines a large range of important electoral issues including changes in party alliances, the role of social factors such as caste, ethnicity, and religion. In the northeast, S. K. Chaube, *Hill Politics in North East India*³⁴, explains the political history of Manipur, the course of hill politics and the role of traditional chief in the state politics. *Working of Parliamentary Democracy and Electoral Politics in Northeast India* edited by Girin Phukan and Adil-ul-yasin (eds.)³⁵ is a collection of seminar papers. The papers included in this volume mainly dealt with evaluation of different elections held in the Northeast; mobilization of social groups and electoral politics; and working of democracy in northeast India with special reference to particular issues. *Electoral Politics in Northeast India* edited by

³³ Rameshray Roy and P. Wallace., *Indian Politics and the 1998 Elections*, Saga Publication, New Delhi, 1999.

³⁴ S. K. Chaube, *Hill Politics in North East India*, Orient Longman. New Delhi. 1976.

³⁵ Girin Phukan & Adil-ul-yasin (eds.). *Working of Parliamentary Democracy and Electoral Politics in Northeast India*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1998.



P.S. Dutta³⁶ aimed to attract the academic activists' attention to the necessity of understanding the political dimension of the socio-economic complexities of North East through the periscope. R. P Singh's, *Electoral Politics in Manipur*³⁷ analyzes the political behavior in Manipur in the light of socio-geographical and economic infrastructure and cultural determinants. It also studies the demographic structure of the assembly constituency, the salient features of the election manifestoes of the political parties and some aspects of the electoral campaign. "Electoral Politics in Meghalaya" by A. K. Baruah and Pascal Malngiang in *Ethnic Identities and Democracy*³⁸ maintains that in the absence of ideological mobilisations electoral politics are centred on tribe affiliations and thus kinship loyalties override political considerations. "Electoral Politics in Manipur" by Bhagat Oinam in *Ethnic Identities and Democracy*³⁹ reveals the influential role of the insurgents in electoral outcomes. The paper also asserts that the election results are a reflection of the failure of the ruling power in the state to deliver the basic social and political goods to the people. None of these studies however dealt with the voting behavior with special references to the hill areas of Manipur.

In India, political behavior is not free from the influence of the problems like religion, caste and tribes, insurgency, communalism, terrorism, politics of defection and political instability. All these problems both directly or indirectly influence the electoral politics of the country, because election forms the

³⁶ P S Dutta, *Electoral Politics in Northeast India*. Omson Publication, New Delhi, 1986

³⁷ R P Singh, *Electoral Politics in Manipur*, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981

³⁸ A K Baruah and P Malngiang, *Electoral Politics in Meghalaya* in A. K. Baruah and Rajesh Dev (eds), *Ethnic Politics and Democracy-Electoral Politics in North East India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2006

³⁹ Bhagat Oinam, *Electoral Politics in Manipur* in A. K. Baruah and Rajesh Dev (eds), *Ethnic Politics and Democracy-Electoral Politics in North East India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2006.

substance of democracy and is an important mechanism reflecting popular will. The growing intensity of caste and social conflict and protest movements rooted in violence are consequences of both the public policies pursued and the compulsions of electoral politics.⁴⁰ Thus, election studies are important within the discipline of political science. However, given the size of the electorate the magnitude of the problem of conducting election at the macro level can well be appreciated. Hence, electoral studies have been done primarily at the micro level. The present study is an attempt in that direction. Electoral Politics in Manipur, a study of 2002 Assembly Elections in the 4 constituency (i.e.- Tengnoupal, Nungba, Kangpokpi, Saikul) is one such micro level study. The hill areas have been taken up for study as most of the research works on electoral politics in Manipur have been conducted in the plains thereby ignoring the importance of the hill areas in the politics of the state. It is hoped that the area selected for study presents important characteristics of Electoral Politics in the state.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The assembly elections of 2002 in Manipur assumed significance for a number of reasons. Pro-autonomy groups targeted political parties and candidates and made demands for boycott of elections. Moreover, many voluntary organizations like the Committee on Human Rights, Human Rights Alerts also called for a boycott of elections as a protest against a series of human rights violations by the security forces. This election was held at a time when the memory of an eventful episode of the ceasefire agreement between Govt. of

⁴⁰ Ratna Tikoo. *Ethnic Issues in North East India: An Overview in Manipur* in G. Phukan & Adil-ul-yasin (eds.), *Op cit*, p. 22.

India and the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland-NSCN (Isaac Muivah-IM) “without territorial limit” remained at its stillness. Therefore, it will be interesting to know how and why the voters were mobilized to vote in this election.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the various factors that influenced the electoral process in the 2002 Assembly Elections in the four selected constituencies.

- (a) To analyze the level of people’s participation in the elections.
- (b) To study various issues as reflected in the manifestoes, programmes and election campaigns of various political parties.
- (c) To study the role of the church, youth and chiefs in mobilizing the people during elections.
- (d) To identify and analyze the various factors that influences the electoral process.

CHAPTERISATION

The Chapters included in this study are:

- (a) Electoral Politics and background of elections in Manipur.
- (b) Study of political parties, their manifestoes, programs and issues.
- (c) The role of chiefs, youth and church.
- (d) Issues and people's reactions.
- (e) Analysis of survey data: factors influencing electoral behaviour.
- (f) Conclusion.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The research was based on primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources of information were collected from Government acts, rules, public documents, manifestoes, and party documents. To supplement the findings, interview of the respondents were carried out. Interviews were based on a structured questionnaire, which reflected the general political perceptions, mobilization, and participation of the respondents. The survey was carried out during August to December 2006. The interviews were supplemented by participant observation and informal group discussion methods.

Secondary sources of information on the other were collected from books, reports, unpublished thesis, journals, magazines, internet, and other printed materials.

The study employs descriptive survey approach and analyses survey data by tallying and averaging responses using simple statistical percentage calculations. Technique of purposive or non-probability sampling was used in selecting the 4 constituencies (i.e. Tengnoupal, Saikul, Kangpokpi, and Nungba). After selecting the constituencies, 2 polling stations were picked up in each constituency for intensive study. Polling Stations are again sampled by employing the purposive sampling method. After selecting the polling stations, 25 respondents each from selected eight polling stations were selected. The electoral roll, prepared by the election department for assembly elections was used for sampling. A sample of 200 respondents was drawn. The sample was selected on purposive basis.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MANIPUR

The study of voting behavior has a certain background- the geographical and socio-political. A brief description of the place, its recent history, its community organization, ethnic antagonism, small group processes, attitude change, and decision-making in general, is necessary to understand the politics of the state. Voting never takes place in a vacuum. It is a process having a backlog of

events, socio-economic and political, behind it, and having consequences for different fields of life of the community ⁴¹

Manipur, a hill state is situated in the South East of the Northeastern frontier of India. It lies just north of the Tropic of Cancer extending between latitudes of 23 83' north, 25 41' north, and longitudes of 93 03' east and 94 78' east. The altitudes above sea level is 970 meters and covered an area of 22, 327 sq km ⁴². Manipur is bounded on the North and West by the state of Nagaland, the North Cachar Hills, and the Cachar District of Assam, on the East and South by the Burma including the Somra Tract, the Kabow valley, and the adjoining Chin Hills. On the South-West corner lies Mizoram ⁴³. Physiographically, Manipur can be divided into three well-defined regions, each of them having a direct or indirect impact on the politics setting of the state and the resultant politico-electoral behavior of the people. These divisions are the Manipur Valley, the Manipur Hills and the Barak Plains ⁴⁴.

In the geographical distribution, Manipur may be simply divided into the valley at the centre and the hills surrounding it. The valley is the homeland of the Meities. The Manipur Hills are the abode of tribes. Some of them are found in the valley also where they live under the shadow of the Meites. However, the valley was never their forte. Though there are as many as 32 recognized tribes, they are broadly classified into two major groups, namely (1) the Nagas, and (2) the Kukis. In the Naga group are included Tangkhul, Mao, Kabui, Kacha Naga,

⁴¹ Bernard R. Berelson, *Voting- A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*, University of Chicago Press, USA, 1964, p. 4

⁴² Statistical Handbook of Manipur, Imphal, 1985

⁴³ Rajat Kanti Das, *Manipur Tribal Scene-Studies in Societies and Change*, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1985 p. 3

⁴⁴ R. P. Singh, *Op cit*, p. 4

Maring and Maram tribes. The Kuki-group includes Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Vaiphei, Zou, Mizos, Anal, Simte, Kom and Gangte. The customs of the Naga group resemble those of the other Naga tribes of Nagaland, while the customs of the Kuki group resemble those of the tribes living in Mizoram.⁴⁵

Manipur has a unicameral legislature. The Legislative Assembly of the state has 60 elected members with no provision for nomination. The state has been divided into 60 single member constituencies of which 40 are situated in the central valley, 19 in the hills and 1 in the Barak Basin. All 19 constituencies in the hills areas are reserve for the scheduled tribes. One constituency in the valley, Sekmai, is reserved for the schedule castes. The remaining 40 constituencies-39 in the valley and one in the Barak Basin, are unreserved general constituencies⁴⁶.

Manipur merged with the Dominion Government of India on 15th of October 1949. Manipur became a Part C State and the State continued to be administered by the President through a Chief Commissioner or a Lieutenant Governor who acted as his agent. On November 1, 1956, Manipur ceased to be a Part C State. Manipur became a Union Territory under the Union Territorial Council Act, 1956. The Territorial Council consisting of 30 elected Members and 2 nominated Members was constituted on 16.8.1957. The Territorial Council was later converted into the Territorial Legislative Assembly in June 1963. The Territorial Legislative Assembly consisting of 30 elected Members and 2 nominated members started to function from 23.7.1963. With the enactment of the North-Eastern Areas (Re-organization) Act, 1971 by the

⁴⁵ J. N. Das, *A Study of the Land System of Manipur*, N.E.C, Shillong, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶ R. P. Singh, *Op cit*, p. 163.

Indian Parliament Manipur was conferred full statehood on 21st January 1972 with a 60 Member Legislative Assembly⁴⁷.

The state is represented in the Lok Sabha by two members of whom one is reserved for the Scheduled Tribe (ST). It is a member of North Eastern Council (N.E.C) and come under special category states for central financial assistance⁴⁸. Imphal is the capital city of Manipur. There are 9 districts, 28 subdivisions and 45 Police Stations in the state. Four districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur are in the valley while five district of Chandel, Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Senapati and Ukhrul are in the Hills. There are 31 towns and 2, 182 inhabited villages in the state. The four valley districts excluding the areas, which fall within the Municipalities Town Committees, and other notified areas are covered by the panchayat raj system. There are seven Municipal Councils in the state. Under Manipur District Council Act, 1971, Hill Autonomous District Councils were established since 1972 for the administration of the hill areas.⁴⁹

Manipuri, which is the mother tongue of the Meeteis and Meetei Panghals (Manipuri Muslims), is the official language and lingua Franca of the state. It is recognized by the National Sahitya academy and is a National Language included in the Eight Schedule of the constitution of India. Besides Manipuri,

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ S. Singait, *Present Status of Forestry in Manipur*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Imphal, August 15, 1999, p 21.

there are more than 30 tribal dialects in the state, all belonging to Tibeto-Burman Languages⁵⁰.

There is no land tenure system in the hill areas. The Manipur Land Revenue and land Reforms Act, 1960 has not been extended to the hill areas. No transfer of land is allowed to non-tribal communities and outsiders in the hill/tribal areas. Thus, hill areas have been provided protection and ensured autonomy in the administration of their affairs according to their distinct way of life and culture. Such a separate system combined with historical factors, geographical divide, ethnicity, and underdevelopment have contributed to lack of development of common identity among the people of Manipur⁵¹.

In view of the above situation, a brief discussion of the past assembly elections is considered necessary in order to understand the electoral dynamics in the state and the assembly elections 2002.

First Legislative Assembly Elections 1972-1973

Manipur became a full-fledged State on 21 January 1972 by the enactment of North-Eastern (Reorganization) Act, 1971. With the attainment of the statehood the total strength of the legislators were increased from 30 to 60 seats. In the process, 40 seats fall under the valley and one in the Barak basin, which was reserved for the Scheduled tribes and 19 seats, were reserved for the hills⁵².

⁵⁰ J.N. Das, *Op cit.* p. 10

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 47.

The delimitation of the constituencies was done based on 1961 census, as the 1971 census was not available. The election for the Legislative Assembly was held on 6th and 8th March 1972 for the hill constituencies and the election for the valley were held on 11th March 1972. The main issues in this election were the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the VIII Schedule to the Indian Constitution and the establishment of a University and a Medical College⁵³. The political condition in Manipur during 1972 elections was similar to the political situation in India during 1967 election. As in the fourth general election of 1967 on all-India level, Manipur followed the similar pattern in 1972 in breaking down the dominant Congress party. The manifestoes of all the opposition parties tried to tarnish the image of the Manipur Congress⁵⁴. One noteworthy feature of the assembly election of 1972 was the emergence of Manipur Peoples Party (MPP) as a regional force in the electoral scene. The party secured 15 seats. As a result, the political mindset of the people had reoriented towards parochial regional outlook.

In the 1972 Assembly elections, the congress secured 17 seats out of 60 contested seats and was closely followed by the MPP with 15 seats. The Communist Party of India (CPI), the Socialists and the Kuki National Assembly (KNA) parties secured five, three, and two seats respectively. Although the Congress party emerged as the single largest majority party, the responsibility to form the government was put on the Manipur Peoples Party (MPP). The MPP thus, formed the government with all the parties, except the Congress and the CPI, and forged an alliance-United Legislature Party with strength of 32

⁵³ *Ibid*, p 95

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 94

members. The party elected Md. Alimuddin as their leader, who was later on invited by the Governor to form the Government.⁵⁵ The political trend favouring regionalism was proved when the MPP form the coalition government with other like-minded political parties and independents. However, the House lost nine members when they defected and joined the opposition party⁵⁶. Clearly, Alimuddin with 26 members was in the minority and had to resign on March 1973 amidst the battle of defections and no-confidence motion. The result was that the President's Rule was imposed in Manipur.

Second Legislative Assembly Elections 1974-1979

Manipur went through a mid-term poll in early 1974 to elect her 60 members after a ten-month spell of President's Rule. Five National Parties, viz., the Congress (i), the Congress (o), the Socialist, Communist Party of India (CPI-M) and three Regional Parties- Manipur Peoples Party (MPP), Kuki National Assembly (KNA), and Manipur Hill Union (MHU) besides a large number of Independent candidates contested this election. The Congress Party secured only 12 seats. The Socialist Party secured only two seats. Two of the National Parties-the Congress (o) and the CPI-M returned blank though they contested 13 and 3 seats respectively. The regional parties as a whole had put up a better show in this election mainly because of their selective contest and regional appeal⁵⁷. One remarkable feature of this election was the emergence of another regional party; The Manipur Hill Union (MHU), which contested for the first time and had a great success by getting 15 out of 16 seats it put up in the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 174.

⁵⁶ B. Pakem. *Opcit*, p. 90.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 179.

fray. The Kuki National Assembly (KNA) returned two seats. In addition, the Independent candidates secured only seven seats though they contested as many as 43 seats.

This time also local issues dominated the electoral scene. The main issues in this election were the protection of territorial integrity of the state, withdrawal of Assam Rifles from Kangla (*Lainingthou Sanamahi Temple*), development of Manipuri language as an official language, withdrawal of Armed Forces Powers Act (AFSPA). The AFSPA is one of the more draconian legislations that the Indian Parliament passed. Under this Act, all security forces are given unrestricted and unaccounted power to carry out their operations, once an area is declared disturbed areas. Even a non-commissioned officer is granted the right to shoot to kill based on mere suspicion that it is necessary to do so in order to maintain the public order, etc.⁵⁸

The 1974 mid-term Assembly poll could not produce a desired result and the state plunged into an era of coalition government. The United Legislative Party (ULP) formed the government after the election on the 4th March 1974, under the leadership of Md. Alimuddin (MPP). The ULP ministry survived for about four months. After the ouster, the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) government of Yangmaso Shaiza was installed on 10th July 1974. In about five months time the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) ministry collapsed and on 16th December 1974, Democratic Legislature Party government (DLP) was installed in the office, which survived for about 8 months. In the wake of National Emergency the Congress government, on the 23rd June 1975, which

⁵⁸ R. P. Singh, *Opcit.*, p.180.

was headed by R.K. Dorendro Singh, replaced the Democratic Legislature Party government⁵⁹. This government continued during the period of National Emergency in the country⁶⁰. Before the end of the Emergency, the sixth Lok Sabha Elections 1977 were held and the Congress captured both the Manipur seats⁶¹.

After the Lok Sabha poll of 1977, which brought about the first non-Congress coalition Janata ministry at the Centre, the whole Congress Party of Manipur defected to Janata and formed the first Janata government in Manipur with Y. Shaiza as its leader. However, with the split of the Janata at the Centre, the Janata party in Manipur also went out and the Legislative Assembly dissolved on November 14, 1979⁶².

Third Legislative Assembly Elections 1980-1985

The Seventh Assembly Election was held in January 1980 along with the Lok-Sabha elections. The seats secured by the parties in the third Assembly Elections (1980) were the following- the Congress secured 13 seats, Janata Party secured 10 seats. CPI and CPI-M won five and one seat respectively. The two regional parties, the MPP and KNA won four and two seats respectively⁶³. The main issues in this election also were the inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII Schedule and removal of AFSPA, 1958.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.182.

⁶⁰ B. Pakem, *Opcit*, p. 91.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 91.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 91.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 91.

⁶⁴ R. P. Singh, *Opcit*, p. 184.

One of the striking pictures of this election results was the position of the independent candidates. They managed to get 20 seats. In spite of any party getting absolute majority, the Congress was the single largest party with 13 seats and forged a coalition government with the Congress (u) and the MPP after admitting most of the successful independent candidates under the leadership of R.K Dorendro Singh⁶⁵. As Indira Gandhi wave was revived in the early eighties, the Janata party Government collapsed at the Centre. As such, its impact too was felt in Manipur also. The impact of personality of the candidates was also felt among the people, as shown by the election of 20 independent candidates.

Fourth Legislative Assembly Elections 1985-1990

Political instability has been the unique feature of Manipur politics, with legislators changing very often from one party to another. However, after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in October 1984, the sympathy wave for the Congress (i) swept the whole country. Manipur was no exception. That was why in the State Assembly elections on December 24th and 27th, 1984 the Congress (i) secured 30 seats, while the MPP secured three, Janata-four, KNA and CPI with one each and twenty-one independents. Later on, the Congress (i) gained the majority by admitting four independents. It was the single party majority government led by Rishang Keishing who was sworn-in on January 3, 1985. It may here be pointed out that the image of the Congress party, which swept the Lok Sabha election at the centre also influenced the electoral

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.190.

outcome in Manipur⁶⁶. The main issues in this election again were the removal of AFSPA, 1958 and the inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII schedule⁶⁷.

Fifth Legislative Assembly Elections 1990-1995

One significant feature, which may be crucially noted in the 1990 elections, was that the formation of the National Front Govt. at the centre had its fallout in the politics of the state⁶⁸. Strategically, six anti-Congress parties, including Janata Dal, CPI, Congress (S), CPI-M and KNA under the leadership of MPP, forged an alliance-United Legislature Front (ULF) thus putting up a joint front against the Congress.

The main issue in this election was the demand for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the VIII Schedule⁶⁹. The 1990 Elections did not produce any single party commanding a majority in the house. The party position of the elections was Congress-26, JD-11, MPP-11, ICS-6, CPI-3, KNA-2 and NPP-1 seats.

The United Legislature Front (ULF) formed the coalition ministry with R.K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister on February 23rd, 1990. However, the ULF coalition could not provide a stable government due to internal bickering. The result of such internal strife enabled the Congress (i) to take over power for some time with R. K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister. However, the Congress (i) led coalition also could not survive due to ethnic violence in the state. This led to the imposition of President's Rule in the state on December 31, 1993. The President's Rule continued for 346 days. It ended on December 12, 1994. On

⁶⁶ B. Pakem, *Opcit*, p. 91-92.

⁶⁷ R. P. Singh, *Opcit*, p.184.

⁶⁸ *Patriot*, New Delhi, February 23, 1990.

⁶⁹ B. Pakem, *Opcit*, p. 93.

December 13, 1994, Rishang Keishing replaced R.K. Dorendro Singh as Chief Minister and he took the party to the next Assembly Elections in February 1995.

Sixth Legislative Assembly Elections 1995-2000

The next General Elections were held on February 16 and 19, 1995. The results were as follows⁷⁰: The Congress secured 22 seats, Manipur Peoples Party (MPP)-18, Janata Dal (JD)-7, Communist Party of India (CPI)-2, Naga People's Party (NPP)-2, Samata party (SAP)-2, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)-1, Congress (s), Federal Party of Manipur (FPM)-1 and Independents-3 seats.

A coalition ministry under Rishang Keishing (Congress) as Chief Minister was installed on February 25, 1995⁷¹. However, the Keishing coalition ministry lasted for 35 months. The House was summoned on December 15, 1997, for a vote of confidence. The motion was lost by 17 to 38. When Keishing was voted out, the four-party coalition called the United Front formed a coalition ministry with W. Nipamacha (Manipur State Congress Party-MSCP, a splinter group of Congress) as Chief Minister along with other Ministers from MSCP, and three from MPP. The other two coalition partners were the FPM and the CPI⁷². Though MSCP was the product of leadership dispute within the Congress, there was a need of such a party with the collapse of MPP. Several reasons can be attributed towards the rise of the MSCP of which the factor of rising regional sentiment should be considered as paramount. In the 1995 elections two regional parties, FPM and NPP were formed. For the first time, BJP secure one seat in the state. In the politics of violence, they are more

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 94.

⁷¹ B. Pakem. *Opcit*, p .94.

⁷² *Ibid.* p. 95.

pronounced. The main issues in this election were the removal of AFSPA, shifting of Assam Rifles from *Kangla* and to solve the ethnic problems⁷³.

Seventh Legislative Assembly Elections 2000-2001

The next election was held in 2000. An important feature of this election was pre-poll alliance. There were three alliances. First was United Front consisting of FPM and MSCP. The second was Secular Democratic Front of Congress (I), MPP, CPI and JD (secular). The third was Manipur Democratic Alliance of BJP, Samata Party (SP) and the KNA. The important issues in this election were to protect the territorial integrity of the state, removal of AFSPA, removal of Assam Rifles from *Kangla* and to solve the problem of insurgency⁷⁴.

In the 2000 elections, the MSCP won 29 seats. In order to form a stable government, it engineered the defection of nine MLAs from the Opposition parties, including the MPP and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Nipamacha formed the Ministry with the FPM, which had six seats. However, the coalition did not last long. Following the fast-paced switching of political loyalties, Nipamacha resigned on February 2001, paving the way for a new coalition government headed by the Samata Party leader, Radhabinod Koijam. The Samata Party had won just two seats, but its strength increased to 12 after 10 of the 11 Congress (I) MLAs joined it. Meanwhile, the MSCP faced a split following infighting between Nipamacha and Th. Chaoba, former Union Minister of State for Food Processing. The group led by Chaoba was recognized as the real MSCP by a High Court order. However, due to the bickering inside the

⁷³ S. K. Chaube. 'Manipur Patterns', *Frontline*, 16 June, 1995, p.46.

⁷⁴ Manifesto and Agenda of Manipur Democratic Alliance, Imphal, 2000. pp. 1-2.

party, 18 MLAs left the MSCP for the BJP. The total strength of the BJP subsequently increased to 26, when two more MLAs from the FPM joined it.⁷⁵

A fresh crisis emerged when the BJP, with strength of 26 MLAs, wanted to join the Samata Party government on the condition that the new coalition government is led by the BJP and that Koijam step down in favour of the BJP's R.K. Dorendra. This formula was not acceptable to the Samata Party. The issue was referred to the respective high commands of the two parties. However, even the intervention of Home Minister L.K. Advani and Samata Party leader George Fernandes could not resolve the crisis. The Koijam government fell after BJP MLAs voted for a no-confidence motion against it⁷⁶.

Eighth Legislative Assembly Elections 2002-2007

The eighth assembly election was held on February 14 and 21, 2002 in the valley and hill constituencies respectively. The issues, which ruled the electoral battle, were concerned with the protection of the territorial integrity of the state, problem of insurgency and stopping of human rights violations by the security forces⁷⁷.

The eight Assembly Elections in Manipur assumes significance for a number of reasons. The campaign for the elections started late and in a dull atmosphere. Many organizations placed restriction on setting up camps, use of intoxicants, distribution of money, etc., which were the usual practices in the past. The idea behind was that elections should be less expensive.

⁷⁵ Assembly Elections- Accessed through www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1905/19050150.htm-8.11.07.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Another special feature was the initiative taken by some of the tribal leaders for the Naga cause. First, was the launching of a new political party- the Naga National Party (NPP) that put up 6 candidates for the first time at Chandel, Phungyar, Mao, Tadubi and Kangpokpi constituencies. Secondly, formation of two fronts: (i) Secular Democratic Front (SDF) and (ii) Democratic People's Alliance (DPA) will enable to have a more healthy democratic process. The first is, formed by the INC, MSCP, CPI and NCP, which has got 35 members supported from the outside by a lone member of the MNC. The rest of the parties formed the other front.

The significance of the 2002 assembly elections lies in the fact that it has appeared to have evolved a new leadership pattern in the state as the renowned and experienced politicians were defeated in the battle of ballots by comparatively younger blood since 41 out of 58 members of the Seventh State Assembly lost their positions. The losers included the Chief Ministers in the last two years, W.N. Singh and Radhabinod Koijam, as well as the longest serving Chief Minister of the state, Rishang Keishing. This indicates the loss of people's faith on the aged-old politicians of the state. The last feature was the introduction of electronic voting machines at 6 valley constituencies in the state⁷⁸.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*

Results of the Eighth Assembly Elections 2002-2007.

Table 1.1

PARTY	SEATS CONTESTED	SEATS WON
Congress	58	20
CPI	16	5
BJP	46	4
NCP	33	3
FPM	48	13
MSCP	42	7
SP	31	3
MPP	14	2
JD (u)	7	0
DRPP	23	1
NNLP	5	0
CPM	1	0
Lok Shakti	23	1
Independents	17	0
Total	364	60

The elections have presented Manipur with a hung Assembly as none of the political parties secured a simple majority in the 60-member House. The Congress (I) emerged as the largest single party by winning 20 out of the 60

seats. (Its previous tally was 10 seats.) The FPM proved that it was the strongest of the five regional parties in the fray, by finishing close behind with 13 seats. The MSCP, which formed the government in coalition with the FPM in 2000, won six. The CPI which failed to win any seat in 2000, won five of the 15 seats it contested. The BJP won four seats. Its ally, the Samata Party, which was instrumental in bringing down the United Front government of the MSCP and the FPM, won three seats. The NCP won three seats, the MPP two, the DRPP two and the MPC one. The congress with the help of MSCP, CPI and the NCP formed the govt. under the banner of *Manipur Secular Front*.

Finally Okram Ibobi Singh was chosen as the leader of the Manipur Secular Front thereby making him the Chief Minister. His cabinet was sworn in on March 7, 2002 along with Konthoujam Govindas, Pheiroijam Parijat and Chungkhokai Doungel as cabinet ministers⁷⁹.

Elections Results of the Four Sampled Constituencies

The selected 4 constituencies are 42- Tengnoupal Assembly Constituency, 46-Saikul Assembly Constituency, 50-Kangpokpi Assembly Constituency, and 54-Nungba Assembly Constituency. 46-Saikul Assembly Constituency and 50-Kangpokpi Assembly Constituency are located in Senapati District. The Senapati District is located in the northern part of Manipur. The Senapati District was earlier known as Manipur North District, which came into existence w.e.f 14 November 1969 with its headquarters at Karong. Later the district headquarter was shifted to Senapati on 13 December 1976. The District came to be known as Senapati District w.e.f 15 July 1983. Several communities like

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Mao, Maram, Poumai, Thangal, Zemai, Liangmai, Rongmei, Tangkhul, Meetei, Kuki, Nepalese, Vaiphei, Chothe, Chiru, and Maring inhabit the district. In Saikul constituency, C. Doungel could hold its position all along since 1990 but each time on the ticket of different political party. In 2002 elections, C. Doungel as an NCP candidate secured the highest number of votes polled (35.36%)⁸⁰. The turnout of voters in this constituency was quite high (91.19%)⁸¹.

The other constituency from Senapati district- kangpokpi has witnessed the electoral victory of Thangminlen Kipgen for three consecutive terms (1995, 2000, 2002.) but each time with different party tag.

54-Nungba Assembly Constituency is located in Tamenglong District. Zaliangrong Nagas, Kuki, Chiru and Hmar inhabit the district⁸². In this constituency, the voters are divided between two important candidates- Gaikhangam of congress and Gangumei Kamei of FPM. In 1984 and in 1990 Gaikhangam could secure the highest number of votes by defeating Gangumei kamei of the FPM. The scene was changed in 1995 and 2000 when Gangumei Kamei secured the highest number of votes and defeated Gaikhangam. However, in 2002 the congress candidate Gaikhangam once again defeated his rival Gangumei kamei⁸³. Such swing of votes is really an interesting matter.

42-Tengnoupal Assembly Constituency is located in Chandel District. Chandel District (formerly known as Tengnoupal District) came into existence on May

⁸⁰ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal. 2002

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Manipur- Accessed through <http://www.hundunnet.com/line/11905/19050150.htm-8> 12 07.

⁸³ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal. 2002.

13, 1974. The District lies in the south-eastern part of Manipur. The district is inhabited by several communities. It is sparsely inhabited by about 20 different tribes. They are scattered all over the district. Prominent tribes in the district are Anal, Lamkang, Kuki, Moyon, Monsang, Chothe, Thadou, Paite, Maring and Zou etc. There are also other communities like Meiteis and Muslims in small numbers as compared to the tribes. Non-Manipuri's like Nepalese, Tamils, Bengalis, Punjabis and Biharis are also settled in this district⁸⁴. In this constituency, Korungthang of SAP secured the highest votes defeating a NCP candidate. In 2000, a NCP candidate got the highest number of votes. In 1995, a congress candidate became an MLA defeating MPP candidate. Turn out of voters in this constituency (2002) was very high (98.77%).⁸⁵

In the selected 4 constituencies, the total electors ranged between 15423 in Nungba to 33040 in Tengnoupal. Among these, the highest number of males and females voters is found in Tengnoupal-16478 males and 16594 females. The total votes polled were the highest in Tengnoupal-33040 votes and the lowest in Kangpokpi-23236, which is 99.77% and 88.88% of the total votes, polled. The highest number of rejected votes was registered in Kangpokpi constituency (304). Amongst the 4 constituencies, Tengnoupal cover the largest number of polling stations i.e. 43. Saikul constituency cover 39, Kangpokpi cover 29 and Nungba cover 32 polling stations. In all the 4 constituencies, female voters outnumbered male voters. However, there was not a single women candidate in these constituencies⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ Manipur- Accessed through <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1905/19050150.htm>-8.12.07.

⁸⁵ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 2002.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

Manipur has come across eight Assembly Elections since it attained statehood (i. e., in 1972, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002). In Manipur since 1972, the election results have shown that the turnout was high⁸⁷ and that there was political fragmentation and hung assemblies. Defections have been the bane of Manipur politics. Between the elections of 1967 and the imposition of the National Emergency (1971) five ministries fell.⁸⁸ Again Manipur is ethnically and politically a fragmented state. Since 1972 to the present day only once did a political party get 30 out of 60 Assembly seats i.e., the congress in 1984. Yet, since March 1972 Manipur mostly had Congress governments under alternating leaders or Presidents Rule.⁸⁹

Thus, going by the political history of Manipur, no single party has been able to command an absolute majority since it attained statehood in 1972. After each election, coalition govt. was the only answer. Instability appears to be inherent in Manipur politics. Besides, the lack of political vision and ambitious corrupt politicians are other contributing factors of instability. The emergence of armed groups and their intervention in the electoral politics have brought significant changes in the politics of the state.

After giving a detailed background of elections in the state from 1972 to 2002, in the next chapter an attempt will be made to study the political parties in Manipur, their manifestoes and electoral performances in the state.

⁸⁷ Yadev. Yogendra, "Reconfigurations in Indian Politics-State Assembly Elections, 1993-95", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.XXXI, Nos.2 and 3, January 13-20, 1996, p.97

⁸⁸ S K Chaube, *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1973, p. 19

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p 258

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES, THEIR MANIFESTOES, PROGRAMMES AND ISSUES

The study of political parties has always been and continues to be central to the understanding of politics. Political parties are the backbone of democracy. Political parties and democracy go hand in hand. Democracy without political parties is unworkable, and political parties without democracy cannot grow.¹

Different thinkers have put a number of definitions of political party forward. Michael Curtis says it is difficult to define accurately a political party². The reason is the views of the liberals and Marxist writers differ sharply on this point. Not only this, even the views of the English liberals differ from their American counterparts.

Some of the definitions given by the writers are as follows. R.G. Gettle defines a political party as "a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of their political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies."³ Leacock said, "Political Parties means more or less organized group of citizens who act together as a political unit. They share or profess to share the same opinions on public questions, and by exercising their voting power towards a common end, seek to

¹ MacIver, *The Modern State*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1950, p. 396.

² B.B. Tayal, *Political Theory and India Democracy*, Aryan Book Depot, New Delhi, 1994, p. 216.

³ S. Puri, *Modern Political Analysis*, New Academic Publishing Co, Jalandhar, 1985, p. 357.

obtain control of government. They constitute something like a joint stock company, to which each member constitutes his share of political power. They are thus collectively able to acquire the strength which it would have been impossible for them acting singly to obtain.”⁴

Political party is a means for the maximization of political participation. It is one of the axioms of the contemporary science of politics that political party has become an indispensable factor in the working of a representative form of government.⁵ Political parties have become indispensable factor in the working of a democratic form of government. It lays down the rule that a political party, whether at the national or regional level in one form or another, is omnipresent. This phenomenon also signifies that the electorate has to express their confidence by way of casting their votes either in favor of national or regional political party. Thus, citizens' commitment to political parties plays an important role for maintenance of a representative system of government. There is however, no constitutional bar as such and a candidate could as well contest as an Independent without the backing of any political party.⁶

The Constitution of India indicates that India is a federal polity with a central government in New Delhi, and state governments for the various States and Union Territories. Consequently, political parties in India are classified as national and state (regional) parties based on their realm of influence. National parties are those that are recognized in four or more states. They are accorded this status by the Election Commission of India, which periodically reviews the

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 357.

⁵ C. Johari, *Indian Government and Politics*, Vishal Publications, Delhi, 1983, p. 28.

⁶ J. C. Aggarwal and N. K. Choudhury, *Elections in India*, Shipra Publication, Delhi, 1983, p. 46

election results in various states from time to time. This recognition helps the political parties to claim unique ownership of certain identities, such as the party symbol, until the next review of their status. Parties that have received certain amount of votes or seats in a state might be recognized as a state party by the Election commission. Recognition as a state party gives the party the possibility to reserve a particular election symbol in the concerned state. To gain recognition as a state party, the party must have some kind of political activity for at least five continuous years, and send at least 4% of the state's quota to the Lok Sabha(India's Lower house), or 3.33% of members to the state assembly. If the above conditions are not fulfilled, then a party may gain recognition by garnering not less than 6% of the total votes in a state or national election, polled in by all its contesting candidates.⁷

In Manipur, the existing political parties may be classified into two categories- National Political Parties and Regional Political Parties. The dominant National political parties are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Indian National Congress (INC), the Janata Dal (U) and the Communist Party of India (CPI). The dominant Regional or State Political Parties are the Manipur Peoples' Party (MPP), the Manipur state Congress Party (MSCP), and the Federal Party of Manipur (FPM).

The Eighth Assembly Elections in Manipur was held on 14th and 21st February 2002. There were as many as 15 political parties and 17 Independent candidates that entered the electoral fray such as the Indian National Congress

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_parties_in_India. 9-7-07.

(INC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Manipur People's Party (MPP), Federal Party of Manipur (FPM), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) and Janata Dal (JD-U) besides number of unrecognized state parties like the Democratic Revolutionary People's Party (DRPP), the Manipur Nationalist Conference (MNC), and the Naga National Party (NNP). These political parties have their separate programmes, aims, and objectives. Let us first deal with National Political Parties:

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

The BJP can be described as a successor of the old Bharatiya Jana Sangh Party. It was in October 21, 1951 that several leaders of the Rastriya Swayam Sevak (RSS) and Hindu Mahasabha, acting under the leadership of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.⁸ This party merged with the Janata Party in 1977. However, within a short period there appeared a dislike within the Janata Party against the Jana Sangh members because of their links with the RSS. Erstwhile Jana Sangh members left the Janata Party and on April 6, 1980, formed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as its President⁹.

⁸ S. N. Sadasivan. *Party and Democracy in India*. Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd, Delhi, 1977, p. 183.

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Janata-Party. 8-8-07.

Programmes of the BJP

The BJP is a cadre-based well-organized political party with a definite ideology. It identifies itself with Hinduism but explains its meaning as Indianess¹⁰. The party stands for decentralization of economic and political power. It is opposed to the political appeasement to any community. It seeks to make India a Ram Rajya- a welfare state committed to secure the welfare of all the people of India. However, its several slogans like 'Indianisation of Muslims' and 'Hindu Rastra' have influenced several people to call it a communal party¹¹.

Performance of the BJP in Manipur

For the first time, in 1984, the BJP took part in the fourth Assembly Elections in Manipur. The party contested 13 seats but failed to secure even a single seat.¹²In the 1990 Assembly Elections also, the party failed to capture any seat though it fielded 16 candidates¹³. The performance of the party in the elections of 1995 improved; the party secured a seat in this election¹⁴. In the Assembly Elections in 2000, the performance of the party was better than the last election. The party secured 6 seats in this election.¹⁵

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1984

¹³ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*. Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1990

¹⁴ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1995

¹⁵ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 2000

In the 2002 Assembly Elections, the Party contested 46 seats and won four, two in the valley, and two in the hills. Its share of total votes was 9.55 per cent. Out of the Party's 42 defeated nominees, 36 lost their security deposits¹⁶.

Communist Party of India (CPI)

The date maintained as the foundation day by CPI is 26th December 1925. To date, CPI happens to be the only national political party from India to have contested all the general elections using the same electoral symbol¹⁷. In Manipur, H. Irabot Singh imitated the Communist Party of India (Manipur) which was established on the 29th October 1948.

Programmes of the CPI

It is in the economic field where the policies and programmes of this party are very important. It desires to bring about scientific socialism by securing the elimination of foreign monopolies, annulment of all collaborative agreements, taking over by the state of all foreign trade, effective measures to curb the monopolists and to break up big monopoly houses, replacement of the Five Year Plan by people's plans, nationalization of all scheduled banks, overhauling of the entire tax structure, abolition of land revenue and its replacement by tax on agricultural income with exemption to all uneconomic holdings, reorganization and democratization of the public sector, assurance of minimum

¹⁶ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the chief Electoral Officer, Imphal. 2002

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_India. 9-8-07

need-based wage, introduction of far-reaching land reforms and the like¹⁸. The CPI has full faith in peaceful means and believes that revolution in India can be achieved by co-operating with other democratic forces.

Performance of the CPI in Manipur

The CPI contested the elections in Manipur for the first time in 1952. The party won two seats out of six it contested¹⁹. In the election of 1957, the CPI fielded candidates in 17 constituencies but could win only four seats²⁰. In 1962, the CPI was completely routed. The party could not win even a single seat out of 14 seats it contested²¹. In the Assembly Election of 1967, the CPI fielded candidates in 6 constituencies. The CPI's performance was still very poor, only one of its nominees could win the electoral battle by securing 5.47 per cent of the votes polled²². In the assembly election of 1972, the party contested in 25 seats and managed to secure 5 seats.²³ The CPI won 6 seats and 5 seats in 1974²⁴ and 1980 elections respectively²⁵. The next election was held on December 27, 1984. The CPI secured 1 seat out of 17 that it contested²⁶. In the 1995 elections, the party won 2 seats²⁷. However, in the election of 2000 the CPI could not secure any seat²⁸.

¹⁸ J. C. Johari, *Opcit*, p. 546

¹⁹ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1952.

²⁰ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1957.

²¹ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1962.

²² Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1967.

²³ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1972.

²⁴ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1974.

²⁵ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1980.

²⁶ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1984.

²⁷ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 1995.

²⁸ Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the CEO, Imphal, 2000.

In 2002, Assembly Elections CPI fielded 16 candidates and won 5 seats²⁹ The party did not participate in the hill districts' constituencies during the 2002 elections The CPI has never fielded their candidate in the hill constituencies The state CPI gets its strength from its devoted workers like the labour class, the government employees, and the students who have been supporting the party³⁰

Indian National Congress (INC)

The party has been one of the most successful of the nationalist movements of Asia and Africa Founded by A O Hume in 1885, it struggled for the liberation of India from Britain and continued to dominate the national political scene up to the 1967 elections

Programmes of the INC

The main aim and objective of the party is to establish a socialist society in which both the public and private sectors will be allowed to work together for the country's economic development Agriculture will be given maximum attention In the field of foreign affairs, the party stands for non-alignment and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries On Gandhain principles, the party believes in non-violence and encouragement of small scale

²⁹ Government of Manipur, Election Results Office of the CEO, Imphal, 2002

³⁰ R P Singh, *Opcit*, p 106

and cottage industries on the one hand and co-operative farming on the other.³¹

Performance of the Congress in Manipur

The Congress party contested the election of 1952 and secured 10 seats. The Congress party did not participate in the electoral battle in the hills except in Churachandpur constituency where a Kuki National Assembly nominee defeated its candidate.³² In the Territorial Council election of 1957, the Congress Party contested all 30 seats but secured only 12 seats.³³ The Congress Party's performance was the best among the political parties contesting the elections as the party captured half of the Territorial Council seats. In 1967 elections, the Party managed to get 16 of 30 seats. The Congress Party later on admitted two nominated members and 7 Independent members to its fold and formed the government, under the leadership of Koireng Singh.³⁴ However, as the hostility in the party grew over the sharing of ministerial positions, the Koireng ministry collapsed. As a result, the centre took control over the state. The dissident group left the party and formed a new party called the Manipur Peoples Party. Such development changed the political scenario of the state. The Congress Party became unpopular. The image of the party was also tarnished because of its late participation on the movement for statehood.

³¹ Indian Elections.com\party profiles\congress.html. 8-9-07.

³² Government of Manipur, *Election Results*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1952.

³³ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1957.

³⁴ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and Report on General Election*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1967.

In the Assembly Elections of 1972, the Congress had to be satisfied with only 17 seats of 60 seats³⁵. In 1974, the state went through mid-term elections. The Congress Party fought the election in alliance with the CPI in the valley. The party contested 49 seats and secured 12 seats³⁶. The next Assembly Elections was held on January 1980. The Congress secured 13 seats³⁷. The party forged a coalition with the Congress (U) and MPP after admitting most of the Independents under its fold and formed the Ministry led by R.K. Dorendro Singh on January 17, 1980. The next Manipur Assembly Election was held in 1984. The Congress contested all the 60 seats and secured 30 seats. The assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 brought sympathy for the Congress party and it was clearly visible in the elections result. The party won an absolute majority formed the government with Rishang Keishing as the Chief Minister.³⁸ In the next Assembly Elections of 1990, the Congress emerged as the single largest party by securing 25 seats out of 60 contested. However, the Congress became the opposition party in the House³⁹ The United Legislature Front (ULF) formed the coalition ministry with R.K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister on February 23rd, 1990. However, the ULF coalition could not provide a stable government due to internal strife. The result of such internal strife enabled the Congress to take over power for some time. However, the Congress led coalition also could not survive due to ethnic violence in the state between the

³⁵ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and Report on General Election*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Imphal, 1972.

³⁶ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Imphal, 1974.

³⁷ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1980.

³⁸ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1984.

³⁹ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer, Imphal, 1990.

Kuki and the Naga. This led to the imposition of President's Rule in the state on December 31, 1993. The President's Rule continued for 346 days. It ended on December 12, 1994. On December 13, 1994, Rishang Keishing (Congress) replaced R.K. Dorendro Singh as Chief Minister.

The next General Elections were held on February 16 and 19, 1995. In this election, Congress secured 22 seats⁴⁰ and formed a coalition ministry under Rishang Keishing (Congress) as Chief Minister on February 25, 1995. However, the Keishing coalition ministry lasted for 35 months. The internal bickering within the party resulted into a split. The breakaway group led by W. Nipamacha Singh formed a new political party (Manipur State Congress Party) and later on, this party formed the government. The next Assembly Elections was held in 2000. In this election, the Congress secured 11 seats⁴¹. Following the fast-paced switching of political loyalties in the state, the new government could not last long and the state was once again brought under President's Rule.

In 2002 election, the Congress fielded 58 candidates and won 20 seats, 10 in the valley and 10 in the hills, giving the party the largest legislative strength⁴². The Party formed the United Progressive Front under the leadership of O. Ibobi Singh. The Congress has been a major actor in the politics of Manipur since

⁴⁰ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer, Imphal, 1995.

⁴¹ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer, Imphal, 2000.

⁴² Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer, Imphal, 2002.

1952. From time to time, the Congress Party suffered electoral setback due to splits or defections.

JANATA DAL (JD)

The resignations or expulsion of some of the Congress (I) leaders from the party in 1989 gave an impetus to the formation of an alternative party to the congress (I). On October 11, 1989, a new party known as the Janata Dal came into being with the merger of three parties i.e., Janata Party, Jan Morcha and Lok Dal under the leadership of V.P. Singh⁴³.

Programmes of the JD

The policies and programmes of the JD includes the eradication of corruption in politics; reforming the electoral system so as to avoid money and muscle power; strengthening centre-state relations; justice to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes; giving special attention to the betterment of the women among others⁴⁴.

Performance of the JD in Manipur

The JD for the first time entered into the Manipur Assembly Electoral fray in 1990. In this election, the JD fielded candidates in 52 constituencies. The party

⁴³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janata_Dal. 9-9-07

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

secured 11 seats and took part in the formation of the government under the United Legislative Front⁴⁵ with R K Ranbir Singh as the Chief Minister

In the next Assembly Elections, which was held on February 1995 the JD secured 7 seats, 3 in the hills and 4 in the valley⁴⁶ In the Assembly elections held in 2000, the JD suffered a setback Only two seats could be captured, one seat by the Janata (S) and one seat by Janata (U)⁴⁷

Regional Political Parties

With reference to North-East India, L S Gassah pointed out that many of the regional political parties at the initial stage were set up only as pressure groups. In general, the aims of such groups were mainly to achieve social and economic goals and for the welfare of the people Their initial formation was also because of the need that was felt necessary to protect and preserve the customs, traditions, customary laws, language, religion, and the distinct identity of their own section of the society⁴⁸

It is generally said that regional political parties are parochial, anti-national and a disintegrating factor⁴⁹ National political leaders also used to level charges that such parties do not adopt positive and constructive attitude towards

⁴⁵ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer Imphal, 1990

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer, Imphal, 2000

⁴⁸ L S Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p 1

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

national problems. On the contrary, it must be said to the credit of the regional parties that they provided political stability, efficient government and continuity. As the regional parties are in a position to understand the regional problems and grievances of the people better and in this way they succeeded in developing the region and delivered the goods.⁵⁰

Some of the important regional political parties in Manipur are:

MANIPUR PEOPLES' PARTY (MPP)

The MPP, at the outset, was an offshoot of the defectors of the Indian National Congress (INC). It was formed on December 26, 1968.

Programmes of the MPP

The party's main objective is to achieve the well-being and advancement of the people of Manipur and to establish an egalitarian society based on democratic socialism and in particular⁵¹.

Performance of the MPP

The MPP for the first time entered into electoral politics in 1972. Almost all the parties, including the MPP, threw a challenge to the Congress and rallied around the banner of anti-Congresses'.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *The Constitution of the Manipur Peoples Party, Imphal. 1984, p.1.*

If we examine and analyze the history of the MPP, we find that it was most popular during the early 1970s. There was a strong wave of the party among the people in the valley. That was the main reason why the party was able to form the Ministry in 1972, just after the attainment of statehood. In fact, it was the Congress, which secured the largest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Manipur after the General elections of 1972. However, feeling the pulse of the people, most of the Independent M.L.As joined and supported the party in the formation of government. The MPP had a good beginning in the initial years but since 1980, it started declining. However, the MPP is the only local party, which could form ministry twice in Manipur, (1972 and 1990) with the support of other parties.

The MPP contested 14 seats and secured just two⁵², making it the lowest party among the regional parties in terms of seats won in 2002. Its share of popular votes was 3.03 per cent. The party could not win any seat in the hill constituencies. Though the party claimed to be a statewide organization, it had proved its influence only in the valley and over the Meiteis. Eight of its defeated nominees lost their security deposits.

⁵² Government of Manipur. *Election Index Card and RO's Report*, Office of the Chief electoral Officer. Imphal, 2002.

FEDERAL PARTY OF MANIPUR (FPM)

The Federal Party of Manipur was formed under the leadership of Prof. Gangmumei Kamei on October 21, 1993. The constitution of the party clearly specifies the objectives of the party⁵³.

Programmes of the FPM

The Federal Party of Manipur (FPM) stands for the following objectives:

- (1) To promote economic development through planning, freedom from exploitation, social control over the natural resources, encouragement of private enterprises, involvement of foreign capital and full participation of the people in the process of planning and implementations of development process as in the state.
- (2) To promote the common heritage of the various sections of the Manipuri's population and protect their cultural and ethnic identity and territorial integrity of the state⁵⁴.

Performance of the FPM

The FPM fought the Assembly Election for the first time in 1995. The Party fielded 22 candidates but only 2 candidates were elected⁵⁵. They were Prof. Gangmumai Kamei and Dr. W. Thoiba Singh. In the next Assembly Elections

⁵³ The Constitution of the Federal Party of Manipur, Imphal, 1993.

⁵⁴ Oinam Kulabidhu Singh, *Electoral Politics in Manipur 1980-1995*, Ph. D thesis, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, Imphal, 1999, p. 83.

⁵⁵ Government of Manipur, *election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1995.

held in 2000, the FPM secured 6 seats.⁵⁶ This shows their improvement as compared to the previous election. The party made an alliance with the MSCP and formed the United Front Government.

The FPM emerged as the second largest group in the Manipur Assembly Elections, 2002. It fielded 48 candidates and secured 13 seats, 10 in the valley and 3 in the hills⁵⁷. The FPM captured the only reserved Scheduled Caste constituency of Sekmai.

MANIPUR STATE CONGRESS PARTY (MSCP)

The defected Congress members under the leadership of W. Nipamacha Singh formed the MSCP on December 1997. The political crisis within the Rishang Keishing Ministry was the main reason for the split of the Congress Party.

Programmes of the MSCP

The objectives of the Manipur State Congress Party are as follows:

- 1) To bring welfare and justice-social and economic to the people irrespective of caste, tribe, religion, creed, etc;
- 2) To propagate and bear true faith and allegiance to the constitution of India.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Government of Manipur. *election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Imphal, 2000

⁵⁷ Government of Manipur. *election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Imphal, 2002.

⁵⁸ The Constitution of Manipur State Congress Party, Manipur, Imphal, 1998, p. 1.

Performance of the MSCP

Since the establishment of the MSCP as a political party, it has actively participated in the political activities of the state. The first MSCP led ministry was sworn in on December 16, 1997 under the Chief Ministership of W. Nipamacha Singh. Thus, the MSCP led coalition ministry is the second regional political party next to the MPP that have set up a non-Congress (i) government. In the Assembly Elections of 2000, the MSCP secured 23 seats and the second MSCP led coalition Government was installed under the leadership of W. Nipamacha Singh⁵⁹. During the MSCP reign, the financial condition of the state was very bad. The government could not even pay the salary of the government employees regularly and the result was that the government had signed an MOU with the central government for total ban on recruitment of job. The impact of the agreement was faced by many young educated youths and it affected the party's electoral performance. In 2002 Assembly Elections, the party fielded 42 candidates and won seven seats, five in the valley and 2 in the hill areas⁶⁰.

KUKI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (KNA)

The KNA had its genesis as a regional political party in 1946 to meet the growing demands of the Kuki community and with an objective to safeguard the interest of the Kukis in a rapidly changing political atmosphere in the hills. The

⁵⁹ Government of Manipur. *election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Imphal, 2000.

⁶⁰ Government of Manipur. *election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Imphal, 2002.

educated elite of the Kukis founded the party on April 24, 1946. The KNA is the only tribal political party in Manipur recognized by the Election Commission of India.

Programmes of the KNA

The party aims to bind together all the Kukis living in different states of India and establish a homeland for the Kuki tribe. It stands for the composite culture of the Kukis and freedom from external exploitation. The party supports the idea of regionalism.⁶¹

Performance of the KNA

For the first time, the KNA participated in the 1952 Electoral College Elections. The party fielded 7 candidates and could secure 2 seats in the hill constituencies.⁶² After 1952 elections, the party remained in a state of dormancy until the late 1960s. In the 1972 State Assembly Elections, the party failed to capture any seat out of two seats they contested⁶³. In the next mid-term Assembly Elections of 1974, the party entered into an election alliance with the MPP and Manipur Hills Union. The results were quite positive as the party captured 2 out of 6 seats that it contested⁶⁴.

⁶¹ The Constitution of the Kuki National Assembly, Manipur. Imphal. 2002, p.1

⁶² Government of Manipur. *Results of the General Election in Manipur*. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1952.

⁶³ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1972.

⁶⁴ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1974

In 1980, Assembly Elections the party had contested in 7 constituencies but captured only 2 seats.⁶⁵ In the Assembly Elections of 1984, the party had contested in 4 constituencies but only one candidate was elected⁶⁶. In the 1990 Assembly Elections, 8 candidates contested in the election, two were elected⁶⁷. The KNA joined in the formation of 1990 coalition government led by the Congress and one candidate of the party got a cabinet berth. However, in the Assembly Elections of 1995, the party put up 6 candidates but none were elected. In the Elections of 2000, the party contested in only one constituency but the party failed to capture the seat.⁶⁸ The party did not contest in 2002 elections.

Three new regional political parties, yet not recognized by the Election Commission of India (EC) participated in the 2002 elections. These were - (i) Democratic Revolutionary People's Party (DRPP), Manipur Nationalist Conference (MNC), and Naga National Party (NNP). Social activists, human rights activists, and former students' union leaders with the ideal of a "New Manipur" formed the Democratic Revolutionary Peoples' Party (DRPP). The DRPP set up 23 candidates in the state assembly elections in 2002 out of whom two were elected⁶⁹. In total, the party received 51,916 votes. After the elections, the party joined the Secular Progressive Front led by the Congress.

MNC was formed in 2002 when a split occurred in the MSCP. Two competing factions struggled over being recognized as the authentic MSCP. In the end,

⁶⁵ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1980

⁶⁶ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1984.

⁶⁷ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 1990.

⁶⁸ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 2000.

⁶⁹ Government of Manipur, *Election Index Card*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Imphal, 2002.

the Election Commission recognized the Th. Chaoba-led group as the real MSCP. W. Nipamacha Singh then re-christened his group as 'MNC'. In the 2002 state assembly elections, MNC supported SPF. MNC won one seat in the elections⁷⁰.

Another party called the Naga Peoples' Party (NPP) was also formed for advocating the rights of the Nagas in Manipur. NPP works amongst the Naga minority in the state. The party favors negotiated settlements of the conflicts in the Northeast, unification of Naga groups and maintaining Naga identity. The president of NNP was Ng. Hungyo. The party fielded five candidates with no success. All the nominees lost their security deposits. The party's share of popular votes was 0.05 percent.

In the 2002 elections, the voters in the hill constituencies had extensive choice because, except for the CPI and CPM all other political parties fielded their candidates. A large number of independent candidates, representing the tribal groups contested the elections.

MANIFESTOES

This chapter also explores the implications of ideological battle amongst the political parties of Manipur as reflected in their manifestoes in the election of 2002. Ideology, to many people means the doctrine that political parties are committed to or which they use in their endeavor to get power and influence. In

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

this sense, it is deliberately formulated and exploited. Parties appeal to some class or sections more than others do, and, their doctrine, if they are to be attractive, must be in keeping with the belief, attitudes and aspirations of those classes or sections⁷¹.

The study of the manifestoes is the key to understanding the various problems, mainly of developmental nature and the ways and means of finding a rational solution to them as viewed by different parties. Significant issues, pointers and divergent approaches to manifold issues in the manifestoes help one in understanding the mind of the parties. The way the voters' behave and react in response to the issues raised in it, is a very important and engaging subject of discussion among political sociologists.⁷²

A brief study of the manifestoes of the main parties provides a clue to the understanding of the election situation and the strategy and tactics of the parties. The manifesto tells the public what a party's policies and priorities are and thus enables them to vote in a policy-oriented way for the ones they favor. All the major political parties dealt at length on the same charter of programmes as listed below.

(1).Territorial

Integrity:

Safeguarding the boundaries of Manipur has been a sensitive issue ever since the state saw widespread violence in 2001 when then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee agreed to extend the truce with the Isak-Muivah faction of the

⁷¹ J. Plamanatz, *Ideology*, Macmillan, London. 1970. p. 123.

⁷² R. P. Singh, *Opcit.*, pp. 66-67.

National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) beyond Nagaland into Manipur. At least 20 people were killed in the unrest. The State Assembly was set on fire by mobs belonging to the majority Meitei community, angry over Vajpayee's decision to allow the NSCN-IM a free run in Manipur. While the estimated 400,000 Nagas in the state are siding with the demand for a 'Greater Nagaland', a concept mooted by the NSCN-IM, the majority Meiteis are opposed to any fragmentation of the state. The NSCN-IM, a rebel group in adjoining Nagaland, wants a 'Greater Nagaland' by slicing off parts of neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh that have sizeable Naga population. The United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of the Nagas residing in four districts in Manipur, favours integrating Naga-inhabited areas with Greater Nagaland.⁷³

Ultimately, the Government of India (GOI) had to roll back the agreement and ceasefire agreement between NSCN (IM) and the GOI was confined to the state of Nagaland only. However, Manipur's majority Meitei community remains suspicious. They fear Manipur's Naga-inhabited areas may be parceled off to Nagaland in a peace deal with the main rebel group, the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM).

The question of territorial integrity of the state was an emotive and politically crucial agenda in the state. This issue also invited involvement of the insurgents in the elections. The issue of territory also played a crucial role in the elections in the hills, as tribes belonging to the broad conglomerations of the

⁷³ [http://www.c-pao.net/election 02\party- manifestos.asp](http://www.c-pao.net/election%20party-manifestos.asp). 9-9-07.

Nagas and the Kukis expectedly voted on ethnic lines. In the valley, protecting the territorial integrity of the state turned out to be one of the major issues of political debate. There was not a single party that could afford to ignore the territorial issue. The new political party, Democratic Revolutionary Peoples' Party (DRPP), mainly harped on this agenda.

For parties like the Congress, the FPM, and the DRPP, Manipur territorial integrity was the most important issues in their manifesto. The Congress blamed the BJP-led NDA government at the centre for the alarm felt by the people of Manipur on the question of the territorial integrity of their state. The BJP pledged to protect and preserve the territorial integrity of Manipur.⁷⁴

(2) **Armed Forces Powers Act (AFSPA):** AFSPA has, once again, become the most controversial issue in this election. Under this Act Security forces were given unrestricted and unaccounted power to carry out their operations, once an area is declared disturbed areas. Even a non-commissioned officer is granted the right to shoot to kill based on mere suspicion that it is necessary to do so in order to maintain public order.⁷⁵ As expected, every political party has promised to repeal AFSPA if elected to power. Despite promising the removal of AFSPA, none of the political parties has chalked out a blueprint to remove the Act. The purpose of imposing the Act is to curb insurgency in the state. Instead, insurgency was increasing in the state.

⁷⁴ The Election Manifesto of the BJP Manipur, Imphal, 2002, p. 1

⁷⁵ Nilendra Kumar, *Law relating to the Armed Forces in India*, Bangalore, Universal Law Publishing Co 2005, p. 109

The law and order situation in the state, both in the hill areas and the valley, was seriously deteriorated. The Congress pledges to give the highest priority to peace. It said that it would engage in a detailed dialogue with the centre to prepare a package of measures to bring about security in all parts of the state and a political settlement, which addresses all genuine concerns⁷⁶. On the law and order situation, the BJP's manifesto said it would make an effort to end insurgency problem, improve the condition of the State police, and set up women police stations in all districts⁷⁷. Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) aims to make sincere and pragmatic efforts to initiate direct and meaningful talks with leaders of the underground outfits⁷⁸. The FPM said that militants should not be treated as terrorists. It stated that negotiations were the only way to bring a lasting solution. The FPM also demanded political prisoner's status for militants when arrested and imprisoned.⁷⁹ While parties have announced that doors are opened for dialogue with undergrounds, they have never made a serious effort to initiate the talks. There is no proper and adequate rehabilitation package of the surrendered undergrounds in Manipur.

(3) **Environment:** Only a few political parties laid stress in their respective election manifestos on the issue of maintaining the ecology and a clean environment. Even if parties like DRPP, CPI and JD (S) promises to formulate a comprehensive plan to check pollution, they put the issue almost at the bottom of the priority list. It is unbelievable that major parties like Congress and MSCP

⁷⁶ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress, Vidhan Sabha Elections 2002, Manipur, Imphal, p. 3

⁷⁷ <http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bhartiya-Janata-party-manifesto.Asp>, 7-10-07.

⁷⁸ <http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur-State-Congress-party-manifesto.asp>, 7-10-07.

⁷⁹ <http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Federal-party-of-manipur-manifesto.asp>, 7-10-07.

did not mentioned about protection of the fast deteriorating environment in the State.

The NCP says it would protect forest as a measure to control flood⁸⁰. The BJP said that the present drainage and sewage schemes in Imphal and other towns will be recast and a project would be taken up to clean its water⁸¹. The MPP takes the pledge to take up a master plan for Imphal city⁸². A look into the manifestos states that majority of the parties are yet to realize the seriousness of the threat posed by environment pollution in Manipur Imphal city.

No Government since Manipur attained statehood has paid attention to the issue of environment. The result is everywhere. A large percentage of the hills have now become barren. As a result, flood has become a yearly phenomenon, destroying crops and livestocks extensively.

On the top of this, the polythene and plastic bags have posed a serious threat. While all the political parties promised development of all kinds like better health care facilities, more productivity in agricultural sector, industrial revolution, development of the hills and supply of safe drinking water to all, only a few talk about the need to check pollution. While thinking of industrial advancement and progress, one should also keep in mind the need to control air, water, and sound pollution⁸³.

⁸⁰ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Nationalist_Congress_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁸¹ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bharatiya_Janata_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁸² http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur_Peoples_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁸³ http://www.manipuronline.com/Editorials/February_2002/february02_1.htm. 2-9-07.

(4) **Corruption:** The people of Manipur have been plagued by the worst corruption taking place at different levels. The election manifesto of the BJP promises to free the state from the triple curses- hunger, fear, and corruption- besides vowing to provide a clean Government and a free hand to CBI in corruption cases⁸⁴. MPP in its election manifesto promised a corruption free Government by passing the Lok Ayukta Act, which aims at checking corruption in high places⁸⁵. The new entrant DRPP organized torch rallies against corruption. Likewise all other parties promised to stamp out corruption.

(5) **Stable-government:** The Congress in its manifesto and election campaign emphasized on the desirability of a stable government in the state. It made an appeal to the people for political stabilization of the state by voting the Congress into power as it has shown stability in the past⁸⁶. The Congress stated that a political culture of defection for personal profit has been promoted by the BJP and the SP, on the one hand, and by regional parties, on the other hand. The other parties countered the Congress for creating the present deadlock and instability because of its long period of misrule.

The CPI in its manifesto promised to fight against defection⁸⁷. The CPI would galvanize public opinion on this score. MPP called for checking defections by amending the Anti-Defection Law⁸⁸. The SP said the political parties, which did

⁸⁴ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02\Bharatiya_Janata_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁸⁵ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02\Manipur_Peoples_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁸⁶ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur, Imphal, p. 4.

⁸⁷ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02\Communist_Party_of_India_manifesto.asp. 8-10-07.

⁸⁸ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02\Manipur_Peoples_Party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

not encourage defections needed to come together in a post poll alliance and provide a stable government⁸⁹.

On the other hand, the fractured mandate has accentuated the already existing deep-rooted political crises. While no party is in a position to execute its party agenda, all that was witnessed was the politicking where each party and individual M. L. As were engaged in tying and untying the knots of political alliance. In the process, governance was neglected. Lack of governance has led to the creation of several socio-political crises being magnified into giant size macro-level issues. The solution lies in political stability. This can be maintained only with a new legislation that will strongly check horse-trading and frequent shift of party loyalty.

(6) **AIDS:** Manifestoes of various state parties for the eighth Manipur Assembly elections have laid considerable emphasis on dealing with HIV/AIDS. For the first time in the country, perhaps HIV/AIDS has become an election issue. With the number of HIV positive cases increasing in the state at an alarming rate, parties can no longer neglect the problem. The newly formed political party DRPP, which in its manifesto, promised maximum autonomy to the Manipur AIDS Control Society, has taken the lead subsidizing medicines and allotting more funds to NGOs working in the sector⁹⁰.

Former minister and president of Manipur Peoples' Party, Mr. O. Joy Singh, felt the issues should be above party politics. Mr. Singh has mooted an idea of

⁸⁹ [http://www.e-pao.net/election 02\Samata Party manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election%20\Samata%20Party%20manifesto.asp) 7-10-07.

⁹⁰ [http://www.e-pao.net/election 02\Democratic People's party manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election%20\Democratic%20People's%20party%20manifesto.asp) 7-10-07.

forming cells within the party structure to spread awareness of the danger of the disease among people⁹¹. The Congress has put AIDS on its top priority list and so has all the other political parties. The BJP in its manifesto has called for restructuring of the state AIDS and drug programmes to make them more effective⁹².

Coming to the matter of health care, BJP manifesto said it would encourage and streamline the age-old medical system practiced by *maibas* and *maibeas* who are the traditional priests and priestesses of the Meitei Hindus and promised to upgrade health facilities in the hill areas. JD (U) said it would set up more primary health centers if given the chance to govern⁹³. The Congress will give top priority to HIV-AIDS prevention and care, including tackling the problem of drug abuse through which the dreaded disease is spreading through the state. The party will also give special attention to primary health centers and implementation of family welfare programmes⁹⁴.

(7) **Education:** The Congress claimed that it did not merely emphasize on qualitative standard in education but would follow the path of equalitarianism in educational opportunities to all sections of the people so that the existing socio-economic disparities are not perpetuated in the educational attainment and intellectual caliber of the younger generation. The Congress also promised the conversion of Manipur University and Regional Institute of Medical Sciences to the central university and institute respectively and approaching the Union

⁹¹ [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur Peoples Party manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur%20Peoples%20Party%20manifesto.asp). 7-10-07.

⁹² [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bharatiya Janata party manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bharatiya%20Janata%20party%20manifesto.asp). 7-10-07.

⁹³ [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Janata Dal manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Janata%20Dal%20manifesto.asp). 7-10-07.

⁹⁴ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur, Imphal, p. 5.

Government to open examination centers in Manipur for admission to academic courses in National Institute of higher studies and professional courses⁹⁵. The CPI manifesto urged upon better pay scale and adequate facilities for teachers, and an adequate representation in the administrative bodies of educational institutions⁹⁶. The MPP urged upon the declaration of the State Policy of new education with a thrust on the depth of science and technology⁹⁷. BJP manifesto said it is committed to convert Manipur University into a Central University. The government college of technology is the only engineering institute in Manipur and owing to financial constraints, the college still lacks infrastructure like adequate number of qualified staff, computing resources, internet facilities etc. that are essential in modern world technology. The remedy lies in upgrading the college to the status of Regional Institute of Technology under the funding of the North-Eastern Council⁹⁸. In short, almost all the political parties stressed on conversion of Manipur University into a central university.

(8) **Unemployment:** The BJP pledged to introduce special employment scheme for the educated unemployed⁹⁹. The DRPP has a plan for generating employment for about 50, 000 youth by implementing new projects based on the existing natural resources of the state¹⁰⁰. MNC promised to solve the problems in appointment of teachers of higher secondary schools and

⁹⁵ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur. Imphal, p. 5.

⁹⁶ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Communist Party of India_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁹⁷ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur Peoples Party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁹⁸ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bharatiya Janata_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

⁹⁹ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bharatiya Janata_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

¹⁰⁰ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Democratic People's_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

colleges¹⁰¹. The Congress party has stated its concern for unemployment among the educated youths and the CPI stressed upon modernization of agriculture and industrialization to tackle problem¹⁰². The JD (U) manifesto laid emphasis on the establishment of medium scale industries so as to eliminate unemployment problem among the youths¹⁰³.

(9) **Sports:** All the major political parties stood on the common plank in the field of games and sports, women's rights, youth, etc. The Congress said efforts would be made to ensure playgrounds in all localities, attached to schools or *panchayats* and mini-stadiums at district headquarters. A reservation in government employment for sports persons and benevolent fund for outstanding sports persons was included¹⁰⁴. The manifesto of BJP said it would evolve a policy for talent-hunt in sports by using modern scientific equipments and provide more facilities of games and sports to all districts. The party further promised to open more SAG (Special Area Game) Centers to provide training to more talented players in selected disciplines in all districts¹⁰⁵.

(10) **Economic problems:** The Congress party's economic programme for the state focused on infrastructure development, in particular a ring road, which will link all the district headquarters directly; the extension of the National Super Highway from Silchar into Manipur; and the extension of the railway network into the state¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰¹ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur_National_Conference_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

¹⁰² http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Communist_Party_of_India_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

¹⁰³ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Janata_Dal_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

¹⁰⁴ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur. Imphal. pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁵ http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Bharatiya_Janata_party_manifesto.asp. 7-10-07.

¹⁰⁶ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur. Imphal, p. 8.

Janata Dal (U) said the party would work for bettering the economic conditions of Manipur by seeking foreign investment and utilizing natural resources properly and take up new road projects in both hill and valley. The party said it would work for making Manipur an international trade centre by regulating and enhancing the existing trade between the state and south East Asian countries¹⁰⁷. The NCP would give emphasis on the economic development of the state, and would work towards proper implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes¹⁰⁸. The MSCP envisages on the economic problems faced by Manipur in adopting short and long-term measures improving the economic conditions of farmers, weavers, and laborers¹⁰⁹. The MPP state will bring about better implementation of the Essential Commodities Act to check price hike of commodities¹¹⁰.

On the issues of economy, people and leaders were equally aware that no political party could come with specific measures to tackle the financial crises, such as irregularity in payment of salaries, financial overdraft, generating state revenues, etc. Yet non-inclusion of the same in the party manifesto could be suicidal.

(11) **Industrialization:** Congress assured to pay more attention to industries and a programme for development of small scale and village industries¹¹¹. The

¹⁰⁷ [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Janata Dal_manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Janata%20Dal_manifesto.asp). 7-10-07.

¹⁰⁸ [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Nationalist congress Party_manifesto asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Nationalist%20Congress%20Party_manifesto.asp) 7-10-07.

¹⁰⁹ [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur State Congress Party_manifesto asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur%20State%20Congress%20Party_manifesto.asp). 7-10-07.

¹¹⁰ [http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur Peoples Party_manifesto.asp](http://www.e-pao.net/election/02/Manipur%20Peoples%20Party_manifesto.asp). 7-10-07.

¹¹¹ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur. Imphal, p. 9.

CPI said that industrialization should be done on a public sector¹¹². As the per capita income in the state is much below the National average and the state remains immensely backward, the parties were expected to come out with a dynamic approach by developing the agro-based industries. Most of the industries suggested by the political parties are common such as the setting up of Cement Factory, Paper Mill, Spinning Mill, Sugar Mill, Fruit Processing Plant, Bamboo-based Industry, Information Technology, including software parks etc. The state has been neglected so far in this sphere.

(12) **Agriculture:** According to Congress manifesto, self-sufficiency in food grains will be a top priority, followed by diversification into horticulture, including medicinal plants, sericulture and plantation crops like cashew nuts¹¹³.

In Manipur, about 70% of the population is dependent on agriculture. All the parties have equally emphasized on agricultural Reforms and its development. The vital needs for land reforms and positive measures for agricultural improvement have also been focused by all party manifestoes. The various remedial measures laid down have been irrigation, removal of uneconomic holdings, improved seeds, land reclamation, marketing facilities, use of fertilizers, etc. The Congress government passed in 1960 the Manipur Land Reforms Act, which provided land ceiling of 25 acres per family. However, until today, there seems to be no machinery to enforce it. Moreover, neither the government has yet formulated any sound agrarian policy nor the parties have ever demanded one.

¹¹² http://www.e-pao.net/election/02:Communist Party of India_manifesto.asp, 7-10-07.

¹¹³ The Manifesto of Indian National Congress. Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2002, Manipur. Imphal, p. 9.

Therefore, in the eight state assembly election, almost all the political parties took up three major issues: (i) territorial integrity of Manipur, (ii) acute financial crisis, and (iii) law and order (insurgency and peace) in the state. The manifestoes by different political parties depicted more or less the same socio-economic and political objectives. However, it can be said that all the political parties' manifestoes have provided the voters with several options and enlightened them with various local, regional, and other issues. Local issues like economic development and unavailability of basic infrastructure mainly dominated the 2002 election manifestoes. For example, the creation of a Sadar Hill district was the most crucial issue that affected the voters in Kuki dominated areas.

In our study of the various manifestoes and issues of various political parties, it is seen that none of the manifestoes dared to overlook some of the significant needs and issues agitating the minds of the voters for example to work for safeguarding the territorial integrity of the state, economic development, etc. All the political parties, therefore, somehow tried to focus them in their manifestoes. However, in real electoral politics the elections manifestoes of the political parties do not play an important role in the electioneering process in the hill areas of Manipur. It has more significance in the urban areas. Very few voters knew about the meaning, value and significance of the election manifestoes. One important thing to note here is that the manifestoes were not easily available to the people of the state. The manifestoes were usually absent

especially from the side of the regional parties while the national parties do not care to translate these to the local language.

CAMPAIGNING

Here, an attempt has also been made to study the efforts and activities of the candidates and political parties to reach the electorate while campaigning. The term election campaigning refers to the set of activities by political parties and candidates to seek electoral support in a bid to win political office. It includes such persuasive activities as speech making, passing out literature, broadcasting, and advertising, distributing posters, and holding rallies. In most countries, active campaigns are waged by well-organized political parties, which carry with them from one election to another a loyal body of supporters who almost invariably vote for the same party¹¹⁴.

Each party launches a rigorous election campaign for influencing the voters in its favor. Such campaigns are designed to make a voter believe that the party or the candidate of the party contesting from his constituency can best serve his interest. Political campaigns are treated as occasions of immense importance by politicians, and never more so than today. In recent decades political actors of all sorts-parties and candidates, governments and other political institutions-have increasingly come to view political campaigning as an essential supplement to their engagement in the process of policy making. By investing ever more efforts and resources into political campaigns, they seek to

¹¹⁴ Marina popesu & Gabor Toka, *Campaign Effects and Media Monopoly* in David M. Farrell and Rudiger Schmitt-Beck (eds.), *Do Political Campaigns Matter? Campaign Effects in Elections and Referendums*, Routledge, 2002, p.141.

mobilize support among the mass public, to persuade citizens of their causes, and to inform the citizenry about public policies and political activities¹¹⁵.

The effectiveness of campaigning varies from place to place, and person to person. In the valley region of Manipur, the election was influenced by the factors like party organization, personality and influence of the candidate, ideology of the parties whereas in the surrounding hills the voting behavior was affected by the personality of the candidate, money, and tribe preferences¹¹⁶. Ever since 1972, when Manipur got statehood, elections are being held and in each election, the people of the state are witnessed more or less the same nature and style of campaigning.

The campaign for the 2002 elections started late and in a dull atmosphere. Many organizations placed restrictions on setting up camps, use of intoxicants, distribution of money, opening of shades, financial assistance for pilgrimage, picnics, of road repairing near the elections, meeting after 7 p.m. etc, etc. which were usual practices in the past. In substance the idea behind was that election should be less expensive. The second was the acts of violence seen at many places. There were also accusations that candidates were forced to withdraw their nominations, e.g. the INC candidates for Chandel and Tengnoupal constituencies.

Ever since 1972, when Manipur got the statehood, elections were being held and in each election, the people of the state witnessed more or less the same

¹¹⁵ David M. Farrell and Rudiger Schmitt-Beck (eds.), *Do Political Campaigns Matter? Campaign Effects in Elections and Referendums*, Routledge, 2002, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ R.P.Singh, *Op cit*, p.217.

nature and style of campaigning. However, in the recent election there were instances of engaging professional artists and entertainers to campaign for a particular candidate or a party. Manipur has a large number of youth organizations and clubs all over the area and financing such clubs is one way of getting enthusiastic and youthful support.¹¹⁷ In the sampled constituencies, the following campaign devices were adopted on a large scale.

Wall-writing/Party flags/Posters

The names of the contesting candidates, their party symbols, party's name, their catchphrases etc. were printed on the walls of buildings and shops in their constituencies. Flags and posters of contending parties were put up at different public places. All these have not only the visual impact but also shows that a household if raised a particular party's flag in the courtyard of the house with consent is regarded as the staunch supporter of that party¹¹⁸. This tactic benefited the candidates in their popularity drive and thus able to woo the floating or indecisive voters¹¹⁹. The candidates selected vantage points for placing the writings to attract the maximum attention of the electorate like walls along the main roads, bus stops, etc. The congress candidates were ahead of other candidates in the poster campaign. Posters depicting Mrs. Gandhi and O. Ibobi Singh and the election symbol of the congress party were widely pasted in different parts of the area.

¹¹⁷ S. K. Chaube. *Op cit*, p. 217.

¹¹⁸ Interview with respondents.

¹¹⁹ Interview with respondents.

Election Meetings

Public meetings was a major means of campaigning in during the elections. All other techniques of propaganda have also their place in the overall strategy of elections. However, for building a public image of the candidate nothing could be compared with well organized and well attended public meetings. However, the public meetings and the speeches therein did not greatly influence the average voters directly¹²⁰. However, one fact is that a fair section of the electorate gauged the chances of the respective candidates based on the attendance at their meetings and voted accordingly hoping to be on the winning side¹²¹. Therefore, all the major political parties organized meetings and at the same time mobilize the public to attend in large numbers.

During 2002 elections, one could find jeeps fitted with loud speakers and decorated with party flags and posters in the roads with someone enumerating the qualities of the candidates and thus asking the public to vote. Modern science has found to change the form of election campaign in the west where election broadcasts and television programmes have replaced the public meeting as the chief instrument of an election campaign¹²². In Manipur, however, public meeting continues to be important in an election campaign¹²³. However, in the face of threats from insurgent groups, no party held big

¹²⁰ Interview with respondents

¹²¹ Interview with respondents

¹²² Bangendu Ganguly & Mira Ganguly, *Voting Behaviour in Developing Society*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1975, p 20

¹²³ R. P. Singh, *Op cit*, p 124

campaign rallies. Instead, they have organized public meetings at the local level.

Door-to door Canvassing

Candidate carried door-to-door campaign with their supporters in order to have an informal face-to-face interaction with their electorates. This contact often proves more effective than any other method. This process and technique of campaigning have a great influence in the voting behavior since it involves direct contacts between the candidates and the electorates¹²⁴.

In the sampled constituencies, candidates usually stopped in front of houses and shops and talked to the people around while the supporters would distribute leaflets directly to the voters with an appeal to vote. Appeals were made in the name of party, tribe, people and the personality and performance of the candidate¹²⁵. Several times, party workers and youth clubs go on such campaign. They would take out slogan shouting procession also. Such campaigns were held in the evening in order to contact as many voters as possible. The voting behavior was influenced by this personal contact¹²⁶. Even educated voters have been found to disclose in confidence that only so and so candidates approached them personally and so he or she voted for him in the absence of an alternative appeal.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Interview with respondents.

¹²⁶ Interview with respondents.

Community Feast

Out of the many methods of campaigning in the sampled constituencies, group feasting is one of them. Workers and supporters of a party try to contact the electorate over a lunch or a dinner and make an effort to touch the heart of the people present by presenting a positive image of their candidate¹²⁷. Financially unsound candidate could not afford this costly affair but of late to the candidates' advantage one interesting trend started unfolding, i.e. more or less the same persons are found in different feastings organized by different political party's candidate¹²⁸. Thus, it makes things more complicated for the candidates for they could not confidently count on anyone as his or her true supporters. One good reason behind this trend could be that the electorate have lost faith in their political masters. Thus, they justified enjoying the candidates money and power at the time of elections. Some of the supporters of the contesting candidates even offered intoxicating drinks to the supporters.

Press and Media

The All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan Kendra (DDK) most of the time, did not cover the events in the hill areas due to weak network of transport and law and order situation. It was confined to the Imphal areas only. Thus, it does not have a profound impact on the majority of the people living in rural and hill areas.

¹²⁷ Interview with respondents.

¹²⁸ Interview with the chief of Gangpijang.

Impact of Money

Voter bribing is an open secret in the sampled constituencies. Candidates, affluent ones or belonging to an affluent party, are alleged to have offered money to the voters. In an interview with some of the respondents it was found that, they received money or intoxicating drinks from the candidates in return of their promise to vote for them.

Boiling Tea

This mode of campaigning is a common feature in Manipur hills. Election campaign by way of boiling tea was carried out mainly at night. The chief summons the villagers for the meeting. One among the campaigners will then address the chief and the villagers in very congenial social settings to influence them positively. In his speech, he will focus on the qualities and political carriers of the candidate¹²⁹. The political parties contesting in the sample constituencies employed more or less the same method of campaigning.

After studying the political parties in Manipur and their manifestoes, programmes and the issues that they had raised, the next chapter will study the role of chiefs, church and youth in mobilizing people during elections.

¹²⁹ Interview with respondents.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF CHIEFS, YOUTH AND CHURCH

In Manipur, regular elections have been conducted since 1952 on a similar pattern followed in the rest of the country. It is seen that apart from political parties, there are a number of other organizations and institutions that play an important role in mobilizing people during elections. Thus, it is essential to study these groups role in electoral politics. These include the Chiefs, the youths, and church among others. The various groups involved in the elections such as the Chiefs and churches are found mainly in the hills, as these institutions are prevalent more in the hill areas. The youth organizations, which are known by different names such youth club, youth fellowship, and the youth associations, are common to both the hills and the valley. These organizations too played an equally useful role in the elections.

Many times, it is said that the Indian society lacks voluntary associations¹. This might be true in certain fields of life. However, a careful look at the electorate in action might reveal that in addition to the political parties, there are a number of organizations that are involved in the electoral process. These organizations are mainly of socio-cultural types. The leaders of such organizations have a position in the neighbourhood and his word commands respect. Thus, he can influence the voting of the neighbourhood. Other organizations take care of

¹ V. M. Sirsikar, *Political Behaviour in India: A case study of the 1962 General elections*, Manaktalas, Bombay, 1965. p.153.

organizing and celebrating certain public socio-religious functions. The parties and candidates endeavour to enlist the support of such organizations that can mobilize the voters during the elections, especially on the polling day. There are also other organizations of an entirely different kind. These are based on caste or tribe and religion. They become politically active during elections. The caste/tribe leader can influence his groups through informal and formal communication. Political parties make special efforts to cultivate the caste/tribe leaders and religious leaders and keep them on their side².

Perhaps one of the foremost functions of these groups is to transmit the culture of the wider society of which they are a part. Social class, religious and ethnic sub-cultures are transmitted through such groups.³In modern complex societies, great varieties of organizations link the individual to public institutions. This may be called political socialization.

Political socialization refers to the process by which the institutions of society—the church, family, peers, the schools, and the mass media—influence the extent to which members participate in the governance of society, especially through voting. The purpose of political socialization in a democracy is to develop citizens who are politically knowledgeable and who actively participate in the decision-making process. This participation primarily involves taking part in the electoral process. It is now recognized that individuals do have innate differences that affect them, such as intelligence and motivation. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the study of political socialization continues to be on how

² *Ibid.*

³ Kenneth P. Langton. *Political Socialization*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.123.

external institutions such as the family, peer etc influence the individual. Political socialization involves the study of certain agents of influence and change on the individual as he or she learns to participate in the governance of society⁴

In Manipur, Organizations such as Churches and Youth clubs and institutions like village chiefs play an important role in political socialization. These groups hold discussions from time to time about the political system prevailing in the state as well as in other parts of the country. These discussions have an impact on the individuals and they learn a great deal of knowledge and experience out of contact with group mates. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that these groups play an important role in mobilizing people during elections.

TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

MacIver and Page used the term Institutions as an established form of procedure characteristic of group activity. According to them whenever associations are created in society, certain rules and procedures also must be created for the dispatch of common business and for the regulation of members to one another and such forms can be called as Institutions⁵. According to Malinowski, for achieving any purpose or to reach any ends, human beings have to organize. Organization implies a very definite scheme or structure. The main feature of any organization is universal and is applicable to all groups in their typical form. For a unit of such organization Malinowski uses the term

⁴ Frank N Magill, *International Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Vol II, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers London 1995, p 962

⁵ W H Hamilton, *Institutions*, Encyclopedia of Social Sciences New York, 1935, p 84

Institutions, which implies an agreement and a set of traditional values for which human beings come together⁶. The term institution is commonly applied to customs and behavior patterns important to a society, as well as to particular formal organizations of government and public service. Institutions are structures and mechanism of social order and cooperation governing the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions are identified with a social purpose and permanence, transcending individual human lives and intentions, and with the making and enforcing of rules governing cooperative human behavior⁷.

Thus, when men agree amongst themselves to submit to some men or assembly of men voluntarily on condition to be protected against all other and to satisfy his needs it is called political institutions. The political institution of the tribal people in Manipur has been the village system that differs from one village to another.

In Manipur out of the total area of 22,437 square kilometers 20,126 square kilometers with a population of 7, 13,813 according to 2001 census constitute the Hill Areas inhabited by 32 different tribes with varying population-strength, starting from Thadou, Tangkhul and Mao, to Moyon, Monsang and Thangal. Broadly speaking, the tribes may be classified into two classes, the Nagas and the Kukis. In the Naga group are included the Tangkhul, Mao (Memai and Poumai), Kabui (Rongmei and Puimei), Kacha Naga, Maring and Maram

⁶ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and other Essays*, University of North Carolina, Chappel Hill. 1944, p. 39.

⁷ Institution - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.htm. Dated 2-04.2010.

tribes⁸ The Kuki group includes Thadou, Hmar, Zou, Anal, Simte and Gangte⁹ In addition, other tribes do not fall into any of these two categories of tribes Tribes such as Paite, Simte, Mizo, Zoumei, Kom, Tedimchin, Vaiphei, Thangkhal, etc, do not wish to be put under any of these ethno-political categories The customs of the Naga group resemble those of the other Naga tribes of Nagaland, while the customs of the Kuki group resemble those of the tribes living in Mizoram¹⁰ Traditionally every tribe of Manipur had a unique political system of their own All types of political systems were found among the tribal people in the past The hill people of Manipur remained independent of any external domination Each village grew in isolation and was ruled by a hereditary Chief The authority of the Chief was unquestioned¹¹ The Hill tribes had a distinct social life, law, customs, and method of governance of the people

The institution of Chiefship has been a common traditional feature in many tribal societies in different parts of the world The institution of Chiefship has existed from times immemorial almost among the tribal in North East India The chiefship are known by different name The Mizos called *Hal*, the Garos called *Nokma*, the Tangkhul called *Awunga*, and the Kukis called *Hausa*, although the names are different, one common feature about Chiefship is that, generally they possess independent powers and functions though of varied degrees and nature The Chiefs in Manipur, however are considered to be the supreme in the jurisdiction of their own villages which are an autonomous units governed

⁸ J N Das *Op cit*, p 23

⁹ *Ibid* p 5

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ M Horam, *Naga Insurgency*, Cosmo Publishing, New Delhi, 1988, p 17

by the Chief. The Chiefs in Manipur in olden times were considered the owner of all lands and nobody could occupy any land without his permission¹².

Chiefship in Chin-Kuki society is hereditary. From clan to clan, the customs differ as to whether the youngest or the eldest son inherited the office of the father. In most cases, however, the eldest son inherited the Chiefship. The chief may have been wanting in qualifications and there may be many other family members who were superior in ability, but unless he was physically or mentally unfit there was no danger of him being supplanted, and the usual course was for the elders and advisors to assist him in his rule.¹³

In the Naga society too, the village chief is prominent at all social and religious gatherings and festivals of the village. The chiefs are called by different names. The Tangkhul called their chiefs *Awunga*, the Angamis called *Kemovo*, the Aos called *Sosangs*, the Lothas called *Ekyungs*, the Semas called *Akekao* and the Konyaks called *Kedange*.¹⁴ Among the Nagas, village administration is run by the village council constituted by the elderly representatives of the clans or households in the village. The village council performs both administrative and judicial functions¹⁵. In the Naga village system the village chiefs enjoy little hereditary authority or rights over land.

Among the Kuki-Chin tribes, Chiefs are powerful whereas among the Nagas, though there are Chiefs, he enjoys little hereditary authority or rights over land.

¹² J N Das, *Opcit*, pp 124-125

¹³ Vumson, *Zo History*, Aizawl, 1989, pp 8-9

¹⁴ M Horam, *Naga Polity*, B.R Publications, New Delhi, 1975, p.80

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p 97

There usually is a council of village elders to govern the village and resolve disputes¹⁶ Naga chiefs are more democratic and the villagers are ruled by councilors. The election of councilors is popular and it is customary to give representation to all the clans residing in the villages. Clan heads usually become councilors¹⁷

The institution of Chiefship was strongly rooted in the early history of Mizo people. The Mizos are scattered in every hill district of the state particularly in Churachandpur district. The chief was the guardian of his people, the leader and defender in times of attacks by the enemy. He was the provider of food in times of scarcity. In battle, he would lead his warriors. Fugitives in war would seek refuge in his house. He settled disputes within a family or between persons.¹⁸ Their own chiefs ruled each village and most of the chiefs belonged to the *Sailo* clan, which had established it as the most dominating ruling clan before the British took over the hills.¹⁹ In traditional Mizo society, the chief ruled the village according to the customs and traditional practices²⁰. Thus, the concept of rule of law was alien to the people. The chief was aided by the council of elders or *upas* in the administration of the village²¹. Clan was an important unit of the village in the traditional Mizo society²²

¹⁶ T C Hodson *The Meitais*, Macmillan, London, 1908, p 540

¹⁷ T T Haokip, *The Kuki chieftainship and its changing dimensions*, Ph D thesis, Department of Political Science, NEHU, 1995, p 80

¹⁸ L B Thanga, *The Mizos: A study in Racial Personality*, Gauhati, 1978, pp 7-8

¹⁹ A S Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, Aizwal, 1970, p 225

²⁰ Lalchungnunga, *Mizoram: Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994, p 28

²¹ Lalngurliana Sailo, *Economic Changes and Social Evolution* Ph D Thesis, Department of History NEHU, Shillong, 2004, p 56

²² T H Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel*, Tribal research Institute, Mizoram, 2005, p 243

In a traditional Paite village the Chiefs was the head and under him, the councilors called *Upas* carried out the administration smoothly. The councilors were advisors in reality and the Chiefs took himself the final decisions. In judicial matters, he was the fountain of justice. He decided cases according to customs of the land with the help of his councilors.²³ The Paite belong to the northern Chin sub-group of kuki-chin locally known as *Zoumi*.²⁴

The Thadou are a sub-group of the Kuki of Manipur. However, in Manipur state they prefer to be addressed as Kipgen and Haokip, which according to them are more appropriate terms of identification since these are indigenous terms and have a definite connotative meaning. This community is mainly concentrated in north Manipur, south Manipur, Tengnoupal and west Manipur bordering the north Cachher hills district of Assam state²⁵.

The Thadou village Chief was called *Hausa*, which literally denotes a person who possesses great wealth in the form of land, cattle, etc., and who is well versed in all types of incantations and music. He should have captured many slaves in battles. He should belong to a powerful and well-known clan. Such persons became the village Chief. *Hausa* was a powerful lord of the village. He might also bring other villages under his control. He distributed the land of his village to the people for cultivation and for other purposes. Every cultivator was required to contribute a basketful of paddy to the *Hausa* after every harvest. This taxation was called *Changseu*. It was also obligatory for any hunter to offer

²³ *Ibid*, p 34

²⁴ H. Kamkhenthang, *The Paite-A transborder Tribe of India&Burma*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1988, p.1.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.211

to the *Housa*, the head and the right hind-leg of any eatable animal killed by the hunter. The *Hausa* finally decided all civil and criminal disputes. He had the complete judicial and executive powers. When a *Hausa* attacked another village, the conquered village became his subject.²⁶

The chief rules every Zeliangrong village with the assistance of the village council members and the elders of the village²⁷. Each village has a chief whom they consider as the highest authority of the village according to their tradition and customary law²⁸. They also have inter- village, district and inter-state court where all complicated problems are discussed strictly based on their customary law. Succession through hereditary system was strictly observed in the past. Chief is the sole authority for each of the village affairs. However, today in some of the villages, chief is elected democratically²⁹.

Among the Lothas, a chief known as *Ekyung* assisted by an informal council of elders ruled the village. The chiefship was hereditary in the family of the man who originally founded the village but did not at all necessarily pass from father to son. The most suitable man becomes chief by force of character. His main function was that of a leader in was³⁰.

However, the Sumi chiefship is mostly hereditary unless the heir is incompetent to succeed. However, the youngest son of the chief can also become chief in

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp.85-94.

²⁷ N. Kahmei, *The Zeliangrong* in N Sanajaoba (ed.), Volume III *Manipur Past and Present*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, p. 417.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁰ J. P. Mill, *The lotha Naga*, Macmillan and Company, London. 1922, p. 96.

the adjoining areas subject to the availability of land and having a good group of royal followers. The basic strength of the Sumi chief lies in the ownership and control of land and resources. The Sumi chiefs have been mostly very autocratic³¹.

The village was the highest unit of political organisation among hill-dwellers. Each village itself was a collection of clans claiming a common descent³². Inter-village contacts were limited, most villages being usually at war with each other. The Naga village system was broadly democratic with village heads enjoying little hereditary authority or rights over land. There usually was a consultative council of village elders to govern the village and resolve disputes. Each village had its own sovereign chief, there being no higher authority to which villages owed allegiance. Land belonged to the village settler (*nampou*) who was usually not the village head (*khulakpa*). Nevertheless, the *nampou* was not a landowner in the traditional sense of the word. He received only a token rent from tillers. Village headmen and council members were men of influence but not necessarily the wealthiest people³³. The Kuki system, in contrast, was centralised with Kuki chiefs being heads of the villages and owners of all its land. Chiefs were also entirely supported by their subject villagers for their day-to-day requirements. Villagers usually cultivated the chief's fields, giving him a share of the game and presents during marriage or childbirth³⁴. Kuki Chiefship was strictly hereditary. Apart from these systems there are also several other systems of smaller tribes like the Hmar's where the

³¹ H. John Sema. *Traditional and Modern Political Institutions of Sumi Naga*. Ph. D Thesis. Department of Political Scienc. NEHU, Shillong. 2001. p. 145.

³² T. C. Hodson, *The Meitheis*. London: Macmillan, 1908, p. 540.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid*, p, 555.

entire village community owns the land, but in practice has to give the Chief a portion of their paddy or hunted animal as the case may be. However, common to both the Naga and Kuki system was the autonomy of village institutions. Even the Manipuri Maharaja's control over the hill chiefs was informal³⁵.

The British annexed Manipur in 1891 and soon initiated administrative changes, most significantly in land revenue and judicial systems. Reformed land revenue administration led to permanent settlement of agricultural land, involving the issuance of land documents to tillers and payment of revenue in cash by them to the state. Taxes on homestead lands were also introduced. In the judicial realm, special courts were abolished and the system of courts was streamlined. Legal codes that the British had introduced in the rest of the country were introduced in Manipur as well³⁶. All these changes consolidated the colonial hold in the state. In 1907, the authority of the *maharaja* was restored. He was put at the head of the newly constituted State *Durbar* made up of six Manipuri members with an English officer as its Vice President³⁷. However, as elsewhere in colonial India, veto power remained with the British Political Agent, while the state ruler held a subordinate position. An outcome of this arrangement was competition between the two centres of state authority, the Political Agent and the Maharaja.

These colonial interventionist measures were confined to the Valley and did not extend to the surrounding hill areas. These were generally unattended, being

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 120.

³⁶ Indian Penal Code (1860), Criminal Procedure Code (1898).

³⁷ For a survey of administrative changes in this period see 'The Administration of the State of Manipur from 13- 9-1891 to 15-5-1907', Manipur State Archives File (Manipur SA) # R-1/S-C, 317- Political.

left to the Political Agent and Vice President of the state *darbar* to conduct periodic expeditions in order to keep peace. The state made no effort to incorporate the hills into the state-wide judicial or land-revenue system or to encourage hill communities to be represented in the newly established state-level governing institutions. Subsequent measures to enhance the state's presence in the Hills also fell short of penetrating far enough to establish effective control through centralised³⁸. Each village was left to its autonomous self-containment, guided and governed by its own sets of customary laws and codes. The British kept its formal presence in the Hills thin and relied on pre-existing centres of power to do its bidding. It authorised local chiefs to maintain order in their jurisdiction and to collect taxes from their subjects, allowing a small part of this to be retained by the chief.

In the Hills, the British reliance on local chiefs and its allocation to them authority to tax and police the public prevented the state from consolidating its own authority and control. The policy helped to reinforce the authority of the chiefs and other traditional local centres of power. Throughout the colonial period, village chiefs remained in positions of strength in Manipur. Old rewards, sanctions and myths remained intact and could not be replaced with state-wide common reward structures.

With the dawn of Independence in 1947, the Government of India chose to depend for most of its administrative expansion on the old power structure of local chiefs and their advisors. The parliament passed the Manipur Village

³⁸ Rules for the Administration of Hills 1919. Government of Manipur.

Authority (Hill Areas) Act, 1956, for the administration of the hill areas in the state. The Act determined the number of a village authority based on the number of tax-paying houses³⁹. A total of 725 village authorities were constituted under the Manipur Village Authority (in the Hill Areas) Act, 1956⁴⁰. This Act introduced the controversial provision for elections to the village authority. The members of the village authority were elected based on adult franchise. The chiefs in Manipur oppose this Act. The Act also placed limitations on the powers of the chiefs. Before the Act was introduced, the chief along with the village authority functioned as the village court. However, under the Act, the head of the state was authorized to appoint two or more members of the village authority to function as the court. However, though these were elected bodies, unelected village chiefs led them⁴¹.

Moreover, through the Manipur Hill Areas Acquisition of Chief's Rights Act, 1967⁴², an attempt was made to abolish Chiefship in the hill areas of the state by paying compensation. The Act, however, has not been implemented. Chiefship prevails with all its rights and privileges in the hill areas of the state. The state's initiative to abolish the system of village chiefship failed despite an act to that effect having been passed in 1968 in the State Assembly. Evidently, the state's political bureaucracy had not been able to muster adequate authority to confront entrenched interests. Failure to abolish chiefships meant links with the traditional past were not severed; and by putting the hereditary chiefs at the top of the elected village authorities, their traditional authority was enhanced.

³⁹ Village Authority (in Hill Areas) Act, 1956. Government of Manipur.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Village Authority (in Hill Areas) Act, 1956. Government of Manipur.

⁴² Manipur hill Areas Acquisition of Chiefs Rights Act, 1967.

Having been incorporated in the administrative structure of the state, and being the channel through which development funds flow, yet lacking in accountability, Village Authorities in the Hills have become sites of contestation for control between different social forces. Their appeal has been on identity lines. This has affected not only on elections to village authorities, but also on the larger character of tribal politics, which has become predominantly identity-based⁴³.

Soon the ambit of their authority was expanded to include power to implement and monitor development programmes in the village. However, elections to village bodies soon took on more traditional forms with each clan nominating a member to the council. The Village Authority Act and subsequent developments created a parallel power structure in the village⁴⁴. Though this act made a start in integrating customary courts into the official system, its successes were modest. The old system of village courts continued, and is community-specific, emphasising the salience of tribal institutions and their specific identity.

Land reforms introduced in the state in 1960 were confined to the valley areas⁴⁵. The Hills, which account for 70 per cent of the state's area, were excluded from its purview. Tribal leaders were concerned about possible alienation of tribal lands to non-locals. Perhaps tribal leaders, mostly people with landed interests, were equally concerned about losing their traditional land

⁴³ Rajat Kanti Das, *Op cit*, p. 67.

⁴⁴ Interview, K. C. Bruno, member Tamenglong Khunjao Village Authority (Tamenglong Khunjao. 6 November 2004).

⁴⁵ *Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms (MLR & LR) Act 1960, Government of Manipur.*

rights⁴⁶. Consequently, land laws in the hill areas are still governed by tribal customs and practices. These exist outside the state's control and have not even been codified. The Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms (MLR & LR) Act is seen as being less definitive on issues such as land-ownership ceilings and redistribution.⁴⁷ The chiefs have interpreted the Government policy on tribal land protection as a threat to the inalienable rights of the chiefs over land. Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act 1975 and Manipur Hill Areas Acquisition of Chief's Rights Act 1967 have not been implemented in the hill areas of Manipur since it was strongly opposed by the traditional chiefs. The chiefs have thus influenced from time to time the course of politics in Manipur, though not with much successes particularly in view of the lack of unity among themselves.

Due to this social and political importance, local chiefs could not escape their responsibilities and hence whenever any critical situation arose they always took the leadership. For instance, during the Kuki rebellion (1917-1919) when the social and political fabric of the Kukis was threatened, the chiefs provided organizational resistance⁴⁸. The importance of Kuki chiefs in the society could be seen from the fact that the Kuki Chiefs' Association (KNA) formed in 1935-36 was the first political organization of the Kukis. Later it took the shape of the Kuki National Assembly (KNA) on 24 October 1946. In fact, KNA emerged from the womb of the chiefship organization and almost all the office bearers of the KNA either were the chiefs or connected with chief's family. In order to

⁴⁶ Kuki chiefs most vehemently opposed extension of MLR&LR Act to the hills. Today opposition to Extension has become a symbol of tribal protest.

⁴⁷ J. N. Das, *Opcit*, pp.139-140.

⁴⁸ T. T. Haokip, *Opcit*, p. 234.

determine the political destiny of the Kukis, the Chiefs took recourse to territorial political demands. The issue of Territorial demand was conditioned by two necessities, to protect their land and cultural identity and to act as a barrier to the infiltration of the dominant valley culture. In its entire movement, there was a perceptible lack of properly defined ideal of a socio-political and socio-economic policy. In fact, the slogan for territorial self-determination for the Kukis only acted as a mechanism to spell false consciousness. The chiefs also failed to develop a regional identity by appealing to the people of the same stock living in the northeast. Under such circumstances, the movement led by the chiefs in Manipur seems to have little relevance for the fraternal tribes across Manipur.⁴⁹

Manipur including the hill areas became a part of Indian Union in September 1949. However, the tribal people in the hill areas of Manipur were apprehensive of the more numerous meeteis of the valley⁵⁰. The Kuki chiefs also started mobilizing the support of the neighboring tribes like the Lushais and the Chins of Burma. Again, the demand for a separate district for the Kuki people was first voiced in the Kuki Chiefs' Zonal Council Meeting held on 3rd of September 1970⁵¹. However, the demand for district autonomy for the Kukis has been facing constant and organized opposition from the Nagas of Manipur, particularly of the north district. They have been threatening to secede from Manipur and join Nagaland if a separate district is given to the Kukis.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 251.

⁵⁰ Nari Rustomji, *Enchanted Frontier*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, p.106.

⁵¹ T. T. Haokip, *Opcit*, p. 245.

The Kuki chiefs and some of the Naga chiefs being the owner of the village land are in a position to influence the electorate in his village. Very often, the candidates give importance to the chiefs whose houses are selected for canvassing purposes. The chiefs also, issues press notes declaring their support to various candidates. They also appeal to the villagers in support of their own candidates⁵². In the 1990 elections, when the Congress (I) government favored the extension of the Manipur Land Revenue Act (MLRA) to the hill districts, the chiefs discouraged their villagers to vote for the Congress (I) party. The chiefs were against the reintroduction\amendment of the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reform Act, 1960, by the congress government in 1989 as they would have lost control over their land. The chiefs actively campaigned against this Act and this had an adverse effect on the congress party in the hill areas, which ultimately undermined the position of the congress party in the hill areas⁵³.

Again, few days ahead of the polls, a particular day was appointed as the day for the meetings of the political agents in which a grand feast usually followed. In the sampled constituencies, almost all the chiefs were invited to attend the meetings. The Chiefs were usually given time to deliver a speech in favouring of a particular candidate or party and highlights the prospects of the candidate or party⁵⁴.

The chiefs, functioning in isolated villages have thus attempted to influence from time to time the course of politics in Manipur. The chiefs are no doubt free

⁵² Interview with the chief of Gangpijang.

⁵³ T. T. Haokip, *Opcit*, p. 246.

⁵⁴ Interview with respondents.

to mobilize people politically. It can be said, that the concept of the traditional political institution among the tribal people in Manipur (especially Kuki) have by and large, remained intact, though changes have taken place especially with the advent of Christianity, education and the introduction of electoral politics. However, despite such factors, the institutions of Chiefship and the village council have been a cementing force for the tribal people. The institution of Chiefship in particular has been jealously guarded since it signifies the traditional culture, though great erosions took place concerning its functions and importance⁵⁵.

In the tribal belt, the electoral behavior was more on community lines. The tribal councils influence the voters and in many cases, they fielded their own candidates⁵⁶. Among the Kuki the Chiefs-association could be seen involved in active politics. One popular mode of vote campaigning in the hill areas of Manipur is 'Boiling tea' in the Chief's residence. The monarchical administration of the Kuki Chiefs and their despotic rule is still very different from democracy. Thus, the chiefs play a crucial role in the electoral politics of the state. Leaders and local influential persons mould the voters' decision⁵⁷. This is particularly true for the voters in tribal community like in the hill areas of Manipur where 'in group' solidarity is strictly maintained. Hence, a significant proportion of voters are influenced by their leaders.

⁵⁵ H. John. Sema, *Opcit*, p.122.

⁵⁶ R. P. Singh, *Opcit*, p.55.

⁵⁷ H.H. Kelly and J.W. Thibaut, *Experimental Studies of Group Problem Solving and Process* in Lindzey Gardner (ed), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol.II, Anderson Wesley, Cambridge, 1965, p. 122.

Some typical Chiefs still followed the path of the age-old despotic rule. Thus, the democratic principle of adult franchise seems to be a mockery in the hands of some of the typical Kuki Chiefs. The need of the hour for the masses is a form of democracy where free and fair voting could be held. Therefore, democracy and abolition of the institution of Chieftainship is the need of the hour. However, until such a thing happens the Chiefs will no doubt continue to play a decisive role in the electoral politics especially in the hill areas of Manipur

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

It is difficult to accurately assign lower and upper age limits for youth because, this vary from time to time, and from society to society. The United Nations identifies the age 15-24 as "youth" which has been adopted in many countries of the west. In India, the age 15-34 is recognized as youth. The period of youth stands for growth, development, action and leadership⁵⁸.

Before the advent of Christianity in the state, the youth of the northeast had their dormitory where all the young men of the village slept together. In Manipur, Tangkhul called it *Longshim*, Rongmeis' called *Khangehnu*, Hmar's *Buonzawl*, Zous' *Sawm*. In Arunachal Pradesh, especially in the Siang District there existed a bachelor's dormitory called *Kebang*. In Nagaland, they called it *Morung*, the Garos in Meghalaya called *Nokpante*, and the Mizo in Mizoram called it *Zawlbuk*. Among the Nagas, the girls also had a house or dormitory for

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

sleeping together. Among the Kuki-Chin tribes of Manipur, such places of sleeping together for the girls were not common.

Zawlbuk of the Mizos served many purposes. In olden days when villages were constantly at war with each other, the young man in the village were required to sleep together in one place so that they could be marshaled together quickly in case of an emergency. However, slowly this developed into a most important institution in the life of a Mizo youth. In this institution, mostly wrestling and trial of strength were done to keep the young ones fit.⁵⁹

The Garos are a tribe in Meghalaya, India and neighboring areas of Bangladesh, who call themselves *A·chik Mande*. They are the second-largest tribe in Meghalaya after the Khasi and comprise about a third of the local population⁶⁰. In the Garo habitation, the house where unmarried male youth or bachelors live is called *Nokpante*. The word *Nokpante* means the house of bachelors. *Nokpantes* are generally constructed in the front courtyard of the *Nokma*, the chief. The art of cultivation, various arts and cultures, and different games are also taught in the *Nokpante* to the young boys by the senior boys and elders⁶¹. *Nokpante* also acted as Village Guards and formed the main body of fighting force in wars. No girl was allowed to enter into the *Nokpante*. However, with introduction of schools and Christianity, *Nokpante* culture was outdated.

⁵⁹ L. B. Thanga, *The Mizos*, Guahati, 1978, pp.12-14.

⁶⁰ Garo (tribe) –accessed through Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.htm. Dated 12-09-05.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

The *Morung*, or the bachelor dormitory system, used to be an essential part of Naga life. Apart from the family, it was the most important educational set up of the Nagas. The *Morungs* are grant buildings, constructed at the village entrance or a spot from where the village can be guarded most effectively. On attaining the age of puberty, young boys and girls were admitted to their respective dormitories. The Naga culture, customs and traditions, which were transmitted from generation to generation through folk music and dance, folk tales and oral tradition, wood carving and weaving, were conveyed to the young in the *Morungs*⁶². Announcements of meetings, death of a villager, warnings of impending dangers, etc., were made from the *Morungs* with the beating of log drums. With the onset of modernity, the *Morung* system is no longer in practice among the Nagas⁶³.

The *Morung* was an important educational institution for the boys. There were regular ranks through which boys passed until they attained adulthood and were admitted to full membership. Normal activities at the *Morung* were never organised; they were spontaneous and members responded naturally. Much of the Naga culture, its customs and traditions have been transmitted from generation to generation through the media of folk music and dance, folk tales and oral historical traditions, carvings of figures on stone and wood, and designs on clothes. Much of this teaching-learning process took place at the men's and women's dormitories⁶⁴.



⁶² J:\Chapter\Naga people - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.htm. dated 12-09-05.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Som inn or the bachelors' dormitory is one of the institutions of the Kuki, which fostered and nurtured the youths into a responsible and matured person in the society. The bachelors choose a leader from amongst them and it was customary for the inmates to obey their chosen leader. The dormitory leader mobilized the youth and rendered free and compulsory services to the society. All male youths of the village who had attained the age of puberty were made to sleep in the dormitory in the night. The village dormitory served as a sleeping place, recreational centre for unmarried. It was also used for imparting and training the young boys. It also served as an inn for a man from another village⁶⁵.

From the above discussion it can be summarized that the dormitory serves as a kind of an informal school where the youngsters learned the art of doing things such as basket making, comb making, cane works and spinning from the seniors. The main functions of the dormitory were defense of the village. All boys attaining puberty must live in dormitory until they were married. It was the village guardroom and the centre of social, religious, and cultural life of the tribe. The institution made all-important announcements. It also entertained important visitors to the village; they were to arrange any village feast. They collected firewood, fetch water, and distribute meat. It was in these institutions that discipline and the elder members of the institution inspired honour for the elder people. Again, through these institutions the feeling of collective unity for their own society was deeply enriched in the minds and thoughts of young people. The dormitory was empty during the daytime but came to life after

⁶⁵ Structure of Chin-Kuki-Mizo Social Institutions manipur channel Ethnic Races Manipur –accessed through~ Manipur - E-Pao! Complete e-platform for Manipuris.htm. Dated 2-09-06.

sunset only. The villagers financed the bachelors' dormitory. The girls were strictly prohibited from entering the boys' dormitory⁶⁶. Thus, the dormitory system of the tribal people in the hill areas played many important roles in the village administration. It was the only institution for the youths in relation with the social and political life.

Of all the forces that contributed for the decaying of this important tribal institution was the coming of Christianity along with the introduction of modern education. In fact, bachelor's dormitory had lost its importance and value among the tribal people soon after the British administration took control of the socio-political administration from the late nineteenth century, followed by the arrival of the Christian missionaries and the subsequent introduction of the modern system of education among the people of this region⁶⁷.

With the advent of Christianity and education, the olden days youth dormitory could no longer exist in the original form and were being substituted by different organizations, unions and associations. All Tribal Student's Union Manipur, as its apex body, today's youth organizations like the Kuki Student's Organization, Hmar Student's Union and Komrem Student's Union are seen as playing a significant role in the electoral politics of the hill areas of Manipur, though they declare that the concerned organizations will not make any alliance with any political party. In the villages and organizational set-up of the youth community known as youth club, youth Union or youth fellowship have their own way in politics.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Garo (tribe) –accessed through Wikipedia. the free encyclopedia.htm. Dated 12-09-05.

The youths of Manipur take active part in the politics of the state. Naga students campaigned for affiliation of schools in the four hill districts of Manipur to the Nagaland Board of School Education. The district units of the students' union staged demonstrations at the district headquarters of Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel. The demand by NGOs and student organizations is meant to add strength to the NSCN (Isak-Muivah)'s demand for the integration of all Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam with Nagaland⁶⁸. The Zeliangrong Students Union of Nungba Area, Nungba Youth Organization and Nungba women body demanded that infrastructure including x-ray machine and medical facilities be provided for the Primary Health Centre at Nungba sub divisional headquarters⁶⁹.

The sampled constituencies have a large number of youth organizations and clubs all over the area and they play an important role during elections. By engaging in the campaigning process, like arranging election meetings and vehicles, the youth organization undertakes the task of giving political education to the electorate⁷⁰. Youth clubs in the constituencies also played an important role as a source of information during elections. The same age groups, classmates, co-workers have intimate bond of ties among themselves. They share, exchange and discuss various problems including political ones. During the time of elections, they try to influence each other's vote-choice in favour of their respective candidates⁷¹.

⁶⁸ <http://news.indiamart.com/news-analysis/manipur-naga-student-12880.html> dated 12-6-09

⁶⁹ <http://www.e-pao.net> \naga students. Dated 12-6-09.

⁷⁰ Interview with respondent.

⁷¹ Interview with a member of a youth club.

The youth clubs and party workers undertook the task of wall writing. The names of the contending candidates, their party symbols, party's name, their catchphrases etc. were printed on the walls of buildings and shops in their area. Later, flags and posters of contending parties were put up at different public places. All these were done by the youth organizations of the respective constituencies. In every hill constituencies, massive impersonations were witnessed, although it is against the model code of conduct. At the poll, the highest voter impersonation was seen from the youths. In an interview, one youth club leader revealed in confidence that he had casted 32 votes. In all the sampled constituencies, youth clubs of the village carry out some election works. Leaders of youth clubs assist party workers in giving out manifestoes, shouting slogans, arranging vehicles, pasting of party posters and arranging election meetings⁷². While conducting house campaigning the candidates are generally followed by leaders of the youth clubs of the locality. Sometimes during election campaign, candidates make promises to certain educated youths that they would be given well-paid Government jobs if they were elected⁷³. Therefore, the youth organizations take keen interest in the election campaign of some candidates. The voters in the sampled constituencies do not consider voting as a political right, which will be exercised on their own individual decisions.

⁷² Interview with the President of Ichailamlan Youth Club.

⁷³ Interview with the Presidents of Gangpijang Youth Club.

CHURCH

The designation 'church' defines an autonomous corporate institution hierarchically organized and served by a professional priesthood. Churches that conform to all these specifications are found only in Christianity; the structural arrangements of other religions are best referred to as religious institutions. The church is a religious non-political organization. It is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ. In the New Testament the word 'church' always refers to people, never, as it often does today, to a building⁷⁴.

There are impacts and influences on politics, which are caused by the church⁷⁵. In many ways, the church has its political influence on the society. The church and politics are entirely two different systems. The church being a religious institution cannot be bound to any political community, or any political system. Yet the church cannot but take interest in social and political structure within which it has a mission to bring the gospel to the people. Though the political community and the church are distinct and independent of each other, they are linked because both are devoted to personal and social vocation of humanity under different titles. Religion is a powerful motivating force in human life, including political life⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ Talcott Parsons, Christianity in David E. Stills (ed.), *Op cit*, p. 502

⁷⁵ Robin Lovin, *Religion and Politics* in Mary Hawkenworth & Maurice Kogen (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Government & Politics*, Vol I, Longman, New York, 1992, p. 502

⁷⁶ *Ibid*

Rev William Pettigrew introduced Christianity in Manipur in 1896. . The British and other European missionaries were responsible for the spread of Christianity in Manipur and especially in the hilly regions. They initiated the spread of modern education among the tribal people. They used English and the local languages as the medium of instruction. At present, almost all of the hill tribal populations are Christians. The Bible is available in Vaiphei, Paite, Tangkhul, Thadou, Lushai and Meitei dialects. Christianity is the second largest religion in the state, accounting for 35% of the population⁷⁷. The hill tribes were largely converted to Christianity in the 19th Century, although some sections of Naga tribes like the Kabui and Rongmei retain their traditional tribal religions. The acceptance of Christianity and the spread of English education marked a departure from many of their tribal customs and traditions⁷⁸.

Christianity has also been a factor for bringing political development in the hill areas. This religion has often been described as a 'primary agent of change among the hill tribes'.⁷⁹ B. Pakem is quite assertive when he says that Christianity has laid the foundation not only of evangelization but also of civilization. He further claims that of all the agents of societal changes in the hill areas of the North East India that of the church is the most important. It was bent on raising the intellectual level of the people. Further, it opens up the avenues for the purpose of modernization to operate in an otherwise educationally and economically backward area⁸⁰. The members of the church

⁷⁷ Manipur - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.htm dated 6-5-09

⁷⁸ S.K. Chaube, *op.cit.* p. 76.

⁷⁹ Frederick S. Downs, *Christianity in North East India*, ISPCK, New Delhi, 1983, p.183.

⁸⁰ B. Pakem, *Christianity in North East India. Problems and Aspirations of the Hill tribes of North East India, Consultation on Christianity and the problems of Hill tribes in North East India*, 21-24 July, 1992. Shillong, pp.1-11

feel that it is their duty to work for the all-round development of the community. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these churches provide a sufficient platform for developing leadership qualities. The various organizations within the church like Women Society, Youth Fellowship etc. do play a vital role in the process of political socialization. These organizations act as a more effective information centre than other sources⁸¹.

In the sampled constituencies, the churches neither encourage nor discourage any political involvement. Beginning party meetings with a church service or prayers was a common feature. Appeasement of the religious leaders was another political tactic of the parties e.g. giving housing loans to such religious leaders⁸². In short, the political parties tried to get as much of political mileage as is possible through their connection with the church organizations.

The nature of education and encouragement for leadership provided in the church organizations resulted to growing awareness of political, economic and social rights among the tribal people in the hill areas of Manipur⁸³. It also has an impact on the status of women and children. Earlier, women did not take interest in politics. Therefore, participation was out of question. Now, women insist on attending the assemblies to represent their interest⁸⁴. This is a clear example of their inclination towards politics.

⁸¹ Interview with respondents.

⁸² Interview with respondents.

⁸³ Interview with the church Pastor of Ichailamlan village in Saikul constituency.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Some of the people in the hill areas of Manipur are ignorant and illiterate about electoral politics and elections due to lack of information and instruction. The uneducated persons just do what a trustworthy person tells them to do. The church leaders, being usually educated know much about the process and they do help in making people aware of the democratic process of elections⁸⁵. On the other hand, neither the national nor the regional parties conduct any programmes to instruct the people on the implications of their rights and duties of the electoral process. They are left to fend for themselves. A curious citizen in remote areas ask the pastor or church elder, who in turn, might give correct or biased information on the matter. A church leader is taken for granted that he is dependable. Hence, some people approach them for guidance⁸⁶.

Overall, the churches and pastors do not involve themselves in promoting the interests of a political party. However, a tacit consent and support to the candidates of their choice, say of one's own tribe seems to be inevitable.⁸⁷ It is said that in the 1990 state Assembly elections, some Presbyterian Church leaders openly supported their candidate hailing from their tribe, Zou. They even forced a village chief to issue the necessary orders so that the entire village might vote for the candidate of their choice⁸⁸. There are also instances where a tribe or sub-ethnic groups has elected candidates belonging to the tribe. For example, the paite-dominated area in Thanlon constituency has been electing Mr. Pungzathang several times from there, who is a Paite. In the

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ Interview with the church pastor of Ichailamlan village in Saikul constituency.

⁸⁷ Jeyaseelan. L. *Christianity and its Impacts: A socio-political and economic with special reference to Churachandpur District of Manipur*, Ph. D Thesis, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, Imphal, 1993, p.342.

⁸⁸ T. T. Haokip, *Opcit*, p. 167.

electoral politics it could be sometime seen that a particular church favours a particular candidate and mainly if he happens to their own church. However, it was not done openly and cannot be found in a written documentary form except some appeal letters⁸⁹.

The early missionaries who were foreigners did not show much interest in the political developments of the state. Besides, they were also harassed by the political bigwig of the time for one reason or the other. Hence, they kept themselves away from any direct interference. They followed a policy of neutrality. In the process, Christians at large have understood politics as something dirty and therefore they should have nothing to do with it⁹⁰.

During the time when the political atmosphere was heating up, all the churches played a very important role for the avoidance of violence and use of unfair means in the election. The role played by the churches was very evident in the 2002 Assembly Elections. A special prayer campaign is usually organized for peaceful conduct of elections in the state. A night of fasting and prayer was called at Imphal on 29 May 2002 for all Christians irrespective of denominations. It is an initiative undertaken by All India Christian Council (AICC) in collaboration with different churches, missions and NGOs. The church felt that the Government of India has failed to solve the situation especially under the Arm Special Powers Act (ASFPA) over last 50 years⁹¹.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*

⁹⁰ [http //churches in Manipur](http://churches.in Manipur) accessed through news indiamart.com dated 7-6-04

⁹¹ [http //indianchristians](http://indianchristians) accessed through manipuronline.com dated 7-6-09.

In addition, religious affiliation and race may account for more important determinants of voting behavior in some political system, and not only may they be more important, but polarization along these lines instead of class divisions may be more dangerous to the stability of those system, since there is less to bargain over in the political market place. However, the dividing line between class, religions and ethnic origin is not a firm one⁹². Voters very often vote on religious considerations. The selection of candidates is done with an eye upon the presence of a religious majority in a particular constituency. The candidate does not hesitate to seek votes by playing the religious card with co- religious voters and the secular card with members of other religious communities⁹³. Although the influence of church in the electoral politics of this state is not as significant as in other states like Nagaland⁹⁴, still the role played by the churches cannot be ignored.

Women's role during the elections is also no less significant. They took part in different ways of campaigning, slogan shouting and in voting. Many of them were seen working in the election offices as helpers in the domestic affairs of the office like cooking food and serving tea etc. Historically, women in Manipur have taken active part in their political struggle.⁹⁵ In the political sphere, women always stood in the forefront of every movement. Women wings of political parties and different women organization in Manipur have a very important role

⁹² Alan R. Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1971, p.128.

⁹³ R. P. Singh, *Opcit*, p. 178.

⁹⁴ Mimi, *The Role of the Baptist Church in Nagaland Politics*, M. Phil Dissertation, Department of Political Science, NEHU, Shillong, 1990, p. 103.

⁹⁵ S.K. Chaube, *Opcit*, p.131.

in creating a sense of awareness in the minds of the female electorate that women can better represent them than by a man⁹⁶

However, women's ability to produce an impact in the political process of Manipur has been negligible. In Manipur women political leaders are limited. Before statehood, only few women were nominated in the territorial assembly. However, women in Manipur have been actively involved in politics very few women have won election so far. It shows that involvement of women in politics is very low. A few women have fought for elections. Women of Manipur have been participating in the political process since 1952 held under the constitution of India. In addition, women voters always outnumbered the men voters in every election held up to 2002⁹⁷. Records have shown that from the year 1952 until 1998 only four women had contested in the parliamentary elections. Out of these, only Kin Gangte came out successfully and represented the state in the House of the people. Assembly election records shows that, till today only three women candidates were elected in Assembly elections and these women were the wives of the MPs, MLAs or Ministers. As reservation of women seat in local bodies came into act women are encouraged to participate in politics at Panchayat and Municipal level. However, the electoral behavior in Manipur over the last many years shows that women are not likely to win election in good number⁹⁸.

⁹⁶ Devi Bimola Ksh 'Manipur Women-A Study' in Naorem Sanajaoba (ed) *Manipur Past and Present, The Heritage and Ordeals of a Civilization*, Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988 p 172

⁹⁷ Election Report, Legislative Assembly Election, Imphal 2002

⁹⁸ *Ibid*

For the rural women in Manipur political participation is far distant dream. Although there are provisions for reservation of seats for women under the Village Authority Act, it has not been implemented. The Village Authority comprised of the chief and his councilors where women membership is nil. On the other hand, women in the hill district generally are not concerned with this problem except for a few enlighten women who discuss the matter occasionally in an informal discussion. Above all, women have not demanded their rights for inclusion in the village local decision-making body⁹⁹.

However, their influence as pressure groups has been effective. If any political party undermines the role of women in elections, then it is diminishing its chances of winning in the battle of ballot. In the hills, the Naga women and the Kuki women are the guardians of their respective tribes. They played a pivotal role during Naga-Kuki clashes. It was at that moment that these women went long stretches in the hills (sometimes-walking 3-4 days continuously) to meet their respective armed militias and underground outfits to tell them to stop killing each other. The Kuki Mothers' Association is formally known as, "The Kuki Mothers' Association for Peace and Social Reformation." During the recent clashes in Churachandpur District between the Paite and Kuki communities, the women of both the communities went out into the open and worked for peace¹⁰⁰.

At the same time, they stand against drug abuse, prostitution, alcoholism, gambling and the like vices affecting their communities. Tangkhul Shanao Long

⁹⁹ Interview with respondents.

¹⁰⁰ Women in Manipur-accessed through [www. e- pao.com](http://www.e-pao.com). Dated 12-5-09.

(All Tangkhul Women's Association) was honored with the Award given by the Indian Federation of Small and medium Newspapers in Sept. 1995 for their courage and struggle in bringing peace and development in the state. In the present scenario, there is strong women's front in every community in Manipur. Among the Meitei community, it is the Meira Paibis, the Naga women's association amongst the Nagas and the Kuki women's association of the Kuki community. Since the various women's groups wield enormous influence in their communities, almost all the organizations, political parties including the underground organizations try to get their support. Even the security forces being aware of their influence try to win to their side. Unlike the women's groups in the valley, the activities of the women's groups in the hills who are mostly Christians are bound by Church rules. The influence of the tribal customs is also equally strong. Traditionally women are treated as inferior in the tribal society.

After studying the role of chiefs, church and youths in mobilizing people during the elections, an attempt will be made in the next chapter to study important election issues and people's reaction on the issues.

CHAPTER IV

ISSUES AND PEOPLES' REACTION.

A political issue is defined as a policy based controversy relevant to the mass public's evaluation of either political parties or candidates for public office. The link between citizens and their elected leaders that arises from political issues lies at the very heart of democratic governance¹

Every political system has its own peculiar characteristics that influence and shape its nature and contents. These factors manifest it during elections and shape the outcome of the elections. The result is therefore the product of the various factors within a political system. On the other hand, the opinions and views of the electorate is the carrier of the factors and forces within the system. Both the factors and the peoples' perception of it influence and shape each other. Therefore, the outcome of the election, again, is an indicator of the peoples' aspiration and wishes in the political system²

Elections are largely influenced by several factors and electoral politics are shaped by the changing position and trends of these factors. Parties convert

Paul Webb. *Campaigns, Elections and Electoral Systems*, in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, Vol 1, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 399

² *Ibid*

these factors into election issues and fight the elections³ However in the Indian context politicization of these issues and the propaganda on these issues by rival political parties may not have much impact on the understanding and consciousness of the public directly due to high rate of illiteracy and lower economic conditions that do not facilitate the easy reach of information of these factors However, its overwhelming presence, importance and prominence in the national perspective can influence the decision of the voters Thus it can affect the election outcome and shape its future trends⁴

By now, quite a number of Indian states have their local regional political parties, which generally try to emphasize the local issues They have posed themselves as an alternative to the national parties whose policy has not been satisfactorily benefited by the states⁵

Changes in the predominant issues from one election to another may affect voting behavior greatly Local issues always influence the choice of the voters⁶ Political parties try to identify itself with local issues and thereby secure for itself popular local support Issues which are directly relevant to class position, such as those involving the extension of the welfare state, nationalization of industry or the rights of trade unions, will presumably increase the correlation between economic class position and voting On the other hand, issues involving civil rights, civil liberties, public morality, or foreign policy are not easily linked with

³ Harold F. Gasnell, *Why Europe Votes*, Social Science Study Vol 19, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1930, p. 103

⁴ Iqbal Narain, *Election Studies in India: An Evaluation*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p. 15

⁵ Election issues- accessed through [www.indiaelections.com](#) Dated 12-6-08

⁶ R. P. Singh *Opin* p. 68

the economic class position. Evidences from many countries indicate that the better-educated people tend to be more internationalists, less jingoistic or xenophobic, more tolerant in comparison with those people who are conservative. At the same time, better educated persons are not so concerned with the issues of religion or racial fanaticism. They are rather concerned with the administrative problems⁷

The electorate is constantly being replaced, and the personality of candidates and issues may be factors in persuading the voter to change his party allegiance. Moreover, the role of issues in an election tends to be more in the nature of a post-mortem on the consequences of policies, not a consideration of the electoral promises contained in the party programmes⁸

Political parties and social groups help voters make sense of political issues. They endure across elections and tend to maintain consistent orientations towards issues⁹. Given the low attention most people pay to politics, the long-standing consistency of parties on most issues provides a critical link for allowing voters to make policy-oriented vote choice. Parties also enhance the accurate use of valence type performance issues, as they provide the over time continuity necessary for voters to reward good performance and to punish bad performance¹⁰

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ Alan R Ball, *Opcit*, p 131

⁹ S M Lipset & S Rokkan, *Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: An Introduction in* S M Lipset & S Rokkan (ed.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, Free Press, New York, 1978, p 67

¹⁰ *Ibid*

Social groups can also assist citizens in casting meaningful policy votes. Labor, business, religious, linguistic, racial/ethnic groups traditionally have been important sources of cues for voters. Feelings toward a group and awareness of the group's position on an issue can serve to alert the voter on the issue and can help determine the voter's own position¹¹

Some issues are more important in elections than others are. Sometimes this happens by accident and sometimes by design. A participant citizen is supposed to take active interest in policies and if he rationally decides, he votes parties on the merits of the issues of policy of various parties¹². Indian politics are said to be oriented not by issues but by personalities. Not all persons who pay attention to the campaign would be clear in their minds about issues¹³

The objective of the study is to find out how far the respondents are familiar with current issues of the state and their reaction on the issues and how far their position on these issues is related to voting choice. The respondents were asked to indicate the issues in the state during 2002 assembly elections. The issues listed by them can be seen in the following table

¹¹ *Ibid*

N S G Kini, *Op cit*, p 98

¹³ *Ibid*, p 149

Table 4.1 Distribution of respondents by identification of issues

Issues	No of respondents	Percentage
Insurgency	40	20
Economic problems	30	15
Underdevelopment	35	17.5
Corruption	20	10
Territorial integrity	10	5
Bandhs	10	5
Higher education	20	10
Armed Forces Special Powe Act(AFSPA)	15	7.5
Stable government	6	3
Do not know/No response	14	7
Total	200	100.00

The percentage of respondents who were able to identify issues works out to 93% while 7% of the respondents are in the category of 'Do not know' and 'No response'. This certainly is a high percentage. Compared with traditional democratic beliefs, the findings of modern voting research present a sobering account of the information actually possessed by the electorate. Many electors are well informed, but the gradient of knowledge is so steep that very large parts of the public are, indeed, ignorant of very elementary political facts¹⁴.

The issues mentioned by the respondents are as follows.

(1). **Insurgency:** An insurgent is a national of a country who is in revolt against the Government of his country and fights to overthrow the Government by

¹⁴ Joel D. Barkan, *Elections in Developing Countries* in Richard Rose (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Elections*, Macmillan and Company, Reference Ltd, 2002, p. 103

guerilla warfare¹⁵. Academically, insurgency has been defined as a struggle between a non-ranking group and ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system it considers illegitimate¹⁶. Hence, insurgency may break out against a particular regime, particular persons of a regime, particular structures and salient values a regime upholds, or particular policies or biases of a regime. In all such possible cases, the prime objective of insurgents would be to capture power and replace the political community¹⁷. Insurgency has been classified into six types – Secessionist, Revolutionary, Restorational, Reactionary, Conservative and Reformist¹⁸. There is however, complete agreement among scholars that insurgency is a form of political violence and is a means to achieve any of the above mentioned ends. The variables that determine the fate of insurgent movements include popular support, organisational cohesion, external support, geography and environment¹⁹.

Manipur is one of the oldest insurgency infected states in independent India. The last few decades have seen the emergence of a number of insurgent groups. With three major ethnic groups in Manipur, its insurgency is also primarily divided into insurgent groups of Meitei, Naga and Kuki²⁰.

¹⁵ Ashok Kumar Ray & B.J. Deb, *Terrorism and Human Rights in North East India*, NEICSSR, Shillong, Om Publications, New Delhi, 2007, p.153.

¹⁶ Bard O'Neil (ed.), *Insurgency in Modern World*, West view Press, Colorado, 1980, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ A.D. Smith, "The Formation of Nationalist Movement" in his *Nationalist Movement*, McMillan, London, 1976, pp. 1-30.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

The large number of insurgent groups existing in Manipur and their extortion demands have made the people realize that most of them are deviating from their main aim. In any case, most of the younger cadres in the factions are doing this only because they have nothing else to do²¹. Protracted deployment of security forces in the state to handle insurgency caused a lot of inconvenience to common citizens and lawless violence perpetrated by the insurgents not merely disrupted the socio-economic development of the people but pushed them to the economic backwardness. This gave rise to compounding unemployment problem leading to involvement of youths in drug trafficking for easy money²².

The immediate problem besetting the people of Manipur today is the failure of the state Government to enforce 'Rule of law' in the state. Apart from atrocities and Human Rights violations by the security forces, there is widespread violence and acts of crimes committed by unknown assailants. On December 13, 2004, for instance, the Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL) abducted the Manipur University Vice Chancellor and Registrar. They were released on December 17 after being shot in their legs. The KYKL justified this action on the grounds that both officials had acted improperly in the appointment of the Director of the Audio-Visual Research Centre of the University²³. In another incident, former Director General of Police of Manipur, Y. Jugeshwor Singh, was shot dead by KYKL militants on April 24, 2004, in front of his residence in

²¹ History of Manipur- accessed through <http://www.manipuronline.com/Editorial/February2002>. Dated 4-02-09.

²² Manipur- accessed through www.idsa.in. Dated 12-6-08.

²³ Manipur elections-accessed through www.christianaggression.org dated 20.09.08.

Imphal. The KYKL claimed that Singh had disobeyed its diktats and was campaigning for the BJP candidate²⁴.

Common citizens who want a normal and peaceful life are fed up with the no-win situation. A related aspect is the fear of extortions, kidnapping and killings of businesspersons. In order to survive, almost every industry or business, big or small, in most part of the state, makes regular contributions to different underground outfits²⁵. All the employees of the medical, fisheries, Education departments in Thoubal District protested against the demand of money, kidnap of officers etc., on the 25th October 2005 and demanded a peaceful working.²⁶ All these reactions from the public emerged from long-sufferings. For any State, region/country to prosper a secure and peaceful environment is necessary.²⁷ Further, the respondents were asked whether the issue of insurgency in the state should be suppressed or resolved by negotiations. The responses are presented in the following table.

Table 4.2 Distribution of respondents on resolution of insurgency

Opinion	No. of respondents	Percentages
Negotiation	112	56
Should be suppressed	60	30
Can't say	28	14
Total	200	100.00

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Interview with respondents.

²⁶ Poknapham (Manipuri Local Daily), dated 26/10/2005.

²⁷ Interview with a respondent.

People's reaction to issues like insurgency shows that majority of the respondents has rejected the option of suppressing insurgency by any means. As many as 56% respondents have suggested that the issue of insurgency should be solve by negotiations. Another 30% respondents were in favour of using force to end insurgency in the state. The rest of the respondents (14%) were not certain as to how the problems of insurgency should be handled. It is also documented that the respondents believes corruption, poor economic condition and unemployment are the causes of the increase in the number of insurgent. Unless unemployment and corruption are arrested in the state there seems to be no other alternatives to ending insurgency²⁸.

(2) **Corruption:** Corruption, when applied as a technical term, is a general concept describing any organized, interdependent system in which part of the system is either not performing duties it was originally intended to, or performing them in an improper way, to the detriment of the system's original purpose²⁹. Corruption is a term with many meanings, but generally, it entails misusing one's office for a private gain or unofficial end.

The most dangerous social evil in the Manipuri society today is the rampant corruption. Corruption in governance and public life siphoning of public money by unscrupulous public servants, fraudulent withdrawals of taxpayers' money without executing public works, irregular and fake appointments in government departments, bribery in appointments, transfers and posting of government

²⁸ Insurgency- accessed through www.christianaggression.org Dated 20.09.08.

²⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption>.

servants, have become order of the day in our society³⁰. In the field of politics, also the picture is equally gloomy. Moral integrity, talents of the political leaders and political ideologies hardly count in elections. Money power and muscle power decide election results³¹. On November 25, 2004 KYKL, militants shot six examination invigilators in their legs in capital Imphal for allegedly encouraging students to take recourse to unfair means to pass the test. Two women accused of doing the same were beaten up and warned of harsher punishment if they repeated the mistake³². Another 10% of the respondents recognised the issue of corruption as the most important issue in 2002 elections.

To understand the people's reaction on corruption, the respondents were asked if they were tired of the large-scale corruption in the state. The responses are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Distribution of respondents on corruption

Reactions	No. of respondents	Percentages
Yes	200	100.00
No	00	00
Can't say	00	00
Total	200	100.00

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ E:\Recommendations of the Symposium on 'Save Manipur' KanglaOnline ~ Your Gateway.htm. Dated 7-02-09.

³² Manipur- accessed through www.idsa.in dated 7-02-09.

The above table vividly indicates that people are not happy of corruption in all spheres of life. Most of the respondents said that public offices are bought and sold in the state³³. The respondents also feel that merits and talents are no longer sole criteria for government appointment and every government job has a price tag in Manipur. One of the respondents said that the general decline in morals and ethics was the cause of corruption in the state.

(3) Economic problems: The economic problems in Manipur are caused by many factors like transport bottleneck, militancy, non-availability of mineral resources, lack of power resources, minimization of medium and large-scale industries, weak agriculture and non-payment of salary in time to the state government employees by the state³⁴. The disadvantageous geographical location of the state is one of the main obstacles to its economic development. According to study, the North East region as a whole shares less than one percent of its borders with the rest of the country, and the rest with Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and the Tibetan region of China.

There has been talk of converting this location disadvantage into a boon because of an increasingly integrated world economy. This is particularly so when all the seven states of the region are on international borders. In addition, these states are very close to the dynamic South-East Asian economies³⁵. Thus, rational policy thinking in this area should be developed. As many as

³³ Interview with respondents.

³⁴ Election Issues- accessed through www.archweb.org. Dated 17-02-09.

³⁵ North-East India- accessed thorough www.cic.nic.in. Dated 2-02-09.

15% respondents felt that an economic problem in the state is the most important issue in this election.

To inquire about the people's reaction to this problem the respondents were asked whether their financial situation had improved during the past five years. The responses are given below in the table.

Table 4.4 Distribution of respondents by financial situation in the past five years

Financial situation	No. of respondents	Percentages
Improved	20	10
Same	80	40
Worsened	100	50
Total	200	100.00

The data presented above suggests an improvement in the economic conditions of the 10% respondents. Since the perception of improvement in one's financial situation largely depends on his or her own satisfaction in life, people having done well would automatically feel an improvement³⁶. However, the majority of the respondents feel that their financial situation has remained the same over the past five years or worsened.

(4) **Bandhs:** Bandhs, originally a Hindi word meaning 'closed', is a form of protest used by political activists in some countries in South Asia like India and Nepal. Often Bandhs means that the community or political party declaring a

³⁶ Subrata K. Mitra and V.B. Singh, *Democracy and Social Change*, Saga Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 111.

Bandh expect public to stay in their homes and strike work. In addition, all the shopkeepers are expected to keep their shops closed and the transport operators like buses and cars are supposed to stay off the road and not carry any passengers. All this is expected to be voluntary, but in many instances, people are terrorized into participating in a Bandh³⁷.

The Supreme Court of India has banned Bandhs in 1998, but political parties still organize them. In 2004, the Supreme Court of India fined two political parties, BJP and Shiv Sena for organizing a Bandh in Mumbai as a protest against bomb blasts in the city³⁸. The Telegraph Daily newspaper reported in this way, "In West Bengal, where the CPI (M) leads a coalition in power, CPI (M) leaders speak out against Bandhs and the damage they cause to productivity and work culture. But in Kerala, where the CPI (M) leads a political formation which is not in power, it is actively involved in promoting and organizing Bandhs." It is a difficult problem for any political party in the country to have a clear-cut ideology on the holding of Bandhs³⁹.

The state government's ineffectiveness in meeting the growing aspirations of the people and the alleged excesses committed by the security forces in the course of countering militancy are the main reasons for calling Bandhs in the state. Militants also call for Bandhs on days of national significance like Republic Day, Independence Day, etc. Today, Bandhs or blockades (blockades in Manipur refer mainly to blocking of the movement of goods-laden vehicles

³⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandh>. Dated 5-02-08.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Manipur Bandhs- accessed through <http://www.e-pao.net/> Dated 2-2-09.

along the inter-state highways) have become the most common and effective means to force the government to redress popular grievances. It is observed that the tribal groups mainly resort to blockade of the inter-state highways that serve as the lifeline of the landlocked state. In contrast, in the plains, Bandhs are common⁴⁰.

The Manipur government has declared bandhs as illegal and a panel of four lawyers has been constituted to consider legal action against bandh organizers in the state. A rough official estimate has put the total loss incurred by Manipur due to bandhs from 2004 to 2007 at about Rs 1,320 crore⁴¹.

According to Oinam Biren Singh, the retired director of economics and statistics department, Manipur 52 bandhs and 43 blockades in the 2007-08 financial year that led to losses to the tune of Rs 504.32 crore and Rs 236.68 crore respectively⁴².

The frequent bandhs and blockades imposed on the inter-state highways by protestors have severely affected economic activities in the state and have led to acute shortages of essential commodities, including life-saving medicines. It is useful, in this context, to recall the 52-day-long (June 19 to August 11, 2005) blockade of the Mao-Imphal section of the NH-39 imposed by All Naga Students Association of Manipur (ANSAM) in protest against the state government's decision to declare June 18 as 'State Integrity Day' in honour of

⁴⁰ E:\IDSA Strategic Comments The Growing Trend of Bandhs and Blockades in Manipur.htm. Dated 3-09-08.

⁴¹ Manipur Bandhs- accessed through www.e-pao-net. Dated 2-02-09.

⁴² Bandhs- accessed through www.manipuronline.com. Dated 6-03-09.

18 persons killed while protesting against the extension of ceasefire between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM to Manipur. To provide relief to the people, the Indian Air Force was pressed into service to airlift medicines to Manipur from Guwahati ⁴³

The number of respondents who identified bandhs and blockades as an important issue in the state was 5%. To know people's reaction on bandhs and blockages the respondents were asked whether they consider bandhs and blockages as a necessary tool of protest. The responses are given in the table below.

Table 4.5 Distribution of respondents by their opinion on bandhs and blockages

Bandhs as tool of protest	No. of respondents	Percentages
Yes	70	35
No	110	55
Can't say	20	10
Total	200	100.00

The above table indicates that majority of the respondents (55%) do not consider bandhs and blockages as a necessary tool of protest. In fact, people are aware of the economic loss of the state during such bandhs and road blockages⁴⁴. However, some of the respondents confessed that there is no

⁴³ E:\IDSA Strategic Comments The Growing Trend of Bandhs and Blockades in Manipur. Dated 22-01-09.

⁴⁴ Interview with respondents.

better way to get attention of the government to solve their problems unless bandhs and road blockages are called⁴⁵.

(5) **Stable government:** The need of Manipur today is a stable government. Encouraging defection will only bring instability as was witnessed in the seventh Manipur Assembly⁴⁶. The Politics of Defection in Manipur began by 1963. In a span of 35 years, (1967 – 2002) Manipur has seen eight Chief Ministers and as many as 25 ministries. This is a clear indication of the fluidity of the political situation in Manipur. What is interesting is that none of the Chief Ministers and their ministries completed full terms⁴⁷.

In the 2000 elections, the Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) won 29 seats. In order to form a stable government, it engineered the defection of nine MLAs from the Opposition parties, including the Manipur People's Party (MPP) and the Nationalist Congress party (NCP). Nipamacha formed the Ministry with the Federal Party of Manipur (FPM), which had six seats. However, the coalition did not last long. Following the fast-paced switching of political loyalties, Nipamacha resigned in February 2001, paving the way for a new coalition government headed by the Samata Party leader, Radhabinod Koijam. The Samata Party had won just two seats, but its strength increased to 12 after 10 of the 11 Congress (I) MLAs joined it. Meanwhile, the Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) faced a split following infighting between Nipamacha and Th. Chaoba, former Union Minister of State for Food Processing. The group led by

⁴⁵ Interview with respondents.

⁴⁶ Political Defection- accessed through www.christainaggression.org. Dated 22-09-08.

⁴⁷ Defections- accessed through www.kanglaonline.com. Dated 22-09-08.

Chaoba was recognized as the real MSCP by a High Court order. Nipamacha formed the Manipur National Conference (MNC). Because of the bickering inside the party, 18 MLAs left the MSCP for the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). The total strength of the BJP subsequently increased to 26, when two more MLAs from the FPM joined it.⁴⁸

A fresh crisis emerged when the BJP, with strength of 26 MLAs, wanted to join the Samata Party (SAP) government on the condition that the new coalition government is led by the BJP and that Koijam step down in favour of the BJP's R.K. Dorendra. This formula was not acceptable to the Samata Party. The issue was referred to the respective high commands of the two parties. However, even the intervention of Home Minister L.K. Advani and Samata Party leader George Fernandes could not resolve the crisis. The Koijam government fell after BJP MLAs voted for a no-confidence motion against it⁴⁹.

In a span of three decades since Manipur became a full fledged state in 1972, the state has witnessed as many as nine chief ministers and President's rule on seven occasions.

However, only 3% of the respondents were able to identify this as an important issue. Further, the respondents were asked whether they consider political instability as the cause of the many problems in the state. The responses are given below.

⁴⁸ Manipur Elections- accessed through <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline>. dated 8.11.07.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Table 4.6 Distribution of respondents by their reaction on political instability

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentages
Yes	115	67.5
No	40	10
Can't say	45	22.5
Total	200	100.00

The above table indicates that majority of the respondents (67.5%) are of the opinion that political instability caused by large-scale defection of political parties is the cause of the many problems faced by the state. However, 10% respondents were not aware that defection will bring political instability and in the process, developmental issues will be ignored. Again 22.5% respondents belong in the group of "can't say". This response probably shows the political immaturity of the hill voters.

(6) Territorial Integrity: The question on territorial integrity of the state was an emotive and politically crucial agenda in the state. This issue was mentioned in the manifesto of all political parties in the 2002 elections. In the valley, protecting the territorial integrity of the state turned out to be one of the major issues of political debate⁵⁰.

Manipur was a sovereign kingdom. It had clearly demarcated territorial boundaries. It lost its sovereignty in the hands of British in 1891. Even during the British regime, its boundaries were honoured and kept intact. Later on, the territorial boundary of Manipur was clearly defined in section 3 of the North-

⁵⁰ http://www.manipuronline.com/Manipur/June2002/territorialintegrity21_2.htm. Dated 2-09-08.

Eastern Areas (Re-organization) Act 1971 as on and from the appointed day there shall be established a new state to be known as the State of Manipur, with the territories which immediately before that were included in the Union Territory of Manipur. There is no ambiguity about the boundary of Manipur, when it was merged with the Indian Union in 1949 as mentioned in the First Schedule of the Indian Constitution, 1950. Manipur has been a pre-existing state before the adoption of Indian Constitution. Manipur merged with a definite boundary⁵¹.

The People of Manipur had also objected to the extension of ceasefire to Manipur in 1964. The All Manipur People's Convention submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister and Home Minister on 23-09-1965 objecting to the extension of ceasefire to Manipur⁵². The All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) also came out strongly against the extension of ceasefire to Manipur⁵³. The Manipur Cultural Integration Center under the leadership of people from both hill and valley campaigned intensely in the late sixties to bring stronger emotional integration of people of Manipur⁵⁴. The people of Manipur in massive rallies participated by lakh of people from all communities and sections pledged to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Manipur on 4th August 1997 and 28th September 2000 respectively⁵⁵. Ceasefire agreement without territorial limits (between the Government of India and NSCN (IM) invited a strong resentment from the public. Protests, rallies, demonstrations for days

⁵¹ http://www.manipuronline.com/Manipur/June2002/territorialIntegrty21_2.htm Dated 2-09-08.

⁵² http://www.manipuronline.com/Manipur/June2002/territorialIntegrty21_2.htm Dated 2-09-08

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ http://www.e-pao.com/Manipur/June2002/territorialIntegrty21_2.htm. Dated 2-09-08.

and imposition of curfews could not bring normalcy. 18 lives were lost⁵⁶. Manipur Legislative Assembly building was burnt down. Official quarters of ministers were destroyed. Ministers were dragged out from their quarters. Government vehicles were destroyed. Despite the curfew and firings, demonstrations and protests could not be contained for days.

5% of the respondents claimed that this issue is the most important issue in the state during 2002 elections. However, the percentage of the respondents who identified this issue as the most important issues during the election is shocking because of the wide public response during the ceasefire. However, it may be mentioned that this issue was particularly very important in the valley and this study is confined to the hill areas of the state. To inquire about the people's reaction on this issue, the respondents were asked if they support the movement for territorial integrity of Manipur. The responses are given below.

Table 4.7 Distribution of respondents by their support to the territorial integrity of the state

Supports	No. of respondents	Percentages
Yes	176	88
No	24	12
Total	200	100.00

⁵⁶ Sangai Express (Manipuri Local daily), Imphal, dated 20/7/01.

The Table indicates that majority of the respondents (88%) supports the movement for the territorial integrity of the state. However, 12% respondents on the other hand indicated the fact that they did not support the cause and that they would like naga inhabited areas of Manipur to merged with the state of Nagaland.

(7) The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1958: The Act has been in force in Manipur, since the time when Tamenglong District in Manipur was declared a 'disturbed' area more than 40 years ago. The Act gives far greater powers without judicial accountability than the original British law of 1942⁵⁷, on which it is modelled. It is also in operation in Jammu and Kashmir and was used briefly in Punjab. The AFSPA gives the armed forces wide powers to shoot, arrest and search, all in the name of aiding civil power. Indian Parliament approved the Armed Forces (Assam- Manipur) Special Powers Act on the 22 May 1958 and was amended in 1972 to extend to all the seven states in the north- eastern region of India. They are Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, also known as the seven sisters⁵⁸.

Its stated aim was to contain insurgency, but ironically, it has only added fuel to an already inflamed situation, as (a) it effectively appropriates the powers of the democratically elected state government and civil administration and vests these in the army, the Governor and the Central government. (b) It abrogates the civil liberties and fundamental rights of the ordinary citizens by declaring a de facto state of emergency by suspending Article 32 (1). (c) it provides the

⁵⁷ Brought in force to break the Quit India Movement.

⁵⁸ AFSPA- accessed through <http://news.indiamart.com>. Dated 12-02-09.

Centre absolute powers to deploy the army in the states or disturbed areas once the Governor (without consulting the elected Chief minister) or Central government has used his/her discretion to declare an area as 'disturbed' in the Gazette, (d) it provides the army absolute powers with immunity from legal accountability, since neither the citizens nor the state government can initiate legal proceedings or administrative action against the army without the previous sanction of the Central government⁵⁹.

The enforcement of the AFSPA has resulted in innumerable incidents of arbitrary detention, torture, rape, and looting by security personnel. The unusual form of protest by some members of Meira Paibis, women organisations, who stripped in front of the Kangla Fort, then headquarters of the Assam Rifles, on 15 July 2004⁶⁰ and an equally unprecedented civil disobedience movement in Manipur in July and August 2004 put the spotlight on the human rights violations in Manipur⁶¹. The alleged extrajudicial execution of Thangjam Manorama Devi (suspected insurgent) on the night of 11 July 2004 by the Assam Rifles personnel sparked the protests demanding justice and the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958⁶².

Many protest rallies, dharnas, conferences and seminars were held all over India and abroad discussing the inhuman nature of AFSPA and the acts of demonized Indian Security Forces in Manipur under the banner of AFSPA. The

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Sangai express (Manipuri Local daily), Imphal, dated 18/7/2004.

⁶¹ AFSPA-accessed through www.manipuronline.com. Dated 13-06-08.

⁶² People of Manipur- accessed through www.indiatogether.org dated 7-02-09.

Naked Protest against Act launched by the group of bold Women of Manipur made headlines in the major National and Regional Newspapers across the length and breadth of the Country⁶³.

The Jeevan Reddy committee, which was formed to review the AFSPA, has come out with the proposal of repealing the said act to incorporate some of its provisions in the unlawful activities (prevention) act, 1967. The proposal has been out rightly rejected by the then Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee⁶⁴. The State Government lifted the AFSPA from seven Assembly segments in Imphal valley from August 12, 2004 with the promise that if the situation improved the Act would be lifted from more areas. However, counter-insurgency operations are continuing. Although the Act is meant for Central forces, the State police and paramilitary forces are making use of it with impunity⁶⁵.

7.5% of the respondents felt that AFSPA was a burning issue in the state during 2002 elections. To know more about people's reaction on this issue, the respondents were asked whether the Act should be scrapped. The responses are as follows

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Armed Forces Special Powers Act-accessed through kanglaonline.com. Dated 7-02-09.

⁶⁵ E:\Recommendations of the Symposium on 'Save Manipur' KanglaOnline ~ Your Gateway.htm. Dated 2-2-09.

Table 4.8 Distribution of respondents on AFSPA

Act to be scrapped	No. of respondents	Percentages
Yes	88	44
No	97	48.5
Can't say	15	7.5
Total	200	100.00

The table above indicates that 48.5% of the respondents feel that the Act should not be scrapped. This finding is of importance since there has been wide demand for scrapping the Act. The manifestoes of all political parties contesting the 2002 elections also pledge to repeal the Act if voted to power. Some of the respondents feel that the present situation in the state would be worse without the Act⁶⁶. Another 44% respondents are of the opinion that the Act should be scrapped and that the Act violates basic human rights. Another, 7.5% respondents cannot say whether the Act should be repeal of not. The respondents believe that the government strategy of violence to end insurgency by imposing AFSPA is not the best approach.

(8) Underdevelopment: Underdevelopment takes place when resources are not used to their full socio-economic potential, with the result that local or regional development is slower in most cases than it should be. It results from the complex interplay of internal and external factors that allow less developed countries only a lop-sided development progression. Underdeveloped nations

⁶⁶ Interview with respondents.

are characterized by a wide disparity between their rich and poor populations and an unhealthy balance of trade⁶⁷

Any development process should be able to encompass both the hills and the valley. However, the interesting feature is that while the development objectives can be common the development path has necessarily to be different in the two regions. What is a right development intervention in the valley need not be so for the hills and vice versa. However, one cannot imagine any sustainable development of Manipur without developing the hills and the plains simultaneously. The development approach so far in the State has been valley-centric. 17.5% of the respondents claimed that underdevelopment is an important issue in the state. Again, the respondents were asked about the causes of underdevelopment in the state. The responses are given below.

Table 4.9 Causes of underdevelopment

Causes	No. of respondents	Percentages
Insurgency	76	39
Insincerity of government	98	49
Others	24	12
Total	200	100.00

The table above indicates that 39% respondents believe that insurgency is the cause of underdevelopment in the state. If militancy has resulted in non-development, it is equally true that non-development has led to militancy largely. It is worthwhile noting that even before militancy broke out, there has

⁶⁷ Development-accessed through E:\ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia htm. Dated 2-2-09

been virtually no development in Manipur⁶⁸ Majority of the respondents (49%) feel that insincerity on the part of the government in giving developmental schemes is the cause of underdevelopment in the state While 12% respondents feel that the cause of underdevelopment in the state is due to other reasons such as corruption in awarding developmental schemes and implementations

(9) **Problems of higher education:** Education in ancient times was discriminatory. It was the privilege of the few elite of the society the children of the aristocrats as well as those of the nobles. Selection of the pupil was based on the status of the parents who would only take part in the affairs and administration of the state⁶⁹. However, education at present is open as well as encouraged to all. Thus, the right to education has become a fundamental right of every citizen⁷⁰

In Manipur, the problem of higher education are bandhs and strikes a very flexible academic calendar, insincerity of teachers and students, etc⁷¹ The rush of students out of the state after the declaration of 10+2 Examination Result is a clear indication of the failure of higher education in Manipur The reason, a Three Years Degree Course (TDC) of Manipur University is misnomer, for it takes about five years to complete it A Master's (MA) degree that is supposed to complete in two years takes more than three years Thus the course that is supposed to complete in five years takes more than seven

⁶⁸ C.J.Thomas, *Constraints in Development of Manipur*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2001, p.21.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ <http://right2information.wordpress.com/category/manipur-rti/>. Dated 27-07-08.

⁷¹ *Ibid*.

years due to frequent bandhs and curfew. The students have to leave the state to avoid this unwelcoming system of higher education⁷²

Another problem is of the educated unemployed. The hard reality is that majority of the employment opportunities are now in the private sectors – which changes to keep pace with its global competitors. However, in Manipur, besides government jobs, there are no private undertakings that can substantially employ a noticeable section of these educated people⁷³. Absence of a counseling cell for students is another hindrance in the education of Manipur⁷⁴

10% of the respondents identified this issue as the most important in the eighth assembly elections. The respondents were further asked as to what are the problems of higher education in the state. The responses are given below

Table 4.10 Causes of problems in education

Problems	No. of respondents	Percentages
Bandhs & Strikes	88	44
Insincerity of teachers and students	59	29.5
Corruption in education department	40	20
Others	13	6.5
Total	200	100.00

The above table indicates that the respondents feel there are many problems associated with higher education in the state. Of which bandhs and strikes top

⁷² Sangai Express (Manipuri Local daily), Imphal. Dated 15/09/08.

⁷³ <http://news.indiamart.com/news-analysis/manipur>. Dated 2-03-09.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

the list (44%) During electioneering the contesting candidates and political parties emphasize these issues heavily and made repeated pledges and promises about their solution

The number of respondents who were able to identify issues works out to 93%. The philosophical deduction on what guides the consciousness of the electorate is the reality of underdevelopment intertwined with political instability. This is intrinsically related to the issue of insurgency and its fallouts like the imposition of AFSPA and the demand for Nagalim. To the outside world the issue of AFSPA and Nagalim seems to have preoccupied the states but in the minds of the people, it was stability and development⁷⁵

However, identification of issues is one thing and the importance of these issues in influencing the direction of partisan preference is another. Issues by themselves are meaningless in a voting context unless they influence the electorate one way or another. The respondents were asked if the issues influence their voting decision. We shall now deal with the weight of issues in voting decision.

Table no. 4.11 WEIGHT OF ISSUES IN VOTING

Influence voting	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	0	0
No	200	100
Total	200	100

⁷⁵ <http://news.indiamart.com/news-analysis/manipur>. Dated 2-03-09.

From the above table it is clear that the position of a voter on issues is not related to his voting choice. This is a negative finding of great significance. While there are issues and considerable issue familiarity (about 93% of respondents is familiar), the position on them does not influence crucial political decisions. However, if issues are not important in vote, something else must be important.

Unlike as in mature political cultures in which issues as well as persons are important, in the case of Manipur persons are more important. In the hill areas, the candidates are known by their personal popularity rather than their party affiliations. Political personalities of particular leader have also played a significant role in influencing electoral behavior. The organization of political parties around the personalities of charismatic or popular leader at the top of party has always been a remarkable factor of popular support. More often than not, they seem to be of more important and inevitable than their parties. Voters also hardly concerned about the parties and their ideologies. This is borne home by the result of 2000 Assembly Elections. Most of the prominent leaders in the state returned to the Assembly but with a party tag different from their previous ones. Moreover, some of these charismatic personalities have a very substantial measure of control over their organization, so that a large number of the members follow them during their periodic defections⁷⁶.

Therefore, people argue that an influential candidate can be more of help to them than an average candidate of a good party. Influential candidate when

⁷⁶ S.K.Chaube, *Op cit*, p.103.

elected might be more helpful and dynamic in doing good to the constituency. The fact that a number of independents are in a position to win their seats also reflects the role of the public image of a candidate as a factor of voting behavior⁷⁷.

In 46 Assembly Constituency Saikul and 50 Assembly Constituency Kangpokpi, C. Doungei and Thangminlen Kipgen were elected repeatedly from 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002 Assembly Elections. This indicates that candidate's personality remained an important factor in attracting the voter's choice overall.

Research elsewhere has shown, that the majority of voters, even in highly educated advanced industrial democracies, does not follow politics closely and do not have high levels of political information. The impact of issues, therefore, requires voters to use their limited information effectively. They are aided in this process by the presence of political parties that provide coherence to political parties to require considerable stimulation by political elites (parties or candidates) to activate issues⁷⁸.

After learning some important election issues and people's reaction on the issues, the next chapter will examine the survey data in order to determine the factors influencing voting behaviour.

⁷⁷ N.G.S.Kini, *Op cit*, p.103.

⁷⁸ Russell J. Dalton, *Election Studies* in Richard Rose (ed.), *Op cit*, p, 188.

CHAPTER V

Analysis of survey data: factors influencing electoral behaviour

No institutional arena of politics has been given more attention than elections and electoral process. The ready availability of aggregate voting statistics made for an early interest in elections as behavioral phenomena¹. However, whereas electoral statistics permitted only inferential statements about individual voting behavior, the invention and application of the sample survey made possible the direct study of individual voters and isolation of the many institutional structural, social-psychological, and directly political variables that influence the voting decision. Electoral behaviour is not confined to the examination of voting statistics, records, and computation of electoral shifts and swings. It also involves the analysis of individual psychological processes and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections².

In the early years of the growth of behavioural movement, the subject matter to which the approach was applied was largely in the area of voting behaviour. Many courses were developed and still exist with the title of "Electoral behaviour" and the field of voting behaviour studies as electoral behaviour

¹ Harold F. Gasnell, *Why Europe Votes*, Social Science Study Vol 19, University of Chicago Press. University of Chicago. 1930, p. 123.

² Donald E. Stokes. Voting in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol 11, Macmillan and Company, New York, 1972. p.394.

continued.³ Electoral behaviour developed as part of the behavioralist revolution in the social sciences during the 1950s. The first studies of electoral behaviour were made by historians and political scientists seeking to explain past elections. Their basic data were election results, and information about the geographical units for which election data existed. More recently, two general methods have come to predominate in the field, the ecological approach that co-related social characteristics of areas with voting results and the survey method, which analyses the behaviour of voters using data collected through interviews with sample electorate.⁴

The study of electoral behaviour constitutes an important area of political science in which the theory can be systematically and qualitatively measured and tested. The voters' intention to vote is a dynamic changing and even fluid mental situation, which is subject to influence and manipulation by factors, which can be internal as well as external. The complex role of elections in the political system is underline by an examination of the electoral behaviour of electorates.⁵

The electoral behaviour is the behaviour, which indicates the voter's choices, preferences, alternatives, agreements, concerns, ideologies, programmes and so on in respect of the various questions of issues on which the various elections are fought. Thus, the voting behaviour apart from being an individual choice and aptitude indicates the dynamic role that one plays in the

³ Stephen L. Wasby. *Political Science: the Discipline and its Dimensions: an Introduction*. Scientific Book Agency. Calcutta. 1972, p.308.

⁴ Donald E. Stokes. *Voting* in David L. Sills (ed.). *Opcit*, p.395.

⁵ Allan R. Ball, *Opcit*, p.128.

achievement of a collective end. It implies the essential assertion of his rights and commitments of the society and the nation. It is concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public elections and the reasons why they vote as they do⁶.

For the analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, the selection was made on the variables of age, sex, literacy and occupation of the voters. The present study employs questionnaire technique of survey research method conducted during August to December 2006. The researcher and participant observation and informal group discussion methods supplemented it.

Technique of purposive sampling was used in selecting the 25 respondents each from selected eight polling stations for interview. The electoral lists, prepared by the election department for purposes of assembly elections were used for sampling. A sample of 200 respondents was drawn. Interviews were based on a questionnaire, which reflected the general political perceptions, mobilization, and participation of the voters. The study analyses survey data by tallying and averaging responses using simple percentage calculations to interpret the data.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

The age of voter has been given an important place as one of the psychic influence on the choice of a voter. It is difficult to measure the exact extent of

⁶ David E. Stokes, *Voting* in David L. Sills (ed.), *Opcit*, p.396.

the influence of age and yet its significance particularly in a developing country like India cannot be underscored.⁷ Older voters tend to vote for conservative parties but this may be simple reflections of the historical period when the electors' voting habits were being formed. Age may be less important than the strength of the voters' attachment to a political party, and it is this allegiance that hardens with age.⁸ Moreover, it is the candidate orientation, which dominates in all age group.⁹

There are three age categories- young, middle-aged and old based on the age stated by the respondents. All respondents in the age group of 18-35 are considered young, 36-53 middle-aged and 54 and above old. The age composition of respondents has been presented in the following table.

Table 5.1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Classified by age	No. of respondents	Percentage
18-35	142	71
36-53	54	27
54-above	4	2
Total	200	100.00

The data in the above table show that 71% respondents belong to the age-group of 18-35, 27% to the age-group of 36-53 and 2% to the age group of 54-above. The highest percentages of respondents belong to the youngest age

⁷ S. P. Verma. *Voting Behaviour in a Changing Society: a study of the fourth General elections in Rajasthan*, National publishing House, Delhi, 1973, pp. 11-12.

⁸ Allan R. Ball. *Opcit*, pp.130-131.

⁹ S.P.Verma, *Opcit*.p.316

group of 18-35 while the lowest percentages belong to the age group of 54-above. Overall, the young age group (18-35) dominates the respondents.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX

Among the socio-economic characteristics, sex of a voter apart from political participation and involvement in a patriarchal society, either facilitates or hinders the individualization of voting decision. Compared to men, women in majority of cases are guided, controlled, and manipulated by their husbands, fathers and brothers in the exercise of their voting rights¹⁰. This is truer in the hill areas where the literacy rate of women is very low and the economic dependency of women on men is very high¹¹. Moreover, majority of women think that politics is not their sphere of activity¹².

Table 5.2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX

Classified by sex	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	95	47.5
Female	105	52.5
Total	200	100.00

It could be seen from the above table that the male respondents constitute 47.55% while the female respondents constitute 52.5% of the total sample

¹⁰ N.G.S.Kini, *Opcit.* p.183.

¹¹ R.P.Singh. *Opcit.* p.124.

¹² *Ibid.*

voters. The female voters are slightly higher than the male voters in the sampled four constituencies¹³.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LITERACY

Literacy is said to be another determinant of political participation. Literacy and education broadens the political vision and perspective of the voters and gives a secular orientation to their voting intention. However, there is a difference between literacy and political literacy. A voter may be illiterate and yet he may be politically literate¹⁴. It may also be added that an illiterate voter can be made politically literate with the help of campaign and propaganda. The point is that literacy may not really be having that importance in empirical experience of voting behaviour, particularly in developing countries like India. Still no worthwhile voting behaviour studies can ignore the literacy status of the voters.¹⁵ It is for this reason that literacy profile of the respondents are given in the following table.

Table 5.3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LITERACY

Classified by literacy	No. of respondents	Percentage
Illiterates	45	22.5
Below matriculate	49	24.5
Matriculate	61	30.5
Graduates and above	40	20
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.00

¹³ Electoral Roll. (Manipur Assembly Elections), Imphal. 2002.

¹⁴ S. P. Verma, *Opcit*, p. 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

In the constituencies under study, it was found that the majority of the respondents were either illiterate or a matriculate. However, 20% of the respondents possessed graduate degree.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

It is rather difficult to make occupational groupings of the voters because a person earns his livelihood by more than one occupation. For example, a farmer in between the period of seedling and harvesting resorts to fishing in order to supplement his family's income. In the case of business, an owner of small pan shop and another owner of a big variety shop claim as belonging to business. In spite of these limitations, it is necessary to look into the occupations of the voters because occupation of a voter influences his political participation and involvement¹⁶. For example, a farmer is engaged in his work from dawn to dusk and cannot spare time to participate in political activities. Moreover, majority of farmers are illiterates. However, the government employees get some spare time during holidays and Sundays to participate in political activities if they so desire. They are more educated and politically more inclined than those in the agriculture incline did. The data in the table-5.4 show the occupational groupings of the sample voters.

¹⁶ R.P.Singh. *Opcit.* p. 145.

Table 5 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

Classified by occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Students	55	27.5
Farmers	40	20.00
Government employees	25	12.5
Business	32	16
Social workers	9	4.5
House-wives	35	17.5
No response	4	2
Total	200	100.00

The data in the above table indicates that the highest percentage of respondents (27.5%) belong to the student community while the lowest belong to the social worker groups.

In the survey of the respondents in the selected constituencies, an attempt was made to measure the degree of political participation, political awareness, political involvement of the voters, exposure to media of communication and voting preferences in order to derive the motivational aspects of the factors responsible for the voting behavior.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation are those voluntary activities by which member of a society share in the selection of rulers and, in the formation of public policy. These activities include voting, seeking information, discussing, attending meetings, contributing financially and communicating with representatives. The

more active forms of participation include formal enrollment in a party, canvassing, speech writing and making, campaigning, etc¹⁷.

To measure the extent of participation of the sample voters, the study was limited to certain activities of the voters. Political participation of the voters was examined from different angles, i.e. turnout, attending election meetings, and campaigning for candidates. Political participation was also examined from membership of various non-political organizations and membership of political parties.

TURNOUT

Turnout is the proportion of eligible voters who make use of their right to vote in a particular election. Voting is the most basic form of political participation. High turnout in democratic elections is usually considered important because of democratic legitimacy: can a government that has gained power in a low-turnout election really claim to be representative government.¹⁸ The following table shows the voters turnout.

TABLE 5.5 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY TURNOUT AT ELECTIONS

Voted	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	170	85
No	23	11.5
No response	7	3.5
Total	200	100.00

¹⁷ W. L. Meller. *Political Participation and Voting Behaviour* in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (eds.). *Op cit*, p 413.

¹⁸ Arend Lijphart. *Turn-Out* in Rose Richard (ed.). *Op cit*, p 314

Voters' turnout could be seen to be very high in the hill areas of Manipur (85%). The level of political consciousness of an individual can be measured by his involvement in voting. The higher the percentage of polling in an election, the higher the rate of citizens' political participation would be. Voting right is a very important right for every citizen and one should exercise it. The respondents in this respect were found highly participative.

ELECTION MEETINGS

Election meetings are one of the most important media through which the electorate are approached collectively, and which are used to inform the electorate about the party, its programmes, and symbols, and to introduce the candidates to the electorate. An election meeting is also important because it gives an opportunity to the candidate and party to demonstrate to the rival candidates their strength and support that they command. It is for this reason that an effort is made to mobilize as large number of people to attend a public meeting as possible¹⁹.

¹⁹ S. P. Verma. *Op cit*, p.276

TABLE 5.6 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY ATTENDANCE AT ELECTION MEETINGS

Attendance in meetings	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	104	52
No	90	45
No response	6	3
Total	200	100.00

From the angle of voters' participation in the election meetings, it was found out that 52% of the respondents attended such meetings. In the rural areas where the rate of literacy is low, 'the spoken word has an edge over the printed word'²⁰. Thus, public meetings have a place of their own.

CAMPAIGNING FOR CANDIDATES

The term election campaigning refers to the set of activities employed by political parties and candidates to seek electoral support in a bid to win political office. It includes such persuasive activities as speech making, passing out pamphlets, distributing posters, holding rallies, by arranging for finance and vehicles, by making door-to-door canvassing and by organizing election meetings²¹. The following table (5.7) shows the responses of the sample respondents.

²⁰ V. M. Sirsikar, *Opcit*, p.78.

²¹ *Ibid*.

TABLE 5.7 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY CAMPAIGNING FOR CANDIDATES

Participated in Campaigning	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	40	20
No	155	80
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.00

Based on voters participation it was found that out of 200 respondents; only 20% of the respondents had some role in the election, either assisting their candidates through distribution of pamphlets, making door to door campaigning, and organizing election meetings.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Political participation starts at the level of voting. Further efforts at participation would result in party affiliation by accepting membership of a party. Party membership could be taken as indicative of active participation in politics²². The membership of all the parties in India, except the C.P.I (both the factions) is more or less liberally granted. Such membership demanded merely the payment of a small annual subscription and a written acceptance of the principles of the party concerned. Under the existing rules, government

²² *Ibid* p.138

servants and servants of the semi-governmental organizations are prohibited from becoming members of political parties²³.

TABLE 5.8 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES, CHURCH AND NGOs

Membership	Yes (Percentage)	No (Percentage)	Total (Percentage)
Political parties	12	88	100
Church	93	7	100
NGOs	9	91	100

In matters of membership of political parties and other associational groups, it was found that only 12% of the total respondents were affiliated to any political parties and 9% of the respondents were members of various voluntary organizations. As many as 93% respondents were members of church.

In general, it has been found that regarding turn-out in voting, the respondents had shown an appreciable mark of participation but in relation to the activities such as participating in election meetings, canvassing for candidates, membership of political parties and other organizations, a vast majority of the respondents was not found participating. This shows that the general population in the hill areas of Manipur does not attach much importance to political activities other than casting votes. Every citizen is not a political activist and hence may not be interested in becoming a member of the political parties and other pressure groups. Further, he may not find it convenient to attend or organize election meetings.

²³ R.P.Singh, *Opcit*, p. 143.

The right to participate is an essential element of democratic government. Indeed, the growth of democratic government is in part measured by the extension of the suffrage and the correlation rights to hold office and to associate for political purposes. Despite its importance to democracy, the right to participate is not exercised by all who possess it²⁴.

POLITICAL AWARENESS

An attempt is also made to measure the degree of political awareness among the voters of the hill areas of Manipur from various angles. Political knowledge about (1) the occupants of important public offices- Chief Minister, Governor, Prime Minister and President, (2) Identification of political parties, candidates and symbols, (3) problems of locality, state and country and (4) the form of government India practices are the areas where the degree of political awareness of the voters can be systematically measured.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

It is expected that as a citizen of a democratic country a voter have to know the form of government. The question is intended to serve as an index of the spread of electioneering and on the contact patterns of the candidates to voters. The following table shows the response.

²⁴ W. L. Meller. *Political Participation and Voting Behaviour* in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (eds.), *Opcit*, p. 414.

TABLE 5.9 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AWARENESS OF THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN INDIA

Level of awareness	No. of respondents	Percentage
Parliamentary form of government	40	20
Don't know	150	75
No response	10	5
Total	200	100.00

From the table above it is quite clear that 75% respondents do not have the basic knowledge about the nature of government in India. However, they still participate in voting. Low rate of literacy, less exposure to mass media of communication and negligence of the political parties to impart political education to the electorate may be treated as the main reasons of this state of affairs.

The response also shows the failure of the political parties as agent of political socialization. It also indicates that the contact patterns of the candidates and campaigners with voters are more oriented to appealing to primordial loyalties.

AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANT OCCUPANTS OF PUBLIC OFFICE

The voters' awareness of the important occupants of public offices is an index of political awareness and interest in political matters²⁵. It is for this reason that

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the respondents were asked whether they know of these important occupants of public offices. The following table shows the responses.

TABLE 5.10 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANT OCCUPANTS OF PUBLIC OFFICES

Information	No. of respondents	Percentage
C. M. of Manipur	117	58.05
Governor of Manipur	22	11.00
P.M. of India	30	15.00
President of India	12	6.00
Don't know	15	7.5
No response	4	2
Total	200	100.00

The data in the table above clearly shows that 58% respondents are informed about who is the Chief Minister of Manipur, 11% of the Governor of Manipur, 15% of the Prime Minister of India and 6% the President of India. However, 7.5% respondents are not aware of any one of them. The table also shows that the voters of the hill areas are more aware of the head of government rather than the head of the state both at the centre and the state. The low rate of literacy, poverty of the people with their daily struggle for bread may account for the poor information on the part of the respondents. Moreover, the high frequency of migration of the educated government employees from the villages to Imphal or other towns has deprived, largely, the common people of the opportunity of getting information from a more literate section of the rural society.

IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES, PARTIES AND SYMBOLS

This is an important dimension of political awareness on the part of the voters. It is an index of political consciousness and articulation as well as the indicator of the success or the failure of electioneering on the part of parties and candidates.²⁶ It is for this reason that the respondents were asked to name the candidates contesting in the 2002 elections, in their constituency, their parties and symbols. The following table shows the responses.

TABLE 5.11 DISTRIBUTION OF VOTERS BY IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES, PARTIES AND SYMBOLS

Correct information	No. of <i>respondents</i>	Percentage
Candidates, parties and symbols	42	21
Candidates and symbols only	88	44
Candidates only	60	30
No response	10	5
Total	200	100.00

From the data in the above table, it can be seen that 44% respondents could identify the candidates and their party symbol though they did not know them personally whereas only 21% could identify the candidates, parties and symbols. About 30% could identify only the candidates.

In the hill areas, the candidates are known by their personal popularity rather than their party affiliations. The high rate of illiteracy, the frequent change of party affiliations by the candidates and absence of political party as a vital

²⁶ S. P. Verma. *Opcit*, p.137.

agent of political socialization, has made the candidates and their campaigners resort to symbols as the cheapest and shortest way of educating the voters. Symbol is a vivid, easily identifiable cue that elite can communicate to their royal supporters with little explanation and at a very short notice²⁷. The candidates try to clarify to the illiterate voters for which symbols they stand when they go from house to house to win their favour.²⁸ Thus, the data indicates that the leaders did not succeed in projecting their image and their party in a clear-cut way to the people.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE LOCALITY, STATE AND COUNTRY

A participating community not only possesses awareness of things around but also takes stands on various issues. Thus, mention of problems is an indication of both awareness and opinion²⁹.

TABLE 5.12 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BT AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE LOCALITY, STATE AND COUNTRY

Awareness of the problems	No of respondents	Percentage.
1 Locality only	114	57
2 State only.	65	32.5
3. Country	10	5
4 Don't know	6	3
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.00

²⁷ Horst Hartman, *Political Parties in India*. Meenakshi Publishing House, Meerut. 1982, p 16

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ N.G.S.Kini. *Opcit*, p.136.

The data in the table-5.12 shows that 57% respondents are aware of the various local problems, (potable water, irregular power supply, bad network of transport and communication and insurgency) which affect them directly. As far as the problems of the state (AFSPA, bandhs and blockades and territorial integrity of the state) are concerned 32.5%, respondents mentioned various state problems. Concerning national problems, the responses of the respondents are very poor. Only 10% respondents reported corruption as the national problem that concerned them the most. It indicates the orientation of the voters towards the local and state problems. Their attention was drawn to issues that directly related to their area.

As a whole, the political awareness of the voters of the hill areas of Manipur is modest. The respondents are not well aware of the form of government that India practices, the head of the state and national problems, but have sufficient information about the candidates, parties and symbols.

EXPOSURE TO MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

During elections, various media of communication which give political information in general and election news in particular are in full operation to influence the behaviour of the electorate. The individual's exposure to radio, newspapers, magazines and inter-personal discussion with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues not only accelerates his contacts with the external social milieu but also enables him to enquire political education which is

essential for participation in democratic processes³⁰. Individuals are equally benefited by the sources of mass media, inter-personal discussion and election-specific media. The respondents were asked to reply about the sources through which they receive the daily news. The following table (5.13) shows the sources of daily news for the respondents.

TABLE 5.13 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SOURCES OF DAILY NEWS

Types of media	No of respondents	Percentage
1 Mass media (Radio, Television & newspaper)	49	24.5
2 Inter-personal media (Relatives, friends, Neighbors, etc)	88	44
3 Election-specific media (Campaigners, meetings, manifestoes, etc)	59	29.5
4 No response	4	2
Total	200	100.00

When this aspect was examined, it was seen that 24.5% respondents claimed that they used radio, television and newspapers (Mass Media) as source of political information. Table 12 again shows that 44% depended on the use of inter-personal media like discussion with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. The same table shows that the remaining voters got information from election-specific media like public meetings, campaigners, candidates and publicity.

³⁰ S. P. Verma. *Op cit*, p.111

The complete picture of the data in the table 12 shows that the inter-personal media have an edge of 14.5% over the election-specific media and 20% over the mass media. As a rural society, the respondents are deprived of advantages of mass media largely. In such context, the inter-personal media dominates other forms of media as a source of political information. Even the information coming from mass media has to be interpreted through inter-personal media. One of the respondents revealed that people in the villages find it very difficult to comprehend the messages- televised and broadcasted because of illiteracy. Moreover, newspapers are very difficult to get in the hill areas and the people equally find it unnecessary to purchase it.

Primary relations characterize rural societies. There exist face-to-face relations among people. Each person knows the other. The members frequently meet and maintain regular contacts³¹. In such societies interpersonal networks of communication continues to be strong. Face to face, communication carries a considerable volume of messages. In fact, the credibility of this channel is the most well established and messages conveyed through the non-traditional mass media invariably require its approval. Much of the information in such societies is conveyed in face-to-face interaction³².

CAMPAIGN EXPOSURE

In this section, an attempt has been made to know the campaign exposure of the respondents. Keeping in view the above considerations, the respondents

³¹ C.N. Shanker Rao. *Sociology*. S. Chand Publications. New Delhi. 1990. pp. 195-196

³² K.G.Joglekar, *Op cit*, p.50.

were asked to state (i) whether the candidates or their supporters contacted them during the election campaign, (ii) Whether they attended election meetings, and (iii) Whether they got election information from election specific media. The replies obtained are given below.

TABLE 5.14 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY CONTACTS DURING CAMPAIGN

Contacted.	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	150	75%
No	45	22.5
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.00

It is interesting to note that the contesting candidates contacted 75% of the sample respondents during the election. This indicates that during the assembly elections the respondents were widely contacted.

The election meetings are one of the most important media through which the electorates are approached collectively. Concerning election meetings, it was found that 52% of the respondents attended election meetings. Regarding election news, it was found that 29.5% of the respondents got election information through election specific media.

Altogether, it has been found that a considerable number of the respondents had an exposure to election campaign. For instance, the contesting candidates contacted 75% respondents. Thus, it can be said that during the 2002

assembly elections a sizable part of the electorate happens to acquire political knowledge through media of electioneering.

TIMING OF VOTING DECISION

In the study of voting behavior, one of the question, is to find out when exactly the voters decide for whom a person is going to vote. Answer to this question partly depends upon the voters' mind as well as the countless influence to which he is subjected to, his own perceptions of political phenomenon, personalities, and issues, his view of government, political parties, and candidates and, above all, his own evaluation of the vote and voting activity³³.

The timing of decision also depends upon the political commitment of the voter and his identification either with political parties or with candidates³⁴. Such voters are likely to be loyal party men who do not easily swerve from their firm resolve to vote the way they want. On the other hand, there would be voters who would be considerably swayed by the election campaign, the printed and spoken words, the posters, popular appeals etc., and would decide only because of these collective influences³⁵. Committed voters do not need external stimuli provided by party campaigns to make up their mind. The lack of such commitments makes the campaigns a critical element in electoral outcomes³⁶. In view of the importance of time factor in deciding for whom to

³³ D. N. Pathak. *Political Behaviour in Gujarat with Reference to the Fourth General Elections: Studies in the Fourth General Elections*, ICSSR. New Delhi. 1972, p. 47.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Ramshrary Roy, *Citizens Orientations and patterns of Political Instability*, in D. L. Shath. (ed). *Citizens and Parties*. Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1975, p.48.

vote, the respondents were asked to state when they had decided to vote for a particular party

TABLE 5.15 DISTRIBUTIONS OF RESPONDENTS BY TIMING OF VOTING DECISION

Timing of voting decision	No of respondents	Percentage
1 After nominations	68	34
2 Campaign started	42	21
3 Few days before polling	65	32.5
4 Day of polling	15	7.5
5 Do not know	6	3
6 No response	4	2
Total	200	100.00

The data in the table (5.15) indicates that 34% respondents made their voting decision once the nomination was made. The voters who took their decision as soon as they knew the names of the candidates or parties may be called committed voters. They were committed either to candidates or to political parties. The rest of the voters who decided later or during the peak of the campaign comprised of floating voters. These voters have considered the candidates qualities, his winning chances, the prospects of the party to come to power and his personal rapport with the public. They are not committed to any political party or any of the candidates. They usually shift their loyalties. It is on them that the campaigners concentrate their attention because they are more likely to change their vote and to bring about a change of government³⁷.

³⁷ Paul Webb. *Campaigns, Elections and Electoral Systems in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (eds). Opcit. p. 399*

When the campaign started about 21%, respondents made up their mind for whom to vote. They were found to have decided for a candidate after getting campaign stimuli. However, this is a small percentage compared to the number of respondents who have attended election meetings, which is 52% of the respondents. More than 32.5% respondents took their vote decision a few days before the poll. During this period, campaign activities of the candidates would grow more intensive. Generally, the campaign would stop 48 hours before the poll. However, there would be hectic covert activities as attempts were made to contact as many voters as possible. The campaign during this period was marked by secret deals, negotiations, private promises, inducements with money or materials, manipulations and intimidations act³⁸. Even on the day of polling 7.5% respondents made up their mind. They were neither committed to parties nor to candidates. The last minute bargaining with candidates, their campaigners and close relatives of the candidates helped them reached their vote-decision³⁹.

Then 3% respondents, as the data in the table 14 show, belong to "Don't know." They could not tell when they reached their vote-decision. In fact, their vote-decision might have been the result of campaign stimuli or pressure in the last minute encounter. They were the targets of the campaigners on the day of polling. Then there were 2% respondents who belong to the category of "No response."

³⁸ Interview with respondents.

³⁹ Interview with respondents.

ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

The voting behaviour of individuals is determined by various factors. The objective of this investigation is to find out how a voter reaches the voting decision. Voting is a means of aggregating individual preferences into collective decisions. In view of the colossal dimensions of modern electorates and the tenuous links between electoral behaviour and government action⁴⁰, an equally interesting problem is to identify the reasons why the citizen vote the way they do.

In order to ascertain the motivational factors responsible for influencing the voting behaviour in 2002 Assembly Elections, a questionnaire was administered on the 200 selected voters in the hill areas of the state.

Factors conditioning the voting preferences of the respondents were an important area of the present investigation. For a further probe, the sample respondents were asked as to what were the immediate reasons, which ultimately decided their vote. The reasons given by the sample respondents for casting votes in favor of candidates can be seen in the table below:

⁴⁰ Russell J. Dalton. *Voting Behaviour, Influences On* in Richard Rose (ed.), *Opcit*, p. 435.

TABLE 5.16 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY FACTORS THAT DECIDED THEIR VOTE

Respondents decision	No of respondents	Percentage
1 Village chiefs	46	23
2 Tribe/clan affiliations	60	30
3 Candidates' personality	44	22
4 Party considerations	10	5
5 Money	10	5
6 Family head	20	10
7 Issues	0	0
8 Do not know	6	3
9 No response	4	2
Total	200	100.00

The largest number among respondents (23%), who gave reasons of their choice, were influenced by the personality of the candidates. The personality of political actors impinges on political affairs in countless way, often with great consequences⁴¹. In 46 Assembly Constituency-Saikul and 50 Assembly Constituency-Kangpokpi, C. Doungel and Thangminlen Kipgen were elected repeatedly from 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002 Assembly Elections. This indicates that candidate's personality remained an important factor in attracting the voter's choice overall. Even the candidates felt that this was the consideration with the voters. In 54 Nungba constituency, the voters are divided between two important personalities. However, in Tengnoupal constituency, personality has less impact to the mind of the voters. It seems the voters are testing different candidates in each election until they find a suitable one to represent them.

⁴¹ Fred I. Greenstein. *Personality and Politics* in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogen (eds) *Op cit*, p.359

Voters in Manipur are hardly concerned about the parties and their ideologies. This is borne home by the result of 2000 Assembly Elections. Most of the prominent leaders in the state returned in the Assembly but with a party tag different from their previous ones. Moreover, some of these charismatic personalities have a very substantial measure of control over their organization, so that a large number of the members follow them during their periodic defections⁴². Some of the respondents argue that an influential candidate can be of more help to them than an average candidate of a good party can. Good candidate when elected might be more helpful and dynamic in doing good to the constituency. The fact that a number of independents are in a position to win their seats also reflects the role of the public image of a candidate as a factor of voting behaviour.

Another 30% were influenced by considerations of tribe, clan, family and the like of the candidates. Tribe of the candidates is an important factor in the voters' mind, and it is given higher place than the party affiliation of the candidates. So the influence of kinship ties was found to be very strong among the voters. During elections, the candidates and their campaigners try their best to influence their relatives first. Thus, there goes on the interaction among the relatives to organize the strength of their candidates. The hill areas is dominated or inhabited mainly by the tribal people, comprising of many tribes and sub-tribes. Though there are as many as 32 recognized tribes, they are broadly classified into two major groups, namely (1) the Nagas, and (2) the

⁴² S.K. Chaube. *Opcit*, p.103.

Kukis. The Naga group included Tangkhul, Mao, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Maring and Maram tribes. The Kuki-group includes Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Vaiphei, Zou, Mizos, Anal, Simte, Kom and Gangte. Going back to the social history of the tribal in Manipur, village and village democracies were formed based on clan and tribe. Along with this, they occupied a particular geographical area demarcating their possession. The village structure, society, and democracy rested mainly on the bonds between clans. This served the purpose of strengthening the bond between the members of the village society. In wider context, the bond that existed between members of the village society drew the tribe members together forming into a cohesive unit⁴³.

In Manipur, as elsewhere in the country, the electorate used their franchise on communal lines too. The Muslims, known as the *Pangals*, numbering less than ten per cent of the population are widely believed to band together politically. The Kukis and Nagas also behave in the same way politically in the hill areas⁴⁴.

In the modern context, with the formation of state and parliamentary democratic process, the bond and linkages within the tribe remained intact in spite of changes. In the new democratic setup, all the tribes meet each other on one platform. The exposure also enhanced the bond within each tribe. Over the years, each tribe grew conscious of itself in terms of its position in the new setup. The main factor that led to this situation was the re-demarcation of district and sub-divisional boundaries according to the geographical area

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 134.

occupied by the tribe. Another is the allocation of assembly seats to each district in terms of their population⁴⁵.

Since the arrangements were done specially in accordance with tribe and geographical lines, every tribe occupied a distinct position in the new set up. At the same time, this changed the outlook of each tribe in terms of its position in the larger society comprising all the tribes of the state. In the political arena, this arrangement suited the tribesmen to collectively support their own leader belonging to their own tribe. As a result, the electoral battle became a contest between the tribes rather than political parties. Notwithstanding to which party the candidate belonged, his tribesmen voted for him. This is in the case of mixed electorate consisting of tribes other than one. However, the same were noticed in constituencies inhabited by one tribe where, clan factor played the role of securing votes for the candidates. This is in keeping with Myron Weiner's justification that tribal people in a core, reserved tribal communities do vote as a bloc⁴⁶. From the above discussion, his other claim that the territorial cohesiveness of tribal enhances their electoral potential⁴⁷ can also be justified.

This factor has undermined the value of campaign, issues, political parties, propaganda and other features of modern elections in the state elections. A lower level of politicization of the people, illiteracy, and economic standard could be taken into account for this aspect. However, the electoral data and records show that these other factors even if improved will not make any

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ Myron, Weiner. *Electoral Politics in Indian States-Three Disadvantaged Sector*, Delhi. Manohar Book Service. 1975. p.100.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

influence on the voters. Taking into account, the socio-economic conditions, literacy, employment and other statistical aspects, there has been a dramatic change from the seventies when the state was newly formed. However, the voter's turn out has remained the same. These suggests that more than any modern electoral methods, tribe and clan linkages play a major role in deciding the outcome of the elections⁴⁸.

The respondents did not consider political issues relevant. Precisely because of this election manifestoes did not matter in the hill areas.

Those who intended to vote based on party consideration remained only 5% of the sample respondents. Party consideration in voting ranks below the personal qualities of candidates. The candidates themselves admitted this fact also. Party identification may be an important variable in voting behaviour at the parliamentary elections in India⁴⁹, but at the state level elections candidate's identification in terms of personal qualities was found to be the most important factor influencing the voter's choice.

Voting behaviour is more easily explained by emphasizing party loyalty.⁵⁰ In most countries, there are relatively permanent party alignments between higher and lower orders in status, income, and power and among specific groups that differ greatly in their view about the good society. One may usually predict the vote of the majority of the electorate by asking the voters how they vote last

⁴⁸ R.P.Singh, *Opcit*, p.143.

⁴⁹ R. P. Singh. *Opcit*, p. 67.

⁵⁰ Allan R. Ball. *Opcit*, p.129.

time⁵¹. Such loyalty rooted in the consistency of structural links to parties, may seem to be destructive of free choice. In fact, however, it helps to preserve it, since if most voters are as fickle as to readily change parties from one election to another, parties would completely disappear whenever they make an obvious major blunder. To survive, the parties must have a loyal group of supporters. Party loyalty by a part of the electorate helps to maintain the competitive party system.⁵²

In developed political systems like the American and the British, political parties have their committed and known affiliations. These play a deterministic role in the determination of voting behavior of the people. This determines an individual's choice of representatives and the view on key national and international issues⁵³. In India also, the parties have their committed supporters who always accept the views and actions of their respective parties. However, in India, people do not hesitate to shift their votes from one party to another and thereby party identities are not very strong. If party loyalty is taken as one of the key indexes of political considerations, it may be assumed that the parties play a marginal role in determining the preference of the voters⁵⁴.

Manipur political atmosphere is one of instability since no ministry could last its full term⁵⁵. The root cause for this is the flexible party loyalties of the MLAs. Mass-scale floor-crossing and en-bloc resignation from the party are not new.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Joseph Lapaombara and Jefferey Anderson, *Political Parties* in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (eds.), *Opcit*, p. 381.

⁵³ Allan R. Ball, *Opcit*, p.130.

⁵⁴ S.P.Verma, *Opcit*, p. 307.

⁵⁵ S.K.Chaube, *Opcit*, p. 78.

Even with the enactment of the Anti-defection Act of 1985, this major crisis has not been solved.

So far, Manipur politics mainly revolve around tribal and clan linkages and this has created problems for the working of the political system⁵⁶. The reality could be seen during elections. Candidates depend on his tribes' support mainly to be elected. The electorate places no importance on the issues and programmes of the candidates' party. This proves that tribal linkages have been the most important factor that determined political loyalties than any other factors for the same reason; this factor has undermined party system. Political parties and party membership do not have much relevance in the state. For many political parties is only a platform to fight elections. This has obviously weakened the attachment between the members and his party thus paving the way for easy defection⁵⁷.

The data in the table 5.16 indicates that 23% respondents made their vote-decision on the advice of the village chief of the village. Through the Manipur Hill Areas Acquisition of Chief's Rights Act, 1967, an attempt was made to abolish Chiefship in the hill areas of the state by paying compensation. The Act, however, has not been implemented. Chiefship prevails with all its rights and privileges in the hill areas of the state. Failure to abolish chiefship meant links with the traditional past were not severed; and by putting the hereditary chiefs at the top of the elected village authorities, their traditional authority was enhanced. Having been incorporated in the administrative structure of the state,

⁵⁶ R.P.Singh. *Opcit*, p. 123.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

and being the channel through which development funds flow, yet lacking in accountability, Village Authorities in the Hills have become sites of contestation for control between different social forces. Their appeal has been on identity lines. This has affected not only on elections to village authorities, but also on the larger character of tribal politics, which has become predominantly identity-based⁵⁸. The tribal chiefs influence the voters in the hill areas and in many cases, they field their own candidates⁵⁹.

Further, 5% respondents were influenced by money in reaching their voting decision. The role of money is increasingly becoming a major factor in elections. In the present economic context, the conduct of elections and electioneering campaign led by candidates and political parties have tended to be costly. This creates doubt whether elections are indeed free, fair and pure. The ceiling imposed on election expenses is no doubt meant to prevent or, at least, reduce the magnitude of an unduly large sum of money spent on elections so that the principle of equal opportunity could be safeguarded.

However, the ceiling and other legal constraints placed on election expenses have not discouraged some contestants and political parties from spending lavishly on electioneering campaign.⁶⁰ Manipur is no exception when it comes to charges of corruption and bribery during elections. A rich candidate or party has always better chances of winning the elections. The number of potential candidates at the time of filing their nominations is numerous, though this would

⁵⁸ Rajat Kanti Das, *Opcit*, p. 67.

⁵⁹ R. P. Singh, *Opcit*, p.55.

⁶⁰ Anjana Bhagat, *Elections and Electoral Reforms in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1996, p.45.

go down at the time of the actual contest after bargains for fat rewards. However, it is to be pointed out that all these things happen only in normal circumstances and not during wave-election or when other key issues are involved⁶¹.

At times when there are no emotional waves or drastic swings of the popular mood, when there are no great issues being debated, in an ordinary election, the money a candidate is able to spend seems to make a difference⁶². There are tight legal limits on the amount of money a candidate can spend during the election campaign. In most Lok Sabha constituencies the limit as amended in December, 1997 is Rs 15,00,000/-, although in some States the limit is Rs 6,00,000/- (for Vidhan Sabha elections the highest limit is Rs 6,00,000/-, the lowest Rs 3,00,000/-). Although supporters of a candidate can spend as much as they like to help with a campaign, they have to get written permission of the candidate. At the same time as parties are allowed to spend as much money on campaigns as they want, recent Supreme Court judgments have said that, unless a political party can specifically account for money spent during the campaign, it will consider any activities as being funded by the candidates and counting towards their election expenses⁶³. The accountability imposed on the candidates and parties has curtailed some of the more extravagant campaigning that was previously a part of Indian elections⁶⁴.

⁶¹ R.P.Singh. *Opcit*, p. 123.

⁶² D. Sunder Ram (ed.). *Indian Democracy*, Kanishka Publishers. New Delhi. 1996. p. 261.

⁶³ Money in Elections-Accessed through www. e-pao. net. Dated 19-6-07.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

Again, the head of the family influenced 10% respondents. In the tribal community, the family-head enjoyed a high status and extended a dominant influence on the family. To some extent, this set pattern of family relationship was transferred to the political life also. The family-head guided the political behaviour of the members. Some respondents (1.5%) did not know on what grounds they voted showing their political immaturity or lack of interest in elections. In addition, 1% respondents belong to the category of "No-response."

In a democracy, the electorate has the right to choose one party candidate, and to throw him away in the next election. This shifting of choice may be termed as defection on the part of the voters. However, one may feel astonished to notice that most of the candidates are in the habit of changing party according to their personal convenience for political gains. The defection of the candidates is highly undesirable, because such an act undermines the character of such a person whom the voters are going to elect. However, defection on the part of the voters may be said to be highly desirable. Because shifting of choice signifies voters' political consciousness⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Fred I. Greenstein. *Personality and Politics* in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogen (eds.), *Opcit*, p.405.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study. Chapter 1 tries to understand the concept of electoral politics and deals with the past state assembly elections from 1972 in order to understand the electoral dynamics in the state and the assembly elections of 2002.

The study of past assembly elections in the state shows that Manipur has come across eight Assembly Elections since it attained statehood (i. e., in 1972, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002). In Manipur since 1972, the election results have shown that the turnout was high and that there was political fragmentation and hung assemblies. Leaders of political parties in Manipur are not free from the state of shifting loyalties from one party to another. Defections have been the bane of Manipur politics. Between the elections of 1967 and the imposition of the National Emergency (1971) five ministries fell. Again Manipur is ethnically and politically a fragmented state. Since 1972 to the present day only once did a political party get 30 out of 60 Assembly seats i.e., the congress in 1984.

Political instability has been a feature of the State since the 1984 polls, when the Congress (I) was forced to seek the help of independents to form the government despite winning half the seats in the 60-member Assembly.

Defection is common, even though several legislators have been suspended for violating the anti-defection law. In 1997, a group of Ministers and legislators, led by former Speaker Wahengbam Nipamacha, broke away from the ruling Congress (I) headed by Rishang Keishing and floated the Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP), which subsequently formed the next government.

A critical study of the history of elections in Manipur leads to the following findings:

High turnout of voters in elections and the percentage in 2002 elections was 90.38%. The electorate are influenced by several irrational forces like those of traditional chiefs, tribe, community, money, and above all, the image of the charismatic leader.

High turnout of women in the poll but small number of women contestants in elections. Only seven women candidates contested this round of elections and one was elected. In 2002 elections, 682661 females voted in comparison to 648599 male voters. Records have shown that from the year 1952 to 1998 only four women had contested in the parliamentary elections. They were – Ishwari Devi (1952), Lhingjaneng Gangte (1948), Anne Mangshatabam (1996) and Kim Gangte (1998). Out of these four women, only Kim Gangte came out successfully and represented Manipur in the House of the People.

However, women voters always outnumbered the men voters in every election held up to 2002. Contributions from the participants during group discussions

with women from various communities suggested that Women in Manipur could seldom come out successfully unless they (candidate) have a good political background. This means that the women candidates must be from either a minister's wife or relative of a minister. High handed male power and money has been involved which is a serious constrain for women. In rural areas especially among the Christian's women participation in politics is considered irreligious.

Some educated women are of the opinion that reservation of seats for women in the State Assembly and parliamentary will bring forth women to participate in politics. The society has negative attitude towards women who are involved in politics especially as a candidate. Therefore, it is not very encouraging for women to take part in politics. Normally husband and relatives does not permit women to take part in election. In Manipur, politics has always been treated as the arena for males, not for females.

Recent events show that the role of money and muscle power is growing. There is also the need of promising regional political party from the political scene of the state. A strong tendency on the part of the opposition MLAs to join the ruling party in the state as soon as the elections is over, irrespective of their previous political affiliations.

Emergence of the Congress (i) as the dominant political party. Since March 1972, Manipur mostly had Congress led coalitions governments under alternating leaders or Presidents Rule. With the announcement of election dates, there was hectic rush for party tickets to contest the election, especially

most of the contestants seeking the Congress tickets. One of the most important reasons was that Congress means the age-old tried and tested party with dynastic inheritance. Therefore, Congress could utilize most resources – money as well as manpower to retain the government. Naturally, the contestants felt of being victorious if they contest on a Congress ticket. While the Congress party has mostly been the leading party in the state assembly elections and has formed the government on most occasions, the most interesting aspect about elections results in Manipur has been the fragmented mandate given to political leaders by the people and the presence of independent candidates. Independent candidates have been prime targets for parties seeking to form the government, but which lacked a clear majority.

The 2002 elections results in Manipur showed all the attributes that have characterized electoral politics in the State since it attained statehood in 1972: high turnout, political fragmentation, and hung Assemblies.

In the second chapter, an attempt is made to study the manifestoes, programmes, and electoral performances of major political parties in Manipur. The Eighth Assembly Elections in Manipur were held on 14th and 21st February 2002. There were as many as 16 political parties and 17 Independent candidates that entered the electoral fray such as the Indian National Congress (INC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Manipur People's Party (MPP), Federal Party of Manipur (FPM), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) and Janata Dal (JD-U) besides number of unrecognized state parties like the Democratic

Revolutionary People's Party (DRPP), the Manipur Nationalist Conference (MNC), and the Naga National Party (NNP).

All parties have their own party programmes, their objectives being to secure the welfare of the people, establish a social, secular, and democratic state, and preserve peace. Party programmes are contained in general terms, showing hardly any dividing lines between the parties. Political parties in Manipur are not by products of different ideological convictions but rather these groupings represent individual interests of the politicians. The breakaway groups from the Congress have no specific political agenda or ideologies. These are the Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) and the Manipur National Conference (MNC).

From the analysis of parties' electoral performance in the state, it is clear that no political party from both national and regional could enjoy the status of complete dominion over other parties since 1972. In as far as the political parties in Manipur are concerned the oldest national political party, the congress can be termed as the most successful party in the state. Since March 1972, Manipur mostly had Congress led governments under alternating leaders. It is also evident that in all the assembly elections up to 2002 the Congress was the only party that contested almost all the seats.

An important feature of party system and politics in Manipur is the deep impact of party system and politics at the national level. Congress that dominated the party system and politics in India until 1967 election with the exception of 1977

election also dominated in Manipur. Congress with the exception of 1967 General election, have won all seats or at least one seat out of two in every parliamentary elections since 1952 to 1966. Any increase in the number of parties at the national level or any change in national politics has found its impact in Manipur. Thus, Janata Party from 1977, BJP (1984), JD (1989), Samata Party (1995), RJD (1998) have made their presence felt in the state.

What should be described as the biggest weakness of the party system in Manipur is the absence of commitment to discipline. Leaders of various parties, off and on, changed their party affiliations just for the sake of having the loaves and fishes of office. It creates the serious problem of political defections. The frequency with which these deplorable acts of political defection have taken place in the recent past has resulted in political instability. In 2000 elections, the MSCP won 29 seats and form a government with the support of nine MLAs from the Opposition parties, including the MPP, FPM and the NCP. However, the coalition did not last long. Following the fast-paced switching of political loyalties, Nipamacha resigned in February 2001, paving the way for a new coalition government headed by the Samata Party leader, Radhabinod Koijam. The Samata Party had won just two seats, but its strength increased to 12 after 10 of the 11 INC MLAs joined it. Meanwhile, due to the bickering inside the MSCP, 18 MLAs left the MSCP for the BJP. The total strength of the BJP subsequently increased to 26, when two more MLAs from the FPM joined it. A fresh crisis emerged when the BJP, with strength of 26 MLAs, wanted to join the Samata Party government on the condition that the new coalition government is led by the BJP and that Koijam step down in favour of the BJP's

R.K. Dorendra. This formula was not acceptable to the Samata Party. The Kojiam government fell after BJP MLAs voted for a no-confidence motion against it. The result is chaos in administration. A healthy party system has not emerged in the state.

The study of election manifestoes made in Chapter 2 shows that for the eighth state assembly election, almost all the political parties took up three major issues: (i) territorial integrity of Manipur, (ii) acute financial crisis, and (iii) law and order (insurgency and peace) in the state. The manifestoes by different political parties in depicted more or less the same socio-economic and political objectives.

In the study of various manifesto and issues of political parties, it is seen that none of the manifesto dared to overlook some of the significant needs and issues agitating the minds of the voters for example to work for safeguarding the territorial integrity of the state, economic development, etc. All the political parties, therefore, somehow tried to focus them in their manifestoes. On the issue of economic bankruptcy, people and leaders are equally aware that no political party can come out with specific measures to tackle concrete financial crisis, such as non-payment of salaries for more than two months to government employees, state overdraft, generating state revenues, etc. Yet every party included the same in the party manifesto. There was not a single party, which did not promise to protect Manipur's territorial integrity. Almost all political parties blamed the BJP-led NDA government at the centre for the alarm felt by the people of Manipur on the question of the territorial integrity of

their state. The BJP however, pledged to protect and preserve the territorial integrity of Manipur. Other issues like health care, unemployment, agriculture, industry, corruption, education and sports received only a routine mention without any clear blueprint for action and played almost an insignificant role in public meetings of the various parties.

Local issues mainly dominated the 2002 election manifestoes. The issues were mainly related to economic development and unavailability of basic infrastructure. For example, the creation of a Sadar Hill district was the most crucial issue that affected the voters in Kuki inhabited areas. The integration of Naga inhabited areas in one administrative unit was the most important issue in Naga inhabited areas.

In Manipur, excepting of a minority of educated elite voters, concentrated particularly in the urban area, the general voters did not bother about high ideological or doctrinal issues. However, election manifestoes did not play an important role in the electioneering process of the hill areas. It has more significance in the urban areas. Moreover, manifestoes were not easily available to the people of the hills. The tribal people were equally not interested in election manifesto. It was only the personal appeals of the candidates that were circulated widely in the constituencies. The manifestoes were usually absent especially from the side of the regional parties while the national parties did not care to translate these to the local language.

The second Chapter also attempted to study the efforts and activities of the candidates and political parties to reach the electorate while campaigning. In the sampled constituencies, the campaign devices adopted on a large scale included community feasts, boiling tea in the chiefs' residence, door-to-door campaigning, wall writing\posters, and election meetings. The study found that the main medium in the campaign carried out by all the political parties was house campaigning. This contact was found to be more effective than any other methods. This process and technique of campaigning have a great influence in the voting behaviour since it involves direct contact between the candidates and the electorates. Candidates stopped in front of houses and shops and talked to the people around while the supporters distributed leaflets directly to the voters with an appeal to vote. Appeals were made in the name of party, tribe, and the personality and performance of the candidate. Such campaigns were held in the evening in order to contact as many as voters as possible. Some of the respondents disclosed that only few candidates approached them personally and so they voted for him in the absence of an alternative appeal. Although promises of withdrawal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act and solving insurgency problem through political dialogue were the main issues at public meetings and rallies, candidates concentrated on house-to-house campaign with themes of development of local areas. In the face of threats from insurgent groups, no parties held big campaign rallies. Instead, they organized public meetings at the local level. Campaign activities were significantly low this time. Many organizations placed restriction on setting up camps, use of intoxicants and distribution of money, which were usual, practiced in the past. The idea behind was that elections should be less expensive.

In Manipur, regular elections had been conducted since 1952 on the same pattern followed in the rest of the country. It is seen that apart from political parties, there are a number of other organizations and institutions that played an important role in mobilizing people during elections. Thus, it is essential to study these groups role in electoral politics. These include the Chiefs, the youths and church among others.

The institution of Chiefship has been a common traditional feature in many tribal societies. The institution of Chiefship have existed time immemorial almost among the tribal communities in North East India. The Mizos called *Hal*, the Garos called *Nokma*, the Tangkhul called *Awunga*, and the Kukis called *Hausa*, although the names are different, one common feature about Chiefship is that, generally they possess independent powers and functions though of varied degrees and nature. The Chiefs in Manipur, however are considered to be the supreme in the jurisdiction of their own villages which are an autonomous units governed by the Chief. The Chiefs in Manipur in olden times were considered the owner of all lands and nobody could occupy any land without his permission.

Chapter III found that in Manipur, villages, whether small or large, were governed by village Chiefs. The system of Chiefship was prevalent in almost all the hill tribes of Manipur. Chiefship in Chin-Kuki society is hereditary. From clan to clan, the customs differ as to whether the youngest or the eldest son inherited the office of the father. In most cases, however, the eldest son

inherited the Chiefship. The Kuki system was centralized with chiefs being head of the village and owner of all village land. Chiefs were also entirely supported by their subject villagers for their day-to-day requirements.

Among the Nagas, village administration is run by the village council constituted by the elderly representatives of the clans or households in the village. The village council performs both administrative and judicial functions. The election of councilors is popular and it is customary to give representation to all the clans residing in the villages. Clan heads usually become councilors. Yet, monarchical system of Chiefship is not absent among the Naga tribes-e.g. the Mao, Zeliangrong etc. Among the Kuki-Chin tribes, Chiefs are powerful whereas among the Nagas, though there are Chiefs, they are more democratic and the village is ruled by councilors.

In the hill areas, the electoral behavior is more on community lines. The tribal chiefs influenced the voters and in many cases, they put up their own candidates. The importance of Kuki chiefs in the society could be seen from the fact that Kuki National Assembly (KNA), the first political party of the Kuki, emerged from the womb of the Chiefship organization and almost all the office bearers of the KNA either were the chiefs or connected with chief's family. During elections, candidates give importance to the chiefs whose houses are selected for election meetings. Sometimes, the chiefs dictate to his villagers the party or candidate they have to vote for. One popular mode of vote campaigning in the hill areas of Manipur is of 'Boiling tea' in the Chief's residence. Very often, the candidates give importance to the chiefs whose

houses are selected for canvassing purposes. Few days ahead of the poll, a particular day is appointed as the day for agent meeting which a grand feast usually followed. Almost all the chiefs from the particular constituency are invited to attend the meeting. The Chiefs were given time to deliver speeches in favouring of a particular candidate or party and highlights the prospects of the candidate or party. Thus, the chiefs play a crucial role in the electoral politics of the state. The study sums up that traditional tribal chief play an important role in mobilizing people during elections. Here it must be mention that 23% respondents cast their vote on the advice of village chief.

The third Chapter also study the role played by the churches in the politics of the state. Reverend William Pettigrew introduced Christianity in Manipur in 1896. Christianity is the second largest religion in the state, accounting for 35% of the population. The hill tribes were largely converted to Christianity in the 19th Century, although some sections of Naga tribes like the Kabui and Rongmei retained their traditional tribal religions.

The study also found that churches did not take direct or active role in politics. The churches held prayer meetings for the avoidance of violence and use of unfair means in the election. Beginning party meetings with a church service or prayer was a common feature. The study found that the influence of church in the electoral politics of this state is not as significant as in other states like Nagaland.

The third Chapter also studied the role of the youth clubs in mobilizing people during elections. Before the advent of Christianity in Manipur, the youth of the north-east had their sleeping house or dormitory where all the young men of the village stay together. In Manipur, Tangkhul called it *Longshim*; Rongmeis' called *Khangehnu*, Hmars' *Buonzawl*, Zous' *Sawm*. In Arunachal Pradesh, especially in the Siang District there existed a bachelor's dormitory called *Kebang*. In Nagaland, they called it *Morung*, the Garos in Meghalaya called *Nokpante*, and the Mizo in Mizoram called it *Zawlbuk*.

The dormitory serves as a kind of school where the youngsters learned the art of doing things such as basket making, comb making, cane works and spinning from the seniors. The main functions of the dormitory were defense of the village. All boys attaining puberty must live in dormitory until they were married. It was the village guardroom and the centre of social, religious and cultural life of the tribe. The institution made all-important announcements. It also entertained important visitors to the village; they were to arrange any village feast. They collected firewood, fetched water and distributed meat. Again, through these institutions the feeling of collective unity for their own society was deeply enriched in the minds and thoughts of young people.

With the advent of Christianity and education, the olden days youth dormitory could no longer exist in the original form and were being substituted by different organization, union, associations, etc. In the villages and organizational set-up of the youth community known as youth club, youth Union, youth fellowship etc,

have their own way in politics. The youth clubs in fact carry out many election works.

By engaging in the campaigning process, the youth clubs in the sampled constituencies' undertook the task of giving political education to the electorate. The youth clubs in fact carried out many election works. They assist party workers in giving out the manifestoes, shouting slogan, painting of roads and walls, distribution of pamphlets, pasting of party symbols, etc. In every hill constituencies, massive impersonations were witnessed. At the poll, the highest voter impersonation was seen from the youths. Party workers and youth leaders specially take part in house to house campaigning. Sometimes during election campaign, candidates make promises to certain educated youths that they would be given well-paid Government jobs if they were elected. Therefore, the youth organizations take keen interest in the election campaign of their candidates.

Chapter III found that the tribal chiefs play an important role in mobilizing people during 2002 elections in the hill areas of Manipur. The chapter also found that the influence of church and youth clubs in the electoral politics of the state was not significant though they took part in various forms of campaigning during the elections.

In the fourth Chapter, an attempt was made to study how far the respondents were familiar with current issues of the state, their reaction on the issues and how far their positions on these issues are related to voting choice. The issues

in the state mentioned by the respondents are insurgency, Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), financial crisis, territorial integrity of the state, bandhs, development, corruption, education, and stable government. These issues have been discussed in detail in the fourth chapter. During electioneering, the contesting candidates and political parties emphasized these issues and made repeated pledges and promises about their solution. The percentage of respondents who were able to identify electoral issues works out to 93% of the respondents (Table 4.1). The remaining 7% of the respondents were in the category of 'Do not know' and 'No response'.

To the outsiders, the issue of AFSPA and Nagalim seems to have preoccupied the states, but the study shows it was all round development that was in the minds of the respondents. Majority of the respondents stated that development was the most important issues that need to be acknowledge by every candidates. This chapter attempted to study respondents view on issues in the state. People reaction to issues like insurgency shows that majority of the respondents have rejected the option of suppressing insurgency by any means. As many as 56% respondents have suggested that the issue of insurgency should be solved by negotiations while the rest of the respondents favour using force to crush insurgency. It is also documented that some of the respondents believes corruption, poor economic condition and unemployment is the causes of the increase in the number of insurgent.

The study indicated that the people are not happy of corruption in all spheres of life. Cent percent of the respondents said that public offices are bought and

sold in the state. The respondents also feel that merits and talents are no longer the criteria for government appointments in Manipur. In financial matters majority of the respondents feel that their financial situation has remained the same over the past five years or worsened. Only 10% of the respondents reported of better economic condition. Regarding Bandhs, the study also found that the respondents (55%) are aware of the economic loss of the state during bandhs and road blockages. However, 35% of the respondents confessed that there is no better way to get attention of the government to solve their problems unless bandhs and road blockages are called.

On the issue of political instability, the study found that majority of the respondents (67.5%) is of the opinion that political instability caused by large-scale defection is the cause of the many problems faced by the state. However, 10% respondents were not aware that defection will bring political instability and in the process, developmental issues will be ignored. Again 22.5% respondents belong in the group of "can't say".

On the issue of protecting the territorial integrity of Manipur, majority of the respondents (88%) support the movement for the territorial integrity of the state. However, 12% respondents on the other hand indicated the fact that they did not support the cause and that they would like naga inhabited areas of Manipur to be merged with the state of Nagaland.

The study of respondent's reaction on the issue of Armed Forces Special Powers Act shows that the 48.5% of the respondents feel that the Act should

not be scrapped. This finding is of importance since there has been wide demand for scrapping the Act. The manifestoes of all political parties contesting the 2002 elections also pledge to repeal the Act if voted to power. Some of the respondents feel that the present situation in the state would be worse without the Act. Another 44% respondents are of the opinion that the Act should be scrapped and that the Act violates basic human rights. Further, 7.5% respondents cannot say whether the Act should be repeal of not. The respondents believe that the government strategy of violence to end insurgency by imposing AFSPA is not the best approach.

Regarding development issue in the state, 39% respondents believe that insurgency in the state is the cause of underdevelopment in the state. If militancy has resulted in non-development, it is equally true that non-development has led to militancy largely. Majority of the respondents (49%) felt that insincerity on the part of the government is the cause of underdevelopment in the state. While 12% respondents felt that, the cause of underdevelopment in the state was due to other reasons such as corruption in awarding developmental schemes and implementations. The study of respondent's reaction on the issue of higher education indicates that the respondents felt there are many problems associated with higher education in the state. Of which bandhs and strikes top the list (44%). As many as 29.5% respondents said that insincerity on the part of teachers is the cause of failure of higher education in the state. Another 20% respondents believed corruption in the education department is the cause of many problems associated with education in the state.

However, table 4.11 clearly shows that the position of the respondents on issues is not related to his voting choice. Precisely because of this election manifestoes do not matter in the hill areas. This is a negative finding of great significance. While there are considerable issues, familiarity the position on them does not influence crucial voting decisions. Therefore, the conclusion drawn is that issues play no real part in the electoral choice of the hill people in Manipur. In the case of 91% respondents, if issues are not important in vote, something else must be important. Unlike as in mature political cultures in which issues as well as persons are important, in the case of Manipur persons are more important. In the hill areas, the candidates are known by their personal popularity rather than their party affiliations. Political personalities of particular leaders have also a significant role to play in influencing electoral behavior.

In the fifth Chapter, an attempt was made to measure the degree of political participation, political awareness, political involvement of the voters, exposure to media of communication and voting preferences in order to derive the motivational aspects of the factors responsible for the voting behaviour.

Political participation of the voters was examined from different angles, i.e. turnout, attending election meetings, and campaigning for candidates. Political participation was also examined from membership of various non-political organizations and membership of political parties. In general, it has been found that regarding turnout in voting (85%), the respondents had shown an

appreciable mark of participation but in relation to the activities such as participating in election meetings (52%), canvassing for candidates (20%), membership of political parties (12%) and other voluntary organizations (9%), a vast majority of the respondents was not found participating. This shows that the general population in the hill areas of Manipur does not attach much importance to activities other than casting their votes. Every citizen is not a political activist and hence may not be interested in becoming a member of the political parties and other pressure groups. Further, he may not find it convenient to attend or organize election meetings.

An attempt was also made to measure the degree of political awareness among the respondents of the hill areas of Manipur from various angles. Political knowledge about (1) the important occupants of public offices- Chief Minister, Prime Minister, Governor and President, (2) Identification of political parties, candidates and symbols, (3) problems of locality, state and country and (4) the form of government India practices are the areas where the degree of political awareness of the voters can be systematically measured. As a whole, the political awareness of the voters of the hill areas of Manipur is modest. The respondents were not well aware of the form of government that India practices, the head of the state and national problems, but have sufficient information about the candidates, parties and symbols. Poverty, illiteracy, low standard of education imparted at schools and colleges and weak networks of transport and communication are the main reasons for this phenomenon. Besides, the frequent change of political party by the candidates' results in their

inability to present political education to the electorate, in tune with their party policies and programmes.

During elections, various media of communication which give political information in general and election news in particular are in full operation to influence the behaviour of the electorate. It is assumed that the media of communication play a significant role in making people politically conscious.

When this aspect was examined, it was seen that 24.5% respondents claimed that they used radio, television and newspapers (Mass Media) as source of political information. Another 44% depended on the use of inter-personal media like discussion with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. The same table shows that the remaining voters got information from election-specific media like public meetings, campaigners, candidates and publicity. As a rural society, the respondents were deprived of advantages of mass media largely. In such context, the inter-personal media dominates other form of media as a source of political information. Even the information coming from mass media has to be interpreted through inter-personal media. One of the respondents revealed that people in the villages find it very difficult to comprehend the messages-televised and broadcasted because of illiteracy. Moreover, newspapers are very difficult to get in the hill areas and the people equally find it unnecessary to purchase it. Inter-personal media is found to be the most popular source through which the respondents got election specific information.

An attempt has been made to know the campaign exposure of the respondents. Keeping in view the above considerations, the respondents were asked to state (i) whether the candidates or their supporters contacted them during the election campaign, (ii) Whether they attended election meetings, and (iii) Whether they got election information from election specific media. The replies obtained are given below.

It is interesting to note that the contesting candidates contacted 75% of the sample respondents during the election. This indicates that during the assembly elections the respondents were widely contacted. The election meetings are one of the most important media through which the electorates are approached collectively. Concerning election meetings, it was found that 52% of the respondents attended election meetings. Regarding election news, it was found that 29.5% of the respondents got election information through election specific media. Altogether, it has been found that a considerable number of the respondents had an exposure to election campaign. For instance, the contesting candidates contacted 75% respondents. Thus, it can be said that during the assembly elections a sizable part of the electorate happens to acquire political knowledge through media of electioneering.

In the study of voting behaviour, one of the questions, is to find out when exactly the voters decided for whom he is going to vote. In view of the importance of time factor in deciding for whom to vote, the respondents were asked to state when they had decided to vote for a particular party. The data in the table (5.15) indicated that 34% respondents made their voting decision

once the nomination was made. The voters who took their decision as soon as they knew the names of the candidates or parties may be called committed voters. They were committed either to candidates or to political parties. These voters usually do not shift their loyalty from one party to another or for one candidate to another. The rest of the voters who decided later or during the peak of the campaign comprised of floating voters. These voters have considered the candidates qualities, his winning chances, the prospects of the party to come to power and his personal rapport with the public. They are not committed to any political party or any of the candidates. They usually shift their loyalty.

When the campaign started about 21%, respondents made up their mind. They were found to have decided for a candidate after getting campaign stimuli. However, this is a small percentage compared to the number of respondents who have attended election meetings, which is 52% of the respondents. More than 32.5% respondents took their vote decision a few days before the poll. During this period, campaign activities of the candidates would grow more intensive. Generally, the campaign would stop 48 hours before the poll. However, there would be hectic covert activities as attempts were made to contact as many voters as possible. The campaign during this period was marked by secret deals, negotiations, private promises, inducements with money or materials, manipulations and intimidations act. Even on the day of polling 7.5% respondents made up their mind. They were neither committed to parties nor to candidates. The last minute bargaining with candidates, their campaigners and close relatives of the candidates helped them reached their

vote-decision. Then 3% respondents, as the data in the table 5.15 shows, belong to "Don't know." They could not tell when they reached their vote-decision. In fact, their vote-decision might have been the result of campaign stimuli or pressure in the last minute encounter. They were the target of the campaigners on the day of polling. The remaining 2% of the respondents belong to the category of "No response."

The voting behaviour of individuals is determined by various factors. The objective of this investigation is to find the factors conditioning the voting preferences of the respondents. For a further probe, the sample respondents were asked as to what were the immediate reasons, which ultimately decided their vote.

The study found that a considerable number among respondents (23%), who gave reasons of their choice, was influenced by the personality of the candidates. In 46 Assembly Constituency Saikul and 50 Assembly Constituency Kangpokpi, C. DOUNGEL and Thangminlen Kipgen were elected repeatedly from 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002 Assembly Elections. This indicates that candidate's personality remained an important factor in attracting the voter's choice overall. In 54 Nungba constituency, the voters are divided between two important personalities. However, in Tengnoupal constituency, personality has less impact on the mind of the voters. It seems the voters are testing different candidates in each election until they find a suitable one to represent them.

A large number of respondents (30%) were influenced by considerations of tribe, clan, religion and the like of the candidates. In the hills, ethnic loyalties play an important role as factors of voting. Going back to the social history of the tribal in Manipur, villages were formed based on clan and tribe. Along with this, they occupied a particular geographical area demarcating their possession. The village structure, society, and democracy rested mainly on the bonds between clans. This served the purpose of strengthening the bond between the members of the village society. In wider context, the bond that existed between members of the village society drew the tribe members together forming into a cohesive unit. In the modern context, with the formation of state and parliamentary democratic process, the bond and linkages within the tribe remained intact in spite of changes. The main factor that led to this situation was the re-demarcation of district and sub-divisional boundaries according to the geographical area occupied by the tribe. In the political arena, this arrangement suited the tribesmen to collectively support their own leader belonging to their own tribe.

The data in the table 5.16 indicates that 23% respondents made their vote-decision on the advice of the village chief of the village. The system of Chiefship is prevalent in almost all the hill tribes of Manipur. The study found that in the tribal constituencies, the electoral behaviour was more on community lines. The tribal chiefs influence the voters and in many cases, they field their own candidates.

The respondents did not consider political issues relevant. Those who intended to vote based on party consideration remained only 5% of the respondents. Further, 5% of the respondents were influenced by money in reaching their voting decision. The role of money is increasingly becoming a major factor in elections.

Again, the head of the family influenced 10.5% of the respondents. In the tribal community, the family- head enjoyed a high status and extended a dominant influence on the family. To some extent, this set pattern of family relationship was transferred to the political life also. Some respondents (3%) did not know on what grounds they voted showing their lack of interest in elections. In addition, 2%% of the respondents belong to the category of "No-response."

A very significant finding of the study is that the levels of politicization among the hill voters are low. In spite of the high percentage of voting, the rural voters were having a low level of politicization. This was indicated by the influence of the traditional chief and of the family head on the voting of majority of the respondents. Another indicator of low politicization of the hill voters was their preference for the tribe of the candidate. Yet another important indication of the low level of politicization of the hill voters is that issues whether local, regional or national as factors of voting was absent in the sample constituencies. The high non-response of the sample voters to many questions was indicative of their low level of political knowledge. The low level of politicization was again indicated by the fact that loyalty towards parties was not particularly very strong. The evidence from the voting patterns over time supported this.

This low level of politicization of the hill people is a glaring example of the lack of proper functioning of various agents of political socialization particularly the political parties. They only make electoral contact with the voters. There is no permanent office of the political parties in two of the sample constituencies. Party offices only come up during elections. The candidates seem to consider political parties only as a mechanism to contest elections and to get finance. They keep the voters hibernating in between the elections.

The study concludes that electoral politics in the hill areas of Manipur mainly revolves around tribe and clan linkages. This reality could be seen during 2002 elections in the hills. During elections, candidates and their campaigners try their best to influence their relatives first. Then there is continued interaction among the relatives to organize strength for their candidates.

APPENDIX-1

State Elections, 2002 to the Legislative Assembly of Manipur

PARTY TYPE	ABBREVIATION	PARTY
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NATIONAL PARTIES

- 1 . BJP- Bharatiya Janata Party
- 2 . CPI- Communist Party of India
- 3 . CPM- Communist Party of India (Marxist)
- 4 . INC- Indian National Congress
- 5 . NCP- Nationalist Congress Party

STATE PARTIES

- 6 . FPM- Federal Party of Manipur
- 7 . MPP- Manipur People's Party
- 8 . MSCP- Manipur State Congress Party
- 9 . SAP- Samata Party

STATE PARTIES - OTHER STATES

- 10 . JD(U)- Janata Dal (United)

REGISTERED (Unrecognized) PARTIES

- 11 . DRPP - Democratic Revolutionary Peoples Party
- 12 . LS - Lok Shakti
- 13 . MNC- Manipur National Conference
- 14 . NNP- Naga National Party
- 15 . SJP(R) - Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya)

INDEPENDENTS

- 16 . IND Independent

APPENDIX-2

Questionnaire for the voters

Research on “Electoral Politics in the Hill Areas of Manipur- A study of 2002
Assembly Elections.”

1. Name:
2. Constituency:
3. Sex:
4. Age:
5. Education:
6. Occupation:
7. Tribe:
8. Did you vote in the 2002 Assembly Elections? Yes/No.
9. Did you attend election meetings/processions? Yes/No.
10. If yes, did it influence your vote choice? Yes/No.
11. Were you exposed to house campaign? Yes/No.
12. Did you participate in campaigning for candidates? Yes/No.
13. Name the candidates of your constituency contesting 2002 elections, their parties and symbols.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Parties</u>	<u>Symbols</u>
a. _____	_____	_____
b. _____	_____	_____
c. _____	_____	_____

14. Please state some of the important issues in your locality, state and country.

(a) Insurgency (b) Economic problems (c) Underdevelopment (d) Corruption (e) Territorial Integrity (f) Bandhs (g) Problems of higher education (h) Armed Forces Special Powers Act (i) stable government (j) Do not know.

14 a. How should insurgency in the state be solved?
Negotiation/Suppressed/Don't know.

14 b. Has your financial condition improved during the past five years?
Yes/No/Don't know.

14. c. What do you think is the cause of underdevelopment in the state?

14.d. Do you think AFSPA is the best way to manage insurgency in the state?
Yes/No/Don't know.

14 e. Are you tired of the large scale corruption in the state? Yes/No/Don't know.

14. f. What are the problems associated with education in the state?

14 g. Do you consider bandhs as a necessary tool of protest? Yes/No/Don't know

14. h. Do you consider political instability as the cause of the many problems in the state? Yes/No/Don't know.

14 i. Do you support the movement for territorial integrity of Manipur?
Yes/No/Don't know.

14. j. Did political issues influence your voting choice? Yes/No.

15. Do you know the form of government that India practices? Yes/No.

16. Please state the name of the C.M and the Governor of the state.

a. _____ b. _____

17. Please state the name of the P.M and the President of India.

a. _____ b. _____

18. What media did you use to get election news?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

19. When did you reach your vote-decision in the 2002 elections?

(a) Already. (b) After nominations. (c) When the campaign started. (d) A few days before the poll. (e) On the day of polling. (f) Don't Know.

20. What/Who was the most important determinant of your vote choice in the 2002 Elections?

21. Do you know the ideologies/manifestoes of parties contesting the 2002 elections? Yes/No/Don't Know.

21 (a). If yes, did it influence your voting decision? Yes/No/Don't know.

22. Are you a member of political party? Yes /No.

22 (a). If yes, name the party. _____.

23. Did the village chief, youth clubs and church influence your voting decision?

If yes, which group. _____.

24. What were the activities carried out by these three groups during elections?

chiefs _____ . Church _____ youths _____

25. What are the problems or issues that your locality, state and country is facing?

(a) Local issues -----

(b) State issues -----

(c) National issues -----

APPENDIX-3

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