

**ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS: A  
CASE STUDY OF 1995 ASSEMBLY  
ELECTIONS IN MANIPUR**

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY  
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IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**(SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES)**

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MIZORAM  
2000**

**NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY**

*J*  
***With Admiration  
Dedicate this Work to  
My Younger Brother  
(Late) Shri Arambam Dayananda Singh  
Who Left us for heavenly abode  
in 1992***

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#### CERTIFICATE

*This is to certify that Shri Arambam Prafullokumar Singh, Senior Lecturer in Political Science, Mamit College, Mamit District, Mamit, Mizoram worked under my supervision on the topic "Elections and Political Dynamics: A Case study of 1995 Assembly Elections in Manipur" for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Department of Public Administration, School of Social Sciences) in conformity to the Rules/Regulations/Ordinance relating to the Degree of Ph.D of the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. The Thesis is a product of his own original research work and it does not form a part of any other Thesis. He is allowed to submit the thesis for examination.*

*Dated, Mizoram*  
The 30<sup>th</sup> November 2000

  
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*I, Shri Arambam Prafullo Kumar Singh, hereby declare that the subject matter of Thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the 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.*

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# CHAPTER – I

*Ecological and Political Profile*

*Geographical*

*Social Difference*

*Economic*

*Cultural*

*Political Organisation of the State*

## **CHAPTER-I**

### **ECOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL PROFILE**

**Geographical**

**Social Differences**

**Economic**

**Cultural**

**Political Organisation of the state**

#### **Geographical**

The state of Manipur, with a rugged hilly and mountainous terrain, occupies the twentieth position among the Indian states in respect of area constituting less than one percent of the total land surface of our country. It is one of the smallest states of the Indian Union situated along the Indo-Myanmar border. As such, it lies in a strategically important area. The state is divided into two regions - central plain and the surrounding hills.

In historical times, though the territorial boundary of Manipur was periodically fluctuated at various stages extending upto Cachar plains in Assam and the Myanmar depending upon the fortunes of the Princess, but it remained considerably stable and unaltered in the recent past.<sup>1</sup> Presently, as per 1991 Census, Manipur has an area of 22,327 sq.kms. of which 20,089 sq.kms. comprise the hills covering around 90 percent and dominating the regional landscape. The remaining area of 2238 sq. kms constituting about one-tenth of the entire areas of the state, forms the Manipur Valley. The Barak Plains on the western outskirts of the state cover an area of 277 sq.kms. As such, the plain area occupies approximately one-tenth of the state area and the rest nine-tenths by the hills.

Located just north of the Tropic of Cancer, the state lies in between 23°.80° North 25°.60° North Latitudes and between 93°.03° East 94°.78° East Longitudes. The altitude of Imphal in the Central Valley is 790 metres while that of the hills in between 1500 to 1800 metres. The climate of Manipur is salubrious. It has a pleasant sub-tropical climate with rainfall ranging from 56 to 160 inches a year. The state is bounded on the North by Nagaland state. On the East, it has a long stretch of international boundary of 352 kms. with the Kabaw Valley of Myanmar - touching a portion of the Upper Burma on the east and the Chin Hills of Burma on the south east. In addition, Manipur has 502 kms. long border with the neighbouring states of Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland. On the South and South-West, the state is encircled by the Chin Hills of Burma and Mizoram. On the west it is adjoined with the Cachar District of Assam. The rivers form the state boundary with Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland as well as Myanmar. Thus, the state of Manipur is sandwiched between Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Myanmar.

The state had a total population of 18,37,149 in 1991, living in 2182 villages and 31 towns. It comprised 9,38,359 males, outnumbered by 8,98,790 females. The sex ratio between the males and females is slightly different - being 958 females per 1000 males. The population of the Scheduled Tribes in the state numbered 6,32,173 accounting for 34.4 percent and the Scheduled caste population is estimated at 37,105 only constituting around 2.0 percent to the total population of the state. Other smaller communities like the Muslims, Nepalese, the Bengalis, the Jains, the Sikhs etc., represent a little percent of the state population. Since the pattern of habitation is largely shaped and influenced by the geography of the state, the Valley is thickly populated accommodating about two-thirds of the state's total population with maximum accumulation in Imphal Urban belt. The valley is one of the most thickly populated region in the country. While the hill areas are sparsely populated-accommodating about one-third of the people. The hills areas provide an extensive

abode for the different colourful tribes consisting as many as 29 recognised scheduled tribes and some other unrecognised tribes. The valley is inhabited by the Meiteis; Muslims, some Kuki-Naga tribes, Sikhs, Jain etc.

The density of population is very high in the valley districts (530 persons per sq.km.) as against the hills districts, with a density of 32 persons per sq.km. The average density in the state is 82 persons per sq.km. as against 257 persons for the entire country. The population density in the Barak plains is moderate.

The bulk of the states' population is rural in character with 72.48 percent people living in the villages and the rest in the urban centres. The State has, however, registered a marked urban growth in the recent years. Except Ukhrul and Churachandpur, (Hills) all the important towns in the state are located in the Manipur valley with comparatively higher living standards of people than the rest of the state. The percentage of literacy in the state was 59.89, with relatively higher proportion in Imphal and other urban areas than the remote and rural areas.<sup>2</sup> People in the state, now-a-days, pay immense attention to education.

Prior to June 1997, the state comprised eight Revenue Districts with fluctuating number of Sub-divisions (30) and Community/Tribal Development Blocks (31). The eight districts were - Imphal (1228 sq.kms./population 7,11,261); Thoubal (514 sq.kms./population 2,93,958); Bishnupur (496 sq.kms./population 1,80,773); Ukhrul (4544 sq.kms./population 1,09,275); Senapati (3217 sq.kms./population 2,08,406); Tamenglong (4319 sq.kms./population 86,278); Churachandpur (4570 sq.kms./population 1,76,184) and Chandel (3313 sq.kms./population 71,014) respectively. The Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur districts are in the heart of the state together forming Manipur Valley. The rest five districts are the hill districts. However, with the concretization of the process to bifurcate Imphal District into two

districts, the number of revenue districts in the state have been increased by one. A new district 'Imphal East' have been formed by carving out of the then 'Imphal District.' With this, Manipur has now nine Revenue Districts altogether. On 18 June 1997, the State Chief Minister Rishang Keishing inaugurated the newly created district at a solemn function at Porompat as headquarters. The administration of each district is placed under the control and supervision of Deputy Commissioner (DC) while the Sub-divisional Officer (SDO) is the in-charge of the Sub-division.

To implement the process of autonomy in the hill areas, Autonomous District Councils have been set up. Presently, there are six Autonomous Hills Districts in the five hill districts each autonomous district provided with a district council. Only the Manipur North District (Senapati) has been divided into two Autonomous Districts (Sadar Hills and Manipur North). The four remaining districts each have one such Autonomous District. These are Tengnoupal (Chandel); Manipur East (Ukhrul); Manipur West (Tamenglong); and Manipur South (Churachandpur). Recently the Government of Manipur has taken a decision and got prepared to elevate Sadar Hills (in Senapati District) to a full fledged district despite the strong objections from the Naga communities there against the government's decision and demand of the Kukis to create it. In the valley, the three-tier Panchayati Raj System has been introduced since 1997 with the holding of elections.

### **Social Differences**

Though the state is very small in size and population, it is composed of different religious and ethnic groups with the Meiteis forming the majority of the total population following different religions and speaking different languages and dialects. Manipur, a polyglot state<sup>3</sup>, furnishes a distinctive pattern of polyarchal society in which multi-ethnic people inhabit and believe in various religions. "The Manipur Nation was," according to S. N. Parratt, "a kind of heptarchy."<sup>4</sup>

Under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 the foreign department of the Government of Manipur did not allow any non-Manipuri to enter Manipur. However, after Manipur's merger to India in 1949, the demography of the state became altogether a different picture as the native population had been swamped by the endless influx of immigrants in the North East States causing uncertainty and imbalances in the density of native hill/plain people and high rate of population growth.<sup>5</sup> Thus the present demographic composition of the state is made up of different communities who have their faiths mainly either in Hinduism or Meiteism, (original religion of the Meiteis) or Christianity or Islam, living side by side culturally and speaking various languages and dialects. Manipur State, however, is free from the strict practice of Hindu caste system as prevalent in some parts of India. The Manipuri, rather the Meitei society, is not a caste-ridden society.

However, the present Manipur has been a tri-ethnic state<sup>6</sup> and its social composition consists of the three ethnic groups- the Meiteis of Manipur valley and the Nagas and the Kukis of surrounding hills. The plains-men and hills-men (have) lived in peaceful co-existence for centuries. Thus, they are the indigenous people of the Manipur valley and the hills. Manipur is the home of these three communities - the Meiteis (who are mostly Vaishnavite Hindus) and the various hills tribes (mostly Christians) broadly divided into the Nagas and Kuki-Chin tribes. These hills tribes, not only having varied physique and appearance, they also differ culturally, socially and linguistically. In the valley there lived Meities and a few hills-men while the hills are inhabited only by hill people.

Since the population of Manipur is at present a mix of different faiths; besides these three (the Meiteis, the Nagas and Kukis) major social formations,

there are other religious minorities and immigrants too. The state, in addition, has a sizeable representation of Manipuri Pangals (Manipuri Muslim). They are valley dwellers like the Meities. The Manipuri Pangals live mainly in the East, South East and South of the Manipur valley concentrating a bulk along the major river banks and in Lilong area in the state. Besides, there is a substantial minority Nepali population mainly found in some hills districts, having its major concentration in Senapati and Chandel Districts. Some Kuki-Naga tribes are also found sparsely dispersed throughout the length and breadth of the valley area. There are more than 200 tribal villages. In addition to this, there are immigrants or non-Manipuris known as, 'Mayangs,' mainly centred in Imphal City and suburbs, in other district headquarters and in the important towns of the state as their occupations are primarily concerned with Shop-keepers, manual labour, business, trade and commerce, service etc. They belong to different sects such as Sikhs, Jains, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists etc. The 'Mayangs' to denote, are the people coming from the west of the country such as the Bengalis, Biharis, Tamilians, Marawaris, Punjabis, Bishnupriyas etc. R. Constatine remarked that 'Almost the first word in the local tongue an outsider gets familiar with in Manipur is 'Mayang.' The non-Manipuris take it to hear ... Originally, the Meiteis, the valley Hindus, used the word to denote the people who belonged to lands to the west, from the Cachar to Tripura - to be precise, a community called Bishnupriya or Bishnupriyas. Gradually, it took in all outsiders. Mayang, however, in current Manipuri parlance speaks more of the injured and exploited feeling of Manipur...' <sup>7</sup> The (Manipuri) Bishnupriyas (the lower-caste Hindus also known as Mayang Kalichas to the Manipuris) mostly live in the Jiribam sub-division of Imphal District. The Barak Plain characterises a mixed population of the Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The population of Mayang in all towns and the state capital is ever



increasing. Of the states' total population, the Hindus constitute around three-fifths, the Christians slightly above one-fourths, the Muslims for nearly seven percent while the rest belong to other religious persuasions such as Sikhs, Jains, etc.

The non-tribal indigenous Manipuris comprising the Meiteis (General, Rajkumar, Brahmins, OBC) and the Meitei scheduled caste along with the Manipuri Pangals predominantly inhabits the Manipuri valley, together form the backbone of the valley as well as state population. But the Meiteis and the Meitei scheduled castes (otherwise called Manipuris) together alone accounted the overall dominant community and also majority of the total population group constituting around two-thirds of the entire states population. The classified Meitei scheduled castes lives in different parts of the valley and the hills, such as the Lois in Sangaithel, Kwatha, Leimaram, Khurkhul, Koutruk, Phayeng, Andro, Sekmai etc. and the Yaithibis (externally degraded group of sweepers, scavengers) in Thoubal Khunou.

At present, the Meiteis in general, is a conglomeration of three distinct religious denominations - the Meitei Hindus (traditional Gaudiya - Vaishnavas religion); the Meitei Sanamahi (the Meitei revivalist group of Sanamahi cult),<sup>8</sup> and the neo-Meitei Christians. The Meitei Sanamahi (a cult of Meitei forefathers) is a resurgent Pro-revivalist group trying to resurrect their lost religion and culture that had completely been wiped out under the incoming influence of the new faith, (Bengali Vaishnavism associated with the School of Chaitanya, since the 18th Century). The revivalist movement denounces the religious faith of Manipuri Vaishnavas, opposes the use of Sanskrit language, the observances of Hindu festivals and the activities of the Brahmins. The movement professes exposition of

pure Meitei belief and Meitei way of life to unfold their racial identity. The Neo-Meitei Christians are the new converts and are very few in number but likely to increase in bulk in the near future unless the socio-economic imbalances in the Meitei Society and the ongoing conflict between the Meitei Hindus and the Meitei Sanamahi are not properly checked and resolved. The followers of the Christianity are mainly found among the younger generations, in the scheduled caste (Lois) Meiteis and in the socially and economically backward classes of people. M. Kirti observes that “Their decision to accept Christianity was usually a family; community/village conversion. By doing so they thought that they would improve their social position . . . Baptism among the scheduled caste (Lois) went on steadily forward ... who seek conversion on grounds of educational and economic facilities ... The Churches also aim at the penetration among the Meitei Hindus through different media. It has spread widely among the Meiteis of the valley. Christianity as a peoples’ movement is to make a profound impact on (the tribals) and weaker sections of the society.”<sup>9</sup>

The various colourful scheduled tribes alongwith other unspecified tribes like Kharam, Tarao, etc. living in the hills and mountainous sections surrounding the Manipur valley accounted for one thirds of the state’s total population. There are as many as 12 major tribes all around the hills of Manipur belonging to Naga and Kuki Chin groups. The Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Tangkhuls, Kabuis, Maos, and Marams are the most prominent among them. The Government of India, irrespective of Nagas or Kukis, has recognised as many as 29 different Scheduled Tribes in the state. They are Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Khoirao, Koirang, Kom, Lamgang, Lushei (Mizo), Monsang, Maram, Maring, Mao, Moyon, Paite, Purum, Ralte, Sima, Simte, Sukte (Sahlte),

Tangkhul, Thadou, Vaiphei and Zou. Each tribe has its own language or dialect, its own culture and guided by its own customary laws.

The tribes of Manipur particularly the Nagas are among the earliest inhabitants of the hills of Manipur. They are known by their tribal names, and occupy different areas of Manipur hills. The Naga ethnic territory was well-maintained till the migration of the Kuki-Chin tribes during the historical period.<sup>10</sup> The Mao, Maram, Rongmeis, and Tangkhuls are the most numerous Naga Tribes in the state. However, among the Naga-confederation of tribes in the state, the Tangkhuls constitute the most numerous tribes and also the largest sub-group predominantly inhabiting and concentrating the North-eastern hills of Ukhrul District along the Indo-Myanmar Border.

The Kuki-Chin tribes are broadly divided into the Old Kuki clans such as Aimol, Chothe, Chiru, Koireng, Kharam, Kom, Purum, Tarao etc; and the new Kuki clans such as the Hmar, Paite, Simte, and Zou. According to Col. J. Shakespear, the old Kuki clans migrated to Manipur from the South in the 16th century and the new Kuki clans in the 18th and 19th centuries A.D. But there is no longer Old Kuki in Manipur. - Aimol, Chiru, Kom are still oscillating. The Kuki group prefers to be called by their own name rather than Kukis.<sup>11</sup> Of the Kuki Chin tribes, the Thadou constitutes the largest “sub-group which along with Paite and Hmar are scattered and concentrated in the Churachandpur District.

The state’s northern hills region chiefly the west, north and north-east are mainly occupied by the Naga groups while the Kuki-Chin groups mainly inhabit the Southern part, where some of the Naga groups are also found interspersed with the dominant Kuki-Chin formations, and vice-versa. The Kuki-Chin tribes are

scattered all over the hills areas in most places among their traditional and hereditary Naga foes. But the Churachandpur sub-region in the South and South-eastern and South-Western hills districts of Manipur along the border with Myanmar, Mizoram and Assam are prominently occupied by the Kuki-Chin tribes. It is the abode of many Kuki-Chin sub-groups who are more or less akin to Mizos of Mizoram state. Of the five hills districts, in Churachandpur district alone, the Kukis outnumber other tribes. Tamenglong and Ukhrul districts are totally Naga dominated, while Chandel and Senapati districts have large Naga population. Further, the Naga tribes constitute the over all majority in the hills districts.

The people of Manipur, by and large, speak different Tibeto-Myanmar languages. Manipur is technically a multi-lingual state. But the dominant language is Manipuri (Meiteilon) spoken by the Meiteis in the valley. It is the most important language of Manipur valley. It is the only language on the eastern Border of India which has its own scripts. The language has a long continuous literary tradition. It is a well developed literary language recognised by the Sahitya Academy and also included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. The language, inspite of having its own scripts, is written in Bengali script. The old Meitei script is found in ancient and Mediaeval Meitei 'Manuscripts.' However, due to the tireless pursuation of the "Meitei Revivallist" the Meitei script had been approved for use recently by the Government of Manipur and have also been prescribed in the curriculum of the school text books.

Manipuri has been the common language of the state of Manipur since remote past in the Manipur valley. Almost all the other communities/ethnic groups in the state including the scheduled tribes commonly understood it. Sometimes they speak it as a medium of communication between tribes. It is also the mother

tongue of the Manipuri Pangals in the valley. Though the hill tribes spoke different dialects/languages, they had generally adopted Manipuri as 'Lingua Franca'. Thus, the Meitei language have been able to attain the status of being a 'Lingua Franca' in the state for the hills tribes as well as for other ethnic communities since very early period. The various Naga-Kuki-Chin tribes in the state, who have adopted Roman script for them, spoke different languages and dialects, but they had generally adopted Manipuri as 'Lingua Franca' And a number of linguistic minorities in and around Imphal and in the state, besides knowing Meiteilon, speaks their own languages-viz., Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi etc. People in general have a fair knowledge of Hindi and English, mainly being the medium of higher Education.

“On the whole, the hill-plain relations had been,” according to N. Sanajaoba, “harmonious, reciprocal and interdependent. The Meitei King had deeper feelings for the hills tribes. Meitei King Pamheiba (also known as Garib Niwaz) maintained the most cordial hill-plain relations. Special departments had been opened for the hill people.”<sup>14</sup> The Manipur valley is the ideal example of peaceful co-existence in the long history of the Manipur inspite of the political turmoil in the recent past. It clearly mentioned in the pages of Manipur Chronicles that from time immemorial, both the plains-men and hills-men have been under one Administration in Manipur. According to V.V. Rao “The existence of different races and ethnic groups, each trying to protect its own interest and identity, rendered political development difficult if not possible. Racial diversity is further accentuated by religious diversity. Although there is religious diversity, there was no religious conflict in the state so far.”<sup>16</sup> The problems based on religious or language issues had been almost absent in Manipur till date.

But V.K. Nayar observes that “in any society, there are bound to be differences, friction and agitation due to political, socio-economic, ethnic and religious reasons. It is particularly true of developing countries, which have attained independence from a foreign colonial rule.” But “Religion and culture,” according to him, “are the most important instruments for the fusion of races into an integrated community.”<sup>18</sup> But the contrast between the Hindu Meiteis and the tribes of the hills was particularly glaring. The boundaries of the state did not enclose a cultural unit. Although the people of Manipur are ethnically similar to each other, however, they exhibit their distinctive affinities on a tribal and language/dialect basis. “Social problems, peculiar to the state, arise out of different customs, practised by almost all tribes. Meiteis, who are in the majority follow Vaishnavite culture, and traditions, Manipuri Muslim and remaining are tribals -both Nagas and non-Nagas. The Hill tribes have been declared scheduled tribe which offers them protection of property and preferential treatment in jobs, competitions and higher education. As a consequence of this, hill tribes have been occupying a large portions of jobs compared to their populations. The resultant Meitei antagonism has strained the social fabric.”<sup>19</sup> Recently, differences also cropped up mainly between the Meiteis and the hill tribes over the introduction of Manipuri as the state language. This has been one of the chief objections of the tribal communities that seems to be against it for all times. The tribals, so far as their English-Oriented life-style is concerned, preferred English to Manipuri. They thought English to be the state language. Their contention is that it not only being putting an extra-burden to the tribal students to learn Manipuri other than English and Hindi, It would also make them disadvantageous against their Meitei counterparts as Manipuri is the mother tongue of the Meiteis. However, inspite of their criticism and opposition towards the adoption of Manipuri as a state

language, the State Government had approved Manipuri as the official language of the state that precipitated remorse and uneasiness in the minds of the tribal brethren. Despite its pros and cons, the having of a common language as well as the primacy of a 'Lingua Franca' can not be neglected and under-estimated at all.

Social differences in the state of Manipur will remain there so far as demands and movements to preserve identity, space and recognition are becoming its prime concern as well as socio-economic and political dimensions added to it. The deliberate British policy of divide and rule between the plains-men and the hills-men to keep the latter away from the mainstream of Manipur's life by developing in them an isolationist psychology from the plains instead of generating amity between the two communities has its lasting imprints till today in the minds of the hilly people begetting highlanders vs plainsmen and making a major factor of stumbling block in the way of unifying the two communities. Today, social disparities in the state particularly the Meitei-Tribal divide has become more and more apparent. This has been further strengthened by the better off economic positions and leading socio-political life of the plains. M. Kirti remarks that "The Manipuri Hindus under the orthodox Maharaja (and his Brahma Sabha) looked down upon the hill people by developing fantastic ideas of cleanliness. It was encouraged by the British Government. They took special care in avoiding the entry into a Meitei House. Taking advantage of Meitei orthodoxy and conservatism, they opened Christian missionaries with full support and created the gap, between the valley and the hills. The primitive tribals resent caste stigma, big brother complex and label of Adivasi/Junglee. Fear and oppressing have compelled them to embrace Christianity. The overlords/marketing agents victimised them. They resisted exploitation, cruel onslaughts on their land etc. Acceptance of

Christianity has help rescue from such abuses and economic enslavement. Christianity endows them with a new sense of identity, well-being and worth. Hindu Vaishnavism has brought changes in the ritual practices of the Meiteis of the valley as different from the Highlanders by the 18th century. In reaction to the same, the tribals embraced Christianity some two centuries later.”<sup>20</sup>

Today, the Nagas in Manipur seemed to be well-prepared to apart from the state of Manipur for an united-Naga nationalism under the call of ‘South Nagaland’ or ‘Greater Nagaland’ by taking away the northern parts of the Manipur territory. The mounting differences, and clashes/conflicts between the Manipuri (Tangkhu) Nagas in particular and the Meiteis over the question of territorial integrity of the state of Manipur seems approaching towards unsolvable point, if not impossible. According to R. Gopalkrishnan “Social, political and economic cleavages accentuated competition, confrontation and conflicts in the society of the state. In spite of the attempts to forge unity there was a clash of interests, priorities and objections between Meitei and Naga sub-groups. With so many parameters and dimensions, as present in the state, the solutions to the problems seems to be difficult if not possible.”<sup>21</sup> With the amalgamation of Manipur into India and the introduction of responsible government, the hills tribes were politically integrated with the state but their emotional integration still remained an open question.

The recent Meitei - Muslim riots in May 1993 claiming more then one hundred lives, the Kuki-Naga conflict in the state and their competition for space and struggle/rivalry for power gradually emerged and accentuated the ongoing separate movements for recognition of other communities in the state etc., added more dimension towards the existing social differences. Today, despite the inter-tribal disputes, forming a part of their tradition maintaining a constant state of



attrition between the various sub-tribes, we experience differences afresh between the Kukis and the Nagas in high magnitude. No doubt, the Kukis and the Nagas have been the traditional foes and enemies in Manipur. And the colonial British Government made use of the traditional Kuki-Nagas rivalries for their strategic and imperial interests. The Kuki-Naga rivalries of the time and the killing of the two communities each other still alive and has now turned into mass killings, destruction of properties etc. The tension between the two tribes continued to exist still and may not be able to resolve in the near future.

Today, under the capitalist mode of developmental economy, we notice the emergence of two classes of people - the haves and the haves-nots-within the communities itself. The traditional-tribal society has no longer been a closed-Knit society today. The same is also true of other communities in the state. The rich people exploit the poor people in a variety of ways and also suppress them.

“Despite these dimensions of conflicts, there is a distinct culturo-ethnic theme of the conflicts, i.e., conflict and rivalry between the Mongoloids and non-Mongoloids in Manipur. Thus, the notion of outsiders (all those who are non-Manipuris) has given a radical and extreme bias to the growing ethnic consciousness in the state. The Meiteis are concentrated in the Imphal valley and are still the dominant stream in the state.”

### **Economic**

Manipur, economically, is a very poor state. It is one of the most backward states in the country, although the people of Manipur are well-housed, well-fed and well-clothed. Its economy is primarily based on agriculture. Agriculture-oriented activities are basically followed in the state. As such agriculture occupies a

dominant place in the economy of the state. About 75 percent of the population depends upon agriculture and allied activities. It is the single largest main source of livelihood of the majority of the total population. The proportion of workers dependent upon this sector is 68.46 percent. The agricultural activities dominate the rural scene while the urban areas have the non-agricultural profession/activities. Apart from the agricultural activities and government employment, the Manipuris are also engaged in various occupations and economic activities such as business, trade and commerce, house-hold industry, construction works, manufacturing industries, labour, transport etc. Since majority of the population depends on agriculture, pressure on land has increased tremendously.

The total number of working population stood at 7,74,904, of which 7,08,283 are main workers, 66,621 are marginal workers sharing 42.2 percent to the states total population. And non-workers comprises 10,62,245 population. About 42 percent of the total working population of the state depends on agriculture. A look into the industrial classification of workers reveals that 66.38 percent of the total main-workers are cultivators and agricultural labourers, while 7.09 percent are engaged in house-hold industries.

Though agriculture is the mainstay of the Manipuris engaging a majority of the working population, still the state is agriculturally backward though it directly or indirectly supports a bulk of the states' population. The backwardness of the economy is further evident from the fact that there has been virtually no diversion from agriculture to other activities such as plantation and forestry for which there is tremendous scope in the state. Settled form of agriculture still continues to concentrate in the valley. Even after 50 years of independence, agriculture continues to depend on monsoon in the state. While the practice of shifting cultivation by burning the patches

of forests is quite prevalent in the hill areas. Terracing is almost absent in the hills unlike in Nagaland and other hill states.

Rice is the staple food of the general populace. The state is near to self-sufficiency in this respect with the increase of rice production. As such, sufficient rice is grown in both the valley and the hills. Manipur, however, is not self-sufficient in her agricultural product.

In Manipur, where there is agriculture oriented economy, industries play a very vital role in the economic upliftment of the state. However, there are no large and medium scale industries worth the name in the state. Industrially, the state is very backward. Almost all the consumer goods are imported from the rest of the country. Though the state is industrially backward, handloom industry forms an important household industry for the womenfolk.

The state is richly endowed with natural resources such as forests, water, land and mineral resources for industrial development in the state. Despite the availability of vast mineral and forests resources, no industrialisation worth the name has taken place in the state. Much of her rich industrial resources have not yet been systematically surveyed, mapped and exploited due to lack of infrastructural facilities like power, skilled man-power, transports and communications, financial institutions etc. None of them have so far been exploited on a commercial-scale. The mineral wealth remains entirely unexplored. So, the state is one of the industrially backward state of the country.

In terms of infrastructural development, the state lags behind the rest of the country by 21 percent. There are several regional disparities also in the state. The valley are more developed than the hills. Infrastructural development is inadequate in the hills in terms of road network, medical facilities, educational facilities, agricultural

development, and power availability. Due to this developmental dichotomy, it is imperative to take up varying degrees of developmental strategies in the valley and hills.

Industrialisation in Manipur too could not pick up the desired speed and progress due to certain impediments. The geographical location of Manipur isolating the state from the rest of the country by a strong barrier of hill and mountain ranges is one of the major stumbling blocks in the industrial development of Manipur. The state has a poor transport system and during the past 50 years of independence, Imphal valley is not connected by Railway. And the plan to include Manipur in the Railway Map of the country (even nominally) has not made much headway. Manipur heavily depends on the mountainous, Imphal-Dimapur and Imphal-Silchar route, for transporting things it needs from outside the state. There is no alternative to these two routes except air transportation. Moreover, the raw materials available in the state have not been fully tapped, the estimates of their reserves are mostly limited, and less in quantity in order to meet the requirements of establishing large scale industries.

Industrialisation in Manipur did never receive any priority in any plan. There has been a tendency of adhocism in all the policies and programmes of the successive governments in the state. A high level of economic production is the manifestation of an efficient government. The economic survival of the people expressed the type of government exist in a state and its influence on political structure is also considerable. Economic development and political activities are intricately intertwined together and goes hand in hand. The present state of affairs in Manipur is characterised by a high degree of political, social and economic instability.

However, a beginning has been made and the state has prepared a blue print for industrial development. The state government has also initiated necessary steps

towards industrialisation of the state. To promote rapid industrialisation, the Government has recognised the need for providing adequate infrastructure and also package of incentives to sustain existing units, attract entrepreneurs and encourage industrialists even from outside the state to make investment in the manufacturing sector. This will indeed go a long way in the acceleration of industrialisation process in Manipur.

The state government is giving thrust to (a) Agro-based industries; (b) Industries based on locally available raw materials and minerals; (c) manufacture of demand based product in North Eastern Region; (d) Petrochemical based Industries (e) Handloom and Handicrafts Industries; (f) Electronics Development and Telecommunications Project based Industries; and (g) Forest based industries; most of which being labour intensive are given priority.

Next to agriculture, the most important economic activity in the state is handloom and handicrafts industries. Weaving is the main industry in Manipur. The handloom products of Manipur with their intricate and enchanting geometrical-designs, colour and texture fetch huge demands and ready market throughout India and even reaching the foreign markets. Such traditional industries, run on cottage scale, fill the vacuum of industrial picture of the state. But today, this industry is being confronted with such problems of rising cost of raw materials, rising cost of production, competition with mill-clothes and finished goods imported from outside the state.

However, backward economy and ailing economic structure, slow pace of development and frequent political instability for the last many years have all still dominated leaving a profound impact on the state's landscape. It is a harsh reality

that during the more than 50 years of our Independence, when the state was under the complete grip of the bureaucrats without any democratic strapping, practically nothing was done for improving the economic lot of the people. It is also a reality that the development of the state is far lagging behind. In spite of huge aid from the centre, there is hardly any economic growth, which can be attributed primarily due to apathy and rampant corruption of the local Government. The future of the younger generations specially the youths, passing out from Schools, Colleges, Universities and other technical/vocational institutions are still in the dark, not finding any suitable employment avenues in the state, thereby swelling an army of unemployed youths, who later on became discontent with the existing system.

A major problem of the state today is the growing unemployment. The state is having 2.52 lakhs persons on the Live Register of all Employment Exchange as on 31.1.95. There are also many more whose names are not registered in the Employment Exchange. Most of them are educated unemployed.

In Manipur, at present, there is no security in all its connotations of life, economic, religious, cultural and social security. The result is the simmering discontents, a feeling of deprivation and pronounced revivalism. The level of corruption in the state Administration (both civil and political) is horrible touching all aspects of our life. Corruption in Manipur is corroding all social fabrics in the state. This is also one of the principle cause of growing discontentment in the state in the form of separatist “insurgency movement.” Another important cause of the seething discontent in Manipur, apart from others, is the economic neglect of the region. Unemployment problem is indeed considered to be the root cause of the social unrest and tension prevailing in the state. This is causing serious strain in the economy of the state and its development efforts.

To overcome these problems, Manipur with a fast growing population has to develop/improve her economy to such an extent that the people may enjoy the same standard of living which is envisaged in our plans and found in some parts of the country. Otherwise economic disparity may bring more political instability. The economic disparities between the hills and the valley have also to be removed for a smooth sailing of the state affairs. An economically stronger Manipur can play a better role in the national politics. The infrastructures of the state for the development of industries and generation of employment potential has yet to be built. Generation of more employment avenues and other opportunities needs to be emphasized to bring down the level of unemployment and unrest. Increases in the generation of more power is still necessary for development of industries. In the field of transport much is desired to be done to meet the growing transport needs of the state.

## **Cultural**

Manipur, in spite of her hill-girt geographical location and her isolation from the rest of India, had been opened to external influences. It has witnessed immigration of waves of diverse people from the west and East since the very remote past making it a meeting ground of diverse people, cultures, languages, traditions and peculiar ways of life. Aryan culture penetrated by slow degrees into the Meitei Community while the Nagas and Kukies of the hills areas remained comparatively unaffected.

Meiteis, Nagas and Kukis constitute the same and single ethnic entity, despite the separate development process and pace of growth.”<sup>25</sup> “The Meiteis were brought into the national mainstream about two centuries ago, they adopted the Hindu religion and Indian culture.”<sup>26</sup> As such, in the post 17th century period, the Meiteis embraced Bengali Hinduism (Vaishnavism) which gave a profound impact to its indigenous/

native cultural practices. But the new faith remained comparatively unaffected to the hills tribes (Nagas and Kukis) in the state. The hill tribes were Christainized only during the British period. Other religion, it is true, entered Manipur from time to time, Muslims who were captured by king Khagemba at the beginning of the 17th Century when he repelled an invasion from the west, were settled as a separate community in the valley and were joined from time to time by other Muslims who came as peaceful settlers. Of Buddhism there is almost no trace in Manipur, a fact which is all the more surprising in view of Manipur's close proximity to Burma and frequent contacts with the country. Christianity was a late comer to the region and despite its high degree of success among the hill peoples has had practically no effect on the Manipuris of the plains.<sup>26</sup> But recently a new phenomenon/trend among the younger generations of the Meiteis in particular had developed with an inclination to embrace Christianity. This is mainly because of the, despite multi-pronged factors - (a) endless conflict between the pro-Hindu group and the pro-revivalists group (Meitei Sanamahi group); (b) the avenues and opportunities to be benefited from the conversion to Christianity (c) the efforts of the missionaries to expand the horizon of the Christian religion, and (d) the gradual declination of the Hinduism among the Meiteis. Thus Christianity as a religion, today, has got a big place among the Meiteis - gradually multiplying the proselytization/conversion process.

Hinduism in Manipur is the post 17th century development while Christianity was of the 20th century. With the adoption of Hinduism, and under its due impact, the Meiteis experienced ongoing change in their outlook, lifestyle and food habit system. In due course of time, the new faith entirely transformed the Pre-Hindu culture into a Vaishnavite-orientated culture, though some relics of the past are still there. Manipuri culture is therefore, interwoven with that of Bengal. The spread and consolidation of Hinduism in Manipur could not eliminate entirely the influence of worshipping deities of animistic origin such as Lam Lai, Umang Lai, Imung Lai, Sanamahi, Nongsaba,



Panthoibi etc. Sanamahi still occupies an important place among the tutelary deities of the Meiteis from time immemorial - a peculiar form of ancestor worship and preservation of race. But the Hindu culture is known neither to the traditional Nagas nor to the Kukis as they were christianised during British Period. Today Meitei revivalist thinking is threatening to shake off the bond of Hindu religion. However, today, it is an obvious fact that western culture has a tremendous impact on the present generations of the Manipuri society in both the hills and the valley. Most of the younger generations have been taken to western life styles, imitating blindly their styles at random though the western culture is a well-developed and advanced one. Under the process of modernisation, the Manipuri society now seems to be at the mercy of the incoming western influence, and approaching towards a transitional period. The flourishing of western culture in the younger generations of the Manipur society is apparent, though change is a natural phenomenon which affects one's culture and society under the impact of imitating life styles of civilised people. Today, the Meiteis in general are no longer in the grip of orthodox Vaishnavism, even inter-marriage with other religious/castes/tribes is no longer a lasting barrier. However, despite its various cultural similarities, adoptions and influence from others, according to M. Kirtri, "The culture of Manipur is, for the most part, the culture of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas of Manipur ... ," The whole social, political and spiritual attitudes are governed by these things. On the other side, he also observes that "Though Manipur religiously belonged to Bengal but linguistically and culturally it is independent".<sup>27</sup>

Manipur develops one of the distinct cultures of its own for which she is famous throughout the world. Manipur is rich in her cultural heritage. Manipur, not only occupies a cultural distinctiveness of her own, the contemporary Manipuri culture also occupies an outstanding place in the composite culture of India and has also immensely contributed a lot to it. "Manipur today is proud of her culture and heritage marked by close interaction between the Meiteis and the hills tribes in the

background of fascinating bounties of nature. In dance Manipur remains the premier state in India as the captivating dance style of the Meiteis and hill tribes are unique treasures of mankind. Today we come across exquisite and enchanting designs in handicrafts and weaving with a rare combination of design, colour and texture. Manipuri women both Meiteis and tribals weave as if with magic fingers”.<sup>28</sup> Handloom products with artistic and aesthetic sense are demanded in many places of India. Khadi and village industries products and types of clothes made on the looms fetch high prices.

Festivals are almost frequent in this state throughout the year and characteristics of this place. In fact, Manipur is land of festivals, hardly a month goes by without a festival. Its cults and festivals are quite special to an outsider. Moirang is considered as the centre of Meitei culture where every summer colourful ‘Lai Haraoba’ dance is traditionally performed in honour of the presiding pre-Hindu deity ‘Thangjing God’. There are a number of annual great festivals of different origins such as indigenous, Vaishnava and of Western. Among them, such as Lai Haraoba (Community dance); Heikru Hidbngba, Thabal Chongba (dance in moonlight); Cheiraoba (Closing and Opening day of the Manipuri year); Ningol Chakouba (parents and brothers bless their married daughters/sisters by feeding them as best as they can); Ratha Yatra (on the model of Puri); Durga Puja (on the model of Bengal); Deepavali; Holi, Mahashivaratri; Buddha Purnima, Maha Navami, Krishna Jarma; Radha Jarma; Christmas, New Year Day festival; Good Friday etc. are worth mention. Since the state represents a fair Muslim population, the festivals of Muharram, Milad-un-Nabi, Idul Fiter/Zuha are also celebrated by the Muslim community in the state. Among the hills tribes, the festivals like Kut of the Mizo-Kuki-Chin origin; Gan-ngai of the Kabui Nagas, Lui Ngaini of the Tangkhul Nagas etc. are great. Lai Haraoba mirrors and reflects the pre-Vaishnavite culture of Manipur particularly of the Meiteis reflecting the old culture of Moirang.

One of the remarkable example of cultural unity of the state since the historical kings that manifest hill-plain good relations in Manipur is that of “Mera Houchongba” of one-day festival. In Manipur, during the ruling kings, the festival of “Mera Houchongba” was held every year in the month of Mera (October) in the place of the Meitei Kings. This festival is performed by the Hills-men before the presence of the Meitei Kings. Before 1891, this festival was celebrated in the Old palace now occupied by the Assam Rifles. This festival is also a big festival of Manipur. Captain E.W. Dun, observes that “This festival in October lasts for only one day; it is a gathering of the hill tribes under the Manipur Government, and is a curious sight on account of the great number of different tribes assembled, with their curious dress and weapons differing from each other .in feature and language, but all unanimous in one particularly to get drunk as specially, and remain so as long as possible. The hill-men indulge in feasts of strength before the Raja, such as carrying heavy weights, etc. They also indulge in war dances and Sham fights.”<sup>29</sup>

Special traits of Meitei culture is found not only in their ethnic features, but also in habits of dressing clothes, taking food and in sports and religious gatherings, rites and fine arts. Manipur is famous and known to the world for her colourful dance, music, polo, handloom and handicrafts products. Polo, a world-wide game today, is identified as originated from Manipur. So, Manipur is the mother of Polo.<sup>30</sup> Manipur dance is recognised all over the world. Different forms of dances such as Rasa Dance, Khamba Thoibi dance etc., are prevalent popularly among the Meiteis. “Of these dances” according to Dev and Lahiri, “Ras has come to acquire a distinctive style of its own and due to Royal patronage in the two centuries preceding the merger of Manipur. This form of classical dance style had given Manipur a pride of place in the domain of Indian classical dances. The performance of this dance is Solo, Duet, and group form along with the background Kirtan is appealing to many. an Indian heart. Today this dance form remains the consolation of the Vaishnavites in Manipur”.<sup>31</sup>

Pung Cholom, Mridanga Kirtan (dance of Manipuri Mridanga); Pala (Choir) Cholom etc., are also quite appreciated along with the different dances of the Meiteis. A number of folk dance have developed among the Kuki-Naga tribes such as bamboo dances of the Mizo-Kuki-Thadou; Khoibu war dance, the Mao Naga dance, the Tangkhul hunting dance etc. The tribal dances are not only numerous but they are reflection of cultural distinctiveness of various groups. Every dance has its picturesque customs and is accompanied by a gala feast. The songs that go with the dances constitute a part of the rich oral tradition of the various tribes but with the inroads of modernisation there has been a corresponding decline in their spontaneity.<sup>32</sup>

Sri Govindaji in the Royal Palace and Radha Krishna in village temples are worshipped daily by the Manipuri Brahmins. Worshipping of Sanamahi (Sun God); and Pakhangba (Moon God) in the form of a snake supposed to be the divine ancestors of the -royal family- are common to the Meiteis. Umang Lais (Forest deities); Lai Chakhetpi (Levelling Goddess); Toknga (Deity of Gossip); Marjing (Presiding deity of polo); and Panthoibi -still worshipped occasionally by every Meitei. Visits to the shrines of primitive deities and Vaishnava pilgrimage are considered as meritorious acts and part of their cultural life. Even the Muslims also use to pay visits to Mecca. This is because of the facts that many sects such as Hinduism, Meitei Marup (Sanamahi), Christianity, Muslims, and tribalism flourished along the social spectrum and many rites have been characterised by daily activities and associated with it too.

The Meiteis are exceptionally talented in games and sports also. Once the indigenous game - Khong-Kangjei - (foot hockey in combination with wrestling) was a popular game in Manipur valley for the Meiteis. Other interesting games and sports included Yubi Lakpi (game of one Vs many with a coconut trying to retain it); archery; Manipuri style of wrestling/Mukna. The Meiteis are also talented in martial

arts such as wrestling, Thangta (sword and spear dance); Thang Yanaba (sword fight); Ta Khousaba (skill and experience in the use of spear against wild animals). Today Manipur has earned a name in games and sports like Hockey, Weight lifting, boxing, cycling, gymnastic etc. In the fifth National Games held in 1999, Manipur became the over all team Champion.

In the field of theatre and Jatra, Manipur is also not lagging far behind. Manipur has earned reputation and a pride of place in contemporary theatre, Drama, one Act Play, Sumangleela (open-air theatre); Ipom (comedy); Folk song etc., are noteworthy to mention, 'fne expression of Vaushnavite culture in Meitei soil such as Nat Sanskirtan, Nat Pala, Khubak Eshei, Nupi Pala, Holi is par-excellence and worth mentioning. The writings of various poets, playwrights, historians, research scholars, writers etc., in lyrics, prose, poetry, Manipuri translations, novels, drama, one-act play, biography and autobiography, historical, and cultural works, short stories, dictionary, essays and translation works etc., and that of the musicians and dancers etc., added a new impetus to the Manipuri culture.

One of the special aspect of Manipuri culture that represents a remarkable convention that may distinguish Manipur from the rest of India is the marketing by women, use of Phanek (lower garment for women) and the covering of heads by the married women with a piece of cloth/handkerchief. Even the food habit is a remarkable cultural feature of the state. The hill-men are meat eaters while the plains-men are mainly the fish eaters. Fish holds a pride of place in their food items. But the food items offered to Hindu deities are vegetables and agricultural crops prepared by the Hindu Brahmins to suit the local taste. Among the various items of curries, Iromba (mainly prepared from Laphu-inner bark of the plantain tree, Yongchak or Bamboo shoot mixed up with flatten fish, potato, Pea seeds, Chilly and salt), and Champhut, Uti, Sagolhawai are the favourite items of dish for both the service of Shri Govindaji

(historic Vaishnavite Centre adjoining the Royal Palace of Manipur's former Maharajas); and other Hindu deities as well as of the Manipuri people.

### **Political Organisation of the State**

“The tri-ethnic nation state of Manipur passed through the pre-history, proto-history and historical stages that spread over the ancient, the medieval, and the modern periods. It had golden periods as well as upheavals and devastations too in equal measures.”<sup>33</sup> But the recorded history of Manipur begins with the accession of the legendary God-King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (The first known historical ruling King of Manipur) in the year 33 A.D. of the First Century. Since then Manipur had been an independent and powerful political entity, ruled by a line of 74 successive Kings one after another till the state was merged with the Union of India in October 1949, despite the brief period of Burmese control in the early part of the 19th century as well as the British Paramountcy in Manipur from the later part of the 19th century till the middle of this 20th century. All the rulers including the two Maharajas appointed by the British during their Paramountcy were the descendants of the King Pakhangba.<sup>34</sup>

The defeat in the historic Anglo-Manipuri War which is known as the “Last War of Independence” for the Meiteis fought in the year 1891 brought Manipur completely under the British subjugation till the withdrawal of the British from the Indian sub-continent in August 1947. Manipur, after the events in 1891, became a dependency of the British with complete subordination of the state to the Government of India, made Manipur a princely state ruled by appointed native kings of their choice from amongst the members of the royal family living under the Paramountcy of the British crown. The state Administration was taken over by the British till the laps of their Paramountcy in India by appointing two of its Officers - the Political Agent (who was the Superintendent of the state) and the President of the state Durbar

to control and supervise the administration of Manipur but the paramount power (British Government) had generously given to the state almost complete freedom in respect of the internal management of the administration to the extent that British imperial interest did not suffer. During the long spell of their presence in Manipur (1891-1947) the state was completely, in all respects, under the exploitative control of the British Administration. The President of the state Durbar and the Political Agent always interfering into the internal affairs of Manipur, and controlling important departments by the British. The old institutions and titles were replaced by English models, including the abolition of slavery and forced labour. The king was kept in charge of the states' administration and became the ruler of Manipur. This system continued till 1948 when the King appointed a Chief Minister to administer the state.

During the short period (1947-1949), in between the British departure of India and the merger of Manipur with India, the people of Manipur had their own democratic constitution known as the "Manipur State Constitution Act 1947" which came into force in 1948. Under the constitution, elections were held in March 1948 and Manipur became the first native state in India to introduced Assembly elections on Adult Franchise.<sup>35</sup> Under the constitution, the first delimitation in Manipur was also carried out in 1948 to secure proper representation of the Meiteis, the tribals, and the Muslims, dividing the entire Manipur into 30 General, 18 Tribals and 3 Muslims constituencies. The whole state was considered as one constituency to secure representation of special interests like commerce (one) and Education (one). Thus the constituencies were classified into three - General, Tribal, and communal. There was no woman constituency returning a woman candidate. After the election, the Legislative Assembly was constituted and the elected Legislative Assembly met thereafter. But within a short period, things took a different turn in Manipur. After the

constitution was brought into force, it remained in operation till 15th of October 1949 and thereafter the peoples' long-desired democratic constitution in the state was eclipsed forever by the strong integration forces in India resulting in the dissolution of the state Legislative Assembly, Interim Council of Ministers and merger of the state with the Dominion of India. Thus, the state, after the lapse of British Paramountcy in India, function for a brief period as an independent kingdom with the Maharaja (Boddhachandra Singh) as the ruler (Head of the State) along with his Council of Ministers. The Manipur State Constitution Act would have been democratic had the leader having the largest majority was appointed Chief Minister. But the chief Minister was appointed by the Maharaja (his own brother) in consultation with the elected minister of the Council although they were elected by the Assembly. It was clear that 90 per cent of full-fledged democracy was introduced on a somewhat imperial model.

After the lapse of the Paramountcy of the British Crown over Indian Sub-continent and the transfer of power on 15 August 1947, Manipur also thereafter as other native states during British India, became sovereign who were, according to the British Prime Minister Attlee, completely independent and were free to either of the two dominions - India or Pakistan - as they choose or remain free and independent. However, after the end of the British Paramountcy, the whole future of Indian states was in the melting pot. Options were opened to the native states either to join India or Pakistan. Unless to join either of the two dominions, the states were to promote the growth of democratic institutions within the states according to the wishes of the people. Manipur being a native state faced this choice. Beyond any doubt, on the other hand, like other Indian states, it was inconceivable for Manipur also to remain separate and independent entity. The



only alternative option available to Manipur was to join and become an integral part of either of the newly emerged two dominions. In this regard, the wishes of the people of Manipur, geographical contiguity, political and other considerations had much to do a great influence in deciding the issue of accession and choice. Despite the pros and cons of the accession, Manipur held no alternative options other than conceding to the forces and appeals of integration of Indian states to the Union of India. On the other hand, India also needed Manipur for her strategical reasons as the state located in a sensitive north-east bordering with Myanmar. Therefore, the independent entity of Manipur was out of question then. Soon the situation took a different turn and the options were closed in favoure of the integration when the Maharaja of Manipur signed the Merger Agreement.

Thus, this tiny erstwhile princely state under geo-political compulsions arising from the British departure and lapse of their paramountcy led the then Maharaja of Manipur Buddhachandra Singh, who could not ultimately sail against the tide, entered into a Standstill Agreement with the Government of India on 2 July 1947. By 1947, Manipur thus became a part of the Indian Union. The Maharaja, however, did not sign the Instrument of Accession for more than two years. Ultimately, after three days, of hard negotiations at Shillong and despite his (Maharaja) convincing arguments against the forces to take the will of the people of Manipur into consideration, under the undue pressure and force of the then Home Minister, Sardar Patel and Sri Prakash, the then Governor of Assam; the then Maharaja of Manipur His Highness Boddhachandra Singh signed the Instrument of Accession (Manipur Merger Agreement) on 21 September, 1949 in Shillong with the Government of India, (though the anti-integration block had strongly agitated against the liquidation of the gaddi threatening that any decision

in favour of the removal of the Maharaja would create chaos in the state). Any idea of possible integration of the state of Manipur with India was then ruled out. The Maharaja was given an annual pension (Privy Purse) of 3 lakhs of rupees from noon of 15 October 1949 (for his lifetime). The state of Manipur, henceforth, was acceded to the same year by the Maharaja and merged with the Indian Dominion and became an integral part of the Union of India. With this the Administration of Manipur was taken over by the Government of India. Since then Manipur have been the scene of eco-cultiiral transformation bringing the state to the threshold of overall development within the framework of the Constitution of India. With the amalgamation of Manipur with the Union of India, the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 became inoperative, the erstwhile Manipur State Legislative Assembly was dissolved, the (Interim) Council of Ministers was dismissed and the Chief Court was abolished by an order of the Government of India, though there were strong protest against the abolition of the Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers and people demanded its restoration.

Manipur after its amalgamation into the Dominion of India, was made a part 'C' state administered by the President of India through a Chief Commissioner. Under the administration and control of the Chief Commissioner, all the central acts had been extended in Manipur. Part 'C' states being a centrally administered area, the administration of Manipur was thus vested directly in the hands of the central government. The Chief Commissioner was assisted by a nominated Advisory Council in the discharge of his functions; consisting of such number of members as the President may think fit for the purpose. On 15 October 1949, a Chief Commissioner was appointed (Major General Rawal Amar Singh being the first Chief Commissioner of Manipur) as Administrator by the

Government of India. On 22 January 1950 Manipur was declared a Chief Commissioners' Province. An Advisory Council was constituted by the Centre consisting of the Chief Commissioner and fourteen others nominated by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Commissioner. On 9 October, 1950, the nominated Advisory Council was formally inaugurated. Since the council was an Advisory Body, its advice was not binding on the Chief Commissioner. Thus, in 1950-51 an Advisory form of government was introduced. In 1953 a nominated Council of Advisors consisting of five members - three from the valley and two from the Hills was constituted.

But the Socialist Party in alliance with some local parties organised an agitation for installation of Assembly against this Advisory Government, in 1954. A group of youths also formed the "Revolutionary Nationalist Party" and held meeting at Mapan Kangjeibung on 19 April 1953. They demanded the immediate announcement of the introduction of a responsible government in Manipur within 15 days opposing the Advisory Council system. It also insisted upon the appointment of Manipuri as officer instead of Mayangs (non-Manipuris) and also to reduce the price of rice etc. And it was also resolved as being ready for agitation to become Manipur an independent state under the United Nations Trusteeship, in case their demands were not conceded to. But the movement discontinued after the arrest of its leaders. After some time they formed a political party "Manipur Nationalist Union".

After the reorganisation of states in India in 1956 following the recommendation of the SRC's report, Part 'C' states ceased to exist and in their place, Territorial Councils<sup>36</sup> were established under the Territorial Council Act 1956. Manipur was also brought under the Territorial Council Act 1956. A Territorial Council was established in Manipur in 1957 which consisted of 30 elected and 2 nominated members.<sup>37</sup> It came into existence on 16 August 1957 and the Manipur

Territorial Council was inaugurated on 2nd September 1957. Thus, the Council replaced the Advisory Rule in Manipur.

The whole of Manipur was agitated from time to time for the restoration of an Assembly. The Communist Party and the Socialist Party started an agitation demanding the establishment of a Legislative Assembly in Manipur. The belief in the formation of a separate state had been nicely given expression to by the Pan Manipur Youth League, Meitei State Committee, United National Liberation Front, Revolutionary Government of Manipur, Kanglei League and political organisations of the hills' people.<sup>38</sup> To satisfy the aspirations of the people of Manipur, under the Government of Union Territories Act of 1963, Manipur was elevated to the status of Union Territory in June 1963. The existing Territorial Council established under the Territorial Council Act 1956 was converted into a Territorial Legislative Assembly with a Council of Ministers to assist the Lt. Governor who was the repository of all powers, which began to function from 23 July 1963. The Assembly consisted of 30 elected and 2 nominated members (till March 1969) and later on 3 nominated members. The Chairman of the Territorial Council was appointed as the Chief Minister of the Union Territory. The tenure of the Assembly was five years. The Assembly, after functioning for some months, had to be dissolved on 16 October 1969 on account of the unstable party positions and President's Rule was imposed.

The people of Manipur were not satisfied with these political developments. They demanded full-fledged statehood for Manipur. In the following years, the voice of the people for a full-fledged state increased day by day on the pretext that people could have power to legislate themselves, manage financial matters and political powers at their own. People also started conceiving that only when Manipur becomes a full-fledged constituent part of India, these problems could be solved. This belief increased gradually. All the then political parties in Manipur also started favouring the

advantages of being a full-fledged state in Manipur. And from this, movement for statehood proceeded en-masse. All the political parties joined together and carried on violent agitation. At the same time, there was agitation for statehood movement in the neighbouring Meghalaya and Tripura. Soon, in the latter part of 1971, an abrupt change took place in the political climate of Manipur. In response to a request made by the Meghalaya Assembly on 30 September 1970 to the Union Government to convert the Autonomous State of M'eghalaya within Assam into a full-fledged state, the Parliament passed the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act 1971 during the Winter Session of 1971 which came into force in January 1972. With the passing of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation ) Act 1971 by the Parliament, as visualised under this Act, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura emerged as three separate states and conferred Union Territory status to Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, Manipur became a full-fledged state on 21 January 1971 (being the 21st state within the Indian Union). The same day (on 21 January 1972) the state of Manipur with an unicameral Legislature was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi in a public meeting at Konung Lampak (Palace Ground), Imphal in fulfilment of the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act 1971 as well as of the people's aspirations in the state. The strength of the Legislative Assembly was fixed at 60 members directly elected by the people along with a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister. There is no provision for nominated members. For the electoral purpose, the whole of Manipur was divided into 60 single-member-constituencies - 40 in the valley including the one in the Barak Basin in Jiri and 20 in the hills. Nineteen constituencies in the Hills are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and one assembly segment (Sekmai) in the valley is reserved for Scheduled Caste. The remaining 40 constituencies - 39 in the valley and one (Kangpokpi) in the Hills - are the unreserved general constituencies. Thus after statehood, the previous 30 member Territorial Assembly Constituency was transformed into 60-member state Legislative Assembly. With the

attainment of statehood, Manipur has contributed its quota of two seats in the Lok Sabha and one seat in the Rajya Sabha. Of the two Lok Sabha seats, one is reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency (Hills Area).

With the conferment of statehood the long demand for a full-fledged state was eventually conceded in order to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Manipur. Since Manipur became an integral part of the Dominion of India on 15 October, 1949, it took over two decades to become a full-fledged constituent state of the Indian Union. Since then, there has been no change in the Constitutional position of Manipur. In joining the Indian mainstream, Manipur is marching well ahead, with other states and people of India, in terms of population and size of the state. Thus, from Advisory Council to Territorial Council, from Territorial Council to Territorial Legislative Assembly and then to a full-fledged statehood in 1972 finally conferred on by the Government of India.

Before 1947, Manipur had no legislature - neither Lower House nor Upper House. Again before 1947, there were no elections in Manipur.<sup>39</sup> Because, Manipur, since Pakhangba ascended the throne in 33 A.D., had been a kingdom ruled by successive kings till the state merged into the Dominion of India. It was during the Interim period of India's Independence/British departure and Integration of Manipur into the Dominion of India that the First General Elections was held in March 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947 to elect 53 members to the State Legislative Assembly. This was the first election so far held in the political history of Manipur.<sup>40</sup> In the election, no political party secured an absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly. People did not vote the Congress Party into power as well as to none of the parties. But the Praja Shanti (rival party of Congress) with the support of Hill MLAs formed the government. The Government formed under the Manipur

State Constitution Act 1947 was a coalition government. Thus, it marked/set on the beginning of coalition Government in the future politics in Manipur. After that elections in 1948, there was no state elections in Manipur till the year 1957 except the General Election (Lok Sabha) and Rajya Sabha elections held in India. It was from 1957 onwards that periodic elections have been held regularly till today - twice during the Territorial Council period (1957-1963); once during the time of Union Territory (1963-1972); and six times (1972-1995) after Manipur have attained full-fledged state of the Indian Union.

In the post-merger period, elections in Manipur can be categorised mainly into two - Parliamentary Elections and State (Assembly) Elections. So far as Parliamentary constituency is concerned, during the period 1952-1996, Manipur was allotted two seats in the Lok Sabha to represent two distinct regions in the state - the Valley and the Hills - and one seat for the Rajya Sabha. The whole of Manipur was divided into two Parliamentary Constituencies for the Lok Sabha elections - the Outer and Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituencies whose boundaries were changed from time to time. Enough there were changes in the boundaries of the Parliamentary constituencies, there was no change in the number of seats allotted in Lok Sabha for Manipur. One seat is for the Meiteis (General) lying in the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency (Valley) and the other is for the Hills Tribes (Reserved) in the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. In the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Lok Sabha Constituency, some General constituencies of the Valley are included and some reserved Assembly constituencies of the hills are also included in the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Lok Sabha Constituency.

In the state, General Elections (including the mid-term polls) to the Lok Sabha to elect its 2 members have been regularly held 12 times so far since the First General Elections held in 1952 followed by respectively in 1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977,

1980, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, and 1998. There was an Electoral College consisting of 30 members for the election of a member to Rajya Sabha. The electorates of Manipur also went to polls in 1952 to elect 30 members of the Electoral College constituted for the election of a member to Rajya Sabha. The Electoral College was abolished after the election to the Rajya Sabha was over. The election in 1952 heralded the beginning of democratic participation of the Manipuris in the political process of India in the post-merger era. Since then there have been regular and periodic elections in the state on party basis, when the Advisory Council was upgraded to the Territorial Council in 1957, it had 30 seats and the number of seats remained unaltered during the Union Territory period also. Since then, all the 30 members of the Council, the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory and 60 members after Manipur have attained statehood, constituted the Electoral College for the election of the lone member to the Rajya Sabha.

As for the state election is concerned, when Manipur merged with the Indian Union, it became a part 'C' state with no legislature. Elections started with the introduction of Territorial Council system in 1957. {*Under the Part 'C' States Act, Manipur was divided into 30 Electoral College constituencies - 20 in the valley and 10 in the hills areas - constituted for the purpose of election of a member to Rajya Sabha*). Under the provisions of the Territorial Council Act 1956, Manipur had 30 elected seats in the Council. The state was again divided into 30 territorial constituencies of which 20 are in the valley and 10 in the hills areas. There was no reservation of seats. After the passing of the Territorial Council Act 1956, the first election to the Territorial Council took place in 1957 to elect its 30 members. Four political parties such as the congress, Socialist, CPI and the Praja Socialist Party including a large number of Independence contested for the 30 seats of the council. In the election, no party was able to secure an absolute majority in the Council but the Congress Party won the largest number of 12 seats in a House of 30 members. The



election of the Chairman of the Council was held on 5 September 1957. H. Dwijamani Deva Sharma and M. Koireng Singh were the two contestants for the post of Chairmanship. In the election of the Chairman of the Council, H. Dwijamani Deva Sharma (Independent) was elected Chairman. Two lady members R.K. Mukhara Devi and Ngalkhokim were nominated to the Council who later joined the Congress. But following the defection, he (Dwijamani) did not command a majority support in the Council and Sibho Lorho (Congress) replaced Sharma as the second Chairman of the Council.

For the second time, the Territorial Council election was held in 1962 in which four political parties (Congress, Socialist, CPI and Praja Socialist Party) and Independents were in the election fray for the 30 seats of the Council. This time also, the number of constituencies of the Council in both the valley and hills remained unaltered and no seat was also reserved either for the Scheduled Tribes or the Scheduled Caste. In this election too, all the political parties failed to obtain an absolute majority. But the performance of the Congress was the best among the contesting parties as the party could return 15 out of 30 seats by increasing 3 more seats from the previous 12 secured seats in 1957. M. Koireng Singh (Congress) was elected Chairman of the Council. Though there was no reservation of seats for the Scheduled Tribes in the Hills during this Territorial Council period, elections were fought on the tribal lines in the Hills Areas and the same phenomena was noticed in the valley too.

When the demand for more autonomy in Manipur gave way to the passing of the Government of Union Territories Bill 1963 by the Indian Parliament, Manipur was brought under Union Territory from 1963 and converted into the Union Territory status. When the Union Territories Act of 1963 came into force, under its provisions, the existing Territorial council was elevated into a Territorial Legislative Assembly.

Prior to 1963 or in between 1949-1963, Manipur had no Legislative Assembly. Under the Union Territories Act 1963 also, the<sup>1</sup> number of constituencies was the same as under the Territorial Council Act 1956 but there was provision for nomination of not more than 3 members. (At first 2 members were nominated but from 1969, the number of nominated members increased upto three members). Thus, since the Territorial Council in 1957 to the Union Territory period, the number of territorial constituencies/elected members had been fixed at 30 elected seats. As were in the Territorial Council period, out of the 30 elected seats, 20 were in the valley and 10 in the hills. But the 10 constituencies in the hills, except the Jiribam Assembly Segment, were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. Thus, reservation of seats for the Scheduled Tribes in the Hills began with the existence of Union Territory in Manipur. Elections were held in June 1963 to elect 30 members of the Legislative Assembly. A popular Government, being the First Popular Ministry in Manipur, was installed on 1 July 1963, with M. Koireng Singh (Congress and the then Chairman of the Territorial Council) as the First Chief Minister. The Assembly began to function from 23 July 1963. The Legislature came into being on 3 August 1963 and became the First Legislature in Manipur after the state merged into the Indian Union. His government, which stayed in power till 12 January 1967, have been the first ever popular ministry in Manipur. Thus, the introduction of the First Popular ministry in Manipur began when Manipur became a Union Territory in June 1963. Upto this period there was political stability in Manipur as there was no real power struggle as well as the politicians had little experience of the lucrative ministerial posts. Thus, the life of the first ministry of M. Koireng completed, with stability. Since the life of the First Legislative Assembly was due to expire in the early part of 1967, a fresh election was ordered- During the period of Union Territory, only one election was held to the Legislative Assembly.

The First election to the Legislative Assembly was held in 1967, and Manipur went to polls on 19 and 20 February 1967 to elect 30 members of the Legislative Assembly. Since the election was the First Assembly Election in Manipur, people

were more enthusiastic than the previous elections. The political parties concentrated more on the Assembly elections than the Lok Sabha elections and they were trying to form unilateral government of their own. Altogether five political parties - Congress, Samyukta Socialist Party, Praja Socialist Party, CPI, CPI (M), alongwith a host of Independents contested for the 30 seats. In this election also the Congress Party still continued to hold on a dominant position in the state politics by securing a working majority of 16 seats in the 30 member Assembly. However, the strength of the Congress was subsequently increased by 9 members by the admission of the 2 nominated members and 7 Independents to its fold. The Congress government was thus formed. For the second time, M. Koirang Singh was sworn - in as Chief Minister on 20 March 1967. Following the 1967 elections, Manipur, in her political scene, experienced its coalition politics and large scale repeated defections and redefections over the issue of formation, reformation and deformation of governments in the name of serving the people and the state. The term heralded the beginning of defections, redefections and coalition government in Manipur which produced three Chief Ministers. And it was also in this term that Manipur experienced prolonged period of President's Rule for the first time which lasted till March 1972. Soon, the Koirang -led second ministry, after hardly seven months in power, was plagued by political instability due to intra-party leadership crisis and power struggle. His ministry fell and he resigned on 4 October 1967 as his government was voted out of power effected by mass scale defection from the Congress party following the growing dissatisfaction among the Congress members of the Assembly over the distribution of portfolios and positions in the ministry. Under the leadership of Kh. Chaoba Singh (Congress) the Deputy Speaker, 8 members defected from the Congress. The defectors, by forming a new party (Manipur Peoples Party) under the leadership of Salam Tombi Singh (the then Speaker of the Assembly) joined hands with some opposition members, forged an alliance known as United Legislature Front having its majority in the House. The

Front offered the post of Chief Minister to Longjam Thambou Singh on 13 October 1967. A short-lived ministry of the United Front, under the leadership of Longjam Thambou Singh (as Chief Minister) was thus formed on 13 October 1967. His ministry lasted less than a fortnight due to redefection which remained in power till 25 October 1967. Very soon the Congress could regain one member that caused political instability in Manipur. The life of 12-days old Thambou Ministry came to an end. Disgusted with this horse-trading among the elected representatives of the people and difficult to experiment further with the formation of a new government in the state, on the 13th day of the Thambou Ministry, for the first time, the Central Government imposed the President's Rule in Manipur from 25 October 1967 which continued till 19 February 1968. The Assembly was kept on suspended animation. In the meantime further defection took place. Those who defected from the Congress to the United Legislative Party defected from the Front and rejoined the Congress. Even the Chief Minister L. Thambou Singh himself also redefected and joined the Congress. After hardly four months, the congress could manage redefection of other 5 more members and when Congress strength increased to a total of 21 members in a House of 30, the Congress Ministry at the centre suspended President's Rule in Manipur. M. Koireng Singh again formed his another ministry on 19 February 1968, being his last ministry. His ministry, however, could not survive long due to defection of 6 members from the Congress forming into 17-member"<sup>1</sup> United Front. On 24 September 1969, before the completion of two years, he resigned as his ministry was defeated following the opposition attack. The United Legislature Front (Opposition Group) made unsuccessful attempts to form the government. The Front could not form the government. However the Union Government after observing the prevalent political situation in the Union Territory of Manipur, where there was abhorrent practice of large scale horse -trading among the elected representatives of the people, producing chronic and endemic political instability, came to the conclusion of not warranting the

formation of further government by the opposition party. Thus, President's Rule was imposed on 16 October 1969 in Manipur. Though the Assembly was suspended in the beginning, it was later on dissolved and continued till the March 1972 Assembly election was held.

As there was strong demands for full-fledged statehood fresh elections to the Assembly did not took place till Manipur attained her statehood in 1972. When Manipur became a full-fledged state in 1972, the Territorial Legislative Assembly was transformed into the state Legislative Assembly. The strength of the Assembly was increased to 60 seats, dividing the entire state into 60 single-member territorial constituencies. Since then reservation of seats was limited to the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste. Again since 1971, delimitation of constituencies in Manipur has not yet been done till date, except minor changes brought about in the population and boundaries of some constituencies. Sometimes one constituency was shifted from one Parliamentary constituency to another. Majority of the Assembly constituencies in Manipur Valley and in the Hills areas are located in the rural areas. The number of Assembly constituencies located in the urban areas are very few in number.

Thus, prior to the First State Assembly Election held in 1972, Manipur witnessed 4 General Elections and one mid-term Lok Sabhapoll, 2 Territorial Council elections and one Union Territory elections. Right from 1952, elections of both the state and Parliament have been a regular feature in Manipur on party basis, providing the people a sense of maturity in the electoral process and techniques. Since Manipur became a full-fledged state of the Indian Union, elections to the state Legislative Assembly in the state had so far been held six times including the recently held one in February 1995. Of these, the second Assembly election of 1974 was a mid-term poll. In all the Assembly elections in the state, the sixth election had been of a peculiar one from the previous five Assembly elections.

For the first State Legislative Assembly elections, Manipur went to polls in three phases - on 6 and 9 March for the hills and on 11 March 1972 for the valley constituencies. Six national parties such as<sup>1</sup> Congress-R; Congress-O; CPI, CPI-M, Socialist; Jan Singh and one regional party-MPP, along with a large number of Independents were in the election fray. The number of candidates and political parties that participated in the election increased enormously since it was the first state Assembly elections. However, to all's astonishment, no party was able to secure a workable majority in the House. But the Congress-R emerged as the single largest party by winning 17 seats. MPP which entered the electoral battle for the first time followed second with 15 seats. Congress-O Captured only one seat; CPI-5; SSP-3; and 19 seats went to Independents. Though the Congress-R emerged as the single largest party, the first state ministry was formed by MPP with the support of Congress-O; SSP and 13 Independents by forging an alliance known as 'United Legislators Party (ULP) of 32 members. Md. Allimuddin was sworn-in on 20 March 1972 as the Chief Minister of the ULP coalition government. Due to large scale defections from the ULP, his ministry was dislodged from power on 26 March 1973 and resigned on 28 March 1973. The combined opposition staked its claim to form an alternative government by forging an alliance - Progressive Democratic Alliance (PDA) - under the leadership of Athiko Daiho (CLP leader). However after observing the political situation in the state in which no party/alliance could form a stable government, the Centre invoked Presidents Rule by dissolving the Assembly with effect from 23 March 1973 till 3 March 1974. Thus, the first popular government of this young state collapsed and Manipur came under Central rule for the first time. However, despite the defections and redefections to form government, the term experienced only one ministry - the least number of ministry so far exists in Manipur till today. In the

following elections, the state witnessed growing intensity of political competition for power among the various parties. The subsequent four terms were marred by defections and leadership crisis yielding more than one ministry in a term.

The second state Assembly election was a mid-term poll. The election to constitute a new House was held in three phase - the hills went to polls on 19 and 23 February while the valley on 25 February 1974. For the mid-term elections, the constituencies were readjusted according to 1971 census. As a result, Sekmai constituency (Valley) was reserved for the Schedule caste. Kangpokpi Constituency (Hills) became a General constituency. The contesting parties were Congress-R; Congress-O; Socialist; CPI; CPI-M (national) and three regional parties viz., MPP, KNA and Manipur Hills Union along with a large number of Independents. The election could not produce a desired result. History repeated itself. No party was able to command an absolute majority, however, MPP improved its position. It performed best by securing 20 seats. Congress-R declined and captured 13 seats. The CPI got 6 seats, SSP 2, MHU 12. Independents could return 7 seats. Soon the state plunged into an era of coalitions and counter-coalitions in the governmental affairs one after the other. The term marked the total beginning of the endless political infighting for leadership and power. This term witnessed the installation and fall of ever largest five ministries. The first was a MPP-led coalition government. Though the MPP had no working majority, it mustered support of SSP, Independents and 6 from MHU and constituted the United Legislature Party (ULP). The ULP ministry was inducted on 4 March 1974 with Md. Allimuddin as Chief Minister. However defections from the ULP government took place on the ground that Yangmaso Shaiza was not made the Chief Minister. After hardly four months stay in power, Allimuddin ministry was

replaced by a Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) coalition ministry headed by Yangmaso Shaiza. His ministry, installed on 10 July 1974, consisted of three parties-MHU, CPI and Congress-R. Though a constituent part, even a single minister did not include from the Congress R. It defected and withdrew support to Yangmaso Shaiza. After having negotiations with the opposition Parties, particularly the UliP, the Congress-ULP alliance assumed the name of Democratic Legislative Party (DLP). On 5 December 1974, after about five months time in power, Shaiza ministry collapsed and resigned. The next day, on 6 December 1974, the DLP coalition government was installed in the Office with R.K. Dorendro Singh as Chief Minister. Dorendro realised that the Congress has gained enough strength to form a Congress ministry without the support of other parties. So he submitted the resignation of his ministry on 23 July 1975. The same day, a coalition government of Congress-CPI headed by Dorendro was inducted for the second time. (The CPI was a partner due to State Governor's advice to Dorendro to seek their co-operation). After the sixth General elections to Lok Sabha in March 1977, the Janata Party came to power at Centre. A change in Delhi brought its impact in the politics of Manipur too. The Congress MLAs in Manipur joined the Janata Party in Manipur. The minority government of Dorendro resigned on 13 May 1977. However, over the issues of leadership, admission of defectors to Janata Party and dissolution of the Assembly as decided by State Janata Party for fresh election, defectors were not allowed to form the government. Since the Centre opposed the decision of State Janata Party to dissolve Assembly, the President's Rule was imposed on 16 May 1977. The Assembly was kept on Suspended animation. Following the resolution of leadership crisis, President's Rule was revoked on 29 June 1977. The same day, Yangmaso Shaiza (who was elected to Lok Sabha on Congress ticket from outer Manipur Parliamentary



constituency and defected to Janata Party in the Lok Sabha) was sworn-in as the chief Minister. Discontentment in the Party leading to resignation of some members from the Janata Legislature Party, deteriorated law and order, increasing opposition demand for resignation of Shaiza, dissolution of the Assembly, charges against Janata Party as corrupt etc. provoked the Centre to impose Presidents' Rule and dissolve the Assembly on 14 November 1979.

In the third Assembly elections held in January 1980, altogether nine political parties were in the electoral battle. They included six national parties -congress-I; congress-U; Janata Party; CPI; CPI-M; Janata-S/Lok Dal, and three regional parties - MPP; KNA; and Ereipak Leishem Party. A host of Independents were also in the election contest. As usual, no party obtained a workable majority in the House. With 13 seats the congress-I emerged as the largest party. The term produced three ministries. The first was a congress-I led coalition government - a combination of congress -I, congress-U, MPP, KNA and Independents - inducted on 14 January 1980 with R.K. Dorendro as\* chief Minister. On 26 November 1980, Dorendro resigned on the ground that he was to be appointed as Indian Ambassador to Norway. The next day on 27 November a coalition government of Congress-I, Congress-U, and MPP led by Rishang Keishing of Congress-I was inducted. Within three months, Keishing ministry fell down following defections. Despite the claim of the Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) consisting of MPP, CPI, CPI-M, Congress-I and Janata Party led by Kh. Chaoba Singh to form an alternative government, the state Governor recommended President's Rule from 28 February 1981 to 18 June 1981 on the ground that PDF would not be able to form a stable ministry. It was revoked on 19 June 1981. For the second time Rishang formed his ministry which survived for the remaining period of the term.

Election to the fourth Assembly was held in December 1984 in which six political parties - congress-I, Janata Dal, CPI, CPI-M (National) and MPP, KNA (regional) including a host of Independents were in the electoral battle. The Congress-I did ever performer- best by winning 30 seats, might be due to 'sympathy wave' for Indira Gandhi following her assassination. The first Congress ministry was formed on 4 January 1985 headed by Rishang Keishing. However political crisis followed soon in the Congress Legislature Party demanding the removal of Keishing. The State Governor was also pressurised by the Army dealing with the NSCN Insurgency activities for Keishing's removal. At last Keishing resigned. He was replaced by R.K. Joychandra, the then Union Minister of State for Petroleum. Joychandra Ministry was installed on 5 March 1988. The Centre sent him as Chief Minister to resolve the intra-party leadership crisis in the State congress-I. His ministry remained in Office till the next elections.

In the fifth Assembly election held in February 1990, ten political parties were in the election fray, they were congress-I, Janata Dal; Congress-S; CPI; CPI-(M); BJP; MPP; KNA; NPP, and MHPC. A number of Independents were also in the contest. There was a pre-poll alliance of six-parties. The Congress-I did not enter into any alliance. No party secured absolute majority. With 26 seats, the Congress-I was the largest party followed by MPP 11; JD 11; Congress-S 6, KNA 2; CPI 3 and NPP 1. The rest of the parties/Independents could not return even a candidate. The term experienced three ministries. The six non-congress parties (MPP, JD, KNA, CPI, NPP and Congress-S) formed United Legislative Party (ULP). On 23 February 1990 the MPP- led ULP coalition government was formed by R.K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister. Ranbir tried to have a stable government by appointing 27 MLAs out of 34 as ministers and gave other post to the rest. But many MLAs in the Ranbir Camp caught up in the congress trap. Ranbir Ministry was collapsed with the arrival of President's Rule keeping the Assembly on 'Animated Suspension.' He remained in

Office till 7 January 1992. The Central Rule was revoked. On 8 April 1992, a coalition government of Congress- MPP was inducted, congress led the ministry under the leadership of R.K. Dorendro Singh. Unfortunately Dorendro ministry faced with Kuki-Naga ethnic clash. The communal clash became a means to struggle for power, causing intra-party leadership crisis in the state Congress-I and political instability. Law and order situation deteriorated. In the night of 31 December 1993, Dorendro ministry was toppled and Central' Rule was invoked. Following the resolution of leadership crisis in the congress-I, the President's Rule was revoked on 13 December 1994. The same day, the last ministry of the term, virtually a government of a group of defectors, headed by Rishang Keishing as Chief Minister was installed. His ministry lasted till he was again sworn-in on 25 February 1995 as the Chief Minister of the newly constituted sixth House of the Assembly.

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2. Source: Census of India, 1991, Final Population Totals, Manipur, Extract from the *Statistical Handbook of Manipur*, 1992.
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6. N. Sanajaoba Singh, "The Roots" in N Sanajaoba (ed.) "*Manipur : Past and Present* Vol.3, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1995, p.1.
7. R. Constantine, *Manipur : Maid of the Mountains*, Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1981, p.34.
8. This new creed of Meitei Revivalist Movement started from around the 1930s in Cachar (Assam) under the leadership of Naoriya Phulo. This movement absolutely broke off from the Hindu Meiteis/Hindu cultures. He was a critic of Hinduism in the form of Bengal Vaishnavism, Bengali and Sanskrit culture and the Manipuri Bamons/Brahmins. His attack on Vaishnavism/Vaishnava Missionaries aroused *The Manipuri*, mind to a strong resolve to throw off the Hindu yoke. Not only the parts of Cachar but Manipur joined his movement though his birthplace continued to be leading among his followers. Phulo's success inspired some Meiteis from Manipur to contact him in the late 1930s. His disciple from Manipur carried on the same line of thinking of Phulo to refute the Hindu ways and carry conviction to the Meitei masses. Under the Presidentship of Pukhrambam Surchand, the Manipur State Meitei Marup was established in Kangleipak with a Constitution. Apart from others, some resolutions included to substitute the Sanskrit terms, and names by pure Meitei words to adopt Meitei hymns in worships, to abandon Hindu festivals in favour of the Meitei ones etc. This movement upholds the primitive beleifs of the Meitei to its full extent, outrightly rejecting the teaching of the Hindu saints. (See also M. Kirti Singh, *Religion and Culture of Manipr*, Manas Publications, Delhi, 1988, First Edition; pp. 51-52.)

9. Ibid, pp. 57,59,61.
10. Gangmuniei Kabui “Genesis of the Ethnoses of Manipur” in N. Sanajaoba (ed.) *Manipur : Past and Present*, Vol. 3, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 25-29.
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17. V.K. Nayar “*Threats from Within: India’s Internal Security Environment*” Lancer Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, First Published, 1992, p. 245.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.
20. See, n. 8. p. 62.
21. R. Gopalakrishnan, *Insurgent North-Eastern Region of India*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, First Published., 1995, p. 89.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91
23. See, n. 12, p. 91 and see also n. 8, p. 149.
24. See, n.6. pp. 5-12.
25. See, n. 17, p. 190.

26. *Cheitharol Kumbaba* (CK) pp. 21,22, 1606 AD.- State Chronicles, edited by L. Ibungohal Singh and N. Khelchandra Singh with an introduction by E. Nillakanta Singh, Imphal, 1967, and see also n. 4, pp. 1,2.
27. See, n.8., pp. 41-149.
28. See, n. 13., p. 15.
29. *Gazetteer of Manipur*, by Captain E.W. Dun, B.S.C. (1886), Calcutta, Reprinted 1975 by Vivek Publishing House, Delhi, pp. 24-25.
30. Manipur is the birth place of the famous game of Polo as well as that of the famous Ras Leela dance where the Gods took to dancing. The most authentic account of it comes from Manipur. It is said to have originated in Manipur introduced during the reign of Khagemba (1600 AD) and it was played from before 1550. In 1852, the world's first official Polo game was played at Silchar with participants drawn mostly from Manipur. As early as in 1901, a Polo Team from Manipur visited Calcutta and Delhi on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales in India. For sometime, this inborn Polo game of the Manipuris was persistently neglected, no worthwhile steps were taken up to encourage this sports in the state among the younger generation, and the Manipuris who originated the game of Polo did not figure anywhere in national or international arena. But today, special encouragements have been given to this game (see the Resistance, Imphal 27 July 1982, see, n. 13, p. 45 and also Eastern Panorama, the News Magazine of North East, Shillong, March 1995, p. 39.)
31. See, n. 13., pp. 3-4.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
33. See, n. 6., p. 15.
34. M. Kirti Singh, "Religion and Culture of Manipur," Manas Publications, Delhi, 1988, First Edition, p.7. (Manipur from 1819-1826 was under the Burmese (Ava) control during the period of seven years devastation. It became a sovereign independent country from 1826-1891. From 1891-1947 Manipur had been a princely state under the British Paramountcy. Though Manipur was under British Paramountcy but Manipur was not annexed into British India. From 1947-1948 it again became an independent sovereign state. With the merged of Manipur with India, it has been a constituent part of Indian Federation today.
35. See, *Ibid.*, p. XXIV of 'Introductory'

36. Before the establishment of a Teritoria! Council, the Advisory council was reorganised. In 1956, it was formed with the Home Minister as the chairmam of the committee, the MP representing Manipur, the chief Commissioner of Manipur and the members of the council of Advisors associated with the Chief Commissioner of Manipur.
37. The Territorial Council Act 1956 laid down that for each Union Territory, there shall be a Territorial Council. The strength of the Manipur Territorial Council was fixed at 30. The Central Government could nominate not more than two non-official persons. The 30 members of the council should be elected on the basis of adult franchise. They shall hold office for a term of five years. The Territorial Council was a body corporate and had perpetual succession and a seal. It should elect a chairman and vice-chairmen from amongst its members. The members of the Territorial council should be registered electors.
38. See, n. 35, p xxxv of 'Introductory'.
39. However, the idea of election in Manipur began in the year 1939 when some of the members of the Manipur State Durbar suggested the introduction of elective elements in the Durbar for legislative purposes. But the proposed idea was declined by the British on the ground that Manipuris had no experience in the working of the democratic institutions.
40. But the 1948 elections were not on the scale and perspective of the modern elections. Because, the system of representation, in its democratic aspects, was partial since the Maharaja appointed his own younger brother as chief Minister of the state who was not an elected representative. Under the 1948 elections, the Meiteis, the Tribals, the Muslims, and special interests like Commerce, and Education secured their proper representation to the Assembly. But there was no reservation of seats for woman.

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## **CHAPTER – II**

*Preparations for the 1995 Assembly Elections*

*Election Notifications*

*Composition of Constituencies and Electors*

*Parties and selection of Candidates/*

*Entry of Independents*

*Nomination/Withdrawal/Final Position of*

*Contesting Candidates*

*Party Alignments*

*Code of Conduct for the Candidates and Party*

*In Power/Misuse of Official Machinery*



## **CHAPTER-II**

### **PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1995 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

**Election Notifications**

**Composition of Constituencies and Electors**

**Parties and Selection.of Candidates/Entry of Independents**

**Nomination/Withdrawal/Final Position of Contesting Candidates**

**Party Alignments**

**Code of Conduct for the Candidates and Party in Power/**

**Misuse of Official Machinery**

In 1994-95, Assembly Election in some states in India were held in two rounds. In its first round, four states viz., Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, and Sikkim, went to polls without insistence on Identity Cards to the voters in the middle of November 1994. And the second phase of Assembly polls were held in another six states in February and March 1995 covering the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur and Orissa. But in these six states, insistence on the requirement of identity cards and the time-bound implementation of the scheme for issue of photo-identity cards to voters was a pre-condition for holding the elections.

The Election Commission had already, as early as 1993, given a directive stipulating that photo identity cards should be issued to all voters and that 30 November 1994 would be tfye deadline. The commission's Letter No. 576/11/94/J.S.II, dated 30 December 1994,<sup>1</sup> all electors would be required to produce

identity cards at the current General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of these six states. T.N. Seshan, the Chief Election Commissioner warned that he would not issue the notification for holding elections to these six State Assemblies (where it was due before 15 March 1995) if the respective State Governments failed to complete the process of printing and distributing photo identity cards by the deadline of 30 November 1994, (more particularly after 1 January 1995 in states where photo ID Cards were not issued) and he would not be responsible for any constitutional impasse which the non-issuance of identity cards to voters would create. But the Election Commission on its part relaxed its earlier deadline for the issuing of ID cards. The dilution of the earlier hardline stance came early December 1994 when the CEC reset to the deadline from 30 November 1994 to 15 January 1995. This was largely to enable the states to publish the final revised version of their Electoral Rolls. But all the affected states repeatedly pleaded that the deadline of 15 January is unrealistic. Initially, Seshan was quite adamant on his mission and his dictate was 'no identity cards - no election.' till the matter was finally brought to the Supreme court for decision.

As the Assembly elections in Manipur was approaching nearer and nearer, the works of, in conformity with the directives of the Election Commission of India, issuing photo identity cards to the electors at photography centres had already been taken up from 18 April 1994 in some selected twenty Assembly constituencies from both the Valley and Hills districts. The remaining forty Assembly constituencies were also taken up with effect from 16 May 1994.<sup>2</sup> The State Election Office and MANITRON were involved in issuing the voters' Photo identity cards.

But as soon as the task of photography for identity cards of the voters has commenced, the Manipur State Governments' move towards it was soon obstructed by both the all Manipur Student Union (AMSU) and the outlawed Revolutionary

People Front (RPF) and its armed wing the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA). During the course of the photography, preparations and issue of voters' identity cards, there were various cases of collection of ID cards from the voters and other incidents such as snatching of Generators, Cameras, Laminations Film pouches, burning of vehicles, other election materials etc. by the AMSU and armed personnels both in the Hills and the Valley against the Election Department officials engaged in making photo-ID cards for voters.<sup>3</sup> The AMSU not only collected forcibly ID cards from the voters in large amounts, called on successful bands, damaged cameras used in the task of photography and its other related documents, burnt down vehicles used by the officials on duty for the purpose etc. There had been stringent restrictions from the AMSU on the ground that identification of foreigners in the state should have been preceded to issuance of identity cards to the electors. But the issue of foreigners in Manipur had been a delicate and handicapped question, for the State Government for the last many years without any tangible solution to the problem. A casual tussle between the State Government and the AMSU over the issue was its outcome for which students leaders were jailed until the parties came to an understanding and agreement on certain terms and references/conditions.

On the other hand, the insurgents' rigid objection and sustained campaign to thwart the task of photography in the State was conditioned by the fear of "Identify Card" of becoming a means to easily identity them (militants) by the Security forces. In a press handout, the Department of Communication and Publicity of Revolutionary Peoples Front (RPF) said "The system of issuing of Identity cards to voters would enable the Indian Authorities to identify the insurgents easily and to suppress the movement. The system is a challenge to peoples' democratic right." It

therefore, urged and appealed to the people of Manipur to disrupt the process, damage and destroy the voters' photo identity cards in the interest of people's freedom movements.<sup>5</sup> So, the militant outfit had been attacking the Election Officials, snatching away and destroying Cameras, Vehicles etc. They had also been snatching away, confiscating and burning the identity cards, negatives, already issued to voters in the valley districts thereby making delays in the photography process. The same was also, experienced in the hill districts. The Press release of the RPF also added that the Students community and the voluntary clubs had disrupted the process for which the outfit congratulated the Students and the people for the work.

The issuance of identity cards to electors thus could not make much headway in the State particularly in the valley due to the opposition from the AMSU and the RPF. Though the process had further been frustrated by the insurgents and students community in the valley, there was no further indication of progress in the five hills districts too due to the intensification of Kuki-Naga conflicts. In the five hills districts, a drastic and wholesale revision of voters list was needed because of extensive demographic changes caused by the movement of both the Nagas and Kukis to other areas dominated by their respective tribes people, where they considered themselves safe. For the Kuki-Naga ethnic war, meanwhile, continued to rage. So, the guarantee that a free and fair Assembly elections in the State could be held on schedule with ID cards under the strict terms and conditions of the Election Commission was very much uncertain and precarious.

Even then, despite the insurgents' resistance, the photography programmes were going on in full-swing with reinforced Security personnels, so as to complete

the task by 15 January 1995, the deadline reset by the Election Commission for the purpose. But in view of the deteriorated prevailing law and order situation in the State, on-the-spot preparation and distribution of cards to the electors was discontinued with effect from 25 June 1994 in order to nullify and invalidate the attempts of the underground outfits to snatch away Identity Cards from the voters. Instead, the photographed electors were supplied with the card number on the 'Spot' to enable them to know their identity card numbers at the time of distribution of their identity Cards and the concerned photos were firmly pasted to the card on the 'Spot', so as to avoid any possible confusions. The changed system of photography was adopted as a security towards the programme.

The Manipur Government requested the EC to extend the deadline for another 15 days more-from 15 January to 31 January 1995 considering the fluid political situation and alarming 'law and order situation in the state without changing the polling dates. The Chief Minister Rishang Keishing even requested the EC to allow the ensuing Assembly polls without ID cards considering the ethnic violence and law and order problems in the State and to allow the election even if the process is not completed before the deadline. Even the State Government was planning to take up the matter to the law court in case the EC turned down the request. Chief Minister Rishang Keishing said, "I will move the Supreme Court to allow the holding of Assembly polls without ID cards." Besides, most of the voluntary Organisations in the State including the political parties and the ruling Congress-I Party urged the EC to allow voting without ID cards in view of the snatching of cards by underground. The All Naga Students Association, Manipur (ANSAM) also demanded polls without ID cards.

Manipur also however, went to polls without the insistence of identity cards to the electors, following the Supreme Court Interim Order dated 17 January 1995 (and Bombay High Court decision) directing the election Commission to allow elections without ID cards in Bihar, Maharashtra and Orissa. The Supreme Court directed that “The Election Commission shall not withhold the elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Bihar and Orissa on the ground that the said Governments had failed to complete the process of issuance of photo identity cards by the deadline prescribed by it.” The Bombay High Court stated that all the electors including those who have not been issued with photo identity cards will be permitted to vote if their names are included on the Electoral Rolls as finally published and their identity is established to the satisfaction of the Presiding Officer in accordance with the relevant provisions of the conduct of Election Rules 1961 and the instructions of the Commission on the subject. The three states - (Bihar and Orissa went to Supreme Court while Maharashtra to the Bombay High Court) filed writ petitions before the Courts in which prayers were made that poll for the current general elections in these states may not be withheld on the ground that the State Governments have not been in a position to issue identity cards to all eligible electors. They challenged the Election Commission’s power to postpone polls on the photo ID cards issue”.<sup>6</sup>

Though the aforesaid orders of the Supreme court and the Bombay High Court were strictly speaking applicable only in relation to the General elections in the States of Bihar, Orissa and Maharashtra, the Secretariat of the Election Commission of India said that the Commission has decided that the insistence on the production of identity cards as a prerequisite for voting will not be made compulsory at the current General elections in any of the six states namely

Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur and Orissa, where polls are to be conducted. The Secretariat directed the Chief Electoral Officers of the six states to follow the instructions for identification of electors. The Election Commission's instruction followed/came after the courts' (SC) order allowing election without ID cards in the above mentioned three states. It was a great relief for the Government of Manipur too which could not meet the deadline of 15 January 1995 for issuing the photo ID cards to all the eligible voters for the February 1995 Assembly polls.

The basic document for determining the eligibility of any person to vote at these elections was the electoral Roll for the constituency concerned as duly published. The production of the identity card possessed by an elector will help in identification of the elector concerned. For which the sole and exclusive responsibility to ensure and established clearly the identity of the electors against the corresponding entry in the Electoral Roll relates, is entrusted to the concerned Presiding Officers to allow cast his/her vote.

Name of Districts	No. of Constituencies	Total Electors	Photograph Taken	Percentage
Imphal	24	4,69,673	4,11,308	87.57
Thoubal	10	191392	158251	82.68
Bishnupur	06	117314	100598	85.75
Uthair	06	174518	127131	72.85
Senapati	03	57854	42067	72.71
Tamenglong	03	151196	108059	71.49
Chandel	02	56187	43487	77.40

Thus, under the revised instructions of the Election Commission of India dated 6 February 1995, the sixth State Legislative Assembly Election in Manipur also was held in February 1995 without any insistment on photo identity cards to the electors. A positive feature of the Supreme Court's intervention was the lifting of uncertainty over the second round of Assembly elections.

By the time when the Election Commission of India allowed Manipur also, to go to polls without Identity cards, the implementation of the scheme for preparation and issue of photo identity cards to the eligible voters in the state was not fully completed. But a total of 10,35,463 out of a 12,69,000 (vide No.

5/Elec/PIC/94 (PR) 3608, dated 17.1.1995), entire electorates in the state, had already been photographed and prepared the cards. There were, in all, five rounds of photography in the state. The percentage of photographed electors in all the sixty Assembly constituencies ranges from 55.88 in Sugnu (Thoubal District) to a maximum of 97.46 in Bishnupur District. The percentage in the entire state stood at around 82.27. Of the three valley districts^ 87.57 recorded the highest percentage at Imphal District and 82.37 percentage in Churachandpur district among the five hills districts. The following Table 2.1 shows the total figure of electors who had already been taken photography before the poll in district-wise along with percentage (as reported on 7 February 1995 Evening).

Table 2.1

District Wise Photographed Voters as Reported on 7 February 1995 (Evening)

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur

In February 1995, Manipur went to polls for the sixth State Assembly Elections to constitute a new House. The election was held in two phases. The first phase of polling was held on 16 February in the five hills districts (Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul). While the second round of

elections was conducted on 19 February in the three valley districts (Bishnupur,



Imphal and Thoubal). The second phase polling ended with large-scale violence of firing incidence, bomb blasts and killings. Polling in Lamsang constituency (Imphal District) was countermanded following the gunning down of one MPP candidate (also the sitting MLA) on 11 February by unidentified gunmen. There was a marked increase in the electorates from the previous electorates. About 12.69 lakhs electorates decided the future of the state. In many constituencies, party volunteers of different political parties and members of various voluntary organisations were on alert to monitor the distribution of money to buy votes by contesting candidates and their Agents.

The ever largest number of 15 political parties sought the mandate of the people. A record of 347 candidates were in the election fray (including the election to the countermanded Lamsang constituency) contesting for the 60 - Assembly seats. Out of which 66 were Independents along with 11 women and 18 Muslim candidates. Besides, eight Editors of local dailies were also in the election fray. They were T.N. Haokip (Thingtlang Post); Ngulkhohao (Sumkawn); Manihar Goswami (Ching Tarn); L. Iboyaima Singh (Janata); Th. Joykumar Singh (Leishemba); Meinam Mithai (Matam); G. Molecule Sharma (Meeoiba) and Kh. Ibomcha Singh (Simanta Patrika). Among the Congress-I nominees, so far, Radhabinod Koijam had been the only MPCC-I President who had been awarded a ticket by the Congress Party to contest the Assembly polls. Lillong constituency was the only one segment where Muslim voters dominated as well as witnessed only the Muslim candidates in the fray. Kishore Thapa was the only Nepali candidate in Kangpokpi constituency. Holkhomang Haokip left his Henglep constituency in Churachandpur District and shifted to Tegnoupal constituency in Chandel District. Two Professors of the State University were also contested the election. The ruling Congress-I was the only party which contested all the 60 seats. While the Manipur Peoples Party, the main opposition party in the state

and also the rival party of congress-I entered the electoral battle alone with 55 candidates. The Janata Dal followed third by contesting in 39 seats. Manipur Hill Peoples Council put up only one candidate.

For the first phase polling, a total of 48,98,78 voters exercised their right to franchise at 825 polling stations spreading over the 20-Assembly constituencies. Altogether 118 candidates of different parties (national and regional) including Independents and women candidates were in the election fray contesting for the 20 seats. Except Kangpokpi constituency (General) in Senapati District, the rest 19 constituencies were reserved seats for the Scheduled Tribes. In its second phase of polls, 7,58,022 electors (Excluding voters of Lamsang constituency) casted their votes in 39 of the remaining 40 Assembly segments. There were, in all, 221 candidates of different political parties (national and local) along with Independent and women candidates. Except Sekmai constituency in Imphal District (reserved for Scheduled Caste) the remaining 39 segments were General seats. In May, the same year, elections to the countermanded Lamsang constituency was held. Eight candidates contested for the lone seat.

The election witnessed no straight - contest but it ranged from triangular fights to twelve-cornered contests. There was not a single candidate elected unopposed/uncontest. The .candidate who secured the largest number of votes was M. Thori of Congress-S in Mao (ST) constituency. He secured 22,310 votes. While the least number of votes secured by an Independent candidate P. Khupzadou from Saikul (ST) constituency. He polled 3 votes only. No woman candidate could return in the election.

The election/polling took place under tight security arrangements. To hold free and fair elections, to monitor law and order situations during the electoral process, and

to co-ordinate election related matters, a State Level Committee of 13 members was formed. State Chief Secretary and Additional Chief Secretary were the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. Commissioner of Election was as its Member -Secretary. For the smooth and peaceful conduct of the polls as well as to ensure effective maintenance of general law and order situations, elaborate security arrangements were made to tackle any untoward incidents occur during the entire election process. The Army authorities were also requested to deploy troops in the sensitive districts where the NSCN outfit was active and constantly operating that might have deteriorated law and order problems. Though the State Government claimed to have made a fool proof security arrangements, the general trend of law and order situations was deteriorating. Following the stern warning from the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) to boycott? The second phase polling in the valley, security arrangements were tightened to tackle any untoward incident and in order to foil any attempt of the PLA outfit to disrupt the poll.

For the first time, Manipur experienced ethnic line of politics during the elections as a result of the demand for formation of 'Homeland' particularly by Nagas of Manipur. The widespread pre-election propaganda on "Greater/ South Nagaland" and UNIC-Congress Agreement on Naga Integration movement drew state-wide attention that polarised the political forces on ethnic overtones. The outcome was the emergence of anti-Rishang and anti-Congress-Wave in the valley in particular. While there was Kuki-Naga divide in the hills. In -Kuki-dominated areas, major issues like South Nagaland and anti-Risharig wave was strong. In other areas, voters more or less concentrated on the considerations of capability and personality of the candidate as well as other important local issues. Protection of the territorial Unity and integrity of Manipur was of prime concern for the non-Nagas particularly the Meiteis.

There were poll-eve and poll-day incidence of violence. During the last round of elections in the valley, peaceful polling was broken in many polling centres/constituencies owing to serious violence/disturbances of bomb-blasts and shoot-outs. Violence erupted the poll in large-scale-being the most violence-proned phase of elections in which people were killed. Reports of disturbing the polling in the hills by the underground elements were also afloat. There were attempts at booth capturing in the hills. Suspected militants' attempts to snatch ballot boxes by attacking the Polling Parties occurred in the hills killing and injuring CRPF personnels.

There were reports of kidnapping the party workers by rival parties. In some areas, workers were intimidated, assaulted, physically manhandled and shot. Intimidation/threatening of voters and preventing them from exercising their right to franchise occurred in some polling stations in the hills for which complaints as tantamount to booth-capturing were made. Impersonation/repeated voting also witnessed in several polling booths. Contesting candidates were attacked in which one was killed.

No fresh poll/repoll was ordered in any of the polling stations or constituencies due to large-scale rigging, booth-capturing or any other gross malpractice/irregularities committed during the polling. Despite the various complaints lodged to the Election authorities demanding for repolling for alleged irregularities and attempt at booth-capturing, no repolling was also ordered in any of the constituencies/polling stations. No polling was also adjourned on the ground that the poll was interrupted or completely upset by rioting, open violence, apprehended breach of peace, serious disturbances. However, in some of the polling stations in the valley where bomb blasts and firing incidents took place on polling day, voting was disturbed, and stopped/discontinued but polling resumed after a whilst break. Reportedly voting

started in Thangal Surung of Saikul constituency only from 10.30 am. after repeated complains as ballot papers could not reach in time.

During the first phase polling, surprisingly there were unexpected peaceful polling at large as against the predictions of the political analysts and the people in general. By and large, the polling was maintained a very peaceful atmosphere. The polling ended with no major incidence of violence except bearing some stray and minor incidents at Kalapahar of Kangpokpi constituency and somewhere. In spite of the ongoing Kuki-Naga ethnic clashes, the electors exercised their rights freely while choosing their choice of representative. In the early hours, voters did not come out properly to exercise their franchise due to bad weather and cloudy but after sunshine, it recorded an increased percentage of voters turn out. Reportedly, polling was over at noon in Khoukhang Chothe Village of Tengenoupal constituency. In another polling station of T.M. Kasom in Ukhrul Assembly segment, polling was over before noon.

Though the polling in the valley was marred by firing incidents and bomb blasts, other incidents such as attempts at booth capturing, rigging, snatching away of ballot papers, ballot boxes from the polling booths did not take place in any polling stations.

Following the stern warning from the PLA not to out on polling day, people were sandwiched between the outfit and the election. However, despite the call from the outfit and the violence perpetuated by the PLA, the voters came out defying the red-alert of the PLA and they exercised their franchise at the cost of their precious lives. In the early hours, due to cloudy, bad weather and also warning from the PLA to the people to remain indoors, voting percentage was very low as people did not come out. However, after sunshine, people came out in large numbers. Polling picked up latter in the afternoon in some of the constituencies of Imphal District. In some of the

constituencies people were seen standing in long queues till the final hours of the closing of the polling hours at 5 p.m. In Thoubal Athokpam Polling Station in Thoubal District, reportedly voting was over by 2 p.m. about.

The election recorded a very high percentage of voting. In all the five hills districts, the polling percentage was very high. In the hills, usually voting percentage has been very high since the previous elections..Reportedly, female and youth voters outnumbered the male voters in terms of poll percentage. Though it recorded a very high percentage, the percentage of voters turn out varies from district to district as well as constituency to constituency. Around 90.39 percent of the voters exercised their franchise in the hills. In Churachandpur district 85.98 percent of the electors casted their votes. While the Ukhrul district had 83.24 percent polling. This percent was the poorest turnout in the five hills districts. In Chandel district, 94.01 percent voters exercised 'their right to franchise. The Tamenglong district recorded an estimated turnout of 89.88 percent. Senapati district was the highest with a record of 95.24 percent voters turn out. Despite the violence disrupted election scene in the second round election, polling went properly. The electioneering tempo was not at all disappeared. The voters exercised their right to vote against all olds and warning and there was large turn out. In many polling stations, voting percentage was very high. In the whole, 92.38 percent was polled in the valley. Of the three districts, Imphal district polled less with 91.24 percent while Bishnupur district topped with a record of 94.02 percent of the voters. In Thoubal district, the voters turn out was 93.95 percent. Women voters polled outnumbering the men electors. In the whole state 91.53 percent polling was recorded. However in the valley, it was the first time, recording more than 90 percent polled - too high in comparison with the previous Assembly elections. In some circles, the believe was that the high percentage of voting was the outcome of unfair voting. They felt that it was due to high impersonation of voting. Proxy was

high due to non-implementation of election Identity card system. They also pointed

out the Possibility of the silent booth capturing mainly occurred in the hills.

Table 2.2  
District-wise Voters, Polled and Percentage - 1995 Elections

District	Total Voters	Total Polled	Polled Percentage
Imphal	4,70,514*	4,29,308*	91.24
Thoubal	1,91,323	1,79,752	93.95
Bishnupur	1,17,348 .	1,10,326	94.02
Churachandpur	1,32,027	1,13,516	85.98
Chandel	57,388	53,952	94.01
Senapati	1,74,932	1,66,607	95.24
Tamenglong	55,517	49,900	89.88
Ukhrul	70,697	58,848	83.24

Source: State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.

\* Including the Countermanded Election to Lamsang Assembly Constituency.

Table 2.3  
Regionwise Voters, Polled and Percentage - 1995 Elections

Region	Total Voters	Total Polled	Polled Percentage
Valley	7,79,185*	7,19,386*	92.33
Hills	4,90,561	4,42,823	90.27
State : Total	12,69,746	11,62,209	91.53

Source: State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.

\* Including the Countermanded Election to Lamsang Assembly Constituency.

In a press hand out on 23 February, the State Government expressed satisfaction to the People of Manipur for their perfect response to the elections. The Chief Secretary, Manipur said that Manipur which went to the polls in two phases saw a large turn out of voters despite the provocation and threats posed by some unlawful organisations to disrupt the polls. The State Government strongly condemned the senseless acts of violence and congratulated the enthusiasm and courage shown by the people for participating in the successful conduct of the sixth Assembly elections. Union Minister of Internal Security, Rajesh Pilot, on 27 February, (who came to Imphal to defuse the internal crisis of Congress-I) expressed congratulation to the people of Manipur for the successful holding of the election by exercising their franchise amidst shoot-outs, bomb blasts and underground warning to remain indoors.

The counting of votes began from 21 February in the morning at 8 a.m. and concluded by 23 February evening. As provided under February 1993 revised Rule 59-A of the conducts of Elections Rule 1961<sub>3</sub>, the counting was done by mixing ballot papers of the entire constituency, instead of the counting polling station-wise (as done in the previous elections). During the course of counting of votes tight/strict security measures in all the district headquarters were taken up. In doing so, in all the counting centres, the State Government imposed CRPC 114 Act. The counting took place at the respective D.C. offices of all the District Headquarters except the Jiribam constituency in Imphal District. The counting for Jiribam constituency was carried out in its Jiribam Sub-divisional Headquarters.

However, in some of the counting centres, counting did not go on smoothly following arguments and counter-arguments among the counting agents following the finding of mistakes in ballot papers! For instance, in Imphal District, over the missing of one ballot paper (No. 11787 sealed against an Independent candidate, Y. Ibomcha in Keirao constituency in Polling station No. 16) which was later on found lying from



the road (in that connection his Election Agent lodged complaint to the Returning Officer expressing unfair and irregularities in this booth); finding of extra ballot papers in Khurai and Wangjing-Tentha constituencies; unsigned and unsealed ballot papers in Mayang Imphal and Khundrakpam Assembly segments; recounting following the protest by rival candidates in Konthoujam segment due to a margin of 3/4 votes difference between Congress-I and MPP candidates, etc. But later on counting started again and all problems were solved declaring the results by Returning Officer following compromise and agreements. Besides there were reports of finding of ballot papers from the basket in Kshetrigao constituency and also finding of ballot papers of other Assembly constituencies to other constituencies.

As predicted earlier, the election result was not a surprise to the people of the state. A hung Assembly and an apparent political instability emerged in Manipur after the poll. No party secured a workable majority in the House to form the government. The poll result did not bring a qualitative change in Manipur politics. It still continued as a part and a routine work of the system. It was a repetition of the previous elections in the state. Manipur was inevitably looking forward for another round of five years of political instability. An obvious coalition government was the outcome. In this election too, there was no clear cut mandate of the electors. So the political crisis in the state remained as it is. The detail discussion on this sixth election will be seen in the following chapters as the research work entirely deals with this election.

### **Election Notification**

In its second round of Assembly Elections in India, six states namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur and Orissa went to the polls in February and March 1995. General Elections to these six states to constitute new Legislative Assemblies were due (to be completed) before 15 March 1995 as their respective existing terms were due to expire consecutively before 25 March 1995. So, elections would have to be held well in time before the date of expiry of their existing

Houses.

But, at first, only five states were scheduled to go to polls in February 1995. Manipur was left out of the list of states to go to polls in February 1995 when the Election Commission, on 8 December 1994, made the sudden announcement of the dates for the Assembly elections in five states only. It was also affirmed that this round of elections would be held only after photo identity cards have been supplied to all eligible voters. T.N. Seshan had, no wonder, withheld Manipur from the Assembly polls along the five states of India though the six states were clubbed together before the December announcement by the CEC. In this connection/ relation, some factors may be cited which had been supposed to have been responsible for the late/delayed announcement of Assembly election to Manipur to constitute its sixth House.

1. That time, the Legislative Assembly of Manipur has been kept under suspended animation since 1 January 1994.
2. Above all, Centre's desire to install a popular Congress-I led Ministry in the state before the election was very much clear, by revoking the almost one year old President's Rule. The idea was prompted by the loss of the Congress-I party in polls in four states in November 1994.
3. The tangle of endless political infighting went on and resolution of leadership crisis within the Congress-I party was precarious. The above point No. 2 had been manifested into action only after resolving the Congress-I leadership crisis.
4. Gradual intensification of insurgency problems in both the hills and valley, rising deterioration of law and order situation in the entire state occurring daily killings, firing incidents, bomb-blasts, murders, looting and arson in the hills due to the continuing Kuki-Naga conflicts, the incomplete process of issuing photo-identity cards to the eligible voters, the mounting political climate in the state etc. were not at all conducive towards the holding of a free and fair election in the state.

By the way, the decision to announce the poll date for Manipur followed a green signal from the Home Ministry that the law and order situation in the state was conducive to hold elections. Moreover, it was only

Commission announced a snap election for Manipur. In the meantime, a new Congress-I led Ministry headed by Rishang Keishing had been inducted on 13 December 1994 by revoking the almost one-year old President's Rule in the state. Opposition political parties and Chief Minister Rishang Keishing himself had also expressed desire for holding Assembly election timely. So the issuing of notification for holding election in the state in time was its logical corollary.

As expected, after hardly one month of the announcement of elections to the above mentioned five states, the Election Commission on 10 January 1995, announced for a snap election in Manipur too to constitute the sixth House. The date for issuing formal notification was given on 16 January. The polling scheduled was made on 16 February 1995 for the entire state (subject to completion of furnishing photo-identity cards to all the eligible voters in the state). In a brief two-paged order, the Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan said to start counting of votes on 20 February as well as to complete the election by 25 February 1995. The Commission decided to count votes in Manipur before other states because the tenure of the outgoing fifth House/Assembly was due to expire on 1 March 1995 earlier than the other 5 states. But Rishang Keishing cabinet recommended Assembly Election to Manipur on 16 and 18 February 1995.

The Election Commission of India issued the formal notification on 16 January 1995 prescribing the hours for taking the poll from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. to be held on 16 February 1995. The same day, in that compliance, the Governor of Manipur also issued an election notification calling upon electors of all Assembly constituencies to

elect members for the Assembly. The following were the scheduled of Elections as fixed by the Election Commission of India.

- a] the 23rd January 1995 (Monday) - as the last date for making nomination
- b] the 24th January 1995 (Tuesday) - as the date for the scrutiny of nomination
- c] the 27 January 1995 (Friday) - as the last date for the withdrawal of candidature
- d] the 16 February 1995 (Thursday) - as the date on which a poll shall, if necessary, be taken, and
- e] the 25 February 1995 (Saturday) - as the date before which the election shall be completed.

Though election in Manipur was in the first instance notified for 16 February and both the hills and valley districts had to go to the polls on this day, this polling schedule was later made change thereby bifurcating the previous schedule into two phases. The Election Commission of India made the amendment on 27 January 1995 in its previous notification No. 464/MR-LA/95(I) dated 16 January 1995. It was after carefully considering the law and order situation prevailing in the state, shortage of security personnels to be deployed in the election and after taking into account all material circumstances and information available to it and also to ensure free and fair polling in the state that the Election Commission have decided to take the poll on two dates -16 and 19 February 1995 instead of one day, on 16 February only. Though the Rishang Keishing Ministry had already recommended to the Chief Election Commissioner for polls on 16 February 1995 for the plains and 18 February for the hills of Manipur). There was mounting political pressure from the ruling Congress-I Rishang Ministry to hold the Assembly election in two phases on the plea of acute shortage of security forces to provide the proper security measures throughout the length and breadth of the insurgency-proned Manipur for the one-day polling schedule. Thereby-holding the election in two phases - 16 and-19 February 1995.

Under the changed polling schedule, the 16 February itself was the first phase of the polling on which the voters of five hills districts (Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul) went for polls. And in its second round, the electors of the remaining three valley districts (Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur) exercised their franchise on 19 February.

The Government of Manipur not only facing a lot of problems on the eve of the Assembly polls but the acute shortage of security forces to cope-up with the impending danger during the election period was also a deep concern that had unnerved the top-brass of the police and military operating in the state including the Government of Manipur.

The underlying reason behind the making of such an alteration to the previous/earlier election schedule was mainly due to the shortage of armed forces to be deployed in the election leading to inadequate security arrangements. In order to enable to facilitate the reinforcement and deployment of para-military forces by rearrangement of security measures to the election, the three valley districts had to go to the polls on 19 February. Thus, the election in Manipur had been held under rescheduled dates - 16 and 19 February, 1995.

### **Composition of Constituencies and Electprates**

Presently, the Legislative Assembly of Manipur is an unicameral house having 60 elected members with no provisions for nominations as there is no Anglo-Indian community in the state. The entire seats of the house is made up of the elected representatives from both the valley and hills districts. (There were eight Administrative Districts in Manipur at the time of holding the Assembly poll. Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur are the valley districts. And five districts are in the

hills namely, Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur and Chandel). The system of representative is on the basis of single-member territorial constituency.

The present state of Manipur geographically falls into three distinct regional units - the central, the surrounding -Jiills and the Barak basin, on the western outskirts of the state, neighbouring a major stretch of it with Assam. But the state can broadly be divided into two regional units - the central valley and the surrounding hills. The central valley (excluding the areas covered by Thoubal and Bishnupur districts) and the small stretch of plain in the Jiri basin, being the part of the Barak plain, have been grouped together into forming the Imphal District.

It is on the basis of this regional/geographical structures of the state that the division of Constituencies into Reserved, and Unreserved Constituencies have been made and distributed between the hills and the plains. Thus the 60 Assembly seats in the state is a blend of-the representatives, elected from both these reserved and unreserved constituencies.

Out of the total of 60 seats in the state legislature one-thirds belongs to the Reserved seats as the population of the scheduled tribes and schedule castes claims about one-thirds of the entire population in Manipur. The remaining 40 seats are the General unreserved constituencies. Again out of the 20 reserved seats, 19 are represented by the various hill tribes as the population outnumbered the Scheduled caste innumerably. So only one seat is shared by the Scheduled Caste in Sekmai Assembly Constituency.

The hilly regions/terrain of<sup>1</sup> the state are populated by a numerous primitive tribes such as Anal, Hmars, Gangte, Kabuis, Korh, Khoirao, Liangmei, Maos, Moyon, Mizos, Marings, Paola, Paite, Simte, Thadou, Tangkhul, Vaiphei, Zou, etc. and many more unspecified (Kuki-Naga) tribes. Most of these tribes broadly falls into the Kuki

and Naga groups. Since the Scheduled Tribes population dominates the entire hill areas, the 19 seats in the hills have been reserved for them.

The Meitei Scheduled caste people are found in both the valley and the hills (very few in number); which do not constitute majority in any of the constituencies of the state. In the hills, the population is sparsely found with a little sprinkling confining in some particular areas only. But a bulk of the community are being concentrated in the plains in a few (scattered) big villages situated wide apart spreading over some constituencies (Sekmai, Oinam, Lamsang etc.) mainly located/situated in the Western i belt of the Imphal and Bishnupur districts followed by some villages in the eastern side particularly in the constituencies of Andro, Thoubal etc. Even then, the Sekmai Assembly constituency in Imphal district have been reserved for the scheduled caste to give them proper representation to the state legislature, as it has the highest percent of the population in comparison to other constituencies/ areas in the plains where the scheduled caste population exists.

Around two-thirds of the state's population are concentrated in the central valley along with the Barak Basin, comprising of three districts. The main composition of the population are the Meiteis, Pangals (Manipuri Muslims) and the Tribals along with some Nepalese. The outsiders known as 'Mayangs' to the indigenous people such as the working class people from Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and a few South Indians, and trading communities of western India, the Marawaris, and Punjabis are also found in dispersing here and there throughout the plains with a majority in Imphal district. All the 40 unreserved General seats lying in the central valley including one in the Barak plain are represented by these various communities. But the Meiteis who constitute around 60 percent of the state's population have been dominating the entire political scene in the valley right from the

very olden days with a nominal involvement of the Pangals in the political ring. The rest of the communities had no say in the electoral battle so long.

There are altogether 40 Assembly segments in the three valley districts

No. of Constituencies: 40							
District	Total Seats	Regional Structures			Nature		
		Valley	Hill	Barak Basin	Unreserved	Reserved	
Imphal	24	-	-	-	24	-	-
Thoubal	10	-	-	-	10	-	-
Bishnupur	06	-	-	-	06	-	-
Churachandpur	06	-	-	-	06	-	-
Senapati	06	-	-	-	06	-	-
Tamenglong	03	-	-	-	03	-	-
Ukhrul	03	-	-	-	03	-	-
Chandel	02	-	-	-	02	-	-
Total							
	60	0	0	0	60	0	0

unequal distributional pattern of constituencies between the valley and the hill districts as well as from district to district also in general. In the state, Imphal district has topped of all with a major share of 24 constituencies. Thoubal and Bishnupur districts has got 10 and 6 seats respectively.

Among the five hills districts, Churachandpur and Senapati districts has six assembly segments each, while Ukhrul and Tamenglong has obtained 3 constituencies each. Chandel is the only district which represents only two seats to the state legislature. Thus, in terms of the number of districts, the hills



outnumbered the valley by 2 districts, but the hills represent only one-thirds of the total number of sixty seats in the state.

Table 2.4  
District-wise break-up of constituencies

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.

- \*1 Jiribam Assembly Constituency.
- \*2 Sekmai Assembly Constituency.
- \*3 Kangpokpi Assembly Constituency. Though the segment belongs to the Senapati District, it is kept as General seat as the composition of voters in the segment is made up of the tribes and the Nepalese. there is mixed population in this Constituency dominated by Nepalese. It is in their interest that the segment remains as a General seat in order to give them representation to the state legislature.

### **The Electorate**

In the February 1995 elections in Manipur, as per the final publication of electoral rolls as on 4 January 1995, there were altogether 12,69,000 qualified electorates spreading over 60 Assembly constituencies in the state, who had been

given the right to exercise their franchise. Of the total electorates, female voters outnumbered males by 4,162. As the entire electorates classifies well into General and Service voters, in the first category 6,31,597 were males and 6,36,307 had been the women electors. A total of 1096 belongs to the service voters of which male voters stood at 822 and 274 were female electors, the former by 546 outnumbered the later. In the three valley districts, there are 7,78,379 General and 199 Service voters while in the five hills districts- 4,90,621 and 897 were General and Service voters respectively.

But due to the lodging of further claims even after its final publication of rolls, inclusion of more electors in the rolls continued till 23 January 1995, the day on which the last date of filling nominations had been fixed for the sixth Assembly poll. As a result, the above electoral size in the state had been increased by 746 voters from its previous 12,69,000 to 12, 69,746 electorates. The addition had also effected changes in the previous total service voters raising upto 1246, increasing by 150 voters, as well as in the General by 596 voters. So the final figure of the electorate in the state had been stabilised at 12,69,746 as on the last date of filling nominations. Out of the 60 constituencies, only in 26 segments, male voters outnumbered women electors and vice-versa in the remaining 34 Assembly segments. But the average in district-wise varies from one another.

Of the five hills districts, only in Senapati district, male electors predominated females in all the constituencies, while in Chandel district women electors superiors in number to male voters. In the remaining three districts, the number of constituencies where male voters outnumbered females are in Ukhrul 1 in 3, in Tamenglong 2 in 3 and in Churachandpur 4 out of 6 Assembly segments respectively.

And in the three valley districts, Thoubal is the only district where all the 10 constituencies except one in Heirok constituency, are predominated by female voters to males. Out of the 24 seats in Imphal district, male voters claims larger in number only in 8 constituencies while in Bishnupur district, in 4 of the 6 constituencies.

But in terms of service voters, in all the 60 Assembly segments, male service voters outnumbered females and the highest number had been recorded at 179 (being 120 males and 59 females) in Chandel (SI) segment in Chandel district. In average, among the eight districts, Chandel, Imphal and Churachandpur leads with a fair majority in service voters. In the remaining districts, it registered very low, the more is in the valley districts. It is found almost nil in 4 constituencies in Imphal district and one constituency in Thoubal district, which is not found in hill districts. In Churachandpur district, 421 service voters had been registered, being the highest in the state.

Female : 636307		Male : 631597		Service : 1096	
Districts	Total	General	Service	Total	
Valley					
Imphal	24	232578	236988	80	27
Bishnupur	06	58776	58491	33	14
Hills					
Chandel	02	26752	29249	142	64
Ukhrul	03	35397	35345	103	27
Senapati	06	89342	85061	101	14
Tamenglong	03	28970	28859	23	02
Churachandpur	06	66252	64517	313	108
State: Total	60	631597	636307	822	274

In district-wise, in four of the five hills districts except Chandel, male electors had the upper hand to females whereas women voters predominates in Imphal and Thoubal excepting Bishnupur district. The following Table 2.5 and Table 2.6 gives a detail picture of the district-wise and constituency-wise break up of electors in the state as on 4 January 1995.

Table 2.5  
District-wise Break up of Electors as on 4 January 1995

Name of Constituency		Total electors in final rolls						
		Nature	General		Service		No. of P/S	Total
			Male	Female	Male	Female		
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Imphal District								
1.	Khundrakpam	General	9127	9015	3	1	28	18,146
2.	Heingang	-do-	9741	10196	-	-	30	19,937
3.	Khurai	-do-	10132	10731	4	2	31	20,869
4.	Kshetrigao	-do-	10604	11290	5	-	30	21,898
5.	Thongju	-do-	9819	10770	1	-	27	20,590
6.	Keirao	-do-	9211	9043	3	2	27	18,259
7.	Andro	-do-	10391	10648	6	4	33	21,049
8.	Lamlai	-do-	9023	8984	6	2	26	18,015
9.	Thangmeiband	-do-	10478	10256	1	-	33	20,735
10.	Uripok	-do-	7293	8315	1	1	22	15,610
11.	Sagolband	-do-	8891	9108	2	-	26	18,001
12.	Keishamthong	-do-	11818	8782	3	1	29	20,604
13.	Singjamei	-do-	7757	8291	-	-	23	16,048
14.	Yaiskul	-do-	8990	9571	5	-	25	18,566
15.	Wangkhei	-do-	12391	13164	19	9	32	25,583
16.	Sekmai (Reserved)	SC	8846	8774	6	3	24	17,629
17.	Lamsang	General	9863	10224	1	1	30	20,089
18.	Konthoujam	-do-	9681	9811	-	-	28	19,492
19.	Patsoi	-do-	10643	11238	-	-	32	21,881
20.	Langthabal	-do-	8683	9068	5	-	26	17,756
21.	Naoriya	-do-	10786	11213	2	-	32	22,001
22.	Pakhanglakpa	-do-	8286	8621	-	-	25	16,907
23.	Wangoi	-do-	9110	9142	3	1	31	18,256
40.	Mayang Imphal	-do-	9110	9142	3	1	31	18,256
	Jiribam	-do-	11014	10733	5	-	36	21,752

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<u>Bishnupur District</u>		General						
24	Nambol	-do-	10019	10710	6	2	28	20,737
25	Oinam	-do-	8618	9578	4	2	24	18,200
26	Bishnupur	-do-	10124	9534	-	1	31	19,659
27	Moirang	-do-	12301	11833	15	5	37	24,154
28	Thanga	-do-	7904	7662	4	2	23	15,572
29	Kumbi	-do-	9812	9174	4	2	27	18,992
<u>Thoubal District</u>								
30	Lilong	-do-	8910	9539	3	1	28	18,453
31	Thoubal	-do-	9910	10084	6	5	32	20,005
32	Wangkhem	-do-	9367	9739	2	1	31	19,109
33	Heirol	-do-	9534	9535	3	2	28	19,074
34	Wangjing Tentha	-do-	9623	9931	3	3	30	19,560
35	Khangabok	-do-	10406	10576	2	1	32	20,985
36	Wabagai	-do-	9117	9450	-	-	28	18,567
37	Kakching	-do-	9085	9854	3	2	30	18,944
38	Hiyanglam	-do-	8270	9385	3	2	27	17,660
39	Sugnu	-do-	9328	9704	2	1	30	19,035
<u>Chandel District (Reserved)</u>		-do-	14681	15599	120	59	54	30,459
41	Chandel	ST	14681	15599	120	59	54	30,459
42	Tengnoupal	-do-	12051	13650	22	5	48	25,728
<u>Ukhrul District</u>								
43	Phungyar	-do-	9296	9102	41	15	46	18,454
44	Ukhrul	-do-	12586	12705	42	11	45	25,344
45	Chingai	-do-	13515	13538	20	1	41	27,074
<u>Senapati District (Reserved)</u>		ST						
46	Saikul	-do-	12145	11726	29	2	37	23,902
47	Karong	-do-	18092	16914	3	3	52	35,012
48	Mao	-do-	18538	17532	21	-	41	36,091
49	Tadubi	-do-	15916	15204	9	2	47	31,131
50	Kangpokpi	General	11307	10822	23	2	28	22,154
51	Saitu	ST	13344	12863	16	5	43	26,228

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Tamenglong District (Reserved)		ST						
52	Tamei	-do-	11579	11347	9	1	55	22,936
53	Tamenglong	-do-	9422	9308	12	1	33	18,743
54	Nungba	-do-	7969	8204	2	-	32	16,175
Churachandpur District (Reserved)								
55	Tipaimukh	-do-	6490	6279	17	4	26	12,790
56	Thanlon	-do-	8022	7476	47	10	32	15,555
57	Henglep	-do-	10308	8727	45	25	46	19,105
58	Churachandpur	-do-	15217	15624	66	9	41	30,916
59	Saikot	-do-	16055	16303	95	36	39	32,485
60	Singhat	-do-	10164	10108	43	24	39	20,339
State Total :			631597	636307	822	274	1977	12,69,000

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.

### **Polling Station**

Altogether 1977 polling stations were set up in the state. The number of polling booths established in an individual constituency varies from one another in all the constituencies. This is “mainly due to the geographical reason that effects irregularities in their respective areas encompassed by a constituency.

Comparatively, hill constituencies have larger number of polling booths than that of the valley constituencies. The influencing factors had been the geographical and demographic structure of the hills determining the location and number of polling booths to be set up. The rough and inaccessibly hilly terrains and sparsely populated scattered small villages have necessitated to provide a large number of polling stations within the easy access to voters. This arrangement facilitates and enables the electors to exercise their right to franchise fairly well and avoids the movement of long distance where polling booths are being stationed beyond 5 kms of their residence.

Therefore, the largest number of polling stations found were 55 in Tamei (ST) Assembly constituency in Tamenglong district. Thus it topped the list in the state. The minimum number being the 26 polling stations recorded in Tipaimukh (ST) Assembly segment in Churachandpur district.

In the valley districts, the size covered by a constituency is relatively small in comparison to the hills. As a result, there is smaller number of polling booths in the valley constituencies, ranging from a minimum of 22 to a maximum of 37. Uripok Assembly segment in Imphal district, with 22 polling stations had been the lowest number in the valley, also being the smallest in the state, while the highest stood at 37 in Moirang Assembly constituency in Bishnupur district.

For the conveniences of taking up beforehand strict security measures, the entire polling stations in the state had been identified and grouped into three categories, such as Hyper-Sensitive, Sensitive, and Less/Non-Sensitive polling booths. The prior identification of sensitive and trouble prone areas were very much needed from the point of view of the election and because of the deteriorated law and order situation in the state. This would greatly facilitated effective steps being taken to prevent commission of serious irregularities at the time of polling like booth capturing, large-scale impersonation, violence etc. The timely steps would also eliminate, to a large extent, the chances of fresh or adjourned poll that would be necessitated by reason of serious irregularities, tampering with ballot boxes or ballot papers.

The Election Commission of India, in this relation furnished the following some factors as the basis on which the sensitive and trouble-prone areas could be identified.

1. Past history of the constituency or polling areas;



2. Any past incidents of booth capturing, violence, riot, large scale impersonation, etc.;
3. Police records containing information regarding the abnormal law and order situation in particular area of region or constituency;
4. Specific complaints made by political parties and candidates;
5. Nature of contest viz., political status of candidates;
6. Known political rivalries;
7. Number of history sheeter; and absconders, and,
8. Number of SC/ST voters.

On the	line of. these guide	lines and consid	erations, the	Chief Secretary/
Chief Electoral Officer, in consultation with the police and district election authorities, prepared a list of the three categories of polling station (containing details of such constituencies or part thereof with necessary contingent plan) to effectively tackle the problem and for ensuring peaceful and smooth conduct of the poll in these areas.				
The Hyper-Sensitive polling stations consisted of 323 polling stations, sensitive polling stations comprised of 953, and remaining 701 were the Less-Sensitive polling stations but one polling station of this third category was deserted in Senapati district.				

Each polling station engaged five polling personnnels such as one Presiding Officer and another four were the Polling Officers. A total of 9885 polling personnnels had been engaged on duty for the conduct of the Election.

Despite its classification of the polling booths into three categories, however, all the non-sensitive polling stations in the valley districts were treated as ‘Sensitive’ due to underground elements’ threat to the voters. The measure was taken up in response to the warning precipitated by the Revolutionary People’s Front (RPF), a valley-based Meitei Underground outfit, to the voters of the valley not to go out to

exercise their franchise on 19 February when the Second phase of elections were being held in the 39 Assembly constituencies. Thus on the election day of the second phase on 19 February, all the polling stations, except the Hyper-sensitive ones, in the three valley districts were kept under reinforced strict/tight security measures, as the forces of insurgency elements were likely to threaten. Table 2.7 indicates the district-wise break up of polling stations in the state along with its classification of three categories.

Table 2.7  
District-wise Break-up of Polling Stations in the State

District	Total no. of P/S	Hypersensitive	Sensitive	Less-sensitive
Imphal	686	15	199	472
Thoubal	296	15	232	49
Bishnupur	170	Nil	84	86
Ukhrul	132 -	132	Nil	Nil
Senapati	248	82	165	Nil but 1 P/S was deserted
Tamenglong	120	Nil	120	Nil
Churachandpur	223	60	80	83
Chandel	102	19	73	10
Total: Manipur:	1977	323	953	700+1

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur

### **Parties and selection of candidates/entry of independents**

With the issuance of election notification by the Election Commission of India for holding the sixth Assembly elections in Manipur to constitute a new House, the electoral process in the state was set in motion. Soon the political parties in the state started tied up in finalising the details of the election such as preparations and selection of the party candidates, realisation of party alignment, electoral strategies

for electioneering, preparing election manifestos, poll campaigning etc., in line with the latest directives and code of conduct of the Election Commission of India.

Sl.No.	Name of Political Parties	Abbreviation	Symbols Reserved/Allotted
<b>A. National Parties (Recognised)</b>			
1]	Indian National Congress	INC	Hand
2]	Communist Party of India	CPI	Ears of corn and sickle
3]	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	CPI (M)	Hammer, sickle and star
4]	Bharatiya Janata Party	BJP	Lotus
5]	Janata Party	JP	Haldir within wheel
6]	Janata Dal	JD	Charkha
7]	Samata Party *	SP	Flaming Torch
<b>B. State Parties</b>			
<b>(a) Recognised</b>			
1]	Manipur Peoples Party	MPP	Bicycle
2]	Kuki National Assembly	KNA	Two leaves
3]	Indian Congress (Socialist)	IC (S)	Charkha
<b>(b) Registered but unrecognised</b>			
1]	Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya)	SJP	Umbrella
2]	National Peoples Party	NPP	Rising sun
3]	Federal Party of Manipur	FPM	Rising sun
4]	Manipur Hill Peoples Council	MHPC	Rising sun

elections. These political parties\* fielded their respective candidates for the election fray for the fresh mandate of the people. The following Table 2.8 shows the number of national and regional political parties along with their respective election symbols contested in the election.

Besides the National and State Political parties (recognised and unrecognised) there have also been a large number of Independent candidates contesting in the elections. In this election, it registered a total number of 66 candidates as Independents out of which two were in the countermanded Lamsang Assembly constituency. When the elections to the countermanded Lamsang constituency was held, two candidates filed their nominations as Independents including the former Assembly Speaker Haobam Borbabu Singh (after he had been defeated in his Wangkhei constituency as MPP nominee).

Table 2.8  
Name, Abbreviation and Symbols of Political Parties

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur

- \* As soon as the Janata Dal (G) led by George Fernandes has been registered as Samata Party with the Election Commission of India, the Election Commission recognised the Party, the symbol being the flaming torch. The State Unit of the JD (G) also became to be known as Samata Party thereafter.

However, in comparison with the previous elections, the number, of Independent candidates entering the electoral battle this time was very less except in 1990 Assembly elections in which only 36 candidates set up as Independents. In the First State Assembly elections held in 1972, there were 123 Independent candidates (19 elected); 111 Independents in 1974 mid-term Assembly poll (7 elected); 119 in 1980 election (19 elected); 175 Independents in 1984 polls (21 elected); and a sharp decline of only 36 Independents in 1990 Assembly elections but even a single independent candidate could return in the poll. Thus, apart from

some increase during the previous four consecutive Assembly elections, since 1972, their number has come progressively to a downward trend during the last two elections held in 1990 and 1995. What is even more significant is that the number of Independent candidates, set up has declined sharply after 1990 elections. In the 1990 elections none of them got elected. While the number of those forfeiting their deposits increased very sharply.

The gradual polarisation of political forces in the state over the years; the lost of electors confidence to Independent candidates in the successive elections; the enforcement of Anti-Defection law etc.; all attributed to decline the number of Independent candidates in the elections.

Though the percentage of votes to Independent candidates had declined in successive Assembly elections in the State,-this sharp decline in the share of votes, had not deterred Independents; including rebel's from major political parties. Their number kept fluctuating according to the political situation either soaring or declining election after election. They still continued to make their presence felt at the hustings and in the Assembly. N.K. Chowdhury pointed out that "Though the winning percentage of the Independents had been negligible their presence in the election cannot be underwritten. Their importance had always been on the increase and sometimes they have been proved crucial during the formation of the governments. (In the contest of the sharp intra-party bickering in almost all the major political parties, the Independents influence the outcome of the poll and play a role in the formation of the government in case of a hung Assembly). L.P. Singh also rightly observed that "There are certain other reasons too, not unoften a political party or a serious candidate sets up independent candidates to divide the caste, communal or other sectional support of an opponent, and in some of these

cases the independent candidate is believed to received a monetary recompense . . . over the years there have been numerous cases that some persons elected to the Assembly as an independent joining a political party out of a questionable motive. Indeed in certain states a person sometimes contests an election to the Assembly as an independent candidate in order that he may latter join a particular party or support a ministry drawn from a particular party for a substantial reward, including in many cases appointment as a Minister. Even after the enforcement of Anti-Defection Law, (though decline the number of independent candidates for election to the state Assemblies) some still contest as an independent candidate in the hope that without joining a party, he could offer, for a consideration, his support to a particular party or group claiming to form the government.<sup>9</sup>

The nomination/selection of candidatures of various parties for election is an important function of all the parties. It is also one of the important stages in the course of elections. It is these party-sponsored candidates that, if selected and nominated the right person, brings power and prestige to the party. Any wrong and bias selection of candidates by favouritism and nepotism through manipulating party norms and other strong consideration and criterias, may lead the party to hell.

The process of awarding party tickets to those aspirants for the February 1995 Assembly polls began with the formal announcement and notifications in the local newspapers by the respective political parties. The parties invited those party-members who are intending to fight the forthcoming Assembly elections in their own party's tickets. The non-party men were also allowed to apply for the election ticket. It invited to apply in a prescribed Application Form within a stipulated time bound period.

Since the Election Commission of India had announced for a snap election in Manipur, the political parties in the state, however, had little time to select and finalise their party nominees/candidates for the elections. Soon the election fever in the state was picking up with the start of the process of party nominations for the poll, and gripped the political circle when the political leaders (ticket aspirants) started trying to grab party tickets by hook or by crook. During the selection of party nominees, a lot of running around by the aspiring candidates to get the blessing of the political parties were seen in full swing. Everyone tried to meet the influential leaders, who in his opinion, counted most in the decision. They were not in a position of quietness due to the uncertainty of the outcome of the party tickets. During the process of the selection of party candidates, mainly the faction -ridden prestigious parties faced 'problems while trying to promote and to get nominated their favoured men for the party tickets.

To get a ticket of a prestigious party like the Congress-I, not only requires the guiding criterias of the party for selecting a candidate, but also needs a huge amount of money to bribe those who are at the helms of awarding the tickets. To quote an Editorial of a local English Daily "Freedom" "that the party ticket for the Congress-I was promised at two lakhs of Rupees to certain candidates just before the last day for filing the nominations papers. The same thing goes for other reputed parties also except the newly formed parties which have absorbed the spill over from the prestigious political parties. Though Manipur is a backward state of India on the eastern most fringe of India, the present market index record of prestigious party tickets is not less than one lakh of rupees. The black market of party ticket had benefited quite a good number of political heavy-weights of Manipur for gambling with a greater stake for the Chief Ministership and lucrative

portfolios of the Council of Ministers.”<sup>10</sup> Some could manage skilfully to survive anyhow from the high level manipulation- of awarding party tickets with under-hand dealings in terms of lakhs of rupees. While many others who have been under great suspense before the final list of the party candidates were out, after not seeing their names in the list, parted their own party with disappointment and denounced the party which had ditched them at the crucial juncture of their political careers leaving aside all philosophical and ideological convictions of his party. The denial of party tickets precipitated many party members resigned from the membership of the party and joined another party along with their supporters.

In case of non-partymen ticket aspirants, they gave first priority either to Congress-I or the MPP and then “to other parties in the last resort. They applied first and tried to get the ticket of the most prospective Congress-I party. This is, mainly because of the fact that to contest election under Congress-I ticket has more better-off facilities and prospects than that of any other parties in terms of organisation, party finance, popularity of the party etc. Few individuals turned up at the last moment as Independent candidates as usual. But reportedly the number of Congress-I ticket aspirants reduced this time when compared to the last Assembly elections. This may be, apart from others, due to the declining position of the Congress-I in the state. Even then, among the various parties, the Congress-I received the largest number of Applications for tickets not only from its own party members but also from other party members for the February 1995 polls, followed by MPP and Janata Dal. There were, however, certain exceptional cases in the left parties (CPI and CPI-M), while nominating the party candidates as the left parties, being the cardre-based parties, maintains its principles throughout Most of the parties including the Congress-I (except the left parties) awarded party-tickets to



those aspirants applying from other parties. For them, allotment of party tickets in many cases, was not a question of being an original-party member or not under certain circumstances, though the membership to party is made compulsory at the time of awarding tickets.

The Congress-I was the only party which announced its party nominees at one time. The finalised list of 60 nominated candidates of the Congress-I party was, after due recommendations by the party's High Command, released by the AICC(I) General Secretary Janardhan Poojari on 20 January 1995 in New Delhi and became the only party which contested the election in all the constituencies. Except Congress-I, most of the political parties announced the list of their respective party candidates in two/three phases.

Despite its various and different purposes for giving interest in elections, however, some parties habitually nominated their candidates for each and every elections no matter the candidate will return or not in the contest. Except Congress-I, MPP and Janata Dal,' the rest of the parties could not put up a good number of their nominees. Out of the 14 political parties that entered the electoral battle, six parties fielded their nominees even less than ten each. The Congress (S) put up only 13 candidates while four parties nominated around some twenty plus each. Even it was a problem for them to find suitable candidates not only from amongst its party members but also from the non-party-members, unless allotting party tickets, to some extent, to those aspirants who left the prestigious parties due to failure to get tickets. To mention, for instance, the MHPC could put up only one candidate, 2 candidates of the CPI(M), while the other faction of the Samajwadi Janata Party only one for the electoral battle. Even the once powerful Janata Party fielded only four candidates. Such parties, excepting left parties, even awaited for

a long time for the aspirant candidates who would intend to contest election under its party banner. Some parties even nominated whoever asked for tickets in order to fulfil and enable to secure the required percentage of votes. For instance, when I interviewed chairman Parliamentary Board, Manipur State Unit, Samata Party, he said, since the party was newly formed in order to stall the election, no hard and fast rule were followed at the time of awarding party tickets. The essential criterias were, to many extent, relaxed. He said to get 6 percent of votes and to put up not less than 21 candidates, tickets were also given without much considerations about the required criterias. He further that most founder members of Samata Party, Who came out of the Janata Dal leaving the party, if asked for ticket, were awarded tickets of SP irrespective of qualifications, monetary position, Social Work etc. of the candidate.<sup>11</sup>

In Manipur too, each and every political party has adopted and observed certain methods and principles of their own in the selection of their party candidates. But today, to observe the principles and procedures of the party concerned while selecting the candidates has also become a mere formality that can be overlooked and also neglected at the time of selection of party nominees. This is because of the emerging changes in the election systems. In many cases, the informal process based on individual relationship and loyalties prevails over the formal procedures for securing the party nominations without fulfilling the vigorous criterias laid down in the formal procedure. No party excepting the left parties depended much on the formal process for selection of candidates. The informal process, the deviation from general Principles, was partly inevitable due to the large number of application and factionalism in party. This time too as before, for instance, even the Congress-I State Unit which follows a long

democratic process and laid down certain criterias for the would be candidates are conveniently forgotten with no assurances to sitting members of the party having poor winning chances in the electoral contest. The President, Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (I), Radhabinod Koijam expressed the necessity if looking into the antecedents of the would be candidates before awarding them party tickets, considering the prospects pf the candidates having winning chances in the election as one of the important factors for selection of candidates.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the formal procedures to be observed and maintained at the time of selection of candidates, any aspirant can be nominated as party-sponsored candidate if fulfils, apart from other criterias, the following conditions.

1. One of the major considerations for awarding party ticket is the question of legitimacy by the would be candidates to the leader aspiring for the post of Chief Ministership after winning the electoral battle. This practice has become in vogue in the recent years and applies particularly to the Congress-I party and then to the MPP in lesser degrees sometimes. Other parties hardly resorts to such games or practices. This is” because pf the fact that since statehood, the succeeding governments in the state have been formed alternately by the Congress party and the MPP with the exception of Janata Ministry in 1978, of which the Congress-led ministry outnumbered the MPP led ministry. The rest of the parties never gets the chance to form and lead/head the government till then except being coalition partners. No doubt, each and every party begets factions within, but the more is in the Congress-I party. In the words of V.M. Sirsikar “But the Congress as an All-India Party was faction-ridden.”<sup>13</sup> Each factions in the Congress-I is headed by a prospective Chief Minister who tries to secure as many nominations as possible to support him at the time of formation of government. In this regard factional politics plays a very important role in getting/securing and awarding party tickets. If a factional leader is unable to get more nominations upto his/her expectations/target for his support, he practices sabotage. The consequence is that a candidate may posses good prospects enough for winning the electoral battle, even then he may be dropped from the list of party tickets if the leader sensed that the would be candidate is not going, to support him after victory. Thus, the existence of such strong intfa-party factional groups struggling for power and contending for leadership (in the Congress party in particular) highly manipulates the process of selection of candidates on merit and democratic basis. This happens

in many cases not only in the Congress party but also to some prospective political parties. In this regard, for instance, mention may be made that even the former Chief Minister of Manipur R.K. Dorendro Singh of Congress-I, was denied the party ticket. He was dropped from the list of Congress-I candidates for the ensuing poll. Reportedly Dorendro complained as not having the names of his supporters in the list of party nominees. One main reason cited was that of his tussle for power with Chief Minister Rishang Keishing and Dorendro's endless vying for the post of the party chief of the state Congress-I unit. For Rishang Keishing still regards Dorendro more of a threat to his position than Radhabinod (the present party Chief and the man who put Keishing back to power). Thus Yaiskul constituency which had always been won by Dorendro experienced a new Congress-I candidate H. Kunjakishore Sharma, former Chairman of Imphal Municipality who was badly defeated by a BJP candidate. The Researcher in an interview with T. Gunadhwaja Singh, ex-minister, and party spokesman of MPCC(I), regarding the selection of party nominees of the Congress-I; he said "The mode of selection of party candidates was also prompted by partisan feelings and prospective candidates were sacrificed at the cost of intra-party leadership struggle. Even the ex-Chief Minister of Manipur Shri R.K. Dorendro Singh was not awarded party ticket in preference to a weak candidate, having no chance to win the seat. Such cases also happened in Uripok Assembly constituency where the sitting Congress-I MLA who was also a Minister (Gunadhwaja himself) was denied party ticket on partisan felling."<sup>14</sup> Gunadhwaja, a Congress-I himself, sitting MLA of sensitive urban Uripok constituency and a Cabinet Minister in-charge of Co-operation in Rishang Keishing Ministry was the only person amongst the ministers in the Rishang ministry not awarded ticket by his party, though a long time party sufferer. Following the denial of party ticket, Gunadhwaja resigned from the Rishang's Council of Ministers by submitting his resignation paper to the Chief Minister (on 21 January 1995) on personal/moral grounds as\* the reason of his resignation. His only crime was that he supported Dorendro in the last election in December 1994 for the CLP(I) leadership. He casted his vote in favour of the former Chief Minister Dorendro. He was one of the three supporters of Dorendro. The two others were MPCC(I) Youth Congress President I. Hemochandra Singh in Singjamei constituency and Smt. K. Apabi Devi in Oinam constituency. Though the two supported Dorendro, both of them could escape the axe by virtue of being branded a youth and a women. The sitting MLA of Tamei constituency I.D. Dijuanang was also denied Congress-I ticket.

The finalised list of Congress-I nominees not only awarded party tickets to many of the Congress-I sitting MLAs in Rishang ministry, it also accommodated several other associate members who were elected on different party tickets like the Janata Dal and the Congress (S) in the previous elections. They were there to express support for Keishing government and took part in the identification

parade held at the Imphal Raj Bhavan on 13 December 1994. They also proved their loyalty to Rishang when they took part in the storming of the Assembly building on 21 December 1994 with pistols in hand and laying siege to the Speaker's Chamber till late night. They were for which subsequently rewarded for their bravery with party tickets. However among the Associate members of Congress-I from other parties who had supported Rishang ministry, was Selkai Hrangchal of JD who did not secured Congress-I ticket.

2. Another most important factor that governs the selection of party nominees is the resourcefulness and ability of the candidate to win the election. In other words while selecting a candidate, winnability of the candidate is of prime considerations and tops over other considerations. Candidates having winning chances are given due preferences to others. Unless a party is able to represent even a single seat in the legislature, the validity and effectiveness of the party can strongly be questioned. In this case, there is no hard and fast rule about the criteria for selection of a candidate which a party has to maintain throughout. This has relevance to many parties, having a loose process irrespective of party affiliation or not of the ticket aspirants. Whether a person is a member or non-member of a party is not an important consideration that do not bother to the party. What they see is the ability and winnability of the candidate with prospects of winning the election. Any time any person can attain the membership or affiliation to any party and get ticket if he/she possess such qualification. The more is quite prevalent and easy to get ticket in respect of small parties lacking strong and competent leadership and supporters who can fight the election. This trend, to some extent, encourages selfish politicians to change their affiliation from one party to another without any ideological conviction while running around for tickets at the connivance of their conveniences. Thus, it is not a matter for these political leaders, if wishes, to get/secure a ticket from any such party if not a party member already.
  
3. Another important factor that influence the selection of party nominees is that of the sound financial positions of the candidates. This is because of the fact that modern elections are very sophisticated and complicated requiring a huge amount of money to be invested in the election. Today, traditional type of elections have disappeared from the scene of power politics in Manipur. Since money power plays a very significant role in any modern elections, the contesting candidates should be in a financially strong position in order to meet and neutralise the challenges made by rival candidates. So,, for allotting the party tickets to the candidates, it is said that finance has been a very important considerations, requiring the amount to spend for the election. The question of the popularity of the prospective candidate has been also very important. But the considerations of

popularity, political experience, the personality of the candidate etc., are no more taken seriously, to some extent, but one should have enough money to run the election campaign. A candidate who can not finance the election hardly win the election otherwise not having strong political support base in his/her own Assembly constituency. But when the Researcher interviewed either with the Presidents or (General) Secretaries of all the political parties that entered the electoral battle in 1995 February Assembly elections, most of them did not like to expose and did attempt to conceal taking into account 'Financial positions of the candidate' to be an important criteria for selecting party nominees, though they confessed themselves that strong financial position of the candidate, in reality, is a must criteria. Even the Congress-I party that tops other parties in terms of election expenses refuse to admit that considerations for monetary conditions of the candidates at the time of selecting party nominees is a must criteria. But do admitted/nodded as a fact. But some of the Party Presidents/Secretaries boldly accepted the sound financial conditions of the candidates as a must criteria at the time of selection of party nominees. The Congress-S President R.K. Nokulsana Singh said "The financial condition of the .candidate is also considered as one of the criteria"; President of KNA, Jainson Haokip, in his opinion "no consideration for money but if one aspires to be a candidate he/she be financially sound in the party opinion in order to meet the entire expenditure involved in the election. This becomes of prime concern/importance as modern election are expensive"; Samajawadi Janata Party (Rastriya) President, Mayanglambam Jane Singh said "no consideration for money but having the capacity of investing election expenses are required. Poor candidates have no chance of winning the election"; National Peoples Party President Kongbrailatpam Brajamohan Dev Sharma, however, remarks the necessity of financial condition in a round about way by saying that 'Taken into account the financial condition of the candidate, the financial position of the candidate should be sound so that after the election it may not be a problem to him and his family by causing bankruptcy'; Manipur Peoples Party Legislature Party Leader, Opposition Leader and also former Chief Minister of Manipur, R.K. Ranbir Singh strongly asserts that "winning prospects of the candidate including his financial conditions tops other considerations"; "Financial position of the claiming candidate is also a very significant factor at the time of recommendation for awarding party tickets" says President of Janata Dal and former Rajya Sabha member Shri W. Kullabidhu Singh. Janata Party General Secretary L. Iboyaima Singh, he himself a candidate, pointed out that "since the party never takes into account financial soundness of the candidate in order to avoid floor-crossing and horse - trading etc., it leads to the downfall of the Janata Party." Samata Party, Manipur State Unit, Parliamentary Board Chairman, Kh. Angangjao Singh emphasised the importance of money factor to fight the election, though not a strong considerations for it at the time of selection of party candidates.

Despite the above mentioned three basic criteria essential at the time of selection of party nominees, some other more criteria are also worth mentioning. The Following criteria are based upon the information furnished to the Researcher in an interview with either the President or (General) Secretary or party spokesman of the political parties.

- a] Compulsory active member (ship) to the party either since a long time back or earned at the time of securing the party ticket is a must criteria for all parties. For BJP one should be an active member and work for the party. But in case of left parties (CPI and CPI-M), one not only being a party member should also be an activists, recognised by the masses as an activists and worked with the masses for a long time. One cannot earn membership to the party only at the time of election for the sake of contesting the polls. The candidate should have loyalty to the party, and maintain party principles and ideology. Loyalty to party and its ideology tops other considerations while awarding tickets. The aspirant candidate should have been a man of such character who takes the policies and programmes of the party is more important than his/her own affairs. While giving party-tickets, left parties never take into account the considerations for money, candidates' economic status whether rich or poor and qualification (though academic knowledge of read and write, speaking, fluency etc., are required). It mainly based on whether the would be candidate is acceptable or not to the masses - based on the working class. Such persons having these qualities are approved by the party for ticket.
- b] Most of the political parties do not have much considerations for academic qualifications of the candidates. No matter that the contesting candidate is having or not such qualification. Qualification of candidate is not the strong criteria for issuing party tickets. But the parties like the FPM, JD, JP counted educational qualifications of the candidates, to some extent.
- c] In case of Samajawadi Janata Party (Rastriya) social and socialist background of the candidate believing in the party ideology as a socialist is necessary while awarding party tickets. Socialist background is more important than tops other considerations. Janata Party also considered political activities and social work either of the state or nation. The party also gives priority to weaker sections (women) if she has calibre to fight the election. NPP prefers the aspirant to be a worker of three different" clubs/societies. If for only one, that society should be represented by all sections of people. BJP considers bio-data, past history of candidates and report from the Kendra Committee to identify sincerity of the candidate. The party also sees the will of the candidate whether he wish to serve the people. MPP also attached importance to those believing in party ideology, service to the party as a member and also given preferences to the sitting party

MLAs/Ministers. But if they lose the winning chances, in the next election, ticket is given to new bloods. In JD, popularity of the candidate and his contact with the masses in his constituency is important and it is a point considered by the Election Committee of the party. The party while considering party nomination, in peculiar cases, accounted caste factors and background of the candidate. The community to which the candidate belongs to or the Sagei (caste) of the candidate is also taken into account when there are multi or various communities or Sageis in that particular constituency. The MPP and BJP observed the party position in the constituency concerned.

To conclude, however, in reality, V.M. Sirsikar thus rightly pointed out that “The nomination process in India leaves much to be desired. The electorate has no chance to influence the primary selection of candidates of any party. The press is equally important in influencing the nomination. Thus the primary process of a democratic election has almost and oligarchic favour.”<sup>15</sup>

In Manipur, election season is very much interesting to watch particularly the battle of awarding party tickets to the aspirants. It is in this time that politicians (except that of the CPI and CPI-M), fully exposed their casual commitments to the principles and ideologies of the party which they belonged/affiliated, becoming a member under its banner. The moment they failed to get the party ticket is the moment to leave the party without any moral and ethical consideration, making possible charges to the party he/she belongs to. As soon as the phase by phase list of nominated party candidates have been announced by the respective parties and most of the aspirants were denied party tickets, the resignation spree from the political parties for not getting party tickets had hit the headlines of the local dailies in the state during the electoral process. This mainly happens in the more prestigious parties. The columns of local dailies were dotted with the words “Resigns” and “I have resign and joined another party” not only by the ticket aspirants but also along with their followers/supporters even sometimes enmasse, indicating their loyalty to the leader by changing their political colour too as their leader changed. Since most of the



politicians were running after the ticket, when denied it, they did not bother about changing their affiliations from one party to another. They left their respective parties, rushed at the doors of other parties who mostly welcomed them warmly and joined it only for a mere 'party ticket; in order to get/accommodate a room to fight the election under its banner. In fact, these politicians started taking their shelter in various political parties to make sure themselves that they are very much in the election fray.

In reality these and such candidates in most cases entered the electoral battle without having any winning prospects but by the desire to set on his/her image for the next election and future politics or fought the election accordingly as instigated by someone/a party, to affect, reduce, weaken the strength and minus votes of rival candidates. However, some of them also could return in the election. For instance, the Researcher in an interview with the BJP candidate Ahanthem Hemchand Singh in Keishamthong constituency, was told that "he entered the electoral battle mainly to make himself popularised for the next Assembly elections. He knew that he himself is already a defeated candidate." Besides, some others wanted to fight elections as he can become a millionaire in an overnight if won the battle. Moreover, one of the motives of many persons offering their candidature is availability of the special facilities to them.

After having denied party tickets, several party leaders resigned from their respective parties and joined other parties making a beeline for the newly formed Federal Party of Manipur in particular and followed by other parties and vice-versa. Among them who left the parties; Congress-I topped other parties. To cite a few examples, as per newspaper report, among others who resigned from the Congress-I party, they included sitting Congress-I MLA and Chairman of the Hill Areas Committee I.D. Dijuanang of Tamei constituency; the General Secretary of the MPCC(I) Kishore Thapa of Kangpokpi segment who joined the Samata Party; senior

Congress-I leader Hijam Heramot Singh of Thonju constituency; two active members of Congress-I Dr. W. Thoiba Singh of Heingang segment, and L. Lala Singh ex-MLA of Khundrakpam constituency, S. Somorjit Singh in Yaiskul constituency (they joined FPM) etc. MPCC(I) Programme Associate Solomon Veino, in a press note on 21 January 1995, also resigned from the Primary membership of the party saying that “favourites gets ticket.”<sup>16</sup> The ex-General Secretary of the Ukhrul District Congress Committee Zimik Weapon also resigned from the Congress-I party saying that “the party was a divided House” and joined the Manipur Hill Peoples Council. Resignation of the dejected ticket aspirants also happened in other parties too, though lesser in degrees. BJP Manipur Unit ex-Vice President Kshetri Kala Singh for not getting ticket for Kshetrigao constituency resigned from the BJP. Hemam Bir Singh of MPP in Moirang constituency resigned from the party. Founder member of the FPM and General Secretary M. Jitendra Singh in Wangkhei segment resigned from the party. David K. Shimray, State executive committee member JD resigned from the party denouncing the Manipur State JD leadership (President W. Kullabidhu Singh) and Samata Party ticket for the Chingai (ST) constituency was given to him. H. Somorendro Singh of Langthabal segment was also one among the Congress-I ticket aspirants. When the ticket for the said constituency was not awarded to him, he fought the election under Samata Party ticket.

### **Nomination/Withdrawal/Final Position of Contesting Candidates**

All the political parties in Manipur, irrespective of national and state/regional, fielded their respective candidates. For the 60 elected Assembly seats, a total of 385 candidates including 10 women candidates and Independents filed the nominations. Out of which, 2 were rejected in the scrutiny one in Wangkhem constituency in Thoubal district and another in Chandel (ST) segment in Chandel district. A total of 38 nominees withdrew their candidature. So, after the scrutiny and withdrawal, only 345 candidates remained in the election fray, for the fresh mandate of the people. A

clear picture of candidates contesting the election thus emerged only after the process of withdrawals had been completed. One special feature of the sixth Assembly election was that, no candidate except H. Borobabu Singh, the former speaker of the outgoing fifth House, either filed the nominations for two seats or contested the elections from two constituencies.

But the exact number of contestants came down to 339 only from its previous 345. Because the election to Lamsang constituency in Imphal district had been countermanded following the killing of one MPP candidate on 11 February 1995, who was also the then standing MLA of the said segment, only five days ahead of the polling scheduled in the five hill

Name of Constituency	Total number of candidates				No. of contesting candidates in the field
	Who filed the nominations	Whose nomination where rejected	After scrutiny	Who withdrew their candidature	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<b>Imphal</b>					
1] Khundrakpam	6	nil	6	nil	6
2] Heingang	9	nil	9	1	8
3] Khurai	9	nil	9	nil	9
4] Kshetrigao	6	nil	6	1	5
5] Thongju	8	nil	8	nil	8
6] Keirao	9	nil	9	nil	9
7] Andro	5	nil	5	nil	5
8] Lamalai	4	nil	4	nil	4
9] Thangmeiband	6	nil	6	nil	6
10] Uripok	6	nil	6	nil	6
11] Sagolband	5	nil	5	nil	5
12] Keishamthong	4	nil	4	nil	4
13] Singjamei	9	nil	9	nil	9
14] Yaiskul	6	nil	6	nil	6
15] Wangkhei	7	nil	7	1	6
16] Sekmai (SC)	4	nil	4	nil	4
17] Lamsang	6	nil	6	nil	6
(Lamsang Assembly Constituency was countermanded following the killing of one MPP candidate. The election was rescheduled on 27 May 1995)					

election total number of candidates who file the nominations for the sixth Assembly polls

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
18] Konthoujam	5	nil	5	nil	5	
19] Patsoi	8	nil	8	1	7	
20] Langthabal	7	nil	7	1	6	
21] Naoriya Pakhanglakpa	8	nil	8	1	7	
22] Wangoi	5	nil	5	nil	5	
23] Mayang Imphal	6	nil	6	nil	6	
40] Jiribam	4	nil	4	1	3	
Imphal Total	152	nil	152	7	145	
<u>Bishnupur</u>						
24] Nambol	5	nil	5	nil	5	
25] Oinam	6	nil	6	nil	6	
26] Bishnupur	9	nil	9	1	8	
27] Moirang	6	nil	6	nil	6	
28] Thanga	4	nil	4	nil	4	
29] Kumbi	8	nil	8	2	6	
Bishnupur Total	38	nil	38	3	35	
<u>Thoubal</u>						
30] Lilong	6	nil	6	nil	6	
31] Thoubal	5	nil	5	nil	5	
32] Wangkhem	7	1	6	3	3	
33] Heirok	6	nil	6	nil	6	
34] Wangjing Tentha	5	nil	5	nil	5	
35] Khangabok	4	nil	4	1	3	
36] Wabagai	7	nil	7	1	6	
37] Kakching	5	nil	5	1	4	
38] Hiyanglam	5	nil	5	1	4	
39] Sugnu	6	nil	6	1	5	
Thoubal Total	56	1	55	8	47	
<u>Chandel (ST)</u>						
41] Chandel	13	1	12	2	10	
42] Tegnoupal	3	nil	3	nil	3	
Chandel Total	16	1	15	2	13	

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<u>Ukhrul (ST)</u>					
43] Phungyar	5	nil	5	nil	5
44] Ukhrul	3	nil	3	nil	3
45] Chingai	8	nil	8	1	7
Ukhrul Total	16	nil	16	1	15
<u>Senapati (ST)</u>					
46] Saikul	7	nil	7	2	5
47] Karong	4	nil	4	nil	4
48] Mao	5	nil	5	2	3
49] Tadubi	5	nil	5	1	4
50] Kangpokpi (G)	6	nil	6	2	4
51] Saitu	9	nil	9	1	8
Senapati Total	36	nil	36	8	28
<u>Tamenglong (ST)</u>					
52] Tamei	6	nil	6	nil	6
53] Tamenglong	7	nil	7	2	5
54] Nungba	4	nil	4	nil	4
Tamenglong Total	17	nil	17	2	15
<u>Churachandpur (ST)</u>					
55] Tipaimukh	4	nil	4	nil	4
56] Thanlon	13	nil	13	1	12
57] Henglep	9	nil	9	3	6
58] Churachandpur	12	nil	12	1	11
59] Saikot	12	nil	12	2	10
60] Singhat	4	nil	4	nil	2
Churachandpur Total	54	nil	54	7	47
Grand Total	385	2	383	38	345

Name of District	Total seats	Total number of candidates				No. of contesting candidates in the field
		Who filed the nominations	Whose nominations were rejected	After scrutiny	Who withdrew their candidature	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Imphal	24	152+3*	nil	152+3*	7+1*	145+2*
Thoubal	10	56	1	55	8	47
Bishnupur	06	38	nil	38	3	35
Ukhrul	03	16	nil	16	1	15
Senapati	06	36	nil	36	8	28
Tamenglong	03	17	nil	17	2	15
Churachandpur	06	54	nil	54	7	47
Chandel	02	16	1	15	2	13
Total Manipur	60	385+3*	2	383+3*	38+1*	345+2*

*Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.*

Table 2.10 reflects the district-wise break-up position of nomination of candidates. Due to the dissimilarities in the nature of the geographical and demographic structure as well as differences in the compositions of the constituencies

in the eight districts, the number of nominations filed varies from district to district. In the entire state, Imphal district, being the only district having largest seat, recorded the highest number of 155 nominations. Ukhrul and Chandel were the two districts having the lowest nominations of 16 each. Except Thoubal and Chandel Districts, there were no rejection of candidates in the remaining 6 districts. In all the eight districts, few candidates of different political parties withdrew their candidature with varying degrees ranging from a minimum of 2 in Chandel and Tamenglong districts, also being the lowest in the state, to a maximum of 8 in Imphal, Thoubal, and Senapati districts. In the entire districts, Imphal district topped in respect of nominations and contesting candidates.

Table 2.10  
District-wise Break-up of Nominations of Candidates  
(Pre-countermanded Election)

Pre-countermanded election	Party	Post-countermanded election	Party
Name of Candidate	Affiliation	Name of Candidate	Affiliation
1] Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh	INC	1] Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh	INC
2] Mutum Deven Singh	MPP	2] Mutum Ruhini Devi	MPP
3] Khundongbam Jugeshwor	CPI	3] Khundongbam Jugeshwor	CPI
4] Thoudam Nabachandra Singh	BJP	4] Thoudam Nabachandra Singh	BJP
5] Wangkheimayum Brajabidhu Singh	IND	5] Wangkheimayum Brajabidhu Singh	IND
6] Puritsabam Shyamo Singh	IND	6] Puritsabam Shyamo Singh	SP
7] Nil		7] R.K. Gambhir Singh	JD
8] Nil		8] Kongbrailatpam Brajamohon Dev Sharma	NPP
9] Nil		9] Dr. Haobam Borbabu	IND/MPP (B)

When the election to Lamsang constituency had been rescheduled on 27 May 1995, altogether 9 candidates filed the nominations, of which 2 were Independents,

and one was a woman candidate. The three political parties, the Janata Dal (JD) the Samata Party (SP), and National Peoples Party (NPP), which did not put up their candidates, this time fielded their nominees for the one seat electoral battle. But the candidature of NPP nominee was withdrawn. P. Shyamo Singh who did file his nomination as Independent, fought the countermanded election as a nominee of the Samata Party (SP). H. Borbabu Singh, the former Assembly Speaker who had lost his Wangkhei constituency under MPP ticket, this time filed his nomination again as Independent /MPP (B), for the Lamsang seat. But he was defeated for the second time also. The ruling Congress-I had electoral alliance with its coalition partners and could retain the seat. The following Table 2.11 compare the disparity of candidates who filed nominations for the Lamsang seat between the pre-countermanded and post-countermanded elections.

No. and Name of A/C	Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation
<u>Imphal District</u>		
11- Sagolband A/C	R.K. Ongbi Sorojini Devi	INC
13- Singjamei A/C	Yumnam Sakhitombi Devi	IND
18- Konthoujam A/C	Ningthoujam Manishang Devi	JD
17- Lamsang A/C	Mutum Ruhini Devi	MPP
<u>Bishnupur District</u>		
24- Nambol A/C	Toijam Ibemhal Devi	CPI
25- Oinam A/C	Keisam Apabi Devi	INC
<u>Churachandpur District</u>		
56- Thanlon A/C (ST)	Ms. B.K. Rose	FPM
58- Churachandpur A/C (ST)	Chingnou	KNA
58- -do- (ST)	Hathoi Buansing	INC
59- Saikot A/C (ST)	Kholi	NPP
60- Singhat A/C (ST)	T. Ngaizanem	MPP

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.



Altogether 11 woman candidates of different party affiliations were also in the electoral battle. But before, the total number of woman candidates stood at 10 only. As the wife of the slain MPP candidate contested for the Lamsang seat, its number gone upto 11. But none of the woman candidates could retain their respective seats. The highest numbers of woman candidates were in Churachandpur district where 5 woman (ST) contestants were in the fray, and the lowest had been in Bishnupur district at 2. Except Imphal, Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts, the remaining five district put up no woman candidates. The following Table 2.12 shows the list of these woman candidates with their party affiliation.

Table 2.12  
List of Woman Candidates in District-wise

District	Largest no. of candidates	Smallest no. of candidates	Largest no. of voters	Smallest no. of voters
Imphal	9 each in Keirao, Singjamei, Khurai	3 in Jiribam	25,583 in Wangkhei	15, 610 in Uripok
Thoubal	6 each in Heirol, Lilong, Wabagai	3 each in Wangkhem, Khangabok	20,985 in Khangabok	17, 660 in Hiyanglam
Bishnupur	8 in Bishnupur	4 in Thanga	24,154 in Moirang	15, 572 in Thanga
Ukhrul	7 in Chingai (ST)	3 in Ukhrul (ST)	27, 074 in Chingai (ST)	18, 454 in Phungyar (ST)
Senapati	8 in Saitu (ST)	3 in Mao (ST)	36,091 in Mao (ST)	22, 154 in Kangpokpi (ST)
Tamenglong	6 in Tamei (ST)	4 in Nungba (ST)	22,936 in Tamei (ST)	16, 175 in Nungba (ST)
Churachandpur	12 in Thanlon (ST)	4 in Singhat (ST)	32,485 in Saikot (ST)	12,790 in Tipaimukh (ST)
Chandel	10 in Chandel (ST)	3 in Tengenoupal (ST)	30,459 in Chandel (ST)	25,728 in Tengenoupal (ST)

Source : Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur

The following Table 2.13 gives a vivid picture of the names of respective constituencies in the state in district-wise where the largest and smallest number of contestants as well as the electors exists. From this table, we came to know that the largest number of candidates in the entire state had been in Thanlon constituency in Churachandpur district where there was 12 cornered contest for the seat. But the smallest number of candidates were not found in a particular segment and district. It had been scattered in 6 constituencies of 5 districts where there was triangular contest viz., Jiribam A/C (Imphal); Khangabok A/C and Wangkhem A/C (Thoubal), Ukhrul A/C (Ukhrul), Mao A/C (Senapati) and Tengenoupal A/C (Chandel).

The largest number of voter, on the other hand, was found in the Mao constituency in Senapati district, having 36,091 electors. The Tipaimukh segment in Churachandpur district with a 12,790 voters had been the smallest in the state.

Table 2.13  
Showing the Largest and Smallest Number of Candidates and Voters

Total no. of Political Parties : 14 Plus Independents along with Langam group									
Name of Districts									Total seats put up
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Party	IMP	TBL	BPR	UKL	SPT	TML	CCP	CDL	
INC (I)	24	10	06	03	06	03	06	02	59+1*
MPP	23	10	06	01	04	03	06	02	55
JD	15+1*	05	06	03	03	02	04	01	39+1*
SP	10+1*	03	NIL	03	02	02	02	01	23+1*
CPI	12+1*	07	04	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	23
FPM	13	NIL	02	NIL	02	01	03	01	22
BJP	12	02	05	NIL	01	NIL	NIL	NIL	20
IC (S)	04	03	01	NIL	04	01	NIL	NIL	13
SJP	04	NIL	01	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	01	06
KNA	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	05	01	06

Source : State Election Office, Imphal, Manipur

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
NPP	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	01	03	01	05
JP	02	NIL	NIL	01	01	NIL	NIL	NIL	04
CPI (M)	02	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	02
MHPC	NIL	NIL	NIL	01	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	01
IND	24	07	04	03	05	02	18	03	66

C election, staked its claim in 40 seats and thus became third in terms of number of contestants in the electoral battle. Relatively, the participation of other parties in the electoral battle manifested weak position as most of them did not put up their respective candidates in many constituencies districts, ranging from 1 nominee for MHPC to 24 of the Samata Party (SP). But this time, the Independents had a fair participation of 66 candidates including Langam Group (MPP) 11 candidates stretching the entire eight districts. The following Table 2.14 presents a clear picture of the final position of contesting candidates.

Table 2.14  
Final Position of Party-wise Break-up of Contesting Candidates in District-wise  
(Including Countermanded Lamsang Constituency Election)

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur

\* The Figure (+1\*) is the no. of contestants increased due to Lamsang A/C election held on 27 May 1995. (Countermanded).

### **Party Alignments**

Political parties seek political power either singly or in alliance with other political parties. In the latter's case, either pre-poll or post-electoral alliances are commonly adopted. When the parties are in a condition not to capture the power singly or when unable to defeat a strong party unilaterally which has been continuously in power, they resorted and forged alliance system. Alliances are thus generally made when the smaller political parties are determined to come in power by defeating a big, strong and powerful party in the elections. As Joseph Schumpeter has observed, "The first and foremost aim of each political party is to prevail over the others in order to get into power or to stay in it."

In such cases, alliances of two or more parties are done with a view to capturing more seats in the election. Such an election alliance is made in most cases amongst the like minded - political parties which sets and have a common minimum programme. V.M. Sirsikar rightly pointed out that, "Electoral adjustments are a way of fighting the elections. Like-minded parties and the unlike-minded but having some common goal, join, bargain and share the seats to avoid unnecessary contests." The alliance always keeps ahead the formation of

the government by capturing more seats. The factors for such an alliance are various and are not in general similar with alliance of other parties. Convenience is also one of the factors that considers by the political parties to enter into alliance. Thus the only principal motive behind the poll-alliance is to come to power and form the government by reaching to an understanding on common minimum Programmes among the constituent parts of the alliance/front partners.

In the fast developing political situation in Manipur following the induction of Rishang Keishing Ministry by the centre on 13 December 1994 and its followed-up hot constitutional crisis, there arose political polarisation in the state -the Congress-I on the one hand and the non-Congress parties on the other. The opposition parties were soon united into forming “Co-ordinating Committee of seven opposition Parties.” They were cohesive by the ambition to defeat the Congress-I led Rishang Keishing Ministry at the time of taking majority prove on the floor of the Assembly House and thus they were sailing in the sinking boat together. The most powerful regional political outfit in the state, the Manipur Peoples Party (MPP) played a very significant role in uniting the opposition parties. However, the seven opposition parties co-ordinating committee disintegrated and the political polarisation in the state soon faded away in the air just with the announcement of Election Notification by the Election Commission and the election approaches nearer and nearer. These opposition parties having varied political philosophies, colours and ideological commitment could not unite even for a month or so. The moment the electioneering process sets in motion, they failed miserably to consolidate themselves for an United Front. The ideological contradiction and disagreement on various basic points became quite apparent and clashing one another among them.

As were in the previous Assembly elections, there was no major change in the political combination of the opposition parties during the sixth Assembly elections. Though the opposition parties did not intend committing electoral suicide and destroy themselves in the February 1995 elections, however, to bring all the opposition parties together into some sort of electoral alliance/understanding did not seem to be any easy task due to the multi-coloured parties. The party alliance with its pro-Meitei stance MPP party and communal party BJP (as termed by some parties) posed a problem for the other (National/Secular) parties and its allies. The process of electoral adjustments among the opposition parties was failed as most of the parties decided to contest individually as much seats as available ignoring the interest of other parties and the prospects of having a pre-poll electoral front among them. The main issue for disagreement, apart from others, among them was seat adjustment. MPP made a half-hearted attempt to bring the opposition into some sort of alliance. Addressing a Press Conference on 8 February, 1995 at MPP Office, Imphal, R.K. Ranbir Singh, leader of MPP said MPP and CPI alone could win 31 seats. A last minute electoral alliance was likely to come in the coming days. MPP, JD and CPI have reportedly agreed to the point. Even then the MPP could not reach an electoral understanding with its political allies or even could not enter into an agreement with any party on sharing of the seats. The opposition parties united only to dislodge Rishang Ministry from power. MPP thought of fighting the election individually and to put up as many candidates as the party can as the party could see good prospects to likely get majority and form the government. The major problem in seat adjustment was that the MPP party made it clear that it would not settle for any seat adjustment with other parties. None of the parties except Congress-I affirmed their due determination to provide one-to-one contest with the

Congress-I in the Assembly polls for the success of the opposition parties. And there was also not a good opposition leader who could endeavour for seat adjustment with the warring factions. At the moment, it was a problem for them to chalk out a common strategy and. a common minimum programme on a common platform to consolidate their strength.

As the non-Congress opposition parties were not able to arrive at any compromise and failed to reach any agreement, the coming together of the opposition in a single United Front system was collapsed. They were not in a position to say who was their alternative to Congress-I and who would be their leader in case they secure a majority of seats in the Assembly. Failure to alliance on the part of non-Congress parties implied that even if they got majority, they were not going to be in a position to form a government by themselves.

Thus, there was no any such pre-poll electoral alliance of various parties in the state during the elections. The 'Front System' was formed among the non-Congress parties only after the election results were announced. The ruling Congress-I party entered the electoral battle individually. The party was not for any electoral alliance/adjustment of seat with any party. While the main opposition party, the Manipur Peoples Party also did not have any poll understanding or joint front with any party or did not put up any joint-candidate with any party.

Though the opposition parties were at their own, however, three of them had certain pre-poll understanding-, The central party leaders such as Indrajit Gupta of CPI, V.P. Singh and S.R. Bbmmai of Janata Dal, during their stay in Imphal for election campaigning, worked out measures for electoral understanding as the leaders were targeting the complete dethroning of the Congress-I in the state. The

electoral understanding as such remained confined to only three party constituents -the CPI, CPI(M) and Janata Dal. The three - party alliance fought the elections. The rest of the parties did not have seat adjustments with one another. The question of supporting the three parties each other was open, depending upon others' attitude. No unit of the three parties would be allowed to support the Congress-I in any circumstances.

In order to form a left-democratic-front, it said the CPI, CPI(M), and Janata Dal has formed electoral alliance in some of the Assembly constituencies but not understanding in 15 Assembly constituencies. These parties decided not to go together either with the MPP or with the Congress-I. The CPI, state unit said it would not adjust seats with the MPP in the 1995 Assembly polls in Manipur.<sup>19</sup> To have left-democratic and secular power in Manipur, the CPI(M) said the party would go together with CPI and Janata Dal, but would not go with MPP. It said, the main programme of the CPI(M) would be to defeat the anti-democratic and anti people plans of the Congress-I and to divert the communal ideas of the BJP from the people. The CPI(M) appealed the people to support the candidates that could defeat BJP and Congress-I.<sup>20</sup> In a Press Conference on 10 February at Imphal, CPI leader Indrajit Gupta ruled out any tying up with the BJP and the Congress-I as the party wants to defeat both the parties. He expressed that an electoral alliance is not possible at present but emphasised the need for a unity after the election results are out and as per the condition from state to state. His party was hopeful of making an alliance with MPP and JD to form the government after the results are out.

The agreement to go together in the election came following the negotiation in the meeting of the three party leaders of CPI, CPI(M) and Janata Dal held on 19



January 1995 in the residence of W. Kullabidhu Singh (MP, Rajya Sabha and JD President). The • meeting unanimously consented to have informal alliance regarding seat adjustment. By reaching an electoral understanding among these three political parties, it decided to jointly contest the Assembly elections to defeat Congress-I and BJP. Understanding was also reached in the meeting about the seat adjustment and decided the seats/candidates to be put up in the 60 constituency in the state.<sup>21</sup>

In the Assembly constituencies where there is no candidate of either of the CPI, CPI(M) and JD, they supported each other and vice-versa. But in some Assembly segments they put up their respective candidates to have a friendly contest. While the rest of the constituencies were reserved for each party on the basis of mutual understanding. In the three party alliance, Naoriya Pakhanglakpa Assembly constituency was given to CPI(M). In Khundrakpam Assembly constituency, candidates of the three parties put up. But in fifteen Assembly segments both the JD and CPI put up their respective candidates such as in the Assembly segments of Thongju, Keirao, Singjamei, Khurai, Khundrakpam, Kshetrigao, Konthoujam, Mayang Imphal, Khangabok, Kakching Sugnu, Lilong, Kumbi, Nambol and Uripok. Those Assembly segments reserved for CPI by JD were Lamalai, Lamsang, Patsoi, Thoubal, Wangjing-Tentha, Heirok and Wabagai. And the Assembly constituencies reserved by CPI for JD were Hiyanglam, Thanga, Bishnupur, Moirang, Oinam, Wangoi, Sagolband, Heingang, Jiribam, Yaiskul and Wangkhei. But no CPI/CPI(M) candidate put up in the hilly Assembly segments. The three parties not only decided to support one another but also expressed their satisfaction over the understanding it had reached among them.

The CPI also supported the Progressive Independent candidates of such constituencies where the CPI party did not put up their party nominees. When I interviewed with Ph. Parijat Singh ex-minister/MLA and State Secretary, CPI Manipur, the CPI gave wholehearted support to such Independent candidates on the ground of the activity of the candidate, speaking in favour of CPI as well as if he/she is a social worker and recognised by masses as an activist etc. For instance, CPI supported the Independent candidate Khwairakpam Leirijao Singh of Sekmai Assembly constituency in Imphal district. Following a meeting on 30 January 1995 of the CPI Local Council of Thangmeibahd A/C, in a Press release, announced support to N. Binoy Singh of Samata Party candidate in Thangmeiband constituency. Considering the existing political situation in India and Manipur, it said, the decision was taken in order to strengthen the left and democratic forces/ fronts.<sup>22</sup>

Besides, the Samata Party State Secretary said that the party would go with the national front and left front in the poll. It, however, added the party would oppose the contesting candidates of the prospective left-front in certain Assembly constituencies. While the Samata Party would not oppose the contesting left-front candidates particularly at Naoriya Pakhanglakpa and Khundrakpam Assembly constituencies where the CPI(M) was strong. It may be remembered that the CPI(M) put up only two candidates for the February poll in these two Assembly segments.<sup>23</sup> Earlier also the President of Samata Party announced not to have contest by Samata Party with CPI(M) in Naoriya Pakhanglakpa and Khundrakpam Assembly constituencies.<sup>24</sup> The Brachin National Union Party (a party founded by O. Tomba Singh, ex-MLA, who nearly swept the Lok Sabha polls on the Brachin Cards in the 1980s) which did not put up even a lone candidate in the poll

supported the FPM candidate Hijam Hramot Singh of Thonju Assembly constituency. Its president said that the party will strive to win the elections for the Federal party candidate. The newly formed Republican Party, Manipur, in a press release on 23 January 1995 supported its party President Haorangbam Mukhai Singh, an Independent candidate of Langthabal Assembly constituency. The party 'said it would support the Independent candidates of all the Assembly constituencies and would also work for the formation of Republican Independent Front. While releasing the party manifesto, President of the MPP Shri. Y. Yaima Singh said MPP will support the Independent candidate of Chingai Assembly constituency in Ukhrul district. The Samata Party sponsored the Independent candidate P. Shyamo Singh at Lamsang Assembly constituency<sup>25</sup> though the Lamsang segment election was countermanded following the gunning down of the sitting MLA. The samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya) Manipur on 5 February appealed its party supporters to work for securing other voters to support candidates other than the Congress-I to ensure success of its party candidates. As per agreements made between the FPM members in Henglep and Gangte Tribal Union (GTU) in Nungba, the FPM in Henglep were asked to support D. Angam Gangte, GTU candidate in Henglep Assembly constituency while the GTU members in Nungba to support Gangmumei Kamei of FPM candidate in Nungba Assembly constituency.

Despite the absence of pre-poll electoral alliances among the non-congress-I political parties and in spite of making some electoral understanding between CPI, CPI(M) and JD, the sixth elections was mainly a battle between the Congress-I and the Manipur Peoples Party (MPP), a regional political outfit. Indeed in the history of Assembly elections in Manipur, most of the Assembly elections have been a

fight between the Congress-I on the one hand and the other parties on the other hand. The prevailing election trend in the state during the sixth elections was that of the anti-Congress-I wave. The Congress-I was fighting on the one hand and the other non-Congress parties on the other hand if not under the banner of an unified formal pre-poll alliance system of the opposition parties.

After the election was over, in a reply to the local reporters, while the MPP-led ULF Camp was going on in the residence of W. Basantakumar Singh, MLA of Janata Dal, R.K. Ranbir Singh, leader of MPP Legislature wing and ULF realised their weaknesses and mistakes for not making a pre-poll alliances of the anti-Congress parties. Ranbir Singh lamented for not doing it in time before the poll.

However, in an attempt to stall the Congress-I in forming the state government, even before the election results were fully declared, the MPP and its like-minded allies were already afoot to form a coalition government led by MPP. The main opposition party in the state, the MPP, following a joint meeting with Janata Dal, Congress-S, NPP, Samata Party, and CPI could form a joint-post-poll-alliance/front under the name of the United legislature Front (ULF) to counter the Congress-Fs move to form a coalition government in the state, though the experience of the Manipur voters with a coalition government have been bitter in the past.

### **Code of Conduct for the Candidates and Party in Power/Misuse of Official Machinery**

The sixth State Assembly election was quite a different one from the preceding Assembly elections. For the election was held under strict supervision and observations of the Election Commission of India through the insistent of a

revised model code of conduct in which the contesting candidates and their parties were not given, a free hand like in the previous elections. As such the electioneering tempo was also very much in a low atmosphere.

For the election contest, the candidates of fourteen political parties (both national and local) were in the fray. They were Indian National Congress; Communist Party of India; Communist Party of India (Marxist); All India Samata Party; Bhartiya Janata Party; Janata Party; Janata Dal (National Parties); Manipur Peoples party; Kuki National Assembly; National Peoples Party; Federal Party of Manipur; Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya); Manipur Hill Peoples Council and Indian Congress (Socialist) (regional). Besides, sixty-six Independent candidates also felt their presence in the contest.

The election model code of conduct laid down certain norms which all the political parties and candidates accepted and expected to observe during the electioneering process. In general the model code of conduct issued by the Election Commission is designed to regulate the general conduct/code of political parties and candidates; election meetings; procession; conduct of all concerned on the polling day; entry into polling booths; Election observers; and the conduct of the party in power whether at the centre or in the states. The last mentioned subject is both specially important and extremely sensitive. Because it is expected that the party in power shall ensure that no cause is given for the complaints that it has used its official position for the purposes of furthering its election campaign.

The model code of conduct eliminates the leverage enjoyed by the party(ies) in power in abusing the Governmental machinery like vehicles; dak bungalows; official personnels, the official media and the like for electioneering. From the

time elections were announced, the ministers and other authorities were not to announce any financial grants in any form or lay foundation stones of projects or schemes of any kinds. The Election Commission also forbids the parties in power from making any adhoc appointments in government or PSUs that might affect or influence the voter in favour of the party in power. Appeals for voter on communal and caste lines have been banned. No candidate or party shall be permitted to act so as to aggravate the existing differences or cause tension between different castes and communities. Criticism of other political parties is to be limited to policies, programmes and past records. They are not allowed to criticise the private lives of rival candidates and acts not connected with their public role. Unsubstantial allegations are to be avoided. The revised model code of conduct bars the candidates and parties from indulging in any activity that may create hatred and tension among different religious; caste and linguistic group with the ulterior motive of getting votes. It also warns parties not to use mosques, churches, temples and other places of worships as fora of election propaganda and not to indulge in "Corrupt practises" such as bribing, intimidation and impersonation of voters. It also cries a halt to parties and candidates not to indulge in all sorts of publicity campaigns invading the privacy and freedom of ordinary citizens. The Code of conduct clearly states that no political party or any candidate shall permit its or his followers to make use of any public/individual's land, building, compound walls, etc. without his permission for erecting flagstuffs, suspending banners, pasting of notices, posters, writing slogans, orinting of symbols, etc.

With the announcement and commencement of electoral process for the February 1995 Assembly Elections, in a statement by the Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur, directed all concerned to observe the model code of conduct and orders

issued by the Election Commission of India. The instructions given to state government to maintain and observe are (1) total ban on transfer of any officer/ official connected with the electoral process in any matter; (2) total ban on misuse of official machinery and vehicles by political party in power; (3) prohibition on visits by ministers to the constituencies and holding meetings with districts officials; (4) Ban on disbursement of grants from discretionary funds of the ministers; (5) ban on announcement of new policy measures and/or schemes promising concessions/ benefits to the electors or any section thereof; (6) ban on laying foundation stones or inauguration of any project/scheme; (7) Ban on recruitment; (8) ban on issue of new arm licences; (9) ban on the use of loud speaker for election campaign without permission of the competent authority and beyond prescribed hours (10) prohibition on defacement of property without obtaining express permission of the owner of the property in writing, and (11) prohibition on the sale of liquor. The Chief Electoral Officer stated that the list is only illustrative and not exhaustive. He asked and appraised the state government not to do anything which might be against the model code of instructions.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 1995, a meeting of the coordination committee of all political parties was held at D.C. Office, Lamphel Pat with Deputy Commissioner, Imphal as Chairman. The meeting was attended by representatives of recognised political parties and representatives of various government departments. In the meeting the D.C. Imphal, appealed the political parties to observe and abide by the election related model code of conduct and orders of the Election Commission.

For the first time, the Election Commission appointed and deployed Central Election Observers in three categories to keep a watch on the poll process and ensure free and fair elections. The election was, thus held under strict supervision of

Central Observers. They were eleven election expenditure observers, eleven general observers; and two special observers. The General observers were specially to see the strict compliance of the “model code of conduct” by the contesting candidates and the party in power. The special observers dealt with the over all supervision of the Assembly Election in the state. The contesting candidates and the office bearers of political parties and their followers or any person were allowed to inform and report the election observers of the violation of any of the rules/provision of the code of conduct by any candidate, party and government. For which, the observers in all categories were available for any election complaints within their respective jurisdiction at the respective district                      Circuit House. But in case of special observers, they were stayed and available at the state Guest House, Imphal.

To discuss the abuses and violation of the election code of conduct by the contesting candidates and misuse of official machinery by the party in power, by the official records available and actions taken against code violation so far, most of the contesting candidates and their parties as well as the ruling Congress-I party properly observed it in this Elections. There was hardly any official record (in the Election Office) justified and proved of the cases of finding of the candidates flouting and violating the codes and misused of official machinery by the party in power during the electioneering process.

The researcher in his personal interview with the respective party leaders- General Secretary of Federal Party of Manipur N. Joykumar Singh said, for instance, “no party and contesting candidates violated the code of conduct as well as misused official machinery by the ruling Congress-I Party since there is no any official record available. But there were so many allegations against code violation



by the candidates and the party in power’<sup>1</sup> K. Brajamohan Dev Sharma, president of NPP said, “All parties and candidates do violate election model code of conduct. The party in power also misused official machinery. But due to lack of proper means to dictate it we cannot confirm and prove it with evidence.” Congress-S president R.K. Nokulsana said, ‘all candidates/parties violated code of election. The ruling party also misuse its official machineries. But it is difficult to control it by the E.C. or any other agencies. It is beyond their control in real practice.”

However, as per information received from the state Election Office, Manipur, only three election petitions were found recorded that lodged/filed in the Guwahati High Court of Imphal Bench. In the Langthabal constituency, O. Joy Singh of MPP candidate filed an election petition in the Guwahati High Court of Imphal Bench against K. Babudhon Singh of Congress-I nominee and others; (Election petition No. 8 (G)95/2 of 1995) demanding repoll in the 20/25 Chajing Mairrenkhong Polling Stations. But the case was still in pending without any final decision till date. In the same court, V. Weapon Zimik of MHPC also filed an election petition (No. 3 of 1995) against Dr. M. Horam of Congress-I candidate and others in Chingai (ST) reserved segment demanding repoll but keeping on pending till today. In another election petition (No. 7(G)95/1 of 1995) filed in the same court by S.L. Paokhosei of Congress-I candidate against Ngamthang Haokip of MPP and others in Saitu (ST) reserved Assembly segment demanded fresh poll. But the case was dismissed on 9th September 1996 and the MPP nominee Haokip was declared elected.<sup>29</sup>

During the election campaigning, a contesting candidate was allowed to use not more than three vehicles at a time. However, the Congress-I candidate of

Mayang Imphal constituency M. Nilachandra Singh used more vehicles in his election meeting violating the strictures of the E.G. While holding an election meeting at Komlakhong, he used 13 vehicles (Buses). Following a written complaint to the election observer of Imphal West-II, Maheshwar Prasad on 3 February noon by a person of the area, Maheshwar Prasad along with the SDC Mayang Imphal rushed to the meeting spot and caught them red-handed with snap. In this regard the observer sent a report to the EC. A case was also registered at Wangoi SDO office under vide No. 68/SDO/RO/95 on 3 February 1995. The 13 vehicles put the Congress-I candidate in trouble. But despite the filling of the report to the EC by the observer regarding the matter, it seemed that no action had been taken up against the candidate till today as the candidate concerned have been elected and have also been in office till date.<sup>30</sup>

As soon as the Election commission announced election for Manipur, the Government of Manipur had already banned the transfer and posting of all categories of government employees till the elections are over. However, as per newspaper report, there was transfer and posting orders by the State Government. For instance, on 21 January 1,995, reportedly four Chequers of Transport Department posted at Imphal, Thoubal, Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts have been given transfer order to Senapati district.<sup>31</sup> To quote an Editorial, “The Rishang Ministry . . . taking more interest in transfer and posting with backdate to avoid the wrath of Seshan.”<sup>32</sup> During the election, from one instance, the All India Radio, Imphal, seemed to have disseminated pro-governmental propaganda. While the JAC sponsored Transporters strike was going on, a public meeting held at MDU, Imphal on 28 January, supported to resume the strike and continue till a lasting solution be made

between the state government and the strikers. But the AIR, Imphal, in its Manipuri News Bulletin at 7.30 p.m. the same day evening, announced that people supported to end the strike.

Rule No. 2 of the General conduct of the Model Code of conduct reads, “Criticism of other political parties ... and candidates shall refrain from criticising of all aspects of private life, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties. Criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified allegations or an distortion shall be avoided.” However, the allegation of MPP levelled against the ruling Congress-I party over the gunning down of M. Deven Singh (MPP candidate in Lamsang constituency) and Sh. Modhumangol Sharma (BJP leader) on 11 February 1995 by unidentified gunmen, was a clear violation of the rule. The MPP accused the ruling Congress-I ministry of Rishang Keishing for violence in the state. The party alleged Congress-I hand in the assassination. On 12 February, the three leaders of MPP (Yaima, Ranbir, and Joy) told reporters that the killing of Deven was political assassination conspired with Congress-I in collusion with militants and Modhumangol’s death was politically masterminded. Ranbir said “The ongoing attack of Congress-I was to terrorise MPP candidates.” Joy considered it as Congress-I plan to demoralise MPP. They accused the Congress-I government for supporting violence by providing more licensed arms to congress-I candidates and threatening MPP candidates by Olive Green Clad gunmen. On 14 February, MPP President Yaima, in a Press Note, said, “the Congress-I must have believe in non-violence but the present Congress-I government in Manipur using violence is known to everyone. He added, ‘I am ready to face if (Chief Minister) Rishang Keishing wants to take legal action on this charge.’”<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, Rishang Keishing said “the state government condemns all acts of violence including the murder of the two political leaders.” Rishang said his Congress-I party would try to find out and punish the assassins. The allegation of “Yaima to ill-fame the non-violent Congress-I party by false propaganda is non-sense statement that cannot be believed by people. To get justice, legal actions would be initiated against the MPP President for spreading false propaganda against Congress-I. In this regard, on 15 February, General Secretary, MPCC-I reportedly lodged a complaint to, the CEC, Special Election Observer and Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur of the violation of the election codes by MPP. It asked the CEC to take action against MPP and its President.<sup>34</sup>

Besides, as per newspaper reports, widely prevalent charges/ complaints/ allegations from many candidates/parties were also noticed in a number of cases in connection with the breaches of law, violation of the election code/instruction by the candidates; misuse of official machineries by the ruling Congress-I party; the use of intimidations and coercion of voters by the powerful rival candidates; voters' bribing and purchase of votes with money; election rigging; booth capturing, and other forms of election abuses and malpractices. They lodged, to that effect, complaints to the Election Authorities/Officials concerned, to take up necessary actions against code violation and to disqualify the candidate concerned. They also demanded repoll in many polling centres.

To cite a few examples, the Election Commission announced election for Manipur on 10 January 1995 during office hours. The same day, the Rishang Keishing Ministry was expanded at 6.00 p.m. night by inducting 24 more new ministers. W. Kullabidhu Singh, President, Janata Dal, State Unit, criticised the expansion of ministry as 'injustice.' The MPP Working Committee appraised the

CEC that the ministry expansion after the announcement of election date for Manipur was in defiance with election code of conducts. The Committee asked the CEC to take up appropriate actions. It said that the illegal Rishang ministry was still continuing breaking the codes by making a number of transfer and posting orders; announcing DPC results on back-date; recruitment procedures of some employees, etc. The Manipur Pradesh BJP President and organisation in-charge of Northeast Hills States, P.B. Acharya, in a joint-memorandum to the CEC on 12 January, charged the ministry expansion as violation of the model code of conduct. They requested the CEC to treat the expansion of ministry as null and void as well as to dismiss the newly inducted ministers from their post.

On 20 February, Ngathingkhui Hungyo, the Samata Party Candidate in Phungyar (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency, lodged complaint to the Election Commission. He urged the CEC to take necessary proceedings against his rival Congress-I candidate Rishang Keishing for his gross violation of the model code of conduct during his election campaign and to disqualify him as a candidate. Hungyo said, in a public meeting on 24 January at Tangkhul Naga Long Pologround at Ukhrul, Rishang Keishing used loud speaker without permit from the competent authority, promised construction of Hydro-Electric Project at Maklang river with an estimated cost of Rs 8 crores, used government chairs and Karnats. He was caught red-handed by an election observer. In another public meeting held at Kasom Khullen, Lamalai Khullen, Bina, Thadong, Thawai etc., Rishang promised rice mills, construction of roads, upgradation of Riha UJB School, and repairing of Mawai Baptist Church. On 12 February Rishang organised community Feasts at Chadong Villages, Kasom Khullen and Nambashi Khullen in which he distributed Rs 800/- each to village headman and particular

amounts to village authority secretaries, leaders and others. Rishang also used more than 18 vehicles of security during the campaigning in his Phungyar constituency.<sup>35</sup>

L. Binjamin, Federal party candidates from Chandel (ST) Reserved constituency, in a press release on 18 February, stated that about 573 Naga voters were not allowed to cast their votes in two polling stations (41/35 Longja Primary School and 41/39 Padai Primary School) which lies in Kuki dominated areas. They were threatened to be killed if they enter the polling stations. Some of them also has kidnapped. He demanded repoll in his constituency as it violated section 58(6) and Section 38-A of the Representation of Peoples Acts 1951 amounting to booth capturing.

Both Jainson Haokip, the KNA candidate and the MPP candidate from Henglep (ST) Reserved Assembly constituency filed reports to the CEC stating that armed volunteers of their rival Janata Dal candidate Sehpu Haokip captured the ballots of five polling station (57/31 Molsang; 57/32 Nabil; 57/25 Chingphel, 57/41 Langjhang and 57/46 Bungbuh). In this connection, the KNA in a press release on 19 February demanded repoll in the constituency as the act violated section 58(b) and section 38-A of the Representation of Peoples Act 1951.

An Independent candidate, Solanki Chothe from Tengenoupal (ST) Reserved constituency demanded repoll in his constituency on the ground that many polling stations (No. 1, 6, 10, 13, 15, 25, 33, 36 to 47) were captured either by the MPP or the Congress-L Only one Polling Agent was available at each polling station. No one dared to report the Presiding Officer due to fear of armed militants.

K.L. Rockey, candidate of Samata Party from Chandel (ST) constituency lodged complaint to the District Returning Officer demanding repolling in the polling station of Toupokpi, (41/28); Chakpikarong (41/32); Tampi (41/30); Rungchang (41/33); Japhou Bazar (41/11); Japhou Bazar (41/12); Longja (41/35) and Paldai (41/39) on the ground that electors casted their votes at the threat of the barrel. His Agents and supporters were threatened with guns. His polling agents did not allowed to enter the polling stations.

In Kangpokpi Assembly constituency, Samata party candidate Kishwar Thapa lodged complaint to the CEC on 18 February. He stated that NSCN (GRPN) canvassed for his rival Congress-I candidates L.S. John. Nepalese were forced to signing an agreement assuring to give their vote to Congress-I. Thapa demanded repoll in six polling station (1,11, 17, 19, 25, 28).

In Chingai (ST) Reserved constituency the MHPC candidate V. Weapon Zimik said his rival Congress-I candidate M. Horam and the Congress-I government of Rishang Keishing have violated the election code of conduct. He said, they used government machineries, men and money, threatened voters. There was widespread rigging of booths in many polling stations. Ballot boxes were kept for hours together in the houses of Horam's workers and agents before reaching the counting centres. The election was not free and fair. So he challenged in the Gauhati High Court, Imphal Bench, demanding repoll.

In Langthabal constituency MPP candidate O. Joy Singh lodged complaint to CEC demanding repoll on the ground that Congress-I conducted widespread rigging violating the election codes. Even he challenged in the Gauhati High Court, Imphal Bench. The congress-S candidate Y. Kala Singh from Naoriya Pakhanglakpa constituency complained the CEO Manipur on 20 February to look

into the violation of election codes and other malpractices on polling day such as bribery of voters, display of symbols, flags and other means of propaganda by his rival candidates W. Angou Singh (Congress-I) A.K. Langam (Independent); A.K. Ibobi Singh (MPP) and Ch. Priyokumar Singh (Independent). His party Congress-(S) demanded the CEC for repolling in the constituency.

In a complaint to CEC on 17 February N. Binoy Singh Samata party Candidate of Thangmeiband constituency stated that civil dressed Manipur Police Commando Personnels campaigned for his rival Congress-I candidate, intimidated the non-Manipuri voters in Thangal Bazar under polling stations 9/27, 9/28, 9/29, 9/30, 9/31 and 9/32. He demanded immediate actions against it.

But one does not know to what extent these complaints and charges were related to violation of the particular instruction/code of the Election Commission. While it may be difficult to prove the truth or otherwise of these stray complaints according to the strict rules of evidence, the possibility of intimidation, coercion and undue influence; breaches of law; adoption of malpractice, code violation etc.; being exercised by the powerful and economically better off candidates and their parties over the weaker and poor parties/candidates cannot be altogether ruled out. As such, most of the complaints/charges/allegations lodged to Election authorities came mainly from the smaller and weaker party candidates against the powerful and strong party candidates. The researcher in his personal interview with the leaders of political parties was also informed that most of the contesting candidates and parties violated the code of conducts. Most of them were also in agreement that the ruling congress-I party misused official machinery for the furtherance of their party position in the election. However, neither the EC nor the Election officials, or Election Observers directed to look into the allegations and complains of booth capturing; election rigging, code violation etc. to have on the spot-study. No follow up steps and



appropriate actions were also yet taken up by the concerned authorities to that effect. It seemed that the Election observers vanished away from the scene as nobody got punished.

The real picture of the electioneering in the state witnessed that many contesting candidates and their parties indulged in various activities and thereby violating the code of conducts of elections and' misuse of official machineries by the ruling Congress-I Party either in one form or the other while trying to swing the votes in their favour. During the entire process of Assembly elections, outright and gross violations of model code of conducts by the powerful candidates in more particular was seen of which ample evidences were available with the people; election observers; election officials on duty and the contesting candidates and their parties.

The Researcher with his own naked eyes witnessed many candidates/parties destroying and spoiling the walls (of the houses) in many constituencies by pasting of their election posters, symbols, and writings. According to newspaper reports also, there was violation of model code of conduct in different parts of many Assembly constituencies in the state by the candidates of various political parties despite the presence of the election observers. The handbills, and graffiti were seen on the walls of Pan Shops, fencings, gates and other public places. Planting and erecting of small-sized flags were seen at tree tops, fencings, gates, on the telephone and electric posts, suspending of festoons across the roads, and lanes were found. However some of the candidates and parties lest of violating model code of conducts, reportedly started removing their flags, posters, festoon as soon as the election observers arrived at Imphal. Many (wall) posters were also torn off following the arrival of observers. As per newspaper reports, election observers while

visiting their respective Assembly constituencies under their jurisdiction about the nature of election campaign by candidates and parties, found party flags, posters, symbols etc., on telephone and electric posts, roads and public places which were forced to remove it out. Even then, dangling of festoons, posters, symbols and flags were seen still not removing in many places. Reportedly, voters were threatened, 'intimidated and forced to vote; booth capturing and rigging occurred more particularly in the hills.

The contesting candidates maintained register for election expenses to be produced before the District Election Officers (DEO) appointed by EC at any time whenever required to see the expenses/register. As far as paper work is concerned the account book was well maintained with the proper entry of expenses not crossing the upper limit of poll expenditure. But in real practice, it become a real fun considering the huge amount of money a candidate spent in the election. Almost all the prospective candidates shoot up their election expenses more than the maximum ceiling of Rs 50,000/-, and some of them even reaching the expenses beyond fifty lakhs of rupees. This is true for majority of the prospective candidates in the election fray.

Many candidates/parties printed their handbills and posters in large quantity but have numbered only 500-1000 on it to evade action from the Election Commission. Fear of the Election Observers, most of the vehicles of the candidates used in the election purpose were also without putting up any party flags. There were instances and eyewitnesses where vehicles and other means of transports were used in transporting voters upto the polling centres in their attempt to strangle the rival candidates campaign and to win the elections. Impersonation took place at polls though it occurs on a small scale but very high in the hills. Ministers used the vehicles allotted to them for the purpose of election campaigning. Most of the contesting

candidates resorted to, voter bribing. To quote an Editorial of an English Paper 'Freedom' ... who cares for the model code of conduct ? ...<sup>36</sup>

Such code of conduct is of little practical value because no party or even no candidate has observed them honestly at the crucial time in the election. The examples are before us. But the serious snag is that this code has no legal sanction and any party or candidate who deliberately intends to violate the code is not subject to any penal action. The EC as such not in a position to take steps against any state because of its dependence upon the state machinery in conducting the election.<sup>37</sup> Hence violation of codes. It cannot be prevented till the EC is lawfully empowered to take steps against code violation. It is generally accepted that in the absence of specific statutory sanctions, the code has proved fully ineffective in preventing the prohibiting activities.<sup>38</sup>

## References

1. See Election Commissions Letter No. 576/11/94/J.S.II, dated 30 December 1994.
2. See, FAX MESSAGE from the Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur, Date 17-5-94, to the Secretary, Election Commission of India.
3. Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur and Local Newspaper Reports.
4. A second Memorandum of Agreement on the Foreigners Issue (the First Agreement being signed in 1980) was signed between the Government of Manipur (Governor V.K. Nayar) and the All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) on the 9th of November 1994 at Raj Bhavan, Imphal, during the regime of President's Rule in order to defuse the Foreigner's- Agitations and to short out the acute problems of the Foreigners Issue in the State about the identification and repatriation of foreigners in Manipur and their great inhibition about the issue of the photo identity cards to voters for the forth coming sixth Assembly polls in Manipur as well as to remove the foreigner's from the voters list, (see also *The Freedom English Daily*, Imphal, 4 January 1995). The political parties however, gave no efforts to materialise the Memorandum of Agreement as they did not like to delay the entire electoral process. Otherwise, the inherent technical difficulties in sorting out the foreigner's issue/problems in the state would have slowed down the electoral process to some extent particularly the issuance of photo identity cards to the electors. Instead the political parties and their leaders were giving their fullest co-operation and help to the state government to complete the task of photo-identity cards to voters just to fulfil the conditions of the Election Commission. (See also *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 26 January 1995).
5. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 14 February 1995 and see also, Eastern Panorama, Shillong , January 1995, p. 15.
6. See, Election Commission of India's Letter No. 576/11/94/J.S. 11/ Dated 6 February 1995.
7. Source: State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.
8. N.K. Chowdhry, *Assembly Elections 1993*, Shipra Publications, Delhi, First Published, 1994, p. 129.
9. L.P. Singh, *Electoral Reforms : Problems and Suggested Solution*, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, First Published, 1986, p. 76.
10. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 4 February 1995.

11. The Researcher's interview with Kh. Angangjao Singh. He was the Chairman, Parliamentary Board, Manipur State Unit Samata Party.
12. *Manipur Mail*, English Daily, Imphal, 15 January 1995.
13. V.M. Sirsikar, *Sovereigns without Crowns*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, First Published, 1973, p. 20.
14. Researcher's interview with T. Gunadhwaja Singh, Spokesman of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee-I.
15. See, n. 13., p. 100.
16. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 22 January 1995.
17. J.A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, London, 1961, p. 279.
18. See, n. 13, p. 131.
19. *Imphal Recorder*, English Daily, Imphal, 22 January and see, n., 16.
20. *Poknapham*, Manipuri Daily, Imphal, 17 January 1995.
21. *Nongallakpa*, Manipuri Daily, Imphal, 19 January 1995.
22. *Rajniti*, Manipuri Daily, Imphal, 3 February 1995.
23. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 24 January 1995.
24. See, n., 22.
25. *Poknapham*, Manipuri Daily, Imphal, 14 January 1995.
26. See, Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates issued by the Election Commission of India. See also n.,9, p.46 and N.S. Gehlot *Elections and Electoral Administration in India*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 163.
27. See, Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates issued by the Election Commission of India and N.K. Chowdhry *Assembly Elections : 1994-95, An Analysis and Results*, Shipra Publications, Delhi, first Published, 1995.

28. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, January 1995.
29. Source : The State Election Office, Lamphel, Imphal Manipur.
30. See, n., 10.
31. *The Kholloao*, Manipuri Daily, Imphal, 2 February 1995.
32. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 25 January 1-1995.
33. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 12,13,14,15,16 February 1995.
34. *Ibid.*
35. See, n., 32 and-21 February 1995.
36. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 13 February 1995.
37. The Editorial *Poll Time Transfers*, *The Hindustan Times*, March 26,1991 as quoted in N.S. Gehlot, *Elections and Electoral Administration in India*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 309.
38. N.S. Gehlot *Elections and Electoral Administration in India* Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 106,161,166.



## **CHAPTER – III**

*Analysis of Election Issues, Electoral  
Strategies and party-wise manifestos*

### **CHAPTER-III**

#### **ANALYSIS OF ELECTION ISSUES, ELECTORAL STRATEGIES AND PARTY-WISE MANIFESTOES**

The hatching of burning election issues and its manifestations on the eve of and during the elections have been a common practice by the contesting political parties. If successful in their play, it is on the basis of these issues that political party or parties ride on the crest of power. It is a general phenomenon also that in the parliamentary elections, important national issues are always conspicuous in play while local issues are in play for priority in the Assembly elections. L.P. Singh observes that, “While elections to the Lok Sabha ought to be fought on national issues which fall within the functions and responsibilities of the Union, elections to a State Assembly should be contested mainly on issues which are primarily of interest to the particular state at the particular time”.<sup>1</sup>

According to V.M. Sirsikar, “A party is known by the slogans it coins. The political slogans represent the effort of the leaders to popularise their policies by simplifying and dramatising the issues. This effort becomes all the more necessary at the time of elections. An average voter might not be interested in the intricate statistics and sophisticated arguments for a policy of a party. What he needs most is a catchy slogan. He could place his faith in the party by its slogans. Slogans could be looked at from the point of view of political socialisation of masses. An easy way to carry ideas to the millions, could be to sloganize the main policies of a party. In a predominantly literate society slogans could be a very convenient channel of communications of political ideas”. Emphasising the importance of slogans, he said “slogans properly coined and cleverly circulated could contribute



to build the party-image .... Earcatching slogans might bring in more dividends in terms of votes and financial support than scholarly manifestos and boring perorations”.<sup>3</sup> Stressing upon the inclination of voters towards issue-based politics, C.P. Bhambhri, stated, “it is a reflection on the maturity of the Indian voter that he is involved in issue-based politics and he is expected to vote for or against a party on the basis of issues raised by a party. Hence many factors operate during the elections but the importance of issues and party manifestoes and promises should never be underestimated. For instance, Mrs. Indira Gandhi contested the Lok Sabha elections of 1971 on the slogan of ‘Garibi Hatao’ and the voters elected the Congress (R) against other political parties. The voters’ verdict was definitely conditioned by the promises made by Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the elections of 1971. It has happened quite frequently and it will be absolutely wrong to ignore the manifestoes and the promises and slogans of political parties during the elections . . . . The 10<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections of 1991 were fought by the Congress Party with the slogan of economic development and national unity, the Janata Dal fought the election on the basis of Mandal Commission for reservation in the Public Services and the BJP contested the elections with a promise to construct Ram Temple at Ayodhya”.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, the importance of a sound electoral strategy in an election cannot be minimised and also ignored. The use of various electoral strategies during the elections by the contesting candidates as well as the political parties to win the electoral battle is a must. Strategies are also quite different from party to party and candidate to candidate depending upon the location, situation, degree of consciousness and awareness of the voters, level of party competition etc. The employment of strategies in the election begins with the start of the formal

electoral process till the end of the polling, sometimes continuing upto the period of government formations. Apart from others, alliance system, factional politics and its interplay, harping on sensitive issues and propagandas etc.. had been the effective strategies mainly adopted in an election. Besides, various other electoral strategies such as money power,, muscle power, factors of religion, caste/class, communalism etc., also were used to get the power. In brief, in an election, the contesting candidates and their parties adopted multi-pronged electoral strategies -both fair and foul means.

During the electioneering process, the candidates and the political parties paid special emphasis on local issues and problems rather than national ones. The election issues in general, were associated with the role of the centre and its negligence toward Manipur; South Nagaland; UNIC-Congress Agreement of August 1972; Mao Gate; Communalism and ethnic clashes. Others included in the list were unemployment problems, corruption; control of price-hike: political stability; water supply scheme and drinking water; agriculture, industry; better economy for, the masses; developmental programmes in the state: improvement in the standard of living and economic conditions of the poor, poverty elimination; real power to the people through local-self government; demand to increase the number of Lok Sabha MPs from two to three; removal of Assam Rifles from the sacred place of Manipur 'Kangla' etc. Since Manipur have been an insurgency-proved state for the last many years, the contesting parties/ candidates also gave importance to insurgency problems; maintaining law and order situation; violation of human rights by security and armed forces; suffering of the people due to tortures meted out by the Army, para-military forces, state armed forces and removal of the Armed forces Special Power Act and other black laws enforcing in

Manipur. The parties/candidates mentioned these issues in their election speeches frequently. These issues and problems were also reflected in almost all the party manifestoes.

The Assembly election scene in February 1995 was vastly different from that in the previous elections. Apart from other election issues that came up, on the eve of the holding of the February 1995 Assembly elections, two important issues came up that became a major electoral issue at the cost of nearly ethnic clashes between the Meiteis (majority community of the state's population) and Manipuri (Tangkhu) Nagas. Both were Naga-related issues.

The demand of the Naga tribes in the state to dismember the state of Manipur reached its peak when it was transformed into an election issue that endangered the communal harmony in the state. The result was that, for the first time, the seeds of communal politics were sown in this tiny state.

For the first time, ethnicity/ethnic issues mainly between the Manipuri Nagas and the Meiteis on the question of protecting the unity and the territorial integrity of Manipur at all cost, involved in the politics of Manipur, when the boundary/territorial dispute between Nagaland and Manipur became a major electoral issue in this February 1995 Assembly election. This issue on territorial integrity of Manipur state became a very important agenda of the contesting parties during the elections.

In September 1994, Vamuzo, the opposition leader of Nagaland moved a Private Member Resolution Bill for Naga integration. On 19 September 1994, the Nagaland Legislative Assembly passed a resolution to that effect to incorporate

into Nagaland the adjoining Naga inhabited areas and thereby keeping the amalgamated areas under one “Administrative Unit.”<sup>5</sup>

Manipur felt threatened to its territorial integrity by this Nagaland resolution. Because, the resolution moved by, the Opposition was supported by the Congress Party in Nagaland Assembly. And out of the five hills districts in Manipur, two districts (Ukhrul and Tamenglong) are totally Naga-dominated. Two others (Chandel and Senapati) are districts with large Naga population, while Ukhrul and Senapati districts are adjoining to the Nagaland state. At the same time, the NSCN, since a long time back, has been demanding for an independent state for the Nagas which affects the northern territories particularly the four hills districts of Manipur. Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong, and Chandel (as they have been trying to integrate the adjoining Naga-inhabited areas into the present state of Nagaland). The integration of these territories/districts, on the other hand, into the present state of Nagaland under the call for a “Greater Nagaland” or “Southern Nagaland” has been a long demand for the Manipuri Nagas (which has been supported by the Chief Minister of Manipur Rishang Keishing, who is a Congress-I and himself a Tangkhul Naga. He has done many things too for the cause of the Nagas).

The important issue of the formation of South Nagaland; the demand for its formation by carving out the four hilly districts from Manipur - Chandel, Ukhrul, Senapati and Tamenglong and the Resolution passed to that effect, invoked the wrath of the Meiteis in particular. As such the call for ‘South Nagaland/Greater Nagaland’ became the most vexed issue in the state. The Meitei political heavyweights along with Students Community - the AMSU came out together singularly and in return condemned the Nagaland Assembly resolution on Naga integration. The objection of the Meiteis to these moves was guided more by their

desire to keep intact the territorial integrity of the state as well as the long tradition of shared history and belonging they have with their brothers in the hill than by any other considerations.<sup>6</sup> The people inhabiting the Manipur Valley (Meiteis) have always favoured political integration of the state.

The Manipur Peoples Party (MPP), the only largest and the most powerful regional political party in the state harped upon the sentiment of Manipur's unity and integrity by picking up the Nagaland Assembly Resolution as well as reviving the agreement concluded between the United Naga Integration council (UNIC) and the Congress when the former was merged with the later in August 1972, in order to pillory and embarrass the Congress Party in the election. There had been charges in various circle that the MPP in its attempt to fight the Congress-I has used the issue of South Nagaland and UNIC - Congress Agreement. Though the Naga Integration Council and its demand have been considered dead and non-existent by any sensible man, the opposition parties, particularly the MPP were making the issue alive in order to work up to suit in their campaign. For they knew that keeping the issue afresh would work against the Congress forces, a cheap political game. The MPP, with sensitive slogans advocated both the issues in their election campaigns, mobilised the voters by circulating the extract Xeroxed copies of the Merger Agreement Context of Annexure-8 made between the UNIC and the Congress with a proposed Map (though the proposed Map was not mentioned in the Agreement) showing the Naga inhabited areas/territories of the adjoining state (Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh) of Nagaland to be disintegrated and amalgamated into the demand for Greater Nagaland in which the Congress stand was not to oppose the call for a "Greater Nagaland." Though for electoral gains, the territorial issue while aligning with the electoral campaigning was at the cost of

ethnic clashes/communal clashes near to break out in a high magnitude between the Manipuri Nagas and the Meiteis.

The MPP was particularly opposed to Rishang Keishing becoming the Chief Minister because they considered him to be a supporter of demand for “Greater Nagaland.” The opposition campaign was that the Chief Minister of Manipur Rishang Keishing, who is himself a Tangkhul Naga from Ukhrul district, had hatched a conspiracy to dismember the state. Rishang Keishing had been the Chairman of the UNIC when it was merged with the Congress Party in August 1972. The merger agreement had stipulated that the Congress would not oppose the call for the creation of “Greater Nagaland or Southern Nagaland.” The political stand of the Joint Agreement for the merger of the UNIC with the All India Congress Party was that “It is agreed upon that the Congress Party does not oppose Naga Integration movement and does not consider Naga Integration movement as anti-party, anti-national, anti-state, and unconstitutional activity.” And “further it is agreed upon that no Congress Party member will be subjected to disciplinary action on the ground that he or she as the case may be is involved in the Naga Integration movement.” “it is also agreed upon that the Naga Integration problem should be discussed and settled at the Government level. The party members can also discuss the matter at different party level.”<sup>7</sup> The opposition revived this ghost from the past to embarrass the Chief Minister Rishang Keishing.

On 20 December 1994, the MPP with its like-minded political parties organised a massive public meeting as “Save Territorial Integrity Day”<sup>\*</sup> in protest against the agreement made on 8 August 1972 between the UNIC and the Congress Party. The political parties unitedly raised their voice against the agreement demanding to destroy it to uphold the integrity of Manipur. In the

meeting, a number of political personalities such as C. Doungel (Kuki leader); O. Joy Singh;<sup>8</sup> Ng. Kumarjit Singh; Ph. Parijat Singh; S. Ibohal Singh and Shri Jibon Singh (MLAs) spoke and raised their voice against the Agreement. They called those who signed the agreement - Shilbhadra Raji (Secretary' of AICC); Hawaibam Nilamani Singh (representative of MPCC) and Rishang Keishing who represented UNIC as enemies of the state as they tried to disintegrate Manipur. The meeting also resolved that Rishang Keishing could not be the Chief Minister of Manipur as he was the enemy of the state. They considered the Congress stand in the Agreement as an attempt of the Congress Party' to give out Manipur's land around 16 sq.kms. out of the entire territory of 22,327 sq. kms. to Nagaland keeping the people of the state under dark. Such cheat of the Congress Party was condemned by the meeting. In other words, the Congress Party in the Agreement says that the demand of the UNIC to unite all the Naga inhabited areas in the North-East Region of India into a single administrative unit to form a Greater Nagaland which includes around 16 sq. kms. of Manipuri's territory is neither anti-party, anti-national, anti-state, nor against the constitution of the country.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the Congress Party' could not come out immediately with a befitting and convincing reply to counteract the issue. The party was in dilemma for some time in making a firm reply as to why it opposed South Nagaland policy as the minds of the valley population in particular had been bedevilled by the sensitive slogans of the issue.

Since the election dates had been announced and was approaching nearer and nearer, there had been increasing propaganda allegedly created by the rival opposition parties that the Congress-I was responsible for all the issues like South Nagaland which aims at disintegrating Manipur. And this created a wave in the

state against the Congress-I Party. Seemingly panicked at the attempts made by its rival parties to distance voters from it by wielding the Manipur Unity cards, the Congress-I, on 3 February 1995 evening in its best efforts to counter the opposition attack, distributed a party leaflet. The Congress-I faced the challenges which might cost its seats in the Assembly by digging out history. It vehemently denied the Congress-I playing any role in trying to hijack the territorial integrity of Manipur. It stated the party is all ready to shed every drop of blood to protect the integrity and unity of Manipur. In the leaflet, there is a long narrative history about the events that happened 25 years back. It says “the Congress-I never supports the South Nagaland, Kuki Homeland, Zeiiangrong Homeland issues which can destroy Manipur”. The much publicised UNIC-Congress-I Agreement of 1972 was called an agreement between the parties to the effect that they were merged. “It has nothing to do with South Nagaland”, it claimed. The Congress-I strongly attacked the parties which were renovating past events after distorting it, to use as election gimmicks. It said that it took this sort of wooing voters a challenge to the entire state.<sup>10</sup>

On the part of the Congress as well as on his part, the Chief Minister, Rishang Keishing, who himself is a Tangkhul Naga, defended and explained by condemning the Nagaland Assembly Resolution. But he had no explanation as to why the Nagaland PCC endorsed the resolution moved by the opposition. Rishang said that his government would take legal actions and would also punish if one is found publishing (reproduction) the content of the most controversial banned booklet “Why Not South Nagaland”. The book was banned by the Manipur Government on 21 April, 1989, under Order Vide No. 2/8(39)/88-H. Rishang Keishing expressed unhappiness over the misunderstanding created between the



people of hills and valley because of South Nagaiaand issue. He also affirmed that there is no demand of South Nagaiaand.<sup>11</sup>

Rishang Keishing, Chief Minister, was very much upset by the distribution of leaflets containing the text of Congress-UNIC Agreement of August 1972. He expressed it as a dangerous sign of spreading communal tension in the state. Rishang felt unfortunate about the communal tension created on the line of South Nagaiaand between the hills and the plains people. He expressed the involvement of a Regional Party (MPP) and a National Party (CPI) in the distribution of leaflets. He said that there is no need to bring out the old issues, again and again to get some narrow political gains. He emphasised the need for maintaining communal harmony in the state. Rishang said that “UNIC has been dissolved after merging into Congress in 1972 and there are no activities of the UNIC in the last 23 years. Nagas of Manipur never wanted South Nagaiaand nor want to integrate with Nagaiaand. We had lived together in the past and we are living together. There is no proposal of the Manipur Nagas of around 3 lakhs to integrate into Nagaiaand. It is unfounded. No Kuki or Naga will try to break the state. No community can demand its own homeland. It will be by those persons who are distributing the pamphlets.” He said to be careful of such groups distributing a Map of South Nagaiaand by creating communal clash and to disintegrate Manipur. Rishang disowned South Nagaiaand, He stated that they want to fish in trouble water. He assured that Congress-I would work for unity of Manipur. But the best person who could answer regarding the UNIC-Congress Agreement was R.K. Ranbir Singh who was the General Secretary of MPCC that time, he added.

The former Chief Minister, R.K. Ranbir Singh (now leader of the MPP) was the General Secretary of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee when the merger

agreement between the AICC and the UNIC was signed. R.K. Ranbir Singh, however, defended himself by saying that he was in the Congress no doubt but he did not sign the Agreement. In a press conference on 2 February 1995, Ranbir clarified that even though he was the General Secretary of the MPCC(I) when the UNIC-Congress agreement was signed on 8 August 1972, he was not a signatory' to it. He added the UNIC-Congress agreement was signed with conspiracy at Delhi by President H. Nilamani Singh without consulting and informing the PCC members. Later, Party High Command imposed PCC members to recommend it. As per party directives, PCC meeting was summoned. In the meeting, he (Ranbir) objected the agreement. He also ridiculed a leaflet scattered in his Assembly Constituency by his rival Congress-I candidate claiming him (Ranbir) being one in the Agreement.<sup>12</sup>

While talking to some correspondents of national papers (8 February) Chief Minister Rishang Keishing said that the crisis of UNIC and South Nagaland is basically confined in Imphal proper. The Deputy Chief Minister, Th. Chaoba Singh said the issue of South Nagaland does not have any impact in rural pockets. Rishang Keishing charged that during R.K. Ranbir's time as Chief Minister, the Kuki leaders have let the Kuki militants armed and that became the major point of starting the Naga-Kuki conflict. Rishang added, Kuki leaders first were with R.K. Ranbir Singh and then came to Congress-I. When Ranbir became the Chief Minister, they (Kukis) shifted their loyalty to Ranbir again. Now, after they (Kuki leaders) have joined the MPP, the tension between Meiteis and Nagas have been created"; said Rishang. Chief Minister Rishang Keishing referred particularly to C. Dounghel as one of the Kuki leaders who has played such games.

MPCC(I) President Radhabinod Koijam told pressmen that some leaders of various political parties in the Manipur valley, by taking political advantage try to kill some important leaders of the Congress-I party by spreading false propaganda

and rumours to the people that may disintegrate Manipur. He said it is unfortunate. He added, in trying to take political advantage by spreading false news, instead it has pegged in between the age-old good relations between the hills and plains. He further added, there is suspicions of emerging as a big issue in reverse of the attempt to kill Congress-I leaders by leaders of some political parties. In order to protect integrity of Manipur and maintain love among the people an Agreement was signed in August 1972 between the UNIC and MPCC(I), said Radhabinod. H. Nilamani Singh and R.K. Ranbir Singh were the then President and General Secretary of the MPCC(I) at the time of signing the agreement. The main purpose of the agreement was to merge the UNIC into the Congress party fold. In the agreement there is no mention about giving even an inch of Manipur territory to Nagaland. The map shown to the people by the political leaders indicating the Naga territories to be merged to Nagaland is unofficial and manipulated Map by these parties. The map is used by the NSCN as their secrecy. He said it is not nice to criticise the Congress-I party again by a person like R.K. Ranbir Singh who was also a signatory in the agreement. To practise/play politics on the basis of an agreement of 23/24 years over by .now is wrong. That will not bring prosperity for the society. His party Congress-I assured political stability in Manipur. On the party's election manifesto releasing function, Radhabinod said, the opportunist politicians try to illfame Congress-I and the Rishang ministry.

During the election, Manipur went under severe transporters' strike. It may be remembered that politically the entire state was in turmoil due to acute power struggle between the ruling Congress-I and the MPP-led non-Congress opposition parties after the' induction of a popular ministry of Rishang Keishing on 13 December, 1994 by revoking the almost one-year old President's Rule in the state.

The psychological warfare between the two became more intensified as the sixth Assembly elections was knocking at the door. The strike was coincided with the opposition parties' effort to pull down Rishang Ministry. It was also a part of their electoral campaign for the sixth Assembly polls to defeat Congress-I party.

It was against this background that the Transporters' strike brew up. In retaliation, the transporters in Manipur in an organised way boycotted the National Highway No. 39 (Imphal-Dimapur Road) and No. 53 (Imphal-Jiribam Road) for 42 days long with effect from 31 December 1994 to 9 February 1995, protesting against the illegal imposition and collection of heavy "vehicles and goods taxes" on the vehicles plying along these two National Highways by the outlawed NSCN(IM) faction.<sup>13</sup> On the part of the NSCN, however, they denied collection of taxes from the vehicles on National Highways. The transport strike was spearheaded by the Join-Action-Committee (JAC) on Transport and Carrier Services, Manipur. It has been the first organised protest against the NSCN. During the course of the strike, all commercial vehicles, trucks, oil tankers including the tourist buses completely stayed off the National Highways. Almost all the valley based organisations, youth clubs, students associations; transport associations; oil depots/dealers; some political parties strongly supported it. Manipur was totally cut off from the rest of the country following the transporters' agitation. The entire system of the state/ Government of Manipur was threatened, paralysed and came to a grinding halt. The JAC strike hit all. Supply of all essential items in the state stopped and dislocated completely. As the supply of essential items came to a screeching halt, it followed increased scarcity and price-hike of essential food items (despite state government's elaborate arrangements/ measures to make available essential items/commodities in the market). Both the

hills and plains people suffered badly untold miseries due to non-availability of essential commodities. The strike badly affected the common people mainly. Even the state transport services affected due to non-availability of high speed diesel. Manipur was on the throes of starvation when all stocks of essential commodities were running out fast. Taking the advantage, traders/hoarders hiked prices of all essential items of commodities beyond common man's reach. Artificial scarcity and unchecked price-hike of essential commodities hit the state making life miserable.

The main grievances of the JAC was that they could no longer bear the heavy burden of taxation by the NSCN on their vehicles and the goods they ferry into Manipur from the rest of the country. So, the JAC demanded apart from others, to provide adequate security measures (full army protection) to the vehicles plying along the two National Highways to stop immediately the forcibly imposition and collection of huge illegal taxes by NSCN(IM) and tripartite talks involving Manipur, Nagaland and Central Government in any negotiation with the JAC on the matter as it involved another state Nagaland. Involvement of Nagaland and Central Government was very much necessary as the transporters were also facing a lot of problems in Nagaland sector.

JAC mobilised and placed the issue before the public and drew their attention. It also appealed the people to challenge the threat on Manipur's life line, to take up suitable actions to enable the vehicles to ply and the National Highways completely secured from the hands of the Naga insurgents.

Soon the territorial dispute/issue between Manipur and Nagaland was further deepened by the JAC strike. For the strike was the outcome of the

collection of taxes by NSCN for the cause of their demand for a “Sovereign Nagaland” affecting mainly the northern territories of Manipur. The strike polarised on ethnic lines between the Meiteis and the Nagas on the question of protecting territorial integrity of the state since the NSCN challenged the unity and integrity of the state. So the people supported JAC stand despite hardships being faced by them. When these two issues, which were unprecedented, became politicised, it transformed into the magnitude of becoming a communal clash between the two ethnic groups.

In the beginning, as usual, people paid scant attention. But later on it began to have larger dimension and ethnic overtones/implications as the JAC strike had the hand of some powerful opposition political parties in the state - the MPP and the CPI. While the stomachs of the people were burning, political parties tried to make their electoral gains out of the issue by embarrassing the Congress-I ministry of Rishang Keishing.

Soon the strike was followed by people’s movement, particularly the Meiteis, precipitating ethnic overtones. For the NSCN(IM) faction is dominated by the Tangkhul Nagas in Manipur aspiring to integrate into Nagaland. People criticised the NSCN’s policy of collecting huge taxes from the vehicles on National Highways. Various organisations supporting the JAC strike said that “even a piece of Manipur territory cannot be formed as ‘South Nagaland’. The collection of taxes from the vehicles plying on National Highways is an open challenge to the people of Manipur.” Intensifying the movement, all commercial vehicles stayed off the inter-district roads indefinitely (with effect from 1 February) particularly from Imphal to Ukhrul (excluding Imphal - Yaingangpokpi) - a move to give a harsh blow to the Tangkhul Nagas in Ukhrul district. Things were likely to become explosive at any movement leading to near communal clash between the Meiteis and Manipuri Nagas.

On the other hand, the opposition parties alleged that Chief Minister Rishang Keishing was fiddling while people's stomachs burnt. "The government is doing precious little to bring an amicable solution to the problem", they charged. In a press conference on 24 January at MPP office, the Party President, Y. Yaima Singh said that "MPP fully supported the JAC strike. The artificial scarcity of essential commodities in the state is created by Congress-I government. Rishang is fully responsible for the present outcome. His ministry makes trouble to the people. Following the strike, people suffered badly. Rishang should settle the matter along with his Nagaland counterpart. The government should own any responsibility coming out of this strike". R.K. Ranbir, the MPP leader, on 2 February said newsmen that "The strike is caused by the mismanagement of Rishang Keishing. The Chief Minister has virtually surrendered to the might of the hills underground outfits. Rishang ministry has done nothing to solve the crisis that caused the people suffer due to non-availability and price-hike of essential commodities. The Congress-I led ministry should resign immediately.<sup>14</sup> Indrajit Gupta. General Secretary of CPI charged the Congress-I for keeping silent too long on the truckers' strike,<sup>15</sup>\*1 The BJP, Manipur Pradesh, in a press release on 4 February, condemned both the State and Central Governments for neglecting the JAC transporters strike. It said the Centre was reluctant to solve the JAC crisis.<sup>16</sup> Almost all the non-Congress-I parties made a big issue out of the truckers' strike.

The ruling Congress-I, however, blamed the CPI and the MPP for the Transporters strike. The MPCC-I Chief Radhabinod Koijam said "The opposition parties are behind this strike and trying to prolong it".<sup>17</sup> Chief Minister Rishang Keishing alleged that MPP along with other anti-Congress parties colluded with JAC and made the artificial price hike. He blamed the JAC for falling prey to the political moves of certain political parties. But the JAC denied the charges.

However, the strike was called off on 9 February, only a week ahead of the polling schedule. An agreement was signed on 10 February with the arrival of Rajesh Pilot, Union Minister of State for Internal Security. The government assured, apart from others, to provide security to vehicles on NH-39 (Imphal-Dimapur) and formation of an intensive Highway patrolling on both the National Highways. On 13 February, 50 vehicles were flagged off from Imphal with escorts. People of the state heaved a sigh of relief. Addressing to a Press Conference, Pilot said the agreement was not a part of Congress-I's election game plan. Suffering of the people is more important than the election.<sup>18</sup>

Despite its' various implications, the vehicle strike had serious impact on the election - particularly the ruling Congress-I party. Because Chief Minister Rishang Keishing is a Tangkhul Naga, who had been accused by the Governor of Manipur, Lt. General V.K. Nayar (Retd) of having nexus with the NSCN (IM) faction. "Precipitating the Naga-Kuki conflict" and "aiding and abetting the NSCN (IM) and subverting the government machinery and police". An earlier Governor, Gen. K. V. Krishna Rao, Retired Chief of Army Staff, had also indicated Keishing for his links with the NSCN".<sup>19</sup> It also influenced the election as the Congress-I government of Rishang Keishing could not manage to deal with the hardships and myriad problems, of the people. The two issues greatly swayed the electorates particularly in the valley and the hills areas where there was Kuki domination.

### **Party-wise Election Manifestoes**

For the sixth Assembly elections, altogether fourteen political parties (recognised and unrecognised) were in the election fray. Of these seven were national parties while the rest belonged to local parties.



Like in the previous Assembly elections, there was a rush of election manifestoes in this sixth Assembly polls too. All the contesting parties, irrespective of local or national parties in the election fray, released their striking and enchanting election manifestoes so as to bewitch the electorates and in order to capture maximum votes through various promises. Election manifestoes issued by the political parties, apart from giving a profile of ideological stance and a social world view, focused on basic local issues and problems; appealed the electorates from different angles and adopted divergent approaches to solve these manifold issues/problems that help in understanding the mind of the parties. It also held out a practical perspective of programmes and actions that will be done/implemented if the party comes to power. As such, “Manifestoes of parties in an election provide both the basic policies and programmes and the issues involved in a particular election”.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, “Every party manifesto projects its goals and offers a critique of the opposition party. The voters will have to decide for or against the agenda of policies laid down by these rivalling parties”.<sup>21</sup> And “it is assumed that the voters’ choice for a particular party is determined and conditioned by the promises of a party during the elections”. But ‘An obvious limitation of this exercise is that the printed word can only reach the literate population which accounts for less than half the total electorate’.

According to R.N. Prasad, “Manifestoes issued on the eve of election, however, may not disclose the real intentions and bonafides of the parties. Declarations and professions put in manifestoes are usually expressed or rather dressed up in a sublimated form which covers up the reality. It is an exercise in draftsmanship for voters consumption. Manifesto making and designing and its wide publicity which is, no doubt, a vote-catching device, have also an educative

value. However, the study of the manifestoes of the parties provides a clue to the understanding of the election situation and the strategy and tactics of the parties”.<sup>24</sup> And it also makes people understand in what way the electorates behave and react in response to the issues and problems raised by parties. R.P. Singh said “The study of manifesto is a key to an understanding of the various problems, mainly of developmental nature, and the ways and means of finding a rational solution of them as viewed by different parties”.<sup>25</sup> Hence party manifestoes and promises of parties should be taken seriously and they should not be rejected cynically. Parties differentiate themselves from one another and the voters also vote for different parties. One method adopted by the parties to differentiate themselves from each other is to project alternative programme agenda, and manifesto during the election”.<sup>26</sup>

The following are the respective election manifestoes released by the contesting political parties during the sixth State Assembly elections in Manipur held in February 1995.

### **Indian National Congress-I (INC-I)**

The Congress-I party keeps the stand to perform/execute/implement the following points/promises if the party gets absolute majority to run/form the government in the ensuing Assembly elections of Manipur to be held on 16 and 19 February, 1995.

1. So long as the Congress Party is in Manipur, not an inch, of land of Manipur will be given out to other states. Territorial integrity of the state will be protected.

a] The resolution taken by the Nagaland Assembly to unite all the contiguous Naga inhabited areas in North-Eastern states (including Myanmar) under one ‘Administrative Unit’ will not be entertained.

b] The Congress Party strongly opposes to any kind of homeland demand such as “Southern Nagaland, Kuki Homeland, Zomi Homeland, Zeliangrong Homeland, etc.” which will affect the integrity of Manipur. Even a piece/ an inch of land will be protected/saved.

2. To set up/form a corruptionless, steady and stable government in Manipur.
3. To promote Manipuri Language (which has been included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution) which is a scheduled language and to demand to include the language on Currency Notes.
4. We will protect our identity.

Manipur is a small state with less population. The culture and tradition of different communities, religions and colours of this state are quite distinct. Art and culture of this land is rather distinct in the world. There is a fearness of loss of the art and culture of the state if we mingle with other big and highly populated states in India. The protection of our identity relates to the preservation of our culture. The party will demand/pressurise to legislate laws to give special protection to Manipur by amending the constitution of India.

5. The hills situated in the plain areas will be included in the districts of the valley.
6. Imphal District will be divided/bifurcated into two districts.
7. Shifting of Assam Rifles from Kangla be completed.
8. Loktak project will be the property of Manipur.
9. Loktak Down-Stream will be taken up.
10. Well-equipped modern stadiums will be constructed within a short time on war footing.
11. Good players will be nurtured properly.
12. Job reservation be made for outstanding players.
13. The insurgency problem in Manipur should not be considered as an issue of the state only. The party will try to bring a permanent solution by arranging talks at the national level with the government of India.
14. The party will try to solve/end the communal clash.
15. Unemployment problem will be considered/solved

- a] Priority to provide a job in a family whose members are not employed.
  - b] The target to employ 10,000 unemployed youths in a year.
  - c] Self-employment schemes by providing loans/financial assistance to the unemployed youths.
  - d] When the Indo-Myanmar Free Trade Agreement becomes effective the desires of the youths be reflected/incorporated.
  - e] Though the state develops in games and sports, due to lack of infrastructure it was unable to organise National Games. The party will try to organise it.
16. To take interest in leading the students community in the right direction.
- a] To make up infrastructure for the school, college, University and other academic institutions.
  - b] Ways and means be provided to ascertain the requirements.
  - c] To maintain peaceful academic atmosphere for the students.
  - d] To encourage higher studies.
  - e] Essential/necessary items/materials of the students will be made available.
  - f] As a regard shown to the students unions in Manipur, due share will be given to them, in the government of the state from time to time and they will be provided "Office Room" in the Manipur Bhawan/House outside the state.
17. Construction of building"<sup>1</sup> and repairing work for schools or colleges (in the areas where there are no such buildings) will be advanced.
18. To raise/improve the standard of education, necessary steps will be taken up.
19. To increase the autonomy of the Manipur University more huge financial assistance will be provided by the Manipur government to M.U. to increase its autonomy.
20. Communication and irrigation system will be improved and seeds of improved variety will be made available for good harvest.

21. Fertilizers for agricultural will be supplied at subsidised rate.
22. Anomalies in the pay-revision of the employees will be corrected without any delay and their benefit will be increased.
23. To take more interest in setting up industries.
24. Beside making the survival of the handloom and handicrafts of Manipur, the products will be taken to the International market to make it a big source of income.
25. Steps will be taken up to make tourism a big industry.
26. The plantation of tea, coffee, cashew nut, rubber will be advanced to raise income and make profitable.
27. Besides preserving cultural heritage of Manipur, the party will try to promote it.
28. Manipur will be made a state where electricity and drinking water are available in all towns, villages and other places of hilly areas (in trying to provide water/electricity to all towns, villages and other hills areas).
29. To provide enough financial assistance/help to the Municipal and Town Committees and to develop towns/cities with modern facilities.
30. To take interest in the development of villages.
31. To hold elections to Zila Parishad and Nagar Palika within 6 months.
32. To take interest in the developmental programmes of the backward areas.
33. To introduce sixth schedule in the hill areas.
34. To provide financial assistance to renovate the Loktak affected areas.
35. To check flood, measures will be taken to improve the banks of the rivers and their sources.
36. To increase facilities for specialised medical treatment in Manipur particularly in the- District Hospitals in order to avoid excess expenditure and inconveniences being faced by the poors in going for treatment outside the state.
37. To encourage indigenous games.
38. To increase the number of Manipur Rifles Battalions.

39. To increase the number of Blocks in the state.
40. To expand Imphal Airport and introduce night flight service.
41. To link Imphal by railways.
42. To develop a new life line by expanding/widening NH-53.
43. To open a third NH from Imphal to railhead in Assam through Tamenglong district avoiding Nagaland area, within a short period.
44. It is a great mistake to the functioning of democracy when the people/voters of the eight Assembly constituencies in Manipur such as Kakching, Heirok, Khangabok, Wangjing Tentha, Wabagai, Hiyanglam, Sugnu and Jiribam (lying within the outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency) do not enjoy the right to contest election although they have the right to exercise their franchise in the Lok Sabha elections. The party will demand to create three Lok Sabha Seats for Manipur two in the valley and one in the hills.
45. Minorities will be given protection. Developmental programmes for them will be taken up by forming Minority Commission.
46. Schemes for welfare programmes/development of women will be taken up.
47. If the Congress come to power, a 'Press Club' will be constructed soon for the Pressman in Manipur.
48. To improve the financial conditions, a committee of the local scholars/learned persons will be set up to earmark a financial strategy for the future generations. A committee of scholars will also be set up and give their due share in the governance of the state in order to overcome/remove the crucial problems of the society.

If the people of Manipur vote the Congress candidates and bring success to all the constituencies in the ensuing Assembly elections in Manipur, the party will be indebted greatly to the people. It will be a great help to implement the promises and to strengthen the Narasimha Rao-led Indian Congress. The manifesto was written in Manipuri.<sup>27</sup>

## **Samata Party (SP)**

Promises of the Samata Party, Manipur, in connection with the 1995 Assembly elections.

1. The people of Manipur will give their verdict on 16 and 19 February elections for the 60 Assembly seats.
2. The party will try to establish "Manipur Regiment" after removing "Assam Rifles" from Manipur.
3. A 'Minority Commission' will be set up for the protection of the minorities.
4. The party will try to review/amend the recruitment rules of all central services so as to keep compulsory reservation of seats for Manipur and other North-eastern states.
5. The party will try to export the handloom and handicrafts products of Manipur. This will help to develop industries as well as long plans will be taken up to improve the financial conditions of women.
6. The party will try to improve the irrigation system for triple cropping. It will help greatly in bringing Green Revolution. New Projects will be taken up wherever necessary for.
7. The products in Manipur will be kept reserved for our own sufficient use.
8. The historical monuments in Manipur will be preserved and protected under the Historical Monument Act.
9. The Samata Party has the stand to find out the original Map of Manipur and protect its territorial boundary. Since the Independence of India till today, there has been no original Map of Manipur included in the Revenue Records that shows the real picture of hills and plains. It is the firm commitment of the party to bring out the original map indicating hills, plains, rivers etc., which have existed since time immemorial.
10. Samata Party condemns all acts to suppress the movement of armed struggle in the hills and plains of Manipur branding them as "insurgents and terrorists." It is the duty of the central government to have political dialogue with them. Release the insurgents who have been behind the bars under TADA act. The party will take the responsibility to pressurise the centre to solve the insurgency problems

through dialogues across the table by declaring ‘general amnesty’ for them. The party will try to remove the Army from Manipur.

11. The party will try to keep a vigil and to legislate laws to restrict the infiltration of foreigners into Manipur and the genuine Rights of the indigenous people/ original inhabitants of Manipur be remained protected in the state.
12. The Central Government should own the entire responsibility of various problems facing/undergoing in the National Highways. The Samata Party will demand the Central Government to compensate as ‘Subsidy’ for the financial loss.
13. The party will try to solve the ongoing communal clash (Kuki-Naga rivalry) in the hills through negotiations. A unified political-platform/stand for the northeast will be formed. The party condemns the deployment of Army and other security forces by the Centre in the small states of north-east to suppress them. The party will try to bring peace, and normalcy in the region through dialogues in a democratic way.
14. A Commission will be formed to find out the causes/lacunae for failure of the existing factories in Manipur like spinning Mill, Khandsari Sugar Mill, Cement Factory etc. and necessary further steps be taken up.
15. The long 45-years of Congress-I rule in the state has failed to bring the desired political changes and to improve the economic and financial conditions of the state. It is understood clearly that in the face of the increasing wave of people's discontentment, the Congress-I rule has also failed to lead politically the movement for people's unrest. Therefore, the time has come to replace the Congress rule by a new People's coalition-government based on new ideas, hopes/aspirations and social equality. This trend is being reflected/seen in other states of India.

The Samata Party keeps the stand to bring People's victory by defeating the Congress-I in this election with the co-operation of the hillmen, plainsmen and minority peoples of the state. The Manifesto was written in Manipuri.<sup>28</sup>

### **Janata Dal (JD)**

Following are some of the programmes to be implemented and taken up by the Janata Dal:



1. The proposals of Janata Dal and its Rajya Sabha member, W. Kullabidhu Singh, to clean Nambul river, installation of Bio-technology research scheme in the Manipur University, inclusion of Loktak Lake under the National Lake conservation Plan, construction of a cycle velodrome at Imphal etc. have been accepted by the Central Government and started implementation work.
2. **Power policy**  
The JD will try to remove the difficulties of industrial backwardness by harnessing sufficient power supply in the state. The failure condition of the 'Loktak Hydro Electric Project' is to be checked and a Power Policy will be framed to end the Power shortage in Manipur by 2000 A.D.
3. **Drinking water**  
The JD will try to remove the insufficient supply of drinking water in Manipur despite a number of perennial rivers we have in the state.
4. **Women's role**  
It is generally accepted that the development of the state is conditioned only when women also played an equal role to it. To make it concrete, the party will try them participate in the national development programmes by providing equal facilities, and 1/3 job reservation for the women in the government services and public undertakings.
5. **Education policy**  
The JD will try to implement the report of Kothari commission to spend 6% of the total national Income<sup>1</sup> on Improving the standard of Education. All childrens upto the age of 14 years will be provided free education. It will be the policy of the JD ministry to impart literacy and primary education to all.
6. **New forest policy**  
The successive governments in Manipur never maintained the policy of environment and forest in Manipur properly. A new forest policy will be made to restrict exploitation of valuable forest products. It is essential to protect forest for keeping natural balance and for this the Party will take up the work of social forestry.
7. **Right to work**  
If a person willingly comes forward/out to do a work (self employment) in any trade, the government should arrange to provide opportunities and necessary requirements to him. The JD will try to made this plan (Right to work) a

Fundamental Right. The proposal had been placed before the National Development Council during the time of V.P. Singh's ministry/government.

8. a] The powers of the Hills District Council will be Proliferated/expanded. The spirit of sixth schedule of the constitution of India will be introduced in the hills districts.
- b] The JD will try to make NH-53 to become a two lane Road like the NH-39.

Lastly, the JD appeals the people of hills and plain to vote/elect their party candidates to help bring welfare to the poor, minorities and weaker sections of the society. The party manifesto was written in Manipuri language.

### **Janata Party, Manipur**

To the General Election of Member of Legislative Assembly of Manipur State Assembly to be held on the 16th and 19th February, 1995. The following are the salient features of the Manifesto of Janata Party, Manipur :

1. To solve insurgency problems in Manipur, immediately bringing normalcy in law and order situation in Manipur; to negotiate directly/indirectly with underground organisations.
2. To solve Naga and Kuki communal clash/fight in Manipur immediately through negotiations.
3. To solve unemployment problems creating 3 lakhs jobs opportunities with a Master Plant in Manipur.
4. To supply agricultural water to the fields of agricultural lands for single, double and triple cropping yields in Manipur.
5. To generate sufficient Electric/Thermal/Solar Chemical Power for the purposes of industrial, agricultural and house hold consumptions in Manipur.
6. To modify present education systems with vocationalization from secondary to the higher level to the employment orientation.

7. To set up a Board/Council of Technical Education providing Technical Education in all districts in Manipur.
8. to established an Engineering college at Imphal in Manipur.
9. To set up a North Campus of Post-Graduate and Research Study Centre of Manipur University to the North side of Imphal at Achanbigei (Alias Koirengei).
10. To modify/re-examine Master Plan for Greater Imphal-2011 A.D. and to implement the same.
11. To promote and develop art and culture centres/facilities at Old and New Imphal capitals/many important towns promoting Tourism, Film and Hotel Industries in Manipur.
12. To set up a New Imphal Capital Complex in between Koirengei Bridge and Manitripukhri onNH-39 East & west sides.
13. To set up an Airport for state cum Inter State Helicopter Air Services/Helipad at any suitable place at Imphal/Old Airport Koirengei.
14. To set up Mini Industrial Towns/Centres at all zonal Centres of Greater Imphal and Towns in all districts.in Manipur for providing the accommodation of 3 lakhs jobs.
15. To set up three-stars Hotels and Food and Catering Training Centres at Old and New Imphal capitals.
16. To set up Housing colonies near zonal centres with recreational centres.
17. To set up passengers Tram Car/Bus surface Transport facilities linked all zonal centres/Towns, old and new Imphal capitals.
18. To regulate public distribution system through fair price shops to the genuine poor families to 50% subsidised rates to the daily use cosumming items of Goods/Articles.
19. To provide sufficient drinking water to all the rural and urban area in Manipur.
20. To check and remedy water and air pollution and to preserve forest for a healthy environment in Manipur.

21. To provide financial power to the Panchayat, Zilla Parishad and Autonomous district council of Manipur state to decentralise in administration.
22. To set up/promote Primary Health Centres for every village/Panchayat
23. To set up/promote the scheme of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary for self Employment.
24. To set up/promote agro-based industries, hotel and electronics industries/ centres at the level of Panchayat/ village promoting khadi & village industries in Manipur.
25. To set up/promote cotton, silk and sericulture base scheme/project/industries at the level of Panchayat/village.
26. To set up/promote New/Existing State High Way Roads/Bridges, Inter Village Roads/Bridges all over Manipur uniformly.
27. To promote/set up public libraries facilities/centres at the level of Panchayat/village.
28. To promote/set up art and culture organisation for every Panchayat/village/ zilla Parishad/district.
29. To promote Games and Sports facilities/ centres for every Panchayat area/centres/zilla Parishad/district.
30. To promote art and cultural centres/facilities for every Panchayat/village/ zilla Parishad/district/town.
31. To delete/drive out foreigners' from Manipur state based on cut off year 1951.
32. To abolish corruption absolutely/perfectly at all levels of administration of the state with computerization/video recording wherever necessary.
33. To promote a clean judicial system in Manipur.
34. To check police atrocities to the state administration in Manipur removing totally the fearnesses to the common people, general public.
35. To survey the land of hill and valley of Manipur for a new land record with classification of rates, values and categorise.

36. To modify/promote Manipur Land Reform and Revenue Act for preserving Khas land/waste land/agricultural land/Housing land.
37. To promote Meitei or Meetei Mayek scripts/Books/Journals/Magazines/News Papers to replace the present Bengali scripts for the same phase by phase from lower to research level to the adoption at the school, college and University levels.
38. To shift Assam Rifle from Kangla immediately.
39. To remove special Army Power Act in Manipur bringing normalcy in Manipur.
40. To delete the inclusion of Meitei community to the state list of socially and educationally backward classes among other backward classes keeping/preserving/promoting the International Standard of Meitei society enjoyed/recognised earlier in the world.
41. To promote/keep the satisfaction of all the communities in all fronts of state administration to a welfare state with love and peace among the all communities in the state of Manipur to the spirit of Indian Constitution and Unity & integrity of the Indian Union to bring the titles “Manipur is the land of Jewel and Diamond of India” and “Mini Japan of India in the field of electronics civilization.”<sup>30</sup>

## **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**

### **A. Political**

1. To solve the insurgency problem-honestly
2. Not to disintegrate Manipur.
3. To handover the ‘Kangla’ in the hands of the people of Manipur as early as possible.
4. To demand to have 3 MPs of Lok Sabha - two in the valley and one in the hills.

### **B. Law and order**

1. To lead a peaceful life by all the people without any fear and to have justice as per law.
2. To remove Armed Forces Special Power Act 1958 that empowers to kill many innocent people.

3. To abstain the CRPF personnels from duty till they be removed from the state.
4. To open a “women’s Police Station” and to lock-up women under trial in such police station.
5. To allow plying of vehicles without any disturbances in all the important roads/ lifelines.
6. To improve the relations between the police and the public.

### **C. General administration**

1. To declare D.P.C. results immediately.
2. To conduct fresh/new recruitments by the MPSC.
3. To provide compulsorily “one family one job’ of the government to all poor families.
4. To inquire against the accumulation of wealth/property.
5. To provide free treatment in the hospital
6. To provide old age Pension without any persuasion.
7. To conduct inquiry against the scandals in Manipur.

### **D. Trade and economic**

1. To provide essential commodities like rice, kerosene, sugar, salt, mustard oil, manure, etc., to the public at subsidised rate.
2. To keep open economic policy by stopping permit system.
3. To open trade between India and Myanmar.
4. To help/assist by the government in exporting the indigenous products of handloom and handicrafts, timber, seeds.
5. To increase the means of transportation in large numbers in all the places.
6. To exploit and used the wasteland.

### **E. Industrial Policy**

1. To equate agriculture to industry and to provide facilities to all paddy fields for double/triple croppings.

2. To support youths willing to start small scale industries.
3. To make success of Hydro electrification to increase the source of income of Manipur.
4. To support the indigenous industries like *Kounaphak* matting; weaving of *Meitei Phanek, MeiteiPhee; Haophee*, shawl” etc.
5. To set up vocational industries of making radio, television, watch, etc.
6. To make success of tourism industry by encouraging tourists by removing Foreigner Restricted Area Permit System.
7. To allow the people to proceed in their own ways about the lands affected by the Loktak Project.

#### **F. Judiciary**

1. To make all law courts independent.
2. Though the Government interferes in the appointment of Judges, no government interference should be allowed in transfer promotion.

#### **G. Education, arts and cultures**

1. To increase the value of education.
2. To implement Manipur Official Language Act.
3. To promote the dance and music, martial arts of Manipur and to spread it abroad.

#### **H. Youth and sports**

1. To provide employment to the outstanding sports men/players of Manipur.
2. To encourage the indigenous games of Manipur like Polo, Kang, etc.
3. To encourage mountaineering, tracking, hiking etc.
4. To keep a good playing ground for every locality.
5. To open Gym at many places.’
6. To keep swimming pool at many places to let the boys/children learn swimming.
7. To reward the children champions in the field of sports. The manifesto was written in Manipuri.<sup>31</sup>

## **Communist Party of India (CPI)**

To entrust the CPI. a clear responsibility for the welfare of the people of Manipur and participate in the formation of government by electing the party candidates in large number, the Party :

- Will bring the most stable ministry in the state.
- Will make a corruptless government/ministry.
- Will protect unity and integrity of state; Manipur should not be disintegrated. The party will plan to maintain love, peace\* and harmony between the hills and plains people.
- Will solved the insurgency problems which is the main issue in the state honestly. The party will have talks without any conditions, and to end the problem, negotiations be made with the central government.
- Will take up necessary steps to provide the youth their means of livelihood with prestige.
- Will demand the central government to improve the development of the state, the standard of living of the people and to execute/implement/concretise important plans. The party will bring welfare to the people of this backward state by making the central government known about the actual conditions in the state.
- Will maintain impartiality to (the welfare of all communities/caste in the state and serve the people honestly irrespective of caste, creed, religion and community. The party will try to develop hill areas with special emphasis.
- Will provide enough room/space to the outstanding youths bringing national prestige in the field of Sanskrit, culture and sports, and to take up welfare measures for the sportsmen. The party will try to promote and elevate the prestige of the youths in the state.
- Will keep emphasis in providing water and electricity abundantly, better standard of living of the people and the special attention will be. paid for the survival of the small scale industries in Manipur.
- Will protect the interests of farmers, workers, employees and the all sections of the communities of the state.



- Will restrain the commercialisation of education to elevate the declining education system, and will try to prevent education becoming a means of earning.
- The CPI appeals the people to give an opportunity to serve the people of Manipur honestly and to bring welfare with dedication. It also urges the people to keep confidence to the party by the voter to bring change and development in the society. The Manifesto was written in Manipuri.

### **Communist Party of India (Marxist)**

The party keeps the following programmes to be taken up in this election :

1. To form a government supported by left, democratic and secular parties by defeating Congress-I.
2. To save democratic and human rights; to keep communal harmony, peace, national unity and oneness, as well as protect territorial integrity of Manipur, to remove draconian laws enforcing in the state.
3. To provide more power/autonomy to states as well as more powers to local bodies, by amending the centre-state relations.
4. To get the facilities/opportunities after the inclusion of the Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the constitution of India.
5. To fight against corruption, to punish those involved in corruption, scandals and to set up Lok Ayukta to adjudicate even the state Chief Minister.
6. To fight against the removal of employees in Banks and Post Offices in the name of Computerisation; to provide unemployment allowances to unemployed; to take up measures to provide jobs to peoples; to provide one job to a family; to include right to work in the Fundamental Rights of the Indian constitution; to increase the amount of pension.
7. To provide compulsory education upto primary level; to remove illiteracy; and give free education upto secondary level; to promote a good education system against the existing new education system; to frame a democratic sports policy.
8. To check price hike/rices; to reduce the high-tax from the people; to manage/control rice trade/business by the government; to maintain the public distribution system properly.

9. To protect the rights of minorities; to protect and look after the land, art, culture and language of the tribals; to provide autonomy for self-rule in the tribal areas; to reorganise the districts of Manipur.
10. To fight against tortures, killings, arrest of the women, to take up measures for women's employment; to provide assistance to the weavers.
11. To distribute lands to the landless peoples through proper land-reforms; to fix reasonably the price of products of the farmers; to give Khe-tyan Patta to the tenants; to maintain irrigation system properly; to legislate the wages of the workers/labourers; to reduce the price of fertilizers/manures.
12. To set up industries, mainly the Agro-based industries, suitable to the state in order to improve the economic conditions of Manipur; to participate the workers/labourers in the management of industries; to legislate for the protection of unorganised workers.
13. To extend the railway line upto Imphal; to provide proper/enough security to trucks, buses and tankers on both the National Highways (no. 39 and 53) by improving them.
14. To, provide with enough margin money for the poor in the villages and towns; to take up housing schemes; to provide water and electricity to all villages.
15. To solve the insurgency problem through political negotiations.
16. To materialise the shifting of Assam Rifles from the 'Kangla'.

To enable to implement the above mentioned programmes, the party appeals the people to give/extend co-operation in this ensuing Assembly elections in order to have a left, democratic, and secular government in Manipur by giving votes to left-democratic and secular candidates. It also appeals the people to give votes and support the party sponsored two candidates in the constituencies of Khundrakpam and Naoriya Pakhanglakpa making them as peoples representatives. The Manifesto was written in Manipuri.<sup>33</sup>

### **Manipur Peoples Party (MPP)**

Fully aware of historical necessity for :-

- raising the image of the state of Manipur,
- enriching the quality of life of the people of Manipur,
- discharging constitutional obligation for removing the abject poverty and fundamental backwardness of the state and
- a growing restraint on the undue resource transfer from the state, The Manipur Peoples' Party commits itself to :-
- a new political turn,
- a new economic order,
- a new social harmony and
- preservation of the distinct identity of the state.

### **Political programmes**

1. Review of the Merger Agreement, 1949 and the transfer of the Kabaw-Valley,
2. The declaration of Manipur valley as scheduled area,
3. Greater autonomy to the state.
4. Re-structuring of the North-Eastern Council based upon the principle of equity,
5. Preservation of territorial integrity,
6. Political solution to the insurgency problems,
7. Bringing the hill areas within the fold of the sixth schedule,
8. Removal of the Black-Laws such as Armed Forces Special Power Act and TADA and others,
9. Creation of three Parliamentary Constituencies for election to the Lok-Sabha,
10. Amicable settlement for the ethnic conflict.

## **Economic Programmes**

11. Provision for food security,
12. Control over price distortions and undue rise,
13. Door-delivery of economic package of essential commodities and industrial inputs,
14. To ensure free and fair inter-state movement of goods and service by removing undue hurdles and impositions,
15. Declaration of a new industrial policy with marked incentives being given to export-oriented industries,
16. Declaration of a new agricultural policy with focus on rising efficiency and productivity,
17. Effective policy - co-ordination for,
  - food, health and education,
  - communications, irrigation and power,
18. Improvement of the Imphal-Jiribam Road,
19. Opening of a trade centre at 'Bungbung' near Burma Border,
20. Tapping/augmentation of %the power resources available in Manipur,
21. The Loktak Hydro Electric Project to be brought to within state sector, Service and social sector
22. Constitution of a staff-selection commission,
23. Introduction of more state civil service,
24. Declaration of a New cultural policy,
25. Declaration of a new state policy of youth and sports,
26. Outright employment of the outstanding sports persons of international standard,
27. Unemployment allowance,<sup>34</sup>

### **Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (Socialists)**

The Congress (S) is committed to upholding the nation's honour and democratic values, promoting the ideal of secularism and ushering in a new social economic order based on equality and justice.

We pledge not merely a replacement of one set of rules by the other, but an alternative model of governance, based on federalism, and decentralisation, institutional accountability, economic equality and social justice, human rights, freedom of communication and access to information for all citizens and a responsive and responsible administration, and through all this ensure the dignity • of both the individual citizen and the nation.

- 1]     **Right to work**  
To materialise the fundamental rights to work guaranteed by the constitution.
- 2]     **The Congress (S) aim**  
The Congress (S) is committed to provide clean and effective government.
- 3]     **Women participation**  
The Congress (S) stands for equal participation of women in socio-economic and political reconstruction of the nation.
- 4]     **Arms Forces Special Power Act**  
The Congress (S) will take up for, withdrawal of Arm Forces Special Power Act, 1958 introduced in Manipur.
- 5]     **Development of Manipuri language and script**  
The Manipuri language as a schedule language should be developed in all aspects giving special stress to its scripts.
- 6]     **Tribal custom**  
The customary law, tradition and usage of the tribal people of Manipur will be safeguarded.

7] **Para-military forces**

Due to introduction of many para military and security forces in this small state, the economy of the state has been adversely effected. The Congress (S) will endeavour to reduced their strength as far as possible.

8] **Drinking water**

Safe drinking water by 1995 to' all the villages under the sponsoring agencies of UMCEF targets every 250 population by a tube well.

9] **Ambulance**

Provision of common ambulance services for group of villages will be provided.

10] **Medical facilities**

Special attention will be given in the hospital and dispensary by providing latest improved hospital equipments and supply free medicine to the patients.

11] **Communication**

Public transport system like circular services in and around the Imphal city and pre-urban areas shall be introduced. Meanwhile all weather road shall be extended in the village of the state.

12] **Forest and Horticulture**

The Congress (S) will make forest and horticulture as "Green Gold" of the hill districts of Manipur by making plantation of local and selected trees in all the de-forested areas by providing financial and technical assistance.

13] **Rural economy**

The party will evolve a set of long overdue policies for the benefit of the neglected farming community by assigning not. less than 50% of the investible resources. Farmers will be assured of the guaranteed remunerative price of the produced.

14] **Bank loan in the hills**

Tribal people in the hill districts are denied "of bank loan as they have nothing to offer as security. The Congress (S) will therefore evolve suitable alternative measures so that the bank loans are given to the tribal people.

15] **Industries**

For creating more job opportunity by setting up job-oriented small scale industries, schemes should be taken up for establishment of electronic industry, watch factory etc., at all the cottage level vis-a-vis agro-forest-based industries.

16] **Tourism**

Tourism will receive a special attention as it will provide employment to many unemployed youth and shall also enhance the prospect and development of handicraft and weaving industries. The restriction imposed to foreign tourists in Manipur should be lifted.

17] **District councils**

Legitimate evolution of financial and administrative power will be accorded to the autonomous district councils.

18] **Political problem**

Initiatives will be taken to resolve the outstanding political problems especially insurgency, through wide-ranging peaceful discussion, without preconditions to bring about an amicable solution.

19] **Education**

Effective implementation of new education policy and systematic utilization of operation black board in the state.

20] **Border problem**

Protection of Territorial integrity of the state.

21] **Economy policy**

Loktak Hydro-Electric Project should be owned by the state government.

22] **Land policy**

Need for land use survey in valley by constituting a land use board. All the arable land should be spared only for agricultural practice in the valley.

23] **Immediate solution of ethnic problem**

The burning problem facing the Nagas and the Kukis shortly term as communal riot between the two tribes should be solved in no time.

24] **Ways to bring in lasting solution to the land dispute in the hill districts**

The present communal riot between the Nagas and the Kukis appears to be based on lack of official records on the ownership of land in the hill districts.

To solve the problem, the Manipur land revenue and land reforms act 1960, should be extended to the hill areas or a new enactment should be made to give a lasting solution to the problem.

25] **Issue of commemorative postal stamp**

All efforts should be made to urge the government of India to issue a commemorative postal stamp in the honour of Bir Tikendrajit for a place at the National level.

26] **Shifting of the Assam Rifle from Kangla**

The Assam Rifles from Kangla should be shifted in no time to restore the ancient historical importance of the area.

27] **Shifting of CRPF Camps from, the sensitive and vulnerable areas**

The CRPF Camps in the sensitive and vulnerable areas should be shifted.<sup>35</sup>

**Kuki National Assembly (KNA)**

The KNA to strive for the fulfilment of the interests and aspiration of the peoples such as :-

**Politically**

- 1] To safeguard the integrity of the state.
- 2] Creation of sadar hills as a separate entity;
- 3] Creation of additional administrative units at block and sub-division levels.
- 4] With the delimitation, to tie up loose ends demographically and geographically.
- 5] To safeguard the legitimate interests and aspirations of non-ethnic citizens of Manipur.



- 6] To safeguard the legitimate interest and aspirations of the tribal pertaining to land settlement, and administrative system in tribal hill areas.

### **Socio-economically**

- 7] At least, one income earner for every home. 8] Jobs for jobless youths;
- 9] Exploitation of forests and mineral resources with simultaneous aforestation programme in the interior hill areas, and preservation of wild life.
- 10] More abundant supplies of gas, cooking coke, coal etc. etc. to relieve pressure on used of fire wood.
- 11] Alternative methods/means of livelihood to replace jhooming and revitalisation of co-operative farming.

### **Miscellaneous**

- 12] To bring about free and compulsory education for children upto the age of 14 besides to raise the level of nutrition and level of standard of living and improve public health.
- 13] To declare war against drug abuses and other social vices which are injurious to health.
- 14] To promote tourism; and sensitize the strategic importance of the state requiring faster development of border roads and state highways etc.<sup>36</sup>

### **National People Party (NPP)**

1. The party will demand to have 3 MPs of the Lok Sabha for the state of Manipur; to provide the existing “Political Post” to those who have no right to contest for the Lok Sabha seat (except having voting rights) within the Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency and from within the Sekmai (SC) reserved Assembly Constituency before the centre concede to the demand.
2. To reduce comparatively the tax on water and electricity than that of other states in India.
3. To reduce the price of the essential commodities like rice, dal, mustard oil and cloths/apparels, by 20 percent to the company price.

4. There will be no room for corruption in the governance/ administration of the state; and will not violate the transfer and promotion rules/ norms.
5. The party will try for “one family one job”; arrangements/plans be taken to construct houses for the homeless; land to<sup>1</sup> the landless; and shall provide jobs/employment for livelihood.
6. To develop transport and communication system, inter-village roads be maintained properly, to suit the modern means of communication.
7. To change the education system in order to maintain good discipline and morality of the youths; and to have total literacy.
8. To take up necessary steps in order to maintain law and order situation in the state.
9. To develop agriculture and industry by providing latest technology, tools and machines.
10. To provide loan up to Rs 10,000/- without ‘Security’ for the trade/profession of one’s livelihood.
11. To provide ‘financial assistance’ and ‘reward’ to any person of the state doing ‘excellent work/job’ for the Manipur or India in conformity with the profession. The manifesto was written in Manipuri.

### **Federal Party of Manipur (FPM)**

#### **The Election of 1995**

The General Election of 1995 is a crucial election for the future of Manipur. Federal Party of Manipur views its participation in this election as a preparatory step for the establishment of a new political and social order in Manipur. The party shall strive to achieve the following manifesto.

#### **Territorial integrity and unity of Manipur .**

Federal Party of Manipur. stands for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Manipur state and the unity of her people. The party will initiate a ‘Live Frontier Policy’ to protect the boundaries of Manipur.

#### **Autonomy for district and villages**

Federal Party shall strive to secure autonomy to the districts, villages both in the hills and valleys as approved by the party.

### **Negotiation for solution of revolutionary movements**

Believing in the universal and historical truth that all forms of conflict are resolved on the negotiation tables, the party proposes that there should be a negotiation between the Government of India and the various revolutionary groups. In the process of peace, the services of persons of goodwill and recognised credibility of national and international stature will be sought and made available to the negotiating parties.

### **Protection of human rights**

Manipur with military, para military and police forces stationed all over the state looks like a police state and vast concentration camp. The human rights violations committed by the security forces in the name of fighting insurgencies have been known throughout the world. Federal Party stands for the protection of basic human rights of the people of Manipur. The party demands :

- The establishment of human rights commission for the state of Manipur;
- Withdrawal of draconian laws like Armed Forces Special Power Acts, TADA and Punjab Security Act, political prisoner status for the insurgents of various groups arrested or imprisoned by the state.

### **Social unity & cultural identity**

Federal Party proposes a restructuring of multi ethnic plural society of Manipur on the principle of social Federalism. While the minorities will be fully protected as they are entitled to the fundamental rights of a citizen. But the indigenous population of Manipur shall be fully protected. The Party shall strive to achieve the following :

- Preservation and protection of the social and cultural identity of various social and cultural groups of Manipur.
- Development of Manipuri language which is the official language of the state included, in the VIII schedule, Development of tribal language of the state, Ban on the entry of Foreigners from Burma, Nepal and Bangladesh.
- Regulation of free entry of non-indigenous population into Manipur to check demographic imbalance of Manipur. Special programme for the ST, SC and OBCs in Manipur. Upliftment of the women, child and physically handicapped Ex-servicemen.
- Old age pension for old and aged specially among the peasants and tribals.

### **Inter ethnic council**

The Government of Manipur will be made to establish an inter-ethnic council to deal with ethnic and communal problem of the state.

### **Shifting of Assam Rifles from the Sacred Kangla**

FPM demands the shifting of the Assam Rifles or any other security forces from the Kangla fort which was the ancient capital of Manipur and sacred seat of religion and culture.

Pension for members of district council, Zilla Parishad; Municipality, Pramukh and Pradhan

Preservation of historical monument and archaeological sites.

Construction of statues of the martyrs of 1891 and other leaders of Manipur.

Establishment of a public INN at Imphal to provide lodging facilities for the weaker sections.

### **Development with social justice**

Federal Party of Manipur is committed to development with social justice. Manipur is now a captive market of colonial economic system of mainland India. Federal Party has always demanded a special state category status for Manipur in the development planning of the Government. Our party welcomes the new economic policy of the government of India but the Central Government should follow a 'Big Push' financial policy for the development of the state and the existing economic and financial institutions should be strengthened to meet the fall out of the Big Push.

Federal Party stands for equitable economic development of all regions, hill and valley, rural and urban and all sections of the population, urban middle class, peasantry and the tribals. The Party stands for the following development programmes.

No alienation and transfer of lands from the indigenous people to the non indigenous migrants,

Land Laws suitable to the tribal and hill areas to make the hill lands a mortgageable commodity for the quick economic development and for the easy flow of institutional finance in tribal areas,

All khas land shall be made available for agricultural purposes, Development of agriculture both in the valley and Hills,

185 A massive jhum control schemes in the hill areas,  
 Appropriate horticultural development schemes through co-operative sector,  
 Wholesale co-operative society shop in every district headquarters,  
 Public distribution system will be expanded, Marketing facilities will be  
 provided to rural peasantry and tribals of the interior,  
 A massive employment generating schemes for the educated unemployed  
 youth,  
 Possibilities for giving allowance to unemployed graduates will be explored,  
 TSP and MAD A for tribals of valley districts.

### **Transport & communication**

An intensive road making programme will be taken up to provide  
 communication facilities to the interior areas, National Highway 53 will be expanded  
 to be the greatest life line of Manipur as NH 39 is no longer dependable supply line  
 for Manipur. Electric powered trolley bus service will be introduced in Manipur  
 valley,

Rope ways will be introduced in suitable hill areas,  
 Privatisation of transport system will be encouraged.

### **Resource mobilization : Utilization of forest, water and energy**

The water and forests are the greatest wealth of Manipur. The party stands  
 for the following:

Protection and development of forest,

Water management of the lakes and rivers of Manipur shall be undertaken on  
 scientific lines,

Negative effect of development project like the Ithai Barrage of the Loktak  
 Project should be rectified

The construction of the Loktak Downstream power project with foreign and,  
 either government or private finance.

One handloom weaving centre in every subdivision,

Bringing of foreign capital in the development of industries,

The free trade on the Indo-Myanmar should be made to benefit the traders of Manipur.

### **Sports & youth welfare**

Sports facilities will be built up at Imphal and in all district headquarters,

Incentives for renown sports person will be provided. Financial support and facilities will be provided to sport persons. Pension for the indigenous sports will be provided,

A massive animal husbandry programme in the form of piggery, duckery, poultry and incentives to the private enterprises of educated unemployed will be taken,

A white Revolution for Manipur,

A clean Government that works.

With the above programme and' ideological frame, Federal Party of Manipur will make a sincere attempt to build up a good society and united Manipur. The Party appeals to the people of Manipur to support the party in the present Election.

### **Samajawadi Janata Party (Rashtriya)**

#### **Policies and Programmes of SJP**

##### **Social Policy**

The party will try to bring harmony and love among the various organisations and people of all communities; will promote the cultural identity of this state; will provide equal share to women in political and economic matters (which constitute half the states' population); will provide free education to all children irrespective of caste, creed, colour, sex.

- Will bring equal development through peoples' direct participation in the administration.
- Will try to solve the problem of unrest/insurgency through sincere negotiations.

### **Political policy**

- The SJP (R) will try to execute/implement all democratic norms and practices in order to remove the 'political chaos' being faced by people to-day.
- Democratic government should be at people's will.
- It is our promise to suppress the 'maladministrators' to protect the oppressed.
- Democratic power should be given to all villages.
- The Party will bring all-round development in the state without any imbalance.
- For this purpose, the party will ask those representatives to resign their posts who do not implement handing over of the democratic political powers to the Panchayats.
- The Party will suppress those trying/attempting to affect, modify and "change the existing boundary of Manipur.

### **Agricultural policy**

- Agriculture in Manipur is the main source of income. Around 62 per cent of the total population of the state are farmers. It is the promise of the party to provide/supply all materials/equipments to develop agriculture and agro-industrial products for peoples' self sufficiency and to improve standard of living of the farmers and their economic conditions. The party will improve irrigation facilities for double/triple cropping.

### **Economic policy**

- Economic policy is supposed to bring welfare to the state. Providing employment to all, to develop the entire state, is the declared economic policy of the party. To implement this, the party will set up

various industries in Manipur to provide job to all able persons. By taking share from the centre, the Party will try to bring an equal development with other states. The Party will provide old age . pension, and will improve sources of earning by developing trade and commerce.

### **Others**

- The Party will provide tap waters to all families
- The Party will promote sportsmen by supplying sports materials and improving stadium and playgrounds.
- The Party will do peoples' service by promoting clubs, organisation.

The party appeals the voters to give votes to the party to enable the implementation of the above mentioned programmes of the party. The Manifesto was written in Manipuri.<sup>39</sup>

### **Manipur Hill Peoples Council (MHPC)**

1. To bring peace and unity in the hill areas as well as in the state.
2. To save the interest of the hill people.
3. To eradicate corruption in the hill area and in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Each and every election manifesto of the contesting political parties reflected the existing social, political and economic conditions of the people in the state. The manifestoes also focused on important local issues and problems. It also reflected the demands and desires of the people. Most of the manifestoes made tall rather reckless promises in trying to make an appeal to the sentiments and emotions of the voters. The documents also contained a programme of actions of the party about what will be done and to be implemented during the period of the term if voted to power. In general, there was an attempt to say something on every issue and problem that agitates the minds of the people of Manipur. Virtually nothing seemed being neglected to promise on the basic themes lying before the



people and the state. Each had a good deal of substance which should be attractive to the discerning voters. The editorial quality of all the manifestoes were impressive. One was as good or bad as another.

Hunting political mileage, they invoked all sorts of tricks and spells. Yet their policies and programmes were only marginally differed. Though there were some differences between the manifestoes of the political parties, the fact remained that the differences were not fundamental.

The February 1995 Assembly polls was a competition of two agenda - threat to territorial boundary of Manipur and the protection of unity and integrity of the state. Threat to the lifelines of the state by the Naga Insurgents was also a very important issue before the people. As such most of the documents have taken into account such major issues from 'South Nagaland, UNIC- Congress Agreement of August 1972, protection of territorial boundary of Manipur to protection of National Highways. The issue on Keeping the territorial integrity of the state intact dominated the political life in the state during the election which all the parties paid their attention to. All the political parties promised the electorates to maintain and protect the unity and territorial integrity of Manipur as they wanted to have maximum gain of the issue while they had remained\* quiet over the issue for a long time. They were against Naga integration movement. These parties were heading only during the elections due to getting pulse of the public involvement in the issue. The ruling Congress-I, in order to neutralise the opposition attack, strongly said that the party denied any homeland demands such as - South Nagaland, Kuki Homeland, Zelianrong Homeland, Zomi Homeland and other similar demands - that may disintegrate Manipur. It said that the Congress would not allow any Homeland demand. Radhabinod Koijam, MPCC-I President, in its election manifesto releasing function said "So long as the Congress Party is in Manipur, even an iota of land would

not give away. The party will protect territorial integrity and invalidate the Nagaland Assembly Resolution to keep under one administrative unit all Naga territories.” The party considered the UNIC - Congress merger agreement as a right step politically. Since the review of the merger agreement of Manipur with India in 1949 and the restoration of the lost ‘Kabaw. valley’ has been an untiring demand of the Meitei insurgents, the MPP included these agendas in its party manifesto.

Presently, the NH-39 (Imphal-Dimapur road) connecting with Dimapur Railhead via Nagaland state is the main lifeline of the state. It is through this highway that all the essential items, commodities, etc., are transported to Imphal. But during the last many years, the transporters have faced a lot of problems within the Nagaland sector as well as from the Naga Insurgents and anti social elements. During the sixth elections, the truckers launched a massive boycott of this National Highway following the imposition of vehicles and goods taxes by the NSCN-(M) faction. So, the solution of the transporters strike on National Highways also assumed priority for some political parties. It has been the demand of the larger section of the people in the state to improve and expand the National Highway No. 53 to become double - lane to avoid problems and difficulties on NH-39. It is also the desire of the people that NH-39 be protected fully and guarded by the state government to avoid economic blockade, disturbances, to protect life of passengers, etc. The FPM manifesto gave emphasis on development of NH-53 (Imphal - Jiribam Road) the only alternative lifeline, to become the main life line of Manipur as NH-39 (Imphal-Dimapur Road) is no longer dependable supply line for Manipur, along with an intensive road making programme to provide communication facilities to the interior areas. However, the Congress-I promised to opened a third National Highway, from Imphal to Railhead in Assam through Tamenglong district avoiding Nagaland area. The JD would try to make NH-53 to become a two-lane highway. The CPI-M pledge to provide enough security to

trucks, buses and trucks on both the National Highways and improve them. The MPP went for improvement of Imphal-Jiribam road.

The removal and shifting away of Assam Rifles from the sacred palace of Manipur 'Kangla' (at the heart of the Imphal town) have been a long drawn demand of the people in the state. It is a burning issue in the state. Following the demand, an agreement was signed in 1976 with the Union Defence Minister to transfer Kangla to state government. However, the agreement could not be implemented upto the peoples' expectations. The existing 4th Assam Rifles Battalions was replaced by the 30th Battalions, instead. And another Battalion- was posted at Luwangsangbam area which is mainly reserved for the transfer of the 4th Assam Rifles Battalion. Following the continuous demands, strikes and agitations from the people, an agreement was again signed in 1993 during R.K. Dorendro's Congress-MPP coalition ministry in order to remove the Assam Rifles from Kangla. The Union Minister of State (Home) M.M. Jacob also attended the "Transfer Function" of Kangla to Manipur. Some Assam Rifles Personnels were nominally shifted. The removal was to complete by six months. Thereafter, various committees have also been formed by the government to protect Kangla. But the agreement could not be concretised till today.<sup>41</sup>

As such, shifting of Assam Rifles became a big issue in the election. Most of the parties attached importance to the issue and gave priority making strong promises to remove it/for its complete transfer. The parties made repeated false promise on the total shifting of the Assam Rifles from Kangla and to hand over 'Kangla' to the people as far as possible. It may be recalled that during the previous Assembly elections, most of the political parties also promised the people to shift away the Assam Rifles from the Kangla. But all the parties forgot their promises as soon as the election ended. Their promises remained a 'promise' unfulfilled, till today.

Since, Manipur has been an insurgency-proned state for the last many years, the political parties paid their attention to it. Violation of human rights by security armed personnels/forces was also a strong propaganda in the election. The parties promised to end the armed movement in the state. They gave emphasis on having talks across the table with the insurgents without any conditions and to announce 'General Amnesty' to them to bring a solution to the issue, through negotiations. They also pledged the removal of the Armed Forces Special Power Act 1958 from Manipur and other black laws enforcing in Manipur and protection of human rights. Though the parties pledged to solve insurgency problem honestly, the past testified that after every election in the state, people experienced more draconian laws instead of taking them away from the state, and violation of more human rights.

It is a reality that since the first state Assembly election held in 1972 till today, Manipur has experienced many a successive-governments marked by instability. All the succeeding terms produced more than one ministry. As such most of the political parties felt the necessity of a strong and a stable government. They promised to have a stable and powerful government without corruption. The Kuki-Naga Communal clashes in the hills have been a burning problem in the state. The parties emphasized in their manifesto to solve the communal clash. The FPM pledged to create the Inter-Ethnic Council to end the communal clash. In trying to garner votes, the Janata Dal, CPI-M and the Congress-S promised to make the 'Right to work' a fundamental right if the party comes to power after the elections.

Unemployment is a problem in the state which is also being one of the most important causes for unrest in the state. Most of the parties have taken their stands on this issue. The KNA party promised jobs to the jobless youths assuring at least one income earner for every home. The NPP and JD affirmed "one family one job." The Congress-I gave priority to provide a job in a family whose members are not

employed. In order to remove unemployment problem, the Congress-I targeted to employ 10,000 unemployed youths in a year including self-employment schemes. The JP proposed to create 3 lakhs jobs opportunities with a Master Plan in the state in order to solve unemployment problems. MPP wanted to provide/give unemployment allowance to the unemployed. The FPM also talked of possibilities for giving allowance to unemployed graduates to be explored not only creating a massive employment generating schemes for the educated unemployed youth. The SJP (R) said providing employment to all (to develop "the entire state) is the declared economic policy of the party. To implement this, the party will set up various industries in Manipur to provide jobs to all able persons. The CPI-M also went ahead to provide unemployment allowance to unemployed, to provide one job to a family; and to take up measures to provide jobs to the peoples.

When we see the political programmes of various political parties, the major thing we find common in their programmes was the subject of poverty, it was so important that all the parties indulged in the politics of poverty. These political parties exploited the masses with slogans during the elections. In their efforts to gain more support they banked upon the voters to eliminate poverty, and to increase the standard of living of the people, to construct houses for the homeless and land to the landless.

Besides, these parties had in their election manifestoes promised- to adopt appropriate measures to deal with various local issues, problems etc., facing in the state. They also promised to bring varieties of developmental programmes such as improvement of the material and social conditions of the common man, development of agriculture, land reforms and so on. On the whole, the basic ingredients of manifestoes such as development of industries including small scale industries, removal of retarded development; to give essential commodities at subsidised rate, to provide job to the leading/outstanding sportsman, to investigate into the scandals in

Manipur; water and electricity to be made available abundantly; plans to clean Nambul rivers; to make the women share in the national development programmes; to enforce the sixth schedule in the hills and expand power of district councils; to announce the plains/ valley area as scheduled area; to keep a separate High Court of Manipur; to open a women police station; to increase one member to Lok Sabha seat, etc., were the major issues at stake for the welfare of all. These issues remained almost the same. But one peculiarity of the manifestoes was that some political parties with absolutely no hope of coming to power also made all these similar tall promises.

From the manifestoes of both the national and regional parties, it seemed that no particular manifesto was honest and keen to bring about the socio-economic transformation in the state for the betterment of the people. Most of the promises in the manifestoes had emotional appeal to the people to suit the existing situations which is difficult to translate it into practice. Most of the manifestoes had similar appeals and promises to the voters since the previous selections which remain un-implemented. Majority of the parties paid weightage to local issues rather than national ones. The parties paid scant considerations for national issues of importance. All the parties had more or less the same/ similar promises harping upon the local grievances/problems of the people. There was no fundamental differences among the manifestoes of different parties. Even the national parties also entered the election on local consideration, issues, etc. No party made any commitment for land reforms in the state. No manifesto promised to distribute the benefits of the planned development among the poor sections of the society. Political parties did not discuss in detail in their election manifestoes about the related issues or economic conditions, policies and programmes relating to the state, while many states have started to become economically powerful, Today Manipur is depending on other states in many respects. Politicians do not think of it. Writing only some new industrial policies, agricultural policies etc., in manifestoes and saying to bring developmental and welfare

programmes to the people/state cannot be the only possible way out to achieve it. Their promises which are emotional to the voters, became non-sense promise difficult to implement into practice. For instance, in the 1990 Assembly polls, the MPP promised the electorates rice at Rs 2.50 per kg. But while in power, instead of rice at cheaper price, the ministry embroiled in rice scandal involving crores of rupees.

There was a gulf of differences between the manifestoes, the parties published before the election and post-poll programme implementation work after coming to power. When voted to power every party did forget its manifesto and promises. This is also the general feeling of the people. As C.P. Bhambri pointed out “. . . Many a time, it has been suggested that the election manifestoes are verbal rhetoric of political parties and every party forgets its manifestoes and election promises after the elections.”<sup>42</sup> To quote an editorial of a local English daily ‘Freedom’ “In the Indian political jargon, manifesto means false promises. The poor people of Manipur have been dwelling in miseries for the last 45 years with false promise given by the corrupt and shrewd politicians to serve their personal ends . . . The people of Manipur had gone through this regime role in every elections in the state. The end result is the deep frustration among the oppressed and exploited people of Manipur. The lengthy political speeches by the powerful political leaders on these false promises could no more convince the people without translating these into actions. The manifesto has betrayed the political philosophy and ideological conviction of the power hungry losts.<sup>43</sup> Vinod Saighal said “Appeals and manifestoes are apparently not worth the paper they are written on.”<sup>44</sup> As soon as the election ended the parties used to forget what they have published in the manifestoes and what they have promised to the people during the” elections except money-making and guarding their seat of power. They give more importance to power struggle than implementation of their promises. Soon people experienced price-hike of essential commodities and other items; adding of draconian black laws; atrocities of the Army, Police, CRPF; large-scale corruption;

malpractice of administration; bandhs; strikes; killing of innocent peoples; damage and looting of public property and funds; unstable government followed by central rule; meaningless water supply; electricity; etc. Within time, legislators became frequent defectors over the formation of ministry; redefection; failure to observe strict party disciplines etc.

Though all the political parties issued election manifestoes, the electorate in general did not attached much importance to it. Nor did they influenced the voters in any way. In retrospect, these days people hardly gives any importance to election promises and manifestoes. Many a voter was blissfully ignorant of the manifestoes. Common man did not read the manifestoes. The educated section of the society viewed the election manifestoes as fantasies that will hardly come true in real life. Election promises always remained as promises though in some accidental cases few promises are implemented. Today it seems that, the people of Manipur have started realising the false slogans, promises, assurances etc., of the political parties made during the election period. We cannot think that the electorate was in any way influenced by the election manifestoes. Rather they have confidence in those leaders who have real practice rather than those who preach. In fact people longed for pragmatic leaders” who can do something genuine task for the state and its people. People would certainly exercise their franchise in favour of better candidates who are relatively less corrupt, more honest and more committed to peoples’ welfare and society. The electorates mostly exercised their franchise guided by extraneous factors.



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2. V.M. Sirsikar, "*Sovereigns Without Crowns*," Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1973, First Published, pp. 224-25.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27.
4. C.P. Bhambri, "*Introduction*" in N.K. Chowdhry, "*Assembly Elections 1993*," Shipra Publications, Delhi, First Published, 1994, p.6.
5. The Nagaland Assembly has not only taken already a decision to form a single administrative unit of Naga-inhabited areas contiguous to Nagaland state, active movements have also been carrying out for the formation of South Nagaland proposing to annex four districts of Manipur - Chandel, Ukhrul, Senapati and Tamenglong to Nagaland. During the JC - sponsored vehicles bandh on NH-39 and 53 in Manipur, Private Buses from Nagaland state known as 'South Nagaland' Bus Service' were plying upto Maram in Senapati district, Manipur. When the Nagaland Assembly adopted and passed the resolution for the creation of Greater Nagaland/South Nagaland, the' politicians in Manipur, particularly the Meitei politicians cried wolf. They claimed that not even an inch of Manipur territory will be ceded to Nagaland. If the Nagas are going and ready to sacrifice for a greater/free Nagaland, why not the Meiteis ready to sacrifice for the integrity of their homeland, despite Meitei's stand divided, weak, and distrustful amongst themselves.
6. Editorial, Imphal Recorder, English Daily, Imphal, 22 January 1995. See also Freedom, English Daily, Imphal, 26 January 1995. In a press statement, the AMSU also warned those to withdraw from their stand of breaking the unity and integrity of Manipur in order to maintain communal harmony which have existed since time immemorial. It said the people of Manipur have been protecting its integrity from time immemorial. During the time of historical kings and under his able administration in Manipur, it never troubled the hilly peoples. Let us today protect integrity of Manipur, it added.
7. See, Merger Agreement Context of Annexure - 8 made between the United Naga Integration Council (UNIC) and the Congress in August 1972.
8. In connection with the passing of the Private Member Bill move by the Opposition Leader, Vamuzo in the Nagaland Assembly on 19 September 1994, O. Joy Sing (MLA) General Secretary of MPP, in a Memorandum submitted to P.V. Narasima

Rao, Prime Minister of India, said that “taking advantage of the favourable atmosphere prepared by the said agreement (UNIC), the Congress MLAs openly supported a motion moved by Mr. Vamuzo leader of the opposition in the Nagaland Assembly on the 19th September 1994 for the creation of “Greater or Southern Nagaland” in terms of bringing all Naga inhabited areas in Manipur and Nagaland under a single administrative set up.”

O. Joy Singh said that the AICC-UNIC joint agreement of 4 August 1972 was a ‘blank cheque’ for the so-called “Naga Integration” which stands against the high ideals of national integration, harmony and unity professed by the AICC, a leading political organisation of the country. He said “the policy support” given by the AICC and MPCC to the process of formalisation of Naga Integration movement surprisingly opened a new hope for the emergence of a state within a state, perhaps unknown in the history of any civilised nation. He said the Nagaland Assembly resolution/move had indeed dismal future in all manifestations. This was to be guarded against. So, he urged the Prime Minister to have indulged in terms of magnanimous interventions -directing the Nagaland Assembly to withdraw the said resolution and declaring null and void the joint agreement for the merger of the UNIC with the All India Congress Party. He invited the attention of the P.M. to the deeper implication of the events as the unusual Nagaland resolution had aroused the wrath of the people. (See, *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 14 December 1994).

9. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 21 December 1994.
10. See the leaflet distributed by the Congress-I during the election, dated 29 January 1995, Imphal, published by General Secretary of MPCC-I.
11. *The Freedom*, English Daily, Imphal, 15 February 1995. But a statement was issued respectively by the All Naga Students’ Association, Manipur and the Zeliangrong Naga Union, that the Nagas of Manipur have nothing to do with the so-called South Nagaland, making a timely clarification on the misconception created in the minds of a cross-section of the people in the state.

Zeliangrong Naga Union, in a press released condemned ‘South Nagaland.’ It appealed to find out those who made the idea of ‘South Nagaland’ before the people. It also said such peoples who are trying to disintegrate the society are enemies. In a press release, the Maring Uparup Assembly of Maring Tribe also said the tribe does not know the word ‘South Nagaland’. The Assembly does not like it and also does not support it. It also condemned the term ‘South Nagaland.’

12. *Ibid.*, 1 & 2 February 1995.

13. The NSCN (M) faction guerrillas have been collecting heavy 'vehicles tax' (road tax) in thousands from the buses, trucks and oil tankers carrying essential food items and passengers plying along the National Highway No. 39 (Imphal -Dimapur Road), the vital lifeline of this land-locked state for the last few years (including from the National Highway No. 53, Imphal-Jiribam Road, the only alternative lifeline of Manipur). The collection of 'Road Tax' was followed by the imposition of "Goods Tax' for the commodities carried on this Highway. On the other hand, the vehicles had been plying on the Highways with the paying of road taxes by the owners to the underground outfits. The paying of 'road taxes' by the vehicles owners was a must as the outfits (Naga Insurgents) have taken complete control of the Highways (NH-39) despite security check-posts at vulnerable areas and the presence of huge number of Army, para-military forces and its security patrolling exercise. The collection of 'road tax and good tax' created extreme problems and difficulties to transport agencies. It was still going on with threats of dire consequences and physical harassment as if people were under two parallel governments. Besides the NSCN seized R.C. Book of vehicles who declined to pay roads and goods taxes. In fact, the collection of taxes from the vehicles by several underground outfits in the state have been a chronic headache for the transport operators. Anti socials too was taking undue advantage. It is, however, not only the NSCN that has been slapping taxes on the vehicles on National Highways. The iCuki militants also have been harassing vehicles on the NH-53 (Imphal-Jiribam Road). There have been also several cases of looting of trucks and buses and private vehicles and harassing of passengers along this Highways under the very nose of the security agencies (from the Imphal to Moreh Road too for a long time). (See also, *Eastern Panorama*, Shillong, March 1995, pp. 16,17).
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## **CHAPTER – IV**

*Campaign Method*

*Participation of Women,  
Mass Organisation in the Campaign*

*Role of the Mass Media; The Press etc.*

## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **CAMPAIGN METHOD**

#### **Participation of Women, Mass Organisations in the Campaign.**

#### **Role of the Mass Media; The Press etc.**

The election provides the opportunity for every contesting political party and candidate to organise a series of public/camera meeting, processions, postering etc., through which its policies and programmes are widely disseminated among the people. Besides, an election campaign provides to all the parties and candidates an opportunity for educating the people on public issues, policies and programmes without which the democratic process has no meaning. As such, canvassing in election, by adopting various methods and techniques of campaigning, is as much indispensable as the election is a must in a democracy. It is on the basis of the nature, technique and effectiveness of the communication of the campaigning processes that a party comes to power.

“In India, the period” between the last date for the withdrawal of candidatures and the day of the poll (it is a minimum period of twenty days) is devoted by the parties and candidates to electioneering in the form of public meetings, processions, posters and demonstrations. The basic purposes of electioneering is to enthuse and educate the electors. It acquires an added significance for India where voters have to be familiarised with the process and mechanism of polling. Therefore, our electoral law has made elaborate provision to ensure that an election campaign was, not vitiated by fraudulent and corrupt

practice or other electoral offences.”<sup>1</sup> Formally, the election campaign generally starts with the announcement of the election schedule. In the beginning the campaign starts with slow pace but gathers momentum as the polling day gets nearer and nearer. However, informally election canvassing starts long before the election schedule is announced and continues till the last moment of polling and employing various overt and covert methods and techniques by the political parties, their contesting candidates and campaigners to influence the choice of the voters. According to Richard Rose, “A Campaign is seen as a ‘feed back mechanism’ - a means of exchanging informations so that the views of the office-holders and electors can be mutually adjusted to the advantage of the electorate.”<sup>2</sup> D.N. Pathak pointed out that “campaign constitutes a vital phase of the electoral process. It arouses voter’s curiosity, identifies issues of debate, spreads informations, mobilises voters into the system,, helps their politicisation, facilitates voters’ choice and performs an educative function. Its major aims are to strengthen loyal voters, win as many as undecided voters as possible and convert or demoralise rival party supporters . . . Campaign also produce a greater degree of politicisation and involvement ultimately leading to political participation.”<sup>3</sup> Jangam said “canvassing means making sure of the required number of votes for the candidates. Negatively, it may mean minimising the number of votes for the rival or opposing’ candidates. The process of canvassing may be simple or direct. It may be complex or indirect. It may be short-range or long-range. The intensity of effectiveness of canvassing may Vary from context to context. The area of the expenses involved may also vary from context to context .... The means employed in the process of canvassing can vary from context to context . . . Various methods and techniques come into play. They may include a door-to-door campaign, a person-to person telephone, campaign, letter or telegram campaign,



use of leaflets, handbills, wall papers, posters, banners, placards, badges, buttons, emblems, stickers, models, newspaper, magazines, radio, television, meetings, rallies, bullock carts, truck, bicycle processions, etc.”<sup>4</sup> R.P. Singh gives a clear picture saying “Election campaign is a kind of strategy and tactics involving a two-way process in which, negatively, the adversaries or opposite party candidates are to be pulled down and given a smashing blow, and positively, to build up his success and emerge victorious. Each political party wants to established a positive image of itself and a negative one of demolition of opposition parties. This battle of ballots is a merciless competition in which one advance at the expenses of others. It has the appearance of a zero-sum game where pay off to all candidates or players add up to a constant sum. Winning of one must come out of the losses of others.”<sup>5</sup>

However, what particular medium would prove effective in this activation process, depends-on the nature of the constituency, level of literacy presence or absence of emotional issues etc.<sup>6</sup> In this regard “An election campaign is fed and sustained by propaganda carried or^by rival parties and candidates. Party propaganda is bound to be laudatory as its” very objective is to persuade the electors to vote in favour of a particular party or candidates.”<sup>7</sup> During the election campaigning period, ‘every ruling party has to defend its performance and every opposition party accused the ruling party for non-performance.”<sup>8</sup> In the process, as such, “during the election period the voters are under a constant barrage of propaganda carried on by the contesting parties. The voters, whether they like it or not, are exposed to this intensive campaigning. This exposure might be due to multiple sources.”<sup>9</sup>

The process of formal electioneering in the state for the sixth Assembly elections began with the announcement and issuance of election notifications by

the Election Commission of India. Altogether fourteen political parties, both National and Regional parties along with” a host of Independents, were in the electoral battle. The political parties were - Indian National Congress; Janata Dal; Janata Party; Bharatiya Janata Party; Communist Party of India; Communist Party of India (Marxist); Samata party (National); Manipur Peoples Party; Kuki National Assembly; Indian Congress (Socialist); Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya); National Peoples Party; Federal Party of Manipur and Manipur Hills People Council (Regional). The names of those sixty-six Independent candidates were Gouro Luwang, Mangi Singh (Heingang A/C); Bihari Singh, Randhir (Khurai A/C); Jalaluddin, Sanamacha Singh; Ibochou Singh (Keirao A/C); Angou Singh; Basir Ahmed (Andro A/C); Molecule Sharma; Bhubon Singh; Sakhitombi Devi (Singjamei A/C); Jitendra (Wangkhei A/C); Leirijao (Sekmai (SC) A/C); Shyamo Singh and Brajabidhu Singh in the countermanded Lamsang Assembly constituency; Indrajit (Patsoi A/C); Gopal, Mukhai, (Langthabal A/C); Lanngam, Priyokumar Singh; Ibochouba Sharma (Naoriya Pakhanglakpa A/C); Abdul Salam; (Mayang Imphal A/C); Tomba (Oinam A/C); Mangi (Bishnupur A/C); Bir (Moirang A/C); Manimohon (Kumbi A/C); Ibopishak Singh (Thoubal A/C); Borchandra Singh; Krishnadas (Heirok A/C); Ibomcha (Wangjing Tentha); Md. Fajnurahman, Sidik Ali (Wabagai A/C); Ibomcha Singh (Hiyanglam A/C); Biren (Jiribam A/C); Jangkhopao; St. Kolari Anal (Chandel (ST) A/C); Silanki Chothe (Tengnoupal (ST) A/C); M.C. Leishisan (Phungyar (ST) A/C); S. Kapow, Khathing (Chingai (ST) A/C); John L. Kilong (Saikul (ST) A/C); S.P. Henry (Karong (ST) A/C); Solomon Veino (Kangpokpi A/C); Alar Thoitak; Thomas (Saitu (ST) A/C); D.P. Panmei (Tamei (ST) A/C); G. Mukunga Rongmei (Tamenglong (ST) A/C); Doukholun, Liankhogin, Lunkhohao, S.L. Mawia, Muana, Nohkhopao, Satpi, C. Thang (Thanlon (ST) A/C); Lalsiemthang (Henglep

(ST) A/C); Chinsuanlam, Lumkhornang, Nehkholet, Paokhogin, Paokhomang, Tongkhodao (Churachandpur (ST) A/C) and Henjakhup, P. Khupzapou, K. William (Saikot (ST) A/C).<sup>10</sup>

When the sixth Assembly election were held in the state, the Election Commission of India had enforced a revised Model Code of Conduct for the candidates and their parties to ensure free and fair elections. When trying to ensure a free and fair election, the Model Code of Conduct for the ensuing elections changed the entire spectrum of the political atmosphere in the state. The model code of conduct observed by the candidates and parties to a great extent, toned down the election campaign tempo in the state. The old style of electioneering campaign in the state had to some extent become obsolete with the introduction of the code of conduct, thereby adopting latest campaigning methods by the candidates and their parties. As such, there was a change in the campaigning methods of the candidates and political parties. They, in most cases, could not canvass openly like in the previous Assembly elections. There was also clandestine and silent campaigning in the night time. Campaigning by the contesting candidates with their large followers and supporter during day time was hardly seen and witnessed. The candidates mainly of the opposition parties (Parties which are not in the ruling party) feared of free movement for campaigning here and there unlike the previous elections. Not only the candidates, even their workers and supporters also could not canvass openly as there were reports of beating, kidnapping and shooting by the rival candidates and their men. Only some days ahead of the polling dates, two political leaders (one was a candidate of the MPP) were gunned down by some unidentified armed men. This is mainly, apart from the enforcement of a revised model code of conduct, due to the worse law and

order situation in the state. The killing of two leaders caused panic not only to the contesting candidates but also to their workers, supporters and the people in general.

Candidates hardly addressed public meetings, which needed prior permission from the concerned Deputy Commissioners. Because of the Election Commission's restrictions on expenditure, posters and banners were conspicuous by the absence when compared with that of the previous Assembly elections in the state. Moreover, there had been absence of a large number of cut outs, graffiti and symbols. A few thousand pamphlets, cut-outs, flags, symbols, posters, and a few score street corner, camera and public meetings had been the feature of the sixth Assembly elections. Walls, both the government and private, were plastered with posters, symbols, painted slogans etc. However, implementing the model code of conduct became a fetish, and in many areas/ constituencies posters were ripped off, walls whitewashed, flags removed and the contesting candidates cautioned. In brief, posters, loudspeakers, banners etc. were absent keeping in mind the Election Commission's restrictions. Campaigning on personal attacks lowered in this election. Though there was outward calmness during the campaigning but the under current of the election was not lost at all. As such the election campaigning during the sixth Assembly elections in Manipur was an unprecedented new experience, never seen in the previous Assembly elections in the state.

Even though campaigning in the state was, by and large, in a low profile because of the strict imposition of code of conduct, electioneering this time was marked with unprecedented heavy rush of top party leaders from the Centre, never seen earlier in the state, in order to strengthen their respective parties. The central leaders of different parties included the All India BJP President L.K. Advani,

Kavindra Purkyastha (member of BJP National Executive), K.B. Thakre (All India General Secretary of BJP); K.R. Malkani of BJP; the CPI leader Indrajit Gupta (General Secretary of CPI); A.B. Bardhan (All India General Secretary, CPI); the newly formed All India Samata Party Chief George Fernandes, Dr. Shambhu Shrivastava, Shahabuddin Shah, Jaya Jaitley of Samata Party Janata Dal leaders such as the former Prime Minister V.P. Singh and All India Janata Dal president S.R. Bommai (MP). Besides the political heavyweights of the Congress-I party were also at Imphal for massive scale of electioneering to consolidate the shaky position of the party. The party's campaigners included Rajesh Pilot (The Union Minister of State for Home, Internal Security, who mixed up official tours to assess the law and order situation in the state on the eve of the polls with electioneering campaign); P.M. Sayeed (Union Minister); and M.M. Jacob (The former Union Minister of State for Home) - both were deputed as the Special Central Congress-I observers in Manipur for the Assembly polls and Sushilkumar Shinde (General Secretary-in-charge of Manipur). No campaigner for the Janata Party, CPI (M); Congress (S); Samajwadi Janata Party (Rastriya); MPP; Kuki National Assembly; National Peoples Party; MHPC and Federal Party of Manipur, came from outside the State/Centre for campaigning in the state. However, A. Achuni, President of SJP Nagaland unit came to the state in favour of the W. Tomcha Group of SJP (R) Manipur unit.<sup>11</sup> The central leaders launched massive scale of election campaign. The heavy rush of the central leaders changed the election scenario in the state drastically in a big way.

Despite the enforcement of the revised model code of conduct and worsening law and order situation in the state, the State Assembly election of 1995 witnessed very active campaigning by all the political parties and their contesting

candidates including the Independents in the election fray. As soon as the electioneering process has started and election date was knocking at the door, campaigning was slowly and gradually picking up in the state. Since election canvassing is the most important aspect of an election; the parties and candidates went for all out efforts for campaign. They undertook the task of the political education of the electorates involving various procedures; Communications techniques by which one can affect or influences another. Soon the electioneering tempo gained momentum in the state as the candidates, their workers, agents, supporters, campaign managers, friends made all possible efforts to mobilise the voters in various ways in order to get the largest number of votes in their favour. In the process hectic election campaigning was in full-swing throughout the state. The contesting parties and candidates indulged in cut-throat competition. Election propaganda was carried out with<sup>1</sup> all out allegations and counter-allegations amongst the rival parties and candidates.

Condition in the state during the February 1995 election were not much different from the previous elections. The party line and the election campaigning was sharply divided between the lone India National Congress on the one hand and the remaining non-Congress thirteen political parties in the state on the other group despite the latter's fragmented and disunited attempt to dislodge the Congress from the saddle, of power. It was projected as a contest and fight between the lone Congress-I party on the one hand and the MPP along with other opposition parties on the other side. As before Congress-I Was the lone party facing the challenges and attacks of the opposition parties trying to break the Congress image and its dominance. They rallied round the banner of anti-congressism. Among the opposition parties there was not a formal common platform of consensus. They did

not forged a pre-poll alliance or front system. None of the parties as opposition partners was cohesive. They were superficially together and unanimous in their attack entirely motivated by the common interest of defeating the Congress party in the electoral battle. The real power struggle was, however, between the ruling Congress-I and the MPP. The election was fiercely competitive between the two parties. So the 'opposition groups' was aggressive/offensive by raising anti-Congress sensitive slogans instigating ethnic affinities and dimensions, partisan appeals while the Congress was on the defensive line of position. (There was cut-throat competition between the Congress and the MPP in particular. There was close contest between the two parties. Both the parties were the main contenders for power.

A very peculiar feature of the sixth Assembly elections in Manipur was that of the anti-Congress-I wave in the state but more particularly in the plains. During the electioneering period, the anti-Congress wave was sweeping and escalating day by day gradually. The news of an anti-Congress wave was fabricated by the protagonists of the non-Congress parties. The popularity of the Congress party was in the wane.

During the sixth state Assembly elections, the contesting political parties and candidates adopted all sorts of formal and informal campaigning methods which are usually adopted and practised in the rest of the country in order to attract the electorates in their favour. In this election, however, some of the prevailing formal campaigning methods were used in lesser degrees. But the other conventional means of campaigning such as public meetings; camera meetings; door to door campaigning; propaganda on loudspeaker etc., as adopted in the previous elections were also mostly in practice by the parties and candidates in the

state. To get the desired election result by influencing the electorates, the contesting candidates and their parties and supporters required all the components of resources and tactical processes to be at hand, in order to communicate, guide, and educate the electorates thereby influencing their conduct and behaviour towards the goal of winning it.

During the electioneering process, particularly the MPP vigorously played upon local issues, sentiments and grievances. Rather regionalism and territorial integrity of the state was worked up by the opposition parties. In fact, issues and problems of direct local concern were pin-pointed and harrnered at by the opposition/non-Congress parties. Though there were national parties in the state, no doubt, all parties paid their attention to local issues, problems etc. concerning the state. Ideology did not play much an active role as mobilising force during the campaigning period. The opposition campaign and strategy were to criticise the ruling Congress-I party by emphasising the local issues. In this election, it seemed that people were swayed by local issues. Since the last part of 1994, the opposition parties have been trying to dislodge the Rishang led ministry as well as to defeat the Congress-I in the February 1995 elections. Though there was no formal alliance among the opposition parties except the electoral understanding made between the three parties - CPI, CPI (M) and Janata Dal, they were cohesive in their stand of defeating the Congress-I party.

The unity of the community, the territorial integrity of the state and its protection constituted the focal point of appeal during the course of campaign. Almost all the parties gave their prime importance to the territorial integrity of the state as the integrity of Manipur had been threatened by the notion of "South Nagaland" when the Nagaland Assembly, corresponding to that effect, passed a



resolution in September 1994 to amalgamate and keep all the adjoining/ contiguous Naga inhabited areas/territories under one “Administrative unit” of Nagaland Government. The style of election campaigning was also, very much influenced by the acute scarcity and shortage of the essential commodities in Manipur due to the 42-day long JAC- sponsored Manipur Truck owner/ operators strike on the National Highway No. 39 (Imphal - Dimapur Road) protesting against the imposition and collection of illegal “Vehicles and goods taxes” from the vehicles plying along this Highway by the NSCN (M) faction. These issues which became prime electoral issues in the state drew state-wide alarming attention, reaching its peak nearly to ethnic clashes in the state between the Meiteis and the Manipuri Nagas.

The larger parties like Congress-I and MPP even the JD along with CPI and CPI-M aimed at bagging larger number of Assembly Seats and moved into the corridors of power. The other smaller opposition parties strongly felt that Manipur was invariably heading for a coalition government because no party, according to their estimate, was going to have an absolute majority. The calculation of the smaller parties was that as no party will get an overall majority, this will give an opportunity to them to play a decisive role in the politics of coalition. So, they wanted to make their presence felt and if the election results favour them marginally with a few seats, they might also move towards the bargaining counter of the coalition politics playing a significant role. Thus, these smaller parties like Samata Party, KNA etc. were banking upon the voters on the pretext of emerging a coalition government after the election. The political parties in the state, thus, entered into the election fray with a wide and complex spectra of choice and alternative to the electorates.

The non-Congress opposition parties in their attack upon the ruling Congress-I party said “The present Congress-I government headed by Rishang Keishing is the worst and Change it for a peoples’ government and also for a corruptless one.” It appealed the electorates to have test of such an alternative government after the polls which can bring developmental programmes in the state. They raised their voice in denouncing the Congress party as corrupt, selfish and charged the Congress party for selling out the future of Manipur and for exploiting and oppressing the innocent people in utter political chaos.

The Manipur Peoples Party, the most powerful regional political outfit in the state and also the only rival party to Congress-I in the election, wanted to destroy the image of the Congress by attacking the party. The MPP mobilised the people to inhibit anti-Congress feeling among the electorates alleging the Congress party for corruption, bribery, and nepotism, for its past misdeeds of selling out a large territory of the Manipur state by signing merger agreement with the United Naga Integration Council (UNIC) in August 1972. In fact, the party identified issues and strategies in order to suit the prevailing political scenario in Manipur and gave priority to it to draw sympathy to the party. As such the party harped upon the sentimental local issues of the state.

In the process, the party revived the UNIC-Congress Agreement of August 1972 and the issue of South/Greater Nagaland thereby appealed the people of Manipur to protect the territorial Integrity of Manipur. The party also highlighted the historical background of Manipur. It gave emphasis on maintaining independent character, distinct identity and culture of Manipur thereby propagating review of the Merger Agreement of Manipur into the Indian Union in 1949. The party also said the centre should not redemarcate and change the territory of

Manipur without the consent of the state. It also appealed to maintain communal harmony and hill-plain relations as well as to protect interest of Manipur. It said, Manipur is a neglected state by the centre. The MPP leader R.K. Ranbir Singh said “Centre takes only the Naga issues but not that of Manipur’s issues”. The MPP also demanded to announce “General Amnesty” to the insurgents. The party said the restrictions being placed upon the underground outfits should be removed in order to keep peace in Manipur. It also, said to make arrangements to bring negotiations with the outfits through political means. In a press note, President of MPP Shri Y. Yaima Singh (MP Lok Sabha) demanded that general amnesty be granted to the underground rebels and way be paved for a political dialogue through a political solution, restrictions on the armed youths be removed to create a way for an agreement with the government through the political door and emphasized such an approach could bring about peace and a stable society in Manipur. These propaganda on sentimental local issues had appealing effects particularly to the youths and the Meitei community in the state.

Apart from others, the main strategy of the ruling Congress-I party was to counter the attack of the Manipur Peoples Party and other opposition parties on the issues of South Nagaland; UNIC-Congress Agreement; protection of territorial integrity of Manipur; JAC-sponsored transporters’ strike on National Highways as instigated by MPP and CPI. Besides, the party was, as usual, rather on the defensive line/position in trying to clarify the voters against the charges levelled by opposition parties such as corruption; price rise; slow pace of developments in the state etc. The Congress party, in its efforts to counter-attack the opposition on these issues, also advocated and gave importance to the same issues like protection of territorial integrity of Manipur, repairing of National Highway No. 53 to

become life line of the state instead of NH-39, Karong Railway etc. These became the main election plank of the Congress-I during the campaigning. The party defended its position by giving an account of its past performances. In replication, Congress leaders clarified that the agreement with UNIC in 1972 was just a merger agreement of the UNIC to the Congress. There was no such terms in the agreement accepting the partition of the state of Manipur or giving away a part of the state to anybody. The strategy of the Congress party was to build up “its image by saying that the party does not support any Homeland demand such as South Nagaland, Kuki Homeland and Zeliangrong Homeland” that may disintegrate Manipur. Chief Minister Rishang Keishang said “There is no demand such as “South Nagaland”. The state government has banned the booklet ‘Why not South Nagaland’ on 21 April, 1989. The government will take legal actions if found publication of its content. It is very injustice to create misunderstanding about South Nagaland and communal feelings in Manipur between the hills and the plains. Rishang said the efforts of MPP to afloat anti-Congress wave in alliance with other anti-Congress opposition parties, charging Congress-I as trying to disintegrate Manipur into pieces and causing artificial price-hike in alliance/ conspired with JAC to blame the Government, have been unsuccessful. Rishang said “MPP is like a mad dog now biting people at sight as their position is worsening day by day” as the election was drawing nearer and nearer. The Congress party promised to protect the unity and integrity of Manipur and to face any attempts and forces to break up Manipur.

The state BJP Unit charged the Congress-I for causing economic insolvency, corruption, underdevelopment, unemployment and failure of law and order situation in Manipur. It appealed the people of Manipur to vote without any fear so that Congress-I would be routed from the state. It also appealed to elect the

real candidates of good parties. But the BJP was the only party that strongly criticised both the Congress-I and the MPP. The BJP in its election campaign *m* the All India Radio, Imphal on 10 Feb. said “The Congress-I and the MPP is trying to tear and disintegrated Manipur into pieces.” In a press release on 18 February, one day ahead of the polling schedule in the valley, BJP Manipur said, “the people of Manipur have tried Congress-I as, well as MPP led coalition government. All of them have proved a great disaster for Manipur.. It is the time the people of Manipur test BJP and give a chance to their good and clean candidates.”

The BJP Chief L.K., Advani while he was a Imphal to assess his party's position after the gunning down of the state unit BJP leader Madhumangol Sharma, addressed four public meetings at Akampat, Yumnam Leikai, Dharmasala and at the residence of the Patsoi Assembly constituency BJP candidate at Tera as a part of his party's election campaign..In his election meetings, Advani assured the people that he would fight and his party would also work for the transfer of Assam Rifles from the Manipur's sacred Palace 'Kangla'. He said it is a much to transfer it somewhere. He said the emergence of insurgency movement in some states of India including Manipur is due to increase in the number of educated unemployed youths. To maintain national integrity; to restrict and check corruption; to keep intact the Unity and integrity of Manipur territory; to solve the unemployment problem etc., he appealed to give vote to BJP candidates.

During his sojourn at Imphal, in a press Conference, Advani said “I do not support South Nagaland and do not agree with any homeland idea.” He only recognised the taxes levied by the Government and not that of the tax collected by the NSCN on National” Highways. In order to solve the insurgency problem in Manipur peacefully, he drew the attention of the Government of India to look into

the problem and insisted on having a proper management of internal affairs, opening up of employment avenues and inculcate the spirit of nationalism. Advani said though militancy is a serious problem, human rights should not be trampled . Advani charged the MPP leaders as pseudo-Congress. He considered the illegal immigrants from Bangladesh as the vote-banks of the Congress-I.

A joint-press release issued by Wahengbam Tomcha Singh (President); G. Phulkeshwar Sharma (General Secretary) of SJP, Manipur (Tomcha faction) and A. Achumi, President of SJP Nagaland stated that the problems like ethnic riots, state boundaries, disputes among the sister-states in the north-eastern region of India particularly in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland could be solved politically only when people uprooted. completely the Congress from this region.

While the Samajwadi Janata party, Manipur Unit (Jane Group) in its statement, said that the loss of Manipur territory, fear of communal problems to the people etc., are due to misuse of political power by the Congress-I party. The party said, no party other than SJP (R) is having agricultural policy. It is only this party that formulates agricultural policy in the country for the first time. The party said a stable society is needed first to a stable government since the stability in government is automatic as and when a strong and stable society exists in the state. The party strongly rejected when other parties campaign with slogans for a stable government without considering the existing social set up. It campaigned to reach the message of this stable society to the electorates propagating through various medias, meeting, poster etc.

The CPI entered the electoral battle on the slogans and issues to remove communal party and defeat communal forces like BJP; to dislodge Congress

ministry from power; to fight instability in the state etc. The party tried to isolate its

main enemy communalism and corruption from the society. It said Congress is a party of “middle class”; BJP of “upper class” and MPP “for middle class.” Since CPI is the party of the labour classes of people, it appealed to “strengthen the party to save and protect them.” It said to know “friend” and “enemy” and not to believe in Congress, MPP etc. It appealed to give vote “to those who can bring communal harmony, balanced development etc.

The CPI leader Indrajit Gupta was also campaigning for his party at Imphal. While addressing election meetings, he told the people to vote for any party except for Congress-I and BJP. In a Press Conference on 10 February at hotel Excellency, Imphal, he said reporters that his party would do better definitely than the last assembly elections in 1990 in which the CPI got three seats. He said Congress-I is the enemy of the CPI. The only resolution of the CPI is to defeat BJP and Congress-I throughout India. Gupta ruled out any tieing up with the BJP and Congress-I. He added the Chief Ministers in the states are the puppets of Congress-I High Command. %He considered his party CPI as a very disciplined group, not a defector’s party. He said a government without CPI can never be stable because CPI is not a party of ‘defectors’, but a party that wants stability. CPI wants to be in power and we do not like to sit in the opposition always. With our discipline, we can have a good share in ruling the state. If you keep the Communist out, no party can last long. Gupta said there will be a coalition government without Congress at the Centre and Manipur. He firmly said CPFs aim is to oust the Congress-I, and said no party will get majority in the election.

The CPI (M) was also anti-BJP and anti-Congress. The party directly . charged the ruling Congress-I government as responsible for the day by day deteriorating situation in Manipur.

The party said there are three issues before us in this election. They are (1) anti-people policy of Congress-I and National Highways controlled by Naga underground; (2) opportunist policy of MPPs Kuki-Naga divide and (3) forces of left, Secular and Democratic to protect unity and territorial integrity of Manipur.

The KNA party was also banking upon the Kuki voters and the party said KNA is the only regional political party for the Kukis. It stands for Kuki community and for their prosperity and progress. So vote to KNA. If you elect KNA candidates, they will participate in coalition government and will do developmental programmes for the people. There will be communal harmony. The party will remove the problems in the hills and, solve other problems too. It will do for the advancement of the Kukis. If not elected even a candidate of KNA and not able to come to power, the Kukis in the hills may face various problems.

The Manipur Hill Peoples Council, while campaigning, gave major emphasis on saving/protecting the interest of the hill peoples.

Such parties banked upon the traditional loyalty of their respective tribes as the tribal Chiefs and their councils could, play major decisive roles. In fact, these parties tried to form “vote-bank” on the line of communal feelings by injecting sensitive slogans which are quite sentimental to the people.

The newly formed Samata Party said Manipur is totally neglected state by the central Government of Narasimha Rao in terms of giving due share to Manipur. The party was banking upon the minority protection. The party demanded formation of “Minority Commission” to protect minorities. It said protection of historical monuments should be done under the Historical Monument



Act. The party was vocal strongly in removing black laws from Manipur such as TAD A, Armed Forces Special Power Act. The Government never passed bill/laws in the State Assembly to recommend the removal of such black laws from the state. The party did not consider “Extremists” in the state as “Insurgents” or “Revolutionaries”. It said, they became extremists due to disappointment. Negotiations and direct talks across the table should be done to bring resolution to the problem. The party, besides maintaining and protecting the territorial integrity of Manipur, strongly mentioned the need to find out the original Map of Manipur which has existed since time immemorial. While launching his election campaign, Kh. Angangjao Singh, Chairman Parliamentary Board, Manipur State Unit of Samata Party and also party candidate in Sekmai (SC) reserved constituency said “though MPP claims to be a local party, it aligns with national parties like the Congress-I after elections. MPP cannot prove that it has done for the welfare of the people. MPP never did. developmental programmes for Manipur. The party just bluffed the people by sensitising on local issues.” He also levelled charges against the Congress Party. He said “most central Congress-I leaders are scandal - related ones. So it is a corrupt party. Congress, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru sold out Manipur territory at Kabaw valley. Congress Naga MLAs refused to sign the protection of territorial integrity of Manipur. Congress party aligns with NSCN(M) that controls Manipur’s lifeline. During Congress regime, Kuki-Naga clash began, even supplying uniform to the Kuki outfits. He said the non-transferring of Assam Rifles from the Manipur’s sacred palace “Kangla” is due to the (State) Government’s inability to give the “Compensation” to Assam Rifles. He also criticised both the CPI and CPI-M by saying that “though both the parties in the election manifestoes criticised Congress as corrupted, after election they supported Congress at the centre. It said, coalition government will come in Manipur. The SP

will also be a partner in the government if formed by non-Congress parties, will support the government from outside, if accepted their policies and programmes. The party will do and work for the people.

George Fernandes, MP, the veteran Socialist leader, president and the main campaigner of the newly formed All India Samata Party was also at Imphal campaigning for his party. He addressed public meeting at Gandhi Memorial Hall, Shamurou, Sekmai, Thangmeiband and Nagalong Ground, Ukhrul. During his brief sojourn in Imphal for launching the election campaign of his party, he addressed a press conference on the statehood day of Manipur, in the conference hall of the State Guest House, Imphal. While addressing the press conference, George said, Manipur is the most neglected state in India. Manipur does not exist for India, and is not in the minds of the people in power at the centre, for which George criticised and blamed New Delhi. He added total negligence of Manipur by the centre in every front and corruption, and non-development are the major problems in the state. He said not only neglected by New Delhi, those central leaders in power do not think for Manipur resulting in drug addiction, AIDS infection, and involving in insurgency activities. He mentioned Manipur's share of investment from the centre during the Five Year Plan as only 0.32 percent so far, while in the coming year as zero percent, and total deposit in Banks of Manipur till march 1994 was only 126 crores of rupees including government's deposits which is even less than the deposit of a Co-operative Bank of Trade Union in Bombay. George highlighted the rampant corruption, scandals, scams of the Congress-I right from the High Command down the lowest party hierarchy. He branded the Congress-I party as the mother of all corruption' in India and New Delhi to be the fountain head of corruption. He cited Supreme Court findings on the famous Hawala Money Scandal Charging Congress-I, BJP and JD for involving in it in sharing the

percentage of the foreign money in terms of crores of rupees. He charged Congress-I for the present state of affairs in Manipur and did not spare politicians and the party leaders of Manipur for being the co-conspirators of corruption in the state. He lamented that because of their Character, they have been all the time easily blackmailing the central leaders and they were also in the habit of selling and buying of MLAs, MPs for capturing power. He added, week youth in Manipur take on to drugs and many take up arms due to various problems and implications of foreigners issue in the north-east including Manipur as very serious. He said his party would put up about 30 to 40 candidates to fight the electoral battle and confident of the formation of a coalition government in which his party would not tie up with Congress-I in any circumstances. George said, "In North-East including Manipur most of the insurgencies has political parentage" and his party is for talks with the insurgents without any preconditions. So he was not surprised to learn . about the involvement of some outfits in the Assembly elections particularly helping the Congress-I candidates. He said "let us sit and talk on what to talk" and situation is worst in north-east than Kashmir. George was very critical about the role of Central Government in the north-east, particularly in Manipur and said in the last 47 years, corruption and mishandling of various issues made the people more frustrated with no trust in the system. To bring solution to the problem, he said those (both central and the state leaders) responsible for the present day affairs in Manipur should be put in jails and released all those who are now in jails; who are the victims of them. He said due to failure of the Indian government to solve the long insurgency problem, law and order situation in Manipur is worst. To improve the klw and order situation, there should be negotiation without any condition between the government and insurgents. He added the present situation is created by the misrule in the last 47 years. On the issue of economic

development, he charged the Centre for neglecting the area totally. He said all the money of the state are siphoned off outside and Centre always gives an excuse of marketing problem. He said “government is the biggest criminal” and also told the pressmen that smuggling in the state is done with government’s patronage. He added, “Congress is facing a defeat here” and hope the formation of a non-Congress coalition government after the results were out. He said his party is ready to join hands with other parties except Congress-I to form a coalition government. The MP and Deputy Leader, of the Samata Party in Parliament and also noted minority leader Sayed Sahabuddin was also campaigning for his party in the Assembly constituencies of Thoubal, Moijing, Andro, Wangkliem, Poubitek, Wangoi, dominated by Muslim voters. He condemned strongly and asserted the assassination of Madhumangol Sharma of B JP and M. Deven Singh of MPP as a political assassination. With a confidence of winning majority of the seats it put up, his party mobilised support by suggesting unconditional dialogues with the ; underground outfits operating in the region, being the top priority of the party as the only strategy and way towards solution.

The Janata Dal said the party has heard a “whispering campaign” from both the MPP and Congress-I workers that “Congress-I for the Nagas and MPP for the Kukis” in their attempt to garner votes. The party opposed such propaganda. It said JD stood for all the communities in the state . . . minority and backward class as well as for all weaker sections in the society. The party is for both the Kukis and the Nagas. It charged the Rishang Keishing ministry as not trying to solve the Kuki-Naga clash. The party said the Keishing ministry and his Congress-I party still deny the UNIC - Congress Agreement of August 1972 to the people. The people of Manipur would not accept the Agreement . . . While the party also

protested the Nagaland Assembly Bill passed in September 1989, taking it as unconstitutional and wrong step towards creating interstate conflict. The party said

“Right to work” should become a “Fundamental Right.” In that regard the government should arrange and provide necessary opportunities, requirement etc.,

to those who come out for any job/self employment in any trade as his own profession. Opportunities should be provided by the state. The party strongly voiced to protect territorial boundary of Manipur and to save even an inch of land of the state. The JD said by taking the national political Scenario, there is possibility of a national Front/left from government next at the centre led by JD. And so also the emergence of a JD led Democratic and left ministry in the state. It appealed the people to vote to JD.

The Janata Dal central leaders were also trying to make a big gain in the election addressing public meetings at different important areas like Palace Ground, Kakching, Moirang etc., of the state. Janata Dal Presidents S.R. Bommai was in Imphal not only in connection with the Assembly election in the state but also to examine the current law and order situation in the North East. Addressing a public meeting at Palace Ground, Imphal, which the state party leaders described it as a “Great Meeting,” the JD President S.R. Bommai Said” the other name of Congress Party is corruption. Corruption means Congress and Congress means corruption.” Bommai said for the last forty years in power, Congress has done nothing. The present Rao government has also done nothing except corruption, citing scandals involving his government in the share purchase scandals in terms of crores of rupees. He said congress is just like “Cancer germ” BJP is almost the same with Congress party, both are the two sides of the same coin. BJP is a communal force while the Congress is corrupted force. Therefore, the two parties

should be wiped out from this country. In Manipur, the MPP is also a corrupt party. So instead of giving votes to such parties, vote to Janata Dal. Bommai said after the present immoral and puppet government in Manipur, a coalition government of JD will emerge in Manipur. V.P. Singh said “there is a loud speaker in every state where the Prime Minister will announce the change or imposition of a new Chief Minister in seconds.” He was particularly apprehensive about the manner in which a Congress-I ministry had been installed in Manipur on 13 December 1994. He said a popular Chief Minister is to be elected by the people, not that kind of Chief Minister coming from the Letter Box. Now-a-days CM is just like Calendar, appointed from Delhi. In Manipur too a new CM has been appointed from Delhi. Manipur CM is just like Loud Speaker, Speaking on microphone from Delhi and hearing in the speaker in Manipur, almost the same. This is the manner of the Congress government. If the JD comes to power, in opposite, speaking from Manipur will hear at Delhi. He said the corrupt Congress government of Rao is declining day by day. In polls, Congress had been defeated in many states. In the Lok Sabha elections too, it will be defeated almost. This will bring a change at the centre, Goming a National or Left-Front government. Therefore, in Manipur too in order to form a JD and left front government, give vote to JD; V.P. Singh appealed the public. They were confident of forming a coalition government of the JD after the polls. In a press meet, V.P. Singh said “secessionist movement in different parts of Manipur is the result of centralised administration.” If the unity of India is to protect, more powers are to be given to states, only then true federation could be maintained throughout. He said during the long Congress administration, Indian federal structure had been lost gradually. Congress tries to maintain a unitary system controlled by the centre. From such administrative system and governance, various states in India have lost their

identity, not only that centre also neglected them creating repentance for it. He added, during his Prime Ministership, on the basis of Sarkaria Commission, he tried to re-evaluate centre-state relations and to, give more powers to states. He said the existence of communal ideas among different communities in North East is the liking of Congress party. The party President Bommai said the targets of JD are -division of political and economic powers, true federalism and to bring social justice.

A novel type of campaigning method was seen with the newly formed Federal party of Manipur. The party entered the electoral battle banking on some basic issues like federalism, autonomy, self government, protection of different identities etc. The party said “Federalism is the need of the hour.” The party aims at the restructuring of the Indian polity on federal principles. It demanded full autonomy for Manipur state and other states in order to retain a ‘dignified place’ in the Indian Republic. As such the party demanded restructuring of the related federal provisions contained in the Constitution, and abolition of Articles 356 to restrict central intervention in the states to suit the interests of the ruling party in the centre. The party also proposes negotiation for solution of revolutionary movement in the state, demanded shifting of “Assam Rifles” from ‘Kangla’ preservation of the territorial integrity of Manipur state and the unity of her people etc.

The NPP proposes the increase in the number of members to the Lok Sabha from two to three members. It said their terms should not be more than twice or thrice. It also demanded simultaneous election of both the Parliament and Assembly in February or March. The party also supported integrity of Manipur thereby condemning the Nagaland Bill passed in September 1994.

The Janata Party was totally against any homeland demand that may disintegrate Manipur. It said, the party has been protecting integrity of Manipur but the activities of regional parties/communal forces have been breaking the integrity of the state. Some persons have been trying to break the integrity of Manipur and to create disorder in the state. As a result it may lead to the disintegration of the state and communal clash. The Janata Party blamed such attempts and stoutly opposed to it as their activities are meant for breaking the state. The party stands that the territorial map of the state should not be hurt at all. The party assured that it will try to obstruct violence in the hills due to (Kuki-Naga) communal clash. The party promised to protect Human Rights and to remove draconian laws operating in the state like TADA, Armed Forces Special Power Act, etc., that harm and curtail the peoples' democratic rights. Steps will be taken for decentralisation of more power to the states by the centre. It said more power, particularly financial powers, should be given to Panchayats/other local bodies like Town Committee, Municipality; to provide district autonomy; • and to' set up District Councils in the hills as per sixth schedule of the constitution of India, as accepted by the Legislative Assembly of Manipur. The party is to promote Khadi and Village Industries, solve unemployment problems with a 'Master Plan' and to solve insurgency problem immediately through negotiations with underground organisations in order to bring normalcy in law and order situation in the state. It said, the goal of Janata Party is to keep an ideal government/administration that may bring welfare to the people by removing corruption, violence, maladministration etc., and a lasting civilised society considering for the future generations. The party appealed the electorates to entrust the political power by giving votes after due considerations of the party's policies and programmes, its philosophies.

The Congress-S said no distinction • should be made between the different communities and religions. The country should be regarded as one from the point of



view of the religion and community. It said poverty should be eradicated and corruption be rooted out by taking but appropriate measures such as establishment of industries suitable to the soil of the state and prone to the viability. The party pledged not merely a replacement of one set of rules by the other, but an alternative model of governance, based on federalism, and decentralisation, institutional accountability, economic equality and social justice, human rights, freedom of communication and access to information for all citizens and a responsive and responsible administration, and through all this ensure the dignity of both the individual citizen and the nation. The party committed to upholding the nation's honour and democratic values, promoting the ideal of secularism and ushering in a new social economic order based on equality and justice.

### **Participation of women and mass organisations in the campaign**

The participation of women and the mass organisation in the election campaigning of the state was, no doubt, minimal. However, despite its negative aspects and their lack of active participation, we noticed that they did involve and participate in the election campaigning. Hundreds of womenfolk joined the (public) rallies organised by respective political parties and the public meeting arranged by the contesting candidates. Despite various restrictions being placed upon their free movement mainly after dark (particularly in the valley), they even attended camera meetings, public meetings etc. held in different parts/areas of the respective Assembly constituencies during night time. They also participated in the campaign launched by their respective candidates; went door to door canvassing along with the candidates. Sometimes, in some constituencies, we noticed women taking the leading role in the campaigning task. They were very keen and vocal also in supporting their candidates to retain the seat. Even quarrels between the women supporters of rival candidates occurred. During the absence of the candidates and his/her campaign manager, agents etc., we find them canvassing clandestinely from house to house for their candidates,

with a strong desire to win the election. Sometimes they were more keen than the menfolk. The womenfolk even lined up in queue earlier than the menfolk on polling days to exercise their franchise. Mainly on the 'Flag Hoisting Day' at the residence/house of the candidate, they use to go in groups to present/offer *Athenpot* to the candidate also a show of their strong support to the candidate. For the purpose, they collected small contributions from amongst themselves to buy rice, sugar, milk (powder), varieties of vegetables etc. If the contestant is a male candidate, his wife takes a major role during the campaigning days. She will try to meet electors here and there to pacify them and console, attend customary function, marriage/death ceremonies etc., to gain popularity and to catch votes too.

In addition, there were a number of voluntary organisations (local clubs) and women organisations like 'Meira Paibis' particularly in the valley involving in the electoral process though their participation was not in large scale. The parties and the candidates tried to enlist their support which can mobilise the voter during the elections. Political leader tried to influence them by constructing Meira Paibi sheds/club building, providing charcoal, kerosene, sugar, tea leaves other materials etc. Some of the clubs/organisations participated in the election with a motive to get club materials such as carom boards, football, volley ball, material for building construction of club, furniture etc. Even some organisations use to ask the contesting candidates to donate a reasonable amount to their association in return for their support to the candidate. However, almost all the organisations declined from participating in the election campaign directly and openly in the name of any particular organisational body. They had the neutral character in their stand and approaches. K. Modhumangol, Editor, Prajatantra, a Manipuri Daily, said that "Though the mass organisations did involve in the election, but it was not in the name of a particular club/association. It is not to affect their organisational

character. Their participation was at individual capacity.” However, Sh. Gopal Sharma, Editor, Poknapham, Manipuri Daily stated “Some women groups attended public meeting or political conference of some political parties without knowing the objective of the meetings or conferences. They were simply participating such functions as curtsey call of friends, relatives, local leader, want of easy money etc.” R.K. Ranendrajit, Editor, Freedom, English Daily, said “But it was not a pure democratic participation with a conviction to win the election. Their participation in election were for personal benefits, gains etc.” During the electioneering period however several voluntary organisations, clubs and women Meira Paibis also came out and appealed the voters to be aware of the abuses by the contesting candidates and their parties. They appealed the contesting candidates and their agents/supporters not to adopt unwanted means and distribute money to bribe and buy the voters, through cash or kind. Similar appeals also were made to the voters not to take money from candidates for feasting, party, or any other purposes in the name of election. They requested the voters not to elect those candidates habituated in defection but to elect those who can see the interest of the people and protect state interest.

Besides, teams of party workers, volunteers used to parade the roads, lanes of the urbanised centres and other areas campaigning for their party candidates. Quite a few students of the- schools, colleges and university were also seen participating in the campaigning at most places.

Besides, most of the political parties in the state have their own women’s wing as well as other mass organisations. These fronted organisations of different parties played crucial roles during the election campaigning. Youth Congress, Mahila Congress, NSUI, Kishan Cell, Labour cell etc. of the Congress-I; Yuva

Janata Dal, Janata Nupi Marup, Satra Janata Dal, Hind Mazdoor Shabha (Manipur Branch) of the Janata Dal; four mass organisation of the CPI such as - All Manipur Nupi Marup, Manipur Loumi Lup; All India Students Federation and All India Youth Federation; that of the CPI(M) like the Student Federation of India, Democratic Youth Federation of India, Manipur Loumi Marup, All Manipur Democratic Women's Association; of the Congress (S) like Youth Congress, Mahila Congress, Legal Cell, Minority Cell, the BJP's Bharratiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM); Bharatiya Janata Manila Morcha (BJMM); Bharatiya Janata Kishan Morcha (BJKM)" Minority Cell, (for Muslims) Schedule Tribe Cell; Schedule Caste Cell (they worked in their areas); of the Janata Party like Yuva Janata, Janata Mahila, Kishan Panchayat; and Samata Party's Yuva Janata Samata Party (youth and student wing); Mahila Samata Party; Minority Cell Samata Party; Legal Cell Samata Party; these are the various mass frontal organisations of the different national political parties in the state.<sup>13</sup> Besides, the regional/local parties in the state also are having their own mass organisation - Youth Front MPP; Women Front MPP (Chanura Marup); Kishan cell; Trade Union Cell; Legal Cell; Human Rights Cell; of the Manipur Peoples Party; women wing and youth wing of the Kuki National Assembly and Federal Youth Front, Federal Women Front, Federal Peasants Front, Federal Minority Front of the Federal Party of Manipur. However, the Tomcha Faction of the Samajwadi Janata Party (R) has no such frontal organisations.<sup>14</sup> The researcher in his personal interview with the President, NPP, K. Brajamohan Dev Sharma found that his party has no such mass organisations like women, youths, students etc. wing as the party considered their involvement in practical politics as injustice. But he said in real practice they also do involve in the campaigning process of the party though the party has no such separate wings.<sup>15</sup> The researcher was also told by the President of Samajwadi

Janata Party (Rashtriya) M. Jane Singh, "Election campaigns are run through the different wings of the party viz. campaign committee; women front; students wing; Socialist Youth Council etc., of the SJP party propagating the socialist ideology of welfare of the people aiming at governance with a rich society towards the transformation of the democratic values of the government of the people by the people and for the people with clear policies of utilisation of land, and human resources through the political, social, economics, educational and agricultural policies."<sup>16</sup> These students wings of political parties such as NSUI of Congress, the Communist dominated SFI and AISF etc., also actively participated in the election campaigning. In fact, the members/comrades of these frontal mass organisations/wings of different parties activity involved and participated in the campaigning process of their respective parties during the election days. They were used in electioneering and participated in poster campaign, house-to-house campaign, group/public meetings; in the processions; rallies etc. Even their leaders addressed public/ camera meeting organised by their parties/candidates. Their women leaders also even took part/leading roles in the camera/public meetings, delivered their speeches in favour of their respective parties and candidates and participated in other campaigning process during the elections. No election could be fought without the help of party workers. Here, V.M. Sirsikar stressed the need of party workers during the elections. He said, "The party militants assume highest importance during the elections. The candidates depend on their support and advice. They are the strategist at the election headquarters and also the tacticians in the field. Whereas the broad directives are issued by the party heads before the campaign is set afoot, adhoc and quick decisions have to be made extempore to reciprocate or counter act the moves of the opponents. It is here that the role of militants comes into picture."<sup>17</sup>

### **Role of the mass media : the press etc.**

In a democratic country like India, the mass media and telecommunications network play a very significant role in educating the people by furnishing with information of various aspects of our life as well as in deciding the political outlook of the people. In India general elections either to the Parliament, State Legislature or the village Panchayat/grass roots levels elections constitutes the biggest events in the functioning of our Parliamentary Democracy. During the elections, people generally likes to hear election news. It is during the election period that the people in a democratic country, who have the supreme sovereign power elect their representatives for a particular fixed term. It is also corresponding to their verdict that the course and fate of a nation is to be decided. It is through the mass media in general, apart from others, that election news reach to the people by providing facts and figures of the election thereby influencing the electorates ultimately. So, the need for mass media during the elections time cannot be overemphasised. The television, radio, press, the post office, telegraph and the telephone system etc., are the media through which the political propaganda is dispersed and disseminated and the governments influence over its people is also exercised. However, dissemination of unbiased election news are indispensable. The moral responsibility of the mass media is to awaken the people to the prevailing reality of the society, its turmoils and consequences. Gehlot pointed out that "The mass media, radio and TV has assumed great importance as a means of campaigning, because the leaders can reach millions of voters in their houses ... Broadcasting (i.e., mass media) has become the cost comprehensive and stimulating means of communications in the modern democracy and the political parties desire to make use of this media as an electioneering means for the furtherance of their poll-prospects."<sup>18</sup> According to S.C. Dube," The function of

mass media is to open up the large masses in society to new information, new thought, new attitudes and new aspirations which lead them to new achievements.”<sup>19</sup> The mass media also plays “an important role in making people politically conscious and which, in turn, should influence their voting behaviour.”<sup>20</sup> Regarding the role of media, V.K. Nayar observes that “the important role that media plays in influencing and generating responses to and formulating issues of national and public interest is indispensable. If it is the conscience of the government, it is also the guardian of the aspirations of the people and thereby the national interest. Therefore, its correct orientation and sensitivity to such issues is of great relevance, particularly in sensitive areas affected by insurgency and terrorism.

During elections, various media of communications which give political information in general and election related news in particular are in full operations so as to influence the behaviour of the electorates. Voters also depend on a variety of sources of information on continuous basis. They receive a greater volume of political information during the time of elections when the political parties, candidates, campaigners activate election specific different media of communication such as public meeting house to house campaign; publicity; poster etc., to sell their ideas to the voters giving information specially relating to elections. There are attacks and counter attacks by the competing candidates, their supporters and the parties. Besides interpersonal media from relatives, neighbours; friends, academics etc., and the election specific media given by mass media like radio, television and newspapers are also in full operations. The press also sometimes joins in such attacks on parties and on candidates.

Radio and televisions, as electronic media, are playing an important role in disseminating information and moulding the thoughts of the people, though political news received from radio and television sometimes happens to be biased.

Both constitutes most significant mass media of communications through which public is impressed very much. Through broadcasting of news and views, the masses are enlightened. As Alan R. Ball observe, “one factor of increasing importance in the determination of election results is the role of the mass media and especially that of televisions . . . Television now takes the major share in political advertising and election campaigns are increasingly fought through the television scenes,” though it provides less political informations than the newspapers. On the other hand radio is also found to be the most popular medium of mass communication particularly in rural and remote areas where there is lack of access to proper means of communications. It dominates television and newspapers as media of informations in such areas. Its popularity increases to a large extent during the time of elections. It is the chief source of information. Joglekar remarks that, “the transistor revolution has brought radio to the cow-herd, the Kislian and the small shopkeeper, it is the primary source of news and the most popular medium of information in rural areas . . . Radio is still the cheapest, fastest and farthest reaching means for bringing a communication process.”<sup>23</sup>

The press which include newspapers of all kinds; periodicals, magazines, weeklies, pamphlets, leaflets and other printed literature, also throw a light on various current issues which help in the formation and expression of public opinion. The press as an instrument of moulding public opinion has been playing very important role in enlightening the people. The press has undue control over the minds of readers and exerts pressures by forming public opinion. It has a forceful voice in the public life of our country. However the press particularly the newspaper is one of the most important media of communications. Newspaper supply us the news regarding all political, social, economic, religious and cultural



activities happening at the different places. We form and mould our opinions from what we read in the newspapers. People are often influenced in their thinking by the particular slant of their favourite newspapers. Sirsikaar rightly remarks that, In the communication process, the newspapers have a place of their own . . . . But the newspapers do not restrict themselves to news. The press arrogates to itself a function of educating the public. Therefore, it expresses views on international, national, and local issues and politics ... It is difficult for a voter to collect all the relevant political informations about parties, their policies and programmes, and their candidates. Many of the voters might not have so much time at their disposal. This results in depending on the press for ready opinions.<sup>24</sup>

As television has . become one of the most popular media of mass communications; its use, as such, has also expanded tremendously both in the urban and rural areas of Manipur. At the time of holding the elections, there was no private owned (non-governmental) broadcasting television station/organisations in the state, and the same was in the case of radio too. It is public/government owned media corporation controlled by the party (ies) in power or the government, but not in the hands of the private owners. Both are government monopolies.

Moreover, in a state like Manipur with a high rate of poverty and not so high in literacy rate also, the use of electronic media in general and the printed media in particular is very much limited, mainly being concentrating to the Imphal and other town areas in the state. Since Manipur is economically backward, majority of the people cannot afford the price of television sets. Only a small percentages owns televisions. So the number of television sets owned is very less in the state due to its high cost and low capacity of transmission, as compared to other states. And also the national programmes dominated the local programmes.

The cost of a radio transistor is, no doubt, cheap. But even then it is not owned by all the families in the state. Though newspaper is one of the most important media of communication, the ownership of newspapers tends to be very concentrated in the state. As such the number of newspaper owner are very less while a bulk of the circulation were concentrated only in the urban and town areas and also places where there is easily accessible communication system. Those who were in the difficult hilly-terrains and outback areas had been beyond the reach of the daily papers. They could not avail of the benefits of newspapers properly. They mainly received political news from radio, political leaders of the area concerned, educated elites etc. Moreover less than half the adult population read the political news in a newspaper everyday.

During the electioneering period as a part of their election campaigning, the contesting recognised political parties were allocated broadcasting time for political broadcast through electronic medias. The Doordarshan Kendra Imphal and the All India Radio, Imphal highlighted the election telecasts of the contesting parties in the state phase by phase during which the parties delivered their election speech to the electorates, from the 1st of February 1995. Besides, the AIR Imphal, announced voters' awareness slogans appealing the electorates to choose the right candidates without any fear while exercising their right to franchise. The DDK Imphal also highlighted the Panel Discussion with the representative of the parties. Election analysis was also done in radio and television during the elections.

In Manipur, when the sixth state Assembly election was held, over thirty daily papers were circulating in the state. A bulk of the local dailies was published in Manipuri vernacular. The rest are either in English or local dialects. Except eight daily papers published at Churachandpur hills district, the rest were

concentrated at Imphal proper including two daily papers in local dialects - one in Tangkhul dialect and the other in Kuki-Thadou dialect. Besides, a number of weeklies and monthlies were also in circulation.<sup>25</sup>

The newspapers in Manipur can be grouped into two. The first group of newspapers are owned either by the political parties or their sympathisers and members. The other group of newspapers are run independently of the political parties by individuals. In the first group, included such as “Simanta Patrika” of Congress-I; “Khollao” of CPI; “Ehou” of MPP, etc. that cater, and endeavour to strengthening their respective philosophy. In the second group, the newspapers such as “Prajantra”; “Poknapham”; Huiyen Lanpao”; “Freedom’, etc. are independent daily papers. The latter group of newspapers are independent to criticise and express the plus and minus points of the political parties and their policies, programmes, performances, etc.

Different political problems are given in the Editorials and Articles. Some of the newspapers also conducted pre-election analysis/Surveys. ‘The Freedom’ an English Daily, was the only daily in the state that was trying to bring and flash the actual picture of the electoral process in Manipur. It attempted to provide exclusive informations of the February 1995 elections to the electorates on an anti-Congress stance till the end of the electioneering process. Other newspapers in the state hardly seemed interested in that way except providing incomplete information such as nominations filed, scrutiny; withdrawal, stray happenings, incidents, of the elections; complaints from the contesting parties and candidates and other election-related news.

Since the sixth Assembly elections in the state was fought between the ruling Congress-I party on the one hand and the non-Congress-Opposition-parties, specially the MPP on the other hand; most of the newspapers, journals,

magazines, weeklies etc., in the state seemed to have favoured the opposition parties thereby injecting anti-Congress wave in the state during the electioneering days. Almost all the print media in the state except the newspapers owned by the Congress-I party or by its party members or sympathisers, favoured the opposition either directly or indirectly by taking on the line of anti-Congress stance. The MPP-run newspapers 'Ehou' was very much critical of the Congress-I in the state. It opposed and criticised the induction of Congress-led Rishang Keishing ministry for a short period of less than two months on the eve of the elections, as not in the public interest. Even the All Manipur Working Journalist Union awarded the Assembly Speaker Dr. H. Borbabu Singh the title of the "Man of Year" on the 21st Press Club Foundation Day on 6 January 1995. Dr. H. Borbabu Singh, who was himself an MPP candidate was honoured by this Union for his role during the fifth term of the Assembly. He did a lot in trying to dislodge the Rishang ministry by disqualifying 23 Rishang loyalist MLAs for which he was ultimately removed from his speakership without following the constitutional norms. The print media, in most cases, not only criticised the policies and programmes of Congress-I and dictatorial form of government in India since independence, but favoured the need of a state not always depending on the centre, that may think and take the interest of the state. It also mentioned the need of regionalism on firm footing to suit the prevailing wave in India. It appealed the people to vote for regionalism, independent status. It also appealed to give vote to protect unity and integrity of Manipur so as to become Manipur more and more prosperous.

Though there are more than thirty daily news papers and other monthly and weekly papers in circulation playing a very important role in moulding public opinion; they did not play any significant role in the State so far as the election

campaign was concerned.’ Most of the newspapers are running on commercial lines, mainly devoted to the non-political aspects making them comparatively ineffective agencies of election propaganda. Most of the political parties in the state owned their own news-paper or papers run by the party members or sympathisers. On the other hand, most of the newspapers also have their leanings either to a party or the other. To mention a few examples - ‘Ehou’ and ‘Sanaleibak’ are run by MPP party and its party sympathiser; ‘Khollao’ a CPI-sponsored daily paper : “Simanta Patrika” and “Manipur Mail” run by Congress-I party and its member, “Nagarik Pantha” run by NPP President; “Janata and Janata Bulletin” run by General Secretary of Janata Party “Ching Tarn” “Mannaba” and “Toknga” run by party sympathisers of Janata Dal etc. As such, the ultimate effect is that most of the local papers favoured the policies and programmes of a particular party or their leanings. They also highlight the favourable points of their party while they criticise other party’s programmes. State Secretary, CPI, Manipur. Ph. Parijat Singh, said besides making advertisement and propaganda in other news papers also as a part of election campaigning, the election propaganda is done by “Khollao” (party-sponsored newspaper) as an organ of CPI Manipur. It said, CPI is a party of poor people, working and labour classes of people. Protect CPI to save the people and strengthen the party by sending more representatives to the state legislatures. At the same time, ‘Khollao’ also makes identification of Congress and BJP to the people, and says to know people’s enemy the Congress-I representing middle class and the BJP representing upper caste/class and not to vote to Congress and BJP. Congress-I party spokesman T. Gunadhwaja Singh said, “Khollao” and “Ehou” criticised and stood against Congress-I party while “Manipur Mail” and “Simanta Patrika” favoured Congress-I party. For instance, during the election, since the Congress-I was in power, “Simanta Patrika” (the

Congress-I owned Manipur Daily) was against the JAC - sponsored transport strike. It said, in its Editorial of 3 February 1995, that Rishang Government has done a lot to solve the problem but JAC still stood against it. It is against the people and appealed to start plying of vehicles. Janata Dal President W. Kullabidhu Singh said, “Ching Tarn” “Mannaba” and “Toknga” (run by party sympathisers) publicised and supported Janata Dal election propaganda. While the “Simanta Patrika” of Congress party opposed Janata Dal. Like that L. Iboyaima Singh, General Secretary of Janata Party expressed unhappiness when his party was opposed and strongly criticised by ‘Khollao’; Simanta Patrika and ‘Freedom’ considering Janata party as useless party, not able to come to power, while the ‘Janata’ (daily paper) and ‘Janata Bulletin’ carried on election propaganda in favour of Janata party. In his opinion most of the newspapers favoured his party. The same opinion also was expressed by NPP President Brajamohan Dev Sharma. He said most of the news papers in the state like Huiyen Lanpao, Poknapham etc., do not support NPP except ‘Nagarik Pantha’ and ‘Paonilkhon’. On the other hand Dr. N. Joykumar Singh, General Secretary of FPM said there is no mouthpiece of media for the FPM. His party was neither supported nor favoured by any newspapers. Similarly for other small and weak parties like Congress (S); KNA; Samata party; SJP (R); MFIPC; BJP; it seemed as if there is no print media to support and favour, or criticise them except BJP.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the multi-pronged and many-sided roles of the mass media in general regarding the news coverage of political events; educating the people, moulding public opinion etc., the mass media in Manipur seemed playing little role. The mass media in general in the state unfortunately even could not provide the people with the latest and upto date news, information of the February 1995

Assembly polls completely. Whether it was due to lack of their interest in election or lack of co-operation from the official Authorities who were dealing with the election process, is a different story. The official media also failed to provide the clear picture of what was going on during the elections. The trend of incomplete news-coverage continued till the elections were over. Under these circumstances, criticism from certain sections of society was afloat about the failure of the mass media in general to provide the accurate news to the peoples on such occasions. To quote an Editorial “The Government of Manipur has not paid much attention to the proper highlighting of the ongoing electoral process in Manipur. The Chief Electoral Officer, Shri A.P. Sharma, L.A .S. should take the lead to disseminate the inflow of the election news from the Election Commission of India as well as from the concerned authorities from the Districts of Manipur ... He is denying the rights to information of the peace loving people of Manipur. So far the filing of nomination papers and scrutiny had been done in Manipur also but the media persons could not get the detail information inspite of the highly effective communication networks of .the counter-insurgency operations throughout the length and breadth of Manipur. A little bit of initiative from the CEO Manipur will definitely give a very rosy picture of the whole process of the elections’95 within few hours .... Election news blackout is an insult to the media persons of Manipur by the CEO, Manipur.”<sup>27</sup>

Regarding the role of the mass media, the press, etc. Sh. Gopal Sharma, the Editor, Poknapham, Manipur Daily stated that “role of- mass media/press in the February 1995 Assembly elections in Manipur was not so important like other states in India. The only available medium of information depends on local newspapers and radio. In 1995, there were no offset presses in Manipur. So all

newspapers published in Manipiir were printed at letter-presses. Though local newspapers tried with their best to cover the latest available information during 1995 Assembly election campaign, people could not be satisfied with their eagerness to learn what were happening in their own constituency as well as in the state. The local newspapers could not effectively influence the outcome of election results to the people, particularly in the rural areas. The people living in the rural areas of Manipur could not avail latest information of election campaign and other election related developments as the circulation of local newspapers were very low. But the local newspapers effectively influenced people living in urban areas as most of the local newspapers, were published only in urban areas. So any sudden political changes developed anywhere in the state could not reach so soon in the rural areas. As such no particular newspaper was inclined to any political party except some party owned newspapers. In Manipur there were not so many party organs. So local newspapers could not effectively influence in the sixth Manipur Assembly election.”<sup>28</sup> R.P. Singh observes that, “Mass media like newspapers and radio do not exercise any decisive influence upon voters. Almost every political party has its daily newspapers primarily catering to its clientele or members. A small percentage of “non-committed” floating voters may come under the influence of the forces and the “hidden persuaders’ in radio and other agencies.” Even though the radio, the television; and press do not create a great impact and fail to bring forth the desired results, yet there is a small percentage of voters who come under its influence and impact. The Editor, the “Freedom” English Daily, R.K. Ranendrajit Singh said, “The media has a very big role and place in elections, particularly in forming (public) opinion, through the analysis, discussions, write ups, and other views presented.” Kangujam Modhumangol Singh, Seniormost Journalist in Manipur and also Editor of Prajatantra Manipur



Daily, said, though the press did not fully influence the voters in general but the press helps in trying to provoke people in moulding/ shaping their choice of candidates/parties. It is thought-provoking instrument for the voters during the election. The election highlights; analysis, views, etc. presented in the mass media (particularly in the newspapers) opened the minds of the voters which the latter enable themselves to justify k in the light of the existing socio-economic and political background. The mass media influence the voters partially but not fully.<sup>31</sup>

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# **CHAPTER – V**

*Electoral Finance and the Role of  
Elites/Money Power/Muscle Power*

## **CHAPTER-V**

### **ELECTORAL FINANCE AND THE ROLE OF ELITES/MONEY POWER/MUSCLE POWER**

Today, a worse evil eating into the vitals of our political system and body-politic is the recent growth of money-power and muscle power and their infinite use in elections. The campaign expenditure has become sky-high. Wealthy candidates with mafia/muscle-power have a chance to win the seat. Even they become indebted to the business houses which help to pay their election expenses. Sundar Ram said, "Free and fair elections constitute the foundations of parliamentary democracy. The framers of the Indian Constitution have given us a fool-proof electoral mechanism for ensuring free and fair elections. However, four factors have tended to destroy the very foundations viz., increased use of money power and muscle power at the time of elections, incitement to caste and communal prejudices of the voters and misuse of official machinery. With the increasing criminalisation of Indian politics in recent years, the muscle-men make their presence felt by intimidation of voters, tampering with ballot boxes and capturing of polling booths. This process of criminalisation is fraught with dangerous consequences".<sup>1</sup> Vimla Thakar rightly pointed out that "Elections were gone through religiously every five years. Though the form of elections and their technicalities were taken care of, there was no democratic substance to it. Votes were purchased or snatched away. Voters were intimidated or terrorised. They were looked upon as vote banks rather than the electorate of a democratic society. Candidates were chosen on caste basis in the beginning. Later, political parties started putting up candidates who had muscle power, money power and even mafia power at their disposal".<sup>2</sup> The very aim and process has been subverted to such an extent that no honest person gets elected. The system is being manipulated by money, muscle and caste factors".<sup>3</sup>

It is an open secret that the laws regarding ceiling on electoral expenses is honoured on paper only. No one can honestly claim that he or she got elected to the Parliament, Assembly and other legislatures while remaining within the limits of expenditure as fixed by the Election Commission of India. Nor any contesting candidate maintains the election expenditure accounts truly. It is not merely because of the loopholes provided by the exclusion of expenditure incurred by the party or friends though that is a convenient escape route, it is also true that the ceiling has become a farce. It may be said that nothing seem to have discredited the electoral laws more than its expensiveness. Efforts are made to bribe every class and group. Till today, there is no way out in which this extravagance is curbed.

The parties/candidates require enormous efforts and mobilisation of human and material resources to win the elections. They contest the elections on the strength of their musclemen and the funds available to them. For election has increasingly professionalised. One hears that the party workers need a wealthy, candidate who can pay their own election expenses. As such, the parties/candidates require money for canvassing a campaign". Over the years, however, the cost of fighting an election has been increasing at an accelerating rate. Unofficial estimates put cost of election much higher. In fact, "Election campaigns are now million-rupee propositions for just one constituency". The mounting election expenditure made it very difficult for a candidate with meagre resources to contest the elections successfully. It is also very rare that a candidate may meet all expenses out of his own pocket. As such, financial support to any party/candidate (mainly having better chances of success at the polls) is required from various sources and donors.

However, it becomes the most difficult to secure adequate information about the various sources of electoral finance in the sixth State Assembly elections in Manipur. Yogendra K. Malik observes that the “Party income and spending records are mostly confidential. In a few cases the party leaders not only refused to give information .... In other cases they were candid enough to report on estimated income .... Party income is a very sensitive subject, often party officials tend to under-report their incomes”.<sup>5</sup> When the Researcher conducted personal interviews with the party leaders, they were very much reluctant to disclose the sources of electoral finance in the sixth Assembly elections. The parties showed a real indifferent attitude in informing the amount of income they derived from various sources. However, it is learnt that the income of parties was derived from various sources though their funding sources were significantly different from party to party. Most of the parties were reportedly well connected with the business magnets. They were also able to raise substantial amount of funds because of their links with powerful interest groups and also to draw substantial financial support from traders, shopkeepers, government employees of all shades, contractors, businessmen etc. They had to depend basically upon outside sources for election funds.

A party in power at the Centre or in State(s) and if it has held office for a long time is far more favourable position to command larger financial resources while the parties which are not in such a position do not command such resources. While the income of the party is also dependent not only on their organisational abilities and but also on the possibilities of their winning elections. In brief, “the relative strength of the parties determines the share of money/fund raising”<sup>6</sup> for the elections. Among the parties, the national parties commanded larger sources than

the local parties. And again, of the national parties, the Congress-I party commanded much larger resources. For the party was in 'power' at the Centre and in Manipur during the elections. Congress-I being the ruling party at the Centre and in many states for a long time, had both the financial resources and a "well organised men power to mobilise voters during the elections.

As per information furnished to the Researcher, the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee-I (MPCC-I) received its sources of funds under the following heads. It included - (a) General Income such as among others, enrolment fee of party members; contribution by the active members to the party fund of Rs. 100/- for every three months; (b) contribution of Rs. 300/- by the Congress MLAs for every month; (c) local contribution such as fund collected from the like-minded/ Congress sympathisers of all shades such as government employees, contractors, businessmen, suppliers, etc.<sup>7</sup>

But a bulk of the resources came from the national party's headquarters in the form of cash and kind (election materials). For the sixth election, the State Unit received election materials such as posters, festoons, badges, flags, party symbols, etc. worth around 'two loads of Tata vehicles' provided by the party's headquarters free of cost for the election purposes. These were distributed among the party candidates. Besides, the State Congress-I party unit was funded by the party headquarters but refused to mention the amount. Say "some lakhs" told Bidyapati Senjam, General Secretary of the MPCC-I in an interview with the Researcher. But the Congress-I candidates were divided into three categories - A, B and C. They received party funding ranging from "two lakhs to five lakhs of rupees". The distribution of such party funding to the candidates were handled by the AICC-I observers after the due identification and recommendation/ endorsement of the MPCC-I authorities (President/ General Secretary). Moreover, the party was assisted from other state units of the neighbouring states with the acceptance of the party High Command.<sup>8</sup>



The election fund of the All India Samata party, State Unit pumped from different sources. The Trade Unions such as Hind Majdoor Sabha; All India Railway Cooperative Bank, Calcutta; All India Taxi Drivers Union, Mumbai, etc. donated to the party at a range of twenty to thirty thousand rupees for the use in elections. The election fund was also collected from all the state party members at the rate of five rupees each (Rs. 2/- as admission fee and Rs. 3/- as donation for election). Each active member donated Rs. 100 each. The party's state unit frontal organisations were also bound to contribute to the election fund. Each member of the party's Kishan organisation contributed Rs. 2/- each. The Manila Front had to give Rs. 5/- each; Rs. 10/- was also given by each member of the Samata Party's Youth Organisation. In all, around rupees fifty thousands could also be collected from all shades of party sympathisers (mainly the government employees).<sup>9</sup>

Above all, each and every party candidate donated Rs. 5000/- each. Every MP of Samata Party contributed ten thousand to 20 thousand rupees. A Union Minister of Samata Party donated thirty thousand rupees. Since the Samata Party is an All India party, the State Unit received Rupees five lakhs from the party's headquarters in Delhi. Not only cash assistance but party's common symbols, posters with the portrait of party leaders; flags, leaflets and other election materials were also provided from the headquarters. The entire fund so collected was used for the party's election expenses. Out of the total sources, some amount was kept reserved to meet the expenditures involved in the campaigning of the Samata Party such as for hiring vehicles, organising public meetings, etc. The party sponsored candidates in the election fray were financed by the party as per the financial conditions of the candidates. The amount ranged from thirty thousand rupees to forty thousand rupees per candidate.<sup>10</sup>

The Bhartiya Janata Party's sources included Central Party's assistance (cash and kind) and funds raised from within the state of Manipur. The BJP's national headquarters provided with party assistance to the party's State Unit but declined to mention the amount. The contesting candidates received party funding as per the prospects of the candidate concerned. Maximum amount was given to the prospective candidates of having the winning chances in the election. It ranged from a minimum of Rs. 15 thousand to Rs. 72 thousand. One candidate got fifteen thousand rupees; sixty two thousand rupees to six candidates; seventy thousand rupees to one candidate named Aheibam Angousana in Kumbi Assembly constituency. The rest of the candidates were given Rs. 40 thousand on average. Above all, posters, flags, Bindi, stickers, badges, symbols, etc. were given from the party headquarters. Collection from Imphal market amounted nearly Rs. 32 thousands.<sup>11</sup>

The Janata Dal (JD) State Unit, also received assistance from the Party's central headquarters in cash and kind. In kind it included election materials like badges, copper badges, plastic/polythene flags, big-sized posters etc. The JD set up 41 candidates in the election. But the party High Command recommended only 25 candidates having better winning chances. They were provided with central party finding of fifteen thousand rupees per candidate. The rest were not given central assistance except election materials like posters, flags, etc.

In case of Janata Party, State Unit, no financial assistance was received from the party's headquarters. But the party headquarters provided with some posters, flags, publicity papers etc. which were distributed to the contesting party candidates. Other sources included subscription from party members, donation from friends, well-wishers, fellow pressmen etc. No financial assistance was given to the party candidates by the party.<sup>13</sup>

Assistance from the Central Committee of CPI-M to the state unit was very much minimal. Since the party put up only to candidates, it got only 25 thousand rupees. The rest of the resources were collected from public donation/contribution (around amounting to 25/30 thousand rupees); donations from party sympathisers (mainly intellectuals from colleges, University, government employees etc.) being around 15/20 thousand rupees. The party also collected election funds from the respective local branches being around 20 thousand rupees. Each party candidate was funded with Rs. 35 thousand plus materials worth five thousand rupees.<sup>14</sup>

The sources of the electoral finance of the Communist Party of India, State Unit, was varied. Trade Union, Manipur” Branch, affiliated to All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) provided monetary helps to the CPI around 2/3 lakhs of rupees for the election purpose. The teaching community in the state also helped some fifty thousand to one lakh rupees. Party sympathisers such as contractors, shopkeepers, suppliers etc. donated nearly 2/3 lakhs. The CPI also organised “Mass Drive” holding meetings appealing the people “give vote and money”. In such a drive the party could collect a sizeable amount of money for election fund. Each MLA of CPI donated one-third of his/her monthly salary to the party fund. Though the Communist Party of India is a national party, it did not get assistance from the central headquarters in the form pf “cash”. No doubt the party received assistance/helps but it was in the form of election materials viz., pamphlets; posters; papers, flags, symbols leaflets etc. Thus, the party did not give “cash assistance” to the contesting candidates. But the campaign expenditure of the candidates to be incurred in printing symbols, leaflets, pamphlets, hiring vehicles badges etc. were borne by the party. The party also provided flags, festoons, posters etc. worth around thirty to forty thousand rupees. Party assistance to the

candidates was in the form of election materials. CPI state unit had around 50,000 members. Each party member contributed to the election fund ranging from Rs. 50/-toRs. 100/-.<sup>15</sup>

Excepting the national political parties, the fate of the local parties, in terms of electoral finance is concerned, were gloomy in the state, though the position of the Manipur People's Party was far better than, the other local parties. They had to depend mainly on the indigenous sources of election funds. As per the information provided to the Researcher by the leaders of the local political parties. "There was no election funding to their sponsored-candidates", But "The party nominees were given some election materials (free of cost) like posters, flags, festoons, party manifestos; symbols etc." The election expenditures/ expenses of the candidates were mainly from their own pockets. Besides, donations and contributions were collected from relatives, friend's circle; common man, party workers/supporters and other interested persons such as contractors, suppliers, businessmen, engineers etc. The Congress-S President, R.K. Nokulsana said, "It is individual funding/ financing by the candidate concerned".<sup>16</sup> The NPP President, Brajamohan Deva said, "The election is fought at the candidates own capacity and sources".<sup>17</sup> The other leaders of the local parties and some national parties expressed similar views that the entire expenses of candidates were from their sources/ends.

This is because of the fact that these smaller local parties, barring the MPP and Congress-S, confronted with many problems. Except MPP, Congress-S and the newly formed FPM, the organisational set up of KNA, NPP, MHPC and SJP(R) was confined in some pockets. The activities of KNA and NPP were concentrated only in Churachandpur area/district; while the MHPC in Ukhrul district and SJP(R) in some areas in the valley. The FPM soon proliferated its organisation and felt its presence

both in the hills and valley. Their party membership was very less with shaky organisation and popularity. (The KNA, Corigress-S and NPP have got their ministerial berths in the previous ministries but it was nil for the SJP, MHPC and the FPM). For them, electoral financing to their nominees was out of question due to financial constraints. Many also did not like to be the candidates of such parties.

Consequently they put up less number of candidates in the election fray. In general, their sources of income mainly collected from membership admission fee, from party members for the election purpose; contributions from individuals/party sympathisers etc. Bhajamohon Deva Sharma of NPP said “The NPP party has around 100 party members. Each Primary member contributed Rs. 10/-; Active member Rs. 500/-; Patron Member Rs. 2000/-; and Life Member Rs. 5000/- (for the use and maintenance of party office); Rs. 5000/- is also taken from each candidate for election and party purposes. In each and every constituency, one committee is formed to collect money from the party sympathisers; and the public for election”.<sup>18</sup> Jainson Haokip, President of KNA said friends, like-minded peoples, party sympathisers contributed and assisted the KNA party and candidates. The KNA candidates donated Rs. 5000/- to the party.<sup>19</sup>

Among the local parties, the MPP had better resources. For the party had vast organisational set up in both the valley and the hills. The party has been in power for more than two times. Most of their MLAs have been in the “Coalition Ministries”. The party also earned regular rent from temporary lease of shops/hotels around the MPP office. Above all, during the elections, the MPP, reportedly, received cooperation politically, socially, economically, and physically from the political parties of the Regional Political Forum of North-Eastern Region (in order to strengthen their party organisations). In other words, MPP got assistance in cash and kind from other local parties of the North Eastern States.

## Money Power

Politics has become a lucrative business and the use of money-power in an election has become an open-secret. It is a general knowledge that money power plays a very significant role in elections. Money changes hands in various ways to persuade or move people to vote in a certain direction. According to Maheshwari, "... 'Money power in election' is a phenomenon seen only at the time of election and is, moreover, sporadic. But money is used in a most intensive way to influence the outcome of an election in some preferred direction, and in the process it may even threaten to vulgarise this barometer of democracy and discredit the latter."<sup>20</sup> Bhambri stated that, "It is correct to maintain that political parties win or lose the elections on the basis of personality of the leaders, local acceptability of the party candidate and caste and community considerations. Of late, the role of money in the elections has assumed great importance not only for election campaign but to bribe the voters and local influential leaders. The role of money in the elections also shows that the election campaign has become very competitive and every major political party is involved in mobilising huge resources to get the vote". It is well known that lots of funds are used in elections by the candidates ... ."<sup>22</sup>

Since Manipur is also within the framework of Indian System of elections, the interplay of "money power" during the sixth Assembly elections could not be ruled out. The only question is that of "Degree and Volume". Rather money power was very active directly or indirectly during the electioneering period owing to its being very expensive. RJP. Singh stated "charges of corruption in elections-are an all India affair. Manipur is no exception. Voter-bribing is an open secret. Candidates belonging to an affluent party, are alleged to have offered money to the voters . . . . The scale and dimension of corruption in Manipur is rather at a low key compared with all India affairs".<sup>23</sup>

The election expenses of candidates depends on a variety of factors - political and non-political. Their election expenses also varied from constituency to constituency as well as from region to region (as Manipur has been a state with two regions - hills and the valley). The expenditure depends upon the location of the Assembly Constituency and its size; voters' mentality' price-index of the time; road communication; political support - base of the candidate/ party; kinship/ community structure; election issues etc. However, the most important factors for heavy expenditure in elections depend upon the location of the constituency; transport facility and more correctly due to the mentality of the voters. In case, the constituency stretches to a far distance, heavy expenditure would be incurred in the campaign work. Electoral spending is very high where there is keen party competition between parties/or areas in which there is strongholds of other Assembly Constituencies where there is strong competition and straight contest with a large number of voters, the election expenses automatically become high. In the Assembly Constituencies where there is strong party organisation and political support base, the candidates spent less. Congress(S ) President R.K. Nokulsana Singh said 'winability of a candidate is generally adjudged from the expenditure in as much as the demand of the voters is to be met with. Generally voters demanded gratification. So that they can cast vote making balance with the gratification'.<sup>24</sup> According to L. Iboyaima Singh, General Secretary of Janata Party those candidates in the well off class invest more money in election."<sup>25</sup> However, all the non-Congress candidates gave very high estimates about their Congress opponents.

However, some variations between the valley and the hills could be witnessed. Of the two regions - hills and the valley, it is a general consensus that the election expenses are more in the valley than the hills. As such, money power is more in play in the plains in terms of distribution of money to bribe the voters. In the valley, a bulk of the election expenses used in voters' bribing. In the valley, in most cases giving of

money to voters is a must, while in other aspects, voters bribing expenditure is more. Money is hardly distributed in the hilly constituencies to bribe the voters. So there is low expenses in the hills in terms of voters bribing. Most of the party leaders expressed the similar views. However, L. Iboyaima Singh, General Secretary of Janata Party strongly defended this point. In his opinion, 'the contesting candidates incurred more expenses in the hills to get solid-block-voters; to capture booths etc. In his estimate, a prospective candidate spent nearly one lakh rupees per polling booth in order to control and bribe the Presiding Officer, other Polling Personnels, Polling Agents etc. He added, no free and fair elections took place in the hills. Candidates try to get votes by hook or by crook. The overall expenditure is, however, lesser in the hills than that of the valley constituencies."<sup>26</sup>

This is mainly, apart from other factors, because of the fact that in the valley sector, the election is a bit complicated one owing to the more educated and conscious attitudes of the electors. However; in the hills, according to unconfirmed sources, reportedly the head of the family can cast the entire votes of his/her family, not often but sometimes. For instance, the Headman of Motbung (in Senapati district) confirmed that normally head of the family was allowed to cast votes of their families."<sup>27</sup> The polling personnels who have been posted and assigned with election duties in the remote hilly areas/polling stations knows that in what ways the voting takes place there. The hilly-bretherns also know it. In such areas, one voter exercises voting rights more than one time. Reportedly when such situations arise, even the polling personnels found it difficult to make them convinced of the voting norms to be followed. Sometimes, occasions also occurred wherein the village headman/authority/leader etc. cast the votes of his people under his control. The only solution is to allow them to exercise the voting rights according to their claim. This practice mainly happens occasionally in the outback hilly areas where there is no proper security arrangement to foil the attempt at. In such areas, the candidates and his



party can easily win their (voters) hearts with some amount of money or by arranging a community feast or by promising or giving some gifts. The parties and their candidates also captured the hearts of the village chiefs, leaders etc.

This trend is quite negative in the valley areas. Sometimes, the contesting candidates found it very difficult to make the voters convinced by any available means, and even it is needed a huge amount of money or any other benefits, promises to make them change their minds, from a candidate to another. The Election Commission of India has fixed the ceiling of election expenditure for a contesting candidate in Manipur at fifty thousand rupees only. But it became a farce. Though the EC has fixed the ceiling at Rupees fifty thousand for individual candidates spending in the Assembly elections of Manipur, the ceiling was not followed by majority of the candidates. The election expenses of the candidates were very high. The General Secretary, Federal Party of Manipur N. Joykumar said “in reality the election expenses of candidates is beyond the ceiling of Rs 50 thousand as fixed by the EC. The minimum expenditure is not less than one lakh rupees.” Though the campaigning period was usually short, however, the need to campaign it extensively to mobilise voters, sometimes to cover the entire constituency, candidates needed ‘money. This money was used to undertake various types of activities.

Even in a small state like Manipur, the election expenses for a candidate, according to various sources, shot up in millions. The figures of election expenses of the contesting candidates varied from one another. According to an estimate (unofficial) by the party leaders, the election expenses of a prospective candidate (in big Assembly constituencies having keen party competition and large number of voters) was likely to spent as much as, on average, ranging from 20/30 lakhs of

rupees to 50 lakhs of rupees, and some candidates even reached almost nearly one crore of rupees. In some constituencies the expenditure exceeded more than 10 lakhs while some other candidates use below 10 lakhs of rupees. It is said that the election expenses even for a poor candidate shot up beyond 5 lakhs of rupees. Some candidates incurred less than one lakh rupees. In such a way, the variation in election expenses occurred. However, leaders of some smaller parties like KNA, NPP, CPI-M and SJP (R). claimed that the election expenses of their contesting candidates were less than the limit of fifty thousand. President of MHPC, V. Zimik Weapon claimed absurdly that he did not use money power in elections. It is however felt that most of the expenditure/expenses incurred by the parties/candidates of flags, poster, leaflets and pamphlets; symbols; banners; processions; organised public meetings; rallies, placards; bill board etc., were of a common nature and of the same. Beside a major part of the poll-expenditure goes towards vehicles, travel and publicity besides payment to polling agents, counting agents etc., and party workers to distribute leaflets, pamphlets and other materials, entertainment of workers, transport and conveyance to voters etc. This money also included the money spent on voters bribing/outright purchasing of voters; on the distribution of liquor among the voters; transportation and fuel bills distribution of clothes, food among the voters in the poor segment etc. V.M. Sirsikar rightly pointed out that “Even if the candidate spends lavishly on hoarding, bill-boards; processions; posters and pamphlets, it could not reach these figures. It was possible that some part of election expenditure went into purchase of votes which were positively crucial.”<sup>29</sup>

When we analyse to ascertain from where this money (of the contesting candidates) comes, it reveals that the candidates have vast resources at their disposal. The sources of their election finance were varied, Above the party fundging (in case

of mainly the national party nominees) and individual funding, most of them were being financed/funded by the big businessmen, contractors, suppliers, with a motive of ten times return after the elections. Besides, many interested persons such as government employees, mainly officers like engineer, police etc., funded the candidates with a special cause of their promotional matters and other service matters protection. Even the government employees, who are in the lower grades also donate the candidates to get their transfer and postings to the remote areas stopped in case their rival candidate wins the poll. The party sympathisers, party workers/members, supporters, - relatives and friend circles of the candidate also contributed for the election. Some candidates were also financed by the factional leaders of some parties and aspirants for the post of Chief Ministership. In other words, the election money of candidates came from mainly four sources (a) Party Assistance; (b) Personal fund; (c) help from ad-hoc bodies; and (d) individual contribution from relatives, friend circles, well wishers, sympathisers, etc. However a bulk of the entire election expenses were from their own pockets/ sources. Here supporters donation becomes more significant. In a personal interview the MPP candidate O. Joy Singh from Langthabal Assembly constituency, cited the sources of his election fund mainly from the common men (working class who are in the lower strata of economy, hawkers, rickshaw pullers) police constables, clerks, etc. Women also brought vegetables, rice, tea leaf, sugar etc. He also received donation/contributions from contractors, officers (engineers, doctors, police personnel); Businessmen, suppliers etc., but he said, it is very less. Election funds were also collected by his workers/supporters. The same views were also expressed by other independent candidates also. In case of national party nominees, party funding was very important. While the frivolous/non-serious candidates (of small parties) faced financial problems to finance the election due to shortage of funds.<sup>30</sup>

There were various reports in the local newspapers as well as from the voters about the money power entering this election. The role of money power which occupied an eminent position in this-sixth Assembly Election, takes place in different ways. In the hills, a bulk of the election expenses used in election campaigning, in organising camera and public meeting, feasting by killing pigs, cows, buffaloes, goats, chickens, using vehicles for campaigning, supply of posters, flags, banners etc., but not much in bribing the electors. In the hills, money was distributed to the voters through the candidates agents, village chiefs (Khullakpa), leaders etc.

The role of money power in moulding and shaping the vote-choice and voting-decision of certain electors can hardly be minimised. Though money alone is not only the determining factor- that influences the voting decision of voters, it plays a very important and formidable role in influencing the choice of the electors. It is very effective only when it is used as a tactical weapon. "Money politics is an important lubricant of the Indian political machine. In many constituencies voters have come to expect payments of money by all candidates." And money "had become an important part of the bargaining between certain section of the electorate and the candidate or the party. In some quarters the expectation to receive payment for voters was considered a part of the routine. It was a sort of business. This was the voters' attitude in poor and backward areas but it was also found in more prosperous localities. The vote, instead of being considered a political right, was often considered as a 'deal'<sup>5</sup>, a benefit to be conferred on the recipient, although a mixture the two attitude was also found." However, for the poor voters, "campaigning period is a time when the market value of their support appears to rise and when the clever seller may turn the value

of his vote or the votes of his followers to good advantage. The poor are wined and dined, wooed with gifts and bribed with cash.”<sup>33</sup>

A majority of voters in the state were illiterate and poor. Most of them were so indifferent to public affairs and other issues that they did not mind selling their votes. Such voters did not possess their power of judicious choice of candidates and proper exercise of the right to vote. Candidates and political parties have been alleged to have been offered money to the poor voters. Besides, the candidates had to pay money just from the top workers down the voters in order to consolidate them. The voters remained and became cheap electorate with the price tag.

In spite of the various strategies involving the money power in the elections, the candidates also bribed the voters and influential leaders through direct cash payment/distribution. Candidates resorted to buying votes. Even postal ballot voters were said to have been offered money. The Researcher heard many candidates/politicians and their workers speaking of voters bribing. Some voters ; made promises to give their votes after accepting payments from the candidates. Payment made to the voters were either in cash or in kind or both. It was also done to voters either in group or individually. Group payments/ donations were made for feasting, other community-based cultural activities/ festivals like Thabal Chongba, Laiharaoba, Sumangleela performances etc. Old voters were paid mostly in kind such as blankets, shawls, dhotis, shirts, cloths, utensils etc. While the young voters (mainly male voters) paid by cash. Female voters accepted mostly both cash and other wearing garments/ apparels and other articles. There was a rumour that some tribal ministers/candidates while on their way back home (Manipur), brought second hand clothes from Delhi in large quantity for the distribution to the voters during elections.

Besides voters bribing, the money power also entered in the name of repairing and singling of village lanes; inter-village roads, donations to the voluntary organisations and clubs purchase of sports goods, library materials for the clubs etc. Some candidates even constructed the club buildings to win the hearts of its members; donated constructed schools etc. The candidates even distributed foods/rice to the poor/needy people. Election season is the season of feasting. The contesting candidates arranged 'feast' and some sort of 'small party of liquor and chickens for many days together. The parties/candidates in their attempt to influence and integrate the voters in general into their respective folds, there was widespread use of inducement. They were allured with liquor, money, gifts, clothes, foods etc.

The range of the price of a vote in the hills is said of Rs. 50-100 per votes. While the price of a vote in the valley assembly constituencies is reportedly varies from a minimum of Rs. 100 per vote even reaching sometimes to Rs. 500 to thousands in some constituencies while bargaining with voters during polling hours. Reports were available that voters demanded payments from active campaigners just on the eve of entering the polling stations. Some voters reportedly delayed their voting decision till the last hour of polling schedule because they expected something in exchange of their votes. In an interview with some of the voters in some Assembly constituencies, it was found that they received money or intoxicating drinks from the candidates and even they were offered "party of chickens and liquor" in return of their promises votes to them. Some voters revealed that they got money from the candidates for their vote ranging from Rs. 100 to thousand per vote. Sometimes, the head of the family got some . hundreds % of rupees for his family's votes. This phenomena of money

entering the election was rampant in the valley constituencies than the hill constituencies. To quote an Editorial, “This year the price of a voter has gone up pretty high due to the recent price-hike during the JAC strike. The present market index of voter differs from constituency to constituency depending on the sensitive areas in the hills and the valley of Manipur .... Previously fifty Rupees was a big sum for the one day polling drama. But now-a-days due to the inflation (raising struggle for power) it has gone upto exorbitant prices ranging from one hundred to thousands of rupees depending on the tight situation of the polling strategy. The late night daily transactions in vote-bazar in all the constituencies of Manipur is really quite amazing and it has exceeded crores of rupees well before the actual polling dates in the hills and the valley of Manipur. This is off the record. This is an old tradition of the Indian democracy. Going for shopping spree for votes with meagre fifty thousand rupees only by a candidate in the thick of election campaign has become the greatest of Indian democracy.”<sup>34</sup> In certain Assembly constituencies, money played bigger roles in bringing success to a candidate. “The money power had swing the poll results to a great extent and the muscle power had given it the fillip to come out with flying colours in the Election ’95.”<sup>35</sup> Money power was a prime mover in this election.

There were, however, newspaper reports of various cases in which the workers of political parties were caught red-handed while buying/bribing voters. Many complaints about distribution of money to bribe and purchase votes/offering substantial financial incentives to the voters were made by the contesting candidates. To quote an Editorial, “The deadline was 5 p.m. on 17 February 1995 % . . . just after sunset . . . the floodgate of the black money was simultaneously opened in all the thirty-nine constituencies “of the Manipur Valley just to sweep the

electorates . . . Money was caught red-handed during the transactions in the darkness of the night . . . who says Manipur is a very backward poor state ? The corrupt political leaders of Manipur have tremendous purchasing powers to buy votes at exorbitant prices with the unlimited funding by Delhi based political tycoons and local business tycoons. The election observers might have seen the late night political deals during the most crucial fortnight hours prior to the polling in the Manipur valley on the 19th February from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will be a gala Sunday for the fun loving people in the name of elections.”<sup>36</sup> Whether the vote buyers with money, were caught red-handed or not, it is a different story. It may be said that almost all the contesting candidates resorted to this means of buying votes with money, though most of them were not caught red-handed. It remained open secret.

### **Muscle Power**

Besides money power, the muscle power too has become a critical component of electioneering in present day elections. It has become an integral part of elections. V.K. Nayar said, “Muscle power has also become an instrument of political clout and therefore its continued use is desirable by those wielding power.”<sup>37</sup> The former Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil stated that “It has also become known to the people that in some constituencies and states, muscle power is used on a large scale to tilt the results of the elections. . . ,”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, muscle power both overground and underground has been engrained into the society and is being used by the politicians also. Since Manipur has been for long an insurgency infested state both in the hills and the valley, the involvement of various underground outfits in the state in the sixth Assembly polls could not be a denied fact. It was an open secret that could not be ruled out easily. According to V.K.



Nayar, "It is a well known fact that insurgent groups have exercised their influences and campaigned for or against candidates in the elections. The links of political parties and individuals with the underground are well known. This not restricted to politicians only, it is also there amongst Government officials and local police officials."<sup>39</sup> To quote an Editorial of 'Freedom' dated 15 January 1995, "Election and Revolutions. are going on hand in hand in this insurgency prone state. The critical political situation in Manipur will force the aspiring candidates to take clearance from the underground organisations to toe their political strategy to come out with flying colours in the ensuing Assembly poll. The political observers and intelligence analysis will have no problem in finding out the secret deal between the candidates and the underground organisations."<sup>40</sup> In another Editorial of the same newspaper, it pointed out that, "The election campaign has activated a lot of tensions with threatening letters and telephone calls to quite a good number of controversial candidates in sensitive Assembly constituencies of Manipur."<sup>41</sup> Even L.K. Advani of BJP who was in Imphal for election campaigning for his party" said that he is not surprised about the reports of two former Governors of Manipur stating the nexus between Rishang Keishing (Chief Minister of Manipur) and NSCN (IM) faction militants. The Researcher in his personal interview with all the leaders of the political parties that have entered the electoral battle, was informed about the involvement of muscle power - both overground and underground - in this sixth Assembly polls. All the party leaders do accept that muscle power was used both in the hills and the valley.<sup>42</sup> But one thing which can be kept in mind is that the use of muscle power in Manipur during the elections was not on the scale of which are being practised in other parts of India like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc.

To incorporate some of their views, Congress (S) President, R.K. Nokulsana said, “muscle and money power has its wide influence. Both play the most important role in elections. Insurgent outfits also do involve in this election.” L. Iboyaima Singh, General Secretary of Janata Party, said “All the underground outfits such as NSCN, KNF and other valley-based insurgents in the State do involve in the elections. They are used as muscle power by the contesting candidates and their parties specially by those candidates of the wealthy class. Besides, criminals, anti-socials, local goondas, hooligans etc. were also used for muscle power.” President of State Janata Dal, W. Kullabidhu Singh (MP Rajya Sabha) stated “there were candidates having nexus with underground outfits in both the hills and the valley. Muscle power used through NSCN, Zomi Union, Kuki outfits etc. and controlled by them. Candidates having their backing won the elections. They also warned some candidates with dire consequences to withdraw their nominations/candidature, to ask their voters not to vote them. Booth capturing was done wantonly in the hills and impersonation of voting mainly by the Agents/volunteers of candidates at the order of these outfits. Corruption among the insurgents is very high.” CPI State Secretary, Ph. Parijat Singh said, “Insurgents of many factions, gang parties, dokoits etc., do involve in this election as hired by the candidates/political parties, but not in the name of a particular outfit/organisation. They intimidated and forced voters to give their votes to a particular candidate. The contesting parties/candidates utilised terrorists factions during the election. More than fifty percent of the candidates used muscle power in order to get the seat. In his Lamlai Assembly constituency, for instance, he said, the MPP candidate used muscle power against the rival CPI candidate.” Even the ruling Congress-I party do accept the use of muscle power in this election. The party spokesman T. Gunadhwaja said undergrounds are indirectly involved but not

directly. They even sponsored candidates. Anti-Social elements also do involve in the elections. The MPP leader R.K. Ranbir Singh stated “In the hills Nagas dominated in their areas while the Kukis in their areas. In the hills, both money and muscle power were used. But in the valley only the money power was used. However, the president of MHPC Zimik Weapon gave an absurd statement by saying that there is no need of using muscle power in the elections.”<sup>43</sup>

Most of the political leaders were in unanimity that muscle power is more widely used in the hills and remote areas than the valley, while the used of money power is more intensive in the valley. KNA President Jainson Haokip stated that “Muscle power is more in the hills due to lack of security arrangements. There was no free and fair elections in the hills. So many booth capturing occurred in the hills. Unexpected candidates got elected. Sincere candidates got defeated due to use of muscle power by rival candidates. Impersonation and bogus voting occurred in many polling booths. Some persons voted for a sizeable voters. Polling persormnls were helpless. Failure of security arrangements are mainly responsible for these electoral malpractices in the hills. BJP ex-President N. Ram Singh said, “Booth capturing, election rigging took place in the hills (but not in the valley) in some areas by forcing the Polling Personnels by the village authority, headmen, leaders, outfits. Election observers too even avoided intentionally of the election malpractices taking place in the Mils during the elections and on polling day. High voting percentage in the hills is mainly responsible for using muscle power either by any party or candidates. One or two persons can vote for others. Impersonation or substitute voting by some persons for someone else is a convention in the hills. Electors mostly do not come to the polling booths for exercising their voting rights. Candidates and their parties asked the village headmen, leaders, Khullakpas

and even Pastors to help and forced the Presiding Officers and other Polling Officers and cast vote for all, even outside the polling booths.”<sup>44</sup>

Most of the political parties/leaders felt that the ruling Congress-I party and the MPP - being the two contenders for power - used both the money and muscle powers by engaging various outfits- in the state. The prospective candidates also adopted the same practice. But they also accepted that among the parties, the Congress-I party topped in using both the money and muscle- power in this sixth Assembly elections.

As soon as the polling day drew nearer and nearer, the tension between the rival candidates and their workers, supporters became on the rise. Rumours of the use of muscle power by the contesting rival parties/candidates were afloat during the course of election campaigning in the state. To quote an Editorial of an English daily ‘Freedom’, “It is an open secret that most of the candidates who are in the fray for the ensuing Assembly poll in Manipur are now well-equipped with sophisticated weapons to provide personal security over and above the normal security personnel provided by the Government of Manipur .... But it is quite amazing to come to know about the numbers of small arms and sophisticated weapons in possession of the invisible secret services raised at their individual level for the purpose of the Election campaign.”<sup>45</sup> In another Editorial of the same newspaper, “The election campaign has activated a lot of tension with threatening letters and telephone calls to quite a good number of ; controversial candidates in sensitive Assembly constituencies of Manipur.”<sup>46</sup>

The rumours which were floating in the state about the elimination of some important political leaders, came, true, when the reports appeared in the newspapers about the assassination of political leaders in broad-day-light, and killing of party workers. There were other reports about the receiving of

threatening letters; beating up of party workers, kidnapping of rival workers by the armed men; chopping and stabbing of workers. There had been unprecedented number of attacks, threats, life attempts mounted on candidates and their workers/ supporters by armed men.

To cite a few examples - on 1 February, the State Education Minister and Congress-I candidate L. Amujao Singh, from Andro constituency was attacked at his residence by four suspected valley insurgents. The incident occurred in the morning when he was still inside his residence. Amujao, however, escaped the attack. Reportedly he had been threatened by KYKL before. On 6 February evening the Deputy Chief Minister Th. Chaoba Singh, Congress-I nominee, from Nambol constituency was attacked at his residence by unidentified gunmen while there was an election meeting. But he escaped. It may be mentioned that Chaoba had already escaped an earlier attempt on his life some years ago in which he lost his wife and son in the attack. In another incident on 10 February evening some unknown armed youths threw a Chinese made hand-grenade with some rounds of firing at the residence of the MPCC-I President Radhabinod Kojiam. That time he was at his drawing room along with some aids, informally presiding a meeting on the election campaign. There was no casualty as the bomb failed to explode. Radhabinod was contesting for the Tangmeiband seat on Congress-I ticket. On 17 February evening, while campaigning along with his supporters, the Agriculture Minister of state and Congress-I candidate from Sekmai (SC) reserved constituency N. Biren Singh was attacked by unidentified gunmen. But there was no casualty. There were many reports of the intrusion of the unknown armed men in the residence of the candidates asking their whereabouts, for instance, in the residence of Thangjam Shyam Singh Congress-I candidate of Khundrakpam

constituency on 20 February, BJP candidate E. Kunjeshwar Singh of Yaiskul constituency, etc. Reportedly, the house of Thoudam Joykumar Singh, BJP candidate of ThQngju constituency at Singjamei Kshetri Leikai was fire up by some unknown youths but no casualty was occurred.<sup>47</sup>

On 11 February, two political leaders were assassinated. In the morning, Sh. Modhumangol Sharma, former President of BJP, Manipur was gunned down at his residence at Sagolband Tera Bazar, Imphal, by two unidentified assailants. He was not a contesting candidate but was leading his party's election campaigning when he was killed. According to family sources, he received threatening letter plus demand for Rs 5 lakhs from an underground outfit. The killing was mostly considered as having political motives behind. It was believed in several circles that Modhumangol was killed for his election speech telecast by DDK, Imphal and AIR, Imphal in the evening of 10 February in connection with his party's election campaign. In his speechj Modhumangol strongly criticised both the Congress-I and the MPP saying that both the parties were trying to lead Manipur into pieces. In another incident, few hours after the killing of Modhumangol, in the evening, the sitting ML A and MPP candidate from Lamsang constituency, M. Deven Singh was kidnapped at Maklang Bazar by 12 unidentified armed persons in full olive green uniform while Deven was returning from his election campaigning. Latter on he was found dead. The slain candidate Deven was a former leader/ex-member of PLA.<sup>48</sup> The gunning down of the two political leaders created panic not only to the candidates but also to their workers and the people. From this we may conclude the involvement of muscle power in the election. Earlier M. Ibotombi Singh, popularly known as Heirok Ibotombi, .was shot death on 7 December 1994 inside the drawing room of his residence at Heirok by two unidentified gunmen. At the time

of his assassination, he was campaigning for the February 1995 Assembly election. It was suspected to be a political assassination.

On 16 February, the party workers of JD candidate Th. Chatukini Singh from Thongju constituency were attacked from a jeep with Congress-I flag by some unidentified gunmen while the workers were driving the candidates jeep near Ningomthong. Two of them sustained bullet injuries. In Khundrakpam Assembly constituency, Congress-I candidate's (Th. Shyam Singh) active worker Koijam Hemanta Singh was reportedly shot dead at Mongjam Taba Khuntningthek Tera Makhong within Heingang Police Station. According to DIG (Range) Manipur, supporters of the Congress-I candidate from Saitu constituency S.L. Paokhosei was beaten up on 12 February by the armed supporters of the MPP candidate Ngamthang Haokip after they have been kidnapped from the gate of Presidency College, Motbung. Three supporters of the lone Independent candidate Solanki Chothe from Tengenoupal constituency were kidnapped by NSCN(IM) activists. They were beaten up and asked to vote for and campaign for the Congress-I candidate Morung Makunga. Reportedly they voted for Makunga out of fear. On 16 February, in Mayang Imphal constituency, the worker of the Independent candidate was beaten and chopped by the workers of the MPP candidate. Reportedly some unknown armed youths threatened the workers of Independent candidate J.L. Kilong of Saikul (ST) Assembly constituency. They enquired about ; him and his agents at his office at K.R. Lane Imphal. The youths later went into the camp of a rival candidate.<sup>49</sup>

On 16 February evening, suspected valley-based unidentified gunmen overpowered and snatched away 6/7 firearms at gun point from the escort party of the MPP candidate from Thongju constituency Dr. Sapam Dhananjoy Singh at his

residence. On 20 February, night, in Keirao constituency, the escort party of the SJP (R) candidate Md. Abdul Mutabib (Haji Yaima) was overpowered, killing one Havildar and a Naik of Manipur Rifles (injuring one boy of the House) and snatching away carbine, and rifle. On 16 February night also an exchange of fire occurred between the armed activist and the bodyguards of the FPM candidate Kh. Dhruvatarra of Langthabal constituency. Reportedly they came to demand money from the candidate. In the same constituency, in the residence of the SP candidate H. Somorendro Singh, unidentified gunmen fired shots following the grudge with the outfit.<sup>50</sup>

According to newspaper report, the vehicle belonging to Kolkhomang Haokip, MPP candidate from Tengnoupal constituency was kidnapped by some unidentified miscreants on 24 January along with his driver and Advocate (his representative) at Pallel while they were proceeding for Moreh for Scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates. But they managed to make a good escape without any harm. It can be recalled that some political parties have asked the government of Manipur to allow filing of nomination papers at Imphal in view of the prevailing law and order situation in the state. The former Chief Minister of Manipur and MPP leader and also a candidate of the party R.K. Ranbir Singh from Keishamthong constituency said that many of his workers have been threatened, mentally terrorised and targeted by some unknown miscreants who cannot be the original undergrounds, along with nine bomb attacks by unknown persons. He said some interested persons were sending out people acting as insurgents to terrorise the MPP workers.<sup>51</sup>

R.P. Singh said, “No one hears about rigged elections here in Manipur”<sup>52</sup> in the previous elections. But this time, there were election rigging reports in the



newspapers by the rival candidates mainly in the hills. The columns of some local papers were also flooded with the complaints by rival candidates of the election rigging, booth capturing etc. In spite of the strict vigilance, the election could not be termed as totally free from rigging. However, no disruption of political and election meetings was ever noticed in the state.

In a press statement by the Secretary, Publicity and Information wing of the Government of the Peoples' Republic of Nagaland NSCN (K) faction, alleged that Th. Muivah have an unholy alliance with "Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's top secret service agency. It said the NSCN (M) Muivah group and RAW warmly welcomed and supported recently concluded sixth Assembly polls in Manipur. The statement said that in the hills they (Muivah group/RAW) participated in the Indian Elections; supported some candidates, campaigned openly and they themselves/its men cast their votes in the process of which some of them were killed, arms and ammunitions lost for the welfare of the Indian constitution.<sup>53</sup>

The elections should be so conducted that the people are in a position to exercise their franchise freely without any intimidation, coercion, interference, undue inducement by political parties and others. It has been seen that not only the vested interests but officials are also guilty of sabotaging free and fair elections, sometimes by openly violating the electoral and other laws. Even though, in the present socio-economic set up the election cannot be expected to be free and fair in the true sense of the term. Rabi Ray pointed out that "the matter is so urgent that it cannot brook any delay for the simple reason that unless the twin ends of money and muscle power are banished during elections they would continue to pose a serious threat to the holding of free and fair election."<sup>54</sup> G.R.S. Rao also stated

that 'Money and muscle power have long ago derailed the train of democratic polity in India. If the process has to be set back on the track, these two evils have to be given priority over the 'System' or method of election for no system can withstand these two cancers. Like bad coins drive good ones out of circulation, only muscles and money power can stand in the electoral arena.'<sup>55</sup>

### **Role of Elites**

According to International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences "Elites are those minorities which are set apart from the rest of society by their pre-eminence in one or more of these various distribution."<sup>56</sup> Pareto believed that every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the qualities necessary for its accession to full social and political power. Those who get on top are always the best. They are known as the elites. The elites consists of those successful persons who rise to the top in every occupation and stratum of society. There is an elite of lawyers, an elite of mechanics and even an elite of thieves and an elite of prostitutes. Society thus consists of two classes according to Pareto- (a) a higher stratum- the elite which is divided into a governing elite and a non-governing elite; and (b) a lower stratum -the non-elite.<sup>57</sup>

As such, the elite in general, is supposed to play a dominant and much significant role in influencing the outcome of the elections, by virtue of their higher positions they hold in the society over others, the esteem and recognition accorded to them by the general masses due to this peculiar position and privileges. However, the elites, despite their higher position/status in the society, could not play any extensive role in this election as we presumed them to be. It seemed that the elites of all sheds, did not influence the voters extensively. This is because of the fact that each and every

elite had his/her political leanings either to a party or the other or candidate trying to strengthen the support base of the party they affiliated to, that restricts himself going beyond his party colour. Their role is limited to a great extent as they had their particular political colours. Moreover, so far as muscle power and money power entered the elections, the role of elites were limited. Congress-S President R.K. Nokulsana said "The elites have no extensive campaign. They always confine within a limited circle. Their influence has a little value to the voter. Their role is limited." N. Joykumar, General Secretary of F#M stated "As the common voters depend on the factor of personal benefit, the elites do not play a major role in elections. They do not become a prime factor as their percentage is very low. Though they can influence to some extent, their importance is very low as they could not influence the larger voters, mainly the illiterate voters." Most of other political leaders, intellectuals, Editors, etc., who were interviewed, nodded and expressed the same views that the elites had limited roles and could not play any major/larger and active role in elections. They were not influential and did not take interest in elections. The elites, in general, took the neutral stand during the elections.<sup>55</sup>

It is very difficult to point out categorically the role of elites during the sixth Assembly elections as they were not participating in the elections openly. However, most of the Government employees had their inclination towards the ruling party or a party (ies) that might have come to power. Even then, they could not campaign openly. Some other political leader like General Secretary of Janata Party L. Iboyaima Singh; M. Shamu Singh, Secretary CPI-M, Manipur State Committee; General Secretary of BJP N. Ram Singh, Kh. Angangjao Singh, Chairman Parliamentary Board, Manipur State Unit Samata Party, K. Modhumangol Singh, Senior most Journalist, Editor "Prajatantra\* Manipur Daily etc., felt that "most elites-supported mainly the party in power. Majority of them are

with the ruling class. Elites in general favoured those candidates and parties who can win and come to power.” Angangjao said elites considered for personal benefits (promotion, contract works, service/jobs, and other benefits). They have no consideration for personality, merit, quality, social works, etc. of the candidate. Elites campaigned for the candidates of their priority. But some of the elites supposed to be neutral. W. Kullabidhu Singh, President of Janata Dal (ex-MP Rajya Sabha) said majority of the elites are opportunist though a negligible section of them voted on the basis of candidates merit.” R.K. Renedrajit Singh, Editor of ‘Freedom’ newspaper, felt bureaucrats as ‘opportunist’ supporting the party in power or the party that may come to power, considering for benefits and promotional matters. Sh. Gopal Sharma, Editor ‘Poknapham’ Manipur Daily, stated “But some of the elite like government servants, professionals favoured the party in power. Though they could not campaigned openly fearing the wrath of Election Commission model code of conduct, they tried to influenced their subordinates, etc. by luring lucrative postings, promotions and so on. Generally party in power can misused government machineries at their wish and like. So the common people and bureaucrats always fear the party in power. They always obeyed willingly or unwillingly the wish of the party in power or man behind the power. So the role of some elites in this election were very important.”<sup>59</sup>

And, despite the limited roles of the elites during the elections; the intellectual elites, human rights activists, etc., inclined towards the regional/local parties. This was because of the fact that there have been lack of confidence in national parties among the intellectual elites due to increasing violation of human rights loss of state autonomy in regard to centre state relations in which the state government always becomes a dependent to the centre; the declining character and

principle of the national parties etc. They presumed that the state government run by local parties would have better harnessed in addressing the grievances of the people, bringing more autonomy to the state. Some educationists considered merit and personality of candidates, character, principle, performance and ideology of the party.

Manipur is not a state where there is extreme caste ridden society. There is no caste stigma in the state. As such campaigning on grounds of religion or caste did not bear much influence upon the voters, However, in this sixth Assembly elections, regional and ethnic forces played a very important role in influencing the voters, mostly in the plains. Unity and integrity of the state and protection of its territorial boundary became the patchword of all the contesting parties in this elections. Issues like South Nagaland and anti-Rishang Keishing wave not only swept across the valley, it was also visible and strong in Kuki dominated areas in the hills. Communal forces . . . Meitei Vs Naga and Naga Vs Kuki - appealed the voters much, besides the role played by elites, money and muscle power in this election.

### **Election violence**

When the sixth State Assembly Election were going to be held in Manipur, the general law and order situation in the state was extremely bad. The imposition of one year-long central Rule in the state to restore democratic process, law and order condition was a complete failure. Rather it became from bad to worse. As such the pre-election atmosphere was marked by a degree of tension, degenerating here and there into outbursts of violence which was not noticeable during the previous Assembly elections in the state. Only .the political parties and tlieir power

hungry candidates were extremely keen to hold the elections at any cost. But it could not expect a free and fair poll in the fast deteriorating law and order condition. Soon after the announcement of the election, the electioneering scenario in the state became intensified gradually by all the contesting parties/ candidates. With that the tension became mounting day by day. Life was not secure during the election process as the election violence were whipped up.

The same day on 5 February, a few hours latter following the killing of five PLA activist early in the morning at Mana Engkhol, Tera Urak, Wabagai, by a combined force of State-Police and Manipur Rifles (in which four UNLF guerrillas were also arrested in operation) the underground made retaliatory attack with a series of at least four bomb blasts on, Imphai Raj Bhavan; Kwakeithel Police Outpost; Singjamei Police Outpost and the last attack was at the police personnels manning the office of the Manipur Public Service Commission Building. The attack injured three persons including one officer-in-charge of Kwakeithel Police Outpost and 14-year old daughter of the Governor's Cook and another three year old boy. Though the real motive behind the bomb-attack was not known exactly, but it appeared apparently the handiwork of the prescribed PLA activists to avenge to the killing of its members by the police. In protest against the killing, the outfit (RPF) also called a successful Manipur Bandh.

On 15 February, only one day ahead of the first phase polls in the hills, a powerful bomb was exploded at about 07.25 p.m. in the State Election Office, Imphai that rocked the entire election process in Manipur. Few minutes prior to the bomb explosion, an anonymous telephone call warned the staffs that the powerful . bomb had been planted inside the room of the Joint Chief Electoral Officer N.

Ibotombi Singh and so to vacate the campus of the Chief Electoral Officer. Immediately the staff vacated the office which enabled them to escape the blasts. However, there was no serious damage. Only a few documents and furnitures were reportedly burnt.

The situation was not better in the hills also. Despite the peaceful outlook during the first phase polling in the hills violence took place in different areas after the poll. In the worst post-poll violence in the hills, reportedly two CRPF Jawans were killed and nine others including a civilian woman injured in the early hours of 17 February, when the suspected Kuki militants attacked and tried to snatch ballot boxes from a polling party. There was heavy encounter for nearly two hours. The incident occurred at Savafai polling station in Churachandpur district. While the Jawans of A/48 CRPF were providing escort to, the ballot boxes of Savafai polling station of Thanlon (ST) reserved constituency. However, no ballot boxes were captured by the militants. In continuation of the violence, the same day (17 February) at around 8.p.m. suspected hill militants ambushed a CRPF party at Riyangfai, 30 kms. North-east of Thanlon, injuring 3 CRPF and one civilian. The CRPF party was proceeding on foot from Thanlon to Churachandpur, district headquarters after the dead and injurious had been picked up by helicopter following the attack at Savafai polling station. In another encounter, one CRPF Jawan sustained injuries when suspected Naga underground militants attacked the 71-CRPF escort party of polling officials with ballot boxes of 45/36-37 polling station of Chingai (ST) constituency in Ukhrul district. The incident occurred on the night of 16 February at an area between Sirankhong and Mulam village while the polling party was heading for district headquarters. However, all ballot boxes were saved from the attackers.

On 15 February late mid-night, violence occurred in Kalapahar of Kangpokpi Assembly constituency in Senapati district One suspected NSCN

activists was killed and three other arrested including one injured following an encounter with the Army patrolling party, near the house of sitting MLA and Congress-I candidate L.S. John. The Army recovered some arms and documents from them. The armed men came in a jeep attached with a Congress-I flag. On further enquiry, it was found out that the flag and the vehicle belonged to Congress-I candidate and Minister of Forest L.S. John of Kangpokpi constituency. In the follow-up operations, the Army raided L.S. John's residence in which some more arms were also recovered. As per radio news, the three arrested were NSCN militants. But John denied them as his workers. He said the vehicle was hijacked by the militants while using for his election purposes.

There were also other reports of unsuccessful attempts by miscreants to capture booths in some of the hill constituencies. On 16 February, while the polling was going on in the hills., some miscreants opened fire some rounds at Lamdan J.B. School (Ichai polling station, in' Churachandpur district near Saikot Police Station). But the situation was brought under control and peaceful polling continued. At Chingmeirong polling station in Ukhrul district, unknown armed men fired some rounds. In a separate incident on 18 February night, suspected KNF tribal militants overpowered the security guards of Ngulkhohao Lungdim, a Janata Dal candidate of Saikot (ST) constituency in Churachandpur district and snatched away rifles and sten carbines. The incident occurred at his residence, Molnom, militants came as JD workers.

The violent atmosphere, which have been building up ever since the polls were announced in Manipur, climaxed on the second phase polls in the valley on 19 February. Large-scale violence erupted in this last round of polling with a series of bom-blasts and firing incidents. Grenades were thrown in many polling stations



by militants, shots were also fired at different places. Violence marred the polling that rocked the state in which at least 7 civilians lost their lives, more than 12 other civilian were seriously injured and 5 CRPF Jawans were also injured following the insurgents attack.

Following the polling in the hills, the prescribed outlawed Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) a valley based insurgent group boycotted the poll in the three valley districts. The outfit sounded red alert just a few hours before the polling day in the valley with an intention to disrupt the polls.. The Revolutionary Peoples Front (RPF), the political wing of the PLA asked the people to remain indoors till the election is over and warned not to come out to exercise their franchise on 19 February as the outfit was planning to strike the security forces deployed in the election. It cautioned those who declined the warning to own responsibility themselves, if faced any untoward incident.

Despite the tight security measures taken up by the state government due to the stern warning from the PLA, several bom-blasts and shoot-outs took place all over the valley during the polling hours. At least 13 bom-blasts in different polling stations occurred on polling day. The previous night of the polling day, two persons suspected as bomb-planters, were killed .in bomb-blasts in a house at Kakching. In Mayang Imphal Higher Secondary School polling station, one youth was killed during polling hours when a powerful bomb went off injuring one who also later died in the Hospital. At Lilashing Khongnangkhong High School polling station of Thangmeiband constituency a powerful bomb exploded damaging the school roof and cycle shed roof. At Uripok Sorbol Thingel U J.B. School polling station unidentified youths hurled a crude bomb which landed at the feet of the voters who were lining up to exercise their franchise. Since the bomb had a long fuse, it exploded long after the public had rushed to safety. Security guards returned in blank as covering fire, and

polling discontinued for some time. At the Sakhi Devi School and Unipok Boys L.P. School polling station in Uripok constituency four bombs exploded along with firing. In the same constituency, at Lamboikhongangkhang LP/UJB School polling stations, two other powerful bombs went off in which one woman voter along with the ballot paper issued to her reportedly ran away to her residence least of panic, two woman voter felt unconscious, and the school wall collapsed, and roofs damaged. At Bheigyabati Devi Primary School polling station of Wangkhei constituency, one Grenade exploded. Bomb blasts also occurred at many places at Haobam Marak Girls' High School, Thangmeiband Thingel; Keisampat Leimajam Leikai Heingang Kontha UJB School etc., disrupting the polling process. Several powerful pipe bombs also were defused by bomb experts of Manipur Police in Kontha Khabam Ahallup polling station of Heingang constituency;.. Gurukul High School polling station of Thangmeiband constituency Seijang Junior High School polling station in Lamalai constituency etc.

Attacks at the polling security personnels also took place at several polling stations by unidentified gunmen in Khurai constituency and Thoubal; exchange of fire occurred at Sagolmang High School of Khundrakpam constituency between CRPF personnel and armed men in which one got injured; another occurred at Kyamgei Heibongpokpi Junior High School polling station of Keirao constituency between polling security MR personnels and unidentified gunmen. At Kongba Dhobi Lampak, to a Manipur Police team escorting/bringing ballot boxes from Irilbung was also attacked.

The worst and most violent of the incident took place at the four-point-crossing at Bashikhong in Thongju Assembly constituency, Imphal district, near the polling station. Suspected valley insurgents ambushed a Joint-Patrolling Party of CRPF and Manipur Police with sophisticated weapons, in the afternoon. The

CRPF also returned the fire, the shoot out claimed 2 civilian lives and left injured as many as other five of the CRPF personnels and 12 civilians. The firing incident created panic and fear. Some of the voters who have come out to cast their votes, went back home without exercising their franchise. Amidst election phobia, combing operation was conducted by the Army and CRPF.

On 20 February 1995, the voice of America (VOA) highlighted that violence marred the Assembly poll in the Manipur valley on the Indo-Myanmar border of India due to series of bombing and 'armed activities by the PLA with a plea to the people to boycott the elections.

Inspite of the red-alert sounded by PLA there was large turn out in the poll. Though it polled fairly, the voters could not exercise their rights in the valley without any fear.

During the last many years, the existing system has widened/distanced and strained the relations between the voters and their representatives. People lost confidence to their representatives. Election promises have become hollow promises. People cannot aspect any kind of hopes, benefits, developmental programmes, etc. from them. Once elected, they forget their people throughout the long five years, till the next election comes. As such people tend to extract whatever amount of money or any kind or benefits they can get from the contesting candidates when the time permits them. Today, the motive of the larger voters in the state is that election season is a "high time" for them to get their 'Share' which have been 'due' for so long normally five years. This, apart from others, makes the election contest very expensive, while trying to bribe the voters. If we can remove this unhealthy culture by re-establishing good relations between the voters and

representatives, the election expenses can be narrowed down to some extent. A sense of confidence is to be created among the electorates that “we are the true representatives of the people”. Only then, votes will not be bought.

Moreover, the gradual decline in the character and principles of political parties, and the loss of moral and values among the legislators has also worsened the true spirit of democratic elections in the state. This paved the way for resorting to unwanted means to win the election leading to unfair elections. It is imperative to deploy enough security personnels to each polling station, more particularly in the remote (hills) areas where these unwanted and unfair elections takes place in order to check the use of muscle power, violence and to foil any attempt at election rigging and booth capturing. This may also neutralise the attempts of the candidates/parties to intimidate, coerce and terrorise voters by using muscle power.

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# **CHAPTER – VI**

*Analysis of Constituency-wise  
Election Results*

## **CHAPTER-VI**

### **ANALYSIS OF CONSTITUENCY-WISE ELECTION RESULTS**

As has been mentioned already in the previous chapter, the sixth Assembly elections in Manipur was held to only 59 constituencies. One Assembly segment (Lamsang Constituency) in Imphal district could not go to polls due to the countermanding of elections following the killing of a MPP candidate by the unidentified underground outfit. Altogether fourteen political parties were in the electoral battle. Seven were national parties and the rest belonged to state parties. Of the state parties, three were recognised parties and the rest four were registered but unrecognised parties. Congress-I was the only party that fielded its candidates in all the Assembly constituencies. The powerful regional political outfit in the state the MPP, set up candidates in fifty-four Assembly constituencies. While the JD put up candidates in thirty-one Assembly segments. The rest of the parties could not put up their nominees properly. The election also witnessed the presence of sixty-six Independent candidates in the fray.

Despite the presence of a large number of political parties in the electoral battle, the election was a fight between the Congress-I and the MPP. There was no any kind of electoral alliance in its true sense of the term except that of the electoral understanding made between the CPI; CPI (Marxist); and Janata Dal. Like in the previous elections, the sixth Assembly elections experienced 'anti-Congress-wave' particularly in the valley constituencies, though it hardly swayed the electors. Though the state is free from any caste-stigma as prevailed in other states of India, for the first time, ethnicity involved in this election arising out of

the issue of protecting the territorial integrity of Manipur which was further compounded by the JAC-sponsored transporters' strike on National Highway following the imposition of illegal 'vehicles and goods taxes' by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland NSCN-(IM) faction. The magnitude of 'ethnic overtone' was so tense that it was likely to have communal clash between the Manipuri (Tangkhul) Nagas and the Meiteis. "Ethnic" propaganda favoured the MPP. The voting was determined by various factors such as party affiliation, money, the question of the protection of territorial integrity of the state, ethnic issues, muscle power, personality of contesting candidates, developmental programmes etc.

Out of the 60-Assembly Constituencies in the state 20 are in the hills (19 are reserved constituencies) while the rest 40 constituencies are in the valley (one constituency is reserved for scheduled caste). Traditionally the hilly constituencies had been the Congress-I bastion but in this election it experienced a change. Except Congress-I and the MPP, the future of other parties is not bright in the state. As a routine work, no party could muster a workable majority after the election results. However, the Congress-I could maintain as the single largest party with 21 seats (but 22 after the countermanded elections to Lamsang Assembly Constituency).

The Election '95 had thrown many surprises to the people of Manipur as expected by the political observers of Manipur as the poll results were pouring in relentlessly with the rise and fall of giants of Manipur politics. By the end of the counting, the poll result showed the rise and fall of many prominent political figures in the state.

Table 6.1  
Khundrakpam Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	28	Total Voters	:	18,146 (M-9129F-9017)
Total Votes Polled	:	15,856	Valid Votes Polled	:	15,585
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	270	Tender Votes	:	1
Polled Percentage		87			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Konjengbam Binoy	MPP	6,440 (Elected)		41.32	
Tonjam Shyamkishwor	CPI	1,629		10.45	
Thangjam Shyam	INC	1,562		10.02	
Thoudam Nilkamal	CPI(M)	1,961		12.58	
Nongthombam Jila	JD	652		4.18	
Lairellakpam Lala Singh	FPM	3,341		21.44	

Though there were six-cornered contest, the real fight was between the MPP and the newly formed FPM. The MPP candidate who was also the sitting MLA could retain his seat by defeating his nearest rival FPM nominee by a big margin of 3099 votes. In the fifth Assembly elections held in 1990, Binoy was elected on MPP ticket by defeating Lala. The latter had also been elected as an Independent candidate in the fourth term of the Assembly.' Except Binoy and Lala, the rest of the candidates forfeited their security deposits. In the first state Assembly elections, the Congress party retained the seat. The CPI could capture the seat for two consecutive terms during the second and third Assembly elections.

Table 6.2  
Heingang Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	30	Total Voters	:	20,025(M-9783 F-10242)
Total Votes Polled	:	18,675	Valid Votes Polled	:	18,411
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	211	Tender Votes	:	53
Polled Percentage	:	93			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
TV Birdhaja Singh	JP	-100		0.54	
Chingakham Iboyaima Singh	MPP	762		4.14	
Thiyam Gouro Luwang	IND	62"		0.34	
Thongam Angoton	SJP (R)	3,712		20.16	
Waikhom Jagor Singh	INC	3,304		17.95	
Wakambam Thoiba Singh	FPM	6,225 (Elected)		33.81	
Yanglem Mangi Singh	IND	3,727		20.24	
Yengkokpam Priyokumar Singh	JD	519		2.82	

There were eight contestants in the election fray for the Heingang seat. The FPM candidate Thoiba defeated his nearest rival Independent candidate Mangi by 2498 votes as well as the sitting MLA and also Minister Jagor of Congress-I by 2921 votes. It may be remembered that the winner Thoiba (College Lecture) was denied Congress-I party ticket for which he joined the FPM. Jagor has been elected thrice consecutively from this constituency - twice on Congress-I ticket during the third and fourth term and once as Congress-S nominee during the fifth term of the Assembly. But this time he again changed his party affiliation and entered the election fray as Congress-I nominee. The voters did not spare him this time. He was badly paid for changing political colour frequently like a Chameleon.

Table 6.3  
Khurai Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 31	Total Voters	: 20,929(M-10166F-10763)
Total Votes Polled	: 19,527	Valid Votes Polled	: 19,284
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 241	Tender Votes	: 2
Polled Percentage	: 93		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Atomba Ngaiirengbamcha	INC	3,043	15.78
Keisham Abochaoubal Singh	SJP (R)	28	0.15
Chandam Manihar Singh	MPP	2,007	10.41
Ningombam Ibohal	BJP	836	4.34
Ningombam Dhiren Singh	JD	2,910	15.09
Ningthoujam Bihari Singh	IND	5,452 (Elected)	28.27
Lairellakpam Randhtr	IND	21	(M)
Laishram Sotinkumar	CPI	4,901	25.41
Huitrom Boney	SP	86	0.45

The Khurai Assembly constituency witnessed nine-cornered contest. Three candidates forfeited their security deposits. It may be noted that since the First State Assembly elections in 1972, excepting the second term, the Khurai seat have been wrested alternately either by the Independents or the MPP. In this

constituency, the CPI is also strong but could not capture the seat till today. The Congress party also has been on the same line with CPI. Atomba Ngiarangbamcha, an Independent candidate, could retain the seat in 1972 and 1984 elections while the MPP nominee Chandam Mariihar Singh wrested the seat twice in 1980 and 1990 Assembly elections. But in this sixth elections Atomba Ngiarangbamcha contested the seat as Congress-I nominee. The election again testified the return of a new Independent candidate Bihari Singh by defeating his nearest rival CPI candidate by a margin of 551 votes as well as the sitting MLA and MPP candidates by 3445 votes. The successive election results, apart from other considerations, show that the voters of this constituency give their preference to Independents rather than party sponsored candidates. Even the strong MPP wave sweeping across the valley constituencies did not work in favour of the party in this constituency. It is rumoured that ..money power played a very important role in getting the seat by Bihari Singh.

Table 6.4  
Kshetrigao Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 30	Total Voters	: 21,900(M-10608F-11292)
Total Votes Polled	: 20,919	Valid Votes Polled	: 20,684
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 235	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 96		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Athokpam Lala	CPI	3,493	16.89
Irengbam Sanatomba Singh	BJP	762	3.68
Basantakumar Wangkhem	JD	7,993 (Elected)	38.64
Muhammudin Shah	INC	7,307	35.33
Kshetrimayum Brajamani Singh	MPP	1,129	5.46

For the Kshetrigao Assembly constituency, a total of five candidates were in the election fray, of which one candidate was a Muslim. In this constituency, there is a fair Muslim population. The constituency have been a Congress-stronghold for the

last many years. In the post statehood period, except in the 1974 mid-term polls, it have been represented by the Congress Party from 1972 to 1990 Assembly elections. The MPP could capture the seat only in the 1974 polls. From the Second term (1974 -mid-term elections) elections till the fifth election in 1990 the politics of this constituency has been dominated by Muslim. During this long 20-years period, two Muslim were elected to be the representatives of this Assembly segment uninterruptedly.

The real contest was between the JD and the INC candidates going neck to neck. The JD nominee Basantakumar is a popular film-Star in Manipur while the Congress-I candidate Mahammuddin Shah is a widely-reputed politician in the state. He has constantly represented the constituency thrice under Congress ticket from 1980 till the holding of the sixth Assembly polls. He has held ministerial portfolios too. But in the sixth polls Mahammuddin could not retain the seat. He lost the seat to the Janata Dal Candidate by 686 votes.

Table 6.5 Thongju Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	27	Total Voters	:	20,590(M-9820F-10770)
Total Votes Polled	:	19,331	Valid Votes Polled	:	19,106
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	225	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	94			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Oinam Ganga Singh	SP	413		2.16	
Thangshabam Budhi	IC(S)	1,282		6.71	%
Thingujam Chatukini Singh	JD	5,039		26.37	
Thoudam Joykumar Singh	BJP	2,615		13.69	
Ningombam Jatishwar	CPI	88		0.46	
Sanglakpam Brajagopal Sharma	INC	3,602		18.85	
Dr. Sapam Dhananjoy	MPP	5,829	(Elected)	30.51	
Hi jam Heramot	FPM	238		1.25	

The number of candidates available for contest in the Thongju Assembly constituency was altogether eight. History shows that till the fifth Assembly

elections, no party could capture the seat for the second time. Only Oinam Tomba was elected twice - in 1972 polls under MPP ticket and as Congress nominee in 1990 elections. When the insurgency movement in Manipur was on the wax, the Founder leader of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), N. Bisheshwar Singh was arrested by the Army. While in the Leimakhong Army Jail, Bisheshwar contested the fourth Assembly polls in 1984 as an independent candidate. He was voted by the voters of this constituency thereby defeating the sitting MLA and minister, O. Tomba Singh. But despite his popularity as an insurgent leader, Bisheshwar could not stage a come back in the electoral battle for the rest of his life till he was gunned down by unidentified armed men. Bisheshwar was replaced by S. Brajagopal Sharma of Congress (S) after the fifth polls in 1990. However Brajagopal Sharma changed his party affiliation and contested the sixth Assembly election under Congress-I ticket. People voted him out. And a strong MPP wave Favoured the party, electing its party nominee Dr. Sapam Dhananjoy Singh, Thus after a long intervene of more than 20years the MPP managed to recapture the seat. The sitting MLA Brajagopal was badly defeated.

Table 6.6  
Keirao Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	27	Total Voters	:	18,2S9(M-9015F-9244)
Total Votes Polled	:	16,996	Valid Votes Polled	:	16,786
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	210,	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	93			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Abdul Matalip	SJP	2,491		14.84	
Alauddin	JD	692		4.12	
Chingakham Shyamjai Singh	MPP	3,095		18.44	
Jalaluddin	IND	1,395		8.31	
Naorem Sanamacha Singh	IND	373		2.22	
Nahakpam Bijoy	SP	1,717		10.23	
Musamuddin	CPI	1,716		10.22	
Hidam Bidur Singh	INC	4,695 (Elected)		27.97	
Yumlembam Ibochou Singh	IND	612		3.65	



There was nine-cornered contest in Keirao constituency, out of which four were Muslim candidates and one was an insurgent turned politician. The constituency had been represented by two Muslim throughout the four terms since 1972 elections Md. Jalaluddin twice under MPP ticket in the 1st and second terms while Md. Abdul Matalip was elected twice in the 3rd and 4th terms as Congress-nominee. Both could not returned again after the fifth polls though the constituency has large Muslim population. An insurgent-turned JD candidate Hidam Bidur Singh replaced the sitting MLA Abdul Matalip of Congress-I in the fifth Assembly polls. Though Bidur changed his party affiliation and contested the election as Congress-I candidates, he could retained his seat for the second time, he defeated the MPP candidate Shyamjai Singh by 1690 votes.

Table 6.7  
Andro Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 33	Total Voters	: 21,056(M-10397F-10659)
Total Votes Polled	: 19,758	Valid Votes Polled	: 19,400
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 358	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Dr. Angou Singh Chingakham	IND	5,376	27.71
Dr. Naorem Binoykumar Singh	SP	1,047	5.40
Basir Ahmed	IND	82	0.42
Loitongbam Amujao Singh	INC	5,217	26.89
Salam Chandra	MPP	7,678 (Elected )	39.58

Except the first two terms in the post statehood period, the Andro constituency has been stronghold for Congress-I till the fifth Assembly elections. L. Amujao Singh, an Independent candidate was elected from- this constituency (Previously known as Top Chingtha Assembly constituency) in the 1972 Assembly polls. In the 1974 mid-

term elections Md. Ashraf Ali a Muslim, as MPP nominee won the seat. L. Amujao Singh of Congress-I was re-elected from the third term till the fifth term.

In this sixth Assembly polls, the Andro constituency witnessed five candidates. Though there was five-cornered contest, the real fight was between the MPP, INC and Independent candidate Angou Singh. Amujao Singh followed third in the battle and was defeated by Chandra Singh of MPP by a big margin of 2461 votes. The Independent candidate Angou Singh ran second.

Table 6.8  
Lamlai Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 26	Total Voters	: 18,017 (M-9031 F-8986)
Total Votes Polled	: 16,881	Valid Votes Polled	: 16,626
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 251	Tender Votes	: 4
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Kamei Sanahal	FPM	487	2.93
Khongbantabam Ibomcha Singh	INC	4802	28.88
Pheiroijam Parijat	CPI	5135	30.89
Kshetrimayun Biren Singh	MPP	6202 (Elected)	37.30

The constituency is noted for communist strongholds for the last many years. Except in the 1984 Assembly elections, Ph. Parijat of CPI have been retaining the seat since 1972 till the 5th election in 1990. Only in 1984 election the Congress nominee. Y. Kerani Singh could capture the seat.

In this sixth Assembly elections, the constituency witnessed four-cornered contest. There was thought fight between the CPI and MPP candidates. But a strong MPP wave in the valley Favoured its party nominee Biren defeating his nearest rival candidate and sitting MLA Ph. Parijat Singh of CPI by 1067 votes. Thus the MPP could retain the seat for the first time.

Table 6.9  
Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 33	Total Voters	: 20,644 (M-10428F-10216)
Total Votes Polled	: 16,833	Valid Votes Polled	: 16,606
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 194	Tender Votes	: 33
Polled Percentage	: 82		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Ngangbam Kumarjit	MPP	545	3.28
Nmgthoujarn Binoy Singh	SP	5947	35.81
Meinam Bharat Singh	BJP	1848	11.13
Radhabinod Koijam	INC	7666 (Elected)	46.16
Kaikhurara Jayantakumar Singh	FPM	549	3.31
Shamurailakpam Gourachandra Sharma	SJP	51	0.31

In the First State Assembly election held in 1972, an Independent candidate S. Ibomcha Singh captured the Thangmeiband seat. N. Gouramani Singh of MPP wrested the seat in the 1974-mid-term poll. Radhabinod Koijam of INC was able to retain the seat for two terms consecutively in the 1980 and 1984 elections. But the seat was recaptured by MPP again in the 1990 Assembly polls.

In this sixth Assembly elections, most of the party presidents were in the electoral battle in this prestigious Thangmeiband constituency. There were six candidates in the contest. The MPCC(I) President Radhabinod Koijam, the Samata Party President N. Binoy Singh and the BJP President Meinam Bharat Singh were contesting for the seat. The real contest took place between Radhabinod and Binoy Singh. The sitting MLA Ng. Kumarjit lost the seat badly by securing 545 votes only. MPCC(I) Chief Radhabinod won the Thangmeiband seat with a convincing big margin of 1719 votes in what was dubbed a 'battle of President' Radhabinod badly defeated his nearest rival Samata Party president N. Binoy Singh. Thus he retained the seat again by getting 7666 votes. The BJP State President M Bharot

was way behind by securing 1848 votes. Though the tragic assassination of BJP's founder leader might have generated sentiments it had not translated into votes. Radhabinod has been a contender for the post of Chief Ministership and retained the confidence of the voter in his constituency. In fact voters saw good prospects in him and thus voted him.

Table 6.10  
Uripok Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	22	Total Voters	:	15,661(M-7319F-8342)
Total Votes Polled	:	13,464	Valid Votes Polled	:	13,276
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	156	Tender Votes	:	32
Polled Percentage	:	86			
Name of Candidate	Party \ Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Chirom Kamal	CPI	659		4.96	
Chongtham Bijoy	BJP	1743		13.13	
N. Nodiyachand Singh	MPP	3646 (Elected)		27.46	
Paonam Achou Singh	INC	3151		23.73	
Meinam Mithai	JD	730		5.50.	
Laishram Nandakumar Singh	FPM	3347		25.21	

The Uripok seat, since statehood, have been wrested twice by the CPI in 1972 and 1974 mid-term Assembly polls; twice by the Congress in 1980 and 1984 elections and once by Janata Dal in the 1990 elections.

A total of six candidates were in the election fray, There was no Independent candidates in the contest. The real contest took place between the MPP nominee and the candidate of the newly formed Federal Party of Manipur. Since the sitting MLA T. Gunadhwaja Singh was not awarded party ticket, he was out of the contest. Paonam Achou of INC nominee who have been elected twice in 1980 and 1984 elections on Congress ticket ran third and could not retain the seat again. The constituency witnessed a new comer. Nodiyachand of MPP defeated his nearest rival FPM candidate Nandakumar by 299 votes. The future of CPI in this Assembly segment is

gloomy following the expellation of M. Meghachandra Singh from the CPI. Meghachandra captured the Uripok seat twice in 1972 and 1974 elections.

Table 6.11  
Sagolband Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	26	Total Voters	:	18,030(M-8908F-9122)
Total Votes Polled	:	15,129	Valid Votes Polled	:	14,952
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	164	Tender Votes	:	13
Polled Percentage	:	84			
Name of Candidate		Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage
Khwairakpam Loken Singh		JD	3515		23.51
R.K. Tarachand Singh		BJP	1711		11.44
Moirangthem Kumar Singh		MPP	5037 (Elected)		33.69
R.K. Ongbi Sorojini Devi		INC	2678		17.91
Salam Damudor Singh		FPM	2Q11		13.45

The CPI captured the Sagolband seat in the 1972 state Assembly polls. It went to MPP after the 1974 mid-term elections. The Congress wrested the seat in the 1980 polls. The electors sent an Independent candidate in the 1984 elections . Then the seat went to Congress again in the 1990 polls, but remained vacant following the dead of the sitting MLA near the sixth Assembly elections.

Five candidates contested for the Sagolband seat in the sixth Assembly polls including a woman candidate. The sitting MLA and former Chief Minister of Manipur (late) R.K. Joychandra Singh expired when .the sixth Assembly elections was only some months ahead. So, the Congress-I ticket was awarded to his wife Sorojini Devi. Kumar has been elected once in the 1980 polls on Congress-I ticket but entered the fray this time on MPP ticket/While Damudor also have captured the seat as Independent candidate, in 1984 elections but he resigned from his seat following the change of Guards in the state. That time R.K. Joychandra was the Union Minister but came back to his State as Chief Minister in order to resolve the

leadership crisis in the State Congress-L As a result Damudor resigned in favour of Joychandra.

In the contest, Tarachand Singh, Sorojini Devi and Damudor Singh trailed far behind. The real fight was between the MPP nominee Kumar Singh and the JD candidate and also new blood Loken Singh. But Kumar could regain his seat again by defeating Loken Singh by a big margin of 1522 votes. The widow of the late Joychandra ran third.

Table 6.12  
Keishamthong Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 29	Total Voters	: 20,613(M-11827F~8786)
Total Votes Polled	: 18,379	Valid Votes Polled	: 18,138
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 241	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 89		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Ahanf hem Hemchand	BJP	559	3.08
Irengbam Jiten	JD	422	2.33
R.K. Ranbir	MPP	10091 (Elected)	55.63
Laishom Lalit Singh	INC	7066	38.96

Keishamthong Assembly constituency is one of the most important constituencies in the state. It is from this constituency that the opposition leader as well as the former Chief Minister of Manipur R.K. Ranbir Singh was contesting on MPP ticket. In Keishamthong constituency, no. political party except the MPP and Congress-I have been able to capture the seat. Since the First state Assembly elections both the parties have wrested the seat alternately. In 1972 elections, MPP got the seat. Then it went to Congress in 1974 polls. The MPP could regain the seat in the next elections in 1980. Again Congress recaptured the seat in 1984 election. As a routine work, the MPP again managed to retain the seat in 1990 polls.

In this sixth Assembly elections, the constituency was locked in four-cornered contest. The rival parties were MPP and Congress as before. Former Chief Minister and MPP leader R.K. Ranbir Singh had a neck to neck fight with the former Congress-I Minister L. Lalit Singh. The rest of the candidates were insignificant in the race. Ranbir polled 10,091 votes more than half of the valid votes polled. Ranbir was the sitting MLA of this constituency. He retained the seat for another term by defeating Lalit of Congress-I by a big margin of 3025 votes. In the eyes of the electors, Ranbir's position was better than of Lalit as the former was a strong contender for the post of Chief Ministership. There was no such prospects for Lailit. Voters wanted their representative to be the Chief Minister of the state.

Table 6.13  
Singjamei Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	23	Total Voters	:	16,070(M-7768F-8302)
Total Votes Polled	:	14,H8	Valid Votes Polled	:	13,982
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	134	Tender Votes	:	2
Polled Percentage	:	88			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Irengbam Hemochandra Singh	INC	5714	(Elected)	40.87	
Elangbam Toraba	CPI	312		2.23	
Gurumayum Molecule Sharma	IND	41		0.29	
Chanam Bhubon Singh	IND	35		0.25	
Waikhom Manimohon Singh	JD	137		0.98	
Haobam Bhubon	BJP	4821		34.48	
Huidrom Surendrakumar	MPP	2311		16.53	
Yumnam Sakhitombi Devi	IND	17		0.12	
Yurembam Iboyaima	IC(S)	594		4.25	

For the Singjamei seat, nine contestants were in the election fray. There was a lone woman candidate. The constituency has been represented by MPP in the 1972 elections and by an Independent in the 1974 mid-term Assembly polls, But after the 1980 Assembly polls the Congress has been able to wrest the seat

continuously till 1990 elections. In this sixth elections too, the Congress managed to retain the seat again. The Congress nominee Hemochandra defeated his nearest rival candidate of BJP Bhubon Singh by 993 votes. Personality, Party and popularity worked upon the voters effectively favouring the young Congress nominee Hemochandra. Before the election, Independent candidate Molecule Sharma released a statement signed by his own blood. It said “if he is elected by the grace of voters, his targets would be implemented within 6 months.” Otherwise he will resign from being an MLA/minister. Even he can be given death punishment. But such absured promises had nothing to do with the voters. Electors voted him out against the statement.

Table 6.14  
Yaiskul Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	25	Total Voters	:	18,617(M-9015F-9602)
Total Votes Polled	:	16,528	Valid Votes Polled	:	16,303
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	225	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	89			
Name of Candidate		Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage
Elangbam Kunjeshwar		BJP	5932(Elected)		36.39
Guruniayum Joykumar Sharma		MPP	5461		33.50
Manihar Goswami		JD	590		3.62
Loitongbam Iboyaima Singh		JP	361		2.21
Sougaijam Somorjit Singh		FPM	1346		8.26
Hanjabam Kunjakishore		INC	2613		16.03

Yaiskul constituency is very much significant in the state's politics. It is the home turf of R.K. Dorendro Singh. It is from this constituency that the former Chief Minister of Manipur R.K. Dorendro Singh has been elected for four terms consecutively since 1974-mid term elections. Following the resolution of leadership crisis in the Congress-I and denial of party ticket to him, Dorendro retired from contesting the sixth elections. Dorendro have been Chief Minister for three times.



In this sixth Assembly polls, the Yaiskul constituency witnessed six-cornered contest. Since the Congress-I ticket was not awarded to Dorendra, the prestigious Yaiskul constituency saw a change. There was a tough fight between E. Kunjeshwar of BJP and G. Joykumar Sharma of MPP. The Congress candidate was weak and trailed behind far and ran third. The BJP candidate Kunjeshwar, who was retired IAS officer, defeating his nearest rival candidate of MPP Joykumar by 471 votes. The BJP opened its first ever account in the state with its candidate Kunjeshwar. In the contest, apart from others, personality of the candidates prevails over other considerations.

Table 6.15  
Wangkhei Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	32	Total Voters	:	25,771(M-12510F-13261)
Total Votes Polled	:	21,993	Valid Votes Polled	:	21,673
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	320	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	35			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Anoubam Raj en Sharma	JD	3680		16.98	
Oinam Shamu	FPM	2880		13.29	
Mangshidam Jitendra	IND	693		3.20	
Sandham Oken	SP	168		0.78	
Dr. Hoabam Borbabu Singh	MPP	6275		28.95	
Yumkham Irabot	INC	7977 (Elected)		36.81	

Wangkhei constituency have been the stronghold of both the MPP and Congress parties. In the 1972, 1980 and 1984 Assembly elections, the Congress-I captured the seat. While the MPP wrested, the seat in the 1974 and 1990 Assembly polls.

For the sixth Assembly election, there were six contestants in the Wangkhei Assembly segment including one Independent candidate. The sitting MLA Haobam Borbabu Singh was contesting as MPP nominee. Yumkham Irabot who has been

elected twice in 1980 and 1984 polls from the constituency on Congress ticket, was also in the contest as Congress-I candidate. There was fierce contest between the Congress-I and the MPP. The Wangkhei constituency assumed significance in the polls. Though Borbabu's role as speaker of the state Assembly during the constitutional crisis on the eve of the sixth Assembly elections was appreciated in most circles in the state, it could not bring him to success. Instead the biggest surprise to the MPP came when H. Borbabu Singh lost the election to his rival Congress-I candidate and former Education Minister Y. Irabot Singh with a big margin of 1702 votes.

Table 6.16  
Sekmai (SC) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 32	Total Voters	: 25,771(M-12510 F-13261)
Total Votes Polled	: 21,993	Valid Votes Polled	: 21,673
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 320	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 85		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Anoubam Rajen Sharma	JD	3680	16.98
Oinam Shamu	FPM	2880	13.29
Mangshidam Jitendra	IND	693	3.20
Shandam Oken	SP	168	0.78
Dr. Hoabam Borbabu Singh	MPP	6275	28.95
Yumkham Irabot	INC	7977 (Elected)	36.81

Sekmai constituency in Imphal district is the only Assembly segment in the state reserved for the scheduled caste. In the beginning, MPP was very strong in this constituency. Kh. Chaoba Singh of MPP captured the Sekmai seat for three consecutive terms in 1972, 1974 and 1980 elections. Then the Congress again wrested the seat from 1984 elections onwards till 1990 polls.

In this sixth Assembly polls, the constituency was locked in four-cornered contest. Chaoba has been elected three times consecutively on MPP ticket while Biren once on INC ticket. Biren was the sitting MLA of this constituency. He was

also minister in the outgoing fifth House of the Assembly. There was close contest between Chaoba and Biren but the latter defeated the former by 732 votes only.

Table 6.17  
Lamsang Assembly Constituency (Countermanded)

Polling Stations	: 30	Total Voters	: 20,163 (M-9907F-10256)
Total Votes Polled	: 19,129	Valid Votes Polled	: 18,909
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 218	Tender Votes	: 2
Polled Percentage	: 95		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Khundongbam Jugeshwar	CPI	2049	10.84
R.K. Gambhir Singh	JD	145	0.77
Thoudam Nabachandra Singh	BJP	297	1.57
Phuritsabam Shyamo Singh	SP	3167	16.75
Mutum Ruhini Devi	MPP	2361	12.49
Wangkheimayum Brajabidhu Singh	1ND	3857	20.40
Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh	INC	4184 (Elected)	22.13
Dr. Haobam Borbabu Singh	1ND	2849	15.07

Elections to the Lamsang Assembly constituency was countermanded following the killing of a MPP candidate also sitting MLA Mutum Deven Singh by unidentified armed men only some days ahead of the polling day. But the bi-elections to the constituency was held on 27 May the same year.

The MPP has captured the Lamsang seat twice in 1972 and 1990 Assembly polls, the CPI once in 1974 mid-term elections' and in 1980 and 1984 elections by the Independents. There were eight candidates in the election fray in this sixth Assembly elections. The former speaker of the state Assembly H. Borbabu Singh also was in the contest as Independent candidate, after he lost his Wangkhei seat. M. Ruhini Devi, the widow of the slain MPP sitting MLA Deven was also in the election fray under MPP ticket. In the contest, the ruling Congress-I candidate Rajen won the Lamsang seat defeating his nearest rival Independent candidate Brajabidhu Singh by a margin of only 327 votes.

Despite the sympathy votes created by the killing of the MPP leader M. Deven Singh, the MPP nominee could not win the seat. The main reason was division of votes of MPP between Ruhini Devi and Borbabu. The MPP party leader Y. Yaima Singh (Lok Sabha MP) said the MPP defeat in the constituency was due to the division of the party. Borbabu, after defeating in his Wangkhei constituency, was invited to contest for the Lamsang seat. Since the MPP ticket was awarded to Ruhini Devi (wife of late M. Deven Singh) Borbabu contested as Independent candidate. As a result MPP vote-bank was divided between the two candidates leading to the defeat of the party. Altogether five candidates lost their security deposits in the elections including Borbabu. Others were Ruhini Devi, Jugeshwore, Nabachandra and Gambhir.

Table 6.18  
Konthoujam Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 28	Total Voters	: 19,616 (M-9744F-9872)
Total Votes Polled	: 18,387	Valid Votes Polled	: 18,131
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 256	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Okram Ibotombi	CPI	5116	28.22
Ningthoujam Manishang	JD	98	0.54
Henam Lokhon	INC	6313 (Elected)	34.82
Heigrujam Thoithoi	MPP	6261	34.53
Yurembam Sharat	BJP	343	1.89

The Konthoujam Assembly constituency have been the strongholds of both the Congress-I and MPP. Henam Lokhon captured the seat twice under Congress-I ticket in 1980 and 1984 elections. H. Thoithoi also wrested the seat twice in 1974 polls as Independent candidate and in 1990 as MPP nominee. In 1972 election Lakshman got the seat on MPP ticket.

Five candidates including one woman candidate were in the election fray for the Konthoujam seat in this sixth Assembly elections. There was close contest between Congress candidate Henam Lokhon and Heigrujam Thoithoi of MPP. However, the sitting MLA of MPP Thoithoi was defeated by Lokhon by a small margin of 52 votes only. Lokhon recaptured the seat. The Janata Dal and BJP candidates were forfeited their security deposits as they secured 98 and 343 votes each.

Table 6.19  
Patsoi Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 32	Total Voters	: 20,881 (M-10643 F-11238)
Total Votes Polled	: 19,932	Valid Votes Polled	: 19,730
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 202	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 95		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Ngasepam Nimai Singh	FPM	1766	8.95
Chingsubam Shyamjai Singh	BJP	2041	10.34
Prof. N. Mohendro Singh	MPP	3742	18.97
R.K. Nokulsana	IC (S)	919	4.66
Dr. Leishangthem Chandramani Singh	INC	5787(Elected)	29.33
Leisangthem Thoiren Singh	CPI	3616	18.33
Sougrakpam Indrajit	IND	1859	9.42

It is noteworthy to mention that in the post-statehood period, Patsoi constituency has been the home turf of L. Chandramani Singh. Chandramani has been able to retain the seat non-stop from 1972-1984 Assembly elections. He was elected to the Assembly from this constituency under MPP ticket upto 1980 elections and in the 1984 poll on Congress-I ticket. Only in the 1990 polls, an old Congress (S) candidate N. Ibomcha replaced Chandramani on sympathy wave/last chance.

The constituency locked in seven-cornered contest six party candidates and one Independent candidate. The sitting MLA N. Ibomcaha Singh retired from contesting the sixth Assembly elections.

The contest took place between the MPP and Congress-I candidates. The MPP nominee Mudindro, also a state University Professor of Economics was defeated by Chandramani by a big margin of 2045 votes. Thoiren of CPI trailed behind third. The rest of the candidates lost their security deposits. It was a clear verdict of the voters' loyalty to Chandramani Singh.

Table 6.20  
Langthabal Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	26	Total Voters	:	17,756 (M-8688 F-9068)
Total Votes Polled	:	16,374	Valid Votes Polled	:	16,229
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	145	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	92			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Khumbongmayum Dhurba	FPM	139		0.86	
O.Joy	MPP	6582		40.56	
K. Babudhon Singh	INC	6674 (Elected)		41.12	
Lairellakpam Gopal	IND	70		0.43	
Haorongbam Mukhai	IND	1002		6.17	
Hijam Somarendro Singh	SP	1762		10.86	

Since the First State Assembly elections in 1972, the Langthabal constituency have been the stronghold of the Manipur Peoples Party upto the 1990 elections. In 1972 polls I. Tompok Singh captured the seat on MPP ticket. Then the MPP leader O. Joy Singh have represented the .constituency from 1974 mid-term elections till he was defeated in the 1995 Assembly polls. He elected on MPP ticket except in 1980 elections in which he contested the election on JD ticket.

In this sixth Assembly elections there were altogether six candidates of different parties including two Independent candidates. As in the previous elections, the real fight was between MPP and the Congress-I. The rest of the candidates were not counted in the race. The sitting MLA and MPP leader O. Joy who have represented the constituency for about twenty years, was for the first

time defeated by Babudhon by a narrow margin of 92 votes only. The security deposits of the other four candidates were forfeited. Sympathy upon Babudhon Favoured the Congress-I. Besides, the basic reason for the defeat of Joy was his long presence in the constituency as representative of the people. Most of the time he was in the opposition, hardly twice in the ministry. As such there was enough room to criticise him leading to his downfall. Electors said “Joy is good for Manipur but not for the constituency.”

Table 6.21  
Naoriya Pakhanglakpa Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 32	Total Voters	: 22,001 (M-10788 F-11213)
Total Votes Polled	: 20,783	Valid Votes Polled	: 20,573
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 210	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Akoijamlbobi	MPP	5237	25.46
Akoijam Langam	IND	6711 (Elected)	32.62
Chingtham Priyokumar Singh	IND	2014	9.79
Thokchom Joy	CPI (M)	366	1.78
Wahengbam Angou Singh	INC	5916	28.76
Shamulailatpam Ibochouba Sharma	IND	62	0.30
Yumnam Kala Singh	IC(S)	267	1.30

The Naoriya Pakhanglakpa constituency was first represented by MPP in the first two state Assembly election in 1972 and 1974. Then the seat went to Congress in the 1980, 1984 and 1990 Assembly poll. Altogether seven candidates were in the election fray. Besides the party-sponsored candidates, three Independent candidates also contested for the seat. The contenders for the seat were the MPP, Congress-I and the Independent candidate Akoijam Langam. In the election battle, Langam defeated the sitting MLA and Congress-I candidate Angou

Singh by 795 votes. Ibobi ran third. The security deposits of the rest of the candidates were forfeited. Voters' desire for an alternative to be their representative Favoured Langam.

Table 6.22  
Wangoi Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	25	Total Voters	:	17,036 (M-8346 F-8690)
Total Votes Polled	:	16,508	Valid Votes Polled	:	16,289
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	219	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	97			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Oinam Jugindra	MPP	3319		20.38	
Moirangmayum Indrasen Singh	SP	3077		18.90	
Wahengbam Nipamacha Singh	INC	3868 (Elected)		23.75	
Sagolshem Achouba Singh	JD	2506		15.38	
Yumnam Mani Singh	FPM	3519		21.60	

The Wangoi seat have been wrested by the two person on different party tickets since the 1972 state Assembly elections. Ch. Rajmohon captured the seat on MPP ticket in 1972 and in 1980 as Congress-I nominee. While W. Nipamacha Singh have been able to retained the seat thrice-in 1974 mid-term Assembly polls as Congress candidate; in 1984 polls as Janata Party nominee and in 1990 Assembly polls under IC (S) ticket. In this sixth elections, the Wangoi constituency was locked in five-cornered contest. There was no Independent candidate. On average, there was keen contest among the rival parties. However, the Congress nominee Nipamacha defeated his nearest rival candidate of FPM Mani by a narrow margin of 349 votes. The MPP candidate Jugindro followed third. The JD candidate lost his security deposit. Personality of the candidate, money power, etc. played dominant role in bringing fortune to Nipamacha.



Table 6.23  
Mayang Imphal Assembly Constituency

Polling Station	: 31	Total Voters	: 18,318 (M-9143 F-9175)
Total Votes Polled	: 17,389	Valid Votes Polled	: 17,078
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 311	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 95		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Md. Abdul Latif	MPP	76	0.45
Abdul Salam	IND	4336	25.39
Khumujam Amutombi Singh	JD	4541	26.59
Chongtham Budhichandra	SP	963	5.64 %
Meinam Nilchandra Singh	INC	5488 (Elected)	32.13
Heisnam Jugin Singh	CPI	1674	9.80

The constituency has a sizeable number of Muslim voters. The MPP candidate Md. Abdul Latif had won the seat twice in 1972 and 1974 elections, on MPP ticket. The JD nominee Amutombi also has represented the constituency twice in 1980 as PLP candidate and in 1990 as JD candidate. While M. Nilachandra has wrested the seat once on JP ticket in 1984 elections. Six candidates including one Independent were in the election fray for the lone seat. There were fierce contest between the two parties -Janata Dal and INC as well as the Independent candidate. In the battle of ballots the JD candidate, the sitting MLA and also former Deputy Chief Minister Ainutombi was badly defeated by Nilachandra with a big margin of 947 votes. The rest of the candidates forfeited their security deposits.

Table 6.24  
Nambol Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 28	Total Voters	: 20,771 (M-10041 F-10730)
Total Votes Polled	: 19,718	Valid Votes Polled	: 19,499
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 219	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 95		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Kongkham Jadumani	JD	3129	16.05
Toijam Ibemhal	CPI	1015	5.21
Thounaojam Chaoba	INC	6521	33.44
Nameirakpam Loken	MPP	7003 (Elected)	35.91
Saikhom Tikendra	BJP	1831	9.39

Th. Chaoba Singh has been able to retain the seat throughout the successive five state Assembly elections since 1972 till 1990, on different party tickets. In the first two Assembly elections in 1972 and 1974, he won the seat on MPP ticket. Then he changed his party affiliation and captured the seat as Congress nominees in the 1980, 1984 and 1990 Assembly polls. Nobody could challenge his leadership during these elections.

In this sixth elections' there was five-cornered contest in the Nambol constituency including one woman candidate. The Deputy Chief Minister and Congress-I nominee Th. Chaoba was locked neck to neck contest with young MPP candidate N. Loken Singh. In the contest, Chaoba, the sitting MLA was defeated by his rival MPP candidate Loken by a big margin of 482 votes. The other three candidates forfeited their security deposits. As' Chaoba has been the representative of the constituency for five consecutive terms, it created rooms for opponents' criticism. Besides, the desired for a change in the constituency acted against Chaoba leading to his downfall.

Table 6.25  
Oinam Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	24	Total Voters	:	18,218 (M-8630 F-9588)
Total Votes Polled	:	17,174	Valid Votes Polled	:	16,943
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	231	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	94			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Keisham Apabi	INC	6373		37.61	
Ngangom Tomba	IND	1015		5.99	
O. Tombi	FPM	2416		14.26	
Nilababu Oinam	JD	384		2.27	
Nongthombam Nimai	BJP	104		0.61	
Yuranam Jiten	MPP	6651 (Elected)		39.26	

During the previous Assembly elections, both the MPP and the Congress-I have been retaining the Oinam seat alternately. The MPP captured the seat in the 1972 and 1974 elections. Whereas the Congress-I managed its presence since 1980 elections to 1990 polls. There was six cornered contests for the Oinam seat including one Independent candidate and woman candidate. There was close contest between MPP and the INC in which Jiten defeated the sitting MLA and Congress candidate K. Apabi Devi by a margin of 278 votes.

Following the killing of K. Bira Singh in the Thangjing Plane crash his wife K. Apabi Devi got elected on Sympathy vote.in the bi-election to Oinam constituency on Congress-I ticket. She was given Minister of state in the Rishang -led Congress Ministry. Even then She was voted out in the sixth Assembly elections. The main factor was that the voters do not like woman as their representative. Moreover, organisation of MPP is very strong in this constituency. Security deposits of the rest candidates were forfeited. Winner Jiten is the son of Y. Yaima Singh who have wrested the Oinam seat thrice in 1972,1974 and 1980 Assembly elections.

Table 6.26  
Bishnupur Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	31	Total Voters	:	19,695 (M-10144F-9551)
Total Votes Polled	:	18,705	Valid Votes Polled	:	18,417
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	288	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	95			
Name of Candidate	Party . Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Khundrakpar Jibon	JD	3550		19.28	
Khundrakpam Pullinkant	BJP	3258		17.69	
Govindas Konthoujam	INC	3766 (Elected)		20.45	
Ningthoujam Mangi	IND	522		2.83	
Pukrambam Indramani	MPP	2822		15.32	
Pukrambam Govardhon	SJP	809		4.39	
Brajamohon	FPM	2949		16.01	
Sorokhaibam Nilakoraol	CPI	741		4.02	

Eight contestants were in the election fray. There was strong contests among the parties of JD, BJP, INC, MPP and newly formed FPM. In the electoral battle, the sitting MLA and JD candidate Kh. Jibon lost to his rival Congress-I candidate. Govindas Konthoujam. Thus the constituency witnessed a new comer. The BJP nominee Pullinkant could not stage a comeback, he ran third. The other five candidates lost their security deposits.

Table 6.27  
Moirang Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	37	Total Voters	:	24,229(M-12369F-11860)
Total Votes Polled	:	22,616	Valid Votes Polled	:	22,369
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	247	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	93			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
K. Deben	IC(S)	1228		5.49	
Moirangthem Panchom	CPI	790		3.53	
Mairembam Monindro	INC	4452		19.90	
Lai shram Kerani	JD	5109		22.84	
Hemam Bir	IND	5204		23.26	
Md. Hesamudin	MPP	5586	(Elected)	24.97	

Total candidates in the election fray were six including one Independent candidate. The first two were weak candidates. Even their security deposits were lost. The real fight took place among the last four candidates. In the contest Hesamudin defeated Bir, an Independent candidate. Kerani, the JD candidate secured third. The sitting MLA M. Koireng Singh expired just on the eve of the sixth Assembly elections. Koireng retained the seat thrice consecutively from 1980 to 1990 elections. However, his son\* Monindro, Congress nominee, could not earn much popularity as his father were and lost the seat. Thus for the first time, a Muslim became the representative of the constituency iia the post” statehood period. The constituency has a fair Muslim population.

Table 6.28  
Thanga Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 23	Total Voters	: 15,389 (M-7814 F-7575)
Total Votes Polled	: 14,465	Valid Votes Polled	: 14,167
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 298	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Thongbram Mangibabu	JD	4277 (Elected)	30.19
Salam Ibohal	MPP	3310	23.36
Haobijam Kangjamba	BJP	3166	23.35
Heisnam Sanayaima	INC	3414	24.10

Thanga constituency is on the Loktak Lake at Moirang. The constituency has the smallest number of electors in the state. In the election fray, there were four candidates. Salam Ibohal of MPP was the sitting MLA. He elected on MPP ticket in the fifth. Assembly elections. The BJP candidate H. Kangjamba has represented the constituency twice in 1972 as socialist candidate and in 1980 elections as INC nominee. H. Sanayaima of Congress has captured the seat once in 1984 elections as Independent candidate. However in this sixth elections the constituency witnessed a new comer. Tongbram Mangibabu of JD, defeated his nearest rival Congress candidate Sanayaima as well as the sitting MLA and JD candidate Magibabu. None of the candidates lost their security deposits in the contest.

Table 6.29  
Kumbi Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 27	Total Voters	: 19,046 (M-9842F-9204)
Total Votes Polled	: 17,648	Valid Votes Polled	: 17,505
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 143	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 93		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Aheibam Angousana	BJP	3164	18.07
Khangembam Manimuhon	IND	2603	14.87
Ningombam Ibobi	JD	1844	10.53
Ningthoujam Mangi	CPI	4164 (Elected)	23.79
Wahengbam Komol	MPP	2199	12.56
Sanasam Bir	INC	3531	20.17

The constituency locked in six-cornered contest. There was only one Independent candidate. Recently in the Kumbi constituency, the CPI has been strong. In the contest, the sitting MLA and CPI candidate managed to retain the seat again. He defeated his nearest rival candidate Bir by a big margin of 633 votes. The BJP candidate ran third in the contest. The deposits of the rest of the candidates were forfeited.

Table 6.30  
Lilong Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	28	Total Voters	:	18,455 (M-8913 F-9542)
Total Votes Polled	:	17,192	Valid Votes Polled	:	16,888
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	304	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	93			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Abdul Gani	JD	3422		20.26	
AbdulJabar	IC(S)	162		0.96	
Abdul Salam	BJP	79		0.47	
Alauddin	MPP*	5369		31.79	
Dr. Badaruddin	CPI	1485		8.79	
Md. Helaluddin Khan	INC	6371	(Elected)	37.72	

Lilong is the only area where there is largest number of Muslim concentration in the state. As such Lilong constituency has been the only constituency in the state from where its representatives were elected from amongst the Muslim community. The first state Chief Minister was a Muslim. He hails from this constituency. Md. Alimuddin elected from this constituency twice in 1972 and 1974 Assembly elections and became Chief Minister of Manipur twice consecutively. After his assassination, Md. Hellaluddin Khan of Congress-I captured the seat in the 1980 elections. But in the next elections in 1984 Allimuddin's son Md. Alauddin under MPP ticket could wrested the seat from Md. Hellaluddin Khan. However in 1990 elections, the latter again won the seat on Congress-I ticket. There were six contestants for the Lilong seat. All the candidates were Muslim, affiliating different parties. In the election the

sitting MLA and Congress-I candidate Hellaluddin Khan managed to retain the seat. He defeated his nearest rival MPP candidate Alauddin by a big margin of 1002 votes. The last three candidates lost their security deposits.

Table 6.31  
Thoubal Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 32	Total Voters	: 19,907 (M-9916F-9991)
Total Votes Polled	: 18,878	Valid Votes Polled	: 18,673
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 193	Tender Votes	: 12
Polled Percentage	: 95		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Tourangbam Mukesh Singh	SP	946	5.07
Thoudam Krishna Singh	INC	4860	26.03
N. Ibopishak Singh	IND	39	0.21
Puyam Khogendro	CPI	1589	8.51
Leitanthem Tomba	MPP	11239 (Elected)	60.18

The results of the previous state Assembly elections show that the constituency is not so strong for Congress-I and other parties except the MPP. The MPP secured the seat in the 1972 and 1974 polls. Then the Congress-I captured the seat in the 1980 election and followed by JP in 1984 and by JD in the 1990 polls. Five candidates locked in for the Thoubal seat including one Independent candidate. The sitting MLA Thoudam Krishna Singh changed his party affiliation this time to the INC. In the 1990 polls he was elected on JD ticket and in 1984 on Congress-I ticket. The MPP candidate Tomba won the seat for the second time by securing more than fifty percent of the votes polled. He badly defeated the sitting MLA Krishna by a big margin of 6379 votes. The rest of the candidate forfeited their security deposits. Frequent change of party was paid for Krishna.

Table 6.32  
Wangkhem Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	31	Total Voters	:	19,103 (M-9369 F-9734)
Total Votes Polled	:	17,976	Valid Votes Polled	:	17,773
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	196	Tender Votes	:	7
Polled Percentage	:	90			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Dr. Nimaichand Luwang	INC	7873 (Elected)		44.30	
Pangambam Munal Singh	SP	3651		20.54	
Longjam Ibotoma Singh	MPP	6249		35.16	

There was triangular contest. Congress candidate, Nimaichand Luwang was locked in with MPP candidate Longjam Ibotomba Singh. Nimaichand Luwang have captured the seat two times, the first was in 1984 elections as Independent candidate and in 1990 poll as Congress candidate for the second time. He was the sitting MLA of this constituency. The other third candidate was Panganbam Munal Singh of Samata Party. In the 1980 elections Munal contested the election on Congress ticket and won the seat. Nimaichand Luwang could retain the seat for the third time. Munal ran third in the contest. None of the candidates lost their security deposits. Apart from others, personality prevails over other considerations.

Table 6.33  
Heirok Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	28	Total Voters	:	19,073(M-9537 F-9536)
Total Votes Polled	:	17,935	Valid Votes Polled	:	17,735
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	1.96	Tender Votes	:	4
Polled Percentage	:	94			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Khundongbam Khelendro Singh	CPI	2773		15.64	
Ningthoujam Borchandra Singh	IND	505		2.85	
Nogmeikapam Komol Singh	MPP	5258		29.65	
Maibam Jugeshwar Singh	IC(S)	2397		13.52	
Moirangthem Okendro	INC	6456 (Elected)		36.40	
Lai shram Krishna Das	IND	346		1.95	



Heirok constituency is also one of the important constituencies in the state. It is from this constituency that the former Congress-I leader Moirangthem Ibotombi (known as Heirok Ibotombi) was elected for four times continuously on Congress-I ticket since 1972 elections. It was only in 1990 elections that Ibotombi was defeated by JD candidate N. Komol Singh. While Ibotombi was preparing for the 1995 Assembly polls, he was gunned down by unidentified gunmens.

For the sixth elections, the constituency was locked in six-cornered contest. There were two Independent candidates. As his father (Ibotombi) had expired, Okendro was awarded the Congress-I ticket for the constituency. The sitting MLA (of JD) N. Komol contested the seat on MPP ticket this time.

The killing of M. Ibotombi Singh created sympathy for his son Okendro. The Sympathy vote favoured Okendro. He defeated the sitting MLA Komol Singh of MPP by a margin of 1198 votes. The rest of the candidates lost their deposits. Thus Ibotombi's son Okendro managed a come-back after a gap of one term.

Table 6.34  
Wangjing Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	30	Total Voters	:	19676 (M-9742 F-9934)
Total Votes Polled	:	18401	Valid Votes Polled	:	18,200
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	198	Tender Votes	:	3
Polled Percentage	:	94			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Chandam Ibomcha	IND	21		0.12	
Maibam Rajen Singh	MPP	166		0.19	
Moirangthem Nara Singh	CPI	5925		32.55	
Moirangthem Hemanta Singh	INC	7638 (Elected)		41.97	
Sagolsem Ibochoubi Singh	SP	4450		24.45	

Since 1984 Assembly elections, the CPI have been strong in this constituency. However, it noticed a downfall in the sixth elections. Five candidates were in the election fray including one Independent candidate. The MPP and Independent candidates were weak candidates, and lost their deposits. The contest took place among the CPI, INC and SP candidates. But the sitting MLA and CPI candidate Nara Singh could not rival the INC candidate Hemanta Singh. Nara was defeated by Hemanta by a big margin of 1713 votes.

Table 6.35  
Khangabok Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations :	32	Total Voters	:20,986 (M-10409 F-10577)
Total Votes Polled :	20,278	Valid Votes Polled :	20,058
Ballot Papers Rejected :	214	Tender Votes :	6
Polled Percentage :	97		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Md. Abdur Rahaman	CPI	5153	25.69
Okram Ibobi Singh	INC	6884	34.32
Laishram Jatra Singh	MPP	8021 (Elected)	39.99

The constituency has also Muslim voters. In the beginning, following the statehood, the constituency has been the home-polling of the CPI. The CPI captured the seat in the first three state Assembly elections held in 1972, 1974 and 1980. Thereafter the CPI could not staged a comeback again in the following elections. There was triangular contest. O. Ibobi Singh has wrested the seat twice in 1984 as an Independent candidate and in 1990 as INC nominee. He was the sitting MLA. But Ibobi was badly defeated by MPP candidate Jatra Singh by a margin of 1137 votes. Thus MPP managed its electoral debut in this constituency.

Table 6.36  
Wabagai Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 28	Total Voters	: 18,492(M-9117F-9375)
Total Votes Polled	: 17,881	Valid Votes Polled	: 17,708
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 179	Tender Votes	: 4
Polled Percentage	: 97		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliatiqn	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Abdul Salam	MPP	6766 (Elected)	38.21
Khomdram Thamphajao Singh	CPI	3230	18.24
Naorem Mohandas	JD	2806	15.85
Md. Fajunurahaman	IND	28	0.16
Mayanglambam Manihar Singh	INC	4861	27.45
SidikAli	IND	17	0.10

Wabagai constituency consists of a fair Muslim population. Muslim dominated the politics of the constituency for three consecutive terms. Md. Habibur Rahman of Congress captured the seat in the 1972 and 1974 elections. Md. Abdul Salam of PLP got the seat in the 1980 polls. Then a Meitei candidate M. Manihar Sigh wrested the seat twice-in 1984 as Independent and in 1990 elections as INC candidate. For the sixth elections, there were six-cornered contest in the election fray. Out of six candidates, three were Muslim candidates. Another three were the Meitei candidates. Md. Abdul Salam of MPP recaptured the seat which he lost it in the 1980 election to an Independent candidate. He defeated his nearest rival Congress-I candidate and also sitting MLA Manihar Singh. The CPI candidate Tamphajao ran third. The other three candidates lost their deposits.

Table 6.37  
Kakching Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 30	Total Voters	: 18,933(M-9088 F-9845)
Total Votes Polled	: 17,212	Valid Votes Polled	: 17,039
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 170	Tender Votes	: 3
Polled Percentage	: 91		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Nongmaithem Nimai Singh	INC	6526	38.30
Mayanglambam Tomaldeva Meitei	MPP	188	1.10
Yengkhom Thambal Singh	JD	3552	20.85
Kshetrimayum Irabot Singh	CPI	6773 (Elected)	39.75

Left politics is strong in Ifakching- constituency, dominating the political scene from 1972 to 1980 elections. Then an Independent captured the seat in the 1984 polls . In the 1990 elections, N. Nimai Singh of INC won the seat. The constituency experienced four-cornered contest in the sixth elections. Irabot have won the seat twice in the 1974 and 1980 elections on CPI ticket. While Nimai has wrested the seat once in 1990 polls on Congress ticket, he contested the seat as sitting MLA. In the contest, Nimai was defeated by Irabot. But the MPP candidate Tomaledva forfeited his security deposit. Thus Irabot captured the seat for the third time.

Table 6.38  
Hiyanglam Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 27	Total Voters	: 17662 (M-8275 F-9387)
Total Votes Polled	: 16,451	Valid Votes Polled	: 16,300
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 151	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 93		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Elangbam Ibomcha Singh	IND	67	0.14
Elangbam Biramani Singh	INC	5637	34.58
Maibam Kunjo Singh	JD	6817 (Elected)	41.82
Huidrom Rajbabu Singh	MPP	3779	23.18

The constituency was locked in four-cornered contest. There was an Independent candidate. Biramani has captured the seat twice on INC ticket in the 1984 and 1990 election. He was the sitting MLA and also Speaker of the Manipur Assembly. Kunjo also have wrested the seat once in 1974 elections on MPP ticket. Rajbapu also have won the seat once in. 1972 polls on Socialist ticket. In the contest Birmani lost the seat to the JD candidate Miabam Kunjo Singh. The Independent Candidate Imbomcha forfeited his security deposit.

Table 6.39  
Sugnu Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	30	Total Voters	:	19,036(M-9331 F-9705)
Total Votes Polled	:	17,538	Valid Votes Polled	:	17,356
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	182	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	92			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Achou Singh Sorokhaibam	BJP	3264		18.81	
Khaidem Nimai Singh	IC(S)	2349		13.53	
Raghumani Singh	MPP	3180		18.32	
Mayanglambam Babu Singh	JD	4404	(Elected)	25.37	
Loitongbam Ibomcha	INC	4159		23.96	

There was five-cornered contest in the election fray. Babu have wrested the seat once in 1984 election on INC ticket. While Ibomcha also had captured the seat once in 1990 polls as JD nominee. He entered the contest as sitting MLA but changed his party affiliation from JD to INC. In this election the sitting MLA Ibomcha could not retain the seat. He lost to his nearest rival candidate Babu of JD by 245 votes. Achou followed third. Nimai lost deposits. JD voters remained unchanged as in the previous election in 1990. So Ibomcha was defeated for changing his party affiliation to Congress.

Table 6.40  
Jiribam Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	36	Total Voters	:	21,777 (M-11034 F-10743)
Total Votes Polled	:	18,215	Valid Votes Polled	:	17,875
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	325	Tender Votes	:	15
Polled Percentage	:	84			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Th. Devendra	INC	8706	(Elected)	48.70	
K. Ningtangpau	FPM	835		4.67	
A. Biren	IND	8334		46.62	

The constituency has mixed population of Meiteis, tribals, Bengalis (Muslims) etc. Except Congress-I.; none of the parties has capture the Jiribam seat from 1972 elections to 1990 polls. Support for Congress-I is very strong. S. Bijoy won the seat twice in 1972 and 1974 polls on Congress ticket. Then Th. Devendra wrested the seat on Congress ticket from 1980 to 1990 elections/There was triangular contest in this sixth elections. There was one Independent candidate. Only two parties were in the election fray. Th. Devendro of INC and K. Ningtangpau of FPM. The real contest was between Devendro and Biren. But Biren could not challenge the presence of Devendro in the consitituency. For the fourth time Devendro won the Jiribam seat. Biren was defeated by 372 votes. Ningtangpau lost deposit. The Jiribam constituency witnessed Congress representative non-stop from 1972 election till 1995 elections -loyalty of voters to Congress.

Table 6.41  
Chandel (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 56	Total Voters	: 30,531 (M-13923 F-16608)
Total Votes Polled	: 28,836	Valid Votes Polled	: 28,684
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 152	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 95		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Bd. Behring Anal	INC	68	0.24
L. Benjamin	FPM	10464	36.48
Hangkhanpao	JD	13030 (Elected)	45.43
Jangkhopao	IND	10	0.03
W.S. Johnson Anal	MPP	43	0.15
St. Kolari Anal	IND	51	0.18
Nehkthothang	SJP	103	0.36
KL. Rockey	SP	4868	16.97
Thangjalet	NPP	23	0.08
Thonglenmang Kuki	KNA	24	0.08

The constituency locked in a ten-cornered contest. The real contest took place between the Federal Party of Manipur and the Janata Dal followed by Samata Party. In the contest, Hangkhanpao defeated Benjamin by 2566 votes. The security deposits of the rest of the candidates were forfeited. The electors give a lesson to the, sitting MLA, B.D. Behring Anal. In the 1990 Assembly polls, he won the seat under J.D. ticket. But this time he entered the election contest as Congress-I nominee for which he was badly defeated by securing only 68 votes.

Table 6.42  
Tengnoupal (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 46	Total Voters	: 26,857 (M-13523 F-13334)
Total Votes Polled	: 25116	Valid Votes Polled	: 24,849
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 267	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Holkhongmang Haokip	MPP	14423	45.97
W.Morung Makunga	INC	13058 (Elected)	52.55
Silanki Chothe	IND	368	1.48

The Tengenoupal constituency (ST) in Chandel district is an important seat as the border town of Moreh comes under it. Moreh is the place from where Naga-Kuki conflict started in Manipur. majority of the voters comprised Naga and Kuki. Since the first state Assembly elections, both the communities - Nagas and Kukis have been trying to get the seat. Both have been able to capture it alternately in the successive Assembly elections. The Kukis could retain the seat till the fourth Assembly elections in 1984 while from the fifth Assembly elections in 1990 the seat went to Naga.

In this sixth Assembly elections, the constituency witnessed three cornered contest. Former power minister and also Kuki leader Holkhomang Haokip was fighting on MPP ticket with the Congress-I Minister, nominee and also Naga leader W. Morung Makunga. Morung Makunga, is the sitting Congress-I MLA of the constituency. The third candidate Solanki Chothe, Independent, was also in the election fray, however was not taken seriously. Chothe trailed behind badly. In the contest, Haokip was badly defeated by Makunga by a big margin of 1,635 votes, it may be remembered that Holkhomang Haokip shifted from Henglep constituency in Churachandpur district. Haokip has retained the Henglep seat for four times in 1972 (Independent); 1974 (INC); 1980 (INC) and 1990 (IC-S). He was defeated only in 1984 elections by an Independent .candidate Sephu Haokip. Though Holkhomang won the 1990 elections on Congress-S ticket from Henglep constituency this time he changed his party affiliation as well as constituency. He was fighting on MPP ticket from this Tengenoupal seat. In the last five years, Haokip has nourished this constituency and was ready to take on Morung Makunga's challenge. While Morung is a young Naga leader who has a black mark on Army's hand book. His residence was raided by Army in 1992 in



connection with NSCN (IM) nexus. Reportedly, muscle power played a very significant role in bringing the election result in favour of Morung Kaunga.

Table 6.43  
Phungyar (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	46	Total Voters	:	18,555 (M-9378F-9177)
Total Votes Polled	:	14,938	Valid Votes Polled	:	14,772
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	166	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	81			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
M.C. Leishison	IND	17		0.12	
Ngathingkhui Hungyo	SP	1937		13.11	
Paul	JD	2023		13.69	
Rishang Keishing	INC	7467 (Elected)		50.55	
N. Solomon	MPP	3328		22.53	

Of the hills districts, the Ukhrul district occupies the most important place during the elections. Ukhrul district is dominated by Tangkhul Nagas. The Chief Minister of Manipur Rishang Keishing hails from this community. He was contesting on Congress-I ticket from Phungyar (ST) Assembly constituency of this district. He was the most important Naga leader accused by the Governors of Manipur for his nexus with the NSCN (IM) faction. Rishang Keishing locked in a five-cornered contest. His main rival was N. Solomon of MPP. In the contest, Chief Minister Rishang Keishing badly defeated his nearest rival candidate of MPP solomon by a big margin of 4139 votes. An anti-Rishang as well as anti-Congress wave sweeping across the state as propagated by the rival party MPP in particular had nothing to do with the election result. A strong MPP wave in the state riding on the crest of ethnic overtones and lauding to protecting ..the territorial integrity of Manipur could not retain the seat. It may be remembered that Rishang Keishing has been retaining the Phungyar seat non-stop since the first State Assembly elections in 1972 till 1995 sixth

elections. He has held the post of Chief Ministership for four times prior to the elections.

Table 6.44  
Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	46	Total Voters	:	25,016 (M-12302 F-12714)
Total Votes Polled	:	20,694	Valid Votes Polled	:	20,458
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	234	Tender Votes	:	2
Polled Percentage	:	83			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Ako Shaiza	SP	2118		10.35	
A.S. Arthur	INC	9982	(Elected)	48.79	
Danny Shaiza	JD	8385		40.99	

In the previous state Assembly elections, the Congress-I have never been able to capture the Ukhrul seat. The prestigious Ukhrul constituency witnessed three-cornered contest. Chief Ministers' Political Adviser and Congress-I nominee A.S. Arthur had a tough fight with Danny Shaiza of Janata Dal.

Congress-I candidate A.S. Arthur is a famous Naga leader who had been arrested by Army in 1993. Some arms/guns of different models and incriminating documents of NSCN (IM) were also seized from his residence in Imphal when raided by the Army. Danny Shaiza is the son of former Chief Minister of Manipur late Yangmasho Shaiza who had been assassinated by suspected Naga militants. Yangniaso Shaiza was retaining the Ukhrul seat for three consecutive terms since 1972 to 1980 elections. The seat went to A.S. Arthur (Independent candidate) in the 1984 Assembly elections. However, Hagnila Shaiza, the widow of the slain Yangmaso Shaiza could recapture the seat on Janata Dal ticket in the 1990 election. But in this sixth Assembly elections, She has left the contest open for her son Danny Shaiza. For the second time, A.S. Arthur could return in the election defeating Danny Shaiza by 1624 votes. It showed the Tangkhul Nagas loyalty to Congress-I.

Table 6.45  
Chingai (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 41	Total Voters	: 27,126 (M-13609F-13517)
Total Votes Polled	: 23,216	Valid Votes Polled	: 22,990
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 226	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 86		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
David Nk. Shimray	SP	5054	21.98
S. Kapow	IND	984	4.28
Khathing	IND	2980	12.96
Dr. Mashangthei Horam	INC	8716 (Elected)	37.91
Rv. Mingthing	JD	1687	7.34
P. Rathing	JP	1129	4.91
V. Weapon Zimik	MHPC	2440	10.61

There were seven candidates in the election fray for the lone seat. Close contest took place between the Congress-I nominee and also Professor of Political Science, Manipur University M. Horam and David Nk. Shimray of Samata Party. Professor M. Horam entered the electoral contest for the second time.

Prof. M. Horam won the Chingai seat with a big margin of 36662 votes over his Samata Party rival candidate David N.K. Shimray Independent candidate Kathing ran third in the contest. The Naga intellectual Horam and also the front ranking writer was one of the new faces in Assembly.

Table 6.46  
Saikul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 39	Total Voters	: 23,796 (M-12571 F-11225)
Total Votes Polled	: 21,998	Valid Votes Polled	: 21,710
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 288	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 92		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Chungkhokai Dounel	MPP	10730 (Elected)	49.42
Holkholet Khongsai	INC	7302	33.63
John L. Kilong	IND	1148	5.29
Ngamkhai	JD	108	0.50
Thangjakam	IC (S)	2422	11.16

Five candidates were in the election fray. There was one Independent candidate. Others were party-sponsored candidates. Doungel was the sitting MLA of this constituency elected on IC (S) ticket in the 1990 elections. Holkholet Khongsai has won the seat two times in 1980 elections as Congress nominee and in 1984 polls as Independent candidate. There was neck to neck contest between Doungel and Holkholet Khongsai. Other candidate were weak candidates. In the contest Doungel managed to retain the seat again defeating his nearest rival candidate of Congress-I Holkholet IChongsai by 3428 votes. The other four candidates lost their deposits. With Doungel, MPP wrested the seat for the first time. Personality of the candidate dominated the voting pattern. Doungel is the Kuki leader.

Table 6.47  
Karong (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 52	Total Voters	: 34,913 (M-17908 F-17005)
Total Votes Polled	: 33,614	Valid Votes Polled	: 33,377
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 237	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 96		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
K.S. Benjamin Banee	INC	8751	26.22
S.P. Hrnry	IND	554	1.66
L. Jonathan	SP	13360 (Elected)	40.03
Th. Rapei	MPP	10721	32.09

There was four-cornered contest in the election fray including one Independent candidate. Benjamin Bani has captured the seat three times in 1974 and 1984 elections as Independent and as INC candidate in 1990 polls. He contested the elections as sitting MLA. There were fierce contest among the candidates of INC; SP; and MPP. However the sitting MLA Bani followed third. He could not retain the seat again. He lost the seat to SP nominee Jonathan. The newly formed Samata Party made its electoral debut with Jonathan.

Table 6.48  
Mao (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 41	Total Voters	: 36,121 (M-19080 F-17041)
Total Votes Polled	: 35,512	Valid Votes Polled	: 35,439
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 73	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 98		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
P. Bessi	JD	21	0.06
S. Lorho	INC	13108	36.99
M. Thohrii	IC (S)	22310 (Elected)	62.95

The constituency has the highest number of voters in the state. Voter turn out was also highest among the constituencies in the state. The constituency locked in triangular contest of three political parties. S. Lorho was the sitting MLA elected on INC ticket in the 1990 elections. He has represented the constituency three times continuously - in 1980 as INC nominee; in 1984 as Independent and in 1990 as INC candidate. This time, however, his leadership was challenged by Thohrii of IC (S) candidate. In the contest, Thohrii badly defeated the sitting MLA Lorhro with a big difference of 9, 202 votes. Bessi secured only 21 votes and forfeited deposit. Lorho's long presence in the constituency .as peoples representative led to his downfall as there was enough room to criticise him.

Table 6.49  
Tadubi (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 471	Total Voters	: 31,372 (M-15047 F-16325)
Total Votes Polled	: 29,218	Valid Votes Polled	: 28,912
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 306	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 93		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
I.S. Hangzing	IC(S)	7303	25.26
O. Lohrii	JD	10614 (Elected)	36.71.
Ng. Luikang	INC	5382	18.62
K. Raina	FPM	5613	19.41

The constituency was locked in four cornered contest. Ng. Luikang was the sitting Congress-I MLA. He captured the seat three times on Congress ticket from 1980 elections to 1990 polls. In the contest, O. Lohrii of JD got the highest of 10,614 votes. He-defeated his nearest rival candidate of IC (S) by 3311 votes. The sitting MLA Luikang lost the seat. JAC -sponsored strike of vehicles on the eve of the sixth election during which the Congress Ministry could not solve the problem/suffering of the people was also a main factor of Luikang's defeat in the polls.

Table 6.50  
Kangpokpi Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 29	Total Voters	: 22,312 (M-11566 F-10746)
Total Votes Polled	: 20,881	Valid Votes Polled	: 20,515
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 366	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 94		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
L.S. John	INC	4011	19.55
Kishore Thapa	SP	7062	34.42
Solomon Veino	IND	•308	1.50
Thangminlen	MPP	9134 (Elected)	44.52

Kangpokpi, though it is in the hills is not a reserved constituency. The constituency is dominated by Nepali population (around ten thousand) to either Kuki or Naga population taking separately. It is in the interest of the Nepalese that the constituency is being kept 'General' Kangpokpi has four cornered contest in the election fray. Kishore Thapa has won the seat thrice continuously in the 1974, 1980 and 1984 elections on Congress ticket. L.S. John has also captured the seat in the 1990 elections on JD ticket. But he contested the election as sitting MLA. But he changed the party affiliation to Congress-I. In the race, John was eliminated. The keen contest took place between Kishore, Thapa and Thangminlen. And the latter defeated Kishore Thapa and sitting MLA John badly. Solomon Veno lost his security deposits.

Nepali voters divided. Moreover, reportedly muscle power also was a factor to the success.

Table 6.51  
Saitu (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	44	Total Voters	:	26,418(M-13151 F-13267)
Total Votes Polled	:	25,384	Valid Votes Polled	:	25,122
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	262	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	96			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Alar Thoitak	IND	7303		29.07	
Haokholet	JD	5765		22.95	
John	FPM	12		0.05	
Landolung	BJP	31		0.12	
Ngamthang Haokip	MPP	9680	(Elected)	38.53	
Panmei Bonthaolung	IC(S)	106		0.42	
S.L. Paokhosei	INC	2199		8.75	
Thomas	IND	26		0.10	

There were eight candidates including two Independent candidates. Candidate Paokhosei has won the seat on Congress-I ticket in 1984 elections. Ngamthang Haokip also has captured the seat once in 1990 polls on MPP ticket and was contesting the sixth elections as sitting MLA. There was close contest between Ngamthang Haokip; Independent candidate Alar Thoitak and Haokholet of JD. But Ngamthang Haokip defeated his nearest rival Independent candidate by 2377 votes. The rest were insignificant candidates. The rest five candidates lost deposits. Though Ngamthang Haokip could retain his seat, it was challenged by S.L. Paokhosei of INC candidate. In a petition filed in the Gauhati High Court, Imphal Bench, Paokhosei demanded repoll. But latter on the case was disposed off and Ngamthang Haokip was declared elected.

Table 6.52  
Tamei (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 54	Total Voters	: 21,970(M-11028F-10942)
Total Votes Polled	: 20,252	Valid Votes Polled	: 20,011
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 241	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 92		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Dijuanang	JD	1273	6.36
Kaiphuibou	IC(S)	3458	17.28
Mangaibou	MPP	4405	22.01
A.G. Pangim	SP	1792	8.96
D.P. Panmei	IND	5047 (Elected)	25.22
Pauheu	INC	4036	20.17

The constituency was locked in six cornered contest. There was only one Independent candidate. Dijuanang has wrested the seat thrice in 1980 and 1990 as Congress candidate and in 1984 as Independent. He was the sitting MLA. Pauheu also has won the seat twice in 1972 and 1974 elections as MHU nominee. Except the JD candidate Dijuanang and SP nominee Pangim, on average there was keen contest among the rest of the candidates. But close-contest took place between Independent candidate D.P. Panmei and MPP nominee Mangaibou. But the latter lost to Panmei. Panmei defeated the sitting MLA Dijuanang badly. The other two candidates forfeited their deposits.

Table 6.53  
Tamenglong (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 32	Total Voters	: 18,031(M-8946 F-9085)
Total Votes Polled	: 15,880	Valid Votes Polled	: 15,777
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 103	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 89		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Daisin Panmei	INC	6029	38.21
Jangamlung Panmei	MPP	839	5.32
G. Makunga Rongmei	IND	315	1.99
Samuel	SP	6515 (Elected)	41.29
Thuankubui Panmei	NPP	2079	13.18



A total of five candidates were in the election fray, including one Independent candidate. Daisin Panmei was the sitting MLA elected in 1990 elections on JD ticket. But he contested the sixth election on Congress-I ticket. Jangamlung Panmei also has won the seat on Congress-I ticket in 1980 and 1984 elections, but he was contesting the sixth election on MPP ticket. Samuel had a close contest with Daisin Panmei. But Sameul defeated Daisin Panmei in the contest by a margin of 486 votes. The other three candidates lost their deposits. Thus with Samuel, the SP made its electoral debut in. the Tamenglong constituency.

Table 6.54  
Nungba (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 32	Total Voters	: 15,516(M-7484F-8032)
Total Votes Polled	: 13,768	Valid Votes Polled	: 13,615
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 153	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 90		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Amu Kamei	JD	1430	10.50
P. Gaijinlung	MPP	2431	17.86
Gaikhangam	INC	4772	35.05
Gangmumei Kamei	FPM	4982 (Elected)	36.59

Four contestants were in the election fray. Gaikhangam contested the seat as sitting MLA. He has represented the constituency three times, elected on Congress-I ticket in the 1980, 1984 and 1990 Assembly elections. Gangmumei Kamei was the founder President of FPM. He was also Professor of History in the State University. The contest took place between Gaikhangam and Gangumei Kamei. The other two candidates were insignificant in the race. This time Prof. Ganmumei Kamei wrested the Nungba seat with a margin of 210 votes. Amu Kamei lost the deposit.

Table 6.55  
Tipaimukh (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 26	Total Voters	: 12,806 (M-6690 F-6116)
Total Votes Polled	: 11,224	Valid Votes Polled	: 10,976
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 248	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 88		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
Dr. Chaltonlien Amo	INC	5299 (Elected)	48.28
Satkohao	KNA	41	0.37
Selkai Hrangchal	JD	2886	26.29
Songlienthang Songte	MPP	2750	25.05

The constituency also locked in four cornered contest. The INC candidate was far more better than the other candidates in the fray. Selkai Hrangchal who was the sitting MLA of JD could not retain the seat. He lost the seat to Chaltonlein Amo. The KNA candidate Satkhohao forfeited his deposit. Tipaimukh constituency has been the stronghold of Congress-I. Ngurdinglen has won the seat non-stop on Congress-I ticket in the 1972,1974, 1980 and 1984 elections,. Only in 1990 elections, the seat was captured by JD candidate Selkai Hrangchal.

Table 6.56  
Thanlon (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	32	Total Voters	:	15,665(M-7859F-7806)
Total Votes Polled	:	12,960	Valid Votes Polled	:	12,735
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	225	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	83			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Demkhoon	KNA	6		0.05	
Doukholun	IND	10		0.08	
Liankhogin	END	30		0.24	
Lunkliohao	IND	35		0.27	
S.L. Mawia	IND	31		0.24	
Muana	IND	16		0.13	
Nohkhopao	IND	15		0.12	
T. Phungzathang	INC	4250		33.37	
B.K. Rose	FPM	36		0.28	
Satpi	IND	22		0.17	
Songchinkhup	MPP	5854 (Elected)		45.97	
C. Than	IND	2430		19.08	

In the state, Thanlon was the only constituency where the largest number of candidates were in the election fray including eight Independent and one woman candidate. Phungzathang had been elected from this constituency on Congress-I ticket in the 1980, 1984 and 1990 Assembly elections. He was the sitting MLA. The election battle was between the MPP candidate Songchinkhup and INC candidate Phungzathang. The Independent candidate C. Than trailed behind very far. The rest of the candidates were only namesake. In reality they were not in the race. In the contest, the sitting MLA Phungzathang lost his seat to his rival MPP candidate Songchinkhup by 1604 votes. MPP could retain the seat for the second time. The first was in the 1974. mid-term Assembly polls.

Table 6.57  
Henglep (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	: 46	Total Voters	: 18,957(M-9526F-9431)
Total Votes Polled	: 16,997	Valid Votes Polled	: 16,752
Ballot Papers Rejected	: 245	Tender Votes	: Nil
Polled Percentage	: 90		
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate	Percentage
D. Angam	SP	470	2.81
Jainson Haokip	KNA	2392	14.28
Lalsiemthang	IND	15	0.09
T. Manga Vaiphei	INC	4992	29.80
Sephu Haokip	JD	5798 (Elected)	34.61
Thangjalam	MPP	3085	18.42

There was six-cornered contest in the constituency. There was one Independent candidate. The Henglep constituency has been the home polling of the Kuki leader Holkhomang Haokip for a long time. He was elected from this constituency for four times except in 1984 elections. He has won the seat in the 1972 polls as Independent; in 1974 and 1980 elections on Congress ticket and in the 1990 polls on IC (S) ticket. He was the sitting MLA. But in this sixth Assembly elections Holkhomang Haokip sifted his constituency to Tengenoupal constituency in Chandel district contesting the election on MPP ticket. Thereafter the seat went to JD.

Close contest took place between Sephu Haokip of JD; T. Manga Vaiphei of INC and Thangjalam of MPP. However the last two candidates ran second and third. Sephu Haokip defeated his nearest rival candidate Manga Vaiphei by a margin of 806 votes. The other three candidates lost their deposits.

Table 6.58  
Churachandpur (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	43	Total Voters	:	31,141(M-15601 F-15540)
Total Votes Polled	:	25,331	Valid Votes Polled	:	24,995
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	331	Tender Votes	:	5
Polled Percentage	:	82			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
Chingnou	KNA	40		0.16	
Chinsuanlam	IND	17		0.07	
V. Hangkhanlian	NPP	14641	(Elected)	58.58	
Hathoi Buansing	INC	1310		5.24	
Jamkholam	JD	2560		10.24	
Lunkhomang	IND	7		0.03	
Nekhholet	IND	5		0.02	
Paokhogin	IND	8		0.03	
Paokhomang	IND	59		0.24	
Tongkhopao	IND	13		0.05	
K. Vungzalian	MPP	6335		25.35	

There were a large number of contestants in the constituency. Altogether eleven candidates were in the electoral battle for the seat. Independent candidates numbered six. Two woman candidates were also in the election . fray. V. Hangkhanlian has won the seat once in the 1990 elections and contested the election as sitting MLA of NPP. K. Vungzalian also has captured the seat once in 1980 polls on Congress ticket. The fight was between NPP candidate V. Hangkhanlian and MPP nominee K. Vungzalian. The former could retain his seat again. He polled more than fifty percent of the valid votes casted. Vungzalian was badly defeated in the contest. The pther nine candidates forfeited their deposit.

Table 6.59  
Saikot (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	49	Total Voters	:	33,045(M-16554F-16491)
Total Votes Polled	:	29,474	Valid Votes Polled	:	29,166
Ballot Papers Rejected	:	303	Tender Votes	:	5
Polled Percentage	:	90			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
T.N. Haokip	MPP	8938	(Elected)	30.65	
Henjakhup	IND	487		1.67	
Khailam	SP	1197		4.10	
Kholi	NPP	7347		25.19	
P. Khupzadou	IND	3		0.01	
Lalhmingthanga	INC	1082		3.71	
Lalkhopao Kom	KNA	329		1.13	
Ngulkhohao Lhungdim	JD	7599		26.05	
Thangkhenkhup	FPM	2168		7.43	
K. William	IND	16		0.05	

The constituency also witnessed large number of contestants including a woman candidate in the election fray for the lone seat. There were only three Independent candidates. Ngulkhohao have won the seat three times in 1974 as KNA candidate; in 1980 as PLP candidate and in 1984 as MPP nominee. While T.N. Haokip has captured the seat once in 1990 polls as KNA nominee. He contested the election as sitting MLA. As such in this sixth elections too, the contest took place between Ngulkhohao and Haokip the latter defeating the former by 1339 votes, and retain the seat again. Kholi of NPP followed third. Other candidates forfeited their deposits.

Table 6.60  
Singhat (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Polling Stations	:	40	Total Voters	:	20,413(M-10212 F-10201)
Total Votes Polled	:	17,530	Valid Votes Polled	:	17,223
Ballot Papers Rejected.	:	307	Tender Votes	:	Nil
Polled Percentage	:	86			
Name of Candidate	Party Affiliation	Votes Polled in Favour of each Candidate		Percentage	
T. Gouzadou	NPP	6327	(Elected)	36.74	
T. Ngaizanem	MPP	5223		30.33	
Thangkhanlal	INC	4696		27.27	
Vungkholian	FPM	977		5.67	

There was four-cornered contest in the constituency including a woman candidate. Thangkhanlal has wrested the seat three time in 1972 and 1980 as Congress candidate and in 1990 as KNA nominee. He contested the election as sitting MLA. T. Gouzadou also has won the seat once in 1984 polls on INC ticket. Except the FPM candidate, there was strong contest among the three candidates. However, T. Gouzadou won the contest for the second time. Thangkhanlal lost the seat. He ran third in the contest. T. Ngaizanem followed second. The FPM candidate Vungkholian lost the security deposit.

**References/Notes**

Analysis of the Election Result - Contesting Parties/candidates/independent candidates of the 60 Assembly Constituencies of the February 1995 Assembly Elections has been made on the basis of List of Elected Persons; Details of General Election to Manipur Legislative Assembly - 1995; and list of Members of Manipur (both MPs and MLAs since 1947), Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Imphal, 1997.



## **CHAPTER – VII**

*Performance of Political parties  
at the 1995 Polls*

## **CHAPTER-VII**

### **PERFORMANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AT THE 1995 POLLS**

Soon after the polling in the hills and plains ended, the political leaders of both the Congress-I and MPP were expecting of the possibility of getting majority and forming the government. With the end of the election campaigning, a last minute assessment of the prevailing election trends in the State showed the visible signs of an anti-Congress wave, more particularly in the valley, though almost all the constituencies did not show that Congress-I would suffer a setback.

However, despite the emerging anti-Congress wave, the State Chief Minister Rishang Keishing was confident of getting a single majority and expected a inviting his party Congress-I by the State Governor to form the ministry. Radhabinod Koijam, the MPCC-I President said that though there were some reverses in the hills his party would be the single largest party in the elections. On the MPP side, the former Chief Minister and MPP leader R.K, Ranbir Singh said that despite the hurdles and difficulties, the MPP would gain majority in the valley Dr. H. Borobabu Singh, the former Speaker, was also hopeful of his party MPP returning to power. He expressed even if we get the majority, we will invite the other opposition parties in the formation of the government

As the counting started on 21 February 1995, the results made many political pundits to do a rethinking. What came as a surprise to all those closely watching the election results was the performance of the ruling party Congress-I and the Opposition Manipur Peoples Party. The voting showed a reverse trend in

both the hills and the valley. After the election results, the news of massive opposition victories and the defeat of Congress-I stalwarts spread. The election trend showed that the Congress-I setback was more pronounced in the hills than in the valley. Congress-I which expected a good result in the hills did extremely bad and the MPP which was supposed to be strong in the valley remained second to Congress-I. The defeat of the Congress-I in the hills had completely offset the gains in the valley. The Congress-I party that entered the electoral battle while in power was voted out. People by and large have voted for a change. Most of the sitting MLAs including Ministers and prominent leaders lost the election and the legislative Assembly of the state saw the emergence of 28 new faces including two Professors of the State University. Among the prominent losers included MPP leaders viz., O. Joy Singh, Dr. H. Borobabu Singh, former Assembly Speaker, Holkhomang Haokip, and Chandam Manihar Singh. The Congress-I stalwarts who lost their seats included Deputy Chief Minister Th. Chaoba Singh, Soso Lorho, W. Angou Singh, E. Birmani (Assembly Speaker), K. Apabi Devi, T. Phungzathang, K.S. Benjamin Bane, Ng. Luikang, L.S. John, Muhammuddin Shah, L. Lalit Singh etc., Janata Dal leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Kh. Amutombi Singh, Selkai Hrangchal, lost their seats. CPI also lost two of its senior leaders Ph. Parijat Singh and Dr. M. Nara Singh. BJP President M. Bhorot Singh, Congress-S President R.K. Nokulsana, Samata Party President N. Binoy Singh, all lost the seat. But one thing that can be reckoned with is that all the woman candidates in both the hills and the valley including the Social Welfare State Minister Mrs. K. Apabi Devi were defeated.

The final results of the election showed Congress-I getting 21 seats (but 22 seats after the countermanded Lamsang Assembly polls in May the same year),

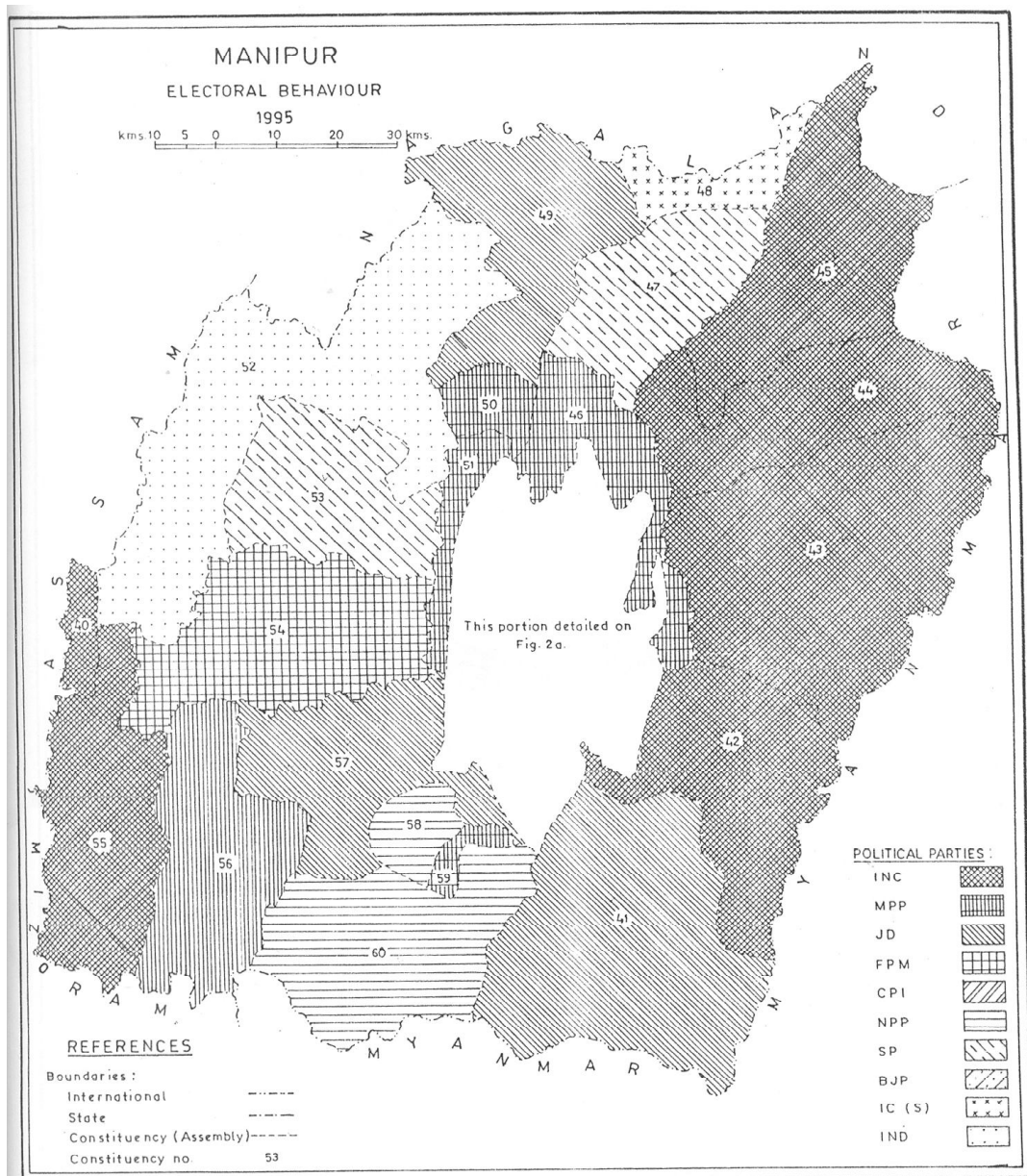


Fig. 2.

MANIPUR  
ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR  
1995

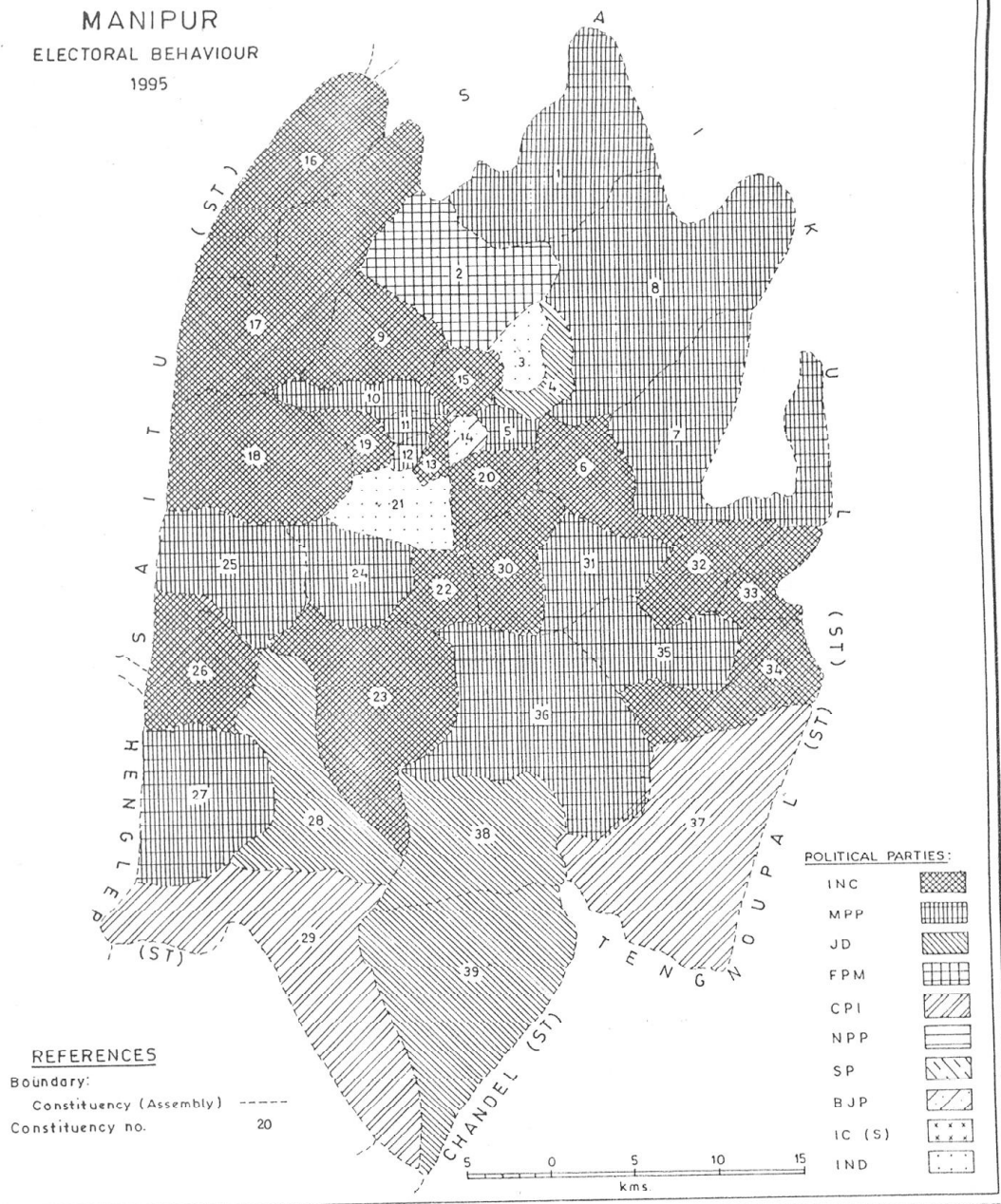


Fig. 2a.

Table 7.1.  
Party-wise Position in District-wise Level

Name of contesting Political Parties	Name of the Districts																	
	Imphal 24 seats		Thoubal 10 seats		Bishnupur 6 seats		Churachandpur 6 seats		Chandel 2 seats		Ukhrul 3 seats		Senapati 6 seats		Tamei 3 seats			
	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won	put up	won
INC	24	12	10	4	6	1	6	1	2	1	3	3	6	-	3	-	-	-
JD	20	1	5	2	6	1	4	1	1	1	3	-	3	1	2	-	-	-
BJP	12	1	2	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
SP	11	-	3	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3	-	2	1	2	1	-	-
JP	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
CPI	13	-	7	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CPI-M	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MPP	23	7	10	3	6	3	6	2	2	-	1	-	4	3	3	-	-	-
FPM	13	1	-	-	2	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-
NPP	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
IC(S)	4	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	1	-	-	-
KNA	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SJP	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MHPC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independent	24	2	7	-	4	-	18	-	3	-	3	-	5	-	2	1	-	-

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.

closely followed by MPP with 18 seats. Janata Dal took home 7 seats being the third party and CPI 2 seats. Other smaller parties like FPM, Samata Party and NPP got 2 seats each. The Congress-S captured only one and the Independent 3 seats. The BJP by returning one seat in Yaiskul Constituency in Imphal District opened its first ever account in the political history of Manipur. Other parties such as KNA, MHPC, SJP (Rashtriya), and JP could not return even a single seat in the contest. The following table shows the party-wise position in district-wise level after the announcement of the final election results.

Table 7.2  
Statement of Seats put up and won by Political Parties in 1990 Elections

Total Seats		: 60	Total Electorates		: 11,89,184
Total Contestants		: 288	Total Valid Votes Polled		: 10,67,944
Party	Seat Contested	Seat won	% Success w.r.t. Seats	Valid Votes Polled	% Valid Votes Polled
INC	60	26	43.33	3,50,975	32.86
JD	52	11	21.15	2,06,833	19.37
BJP	16	-	0	28,185	2.64
CPI	14	3	21.43	40,529	3.80
CPI-M	1	-	0	607	0.06
Congress (S)	37	6	16.22	1,37,556	12.88
MPP	46	11	23.91	2,18,875	20.49
MHPC	9	-	0	8,700	0.81
Independent and Others	53	3	5.66	75,684	7.09

Source : Manipur Today, Independence Day Special Issue, 15 August, 1995, Vol.XV., No. 3, Published by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Manipur, pp. 25-32.

Table 7.3  
Statement of Seats put up and won by Political Parties in 1995 Elections

Total Seats : 60		Total Electorates :		12,69,746	
Total Contestants : 347		Total Valid Votes Polled :		11,45,965	
Party	Seat Contested	Seat won	% Success w.r.t. Seats	Valid Votes Polled	% Valid Votes Polled
INC	59+1	21+1	36.67	3,28,362	28.65
JD	40+1	7	17.07	1,36,615	11.92
BJP	19+1	1	5.00	38,405	3.35
SP	23+1	2	8.33	74,054	6.46
JP	3	-	0	1,590	0.14
CPI	22+1	2	8.70	64,026	5.59
CPI-M	2	-	0	2,327	0.20
MPP	53+1	18	33.33	2,71,247	23.67
KNA	6	-	0	2,832	0.25
NPP	5	2	40.00	30,417	2.65
Congress (S)	13	1	7.69	44,797	3.91
FPM	23	2	8.70	56,300	4.91
MHPC	1	-	0	2,440	0.21
SJP(R)	6	-	0	7,194	0.63
Independents	64+2	3	4.55	85,359	7.45

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur.

\* The percentage is calculated including the countermanded Lamsang Constituency. + sign mean increased number of seats contested and won in the, elections to the countermanded Lamsang Assembly constituency held on 27 May 1995.

The ruling Congress-I party which fought the election while in the ministry emerged as the largest single party in the election with 21 seats. But the party suffered a great loss, despite securing the largest seats in the election. It could not retain all the 26 seats it clinched in the 1990 Assembly polls. The election result showed that people did not like the party. In the outgoing fifth house, the Rishang-led Ministry had-28 Ministers altogether, but most of them were badly defeated.



The party failed to get a workable majority to form an unilateral government in the state.

In the pre-poll analysis, political analysts predicted the securing of more seats by the Congress party in the frills. But-in reverse, the Congress-I captured less number of seats in the hills while the party wrested more seats in the valley, beyond peoples' expectations, where there was strong anti-Congress wave. In the hills districts, it could return only five seats out of the 20 seats it contested negating the expectations of the people that the party could clinch majority of the seats in the hills than the valley. The Congress-I candidates could retain their seats — three in Tangkhul-Naga dominated Ukhrul district; and one each in Tengenoupal (ST) reserved constituency of Chandel district and in Tipaimukh (ST) reserved constituency of Churachandpur district. In these constituencies of Ukhrul, Phungyar, Chingai and Tengenoupal, the winners were all Nagas while the victor in Tipaimukh segment was a Hmar. Contrary to peoples' expectations, in the rest of the two hilly districts of Senapati and Tamenglong, none of the Congress-I candidates could return even a single seat. It may be remembered that in the 1990 Assembly elections, the Congress-I could retain 8 seats out of the 20 Assembly segments in the hills.

All the five hills districts of Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong, Chandel and Churachandpur have been traditionally strong bastion of the Congress with 19 (ST) reserved seats and one general seat in Kangpokpi constituency spreading across the hills, inhabited by different colourful tribal groups of Kuki-Naga origin. With a strong anti-Congress wave sweeping across the valley during the campaigning days, the party pinned much hopes on the hills. But the belief that the Congress-I would get more seats in the hills than in the valley became a myth and

just reverse. In the two hilly districts of Tamenglong and Senapati, all Naga dominated areas, where the two National Highways passing through, even a candidate of Congress-I could not return. All of them were badly defeated, might be due to JAC strike, apart from other factors, during which there was no transportation on both the National Highways for 42-days together causing acute problems of the shortage of essential commodities in the state in which the Congress-I ministry led by Rishang Keishing was unable to tackle the problem. In Senapati district, in four Assembly constituencies, from Mao to Kangpokpi along the National Highway No. 39 (Imphal-Dimapur Road); all the four Naga sitting MLAs were badly defeated. To enable to retain the seats, Chief Minister Rishang Keishing made them Ministers during the fifth tenn of the Assembly. They were Transport Minister Soso Lorho in Mao constituency; Tribal Development Minister of state Ng. Luikang in Tadubi segment; Medical Minister Benjamin Bane in Karong constituency and Forest Minister L.S. John in Kangpokpi constituency. Even the offering of ministerial post to these four constituencies failed to retain the seat by the Congress-I party. In Tamenglong district also, two ministers of Rishang , Ministry were defeated. They were Industry Minister of State Daisin Panmei in Tamenglong constituency defeated in the hands of Samata Party candidate Samuel Jendai; and Agriculture Minister Gaikhangam in Nungba Assembly segment defeated by a Professor of State University. Gangmumei Kamei of Federal Party of Manipur. In Tamei Assembly segment also, the Congress-I candidate could not retain the seat. It was only in Ukhrul district that all the Congress-I candidates could return again - Chief Minister Rishang Keishing in Phungyar constituency; A.S. Arthur in Ukhrul segment defeating the standing MLA of Janata Dal and Prof. M. Horam, in Chingai constituency defeating the sitting MLA of MPP. Sports Minister of the State, B.D. Behring Anal in Chandel (ST) constituency also

was defeated. He became the only candidate who secured the least number of votes 68 only, though he fought the election as Congress-I Minister. In Churachandpur district, two ministers in the Rishang Ministry - PHED Minister T. Phungzathang in Thanlon (ST) reserved constituency and Minor Irrigation Minister Thangkhanlal in Singhat (ST) reserved segment were defeated.

In the valley also, it was reversed. Despite the anti-Congress trend and sentiments in the valley, the party's comparatively better performance in the valley came as a pleasant surprise to the party leadership. The Congress-I won 17 seats in the valley. In the 1990 Assembly polls, the Congress secured 18 seats in the valley, only one seat more than the February 1995 elections. The Congress-I could capture eleven seats but 12 including the Lamsang Assembly seat in Imphal district; 4 seats in Thoubal district while in Bishnupur district only one seat. Beyond expectations of the political analysts, and the general people, in the suburbs of Imphal district and in the Thoubal district, more Congress-I returned.

Among the prominent losers who entered the electoral battle as Congress-I nominee included altogether eleven cabinet Minister and eight Ministers of State in the Congress-led Rishang Keishing Ministry. Those badly defeated cabinet Ministers were - (1) PHED Minister T. Phungzathang; (2) Agriculture Minister Gaikhangam; (3) Medical Minister Benjamin Bane; (4) Forest Minister L.S. John; (5) Transport Minister S. Lorho; (6). Finance Minister W. Angou Singh; (7) Veterinary Minister Th. Krishna; (8) Education Minister L. Amujao Singh; (9) Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister L. Ibomcha; (10) Deputy Chief Minister Th. Chaoba Singh (11) Industry Minister O. Ibobi Singh. And those who contested as Ministers of State but lost their seats were - (1) Tribal Development Minister Ng. Luikang; (2) Sports Minister B.D. Behring; (3) Minor Irrigation

Minister Thangkhanlal; (4) Industry Minister Daisin Panmei; (5) Publicity Minister M. Manihar; (6) Social Welfare Minister K. Apabi Devi; (7) P.W.D. Minister N. Nimai and (8) Agriculture Minister S. Brajagopal Sharma. Besides Speaker of the Assembly E. Biramani Singh in Hiyanglam Assembly segment was also<sup>1</sup> defeated. Thus, the result was that altogether 20 ministers of the outgoing Congress-I Ministry headed by Rishang Keishing were humbled in the elections.

Among the prominent Congress-I winners included Chief Minister Rishang Keishing (returned again); MPCC (I) President Koijam Radhabinod; former Education Minister Y. Irabot Singh; former works Minister Th. Devendra; Dr. L. Chandramani Singh; Fishery Minister W. Nipamacha; Sericulture Minister of State N. Biren Singh; M. Nilachandra Singh; IFC Minister Md. Hellaluddin; Dr. Nimaichand Luwang; I. Hemochandra; IFC State Minister H. Bidur Singh (an insurgent - turned politician); A.S. Arthur; Morung Makunga etc.

In the pre-statehood period, the Congress party had an effective hold on the voters with a fair majority support-base when comparatively compared to that of other parties. But after the First State Assembly Election in 1972, the hold of the Congress party on the electorates seem to have been gradually declining to a great extent as experienced from the successive Assembly election results in the State, though the party managed anyhow to form the government either one party or coalition ministry. The poor performance of the ruling Congress-I party in this election could be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, dissension and intra-party squabbling on the eve of the polls demoralised the rank and file and created a confusion among the party workers. The leadership crisis that led to the resignation of former Chief Minister R.K.

Dorendro Singh from the membership of the Assembly House in December 1994 cost the party heavily. He was outcast from the CLP leadership by a group led by his erstwhile Deputy Chief Minister Rishang Keishing and MPCC-I President Radhabinod Kojiam. Dorendro Singh, who was infuriated with the betrayed by his colleagues and by the party high command not to contest the poll. As a result, the BJP won the Yaiskul Assembly seat, the home turf of Dorendro Singh for four consecutive terms since 1974-mid term Assembly poll in the state. At a time when the party should have channelised all its efforts in the run up to the polls, instead indulged in mud-slinging. Dorendro Singh was accused of “Campaigning” for rival candidates of Congress-I “including the one pitted against the STATE PCC (I) President Radhabinod Kojiam,” helping his rival candidate of MPP nominee Ng. Kumarjit Singh. And the Researcher in his personal interview with the spokesman of MPCC (I), he said “The then CLP leader Shri Rishang Keishing, and the PCC(I) President Shri Radhabinod Kojiam treaded different paths from one another thereby hampering the prospects of about 10 party candidates.”<sup>1</sup> Beside some prominent Congress-I stalwarts reportedly supported morally and materially non-Congress-I candidates with a view to crushing particular Congress-I candidate so as to remove them from the struggle for leadership within the party circles.

Secondly, squabbling for party tickets and the choice of nominees had seemingly upset the Congress’s poll prospects. The outward unity in the State Congress-I during the constitutional crisis followed after the induction of Rishang ministry on 13 December 1994, however, started crumbling the moment the party ticket were announced. For instance, out of the 10 sitting MLAs and Ministers (elected on non-Congress Party tickets during the fifth term) who were awarded

Congress-I tickets for supporting the outgoing Rishang Keishing ministry, only three returned successful. For example, Fisheries Minister W. Nipamacha Singh (who elected on Congress-S ticket in the previous term), and H. Bidur Singh (Elected on Janata Dal ticket). Being denied party nominations at least 35 Congressmen contested the poll against official candidates under the banner of other parties and some of them also returned in the election. For instance in Tamei (ST) reserved Assembly constituency, the sitting Congress (I) MLA I.D. Dwijuanang was denied party ticket. So he contested the election on Janata Dal ticket but could not retain the seat. W. Thoiba Singh, after his failure to grab the Congress-I party ticket, entered the electoral battle in Heingang constituency as Federal party of Manipur nominee and won the seat. This divided the vote bank of the party sharply. The ruling Congress (I) on its part had to hand over as many as 25 of its seats to opposition or Independent candidates; while the party wrested around 12 seats from the opposition including that of the former Speaker Dr. H. Borobabu Singh in Wangkhei Assembly constituency; O. Joy Singh in Langthabal constituency; Ng. Kumarjit in Thangmeiband constituency etc. Peoples speculation that some among the ministers in Rishang Keishing ministry though awarded party ticket may not get elected, became true. The outcome for selection of wrong men as Congress-I candidate resulted the party suffering a jolt in the election. Because, the party in many cases did not select the right kind of persons as party nominees who will be acceptable to the voters. A ministerial post, loyalty to factional leadership etc., can in no way be the criteria for the selection of the party candidates. Because they had in past rejected the voice of the people as they made themselves busy hunting for personal gains and ministerial berths. The Congress-I party spokesman, T. Gunadhwaja Singh told the Researcher that "The mode of selection of party candidates was also prompted by partisan feelings and

prospective candidates were, sacrificed at the cost of intra-party leadership struggle. Even the ex-Chief Minister of Manipur Shri R.K. Dorendro Singh was not awarded party ticket in preference to a weak candidate, having no chances to win the seat. Such cases also happened in Uripok Assembly constituency where the sitting Congress-I MLA who was also a Minister was denied party ticket on partisan feeling.”<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, another factor that acted against the ruling Congress-I party was a strong anti-Rishang Keishing wave in both the hills and the plains. Rival parties like the MPP in particular fully exploited the sagging popularity of the Congress throughout the state to convert it into an anti, -Rishang Keishing tide. It is quite sometime new that Rishang Keishing’s name has been linked to underground outfits and the demand for ‘Greater Nagaland.’ Territorial integrity of Manipur was a very sensitive issue among the valley inhabitants and the non-Naga tribal communities in the hills. For the first time, the majority community in the state/valley, the Meiteis voiced their strong opposition to the demand for greater Nagaland. The anti-Congress and anti Rishang wave that swept over the state but more strongly in the valley during the electioneering period was the outcome of the question of protecting territorial integrity of Manipur by the non-Congress parties particularly the MPP. Following’ the appeasement policy of the Centre to the Nagas, the neighbouring Nagaland State Assembly by taking due advantage, passed a resolution in September 1994 to amalgamate the adjoining Naga -inhabited territories/areas under one “Administrative unit” into forming Greater Nagaland. The Congress-I government at the centre remained a silent spectator without any objection against the resolution passed by the Congress-I government in Nagaland. This created anger to the non-Nagas in Manipur. This also threatened

the territorial integrity of Manipur. The Meiteis in particular became hot-blooded against the appeasement policy of the centre. The powerful regional political outfit in the state, Manipur Peoples Party, by taking the advantage, wanted to exploit the credibility of the Congress-I. MPP revived again the Naga-related issues such as UNIC-Congress Agreement of August 1972, and the demand for South Nagaland. The party in trying to dis-image the Congress party highlighted the appeasement policy of the Nagas by the centre and its divide and rule policy to inject communal feeling in Manipur. Soon a strong movement in the valley emerged saying that Manipur cannot be disintegrated. It adversely affected the Congress-I as the movement converted into an anti-Congress and anti-Rishang waves sweeping across the valley in particular. Anti-Rishang propaganda aims at winning the hearts of the Meiteis, and the Kukis. The goal of such Naga-card politics was the catching of the voters while they were in an emotional, sentimental condition for the cause of territorial integrity of Manipur. During the election, a sea-change in Manipur politics on ethnic lines experienced, that created a slight tension in the political psyche of the people of the state. The Congress-I Party spokesman, T. Gunadhwaja himself admitted that “The issue on South Nagaland became a major factor as the propaganda on the issue was quite sentimental particularly to the Meiteis (youths) that swept the entire valley during the campaigning days. It affected badly the image of Congress-I specially as the Congress Party could not clarify and defend properly the attack of the MPP upto the level of the voters.’

Lastly, indifferent attitude of the Rishang Keishing government towards the myriad problems facing the people on the eve of the polls proved costly for the ruling party. Almost all the rion-congress-I parties made a big issue out of the Truckers’ strike that lasted for 42 days. The JAC sponsored transporters strike



began against the illegal imposition of the vehicles and goods taxes on National Highways by the outlawed NSCN adding more fuel towards the strained relation between Meiteis and the Nagas. The truckers and transport operators stayed-off the Imphal-Dimapur and Imphal-Jiribam roads stopping supply of all essential items. They were protesting against imposition of illegal taxes by the underground militants on the Imphal-Dimapur road. The issue was compounded by peoples' movement against the NSCN not to impose and collect Nagaland tax on the National Highways inside the Manipur territory. The agitation was suspended only one week before the state went to the polls. These issues and its follow-up movements not to break Manipur, had its impact in this election.

However, the Union Minister for internal security, Rajesh Pilot who came to Imphal on 27 February just two days after the installation of Rishang-led new ministry to defuse the crisis in the Congress-I between Radhabinod and Chief Minister Keishing, said due to communal clash, Congress-I could not secure more seats in the hills.<sup>5</sup>

In this election, among the regional political parties, the MPP was the only party which made a good show by improving its position significantly from the previous elections, and emerged second with 18 seats, next to Congress-I. The pro-Meitei MPP did better than the 1990 Assembly polls in which the party could retain only eleven seats. The opposition MPP virtually improved from 23.91 percent to 39.96 percent. The election scene in 1995 was vastly different from that of the previous Assembly elections in the state. In this election, one important issue- the protection of the unity and integrity of the state swayed the electorates in the valley in particular in favour of MPP, giving the MPP a record of 18 seats.

Riding the crest of anti-Rishang tide in the state, the MPP relied heavily on the sentiments of the plainsmen of the valley to hit the electoral jackpot. The party wooed the majority Meitei voters by harping on the review of the Merger Agreement signed between the Union Government of India and the Maharaja of the erstwhile princely state of Manipur, 46 years ago. The MPP also revived the agreement signed between the United Naga Integration Council (UNIC) and the Indian National Congress in August 1972. The party also pledged to maintain the unity and integrity of Manipur at any cost. The anti-Rishang propaganda acted swiftly in winning the hearts of the Meiteis and the Kukis to some extent. It was successful.<sup>6</sup>

These factors apart, the upswing of the MPP stemmed from several other factors too. It was not due to the efforts of the party alone. Negative votes of the Congress came as a blessing in disguise for the party. It is the negative vote which was not available before the election that MPP could muster. Voters were fed up with the hollow promises of the Congress during early elections and the farce done by the Congress MLAs after the induction of Rishang ministry on 13 December 1994. Barring the Congress-I Party, none of the national parties in the state has a future in Manipur, even the once powerful Janata Party too. Faced with this reality, the electors obviously looked at the MPP as an alternative to the Congress-I. Not that only the MPP could deliver the goods. During the MPP - led seven party coalition ministry, the MPP miserably failed to keep its poll promises, one of which was rice at Rs 2.50 per kilo. Instead of rice at cheaper rate, the Chief Minister R.K. Ranbir Singh himself got embroiled in what came to be known as 'rice scandal' involving crores of rupees. People have not yet forgotten this MPP fiasco.<sup>7</sup> But electors saw no alternative party either national or regional other than

MPP that could form a non-Congress ministry in the state. The MPP leader and also former Chief Minister R.K. Ranbir Singh did accept that the electoral position of his party could be improved due to, apart from other factors, communalism in the hills, and by harping on the sentimental issues of the state by highlighting the historical background of Manipur like protection of territorial integrity of Manipur, review of the Merger Agreement, UNIC-Congress Agreement etc.

The position of the MPP, however, would have been much better and improved than the 18 seats it wrested, had the party not been subjected to confrontation between two factions “of the party. A long tussle between the two camps of MPP headed by A.K. Langam group on the one hand, and Y. Yaima Singh and R.K. Ranbir Singh group on the other, was going on over the post of party Presidentship, till the final days of the last date of filing nomination papers. On 12 January 1995, subordinate Judge No. II, Imphal East, in its pronouncement, said the President of MPP is A.K. Langam. However, following the petition/ appeal at the Supreme Court by Y. Yaima Singh Group, later on, Langam was defeated, and party President was scrambled by Y. Yaima Singh. The order of the Sub-Judge No. II was stayed by District Session Judge, Manipur East court, and annulled it. So, Yaima Singh remained President of MPP. The MPP (reserved) symbol of ‘Bicycle’ was allotted to Y. Yaima-led group following the stay order on 28 January 1995 by the Additional District Session Judge Court, Imphal West, against the Injunction order of the Sub-Judge No. II saying A.K. Langam as the president of the MPP (though the final hearing of the case was on 14 February 1995). Thus as per order of the court, the Election Commission allotted the Reserved Symbol of MPP (Bicycle) to Yaima group .\*. and his party nominee. And Yaima was recognised as its President. After the court decision Langam group left the MPP. Though decided to contest the election in the name of MPP (L); A.K. Langam group was treated as Independent candidates. The

Langam group fielded eleven candidates in the constituencies of Naoriya Pakhanglakpa; Khurai; Yaiskhul; Wangkhei; Thongju; Heingang; Oinam; Mayang Imphal; Saikul; Chandel and Tengenoupal.

Because of this tussle between the two leaders, the MPP could secured less number of seats in the polls. A.K. Langam who was supposed to enter the election contest in Naoriya Pakhanglakpa constituency as MPP nominee, contested the election as an Independent candidate and won the seat. Moreover, the MPP was downed by one more seat after the death of M. Deven Singh in Lamsang constituency. The party lost its Lamsang seat as the sitting MLA Deven was also expected to win the seat. He was included in the list of winning candidates of MPP.

Despite a number of factors favourable to the party, the MPP saw fall of its heavy-weights in the electoral battle. Prominent leaders who could not stage a comeback despite tremendous improvement in the MPP tally included controversial and maverick former Speaker. H. Borobabu Singh. The party lost one of its trend setters. Borobabu was routed by Y. Irabot Singh of Congress-I, a former cabinet minister. The party's fiery leader O. Joy Singh lost the Langthabal seat which he had been retaining for the last 20 years - four terms consecutively to a new horn of Congress-I. A prominent Kuki leader Holkhomang Haokip also hit the dust. The long list of prominent losers included Thoithoi, Ibohal, Chandam Manihar, Kumarjit, Kh. Chaoba, Md. Adul Latif, Alauddin, N. Solomon, and K. Vungzalian.

While the Congress-I and its rival party MPP maintained a stiff competition almost neck to neck, the nearest to trail the two parties was the Janata Dal, which

managed to clinch at least 7 seats despite strong contentions from its rival parties. The Janata Dal which secured eleven seats in the 1990 Assembly polls finished third with only 7 members in this election. The JD seemed to have wrested most of the seats meant for the Congress© thereby making its presence felt in the political scenario of the state. The prominent party losers included former Deputy Chief Minister Kh. Amutombi Singh who lost in the hands of M. Nilachandra of Congress-I; Th. Chatukini Singh; Kh. Jibon; Abdul Gam; Danny Shaiza; Selkai Hrangchal and I.D. Dijuanang. The prominent winners were Basantakumar Wangkhem; T. Mangibabu; M. Kunjo Singh; M. Babu Singh; Hangkhanpao; O. Lohrie; and Sehpu Haokip. Apart from others, according to W. Kullabidhu Singh, ex-MP and ex-President of Janata Dal, state unit, Manipur, the following factors are mainly responsible for the declining position of the Janata Dal in the polls, (a) The existence of opportunist element among the elected MLAs/ministers of JD and none of them did work for strengthening the party, (b) The existence of opportunist party members at the organisational level thereby quarrelling over the posts of “Office Bearers” particularly the “President-ship” post that weakens the organisation of the Janata Dal. (c) Lack of money, fund and other resources of the party thereby hampering the task of proper organisational work of the party in the state; and (d) Partner of Janata Dal before the election, particularly the MPP assumed that anti-Congress wave might favour Janata Dal in the poll. Lest the MPP Chief Minister R.K. Ranbir Singh owing to his wide prerogative did something against the Janata Dal to weaken the party.<sup>8</sup>

The newly formed Federal Party of Manipur and Samata Party, in order to stall the forth-coming Assembly elections 1995, opened their first account with 2 seats each. Out of the 22 seats it contested, the fledging FPM made its electoral

debut by winning two seats - one in the hills and the other in the plains. President of the FPM Prof. Gangmumei Kamei wrested the Nungba (ST) reserved seat in Tamenglong district while W. Thoiba Singh in Heingang Assembly constituency could retain the seat in Imphal district Prof. G. Kamei defeated his nearest rival Gaikhangam of Congress-I who was also the sitting MLA and also Agriculture Minister in the Rishang Ministry. The All India Samata Party of George Fernandes was also able to maintain its electoral debut by winning two seats in Karong and Tamenglong constituencies. Both the Samata Party nominees defeated the sitting MLAs who were both ministers in the Rishang Keishing ministry. The party put up 23 candidates for the electoral contest.

The Researcher was told by N. Joykumar Singh, General Secretary, FPM that his party could not secured more seat due to some factors. Being a newly formed party organisational network of the party was weak and confined to some constituencies. There was less party membership/activists to work for the party. The ideology of the party could not reach the people properly as such the party failed to earn a fair image before the poll. Besides, money factor played a very important role and part. Owing to fund shortage, the party could not finance the election. Most of the party candidates who entered the electoral battle faced financial problems as they depended on their individual resources and capacity. As such the party did not put up large number of candidates in the election fray. However, Joykumar emphasised that his party could attain second in most constituencies. There was close contest with the rival party candidates if not won the seat. Voting percentage of the FPM is very high (securing 5 percent of the valid votes polled) though for the first time.<sup>9</sup>

The Researcher, in his personal interview with the Chairman, Parliamentary Board, Manipur State Unit, Samata Party, Kh. Angangjao Singh was told that the two elected MLAs of the Samata Party were JD activists before. They were popular since before the formation of the party. So, they could retain the seats. The rest of the party candidates were new comers not properly recognised by the people. Hence, low performance of the Samata Party. Regarding the downward trend of the party', he further added that being a new party and since the party was formed to stall the election, the party did not have enough time for full preparation of the election; no time for effective election propaganda even to reach the nook and corner of the state. Being a snap election there was less time to devote in propaganda and to work for the party. Lack of powerful spokesman and leader to strengthen the party is another factor. Weakness in political-base and organisational set up in most of the constituencies, shortage of party fund to finance the election; low profile of candidates in terms of popularity and personality to compare with that of other parties; lack of popularity of the party; poor family conditions of the candidates; etc., are worth mentioning. Another important factor is that at the time of awarding party ticket no hard and fast rules were followed. Since the Samata Party is the outcome of the George Fernandes's faction who left the Janata Dal, most of the founder members of Samata Party in Manipur who came out of the Janata Dal, State Unit, if asked for ticket, awarded tickets irrespective of possessing winning prospects by the candidates. They were given party tickets without much considering essential criteria of the party.

The Indian Congress (S) made its electoral presence and came back with a lone seat this time out of the 13 candidates it put up. In the 1990 Assembly elections, the party secured 6 seats. However, in this election, the party suffered a

great setback by 5 seats. M. Thohrii in Mao (ST) reserved Assembly constituency, only could retain the seat. Even the party President R.K. Nokulsana was badly defeated. The main reason for a big loss in the polls is that those who had been elected under Congress (S) ticket in 1990 Assembly polls, changed their party affiliation in this election. For instance W. Nipamacha Singh in Wangoi constituency; Waikhom Jagor Singh in Heingang constituency S. Brajagopal Sharma in Thongju constituency contested the election as Congress-I nominee while C. DOUNGEL of Saikul (ST) reserved constituency and Holkhomang Haokip of Henglep (ST) reserved segment entered the election fray as MPP candidate. Only N. Ibomcha of Patsoi constituency retired from contesting the election again. Among them W. Nipamacha and C. DOUNGEL could return again. This change in party affiliation badly affected the poll prospects of the Congress (S), resulting in capturing only one seat.. The party president, R.K. Nokulsana,<sup>11</sup> in his opinion, the position of the Congress (S) was further endangered by the threat from the underground outfits; lack of leadership in the party; symbol dispute; shortage of fund; lack of personality of the candidates etc. Besides, the party could not organise proper campaign during the electioneering period. Moreover the party has no vast organisational set up across the state, still much more to be done in the hills.

For the first time in the political history of this front-line state of Manipur, the saffron brigade, the BJP could manage to open its first account in this February 1995 Assembly polls. The BJP candidate E. Kunjeshwar Singh IAS (retired) and a former Finance commissioner, was declared elected from the prestigious Yaiskul Assembly constituency, which had been a stronghold constituency of the Congress-I. For many terms, this Yaiskul constituency had been the constituency of the veteran Congress (I) leader and the former Chief Minister of Manipur R.K. Dorendro Singh. After denial of



party ticket by the Congress-I, Dorendro retired from contesting the election. The Congress-I nominated a weak candidate for this constituency. As a result BJP could capture the Yaiskul seat, thus becoming the only one candidate from the party to make its debut in the states politics out of 20 seats the party contested. Interestingly, the Yaiskul constituency which lies in the heart of Imphal is known for its Govindaji Temple being considered as the nerve centre of Manipur Hindus. Despite the neck to neck fight between the BJP and the MPP in this politically conscious constituency, the voters of Yaiskul could not be swept by the pro-MPP swing in the thick of the anti-Congress (I) wave in the valley. But finally the lotus blossoms in this constituency. It may not be, however, due to the glory of the Hidutva of the BJP in this constituency. Nor it is on party line too as the BJP was not a strong party in the state. But it is the outcome of the choice of the towering personality of the BJP candidate in the prevailing political situation in the state. The BJP entered the electoral battle for the first time in 1990 Assembly polls with 17 candidates in the election fray, but none of them returned.

Though the BJP has wrested one seat, the future of the party is very much lagging behind in the state. According to N. Ram Singh, ex-General Secretary BJP State Unit; there is no consideration for the party by the electors. People takes BJP as communal party. The BJP could not defend it properly and clarified the charge to the people. Other parties also attacked BJP as communal party. Beside there is weakness in the party's organisational set up. The work of the party is confined to some areas - almost nil in the hills areas. Mass organisation of the BJP is a must in order to improve its position. Further, low personality of the candidates as seen by the voters, shortage of party fund to finance the election, voters' unconsciousness etc., are the problems being faced by BJP.<sup>12</sup>

The National Peoples Party contested the state Assembly elections for the first time in 1990. The party put up 4 candidates and could return only one seat in Churachandpur (ST) reserved constituency. But in this 1995 Assembly polls, the party could improved its position *by* one seat. Out of the five candidates it fielded, the party wrested 2 seats, both in Churachandpur district. The sitting MLA V. Hangkhanlian in Churachandpur constituency returned again, and the other one from Singhat Assembly constituency. Though the party is mainly formed and organised by the Meiteis at Imphal, its organisational activities are mainly confined to Churachandpur area. The party President K. Brajamohan Dev Sharma said<sup>13</sup> the NPP has no strong organisation in the valley. So not even a single candidate was put up in any of the valley constituencies. NPP President was a teacher in Churachandpur for a long time. His party could secure two seat in Churachandpur area due to mainly personality of the candidates as well as long association of the Party President there with the Meitei and Tribal communities while he was in Churachandpur. Giving the reason for not getting more than two seats, he added the shortage of party fund; use of muscle power by rival parties; differences in opinions among the party leaders; are also responsible. He said the party could not put up large number of candidates in the election fray as most of the peoples do not like to become nominee of NPP being registered party and not popular like Congress and MPP.

The electoral performance of CPI in the political history of Manipur is not impressive. Since territorial council elections in 1957 till the sixth State Assembly elections in 1995, the party has not been able to capture more than at a range from one to six seats. After statehood, in two successive Assembly elections in 1972 and 1974, the party could maintain its hold over the two urban constituencies of

Sagolband and Uripok. However, in the subsequent elections, the support base of the CPI has been shifted to rural areas like Khundrakpam, Khangabok, Sugnu, Kakching, Hiyanglam, Wangjing Tentha, Kumbi, Lamlai, Lamsang. The CPI is still strong in these rural pockets and the party could capture seats from either of these constituencies alternately after every election. In the 1995 polls, the CPI also made its electoral presence and came back with 2 seats from the electoral battle. The party fielded 23 candidates and returned two candidates from Kakching and Kurnbi constituencies. But the party suffered by one seat. It secured 3 seats in the 1990 polls out of the 14 seats contested. The sitting MLA of Kumbi constituency N. Mangi Singh could retain his seat. Since Kakching constituency has been a stronghold of CPI, the veteran leader Ksh. Irabot Singh regained his seat which he lost in the previous elections. Among the long list of CPI losers, the prominent leader Dr. N. Nara Singh and Ph. Parijat Singh were included. The sitting MLA in Wangjing-Tentha segment Dr. M. Nara Singh was badly defeated by a Congress-I candidate. Though Lamlai constituency is known for communist stronghold till today from where Ph. Parijat Singh have been elected repeatedly. This time the sitting MLA Parijat could not stage a come back in the contest. He lost the seat to an MPP candidate. Explaining the reasons responsible for downward trend of CPI's electoral performance in the 1995 polls, the state secretary CPI, Manipur, Ph. Parijat Singh stated<sup>14</sup> that use of muscle power, money power and criminalisation of politics by the rival parties; employment of unfair means and misuse of government machinery by the party in power adversely affected the fair poll prospects of CPI. He considered most of the voters as purchasable commodities. Their standard is low and do not know what is "election" and "voting right." CPI is a party of the poor, peasants, workers while the other parties like Congress-I is a party of the rich. They can purchase votes. Owing to the existence of moneyed-voters, CPI cannot

give money to them, as the party pruned to fund shortage. He emphasised that despite the ups and downs and loss of seats in polls, the voting percentage of the party is increasing (The party secured 3.77 percent, of the total valid vote polled in 1990 elections while 5.50 percent in the 1995 polls - Researcher). On the whole no erosion occurred in CPI as was done in other parties. In other parties mass defection took place among the party sympathisers and supporters. Whenever the leader changed his party affiliation, his followers also do changed their side. While it is not so in CPI. Parijat said, the organisation of CPI is almost nil in the hills due to shortage of party funds, which is an absurd statement. Moreover, the existence of religious biasness among the hillsmen, he said, and their assumption of CPI as anti-Christian led to the absence of CPI's- organisational set up in the hills of Manipur. But he strongly mentioned that today a beginning has been made. CPI has started extending its influence in the hills. The election of Kim Gangte, a CPI candidate, in the Lok Sabha election in 1998 from the outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency, is a sign of improving the popularity of the CPI in the hills areas of Manipur.

In the politics of this state, the Independent played a very significant role particularly at the time of formation of the governments. As such we witnessed the presence of a large number of Independent candidates in each and every Assembly election in the state. However, after the imposition of the anti-defection law, the importance of Independent seemed declining election by election. In the first state Assembly elections in 1972, a total number of 123 Independent candidates were in the election fray and 19 got elected. In the 1974 mid term poll, it registered a total of 113 (three) Independent candidates and 7. returned in the contest. In the 1980 polls, it recorded 119 Independent candidates and 19 managed to capture the seats. Out of 175 Independent candidates, in the 1984 elections, it wrested 21 seats. However,, it registered a marked decline from the 1990 Assembly polls in the

state. In this election, none of them could capture even a single seat. There were 36 Independent candidates in the electoral battle. However, the Independents made their electoral presence again in the 1995 Assembly polls. Out of a total of 66 candidates, the Independent captured three seats in the constituencies of Naoriya Pakhanglakpa; Khurai and Tamei. Though the winning percentage of the Independent had been negligible their presence in the election cannot be underwritten. Their importance had always been on the increases and sometimes they have even proved crucial during the formation of the governments. In the contest of the sharp intra-party bickering in almost all the major political parties, the Independent influence the outcome of the polls and play a role in the formation of government in case of ahung Assembly.<sup>15</sup>

With the gradual polarisation of political forces in the state over the years, the percentage of votes to Independent candidates had declined in successive Assembly elections in Manipur. But this sharp decline in the share of votes, had not deterred Independents including rebels from major political parties. Their number kept either soaring or lowering election after election. They continued to make their presence felt at the hustings and in the Assembly.

Other smaller local parties such as KNA, SJP, MHPC and the two national parties - CPI(M) and Janata Party - badly suffered in the poll without returning even a single seat.

KNA President Jainson Haokip said KNA is the only regional political party for the Kukis. The party stands for Kuki community at large and for their progress and prosperity.” The party is mainly confined in Churachandpur areas. Since the party is meant for Kukis, its organisational activities are also

concentrated in Kuki - dominated Churachandpur side, it never extended its influence and organisation to the valley areas. So even a single candidate was nominated in the valley constituencies. After statehood, so far as the available record is concerned, the party has entered the electoral battle for four times. In 1974 - mid-term polls, the party fielded 6 candidates for the first time, and it won 2 seats - one in Saitu (ST) reserved Assembly constituency in Senapati district and the other one is in Churachandpur district. It secured one seat out of four contested seats in 1984 Assembly elections. The party put up 7 candidates in the 1990 Assembly elections and wrested 2 seats. However, the KNA party, though stands for Kuki community, could not return even a single seat in the 1995 Assembly polls. All the six candidates defeated badly. Even the party President Jainson Haokip suffered a great loss. The party failed to stand as a strong force and a single political unit of the Kuki tribes. The net result was the electoral failure of the party.

The responsible factors might be due to the two sitting MLAs of KNA - T.N. Haokip and Thangkhanlal - who changed their party affiliation in the 1995 polls, the former under MPP ticket while the later as nominee of the Congress-I contesting the election. Party President Jainson Haokip state that the KNA party got two ministers in the coalition Ministry led by R,K. Ranbir Singh, after the 1990 Assembly polls. These two KNA ministers did not think of the people. They stood against the interest and wishes of the people. They became self-interested ones/ministers. So people lost confidence in KNA party and opposed it The President added, due to communal tension in the hills and interference by underground outfits in the hills mainly the Kuki outfits, party position of the KNA was also badly affected. He said these Kuki outfits wanted money. But KNA has

no money to console them. Ultimately the Kuki outfits supported those parties/candidates having money. Corresponding to this point is the financial problems faced by the KNA candidates. Before the emergence of Kuki insurgents, the KNA party got funds from the people. But after their emergence, the KNA party did not get fund from the people. So lack of money, party fund meant he said, failure to face the rival candidates in terms of money power which was very important in the election. Another factor that, adversely affected the poll prospects of the KNA is, according to him, the arrival of Kuki National Army (KNA) from Burma. The innocent people/voters considered KNA party as similar to Kuki National Army in terms of abbreviation. It badly affected the image of the KNA party that led to the loss of votes to the party.<sup>16</sup>

The Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya); which has two groups, entered the electoral contest, for the first time in 1995 Assembly elections by fielding altogether 6 candidates. M. Jane group (who refused to have two group/factions in SJP and considered/claimed his group as the only SJP in the state) put up 5 candidates while W. Tomcha group nominated only one in Thangmeiband constituency. But none of the candidates of both the factions could return from the electoral fight. Sh. Gourachandra Sharma, candidate of W. Tomcha group, said the main reason for the failure of SJP to make its electoral debut is organisational weakness and dual functioning of the party in the state unit. President of the other group, M. Jane Singh said “The party was a young one, new in the state on the eve of the 1995 elections. The organisational set-up of the party was also not vast. Though the party participated in the election fray for the first time and could not secure even a lone seat, the results were quite satisfactory in terms of percentage of votes polled in some of the constituencies like Heingang and Keirao. It is

apparently indicated that socialist values are very much in the minds of the general populace though no candidate was elected. He added shortage of party fund; use of money power and muscle power by rival parties/candidates; and lack of socialist ideas and values to the voters may also be counted for the defeat of the SJP in the election.<sup>17</sup>

Like the KNA, the MHPC is also the party of the hills which is mainly concentrated in the Ukhrul district. Party President Zimik Weapon said MHPC means for hills only. It is to save the interest of the hill peoples. The party had entered the electoral battle twice. In 1990 Assembly polls, for the first time, the party fielded 7 candidates. But the party could not secure even a single seat. In the 1995 Assembly elections also its lone candidate in Chingai (ST) reserved Assembly segment was badly defeated by a Congress-I candidate. There is nothing to be mentioned more about the electoral performance of the MHPC. The party is now on the verge of withering away. The future of the party is still gloomy. However, Zimik Weapon, party President and the only candidate in the 1995 polls said “The party could not return from the race of election but there was great moral victory.”<sup>18</sup> He lodged an election petition to the Gauhati High Court, Imphal Bench, against his rival Congress-I candidate Dr. M. Horam demanding repoll. But it is still keeping on pending.

There is little to be counted regarding the electoral performance of CPI(M). The party had contested the elections five times but in all, it could capture only one seat in 1980 Assembly polis, out of two seats it contested. People hardly wished to contest under CPI (M) ticket. So, the party put up candidates nominally for every contest. When the party contested polls for the first time in the Territorial Assembly elections in 1967 after Manipur became a Union Territory, it fielded 4



candidates; 2 candidates in 1980; ,2 in 1984; one in 1990 and 2 nominees in 1995 Assembly elections. In this 1995 election also the party suffered a great loss without returning even a single seat. According to Secretary, CPI(M) Manipur State Committee, M. Shamu Singh, Secretariat Members N. Modhusudon Singh and Y. Ratan Singh, the organisational weakness and low personality of the CPI(M) candidates accounted for bad performance in the polls. They said since the party was in its formative stage, voters did not take CPI(M) as an important party.<sup>19</sup>

The position of the once powerful Janata Party is fast declining. It could not made its electoral presence in this 1995 Assembly elections. When the party contested the 1980 Assembly polls for the first time, it put up 53 candidates and won 10 seats. The party fielded 4 candidates in the 1995 polls but could not stage a come back from the electoral battle. All the candidates were defeated badly, L. Iboyaima Singh, party candidate and General Secretary of Janata Party narrated the reasons for the failure of his party in the polls. He stated that when the Janata Party came to power at the centre as an alternative to the Congress and became a strong force in the country, most of the existing/present day MLAs, leaders and candidates were in Janata Party. Some of them were also elected on Janata Party tickets in the subsequent Assembly polls. The routing and breakdown of Janata Party and division in the party at the centre brought its impact on the politics of Manipur too. Following the changes taking place at the centre after the 1980 Lok Sabha polls, leaders and MLAs of Janata Party in Manipur suddenly became opportunists, left the party and joined either Congress or other parties in the following years. It brought downfall of Janata party in Manipur. He added, lack of democratic awareness among the voters, fund shortage of the Janata Party to

finance the election and unsound financial conditions of the party candidates also affected the poll prospects of Janata Party.' The strengthening of the separatist movements in Manipur spearheaded by students community; underground outfits etc.; weakened democratic movements in the state. As a result, the Janata Party was unable to organise their programmes effectively against the restrictions imposed/placed by the activists of the separatist movements.<sup>20</sup>

Indecisive though the verdict of the 12.69 lakh voters was, their message is crystal clear. From the results, it seemed that, people were not going to tolerate floor-crossing and marriage of conveniences in future. During the last five year term, all the MLAs of all hues and shades changed their side at one stage or the other. After the 1990 Assembly polls, the first ministry headed by MPP under the Chief Ministership of R.K. Ranbir Singh, comprised MPP, Janata Dal, CPI, KNA, NPP and Congress (S). The next ministry was followed by a Congress-I-led government of R.K. Dorendro made up of Congress-I, MPP, Janata Dal, Congress (S); KNA; and NPP. Finally another Congress-I-led ministry of Rishang Kleishing was inducted. Keishing ministry was supported by Janata Dal, Congress (S), KNA and NPP. And these MLAs who changed their colour quicker than a Chameleon had to pay heavily for dishonouring the mandate of the people. Even the Naga voters rejected their leaders who hoped floor as many times as they wished. To cite an example - B.D. Behring Anal, L.S. John etc., who earlier got elected on JD tickets fought the election this time as Congress(I) candidates. The result is that voters of Chandel and Kangpokpi Assembly constituencies voted them out. The same is the case in the valley. For instance, W. Jagor Singh and S. Brajagopal Sharma, sitting MLAs of Congress (S) were also rejected when they contested the election on Congress-I ticket. In brief, out of a total of 51 sitting MLAs in the election fray, only 17 members managed to retain their respective seats.<sup>21</sup>

It has been a fact indeed that most, of the contesting candidates in all the successive Assembly elections in the State were not unfortunately upto the expectations of the people. Only a few of them deserve to be the representative of the people. So, in the eyes of the electorates, they are equally good and equally bad so far as their election promises, like developmental programmes; abolition of corruption etc.; were concerned. People felt that all the parties were at par. So, in certain circumstances, voters caste their votes in favour of the deserving candidates irrespective of party affiliations.

Manipur, being a constituent part of our Indian system, party politics does not get deep-rooted here as in USA and England. The successive election results shows that electors do not have confidence in a particular party. The people of Manipur have failed to give their mandate to a particular party since the last many elections in the state. Voters cast their votes on the line of candidates but not on the party lines in many cases. For instance, to support this point, even Independent candidates won the seats. Since the territorial council elections in 1957 till the 1995 Assembly polls in the state, no party has got absolute majority/single majority in the elections, in order to enable to form a unilateral government, Non-Congress parties also had come to power on the anti-Congress waves. Even MPP also had been in power heading the ministry for more than twice on the non-Congress slogans. But voters do not keep confidence even in MPP also. But from the past experience, voters also do not like to hand over their mandate to Congress(I) only.

Another aspect of the election is that though the female voters had the numerical strength to male voters, not even a single woman candidate could return in the elections. The same trend has been since the First State Assembly elections held in 1972. Even Mrs. K. Apabi Devi of Oinam Assembly constituency who became the first woman minister in Manipur, also fell down in the electoral battle.

The election presents a clear cut message from the electorates. The electors do not like the old leaders and seasoned politicians as their representative throughout thereby sending new bloods as their representatives. A lot of young and new faces were ejected in this round of elections. The election witnessed the entry of as many as 28 new faces, this being a very important aspect of the 1995 elections. They include two prominent University Professors of the state. They found their way into the Assembly. Professor Gangmumei Kamei, founder and President of the newly formed Federal party of Manipur, whose political and academic pursuits have gone hand in hand won the Nungba seat by defeating the sitting MLA and Minister of Congress-I government. And Professor M. Horam, the front-ranking writer and Tangkhul Naga intellectual, and whose history of the Naga movement drew rare reviews won the Chingai seat as a candidate of the Congress-I. Another important new comer to the Assembly was E. Kunjeshwar Singh, a former IAS officer. Incidentally he has been the only BJP candidate to have been elected to the Assembly. Manipur voters now appear to prefer the new ones when the choice is fairly available to them. However, in some constituencies, politically dormant leader like Dr. L. Chandramani Singh of Congress-I successfully made a comeback. Chandramani won the Patsoi seat on a Congress-I ticket.

Another aspect of the poll result was that the constituencies through which the NH-39 and NH-53 pass have shown anti-Congress wave. Out of the eight districts, not a single seat was captured by Congress party in the two districts of Senapati and Tamenglong, where the two national highways run. However, despite the anti-Congress wave, the Tangkhuls paid their loyalty to Congress-I. All the three seats, in Tangkhul Naga dominated Ukhrul district\* were bagged by Congress-I. Only the Ukhrul district elected their representatives from the Congress-I. The Kuki-dominated

areas voted for either MPP mainly or other parties. In Churachandpur district, Kuki-dominated area, except one seat secured by Congress-I, the rest five representatives went to non-Congress parties. However in the valley, contrary to one's expectations, Congress-I did extremely well, particularly in the Imphal district. Before the election, people talked about having anti-Congress wave particularly in the valley. But after the final results, the Congress-I could secure 16 seats from the 3 valley districts. But the Congress-I secured less seats in the hills and more seats in the valley. It seemed that the anti-Rishang and the South Nagaland wave as well as the impact of UNIC-Congress Agreement of August 1972, hardly swayed the people as they sounded before the polls. These issues hardly affected the poll prospects of the party. Hence the party could still command nearly 30 percent of total valley voters and around 28 percent of states total voters. However, the Congress-I party's popular vote base, on the other hand, slipped down to 28.76 percent from the 32.86 percent it had in the 1990 election taking the total votes its candidates could poll.<sup>22</sup> In fact, in both the valley and the hills, the Congress-I secured less votes and seats compared to 1990 polls. While the powerful regional political party, the MPP, increased its votes and seat in both the hills and valley. Another trend recently coming up is that elections are won by the energetic educated candidates. This is because of the fact that the personality of the contesting candidates has become a question as the electors became very much conscious of their voting rights - electing the right person as their representatives.

It may be recalled that the CPI, CPI(M) and Janata Dal had pre-poll electoral understanding and seat adjustment to some extent. Though the three parties could have a joint understanding thereby fielding joint/common candidates in some of the Assembly constituencies, they were not able to match either the Congress-I party or the MPP. Nor they could secure majority in the election.

Besides most opposition parties fielded less number of candidates than the number of seats available for contest and thereby presenting the prospects of a coalition ministry in the state.

Regional and district-wise variations of voting pattern due to geo-political cultural differences has been noticed in this 1995 elections. This is further strengthened by the absence of party organisations either in the valley or the hills. For instance, the Congress-I, MPP and JD to some extent, has their organisational set up in both the hills and the valley. While the NPP, KNA and MHPC concentrated their activities in the hills.

One very important aspect of the 1995 elections which is clear from the voting pattern is that people wanted a change. Electorates of this strife-torn state voted for a change. It seemed that voters desired for a change and a new political platform where there was no space for corruption, power politics, floor-crossing, nepotism, unethical and immoral politics. Moreover, though the pattern of voting shows the unstable mind of the voters as proved by the elections results, it indicated that the people of Manipur wanted something new to be experienced. In many Assembly constituencies, most of the sitting MLAs were knocked out, thereby more new faces were in the scene. It proved that electors have no trust to such leaders. Though the electorate voted for a change, unfortunately it resulted in another five years of political instability and chaos in the state as usual.

### **Formation of Government**

After the counting had been over, no party secured a workable majority. As such the state of Manipur was heading for another five years of political uncertainty with the final polls results showing a hung Assembly. However the Congress-I and the

MPP came neck to neck being the two strong contenders for power. But the Congress-I emerged as the single largest party in the poll with 21 seats in their hands out of the total of 59 contested seats, running short of a minimum of 11 ML As to form the unilateral government, followed closely by 18 seats of the MPP. The congress-I was still a force to reckon with even after the massive anti-Congress-I wave in the thick of the electoral process. The State Janata Dal bagged the third party position in the poll retaining 7 seats. The newly formed Federal Party of Manipur, CPI, SP and NPP could return 2 seats each. While the Independents captured 3 seats and the BJP opened its account for the first time with one seat. And the Congress (S) won only one seat. The following table show the final tally of the sixth Assembly elections in Manipur.

Table 7.4  
Party wise Position 1995 Elections

Party	Seats
INC	21
MPP	18
JD	7
CPI	2
FPM	2
SP	2
NPP	2
IC(S) BJP	1 1
Independents countermanded	3
Total Seats	60

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur

Things became more tense, uncertain and unpredictable after the announcement of the poll results as the Congress-I and the Manipur Peoples Party

acted swiftly the task of the formation of a new government in the state. In a press release on 23 February, the MPCC(I) President Koijam Radhabinod appreciated the people of Manipur for voting the party with confidence to emerge as the single largest party. He said that the Congress-I has made all out efforts to form and provide a stable government in the state with the alliance of other like minded MLAs of to other political parties. And priority would be given to development programmes of the state after the party forms a new government. On the other side, the MPP president Y. Yaima Singh (MP Lok Sabha) expressed that his party would form a government but without the help of the Congress-I. he said, “The MPP wants to form a Legislative Front with parties other than the Congress-I” and efforts were on to hold a meeting with the leaders of the parties.

As the history of Assembly elections and formation of successive governments in Manipur indicated to us, other parties were of little importance to be discussed with in this regard as they were in most cases running after either the MPP or the Congress for power share except during the Janata Period. Soon the MPP speeded up the election of its new legislature Party leader and got prepared the ground for a coalition government with other parties other than the Congress-I. On 23 February, the day on which the counting of ballot papers ended, R.K. Ranbir Singh was unanimously elected leader for the MPP legislature Party.

In the meantime, the MPP had already consolidated the support of other seven political parties to form a non-Congress-I government in the state. On 22 February, the President of MPP, Y. Yaima Singh convened a meeting of the Presidents of seven political parties at the residence of W. Kulabidhu Singh (MP Rajya Sabha and JD President) to discuss the latest political scenario in Manipur. The seven parties were MPP, JD, SP, CPI, NPP, FPM and Congress (S). Two of the three Independent MLAs were also present at the Meeting.<sup>1</sup> In the meeting, the seven parties unanimously



agreed to go together and resolved to form an United Legislature Party without the Congress-I and the BJP. The seven party United Legislature Front (ULF) came into force from 23 February. The same day, acting swiftly before the Congress-I staked its claim, the MPP led ULF stalled the Congress-I in staking its claim to form the new popular government, under the leadership of R.K. Ranbir Singh by submitting the list of 32 ML As supporting him to the state Governor O.N. Srivastava.

Ms Jaya Jaitley, General Secretary and Dr. Shambhu Shrivastava, national campaign co-ordinator of Samata Party informed the state Governor O.N. Srivastava of the decision of SP Manipur to support the MPP-led United Legislature Front (ULF) of seven opposition parties to form a popular government in the state in order to keep Congress-I out of power. The Janata Dal State Unit also in its meeting endorsed the steps taken by its Party president W. Kullabidhu Singh to stake claim to form a ULF Government of seven parties other than Congress-I and the BJP. Janata Dal, Manipur said it would support the MPP-led ULF while forming a new government. NPP also had already taken a stand to support the ULF. On the other side, Rishang Keishing was chosen as the new Congress Legislature Party (I) leader on 23 February at the State Guest House, Imphal in the presence of two Congress-I observers M.M. Jacob and Assam Chief Minister Hiteshwar Saikia. The same day on 23 February, the MPCC(I) President Radhabinod Koijam also met the State Governor O.N. Srivastava and staked its claim to form the new ministry by his party. A.K, Langam (Independent) and his supporters announced as supporting Rishang led Congress-I ministry in the state.

Soon the Congress-I and ULF experienced strong confrontation over the formation of a new government by espousing supporters. There was tough fight between the Congress-I and the ULF as the political drama over the formation of a

new coalition government was in full swing. As a part of the tradition of the formation of government in Manipur, the signature campaign along with the political campaign was going on in full swing with their best available resources. The horse-trading was also in full swing with the arrival of the two Congress-I central observers Assam Chief Minister Hiteshwar Saikia and former union Minister of state for Home M.M. Jacob. But for a long time both the camps could not get simple majority of 31 MLAs, though they claimed of having majority support.

However, soon the handicapped Congress-I was able to take in some of the smaller party MLAs by offering huge “incentive” and the party could muster its strength against the ULF efforts. Though the 7 parties MPP, JD, SP, CPI, Congress (S), NPP and FPM have already united together into forming ULF, however, the MLAs of SP, NPP, FPM and one Congress (S) were with the Congress-I camp. When the Poknapham (Local Daily) reporters went to the Rishang Keishing camp to collect the ongoing informations/developments, they found there in the Rishang camp - T. Goujadou of NPP, M. Thohri of Congress (S); Samuel and Jonathan of Samata Party; Gangmumei Kabui and Thoiba of FPM. Even the Independents were also with the Congress-I. But the lone MLA of BJP was still neutral on both sides. The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha BJP said “BJP will do valuable politics.” The propaganda against BJP by other parties for being or not being a partner of the Congress-I or the ULF camp, as having no relation with BJP. Rishang claimed of having the support of 31 MLAs Congress-I 21; Congress (S) 1; NPP2; SP2; FPM 2; Independents 3 and added some MLAs from JD to be defected shortly. On the ULF side, though 7 parties have united together, adding together MLAs of MPP 18; JD7; CPI 2 and one Independent, not more than 28 MLAs, though according to

some sources it said that the ULF is supported by 32 MLAs - MPP 18; CPI 2; JD 7; NPP 2; Congress (S) 1 and 2 Independents.

However after three days of hectic political activities, although a loose conglomerate of seven party United Legislature Front (ULF) staked its claim to form the next ministry minority claiming majority support, the State Governor invited the minority Congress-I of Keishing to lead the government on the ground of being the single largest party; without counting the heads of the MLAs in the Rishang camp supporting him. On, 25 February 1995 in the afternoon at 1.17 p.m. a coalition government led by minority Congress-I and headed by Rishang Keishing was inducted in Manipur with full centre's blessing ending the political uncertainty and speculations generated by the poll results that give no party an absolute majority. Rishang Keishing was sworn in as the Chief Minister for the fourth time in the Imphal Raj Bhavan along with his two Congress-I colleagues of the three member council of Ministers, the MPCC(I) president Radhabinod Kojam and former Education and works Minister Th. Devendra Singh as Cabinet Ministers. On 24 February Chief Minister Rishang Keishing submitted his resignation along with his council of Ministers to the Governor but continued his office as caretaker till alternative arrangements were made as advised by the Governor. The Governor dissolved the previous state Assembly with immediate effect. The Assembly Secretariat issued a notification to this effect on 25 February. The State Governor, O.N. Srivastava in a solemn function administered the oath of office and secrecy to the three member Rishang ministry in front of the two central observers (Saikia and Jacob); and Meijinlung Kamson (MP Lok Sabha). Radhibinod Kojam who had lost in the CLP leadership contest, was made the Deputy Chief Minister with the intervention of the Union Minister of Internal Security Rajesh Pilot after a crisis in the party following the confrontation between the Chief

Minister Rishang Keishing and Radhabinod over the post itself. The new ministry of Rishang Keishing. had to have the trial of strength on the floor of the House within one month as the Governor had given 30 days time to Keishing to prove its majority on the Assembly floor.

According to reliable sources, when the MPP led ULF leaders called on the Governor to stake their claim to form the Government by submitting a letter claiming the majority support of the MLAs in the House, the Governor reportedly asked them to furnish the names and signatures of the MLAs supporting the front, by 6 p.m. of 24 February. Moreover, the Governor informed the ULF leaders that they could come anytime with the names. But at the same time, he insisted that he should not be blamed for a partial approach if in the meantime he decided otherwise, as he could not allow indefinite time to ULF to substantiate their claim. But could not produce the signature and tried to produce their MLAs on 25 February. When the MPP President Y. Yaima Singh met the Governor on 24 February evening, the Governor told the ULF leader R.K. Ranbir Singh that he would invite Congress-I first. In case the party fails to show the number on 25 February the ULF also be given a chance to form the government. Even then ULF leaders met the Governor again at 10.15 a.m. just 3 hours before the swearing in ceremony of the newly installed Rishang Ministry to bring all the required MLAs for physical appearance before the Governor, Srivastava regretted them that he had already consented to Rashang.<sup>24</sup> The Governor said he had received a claim of support, of 35 MLAs from the MPP President Y. .Yaima, but when the latter was asked to substantiate the claim, the newly formed ULF could produce only 27 MLAs (MPP 18, JD 7, and CPI ).<sup>25</sup>

After the swearing in ceremony, Keishing told reporters that he would prove the majority of his ministry on the floor of the state Assembly within one month as advised by the Governor. Keishing said, "It is no point now to disclose the strength of

my ministry. I will prove it within the stipulated time.” But he said at present, he had an effective strength of 31 in the 60 member House (of which the present effective strength was 59 due to countermanding of Lamsang Assembly Constituency). Apart from the existing 21 Congress-I MLAs, the other MLAs from other parties who had supported Keishing were two each from the FPM; SP; NPP, one Congress-S and three Independents. Keishing said he had already obtained their support in writing and forwarded them to the Governor. Keishing said his ministry was likely to expand before 10 March, 1995. Rishang said the first priority and immediate task of his government would be the restoration of peace and normalcy, communal harmony, containing the rising militancy and to solve the ongoing insurgency problem in Manipur with greater emphasis on the rapid developmental programmes from time to time by taking funds either from the Centre or other Financial Agencies, for the strife-torn state. In his statement, Rishang affirmed that his party does not support any homeland demand. Rishang further added that his government would fight those who are playing communal politics in the state saying that he is totally committed to and would stand for the territorial integrity of Manipur. He was fully confident of providing a stable government in the state and claimed that his ministry would last the full five years term. In a press release Rishang said to bring developmental programmes by controlling insurgency problems in the state, no secessionist idea in Manipur and communal politics to be challenged.

Just after the swearing in ceremony, the Governor however, told reporters that he was very sensible and only following the convention. The Governor said his decision to invite Rishang Keishing to form the new ministry was strictly based on the convention and recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission. He is not sided with any party, rather he took the decision after he seriously thought for a stable government in the state. “Whatever I have done is as per the convention and

I always want a stable government” he said. Justifying his decision, O. N. Srivastava said he had invited Keishing to form the ministry since his party Congress(I) had emerged as the single largest party in the hung Assembly by winning 21 seats out of the 59 seats it contested.<sup>26</sup> (Total strength of the Assembly is 60 members. However, elections to the Lamsang Assembly constituency was countermanded following the killing of one MPP candidate).

According to Sarkaria Commission if an alliance claiming majority support had not been formed prior to the election, then in preference to it the largest single party should be given first chance for forming the government. So the action of the Governor to invite the leader of the single largest Congress (I) party was in consistent with the process suggested by the Sarkaria Commission. The seven party alliance of ULF led by the MPP was put together only after the elections.<sup>27</sup> Soon after the installation of Rishang Ministry, the Governor became the centre of attraction after he denied the ULF to form the next ministry. While the Congress leaders at the centre including AICC General Secretary in-charge of the North-East state, Shinde are strongly defending the decisions of the Manipur Governor O.N. Srivastava to invite the single largest party to form the ministry in the state, all the opposition parties were once again up in arms against this decision as they feel the act would only benefit the Congress Party to “go ahead with its same dirty game of horse trading.”<sup>28</sup> The political circle in Imphal soon became very tense when the leaders of the MPP-led opposition parties accused and charged the State Governor for siding with Congress-I as a Congress-I agent.

Notwithstanding, the opposition parties charged the State Governor with “undemocratic manoeuvre” to suit the Congress design. The same day evening of the induction of the Rishang Ministry, in a press Conference, the ULF leader R.K.

Ranbir Singh said the installation of Rishang Ministry is against the democratic norms of the country as it was based on the notion of inviting to form the government to the single largest party which could be either void or avoided. While in the ULF camp (in the residence of the newly elected W. Basantakumar Singh of JD) its leader R.K. Ranbir said the reporters that the Governor as “Congress (I) Agent.” Ranbir added, before the constitution of the sixth Assembly, to invite the Congress (I) by the Governor to form the government (though Congress (I) became single largest party as per norms) is to violate the parliamentary tradition, mockery of democracy and against the opinion of the people. The ULF spokesman O. Jpy condemned the Governor’s action and added that the Congress -I was trying to buy the mandate of the people of Manipur. Joy told the pressmen that the mandate given by the people was against Congress (I) and MLAs going against the mandate would mean betrayal.<sup>29</sup>

CPI(M) expressed as unfortunate the imposition of the Congress (I) government at the centre to have a Rishang-led Congress (I) minority government in Manipur without knowing the mandate of the people. It said also as unfortunate when some MLAs who- have won the election on anti-Congress campaign have changed their stand due to power hunger and money by deceiving people. The party’s state secretariat stated, the new ministry, of minority Congress (I) was against the mandate of the people. The party condemned other parties who are trying to go hand in hand with Congress (I) by stating that they are betraying the peoples mandate of anti-Congress (I). The party condemned the Congress (I) for employing horse-trading with large sum of money and added that the new Rishang government is anti-people.<sup>30</sup>

BJP charged that Governor colluded. with Keishing to form anti -people government. BJP President M. Bhorot Singh and the newly elected BJP MLA Shri E.

Kunjeshwar Singh condemned the installation of minority Congress (I) ministry led by Rishang inducted on 25 February. In a joint press statement, they said that installation of minority Congress (I) ministry by the State Governor is undemocratic and alleged the Governor for colluding with Congress (I). The newly elected MLAs of the Assembly were not invited the Governor at the time of induction of Rishang Ministry. BJP Manipur Pradesh, condemned the formation of government by Congress (I) forcibly without inviting the newly elected MLAs as well as the denial of the ULF claim to form the government by showing the physical strength. BJP felt it as an indication of the evil designs of both the Governor and the Congress (I), and did not believe that the new government would do anything good for the welfare of the state. The BJP also condemned the giving of 30 days time to Rishang to prove the strength of his ministry, as too long. E. Kunjeshwar, the newly elected MLA (BJP) said Governor tried to .damage democracy as he invited minority Congress (I) to form the government. He was not invited for the swearing in ceremony and criticised the action of the Governor as trying to forcibly form the government by the Congress(I).

K.L. Sharma of BJP termed the decision of the Governor as an act to please the Congress Party. Demanding that there should be a clear guideline for the Governor to deal with the situation like in Manipur, the BJP spokesman observed that the Congress Party would be in trouble if it tried to defend the said decision by saying that the Governor had only followed the precedents, as the people knew it very well that the same party on numerous occasions had shown 'Disrespect to the constitution and misused the constitutional provisions and overlooked precedents for its own survival.' To substantiate his claim Sharma pointed out that even after being the single largest party, the.BJP was not invited to form the government in Uttar Pradesh in 1993. He warned that if tilings went on like this, the high office of the Governor would very soon lose its credibility. The people must protest against



this kind of misuse of power.<sup>31</sup> A visibly annoyed Jaya Jaitley, the spokesman of the newly formed Samata Party, which has two MLAs in the present Manipur Assembly, alleged that apparently Shrivastava decided to allow the Congress party to form the government long before the election results were declared. In a statement signed by Samata party National Campaign Coordinator Dr. Shambhu Sirvastava and General Secretary Jaya Jaitley, charged the Governor for allowing a minority Congress (I) government against the people's opinion by giving to the Congress the advantage of MLA business. It said the party supported ULF for a government without corruption and not against the people. The veteran CPI leader Farroqui remarked that the Governor was acting as an agent of the Congress(I) Party and at the same time lowering the dignity and integrity of the high office of the Governor. He further felt that the Governor was in a desperate hurry to install a Congress Government.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile serious charges also were being levelled against the ruling party. Samata Party's All India General Secretary charged the ruling Congress (I) for trying to intimidate their two MLAs who were now untraceable since 24 February evening. In a Press Conference on 25 February at Imphal, National Campaign Coordinator of the party Dr. Shambhu Srivastava said that the two MLAs have been threatened by undergrounds in league with Rishang. The party is not happy with the development and said that if the two Samata Party MLAs joined the Congress (I) government, they would be suspended from the party. The two central party leaders met the Governor on 25 February morning and expressed their decision to support ULF. However, the Governor told them that their MLAs had given their signatures for Rishang. Dr. Shambhu added that Samata party would rather not have them than to join Congress (I). The leaders demanded the Governor

to allow the free movement of MLAs before allowing a ministry to go ahead. Charging the Congress (I) both Shambhu and Jaitley said that Congress-(I) has hijacked the mandate of the people. They also added that the present mandate of the people is an anti-Congress mandate. “We are not part of the suitcase family, said Jaya Jaitley.”<sup>33</sup>

According to Jaya Jaitley, after failing to win over the two Samata Party MLAs to their fold, the Congress (I) party managers were openly encouraging an ‘ethnic divide.’ She said that feelers were already sent by the Congress to the two Naga MLAs of her party, not to join hands either with Meiteis or Kukis, describing it as a dangerous trend. She remarked that the people of Manipur would thwart the attempt of creating an ethnic divide as they did in the last Assembly election. Informing that there was no change in her party’s anti-Congress stand, she claimed to be in possession of the letters of the two party MLAs wherein they had clearly stated that they would not support the Congress. She further informed that the party would not hesitate to expel the two MLAs from the party if they disobey the party decision.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand the Congress leaders were of the opinion that there is nothing wrong in inviting the single largest party to form the government. They pointed out that in Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh Yadav was invited to form the ministry as Samajwadi party and Bahujan Samaj Party formed an alliance long before the election, thus the combined alliance was taken as a single party. In the case of Manipur, these leaders felt that a case could be made of “Constitution Violation” if the Governor decided to call the ULF.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly if one decides to go by the history he will find that barring 1984, when the Congress won 30 seats, since 1972, whenever the Congress party managed to rule the state, they did either by engineering defections in smaller parties or by the help of strong backing from the centre both at political and administrative level.

The general feeling was that without the great favour of the Governor, the Congress-I would have not come back to power this time on 25 February 1995. If there was popular head-counting of the MLAs supporting the two camps, the true perspective of the political scenario could have been projected to the people of Manipur without any bias opinion by the centre. Though Rishang formed the government with the help of his party's Central Observers, still the tug of war between the Congress-I and ULF was continuing, with their camps; every camp claiming to have more numbers of MLAs. Both sides were still short of MLAs. The so-called horse-trading continued for a longer period as the Governor had given Rishang 30 days chance to prove his majority in the House. The MLAs of insignificant political parties like FPM, NPP, SP and the three Independents became the bone of contention in the acute power struggle. The newly formed 7 parties alliance the ULF remained without the needed number to form the government as the MLAs of some smaller parties have rushed in the Congress-I camp. The Congress-I was offering a large amount of money to the defectors. The rate of an MLA has reportedly gone up to at least 40 lakh rupee plus a ministerial birth and primary membership to Congress-I. Meanwhile, ULF leader R.K. Ranbir Singh was hopeful of defeating Congress-I on the floor of the House. He charged the Congress-I for hijacking democracy and trying to buy the peoples mandate. He said "The mandate given by our people was anti-Congress and those MLAs who were elected by being anti-Congress should not join Congress. If the MLAs joined Congress-I, then they were betraying people's mandate." However, as advised by the state Governor, the Congress-I led coalition government of Rishang Keishing could prove the majority strength of his ministry on the floor of the Assembly House on the night of 25 March 1995 by voice-vote. His ministry was supported by altogether 35 MLAs. They included 21 Congress MLAs; 2 FPM; 2 SP; 2NPP; 1 Congress (S); 3 Independents and 4 from JD (Progressive) faction. The 4 MLAs of JD progressive faction were W.

Basantakumar; M. Babu; S. Lorho, and Hangkhanpao. With that the uncertainty that loomed over the Rishang Ministry for one month long ended. Thus the Congress-I could form the government by getting support of some other smaller parties.

But given the bizarre political happenings during the last five years how long the ministry would last was as good as anybody's guess. During the just concluded fifth term the state had at least three coalition ministries all of which turned out to be a fiasco. Throughout the term, toppling games had thrown the state into a turmoil bringing all developmental works to a grinding halt. Insurgents belonging to different outfits struck back with a vengeance and the Kuki-Naga Conflict erupted into a full-blown civil war. If the past experience were any guide and the general expectation was concerned -R.K. Ranbir Singh, an old master in horse-trading and leader of MPP legislature, would not remain a silent spectator. He would spare no effort to dislodge KLeishing ministry. It would not take long to begin the toppling game from the unexpected quarter of the political arena at any moment. But it remained to be seen how the Naga leader tackled the issues after successfully proved the majority of his ministry on the floor of the House. Would he manage to survive the full term of the House ? Time would only provide the answer.

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## **CHAPTER – VIII**

*Voting Behaviour/Pattern in the Constituencies  
of two Districts : Imphal and Ukhrul*

## **CHAPTER-VIII**

### **Voting Behaviour/Pattern in the Constituencies of Two Districts Imphal and Ukhrul**

“Voting is a means of aggregating individual preferences into collective decisions. The study of electoral behaviour may be viewed as concerned more narrowly with the formation and expression of individual preferences.”<sup>1</sup> As such, the voting behaviour refers to the choice exercised by a voter at the time of election in deciding to cast his/her vote for a certain party or candidate or symbol which is known as “Voting preferences.” It is the behaviour of a voter which indicates, signifies and also expresses his/her preferences, choices, opinions, wishes, will and alternatives to parties, and candidates in respect of various questions and issues such as party ideology, programmes, affiliations and loyalty, local and national issues, etc., during the time of an elections. For each and every State Assembly election, the patterns of voting behaviour of the electorates do not always remains the same. As the political consciousness and socio-economic background of the voters change, so the voting behaviour of the voters too. The behaviour of the voters is subject to condition by the state of the economy at the time of the election; political alignment; competitiveness of the contesting parties; extent of mobilisation of voter’s support through propaganda; issues and organised activities and by emphasising ideological differences with other parties; candidates in the election fray, etc.

V.M. Sirsikar pointed out that “There would not be one but many theories of Indian Voting behaviour depending on the region; community or the specific interest of the researcher.”<sup>2</sup> So approaches to studying why voters cast their votes in the way they like are varied and complex. There has been several ways, methods



or techniques of knowing and establishing the voting behaviour of the voters. Why voters prefer one party/candidate to the available alternatives, has various considerations. However, in the study of voting behaviour, three broad approaches stand out. They are : The Party identification model (voters cast votes out of long term loyalty to a party); The rational choice approach (the voters rationally taking decision which way to vote on the performance and promise of the parties/candidates; on the record of the government making a retrospective judgement ignoring the promises of the parties/candidates); and the sociological approach emphasising the correlation between the voting behaviour and the voters' caste, religion, age, etc.). The process of taking vote-decision is fairly a complex phenomenon, different factors continuously work in many ways upon the minds of the electors. The "vote-choice of a voter is the result of interaction of psychological, social and economic and political factors. It is the end product of many factors which are operating upon the minds of a voter in a "Conjunctural and Commulative fashion."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, "the voting decision of a voter may be his own decision or may either be an act of inducement by other fellow castement, village notables, family heads, or a 'political broker' or an unthinking response to varieties of stimuli generated during the campaign."

However, .in general, the determining factors that have influenced the voting behaviour/decision of the voters can be grouped into two : political factors and non-political factors. The political factors are such as influence of party and its organisation; party affiliation/membership; party ideology; party programmes/manifestoes; issues, etc. While the non-political factors include role of money power, muscle power; friendship or intimate relations with the candidates; labour and dedication of the candidate to social work; kinship-ties; pressures and

influences from local elites; personal loyalty to the candidate; private promises; political consciousness, of the voters; etc. Thus voting behaviour of electors may be influenced by multiple factors such as charismatic personality/personal quality of candidates; personal attraction of popular leaders; loyalty/ commitment to a party; sympathy wave; regional/parochial considerations; promises of the party during the election; literacy; status; occupation; personal contact with the candidate; factional loyalties; ethnic loyalty; appeals to caste, class ethnicity, community, religion and language; socio-economic background of the electors and so on. Besides, some voters are also influenced and swayed by the impact of election campaign; popular appeals; the posters; the printed and spoken words while others do not. The voters' perceptions of the political phenomenon, his views on government and identification of the parties/ candidates also influence voting behaviour. One's voting decision is also guided by candidates' attack on administration. Voting also is decided by secret deals, promises, negotiations, inducement with money or materials; intimidations, etc. The elites such as village money-lenders; businessmen; and high-salaried class government employees also played a great role in shaping the voting decision of the electors. The concept of social class in terms of occupation, income, education, ethnical factors, hill-valley dichotomy and division into indigenous and migrant population also influence the voting behaviour. In brief, these multiple factors either singly or jointly work-up together, affect and influence one's voting decision/ behaviour at election time.

This study concentrates on the voting behaviour of three Assembly constituencies : Langthabal and Keishamthong from Imphal district and Ukhrul (ST) reserved constituency from Ukhrul district, during the sixth Assembly elections. The Keishamthong constituency has the urban feature and the

Langthabal segment has the semi-urban-rural character. And the Ukhrul constituency (hills) also has the tribal-rural-urban feature/nature. Except Keishamthong constituency, the other two constituencies -Langthabal and Ukhrul have mixed population. In Langthabal constituency the voters consist of the Meiteis and the Kabui Naga tribes. While the electors in Ukhrul constituency comprise the Tangkhul Nagas, the Kukis; the Meiteis; Nepalese and the non- Manipuris. The selection of the Langthabal and Keishamthong Assembly constituencies exhibits certain unique features. O. Joy has retained his Langthabal seat for four consecutive terms succeeding since the 1974 - mid-term Assembly polls. But the voters of the Keishamthong Kendra have changed their representative for each term since statehood. But in this sixth elections. O. Joy was defeated for the first time while R.K. Ranbir Singh could retain his Keishamthong seat again. Another aspect for the inclusion of Ukhrul constituency was that Ukhrul district is predominantly inhabited by Tangkhul Nagas. During the election campaign, the issue of "South Nagaland" was a burning issue before the electors, mainly stirred up by the Manipur Peoples' Party. The MPP in its election campaigning criticised and charged the State Chief Minister Rishang Keishing (a Tangkhul Naga from Ukhrul district) and his Congress-I Party supporting the issue of 'South Nagaland' and thereby it appealed to the people not to vote for Congress-I. In this context whether the Tangkhul Naga voters voted for Congress-I, has to ascertain it.

The study attempts to analyse and interpret the political behaviour of the voters of Langthabal, Keishamthong and Ukhrul constituencies. Though the systematic study and scientific analysis of the study on voting behaviour in these Assembly segments are rather a complex and difficult exercise due to their

inherent problems, however, the objective is to identify and find out the dominant pattern of voting behaviour of the voters within the framework of the existing socio-economic, political, ethnic and other relevant parameters of the society, level of political awareness of the voters; exposures to election campaign,; media of political informations; decision-taken for voting-choice; influence of political and non-political factors, etc. Attempts have also been made to examine the pattern of their party preferences; orientation towards a particular candidate; the importance attached to local issues and the awareness of broad national issues and their influence in the poll and its actual voting results. It also tries to measure the degree of political awareness, political participation and involvement along with other determining factors influencing the voting behaviour of electors.

### **Langthabal Assembly Constituency**

When the First State Assembly elections were held in 1972, the present Langthabal constituency was known as “Lilong Chajing.” However, following the readjustment of Assembly constituencies according to 1971 Census, many of the Constituencies visualised a change in their nomenclature. In the process, some of them lost their old names and appeared with new names. So, from the mid-term poll in 1974, the “Lilong Chajing constituency” came to be known as “Langthabal Constituency.” It forms the 20th Assembly constituency in the state.

There were a total of 17,756 voters in Langthabal Assembly constituency comprising 8683 male voters and 9068 female voters. Thus, female voters outnumbered the male voters by 385 votes. Altogether 26 polling stations were set up in the constituency. The composition of the voters of the constituency is of the two communities only - the Meit'eis and the Kabui Nagas. The tribal-voters are

very less and live in two small hillocks (known as Langthabal Chingthak/Chingkha and Langthabal Khoupum) located part.” Of the 17,756 electors, tribal voters constitute around 600 and the rest are the Meitei voters including the Meitei Brahmins. The Meitei Brahmin voters are also very few.

Among the Meitei voters, there are two religious groups the Meitei Hindu and the Meitei Sanamahi. The latter group, small in number, mainly concentrated in Lilong Chajing area in the southern part of the constituency. The Meitei voters outnumbered the Meitei Sanamahi voters several times. In Lilong Chajing area, there had been difference between the two religious groups. Sometimes rivalries also occurred. Most of the tribal voters are Christians. The Meitei Brahmins are also Hindus. Though the voters belonged to a wide spectrum of socio-economic positions, majority of them are in the lower strata of income group. Only a few of them are wealthy class of people. Most of the female voters are engaged mainly in household industries particularly in handlooms. A bulk of the voters are also engaged in agricultural activities. Majority of the aged-voters are illiterate. There are voters in service such as in government establishments, Schools, Colleges, University, Offices etc.

The voters are almost equally divided and concentrated thickly in two compact areas - the northern and southern portions of the constituency. The two portions are well connected by a thin-chain-like localities populated sparsely. The politics of constituency is played mostly by the north. In the post-statehood period, as such, the representative of constituency had been elected from the north for four consecutive terms. The voters in the middle segment living in such localities of Langthabal Mantrikhong, Langthabal Kunja, Langthabal Chinthak/Chingkha;

Langthabal Khoupum play a crucial role as a balancing factor either to the north or the south, in the politics of the constituency.

Though the Lilong-Chajing-Karam areas in the South along with its adjoining localities (Haoreibi and Naralkonjil) form the southern strongholds, history tells us that there had been no unity among the voters for the last many years. The electors were divided on the line of religion (Meitei Hindu Vs Meitei Sanamahi); leadership; Leikaism (localism); party affiliation, etc. The number of aspirants contesting the Assembly elections have been on the rise, thus affecting the prospects of unity-formation. On the other hand, among the voters in the northern portion, there has been unity throughout despite having various party affiliations and other sort of differences. However, differences cropped up recently leading to the birth of those aspiring to contest the election and challenging the existing leadership of the constituency. In terms of party affiliation, the majority of the voters are neutral electors, though they have their leanings either to a party or the other. Membership of voters to various parties are minimal. Only some of them had their affiliation either to MPP, Congress-I, Janata Dal. CPI, CPI-M, FPM, etc. Some parties like NPP, KNA, MHPC, etc. did not have even a single sympathiser, However, the MPP and the Congress-I had the largest following. Table 8.1 shows the socio-economic background of the contesting candidates and election results.

Though there was six-cornered contest, MPP and Congress-I were the rival parties contending for the seat. In the election voters turn out was very high. It recorded 92.22 percent. There was no tender votes a sign that challenge voting did not occur due to impersonation. The voting percentage was high because there was fierce competition between the MPP and Congress-I. The supporters of both the parties were so enthusiastic that they exercised their right to vote with a deliberate

Table 8.1  
Langthabal Assembly Constituency  
Socio-Economic Background of Candidates and Election Results : 1995

Polling Stations	26									
Total Voters : Male 8688, Female 9068	17,756									
Total Votes Polled	16,374									
Total Valid Votes Polled	16,229									
Percentage of Votes Polled	92.22									
Rejected Votes	145									
Tender Votes	Nil									
Candidate	Age	Qualification	Religion	Caste	Party	Political Experience	Election Contest	Votes Polled	Percentage	Remarks
Kh. Dhurba	30	Matriculate	Hindu	Meitei	FPM	10 yrs.	First	139	0.86	Elected
O. Joy	53	B.A. LLB	-do-	-do-	MPP	20 yrs.	Fifth	6582	40.56	
K. Babudhon Singh	54	Read Ten Class	-do-	-do-	INC	33 yrs.	Third	6674	41.12	
L. Gopal	40	B.A.	-do-	-do-	IND	10 yrs.	First	70	0.43	
H. Mukhai	30	M.A.	Sanamahi	-do-	IND	10 yrs.	First	1002	6.17	
H. Somorendro Singh	30	BE (Civil)	Hindu	-do-	SP	5 yrs.	First	1762	10.86	

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur; Researcher's personal interview with the candidates; and whos' who, Legislative Assembly of Manipur.

aim to win the seat by their respective candidate. This resulted in the rise of voting percentage. In the election contest, the Congress-I nominee K. Babudhon Singh defeated his nearest rival of MPP O. Joy Singh by a narrow margin of 92 votes only. The MPP candidate, who was also a sitting MLA, lost the Langthabal seat for the first time. The SP candidate Hijam Somorendro Singh stood third. The rest of the candidates forfeited their deposits.

However, the defeated MPP candidate O. Joy in a press statement<sup>5</sup> said that the rigging of poll by the Congress-I candidate was the reason for his defeat. He said "large Scale rigging has been a feature in my constituency and I demand free and fair poll." He challenged in the Gauhati High Court, Imphal Bench, demanding repoll. Though the MPP nominee claimed that rigging of polls in his constituency, particularly in Chajing Mairengkhang Polling Booth, was mainly

responsible for his election defeat, apart from others, three basic factors worked against him leading to his downfall. Firstly, there was a breakdown in his support-base. Langthabal had been a constituency where there was “consistent pattern of voting” for four consecutive terms. Highly consistent voting took place as a bulk of the voters committed to MPP and its candidate O. Joy. As a result he had been elected for four consecutive terms since 1974. Later on, however, a shift in voter’s loyalty was seen. This was because of the fact that though he had represented the constituency for four terms, he was hardly in the ruling party/ministry. Most of the time he was in the opposition unable to make his supporters satisfied. When the voter’s expectation of gaining benefits from him after every election became a ‘dream’ for a majority of voters. They started changing their support to other parties/candidates. O Joy’s long presence in the constituency as MLA and minister for a while unable him to fulfil the desires/wants of his people. This weakness paved the way for his declination leading to the loss of his support-base. It badly affected his position in the sixth Assembly elections that cost the seat he was fighting for.

Secondly, both the Samata Party candidate Hijam Somorendro Singh and Independent candidate Lairellakpam Gopal Singh hail from the home turf of Joy. Earlier both of them were Joy’s supporter, But they came out as candidate challenging the leadership of Joy in the constituency. It also weakened Joy’s prospects and strength. Somerendro polled 1762 votes while Gopal secured 70 votes. Most of the votes captured’ by Somorendro were the votes of Joy. A small margin of only 92 votes defeated Joy in the election contest. Lastly, people felt sympathy for the Congress-I candidate K. Babudhon, for he had lost the election contest twice. No doubt in the eyes of the people, Babudhon seemed to be very



passive. The general impression was that even though he wins the election, he would not be able to bring development in the constituency. Even then, people wanted to test him. This favoured him to win the seat.

Joy was a prominent political leader and reputed throughout the state for his bold speeches and actions. People considered him as doing something good for the future of Manipur. A strong MPP wave was also sweeping across the state during the election. But people voted him out. It seemed that neither the programmes and ideology of the party(ies) nor the personality of the candidates influenced the voting behaviour of the voters. The voting behaviour was unstable. The main reason, apart from other factors, for changing voters' preference was that they wanted a change in the leadership pattern of the constituency. Their desire for a change in their leadership pattern conditioned their preference to Congress-I party. In my personal interview with many voters, I was told that "There can be all round development in the constituency only when we change our representative." This also led to the setback of the MPP. However, the voters did not see winning prospects in other parties and candidates. The Independent candidate Haorongbam Mukhai hailed from the home-polling of Congress-I candidate. But Mukhai was seen by many as set up by MPP candidate O. Joy to eat away votes of his rival candidate K. Babudhon Singh. While the FPM candidate Khumbongmayum Dhurba was not only unpopular and weak but considered as influenced by K. Babudhon Singh so as to extract and reduce the MPP votes in the area. The Independent Lairellakpam Gopal Singh was talked about as having some psychiatric problem. Though quite energetic and people saw a good future in the Samata party candidate Hijam Somorendro Singh, it could not be translated into practice. Further, both the FPM and SP were newly formed parties in order to stall

the elections. There were no proper organisations and activities of the parties. The parties could not command larger followings as such. So, the choice of party and candidate was limited to either Congress-I or the MPP. Since voters wanted for a change in the constituency, ultimately the Congress-I won the seat for the first time in the post-statehood period.

Table 8.2  
Trend of Voting Behaviour in Langthabal Assembly Constituency

Year of Election	Name of Elected Candidate	Party Affiliation
1972	Irengbam Tompok Singh	MPP
1974 Mid-term	O.Joy	MPP
1980	O.Joy	Janata Party
1984	O.Joy	MPP
1990	O.Joy	MPP
1995	K. Babudhon Singh	INC

Source : List of Members of Manipur (Both MPs and MLAs since 1947) Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Imphal 1997.

From the above Table 8.2, it can be inferred that except in the Assembly polls in 1990, the voting behaviour of the voters of Langthabal constituency was stable throughout. They had their leanings towards a regional party - the Manipur Peoples Party. It shows that the electors did not like national parties. In 1972, they elected MPP candidate Irengbam Tompok Singh. Even though there was a change in the party's nominee in the 1974 mid-term-polls, the voters preference for MPP remained unchanged. But a change occurred in 1980 elections. The seat was captured by Janata Party. But the elected candidate was O. Joy himself. This also reflects loyalty of the voters to the candidate than the party of his affiliation. In the 1984 and 1990 elections, O. Joy again contested the elections on MPP ticket. People voted him again. There lies the importance of both the candidate and party

though the preferences of the voters were more towards the regional party to national party. The voting behaviour of the voters were conditioned by both the importance of party level and the status of candidate. But we saw a shift-away from regional party to national party in the 1995 elections. In this election, the Congress-I could capture the seat.

### **Keishamthong Assembly Constituency**

The Keishamthong Assembly constituency, situated in the heart of Imphal city, is surrounded by the constituencies of Sagolband on the North; Yaiskul and Singjamei on the East; Naoriya Pakhanglakpa on the South and West. It lies along the Nambul river having an oblong North-South shape. There were 20,613 voters in Keishamthong constituency including 11,827 male electors and 8786 female voters. The constituency was divided into 29 polling booths.

The composition of the electors consists of Meiteis and Meitei Brahmins only. There is no non-Manipuri or non-Meitei voters such as Schedule Tribes, Schedule Caste and Mayangs in the constituency. The electors were predominantly Hindus. As such there has been no religious conflicts among the electors. Differences among them exist on party-lines, locality etc. Since it is an urban constituency, those engaged in agricultural activities are very few. There are a large number of voters who are in the white-colour jobs. The percentage of literacy is high. The living standard of people is comparatively high. Larger section of the electors are non-party member. But the voters, as a whole, were either sympathisers or supporters of one party or the other. Of the parties, the Manipur Peoples Party and the Congress-I had the largest followers. In the politics of the constituency, it seemed that the South was dominated by the North. Since statehood till today, the representative of the segment has been kept in the

Northern portion. But one special feature of the constituency was that no candidate could get elected for the second time consecutively. Table 8.3 gives a clear picture of the election results and socio-economic background of the candidate in Keishamthong Assembly Constituency.

Table 8.3  
Keishamthong Assembly Constituency  
Socio-Economic Background of Candidates and Election Results: 1995

Polling Stations										29
Total Voters : Male 11,830, Female 8787										20,617
Total Votes Polled										18,379
Total Valid Votes Polled										18,138
Percentage of Votes Polled										89.16
Rejected Votes										241
Tender Votes										Nil
Candidate	Age	Qualification	Religion	Caste	Party	Political Experience	Election Contest	Votes Polled	Percentage	Remarks
A. Hemchand	50	Graduate B.E. Aeronautical	Hindu	Meitei	BJP	8 yrs.	First	559	3.08	
I. Jiten	55	Graduate	-do-	-do-	JD	22 yrs.	Third	422	2.33	
R.K. Ranbir	64	Inter- mediate	-do-	-do-	MPP	40 yrs.	Sixth	10,091	55.63	Elected
L. Lalit Singh	59	M.A.	-do-	-do-	INC	40 yrs.	Third	7066	38.96	

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur; Researcher's personal interview with the candidates; and whos'who, Legislative Assembly of Manipur.

Despite four candidates in the election fray, the MPP and the Congress-I were the only parties contending for the seat. The voting percentage was moderately high. The turn out of voters was recorded at 89.16 percent. In the contest, though the voters of this constituency never elected their representative for two consecutive terms, the sitting MLA of MPP R.K. Ranbir defeated his nearest rival of Congress-I Laishom Lalit Singh by a big margin of 3025 votes. Though the BJP candidate followed third, his deposit was forfeited along with the deposit of JD candidate.

In Keishamthong constituency, personality of the candidate played a very important role in the election since it is also a significant, considerations for voting. Thought men of personality are very rare, however, among the contesting candidates, personality of MPP candidate R.K. Ranbir Singh surpassed other. It is because of his personality that he could maintain voters loyalty to him and his party. The behaviour of voters revealed a high level of loyalty and allegiance to MPP. The ideology and programmes of the party played less significant role during the election in influencing the voters. Beside, there was importance of issues. As such the presentation of issues, the mobilisation of voters and the organisation of election campaigns on various issues were of utmost significance in the election. During the campaigning period, the MPP exploited the sentiments of the electorates with sensitive slogans that swept the voters in the valley in favour of the party. Apart from others, the voters' preference to MPP was also guided by one strong consideration that "Ranbir will be the *next* Chief Minister of Manipur" if he wins the election, he had been Chief Minister once. In this election, the voting behaviour of the electors was considerably stable. They voted for MPP a regional party for two consecutive terms. Except the Congress-I candidate, the rest of the candidates were very weak. They were- not much popular. In my personal interview, the BJP candidate Ahanthem Hemchand said that "he is already a defeated candidate." Citing the reasons for his defeat, he said, being a fresh candidate, he was not popular in the constituency and the BJP organisation was also not deep rooted. Financial shortage; selfish voters; and lack of consciousness among the electors were also responsible for his election defeat. The interplay of money power was also not less important.<sup>6</sup> According to Congress-I candidate L. Lalit Singh, many factors were responsible for his defeat in the election. He stated that money power was used extensively by his rival MPP candidate. There was

threat from anti-social elements. So no proper campaigning was done. There was sign of using extra-ballot papers. Ballot papers of a Polling Station was found in another Polling Station. There was booth-capturing by the MPP. He said there was no impact of the issue on South Nagaland and UNIC-Congress Agreement.<sup>7</sup>

Table 8.4  
Trend of Voting Behaviour in Keishamthong Assembly Constituency

Year of Election	Name of Elected Candidate	Party Affiliation
1972	Laishram Manaobi Singh	MPP
1974 Mid-term	R.K. Ranbir Singh	INC
1980	Laishram Manaobi Singh	MPP
1984	L. Lalit Singh	INC
1990	R.K. Ranbir Singh	MPP
1995	R.K. Ranbir Singh	MPP

Source : List of Members of Manipur (Both MPs and MLAs since 1947) Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Imphal 1997.

The voting behaviour of the Keishamthong constituency had been alternated between the national and regional parties. In 1972, their preference was for a local party. In the 1974 mid-term poll, their voting behaviour was changed to a national party. Their leaning to the regional party was again restored in the 1980 elections. While they attached priority to Indian National Congress during the 1984 polls. Again they preferred Manipur Peoples Party to a national party in the 1990 and 1995 elections. So there were ups and downs in the behaviour of the voters. But their choice was limited to Congress and MPP.

### **Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency**

Since Ukhrul (ST) reserved Assembly constituency is a hills constituency, it covers a vast area. It is populated mainly by the Kukis and the Tangkhul Nagas who

are scheduled tribes. Majority of the population are concentrated at Ukhrul proper. There is no homogeneity in the composition of the voters. The Meiteis and the non-Manipuris such as Nepalese, Binaries, Marawaris etc. are also found in the constituency. But the majority of the latter group or communities are in Ukhrul proper. Around ten Villages belong to the Kuki community. The community populated in the villages such as Chingphei; Kamshi; Litan Lamalai; Mullarn; M. Chipphu; Molnom, Sareikhong; Songphel; Shangikai; and Yaolen. The Kuki voters constitute around 2500; the non-Manipuris about 500 voters (dominated by Nepalese) and the Meiteis accounted for nearly 400 who live mainly in Litan, Sanakeithel, and Ukhrul town proper. The rest of the voters are Tangkhul Nagas. The Kukis and the Nagas are all Christian. The non-tribal voters are mostly Hindus. Most of the Kuki - Nagas are agriculturists depending on jhuming and wet-rice cultivation, though many of them are also in the white-collar jobs. Poor section of the people prevailed over the rich class of people. The non-tribal voters are mainly the businessmen and shopkeepers. They did not involve and participate in the election openly and actively as they are outsiders forming minority group in the area. The non-Manipuri voters preferred national parties to local parties. The Meiteis and the Kuki-Naga voters had different shades of their political opinion and affiliations. But most of them are either sympathisers or supporters of Congress-I or Janata Dal. The Tangkhul Nagas are not only in majority but also dominated the political life in the constituency in particular and in Ukhrul district in general. In spite of the ongoing Kuki-Naga clash in the hills, reportedly, the Kukis have their loyalty to the Tangkhul Nagas. No, doubt there has been mutual understanding and close harmony among the various communities living in the constituency.

The constituency has registered a total of 25,016 electors out of which 12302 were male and 12714 female voters. The constituency had 46 polling stations. The contesting parties were Indian National congress, Janata Dal and

Samata party. The percentage of voters turnout in the constituency was moderate. It recorded 83 percent. The real contest took place between Congress-I and the Janata Dal. In the contest, Danny Shaiza of Janata Dal was defeated by the Congress-I candidate A.S. Arthur by a big margin of 1624 votes. Though Ako Shaiza stood third by securing 2118 votes, his deposit was forfeited. Since Samata Party was the outcome of JD (G) faction and formed to stall the election, it was not popular. So voters did not attach much importance to it. Table 8.5 shows the election result of Ukhrul constituency.

Table 8.5  
Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Socio-Economic Background of Candidates and Election Results: 1995

Polling Stations											46
Total Voters : Male 12,302, Female 12714											25016
Total Votes Polled											20694
Total Valid Votes Polled											20458
Percentage of Votes Polled											82.72
Rejected Votes											234
Tender Votes											2
Candidate	Age	Qualification	Religion	Caste	Party	Political Experience	Election Contest	Votes Polled	Percentage	Remarks	
Ako Shaiza	57	Graduate	Christianity	Tang-khul	SP	20 yrs.	First	2118	10.35		
A.S. Arthur	65	Graduate	-do-	-do-	INC	11 yrs.	Third	9982	48.79	Elected	
Danny Shaiza	41	Graduate	-do-	-do-	JD	10 yrs.	First	8385	40.86		

Source : State Election Office, Lamphel, Manipur; Researcher's personal interview with the candidates; and whos'who Legislative Assembly of Manipur.

According to the Election Agent to Danny Shaiza, apart from other factors, two main reasons were responsible for his defeat in the election contest. First, both Danny Shaiza and Ako Shaiza were of the same family line. Ako Shaiza is the uncle of Danny Shaiza. So votes were divided between the two. Many voters of the Shaiza family did not exercise their franchise as they could not decide themselves



to whom to vote - either Danny Shaiza or Ako Shaiza. This led to his (Danny Shaiza) defeat. Danny Shaiza got 8385 votes while Ako Shaiza secured 2118 votes. The division of votes among them helped A.S. Arthur. Lastly, the caretaker ministry of Rishang Keishing also helped Arthur to win the election. Arthur, the Congress-I candidate, was also an Advisor to Rishang, the State Chief Minister and so fared well in the polls.<sup>8</sup> It may be mentioned that the politics of Ukhrul district was dominated by two personalities - Yangmaso Shaiza, former Chief Minister of Manipur and Rishang Keishing, Chief Minister of Manipur for four times - for the last many years. But after the assassination of Yangmaso Shaiza in 1990 by unidentified gunmen, it was left to Rishang Keishing. Mrs. Hangmila Shaiza, the widow of the slain Yangmaso Shaiza, could capture the Ukhrul seat in 1990 election on Janata Dal ticket. But she left the contest for her son Danny Shaiza in the 1995 elections.

During the election, ethnicity involved for the first time in Manipur politics. The minds of the-electorates were poisoned with the notion of "South Nagaland." The election slogan on ethnic lines fomented communal tension in the state particularly between the Manipuri Nagas and the Meiteis. The MPP campaign on "South Nagaland" issue and its inherent anti-Congress slogans, however, had no impact upon the voters in Ukhrul constituency as they voted for Congress-L. Not a non-Congress-I candidate returned in all the three constituencies of Ukhrul district predominantly populated by the Tangkhul Nagas.

It has been a forgone conclusion that in the surrounding hills of Manipur, ethnic loyalties played a very important role as a determining factor of voting. It also seemed that "the recent Kuki-Naga ethnic clash has strengthened the role of ethnic loyalties among the tribals as one of the most important factors influencing

their voting behaviour. However, in Ukhrul constituency, voting on the same trend was not found. For all the candidates belonged to one ethnic community - the Tangkhul Nagas. There was no communal voting as such. The voters had to make their preferences of party and candidate as per their party loyalty, affiliation, performances of the party, campaign style, promises, personality of the candidate, education, etc. For instance, A.S. Benjamin Zimik voted to Danny Shaiza on two considerations - believed in Shaiza family's leadership and commitment to their family. A.S. Silas said "I gave my vote to Danny Shaiza by considering his personality as a candidate. I considered him as a good person". The majority of the Meitei voters voted to the Janata Dal candidate Danny Shaiza. The Meitei voters whom I interviewed personally expressed that Danny's father (late) Yangmaso Shaiza (former Chief Minister of Manipur) had cordial relations with them. So they gave their votes to Danny Shaiza. The non-Manipuri outsider voters refused to disclose their preference of party and candidate out of fear. Even the Kuki voters were scared of furnishing informations, might be due to having of communal tensions between the Kukis and the Nagas.<sup>9</sup>

As in the Langthabal and Keishamthong constituencies, the ideology and programmes of the parties did not influence the voters much. Rather personality of the candidate, loyalty to the party and the candidate played bigger roles in directing the voting behaviour of the electors. The voting behaviour was unstable. The main reason for the setback of the Samata Party was that the party was new and unpopular. Its candidate was also<sup>11</sup> very weak. Despite the division of votes in the Janata Dai's support-base, change of party nominee is also a major factor for the defeat of the party in the polls.

Table 8.6  
Trend of Voting Behaviour in Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency

Year of Election	Name of Elected Candidate	Party Affiliation
1972	Yangmaso Shaiza	MHU
1974 Mid-term	Yangmaso Shaiza	MHU
1980	Yangmaso Shaiza	PLP
1984	A.S. Arthur	Independent
1990	Smt. Hangmila Shaiza	JD
1995	A.S. Arthur	IND

Source : List of Members of Manlpur (Both MPs and MLAs since 1947) Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Imphal 1997.

In Ukhrul constituency, till 1974 mid-term elections, there was consistency for a definite period in the voting behaviour of the voters. They favoured and. voted for the same party-Manipur Hills Union in the 1972 and 1974 polls. However, inconsistency in voting took place in the following elections. They did not stick to a particular party. They changed and opted different parties at different elections. In the 1980 elections, Yangmaso Shaiza of PLP got the seat. Again they changed their support to an Independent candidate. A woman candidate of Janata Dal retained the seat in the 1990 polls. In the 1995 polls, the. Congress-I wrested the seat for the first time. It shows that, except in the beginning following the statehood, the voters changed the trend of their voting behaviour for each elections. The electoral behaviour in these three Assembly constituencies as projected in this study reveals that the voters' political behaviour was different from district to district and more particularly in between the valley and the hills. R.P. Singh observes that "In the central valley elections were influenced by the factors like party organisation, personality and influence of the candidates, ideologies of the parties, and to some extent wealth. In the sui'Tounding hills, the voting behaviour of the electors was much affected by the clan prejudices and preferences . . . and on the personality and outlook of the candidates.

For the tribal people living in these hills, the electoral considerations were mostly guided by their socio-economic interests, as their land for the last several centuries have remained untouched by the process of development.”<sup>10</sup> In fact, in the selection of their representatives, the voters were guided and influenced by such factors like party loyalty, party level and personality of the candidate. Though the voting behaviour based on party loyalty is no longer a persuasive explanation and many political scientists talk about weakening of voter’s loyalty or attachment to specific parties, it is still very much there in these constituencies. S.K. Chaube state that the awareness of political party as the major rhyme of voting is rather lacking both in urban and rural Manipur as it is in most of states in India. However, in Manipur voters not only attach importance to party levels but also to status and personality of the candidate. Sometimes, political personalities seemed to be of greater important than their parties.<sup>11</sup> While selecting the candidate and party, the voters were also influenced by other considerations and factors’ such as socio-economic conditions, political background, method of campaigning, role of money, party ideology and manifestoes to some extent, party affiliation, kinship ties etc. Apart from ethnicity, according to Lucy Abonmei, “money, promise for government jobs, personalities of candidates also influenced the voters in the hills.”<sup>12</sup> They were also influenced by the services of candidates rendered to the constituency. These considerations easily influenced much the electoral behaviour of the voters. However, it seemed that political and socio-economic factors exercise greater impact upon the voters than other factors.

We also come to know that though religion is still an important indicator of voting pattern (although its impact on voting behaviour has been declining due to increasing secularisation of society) and some scholars in Manipur emphasised caste as a factor of voting in election, however, caste and religious voting like in other parts of the country have not much significance in these three constituencies

in particular. For Manipur is not a state where there is extremely caste-ridden society. There is an absence of caste-system in the state. However, influence of religion occurred in some pockets of Langthabal constituency. In Lilong-Chajing area, there are two religious groups - the Meitei Hindus and the Meitei Sanamahi. Due to differences and clash between the two groups in the area, the voting behaviour of the electors in that particular area were influenced by religious forces *in* the background though the vital secular factors such as locality, economic, age, sex etc., consideration play decisive roles in the foreground. No doubt, parties and candidates exploit the religious sentiments of the people but emphasis is given on universal factors which do sway the minds of the voters. In this pocket, Meitei Sanamahi voters mostly favoured the MPP and the Meitei Hindus who mostly support the Congress-I party or the other parties.

Why voters prefer a particular party or candidate to the available alternative has various considerations. Some voters cast their votes for a party or candidate to serve their personal ends. Such voters voted a party or a candidate for some short of gains from the elected candidate. Contractors, supplier, etc., support a party or a candidate for work order, businessmen for permit, officers for promotion and posting at selected areas, (unemployed) youths for getting jobs or for momentary pleasures, etc. Since teachers group are the primary victims of transfer and postings, most of them joined politics silently. And some voters may deem certain issues to be of importance. The importance of the issues may lead to his continued voting for the same party all the time or may lead to vote for other parties. During the elections, the issue of the protection of Manipur's territorial integrity played an important factor in influencing the voting behaviour of the voters. The local issues and regional concerns assumed a more direct bearing on the minds of the voters. According to R.P. Singh, "Excepting a minority of educated elite voters concentrated in urban areas

particularly, the general body of voters did not bother about high ideological or doctrinal issues. Their orientation was more towards the local issues and problems.”<sup>13</sup> But national issues and slogans were no longer in the minds of the voters. The voters were also more concerned with their everyday life, personal problems and solutions to it rather than hollow promises made for them by the parties and their candidates. In many respects, voting has become a means to serve personal interest through political involvement.

It also appears that the voting behaviour of some sections of voter changed from election to election. The behaviour of voters in Keishamthong constituency revealed a high level of allegiance to MPP while changes occurred in the behaviour of some sections of electors in Langthabal and Ukhrul constituencies. This mainly was related with the voters often labelled as “fence or floating voters.” But it seemed that the committed voters remained static. The ability of the voters to identify parties, candidates and symbols reflects their level of political interests, involvement, participation and awareness, But it cannot be said that they were fully conscious of their political rights in selecting the right man as their representatives.

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## **CHAPTER – IX**

*Concluding Observations / Suggestions*



## CHAPTER - IX

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATION/SUGGESTION

Since no authentic study of the 1995 polls has been made, the present work attempts to study the trends of electoral politics during the general elections to the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1995, participation of regional and national political parties, their electoral alliances, comparative analysis of their election manifestoes, issues and promises, reason for the success and setbacks of the participating parties and their overall performances and prospects in the context of the state politics. It also intends to throw some light on the socio-economic support-base of the constituency, political mobilisation, apathy and political awareness of the voters, voting turnout and role of ethnic and regional forces.

Election in a parliamentary democracy is a political means through which the political opinions and awareness of the masses are moulded and promoted. Election involves people into politics or public affairs through participation and mobilisation, provides political linkages, resolves conflicts and also brings about peaceful and orderly change of authority to the new leaders through the election. The right to govern is obtained by the contesting parties. The political parties, as per the rules of the representative democracy have also accept the election results. Hence, a good election system is regarded as the life-belt of genuine representative government serving an important function for the citizen and the political system as well. In India also, elections to legislative bodies are conducted on the basis of Adult Franchise, a single member constituency, one-voter-one vote, secret ballot, direct election and election by simple majority. Briefly, elections in India, however, appeared to be an increasingly integrative process.<sup>1</sup>

Manipur, the erstwhile princely state, was amalgamated into the dominion of India after the signing of Manipur Merger Agreement on 21 September 1949 in Shillong between the Government of India and his Highness the Maharaja of Manipur Bodhachandra Singh. Manipur became an integral part of the Indian union with effect from 15 October 1949. After the integration of Manipur into the dominion of India, Manipur was made a part 'C state administered by a Chief Commissioner assisted by a nominated Advisory Council. A territorial council was set up in 1957 consisting of 30 elected and 2 nominated members. In June 1963, Manipur was elevated to the status of Union Territory under the Union Territories Act 1963 with a Territorial Assembly of 30 elected and 2 nominated members and a council of Ministers. With the passing of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act 1971 by the Parliament, Manipur became a full fledged state of the Indian Union on 21st January 1972 with an Unicameral Legislature having 60 elected-members. Since then, the election to the legislative Assembly had so far been held six times including the one held in February 1995 of which the second Assembly election of 1974 was a mid-term poll.

The first Assembly elections in Manipur were held in 1972, which had experienced only one ministry headed by Md, Allimuddin of Manipur People's Party. The subsequent four terms were marred by defection and leadership crisis yielding more than one ministry in a term. The second Assembly constituted in 1974 after the mid-term poll witnessed the installation and fall of ever largest five ministries headed respectively by Md. Allimuddin of MPP, Yangmaso Shaiza (twice) and R.K. Dorendro Singh' (twice) of Congress Party. In the third term of 1980, three ministries were inducted under the respective leadership of R.K. Dorendro Singh and Rishang Keishing (twice) of the Congress Party. In the fourth

Assembly election in 1984, there were two Congress ministries of Rishang Keishing and R.K. Joychandra Singh, being the only term that witness the least number of ministries so far existed in Manipur till date. In the outgoing fifth Assembly constituted in 1990, had experienced three ministries led by R.K. Ranbir Singh (MPP) and R. K. Dorendro Singh and Rishang Keishing (Congress-I).

The state also had seen four remarkable features in the formation of successive governments by the political parties. First, it has been through defection of the legislators that most of the ministries since 1972 in the state have been formed and toppled even has before the normal dissolution of the state legislature. In true, there not been a single instances in Manipur where ministries were formed without defections. Second, the state has also experienced coalition governments led either by the Congress party or the MPP with the exception of a brief period of Janata Party government headed by Yangmaso Shaiza from 26 June 1977 to 14 November 1979.

Third, from 1972 to February 1995, Manipur state had formed 15 ministries altogether. Of these, the Congress had been in power for the longest period despite its failure to secure an absolute majority in all the six Assembly elections. The Manipur Peoples Party had formed the government three times and the Janata Party once. The other parties in the state had not been in a position either to form the government unilaterally or to lead the (coalition) government. Only they had been partners to any government formed either by Congress Party or Manipur Peoples' Party or the Janata Party.

Lastly, it may be noted that till today no political party could even secure a single party majority in the 60 member Assembly. Only in the fourth Assembly

election in 1984, the Congress Party performed best by winning 30 seats. The congress Party and the MPP had thus been managing respectively to form the government, with the support of other political parties (both national and regional) and Independents.

Geographically, the present state of Manipur is broadly divided into the hills and the plains regions encircled by ranges of high hills except the Barak Basin. Presently it comprise 9 Administrative Districts after the bifurcation of the then Imphal district into two district (Imphal East and Imphal West districts) in 1997 of which 4 district - Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur are in the valley. The remaining five district - Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur and Chandel are the hill districts. In the hills, there are six autonomous hills districts councils, while in the valley, the Panchayati Raj system has been introduced.

Demographically, the state is heterogeneous and populated by different communities such as the Meiteis (schedule caste, Meitei Brahmins and OBC); the Meitei Pangals (Manipuri Muslims); the Kukis, the Nagas; the Nepalese; and the non-Manipuri communities (Bengalis, Binaris, Marawaris, Keralites, Punjabis, Tamilians etc.) living side by side culturally and speaking various languages and dialects. The five hill districts are populated by as many as 29 scheduled tribes who are mostly Christians. The Naga tribes constitutes the overall majority in these five hills districts. The Meiteis form the majority community in the state. In the four valley districts, the Meiteis dominate and constitute around 60 percent of the states' population. The Meiteis and the Kuki-Naga tribes are the original inhabitants of the state. Comparatively the living standard of the plainsmen is higher than that of the hillsmen. Though the majority Hindus, the Christians, the

Muslims and other smaller religious minorities live in the state, the state of Manipur is free from caste-stigma. The people in the state speaks different languages and dialects. But Meiteilon has been the dominant language in the state which is understood and spoken by the other communities in the state. Presently Meiteilon has attained the status of 'Lingua-Franca' in the state. Though there has been a harmony and peaceful co-existence among the different communities/ tribes, today differences and conflicts between the Meiteis and the Naga tribes, the Kukis and the Nagas, the Meiteis and the Muslims are experienced probably due to deteriorating socio-economic factors such as regional economic imbalances and under development as well as due to other factors like demands/movements for homeland, to protect identity, to achieve recognition; struggle for power and space. Today unemployment problem in the state is very acute which is considered as the root cause of insurgency and unrest in Manipur.

The Legislative Assembly of Manipur is unicameral. It has 60 elected seats. There are altogether 40 Assembly segments in the four valley districts of which one is reserved for scheduled caste in the Sekmai Assembly constituency. And the remaining 39 are General seats. Out of the 20 seats in the five hills districts, 19 are reserved for scheduled tribes and the remaining one is a General seat in the Kangpokpi constituency. Thus in 'all, out of the existing 60 seats, 40 are General seats, 19 are reserved for scheduled tribes and one for scheduled castes. The state Assembly have been represented by such communities of Nepali and Kuki-Nagas in the hills and the Meiteis.and Pangals in the valley.

In the middle of February 1995, the sixth State Legislative Assembly Election of Manipur was held in two phases without insisting on photo Identity Cards to the voters following the decision of the Bombay High Court and Supreme

Court of India. The election was conducted in the background of bomb-blasts, firing incidents, threats, intimidation, constitutional crisis, ethnic issues., boundary disputes between Nagaland and Manipur, attack on contesting candidates, killing of political leaders, etc. The first phase polling took place on 16 February 1995. On this day, the electors of five hill districts went to polls to elect 20 members. And the second phase of polling was held on 19 February to elect 39 members out of a total of 40 in the three valley districts. The Lamsang Assembly constituency in Imphal district was countermanded following the killing of the MPP candidate, only five days ahead of the poll schedule in the hills districts. So, the election were held for only 59 seats. The election for the countermanded Lamsang constituency was held on 27 May 1995.

For the February 1995 polls, there were a total of 12,69,746 electorates. Some 1977 polling stations were set up in the state dividing them into three categories- Hyper-Sensitive, Sensitive and Less-sensitive to enable to take up beforehand strict measures to prevent irregularities at the time of polling. Fourteen political parties (both national and local) entered the electoral battle. Besides, 66 Independent candidates also contested the election. Except Congress-I, MPP and Janata Dal, other parties could not put up their respective candidates in large numbers. Despite 14 political parties, the Congress-I and the MPP were the strong contender for power. A total of 388 candidates (including the election to the countermanded Lamsang constituency) filed their nominations; 2 candidates rejected in the scrutiny and 39 withdrew their candidature. So 347 candidates remained in the election fray including eleven woman contestants. The Congress-I was the only party that contested all the seats while the MHPC set up only one candidate. In this election some sort of pre-poll electoral understanding was made between the CPI, CPI-M and the Janata Dal. However, the post-election alliance was formed among the parties of MPP, JD, NPP,

Congress-S, SP and CPI. Most of the parties manipulated the process of nomination in many ways. This is mainly due to lack of internal democracy and existence of factional leaders in the party. Most of the parties, besides partymen, allowed non-partymen to apply for ticket. Except left parties, it seemed that no hard and fast rules were followed by other parties while giving party tickets, despite their own methods and principles to be observed at the time of selection of party nominees. In real practice, informal process prevailed over the formal procedures. Apart from other formal procedures, the criteria governing the award of tickets were - legitimacy of the ticket aspirant to the (factional) leader aspiring for the post of Chief Minister, huge amount of money to oil the palms of those handling the task (with the exception in the left parties), resourcefulness and ability of the candidate to win the election, etc. Since there was no exercise of democratic practices during the nomination process, right men were not selected as party nominees. Its consequences were far reaching, that many candidates lost the election as a result of wrong selection of candidates. As non-partymen were also allowed to apply for party ticket, it hurt the sentiments of the members who have suffered a long for the cause of his/her party. So, it would have been imperative to give party tickets only to those party men/members. Moreover, the selection process of party nominees should be on democratic lines and methods. There should not be any room for sabotaging the process. The principle criteria governing the issue of party ticket shall be - long-membership to the party; dedication and social work; observance of party's % integrity; ideology and principles; character and background of the person; educational qualification, etc.

Though the election was for the first time held under the strict supervision of central observers appointed by Election Commission and no official record on the violation of code of conduct was available, but there were various allegations, charges, complaints, etc. made by rival parties and candidates for violation of instructions, breaches of laws, intimidation of voters, attempted booth-capturing etc.,

though nobody knew the truth of these complaints. Moreover, no proper action was also taken up against any candidate. However, the Researcher witnessed many parties and candidates violating election codes by electing flag staffs, pasting posters, writing election slogans, etc., in the public places. Impersonation voting took place; candidates used vehicles more than the number prescribed by Election Commission. The election expenses of the candidates also shot up beyond the maximum limit of rupees fifty thousand. Most of the prospective candidates resorted to bribing the voters. In real practice, the model code of conduct was meaningless as no party and candidate observed it honestly. This is because of the fact that this 'code' had no legal sanction. To make the code "effective", it should be given a "statutory teeth." So that election process can be made clean and healthy.

The February 1995 election was quite different from the previous elections in the state as it was mainly issue-based on the line of ethnicity particularly between the majority Meiteis and the Manipuri (Tangkhu), Nagas, over the protection of territorial unity and integrity of Manipur following the Nagaland Assembly Bill passed in September 1994 to amalgamate all the adjoining Naga-inhabited areas under one 'Administrative unit' under the call for a "Greater Nagaland" or "South Nagaland." The issue was an important agenda for all the contesting parties as it threatened Manipur's territorial integrity. The main opposition party- the MPP, in order to defeat the Congress-I in the polls, harped upon the sentiments of Manipur's integrity card and mobilised the voters by picking-up the issue and reviving the Agreement concluded between UNIC-Congress in 1972. Because the Nagaland bill moved by the opposition was supported by the Congress Party of Nagaland. The opposition campaign was that Congress-I was mainly responsible for issues like 'South Nagaland' which may lead to disintegrate Manipur. However, the Congress-I said the party opposed any



kind of homeland demand by any community in the state which can destroy Manipur. The party denied Congress-I playing any role in trying to disintegrate Manipur. It assured to protect the unity and integrity of Manipur. The territorial dispute was further deepened by the Transporters strike launched against the NSCN (IM) faction for collecting illegal “vehicles and goods taxes” from the vehicles plying along the national highways in the state, leading to near communal clash between the (Tangkhul) Nagas and the Meiteis as the NSCN(IM) demanded to integrate into Nagaland challenging the unity and integrity of Manipur. Though the contesting parties released their respective election manifestoes reflecting the existing socio-economic and political situation in the state, and making tall promises, however, there was no fundamental differences in their policies and programmes. Their manifestoes were primarily dominated by the local issues and problems such as unemployment; insurgency problems; economic development; etc., confronting the state. The protection of unity and integrity of Manipur was a prime concern for all the contesting political parties. But it seemed that their manifestoes were guided by emotional appeals as the parties were not honest to deal with the existing problems of the state. After the election, manifestoes became hollow and false promises. People experienced a gulf-of-differences between their promises and programme implementation work. So, the general voters do not attach much importance to manifestoes. There lies the irrelevance of publishing election manifestoes by the parties during an election.

The contesting parties and candidates conducted election campaign during the election to educate the voters. They”<sup>1</sup> adopted and used various methods and techniques such as door-to-door campaign, public and camera meetings, distribution of leaflets, pasting of symbols and posters, erecting of flag staffs, etc., in trying to win the support of as many votes as they can. While trying to strengthen the positions and prospects of

their respective parties, the election also witnessed heavy campaigning by the central leaders of many parties. But the election also experienced a shift away from old style of campaigning to new campaigning methods. The old style of campaigning like rallies, processions, etc. practiced during the previous elections, were rarely seen in this sixth election. Candidates hardly addressed public meetings. Posters, symbols, flags etc. were too few. The electioneering tempo was very low due to the insistence of a revised model code of conduct. The women, the mass organisations, the students and the youths enthusiastically participated in the elections campaign, though their involvement was minimal. The members and leaders of frontal organisations of various parties were very active<sup>1</sup> engaging in various election-related activities. Though maintained its neutrality, voluntary organisations also involved in the election with various motives. However, the mass media played little role during the elections in educating and influencing the voters. But it helped in provoking and moulding public opinions by furnishing election advertisements, informations in the columns, editorials, news items and conducting election analysis.

During the campaigning, the party line was divided between the ruling-Congress-I on the one hand and the non-Congress parties, on the other. There was keen competition between the Congress-I and the MPP. The non-Congress parties were aggressive and charged Congress-I as a party of corruption, and for selling out a large territory of Manipur. While the Congress-I was defensive. Parties attached much importance to local issues rather than national issues. Protection of Manipur's integrity became focal point for all the parties during the campaigning. It seemed that the appeal of ideology and programmes played little roles in the election. Due to increasing expenses on elections, to contest election and campaign successfully has become very expensive requiring huge amount of money. As such, the contesting parties and candidates depend on various sources for financial

support. Though it is very difficult to get proper information of their sources of electoral finance in the sixth elections in Manipur, it is learnt that they had vast financial resources. Besides party assistance they were funded by contractors, big businessmen, suppliers, government employees, particularly the officers, factional leaders of political parties, aspirants for the post of Chief Ministership, etc. Among the parties, the national parties had better resources than the local parties. Party funding was important for the candidates of national parties, though personal funding was more significant.

Today money power and muscle power play a very important role in elections. Both have become major components and considerations for winning a seat. The role of money power in influencing the vote choice of some voters cannot be undermined though it alone is not the only guiding factor for electoral success. During the sixth elections in Manipur, money power was used extensively both in the hills and the valley constituencies. However money power played a more significant role in the valley than the hills in terms of voters' bribing is concerned. The contesting parties and candidates bribed the voters. In the hills, the price of a voter ranged from Rs 50 to 100, while in the valley it was in between Rs 100 to thousands. In the procession average, candidates spent ranging from 20 to 50 lakhs of rupees though some other candidates incurred less than the amount. Some prospective candidates even reached nearly one crore of rupees. So, majority of the contesting candidates did not observed the ceiling on election expenses as fixed by the Election Commission. The use of muscle power (both overground and underground) by the prospective<sup>1</sup> parties and candidates was seen in this sixth elections though the scale of using muscle power was very low comparatively than other states in India. But it was more heavily used in the hills and remote areas

than the valley. Political leaders were gunned down. Contesting candidates were attacked. There were newspaper reports of kidnapping party workers. Many complaints were made against attempted election rigging and booth capturing particularly in the hills.

The elites in general could not play a very significant and extensive role in influencing the voters during the sixth elections. Moreover, campaigning on caste and religious lines also did not appeal the voters much. Instead, it seemed that communal forces appealed the voters. Voters were also influenced by regional and ethnic forces. To maintain the territorial Boundary of the state was an important slogan to the electorates.

The elections to the sixth Assembly was held in 59 constituencies as the Lamsang constituency was countermanded following the gunning down of a MPP candidate. It experienced “anti-Congress-wave” mainly in the valley and Kuki dominated area. A total of 347 candidates were in the election fray including 66 Independents. There was no straight-fight in any constituency. The contest ranged from three-corner to 12-cornered contest. In most of the constituencies, the Congress-I, the MPP and the Janata Dal were the main contenders for seat. Though there were mushroom growth of candidates in the election fray, many of them forfeited their security deposits. Only a few of them deserved to be the candidates. In many constituencies, the sitting MLAs were defeated while some of them could retain the seat again. The election saw the rise and fall of many prominent political leaders. The voters were influenced in their voting behaviour by many factors such as money power, muscle power, personality of the candidates, ethnic issues, party affiliation etc. The election saw the defeat of many sitting MLAs, ministers, and prominent leaders, and emergence of new faces. Not even a single woman candidate could return in the

polls. No political party secured a workable majority in the House. The results presented a reverse trend in both the hills and the valley. The Congress-I, which entered the election contest while in power, was voted out though it emerged as the single largest party with 21 seats. Against the prediction of the political analysts, the Congress-I secured less seat in the hills while more seats in the valley despite anti-Congress waves. On the other hand, the MPP which expected a good result in the valley, could not hit the target well. The party returned with 18 seats. The Janata Dal wrested 7 seats. The CPI could retain only 2 seats. The Congress (S) captured only one seat. For the first time, the BJP could open its first account in the state by securing one seat. The FPM, SP and NPP bagged two seats each. The Independents won three seats. Not a single seat was wrested by the rest of the political parties. The anti-Rishang Keishing wave, the selection of wrong men as Congress-I candidate by manipulating the nomination process, failure of the Rishang -led Congress-I government to solve the various problems facing the people on the eve of the election etc., were responsible for the poor performance of the congress-I in the polls. The MPP could improve its position from the previous elections because of the fact that, apart from others, the party promised to protect the integrity of the state at any cost, that swayed and won the hearts of the majority Meitei voters and the Kukis to some extent in favour of the MPP. Had the party been not prone to leadership crisis, its performance would have been much improved. Except Congress-I and the MPP, the performance of other parties were very poor. The main reason for the setback of Congress (S) was that those Congress MLAs elected in 1990 polls left the party and contested the 1995 polls under the tickets of other parties. There was no deserving candidates to substitute them in the 1995 elections. This weakened the party's position. We have yet to see the electoral performance of the newly formed Samata Party and Federal Party of Manipur in the following elections in the state. Still the future of BJP is not bright in the state though the party made its first electoral debut.

The electoral performance of CPI has been fast declining. The once powerful Janata Party is today on its extinction. Though the KNA party stands for the Kuki community, it seems that, the party has no longer its hold over the community, resulting in its total electoral failure. The Janata Dal also heavily lost in the polls. The electoral performance of NPP is still very bad. The SJP, MHPC and CPI-M also hit the dust in the polls. We cannot say much more about their electoral performance. Regional and district-wise variations of voting pattern was also visible. This was due to geo-political and cultural differences in the state. This was further strengthened by the absence of party Organisational set up either in the valley or the hills. Some parties concentrated their activities in the hills while some others in the valley only. If these parties have to survive as a party, they have to do a lot in order to improve and strengthen their positions. One imperative is that they have to expand the horizons of their party's organisational set up in both the hills and the valley with regular activities. Besides, at the time of nomination process, the parties must select only the right man as party candidates whose integrity and principles as well as works are known by the people. They must nominate those who are acceptable to the people. Those who have changed from one party to another at one stage or the other and dishonoured people's mandate should be dropped from the list of party candidates. However, the politics of Independents in the state has always seen ups and downs. Still their importance is being felt. People want a new political platform where there is no corruption, floor-crossing, unethical and immoral politics.

To analyse and understand voting behaviour of electors during the sixth Assembly elections, three Assembly constituencies were selected. The two constituencies of Langthabal and Keishamthong are from the Imphal district (plains) and the Ukhrul (ST) reserved constituency is from the Ukhrul district (hills). Keishamthong is an urban constituency while the Langthabal and Ukhrul

constituencies has both urban-rural features. Except Keishamthong constituency, Langthabal and Ukhrul constituencies have mixed population. In all the three constituencies, majority of the voters are non party members despite their leanings either to a party or the other. A small section of the voters had their membership to different parties. Despite six-cornered contest in Langthabal constituency, there was keen competition between the Congress-I and the MPP. But the latter was defeated by the former. In this constituency, party programmes, ideology and personality of the candidate seemed to play less important roles in influencing the voting behaviour of voters. Rather, the long desire of the voters for a change in their leadership pattern effected a change in their voting behaviour leading to the success of Congress party. Collapse in the MPP's support-base and emergence of new leadership also attributed to MPP's setback,. Since there was no winning prospects to other parties, Congress-I got the seat, for the first time in the post-statehood period. Voting behaviour was unstable in this constituency. In Keishamthong constituency, though no party or candidate could return again for the second time in the polls, the MPP wrested the seat again by defeating the Congress-I. The voting behaviour was stable. In this constituency personality of the candidate played a bigger role that influenced voting behaviour. Moreover, the importance of issue could not be ignored in winning the seat. The MPP exploited the sentiments of plainsmen promising to protect the territorial integrity of Manipur on South Nagaland issue which the Congress-I could not defend. In Ukhrul district, the Congress-I defeated the Janata Dal. The voting behaviour of the voters was unstable. Apart from others party loyalty and personality of the candidates were the major considerations that influenced the voting behaviour. Division of voters was the main reason for the setback to Janata Dal. The MPP campaign on South Nagaland issue creating anti-Congress wave asking people not

to vote for Congress hardly swayed the voters. Since all the candidates are of the same community who are Christians, religion and ethnic loyalty did not play significant role in influencing the voting behaviour of the voters. In the three constituencies, caste and religious voting did not take place except in some pockets of Lanthabal constituency here there was some influence of religion. The local issues and problems had a direct bearing upon the minds of the voters. The voting behaviour of some sections of the voters, particularly the floating voters, are instable while the committed voters remained mostly stable. In general, their voting behaviour was conditioned by such consideration like personality of candidates, party affiliation and loyalty, private promises, role of money power, issues, etc. The ability of the voters to identify parties, candidates etc. reflects their level of political awareness and participation.

Though elections form the backbone of democracy giving a platform for people's participation in the affairs of the State, however, today we experienced no free and fair elections. The true character of free and fair elections is increasingly being marred by muscle power, money power, attempts at booth capturing, appeals to caste, community, ethnicity, impersonation voting, criminalisation of politics, misuse of governmental machineries, violation of election codes, rules, instructions etc. in trying to capture power by hook or crook. The existing electoral system in the process has developed a great many distortions and negativities during the last many years. As a result, it has become ineffective to deal with these unhealthy forces. It is in this background that the urgency of electoral reforms assumes important in order to maintain a healthy election trend. In the light of the above findings, some suggestions may be placed as remedial measures in order to improve and bring about a healthy changes in the election system in general as well as to help in the conduct of free and fair elections.



In terms of election expenses of a contesting candidate in the state, is concerned most of the party leaders feel that the ceiling on election expenses i.e., rupees fifty thousand as prescribed by the Election Commission of India is unrealistic. It is too less considering the price index at the time of election. The amount cannot meet the entire election expenses involved. Some leaders said that the amount cannot buy even the election materials. So it should be increased to a sizeable amount. Moreover, the election expenses between the candidates of the hills and the plains should not be equally fixed. Because, the valley constituencies are compact and small in area. A candidate can cover the entire constituency in a day or so. While the hill constituencies are fragmented and dispersed apart over a long distance. This automatically involves heavy expenditure in campaigning throughout the constituency.

The political parties should not be allowed to enter the election fray while in power. Only the Chief Minister can stay as 'Caretaker' till a new government is formed. Other ministers should resign at the time of filling nominations. This is because of the fact that during the elections, there were many allegation of misusing government machineries by the party in power.

The poll schedule in the country as a whole needs to be further compressed. The election time including campaigning period is too long. It may be reduced to around 10 days for the valley and 15 days for the hills. As elections are being conducted regularly voters are capable of assessing the political parties and their candidates easily in 10 days. The campaigning materials used by the parties/candidates be restricted to some considerable items. It should be limited to only party flags, symbols and posters of the candidate concerned. No other campaign literature/materials should be allowed to be used. Because, people know that which

party or candidate is the best. Unnecessary spending on campaigning in the name of election should be considered a 'crime' to the nation's developmental process.<sup>2</sup>

Today, election promises has become hollow promises in most case. So, any party when it comes to power, if unable to fulfil its election promises, must be disqualified from contesting the next elections on the ground of cheating and dishonouring the mandate of the people. The election dispute should be decided expeditiously and disposed off within a reasonable period of time say six months as in the case of bi-elections. Keeping election disputes on pending till the next election comes may strengthen the electoral malpractices. So quick disposal of election petitions are imperative. Otherwise, there is no meaning of lodging complaints. Special courts may also be constituted for this purposes.<sup>3</sup>

So long as elections are held and multi-party system exists in India, election alliances are unavoidable. However, law must restrict the formation of post-poll alliance considering the chances to form the ministry. Pre-poll-alliances is mandatory. Anti-Defection law should be amended to remove the lacunae so that any elected representative who leaves the party, be or she, must vacate the seat forthwith. Once a candidate contests and wins seat on the platform of a particular political party. He/she should not be allowed to change allegiance/affiliation throughout the term for which he or she has been elected. Any change in party affiliation would have tantamount to his/her disqualification. This will strengthen the stability in government. The law may provide for disqualification of the members going out of the parent party in any number.<sup>4</sup>

Law must also try to limit the number of candidates by placing certain criteria. There must be some specific qualification for the aspiring candidates to fight the elections. The law should prescribe a minimum educational qualification

for candidates - perhaps a University degree. This may reduce the mushrooming of candidates thereby reducing the electoral expenses to be borne by the state. One needs certain qualifications for holding a job, public office etc. Why not for the candidates who are suppose to hold a dignified post .A lay man or criminals playing politics cannot be the right and deserving proposition to hold such a prestigious post Moreover, many candidates desired to contest election simultaneously from more than one constituency to win the seat by hook or by crook. But in the event of victory/success from more than one constituency, he/she has to vacate the other seat necessitating by elections causing unavoidable strain on manpower and financial resources of the state. So no candidate should be permitted and allowed to contest election simultaneously from more than one constituency. It must be restricted by law in all's interest.<sup>5</sup>

It is also imperative to have a total ban on the Independent candidates. Since India has adopted party system, the election should be fought on party lines but not on an individual capacity. There is no justification for allowing independent candidates. Allowing Independents to contest election may undermine the character of party system. As well, it also creates a lot of problems in printing ballot papers; confusion to voters' choice of candidate, allotment of symbols etc.<sup>6</sup> To eliminate the menace of independent candidates only registered political parties should be permitted to contest elections. The formation of various new political parties creates problems and burdens to the entire election process as well as instability in government. Possibly the mushrooming of political parties should be checked and prevented at the cost of the stability in government. Their number be drastically reduced by law, providing for a reasonably higher percentage of nation-wide or state wide vote being compulsory for recognition and registration as a national or state party.<sup>7</sup>

A Party must be at least more than five year old before it can contest any election to public office or membership to any legislature. For the registration and recognition of parties, it should function and organise its activities for not less than five years. The party must have a sizeable membership in all the territorial constituencies. Those parties which are unable to secure at least 50 percent votes in the polls for two consecutive election contest must also be derecognised and eliminated from the next elections. Once it has done, it cannot be revived again. Automatically the party will cease to exist. (Some eminent personalities like Subhash C. Kashyap proposed for a reasonably higher percentage of nation-wide or state-wide vote being compulsory for recognition and registration as a national or state party).

The elected members should represent the views of the majority of the people in the society. No candidate should be declared elected unless he/she has secured 50 percent of total votes polled. Only candidates securing more than 50 percent of votes polled should be declared elected. If no candidate secures that kind of support, immediately within a week's time, there should be a repoll to ascertain who gets the requisite number of votes. This condition would reduced the possibility of weak candidates getting elected. This system also will eliminate the weak and frivolous candidates from contesting the election.

It is said people are "sovereign and powerful." This sovereign power is however, limited to a few moment-the moment to seal the ballot papers to elect their representatives. For the rest of the period till the next election comes, they are powerless. They do not have control over their legislators/ representatives when the latter indulged in undemocratic practices such as defection, redefection (Floor-crossing), corruption, scams, scandals, etc. V.M. Sirsikar rightly pointed out that "The

general elections endow a temporary personality to the common citizens. They are crowned as “the sovereign voters.” In a sense this sovereignty is very real as the voters collectively decide upon the set of elite who would rule the next term of five years. But at the same time the sovereignty is very transient. It lapses the day the polling is over. No elite neither the elected nor the defeated feels concerned about “the sovereigns” for five years. The voters return to their daily drab routine without their ‘crowns’.<sup>9</sup> So, today, there has arisen the necessity to adopt and introduce into practice the devices of Direct Democracy as prevalent in Switzerland as the only devices to check upon the unethical and irresponsible behaviour of the legislators. Only then they can be checked by due process when the situation arises. The Election Commission should be given “Statutory Power.” Law must empower the Commission to disqualify any candidate/party who violate the election codes, rules, instructions and laws, without enabling the political parties/ candidates to appeal to the judicial courts.

In the present context, considering the instability in government, it is high time to increase the required majority to form a government from simple majority to two-thirds majority. The government should be formed and removed by the two-thirds majority of the members of the lower House. It would help the government to work without the Damocles’ Sword of uncertainty hanging over its head. It is also necessary to consider the efficacy of certain proposed measures for curbing the influences of money power, such as making the submission of an audited account of income with the EC obligatory for every political party, and a complete ban on donations by companies to political parties, particularly in the present context of clandestine political deals in multicore financial scams of diverse sorts. Measure to make political parties function on democratic lines are worth our considerations. It is also necessary to evaluate the suitability and efficacy of the

following and also other measures to prevent booth-capturing and scientific rigging of elections and to make election free and fair, the issue of identity cards with photographs to every electors, the use of electronic voting machine, maintenance and revision of electoral rolls with accuracy and completeness; statutory sanction for the model code of conduct formulated by the EC; keeping out persons with proving criminal records from electoral contest as proposed by the EC; the voters right to recall; the voters right to reject undesirable and frivolous candidates. The criteria for registering and recognising political parties and de-registering and de-recognising them should be clearly stated and well established. The registration criteria should relate to clear objectives and representational character of the party, its non discriminatory activities and its commitment to public service.. No party which is based on religious, communal or caste appeal should be recognised as a political party. A political party which promotes communalism either before, during or after elections should be dereorganised and disqualified from contesting the elections. Only such political parties should be registered and continue to be recognised which practise internal democracy and adhere to the democratic process of regular elections of their office bearers from the grassroots to the state or national levels. The political party which does not follow the democratic norms within cannot be expected to adhere to these outsides.<sup>10</sup> Prescribing of strict and reasonable ceilings through elections laws on expenditure that be incurred by contesting candidates, periodic revision of such ceilings and very strict enforcement of these laws and rules are essential to curb the growing menace of money power in elections. There should be limits on expenditure to be incurred on vehicles, publicity, literature, posters, hoarding, public address system, meetings, advertisements, etc, The use of muscle power has again become a menace in elections. It results in impersonation, intimidation,

booth-capturing and vote rigging. It is very important to remove the threat or use of muscle power by strengthening the polling and law and order machinery, by introducing the identity card system and by providing exemplary punishment for infractions. One of the suggestions is that no arms should be allowed to be carried by contesting candidates, their supporters or voters during elections. There should be a model code of conduct not only for political parties but also for the candidates. The model code of conduct should be strictly enforced and a breach of the code by a candidate should warrant severe punishment. The need for a massive national voter awareness campaign is both desirable and essential. The voter must be made aware of the importance of his right of franchise and its free and fair exercise. He or she must know the laws and rules of conduct and must be motivated to help the process of democracy by exercising his or her right of franchise in a free, fair and independent way.<sup>11</sup>

The use of money power and muscle power in elections has corroded the very fabric of our body politics and political system. Competitive use of money and muscle power and escalating costs have also become a serious menace. To curb this, it will be desirable to supplement the present financial limits for election related expenses by physical limit also e.g. low cost specifications regarding number, size, material and colour of handbills, poster, hoardings and wall paintings, newspapers, radio and TV advertisements, number of vehicles and election campaigners used (to keep down money power) and also to ban large electioneering meeting needing use of more than one microphone, all election related procession and use of unregistered and unapproved election campaigners. All campaigners should be checked by an agency appointed by the Election Commission for their suitability and issued identity badges to keep out known

‘goonda’ elements (to keep down muscle power). Since all the informations that the voters really need is qualification, experience, party affiliation and objectives of the candidates, no costly, hi-tech and highly competitive publicity campaign is necessary. Every political party (as well as a candidate) seeking an election symbol must sign a pledge in writing that it (and he or she) accepts unreservedly the unity and integrity of India and adjures propaganda against any religious group or tribe or language and other fissiparous or chauvinistic action that can adversely affect national unity and integrity.<sup>12</sup>

Election law and procedures need to be reformed. Criminals, mafias, charge-sheeter, and those involving in scams/corruptions (whether convicted or cases pending against them in judicial courts for decision) should be debarred from contesting elections.<sup>13</sup>

Success of democracy depends on free and fair elections. In order to have free and fair elections, a consideration of strengthening the Election Commission with more power and its own cadre of officers to man its key offices in the states, the partial less list system as prevalent in Germany with a knowledge of certain difficulties in operationalising this in the Indian context; state funding of elections for the recognised national and state parties and their candidates as justified by the Indrajit Gupta Committee, Compulsory voting law, auditing of the accounts of political parties, and rules for ensuring inner party democracy and political parties are important measures. These measures will also go a long way in ensuring political reforms necessary for a healthier political life in the country. Such drastic steps would be needed to strengthen the system and avoid the chances of disunity and disintegration of the country and to cope up with new problems and



challenges. If these steps and reforms delayed further, may imperil the democratic foundation of our polity. They are the need of the hour.

The study of February 1995 Assembly polls in Manipur experienced growing intensity of political competition among the various political parties contesting the election. Still the power struggle has been between MPP and Congress-I. In this election too, the long domination of Congress party in both the government as well as politics in the state was also experienced heavily challenged by the non-congress parties particularly the Manipur Peoples party. Though the hill constituencies has been the strong bastion of Congress, it saw a sea change in this election. The Congress-I suffered a set back in the hills except in Ukhrul district. As in the previous elections, no contesting party could secure a workable majority in the election. It seemed that except, Congress-I and MPP, the future of other parties are fast declining with no bright future. The parties in their struggle for power started adopting sensitive issues, regional appeals, and emphasis to local problems to win the election. The MPP played with the sentiments of the plainsmen to hit the electoral jackpot. During the election, the tentacles of ethnicity emerged for the first time in the political history of Manipur. The protection of Manipur's territorial integrity became the most important election propaganda during the election. The election also indicates that the majority section of the electorates were dissatisfied with the existing system in the state. They could not tolerate floor-crossing, corruption etc. So, many of them were rejected by the voters for dishonouring the peoples' mandate. Election promises has been hollow promises so far as socio-economic conditions and hardships of the people are concerned. The election also manifested that party politics in Manipur does not get deep-rooted. The successive election results also indicate that the electorates do

not have full confidence to any particular party as no party could secure a workable majority till date in the elections. In many cases, the voters cast their votes mainly on the line of candidates. Though the female voters outnumbered the male voters, still the electorate has no confidence to women candidates as none of them returned in the election. A denial to hand over the reins of the governance of State Affairs. Another aspect is that majority of the candidates were not upto the mark of the people. In the eye of the people both the parties and candidates are equally good or bad so far as their performance is concerned only a few of them deserved to be peoples representatives, so voted irrespective of their party affiliations. The election of many new and young candidates appears that the electorate do not like the old and seasoned politicians/leaders to be their life time representative. The election also shows that energetic, and educated candidates with personality won the seat. There are several reason for defeat of the existing MLAs and ministers in the election, disillusionment with them being the most common. Today, the electorate have become quite conscious of their voting rights, and mature enough of the electoral process and techniques as provided by the regular elections.

Thus, in the politics of Manipur we find the element of aggravation of regionalism and sectarianism. The need for a concerted and meaningful action in regard to political modernisation in the state is imperative. The party system needs re-structuring and re-orientation to make political competition healthy and genuinely democratic. At the same time, the political ethos among the electorate need to be modernised by education, and socio-economic improvement which would ensure better political awareness, stronger political efficacy and reasonable degree of stable political affiliations and relationships. Thus the political leaders, elites and social scientists have to apply their mind earnestly to the problems of

democratisation of the “developing society” in this part of the Indian Union.<sup>15</sup> In fact, it is high time for all the political parties to review their political blunder to open new vistas in the politics of the state of Manipur.

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