

**ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF VOTING  
BEHAVIOUR**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
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**ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

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### **Certificate**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, **“ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR”**, submitted by Steffi C Beingiachhiezi, for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**, is a research work, done under my supervision and guidance. The thesis, submitted by her has not formed the basis for the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as a dissertation or thesis in any university. I also certify that the thesis represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

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**DECLARATION**  
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I **STEFFI C BEINGIACHHIEZI**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this 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 do 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 1

### INTRODUCTION

Democracy as a form of government has been defined in terms of sources of authority for government, purposes served by government, and procedures for constituting government. The central procedure of democracy is the selection of leaders through elections by the people they govern. The most important modern formulation of this concept of democracy was done by Joseph Schumpeter in 1942. In his pathbreaking study, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Schumpeter spelled out the deficiencies of what he termed the classical theory of democracy, which defined democracy in terms of the will of the people (source) and the common good (purpose). He also labeled another theory of democracy, the democratic method in which the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions acquires the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.<sup>1</sup>

Democracy is regarded as the best type of Government in modern times and nearly everyone believes in democracy and the electoral process. The durability of democracy stems from the fact that in this system of government, the citizens get full opportunities for expressing his will, developing his personality and his faculties for social, economic and political justice. It has rapidly become a culture in itself, a deliberate cultivation of an intellectual passion in people. Democracy is a form of government in which the sovereign power rests in the hands of the people and is exercised by them either directly or indirectly through their representatives.<sup>2</sup>

To appreciate the full role of elections in a democratic system it has to be considered from different angles that, from the point of view of the individual voter, elections are the means by which he takes his share in political power by voting for the representative of his choice. Secondly, from the point of view of the voters collectively, elections are the means by which they bring the decision-makers under popular control, a control that is ever present in the office (or in the case of aspiring candidates out of

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, P. 6. z-lib.org. <https://bok.asia/book/1115592/>. accessed on 25-02-2021.

<sup>2</sup> Raisa Ali. (1996). *Representative Democracy and The Concept of Free And Fair Elections*. Deep & Deep Publications: New Delhi, p. 1.



office) may affect their chances at the next election. And lastly, from the point of view of the representatives, the election result is an authorization to make decisions to govern within the broad drift of a policy platform, if there is one, subject to the sanction of the next election. Thus, the election result invests representatives and their decisions with legitimacy. In short, the Government which is produced-almost as a by-product and invested with legitimacy is the Chief social purpose of the whole electoral process.<sup>3</sup>

In a contemporary political system, democracy or otherwise, elections are the most significant aspects for they remain the first and foremost touchstone based on which the parameters of representation and legitimacy of a system are to be judged. Elections though complicated, provide a link between the society and the polity and between the traditional social systems and evolving political structures. Therefore, the elections must be analyzed within the context of the complete political and social systems.

Besides being a formal act of collective decision, they involve a stream of connected antecedent and subsequent behaviour and a concatenation of thousands of events, significant and trivial. Nevertheless, elections perform different roles in different political systems. In some situations, they are the central while in others they may be peripheral. Thus, the Elections are devices for legitimacy, identification, integration, communication, political education, participation, socialization, mobilization, conflict-resolution, political choice, political control, and are inextricably linked with the distinctive characteristics, traditions, experiences, values and goals of different political systems. Broadly, election may be regarded as the procedure for authoritatively aggregating political preferences of the mass electorate.<sup>4</sup>

Gerald Pomper in Sushma Yadav's *Election Commission and Electoral Process* describes election as "the great public ceremonies of American life". This is even truer in developing countries where elections are newer and often more exciting experiences. They are, thus, not only great festivals providing entertainment and excitement for virtually the entire population but also acquired what Albinski and Petit have the term in

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<sup>3</sup> Opt. cit., p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Sushma Yadav. (2018). *Election Commission and Electoral Process*. Uttar Pradesh: Pearson Publication. p. 277.

Sushma Yadav's as "a sacramental or commemorative aspect" and have become a conspicuous symbol of nationhood and social purpose." This is true, as in the words of Morris-Jones and Biplab Dasgupta in Sushma Yadav's, "Elections in India provide the occasion for the widest degree of popular participation: they constitute the most important single arena for genuine competition between political groups: they are the principal agency through which recruitment to a significant part of the political elite is affected: and the skills and resources which they essentially call forth figure prominently in political life in general."

Unlike the new states in the developing world, elections in India have been central, not peripheral to the system. They have no doubt, been conditioned by the ancient, heterogeneous and basically traditional nature of the social system and the general environmental factors; they have also greatly influenced the nature and evolution of the entire political system termed "the immense transformational impact of our electoral system" by Imtiaz Ahmed in Sushma Yadav's *Election Commission and Electoral Process*.<sup>5</sup>

Voting is one of the most commonly used terms in the contemporary age of democratic politics. The ever-increasing popularity of democratic theory and practice has even made this term a household name. In a democratic system, and their number is quite large and ever-increasing, each adult citizen uses "voting", as a means of expressing his approval or disapproval of government decisions, policies, and programmes of various political parties and qualities of candidates who are engaged in the struggle to get the status of being the representatives of people.<sup>6</sup>

The study of voting behaviour has different connotations for different academic disciplines and the factors/variables they probe and compute are also different from each other. The sociological or social contextual approach refers to the social settings in which the individuals or voters function and their voting behaviour is affected. On the other hand, the discipline of political science computes voting behaviour using political factors such as electoral issues, political programs, electoral campaigns, and the

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<sup>5</sup> Opt. cit., p. 278.

<sup>6</sup> Biraj, Hazarika. (2015). *Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants*. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Vol. 20. Issue.10, Ver. IV (Oct, 2015). p.22.

popularity of the political parties and leaders based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The focus of political science on enquiry in election study has focused on three main areas: the structure and motivations of the electorate, the operation and effect of the party and election system, and the impact of social and political institutions on voting behaviour. Political theorists are concerned with understanding the political community and the political animal, and to understand them eventually by means of precise and general statements.<sup>7</sup>

Voting is one of the most visible forms of political participation in democratic countries. The overall purpose of election studies is to find out the voting patterns and trends based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The purpose of election studies is not only to present the narrative account of various events that take place during elections but also to scientifically identify and explain the recurring causal dynamics underlying the particular events of that election based on voters' opinions and feedback. The data on the voting process available with election bodies provided the impetus to the psephologists to collect further electoral data through opinion polls for measuring voting behaviour and attitudes of voters.<sup>8</sup>

Samuel S. Eldersveld in his "*Theory and Method in Voting Behaviour Research*" writes the term "voting behaviour" is not new. But it has been used of late to describe certain areas of study and types of political phenomenon which previously had either not been conceived or were considered irrelevant." The study of electoral behaviour constitutes a very significant area of empirical investigation. The electoral behaviour displays the astounding fact that the behaviour of man is influenced by several irrational factors, the influence of money or charismatic personality of a leader and a host of irrational factors can have their influence on the minds of the voters.<sup>9</sup>

India is the largest working democracy in the world. In the latest Lok Sabha election in 2019, the voter's turnout was 67.11 percent beating the previous turnout of 65.95 percent notched up in 2014, according to the data released by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Generally, in India as a whole, voting behavior is influenced

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<sup>7</sup>Sanjay, Kumar. (2013). *Measuring Voting Behaviour*. New Delhi: Sage Publication. P.7

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp.8-9.

<sup>9</sup> Zahida Akhter, Younis Ah. Sheikh. (2014). Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, Vol 4. No. 8, 2014. p. 105.

by various factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, the purpose of the polls, the extent of franchise and the like political parties and groups make use of these factors for the sake of winning the battle of the ballot box. Politicians despite making their professions for enlightened secularism, can be found making appeals to religious and communal sentiments of the people, and are also found involved in exploiting the factors of language and money to achieve the purpose of emerging successful in the war of votes.<sup>10</sup>

### **Theoretical aspects of voting behaviour:**

The scientific study of voting behaviour is marked by three major research schools: the sociological school, often identified as the School of Columbia, with the main reference in Applied Bureau of Social Research of Columbia University, whose work begins with the publication of the book *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944) and focuses on the influences of social factors; The Psychological model, also identified as School of Michigan, which has its major reference in the work of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960)- *The American Voter*-and assumes that party identification is the main factor behind the behaviour of voters; and rational choice theory also referred to as a model of economic voting, or even as School of Rochester, whose landmark work is the work of Anthony Downs (1957)- *An Economic Theory of Democracy*-and that puts emphasis on variables such as rationality, choice, uncertainty and information.<sup>11</sup>

### **School of Colombia (Sociological model of voting behaviour):**

The theoretical assumptions of the sociological model of voting behavior are defined in three essential works: *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944), *Voting* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld & McPhee, 1954) and *Personal Influence* (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). The research was conducted at Ohio State (Erie County), using a questionnaire as a technique of investigation for the first time in the study of a US Presidential election. The study focused on the study of the psychological mechanisms involved in the processes of choice and the effects of publicity, advertising and mass

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<sup>10</sup> Opt. cit. p.23.

<sup>11</sup> Rui Antunes. *Theoretical Models of Voting Behaviour*. Escola Superior de Educacao-Instituto Politecnico de Coimbra. P.146.

media on consumer behavior had two main objectives in this research: to study the effects of exposure to the media to know how the voters arrive at their decisions and the role of media in the process. The report of the study was published under the title *The People's Choice* in which it identifies the voters who changed their position during the campaign period.<sup>12</sup>

The central hypothesis of the study was that the act of voting is an individual act, affected mainly by the personality of the voter and his exposure to the media. The results, however, contradict the main thesis, suggesting the effect of social groups to which they belonged. The main finding was that the majority of voters voted according to their original political predisposition. The association between electoral behaviour and the social groups to which they belonged was so strong that it was possible to explain the electoral choices using only the three factors that defined the Index of Political Predisposition used in research: socio-economic status, religion, and area of residence.<sup>13</sup>

Individual's attitudes are formed and reinforced by their membership in social groups such as their social class, ethnic group, religious group, and associations to which they belong. They found that people under cross-pressures were most likely to change. The limitation of this model is that it fails to explain the variation that occurs in a specific election due to economic factors. While social factors may explain the long-term stability of voting behaviour, they do not explain the variations that occurred in different elections. In order to overcome this problem, the psychosocial model was developed in Michigan using the concept of partisanship, which seeks to link the long-term historical and social factors and the short-term political and social factors that were characteristics of each election.

#### **School of Michigan (Psychosocial Model of Voting Behaviour):**

The psychosocial model has its origin in studies conducted by the Survey Research Centre at the University of Michigan during the 1948 US presidential elections, its results analyzed by Campbell and Kahn (1952) in the *People Elect a President: the elections of 1952's Report* was presented by Campbell, Gurin and Miller

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p.147.

(1954) in *The Voter Decides*; and elections in 1956, where results, combined with those obtained in previous investigations, have led to the book *The American Voter*, written by Campbell, Converse Miller and Stokes (1960). The central concept of this model of voting behaviour is partisanship, which is designed as a psychological affinity, stable and lasting relationship with a political party that does not necessarily translate into a concrete link, namely registration, or consistently voting and systematic militancy with this party:

*“In characterizing the relation of individual to party as a psychological identification we invoke a concept that has played an important if somewhat varied role in psychological theories of the relation of individual to individual or of an individual to group. We use the concept here to characterize the individual’s affective orientation to an important group object in his environment. Both reference group theory and small group studies of influence have converged upon the attracting or repelling quality of the group as the generalized dimension most critical in defining the individual-group relationship, and it is this dimension that we will call identification.”*<sup>14</sup>

According to the Author, partisanship is acquired through a socialization process, influenced by the values and attitudes of family, colleagues and peers, a process that Miller and Shanks (1996) considered similar to that which leads subjects to identify with a religion. This emotional link between the subject with ‘their’ political party can be achieved with varying degrees of involvement in a process analogues to what happens with the connection of individuals to a religion, manifested in ways as different as going from non-religious to deeply religious. In this perspective, partisanship is a genuine form of social identification in which *“citizens have an enduring sense of what sorts of people belong to various parties and whether they identify with these social groups”*.<sup>15</sup>

The study also attempts to explain the electoral behaviour of a person in terms of the funnel of causality which represents the chain of events that contribute to the vote of the subjects, distinguishing distal factors such as socio-economic and historical factors, values and attitudes and membership groups and proximal factors such as issues,

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<sup>14</sup> Rui Antunes. (2010). *Theoretical Models of Voting Behaviour*. Instituto Politecnico de Coimbra: Escola Superior de Educacao. p. 154.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 154.

candidates, election campaign, political and economic situation, the government action, influence of friends. At the entrance of the funnel are the sociological and social characteristics that influence the next element of this sequence that is partisanship. Partisanship has, in turn, a decisive role in evaluating candidates, the issues, the incidents of the campaign that are reported in the media and the conversations that voters have with family and friends about the election. the output of this funnel is the vote. This scheme clarifies the central role of partisanship as a result of the combination of dispositional and long-term factors and as a factor moderating the effect of short-term variables on voting behaviour.<sup>16</sup>

Although the model encompasses all these factors, it focuses its attention on the relationship of partisanship, candidates and issues and less on social factors and communication systems.

#### **School of Rochester (Theory of Rational Choice):**

The theoretical background for an economic explanation of voting behaviour has been submitted by Anthony Downs (1957) work on “An Economic Theory of Democracy.” This theory is commonly referred to as rational choice theory. This theory attempts to explain electoral behaviour taking as its starting point the work done within the political economy by Kenneth Arrow (1951, 1986) that relates economic parameters resources, goods, and technology with a potential outcome or choice. The premise is simple, if the assumptions of rational choice are able to explain the market, then they can explain the political functioning. It establishes a direct analogy between consumers and voters and between enterprises and political parties. If companies seek to maximise profits and consumers act to maximize the utility, it can, then, theorize in the sense that voters seek to maximize the utility of their vote as the parties act to maximize electoral gains obtained from their political proposals.

*“Our main thesis is that parties in democratic politics are analogous to entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy. So as to attain their private ends, they formulate whatever policies they believe will gain the most votes, just as entrepreneurs produce whatever products they believe will gain the most profits for the same reason. In*

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.155.

*order to examine the implications of this thesis, we have assumed that citizens behave rationally in politics, this premise is itself a second major hypothesis.”<sup>17</sup>*

The operation of the model is based on three fundamental premises: (1) all decisions- those that are made by voters and political parties-are rational, i.e. guided by self interest and enforced in accordance with the principle of maximization of action’s utility; (2) the democratic political system implies a level of consistency that supports predictions about the consequences of decisions made by voters and political parties, i.e., their agents-voters,, parties and government are responsible and trustworthy, which makes it possible to make predictions about the consequences that result from different choices, and (3) the democratic system assumes- despite the consistency stated in the previous point-a level of uncertainty, sufficiency important to allow different options.

### **Profile of Mizoram**

Mizoram is a hilly area located in the northeastern part of the country and is bounded by Myanmar (Burma) to the east and south, and Bangladesh to the west. The state of Tripura to the northwest, and Assam to the north, and Manipur to the northeast. Mizoram was known as the Lushai Hills District of Assam before it was renamed the Mizo Hills District in 1954. In 1972 Mizoram became a centrally administered union territory under the name of Mizoram, and in 1987 became a full-fledged State on 20th February 1987 consequent upon the signing of the Peace Accord between the Government of India and Mizo National Front in 1986.<sup>18</sup> It became the 23rd state of the Indian Union. There are 11 districts, namely, Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Mamit, Saiha, Serchhip, Hnathial, Saitual and Khawzawl. <sup>19</sup>As per the details of 2011 Census, Mizoram has a population of 10.97 Lakhs, an increase from the figure of 8.89 Lakh in the 2001 census. The total population of Mizoram as per the latest census data is 1,097,206 of which males and females are 555,339 and 541,867 respectively. The population of Mizoram forms 0.09 percent of India in 2011. The literacy rate in Mizoram is 91.33 percent as per the 2011 population census. Majority of the population are Christians

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Downs. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row Publisher: New York. pp.295-296.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.protocol.mizoram.gov.in/page/profile-of-mizoram> accessed on 17-04-2023.

<sup>19</sup> <https://mizoram.nic.in/gov/dc.htm> accessed on 17-04-2023.



with 87.16 percent of the State population, Hinduism is the second most popular religion in Mizoram state with 2.75 percent.<sup>20</sup>

There are three Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) for ethnic tribes in Mizoram, namely the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC), Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) and Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC).<sup>21</sup> The State Capital, Aizawl is under the civic administration of Aizawl Municipal Corporation. Aizawl Municipal Corporation was formed in 2010 with 19 members. The AMC office is administered by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Commissioner. It consists of 19 elected members representing 19 wards of the city and others appointed by the Governor of Mizoram. One-third of the total membership is reserved for women, these six seats shall be rotated after every five years. The tenure of the Corporation is five years. There is a Ward Committee in every ward that consists of a Chairman, who is an elected Councillor from that ward, and two members each from all the local councils within the ward. There are 83 local councils that have a term of 5 years.<sup>22</sup>

Before the advent of the British, Mizoram, the then Lushai Hills was under the control and authority of numerous local tribal Chiefs. Tribe and clan distinctions and classifications had a great bearing on the setting up of villages. Village administration tends to differ from village to village and from clan to clan. The Chiefs tried to protect and maintain their territorial integrity, security, authority and supremacy by defeating and destabilizing their enemies. As a result, wars were frequently fought between the Chiefs. Thus, weaker clans had to take refuge from stronger clans. The Chiefs were the ultimate source of authority and as such the prosperity, strength or weakness of each clan and society greatly depended upon the administrative capabilities and qualities of their respective Chiefs. The powers and

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/mizoram.html> accessed on 17-04-2023.

<sup>21</sup> <https://ladc.mizoram.gov.in/page/brief-history-of-ladc> accessed on 17-04-2023.

<sup>22</sup> <https://amcmizoram.com/page/about-us> accessed on 17-04-2023.

authorities of the Chiefs were slowly and gradually reduced with the annexation of the Lushai Hills by the British in 1891.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of the British annexation after the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-1890, the administration of Mizoram, then Lushai Hills was divided into two divisions, namely, North Lushai Hills with headquarters at Aizawl and South Lushai Hills with headquarters at Lunglei. The North Lushai Hills District was under the control of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, while the South Lushai Hills District was under the supervision and control of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. After the Chin-Lushai Conference, 1892, the two Lushai Hills were amalgamated into one district in 1898, with a Superintendent designated as in-charge of the district. Since then, there had been several sociopolitical developments within the district. The Mizo Hills had transformed itself into a democratic order from the authoritarian Chiefs.<sup>24</sup>

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF MIZORAM**

Mizoram contributed two members of Parliament, one each in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The strength of Mizoram Legislative Assembly stands at 40 since the attainment of statehood as the Indian Union in 1987. Since then, elections to the members of Legislative Assembly have been held every five years in the State.<sup>25</sup>

The State of Mizoram has come across Eleven Legislative Assembly elections since it attained Union Territory (UT) and two mid-term legislative assembly elections in 1979 and 1989. The results of the legislative assembly elections demonstrate that since the very first legislative elections, the voter turnout in every election has been high varying from 72.90 percent in 1972 to 83.41 percent in the 2013 election.<sup>26</sup>

To understand the electoral history of Mizoram, the electoral politics of Mizoram since Mizo District Council era, electoral politics in the Union Territory era and after Statehood should be traced back. Since the formation of the Lushai Hills District

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<sup>23</sup> Opt. cit., p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Zarzosanga. *Elections in Mizoram: A Study of the Role of the Mizoram People Forum*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. (. Pp.15-16)

<sup>25</sup> Zoramthanga. (2016), *Voting Behaviour of Youth in Aizawl District: A Case Study of the Seventh Assembly Election*. Unpublished Dissertation. p. 7, p. 23.

<sup>26</sup> K. C., Lalthansanga. (2018), *Mizoram Elections Results & Statistics*. Aizawl: Daifim Print & Publication. p. 163.

Advisory Council in 1948, the Mizo Union completely dominated the electoral scene. An Advisory Council election was held, out of 35 members 10 seats were reserved for the Chief's Representatives and 25 were reserved for commoners representatives. The Advisory Council was changed into Advisory Committee in 1949, which functioned till 1951.<sup>27</sup>

From the first election to the third election to the District Council, Mizo Union (MU) dominated the electoral scene and formed the Executive Committee (government). The main reason behind the success of Mizo Union was mainly due to its commitment to the abolition of Chieftainship for improvement of the socio-economic and political conditions of the common people.<sup>28</sup> The Fourth election was to be held in 1967 but it was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1970 due to Mizo National Front (MNF) Insurgency. At the fourth and last election to the Mizo District Council, the Congress party won 10 seats. But the Congress was unable to form a stable government (Executive Committee) in the District Council. As a result, the Mizo Union formed a coalition government headed by Ch. Chhunga as the Chief Executive Member which lasted till the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972.<sup>29</sup>

### **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE UNION TERRITORY OF MIZORAM**

The first election to the Legislative Assembly of the newly elevated Union Territory of Mizoram was held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1972 and the total number of elected seats in the Legislative Assembly was 30. The Mizo Union won 21 seats, Indian National Congress (INC) won 6 seats and Independent candidate won 3 seats.<sup>30</sup> The first government of the Union Territory of Mizoram was formed by Mizo Union with Ch. Chhunga as the first Chief Minister. This election marked the increasing participation of national political parties in the Union Territory in the years to come.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Jangkhongam Doungel. (2010), *Evolution of District Autonomy in Mizoram*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publication. p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Lalrintluanga. (2016). *The Genesis and Functioning of the Mizo District Council* in Doungel, Jangkhongam (2016). *Autonomy movement and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publication. P. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Opt. cit., p. 184.

<sup>30</sup> Opt. cit., p. 10

<sup>31</sup> A.P.K Singh. (2016), *Political Scenario of Mizoram: Past and Present*, Mittal Publication: New Delhi, p. 84.

In the second election to the Legislative Assembly election, the People's Conference (PC) got a landslide victory by winning 22 seats out of 30 seats, a PC government was formed with Brig. T. Sailo as the Chief Minister. However, it could hardly survive only for five months because leadership crisis and dissident activities in the ministry automatically led to a vertical split in the PC party. Subsequently, the party was split up into two parties PC or PC (A) led by Brigadier T. Sailo and PC (B) led by Thangridema.<sup>32</sup> On 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1978, the Union Territory of Mizoram was placed under the President's Rule. PC (A) retained and continued functioning as PC afterward.

The third election was held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1979, it was a mid-term poll. Out of 30 seats, PC won 18 seats, INC won 5 seats, People's Conference (B) won 4 seats and Janata Party won 2 and Independent candidate won 1 seat.<sup>33</sup> The fourth and last election to the Legislative Assembly was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1984. The election resulted in a decisive victory for the Congress by winning 20 seats and formed the government under the leadership of Lalthanhawla and remaining in power till Mizoram became a full-fledged State.<sup>34</sup>

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS AFTER STATEHOOD**

After Mizoram became a full-fledged State, the electoral scene was more or less characterized by a two-party dominant system wherein Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) were interchangeably voted into power. Even though there were times when smaller parties joined either INC or MNF to form a coalition government, the dominant parties happened to be either INC or MNF. The first general of the State Legislative Assembly was held in 1987 and MNF formed the first State Government with Laldenga as Chief Minister by winning 24 seats. However, Laldenga's Ministry could not survive a year due to internal party problems.<sup>35</sup> As a result, a mid-term election was conducted in 1989 and Congress formed the State government with Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister by winning 23 seats.

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<sup>32</sup> C. Hermana. (1999), *Zoram Politics Thil Tleh Dan* – Vol. II (1972-1999), published by the author. Aizawl: Pressom Production. Pp. 43-45.

<sup>33</sup> Opt. cit., p. 37.

<sup>34</sup> Opt. cit., p. 112.

<sup>35</sup> K. C. Lalmalsawmzauva, Which Political Party is Where: Voting Behaviour in Aizawl City, *www.researchgate.net*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340571606>. accessed on 01-04-2021.

The third Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on November, 1993 and a coalition government was formed Indian National Congress (INC) led by Lalthanhawla and the Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) led by Brig. T. Sailo was the coalition partner. However, before the coalition ministry had completed its full term, the MJD was thrown out from the Ministry and it subsequently became pure INC Ministry.<sup>36</sup> In the fourth Mizoram Legislative Assembly held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1998, the MNF led by Zoramthanga won 21 seats and MPC led by Brig. T. Sailo won 12 seats and they formed a coalition government.<sup>37</sup>

The Fifth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2003. The MNF won 21 seats and formed the government again with Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for the second time. After the MNF Ministry led by Zoramthanga had completed its full term, the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008. In this election, the then ruling party MNF party could secure only 3 seats and this poor result of MNF had surprised not only the voters but also its party workers. The Congress had a thumping majority by winning 32 seats from the total 40 seats. The Congress had formed new Ministry with Lalthanhawla as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for the Fourth time. The essentiality of the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly was that Mizoram People Forum (MPF) which was formed way back in 2006 could play constructive role for conduct of free and fair election.<sup>38</sup>

The Seventh State Legislative Assembly election was successfully held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. The Indian National Congress led by Lalthanhawla returned to power in this election with an unexpected victory by securing 34 seats out of the total 40 seats. The MNF and its alliance could only secure 6 seats and no other political party could secure even a single seat. The Congress led by Lalthanhawla formed the new ministry. The Seventh State Legislative Assembly Election of Mizoram was concluded peacefully

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph C. Lalremruata. (2018). *Assembly Elections in Mizoram: A Study of Fifth to Seventh Assembly Elections (2003-2013)*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Mizoram University, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

and successfully due to the efforts and cooperation of officials, media, and civil societies.<sup>39</sup>

The Eight State Legislative Assembly of Mizoram was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018. In this election, the MNF returned to power by winning 26 seats. The MNF led by Zoramthanga formed government. In this election, the newly formed political forum Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) surprisingly won 8 seats out of nowhere and emerged as the second-largest party in the State Legislative Assembly.

### **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AREA OF MIZORAM**

After the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC), the first two terms of the PLRC were dominated by the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU). Since the PLTU was the only political party, there was no question of setting up official candidates for the elections. In the first term, the PLRC functioned smoothly but it was disturbed by the untimely demise of some of its members.<sup>40</sup> In the Second term of the PLRC, the Lakhers demanded the post of CEM to the S. D. O. because equal distribution of post was agreed upon at the time of the formation of the PLTU but it was not implemented in good faith. Therefore, the Lakher even the session in the initial stage. However, the S. D. O could not concede to the demand of the Lakhers as it was not found in the rules of the PLRC which further angered the Lakhers.<sup>41</sup>

In the Third election of the PLRC, there was a new political development with the formation of the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) before the election in 1963. The MFP demanded a separate Lakher District Council and boycotted the third election of the PLRC in 1964. Therefore, the election could be conducted only in the Pawi-dominated area. There were 6 elected members and the government was formed under the leadership of Lalchunga Chinzah. At the same time, the Lakhers also established their own parallel Lakher District Council to which they pay their taxes, revenues and all dues which they owed to the self-styled Regional Council than the PLRC. The Fourth and Last Election of the PLRC could not be held in time due to the MNF Insurgency,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> Opt. cit., p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

therefore election was held in 1970 which was also contested by the Lakhers.<sup>42</sup> For the first time, Zakhu Hlychho from the Lakher section was elected as the Chief Executive Member (CEM). However, the government led by Zakhu Hlychho faced an abrupt end within a short time and the PLRC was kept under suspended animation under the rule of administrator. After the political solution has arrived, a new Executive Committee was constituted with Zakhu Hlychho as the CEM and functioned till the trifurcation of the PLRC.

With the creation of the Union Territory of Mizoram the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council (PRC), the Lakher Regional Council (LRC) and the Chakma Regional Council (CRC) on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1972. The Headquarter of PLR was located at Lawngtlai, LRC at Saiha and CRC at Chawngte (Kamalanagar). On 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972, the three Regional Councils were upgraded to the status of full-fledged Autonomous District Council and they continued to be governed by their respective interim government till the conduct of each District Council election in 1973. Under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1988 of the Indian Parliament, the name of the Pawi Autonomous District Council was changed to Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC), and the Lakher Autonomous District Council (LADC) was changed to Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC).<sup>43</sup>

### **Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC)**

Since the formation of the first Executive Committee, the ADCs have faced political instability due to the desire for coveted posts by the politicians and defections of elected members. The first general election to the Lai Autonomous District Council was held in December 1972. The election was contested by two political parties, Congress (M)- Manghnuna faction and Congress (I)-L. Chinzah faction. Both the party was a result of a split in Congress party in LADC area. Both the party contested all the 12 seats of CADC. Congress (L) formed the first LADC government with U. Zathang as the Chief Executive Member (CEM). The Executive Committee under the leadership of U. Zathang functioned smoothly for four years. Due to the charges leveled against U.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

Zathang's administration by the two MLAs from F. Manghnuna group, an enquiry commission headed by Rohmingthanga and Agarwal was formed by the Government of Mizoram. As such, the Executive Committee was dissolved on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1976 after completion of four years.<sup>44</sup>

The second election to LADC was held in November 1977. In this election, the Janata Party led by F. Manghnuna, the People's Conference (PC) led by T. Hranghluta and United Pang People's Party (UPPP) contested the second election to LADC. The United Pang People's Party fielded one candidate as an independent as it was an unregistered party. Janata Party won 6 seats, PC won 5 seats and the UPPP won one seat. Arun Kumar Dewan, elected from Sakeilui constituency was disqualified for not submitting election expenses. By-election was held and Anil Bikash of Janata Party was elected from Sakeilui Constituency. The second term was besieged with defection and political instability. The first Executive Committee was formed by PC with F. Manghnuna as CEM on 17<sup>th</sup> November which did not last long due to defection of Two of its Members, A. Thansiamia and R. Zawlsuaknawla to the PC party. Another government was formed by PC with T. Hranghluta as CEM on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1978. On the other hand, the Janata Party was also merged with Congress and Congress became majority again with the defection of A. Thansiamia as well. Then, the Congress government was formed with F. Manghnuna as CEM on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1979. However, with the strong inducement of PC in persuading A. Thansiamia in favour of PC another government was formed by PC with T. Hranghluta as the CEM on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1979 which lasted till the end of the second term.<sup>45</sup>

Hung District emerged in the Third term and the Fifth term to the LADC. The third election to LADC was held in November 1982. The number of constituencies was also increased from 12 to 17 since the third term. Congress won 11 seats and MNF won 8 seats. The Fifth election to the Lai Autonomous District Council was held in May 1992. In this election, Congress won 7 seats, MNF won 8 seats, whereas Lairam Congress (LC) and Riang Democratic Party (RDP) won 3 seats and One seat respectively. The Sixth election to Lai Autonomous District Council was held in May

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<sup>44</sup> Jangkhongam, Doungel. (2016). *Evolution of District Council Autonomy*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publication. Pp. 77-80.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Pp. 80-83



1997. The number of constituencies was also increased from 19 to 24. The Congress won 14 seats, Lairam Peoples Party (LPP) won 3 seats, MNF won two seats and Independent candidate won 3 seats.

The Seventh election to Lai Autonomous District Council was held in May, 2002. Both INC and MNF won 9 seats each, MPC won One seats, LPP retain two seats and two seats was retained by independent candidate. Government was formed by MNF with the support of two independent members. An independent member, Zungchema became the CEM from 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2002.<sup>46</sup> The Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh elections to LADC were held in 2010,2015 and 2020 respectively. In the Eleventh Election to LADC held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Out of 25 elected seats, MNF secured 20 seats, Congress 1 seat, BJP 1 seat and Independent candidates secured 3 seats.<sup>47</sup> The MNF being the single majority party formed the Executive body led by Manghmung Chinzah as the CEM.<sup>48</sup>

### **Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC)**

In the first term of the MADC, the electoral scene was dominated by the Mara Freedom Party (MFP). Before the completion of the first term, MFP merged with Indian National Congress in 1975 which was later merged with Janata Party in the early part of 1977 before the Second term Election to the MADC. The Second election to MADC was held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1977. The number of members of the MADC legislature was increased to 15 members, 14 elected and 1 nominated. The election was contested by the Janata Party and Independent candidates. The Janata Party secured 12 seats and 2 seats were won by Independent candidates. The office of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) was held by Mylai Hlychho. This executive body ran smoothly till the end of its term. However, the Janata Party of the MADC merged into the Indian National Congress (INC) again after the INC returned to power at the Centre power in 1980.<sup>49</sup>

The Indian National Congress (INC) again dominated the electoral scene of MADC for three consecutive terms i.e., from the third term to the sixth term of MADC.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.pp.97-99.

<sup>47</sup><https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/11th-lai-autonomous-district-council-2020-results-declared>, accessed on 07-03-2021.

<sup>48</sup><https://ladc.mizoram.gov.in/page/office-holders-of-ladc>accessedon 07-03-2021.

<sup>49</sup> Opt. cit., p. 155.

In the Seventh and Eighth terms of MADC, a coalition government was formed by MNF and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) in the Seventh term but could not last long due to the withdrawal of support by MNF, and a new Executive Committee was again formed.<sup>50</sup> The Eighth term also witnessed a coalition Executive Committee formed by MNF and MDF. As there was no single majority party, a coalition government was formed by MDF and MNF supported by an Independent candidate. The Chief executive post was given to N. Viakhu, an independent candidate.<sup>51</sup>

In the Ninth term, MDF and INC formed a coalition government with an executive body headed by S. Khipo as CEM. This Executive body was voted out on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2008 by elected members from MDF and MNF to form a new Executive body headed by M. Laikaw as CEM. However, this Executive Committee was also dissolved on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 as 3 elected members from MNF and 2 elected members from MDF defected from their party and joined Congress. A New Executive body was formed on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 with S. Khipo as CEM who remained in office till the next Election of MADC.<sup>52</sup>

In the tenth and eleventh elections of MADC, the Executive body was formed by the Congress. The Eleven election of the MADC was held on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. In the eleventh election to MADC, INC gained a majority by securing 17 seats out of 25 seats and formed the government with N. Zakhai as the Chief Executive Member.<sup>53</sup> The government led by N. Zakhai along with all the 17 elected MDC and 3 nominated MDC merged with BJP on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2022.<sup>54</sup> Thus, a new BJP government was formed with N. Zakhai as CEM which continued to function till the end of the Eleventh term to MADC.

Election to the twelfth term of the MADC was held on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2022. In this election, Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the single largest party by winning 12 seats, though one short of the majority mark of 13; whereas, MNF won 9 seats and INC won 4 seats. Though BJP secured 12 seats, the biggest political rivals in the State, MNF and

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<sup>50</sup> Opt. cit., p. 95.

<sup>51</sup> Opt. cit., p. 97.

<sup>52</sup> Opt. cit., p. 99.

<sup>53</sup> [www.madc.mizoram.gov.in](http://www.madc.mizoram.gov.in). accessed on 06.03.2012.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/congress-members-merge-with-bjp-in-mizoram-autonomous-council/story> accessed on 15-10-2023.

INC formed a coalition government despite a clear instruction, given to MDCs of INC not to ally either with MNF or BJP by the Pradesh Congress of the state. The ruling party in the State, MNF's performance in the twelfth election was not quite satisfactory, it could win only 9 seats. This is indeed disappointing though the Party used Socio-Economic Development Programme (SEDP) as its main propaganda for this election.<sup>55</sup>

### **Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC):**

The Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) started functioning on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972 with a ray of hope for uplifting the socio-economic life of the people who are mostly below poverty line. However, it did not take long to dwindle. The first term of the Executive Committee of the Chakma District Council could not last long due to the alleged mismanagement of funds and inefficiency and thereby Nilo Moni Chakma was ousted from the Chief Executive Membership and Sneha Kumar Chakma was elected in his place. However, he was ousted from the CEM post and Laichoga Tongchongya was elected as the CEM. But the Government of Mizoram did not approve the proceeding and suspended the executive Committee and the Sub-Divisional Officer of Chawngte, Civil Sub-Division created in 1976 was asked to look after the administration of the District Council on behalf of the Administrator till the conduct of the election for the District Council. Thus, the first Executive Committee was dissolved and remained suspended till 22.01.1978. During the first two terms from 1972 to 1982, there was no party politics in Chakma District Council as all the members contested as Independent candidates.<sup>56</sup>

However, the third election in 1982 was held on a party basis which paved the way for the genesis of party politics in the Chakma Autonomous District Council. The party politics amongst the Chakma grew gradually with the increase in political awareness in the society. As a result, a new regional political party known as Mizoram Chakma Jatiyo Parishad (MCJP) was formed in 1987 under the leadership of B.B.

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<sup>55</sup><https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rivals-congress-and-mnf-join-hands-to-control-mizoram-s-madc-keep-bjp-out-101652862942129.html> accessed on 24-05-2022.

<sup>56</sup> Jyoti Moy Chakma. *Formation and Functioning of the Chakma Autonomous District Council: Issues and Challenges* in Doungel, Jangkhongam. (2016). *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publication. Pp.61-62

Chakma. From 1983 to 1998, the Congress (I) Party ruled the government of CADC with minor opposition from other parties. Another remarkable development took place in 1997 to 1998 where a group of Chakma leaders joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Mrs. Sneha Dini Talukder was elected for the first time as BJP candidate in 1998. In the meantime, there was a major split in the CADC Government or Executive Committee in 2000 where the members were divided into two groups, one group was led by Rasik Mohan Chakma and the other was led by Pulin Bayon Chakma. Later on, the majority group led by Rasik Mohan Chakma joined the Mizo National Front (MNF) and formed the government of Chakma Autonomous District Council by ousting the Congress (I) leader Pulin Bayon Chakma, the then Chief Executive Member. This became a remarkable history in CADC politics as it brought a true democracy with strong opposition, which was earlier hitherto absent in CADC politics.<sup>57</sup>

From the third term (1982-1987) of the CADC till the end of the Sixth term (1998-2003) the Indian National Congress ruled the government of CADC with minor opposition from other parties. For the first time in an election to the members of CADC, BJP candidate Sneha Dini Talukdar was elected in 1998. During the Sixth term, the Congress government in the CADC faced a major split into two groups in 2000, one group was led by Rasik Mohan Chakma (Executive Member) and the other was led by Pulin Bayon Chakma (CEM). The majority group led by Rasik Mohan Chakma joined the MNF and formed the government of CADC by ousting the Congress leader, Pulin Bayon Chakma, the then CEM.<sup>58</sup>

The Seventh Election to the CADC was held on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2003. The Executive body was formed by MNF led by Rasik Mohan Chakma as CEM and Gokul Chandra Chakma as Chairman. This Executive body remained in power till the next election of CADC in 2008. In the Eight and Nine Election to the CADC held in 2008 and 2013 respectively, the Congress formed the Executive body which functioned smoothly in the two terms.

In the tenth Election to the CADC held on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, out of 20 seats, MNF secured 8 seats, Congress secured 7 seats and BJP secured 5 seats. Under the given

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<sup>57</sup> Opt. cit., p.62.

<sup>58</sup> Opt. cit., p. 62.

circumstances with no party gaining a clear majority, the Congress and BJP joined hands to form a coalition Executive body. It was the first instance of the BJP and INC forming a coalition government all over India due to sheer opportunism. In the meantime, with the death of the sitting MDC of the MNF, the tally of MNF was reduced to 7. The MNF gained a majority when 4 MDCs of the Congress split and joined with MNF enhancing the tally of MNF to 11 members.<sup>59</sup>

### **Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC)**

The AMC started functioning on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008, at its office at Thuampui Veng, Aizawl. The Council office was headed by Chief Executive Officer. On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007, the State Government of Mizoram, Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Department of Mizoram, and the Union Ministry of Urban Development signed a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The MoA explicitly binds the state government to implement a reform agenda under the JNNURM (such as the establishment of ULB under the 74th Amendment), failure to do so would entail withholding subsequent instalments of grants given by the centre to the state of Mizoram. There are 19 wards in Aizawl Municipal Corporation, 6 wards is reserved for women. The total number of 6 (Six) seats/wards nearest to 1/3rd out of the number of 19 seats in Aizawl Municipality shall be reserved for women by rotation and the Scheduled Castes population in Aizawl Municipality mainly consists of the persons employed in various Departments of the Government of Mizoram.<sup>60</sup>

The Aizawl Municipal Corporation (formerly Council) started functioning from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 at its office at Thuampui Veng, Aizawl. The Corporation office is headed by a Municipal Commissioner. The first election to the 19-member AMC held in November 2010 saw the Indian National Congress and Zoram Nationalist Party alliance forming the council (INC =5, ZNP =5) and the opposition alliance Mizo National Front and the Mizoram People Conference trailing by just one seat (MNF=5, MPC=4).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> [www.cadc.gov.in/releases/departments/information-public-relation/page/8/](http://www.cadc.gov.in/releases/departments/information-public-relation/page/8/), accessed on 06-03-2021.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/94392205/Municipality-Mizoram#> accessed on 07-03-2021.

<sup>61</sup> <https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/amc-inthlanna-results> accessed on 07-03-2021.

In the 2015 AMC election, though MNF was the opposition party in the State Legislative Assembly, MNF could secure 11 seats out of the total 19 seats it contested. The remaining 8 seats went to the Congress-MPC alliance. The Congress bagged 7 seats out of 14 seats it contested while the MPC could managed to garner only 1 seat out of the 5 seats it contested. Unlike the previous election, the MPC and ZNP suffered a setback in terms of the seat won and vote share. The ZNP made an electoral alliance with the BJP and contested 12 seats and 4 seats respectively in which both the party drew a blank. The MNF party had performed very well in terms of seats won though it was an opposition in the State and formed the government in AMC by voting out of power the ruling Congress-led alliance after the completion of one term which is unlike the trend that people witnessed in the State Legislative Assembly elections.

The first election to the 19-member AMC held in November 2010 saw the Indian National Congress and Zoram Nationalist Party alliance forming the council (INC=5, ZNP=5) and the opposition alliance Mizo National Front and the Mizoram People Conference trailing by just one seat (MNF=5, MPC=4).<sup>62</sup> The third election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation was held on 16.02.2021. Out of the 19 seats, MNF won 11 seats, ZPM won 6 seats and INC won 2 seats.<sup>63</sup> Since the formation of Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), the performance of MNF has been quite good and could form the government since the first term of AMC.

## **VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN MIZORAM**

The political landscape of Mizoram in the erstwhile Mizo District Council and the early part of Union Territory of Mizoram was more or less dominated by the Mizo Union. After Statehood in 1986, it was more or less characterized by the two-party dominant system of politics wherein the Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) into power interchangeably voted to power even though there was a time when smaller political parties were joining the bandwagons on and off. Before statehood, political issues like abolition of Chieftainship, independence, peace accord, etc., dominated Mizoram electoral politics and have now become issues of the past.

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<sup>62</sup> Opt. cit., 315.

<sup>63</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/party-wise-result-of-ge-to-amc-2021> retrieved on 14-11-2023.

Apart from the development issue, unification of the Zo-ethnic tribes and putting them under one common platform or administrative unit, greater power for the Autonomous District Council in the ADCs area was still one of the common interest zones among political parties during elections. Hence, this issue has been raised in every election by major political parties through their election manifestoes and campaign speeches. Since 2003, it has been possible to state that the main issues in elections in Mizoram were development, corruption, agricultural sector, education, and unemployment problem.<sup>64</sup>

In the State Assembly Election held in 2008, the INC secured 32 seats out of 40 seats, the victory of the INC shows the influence of Congress's New Land Use Policy (NLUP) which was the main poll plank of the party. NLUP, which was the flagship programme of the State Government led by INC, was still attractive and convincing to voters which subsequently led to victory of the INC in the 2013 Mizoram Legislative Assembly election. In the post-statehood period, the MNF and the Indian National Congress formed the government alternately alone or in coalition with other parties in the State as well as the ADCs. MNF and Congress were the two largest parties that could cover the whole of Mizoram, though regional parties and sub-regional parties other than MNF formed and captured the political arena, they were short-lived. From the past experienced, it is evidently clear that the voter's give more preference to the MNF and INC and regional political parties like ZNP (merge to Zoram People's Movement), MPC could not gain much ground in the ADC areas.

Assessment of voting patterns consistently focuses on determinants of electoral behaviour, or factors influencing electoral behaviour: why people vote as they do and how they arrived at the decisions they make. A brief analysis of some of the main determinants of voting behaviour in Mizoram are, the economic conditions of a voter largely decides which party he vote so as to improve his economic conditions. This is evidently clear why Congress won the 2008 and 2013 Assembly elections due to the Congress Government's flagship programme, the NLUP (New Land Use Policy).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Opt. cit., p. 316.

<sup>65</sup> LH. Chhuanawma. (2016). Determinants of Voting Behaviour in Mizoram, *Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies Vol. 1 No.1 (January-June 2016)*, P. 61.

During and before the 2008 and 2013 Assembly elections, each entitled household was promised Rs. 1 Lakh under the NLUP. Secondly, Social and cultural factors like ethnicity, clan and family ties also determine the voter's behaviour. Thirdly, Regionalism acts as a strong factor in determining who to vote by the voter. The MNF always harps on "Mizo Nationalism" to influence voters to its advantage. Moreover, the personalities of the candidates and party leaders also have a great impact. In recent years, public opinion and mass media become important determinants of voting behaviour in Mizoram.<sup>66</sup>

In the Sixth Schedule Area of Mizoram, in recent years issues like direct funding, and greater autonomy for Autonomous District Councils in terms of Amendment of Sixth Schedule provisions have emerged as one of the popular slogans of politicians in the ADC areas of Mizoram to woo the voters. A number of memorandums in this regard have also been submitted to the Central Government. To influence the general public, this utopian slogan has been used by political parties, especially Congress as its election policy for the sake of winning the ballot earlier which was done afterwards by the BJP in the Sixth Schedule Area.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Raisa Ali (1996) in his book, "*Representative Democracy and Concept of Free and Fair Election*" deals with the evolution of democracy in India and the electoral process, free and fair elections, evolution and nature of universal suffrage. The author also gives a brief introduction about the general electoral Roll in India and explain the importance of electoral roll, and also points out the concept of universal right to contest election. He also stresses on the importance of secret voting and explains the various components of an election such as electoral office, electorates, candidates, political parties, constituencies, mass media, electoral machinery, and electoral system. The author also highlights the power, functions and role of the Election Commission of India in preparation of the electoral roll, superintendence, direction and control over the conduct of elections etc. The author also evaluates the various electoral corrupt practices and offenses such as bribery, undue influence, and appeal on the grounds of religion,

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<sup>66</sup> Opt. cit. pp. 61-63.



race, caste, etc. The author also gives valuable suggestion on how to enforce free and fair election.

Biraj Hazarika (2015) in his article “*Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants*” highlights the various determinants of the behaviour of Indian voters such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, the purpose of the poll, the extent of franchise, political wave, etc. In this paper, the author also points charisma as one of the important elements in winning elections especially when the group is weak. He also states how other elements like caste, religion, and language are used by political parties to woo the voter by politicizing these factors, formulating policies and programme and strategizing elections. Other factors like money, sub-nationalism and performance of party in power, mass literacy, factionalism and public esteem of the candidate, and election campaign are also analyzed.

Heinz Eulau (1980) in his “*The Columbia Studies of Personal Influence: Social Network Analysis*” makes an analysis of the contribution of the Columbia studies, the influence of social networks which is quite relevant in today’s world. He also critically analyses upon the Columbia studies where he states that the findings of Erie County investigators falsified the image of autonomous and rational voters. The voters often made up their minds rather early in campaigns. He also states that personal and face-to-face communication seems to be more effective in determining vote decisions than direct exposure to media. He also makes a critical analysis on the personal influence and social interaction method of the Columbia studies to understand the psychological model of voting behaviour.

Jungug Choi (2009) in his article “*Strategic Voting in India: Its Extent and Determinants in the 2004 General Election*” makes an analysis on the strategic voting in India based on individual voter’s preferences. The study shows that strategic voting is determined by a logistic function of information, participation in partisan activities, education, middle-class identification, Scheduled caste membership, being Muslim, and strategic alliances. The study also tends to identify whether the strategic voting of the Muslim and Scheduled Caste contradict. This study also mainly focuses on how the voters cast their ballots when their favorite parties are unlikely to win the election.

L. H. Chhuanawma (2016) in “*Determinants of Voting Behaviour in Mizoram*” made an illuminating study on the various factors that determined the voting behaviour in Mizoram. He pointed out how the people voted based on the partisan attachment to his/her party and the “Delhi factor” or “Delhi syndrome acts as an important political determinant. He also observes how the economic condition of the voter acts as a factor in influencing his choices which is evidently clear from the 2008 and 2013 Assembly Election. The performance of Congress in this election was beyond expectation due to its flagship programme, NLUP. L. H. Chhuanawma also observes that factors like religion, social and cultural, regionalism, personality and role of public opinion and mass media acts as an important factor in determining the behaviour of the voters.

Mulyana Abdullah, Kama A. Hakim, Wilodati and Ratnafitria (2019) made an insightful study on the influence of party identification among the voters in Indonesia in their paper “*Analysis of Vote Behaviour: Psychological Study of Vote Behaviour on Young Generation*”). The study identifies that voting behaviour among young voters has been planted through interaction with social sites and can emerge from themselves as novice voters. Party identification of the younger generation also emerged out of loyalty and alignment towards party policies and programmes. The psychological power of political participation in society through the voluntary of people also acts as part of choosing who to vote.

Sanjay Kumar and Praveen Rai’s (2013) book titled, “*Measuring Voting Behaviour In India*” is an important guide in understanding the voting behaviour, tracing the origin of election survey in India and measuring the voting behaviour and attitudes through pre-poll and exit polls. The study clearly pointed out how election surveys were conducted by media and polling organizations to measure the popular mood of the voter during elections, the voter’s choice of political parties and leaders, and the voting intentions of the electorates. The authors also pointed out the various research methods for studying the voting behaviour of the electorates like sample surveys, case studies and participation observatory studies. The modes of interview techniques, the importance of scientific sampling in election surveys, methods of sampling used in election survey and the basic parameters that need to be followed in framing a good questionnaire for measuring voting behaviour and attitudes were found in this book.

Staffan I. Lindberg and Minion K. C. Morrison (2008) in their research article “*Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic? Survey Evidence from Ghana*” focus mainly on individual voter, the influence of clientelism or ethnic and family ties. The study brings insightful knowledge on the voting behaviour of the Ghanaian based on evaluative rational and non-evaluative rational voting. The authors focus mainly on the voter’s judgment of the performance of the party or representatives on policies. The two possible voting behaviour based on clientelistic voting base on personal effective ties of family, ties or patronage and proxy voting influenced and driven by ethnic, clan or family ties. The study reveals that the conventional study on African voting often points out the role of the ethnic card however, in reality, this has been overrated and only a few voters seem to think in terms of tribal loyalties which cannot be explained as the outcome of the voting. The average Ghanaian voters are more mature and look to national and general policies concern.

The book “*Electoral Politics in India: The Resurgence of the Bharatiya Janata Party*” is a book edited by Suhas Palshikar, Sanjay Kumar, and Sanjay Lodha (2017) which contains Eighteen essays by prominent authors. This book deals with the analysis of the historic win of the BJP in the elections of 2014 Lok Sabha and the humiliating defeat and failure of the Indian National Congress (INC) in this election. They also focus on why and how the BJP saw a massive win in the state of Uttar Pradesh which contributed over 26 percent seats to BJP by winning 71 out of 80 seats. Besides this, they also attended to those States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Odisha why the BJP could not perform well. This book also focuses on leadership, locality, age, class, and media exposure as important determinants in these elections.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, Economic and Political Weekly published Special Statistics: 2013 State Election: 2013 “*Legislative Assembly Election, Mizoram.*” In this article, an analysis on the 2013 State Legislative Assembly Election was done. It highlights the number of candidates, voters’ turnout and the outcome of the said election. This article also analyses the seats contested, and votes secured by major parties and highlights the change in seats won, and voters’ turnout from the previous election i.e., the 2008 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election.

Lallianchhunga (2009) in his article “*Mizoram: The Congress Holds Its Ground*” made a study on the election to the Lok Sabha in Mizoram held in 2009. He observes that the people in Mizoram gave privileges to their local issues over the national issues and remained largely unaffected by fluctuations in national politics. He also observes that people voted mostly based on the state government performance and the voters in deciding whom to vote, the candidate mattered more than the parent political party on whose ticket the candidate stood for. He also stated that the Congress was able to consolidate its support base among the minority communities in the state such as the Hmars, Chakmas, Lais, Maras and Brus who all voted for the Congress Party.

Ayangbam Shyamkishor (2014) in his article “*Electoral Performance of the Mizo National Front*” evaluates the electoral performance of Mizo National Front (MNF) since the post-statehood era. The author made a critical evaluation on the performance of MNF in the State Assembly election and that factors like championing Mizo Identity and Nationalism, the charismatic leadership of Laldenga , and the promise to implement all the terms and conditions in the Peace Accord, make MNF popular in the early period of Statehood. However, the internal crisis within the party, the demise of Laldenga, the charge of corruption, nepotism and maladministration of MNF Ministry reduced the popularity of MNF. The author made a critical evaluation that the party needs to change its leadership, revive, reviewed and modify its policies to suit the pulse of the people so as to strengthen the party.

“*Electoral Politics in Mizoram: Emerging Issues and Trends*” is an important book on the study of electoral politics in Mizoram edited by Lalmalsawma Khiangte and F. Lalramhluni (2021). This book contains research-based work of 22 authors who solely focused on an in depth analysis of the various issues and trends, particularly the Eight State Legislative Assembly Election held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018. This book discusses various electoral issues like counter charges of political alliances, attempts for establishment of alternate fronts, analysis of political manifestos and policies, political participation of women in politics, a study on voting behaviour etc.

Praveen Rai's (2011) “*Electoral Participation of Women In India: Key Determinants and Barriers*” makes an analytical study on female participation in the

lower house of Parliament and Legislative assemblies, candidature in electoral competitions participating as members and functionaries of political parties, active campaigners for political parties and women as single time voters. The only level where women achieved some degree of parity is as voters in elections. Various determinants like media exposure, social networking, interest in politics, voting discretion, the importance of the vote and demographic variables determined women's participation in electoral competition both as voters and campaigners.

Pravin. H Sheth (1973) in his article "*Indian Electoral Behaviour: Patterns of Continuity and Change*" explains the various functions of elections in India. He analyzes the major trends in the 1967 and 1971 Lok Sabha elections. He explained how the Indian electorate had begun to show a consciousness of the meaning and power, how the electorate exercised his vote without being conditioned by caste and local influences, and how Congress still enjoyed mass support. In the 1971 Lok Sabha election, the major trends that set forth the election were the rejection of unpolarized and unprincipled coalition politics, rejection of rightist forces at the poll, decline of 'vote banks' and the key men. He also studies various vote banks such as caste, heads of leaders of sects and communities, princes, landlords, industrialists, and the influentials who act as intermediaries between their pockets and function as links between the voter and the party or the candidate who lost their influence and power. He also explains on the various patterns of mass mobilization, development of mass politics, elite-mass relationships, etc.

"*Election Manifesto is the Key Determinant of Voting Behaviour in Tamil Nadu Electoral Politics*" is a research article written by K. Saravana Rajasena and A. Thanikoda (2016) in which the authors explain how voting behaviour in India is influenced by various factors such as religion, community, caste, language, ideology etc. The authors also highlight how current events like problem faced by common man and new political development has been used by opposition parties which contribute to the voting behaviour in a major way. Local issues in Tamil Nadu also acts as a major determinant in voting behaviour.

*“Political Development in Mizoram: Focus on the Post Accord Scenario”* authored by Padmalaya Mahapatra and Lalngaihrawia Zote (2008) is an article on the political development in Mizoram which highlights the electoral politics in the First to the Fifth State Legislative Assembly Election. The authors also highlight the Lok Sabha election held on February, 1998. In this election, Dr. H. Lalungmuana backed by MNF and MPC was elected. In the 1999 Lok Sabha election held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, Vanlalawma, the common candidate of MNF and MPC won the election. The authors also highlight the role of civil societies like Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) etc. and the Churches and their influence on the policies of the government for instance, The Mizoram Total Liquor Prohibition Act which was passed under the influence of the Churches and other Civil Societies in the State.

Sushma Yadav (2018) in her essay *“Election Commission and Electoral Process”* gives an insightful discussion on elections as an important element that make it possible for the citizens to exercise a genuine and meaningful degree of political choice and control. The author gives an overview of the basic constitutional provisions regarding the franchise and elections. He also highlights the jurisdiction of the Election Commission as wide enough to include all powers necessary for the smooth conduct of elections. The author also observes that the electoral politics in India is very much influenced by religion, linguistic and regional cleavage which act as the most powerful factor in determining party choice. He also makes an in-depth study on the factors that caused drawbacks and malpractices to the working of the Indian electoral system such as multiplicity of political parties, personality cults in party system, exploitation of caste and communal loyalties, the role of muscle and money power, misuse of government machinery, fraudulent practices including booth-capturing, intimidation and impersonation. The author also highlights the necessary agenda for electoral reforms such as change in the Electoral System, restructuring the Election Commission, strengthening the Electoral Machinery, and curbing the influence of money and muscle power to ensure free and fair elections.

Waiphot Kulachai, Unisa Lerdtomornsakul and Patipol Homyamyen (2023) make a comprehensive literature review on the factors influencing voting decisions in

their paper “*Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour: A Comprehensive Literature Review*” in which they highlight the various elements that influence the voting decision such as the individual level factors, socio-cultural factors, and political factor. Income, education, gender, age, political ideology, personality traits, intelligence traits and issue concern are the individual level factors. Social identity, ethnicity and race, religion, media influence and social influence constitute the socio-cultural factors. Party identification, candidate characteristics, policy positions, campaign strategies, and economic conditions are the political level factors. These factors collectively shape the democratic process and have implications for the functioning of the democratic system. Some of the key implications are representation, accountability, policy outcomes, democratic legitimacy, political culture and engagement, and social cohesion.

Zahida Akhter and Younis Ah. Sheikh (2014) makes an insightful study of determinants of voting behaviour in “*Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective.*” The authors stresses out that voting behaviour of men is influenced by several irrational factors and pressure groups in invoking religious and communal factors, the influence of money or the charismatic personality of a leader. The authors also identify the main political and socio-economic factors such as caste, religion, language, money factor, current events, election campaigns, local issues, and mass illiteracy as the major determinants of voting behaviour in India.

## **RESEARCH GAP**

The study of voting behaviour in Mizoram conducted so far has been limited to the study on Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and specifically concentrated on a particular election or area. So far, no study has been conducted on voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram. To identify the factors that influence voting behaviour, and to identify the similarities and dissimilarities in how the voters vote in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and at the local level in both the Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal elections the study has been conducted. The absence of literature also makes it necessary to conduct the study of voting behaviour in the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule with an aim to contribute literature on the body of knowledge relating to this area.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study of voting behaviour in Mizoram needs to be examined from the political context as well as the socio-economic context. The economic condition, social, cultural, regional and communities need to be taken into account because the voter's actions and choices may vary based on their economic and social status, the community, and the region to which an individual voter belongs. The political aspiration for greater political power always plays a key role in building a vote base mainly in the Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram. On the other hand, family ties, clan and ethnic groups also determines the voting behaviour in some part of the state.

In other words, the role of civil society groups in Mizoram has been recognized as an important determiner of electoral politics in the state. As such, there were often similarities and dissimilarities in the pattern of the voting behavior of different districts, regions, or villages. Accordingly, due to these changes, the voting pattern of the Sixth Schedule area and the non-Sixth Schedule of electoral politics in Mizoram lies with several factors, namely, the support for a particular political party, choice of a candidate, party policies and manifestoes, etc.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To study the pattern of voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections (2013 and 2018) in the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule areas.
2. To study the pattern of voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections.
3. To study the role and impact of Political Parties' manifestos.
4. To analyze the role and influence of the Mizoram People Forum on voting behavior.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the factors that determine the voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections?



2. What are the factors that determine the voting behaviour in Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections?
3. What is the influence of the political parties' manifestos on the voting decisions of the voters?
4. What is the influence of Mizoram People Forum's activities on the voting decisions of the voters?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research study is a mixture of both Qualitative and Quantitative. Data is collected from both Primary and Secondary sources. Primary data is obtained through unstructured interviews. Political leaders, leaders from civil societies and prominent citizens are interviewed. Survey method through a structured questionnaire is also employed. Secondary data mainly consists of manuscripts, articles, journals, government records, statistical data published by the State Government, Government Archives, Gazette notifications, internet, and other related sources etc.

In selecting the sample, a random sampling technique is used to draw the necessary sample. Samples are drawn from Aizawl West-I Constituency, Mamit Constituency, Lawngtlai East Constituency, Tuichawng and Saiha Constituency.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The research work focuses on the study of the voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly and elections to the Autonomous District Councils and Aizawl Municipal Corporation. From the Non-Sixth Schedule areas of Mizoram, Aizawl District, and Mamit District are covered for the purpose of the study. From the Sixth Schedule area Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council, and Chakma Autonomous District Council are the study area.

For this study, Aizawl District and Mamit District are selected for the study of voting behavior from the Non-Sixth Schedule area. Out of the 40 constituencies, Aizawl District has 12 constituencies out of 40 and also Aizawl District is the most populous and urbanized district with different communities from the Zo-Ethnic tribe which played

a significant role in understanding the electoral process and the voting behaviour. Apart from this, Aizawl, the Capital of Mizoram is under the civic administration of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation which played a great role in analyzing the voter's choices and preferences in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and the AMC elections.

Mamit District is the least urbanized District of Mizoram with 17.25 percent of the total population i.e. out of 86,364 only 14,899 people live in urban areas and is also the second lowest Literacy rate with 84.9 percent out of all eleven districts of Mizoram. The Seventh and Eighth Election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly are the main focus of this study. From the Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram, the three Autonomous District Councils are selected for this study. The study of the voting behaviour in the Sixth Schedule area in the election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and election to the Autonomous District Councils are the main focus.

For the purpose of the study, the year between 2012 to 2021 is selected as the study period. The main reason for the selection of these years is that in 2013 and 2018, elections to the State Legislative Assemblies were held. Elections to Aizawl Municipal Corporation were also held in 2015 and 2021 during the selected study period. The Ninth and Tenth elections to CADC were held in 2013 and 2018, the Tenth and Eleventh elections to MADC were held in 2012 and 2017 and the Tenth and Eleventh elections to LADC were held in 2015 and 2020 also fall within the selected study period.

## **CHAPTERISATION**

### **Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION:**

The first Chapter deals with the introduction of the study. This chapter highlights the theoretical aspects of voting behaviour as propounded by three major research schools. The sociological school, often identified as the School of Columbia, the Psychological model, also identified as the School of Michigan, and rational choice theory also referred to as a model of economic voting, or even as School of Rochester. The first chapter also gives a brief account of the electoral politics in Mizoram. The

history of electoral politics in the Mizo District Council era, the Union Territory era, and the Statehood era are dealt with in the first chapter. The electoral history of the Autonomous District Councils such as the Mara Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, and Chakma Autonomous District Council are included. The research problems, scope of the study, review of related literature, research objectives, research questions, and research methodology are also included in this chapter.

## **Chapter 2: THE SEVENTH AND EIGHT MIZORAM STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AND NON-SIXTH SCHEDULE AREA**

The second Chapter analyzes the factors that influence voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections. This chapter deals with identifying the various elements like the preferences of the political parties, the candidate's quality, and personality, and political party manifestos, in the voter's decision to vote. The study mainly focus on identifying the voting behaviour in the in the Sixth Schedule area and Non-Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram.

## **Chapter 3 : A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MIZORAM AND AIZAWL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION ELECTIONS:**

The Third Chapter deals with the study of the factors that influence voting behaviour in the elections to the Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram and elections to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation.

**Chapter 4 : ROLE OF MANIFESTOS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ELECTIONS:**

The Fifth Chapter analyzes the manifestos of political parties in the Seventh and Eighth elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections. It analyzes how manifestos have influenced the voters in their voting decisions.

**Chapter 5 : ROLE OF MIZORAM PEOPLE FORUM IN ELECTIONS:**

The election watchdog Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was founded to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the State. This chapter identifies the level of awareness among the voters, the activities of the MPF in reducing the various elections malpractices.

**Chapter 6 : CONCLUSION**

The final chapter presents the overall outcomes of the research as well as the suggestions incorporated by the respondents are presented in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### **THE SEVENTH AND EIGHT MIZORAM STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AND NON-SIXTH SCHEDULE AREAS**

The present Mizoram State Legislative Assembly is Unicameral and it has 40 elected seats, out of which 39 are reserved for Scheduled Tribe. The First Legislative Assembly election in Mizoram was held in 1972 after Mizoram became a Union Territory from District Council and this election was won by the first political party of Mizoram, namely, the Mizo Union. During the Union Territory era, the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections had been a fight between the Indian National Congress (INC) and the People's Conference (PC) after the Mizo Union was merged with the Indian National Congress on January 24, 1974. However, the influence of the PC drastically declined in the post-statehood era and rivalry was mainly between the Indian National Congress and the Mizo National Front (MNF) party in various State Legislative Assembly elections after Mizoram became a State. there have been governments formed alternatively by four political parties till the present, namely, Mizo Union, the first winning political party of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly election merged to INC in 1974, PC, Indian National Congress, and MNF. To understand the electoral politics of Mizoram, it is required to analyze the electoral politics of Mizoram since the era of Mizo District Council, Union Territory, and Statehood.

#### **Electoral Politics during Mizo District Council:**

Since the formation of the Lushai Hills District Advisory Council in 1948, the Mizo Union completely dominated the electoral scene. An Advisory Council election was held, out of 35 members 10 seats were reserved for the Chief's Representatives and

25 were reserved for the commoner's representative. The Advisory Council was changed into Advisory Committee in 1949, which functioned till 1951.<sup>67</sup>

From the first election of the third election to the District Council, Mizo Union dominated the electoral scene and formed the Executive Committee (government). The main reason behind the success of Mizo Union was mainly due to its commitment to the abolition of Chieftainship for the improvement of the socio-economic and political conditions of the common people.<sup>68</sup> The Fourth election was to be held in 1967 but it was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1970 due to Mizo National Front (MNF) Insurgency. At the fourth and last election to the Mizo District Council, the Congress party won 10 seats. But the Congress was unable to form a stable government (Executive Committee) in the District Council. As a result, the Mizo Union formed a coalition government headed by Ch. Chhunga as the Chief Executive Member which lasted till the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972.<sup>69</sup>

### **Electoral politics of the Union Territory OF Mizoram**

The first election to the Legislative Assembly of the newly elevated Union Territory of Mizoram was held on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1972 and a total number of elected seats in the Legislative Assembly was 30. The Mizo Union won 21 seats, Indian National Congress (INC) won 6 seats and Independent candidate won 3 seats.<sup>70</sup> The first government of the Union Territory of Mizoram was formed by Mizo Union with Ch. Chhunga as the first Chief Minister. This election marked the increasing participation of national political parties in the Union Territory in the years to come.<sup>71</sup>

In the second election to the Legislative Assembly election, the People's Conference (PC) got a landslide victory by winning 22 seats out of 30 seats, a PC government was formed with Brig. T. Sailo as the Chief Minister. However, it could

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<sup>67</sup> Opt. cit. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Lalrintluanga. (2016). *The Genesis and Functioning of the Mizo District Council* in Dounghel, Jangkhongam.

(2016). *Autonomy movement and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publication. Spectrum Publication: Guwahati, P. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Opt. cit., p. 184.

<sup>70</sup> Opt. cit., p. 10

<sup>71</sup> A.P.K Singh. (2016), *Political Scenario of Mizoram: Past and Present*, Mittal Publication: New Delhi, p. 84.

hardly survive only for five months because the leadership crisis and dissident activities in the ministry automatically led to a vertical split in the PC party. Subsequently, the party was split up into two parties PC or PC (A) led by Brigadier T. Sailo and PC (B) led by Thangridema.<sup>72</sup> On 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1978, the Union Territory of Mizoram was placed under the President's Rule. PC (A) retained and continued functioning as PC afterward.

The third election was held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1979, it was a mid-term poll. Out of 30 seats, PC won 18 seats, INC won 5 seats, People's Conference (B) won 4 seats and Janata Party won 2 and Independent candidate won 1 seat.<sup>73</sup> The fourth and last election to the Legislative Assembly was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1984. The election resulted in a decisive victory for the Congress by winning 20 seats and formed the government under the leadership of Lalthanhawla and remained in power till Mizoram became a full-fledged State.<sup>74</sup>

### **Electoral politics after Statehood**

After Mizoram became a full-fledged State, the electoral scene was more or less characterized by two-party dominant system wherein Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) were interchangeably voted into power. Even though there were times when smaller parties joined either INC or MNF to form a coalition government, the dominant parties happened to be either INC or MNF. The first election of the State Legislative Assembly was held in 1987 and MNF formed the first State Government with Laldenga as Chief Minister by winning 24 seats. However, Laldenga's Ministry could not survive a year due to internal party problems.<sup>75</sup> As a result, a mid-term election was conducted in 1989 and Congress formed the State government with Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister by winning 23 seats.

The third Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election which was held in November, 1993 and a coalition government was formed where the Indian National Congress (INC) led by Lalthanhawla and the Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) led by Brig. T. Sailo was the coalition partner. However, before the coalition ministry had completed its

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<sup>72</sup> C. Hermana, *Zoram Politics*. (1999). *Thil Tleh Dan* – Vol. II (1972-1999). Published by the author. Aizawl: Pressom Production. Pp. 43-45.

<sup>73</sup> Opt.cit., p. 37.

<sup>74</sup> Opt.cit., p. 112.

<sup>75</sup> K. C. Lalmalsawmzauva, Which Political Party is Where: Voting Behaviour in Aizawl City, *www.researchgate.net*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340571606>. accessed on 01-04-2021.

full term, the MJD was thrown out from the Ministry and it subsequently became a pure INC Ministry.<sup>76</sup> In the fourth Mizoram Legislative Assembly election held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1998, the MNF led by Zoramthanga won 21 seats and MPC led by Brig. T. Sailo won 12 seats and they formed coalition government but the coalition government transformed itself into a pure MNF government after one year.<sup>77</sup>

The Fifth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2003. The MNF won 21 seats and formed the government again with Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for the second time. After the MNF Ministry led by Zoramthanga had completed its full term, the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008. In this election, the then ruling party MNF party could secure only 3 seats and this poor result of MNF had surprised not only the voters but also its party workers. The Congress had a thumping majority by winning 32 seats from the total 40 seats. The Congress had formed a new Ministry with Lalthanhawla as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for the Fourth time. The essentiality of the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was that Mizoram People Forum (MPF) which was formed way back in 2006 could play a constructive role for the conduct of free and fair elections.<sup>78</sup>

The Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was successfully held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. The Indian National Congress led by Lalthanhawla returned to power in this election with an unexpected victory by securing 34 seats out of the total 40 seats. The MNF and its alliance could only secure 6 seats and no other political party could secure even a single seat. The Congress led by Lalthanhawla formed the new ministry. The Seventh State Legislative Assembly Election of Mizoram was concluded peacefully and successfully due to the efforts and cooperation of officials, media, and civil societies.<sup>79</sup>

The Eight State Legislative Assembly election of Mizoram was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. In this election, the MNF returned to power by winning 26 seats. The MNF led by Zoramthanga formed the government. In this election, the newly formed

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<sup>76</sup> Opt. cit., p. 27.

<sup>77</sup> Opt. cit., p. 29.

<sup>78</sup> Opt. cit., p. 31.

<sup>79</sup> Opt. cit., p. 32.



political forum, Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) surprisingly won 8 seats out of nowhere and emerged as the second-largest party in the State Legislative Assembly.

### **THE SEVENTH STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION, 2013.**

Due to the expiry of the term of the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, the Seventh Legislative Assembly election was scheduled to be held in December 2013 along with two other states, Delhi and Rajasthan. The Chief Election Commissioner, V.S. Sampath announced that Mizoram and Delhi would go to polls in a single phase on December 4, 2013 and results would be declared on December 8, 2013. The Election Commission of India re-schedule the date of polling to November 25 from December 4 and the date of vote counting to December 9 from December 8. The change of polling date was made by the Election Commission of India as the largest Church in Mizoram, the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram backed by the Civil Societies within the State urged the ECI to change the previous polling date scheduled by the ECI as the previous polling date coincided with the time when the Mizoram Synod scheduled to have the Annual Assembly, the United Pentecostal Church (UPC) and Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK) would also hold Statewide conference.

After hearing the Schedule of Mizoram State Assembly Polls, different parties seem to be confident and eager to face the polls. The ruling Indian National Congress party, which enjoyed, majority with 32 seats in the 40 seats Assembly, was confident to retain its power. The INC was confident that the State Government flagship programme namely, New Land Use Policy (NLUP) which had already covered 1.2 lakh families i.e. nearly half of the total number of families in the State would help the party to retain its power. The Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) led by MLA and former MP (Lok Sabha) Lalduhoma made it clear that the party should face poll alone. Despite the party having only two MLAs in the last Assembly Election, its party President was confident that the people especially the youths who constituted around 60 percent of the total electorates of State wanted a new ruling party in the State. The main opponent of the Indian National Congress party, namely, the MNF party, which could capture only 4 seats in the last State Legislative Assembly polls (including one seat captured by its partner Maraland Democratic Front-MDF) was seeking an alliance with the Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) which has two MLAs. One of the three legislators of MNF and party stalwart B.

Lalthlengliana unfortunately passed away in April, 2013. Hence, one seat of MNF remained vacant.<sup>80</sup>

Like other previous State Legislative Assembly Elections in Mizoram, the total seats of MLA remained unchanged i.e. 40 seats. As per the final publication, there were 690860 voters for the Seventh Legislative Assembly Election, out of which 350333 were female and 340527 were male voters. Like the last 2008 State Legislative Assembly polls, the female voters outnumbered their male counterparts.<sup>81</sup> With the announcement of Legislative Assembly elections for Mizoram and four other States by the Election Commission of India, the model code of conduct came into force in these States. In the case of developmental activities, Mizoram CEO Ashwani Kumar said that while many ongoing works were allowed to continue, some other Government programmes like MGNREGS and disbursement of money to beneficiaries under the New Land Use Policy (NLUP) which was the flagship programme of the State Government would not be allowed to continue. Even MPs and MLAs would also be prohibited from disbursing their Local Area Development Funds popularly known as MP Fund and MLA Fund for the same reason.<sup>82</sup>

For the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, there were nine political parties in the electoral fray. Three political parties namely Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC) and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) were national parties while three State parties such as Mizo National Front (MNF), Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) and Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and the remaining three political parties namely Ephraim Union, Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) and Jai Maha Bharat Party (JMBP) were registered unrecognized parties in the State.<sup>83</sup> Most of the political parties that published election manifestos promised the people of Mizoram to make progressive developments and improvements in various fields and it seemed that the opposition pledged for more developments than the ruling party.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Opt. cit., p. 182

<sup>81</sup> *Statistical Report on General Election, 2013 to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram*. New Delhi: Election Commission of India. P. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Opt. cit., P.184

<sup>83</sup> Opt. cit., P.2

<sup>84</sup> Opt. cit., P. 3

### **Result of the Seventh Election to Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election, 2013:**

With the expiry of the term of the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was scheduled to be held in December 2013 along with two other States namely Delhi and Rajasthan. The Chief Election Commissioner, V.S. Sampath announced that Mizoram and Delhi would go to polls in a single phase on December 4, 2013 and results would be declared on December 8, 2013. After the announcement of the schedule of the Mizoram Assembly poll date and vote counting date, the largest church denomination in Mizoram, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church backed by political parties and civil societies appealed the Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ashwani Kumar to re-schedule the polling date as it coincided with the holding of Synod-the highest authority of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. The leaders also expressed their desire to change the vote counting date as December 8, 2013 fell on Sunday which is the Holy day for majority of the Christians and it would cause inconvenience and hurt the sentiments of people in the Christian dominated State. After a strong appeal made by the Church, civil societies and political parties the polling date was re-scheduled to November 25 from December 4 and vote counting date was changed to December 9 from December 8, 2013.

In the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election held in 2013, the total number of voters was 690860, there were 340527 male voters and 350333 female voters. The total voter turnout was 80.82 percent, male voters turnout was 79.50 percent and female voters turnout was 82.17 percent. Out of the 40 constituencies, there were 142 candidates in the fray.<sup>85</sup> There were three national parties contesting the election- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Party (INC), and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Mizo National Party (MNF), Mizoram People's Conference (MPC), and Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) were the state party that contested the election. Jai Maha Bharath Party (JMBP) and Maraland Democratic Party (MDF) also contested the election.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Opt. cit. P. 4

<sup>86</sup> K.C. Lalthansanga.(2018) *Mizoram Election: Results & Statistics*. Aizawl: Daifim Print & Publication. Pp. 162-164.

**Table.1.1. The list of elected candidates in the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election is given below.<sup>87</sup>**

<b>List of Successful Candidates</b>		
<b>CONSTITUENCIES</b>	<b>NAME OF ELECTED CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY AFFILIATION</b>
Hachhek	Larinmawia Ralte	INC
Dampa	Lalrobiaka	INC
Mamit	John Rotluangliana	INC
Tuirial	Hmingdailova Khiangte	INC
Kolasib	P.C. Zoramsangliana	INC
Serlui	K. Lalrinthanga	INC
Tuivawl	R.L.Pianmawia	INC
Chalfilh	Dr. Ngurdingliana	INC
Tawi	R. Lalzirliana	INC
Aizawl North-I	R. Romawia	INC
Aizawl North-II	Lalthanliana	MPC
Aizawl North-III	Lalthanzara	INC
Aizawl East-I	R. Lalrinawma	INC
Aizawl East-II	Lalsawta	INC
Aizawl West-I	K. Sangthuama	MNF
Aizawl West-II	Lalruatkima	MNF
Aizawl West-III	Vanlalzawma	MNF
Aizawl South-I	R. Vanlalvena	INC
Aizawl South-II	Lt. Col. Zosangzuala	INC
Aizawl South-III	Ks. Thanga	INC
Lengteng	H. Rohluna	INC
Tuichang	Lalrinliana Sailo	INC
Champhai North	T.T. Zothansanga	INC

<sup>87</sup> Opt. cit., P. 6.

Champhai South	Jh. Rothuama	INC
East Tuipui	T. Sangkunga	INC
Serchhip	Lalthanhawla	INC
Tuikum	Er. Lalrinawma	MNF
Hrangturzo	Lalthanhawla	INC
South Tuipui	John Siamkunga	INC
Lunglei North	P.C. Lalthanliana	INC
Lunglei East	Joseph Lalhimpua	INC
Lunglei West	Chalrosanga Ralte	INC
Lunglei South	S. Laldingliana	INC
Thorang	Zodintluanga	INC
West Tuipui	Nihar Kanti Chakma	INC
Tuichawng	Buddha Dhan Chakma	INC
Lawngtlai West	C. Ngunlianbunga	INC
Lawngtlai East	H. Zothangliana	INC
Saiha	Dr. K. Beichhua	MNF
Palak	Hiphei	INC

**(Source: Mizoram Election: Results and Statistics. Pp.163-164)**

The Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election result was completed on December 9, 2013 and the State ruling party, the Indian National Congress had stormed back into power snapping 34 seats out of the total 40 seats. MPC could bag only 1 seat and MNF could bag 5 seats out of the total 40 seats. Other parties that contested the poll namely, ZNP, BJP, NCP, and MDF could not bag even a single seat in the poll. After securing 34 seats in the poll, Congress with a landslide victory under the leadership of Shri. Lalthanhawla was sworn in as Chief Minister of Mizoram for the second consecutive term and for the fifth time in his illustrious political career.

## **Election Manifestos of political parties for Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, 2013**

### **Bharatiya Janata Party:**

#### **Agriculture:**

1. 80 percent of population in Mizoram depends upon agriculture while only 20 percent comprises government employees and other tertiary professions who have regular sources of income. Hence, the State government would consider the livelihood of 80 percent population.
2. Steps should be taken up to consider good marketing system for the export of agricultural products of Mizoram outside the State at remunerative prices. In this regard, the Central BJP would be requested to help the State.
3. Farmers should be given good seeds for increasing their production and the State Government should also help them in maintaining their crops.
4. More Kisan Credit Cards should be disbursed to farmers.<sup>88</sup>

#### **Health:**

1. Priority would be given to the health sector and steps should be taken up as under:
  - a) Government Doctors would visit various villages to conduct health clinics. All Community Health Centre (CHC) and Primary Health Centre (PHC) will be given the required Doctors.
  - b) BJP government would establish a separate cell for consulting physicians through telephone.
  - c) Efforts should be made to improve medicinal plants.

#### **Road Transportation:**

1. Rural connectivity would be done in every village where the population exceeds 250 through PMGSY.
2. State/international Border roads would be well constructed and maintained.
3. Steps should be taken up to implement four-lane National Highways.

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<sup>88</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Bharatiya Janata Party. 2013. P.8.

4. Aizawl city extension would be implemented for solving the congestedness of the City.
5. Fly over would be constructed in every convenient area at Aizawl to solve traffic problems.
6. Look East Policy would be pursued as it is proposed to be done.<sup>89</sup>

**Electric & Power Supply:**

1. As many people's livelihoods depend on electricity, the ongoing hydel projects should be completed to produce sufficient electric power.
2. As there are plenty of natural gas in Mizoram, it should be used for producing electricity and attempt should be given to explore natural gas as much as possible. No new hydel project, except ongoing, should be constructed as it could generate earthquakes and cyclones.
3. Electricity should be given to all un-electrified rural areas.

**Education:**

1. As initiated by the BJP and already done in many places, textbooks should be distributed free of cost to students from primary school to high school. Mid-day meals should also be continued at primary and middle schools and all private schools should also be included under SSA.
2. Hindi and English should be emphasized.
3. All available steps should be taken up for proper functioning of SCERT.

**Position of Women:**

1. As one of the objectives of BJP is to uplift the status of women, 33 percent of seats should be reserved for women in all fields.

**For the development of the State:**

1. BJP Mizoram Pradesh would upgrade and enlarge the provisions of the Sixth Schedule in the State as necessary.
2. Minorities of the State should be given the right to govern themselves as it is necessary.

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<sup>89</sup> Opt. cit., P.12.

3. Skill development training would be conducted for Mizo youths in other States, ruled by the BJP.
4. Special development schemes should be implemented in the constituencies where BJP candidates are elected.
5. House should be constructed for those who could not construct by themselves
6. Educated unemployed youths would be helped in searching for jobs.
7. Mizoram would be favoured while formulating new plans for the State development from the Central BJP.
8. Efforts should be made to make the existing State's debts of Rupees thousands of crore to zero balance.
9. Poor people and minorities should be uplifted.
10. Good projects and plans made by past governments should be continued.

**Religious matter:**

1. The BJP Constitution and Rules in Article=II mention that the party believes in democracy, socialism, and secularism. Hence, all religions should have the freedom to pursue their faiths.<sup>90</sup>

**Economic development:**

1. Steps should be taken up for economic self-sufficiency.
2. As initiated by the BJP and practiced in the whole country, 35 kg of rice should continuously be distributed to the BPL families every month at Rs.3 per kg.
3. The status of BPL families should be improved and uplifted.

**Welfare for youths:**

1. More jobs should be generated for educated youths under the Government of Mizoram. Even quota should be availed for Mizo youths under the Central Government for those who are not employed under the State government. Further, educated youths should also be helped in finding jobs outside the country.
2. Regular sources of income should be considered for youths who are interested in sports.

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<sup>90</sup> Constitution and Rules (2004): Bharatiya Janata Party. P. 1.



3. The State Government should make plans for the livelihood of uneducated youths according to their ability and skills.
4. A separate Cell would be set up to study the interest of youths. This cell should seek advices from various people and an action plan should be formulated according to reliable advice received by the cell for the welfare of youths.
5. Families which do not have government employees would be favoured.<sup>91</sup>

#### **Welfare of Elders:**

1. A State Council for older persons should be set up.
2. Steps should be taken up to reserve a separate ward for elders in every civil hospitals.
3. Steps should be taken up to implement the Maintenance and Welfare of parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.
4. Old age pension should be availed by more old age persons and it should also be increased.
5. Day Care Centre and Elder Care and Nursing homes for old age persons should be established.
6. Steps should be taken up to continue the ongoing construction of MUP building.<sup>92</sup>

#### **Indian National Congress (INC):<sup>93</sup>**

1. The development works which were already started by the State government during the last five years (2008 to 2013) should be continued and some important points which were not implemented in the 2008 election manifesto of the INC would also be fulfilled.
2. The flagship programme of the State government 'NLUP' would continue to be the first priority to uplift farmers of Mizoram, to remove the traditional jhumming system, to prevent excessive urban migration from rural areas, to

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<sup>91</sup> Opt. cit., p.9.

<sup>92</sup> Opt. cit. Pp. 10-12.

<sup>93</sup> Official Election Manifestoes: Indian National Congress, 2013.

sustain the burden of debt problems of villagers, to conserve and protect animals and forests.

3. Steps should be taken up to stop illegal trade in border areas of Bangladesh and Myanmar but legal trading should be started and developed in these areas.
4. Special skilled education programme will be introduced to provide necessary skills which are useful for employment within and outside India. Steps should also be taken up to create a chance for interaction between unemployed Mizo youths and the employers. Mizoram Youth Commission, Labour and Employment Department, and Mizoram Skill Development Society should be upgraded to implement this programme.
5. Steps should be taken up for proper maintenance of artificial grass football grounds, astroturf hockey grounds and other sports infrastructure constructed by the State Government. Besides, other necessary infrastructures should also be constructed for talented youths in various sports disciplines. The ongoing construction of stadiums in some district headquarters of the State should be completed as soon as possible.
6. Steps should be taken up to introduce Chief Minister's Rural Housing Scheme to facilitate the problems faced by the rural people in housing constructions.
7. Efforts should be taken up to implement the suggestions made by the Mizoram Education Reforms Commission and the Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
8. Efforts should be taken to send all children to school at the elementary stage as well as to reduce the drop-out rate from this stage. Computer education would also be undertaken emphatically at every school.
9. Steps should be taken up to upgrade the capacity of State Referral Hospital from 150 bedded and to upgrade it into Medical College.
10. Efforts should be taken up to set up Medical College for Mizoram.
11. Mental Hospital should be established in the State.
12. To make Mizoram self-sufficient in power, power generation of the State would increase from its present capacity to at least 280 Megawatt. Besides,

all unelectrified rural areas of the State should be provided electricity within five years.

13. All rural and urban areas should be provided with pure drinking water within 2017.
14. Efforts should be taken up to complete Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP) in time.
15. To attract tourists as well as to simplify transportation system of people, Cable Car (Ropeway) would be introduced at Aizawl and other convenient places of the State.
16. Steps should be taken up for setting up of High Court in the State.
17. Steps should be taken up to explore natural resources (Oil & Gas) of the State to increase the financial resources of the State and to utilize it for cooking and generating power.
18. The Family and relatives of those martyrs during the insurgency period of Mizoram (1966 to 1986) would be helped by the State Government to receive compensation (ex-gratia) from the government. Further, steps should be taken up to help these people in whatever way they require.
19. Steps should be taken up for the welfare of disabled persons in accordance with the “Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act)”.
20. Efforts should be taken up for the development of furniture industry in Mizoram and the products made by local materials should be promoted in accordance with the law formulated by the Government of India. Special Economic Zone (SEZ) should be created for the promotion of furniture industry if need arise.
21. Women & Child Development Department would be set up to look after and take care of women and children's affairs.
22. Steps should be taken up for development of tourism sector to attract more tourists to the State. besides, efforts should be paid for development of Eco-tourism, adventure and motor sports to attract more tourists.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Official Election Manifestoes: Indian National Congress, 2013.

## **MNF, MPC and MDF Common Election Manifesto:<sup>95</sup>**

1. Efforts should be paid, on the basis of ‘UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, dt.13.0.2007’ and to put Zo-ethnic tribes under one administrative umbrella. International Mizo Convention would also be organized.
2. Steps should be taken up in the following areas; to include Mizo Language into the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India, to put the whole area of Mizoram under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India as before, to enforce Inner Line Regulation better than its present provision and to implement the unfulfilled points under the Peace Accords between MNF and Government of India.
3. Decentralization of power should be implemented in reality and Good Governance which includes every citizen would also be implemented.
4. Steps should be taken up for successful implementation of Socio-Economic Development Programme (SEDP) and Six Basic Needs.
5. It is seen from developed countries that quality education is one of the important factors for the progress and growth of the nation and even in some States of India. Hence, priority should be given for bringing out quality education so as to produce more quality youths to find jobs even outside the State and the country. Steps should also be taken up to provide Laptops for merit students in various examination of HSLC, HSSLC and University.
6. Healthcare schemes would be reformed better than the present system.
7. Lok Ayukta/Vigilance Commission would be set up to investigate corruption including the Chief Minister, political leaders and Government employees.
8. Steps should be taken up to improve air, water, rail and road transport and to continue the uncompleted roads which connect rural areas. The road which connected neighbouring states such as Manipur, Tripura and Assam should be repaired and border roads should also be resurfaced. Besides, steps should be taken up to establish a new Airport at convenient places in Southern areas of

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<sup>95</sup> Common Election Manifestos: MNF, MPC and MDF, 2013.

the State. attention would also be paid for the availability of Cargo plane service at Lengpui Airport.

9. Steps should be taken up for the exploration of mineral resources of Mizoram and to protect the rights and share of sons of the soils when oil and natural gas are explored.

**Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP):<sup>96</sup>**

1. To provide market security to farmers for their survival.
2. Minimum price will be fixed for some crops such as fruits and vegetables like ginger squash, hatkora, sesame, chilly, etc. Funds will be allocated from the budget to purchase these selected crops and fruits. Besides, market disposal would be considered for turmeric.
3. Shifting cultivation will slowly be eradicated and priority will be given to permanent farms/gardens to replace this traditional practice. Terracing would ne encouraged and proposal be made for construction of rain water harvesting and water canal. Instead of chemical fertilizer, an organic farming system would be encouraged.
4. Survey would carefully be done to increase crop production and every possible land would be made for wet rice cultivation.
5. Steps should be taken up to learn how to produce more gingers, onions etc. within a small area of land.
6. Efforts should be taken up to enact special provisions in accordance with Mizo culture and tradition will be protected and a resolution will be passed for this at State Legislative Assembly. Further, the Central Government would be requested to provide political, administrative and financial autonomy for Mizoram.
7. Steps should be taken up to establish Autonomous District Councils like before and to put the entire State under the Sixth Schedule provision for the

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<sup>96</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Zoram Nationalist Party: 2013.

protection of Mizo Culture, tradition and custom. Even the boundary of Revenue District will be re-inspected.

8. The problems faced by Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) and Autonomous District Councils shall be carefully studied and their problems should be solved. For development of some particular backward areas, Regional Development Council may be established and when required.
9. Steps should be taken up to solve border problem of Cachar and Mizoram through dialogues. Further, Border Development Wing will be established.
10. Priority should be given to the unity and brotherhood of all Zo-ethnic tribes living in various parts of the world as Mizoram is the only Jerusalem for all ZO-ethnic tribes. To materialize this, steps should be taken on the basis of UN Resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
11. Efforts should be paid for establishment of a separate High Court for Mizoram. Steps should also be taken to avoid the problems which happened due to cases pending in the Courts. Further, the State Government would do its best for more entry of qualified Zo-ethnic tribes into the Judges of the Supreme Court and High Court.
12. Steps should be taken up to help Mizo youths through skill development to enable them to be self-reliant.
13. The State Government will help urban poor and youths who engage in business to receive loans and students should also be helped to get educational loans for their education and State Government will be guarantors in these loans.
14. The State Government would give financial support to civil service aspirants of UPSC for their coaching fees and it would also act as the loan guarantor if they want to take loan for this purpose.
15. The State Government would be guarantor for educated and uneducated persons, who work hard to stand up by their own, to take loans from banks, financial institutions and industrial units.
16. Welfare of the youths would still be the main policy and the State Government would reform and improve the Youth Commission.

17. Free wifi would be provided throughout the State for the improvement of youths in the internet world.
18. Priority would be given to development of sports and more coaching and training would also be conducted.
19. Widows, poor people, businessmen, artists and common people would be divided into various categories and the State government would be their loan guarantor when they take loans for their occupation.
20. Priority should be given to development of education as it is one of the most important means for the development and progress of Mizoram. Steps should also be taken up to implement the objectives of education.

Apart from the above mentioned points, the election manifestoes of ZNP also include various fields such as capacity and skill development, privatization of education, banking sectors, corruption mechanism, welfare of various sections of society, etc.<sup>97</sup>

## **ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN**

The Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election turned towards three-cornered fight again like the Fifth and the Sixth State Legislative Assembly elections held in 2003 and 2008 respectively. The State ruling party the Indian National Congress and the ZNP which were electoral partners in 2010 Aizawl Municipal Council (AMC) elections decided to contest the polls separately whereas MNF and MPC agreed to form a pre-poll alliance. As other political parties whether national and state parties did not have much impact in State electoral politics till 2008 State Legislative Assembly polls, Mizoram political scenario witnessed three-cornered fight in the said Legislative Assembly election.<sup>98</sup>

The Indian National Congress (INC) and MNF party fought the election alone while ZNP contested the polls in alliance with MPC in 2008 Legislative Assembly election. Despite INC's winning the last 2008 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election with 32 seats out of 40, it formed an alliance with ZNP in the Aizawl Municipal Council election held in 2010 and won the election with 10 seats (5 seats each) out of

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<sup>97</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Zoram Nationalist Party: 2013.

<sup>98</sup> Opt. cit. P. 204.

the total 19 seats. On the other hand the MNF-MPC alliance captured 9 seats with MNF bagging five seats and MPC four seats. These two parties formed a pre-poll alliance even in 1998 Mizoram Legislative Assembly polls and got a landslide victory by capturing 32 seats with the MNF winning 21 seats and MPC bagging 11 seats.<sup>99</sup>

ZNP President Lalduhoma accused Chief Minister Lalthanhawla and ex-Chief Minister Zoramthanga of a lack of political vision. In his speech at Youth Corps volunteers at Youth Hostel, Luangmual Aizawl on October 1, 2013 Lalduhawma strongly attacked the four times Chief Minister Lalthanhawla and two-times Chief Minister Zoramthanga and said that both of them lacked a clear vision for the development of the State. He stated that every Chief Minister without vision would lead us nowhere. With regard to the future of youths in Mizoram, he said that his party was clear to solve the unemployment problem faced by the Mizo youths. He also said that skill development was one of the important programmes of his party and accused the State Government of its negligence in skill development for youths. He promised the gathering youths that Labour & Employment department would be enlarged if his party came to power. A former IPS officer and from Lok Sabha Member, ZNP President Lalduhoma had topped every opinion poll for most popular choice for Chief Ministership in Mizoram. Ironically, he had never brought his party to power after forming the ZNP and the maximum seats which the party could win till then was two seats.<sup>100</sup>

In the leaders meet cum political training held at the party headquarters, Aizawl Lalmangaiha Sailo IRS (Retd) who was also the MPC President and son of the party founder, Brig. Thenphunga Sailo, addressed party workers gathering from various districts and told them that the leaders of MPC party had worked hard to win the Seventh State Legislative Assembly election. With regard to programmes and policies for development of the State, MPC only focused on developmental activities for Mizoram and the party was open to cooperating with other parties which had the same principle as MPC, he added. The MPC senior leader and right-hand man of the MPC President, Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana also addressed the party workers and strongly

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<sup>99</sup> Opt. cit. P. 205.

<sup>100</sup> Opt. cit. P. 205.



attacked the ruling Indian National Congress party government and said that the INC totally failed in various sectors. He pointed out five points in which the State Government failed and said that the Congress Government could not solve the boundary problem between Mizoram and Assam (Cachar) and they also totally failed in general administration. Dr. Kenneth said that the condition of the road was extremely bad and unrepaired everywhere in the State and this was a big problem for people and this was the worst time in the history of the State in this regard. The State Government also failed in the field of education because many schools were closed by the people due to a severe shortage of teachers. In producing energy, the Congress government totally failed and they could not complete even a single bid hydel project for the use of the State after the combining ruling period of the party was 17 years, he added.<sup>101</sup>

The Church sponsored election watch-dog, the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) organized Talk Show for Presidents of all political parties to share their visions with the voters at Ignite Studio, Aizawl on October 10, 2013. All party top leaders including two small political parties namely, the BJP and the newly floated Trinamool Congress participated in this joint platform for 2013 Legislative Assembly election campaign. Every party chief was given 30 minutes each and Chief Ministerial candidates of various political parties shared their visions for development of the State, how they would form a popular government, fight against corruption and their policies for financial management. ZNP President Lalduhoma had spoken first and highlighted the three major policies of his party's political goals which basically aimed to reunite all ZO-ethnic tribes across the region, economic goal and lastly spiritual goal which he stated was essential for a Christian-dominated State of Mizoram. The State ruling party, namely, the National Congress State Pradesh President and Chief Minister Lalthanhawla claimed that his party flagship programme New Land Use Policy (NLUP), which aimed to help the poor stand on their feet, had also borne fruits, and this poor-people oriented policy would be continued if his party was given a chance again by the people.<sup>102</sup>

The biggest opposition party, MNF President and former Chief Minister Zoramthanga stated that his party was against the construction of hydro projects to generate power, as against Chief Minister Lalthanhawla's vision to "undertake

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<sup>101</sup> Opt. cit. 206.

<sup>102</sup> Opt. cit. P. 206.

hydroelectric projects in all potential rivers” in Mizoram. He said that his party would instead focus on thermal plants and exploration of gas. Even war against drugs and liquor would be the top priority of his party. Like ZNP, ‘reunification of ZO-ethnic tribes’ had figured prominently in the MNF’s poll manifesto. MPC party President led by Lalmangaiha Sailo was surprisingly represented by its Vice President Vanlalhlana. He said that the MPC party was strongly committed to fulfilling the unfulfilled ‘Six Basic Needs’, more than 30 year old policy formulated by its party founder Brig T. Sailo and this policy was still relevant and necessary for the development of the State. Mizoram State BJP Unit President, H. Lalhluna said that the main policy of his party was to elevate the farmers by harnessing the entire potential areas. B.T Nghinglova IPS (Retd) who was the President of Trinamool Congress Mizoram Unit also delivered a speech and stated his party strongly opposed Chief Minister’s vision to undertake hydroelectric projects in all potential rivers in Mizoram to generate electricity.<sup>103</sup>

President of Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) and Chief Minister Lalthanhawla was strongly attacked by the main opposition party of the State, MNF with regard to Mizo Nationalism. In the letter published by MNF General Headquarters., they vehemently criticized the speech delivered by Lalthanhawla regarding unification of all Zo-ethnic tribes and said that it was just for the sake of capturing votes and it did not come out from the bottom of his heart. The MNF party also said that Lalthanhawla badly needed to revive himself on Mizo Nationalism because he was deeply absorbed by mainland culture and Hindu philosophy.<sup>104</sup>

When Indian National Congress party returned to power in 2008 State Legislative Assembly election, the party’s main bullet in the early terms New Land Use Policy (NLUP) was revived and it seemed that the policy which promised direct cash benefit to the beneficiaries was very effective to voters in the poll campaign. In 2013 State Legislative Assembly election too, the main agenda of the party was again NLUP to woo the voters. Meanwhile, leaders of other political parties vehemently criticized this policy and accused the scheme as just election oriented not for development of the State. in this connection, ZNP President Lalduhawma also, in his speech to ZNP workers meet of Aizawl East-I, publicly criticized NLUP and CM NLUP special package as an

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<sup>103</sup> Opt. cit. P. 207.

<sup>104</sup> Opt. cit. p. 207

improvised policy and just for capturing votes. In his press meeting at Aizawl on October 8, 2013, ZNP President Lalduhawma promised that if his party came to power, the problem of government servants' pay would be solved by Seventh Pay. He attacked again the ruling party flagship programme NLUP and said that the fund allocated for that programme had been diverted from Additional Central Assistance (ACA) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). Hence, it was not a special package from the Centre as stated by INC leaders and the fact was that Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) diverted Rupees 1062 Crore for NLUP from these Centrally Sponsored Schemes like MGNREGA, Technical Mission, Bamboo Mission, IWDP, BADP and BRGF apart from Rupees 1526 Crore diverted from Additional Central Assistance/ Special Plan Assistance (SPA). The ZNP President reiterated that his party would go alone in 2013 State Legislative Assembly polls and his party would provide Rupees 5 Lakh loan to the educated unemployed and the persons who needed money to start their livelihood.<sup>105</sup>

As the Seventh State Legislative Assembly was approaching, two regional political parties, namely, the MNF, MPC and MDF based in the Southern part of Mizoram had finalized a pre-poll alliance on October 29, 2013 for the upcoming election. As per the seat sharing agreement, MNF the biggest party among the three parties would be given 31 seats, MPC eight and MDF in one constituency. MPC would contest in Tuirial constituency in Kolasib district and four constituencies such as Chalfilh, Aizawl North-I, Aizawl North-II and Aizawl East-I in Aizawl District. In Champhai district, Champhai South in Mizoram-Myanmar border, Hrangturzo constituency in central district of Serchhip and Lunglei East in South Mizoram Lunglei District. The MDF would contest only in Palak Constituency in Saiha District. The remaining 31 seats would be fielded by MNF party.<sup>106</sup>

In press conference, MNF Senior Vice President Tawnluia said that the alliance was formed by three parties to form a true democratic government in the State, to protect the people, land and religion and for all-round speedy development. The MNF and the MDF were already partners in the 2008 State Legislative Assembly polls and had three and one MLA respectively in the 40 Assembly seats. But, after the death of one MNF

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<sup>105</sup> Opt. cit. P.208

<sup>106</sup> <https://lenkaw1.khampat.com/2013/10/mnf-mpc-leh-mdf-ten-thawhhona-ziakfel.html> accessed on 20-06-2023.

Legislator B. Lalthlengliana in April, 2013, MNF-MDF combine had only three MLAs. There was a stalemate between MNF and MPC in the pre-poll process of three party's alliance in the beginning, but it was resolved at last.<sup>107</sup>

MNF youth wing headquarters President, P.C. Laltlansanga said that a new police battalion would be established for unemployment of Mizo youths if MNF party came to power with the help of God and the people. He accused the ruling Congress Government which made Mizoram Youth Commission established by the MNF, ineffective and malfunctioning.

MNF leaders also promised to end nepotism if the party was voted back to power. The party promised that recruitment for all government jobs would be made through employment exchange. The party leaders said that they would stop the practice of recruiting youths for government services on the basis of recommendations made by politicians and government officials. Former Cabinet Minister and MNF leader, Dr. R. Lalthangliana, Liansuama and former MLA Lalchhandama Ralte, also assured voters that Lok Ayukta and Anti-Corruption authority would also be set up in the State and it would be empowered to investigate government employees and public servants including Chief Minister and Ministers. They apologized for the resolution passed in the State Legislative Assembly House for fencing Mizoram-Myanmar international border during the MNF regime. The largest opposition party in Mizoram also pledged that they should scrap the existing lifetime payment of vehicular road tax imposed by the present government led by INC and said that it was a heavy burden for vehicle owners and common men.<sup>108</sup>

Indian National Congress party stalwart and Cabinet Minister Zodintluanga, in his campaign tour to his constituency, Thorang, said that the MNF-MPC pre-poll alliance was very ineffective and both of them should kill themselves and this thing was cleared from their seats sharing pattern, he added. He also said that many MNF party workers at various blocks were not happy over the seats sharing pattern made by their leaders and they also submitted letters to their party headquarters and urged to reshuffle and placed MNF candidates would be fielded by the MPC. Zodintluanga also stated that

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<sup>107</sup> Opt.cit.217.

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.firstpost.com/politics/mnf-promises-jobs-via-employment-exchanges-if-voted-to-power-1200271.html> accessed on 17-05-2023.

Indian National Congress party would win again the polls was apparent due to the incident. At the same time, MPC General Headquarters youth wing published a statement in response to Zodintluanga's speech and said that pre-poll alliance of MNF-MPC was formed to save the State from Indian National Congress's tyrannical rule. The condition of Mizoram was being deteriorated under INC rule. Hence, the MNF-MPC alliance would try to overthrow this party in 2013 State Legislative Assembly election to establish people's government, the MPC youth wing's statement stated.<sup>109</sup>

### **EIGHT MIZORAM STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION, 2018**

The Eighth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election was scheduled to be held on 28th November, 2018. As per the final electoral roll published by the Election Commission of India, the total number of voters was 7,68,181, out of which 3,74,496 were male voters and 3,93,685 female voters.<sup>110</sup> A total of 204 candidates, for the election to the 40 member Mizoram State Legislative Assembly file for nomination. The total number of voters turnout is 84.9 percent. Eight candidates including the then Chief Minister Lalthanhawla, ZPM Chief Ministerial candidate Lalduhoma, Peoples's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM) President, Vanlalruata, National People's Party (NPP) convener, Lianzuala, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) State Unit Chief Lalawmpuia Chhangte, Rev. Zaichhawna Hlawndo and his two daughters from 'Zoramthar' also filed nomination in two seats each.<sup>111</sup> The Eight State Legislative Assembly election was contested by INC, MNF, ZPM, NCP, NPP, BJP, People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM) and Zoramthar. The Mizo National Front (MNF) won the elections by bagging 26 out of the 40 state assembly seats.<sup>112</sup>

Total number of electors in Mizoram stands at 7,84,405, out of which 3,81,991 (48.7 per cent) were male and 4,02,408 were female (51.3 per cent). The two key players this time were joined by the ZPM in the run. The ZPM was seen by people mostly in the

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<sup>109</sup> Opt. cit. P. 219.

<sup>110</sup> <https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/schedule-for-general-election-to-8th-mizoram-legislative-assembly-2018> accessed on 23-05-2023.

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/poll-officer-nominations-of-204-candidates-to-mizoram-assembly-accepted-1946893> accessed on 24-05-2023.

<sup>112</sup> <https://mizoram.nic.in/gov/mla.htm> accessed on 24-05-2023.

state capital Aizawl as a resort against the ineffective and corrupted ministries of Congress and MNF. It was led by Lalduhoma, President of the ZNP. The BJP was striving to win in the state where it had never won a single seat before. The PRISM was an anti-corruption agency-turned political party. The Zoramthar was an evangelistic party which wanted to change the political scene of the state through the Gospel. While all the contending parties campaigned earnestly to form a ministry, the main battle was between the ZPM, Congress and the MNF.

### **Result of the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election, 2018.**

Due to the expiry of the Seventh term of the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. In the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, there were 3 national political parties, namely Bharatiya Janata Party, Indian National Congress and Nationalist Congress Party and Mizo National Front, National People's Party and People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM) and Zoram People's Party (ZPM) (contested as Independent Candidates) contested the poll.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Opt. cit., P.1.

**Table. 1.2. The list of elected candidates in the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election is as given below:<sup>114</sup>**

<b>List of Successful Candidates</b>		
<b>CONSTITUENCY</b>	<b>NAME OF ELECTED CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY AFFILIATION</b>
Hachhek	Larindika Ralte	INC
Dampa	Lalrintluanga Sailo	MNF
Mamit	H. Lalzirliana	MNF
Tuirial	Andrew H Thangliana	IND
Kolasib	K Lalrinliana	MNF
Serlui	Lalrinsanga Ralte	MNF
Tuivawl	Lalchhandama Ralte	MNF
Chalfilh	Lalrinliana Sailo	MNF
Tawi	R. Lalzirliana	MNF
Aizawl North-I	Vanlalhlana	IND
Aizawl North-II	Vanlalhlana	IND
Aizawl North-III	C. Lalmuanpuia	MNF
Aizawl East-I	Zoramthanga	MNF
Aizawl East-II	Robert Romawia Ralte	MNF
Aizawl West-I	Lalduhawma	IND
Aizawl West-II	Lalruatkima	MNF
Aizawl West-III	VI. Zaithanzama	IND
Aizawl South-I	C. Lalsawivunga	IND
Aizawl South-II	Lalchhuanthanga	IND
Aizawl South-III	F. Lalnunmawia	MNF
Lengteng	L. Thangmawia	MNF
Tuichang	Tawnluia	MNF
Champhai North	Dr. Zr. Thiamsanga	MNF

<sup>114</sup> Opt. cit., P. 4.

Champhai South	T.J. Lalnunluanga	MNF
East Tuipui	Ramthanmawia	MNF
Serchhip	Lalduhawma	IND
Tuikum	Er. Lalrinawma	MNF
Hrangturzo	Lalchamlia	MNF
South Tuipui	Dr. Lalthangliana	MNF
Lunglei North	Vanlaltanpuia	MNF
Lunglei East	Lawmawma Tochwawng	MNF
Lunglei West	C. Lalrinsanga	MNF
Lunglei South	K. Pachhunga	MNF
Thorang	Zodintluanga Ralte	INC
West Tuipui	Nihar Kanti Chakma	INC
Tuichawng	Buddha Dhan Chakma	BJP
Lawngtlai West	C. Ngunlianchunga	INC
Lawngtlai East	H. Biakzaua	MNF
Saiha	Dr. K. Beichhua	MNF
Palak	Kt. Rokhaw	INC

**(Source: Detailed Results: Election Commission of India- State Election, 2018 to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram).**

The Eight term of Mizoram State Legislative Assembly witnessed the usher in of a new government with MNF that emerged as the single majority party which bagged 26 seats out of the 40 seats. The election result brought an end to the ten year Congress rule in the State. The result of the Eight election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly was indeed surprising. Though MNF emerged as the single majority party, the newly formed Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) which contested the election fray as Independent could secure 8 seats and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made its debut by winning a single seat from Tuichawng constituency. The new government in the Eight term was formed by MNF under the Chief Ministership of Shri. Zoramthanga.



## **Election Manifestos of Political Parties in the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, 2018.**

### **Mizo National Front:**

For the 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, the MNF party has laid down its policy and manifestos into three main heads such as:

#### **Political and Administrative Policy:**

The party always aims and stands to safeguard and uphold the Mizo culture and identity, protect the Territory, to form a transparent and accountable government, to promote the spirit of brotherhood among different Zo-ethnic tribes for bringing success the unification of the Zo-ethnic tribes. To promote Mizo brotherhood various seminars and workshops in art, culture and literature will be organized. To bring 'Zoram Thar' (New Mizoram) steps should be taken for long-term economic development, exploration of mineral resources and to protect the assimilation of Mizo tribe, the party promise to revive the 'Memorandum of Settlement' between MNF and Govt. of India.

#### **Political Policy and Programmes:**

- To promote Unification of all Zo ethnic tribes from neighbouring states and other places under one administrative umbrella by organizing 'Cultural Meet'. For this purpose, goodwill ambassadors will be sent to different Zo-inhabited places and organize 'International Mizo Convention'.
- To promote and protect Mizo culture, religion and language.
- To protect the Mizo people from assimilation and the party will promote 'Mizo Nationalism' by promoting brotherhood among different Mizo tribes and protect the minorities.
- To solve the border issues with neighboring states.
- To take steps for the inclusion of certain areas of Mizoram under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Steps should also be taken up to include Mizo language into the Eight Schedule of the

Constitution of India. Steps should be taken for enforcement of Inner Line regulation better than its present provision.

- To implement the unfulfilled points under the Peace Accord between the MNF and the Government of India. The party will also take step to honour and compensate the ‘Martars’ who sacrifice their life for the independent movement.
- The Party also stands for equal economic development throughout the State.
- To promote border trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh.<sup>115</sup>

#### **Development of Districts and Autonomous District Councils (ADC):**

- Steps should be taken up for development of different districts and Autonomous District Councils within the States. More central funds will be generated for the development of ADCs.
- Where there is no Autonomous District Council, a District Development Board will be established and at District Headquarters, a Municipal board/council will be set up.<sup>116</sup>

#### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY (SEDP)**

For the successful implementation of SEDP. Five important programmes are introduced:

1. Green Revolution (Food sufficiency)
2. Industrial development and trade & commerce.
3. Manpower and technology development.
4. Social development and social security.
5. Invest in Mizoram

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<sup>115</sup> Mizoram National Front SEDP: Policies and Programmes (2017). Mizo National Front General Headquarter: Aizawl. Pp.4-7.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. pp.7-8.

## **SEDP is further divided into two main heads:**

### **Economic development policy and programme:**

1. To bring Green revolution for sufficiency in food supply. This also includes increase production in agriculture and allied sectors, industrial development, infrastructure development and creation of trade and investment environment.
2. To build a healthy and better society, human resource development, youth employment and services and sports are also included in this policy.

### **The delivery system of SEDP:**

For successful delivery of the programme, priority will be given to the upliftment of BPL (Below Poverty Line) families, generating employment for the unemployed and abolishing inequality.

Under this policy, cash incentives will be distributed along with the trade each beneficiaries choose proper training will be given. Financial assistance and support will be given through: Grants, Price support, Subsidy and Loan.<sup>117</sup>

### **Economic Policy and Programme: Sufficiency in food supply**

For successful implementation of Green Revolution, economic activities for all will be introduced. Support will be provided through grants and soft loans/ free interest loans. The government will act as guarantor for those who could not repay their loans.

- For agriculture and allied sector, convergence scheme will be implemented for farmers and the government will provide and assist the farmers in providing market linkage.
- For large-scale production of rice mechanization will be implemented for cultivation of land, rice mill and de-husking and polishing machine will be install.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid. pp. 12-15.

- Special project for cultivation of selected crops like potato, onion, cabbage, cauliflower and grains such as dal, soya bean, wheat, etc., will be cultivated.
- Improved farming technology will be introduced for jhum cultivators for instance, hillslope terracing, contour trenching etc. Jhumming regulation will also be introduced to increase agricultural products.
- Horticulture farmers will be assisted by the government by introducing cropping zones.
- Steps should also be taken for construction of agriculture link roads and irrigation through rainwater harvesting to support farmers.
- Food and fruit processing programme will be introduced.
- Emphasis will be given to bamboo industry
- Rubber cultivation will also be given importance.
- Emphasis will be given on development of sericulture, animal husbandry and veterinary, fishery, etc.
- To provide scope for employment opportunities in social sector and social enterprises.
- Better utilization of available resources to make Mizoram an industrial estate and industrial growth centre.
- To uplift the economic condition of urban poor population Special Development Scheme will be introduced.
- Insurance schemes such as crop insurance schemes/micro-insurance schemes will be initiated.
- The government will take measures for a sufficient supply of basic needs of the people such as water supply, power supply, gas supply, and ration supply.
- Infrastructure development such as transport & communication infrastructure, ropeway communication, improvement and maintenance of rural roads, development of urban infrastructure through construction of elevated road, fly over and proper drainage systems.

- Generation of more power through hydel project, natural gas thermal project, solar and wind hybrid project.

**Social Development programme:**

- Steps shall be taken to improve health and sanitation
- Steps shall be taken to reduce crime rates.
- Steps shall be taken for community improvement programme.
- Construction of the recreational centre, public toilets, health centre, sports centre, information technology transmission centre etc.
- Promotion of Man Power Development Policy will be taken up through identification of Potent embedded skills, potential key growth resources, sports, nursing, introducing designing and fashion technology, music and fine arts.
- Steps will be taken up to promote Eco-tourism and adventure-tourism.

**Sports and Youth Services:**

- Step will be taken up for promotion of sports at higher standards by implementing regulations as per International Olympic charter.
- Sports and physical training will be imparted at both private and public schools as compulsory subject.
- Step will be taken up to promote traditional/indigenous games.
- Cash incentives will be provided to sportsmen who won medal at International and National level.
- Playground, stadium and hall, Hostel and training academy, sports equipment will be provided with proper maintenance and management will be provided for promotion of sports.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid. pp. 35-40.

### **Indian National Congress:**

- Continuation of the party's flagship programme i.e. New Land Use Policy (NLUP) for farmers as per the need of the people and the cash incentives will also be raised.
- Continuation of New Economic Development Policy for unemployed youths with a special thrust on entrepreneurship development for youths.
- Introduction of a new housing Scheme- Chief Minister's Rural Housing Scheme for poor people in rural areas and residential quarters for employees of the police and education department.
- The Mizoram State Health Care Scheme will be merged with the Central Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) to provide more benefits to the people where patients with chronic illness could claim more than Rs. 5,00,000/- from both the scheme.
- Proper Ambulance Network system will be introduced where patient can be transferred without any delay from places where doctors are not available.
- To upgrade Mizoram Institute of Medical Education & Research (MIMER) as one of the best medical institutes in India.
- Persons with disability, orphans, widows, widowers and underprivileged families will be given assistance.
- Free laptop will be distributed to candidates who cleared HSLC and above exam every year. At the initial stage, laptops will be provided to those who passed HSLC and above who are unemployed.
- Steps will be taken to enhance quality in Science, Mathematics and Technical education. Steps will also be taken so that student can clear their HSLC examination without Science and Mathematics subjects.
- A separate budget will be allocated for Excursions and study tours for College and University students.
- Phased implementation of the recommendations of the Mizoram Education Reform Commission.

- Set up more rehabilitation centres for drug addicts and alcoholics across the State. For this purpose, Counselling Centre will be set up in different places in collaboration with Church and other voluntary organisations.
- The party promises to revise the disaster management mechanism within a year after formation of government to face any disaster that may occur. For relief and rehabilitation of disasters that may occur, a separate budget will be allocated apart from the aid received from the Central government.
- To encourage more participation from the people in protection of Forest, wildlife and water resources, separate budget will be allocated.
- Necessary steps will be taken for overall development and to ease the burden of the people, management of electric line and introduction of energy bill collection system for collective participation of the citizens will be implemented.
- To promote solar energy more solar plants will be installed in rural parts of the State without neglecting the ongoing Hydel project.
- Formation of 'Project Assessment & Monitoring Committee' to assist projects undertaken by different departments.
- For promotion of tourism in the State, Institute of Hotel Management training will be conducted immediately.
- The party will promote fine arts and Music. The Convention Centre will be set up for organizing big concerts and conferences.
- Racing tracks will be built for promotion of Motor Sports.
- Conducting of fresh Below Poverty Line (BPL) Baseline Survey.
- Effective curbing of illegal cross-border trade and further enhancement of Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh Border Trade.
- Development of an extensive youth skill development programme.
- Development and upgradation of sports facilities and infrastructures.
- Upgradation of State Referral Hospital and ultimately to a Medical college.
- Establishment of a 50-bed Mental Hospital.

- Upgradation of the State Cancer Hospital from 50 to 100 bedded hospital.
- Ensure energy security through enhancement of the installed capacity to at least 280 MW.
- Connection of all census villages by truckable roads within the next five years through PMGSY.
- Timely completion of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP).<sup>119</sup>

**Bharatiya Janata Party:**<sup>120</sup>

- To include Mizo language in the Eight Schedule to the Constitution of India.
- Supply of rice at Rs.1 per kg to every homeless family.
- To make Aizawl traffic congestion-free in three years.
- To make all-weather roads pothole free in the next six months after formation of government.
- To establish two medical colleges, three engineering colleges and a nursing college institute.
- To create 50,000 job opportunities in the next five years.
- Construction of trans-boundary highway, linking Myanmar and Bangladesh via Aizawl to promote trade, tourism and industries.
- To take initiative to expand the National Highway to a four-lane highway.
- To upgrade and enhance the Autonomous District Councils as per the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
- To ensure freedom of religion as the Constitution of India ensured secularism.
- To promote and develop the infrastructure and facilities of games and sports for youths who are interested in various disciplines of sports.
- To strengthen information technology in accordance with the developing trends.

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<sup>119</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mizoram-elections/mizoram-polls-congress-releases-manifesto-promises-laptops-to-students/story-YKrG244lB8ydEk73FvO90J.html>. accessed on 16-05-2022.

<sup>120</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Bharatiya Janata Party.



- To strengthen the industry sector for local products of bamboo and timber.
- To utilize natural resources for overall development of the State.
- To set up various facilities for old-age citizens.

**Zoram People Movement:<sup>121</sup>**

- To combat corruption with the set up of a vigilance commission and revised the Lok Ayukta 2014.
- Decentralisation of authority will be implemented by giving more authority to the local government.
- To make minimum and appropriate use of public funds.
- To set up the Boundary Commission to solve the long pending boundary disputes and
- To work effortlessly with ZORO for the unification of all the “Zo-ethnic” tribes in the world.
- To take measures to increase Mizo population, and for better utilization of resources, the government will provide incentives to mothers with more than three children.
- To inculcate the spirit of Mizo Nationalism and take steps for resurgence of Mizo Culture.
- To protect the Mizo population from assimilation and effective measures will be taken for this purpose in the issue of Inner Line Permit.
- Cash incentive will be awarded to couple who have more than 3 children to encourage Mizo population growth.<sup>122</sup>
- To generate more hydel projects and solar energy for power sufficiency.
- To harvest water resources through solar power and conventional power.
- To construct better communication and road transports such as roadways, airways, railways and inland waterways.

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<sup>121</sup> The Manifestos of the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) (2018). Zoram People’s Movement General Headquarters: Aizawl. Pp.1- 8.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. Pp.12-13.

- To negotiate with the Central Ministries of Road Transport and Highways to replace the Bailey bridges to concrete enforcement bridges within the State.<sup>123</sup>
- To empower and develop the civil servant aspirants by setting up more coaching institutions and provide cash incentives to those who clear preliminary and mains examination so as to encourage them.
- To promote and create awareness among people to use locally made and Mizo Indigenous products.
- To improve the education system and encourage computerization of the education system.<sup>124</sup>
- To provide loans to small entrepreneurs who produce locally made goods.
- To take necessary measures for tapping underground resources.
- To help the youths to have a worldwide view, the government will organized an excursion to foreign land for the youths.
- To inculcate competitive spirit among the youths.
- To have a separate budget for the upliftment of farmers and for the purchase of crops
- To promote contract farming and organic farming.
- To generate more employment opportunities for youths within and outside the state by establishing various training centres.
- To monitor small and medium projects ‘State Public Works Control and Monitoring Authority will be established.
- Steps will be taken for mitigation of various social problems such as human rights violations, adoption, child abuse, rape, human trafficking, physical torturing, child labour.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.Pp.14-15.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. Pp. 20-21.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.p.28.

### **People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM)**

The PRISM declared in its manifesto to uphold and protect the state, identity and religion of the people and to explore and expand the natural resources available to the state. Over 1.5 lakh employment would be generated and proper policies would be implemented for the present and future generations. It also promised to reform the educational system and sports policy benefitting the youth. Like the ZPM, the PRISM also exempted the Chief Minister from work and departments and would reduce the facilities and wages of the MLAs. It included administrative and financial reforms in their agenda, encouraging decentralization of power to the lowest level. Rules would be strictly followed in all possible manners, and transparency of government would be maintained. The PRISM promised to fight against corruption and corrupted officials and give general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation. Health care schemes for the public, welfare of labourers, elderly, women and the poor were also part of the social welfare program. Improvement in the available infrastructure and providing the basic necessities of people were given importance. The Look West Policy would be adopted enhancing trade with Bangladesh through the Tlabung Border Trade Center. The UN Sustainable Development Goals would be adopted to achieve, and the protection of the environment would be a great concern if it came to power.<sup>126</sup>

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

Human development was the central concern of the NPP. While developments in different areas take place, none of these would matter if humans do not develop. The NPP sought to appeal to this through quality education, and by revising education service rules free from narrow party politics. A work culture would be established which should be quality-assured. The NPP also expressed to expand market economy by exporting local products like corn, bamboo, and rice, with the government involved in manufacturing, processing and marketing. A food park would be established. Higher electrical generation and better infrastructure, especially roads, were also part of the manifesto. There would be a health care scheme properly maintained, with a special package for the poor. Social services for the aged and children would be delivered.

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<sup>126</sup> <https://zothlifim.com/chanchinthar/2017/08/prism-mla-election-manifesto-2018-tlangzarh/> accessed on 24-016-2023.

There would be a youth welfare policy covering all aspects of interests and development for the Mizo youth. Tourism was to be developed where the government would assist those interested in eco-tourism. Decentralisation of power was given a place, and local development works would be in the hands of local authorities as far as possible. Better packages for ex-servicemen, development of Ayush and land revenue were also part of the election promise. The NPP appealed to the tribal and Christian sentiments of people of Mizoram by seeking to expand the affairs of tribals and keeping a separate pilgrimage budget for Holy Land tour.

### **Zoramthar**

The Zoramthar being an evangelistic party had no specific manifesto. However, the leaders made it clear in their reasons for establishment that they sought to change the current condition, rather disappointing in nature, prevailing in the state through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So if they were to attain power, they would lead the state in accordance with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>127</sup>

### **Main Issues Preceding the Elections:**

On the eve of the election, a quit notice was given to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), SB Shashank by a coordination committee headed by the Young Mizo Association (YMA) comprising Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and Mizo Students Union (MSU). This was a result of two issues, one involving the deployment of central forces for the Bru voters in Tripura camps whose representatives opted to vote in their camps while the Mizoram government wanted them to cast their votes in Mizoram, and the other involving the letter sent by the CEO to the Election Commission of India where he alleged interference by the Home Secretary, Lalnunmawia Chuango in the preparations for the polls, resulting in the immediate removal of Lalnunmawia Chuaungo. The committee mobilized thousands of Mizo people who protested in the streets of Aizawl demanding the removal of SB Shashank and the reinstatement of Lalnunmawia Chuaungo. They were keen on boycotting the elections if their demands were not met

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<sup>127</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mizoram-elections/mizoram-election-2018-a-political-group-banks-on-godliness-to-win-polls/story-J5Czhajm1tq2yonABM3XcN.html> accessed on 18-06-2023.

with. However, the CEO was replaced and elections took place in a peaceful environment across the state.<sup>128</sup>

A major issue in the pre-poll was concerning liquor. Since the advent of British missionaries in 1894 and the ultimate conversion of people to Christianity, liquor has always been regarded as a sin by the majority of people. The Church with its mighty influence has always opposed the ease of the Mizoram Liquor (Total Prohibition) (MLTP) Act of 1995 by the milder Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) (MLPC) Act of 2014 during the Congress rule, resulting in the entry of liquor shops within the state. Major Civil Societies operating in the area were also against the MLPC Act, but the government went on with it regarding it to be promising of positive revenue. The MNF and the ZPM had promised total prohibition of liquor if they were brought to power, while Congress leader Lal Thanhawla opined that liquor itself was overestimated and that all thriving economies were only due to sell of liquor. The BJP, on the other hand, has taken a middle path by proposing to ban the liquor coming from outside the state and encourage only locally produced ones. The powerful Presbyterian Church had organized mass prayers in all member churches across the state twice that year against the repeal of the prohibition. People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM), a new party contesting polls for the first time, said total prohibition was not a solution. The opinion of people was dispersed regarding alcohol as shown in opinion polls by the media.<sup>129</sup>

The state of infrastructure was also a major concern. Despite the developments happening in the state, the roads were neither properly constructed nor maintained. Citizens, columnists and political parties raised their concerns over the road conditions in Mizoram as they were aware of the deteriorating condition of road communication during the Congress regime in the State. The road condition worsened for people living outside the Aizawl city. Due to this reason, the opposition party, MNF on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 had called a total bandh throughout the State to protest against the bad roads, claiming that the Congress in its ten-year rule did not improve the road conditions

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<sup>128</sup> <https://thenortheasttoday.com/states/mizoram/mizoram-poll-state-ceo-gets-quit-notice-from-influential/cid2523647.html> accessed on 12-06-2023.

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mizoram-elections/mizoram-assembly-elections-2018-liquor-ban-a-poll-issue-for-all-parties/story-4qOTZYSubx9DWtxp4YcQxH.html> accessed on 13-06-2023

in Mizoram. This view was shared by the public in general, and thus hampered the image of ruling ministry to some extent. Many civil societies had also called upon volunteers to repair roads that connect villages and the city. Numerous blockades also happened during the Congress rule by different agencies to protest against the road conditions, which proved to be of no avail.<sup>130</sup>

Illegal immigration has also been a topic of discontentment among the people of Mizoram. There are claimed to be over 10,000 illegal Chakma immigrants in the region who migrated from Bangladesh and reside in the south-western part of the state. The Young Mizo Association (YMA), one of the largest civil society in the State organized rallies in different part of the State demanding the abolition of the Chakma Autonomous District Council which they claimed as a safe haven for immigrants Chakma. Besides those legally residing Chakmas, there had been reports of illegal influx judging from the enormous increase in the Chakma population in the last census. A separate Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) had been formed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India in 1972, and thus the CADC has executive power over certain departments in the area. The Chakmas being immigrants from neighbouring countries were never considered as insiders by the public, and thus movements and protests had been going on for scrapping of the CADC, who had demanded the status of UT.<sup>131</sup>

The issue of women has also been a topic of debate. Despite the fact that female electors outnumber that of males in the highly-literate state, only 15 female candidates had been fielded by different parties. The Congress fielded only one female candidate which according to the President Lal Thanhawla was due to the fact that the society preferred men over women when it comes to their legislators. The MNF failed to field any due to lack of competent persons in the women wing. The BJP topped the list by fielding 5 candidates, followed by Zoramthar that fielded 4. The NCP and ZPM also had few female candidates in the fray. The Congress ministry failed to formalize the Mizoram Divorce Ordinance, 2008 promulgated by the MNF ministry, and the MNF

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<sup>130</sup> C. Lalremiami & Dr. C. Lalhmanmawia. *Mizoram Legislative Assembly Elections 2018: An Overview*. in Lalmalsawma Khiangte & F. Lalramhluni *Electoral Politics in Mizoram: Emerging Issues and Trends*. New Delhi: Mittal Publication. p. 34

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/oct/11/tribal-outfit-rakes-up-chakma-issue-ahead-of-mizoram-assembly-polls-1884169.html> accessed on 16-06-2023.

was trying to corner the Congress for the same. The Congress was preparing to rule for three consecutive terms when it faced defection in the party where the Home Minister and one MLA defected to MNF, the regional rival of Congress in the pre-polls. The MNF's membership in the BJP-led alliance was used against them by other parties, and Congress' rule over the Chakma Autonomous District Council in coalition with the BJP was thrown against them. The Congress and MNF had also fished out the ZPM's Lalduhoma's conversation with BJP leaders for striking a deal, all events showing the unpopularity of the BJPs among people. All such issues unfolded in the run up to the polls, making the election an interesting one.

Another issue in the Eight State Legislative Assembly election was the upsurge of BJP at the national and regional levels. In the bye-election to the Chakma Autonomous District Council held in 2018, the BJP made its first impetus in the State electoral politics. In 2018, the CADC election, the BJP secured five out of Twenty seats. Tuichawng is the only Assembly constituency in poll-bound Mizoram's CADC. In the Chakma-Mizo relations, BJP is their only saviour many feel. The BJP made its debut in Mizoram elections by winning Tuichawng constituency.<sup>132</sup>

The MNF in its 2018 election manifesto used the Socio-Economic Development Policy (SEDP) as a footstep to the Congress New Land Use Policy (NLUP). The chief aim of the SEDP is the overall socio-economic development of the state by distributing as much as three lakhs to the people. This dazzling campaign theme of the MNF hit the ears of many people during election campaign period. Another issue is the anti-incumbency drive to the current government. This is one of the American patterns of change of government after two consecutive terms. The expression of widespread dissatisfaction arise from the elongated incumbency of both Congress and MNF governments respectively. Many young generations and educated people of today felt that they were left behind without prior choices beyond Congress and MNF and were so much eager to witness changes by change of government other than Congress and MNF. At this juncture, Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), a political conglomeration of seven political parties emerged as a third wing in a Congress-MNF alternate ruling party in the political history of Mizoram elections. Therefore, many people and particularly those of

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<sup>132</sup> Opt. cit. p. 37

non-party men anticipated this political entity as a crucial expedient of change in Mizoram politics.<sup>133</sup>

The politics of district demand has always been a cause of concern in the elections in India. In Mizoram, demands for full-fledged functioning of new districts such as Hnathial, Saitual and Khawzawl has an immense impact in election. The people in these districts have long years compelled the Government in every possible ways, submitted memorandums and even organized total bandh before the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. The MNF Vice President Dr. R. Lalthangliana has expressed that if the MNF formed government in the State, the three new districts which would be operational which was earlier announced by the previous MNF government in 2008. The Congress government on the other hand did not satisfy the aspirations of these three districts hopeful.

Lastly, there was a dissident move within the Congress Party to which four high profile leaders of the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) including the then Home Minister and Vice President of MPCC R. Lalzirliana, Assembly House Speaker Hiphei, and former Parliamentary Secretary Hmingdailova Khiangte quit the party on the eve of the election. This obviously has a damaging upshot on the ruling Congress government. However, this surprising move immensely re-arouse political awareness among the general masses, particularly to the upcoming election.

### **Election Campaigns**

Election campaigns are the means by which political parties and candidates present their ideas and prospects for the state or country in the period preceding the elections. In India, such campaigns often indulge violence and undue circumstances so in order to avoid such mishaps, the Election Commission of India had laid down a Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates, by which the said parties should abide. The first part is a general conduct guideline including creating no tension and hatred between communities, religions or castes, avoiding corrupt practices, avoiding criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified

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<sup>133</sup> F. Lalramhluni, *Analysis of Manifestos of Political Parties in Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Elections 2018* in Lalmalsawma Khiangte & F. Lalramhluni *Electoral Politics in Mizoram: Emerging Issues and Trends*. New Delhi: Mittal Publication. P. 65.



allegations, respecting the right of every individual for a peaceful and undisturbed home, no obstruction to processions organized by other parties regarding usage of individual property without prior permission for the erection of flags, posters, banners or canvasses. The other part is confined to conduct in meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths and general guidelines on election manifestos. The party in power must not use its official position for purposes pertaining to election campaigning, and observers are appointed by the Election Commission so that misconduct on any part of the parties or candidates may be brought to their notice. The parties and candidates in Mizoram had another conduct to abide by, laid down by the MPF as already mentioned above. The MPF's code of conduct was largely supplementary to that of the ECI's, which was exemplary towards the rest of country.

Election campaign started with all the political parties striving to capture the hearts of people. Allegations were thrown against one another as part of the process. The ZPM as expected performed rather well in Aizawl, whereas their achievement did not expand to other districts. This may be because of the failure of ZPM to establish units in the villages, which all together form a large section of the society. Also being a newly formed group, their influence did not reach the corners of the state, which clearly highlights the importance of election campaigning in the electoral process. The MNF and Congress being firmly established in the length and breadth of Mizoram were rather confident of winning. Other parties were relatively smaller, so the chances of them capturing any seat were rather meager. The BJP was eager to enter the Assembly, buoyed by its success in the recently concluded elections in the Northeast region. However, the BJP is regarded in Mizoram as anti-secular and a threat to the national unity and religious minorities. Its only hopes of winning were in the Chakma and Bru-dominated areas. Elections took place on November 28, 2018 in a peaceful environment once again. It could be considered one of the most heated and most watched elections Mizoram has ever had, with the Congress trying to retain power for the third time in a row with the slogan of New Economic Development Programme (NEDP).

The MNF tried to come back to power with the Socio-Economic Development Policy (SEDP), and distanced itself from the BJP, its parent party in the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), which is very unpopular among the Mizo as BJP is

regarded as a fundamentalist Hindu party. The counting of votes was held on December 11, 2018, and the results brought the MNF back to power after 10 long years, by winning 26 of the 40 Assembly seats. The Congress suffered a major setback and captured only 5 seats as compared to 34 in the last elections, with its Chief Ministerial candidate Lal Thanhawla losing in both the seats he contested in. The ZPM managed to capture 8 seats, out of which 6 were in Aizawl district. The BJP made its debut in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly by winning a seat from Tuichawng constituency, a constituency dominated by Chakmas.

## **Voting Behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Elections:**

### **1.1 Constituency-wise Data Analysis**

As part of the field study, 375 samples, selected through simple random sampling, were approached by the scholar employing a structured questionnaire, where 75 samples each represent 5 MLA constituencies, namely, 15-Aizawl West-I, 3- Mamt, 37-Lawngtlai East, 36-Tuichawng and 39-Saiha. Out of 375 samples, 180 respondents were females i.e. 48 percent and the other 195 respondents were males i.e. 52 percent. The respondents were from various age groups, occupation, and educational backgrounds. The respondents have been divided into the age group between 18-20, 20-40, 40-60, 60-80 and 80-100. From 18-20 age group, there are 30 respondents, 189 respondents from the 20-40 age group, 138 respondents from 40-60 respondents, 37 respondents from 60-80 respondents, and 1 respondent from the age group 80-100. Occupation-wise, the respondents were classified into Five groups, government employees, self-employed, farmers, daily labourers and students. Students include those studying in schools, colleges, universities, and research scholars, government jobs are comprised of those serving in public sector, self-employed covers those engaged in business both big and small, farmers comprises of those who operate a farm or cultivate land, daily labourers comprises of unskilled labour. The respondents were also categorized on the basis of their ration cards, such as APL (White), BPL (Blue), AAY (Yellow), and No Ration Card. Respondent belonging to AAY (White) comprises 46.68 percent, BPL (Blue)

comprise 46.4 percent, AAY (Yellow) comprise 5.06 percent and respondents with No Ration Card (NRC) comprise 1.87 percent.

The respondents can also be placed under three categories based on their educational backgrounds, below HSLC, HSSLC, Graduate, and Post Graduate. Below HSLC comprises of those who do not complete their matriculation, HSLC are those who completed till 10<sup>th</sup> Standard, HSSLC comprises of those receiving education up to 12th standard, graduate are those completing graduation course in any academic stream, and post graduate comprises of university graduates and above. The percentage of samples derived from the survey on the basis of occupation comprises 21.34 percent of government employees, 28.26 percent self-employed, 13 percent farmers, 31.74 percent daily labourers and 5.6 percent comprises of students.

For evaluative purposes, the samples are obtained from 5 different MLA constituencies of Mizoram, 2 constituencies from non-Autonomous District Council areas, namely 3-Mamit Constituency from Mamit District where samples are obtained from Lungsir, Luangpawl, Damdiai, Suarhliap and Sabual. From Aizawl District, 15-Aizawl West-I Constituency is selected as the study area, 75 samples are obtained from Aizawl Municipal Corporation Ward X (Zotlang, Zonuam and Chawnpui) and Ward XI (Luangmual and Chawlhmun) that are within Aizawl West-I Constituency. From Autonomous District Council areas, MLA constituencies namely 36- Tuichawng, 37- Lawngtlai East, and 39-Saiha are selected for the purpose of the study. From Tuichawng constituency samples are obtained from Kamalanagar-I, Kamalanagar-II, Kamalanagar-III, Kamalanagar-IV and Saizawh 'W'. From Lawngtlai East constituency, samples are obtained from Bazar Veng, Electric Veng, Bualpui 'NG', Lungzarhtum and Siachangkawn. From Saiha Constituency, samples are obtained from Siaha Vaihpi, Bazar Vaih, Chhaolo, Noahtlah and Tisopi. For the purpose of the present study, the unit of categorization will be based on the occupation of the respondents from the selected 5 MLA constituencies. The respondents were approached with a structured questionnaire comprising of 9 questions relating to the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections held in 2013 and 2018. The responses of the questionnaire are illustrated in the form of tables for better understanding, and the variables are given in percentages.

**Table 2.1.1: Do you consider voting as important?**

Constituency	Percentage Of Respondents		Variables	
			Yes	No
15-Aizawl West-I	Male	42.67	42.67	–
	Female	57.34	57.34	–
	Govt. Employee	17.34	17.34	
	Self Employed	45.34	45.34	
	Farmer	4	4	
	Daily Labourer	26.66	26.66	
	Student	6.66	6.66	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	–
3-Mamit	Male	58.66	58.66	–
	Female	41.34	41.34	–
	Govt. Employee	12	12	–
	Self Employed	18.66	18.66	–
	Farmer	18.66	18.66	–
	Daily Labourer	29.34	29.34	–
	Student	21.34	21.34	–
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
36-Tuichawng	Male	57.34	57.34	
	Female	42.66	42.66	–
	Govt. Employee	33.34	32	1.33
	Self Employed	14.66	14.66	–
	Farmer	–	–	–
	Daily Labourer	50.66	50.66	–
	Student	–	–	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>98.66</b>	<b>1.33</b>
37-Lawngtlai East	Male	46.67	45.33	
	Female	53.33	53	–
	Govt. Employee	25.34	25.34	–

	Self Employed	36	36	–
	Farmer	16	16	–
	Daily Labourer	16	14.67	1.33
	Student	5.33	5.33	–
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>97.34</b>	<b>1.33</b>
39-Saiha	Male	54.66	54.66	–
	Female	45.34	45.34	–
	Govt. Employee	17.34	17.34	–
	Self Employed	26.66	26.66	–
	Farmer	28	28	–
	Daily Labourer	17.34	17.34	–
	Student	10.66	10.66	–
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>97.34</b>	<b>2.66</b>

(Source: Field Study)

All respondents, both male and female, considered that voting is important, with the exception of two respondents—one each from 36-Tuichawng and 37-Lawngtlai East—who believe that voting is not significant. As a significant proportion of the voters views voting as important, which also increases voting participation, this is a sign of a high degree of political awareness and political engagement among the people. The voter participation in the Seventh and Eighth elections for the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, held in 2013 and 2018, which was 83.41 percent and 84.9%, respectively, also demonstrates the voters' level of political awareness.

**Table 2.1.2 Do you register in any political party?**

Constituency	Percentage Of Respondents		Variables	
			Yes	No
15-Aizawl West-I	Male	42.67		42.67_
	Female	57.34		57.34_
	Govt. Employee	17.34		17.34_
	Self Employed	45.34	<b>25.3</b>	20
	Farmer	4	2.66	2.66_
	Daily Labourer	26.66	10.66	16_
	Student	6.66		6.66_
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>37.54</b>	<b>62.66</b>
3-Mamit	Male	58.66	58.66	_
	Female	41.34	41.34	_
	Govt. Employee	12		12
	Self Employed	18.67	9.33	9.33
	Farmer	18.66	18.66	_
	Daily Labourer	29.34	20	10.66
	Student	21.34	4	17.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51.99</b>	<b>49.32</b>
36-Tuichawng	Male	57.34	12	
	Female	42.66	8	
	Govt. Employee	33.34	<b>12</b>	25
	Self Employed	14.67	2.66	12
	Farmer	–	–	–
	Daily Labourer	50.66	17.33	32
	Student	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>69</b>
37-Lawngtlai East	Male	46.67	45.33	
	Female	53.33	53.33	_
	Govt. Employee	25.34		25.34_

	Self Employed	36	9.34	26.66
	Farmer	16	10.66	5.34
	Daily Labourer	17.34	6.66	10.67
	Student	5.32	–	5.32
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26.66</b>	<b>73.33</b>
39-Saiha	Male	54.66	54.66	–
	Female	45.34	45.34	–
	Govt. Employee	17.34	<b>2.6</b>	16
	Self Employed	26.66	8	18.66
	Farmer	28	13.3	14.66
	Daily Labourer	17.34	6.6	10.66
	Student	10.66	–	10.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>69.5</b>

(Source: Field Study)

The above table demonstrates that there is little party affiliation among voters. Voters can utilize this to keep themselves free from party influence, which could restrict their ability to make decisions or cast votes during elections. From the above figure, it is clear that out of the five MLA constituencies, Mamit Constituency has the highest level of political party affiliation among voters, accounting for 57.32 percent of the 75 total samples. Self-employed people from the Aizawl West-II Constituency had the highest registration to political parties out of all occupations, at 25.3%. The above table also clearly demonstrates that 2.6% and 14%, respectively, of government employees in Saiha and Tuichawng Constituencies, both from the Autonomous District Council region, have an affiliation to a political party, which is unexpected considering that government workers are supposed to maintain their political neutrality. Except for Mamit, students do not identify with any party in any of the five constituencies.

**Table 2.1.3: Do you receive any freeship (NLUP/SEDP) from the government?**

	Character	Variables (in percentage)	
		Yes	No
15-Aizawl West-I	Govt. Employee		17.32
	Self Employed	18.66	26.66
	Farmer	4	1.34
	Daily Labourer	4	22.66
	Student	–	6.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26.66</b>	<b>74.64</b>
3-Mamit	Govt. Employee	<b>1.34</b>	10.66
	Self Employed	2.66	16
	Farmer	16	2.66
	Daily Labourer	17.34	12
	Student	–	21.34
	<b>Total</b>	<b>37.34</b>	<b>62.66</b>
36-Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	–	33.34
	Self Employed	2.66	12
	Farmer	–	–
	Daily Labourer	<b>20</b>	32
	Student	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22.66</b>	<b>77.34</b>
37-Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	<b>2.66</b>	22.68
	Self Employed	5.33	30.66
	Farmer	9.33	6.66
	Daily Labourer	2.66	14.66
	Student	–	5.32
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19.98</b>	<b>79.98</b>
39-Saiha	Govt. Employee	<b>1.34</b>	16
	Self Employed	10.67	16
	Farmer	12	16



	Daily Labourer	2.67	14.67
	Student	–	10.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26.68</b>	<b>73.32</b>

(Source Field Study)

The respondent who receives or does not receive any freeship from the State government, such as NLUP or SEDP, is shown in the above table. The respondents who did not receive any freeship from the State government are far more numerous than the responders who did. Only 26.66 percent of people in the Aizawl West-II Constituency receive freeship from the State government, compared to 74.64 percent of people who do not. Likewise, the Mamit, Tuichawng, Lawngtlai East-II, and Saiha constituencies granted freeship to 37.34 percent, 22.66 percent, 19.98 percent, and 26.68 percent of their respective electorates. While the percentage of people from the constituencies who do not receive any freeship is 62.66 percent, 77.34 percent, 79.98 percent, and 73.32 percent, respectively. Despite the fact that majority of respondents do not get any government assistance, voter turnout in elections makes it clear that this issue has no impact on how voters choose to cast their ballots. The fact that government employees from Saiha, Lawngtlai, and Mamit constituencies are among those who receive freeship from the government is one unexpected finding in the above table.

**Table.2.1.4 Which Party do you vote for in the 2013 MLA Election?**

Constituency	Character	Political Parties in Seventh State Legislative Assembly Election, 2013					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Aizawl West-I	Govt. Employee	9.34	5.34	2.66			
	Self Employed	18.66	16	8			1.34
	Farmer	2.66	1.34				
	Daily Labourer	6.66	12	4			
	Student	2.66	4				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39.98</b>	<b>38.68</b>	<b>14.66</b>	–	–	<b>1.34</b>
Mamit	Govt. Employee	2.66	9.35				
	Self Employed	6.66	12				
	Farmer	2.66	16				

	Daily Labourer	16	13.34		1.34		
	Student	13.34	8				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>41.32</b>	<b>58.69</b>	–	<b>1.34</b>	–	–
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	21.34	10.66			1.34	
	Self Employed	5.34	9.34				
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Daily Labourer	25.34	25.34	–	–	1.34	–
	Student	–	–	–	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52.02</b>	<b>43.34</b>	–	–	<b>2.68</b>	
Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	14.66	10.66		–	–	
	Self Employed	14.66	18.66	1.34	–	–	1.34
	Farmer	8	8	–	–	–	
	Daily Labourer	5.34	9.34	2.66	–	–	
	Student	4	1.34	–	–	–	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46.66</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	–	–	<b>1.34</b>
39-Saiha	Govt. Employee	10.66	6.66	–	–	–	
	Self Employed	13.34	10.66	2.66	–	–	
	Farmer	17.34	10.66	–	–	–	
	Daily Labourer	4	12	–	–	–	1.34
	Student	4	4	–	–	–	2.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>49.34</b>	<b>43.98</b>	<b>2.66</b>	–	–	<b>4</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>1.34</b>

(Source: Field Study)

The aforementioned table shows the political party the responder voted during the 2013 election for the seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly. According to the respondent's response about their party preference, MNF received the most vote share, or 52.02 percent, in Tuichawng constituency, and the lowest vote share, or 39.98 percent, in the Aizawl West-II constituency. Despite having the second-lowest vote share of the five constituencies in Aizawl West-II, MNF nonetheless has the greatest vote share of any other political party there. Congress is the closest to MNF, with a difference of just 1.3%. According to the study, the total percentage of respondents who voted for

Congress in the 2013 election was 47.2, giving it the highest vote total, followed by MNF with 46.4 percent, ZNP at 2.66 percent, MPC at 0.26 percent, BJP at 0.53 percent, and those who voted "Others" with 1.34%.

**Table 2.1.5 Which party do you vote for in 2018 MLA Election?**

Constituency	Character	Political Parties in the Eight State Legislative Assembly Election, 2018						Who votes for the Same party in both elections	Who votes for different party in both election
		MNF	CONG	ZPM (Ind)	MPC	BJP	OTHERS		
Aizawl West	Govt. Employee	9.33	5.34	2.66	—	—	—		
	Self Employed	16	9.34	20					
	Farmer	2.66	2.66						
	Daily Labourer	6.66	9.34	10.64					
	Student	1.34	4	1.34					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35.99</b>	<b>30.68</b>	<b>34.64</b>					
Mamit	Govt. Employee	6.66	5.35						
	Self Employed	12	5.34	1.34					
	Farmer	8	8						
	Daily Labourer	17.34	6.66	5.34	1.34				
	Student	13.34	5.34	2.66					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>57.34</b>	<b>30.69</b>	<b>9.34</b>	<b>1.34</b>				
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	17.34	9.34			6.67			
	Self Employed	6.66	8						

	Farmer								
	Daily Labourer	17.34	30.67			2.66			
	Student								
	<b>Total</b>	<b>41.34</b>	<b>48.01</b>			<b>9.33</b>			
Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	16	8	1.34					
	Self Employ	20	12	2.66			1.34		
	Farmer	5.34	10.66						
	Daily Labourer	10.66	6.66						
	Student		2.66	2.66					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>39.98</b>	<b>6.66</b>				<b>1.34</b>	
39-Saiha	Govt. Employee	12	4			2.66			
	Self Employ	12	9.34	1.34		2.66			
	Farmer	14.66	9.34			4			
	Daily Labourer	6.66	6.66			1.34	2.66		
	Student	5.34	4				1.34		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50.66</b>	<b>33.34</b>	<b>1.34</b>			<b>10.66</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>46.13</b>	<b>38.66</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>61.34</b>	<b>38.66</b>

(Source: Field Study)

The respondent's preference for a political party in the 2018 election for the Eighth State Legislative Assembly is shown in the table above. According to the respondent's choice of political party, the MNF received the biggest percentage of votes in the 2018 election for the Eighth State Legislative Assembly (46.13%), followed by the Congress (38.66%) and ZPM (Ind) (10.9%). The 'Others' category receives the least amount of votes (0.8), followed by the MPC and the BJP (0.26 and 4%, respectively). MNF received the highest vote—57.34 percent—in the Mamit constituency and the lowest—35.99 percent—in Aizawl West-II. According to the survey, 61.34 percent of

respondents voted for the same party in both the seventh and eighth elections for the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, while 38.66 percent cast their ballots for a different party in each election.

**Table 2.1. 6. *Who influenced you in your voting decision?***

Character	Variables (In percentage)		
	Myself	Family	Friends
Govt. Employee	18.66	0.53	–
Self Employed	20.8	5.06	1.06
Farmer	13.33	0.8	
Daily Labourer	24.26	6.13	
Student	6.13	1.06	
Total	83.18	16.52	1.06

**(Source: Field Study)**

The elements that affect the respondent's decision to vote are listed in the above table. According to the respondents' responses, individuals who vote according to their "own choice" can be considered to have the most influence over how they cast their ballots. This demonstrates that the voter has the freedom to exercise his or her right to vote and make decisions without interference from others. 16.52 percent of voters voted under the influence of family members, which is quite low when compared to the voter's own choice. Only 1.06 percent of those respondents claimed that their "friends" had an impact on them. Only self-employed respondents decided to vote on the influence of their friends, while everyone else chose to vote on their own or their family's influence. Daily labourers have the greatest voting rates on the influence of "Self," at 24.26 percent, and students have the lowest rates, at 6.13 percent. The percentage of respondents who say that their family influences their voting choice is highest among daily labourers (6.13%) and lowest among students (0.8%). The respondents' perception of the influence of friends is the lowest when compared to other variables.

**Table 2.1.7. Do election manifestos of political parties influence you in your voting decision?**

Character	Variables (in percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee	10.4	10.6
Self Employed	12.8	16.2
Farmers	5.86	7.2
Daily Labourer	12.2	14.4
Student	6.9	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.26</b>	<b>51.2</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The political party's election manifesto is one of the most significant factors that influence a voter's choice of candidate. Nevertheless, the study's findings indicate that 51.2% of respondents did not let political party manifestos affect how they voted. 48.26% of people say that political party manifestos have an impact on them. The difference is not very noticeable in this area because there are numerous other elements that affect a voter's decision to cast a ballot in an election, in addition to the manifesto.

**Table 2.1.8 Which factor influenced you in your voting decision?**

Character	Variable (In percentage)			
	Political Party	Candidate	Party Manifesto	No specific reason
Govt. Employee	7.73	7.2	3.2	3.2
Self Employed	7.73	10.93	6.67	3.2
Farmer	4	4.26	5.6	0.8
Daily Labourer	9.06	9.34	4.8	4.8
Student	1.86	2.4	1.34	1.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.38</b>	<b>34.13</b>	<b>21.61</b>	<b>13.06</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The purpose of this question is to ascertain the factors that influence a voter's choice of ballot. The percentage of voters who said they supported a political party was 30.38 percent. People who cast their votes based on political party do so primarily because they support the party's philosophy and policies. A decision is based on the candidate for 34.13% of the respondents. Every political party will always provide the strongest candidate to represent the party in elections since a candidate reflects the image of the party. The purpose of this question is to ascertain the factors that influence a voter's choice of ballot. The percentage of voters who said they supported a political party was 30.38 percent. People who cast their votes based on political party do so primarily because they support the party's philosophy and policies. A decision is made based on the candidate for 34.13% of the respondents. 21.61 percent of respondents said they voted based on the party platform. 13.06 percent of respondents simply voted as a matter of duty and responsibility without providing any specific reason for casting their votes.

**Table 2.1.9 What type of person do you prefer as your MLA? (Select not more than three)?**

Character	Variables (in percentage)						
	Senior Politician	Active Party Member	Well Educated	Good Speaker	Wealthy Candidate	Socially active candidate	Young and energetic
Govt. Employee	2.26	11.2	13.86	2.4	1.06	13.34	12.53
Self Employe	3.2	13.6	15.73	2.4	0.53	18.4	14.66
Farmer	1.34	8.25	4.53	0.26	0.26	12	7.46
Daily Labour	2.9	16.8	16.26	4.26	0.53	15.46	16
Student	1.3	2.6	5.06	0.8	0.26	8	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.46</b>	<b>52.53</b>	<b>55.46</b>	<b>10.13</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>55.46</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above question attempts to identify the choices of the voters what type of candidate they prefer as their representative. Community based candidate has received the highest weightage with 67.2 per cent. Well Educated and, Young and Energetic

Candidate has scored the second highest with 55.46 per cent each. The third choices of the respondent is an Active Party Member which scored 52.53 per cent. Least preference is given to wealthy candidate with a score of 2.66 per cent. The preference given by each occupation base on the type and quality of a candidate is different from each character. Govt. employee give the highest preference to well educated candidate and least preference to a candidate who is a good speaker. Self-employed, farmer, daily labourer and student also give their highest preference to socially active candidate and least preference to a wealthy candidate. Farmer, daily labourer and student also give their least preference to good speakers and wealthy candidates.

In the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, the characteristics of Candidate is the main element that influences the voting decision in both the State Legislative Assembly elections, ADC, and AMC elections. the individual's attitude is influenced by his support toward a candidate. Among the candidate characteristics, one who is socially active is most preferred, and a candidate well educated and who is young and energetic is also highly preferred. A candidate who is an active party member is also among the characteristics that the voters prefer to vote. Secondly, Party identification is another important factor that influences the voter's decision to vote. Though the level of those respondents who register/affiliate themselves to a political party is quite low in the study area, 30.38 percent of the respondents make their voting decision due to their support or attachment toward a political party.

The majority of the respondents (61.34) voted for the same political party in both the Seventh and Eight State Legislative Assembly elections. In the Seventh State Assembly election, both MNF and Congress had the highest vote share. Thirdly, party manifestos play an important role in influencing the voting decision of the voter. Though a party manifesto is not the first thing that a voter considers while making his voting decision, 48.26 per cent of the total respondents are influenced by the manifesto of a political party. An individual voter who makes his own voting decision without the influence of others is the highest among the respondents and few voters make their voting decision on the influence of family members and friends. This showed that voting is an individual act and the influence of family and friends as part of social group is also



minimal. The individual's attitudes are formed and reinforced not by their membership in social groups but the individual's attitude itself.

The study also found out that only 20 percent of the respondents have attended public meetings and street campaigns organized by political parties during election campaigns but the impact of election campaigns on the voters is minimal. Rather than public meetings and street campaigns, the voters considered house to house campaign as more effective in influencing the voting behaviour as it is the best time for the candidate and the voters to engage in a close conversation and reach to certain agreements. However, due to the large area of constituencies and greater number of voters in State Legislative Assembly elections, house to house campaign is time-consuming for the candidates.

Party identification is also one of the elements that influence the voting behaviour in the State Legislative Assembly election. Though the respondents who affiliate or register themselves to political party is only 30.5 per cent, the influence of political party in voting decision among the respondents are 30.38. Indian National Congress and Mizo National Front are the two most preferred political parties that contested the elections. Majority of the respondents i.e. 61.34 per cent voted for the same political party in both the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections. The support for party, policies, programme and attachment towards a political party also largely shape the voting decisions of the voters.

The role of party manifestos is another important element that shape voting behaviour. The manifestos of political parties often target various sections of the society in order to win their support. Among the respondents, 21.61 per cent make their voting decision base on the manifestos of political parties. Political parties often issue election manifestos that they believe would influence the voters most. The voters who are benefited by the economic policies through freeship are likely to give their support to the parties and the government. However, the respondents who received freeship such as NLUP and SEDP are only 26.68 per cent, and act directly according to their own interests without consideration on manifestos and policies of political parties.

In the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, Indian National Congress and Mizo National Front have been interchangeably voted to power. Till the Seventh Mizoram State Assembly elections held in 2013 both the political parties again emerged as the two largest contenders and captured majority of the votes as there are no political parties that could compete with Congress and MNF. The two parties are voted to power interchangeably since the Statehood era, and the people also believed that there was a trend like in the State Assembly election where One party would usually rule for two consecutive terms. The Congress which was the ruling party in the 2008 election, returned to power in the 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. Though there are many factors that contribute to the return of Congress to power, undoubtedly the Congress flagship programme NLUP is among the many factors. However, the scenario has change in the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election with the emergence of ZPM in the electoral fray by winning eight seats in the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly and emerged as the largest opposition party in the eight term.

## CHAPTER 3

### A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MIZORAM AND AIZAWL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION ELECTIONS

#### INTRODUCTION:

The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) which was created as provided under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 1 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India by the Government of Assam was inaugurated by Ch. Saprawnga the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam with Headquarters at Saiha at Lunglei on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1953.<sup>134</sup> The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC) functioned for a period of 19 years from 1953 till its trifurcation into three regional councils on 2nd April 1972. On 21st January 1972, the erstwhile Mizo Hills was separated from Assam with the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram by the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971. The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was also trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma Regional Council on 2nd April 1972 as per the Administrator of Mizoram Notification No. CCMP/3/72-77 of 1.4.1972. On 29th April 1972, the three Regional Councils were upgraded to the status of full-fledged Autonomous District Councils and were governed by their respective interim government till the conduct of District Council election in June 1973. After the trifurcation of the PLRC, an administrative arrangement was made in such a way that the existing Members of the PLRC would become Members of their respective Regional Council. As such, all the Pawi Members of Regional Council (MRC) become members of Pawi Regional Council, the Lakher MRC become members of Lakher Regional Council and the Chakma MRC become the members of CRC respectively.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Opt. cit. P.7-8.

<sup>135</sup> Opt. cit. pp. 68-69.

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AREA OF MIZORAM**

After the formation of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC), the first two terms of the PLRC was dominated by the Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU). Since the PLTU was the only political party, there was no question of setting up official candidates to the elections. In April, 1954 the first election was held and elected Z. Hengmanga as Chairman, and C. Zochhuma was elected as Chief Executive Member (CEM) and continued in office till his death on August, 31. After the death of C. Zochhuma death H. Kiautuma was elected as the CEM on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1957.<sup>136</sup> The second election to the PLRC was held in 1957. After the election, a dispute erupted when the Lakhers demanded for the post of CEM to the S. D. O. because the equal distribution of posts was agreed upon at the time of the formation of the PLTU but it was not implemented in good faith. Therefore, the Lakher even boycotted the session in the initial stage. However, the dispute was shortly resolved and H. Kiautuma was elected as CEM, and Mylai Hlychho was offered the Executive Member (EM) post which he first declined and later accepted the post.<sup>137</sup>

Before the third election to PLRC, there was a political development in the PLRC. The Lakhers formed their ethnic-based party, namely the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) in 1963. The party demanded for creation of a separate Mara District Council and even established a self-styled Mara District Council by boycotting all the PLRC activities and functionaries. Moreover, the influence of Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) as a common political platform also declined. In spite of the boycott by the Lakhers, the third election to the PLRC was held in 1964 among the Pawis and Chakmas. There were 6 elected members and the government was formed under the leadership of Lalchunga Chinzah.<sup>138</sup> At the same time, the Lakhers also established their own parallel Lakher District Council to which they paid their taxes, revenues and all dues which they owed to pay to the self-styled Regional Council than the PLRC.

The Fourth and last Election of the PLRC could not be held in time due to the MNF Insurgency, therefore election was held in 1970 which was also contested by the

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<sup>136</sup> Opt. cit., p. 39.

<sup>137</sup> Jangkhongam, Dounge, & Steffi, C. Beingiachhiezi. *Autonomy Movement of the Pawi and Lakher with Special Reference to the Emergence of the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (PLRC)* in . p. 429

<sup>138</sup> Opt. cit. p.430.

Lakhers.<sup>139</sup> For the first time, Zakhu Hlychho from Lakher tribe was elected as the Chief Executive Member (CEM). However, the government led by Zakhu Hlychho faced an abrupt end within a short time and the PLRC was kept under suspended animation under the rule of administrator. After the political solution was arrived, a new Executive Committee was constituted with Zakhu Hlychho as the CEM and functioned till the trifurcation of the PLRC and the formation of three Autonomous District Council by the North Eastern (Re-organisation) Act, 1971.<sup>140</sup> The Lakhers and Pawis also demanded the change of their Autonomous District Council's name with their indigenous names. As a result, under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1988 of Indian Parliament (No. 67 of 1988) and by Notification No. DCA/E/154/8/40, Pawi Autonomous District Council was changed into the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) and Lakher Autonomous District Council was changed to the Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) in 1988.<sup>141</sup>

With the creation of the Union Territory of Mizoram, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils, namely, the Pawi Regional Council (PRC), the Lakher Regional Council (LRC) and the Chakma Regional Council (CRC) on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1972. The headquarters of PLR was located at Lawngtlai, LRC at Saiha and CRC at Chawngte (Kamalanagar). On 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972, the three Regional Councils were upgraded to the status of full-fledged Autonomous District Council but they continued to be governed by their respective interim government till the conduct of the District Council election in 1973.<sup>142</sup>

#### **Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC):**

Since the formation of the first executive Committee the ADCs have faced political instability due to the desire for coveted posts by the politicians which led to defections of elected members. The First election to the Lai Autonomous District Council was held in December, 1972. The election was contested by two political party, Congress (M)- Manghnuna faction and Congress (I)-L. Chinzah faction. Both the party was a result of a split in Congress party in LADC area. Both the party contested all the

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<sup>139</sup> Opt. cit. p. 41.

<sup>140</sup> Opt. cit. p 430.

<sup>141</sup> Opt. cit. p.78.

<sup>142</sup> Opt. cit. p. 43.

12 seats of LADC. Congress (L) formed the first LADC government with U. Zathang as the Chief Executive Member (CEM). The Executive Committee under the leadership of U. Zathang functioned smoothly for a period of four years. Due to the charges levelled against U. Zathang's administration by the two MLAs from F. Manghnuna group, an enquiry commission headed by Rohmingthanga and Agarwal was formed by the Government of Mizoram. As such, the Executive Committee was dissolved on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1976 after completion of four years.<sup>143</sup>

The Second election to LADC was held in November, 1977. In this election, Janata Party led by F. Manghnuna, People's Conference (PC) led by T. Hranghluta and United Pang People's Party (UPPP) contested the second election to LADC. The United Pang People's Party fielded one candidate as an independent as it was an unregistered party. Janata Party won 6 seats, PC won 5 seats and the UPPP won one seat. Arun Kumar Dewan, elected from Sakeilui constituency was disqualified for not submitting election expenses. By-election was held and Anil Bikash of Janata Party was elected from Sakeilui Constituency. The second term was besieged with defection and political instability. The first Executive Committee was formed by PC with F. Manghnuna as CEM on 17<sup>th</sup> November which did not last long due to the defection of Two of its Members, A. Thansiamia and R. Zawlsuaknawla to the PC Party. Another government was formed by PC with T. Hranghluta as CEM on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1978. On the other hand, the Janata Party was also merged with Congress and Congress became majority again with the defection of A. Thansiamia as well. Then, Congress government was formed with F. Manghnuna as CEM on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1979. However, with strong inducement of PC in persuading A. Thansiamia in favour of PC another government was formed by PC with T. Hranghluta as the CEM on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1979 which lasted till the end of the second term.<sup>144</sup>

The Third Election to LADC was held in November 1982. The number of constituencies was also increased from 12 to 17 since the third term. For the first time, a hung district council emerged as there was no single majority party. The government was formed by congress with F. Manghnuna as CEM with the joining of Congress by an

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<sup>143</sup> Opt. cit. Pp.77-80.

<sup>144</sup> Opt. cit., Pp.80-83.

Independent Candidate. However, a political conflict arose between District Council Administration and the State government after the formation of government in the State by MNF with Laldenga as Chief Minister (CM). With this regard, two enquiry commission was instituted. Subsequently, the Governor of Mizoram dissolved the Third District Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1987 and appointed Kaprumvunga S.D.O. (Civil) Lawngtlai as Administration with immediate effect.<sup>145</sup>

The Fourth election to the LADC was held in February, 1988. The seats of LADC was increased from 17 to 19 seats. In this election, Congress won 11 seats and MNF won 8 seats. Congress government was formed with L. Chinzah as CEM. However, 5 Congress MDC and 1 MDC from MNF were disqualified due to complain lodged for election malpractices. The fourth term of LADC also witnessed political instability. L. Chinzah government was voted out by a no-confidence motion on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1988 and a new government was installed with B. Thanchhunga as the new CEM on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1989, this government also did not last long. Nine Congress MDCs resigned from membership of the District Council. Automatically, LADC was put under Governor's rule and J. K. Kapoor was appointed as Administrator with effect from 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1990. After six months of Administrator's Rule, a new government was formed by MNF with A. Thangruma as CEM which the Governor of Mizoram did not approve. As a result, the Council could not function properly and LADC was once again placed under the Governor's Rule till May 1992.<sup>146</sup>

The Fifth election to the Lai Autonomous District Council was held in May, 1992. In this election, Congress won 7 seats, MNF won 8 seats, whereas Lairam Congress (LC) and Riang Democratic Party (RDP) won 3 seats and One seat respectively. Congress government was formed with the support of Lairam Congress with C. Thanghluna of Lairam Congress as CEM. Later on, the Lairam Congress merged with the Indian National Congress due to political compulsion. The government formed by C. Thanghluna, for the first time in LADC completed its full five years term in the midst of a political tussle.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Opt. cit., Pp.85-86.

<sup>146</sup> Opt. cit., Pp.86-89.

<sup>147</sup> Opt. cit., Pp.90-92.

The Sixth election to Lai Autonomous District Council was held in May, 1997. The number of constituencies was also increased from 19 to 24. The Congress won 14 seats, Lairam People's Party (LPP) won 3 seats, MNF won two seats and Independent candidate won 3 seats. Congress formed the government with F. Rohnuna as CEM and functioned smoothly for two years but the problem started with the formation of MNF government in the State. LADC was placed under the Governor's rule from 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1999 to 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1999 due to the resignation of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and the refusal of both panels of members to perform the duty of Presiding Officer. The Chairman resigned due to his election as MLA. Another government was formed by MNF with U. Zathang as CEM due to the defection of 10 Congress MDCs, 2 MDCs from LPP and 3 Independent to MNF. U. Zathang government was voted out in a no-confidence motion by a section of his own party in alliance with opposition party on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2001. Subsequently, Mamghmunga Chinzah was elected as the new CEM, and U. Zathang was accommodated in the Vice Chairman position.<sup>148</sup>

The Seventh election to Lai Autonomous District Council was held in May, 2002. Both INC and MNF won 9 seats each, MPC won One seats, LPP retained two seats and two seats was won by independent candidate. Government was formed by the MNF with the support of two independent members. An independent member, Zungchema became the CEM from 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2002.<sup>149</sup>

The Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh elections to LADC were held in 2010,2015 and 2020 respectively. In the Eleventh Election to LADC held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020, out of 25 elected seats, MNF secured 20 seats, Congress 1 seat, BJP 1 seat, and Independent candidates secured 3 seats.<sup>150</sup> The MNF being the single majority party formed the Executive body led by Manghmung Chinzah as the CEM. This Executive body led by Manghmunga Chinzah was defeated in a no-confidence motion by dissident MDC and opposition MDCs on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and a new Executive Committee was formed

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.pp.92-96.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.pp.97-99.

<sup>150</sup> www.dipr.mizoram.gov.in. <https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/11th-lai-autonomous-district-council-2020-results-declared>, accessed on 07-03-2021.



again by MNF with V. Zirsanga as the Chief Executive Member formed on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021.<sup>151</sup>

### **Tenth and Eleventh elections to Lai Autonomous District Council**

The Tenth election to Lai Autonomous District Council was held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. The result of the tenth election to LADC was declared on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.<sup>152</sup>

**Table. 3.1. List of elected candidates in the Tenth election to LADC:**

Sl.No	No. & Name of the Constituency	Name of Elected Candidates	Party Affiliation
1	01-Sangau 'East'	F. Rohnuna	MNF
2	02-Sangau 'South'	ST. Laldailova	INC
3	03-Sangau 'West'	C. Lallungmuana	INC
4	04-Cheural	L. Lawmkima	INC
5	05-Lungtian	H. Biakzaua	MNF
6	06-Lungpher 'South'	C. Lalhnuna	MNF
7	07-Vawmbuk	T. Zakunga	INC
8	08-Bualpui 'West'	V. Zathanga	MNF
9	09-Bualpui 'East'	K. Vanlalsanga	INC
10	10-Lawngtlai Bazar	C. Sangchhunga	INC
11	11-Lawngtlai Vengpui	V.L. Hmuaka	INC
12	12-Lawngtlai Chandmary	C. Lalsawmzuala	MNF
13	13-Council Veng	Manghmunga Chinzah	MNF
14	14-Lawngtlai College Veng	Chhuanawma	INC
15	15-Lawngtlai-III	T. Lalengmuana	MNF
16	16-Lawngtlai AOC	LR. Dingmuana Chinzah	IND
17	17-Paithar	V. Zirsanga	INC
18	18-Diltlang 'South'	Laltlawmlova Chinzah	INC
19	19-Chawngte 'P'	Andrew Laltlanzara	MNF

<sup>151</sup><https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/lawngtlai-dc-swears-in-pu-v-zirsanga-as-the-11th-ladcs-new-chief-executive-member> accessed on 23-11-2023.

<sup>152</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/ge-to-ladc-2015-notification-results> accessed on 09-10-2023.

20	20-Sakeilui	Suresh Chakma	INC
21	21-M. Kawnpui	N. Sangnawni	INC
22	22-Bungtlang 'S'	J.C. Ngurluaia	INC
23	23-Sekulh	Lallawmsanga Apetow	INC
24	24-Tuithumhnar	K.C. Malsawmdawngliana	INC
25	25-Vathuampui	C. Lalneihkhuma	INC

(Source.: [www.sec.mizoram.govt.in](http://www.sec.mizoram.govt.in).)

After the expiry of the Tenth term of the Lai Autonomous District Council, an election was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2020. The result of the eleventh election was declared on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.<sup>153</sup> The list of successful candidates from each constituency and their party affiliation is as given below:

**Table. 3.2. List of elected candidates in the eleventh election to LADC:**

Sl.No	No. & Name of the Constituency	Name of Elected Candidates	Party Affiliation
1	01-Sangau 'East'	B. N. Thangpuia	MNF
2	02-Sangau 'South'	J. B. Vanhoy	MNF
3	03-Sangau 'West'	K. Hre Kung	MNF
4	04-Cheural	C. L. Lianzuala	MNF
5	05-Lungtian	Sanghuliana Mualchin	MNF
6	06-Lungpher 'South'	C. Lalmuanthanga	INC
7	07-Vawmbuk	T. Zakunga	BJP
8	08-Bualpui 'West'	V. Zathanga	INC
9	09-Bualpui 'East'	L. Daniela	MNF
10	10-Lawngtlai Bazar	Lalropuia Chinzah	MNF
11	11-Lawngtlai Vengpui	V. L. Hmuaka	MNF
12	12-Lawngtlai Chandmary	Lorrain Lalpekliaana Chinzah	IND
13	13-Council Veng	Manghmunga Chinzah	MNF
14	14-Lawngtlai College Veng	C. Hrangthianga	MNF
15	15-Lawngtlai-III	T. Lalengmuana	MNF

<sup>153</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/notification-results-of-ge-to-ladc-2020> accessed on 09-10-2023.

16	16-Lawngtlai AOC	L. R. Dingliana Chinzah	IND
17	17-Paithar	V. Zirsanga	MNF
18	18-Diltlang 'South'	H. C. Lalthawmliana	MNF
19	19-Chawngte 'P'	Andrew Laltlanzara	MNF
20	20-Sakeilui	Tuturu Singh	MNF
21	21-M. Kawnpui	N. Zangura	IND
22	22-Bungtlang 'S'	L. Lalhmachhuana	MNF
23	23-Sekulh	Lallawmsanga Apetow	MNF
24	24-Tuithumhnar	H. Lalmuansanga	MNF
25	25-Vathuampui	C. Rongura	MNF

(Source: [www.sec.mizoram.govt.in](http://www.sec.mizoram.govt.in))

In the Eleventh Election to LADC held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020, out of 25 elected seats, MNF secured 20 seats, Congress 1 seat, BJP 1 seat, and Independent candidates secured 3 seats.<sup>154</sup> The MNF being the single majority party formed the Executive body led by Manghmung Chinzah as the CEM. This Executive body led by Manghmunga Chinzah was defeated in no-confidence motion by dissident MDC and opposition MDCs on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and new Executive Committee was formed again by MNF with V. Zirsanga as the Chief Executive Member formed on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

#### **Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC):**

In the First term of the MADC, the electoral scene was dominated by the Mara Freedom Party (MFP). Before the completion of the first term, the MFP merged with Indian National Congress (INC) in 1975 which was later merged with Janata Party in the early part of 1977 before the Second term Election to the MADC. The Second term election to MADC was held on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1977. The number of members of MADC legislature was increased to 15 members, out of which 14 were elected and 1 was nominated. The election was contested by the Janata Party and Independent candidates. The Janata Party secured 12 seats and 2 seats were won by Independent candidates. The office of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) was held by Mylai

<sup>154</sup> [www.dipr.mizoram.gov.in. https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/11th-lai-autonomous-district-council-2020-results-declared](https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/11th-lai-autonomous-district-council-2020-results-declared), accessed on 07-03-2021.

Hlychho. This executive body ran smoothly till the end of its term. However, the Janata Party of the MADC merged into the Indian National Congress (INC) again after the INC returned to power at the Centre in 1980.<sup>155</sup>

The Indian National Congress (INC) again dominated the electoral scene of MADC for three consecutive terms i.e., from the Fourth term to the Sixth term of MADC. In the Seventh and Eighth terms of MADC, a coalition government was formed by MNF and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) in the Seventh term but could not last long due to the withdrawal of support by the MNF and a new Executive Committee was again formed.<sup>156</sup> The Eighth term also witnessed a coalition government formed by MNF and MDF. As there was no single majority party, a coalition government was formed by MDF and MNF supported by an Independent candidate. The Chief Executive Member (CEM) was given to N. Viakhu, an independent candidate.<sup>157</sup>

In the Ninth term, MDF and INC formed a coalition government with an executive body headed by S. Khipo as CEM. This Executive body was voted out on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 by elected members from MDF and MNF to form a new Executive body headed by M. Laikaw as CEM. However, this Executive Committee was also dissolved on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 as 3 elected members from MNF and 2 elected members from MDF defected from their party and joined Congress. A New Executive body was formed on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 with S. Khipo as CEM and remained in office till the next Election of MADC.<sup>158</sup>

The Congress could hold its ground in MADC and formed government in the Tenth and Eleventh elections of MADC. On May 4, 2017, the MADC held its Eleventh election. By winning 17 out of 25 seats in the eleventh election for MADC, INC increased its margin of victory. Congress established a new administration, with N. Zakhai serving as the CEM.<sup>159</sup> The N. Zakhai-led government though ran smoothly but it was merged with BJP before the completion of the term. One significant event that occurred during the eleventh term of MADC was the dissolution and merger of MDF

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<sup>155</sup> Opt. cit., p. 155.

<sup>156</sup> Opt. cit., p. 95.

<sup>157</sup> Opt. cit., p. 97.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>159</sup> [www.madc.mizoram.gov.in](http://www.madc.mizoram.gov.in) (official website of MADC), accessed on 06.03.2012.

with BJP on October 25, 2017, in advance of the State Legislative Assembly election that would be held the following year, in 2018. The MDF was a regional political party with its base in the MADC area and had two elected members in MADC legislature. Along with the two MDF elected members, MDF was merged into BJP.<sup>160</sup>

### **Tenth and Eleventh Elections to Mara Autonomous District Council:**

The Tenth election to Mara Autonomous District was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2012 for the 25 constituencies. The result of the Tenth election to MADC was declared on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2012.<sup>161</sup>

The result and list of successful candidates of the Tenth election to Mara Autonomous District Council is given below:

**Table 3.3. List of elected candidates in the Tenth election to Mara Autonomous District Council:**

Sl.No	No. & Name of the Constituency	Name of elected candidates	Party Affiliation
1	01-Tokalo	J. Rawna	MDF
2	02-Phura	K. Pawhnie	INC
3	03-Vahia	K. Chhuabei	INC
4	04-Laki	B. Pasia	MDF
5	05-Zawngling	L. Prisila	INC
6	06-Chapui	F.C. Rehmo	MNF
7	07-Chakhang	K. Hrahmo	INC
8	08-Siata	L.C. Apaw	IND
9	09-Tuisih	Tiahlei Syuhlo	IND
10	10-Tuipang-I	F.C. Lawmkima	INC
11	11-Tuipang-II	Hiphei	INC
12	12-Latawh	Beirahmo Syhly	INC
13	13-Serkawr	I.P. Junior	INC

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.indiatoday.in/pti-feed/story/bjp-mdf-merge-ahead-of-2018-mizoram-assembly-polls-1072821-2017-10-25> accessed on 07-09-23.

<sup>161</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/ge-to-madc-2012-notification-result> accessed on 08-10-2023.

14	14-Maubawk	N. Zakhai	INC
15	15-Rawmibawk	R.T. Zachono	INC
16	16-Niawhtlang	F. Hrangchunga	INC
17	17-Chhualung	M.H. Tiabi	INC
18	18-Saiha North-I	Nahlo Solo	MNF
19	19-Saiha North-II	C. Lawbei	MDF
20	20-Saiha South-I	V. VB. Byhna	INC
21	21-Saiha South-II	KH. Beihlo	INC
22	22-Saiha East-I	Sangtlunga	MNF
23	23-Saiha East-II	L. C. Chakhai	INC
24	24-Saiha West-I	K. Chiama	MDF
25	25-Saiha West-II	Pakhu Hlychho	MDF

(Source: [www.sec.mizoram.govt.in](http://www.sec.mizoram.govt.in))

In the Tenth term of MADC, government was formed by Congress and 2 elected independent candidates since there was no single majority party to for the government. R.T. Zachono, elected from Rawmibawk constituency served as the Chief Executive Member. The government led by R.T. Zachono ran smoothly till the end of its term.

On May 11, 2017, the Mara Autonomous District Council's Tenth term was set to expire. As a result, the State Election Commission of Mizoram declared that election to the Mara Autonomous District Council will be held on May 4, 2017, in accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (1) of Rule 3 of the Mizoram (Constitution of State Election Commission) Rules, 2008 and sub-rule (5) of Rule 7 of the Mara Autonomous District Council (Constitution, Conduct of Business, etc.) Rules, 2002 as amended. The overall number of voters in the Tenth Election for the MADC was 37255, and 31836 of them actually cast ballots or 85.45%. Out of 929, 883 electors that cast ballots, 15-Amohtlah Constituency had the highest turnout (95.05%). The lowest voter turnout, however, occurred in 22-New Sialha East-I, when only 1867 of the 2509 eligible voters cast ballots, i.e. 74.41%.

**Table 3.4. The results and list of successful candidates of the Eleventh election to Mara Autonomous District Council.<sup>162</sup>**

(Source: [www.sec.mizoram.govt.in](http://www.sec.mizoram.govt.in))

SL.NO	NAME OF CONSTITUENCY	NAME OF CANDIDATE	PARTY AFFILIATION
1	01-Tokalo	KL. Bana	INC
2	02-Phura	K. Pawhnie	INC
3	03-Vahia	K. Chhuabei	INC
4	04-Laki	T. Seido	INC
5	05-Zyhno	L. Priscila	INC
6	06-Chapi	F.C. Rehmo	MNF
7	07-Chakhei	K. Hrahmo	INC
8	08-Siata	L. Khaichyu	MNF
9	09-Tisi	S. Tiahlei	INC
10	10-Tipa-I	F.C. Lawmkima	INC
11	11-Tipa-II	K. Siakhai	INC
12	12-Laty	Beirahmo Syhly	INC
13	13-Saikao	B. Luaha	MDF
14	14-Amobyu	N. Zakhai	INC
15	15-Amotlah	H.C. Malsawma Zasai	MNF
16	16-Noahtlah	Lalrosanga	MNF
17	17-Chhaolo	M.H. Tiabi	INC
18	18-Siaha North-I	NG. Silla	INC
19	19-Siaha North-II	V. Vanhupa	INC
20	20-Siaha South-I	V. VB. Byhna	INC
21	21-Siaha South-II	KH. Beihlo	INC
22	22-Siaha East-I	H. Hrangchuanga	INC
23	23-Siaha East-II	H.C. Biakcheuva	MNF
24	24-Siaha West-I	K. Chياما	MDF
25	25-Siaha West-II	H. Sahlo	INC

The new government was formed by INC in the Eleventh term, which became the lone party with a majority. N. Zakhai served as the Chief Executive Member of the new government. According to N. Zakhai, the Congress-led administration was unanimously dissolved on June 19, 2019, at a meeting in Siaha, before the end of its term with a decision to merge with BJP. A new BJP-led government, not a coalition, is

<sup>162</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/ge-to-madc-2017-press-note-result> accessed on 07.09.23

formed when all 17 of the Congress' elected members, together with the three nominated members, joined the BJP.<sup>163</sup> The merger came as a huge surprise, given that the Congress and BJP were the two biggest rival in the central.

Election to the Twelve term of the MADC was held on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2022. In this election, Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the single largest party by winning 12 seats, though one short of the majority mark of 13; whereas, MNF won 9 seats and INC won 4 seats. Though BJP secured 12 seats, the biggest political rivals in the State, MNF and INC formed a coalition government despite a clear instruction, given to MDCs of INC not to ally either with MNF or BJP by the Pradesh Congress of the state. The ruling party in the State, MNF performance in the twelfth election was not quite satisfactory, it could win only 9 seats. This is indeed disappointing though the Party used Socio-Economic Development Programme (SEDP) as its main propaganda for this election.<sup>164</sup>

#### **Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC):**

The Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) started functioning on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1972 with a ray of hope for uplifting the socio-economic life of the people who are mostly below the poverty line. However, it did not take long to dwindle. The First term of Executive Committee of the Chakma District Council could not last long due to the alleged mismanagement of funds and inefficiency and thereby Nilo Moni Chakma was ousted from the Chief Executive Membership and Sneha Kumar Chakma was elected in his place. However, he was ousted from the CEM post and Laichoga Tongchongya was elected as the CEM. But the Government of Mizoram did not approve the proceeding and suspended the Executive Committee and the Sub-Divisional Officer of Chawngte, Civil Sub-Division created in 1976 was asked to look after the administration of the District Council on behalf of the Administrator till the conduct of election for the District Council. Thus, the First Executive Committee was dissolved and remained suspended till 22.01.1978. During the first two terms from 1972 to 1982, there

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<sup>163</sup> <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/congress-merges-with-bjp-in-mizorams-mara-autonomous-district-council-2202637.html> accessed on 07-09-23

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rivals-congress-and-mnf-join-hands-to-control-mizoram-s-madc-keep-bjp-out-101652862942129.html> accessed on 24-05-2022.



was no party politics in Chakma District Council as all the members contested as Independent candidates.<sup>165</sup>

However, the Third election in 1982 was held on a party basis which paved the way for the genesis of party politics in the Chakma Autonomous District Council. The party politics amongst the Chakma grew gradually with the increase in political awareness in the society. As a result, a new regional political party known as Mizoram Chakma Jatiyo Parishad (MCJP) was formed in 1987 under the leadership of B.B. Chakma. From 1983 to 1998, the Indian National Congress (INC) Party ruled the government of CADC with minor opposition from other parties. Another remarkable development took place from 1997 to 1998 where a group of Chakma leaders joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Mrs. Sneha Dini Talukder was elected for the first time as BJP candidate in 1998. In the meantime, there was a major split in the CADC Government or Executive Committee in 2000 where the members were divided into two groups, one group was led by Rasik Mohan Chakma and the other was led by Pulin Bayan Chakma. Later on, the majority group led by Rasik Mohan Chakma joined the Mizo National Front (MNF) and formed the government of Chakma Autonomous District Council by ousting the Congress (I) leader Pulin Bayan Chakma, the then Chief Executive Member. This became a remarkable history in the CADC politics as it brought a true democracy with strong opposition, which was earlier hitherto absent in CADC politics.<sup>166</sup>

From The third term (1983-1987) of the CADC till the end of the Sixth term (1998-2003) the Indian National Congress ruled the government of CADC with minor opposition from other parties. The Third Election to the Chakma Autonomous District Council was held in two phases on 7th and 14th December, 1983. The Congress formed the government by winning 9 seats out of 10 seats. Rumani Chakma was sworn in as the CEM. During this term, there was a frequent change in the CEM. Pulin Bayan Chakma succeeded Rumani Chakma. Again Pulin Bayan Chakma was replaced by Nutan Kumar Chakma. This council had two EMs. Like the CEM, there was a continuous change in

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<sup>165</sup> Opt. cit., Pp.61-62.

<sup>166</sup> Opt. cit. p.62.

the Chairman of the Council. Nutan Kumar Chakma, Punya Chakma and Doyal Dhan Chama held the post of Chairman in succession during this term.

The Fourth General Election to the CADC was held on 3rd January 1988. The Congress once again formed the Government by winning 10 seats out of 11 seats. In the Fourth election to CADC, Sneha Dini Talukdar, BJP candidate was elected as a Member of District Council (MDC). The Executive Body was headed by Pulin Bayan Chakma (CEM) along with other two Executive Members. Punya Chakma was sworn in as the Chairman and Binoy Biswa Chakma as Deputy Chairman. The Fifth General Election to the Chakma Autonomous District Council was held on 12th January 1993. For the third time, the Congress again came into power and formed the government. The Executive Body consists of Pulin Bayan Chakma as the CEM and five Executive Members. Adi Kanta Tongchangya was the Chairman of the Council. The resignation of Pulin Bayan Chakma from the CEM and Adi Kanta Tongchangya from the Chairman reshuffled the Executive Body. A new Executive Body was formed on 11th July, 1994. Rasik Mohan Chakma was sworn in as Chairman and Adi Kanta Tongchangya as the CEM of the Chakma Autonomous District Council.

The Sixth election of the CADC was held on 13th January 1998. The Congress again formed the government by winning 10 seats out of 13 elected seats. The Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) could manage to secure a single representation. During the Sixth term, the Congress government in the CADC faced a major split into two groups in 2000, one group was led by Rasik Mohan Chakma (Executive Member) and the other was led by Pulin Bayon Chakma (CEM). The majority group led by Rasik Mohan Chakma joined the MNF and formed the government of CADC by ousting the Congress leader, Pulin Bayon Chakma, the then CEM.<sup>167</sup>

The Seventh Election to the CADC was held on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2003. The Executive body was formed by MNF led by Rasik Mohan Chakma as CEM and Gokul Chandra Chakma as Chairman. This Executive body remained in power till the next election of CADC in 2008. In the Eight and Nine Election to the CADC held in 2008

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<sup>167</sup> Opt. cit., p. 62.

and 2013 respectively, the Congress formed the Executive body which functioned smoothly in the two terms.<sup>168</sup>

In the Tenth election to the CADC held on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, out of 20 seats, MNF secured 8 seats, Congress secured 7 seats and BJP secured 5 seats. Under the given circumstances with no party gaining a clear majority, the Congress and BJP joined hands to form a coalition government. It was the first instance of the BJP and INC forming a coalition government all over India due to sheer opportunism. In the meantime, with the death of the sitting MDC of the MNF, the tally of the MNF was reduced to 7 members. The MNF gained a majority when 4 MDCs of the Congress split and joined with MNF enhancing the tally of MNF to 11 members.<sup>169</sup>

#### **Ninth and Tenth Election to Chakma Autonomous District Council:**

Election to the Ninth election to Chakma Autonomous District Council was held on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. The results to the Ninth election to CADC was declared on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.<sup>170</sup>

**Table 3.5. List of elected candidates in the Ninth election to CADC**

Sl.No	No. & Name of the Constituency	Name of the elected Candidate	Party Affiliation
1	01-Borapansury-I	Dayal Chandra Chakma	INC
2	02-Borapansury-II	Buddha Dhan Chakma	INC
3	03- Chhotapansury	Amar Smriti	INC
4	04-Bajeisora	Pulin Bayan Chakma	INC
5	05-Kamalanagar-‘N’	Parimal Chakma	INC
6	06-Kamalanagar-‘S’	H. Amaresh Chakma	MNF
7	07-Kamalanagar-‘W’	Punya Chakma	MNF

<sup>169</sup> [www.cadc.gov.in/releases/departments/information-public-relation/page/8/](http://www.cadc.gov.in/releases/departments/information-public-relation/page/8/), accessed on 06-03-2021.

<sup>170</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/ge-to-cadc-2013-notification-result> accessed on 09-10-2023.

8	08-Udalthana	Ajoy Kumar	INC
9	09-Ugudasury-‘S’	Susen Chakma	INC
10	10-Mandirasora	Indralal Chakma	MNF
11	11-Ajasora	Taranisen Chakma	INC
12	12-Maniabapsora	Sushil Kumar Tongchangy	INC
13	13-Vaseitlang	Buddha Lila Chakma	INC
14	14-Longpuighat	Chitra Chakma	INC
15	15-Rengkashya	Amit Kumar Chakma	INC
16	16-Damdep	Adikanta	INC
17	17-Jaruldubasora	Purna Muni Chakma	INC
18	18-Fultuli	Kali Kumar Tongchangya	INC
19	19-Devasora-‘S’	Bubon Chakma	INC
20	20-Parva	Mohan Chakma	INC

**(Source: [www.sec.mizoram.govt.in](http://www.sec.mizoram.govt.in))**

The Ninth General Election to the CADC was held on 17th April, 2013. The Congress once again came out with a marvellous victory by winning 17 seats out of 22 seats. Dr. BD Chakma was sworn in as the CEM and later resigned as he was elected from Tuichawng Constituency as MLA in the general election to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram. Kali Kumar Tongchangya succeeded him. During this term, the Executive Body consisted of nine EMs. Dayal Chandra Chakma was the Chairman of the Council. Nihar Mala Chakma, Sneha Maya Chakma, Dhak Moni Tongchangya, and Lalchangliana were nominated MDCs.

### Tenth election to Chakma Autonomous District Council

With the expiry of the Ninth term of CADC, the tenth election to Chakma Autonomous District Council was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. Results to the tenth election to CADC was declared on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.<sup>171</sup> List of elected candidates and the party affiliation is as given below:

**Table 3. 6. List of elected candidates in the Tenth election to CADC:**

Sl.No	No. & Name of the Constituency	Name of the elected Candidate	Party Affiliation
1	01-Borapansury-I	Rasik Mohan Chakma	MNF
2	02-Borapansury-II	Kusum Lota Chakma	BJP
3	03- Chhotapansury	Shanti Jiban Chakma	BJP
4	04-Bajeisora	Anil Kanti Chakma	BJP
5	05-Kamalanagar-‘N’	Durjya Dhan Chakma	MNF
6	06-Kamalanagar-‘S’	H. Amaresh Chakma	MNF
7	07-Kamalanagar-‘W’	Sanjeev Chakma	BJP
8	08-Udalthana	Ajoy Kumar Chakma	INC
9	09-Ugudasury-‘S’	Pranad Kumar Chakma	MNF
10	10-Mondirasora	Onish Moy Chakma	INC
11	11-Ajasora	Mohesh Baran Chakma	MNF
12	12-Maniabapsora	Uday Tongchangya	MNF
13	13-Vaseitlang	Buddha Lila Chakma	INC
14	14-Longpuighat	Lakhi Dhan Chakma	MNF
15	15-Rengkashya	Amit Kumar Chakma	INC
16	16-Damdep	Hiranand Chakma	BJP
17	17-Jaruldubasora	Lakkhan Chakma	MNF
18	18-Fultuli	Sub-judiced	
19	19-Devasora-‘S’	Budon Kumar Chakma	INC
20	20-Parva	Mohan Chakma	INC

(Source: [www.sec.mizoram.govt.in](http://www.sec.mizoram.govt.in))

The Tenth General Election to the CADC was held on 20th April, 2018. Shanti Jiban Chakma was sworn in as the CEM and Budha Lila Chakma was the Chairman of the Council. It was a coalition government, formed by two ideologically opposite parties, namely, Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC).

<sup>171</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/ge-to-cadc-2018-notification-results> accessed on 09-10-2023.

The first CEM in the Tenth term of CADC was Shanti Jiban Chakma elected from the BJP. In fact, it was the first coalition government, formed by BJP and INC all over India but the government was short-lived. After eight months of the BJP-INC coalition government, Four elected MDC from Congress withdrew their support and joined hands with MNF. A new MNF government was formed with Rasik Mohan Chakma from MNF as the CEM and H. Amaresh Chakma was appointed as the Chairman of the Council. The executive body consisted of eight Executive Members. The tenth term of CADC could not function smoothly due to the frequent changes in the incumbency of the CEM post and when Buddha Lila Chakma made a claim to be the Sixth CEM of CADC. The Governor of Mizoram felt that the constant change of administration due to political maneuvering could damage the people and such Governor's Rule was imposed on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.<sup>172</sup>

#### **Electoral Campaign in Autonomous District Council area:**

The three Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram namely; Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC), Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) and Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) have always aspired to have greater administrative power as the power given to the ADCs through the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India is limited. Since 1986, the demand for Union Territory was initiated by the United People's Party (UPP) . The UPP was formed by a few educated elites with an inspiration for greater administrative power for the Mara and initiated the demand of Union Territory (UT) for Maraland. The demand for UT was initiated further through the submission of a Memorandum to the Central government. With no electoral success, the UPP came to an end after 9 months since its formation. The aspiration for greater power remained and, the Mara started demanding the status of Union Territory (UT) to the Central Government through submission of a Memorandum. The demand for UT was initiated by Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) under the presidentship of P.P. Thawla.

The MDF was indeed popular during its heyday and the policy of the party also reached the length and breadth of the Mara-inhabited villages in the MADC area. The

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<sup>172</sup> <https://www.cadc.gov.in/2022/12/22/governors-rule-imposed-in-cadc/> accessed on 26-11-2023.

Party also sent representatives to Delhi to further pursue its demand for UT with the money contributed by various officers, businessmen, church leaders, and the people. The party also has electoral success and formed coalition government in MADC. The party even secured an MLA seat from Palak Constituency in the 7<sup>th</sup> State Legislative Assembly election, in which the party formed a pre-poll alliance with Mizo National Front (MNF). In this election, a coalition government was formed by the MNF-MDF alliance.

However, the MDF could not retained its success which was clearly shown in the elections that followed. With the constant loss of the election by the MDF, the Mara people began to doubt and question the party if UT status for Maraland was really possible. The demand for Union Territory by MDF was later joined by the Lai and Chakma. During the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Elections, the political parties in ADC areas other than the regional political parties in the ADC areas, mainly shared the same election manifestoes published by the headquarters from Aizawl. The political parties hardly published a separate election manifesto. However, during the elections to the Autonomous District Councils, various parties published election manifestos based on local aspirations, local issues, etc.

Since 2008, Congress under the leadership of Hiphei started popularizing the controversial policy of direct finance for Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram. The Congress used the slogan 'Direct finance' as one of the most popular election campaign tools for winning the electoral votes. However, with the defection of Hiphei from Congress to BJP in 2018, the policy of Direct Finance was carried on by BJP under Hiphei's influence.

#### **Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC):**

For a long, Aizawl has had Village Councils although it develop an urban settlement for many people in the post-independence period. In spite of people's demand for establishing a Municipality for Aizawl in line with the Constitutional Seventy Fourth Amendment Act, 1992, hitherto no political party or state government really demonstrated a willingness to establish one. It is therefore

interesting to note that the AMC owes its origin to the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), a pressure exerted from outside (Delhi).

JNNURM was launched in the country by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Indian Prime Minister in December 2005. JNNURM envisaged addressing infrastructural deficiencies, poor service delivery systems, and poor governance in 63 selected cities including Aizawl. The JNNURM made it compulsory on the part of state governments receiving funds for city infrastructural developments to necessarily carry out reforms such as starting Municipalities and holding elections for such decentralized Urban Local Bodies (ULB).

The state government then enacted The Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007. The said Act was notified on April 20, 2007 which became effective on this date itself. The act provides for the establishment of (a) A Municipal Board for a specified transitional area, (b) A Municipal Council for a smaller urban area, and (c) A Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area.<sup>173</sup>

The AMC started functioning on July 1, 2008 at its office at Thuampui Veng, Aizawl. The Council office was headed by Chief Executive Officer. The Government of Mizoram, Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation, Department of Mizoram and the Union Ministry of Urban Development signed a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on June 12, 2007. The MoA explicitly binds the state government to implement reform agenda under the JNNURM (such as the establishment of ULB under 74th Amendment), failure to do so would entail withholding subsequent instalments of grants given by the centre to the state of Mizoram.

The First election to the 19-member AMC was held in November 2010 where the Indian National Congress and Zoram Nationalist Party alliance formed government in the council (INC=5, ZNP=5) and the opposition alliance Mizo

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<sup>173</sup> L.H. Chhuanawma. (2011) *Aizawl Municipal Council*. Paper presented on *UGC-Sponsored National Seminar on "Rural Development without Panchayati Raj Institutions in NE India"*, organized by Government J. Buana College, Lunglei on May 18&1.



National Front and the Mizoram People Conference trailed by just one seat (MNF=5, MPC=4).<sup>174</sup>

### **Composition**

The AMC consists of 19 elected members representing 19 Wards of the city of Aizawl and others appointed by the Governor of Mizoram. Roughly one-third (i.e. 6) of the total membership is reserved for women, these six seats shall be rotated after every five years. The tenure of the Council is five years. The AMC is administered by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Municipal Commissioner. There is a Ward Committee in every ward that consists of a Chairman, who is an elected councillor from that ward, and two member each from all the local councils within the ward. There are 85 local councils having a term of five years. The Aizawl Municipal Council was upgraded to Aizawl Municipal Corporation on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.<sup>175</sup>

### **Powers and Functions**

Chapter VI of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 20017 (As amended in 2009)<sup>2</sup> contains a list of the powers and functions of the AMC, reproduced here in toto:<sup>176</sup>

### **Functions of Municipality**

(1) Every Municipality shall

a. Provide, on its own or arrange to provide, through any agency the following core municipal services:

- i. water supply for domestic, industrial, and commercial purposes,
- ii. drainage and sewerage.
- iii. solid waste management,

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid. LH Chhuanawma.

<sup>175</sup> <https://amcmizoram.com/page/rti> accessed on 21-07-2023.

<sup>176</sup> <https://amcmizoram.com/page/rti> accessed on 21-07-2023.

- iv. preparation of a plan-for economic development and social justice,
- v. communication systems including construction and maintenance of roads,. footpaths, pedestrian pathways, transportation terminals, both for passengers and goods, bridges, over-bridges, subways, ferries and inland water transport systems,
- vi. transport system accessories including traffic engineering schemes, street furniture, street lighting, parking areas and bus stops,
- vii. community health and protection of environment including planting and caring for trees on roadsides and elsewhere,
- viii. markets and slaughterhouses.
- ix. promotion of educational, sports and cultural activities, and
- x. aesthetic environment, and

b . perform such other statutory or regulatory functions as may be provided by or under this Act or under any other law for the time being in force.

(2) The Municipality may, having regard to its managerial, technical, financial and organizational capacity, and the actual condition obtaining in the municipal area, decide not to take up, or postpone the performance of, any of the functions as aforesaid.

(3) The State Government may direct a Municipality to perform any of the functions as aforesaid, if such function is not taken up, or is postponed, by the Municipality.

(4) The Municipality may plan, build, operate, maintain, or manage the infrastructure required for the discharge of any of the functions, as aforesaid, either by itself or by agency under any concession agreement referred to in 58 -A.

**Discretionary functions of the Municipality:**

“A Municipality may, having regard to the satisfactory performance of its core functions which shall constitute the first charge on the Municipal Fund, and subject to its managerial, technical and financial capabilities, undertake or perform, or promote the performance of any of the following functions:

(1) in the sphere of town planning, urban development and development of commercial infrastructure,

- a. Planned Development of new areas for human settlement.
- b. Measures for beautification of the municipal area by setting up parks and fountains, providing recreational areas, improving river banks, and landscaping.
- c. Collection of statistics and data, significant to the community, and
- d. Integration of the development plans and schemes of the municipal area with the district or regional development plan, if any.

(2) in the sphere of protection of environment,

- a. Reclamation of wastelands, promotion of social forestry and maintenance of open spaces.
- b. Establishment and maintenance of nurseries for plants, vegetables and trees and promotion of greenery through mass participation.
- c. Organization of flower-show and promotion of flower-growing as a civic culture, and.
- d. Promotion of measures for abatement of all forms of pollution;
- e. Construction and maintenance of cattle pounds,
- f. Provision for unfiltered water supply for non-domestic uses,
- g. Advancement of civic consciousness of public health and general welfare by organizing discourses, seminars and conferences, and
- h. Measures for eradication of addiction of all kinds including addiction to drugs and liquor.

(3) in the sphere of education and culture,

- a. promotion of civic education, adult education, social education and non-formal education,

- b. promotion of cultural activities including music, physical education, sport and theaters and infrastructure.
- c. advancement of science and technology in urban life,
- d. publication of municipal journals, periodicals and souvenirs, purchase of books, and subscription to journals, magazines and newspapers,
- e. installation of statues, portraits and pictures in an appropriate manner,
- f. organization, establishment and maintenance of art galleries and botanical or zoological collections, and
- g. maintenance of monuments and places of historical, artistic and other importance.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act but subject to the provisions of any State law relating to planning, development operation, maintenance and management of Municipal infrastructure and services, a" Municipality may, in the discharge of its functions specified in section 57, section 58, and section 59,

- a. promote the undertaking of any project for supply of Urban environmental infrastructure or services by the participation of a company, firm, society, trust or any body corporate or any institution, government agency, or any agency under any other law for the time being in force, in the financing, construction, maintenance and operation of such project of a Municipality irrespective of its cost,
- b. consider and approve the undertaking of any project relating to urban environmental infrastructure or services by a company, firm, society, or body corporate in terms of a private sector participation agreement or jointly with any such agency, and
- c. consider and approve the undertaking of any project relating to urban environmental infrastructure or service by any institution, or government agency or any agency under any other law for the time being in force, or jointly with any such agency.

In the discharge of its obligations for providing urban environmental infrastructure and services in relation to water-supply, drainage and sewerage; solid waste management, communication systems and commercial infrastructure, the municipality may, wherever considered appropriate in the public interest,-

- a. discharge any of its obligations on its own, or
- b. enter into any private sector participation agreement.

**Transfer of functions of State Government:**

a. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or in any other law for the time being in force, the State Government may, subject to such conditions as it may think fit to impose, transfer, by an order published in the Official Gazette, to a Municipality any such functions and duties relating to Government under any law which the State Legislature is competent to enact, or which is otherwise within the executive power of the State, and appear to relate to matters arising within a municipal area being of an administrative character, and shall, on such transfer, allot to the Municipality such fund and personnel as may be necessary to enable the Municipality to discharge the functions and duties transferred.

b. Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section(1), the State Government may transfer to the Municipality such functions and duties as are performed by the departments of the State Government on any of the following matters:

- c. town and country planning;
- d. urban development;
- e. water supply and sanitation;
- f. transport system including regulation of traffic terminus;
- g. employment schemes and programmes;
- h. health and family welfare;
- i. relief and social welfare including social security schemes and programmes;

- j. public works including road construction and housing;
  - i. cottage and small-scale industries, business and services including programme for skill development;
  - ii. education including primary education, adult education, vocational education, social education, non-formal education, audiovisual education and library services;
  - iii. food and supplies including rationing and distribution;
    - a. civil defense;
    - b. fire protection and fire-fighting;
    - c. sports and youth services
    - d. Welfare of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes;
    - e. environmental safety and improvement;
    - f. social forestry and plantation programme.

Where any function or duty under any law is so transferred. such law shall have effect as if this section has formed a part of such law, and thereupon such law shall be deemed to have been amended accordingly

Besides this, the AMC also has the power of taxation as per Section 210 of the same Act, which says:

- a. Every municipality may levy,
- b. Property tax; and
- c. a profession tax;
- d. a tax on carriages and animals;
- e. a tax on carts, and advertisement tax other than advertisements published in newspapers.

It may be noted that the Act contains more or less similar subjects contained under the 12th Schedule of the Indian Constitution as incorporated by the 74th Amendment. For the benefit of comparison between the Act and the 12th Schedule, the latter is reproduced here in toto:

1. Urban planning including town planning.
2. Regulation of land use and construction of buildings.

3. Planning for economic and social development.
4. Road and bridges.
5. Water supply for domestic, industrial and, commercial purposes.
6. Public health, sanitation conservancy and solid waste management.
7. Fire services.
8. Urban forestry protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects.
9. Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded.
10. Slum improvement and upgradation.
11. Urban poverty alleviation.
12. Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens, and playgrounds.
13. Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects.
14. Burials and burial grounds; cremations, cremation grounds and electric crematoriums.
15. Cattle ponds; prevention of cruelty to animals
16. Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths.
17. Public amenities including street light, parking lots, bus stop and public conveniences.
18. Regulation of slaughter and tanneries.

The first actual transfer of power from the state government to the AMC was regarding the transfer of management of Ch. Chhunga Bus Terminal at Thuampui Veng and Ch. Saprawnga Truck Terminal at Rangvamual Veng on May 27, 2009. Eight subjects are presently being considered by the state government for transfer to the AMC, they are: Solid waste management, slum improvement and up gradation, urban poverty alleviation, parks and gardens, burials and burial grounds, cattle ponds and animal controls, street lighting including parking lots and public conveniences, slaughterhouse and markets.

**Sources of finance Sources of finance for the AMC are:**

1. Finance Commission of India, grants for local bodies-Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies,
2. Grants from the state government,
3. Internal resource mobilization through taxation,
4. Loan borrowing from external sources, with the prior approval of the state government.

**Aizawl Municipal Corporation Ward List:**

The total number of Municipal Wards of the Aizawl Municipal Council and the seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and Women as determined by the State Government and the State Election Commission under Article 243T of the Constitution of India are as follows:<sup>177</sup>

**Table. 3. 7. List of Wards in Aizawl Municipal Corporation:**

Sl.NO	WARD	STATUS
1	Ward no. I	ST
2	Ward no. II	ST(WOMEN)
3	Ward no. III	ST
4	Ward no. IV	ST(WOMEN)
5	Ward no. V	ST
6	Ward no. VI	ST (WOMEN)
7	Ward no. VII	ST
8	Ward no. VIII	ST
9	Ward no. IX	General
10	Ward no. X	ST
11	Ward no. XI	ST (women)
12	Ward no. XII	ST (women)
13	Ward no. XIII	ST

<sup>177</sup> <https://www.censusindia.co.in/towns/aizawl-population-aizawl-mizoram-801506>.accessed on 03-08.2023.



14	Ward no. XIV	ST
15	Ward no. XV	ST
16	Ward no. XVI	ST
17	Ward no. XVII	ST (Women)
18	Ward no. XVIII	ST
19	Ward no. XIX	ST

(Source: [www.amcmizoram.com](http://www.amcmizoram.com))

The total number of 6 (Six) seats/wards nearest to 1/3rd out of the number of 19 seats in Aizawl Municipality shall be reserved for women by rotation and the Scheduled Castes population in Aizawl Municipality mainly consists of the persons employed in various Departments of the Government of Mizoram.<sup>178</sup> Since the Schedule Caste (SC) population as per the 2001 census is only 0.02% of the total population in Aizawl Municipality. The reservation of seat (s) for the SC population shall be treated as Zero (0) for the time being, subject to review after the 2011 Census figure is published. The Scheduled Tribes population in Aizawl Municipality mainly consists of persons permanently residing in various localities/Streets/Veng, which is 91.8% of the total population of Aizawl Municipality. Therefore, 18 seats out of the total seats of 19 in Aizawl Municipality shall be reserved for the ST population for the time being, subject to review after the 2011 Census figure is published.<sup>179</sup>

#### **Aizawl Municipal Corporation Election 2015:**

The Second election to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation was held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. The result of the Second election to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation was declared on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>178</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/94392205/Municipality-Mizoram#> accessed on 09-09-2023.

<sup>179</sup> <https://www.censusindia.co.in/towns/aizawl-population-aizawl-mizoram-801506> accessed on 02-09-2023.

<sup>180</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/ge-to-amc-2015-notification-result> accessed on 02-09-2023.

**Table. 3. 8. List of elected candidates and party affiliation in the Second election to AMC 2015:**

<b>WARD NO.</b>	<b>NAME OF ELECTED CANDIDATES</b>	<b>PARTY AFFILIATION</b>
I	R. Zomuanpuii	INC
II	Lalringliana	MNF
III	K. Romawia	MNF
IV	Laltlanzova Khiangte	MNF
V	Rosiamngheta	INC
VI	C. Lalmuanpuia	MNF
VII	K. Lalhmingliani	INC
VIII	P.C. Lalhmingthanga	MNF
IX	B. Lalawmpuii	MNF
X	R. Lalbiakthanga	MNF
XI	H. Zonunsanga	MNF
XII	R. Thanglura	MNF
XIII	Zonunsangi	INC
XIV	Lalhmingmawia	MNF
XV	Zodingpuii	INC
XVI	C. Lalsawivunga	MPC
XVII	H. Vanlalruata	INC
XVIII	M. Zohmingthangi	INC
XIX	C. Lalthansanga	MNF

**Source: www. diprmizoram.gov.in)**

In the 2015 AMC election, though MNF was the opposition party in the State Legislative Assembly, MNF could secure 11 seats out of the total 19 seats it contested. The remaining 8 seats went to the Congress-MPC alliance. The Congress bagged 7 seats out of 14 seats it contested while the MPC could managed to garner only 1 seat out of the 5 seats it contested. Unlike the previous election, the MPC and

ZNP suffered a setback in terms of the seat won and vote share. The ZNP made an electoral alliance with the BJP and contested in 12 seats and 4 seats respectively in which both parties drew blank. The MNF party had performed very well in terms of seats won though it was an opposition in the State and formed the government in AMC by voting out of power the ruling Congress-led alliance after the completion of one term which is unlike the trend that people witnessed in the State Legislative Assembly elections.

### **Aizawl Municipal Corporation election 2021:<sup>181</sup>**

The third election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation was held on 16.02.2021. Out of the 19 seats, MNF won 11 seats, ZPM won 6 seats and INC won 2 seats. Since the formation of Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), the performance of MNF has been quite good and could form the government since the first term of AMC.

**Table. 3.9. List of elected candidates and party affiliation in the Third AMC election, 2021:**

<b>WARD NO</b>	<b>NAME OF THE CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY AFFILIATION</b>
I	Lalrinenga Sailo	MNF
II	Lalringliana	MNF
III	C. Lalchhandami	ZPM
IV	Laltlanzova Khiantge	MNF
V	Rosiamngheta	INC
VI	John Zosangliana Ralte	MNF
VII	Vanlalneia	MNF
VIII	Christina Roluahpuii Sailo	ZPM
IX	R. Lalawmpuii	MNF
X	Chuausikpuii	MNF
XI	H. Zonunsanga	MNF

<sup>181</sup> <https://amcmizoram.com/page/list-of-councillors> accessed on 23-06-2023.

XII	R. Thanglura	MNF
XIII	Lalfakzuala Chenkual	MNF
XIV	Ramthanzauvi	ZPM
XV	Zodingpuii	INC
XVI	R. Lalawmpuii	ZPM
XVII	David Zohmangaiha	MNF
XVIII	Malsawmzuala Ralte	ZPM
XIX	Baryl Vanneihsangi	ZPM

(Source: [www.amcmizoram.com](http://www.amcmizoram.com))

In the third election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation, Mizo National front was voted back to power by securing 11 seats out of 19 seats. Out of the 6 reserved seats for women, the Zoram People Movement secured 5 seats and MNF secured 1 seat.

#### **DATA ANALYSIS**

As part of the field study, 300 samples, selected through simple random sampling, were approached by the scholar employing a structured questionnaire, where 75 samples each represent 4 MLA constituencies, namely, Aizawl West-I, Lawngtlai East, Tuichawng, and Saiha. Out of 300 samples, 149 respondents are females i.e. 49.66 percent and the other 151 respondents are males i.e. 50.33 percent. The respondents are from various age groups, occupations, and educational backgrounds. The respondents have been divided into the age group between 18-20, 20-40, 40-60, 60-80 and 80-100. From the 18-20 age group, there are 9 respondents, 149 respondents from the 20-40 age group, 113 respondents from 40-60 respondents, 28 respondents from 60-80 respondents, and 1 respondent from the age group 80-100. Occupation-wise, the respondents are classified into Five groups, government employees, self-employed, farmer, daily labourer and students. Students include those studying in schools, colleges, universities and research scholars, government job comprises those serving in the public sector, self-employed cover those engaged in business both big and small, farmers comprise those who operate a farm or cultivate the land, daily labourers comprise unskilled labour. The respondents are also categorized on the basis of their ration cards, such as APL (White), BPL (Blue), AAY (Yellow), and No Ration Card. Respondent

belonging to AAY (White) comprises 45.66 percent, BPL (Blue) comprise 48 percent, AAY (Yellow) comprises 4 percent and respondents with No Ration Card (NRC) comprise 2.34 percent.

The respondents can also be placed under three categories based on their educational backgrounds, below HSLC, HSSLC, Graduate, and Post Graduate. Below HSLC comprises of those who do not complete their matriculation, HSLC are those who completed till 10<sup>th</sup> Standard, HSSLC comprises of those receiving education up to 12th standard, graduate are those completing graduation course in any academic stream, and post graduate comprises of university graduates and above. The percentage of samples derived from the survey on the basis of occupation comprises 23 percent of government employees, 30.66 percent self-employed, 11 percent farmers, 30 percent daily labourers and 5.3 percent comprises of students.

For evaluative purposes, the samples are obtained from 4 districts of Mizoram, Aizawl District, Aizawl West-I Constituency is selected as the study area. For the study of voting behaviour in Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), Ward X (Zotlang, Zonumam, and Chawnpui) and Ward XI (Luangmual and Chawlhmun) which are located within Aizawl West-I constituency, 75 samples are obtained. For the purpose of the study of voting behaviour in Autonomous District Council areas, MLA constituencies namely Tuichawng, Lawngtlai East, and Saiha are selected as the study area. From Tuichawng constituency samples are obtained from kamalanagar-I, Kamalanagar-II, Kamalanagar-III, Kamalanagar-IV and Saizawh 'W'. From Lawngtlai East constituency, samples are obtained from Bazar Veng and Electric Veng Lawngtlai, Bualpui 'NG', Lungzarhtum and Siachangkawn. From Saiha Constituency, samples are obtained from Siaha Vaihpi, Bazar Vaih, Chhaolo, Noahlah, and Tisopi. For the present study, the unit of categorization will be based on the occupation of the respondents from the selected 4 MLA constituencies. The respondents were approached with a structured questionnaire comprising 5 questions relating to the elections of Aizawl Municipal Corporation, Chakma Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, and Mara Autonomous District Council which falls within the study period i.e. 2012 to 2021. The responses to the questionnaire are illustrated in the form of tables for better understanding, and the variables are given in percentages.

**Table 3.1.1 Which party do you vote for in the 2013 CADC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	20	8				2.66
	Self Employed	8	9.33				
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–	-
	Daily Labourer	26.6	21.33	–	–	2.66	–
	Student	–	–	–	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54.6</b>	<b>38.66</b>	–	–	<b>2.66</b>	<b>2.66</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above question is framed to understand who the respondent voted for in the 2013 CADC Election. For the purpose of the study, the voters were characterized based on their occupations such as Govt. employees, self-employed, farmers, daily labourers, and students. Among the mentioned occupations, MNF party secured the highest votes i.e. 26.6 percent out of the total sample from Daily Labourer. The total percentage of vote obtained by MNF was 54.6 percent and 38.66 percent was secured by Congress. Whereas, BJP and Others both stood at 2.66 percent each.

**Table. 3.1.2 Which party do you vote for in the 2018 CADC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	20	5.33				2.66
	Self Employed	6.66	9.33			2.66	2.66
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–	-
	Daily Labourer	22.66	25.33	–	–	4	–
	Student	–	–	–	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>49.32</b>	<b>39.96</b>	–	–	<b>6.66</b>	<b>5.32</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above table illustrate the respondent's choice on political party in the 2018 CADC election. Congress received the highest votes from Daily Labourer at 25.33 percent. However, the total vote share of Congress in the 2018 CADC election

was only 39.96 percent. MNF had the highest vote share at 49.32 percent. The vote share of MNF from Govt. employees and daily labourers was quite high compared to other political parties, which stands at 20 percent and 22.66 percent. the vote BJP obtained also increased to 6.66 percent in 2018 from 2.66 percent in 2021 CADC election.

**Table. 3.1.3 Do you vote for the same party in MLA and CADC elections?**

Constituency	Character	Variables (in percentage)	
		Yes	No
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	25.33	5.33
	Self Employed	14.75	2.66
	Farmer		
	Daily Labourer	46.66	5.33
	Student		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>86.75</b>	<b>13.32</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above question aims to identify whether the respondent vote for the same party in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and Chakma Autonomous District Council. It is evidently clear from the above table that majority of the voters i.e 86.75 per cent of the voters voted for the same party in both the election. This shows that the voters' voting decision is highly influenced by their support for a particular party, there is no difference in their choice of party in different elections. Those who did not vote for the same party in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election were only 13.32 percent.

**Table. 3.2.1 Which Party do you vote for in the 2012 MADC Election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Saiha	Govt. Employee	5.3	10.66				
	Self Employed	9.3	13.33				2.66
	Farmer	12	16	–	–	–	4
	Daily Labourer	2.66	10.66	–	–		–
	Student	2.66	6.66	–	–	–	1.33
	<b>Total</b>		<b>31.92</b>	<b>57.31</b>	–	–	

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above table illustrate the respondent's choice of political party in the 2012 Mara Autonomous District Council election. Congress had the highest vote share with 57.31 percent. Out of all the political party contesting the 2012 MADC election, Congress had the highest vote share from all occupation such as govt. employee, self-employed, farmers, daily labourer, and students at 10.66, 13.33, 16, 10.66, and 6.66 percent respectively. MNF had the highest vote share at 12 percent from farmers. 2.66 percent each from daily labourers and students and 5.3 and 9.3 percent from govt. employee and self-employed. The total vote share of MNF in the 2012 MADC election is 31.92 percent.

**Table.3.2.2. Which party do you vote for in the 2017 MADC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Saiha	Govt. Employe	6.66	9.33				1.33
	Self Employed	16	9.33				
	Farmer	10.66	17.33	–	–	–	
	Daily Labourer	2.66	12	–	–		1.33
	Student	2.66	6.66	–	–	1.33	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>38.64</b>	<b>54.65</b>	–	–	<b>1.33</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**



The above table also illustrates the political party the respondent voted in the 2017 Mara Autonomous District Council election. In this election also, the respondent who voted for Congress was at the highest at 54.65 per cent and MNF was 38.64 percent. Congress had the highest vote from farmers at 17.33 percent and the lowest vote from students at 6.66 percent. self-employed stood as the highest voter of MNF at 16 percent and daily labourers and students stood as the lowest voter of MNF at 2.66 percent each. BJP had the lowest vote at 1.33 percent among the political parties who contested the 2017 MADC election. The respondent who voted for 'Others' voted for either Maraland Democratic Front (MDF), Independent Candidate or NOTA (None of the Above).

**Table.3.2.3. Do you vote for the same party in MLA and MADC election?**

Constituency	Character	Variables (in percentage)	
		Yes	No
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	9.33	8
	Self Employed	13.33	12
	Farmer	4	24
	Daily Labourer	8	9.33
	Student	5.33	5.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39.99</b>	<b>58.66</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above question aims to identify whether the respondent voted for the same party in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and Mara Autonomous District Council election. The above table illustrates that the number of voters who do not vote for the same party in both elections is much higher at 58.66 percent than the number of voters who vote for the same party in both the election at 39.99 percent. This shows that the voters' choice differs from one election to another election.

**Table.3.3.1. Which party do you vote for in the 2015 LADC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	10.66	12				
	Self Employed	20	17.33	1.33			
	Farmer	5.33	8	2.66	–	–	
	Daily Labourer	9.33	8	2.66	–		
	Student	2.66	2.66	–	–		
	<b>Total</b>		<b>47.98</b>	<b>47.98</b>	<b>6.65</b>	–	

**(Source: Field Study)**

The above table shows the voters' choice of political party in the 2015 Lai Autonomous District Council election. The vote share of Congress and MNF did not show much difference, Congress stood at 47.99 percent and MNF at 47.98 percent. Among the different occupation, Congress had obtained the highest vote at 10.66 percent from self-employed and MNF also obtained the highest vote from self-employed at 17.33 percent. The reason is that the self-employed constitute the highest number of samples at 37.66 percent out of the total sample.

**Table.3.3.2. Which party do you vote for in the 2020 LADC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	12	9.33			1.33	
	Self Employed	14.66	21.33	2.66			
	Farmer	6.66	9.33		–	–	
	Daily Labourer	8	8	1.33	–		
	Student	2.66	2.66	–	–		
	<b>Total</b>		<b>43.98</b>	<b>50.65</b>	<b>3.99</b>	–	<b>1.33</b>

**(Source: Field study)**

The above table illustrates the respondent's choice of political party in the 2020 LADC election. The voter choice of Congress party in the 2020 LADC election

witnessed an increase from 47.99 percent in the 2015 LADC election to 50.65 percent in 2020 which made Congress the highest party that the voters vote in 2020 LADC election. MNF party also witnessed a decline in the vote share from 47.98 percent in 2015 LADC election to 43.98 percent in the 2020 LADC election. ZNP party also obtained a 3.99 percent vote share in the 2020 LADC election.

**Table.3.3.3. Do you vote for the same party in both LADC and MLA elections?**

Constituency	Character	Variables (in percentage)	
		Yes	No
Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	22.66	16
	Self Employed	10.66	12
	Farmer	10.66	5.33
	Daily Labourer	8	9.33
	Student	2.66	2.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54.64</b>	<b>45.36</b>

(Source: Field Study)

The above table illustrates whether the respondent vote for the same party in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and Lai Autonomous District Council election. the voters who voted for the same party in both election was higher at 54.64 per cent than the voters who did not vote for the same party in both election at 45.36 percent. Among the various occupations, govt.employee has the highest percentage at 22.66 percent for those who vote for the same party in both elections.

**Table.3.4.1. Which party do you vote for in the 2015 AMC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Aizawl West-I	Govt. Employee	13.33	10.66			1.33	
	Self Employed	20	16	6.66			
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–	
	Daily Labourer	4	18.66		4		
	Student	2.66	4	–	–		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39.98</b>	<b>49.33</b>	<b>6.66</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.33</b>	

(Source: Field Study)

The above question aims to identify which political party the respondent voted in the 2015 AMC election. Among the various political parties, the MNF received the highest vote from the self-employed at 20 percent and the lowest vote from students at 2.66 percent. Congress party received the highest vote from daily labourers at 18.66 percent and the lowest vote from students at 4 percent. From the total number of samples collected, Congress received the highest vote at 49.33 percent and MNF received the second highest at 39.899 percent. BJP party has received the lowest vote at only 1.33 percent from Ward X of Aizawl Municipal Corporation. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, it must be noted that the Congress and Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) entered a pre-poll alliance.

**Table.3.4.2. Which party do you vote for in the 2021 AMC election?**

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZPM	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Aizawl West-II	Govt. Employee	9.33	5.33	10.66			
	Self Employed	13.33	12	17.33			
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Daily Labourer	14.66	5.33	6.66	–		
	Student	2.66	1.33	2.66	–		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39.98</b>	<b>23.99</b>	<b>37.31</b>	–		

(Source: Field Work)

The above question aims to identify which political party the respondent voted in the 2021 AMC election. In the 2021 AMC election, the respondent's choice of political party witnessed an equal distribution among three political parties namely, MNF, Congress and ZPM. The MNF party had the highest vote with 39.98 percent, ZPM at 37.31 percent, and Congress at 23.99 percent. Among the various occupations, ZPM had the highest vote from self-employed at 17.33, MNF had the highest vote share from daily labourer at 14.66 percent and Congress from self-employed at 12 percent.

**Table.3.4.3: Do you vote for the same party in AMC and MLA elections?**

Constituency	Character	Variables (in percentage)	
		Yes	No
Aizawl West-II	Govt. Employee	12	14.66
	Self Employed	25.33	20
	Farmer	–	–
	Daily Labourer	12	20
	Student	–	6.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>38.33</b>	<b>61.32</b>

(Source: Field Study)

The above table identifies whether the respondents voted for the same political party in both the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections. A greater number of respondents (61.32 percent) did not vote for the same party in both Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election and Aizawl Municipal Corporation election. The respondents who voted for the same party in both the election was 38.33 percent.

**Table 3.5.1. What influenced you the most in your voting decision?**

Constituency	Character	Variables (In Percentage)				
		Political party	Candidate	kinship	Locality or Village	No specific reason
Aizawl West-I	Govt. Employee	1.33	10.66	–	5.33	2.66
	Self Employed	4	34.66		5.33	1.33
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–
	Daily Labourer	–	18.66	2.66	5.33	
	Student	–	5.33			1.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>69.31</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>5.32</b>

Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	14.66	8	–	–	8
	Self Employed	16	1.33	–	–	–
	Farmer	–	–	–	–	–
	Daily Labourer	24	8	5.33	–	14.66
	Student	–	–	–	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54.66</b>	<b>17.33</b>	<b>5.33</b>	–	<b>22.66</b>
Lawngtlai East	Govt. Employee	1.33	3.33	–	2.66	5.33
	Self Employed	2.66	16	6.66	2.66	10.66
	Farmer	4	2.66	4	2.66	2.66
	Daily Labourer	2.66	8	2.66	1.33	–
	Student	–	4	–	–	2.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10.65</b>	<b>43.99</b>	<b>13.32</b>	<b>9.31</b>	<b>21.31</b>
Saiha	Govt. Employee	4	6.66	4	1.33	1.33
	Self Employed	8	9.33	4	1.33	4
	Farmer	8	12	1.33	2.66	4
	Daily Labourer	–	12	1.33	–	5.33
	Student	2.66	6.66	1.33	–	–
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22.66</b>	<b>46.65</b>	<b>11.99</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>14.66</b>
	Grand Total					

(Source: Field Work)

The above table illustrates what factors influence the respondent in making their voting decision. The respondent are given four option to choose such as political party, candidate, kinship and one's own locality. From Aizawl West-I constituency, the respondent mostly made their voting decision base on the Candidate (69.31 percent). Secondly, the respondent made their voting decision base on the candidate who belong to the same locality or village as the respondent (15.99 percent). While deciding who to vote for in the AMC election, the choice of political party did not have much role since it was 5.33 percent only. There are 5.32 percent

respondent who made their voting decision with no specific reason but out of duties and responsibilities. Kinship also plays a minimal influence on the respondent's decision in voting.

The respondents from Tuichawng constituency have a different pattern while making their voting decision. The respondents were mostly influenced by political party (43.99 percent). While deciding who to vote for in the CADC election, the influence of a candidate did not have much impact on the respondent's voting decision since it was 17.33 percent only. There were 5.32 percent of respondents who made their voting decision with no specific reason but out of duties and responsibilities. Likewise, kinship also did not have much influence on the respondent's decision to vote (5.33 percent). The respondent who made their voting decision with no specific reason was rather high at 22.66 percent.

The respondents from Lawngtlai East constituency have a different pattern than respondents from Tuichawng constituency while making their voting decisions. The respondents were mostly influenced by their preference for a candidate (54.66 percent). While deciding who to vote for in the CADC election, the respondent's preference of a political party, kinship, and same locality or village did not have much impact on the respondent's voting decision which stood at 10.65 percent, 13.32 percent, and 9.31 percent only. There were 21.31 percent of respondent who made their voting decision with no specific reason but out of duties and responsibilities.

The respondents from Saiha constituency has the same pattern while making their voting decision. The respondents were mostly influenced by their preference of a candidate (46.65 percent). While deciding who to vote for in the MADC election, the respondent's preference for a political party was much higher compare to respondents from Lawngtlai East and Aizawl West-I Constituency. The respondents who made their voting decision base on kinship and same locality or village was also not high like the respondents from other constituencies which was 11.99 per cent and 5.32 per cent. The respondents who made their voting decision with no specific reason but out of duties and responsibilities were also the second lowest among respondents from Saiha Constituency at 14.66 percent.

**Table 3.6.1** *Do you vote for the political party in the AMC election that holds power in the State?*

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee	5.33	14.66
Self-Employed	14.66	30.66
Farmers	–	–
Daily Labourers	4	24
Student	–	5.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.32</b>	<b>74.65</b>

(Source: Field Study)

**Table 3.6.2.** *Do you vote for the political party in the MADC election that holds power in the State?*

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee		13
Self-Employed	2.66	24
Farmers	6.66	21.33
Daily Labourers	5.33	12
Student	–	10.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.63</b>	<b>85.32</b>

(Source: Field Study)

**Table 3.6.3.** *Do you vote for the Political party in the LADC election that holds power in the State?*

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee	5.33	17.33
Self-Employed	17.33	21.33
Farmers	6.66	9.33



Daily Labourers	14.66	2.66
Student	4	1.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.98</b>	<b>51.98</b>

(Source: Field Study)

**Table.3.6.4. Do you vote for the political party in the CADC election that holds power in the State?**

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee	12	17.33
Self-Employed	5.33	12
Farmers	–	–
Daily Labourers	12	40
Student	—	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.33</b>	<b>69.33</b>

(Source: Field Study)

The above tables Table.3.6.1, Table.3.6.2, Table.3.6.3 and Table. 3.6.4 aims to identify the respondent's choice on whether they prefer to vote for the same political party who is ruling in the State. The above table illustrate that majority of the respondents do not necessarily vote for the ruling party in the local elections. Looking at the above table, it is clear that the number of respondents who do not necessarily vote for the ruling party in the State was much higher in all the study areas, such as 74.65 percent in AMC, 51.98 percent in LADC, 69.33 percent in CADC and 85.32 percent in MADC area. Those respondents who necessarily voted for the ruling party in the State in all the study areas was 25.32 percent in AMC, 14.65 percent in MADC, 29.33 percent in CADC and 47.98 percent in LADC.

**Analysis of Voting behaviour in Aizawl Municipal Corporation and Autonomous District Councils:**

Voters are pro-active and place a higher value on the Autonomous District Council elections since they are the ones who will decide their fate for the next five

years. The salaries of the ADCS employees have a significant impact on the economy of the ADCs. Who will win the most seats and form the government has a significant influence on the voting behavior of voters in ADCs. In a conversation with a politician from LADC who is a member of the MNF party (C. Lalsawmzuala, Treasurer MNF District Hqrs. Lawngtlai), he stated that voters do not think about an election manifesto or a party's policies; instead, they focus on whether a candidate will give them or a member of their family a job. Additionally, he said that the ADC region is a place where using financial power is quite important. Despite the fact that MPF's efforts are publicly visible, politicians and candidates used money power and promising voters to provide them with jobs and other benefits. Consequently, he added, it is crucial to conduct house-to-house campaign during election campaigns because it is one of the few opportunities for a candidate and voter to engage in a close conversation.

According to Rajesh Chakma, the General Secretary of the BJP's Chakma District Core Committee, in an interview, voters in the CADC region are more influenced by familial ties and relationships. A candidate frequently plays the politics of family cards and has a good probability of winning if they have a huge family network. The second is financial power. Regarding the use of money, he claimed that the majority of voters believe that, regardless of how many times they vote for a candidate, neither they nor their community will profit since a politician is always hungry for power and wealth. The election period is therefore a time when voters believe they may exchange votes with money or extort money from candidates. According to Durjya Dhan Chakma (vice president, MNF, Chakma District), the use of money power is common in elections. However, it is not the only element that affects how voters decide to cast their ballots. Candidates' personalities, intelligence levels, and other traits can also influence voters. The electorates are tired of candidates and political parties that run their campaigns on empty slogans like amending the Sixth Schedule for greater power, providing direct funding, etc.

In an interview with N. Chakhai, Working President, Maraland Pradesh Congress Committee, Saiha expressed his opinion that a party leader's leadership style has an immediate impact on a voter's decision to cast a vote. Second, a

candidate's intellectual capacity is also crucial. Thirdly, the voter's decision to cast a vote was affected by the policies and programmes of a political party. In an interview with N. Beikhai, Vice President, BJP Saiha he expressed his opinion that the politics of MADC are more influenced by national politics than state politics. The party will have more support in the future as a result of voters' perceptions that the Mizoram State government has consistently ignored the desires of ADC people and for the advancement and development of ADCs in Mizoram, it is more likely to support the national party than join hands with State or regional parties.

Elections to MADC and CADC are usually held before the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections.

- When the Tenth election to MADC was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012, Congress was the ruling party in the State government. In the tenth term of MADC, Congress also held a majority in the MADC election and formed the government in MADC.
- The Seventh State Assembly election was held on 25<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2013 and Congress became the majority party by winning 34 seats out of 40 seats. Dr. K. Beichhua from MNF was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Saiha Constituency though Congress was the ruling party in MADC.
- In the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018, MNF emerged as the single majority party by winning 26 seats and forming the government in the State, Dr. K. Beichhua from MNF was again elected as MLA from Saiha constituency, though Congress was the ruling party in MADC.
- Likewise, in the Ninth election to CADC held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013 just 7 months before the Seventh election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, Congress won 17 seats and formed the government.
- In the Tenth election to CADC held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018, as there was no single majority party, a coalition government was formed by the two ideologically opposite parties and the biggest rival in the Central- Bharatiya

Janata Party and Indian National Congress. However, the coalition government was short-lived.

- In the same year, the Eight Mizoram State Assembly election was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and Buddha Dhan Chakma was elected as MLA from the Tuichawng constituency.
- Buddha Dhan Chakma who was elected as MLA from Tuichawng constituency in the Seventh State Assembly election was from Congress and was re-elected as MLA from Tuichawng constituency from BJP ticket.
- The elections to the Lai Autonomous District Council are usually held when the State government is halfway to its ongoing term. Therefore, the party that holds power in the State always has more advantage in winning the poll and forming the government in LADC.

Therefore, the voting behaviour in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and the voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Council showed some similarities in party identification, characteristics of the candidate, and party manifestos. It can also be mentioned that the voting behaviour in ADC is also influenced by factors like familial ties and relationship, attachment towards the candidate and party identification of an individual. The influence of money power is quite prominent in ADC elections. However, there are diverse opinions on the use of money power as a factor in voting behaviour. Some political leaders are of the opinion that if money power is an important factor in winning the elections then prominent candidates would not have the chance to win the elections. In this regard, the role and activities of the MPF in ensuring free and fair elections are also questioned so that the MPF cannot monitor unethical election practices that are quite prominent in the ADC elections.

## CHAPTER 4

### A STUDY OF MANIFESTOS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ELECTION

#### **Introduction:**

Up to the end of the Second World War, there was no political party of any kind in the Lushai Hills District. There was political consciousness among the people. But the formation of political parties of any kind was banned. Anyone suspected of taking such steps was arrested by the Superintendent, Lushai Hills District. It was after the Second World War, that the political feeling which had been suppressed for a long time had come into being exposed. This was the result of two important factors; Firstly, during the war, many volunteers from the Lushai Hills went to France on her Majesty's service. These people seeing the outside world, and experiencing the freedom enjoyed by others came back with a feeling of Mizo nationalism. Secondly, the long political enslavement of the Mizo people at the hands of the Superintendent and the chiefs brought a lot of political feelings and consciousness among the people in the district. The common people had to bear many sufferings under the rule of the chiefs which they wanted to change by any means. It was the early educated youth who wanted to organize themselves into a political party because they did not want the transfer of power to the chiefs after India became independent. They could no longer adjust themselves under the dictatorial rule of the chiefs.

#### **Mizo Union:**

The first political party in Mizoram, erstwhile known as Lushai Hills was formed in 1946 known as the Mizo Common People's Union (MCPU) under the initiative of R. Vanlawma which was later renamed as Mizo Union. The first political party was formed as a result of the political enslavement of the Mizo People at the hands of the British Superintendent and the Mizo Chiefs, the spread of education, and the outbreak of the Second World War which brought a lot of political consciousness and awakening in the district and thereby influenced the Mizo youths politically to organize themselves into a political party. As a result, the Mizo Common People's Union was formed with the main objectives of uniting the sub-

tribes (all Mizo) of the territory and of integrating the areas of Assam, Tripura, and Manipur pre-dominantly inhabited by the Mizo into a single political unit. The party aimed at achieving a democratic system of administration for the Mizo within the Union of India and also striving for autonomy to preserve ethnic identity, and safeguard and promote the culture, customs, dialects, and economic patterns of the Mizo. Besides, the Mizo Union had a clear economic programme for fighting the vested interests of the Chiefs. The Party objected to the exploitation of the common Mizo by the autocratic Chiefs and later turned to be anti-Chiefs. The party also promised to bring reforms in the village administration as well as to protect the villagers from the Chief's excesses.<sup>182</sup>

After its formation, the party was able to maintain a stronghold among the Mizos especially among the commoners. It may be due to the anti-chief policy of the party as some of the objectives of the party included achievement of the rightful status for the Mizos; unifying the common people; generate; upliftment of the Mizo people; to become a democratic representative and spokesman for the whole of Mizo people; and to popularize the Mizo language. Its popularity among the people was so strong that the party was able to remain in power throughout during the district council period except for a short interval during 1970-71. In the first Union Territory Legislative Election also, the party had a landslide victory.

A new political consciousness emerged among the Mizo when the Indian Independence and the transfer of power from the British to India drew nearer. The leaders of Mizo Union decided that it was best for the Lushai Hills to remain under Assam Province, having Autonomous District. Few leaders in the Mizo Union could not fully support this idea and thus stand for supreme sovereignty and full independence for Lushai Hills after the British left the Lushai Hills. As such a meeting was held on the 21st February, 1947 at the Bengali Theatre 48 Hall, Aizawl, where Pu Sainghinga Assistant Superintendent, Aizawl took the chair. The meeting was attended by people from different fields like teachers and church elders. In this

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<sup>182</sup> R. N. Prasad. (1987), *Govt. and Politics in Mizoram*. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre. Pp.244-255.

meeting a resolution was passed about the Mizo people's desire for full independence after the British left the Lushai Hills.<sup>183</sup>

### **United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO):**

The conflict of interest that emerged within the Mizo Union party resulted into the existence of Mizo Union-Right Wing (conservatives) and Mizo Union-Left Wing. The Mizo Union was succeeded by the Left Wing led by Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga. A fresh election was conducted where those leaders who did not want Mizo Hill District to be under India had lost leadership position in the party. Later the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) was formed under the leadership of Lalbiakthanga and Lalmawia immediately who received full support from the Chiefs to counter Mizo Union.

The UMFO stands for the idea of joining the Burma government after the British left Lushai Hills. The UMFO leaders argued that as India had a vast population who were much clever than the Mizo, the Mizo were bound to loss if they would have to compete with those people who are cleverer than them. Then the Mizo would soon be eliminated and would not have the chance to protect their own custom and culture. By joining Burma, Mizo people would be together with other hill people, which would give them more chances to survive, even if they would be overpopulated. However, this idea was not well received by the majority of Mizo people. Though the party became much popular in the beginning it could not overshadow the outstanding performance of the MU. The party also did not receive much success in the election. In 1952 District Council election, it won only one seat out of 24. In 1952, the Assam Legislative Election though the party put up three candidates all lost the election again. In Oct. 1956, the Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU) was inaugurated in Mizoram. UMFO was dissolved and mingled itself inside the new party with Lalmawia as President.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mizo\\_Union](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mizo_Union) accessed on 01-06-2022.

<sup>184</sup> K.M. Zakhuma. (2001). *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989: A Study with Special Reference to Political Parties in Mizoram*. Aizawl: Mizoram Publication Board. P. 93.

### **Mizo National Front:**

The Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed at the residence of Laldenga at Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1961. Founding members of the MNF who were present on that night were A. Rohnuna, Kailianchunga, C. Hermana, Lairokunga, Zotama, Vanlalliana and Ladenga. The main objective of the MNF party was the creation of Sovereign Independence of Mizoram where the Zo-ethnic tribes outside the erstwhile Lushai Hills should also be included. Laldenga was unanimously elected as President of the MNF. Many writers have wrongly stated Mizo National Front (MNF) as a transformation toto of the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF), however, it should be clarified that some leaders of MNF were involved some leaders of MNF were involved in MNFF activities including its party President, Laldenga but it was not a transformation from MNFF.<sup>185</sup>

From its very inception, MNF started to propagate the legitimacy of its claim for independence and claimed that the party had the backup of law and the erstwhile organisation United Nations Organization (UNO) but now the United Nations (UN). The ignorant masses were really fascinated by this propaganda and MNF continued to grow in popularity mainly because of the independent policy and charismatic leadership of Laldenga. The main aims and objectives of the party were ‘to re-unite all the Mizo people living in the contiguous areas, liberate Mizoram from India, to uplift the living standard of the Mizo, to safeguard and promote Christianity, to prepare itself for acquire dependable source of support of some foreign countries.’<sup>186</sup>

### **Indian National Congress (INC):**

Among the National Political Parties, only the Congress has been able to establish some hold in Mizoram. The Indian National Congress was formed in Lushai Hills on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1961, by A. Thanglura. In the initial stage, the attempt to popularise the Congress Party among the Mizo was something like “trying to sell human excreta” because it was by nature opposed to Mizo Union and MNF

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<sup>186</sup> C. Hermana. (1999). *Zoram Politics Thli Tleh Dan. Vol. I*. Aizawl: Published by the Author. Pp.65-74.



movements. The party began to gain popularity when the Ex-MNA (or MNF returnees) and pro-MNF began to join the party. Though Congress began its activities, it was looked upon as an 'overground MNF because of its policy of peaceful settlement of the Mizo problem and its attempts to act as a mediator between the Government of India and the underground MNF. It captured majority of seats in the District Council Election of 1970 by a small margin of one over the Mizo Union and formed a shaky government in the last Mizo District Council. It swallowed the Mizo Union in a merger in 1974 and was in opposition during the PC government during 1978-1983. In the 1984 Assembly elections, Congress could bagged 19 out of 30 seats with its pledge to the people that it would finalize the negotiation for peace between the Government of India and the MNF and the party also promised to step down from power in favour of the MNF. This pledge was so appealing to the Mizo people because the people remembered the remark of Mrs. Indira Gandhi that if Mizoram Government was formed by Congress, she could have directed it to step-down any moment the MNF would come overground. The people wanted to try them on this promise. When the Government of India and MNF came to the conclusion of the negotiation, the Congress Ministry could share power with the MNF, the Chief Minister stepping down to Deputy Chief Ministership, and three other ministers being replaced by MNF. In the 1987 State Assembly Election, Congress captured 13 seats out of 40 seats. In this election, all the Congress Ministers who had vacated their seats in favour of the MNF got re-elected and all those who remained in the coalition Government (except Lalthanhawla who remained as Dy. Chief Minister in Laldenga Ministry) lost in the 1987 election.<sup>187</sup>

### **Zoram Nationalist Party**

Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) was formed on 29th July, 2000. In the beginning, the party was known as Mizo National Front (Nationalist) or MNF (N), a faction of MNF. The founder of this party was Lalduhoma, who was also the Founder President of MNF (N). ZNP contested its first election in the State Legislative Assembly election in 2003. Although the party was unable to effectively compete

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<sup>187</sup> Lalchungnunga. (1994). *Politics of Regionalism and National Integration*. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House. Pp.94-96

with the more established political parties in the state like the MNF and Congress, it had established itself as one of major political parties in the state as well as an effective ally for other political parties in elections. The main objective of the party was to establish Zoram Thar<sup>188</sup> (A new Mizoram), which should be based on the foundations of a just and sustainable socio-economic development, and to uphold Christian ethics and principles to ensure good governance.<sup>188</sup>

### **Mizoram People's Conference**

The Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) was formed on 17th April, 1975 by Brigadier T. Sailo. The origin of the party could be traced with the formation of the Human Rights Committee by Brigadier T. Sailo on 1st June, 1974<sup>189</sup>, which he later converted to a political party. The MPC party contested its first election in the second Mizoram Union Territory Legislative Assembly election in 1978. They won the election and formed the Government with Brigadier T. Sailo becoming the Chief Minister. The party also won the third Union Territory Legislative Assembly election in 1979. However, since then, the MPC failed to sustain its stature as one of the strongest political parties in Mizoram and has been largely overshadowed by other political parties like the MNF and Congress. The main aims and objectives of the party were to embrace the Constitution of India, uphold the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of the country and uphold the freedom of Mizoram and the identity of the Mizo people, as well as to give utmost efforts for the development of Mizoram. The party also pledged to work for the re-unification of the Mizo living in different areas of the country through non-violent methods.

### **Zoram People Movement (ZPM):**

Zoram People Movement was constituted on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017, with the coming together of six parties groupings– Zoram National Party (ZNP), Mizoram People Conference (MPC), and Zoram Exodus Movement (ZEM), Zoram Reformation Front (ZRF), Mizoram People's Party (MPP) and Zoram Democratic

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<sup>188</sup> Opt.cit. P. 54.

<sup>189</sup> Opt. cit. Pp 51-52.

Front (ZDF). All these six political groupings came together under one election symbol in the 2018 State Legislative Assembly election.<sup>190</sup>

### **Election Manifesto of Political Parties in the 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election:**

Manifestos can be a useful instrument in electoral politics. Outlining a political party's promises during an election season, manifestos offer a useful entry into understanding such party's intentions *ex-ante*, based on which voters can make their decisions. Manifestos, therefore, can be considered a building block for electoral democracy.

One would imagine that a manifesto can serve as a “monitoring device”: When an incumbent party fails to deliver a certain promise made in its manifesto, it should be easy to hold them accountable. This is not the case, however. Indeed, the question is how seriously election manifestos are taken. At best, this has been answered by studying the performance of governments against the promises they made before coming to power. Studies show that in advanced economies such as Sweden, for example, the rate of fulfilment of manifesto promises is as high as 82 percent over an average of four elections. Similarly, Spain and the Netherlands have shown high rates of fulfilment of promises contained in poll manifestos.<sup>191</sup>

Political parties are not legally obligated to fulfill their manifesto promises. In India, a Public Interest Litigation on this matter in 2015 was dismissed by the Supreme Court, which ruled that current legal frameworks cannot hold a political party that reneges on its manifesto promises, accountable or liable. To be sure, there are broad guidelines that the Election Commission of India rolled out in 2013 in the ‘Manifesto’ section of the Model Code of Conduct, as a result of the Supreme Court’s direction in another case. However, these guidelines focus not on establishing accountability, but on the nature of promises being made. For

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<sup>190</sup> [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/zoram-peoples-movement-all-you-need-to-know-about-mizorams-zpm/](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/zoram-peoples-movement-all-you-need-to-know-about-mizorams-zpm/) accessed on 05-12-2023.

<sup>191</sup> Ovee Karwa, Yugank Goyal, & Sahil Deo. (2020). *Manifestos as a tool of accountability: A content analysis of the 2004-2019 UPA and NDA Poll Manifestos*. Observer Research Foundation. Issue. No. 535. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation. P. 4.

instance, the guidelines instruct political parties to ensure that Constitutional ideals are not violated in their manifestos, and to not make promises that “vitiating the purity of the election process or exert undue influence on the voters in exercising their franchise.” Parties are required to indicate the rationale behind a commitment, as well as the capital needed to meet certain promises in the manifesto.<sup>192</sup>

**Indian National Congress:<sup>193</sup>**

1. The development works which were already started by the State government during the last five years (2008 to 2013) should be continued and some important points which were not implemented in the 2008 election manifesto of the INC would also be fulfilled.
2. The flagship programme of the State government ‘NLUP’ would continue to be the first priority to uplift farmers of Mizoram, to remove the traditional jhumming system, prevent excessive urban migration from rural areas, sustain the burden of debt problems of villagers, to conserve and protect animals and forests.
3. Steps should be taken up to stop illegal trade in border areas of Bangladesh and Myanmar but legal trading should be started and developed in these areas.
4. Special skilled education programme will be introduced to provide necessary skills which are useful for employment within and outside India. Steps should also be taken up to create a chance of interaction between unemployed Mizo youths and employers. Mizoram Youth Commission, Labour and Employment Department, and Mizoram Skill Development Society should be upgraded to implement this programme.
5. Steps should be taken up for proper maintenance of artificial grass football grounds, astroturf hockey grounds and other sports infrastructure constructed by the State Government. Besides, other necessary infrastructures should also be constructed for talented youths in various sports disciplines. The ongoing

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<sup>192</sup> Ragini, Kanungo. (2020). *Election Manifestos in India: Beyond Election Campaigns*. Indraprastha Law Review. Winter 2020: Vol: Issue 2. P.11

<sup>193</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Indian National Congress 2013.

construction of stadiums in some district headquarters of the State should be completed as soon as possible.

6. Steps should be taken up to introduce Chief Minister's Rural Housing Scheme to facilitate the problems faced by the rural people in housing constructions.
7. Efforts should be taken to implement the suggestions made by the Mizoram Education Reforms Commission and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
8. Efforts should be taken to send all children to school at an elementary stage as well as to reduce the drop-out rate from this stage. Computer education would also be undertaken emphatically at every school.
9. Steps should be taken up to upgrade the capacity of State Referral Hospital form 150 bedded and to upgrade it into Medical College.
10. Efforts should be taken up to set up a Medical College for Mizoram.
11. Mental Hospital should be established in the State.
12. Efforts should be taken up to reduce the present infant mortality rate from 30 out of 1000 to 18 out of 1000 and maternal maternity rate should be reduced from the present 68 out of 100000 to 35.
13. To make Mizoram self-sufficient in power, power generation of the State would increase from its present capacity to at least 280 Megawatt. Besides, all unelectrified rural areas of the State should be provided electricity within five years.<sup>194</sup>
14. To take steps for connecting the eastern and western part of the State, new roads would be constructed.
15. All rural and urban areas should be provided pure drinking water within 2017.
16. Efforts should be taken up to complete Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP) in time.
17. Convention Centre, which could manage every big community programme, would be constructed at Aizawl.

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<sup>194</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Indian National Congress 20123.

18. To attract tourists as well as to simplify transportation system of people, Cable Car (Ropeway) would be introduced at Aizawl and other convenient places of the State.
19. Steps should be taken up to repair and reconstruct the old bridges in various places of the State.
20. Efforts should be taken up for the welfare of permanent minority residents of Mizoram.
21. Steps should be taken up for setting up of High Court in the State.
22. Steps should be taken up to explore natural resources (Oil & Gas) of the State to increase financial resources of the State and to utilize it for cooking and generating power.
23. The Family and relatives of those martyrs during the insurgency period of Mizoram (1966 to 1986) would be helped by the State Government to receive compensation (ex-gratia) from the government. Further, steps should be taken up to help these people in whatever way they require.
24. Steps should be taken up for the welfare of disabled persons in accordance with the “Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act)”.
25. Efforts should be taken up to reform the existing District Development Board with regard to funding system and organizational function. Steps should also be taken up to give more powers to village councils to work with District Development Board.
26. Steps should be taken up for the citizens to receive important documents like permits, license etc. and other welfare programmes in time without delay and necessary rules should be formulated as required.
27. Efforts should be taken up for the development of furniture industry in Mizoram and the products made by local materials should be promoted in accordance with the law formulated by the Government of India. Special Economic Zone (SEZ) should be created for the promotion of furniture industry if need arise.
28. Indian National Congress party had already learnt about Lok-Ayukta and it was found that this body should be very effective in preventing and

controlling corruption. Hence, steps should be taken up to set this kind of body in the State as soon as possible.

29. The Women & Child Development Department would be set up to look after and take care of women's and children's affairs.
30. Steps should be taken up for the development of tourism sector to attract more tourists in the State. besides, efforts should be made the development of Eco-tourism, adventure, and motorsports to attract more tourists.<sup>195</sup>

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

#### **Agriculture:**

1. 80 percent population in Mizoram depends upon agriculture while only 20 percent comprises government employees and other tertiary professions who have regular sources of income. Hence, the State government would consider the livelihood of 80 percent population.
2. Steps should be taken up to consider a good marketing system for the export of agricultural products of Mizoram outside the State at remunerative prices. In this regard, Central BJP would be requested to help the State.
3. Farmers should be given good seeds for increasing their production and the State Government should also help them in maintaining their crops.
4. More Kisan Credit Cards should be disbursed to farmers.

#### **Health:**

1. Priority would be given to the health sector and steps should be taken up as under:
2. Government Doctors would visit various villages to conduct health clinics. All Community Health Centre (CHC) and Primary Health Centre (PHC) will be given the required Doctors.
3. BJP government would establish a separate cell for consulting physicians through telephone.
4. Efforts should be made to improve medicinal plants.

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<sup>195</sup> Official Election Manifestos: Indian National Congress, 2013.

**Road Transportation:**

1. Rural connectivity would be done in every village where the population exceeds 250 through PMGSY.
2. State/international Border roads would be well constructed and maintained.
3. Steps should be taken up to implement four-lane National Highways.
4. Aizawl city extension would be implemented to solve the congestedness of the city.
5. Flyover would be constructed in every convenient area at Aizawl to solve traffic problems.
6. The Look East Policy would be pursued as it is proposed to be done.

**Electric & Power Supply:**

1. As many people's livelihoods depend on electricity, the ongoing hydel projects should be completed to produce sufficient electric power.
2. As there are plenty of natural gas in Mizoram, it should be used for producing electricity and attempt should be given to explore natural gas as much as possible. No new hydel project, except ongoing, should be constructed as it could generate earthquakes and cyclones.
3. Electricity should be given to all un-electrified rural areas.

**Education:**

1. As initiated by the BJP and already done in many places, textbooks should be distributed free of cost to students from primary school to high school. Mid-day meals should also be continued at primary and middle schools and all private schools should also be included under SSA.
2. Hindi and English should equally be emphasized.<sup>196</sup>
3. All available steps should be taken up for the proper functioning of SCERT.

**For the development of the State:**

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<sup>196</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Bharatiya Janata Party 2013.



1. BJP Mizoram Pradesh would upgrade and enlarge the provisions of the Sixth Schedule in the State as necessary.
2. Minorities of the State should be given the right to govern themselves as it is necessary.
3. Skill development training would be conducted for Mizo youths in other States, ruled by the BJP.
4. Special development schemes should be implemented in the constituencies where BJP candidates are elected.
5. House should be constructed for those who could not construct by themselves
6. Educated unemployed youths would be helped in searching jobs.
7. Mizoram would be favoured while formulating new plans for the State development from the Central BJP.
8. Efforts should be made to make the existing State's debts of Rupees thousands of Crore to zero balance.
9. Upliftment of Poor people and minorities.
10. Good projects and plans made by past governments should be continued.

**Religious matter:**

1. The BJP constitution and rules in Article=II mentioned that the party believes in democracy, socialism, and secularism. Hence, all religions should have the freedom to pursue their faiths.<sup>197</sup>
1. Old age pension should be availed by more old age persons and it should also be increased.
2. Day Care Centre and Elder Care and Nursing homes for old age persons should be established.
3. Steps should be taken up to continue the ongoing construction of MUP building.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Constitution and Rules: Bharatiya Janata Party. (2004). New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party Publication. P. 1.

<sup>198</sup> Official Election Manifestoes, Bharatiya Janata Party, 2013.

### **Mizoram Democratic Alliance (MNF, MPC, and MDF- Joint Election Manifesto:**

1. Efforts should be paid, on the basis of the “UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people, dt. 13.9.2007” and to put Zo-ethnic tribes under one administrative umbrella. To promote brotherhood among different Zo-ethnic tribes International Mizo Convention would also be organized.
2. Steps should be taken up to include Mizo language into the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India. To put the whole area of Mizoram under the Sixth Schedule provision as before and to enforce Inner Line Regulation better than its present provision and to implement the unfulfilled points under Peace Accord between MNF and Government of India.
3. Decentralization of power should be implemented in reality and Good Governance which includes every citizen would also be implemented.
4. Step should be taken up for successful implementation of Socio-Economic Development Programme (SEDP) and Six Basic Needs.
5. From the experience of developed countries it is evidently clear that quality education is one of the important factors for progress and growth of the nation and even in some States of India. Hence, priority should be given for bringing out quality education so as to produce more quality youths to find jobs even outside the State and the country. Step should also be taken up to provide Laptop for merit students in various examinations of HSLC, HSSLC and University.
6. Healthcare schemes would be reformed better than the present system.
7. To strengthen and improve the present health care system.
8. The Youth Commission will be reformed to be more beneficial for youths. Efforts should be made for welfare of youths and youth services on the basis of the Indian National Youth Policy 2012.
9. To collaborate with the National Skill Development Corporation to enhance training in the following lines automobile engineering, electronics, building construction, food processing, IT and software,

tourism and hospitality, gems and jewellery, transportation/logistics/ warehousing, insurance, banking, entertainment, broadcasting etc.

10. To set up Lok Ayukta/ Vigilance Commission to fight and investigate corruption including the Chief Minister, political leaders and Government employees.
11. To strengthen and complete Chhintuipui Hydel Project (Kolodyne) 635 Megawatts, Tuirial Hydel Project 60 megawatts, Bairabi Hydel Project 120 Megawatts and Tuivawl Hydel Project 210 megawatts to make Mizoram sufficient in power generation.
12. To take steps for the development of solar and wind energy.
13. Steps should be taken to explore Oil and Natural Gas resources of Mizoram and to protect the rights and share of sons of the soil when oil and natural gas are explored.<sup>199</sup>

**Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP):<sup>200</sup>**

1. To provide market security to farmers for their survival
2. To ensure good and stable market security/ system for hard-working farmers and labourers.
3. Minimum price will be fixed for some crops such as fruits and vegetables like ginger, squash, hatkora, sesame, chili, etc. Funds will be allocated from the budget to purchase these selected crops and fruits. Besides, market disposal would be considered for turmeric.
4. To reduce and abolish the present jhumming/shifting cultivation system and priority would be given for permanent farm/garden to replace this traditional practice. Terracing would be encouraged and proposal be made for construction of rain water harvesting and water canal. Instead of chemical fertilizer, organic farming system would be encouraged.
5. Survey would carefully be done to increase crop production and every possible land would be made for wet rice cultivation.

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<sup>199</sup> Common Election Manifesto: MNF, MPC and MDF.

<sup>200</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Zoram Nationalist Party 2013.

6. Steps should be taken up to learn how to produce more ginger, onions etc within a small area of land.
7. Efforts should be taken up to enact special provisions in accordance with Mizo culture and tradition will be protected and a resolution will be passed for this at the State Legislative Assembly. Further, the Central Government would be requested to provide political, administrative and financial autonomy for Mizoram.
8. To negotiate with the Central Government to put back the whole state under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and to establish more Autonomous District Councils to preserve Mizo culture, identity, and tradition. Even the boundary of the Revenue District will be re-inspected.
9. Address the problems faced by Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) and Autonomous District Councils shall be carefully studied and their problems should be solved. For development of some particular backward areas, Regional Development Council may be established as and when required.
10. Step should be taken up to solve the long pending Cachar-Mizoram boundary disputes by setting up a Border Development Wing.
11. Priority should be given for the unity and brotherhood of all Zo-ethnic tribes living in various parts of the world as Mizoram is the only Jerusalem for all Zo-ethnic tribes. To materialize this, steps should be taken on the basis of UN Resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples passed on 13th September 2007.
12. Step should be taken up to modify or reform the existing rules and laws for implementation of good governance in Mizoram.
13. Efforts should be taken up for the establishment of separate High Court for Mizoram. Step should be taken up to avoid the problems which happened due to cases pending in the Courts. Further, State Government would do its best for more entry of qualified Zo-ethnic tribes into the Judges of Supreme Court and High Court.

14. Step should be taken up to solve the problem faced by artists, The Anti-Piracy Act should be reformed. More efforts should also be given for the development and progress of Artists and film producers.
15. Steps should be taken up to help Mizo youths through skill development to enable them to be self-reliant.
16. To provide educational loans and business loans to youths and urban poor people to help them in their studies and to uplift urban poor people and the government will act as their guarantor.
17. The State government gives financial support to civil service aspirants of UPSC for their coaching fees and it would also act as the Loan guarantor if they want to take a loan for this purpose.
18. To provide loans to educated and uneducated people and the State Government will be their guarantor to ensure inclusive development so that they can stand up on their own to take loans from banks, financial institutions and industrial units.
19. The welfare of the youths would still be the main policy and the State Government and would reform and improve the Youth Commission.
20. To empower and develop the youth's career especially in games and sports by setting up more coaching centres and provide better facilities and increase training opportunities for sports persons.
21. Free wi-fi would be provided throughout the State for improvement of youths in internet world. Further, steps should also be taken up to provide Laptops to all students who passed out HSSLC and cannot purchase by their own.
22. Step should be taken up to help youths to find suitable employments inside and outside the State.
23. Priority would be given for development of sports and more coaching and training would also be conducted. The State Government would give more rewards for those who represented the State and India and received awards. Gymnastics would also be included in the school curriculum to improve mental and physical health of the students.

24. Widows, poor people, businessmen, artist and common people would be divided into various categories and the State Government would be their loan guarantor when they take loan for their occupation.
25. Capacity and skill s development should be emphasized for producing quality youths.
26. Step should be taken up to help youths who are addicted to drug and alcohol to give up their addiction and return to normal life. Steps should also be taken up to restrict illegal drug trafficking within Mizoram.<sup>201</sup>
27. Priority should be given for development of education as it is one of the most important means for the development and progress of Mizoram. Step should also be taken up to implement the objectives of education.
28. Policy formulated by previous government for development of education would be continued. Steps should also be taken up to reform education department after careful study.
29. Steps should be taken up to reform financial management and the present file movement system which has to pass through many sections for final decision and financial sanction.
30. The method of formulation of the plan and budget should be changed. Space would be reserved for common people (grassroots level) to express their opinions in budget formulation and financial sanction system would also be simplified.
31. For the effective functioning of various Banks in the State, a new Minister's portfolio namely Banking Affairs would be created. Step should be taken up to build up good cooperation with Banks and disburse more loans to people.
32. Step should be taken up to receive as much funds as possible from the Central Government and outside the country and reliable Consultancy Firm would carefully be selected to do this work.
33. Steps should be taken up to solve the problems related to salaries of government employees under the 7<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission.

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<sup>201</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Zoram Nationalist Party 2013.

34. To root out corruption at all levels, Lok Ayukta would be set up to investigate corruption cases including the Chief Minister, and CBI would also be employed to investigate corruption cases as and when required.

### **Election Manifesto of Political Parties in 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election:**

#### **Mizo National Front:**

For the 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, the M NF party has laid down its policy and manifestos into three main heads such as:<sup>202</sup>

#### **Political and Administrative Policy:**

The party always aims and stands to safeguard and uphold the Mizo culture and identity, protect the Territory, to form transparent and accountable government, to promote the spirit the of brotherhood among different Zo-ethnic tribes for achieving success the unification of the Zo-ethnic tribes. To promote Mizo brotherhood through various seminars and workshops in art, culture and literature will be organized. To achieve ‘Zoram Thar’ (New Mizoram) steps should be taken up for long term economic development, exploration of mineral resources and to protect assimilation of Mizo tribe, the party promise to revive the ‘Memorandum of Settlement’ between the MNF and Government of India.

#### **Political Policy and Programmes:**

1. To promote Unification of all Zo ethnic tribes and to bring all Zo-ethnic tribes from neighbouring states and other places under one administrative umbrella by organizing ‘Cultural Meet’. For this purpose, goodwill ambassadors will be sent to different Zo inhabited places and organized ‘International Mizo Convention’.
2. To promote and protect Mizo culture, religion and language.

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<sup>202</sup> Mizoram National Front SEDP: Policies and Programmes (2017). Mizo National Front General Headquarters : Aizawl. Pp. 4-7

3. To protect the Mizo from assimilation and the party will promote 'Mizo Nationalism' by promoting brotherhood among different Mizo tribes and protect the minorities.
4. To solve the border issues with neighbouring states.
5. To take step for inclusion of certain area of Mizoram under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Step should also be taken up to include Mizo language into Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India. Step should be taken for enforcement of Inner Line regulation better than its present provision.
6. To implement the unfulfilled points under the Peace Accord between the MNF and Govt. of India. The party will also take step to honour and compensate the 'Martars' who sacrifice their life for the independent movement.
7. The Party also stands for equal economic development throughout the State.
8. To promote border trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

**Administrative Policy and Programmes:**

1. to ensure efficient and effective, transparent government through good governance
2. To ensure participatory and equitable government through consensus oriented.
3. To ensure responsive and accountable administration through use of Information and Communication technology.
4. The party also promise to promote free and fair election working together with various Civil Societies.
5. Decentralization and outsourcing of power should be implemented.

**Development of Districts and ADC:**

1. Step should be taken up for development of different districts and Autonomous District Councils within the States. More central fund will be generated for development of ADCs.



2. Where there is no Autonomous District Council, District Development Board will be established at District Headquarters, Municipal board/council will be set up.<sup>203</sup>

### **Administrative reform**

1. Administrative reform Commission will be set up to bring reform in the administration.
2. E-governance will be implemented more with the help of information and communication technology and to remove red tapism in office administration, efficient delivery system will also be introduced.
3. Efficient financial management system will be introduced. Apart from grants received from the Central Government, External aided projects/loans through world bank and Asian Development Bank etc., and Negotiated loans through NABARD, LIC, NCDC will be pursued to bring economic development in the State.
4. Fiscal reform and austerity measures will be initiated through collection of taxes and prevent misuse of government funds austerity measure through 'Tax Deduction at source' will be implemented.
5. Land holding system will be reform through 'Land reform' and reclaim unutilised land and give back to landless farmers.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SEDP)**

For successful implementation of SEDP. Five important programmes are introduced:

1. Green Revolution (Food sufficiency)
2. Industrial development and trade & commerce.
3. Man power and technology development.
4. Social development and social security.
5. Invest in Mizoram

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<sup>203</sup> Opt. cit. pp. 7-8.

**SEDP is further divided into two main heads:**

**Economic development policy and programme:**

1. To bring Green revolution for sufficiency in food supply. This also includes increase production in agriculture and allied sectors, industrial development, infrastructure development and creation of trade and investment environment.
2. To build a healthy and better society, human resource development, youth employment and services and sports are also included in this policy.<sup>204</sup>

**Economic policy and Programme: Sufficiency in food supply**

For successful implementation of Green Revolution, economic activities for all will be introduced. Support will be provided through grants and soft loans/ free interest loans. The government will act as guarantor for those who could not repay their loans.

1. For agriculture and allied sector, convergence scheme will be implemented for farmers and the government will provide and assist the farmers in providing market linkage.
2. For large scale production of rice, mechanization will be implemented for cultivation of land, rice mill and de-husking and polishing machine will be install.
3. Special project for cultivation of selected crops like potato, onion, cabbage, cauliflower and grains such as dal, soyabean, wheat etc will be cultivated.
4. Improvised farming technology will be introduced for jhum cultivators for instance Hillslope terracing, contour trenching etc. Jhumming regulation will also be introduced to increase agricultural products.
5. Horticulture farmers will be assisted by the government by introducing cropping zone.

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<sup>204</sup> Opt. cit. Pp.12-15.

6. Steps should also be taken up for construction of agriculture link roads and irrigation through rain water harvesting to support farmers.
7. Food and fruit processing programme will be introduced.
8. Emphasis will be given on bamboo industry
9. Rubber cultivation will also be given importance.
10. Emphasis will be given on development of sericulture, animal husbandry and veterinary, fishery etc.
11. To provide scope for employment opportunity in social sector and social enterprises.
12. Better utilization of available resources to make Mizoram as industrial estate and industrial growth centre.
13. To uplift the economic condition of urban poor population, Special Development Scheme will be introduced.
14. Insurance scheme such as crop insurance scheme/micro insurance scheme will be initiated.
15. The government will take measures for sufficient supply of basic needs of the people such as water supply, power supply, gas supply, ration supply.
16. Infrastructure development such as transport & communication infrastructure, rope way communication, improvement and maintenance of rural roads, development of urban infrastructure through construction of elevated road, fly over and proper drainage system.
17. Generation of more power through hydel project, natural gas thermal project, solar and wind hybrid project.

**Sports and Youth Services:**

1. Step will be taken up for promotion of sports at higher standards by implementing regulations as per International Olympic charter.
2. Sports and physical training will be imparted at both private and public schools as compulsory subject.
3. Steps will be taken up to promote traditional/indigenous games.
4. Cash incentives will be provided to sportsmen who win medal at International and National levels.

5. Playground, stadium and hall, Hostel and training academy, sports equipment will be provided with proper maintenance and management will be provided for promotion of sports.<sup>205</sup>

**Indian National Congress:<sup>206</sup>**

1. Continuation of the party's flagship programme i.e. New Land Use Policy (NLUP) for farmers as per the need of the people and the cash incentives will also be raised.
2. Continuation of New Economic Development Policy for unemployed youths with special thrust on entrepreneurship development for youths.
3. Introduction of a new housing Scheme- Chief Minister's Rural Housing Scheme for poor people in rural areas and residential quarters for employees of police and education department.
4. The Mizoram State Health Care Scheme will be merged with the Central Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) to provide more benefit to the people where patients with chronic illness could claim more than Rs. 5,00,000/- from both the scheme.
5. Proper Ambulance Network system will be introduced where patient can be transferred without any delay from places where doctors are not available.
6. To upgrade Mizoram Institute of Medical Education & Research (MIMER) as one of the best medical institution in India.
7. Person with disability, orphans, widows, widowers and under privilege families will be given assistance.
8. Free laptop will be distributed to candidates who cleared HSLC and above exam every year. At the initial stage, laptop will be provided to those who passed HSLC and above who are unemployed.<sup>207</sup>
9. Step will be taken up to enhance quality in Science, Mathematics and Technical education. Step will also be taken up so that student can clear their HSLC examination without Science and Mathematics subject.

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid. pp. 35-40.

<sup>206</sup> Official Election Manifesto: Indian National Congress 2018.

<sup>207</sup> <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mizoram-elections/mizoram> accessed on 16-05-2022.

10. Separate budget will be allocated for Excursion and study tour for College and University student.
11. Phased implementation of the recommendations of the Mizoram Education Reform Commission.
12. Set up more rehabilitation centres for drug addicts and alcoholics across the State. For this purpose, Counselling Centre will be set up in different places in collaboration with Church and other voluntary organisation.
13. The party promised to revise the disaster management mechanism within a year after formation of government to face any disaster that may occur. For relief and rehabilitation of disaster that may occur, separate budget will be allocated apart from the aid received from Central government.
14. To encourage more participation from the people in protection of Forest, wildlife and water resources, separate budget will be allocated.
15. Necessary steps will be taken up for overall development and to ease the burden of the people, management of electric line and introduction of energy bill collection system for collective participation of the citizens will be implemented.
16. To promote solar energy more solar plant will be installed in rural parts of the State without neglecting the ongoing Hydel project.
17. Formation of 'Project Assessment & Monitoring Committee' to assist project undertaken by different department.
18. For promotion of tourism in the State, Institute of Hotel Management training will be conducted immediately.
19. The party will promote fine arts and Music. Convention Centre will be set up for organising big concert and conferences.
20. Racing tracks will be build for promotion of Motor Sports.
21. Fresh Survey shall be initiated for Below Poverty Line (BPL) Baseline Survey.
22. Effective curbing of illegal cross-border trade and further enhancement of Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh Border Trade.
23. Development of extensive youth skill development programme.
24. Development and upgradation of sport facilities and infrastructures.

25. Upgradation of State Referral Hospital and ultimately to a Medical college.
26. Establishment of a 50 bedded Mental Hospital.
27. Upgradation of the State Cancer Hospital from 50 to 100 bedded hospital.
28. Ensure energy security through enhancement of the installed capacity to at least 280 MW.
29. Connection of all census villages by truckable roads within the next five years through PMGSY.
30. Timely completion of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP).

**Bharatiya Janata Party:<sup>208</sup>**

1. To include Mizo language in the Eight Schedule to the Constitution of India.
2. Supply of rice at Rs.1 per kg to every homeless family.
3. To make Aizawl traffic congestion free in three years.
4. To make all weather roads pothole free in the next six month after formation of government.
5. To establish two medical college, three engineering colleges and nursing college institute.
6. To create 50,000 job opportunity in the next five year.
7. Construction of trans-boundary highway, linking Myanmar and Bangladesh via Aizawl to promote trade, tourism and industries.
8. To take initiative for expanding the National Highway to a four lane highway.
9. To upgrade and enhance the Autonomous District Councils as per the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
10. To ensure freedom of religion as the Constitution of India ensured secularism.
11. To promote and develop the infrastructure and facilities of games and sports for youths who are interested in various disciplines of sports.

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<sup>208</sup> Official Election manifesto: Bharatiya Janata Party. 2018.

12. To strengthen information technology in accordance with the developing trends.
13. To strengthen industry sector for local products of bamboo and timbers.
14. To utilize natural resources for overall development of the State.
15. To set up various facilities for old age citizens.

**Zoram People's Movement:**

1. To combat corruption with the set up of vigilance commission and revised the Lok Ayukta 2014.
2. Decentralisation of authority will be implemented by giving more authority to the local government.
3. To make minimum and appropriate use of public funds.
4. To set up the Boundary Commission to solve the long pending boundary disputes and
5. To work effortlessly with ZORO for unification of all the ZO-ethnic tribes in the world.
6. To take measures for increasing Mizo population, and for better utilization of resources, the government will provide incentives to mother with more than three child.
7. To inculcate the spirit of Mizo Nationalism and take steps for resurgence of Mizo Culture.
8. To protect the Mizo population from assimilation and effective measures will be taken up in this regard. For this purpose issue of Inner Line Permit will be computerized.
9. Cash incentive will be awarded to couple who have more than 3 children to encourage Mizo population growth.
10. To generate more hydel project and solar energy for power sufficiency.
11. To harvest water resources through solar power and conventional power.
12. To construct better communication and road transports such as roadways, airways, railways and inland waterways.

13. To negotiate with the Central Ministries of Road Transport and Highways to replace the bailey bridges to concrete enforcement bridges within the State.
14. To empower and develop the civil service aspirants by setting up more coaching institutions and provide cash incentives to those who clear preliminary and mains examination so as to encourage them.
15. To promote and create awareness among people to use local made and Mizo Indigenous products.
16. To improve the education system and encourage computerization of education system.
17. To provide loans to small entrepreneurs who produce local made goods.
18. To take necessary measures for tapping of underground resources
19. To help the youths to have a worldwide view, the government will organized an excursion to foreign land for the youths.
20. To inculcate competitive spirit among the youths.
21. To have a separate budget for upliftment of farmers and for purchase of crops
22. To promote contract farming and organic farming.
23. To generate more employment opportunities for youths within and outside the state by establishing various training centres.
24. To monitor small and medium projects 'State Public Works Control and Monitoring Authority will be established.
25. Steps will be taken for mitigation of various social problems such as human rights violation, adoption, child abuse, rape, human trafficking, physical torturing, child labour.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> The Manifestos of the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM). (2018). Zoram People's Movement General Headquarters: Aizawl. P. 8.



## **Election Manifestos of Political Parties in Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), 2015:**

Each party contesting the AMC election has issued manifestos mainly on the grounds of local issues, development of the city and issues relating to youth. Both the alliances, the Congress-MPC alliance and the BJP-ZNP alliance issued joint manifestos in which they included their shared views and issues. It can be mentioned here that in the previous AMC election 2010, the Congress-ZNP alliance did not issue a joint-manifesto. However, in the second AMC election 2015, both the alliances issued joint manifestos. Moreover, party manifestos have attained an important position and every contesting political party came up with well-documented manifestos.

### **Manifesto of MNF Party:<sup>210</sup>**

1. The election manifesto of the MNF started with the key achievements under the leadership of Laldenga and Zoramthanga during their rule in the state.
2. It addressed the need for a better administration, public amenities, youth vision, development works, public health services, social and community services.
3. The most striking feature of the manifesto was the youth vision which included establishing Community Information & Knowledge Centre, provision of free wi-fi in some areas of the city if voted to power.

### **Joint Manifesto of Congress-MPC Alliance:<sup>211</sup>**

1. To take step for better administration of the AMC, to ease traffic congestion rope-way will be installed in some areas of the city.
2. Free wi-fi hotspot in some areas and institutions within the city, provision of a more efficient supply of energy in the city using solar panel.
3. To complete various developmental works like urban poor housing, Lalsavunga park, Common cemetery at South Hlimen etc.

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<sup>210</sup> <https://mnfparty.org/amc-manifesto/> accessed on 15-04-2022.

<sup>211</sup> Joint Election Manifesto: Indian National Congress and MPC 2015.

4. It also claimed to increase the functions performed by the Aizawl Municipal Corporation.

**Manifesto of BJP-ZNP alliance (NDA):<sup>212</sup>**

The eight pages manifesto with 25 points issued by the NDA alliance has offered a lot of developmental works and promised more funding from the Central and make Aizawl City ‘Smart City’ and name it ‘City of Churches’, it includes:

1. Implementation of ‘Housing for All’ Scheme under Aizawl Municipal Corporation. Under this scheme, low interest housing loans will be arranged not only for the economically weaker sections but for retiring Church Ministers, social workers and media persons, among others.
2. ‘Rapid Mass Transit System’ will be introduced under which ropeway between Aizawl and Lengpui Airport would be set up to boost tourism.
3. Modernization of Waste Management System will be introduced.
4. The revival of Smart City Project.
5. For the welfare of youths, initiatives will be taken to provide job opportunities to unemployed youth under the Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA).<sup>213</sup>
6. The construction of the Diversion Bridge in some areas including Bawngkawn, Vaivakawn, Chanmari, Bungkawn, Sikulpuikawn and Khatla, establishing mega amusement park, smart parking lot, smart market, rapid mass transit system, road extension by 5 percent, town extension scheme, pedestrian footpath, privatization of drainage systems etc.
7. It also offered the urban youth a loan of Rs. 50,000 to 10,00,000 under Micro Units Development and refinance agency.

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<sup>212</sup> Joint Election Manifesto: BJP and ZNP Alliance (NDA) 2015.

<sup>213</sup> <https://www.telegraphindia.com/north-east/nda-releases-manifesto/cid/1527355> retrieved on 02/11/2023.

## **Election Manifestos of Political Parties in AMC election, 2021:**

### **Zoram People's Movement (ZPM):**

1. The Municipal Ward Committee will be given more power and functions as per the Mizoram Municipalities (Ward Committee and Local Committee) Rules, 2010 chapter-II.
2. Taxes paid by the people to AMC will be publicised to the Tax-payers.
3. To set up Vegetable Supply Chain Centre.
4. Step will be taken up for proper waste segregation for sanitation and clean Aizawl City.
5. Centre for Innovation and Training will be set up.
6. For peace and security of the people, Social Security System will be set up.<sup>214</sup>

### **Mizo National Front:**

1. Relocation of overcrowded business and market places to other place.
2. To prepare for immediate relief & rehabilitation in times of disaster.
3. To provide employment opportunity to jobless people through SEDP.
4. To complete the housing scheme such as (BSU/RAY) within AMC area.
5. Adoption of scientific method for waste management.
6. For prevention from disaster during rainy season proper sewage/drainage system will be implemented.
7. For better security purpose, CCTV will be installed in various place.
8. Installation of Street light within AMC area in various place.
9. Better recreation centre for the youth will be established.
10. Futsal ground will be constructed in every AMC ward.
11. To assist the various development work initiated by the State Government.
12. Step will be taken up to minimize Gas pollution, water pollution and sound pollution for clean and safe Aizawl city.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> <https://www.eastnews.in/latest-north-east-news/mizoram-news/mizoram-zpm-releases-party-manifesto-for-amc/> accessed on 25-05-2022.

<sup>215</sup> <https://mnfparty/AMC-Manifesto>.accessed on 24-05-2022.

In AMC and MADC election, political party particularly focus on local issues based on local need. Development works related to local needs are mainly focussed. In MADC election, since majority of the party contesting the elections are either national party or state party, the manifestos published by the party headquarter in Aizawl is also used as manifestos in ADC areas. But in ADC, apart from the headquarter published manifestos, political parties in ADC used amendment of Sixth Schedule provision, greater autonomy, generation of employment etc as their additional election Manifestos.

### **Analysis of Election Manifestos:**

Firstly, all major political parties in the State promised, in their election manifestos, to build up good cooperation and relationship with Church and Civil Societies in elections to the State Legislative Assembly if they were voted to power. This point clearly revealed that political parties always play safety card with civil societies to remain in their favour. The significance and powerful position of the Civil Societies and Church in the State is greatly highlighted with the inclusion of civil societies in their election manifestos mostly in areas related to social issues and upliftment.

Secondly, all political parties which published election manifestos for the two Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections (2013 and 2018) promised to provide better road conditions and to connect all villages with motorable road to voters. Mizoram, being situated in a hilly area transport and communication barrier is much seen. Every political party always promise for better road condition and during election campaign road condition has always been of the most important issue raised in every election. This has clearly revealed that the condition of roads in the State is not good and satisfactory and even they are not maintained very well. Many political drama also centred around this issue when one party would use this as a tool to attack and accused another party.

Another important point that has been seen in the election manifesto is about the unification of Zo-ethnic tribes. Zo ethnic tribes are scattered in various parts of North East in India, Myanmar, Bangladesh and the present State of Mizoram is the

place where Mizo people are majority. Hence, the unification of various Zo-ethnic tribes under one administrative unit and to make Mizoram as the main home for them seem to be one of the important issues in the State Legislative Assembly elections. No Doubt, political parties can play very important role by stating the unification movement of various Zo-ethnic tribes, however, it may not be too easy to put various Zo-ethnic tribes residing in various States and countries under one administrative unit.

Fourthly, unemployment problem, especially educated youths, was seen in all the election manifestos and all political parties promised to voters that they should solve this big problem if they came to power. No doubt, unemployment problem has become one of the most challenging issues not only in Mizoram but also in the whole country and various parts of the world. Even in Mizoram, the educated unemployment problem is one of the burning issues. Hence, all political parties promised to solve this problem in their electoral campaigns in various State Legislative Assembly elections. At the same time, there can be two questions because every ruling party promised to solve this problem again and again in various assembly elections.

It has been very interesting to note that political parties in their election manifestos emphatically promised voters to construct more Hydel Projects to produce sufficient power in the State and this has been one of the dominant issues of election manifestos in past elections. This point clearly revealed that the State is not sufficient in electric power. In fact, the State has not produced even half of its requirement of power till today despite the starting of Hydel Projects in the State from the past. It is said that Mizoram has good potential to generate more power not only for domestic consumption but also for selling outside the State. It is quite disappointing that the State has not successfully completed any big Hydel Project except Tuirial Hydel Project up till now.

Another issue that political parties focus on is sports and youth development. All major political parties pledged to the development and improvement of Sports infrastructures as well as to promote sports persons. Thus, it occupied an important

place in election manifestoes. Major political parties also promised in their election manifestoes to take up vigorous steps for Mizo youths to enter into various branches of armed forces. This becomes valid promise for solution of unemployment problem since few years back.

Corruption in India is deep-rooted and is galloping unchecked and unhindered. The top politicians at the Centre and States talk of waging war against corruption, fighting the evil of corruption, no compromise on corruption, and not to spare any corrupt person, howsoever, it is well known that India appears to be sinking deeper and deeper in corruption. Corruption is spreading over the society in several forms. Of these, the major ones are bribery, nepotism, misappropriation of funds, patronage and favouritism. India was viewed as the Seventh most corrupt country in the world according to a survey conducted by non-governmental German organization called 'Transparency International' in 1996. Even in the case of Mizoram electoral politics, removal of corruption is still one of the common promises made by political parties in their election manifestoes in Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections till today. Major political parties emphatically promised to set up anti-corruption bodies like Vigilance Commission etc, to remove corruption in the State. This highlights that corruption is one of the burning issues in the public in Mizoram and which is believed to be rampant particularly among government officials. So, political parties commonly focused this area to woo voters.

Formulation of new tourism policy and development of tourism sector had also been one of the common promises made by major political parties in their election manifestoes. In fact, Mizoram has good potential for development of tourism to attract more tourists from outside the State and this sector may be one of the best sectors for generating financial sources for the State. However, there is no exaggeration to state that every ruling party did not pay enough attention for the progress and development of this sector during its rule despite promising to develop and promote this sector in their election manifestoes.

One common promise made by candidates during Assembly elections was to spend more time in their constituencies if they were elected. In many places of the

country, it was seen that some representative leaders like MLAs and MPs did not pay much attention for development of their constituencies after the election was over. In some cases, through media, it was heard that some legislators did not regularly visit their constituencies from where they were elected after election was over. In fact, some elected leaders were active only during electoral campaigns with a bundle of promises. In its election manifesto for 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, the ZNP promised construction of MLA quarters in every Assembly Constituency of Mizoram if the party was voted to power. In this issue, ZNP was the only political party that promised voters to construct MLA quarters while all other political parties were silent about this in their election manifestos. It seems that if there are MLA quarters in every Assembly Constituency the elected representatives of various Legislative Assembly Constituencies may spend more time at their constituencies and this should have a positive impact for development and progress of various Assembly segments. If this has been implemented in reality by any government, it should be one positive step for the State.

In Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, empowerment of grassroots level democratic institution like Village Councils has been one of the common issues in election manifestos. The promise to empower and upgrade the existing Village Councils with more powers and function has always been included in the manifestos of major political parties. This idea is very important because the success of democracy largely depends on the successful functioning of grassroots democratic institutions. No doubt, the pace of development in some States of India is faster than other States as grassroots level democratic institutions have been given more powers and funds for their effective functions. In the context of Mizoram, the powers and functions of Village Councils and Local Councils have been very effective and meager to involve in real development within their respective villages or localities. In reality, whatever government in Mizoram, they were not serious and interested for the empowerment of Village Councils despite a promise, made in every election. In fact, almost all important responsibilities and duties are carried out by the concerned departments and officials. Hence, decentralization of power is a must for the last progress and development of Mizoram.

The area of importance given by political parties through the election manifestos in recent years also includes the improvement and upgradation of the status of Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram. To win the sentiment of various Zo-Ethnic tribes in Mizoram and the people who reside in Autonomous District Council areas this issue has always been used by political parties as their election manifestos.

Majority population in Mizoram depends on Agriculture and its allied sectors. Hence, agriculture sector is one of the common areas focussed by political parties in their election manifestoes and this sector was specifically addressed in their election manifestos. In fact, there is no successful attempt to make a big change in agricultural system in the State as expected by people since the period of Union Territory to post Statehood era though several policies like Garden Colony, Jhum Control, MIP, NLUP and SEDP have been implemented under various State Governments. This sector will surely continue to be important issue in future elections because it is directly related with the livelihood of the people of Mizoram.

The exploration of natural resources of the State has now become very important issue in election manifestoes. Most of the political parties promised to speed up this process and to protect the rights of the people of Mizoram when its natural resources are explored. One important thing about this issue is the State Government and all political parties must be united to take the right steps for its exploration before it is too late. Another important issue the majority of the political party used as their election manifestoes is the border issue the State faced with its neighbouring States particularly the Assam-Mizoram border as an important point in an election manifesto. All major political parties used to promise to solve the border problem by setting up of Border Commission as their election manifesto, but the issue is not solved till the present time. Further, it seems that inter-state border problems could not be easily solved because each side takes a different stand. Hence, this promise is good but it seems to be election oriented than realistic policy.

Most of the political parties in their election manifestos also promised free cash incentives to the people. Congress promised distribution of Rs. 1 lakh under the



Party's flagship programme NLUP, MNF promised Rs.3 Lakh under SEDP, and ZNP in its 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election promised distribution of Rs.1 lakh to those who have received NLUP as a continuation if the Party come to power. The promise for distribution of cash incentives to the voters has become a regular trend in Mizoram since the past few years. Political parties have been using this as a tool mostly to woo poor voters. For voters who are economically poor, receiving freeship or cash from the government for start up of occupation is in fact quite attractive, which the political parties and leaders are well aware has become a common practice now.

In its election manifesto for 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election, ZNP promised that if the party was voted to power, the State government would be a guarantor in educational loans and business loans for youths and poor people. This might be a good way to help people because banks may not hesitate to provide loans if the State government is a guarantor. As such, educational loans may be given to many students to pursue their education within and outside the country. Over and above that, business loan was also promised to unemployed youths who could not start their livelihood by themselves. On the other hand, this might have a negative effect because if one cannot repay his loan under this scheme, the State Government has to repay it. Although this policy seems to be citizen oriented, it may be risky for the State Government because all pros and cons should be carefully analysed and examined before its implementation.

The other areas commonly addressed by various political parties in their election manifestoes are creation of the world of youths, providing quality education and solution of traffic jam problem at Aizawl city. All major political parties emphatically promised in their manifestoes to implement several welfare programmes for promoting youths. Quality education is still a burning issue in Mizoram and it takes a lion's share in election manifestoes of various political parties in several Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections. Political Parties used to promise to reform educational system, but, the question which can be raised is that will they implement their manifestoes in reality while ruling the State. To solve traffic jam problems at Aizawl City, all major political parties pledged to construct flyover,

over-bridges and parking lots. In a hilly congested area, this method seems to be one of the good options to solve this problem but real work is slow.

One interesting point which was seen from the election manifesto is to fix the minimum price for farmer's products. In its 2013 election manifesto, ZNP promised to fix minimum price for various crops produced by farmers in Mizoram and a separate fund will be allocated from the budget to purchase these crops. The same issue was used by ZPM as its 2018 election manifesto to allocate separate budget for purchase of crops produced by farmers. The ZPM party also promised to promote organic farming. As already stated, the majority of the population in Mizoram depends on agriculture, to woo the farmer voters' the interest of farmers has always occupied an important place in political parties' manifestos. Hence, the first important step for their development is certainly to provide market security from the government side that should make farmers to work with confidence.

In the Eight State Legislative Assembly election, 2018, the MNF party in its election manifesto talked about setting up Lok Ayukta to fight against corruption, to make Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) more powerful, to ensure decentralization of government and grading status of areas that do not fall under district council as district development council, to exercise e-governance in a resourceful way, to shift Assam Rifles from their present post and to revise the Mizoram Land Revenue Act 2013 and to control and monitor Mizoram Urban Areas Rent Control Act.<sup>216</sup>

The main theme of the MNFs economic policy was in the form of Socio-economic Development Policy (SEDP) in which cash distribution of Rupees 3 Lakhs will be given to those economically lower section families to boost their economy in the field of agriculture, sericulture, animal husbandry, handloom and handicraft, carpentry and petty trading. The MNF hardly changes its economic policy which could be seen from the past election manifestoes of the party. The MNF party also stressed on 'Man Power Development' and the achievement of this through the development of sports infrastructures, promoting entrepreneurship among the youth,

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<sup>216</sup> Opt. cit., p. 66

incentive awards to promote central and all India services, and building hostels in every district capital for the students. The MNF party pledged to revise the school education calendar according to the convenience and needs of the Mizo society as a whole. Strengthening the existing education institutions by solving the problems of lack of teachers in rural areas, promotion of medical, paramedical, engineering, technology and management courses.<sup>217</sup>

The MNF party also stressed on setting up of rehabilitation centres as utmost importance and put the blame on the selling of liquor under the MLPC Act, 2014 and alleged this as the reason for an increase in substance abuse among the youths. Development of the existing government hospitals and health centres, recruitment of more doctors and nurses to end a shortage of medical staff, and continuation of Mizoram Health Care are some of the important policies laid down by the party. The MNF party also gave utmost importance to road development, highways such as East-West corridor, North-South National highways would be developed and widened. Agriculture link roads would be built for easy accessibility for rural farmers. Modernization and infrastructure development of Lengpui Airport would be given importance and construction of new airport in Lunglei for Southern Mizoram. Efforts would be made by the party in order to achieve self sufficiency in hydro/solar/renewable energy. Big storage for LPG bottling plant, FCI godowns to provide the demands of the state as a whole will be built by the party. Not only that, the party pledged to work in availing natural gas and oil resources which is available within the state.<sup>218</sup>

The Congress party in its election manifesto highlighted development of relief and rehabilitation department, monitoring of control of de-forestation and growth in tourism by establishing Hotel Management Institute. The Party also stressed its New Land Use Policy (NLUP) alone as its economic policy, saying there will be continuation of distribution of NLUP and guidelines of the policy would be revised. The Congress party also promised to build rehabilitation centres and counselling centres to curb down substances abuse that has a high impact among the

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<sup>217</sup> Opt. cit., p. 67

<sup>218</sup> Opt. cit., p. 68

Mizo youths. Besides the ongoing sports schemes and promotion done by the Congress Ministry, the party promised to promote motorsports by making race tracks. The promotion of music and fine arts is also mentioned in their manifesto. Education policies such as distribution of free laptops to all the students passing classes 10 and 12, promotion of science, mathematics, and technical courses, and separate budget for study tours for college and university students are the important points. The Congress party pledged the continuation of free housing schemes for poor in rural and urban areas, modernization of maintenance of power, and bill payments. Priority will be given to solar energy at the same time not neglecting hydro-electric power. Proper assessment and evaluations of projects that are given out the different departments of the government and upgrading the functioning of the State Planning Board for efficiency should be the first priority of the party.<sup>219</sup>

An analysis of election manifestos of political parties in Mizoram also shows that the manifestos published before an election are mainly targeted at each and every section of the society to woo and gain the good side of the voters. In terms of social welfare, each political parties in their election manifestos promise to provide aid and assistance to old age, widows, widowers, orphans, physically disabled persons, etc. Political parties through their manifestos also stand up for setting up addiction centre for drug addicts and alcoholics. In this particular area, political parties also promised to cooperate and work together with various civil societies in the State.

Another issue raised by political parties in their election manifestos is environmental issues. Protection and promotion of the environment has been one of the most important emerging issues both locally and globally. A great concern arises in recent years in this regard and political parties also started their vision and focus toward environment.

Election manifestos have been one important part in electioneering process and activities for political parties to inform their promises and visions to votes when they rule the States and it is also useful for people to learn the policies and visions of

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<sup>219</sup> Opt. cit., pp.66-70

various political parties. At the same time, many people opined that election manifestoes were just the promises of political parties that were hardly fulfilled when in power. Election manifestos are also seen as just the formal part to be done by political parties during elections and they are not serious about the implementation of their manifestoes after they capture power. Hence, in today's electoral politics in India, election manifestos seem to have less influence and it is seen by many as only a formal part in electoral politics.

The campaign methods in Mizoram were mostly public meetings, rallies, distribution of election manifestoes, talk-show and house-to-house campaigns. Since the last few years, particularly from 2008 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, cell phones and social networking sites have become popular and now social networking sites like Facebook, Whatsapp etc., become very important tools for electoral campaigns. With regard to the house-to-house campaign, the Church-sponsored election watch-dog, namely, Mizoram People Forum (MPF) which was established on June 21, 2006, did not favour house to house campaign as it might create a chance of corruption, so, the forum requested political parties not to do this traditional practice during elections. Hence, one of the popular campaigning methods i.e. house-to-house campaigns had not been practised publicly by candidates, campaigners and political parties in 2008 and 2013 State Legislative Assembly polls. But the house-to-house campaign was allowed in the 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election by the MPF since it was one of the direct interactions between the voters and candidates who could interact, address personal problems, desires, and expectations from the candidates.

After the MPF interfered in electoral politics, it signed a memorandum of understanding with major political parties and some old practices like organizing community feasts and singer enriched road shows and rallies, house to house campaign, etc., had not been entertained especially since 2008 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. This had been encouraged by the MPF for ensuring free and fair elections under smooth and peaceful atmosphere of Mizoram. The MPF used to organize talk show, joint public meeting for candidates and political parties and political parties and candidates were not allowed to organize separate public

rallies and meetings etc., as these things could spoil smooth atmosphere of elections. With regard to election manifestoes, the MPF also strongly appealed various political parties not to promise unrealistic things in their election manifestos.

As already stated, some candidates and political parties in different places of the country did not hesitate to adopt dirty tactics to win elections. Sometimes it was seen in newspapers and media that some candidates were allegedly linked with criminals and armed insurgent groups to win an election. Hence, booth capturing, kidnapping, torture, killing, and disbursing money and goods to voters now become one of the features of electoral politics. However, in the case of Mizoram, it is still one of the most peaceful States in the country. Due to that, the election atmosphere is also smooth and cool in Mizoram compared to other States despite some imperfections.

After the MPF signed a joint agreement with political parties, elections in Mizoram witnessed a new atmosphere where voters missed frenzied election campaigns. Before the appearance of MPF in the electoral scene, the State witnessed an expensive election campaign by organizing singers enriched road shows, house-to-house campaigns, separate public rallies, and throwing feasts. With the banning of all these activities by a powerful election watch dog i.e. Mizoram People Forum (MPF) for implementation of free and fair elections, Mizoram politicians had found an ideal tool in mobile phones to do the unfair activities. But still, politicians have become more careful in acting openly by performing these activities fearing an outlash from MPF. It has been feasible to state that the success of the MPF's motto of low profile and inexpensive elections was because of the huge support of the masses who seemingly have had enough of the old-style electoral campaign methods. The involvement of the Churches as members of MPF is also one of the major factors why people willingly support its actions and activities and the respect for the Churches also force the political leaders to act accordingly. However, candidates were looking at a new way to reach out to voters through used of mobile phones and other means.

In the earlier electoral politics of Mizoram issues like abolition of chieftainship, independence, peace accord etc., dominated the politics of Mizoram which have now become issues of the past. Development has become the main issue of all other issues in Mizoram electoral politics in the last few decades. Apart from development issues, unification of the Zo-ethnic tribes and putting them under one common platform or administrative unit is still one of the common interest zones among political parties during elections. Hence, this issue has been raised in every election by major political parties through their election manifestoes and campaign speeches even by national parties like Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party. Issues like development, corruption, the agricultural sector, education, and unemployment have been taken as the main areas of concern by various political parties in recent years.

In the post-statehood period, two political parties namely, the MNF and the Indian National Congress (INC) formed the government interchangeably in the State alone or in coalition with other parties. In every Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, these two parties played a major role and captured majority votes. In fact, the influence of these two parties was much bigger than other political parties in various elections of Mizoram. The main reason behind this is that there is no political party in the State that could compete with these two parties in various poll till the Seventh State Legislative Assembly election. However, with the emergence of the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) as the second largest party in the State Legislative Assembly, in the eighth term of the State Legislative Assembly, a question often arises whether there will be a change in dominant party of the bipolar electoral system or will it transform into end of two dominant parties in Mizoram electoral system.

## CHAPTER 5

### ROLE OF MIZORAM PEOPLE FORUM IN ELECTIONS

Civil society is becoming more significant not only at the local, national, and even international levels. The term has been used to describe the challenges of transitioning from a statist regime to a democratic one. It is a life of associations through which the citizens are given the ethic of "self-interest," properly understood, in which an, rightly understood' in which an 'enlightened regard for themselves constantly prompts them to assist one another and inclines them willingly to sacrifice a portion of their time and prosperity to the welfare of the state'.<sup>220</sup>

The goals of civil society are to uphold and safeguard the needs of people in general. In the event of an authoritarian use of power, it challenges the state's coerciveness by speaking for the interests of the people. In many regions of the world, civil society organizations have expanded and grown significantly. It plays a crucial role in a liberal democratic state and is vital for democratic governance. Civil society works to preserve and uphold the interests of the people. The excessive centralization of governmental authority can only be moderated and restrained by a thriving and politically aware civil society. All types of organizations or associations, such as interest groups, voluntary organizations, religious organizations, political parties, professional associations, social movements, and grassroots movements are included in civil society. People who possess a shared interest come together to form these organizations known as civil society groups. Due to the fact that people are by nature selfish creatures, civil society has the most important position in society. Civil society was created to uphold peace and order among citizens and deal with social disputes. Through the numerous activities and roles of civil society, the interests and welfare of people are promoted.

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<sup>220</sup> J.C. Zomuanthanga, *The Civil Society in Mizoram: A Study of the Church & YMA* in Patnaik. K. Jagadish (2014). *State & Civil Society*. Guwahati: EBH Publishers. p. 179.



Following the 'mautam' famine that hit Mizoram in 1958, it has had a huge insurgency and a movement toward secession from the Indian Union. The peace agreement was finally reached on June 30, 1986, following a lengthy insurgency and uprising against the Indian government that had started in 1966. Mizoram subsequently became a full-fledged federal state of India in 1987. Civil society groups like the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizoram Zirlai Pawl (MZP), and the Church played a crucial role in sustaining Mizoram's peace process during the insurgency. It was in fact, the church leaders who initiated the Peace negotiations between the Government of India and MNF which eventually pave the way to the signing of the "Mizo Peace Accord", also known as the Memorandum of Settlement, in 1986. The courageous attempts of Church leaders to restore peace, stability, and harmony to the state during the insurgency were remarkable.

Mizoram had strong civil society organizations and its existence is crucial to the evolution of Mizo society. Its vibrant role relating to development is also remarkable. Mizoram civil societies have largely impacted the state government deliverance of socio-economic and political administration. They provide a platform of interaction between the citizens and the state in Mizoram. It played a vital role and contributed to the development and welfare of the people. Even after the acquirement of statehood, civil society continues to play a significant role in sustaining peace, integrating the people and works for securing the welfare of the society. Besides, the introduction of the formal electoral process in Mizoram and the subsequent General Elections that followed since the 1952 District Council elections marked the significant role of civil society. The civil society organizations in Mizoram act as crucial organizations in restricting political and electoral malpractices.

Despite being rather distant, three aspects of the churches' involvement in state politics stand out. One is an evangelical effort by several denominations to find a peaceful way to end the political unrest in the State. For instance, the Presbyterian Church began mediating between political groups in 1954 in order to bring about peace. The same function or activity was performed during the insurgency between the Indian Government and the public at large as well as between the MNF and the Indian Government. The Christian Peace Mission Committee established by the

Presbyterian Church in Aizawl can be mentioned in this context. The Mizoram Churches Leaders Committee was established by the various denominational faiths in July 1982. The Committee assisted in fostering an environment in which no party could prevail without a commitment to restart peace discussions by holding several meetings with government representatives and representatives from other political parties in the states.<sup>221</sup>

The Church also has a significant impact in Mizoram's social, economic, and political life because the vast majority of the population belongs to one or the other church organizations. The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Bill, which superseded the 17-year-old Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, was enacted by the State Assembly on July 10, 2014, during the Congress Ministry led by Chief Minister Shri. Lalthanhawla. This new rule included a stringent prohibition on the opening of wine shops. Chief Minister Lalthanhawla stated that the bill was not intended to incite conflict between the government and the Church, but rather to protect numerous youths from the consumption of spurious alcohol sold in large quantities in the state as a result of the imposition of total prohibition in the state. The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, the largest church in the state, opposed the legislative amendment because it would simply ease prohibition. The former Chief Minister's speech indicates that no political party or government is ready to oppose the church.

Another incident that needs to be highlighted is when the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, Synod expressed its desire to reschedule the polling date for the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election fixed by the Election Commission of India (ECI), which is another incident that needs to be highlighted in terms of the influence and role of the church. This occurred immediately after the ECI announced that Mizoram and Delhi would go to the polls in a single phase on December 4, 2013, with results being announced on December 8, 2013. In this regard, officials from the United Pentecostal Church (UPC), Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitu Committee, Mizoram People's Forum, and Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) met with the Election Commission to discuss the modification of the polling dates. The

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid. p. 182

voting date set by the ECI was on a day when the Presbyterian Church was to hold its highest decision-making conference from December 3-8. The United Pentecostal Church-Mizoram was also scheduled to hold its annual general conference during the same period, which would prevent thousands of voters, including priests, from casting their ballots. With regards to vote counting, the church elders also expressed their desire to change it because the date for vote counting, which fell on Sunday, the holy day for the majority of Christians, and it would cause inconvenience and hurt people's feelings in the Christian-dominated State. The church elders also expressed their desire to change that date. State.<sup>222</sup>

In this regard, the State's political parties and civil society organizations supported the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Synod. The Synod stated that it would not alter its program if the ECI did not reschedule the Mizoram elections, according to the Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. Lalzuithanga. On October 17, 2013, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ashawani Kumar called a meeting to discuss the topic with representatives of the Church and civil society. The representatives of political parties walked out angrily from the meeting and said that the CEO had acted immaturely and irresponsibly in the meeting while discussing altering the date of polls and vote counting. After this incident, major political parties in the State sent a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner and demanded the removal of Mizoram CEO Ashwani Kumar. The main disagreement between the CEO and leaders of Political Parties, Civil Societies and the Church was that the CEO advised the Election Commission of India to re-schedule the date of polling and voting to count on November 27 and December 9 while the Church, Political Parties and Civil Societies appealed to the ECI that November 25, 2013, should be polling date when Madhya Pradesh would go to poll on the same day.<sup>223</sup> At last, after a strong appeal made by the Church, Civil Societies, and Political Parties, the Election Commission of India (ECI) changed the polling date and vote counting for the Seventh Mizoram Legislative Assembly Election. On October 23, 2013, the ECI re-scheduled the date of polling to

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<sup>222</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/parties-seek-ouster-of-mizoram-chief-electoral-officer/articleshow/24335060.cms?from=mdr>. Accessed on 20-06-2023.

<sup>223</sup> <https://lenkaw1.khampat.com/2013/10/mizoram-assembly-inthlan-leh-vote.html>. accessed on 20-06-2023.

November 25 from December 4 and the date of vote counting to 9 December from 8 December .

Another important role of the Church needed to be highlighted was the publication of an election message to the people of Mizoram for the 2013 State Legislative Assembly election by the All Church Joint Committee of Mizoram namely, Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC). The MKHC requested candidates, political parties, and voters to help implement free and fair elections in Mizoram. In its election message, the MKHC appealed to political parties to consider the personality and reputation of a person while selecting candidates. Even the MKHC said that it wanted all voters to exercise their franchise under a free and fair atmosphere which meant free from the interference of armed insurgent groups, money, and muscle power. Further, it also requested all voters to elect only good candidates for the welfare of the State. The MKHC's election message to the people of Mizoram was unanimously made by 14 church denominational groups of Mizoram.

Since the initiative was taken up by the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, the largest church denomination in the State, the creation of the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) is another significant contribution made by the church organization. On June 21, 2006, the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was established in order to facilitate the holding of free and fair elections and to bring about reforms in electoral politics. Leaders of different churches and civil societies unanimously formed MPF intending to monitor and supervise strictly and fairly the implementation of free and fair elections in the State at all levels. It also has an objective to advise and assist the state government for enforcement of good governance in Mizoram. The MPF for its smooth implementation of its aims and objectives has established District, Local, and Constituency Forum in various parts of the State with good cooperation and coordination with different political parties, media, government officials, and citizens for conducting free and fair elections.<sup>224</sup>

Since the 1970s, Mizoram has been slowly witnessing unhealthy electoral patterns, such as the use of money and muscle power in elections. As a result, the church made the decision to interfere in electoral politics in an effort to influence

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<sup>224</sup> Opt. cit., pp.262-263

state elections in a way to bring positive changes. Since the first Mizoram Union Territory elections in 1972, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod has released statements in the form of requests and appeals to the public on the eve of every election to ensure free and fair elections in Mizoram. Additionally, the Synod Social Front, a wing of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, conducted political education campaigns and seminars in various places within Mizoram.

Till 2003, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and other churches in Mizoram restricted their participation in the election process to prayers, pleas, and appeals. However, their views and opinions of their participation and involvement in the democratic process were altered by the State Legislative Assembly elections of 2003. The State Legislative Assembly election in 2003 was clouded by a number of unfavourable incidents, including threats, the use of money to influence voters, threats, false kidnappings, and allegations of the involvement of some underground organizations. Therefore, through its resolution No. Synod 2004 General 11, the Mizoram Synod agreed to examine the issues in further detail and develop a more comprehensive plan for political reform. The matter was one more forwarded to the Synod Executive Committee (SEC), who in turn entrusted the matter to the Synod Social Front.<sup>225</sup>

Since the first Mizoram Legislative Assembly election in 1972, the largest church denomination in Mizoram i.e. Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Synod used to make a serious appeal to the public in every election in Mizoram for conduct of free and free election. As people of Mizoram paid great importance to the election message issued by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church in earlier times. In its election message, Church requested political parties to put up honest and upright people with high standing in the society as their candidates. Even political parties had been requested to organize peaceful electoral campaigns and refrain use of money power towards voters, unrealistic promises, and other illegal means. Simultaneously, the Church also strongly requested the voters to refrain themselves from influence of money and to exercise their franchise freely and without fear. Moreover, the

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<sup>225</sup> Zarcosanga. (2013). *Elections in Mizoram: A Study of the Role of the Mizoram People Forum*. Unpublished Thesis. P. 85.

Mizoram Presbyterian Church used to organize seminars and political education campaigns through one of its wings, the Synod Social Front at various places in Mizoram.

The Synod Social Front is a committee set up by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod, to strengthen and widen Ministry of the Church, especially on the issue of social reform. Right from the time of its inception, the political education programme has been followed up keenly and effectively for the purpose for which Synod Social Front was set up. However, it was realized that all these activities of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church were not effective enough to the public since the 2003 State Legislative Assembly election. The 2003 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election witnessed unusual activities where the indirect involvement of certain armed groups was said to be detected for the first time by the media and there was also rampant use of money which automatically led to huge election expenditure. Even the people of Mizoram were largely surprised by the Suangpuilawn fake kidnap incident in which some candidates of Suangpuilawn Constituency were kidnapped before the polls in the 2003 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. In view of the emergence of various untoward incidents which erupted in the 2003 State Legislative Assembly election of Mizoram, the Synod Social Front prepared questionnaires to study the views and attitudes of the public regarding the said election. This study revealed that the atmosphere of election politics in Mizoram was not fair enough like before and it deteriorated since 2003 Mizoram Legislative Assembly election. Synod Social Front also carried out a serious study on other election related matters and tried to introduce reform in electoral politics so as to bring solution to the rising problems.<sup>226</sup>

In 2004, the Synod General Assembly adopted the agenda of Aizawl West Presbytery and the proposal made by Synod Executive Committee (SEC) such as “the Mizoram Synod should give more efforts to reform political atmosphere in Mizoram” and a “way should be procured to cooperate with various civil societies and churches to reform politics in Mizoram”. Synod Executive Committee (SEC) had selected five persons, namely, Rev. Dr. Lalbiakmawia as convener, Rev.

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<sup>226</sup> Opt. cit., P.71.

Chanchinmawia, Rev. Thangdela, Upa K. Malsawma and Upa Chhawnvunga to conduct a detailed study upon the subject and to submit a proposal in this matter. After the above leaders carefully studied the questionnaire prepared by the Synod Social Front and consulted leaders of different churches, civil societies, political parties, Former Legislators Association of Mizoram (FLAM), and prominent citizens of Mizoram, they submitted the report to the Synod Executive Committee (SEC). As the SEC agreed on cooperation with different civil societies and churches to reform the political system in Mizoram, the responsibility was given to Synod Social Front. The Synod Social Front organized consultations and discussions with other voluntary associations, civil societies and churches, and all agreed that it was necessary to form non-political social reform body for initiating campaigns and awareness for conduct of free and fair elections in Mizoram. Subsequently, the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) happened to be the commonly acceptable name of the newly formed civil society. After completing the formulation of MPF constitution and working guidelines, representatives of various churches and civil societies took permission from the high-level committees of their respective organizations to take an active part in the MPF. Finally, at their fifth meeting, leaders of different civil societies and churches unanimously formed Mizoram People Forum popularly known as MPF on June 21, 2006.<sup>227</sup> Even though MPF was established under the initiative of the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI), Mizoram Synod, there were also other churches and civil societies as affiliate members of the forum, the MPF has eleven Constituent members and six Associate members. The Constituent members were also the founding members of MPF.

The Constituent members of the MPF are as follows:<sup>228</sup>

- i) Mizoram Presbyterian Church.
- ii) Catholic Church, Mizoram.
- iii) Wesleyan Methodist Church.
- iv) Evangelical Church of Maraland, Siaha.
- v) Evangelical Free Church of India.

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<sup>227</sup> Mizoram People Forum Chanchin (2006-2016). (2022). Aizawl: Mizoram People Forum Headquarters. Pp. 1-3

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.p.13

- vi) Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran (Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church).
- vii) Young Mizo Association
- viii) Mizoram Upa Pawl ( Mizoram Elder's Association)
- ix) Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl- MHIP (Mizo Women's Organization)
- x) Mara Thyutlia Py- MTP (Mara Youth Association), Headquarter, Siaha
- xi) Young Lai Association (YLA) Headquarters, Lawngtlai.

The following organizations are Associate members of MPF:<sup>229</sup>

- i) Mizoram Young Chakma Association, Chawngte 'C'.
- ii) Mizoram Chakma Student Union.
- iii) Mizoram Chakma Mahila Samiti
- iv) Mizoram Buddhist Association.
- v) B. R. K Headquarters, Chawngte (Buddhist Association).
- vi) Mara Chano Py-MCHP (Mara Women's Association), Siaha.

The majority of the Mizoram Church denomination joined MPF. Sadly, the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM), which has the second-largest congregation and is one of the most powerful and prominent religious organizations in southern Mizoram, has decided not to join the MPF. The absence of BCM in MPF undoubtedly leaves a significant gap in the organization's ability to operate effectively, particularly in the State's southern region. Several religious groups, including the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the United Pentecostal Church-Mizoram also refused to join MPF is United Pentecostal Church-North East India.<sup>230</sup>

The MPF also stresses reforming society in general and the electoral system in particular through Christian ethics and biblical teaching on the basis of Psalms 37:3 "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land". As majority of

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<sup>229</sup> Opt. cit. p. 77.

<sup>230</sup> Mizoram People Forum Annual General Meeting vawi 1-na report. (2007). Aizawl: Mizoram People Forum. Pp.5-9.



the population in Mizoram belong to Christian religion, the MPF urges people of the State to reform themselves morally and ethically through biblical teaching and to implement Christian morality for cleansing politics as well as introduction of good governance. It is also desirable to highlight that majority of the population of Mizoram are member of the MPF by virtue of their membership in the Church, civil societies and voluntary associations.<sup>231</sup>

The MPF mainly focussed on areas such as electoral reforms, political education, good governance, and awareness. The MPF also strongly opposes nepotism, favouritism, criminalization of politics, and corruption in the administration. To achieve its aims and objectives the MPF organized various seminars and conferences at the State level, trainer's training programmes, seminars and awareness programmes in all districts of the State, and constitution with all political parties of the State for implementation of free and fair polls in Mizoram.

**The goals and objectives of MPF are as given below:**

- i) To work towards establishing a democratic government through free and fair elections.
- ii) To reform the electoral process and do away with the corruption and malpractices in the electoral system of the State.
- iii) To put in place a transparent, accountable, and responsible government.
- iv) To educate people on the governance issue and make them to be a responsible citizen.
- v) To guide and advise the government on development issues.
- vi) To conduct social audits for social reforms.
- vii) To counter any form of violence, use of arms and terrorism.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Mizoram People Forum. *Inthlanna Thianghlim leh Rorelna Dik-Mizoram People Forum-2*. (2008) Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press. Pp.67-68, 75.

<sup>232</sup> Lalbiakmawia Ngente. *The Role of Mizoram People Forum*. In Mizoram People Forum Chanchin (2006-2016). Aizawl. Mizoram People Forum General Headquarters. P.256

### **Vision and Mission:**

The vision and mission of the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) is to establish good governance, peace, and harmony in the State for progressive, just, and sustainable socio-economic development and freedom of people. The MPF aimed to achieve this vision and mission by changing the value system, people's perception and electoral reforms. The main focal themes are electoral reforms, political education, good governance, advocacy, and awareness.<sup>233</sup>

### **Organizational Structure:**

The organizational structure of the MPF has been set-up in the following stratum, such as Headquarters, District Forums, Constituency Forum (MLA Constituency) and Local Forums. The headquarters of MPF is located at Aizawl, which is also known as the Central Forum. The headquarters is administered by Twelve (12) Office Bearers, Eighteen (18) Governing Board Members and Five (5) Advisers. District Forums are formed in all Districts except in Aizawl and Lunglei districts because Aizawl can be mobilized and organized by the Central Forum, however in the case of Lunglei, the largest church organization of the District, namely, the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM) is not a constituent member of the Forum since its establishment. The district Forum also has Office Bearers and Executive Committee Members. Constituency Forum is supposed to be established in every MLA constituency in times of MLA election to enforce the guidelines of MPF but it cannot be established in all MLA constituencies.<sup>234</sup>

It has been desirable to express that the Local Forum which is supposed to be set-up in every village and locality all over Mizoram is the grassroots unit of MPF. Local Forums are established in all Village Council areas as well as Local Council areas (in cities) and more than one Local Forum can be established in big villages as well as large areas of the Local Council. All constituent members of the MPF have been accommodated in Office Bearers as well as Governing Board Membership in the forum. As the MPF is a non-political body, office bearers as well as Executive

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid. p.257.

<sup>234</sup> Constitution of the Mizoram People Forum. (2023). Aizawl: Mizoram People Forum General Headquarters.P.22-24.

members at every level starting from the grassroots level i.e. Local forum up to the apex layer i.e. the Headquarters are strictly forbidden to become primary members of any political party. Hence, any office bearer or executive committee member who joins a political party is automatically relieved from any responsibilities of the MPF. With regard to membership of the MPF, Church Organizations can become constituent members with a payment of Rs. 1000 while Civil Societies and Voluntary Associations can become constituent members with a payment of Rs,500 to the MPF Headquarters. Even individuals from non-constituent bodies can personally become members with payment of Rs. 100. However, as stated above, the MPF has strictly monitored its leaders at various levels to become a non-political body as well as a non-political forum working for the well-being of the society and State, especially for implementation of free and fair elections at various level elections and good governance in the State of Mizoram.<sup>235</sup>

After its establishment, the MPF convened all Party meeting and invited major political parties of Mizoram on September 25, 2006. In the meeting, leaders of political parties gave advice and suggestions for the smooth functioning of the MPF. Even party leaders expressed their views about election expenditures and stated that election expenditures had now become considerably high. The expenditures incurred during electoral campaigns, mainly for organizing public meetings, feasts, posters, banners, house-to-house campaigns, etc became a great burden for candidates of all political parties. So, if this trend continued in the electoral process, it would be very difficult for some candidates to campaign for elections with such high expenditures. Therefore, political parties stated that the MPF must stop such events and occurrences like the use of money power, public feasts, house-to-house campaigns, providing transportation for voters, hiring singers and other entertainers, excessive use of flags, posters, and banners, etc., which amount to high expenditures during elections.<sup>236</sup> Various suggestions and advice from leaders of political parties were seriously taken up by the MPF and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drafted on the basis of the views and opinions of political leaders, as a result, an

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>236</sup> Mizoram People Forum. *Mizoram People Forum lo Dinchhuah Dan*. Aizawl.:Lengchhawn Press. P.16.

agreement was signed between the MPF and major political parties in the State. Finally, the MPF and political parties held another joint meeting and completed the final draft of the Election Guidelines on April 30, 2008. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) became the main principle and the basis of the activities of the MPF and election guidelines in various elections held in Mizoram.<sup>237</sup> It is very interesting to state that Election guidelines is prepared, keeping in mind the election Model Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission of India. Over and above that, legal, social and moral aspects, and sentiments of general public were taken into account in circulating the election guidelines.<sup>238</sup>

### **Membership:**

With regard to membership of the MPF, the Church organization can become a constituent member with a payment of Rs.1000 while Civil Societies and Voluntary Associations can become constituent members with a payment of Rs. 500 to the MPF Headquarters. Even Individuals from non-constituent bodies can personally become members with a payment of Rs.100. The MPF has strictly monitored its leaders at various levels to become a non-political forum working for the well of the society and State, especially for the implementation of free and fair elections at various level elections and good governance in the State of Mizoram.

### **The Election Guidelines of MPF**

The MoU signed between the MPF and political parties became the main principle and the basis of the activities of MPF as election guidelines in various elections held in Mizoram. They are as given below:<sup>239</sup>

#### **1. Election Expenditure:**

- i) No party or candidate shall indulge in huge and wasteful election expenditures. Election expenditures should be kept to a minimum.
- ii) Activities that are corrupt practices and offenses under the election law can crop up during the house-to-house campaign. Therefore, all

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<sup>237</sup> Interview with Rev. Lalsangliana Pachuau, General Secretary, Mizoram People Forum by the Scholar on 04-05-2023

<sup>238</sup> Opt. cit. P.55

<sup>239</sup> Opt. cit. 90.

such activities must be avoided and public processions should also be not organized in favour of a particular candidate or party during an election.

- iii) Influencing voters through money or other incentives must be avoided.
- iv) Community feasts, picnics, posters, and flag wars escalate the election expenditure unnecessarily. Therefore, they may be avoided.
- v) The general public, organizations, and individuals are requested not to ask or expect any favour from candidates. Similarly, candidates and political parties are also requested to refrain from announcing any financial grants or promises thereof.
- vi) Setting up of Campaign/ election office may be avoided.

**2. Free and fair election, and security issues:**

- i) Use of force, intimidation, and undue influence to the voters to secure their votes must be avoided.
- ii) Securing the support of underground armed groups and the use of arms shall be prevented at all costs.
- iii) Take all necessary actions for security and peaceful elections, especially along the border and sensitive areas.

**3. Policy implementation and candidature issues:**

- i) Only realistic and practicable policies and programmes must be included in the party manifesto.
- ii) The personal and individual lives of the candidates should not be used as a poll issue. The election campaign should revolve around the party policy and programme.
- iii) Political parties are expected to put forward those who are upright, God-fearing, clean, and honest persons as candidates.
- iv) Campaigning through false propaganda, unproven truth, and scandalous issues must be avoided

#### **4. Joint effort for electioneering:**

- i) A joint election campaign platform will be organized for candidates under the guidance of the MPF as and when possible.
  - ii) All public meetings, even those organized by individual parties, may be held under the guidance of the MPF.
  - iii) Distribution of party manifesto, policies and programmes and any other leaflets may be undertaken by the MPF or in a joint effort with party workers.
  - iv) No tea or eatable items shall be served on polling day at the polling stations. Providing electoral numbers or slips will be done by the MPF members or in a joint effort with party workers.
5. In addition to the above-mentioned guidelines, the MPF Local Forums and leaders of political parties may, without deviating from the spirit of the agreement, draft in detail actions to be taken within their localities, as per their requirement.

As mentioned in the election guidelines, the MPF had prescribed the numbers of flags, banners and posters to be used for campaigning in each locality as under:

- Village Council/Local Council having up to seven members:  
Banner-3                      Flags-30                      Posters-Up to 20
- Village Council/Local Council having up to five members:  
Banner-3                      Flags-20                      Posters- Up to 15
- Village Council/Local Council having up to three members:  
Banner-3                      Flags-10                      Posters- Up to 10

As it has been felt necessary, the MPF also fixed the size of the banners and posters. The banner should not be more than 18ft x 4ft in size and the posters should not be more than 4ft x 3ft in size. It should be desirable to highlight that the main idea behind formulating the Election Guidelines is to conduct free and fair elections

and to enable law-abiding citizens to cast their votes freely without fear and even to prove that elections in India are not about money and muscle power alone.<sup>240</sup>

On polling day, the MPF Local Forums set up MPF offices near the polling booths or inside the polling area in their respective localities and strictly monitored the polling areas throughout the polling day. The MPF carefully kept very watchful eyes on the activities of political parties, candidates and their campaigners and even party workers so as to prevent electoral malpractices like use of money, distribution of materials to the voters etc. The MPF volunteers also helped the old and disabled persons who came to exercise their franchise on polling day. Besides, MPF used to seriously appeal to voters to exercise their franchise on polling day through Public Announcement (PA) sets. In some areas, the MPF publicly announced the names of candidates or campaigners involved in distribution of money or materials to the voters if there were reliable reports. The role played by MPF has been very helpful and effective in avoiding many malpractices which had been seen freely in the past elections.

Due to non-participation of some Church organizations in the Southern part of Mizoram, the nature of elections and electoral campaigns in these areas, as compared to the northern part was quite different. Moreover, members of these four church organizations often tend to be favourable targets for some mischievous political party workers. Obviously, they tried to take advantages for the non-participation and involvement of these non-participating Churches in the MPF had been felt by many citizens including prominent academicians and leaders of Civil Societies. Because, the participation of these Churches in the MPF would surely strengthen the MPF's activities for implementation of free and fair polls, especially in the Southern part of the State.

In fact, the active participation of major civil society organizations and Churches in the MPF is very important for the successful functioning of the MPF in reforming the electoral system and policies in the whole area of the State. Members of the MPF have also recognized the importance of the inclusion of these major

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<sup>240</sup> Opt. cit. 99.

Churches in the MPF so as to strengthen the activities and movement of the MPF. These non-member Church organizations have opted to remain out of the MPF till today though the MPF has been appealing and inviting these organizations to join the MPF.

As the largest denomination in the Southern part of the State i.e. the Baptist Church of Mizoram has not joined the MPF, elections trend and atmosphere has certainly been different at Lunglei which is the second largest town next to Aizawl in the State. Majority of the people within the Lunglei district have been members of the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM). Hence, the non-participation of BCM has certainly handicapped the activities and movement of MPF and the MPF could not be effective enough in this district compared to other parts of Mizoram. However, pastors from Baptist Church of Mizoram joined the MPF as individuals. Though BCM opted out from MPF, the MPF's District Forum and Local Forum are actively participating in the MPF's activities in the Southern part of Mizoram through the support of the Church, Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM) and Lairam Isua Krista Kohhran (LIKBK) and through voluntary organizations in Saiha and Lawngtlai District

Since its establishment, MPF has actively performed the role as election watchdog in Mizoram. The MPF was formed under the initiative of the largest Church denomination of the State i.e. Mizoram Presbyterian Church of India following public outrage at the way the election campaign had deteriorated involving all kinds of ways and means freely to get parties into power. The success of the activities and efforts of MPF largely depend upon the public support and morality to censure the violators by declaring their names in public as MPF has no legal authority to punish violators of the election guidelines formulated by the forum.<sup>241</sup>

#### **Role of the MPF in different elections:**

Since its formation, the MPF has taken the initiatives for the conduct of free and fair elections and the activities of the MPF in different elections are as explained below:

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<sup>241</sup> Opt. cit. p. 274



### **Tlungvel Assembly Constituency Bye Election 2006:**

The first activity of the MPF for initiating the conduct of free and fair elections could be traced back to the bye-election in Tlungvel Legislative Assembly Constituency held on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006. As a newly established organization, the MPF did not have adequate time to establish its Local Forum in different parts of Mizoram, as such, leaders of the MPF Hqrs. Aizawl traveled to various villages within Tlungvel constituency on a tight schedule to monitor and supervise bye-elections strictly for conducting free and fair elections in this constituency. The MPF conducted meeting with the candidates of this constituency and concluded 12-points agreement for conducting free and fair election. It also successfully organized joint platforms for the candidates in different villages of the constituency. Due to the efforts of the MPF as well as the strong support given by the public and various political parties, Tlungvel Legislature Assembly Constituency bye-election was completed successfully. The report or complaint regarding house-to-house campaign, organizing feast, and use of money power had not been found. It has been admitted that the success rate of the MPF activities in this bye-election was completed successfully. It has been admitted that the success rate of the MPF activities in this by-election is more than eighty percent (80 percent).<sup>242</sup>

### **Mara Autonomous District Council Election, 2007.**

The MPF also took up the role of supervising the election of Mara Autonomous District Council held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008. The District Forum of MPF was established on January 23, 2007 at Saiha so as to gear up the forum for supervising the election-related activities for the conduct of free and fair poll. With the establishment of the MPF District Forum, the MPF Local Forums were established in many villages immediately throughout Saiha District and Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM), the constituent member of the MPF from the district played very important and effective role in this election. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed under the initiative of the MPF District Forum

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<sup>242</sup> Jangkhongam Doungel. *The Mizoram People Forum (MPF) and its role in electoral reform in Mizoram*. (2020). *The Indian Journal of Political Science*. Vol. LXXXI, No. 2., April-June, 2020. Meerut: Published by Indian Political Science Association. P. 200.

with different political parties of the district namely, Indian National Congress (INC), Mizo National Front (MNF), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF). Hence, the MPF enforced election guidelines as per the agreements of the MoU. Over and above that, the then Governor of Mizoram, M.M. Lakhera had issued a notification for the prohibition of contract works, development works, and other ongoing governmental works until completion of the election processes. Further, the formal practices in the past elections like house-to-house campaigns, concerts, road shows, excessive use of PA system, and organizing lavish feasts. Separate political rallies and the war of posters and flags were strictly prohibited. Due to the efforts of the MPF, the election expenses had also declined and a new sign of change was witnessed for the first time in the MADC election.<sup>243</sup>

After five years, the MADC faced another election in 2012 where the political atmosphere was tense and critical. The top-ranking leaders of political parties and many Cabinet Ministers of the State were involved in electoral campaign which was indeed a headache for the MPF. The then ruling party of the State as well as the Autonomous District Council, the Indian National Congress (INC) on one side, and the largest opposition and regional party of Mizoram, MNF, and its partner MDF on the other side had confronted a political tug of war for power. Like the previous election of the MADC, the MPF strictly monitored and supervised elections for implementation of free and fair elections as per the MoU signed by the MPF and Political parties. Even leaders of the MPF headquarters had stayed there at Saiha for effective monitoring of the election under the leadership of Mr. H, Lalramthanga the then General Secretary of MPF Hqrts., Some sections questioned the monitoring and supervising role of the MPF and that they could not restrict the activities of top officials like the Chief Minister, Cabinet Ministers, and Leaders of the INC. However, there was no genuineness in such accusations if facts and incidences were examined. The valuable role and service played by the MPF could enable the conduct of elections with dignity and honesty for the implementation of a free and fair poll.

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid. p. 201.

Due to the tireless efforts of the MPF, the election was concluded successfully and polling was peacefully done on May 3, 2012.<sup>244</sup>

**Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) election:**

The MPF District Forum was established with the enthusiastic support and active cooperation of the Young Chakma Association (YCA) on March 5, 2008 in the Chakma Autonomous District Council area. The MPF could not sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with political parties but that did not prevent the MPF from working for the implementation of free and fair polls. The MPF had convened meeting and briefed all candidates who contested the election of Member of District Council (MDC) on February 17, 2008 at YCA Hall, Chawngte 'C' (Kamalanagar). A public meeting was also organized for all political parties at Art and Culture Hall, Chawngte 'C' on February 18, 2008. The MPF had strictly prohibited house-to-house campaigns, excessive use of PA systems, concerts, road shows, flags, posters wars, and lavish feasts, whereas, the MPF had conducted joint platforms where leaders of different political parties had spoken out their manifestoes and objectives to the public. The initiative taken up by the MPF was responded positively by candidates and political parties and it automatically led to a clam and peaceful conduct of election. After five years, the election was held at Chakma Autonomous District Council again in 2013. The MPF had organized a joint platform at the lawn of CADC Rest House where representatives of MPF and political parties delivered speeches. However, the atmosphere was extremely competitive and tense which was not that healthy. As such, a joint platform was not organized again by the MPF in this election. Yet, the MPF strictly monitored the election, and a free and fair poll was held on April 17, 2013.<sup>245</sup>

**Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, 2008:**

The MPF requested all political parties of Mizoram to abide by the MoU signed as per the election model code of conduct between the MPF and political parties. Some of the restricted activities were house-to-house campaigns, use of

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<sup>244</sup>Ibid. p.201.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. p.201

money power, organizing lavish feast, sticking excessive posters and banners, concerts, road shows, separate public rallies and cooperation with armed insurgent groups. The top leaders of the MPF Headquarters, namely, Rev. Zosangliana Colney and Dr. Lalbiakmawia Ngente met leaders of NSCN (IM) at Kolkatta in 2008 and requested them to refrain from involving in the 2008 Mizoram Legislative Assembly election. Further, they also requested the NSCN (IM) leaders to convey the same to other friendly insurgent groups in the region. Then, the MPF headquarters signed a Memorandum of Understanding with political parties and the MPF strictly enforced and monitored those guidelines. The MPF structure at different levels, namely, Headquarters, District Forum, Constituency Forum, and Local Forum carried out bold steps with the cooperation of media in different parts of Mizoram and it organized Joint Platforms for candidates in different constituencies. The Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election held on December 2, 2008 completed peacefully due to the painstaking efforts of the MPF. As the District Forums of the MPF have not been established in Lunglei and Lai Autonomous District Council area of Lawngtlai District, the election activities in these two districts were said to be expensive and uncontrollable compared to other districts where the MPF actively functioned. The Observers of the Election Commission of India and different national newspaper highly appreciated the contribution of the MPF and they also stated that Mizoram can become a role model for other States of the country.<sup>246</sup>

#### **Lai Autonomous District Council election (LADC) 2010:**

The MPF District Forum was established on June 9, 2009 at Lawngtlai which was subsequently followed by the establishment of Local Forums in villages and localities throughout the district except in four villages. The District Forum had taken the initiatives and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the six political parties. The MPF Headquarters and District Forum launched rigorous campaigns by preaching in different churches as well as visiting various Local Forums. As politics in LADC was infested by clannish and family feeling, the guidelines of MPF seemed to be critical to be implemented in the 2010 LADC election. However, due to the painstaking efforts of the MPF, a unique development

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<sup>246</sup> Opt. cit., p. 8.

was witnessed for the first time in LADC election and polling was peacefully held on November 18, 2010. There may be complaints from certain sections but it should be admitted that there was improvement in the electoral practices.<sup>247</sup>

#### **Lok Sabha election, 2009:**

The MPF in different levels starting from Headquarters down to Local Forums launched intensive campaigns in different parts of Mizoram for polling to the 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha which was scheduled to be held on April 16, 2009. There were four candidates in the Lok Sabha election for the Parliamentary constituency of Mizoram, namely, C.L.Ruala of Indian National Congress (INC), Dr. H. Lallungmuana of Mizo National Front (MNF), Lalawmpuia Channgte of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Rualpawla of Isreal National Front and the main contest was between MNF and INC candidates. The MPF Headquarters had arranged joint public meeting at Central Hall, Venghlui, Aizawl on April 13, 2013 where all the four candidates delivered campaign speech which was really appreciated and heard by the public. Due to the painstaking efforts and effectively supervising activities of the Lok Sabha Election by the MPF, candidates and political parties strictly followed the appeal of the MPF resulting in a peaceful poll.<sup>248</sup>

#### **Aizawl Municipal Council (AMC) election, 2010:**

The MPF geared up itself for the first election of the Aizawl Municipal Council (AMC) which was scheduled to be held on November 3, 2010. As the election was to be held within Aizawl, the Municipal Council election could directly be supervised by the headquarters of MPF by mobilizing 80 Local Forums which were actively functioning within the area of the Aizawl Municipal Council. The political tug-of-war between the ruling and opposition groups were so competitive because it was the first municipal election in Mizoram. As such, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the MPF and political parties was strictly enforced by the MPF, and the polling was completed peacefully on November 3, 2010.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid. p. 202.

<sup>249</sup> Opt. cit. p. 64-65.

### **Chalfilh Legislative Assembly bye-election, 2013:**

The MPF was again involved in the Chalfilh Legislative Assembly bye election on February 21, 2013 and it organized successful awareness campaigns in all 23 villages of Chalfilh constituency. However, the integrity of the MPF began to be questioned in the said bye-election. Chalfilh Constituency Joint Students' Union questioned the MPF for not inviting independent candidates to the joint platform at Khawruhlian. The MPF leaders had clarified that the recognized political parties which have headquarters or offices at Aizawl/Mizoram will only participate in the joint platform programme organized by the MPF as per their agreement with political parties. As such, the MPF alone could not change the agreement that was signed between the Forum and different political parties without the consent of political parties, the MPF further clarified. Then, Khawruhlian joint platform programme was boycotted by the Students' Union and they requested the public not to participate in the joint platform, however, the joint platform was successfully held by the MPF and all invited MLA candidates could also participate, and delivered speeches, over and above that, some feasts were also said to have been organized in some parts of the constituency and there were some other complaints too. The MPF leaders then clarified in Memorandum No.2 (4) that it is clearly mentioned that the feast would not include organizing dinner for strangers and for the block and unit level leaders in an important/necessary issue. So, the MPF justifies itself that it is very difficult to differentiate and classify many times what exactly is a feast for the MPF. The MPF had performed its duties like in previous elections but the integrity of the MPF was questioned in the said bye-election.<sup>250</sup>

### **Role of MPF in the Seventh State Legislative Assembly Election:**

The Sixth State Legislative Assembly election held in December 2008 witnessed a low-profile and inexpensive Assembly poll due to the efforts of the Mizoram People Forum (MPF). Even for the Seventh State Legislative Assembly election, the Church-sponsored election watch-dog MPF made an agreement with Mizoram political parties for the peaceful success of Assembly polls. The MPF

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<sup>250</sup> Opt. cit. p.71-75

conducted a meeting with political parties at Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) Headquarters Office, Aizawl on June 8, 2013, so as to gear up the preparation for the said Assembly election. MPF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with major political parties of Mizoram, namely, Mizo National Front (MNF), Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP), Indian National Congress (INC), Bharatya Janata Party (BJP), Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) and the MoU comprised of 27 agreements. The MPF and representatives of six major political parties of Mizoram, namely, INC, MNF, ZNP, BJP, MPC and Trinamool Congress agreed in their meeting held on September 28, 2013 at MUP Hqrts. office that all the MLA candidates for 2013 Mizoram Legislative Assembly election should participate in the MPF joint platforms in their respective constituencies.<sup>251</sup>

In pursuance of the MoU signed with political parties, the MPF organized joint platform for political parties at Ignite Studio, Aizawl and the leaders of different political parties delivered campaign speeches. The MPF Hqrs., District Forums, Constituency Forums and Local Forums had strictly enforced the MoU signed by the MPF and political parties for the conduct of free and fair election and the political parties also cooperated very well with the MPF. Polling was done peacefully on November 25, 2013. The observers of the Election Commission of India for Mizoram election, media, citizens, different leaders of political parties and high-level officials deeply appreciated the performance of the MPF in the implementation of a free and fair election in Mizoram.

The voluntary activities of the MPF to monitor and supervise elections for implementing free and fair elections had been started in the 2006 By-Election of Tlungvel Legislative Assembly Constituency. The trend continued in the following elections to the Legislative Assembly, Lok Sabha, District Council, Municipality, Local and Village Councils. With the Seventh State Legislative Assembly election just around the corner, the MPF was gearing up to keep watchful eyes on the political parties to make sure that none of the candidate had stepped out of the guidelines, laid down in terms of agreement. This time, the MPF also liked to interfere in the election manifestoes, to keep the political parties away from making tall promises. In the 27

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<sup>251</sup> Opt. cit. P. 282

points Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the MPF and political parties, one significant point which clearly stated was that political parties should promise only what they would be able to fulfill.

As in the previous 2008 State Legislative Assembly election, the political parties in Mizoram should not impose and organize road shows, house-to-house campaigns, separate public rallies, and feasts for 2013 State Legislative Assembly polls. Supporters of candidates could no longer use caps, t-shirts, badges and stickers bearing party symbols and party flags during electoral campaign. The number of flags, banner and posters that a candidate could use were also restricted based on the number of local council members or village council members in each locality or village. For instance, it had been possible for a candidate, 3 banners, 30 flags and 20 posters for an area that had more than seven local/village council members, but in an area that had more than five but less than seven local/village council members – 3 banners, 30 flags and 15 posters whereas 3 banners, 10 flags and 10 posters for an area having less than five village council members. These were the agreements made by the MPF and political parties. The MPF said that election banner should not be larger than 18 feet into 4 feet.

While enforcing strict restrictions upon political parties and their candidates, the MPF also urged all voters to help and achieve clean and fair elections. Even organizations and individuals should not expect any benefits in the form of money or materials from candidates. The Church-sponsored election watchdog, the MPF also asked political parties to nominate only incorrupt and clean persons, free from drugs, alcohol and other anti-social activities for their candidates. The MPF said that it would keep watchful eyes on each candidate to ensure that the guidelines were strictly adhered to. With regard to the performance of candidates, the MPF announced that candidates who defied the Memorandum of Understanding signed with political parties would be publicly declared in names. The church has a very effective impact on the people of Mizoram as a majority of the population are Christians and no candidate would dare to defy the church's dictate.



On the other hand, the MPF clearly stated that those who lodged complaints to MPF should have documentary proof and without which people were requested not to make any complaint. With regard to action taken against the candidates who defied the terms of the agreement, the MPF leaders said that they did not have authoritative power to take action. Hence, the only thing the MPF could do was to declare the name of the candidates who committed unfair practices in the public.

### **Role of MPF in Governance:**

Besides electoral reform, the MPF has widened its activities upon the issue of good governance in Mizoram. In this regard, the MPF Hqrts. used to organize District level seminars for good governance in various districts of Mizoram on different dates such as:<sup>252</sup>

- i. 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at Champhai
- ii. 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 at Serchhip
- iii. 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 at Kolasib
- iv. 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at Lawngtlai
- v. 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010 at Mamit
- vi. 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 at Aibawk.

The participants and organizers felt that the seminars for good governance held in different places of the State were beneficial for inculcating awareness among the citizens. Further, the MPF organized seminars related to good governance and the responsibility of citizens in different places of the State were beneficial for inculcating awareness among the citizens. Further, the MPF organized a seminar related with good governance and the responsibility of citizens in different places of Mizoram every year. The MPF leaders also met top-ranking leaders of the State Government just after the new ministry led by Lalthanhawla had been installed to pursue its election manifestoes and promises effectively without discrimination. In the middle of 2011, there was an undesirable hot debate between the MNF and the INC on the issue of the surrender of MNF whether the MNF insurgents were really fighting for sovereignty or not? The debate seemed to be developing in an unhealthy

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<sup>252</sup> Opt. cit. p. 10.

manner as there was a regular hot exchange of words in print and electronic media between the two political parties. The MPF leaders met Zoramthanga (President of MNF) and Lalthanhawla (President of INC) on October 24, 2011 and November 3, 2011 respectively and requested them to refrain from unparliamentary and ironical words so as to evade unhealthy political development. Both the two top political leaders responded positively to the MPF leaders' request and expressed willingness not to continue the debate. In such way, the MPF could manage to act as a neutral and reliable umpire in times of crisis in the political system of Mizoram.<sup>253</sup>

**Table.5.1.1. Are you aware of the MPF activities for ensuring free and fair elections?**

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employees	14.13	5.06
Self Employed	16.26	14.66
Farmer	10.4	2.13
Daily Labourer	14.4	9.06
Student	4.53	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>59.72</b>	<b>34.91</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

In order to determine whether voters are aware of MPF's efforts prior to an election, the question mentioned above was asked. Since its establishment, the MPF has actively acted as the State of Mizoram's election watch-dog to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections. The MPF has been educating the public through awareness campaigns, booklets distribution, conferences, and other events in order to hold free and fair elections. The initiatives have been carried out at the local, district, and other levels. While 34.91 percent of the respondents do not know about MPF activities, compared to 59.72 percent of respondents who are aware of them. It is evident that,

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<sup>253</sup> Opt. cit. 10.

despite the fact that MPF's message and actions did not reach every part of the state, the majority of people were made aware of them. The respondent from Tuichawng constituency are the one who are least informed of MPF activities. The absence of church involvement in Tuichawng constituency has hampered MPF's ability to operate effectively, which is the cause. Sunday services are one of the most important platforms of MPF to spread election issues and carry out awareness campaigns.

**Table 5.1.2 Do you think MPF is strong enough to ensure free and fair elections in the state?**

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee	8	16.8
Self Employed	8.11	15.2
Farmer	5.87	7.74
Daily Labourer	10.94	19.2
Student	2.27	5.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.19</b>	<b>64.81</b>

**(Source: Field Study)**

The purpose of the above question is to determine whether voters believe that the MPF is powerful enough to monitor the conduct of free and fair elections in the State. Only 35.19% of respondents believe that MPF is strong enough to monitor a free and fair election, compared to 64.81% who believe MPF is not strong enough. Since its formation, the MPF has proven to be strongly in favour of holding free and fair elections. Election practices have undergone a fresh change as a result of MPF's initiatives. Before the MPF entered the electoral scene, politicians and political parties openly engage in use of money power, gift-giving, and other unethical behaviours. Since the MPF was established, many undesirable practices have faded away.

### **Critical assessments of the activities and functions of MPF:**

The role played by MPF in monitoring the conduct of free and fair election in Mizoram is quite unique and is one of the rarest case in India. In an interview with Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, General Secretary, Mizoram People Forum (MPF) at his Office Chamber he expressed that the MPF could act as a watch-dog for free and fair election because of the involvement of various Church and voluntary organization, within the State as majority of the Population were Christian, the respect for Church leaders is widely witnessed. He also expressed his opinion that if the Baptist Church of Mizoram could join MPF, a greater role could be played by the MPF. After the appearance of the MPF, the state witnessed a fairer and freer election. Major Political parties with the initiatives of MPF could reach a consensus in facing election which minimized the unnecessary and extravagant expenditure of candidates.

However, MPF has no legal authority over the malpractices found in the guidelines issued, it could act only as a monitoring agent which also hinders the effectiveness and smooth functioning of the MPF. All groups of people have praised and criticized the MPF's extensive efforts to help ensure a free, peaceful, and fair election. There has been a perception that the MPF is not very powerful in the post-election period. Its efforts have essentially been limited to achieving the organization's goals of establishing good governance, administrative reforms, or initiating a long-term, inclusive process of economic development.

Critics frequently draw attention to, or rather raise doubt on, the majority opinion on the MPF's successes. There is no need for the MPF or the role that it played in ensuring electoral reforms in the state, according to Mr. Durja Dhan Chakma, an eminent politician and Ex-CEM of Chakma Autonomous District Council and MNF District Vice President, Chawngte 'C'. The MPF could only do little about the events occurring in secrecy, although they were effective in eliminating electoral malpractices that were previously performed openly and in public. Though the MPF was present, Mr. Durja Dhan Chakma expressed his view that many politicians and political parties continue to exploit their financial power in

order to gain political power. The MPF was only able to lessen the corrupt electoral tactics; it will never be able to completely forbid the use of money power.

Although the MPF's initiatives have resulted in numerous changes in the State's electoral politics, according to Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau, the MPF still has a long way to go because unethical electoral practices cannot be stopped overnight. It will take time to put an end to these practices. Rev. Lalramliana Pachuau also expressed the view that the Church organization's involvement in MPF makes its successful operation possible. People have an immense amount of respect for the Church, which leads to a great deal of respect for the MPF, which greatly supports the MPF's successful operation.

H. Vanlalhluaana, President of MPF District Forum, Mamit also expressed his opinion that the MPF's messages were well-respected by the general public and political parties in particular due to the Church's significant involvement as well as other significant civil societies and numerous regular election practices. Additionally, candidates' election expenses decreased, which used to be a burden for them. Additionally, the MPF was unable to entirely eliminate the use of financial influence by political parties and candidates. Even though political parties and candidates claim they don't wish to use money to influence voters, this is a popular tactic used by those who want to win the election. If someone engages in such behaviour, the MPF will reprimand them and notify the public via its public information system. This may have a detrimental effect on voters' decisions to not cast their votes for people who commit electoral fraud. To guarantee a free and fair election, however, MPF must consolidate its internal operations. If the Baptist Church of Mizoram joined MPF formally, MPF would gain more strength and efficiency in the Southern part of Mizoram, especially Lunglei District.

The MPF has quickly established itself as one of the State's most active and financially stable organizations. It is as a result of the donations and contributions it has received from its member organizations and individuals. There may still be some inconsistencies and weaknesses in the way it is currently organized, structured, and run. The general population, candidates, political leaders, and political parties all

backed and worked with the MPF. The Election Guidelines established by the MPF with the approval of the major political parties do not have any legal authority, but they have been diligently followed by the relevant political parties or people throughout each election campaign. The Mizo people have always developed and maintained the spirit of social bonding and respect for religion and the church as well as the civil society organizations in their daily lives, which is why the MPF has received such respect and reverence.

There is no question that the MPF does significantly alter the state's electoral process, even in the face of numerous complaints and critiques from certain sections of the community. The MPF's active and extensive efforts can be attributed to changing the atmosphere of elections, especially on election day, changing the nature of election campaigns, and, most importantly, fostering more fair and peaceful political debates in general and during elections in particular. Despite the diverse opinions on the role of the MPF as an effective election watchdog, certain groups of people have praised and criticized the MPF's extensive efforts to help ensure a free, peaceful, and fair election. There has been a perception that the MPF is not very powerful in the post-election period. Their efforts have essentially been limited to achieving the organization's goals of establishing good governance, administrative reforms, or initiating a long-term, inclusive process of economic development.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION:

Voting is one of the most commonly used terms in the contemporary age of democratic politics. The ever-increasing popularity of democratic theory and practice has even made this term a household name in the democratic system, and their number is quite large and ever-increasing, each adult citizen uses "voting", as a means of expressing his approval or disapproval of government decisions, policies and programmes of various political parties and qualities of candidates who are engaged in the struggle to get the status of being the representatives of people.<sup>254</sup>

The study of voting behaviour has different connotations for different academic disciplines and the factors/variables they probe and compute are also different from each other. The sociological or social contextual approach refers to the social settings in which the individuals or voters function and their voting behaviour is affected by it. On the other hand, the discipline of political science computes voting behaviour using political factors such as electoral issues, political programs, electoral campaigns, and the popularity of the political parties and leaders based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The focus of political science on enquiry in election study has focused on three main areas: the structure and motivations of the electorate, the operation and effect of the party and election system, and the impact of social and political institutions on voting behaviour. Political theorists are concerned with understanding the political community and the political animal and understanding them eventually by means of precise and general statements.<sup>255</sup>

Voting is one of the most visible forms of political participation in democratic countries. The overall purpose of election studies is to find out the voting patterns and trends based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The purpose of election studies is not only to present the narrative account of various events that take place during elections but also to scientifically identify and explain the recurring causal dynamics

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<sup>254</sup> Opt. cit., P.22.

<sup>255</sup> Opt. cit., P.7

underlying the particular events of that election based on voters' opinions and feedback. The data on the voting process available with election bodies provided the impetus to the psephologists to collect further electoral data through opinion polls for measuring voting behaviour and attitudes of voters.<sup>256</sup>

Samuel S. Eldersveld in his "*Theory and Method in Voting Behaviour Research*" writes the term "voting behaviour" is not new. But it has been used of late to describe certain areas of study and types of political phenomenon which previously had either not been conceived or were considered irrelevant." The study of electoral behaviour constitutes a very significant area of empirical investigation. The electoral behaviour displays the astounding fact that the behaviour of man is influenced by several irrational factors, influence of money or the charismatic personality of a leader and a host of irrational factors can have their influence on the minds of the voters.<sup>257</sup>

India is the largest working democracy in the world. In the latest Lok Sabha election in 2019, the voter's turnout was 67.11 percent beating the previous turnout of 65.95 percent notched up in 2014, according to the data released by the Election Commission of India. Generally, in India as a whole, voting behaviour is influenced by various factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, the purpose of the polls, the extent of the franchise, and the like political parties and groups make use of these factors for the sake of winning the battle of the ballot box. Politicians despite making their professions for enlightened secularism, can be found making appeals to the religious and communal sentiments of the people, and are also found involved in exploiting the factors of language and money to achieve the purpose of emerging successful in the war of votes.<sup>258</sup>

Elections in India are conducted by a constitutional and independent body known as the Election Commission of India (ECI), created under the provisions of Article 324 of the Constitution of India. The ECI is headed by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two other Election Commissioners (EC). The functions of the ECI have been included under Article 324 (1) which includes the superintendence, direction, and

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<sup>256</sup> Oct. cit., pp.8-9.

<sup>257</sup> Zahida Akhter, Younis Ah. Sheikh. (2014). Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, Vol 4. No. 8, 2014. p. 105.

<sup>258</sup> Opt. cit. p. 23



control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every state and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President.” Such indicative functions of the ECI boil down to include the whole gamut of the electoral process including preparation, maintenance and revision of electoral rolls, the notifications, scrutiny, withdrawals and polling, registration of and recognition to political parties, allotment of election symbols, the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer (a state government official) for each state, Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers and Assistant Officers for each Assembly and parliamentary constituency, and the receiving of election petitions and the appointment of Election Tribunals to consider such petitions.<sup>259</sup> Since the ECI plays all such functions, its role becomes critical for the conduct of free and fair elections in the country.

The present Mizoram State Legislative Assembly is Unicameral and it has 40 elected seats, out of which 39 are reserved for Scheduled Tribe. The First Legislative Assembly election in Mizoram was held in 1972 after Mizoram became a Union Territory from District Council and this election was won by the first political party of Mizoram, namely, Mizo Union. During the Union Territory era, the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections had been a fight between the Indian National Congress (INC) and the People’s Conference (PC) after the Mizo Union was merged with the Indian National Congress on January 24, 1974. However, the influence of PC drastically declined in the post-statehood era and political rivalry was mainly between the Indian National Congress and the MNF party in various State Legislative Assembly elections after Mizoram became a State and there have been governments formed alternatively by four political parties till the present, namely, Mizo Union, the first winning political party of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly election merged to INC in 1974, PC, Indian National Congress and MNF.

The Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2013 which saw the Indian National Congress and MNF as the two major contenders. Out of the total 40 seats, the Indian National Congress won a thumping

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<sup>259</sup> <http://www.commonlii.org/in/other/lawreform/INLC/1999/5.html> accessed on 15-11-2023.

majority by securing 34 seats, thereby returning to power as the ruling party in the State. The Government was formed with Shri. Lalthanhawla as the Chief Minister. On the other hand, MNF and its alliance could secure only 6 seats, while no other party was able to secure even a single seat in the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election.

As the Seventh term of the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly came to an end, the election to the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly was held on 28th November 2018. In this election, MNF emerged as the single largest party by winning 26 seats. The newly formed political group Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) candidates which contested the election as Independent surprisingly won 8 seats. Congress which was then the ruling party in the Seventh term could manage to win only 5 seats and for the first time in the electoral history of Mizoram, BJP made its debut by winning 1 seat from Tuichawng Constituency.<sup>260</sup>

#### **Patterns of Voting Behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election:**

The political landscape of Mizoram in the erstwhile Mizo District Council and the early part of the Union Territory of Mizoram was more or less dominated by the Mizo Union. After Statehood in 1986, it was more or less characterized by the two-party dominant system of politics wherein the Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) captured power interchangeably and voted to power even though there was a time when smaller political parties were joining the bandwagons on and off. Before statehood, political issues like abolition of Chieftainship, independence, peace accord, etc., dominated Mizoram electoral politics and have now become issues of the past.

Apart from the development issue, unification of the Zo-ethnic tribes and putting them under one common platform or administrative unit, greater power for the Autonomous District Council in the ADCs area is still one of the common interest zones among political parties during elections. Hence, this issue has been raised in every election by major political parties through their election manifestoes and campaign

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<sup>260</sup> <https://mizoram.nic.in/gov/mla.htm> accessed on 15-11-2023.

speeches. Since 2003, it has been possible to state that the main issues in elections in Mizoram were development, corruption, agricultural sector, education, and unemployment problems.<sup>261</sup>

In the State Assembly Election held in 2008, the INC secured 32 seats out of 40 seats, the victory of the Indian National Congress shows the influence of Congress's New Land Use Policy (NLUP) which was the main poll plank of the party. NLUP, which was the flagship programme of the State Government led by INC, was still attractive and convincing to voters which subsequently led to the victory of the INC in the 2013 Mizoram Legislative Assembly election. In the post-statehood period, the MNF and the Indian National Congress formed the government alternately alone or in coalition with other parties in the State as well as the Autonomous District Councils. MNF and Congress were the two largest parties that could cover the whole of Mizoram, though regional parties and sub-regional parties other than MNF were formed and captured the political arena, they were short-lived. From past experience, it is evidently clear that the voters give more preference to the MNF and INC and regional political parties like ZNP (merged to Zoram People's Movement), MPC could not gain much ground in the ADC areas.

Assessment of voting patterns consistently focuses on determinants of electoral behaviour, or factors influencing electoral behaviour: why people vote as they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make. A brief analysis of some of the main determinants of voting behaviour in Mizoram is, that the economic conditions of a voter may largely decide which party he votes for so as to improve his economic conditions. This is evidently clear why Congress won the 2008 and 2013 Assembly elections due to the Congress Government's flagship programme, the NLUP (New Land Use Policy).

In the Sixth Schedule Area of Mizoram, in recent years issues like direct funding, and greater autonomy for Autonomous District Councils in terms of Amendment of the Sixth Schedule provisions have emerged as one of the popular slogans of politicians in the ADC areas of Mizoram to influence the voters. A number of memorandums in this regard have also been submitted to the Central Government. To influence the general

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<sup>261</sup> Opt. cit., p. 316.

public, this utopian slogan has been used by political parties, especially Congress as its election policy for the sake of winning the ballot earlier which was done afterwards by the BJP in the Sixth Schedule Area.

In the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013, there were 6,90,860 voters, the total number of male voters was 3,40,527 i.e. 49.29 percent and the total female voters was 3,50,333 i.e. 50.70 percent. The voter turnout in the Seventh Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was indeed remarkable which was 80.82 per cent. out of the total 40 seats, Congress won 34 seats, MNF won 4 seats and 1 seat was won by Mizoram People's Conference (MPC).<sup>262</sup>

In the Sixth term of the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, the State government was formed by INC with Shri. Lalthanhawla as the Chief Minister. In the Seventh term, Congress could hold its ground in the State by emerging as the single majority party. One of the reasons behind Congress victory was that there was a trend where one party usually ruled the State for two consecutive terms. Majority of the people believed that this trend would continue and Congress had more advantage in winning the election. Another reason that contributed to Congress's victory is the implementation of Congress's flagship programme New Land Use Policy (NLUP) which every household in the State is promised One Lakh cash.

In the Eight State Legislative Assembly of Mizoram held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 MNF returned to power by winning 26 seats. The voter turnout in this election was 84.9 per cent. The MNF led by Zoramthanga formed the government in the State. In this election, the newly formed political forum Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) surprisingly won 8 seats out of nowhere and emerged as the largest opposition party in the State Legislative Assembly. BJP secured One seat and, Congress's performance was indeed disappointing who could win only 4 seats, though it was the ruling party in the Seventh term.

As can be seen in Chapter 2, a Structured questionnaire was employed by the scholar to find out the reasons behind the voting decisions of people of Aizawl District, Mamit District, and Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram namely, Mara

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<sup>262</sup> Statistical Report on General Election, 2013 to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram. Pp.4 & 6.

Autonomous District Council (MADC), Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) and Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC). The respondents were selected based on Constituency wise of the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly in which Aizawl West-II Constituency from Aizawl District, Mamit Constituency from Mamit District and, Tuichawng and Lawngtlai-East from Lawngtlai District and Saiha Constituency from Saiha District as the study area. The respondents comprised of various age groups, occupational activities, and educational backgrounds. For the purpose of analysis of the study, the respondents from each constituency were categorized into five occupational activities, viz., Government employee, Self-employed, Farmers, Daily Labourer, and Student for representative purposes.

All the characters considered voting as important, except 2.66 percent out of the total respondents considered voting as not important. In relation to this question, 1.33 percent of govt. employee from Tuichawng constituency and 1.33 per cent of Daily Labourer from Lawngtlai East constituency considered voting as not important. The number of respondents who considered voting as important was 97.34 percent. The State of Mizoram has experienced high voter turnout in elections with 80.82 percent in the 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and 84.9 percent in the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. The high percentage of voter turnout on the poll day also confirmed the voter's attitude toward voting as important and their sense of being responsible citizens through exercising their right to vote in elections.

The characters who responded to this questionnaire also show that among the various characters, those who register/affiliate to any political party are much higher among those who do not hold any government jobs. The Student respondents who register/affiliate themselves with political parties are seen only in Mamit Constituency which stands only at 4 percent out of the total respondents. Govt. employees who register/affiliate themselves to a political party is also seen only in Tuichawng and Saiha Constituency. It is indeed surprising to see govt. employee as a registered party member, though govt. employees are believed to maintain neutrality in politics. The reason behind this is mainly because mostly in ADC areas, govt. Employees are quite influential in society mostly in rural areas and they always have a greater vote weightage and an important vote bank to politicians.

In the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election campaign, one of the most important elements that political parties used to win the voter's support was through its party manifestos. During election campaigns, political parties issue their election manifestos which usually cover issues like the Re-unification of the Zo-ethnic tribe who are scattered in different parts of the country and the world, issues like unemployment, infrastructural development, and various societal problems like rescue homes for drug abusers, sex worker etc. The election manifestos of political parties often target each and every section of society to establish a greater vote bank and support from such members. Shri. Lalthanhawla, the Ex. President of Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) during a speech, mentioned that a manifesto is nothing great but political parties are just trying their best to write the finest manifestos. Though each political party tried its best to influence the voters through manifestoes, the respondents voting decision who were not influenced by the political party's manifestoes is higher at 51.2 percent than those who were influenced by the political party's manifestos at 48.26 percent.

It is also fair to state that political parties often target the lower income with promises of freeships such as NLUP, SEDP, etc. when voted to power. However, the number of respondents who have not received any freeship from the government is quite high at 73.32 percent compared to 26.68 percent of those who received such freeship in terms of cash or kind. The response of the respondent also shows that those who received such freeship (NLUP, SEDP) did not necessarily vote for the political party in power at the time they received such freeship. However, the respondent who received such freeship from the government during the Congress rule in the Sixth term of Mizoram State Legislative Assembly also voted for the same party in the Seventh Election to the State Legislative Assembly. In the meantime, those who voted for Congress in the Sixth term and received such freeship from the Congress Government voted for another party like MNF, ZPM, or others in the next election.

When the respondents were approached with which political party they voted for in the Seventh and Eighth elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. The characters in each constituency of the study area have cast their votes mostly for MNF and Congress. This clearly shows that since the Statehood era, MNF and Congress

have emerged as the two largest contenders in State politics. More preference is given to both the parties, the total vote percentage of those who voted for MNF stands at 46.4 percent and those who voted for Congress stands at 47.2 percent, respondent from Aizawl West-I constituency, Lawngtlai-East and Saiha Constituency also voted for Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) which counts at 2.66 percent out of the total respondent. There are no respondents from Mamit Constituency and Tuichawng Constituency who voted for ZNP. At the same time, respondents who voted for MPC, BJP, and Others were quite low in the 2013 election. The total percentage of votes received by BJP is 0.53 percent and this is also from the Autonomous District Council area.

In the 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, the vote share of MNF had a slight decline from 46.4 per cent to 46.13 percent and Congress vote share declined from 47.2 percent to 38.66 percent. The decline in the vote share of Congress and MNF can be said that due to the emergence of a newly formed political group, Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) which contested the election as Independent candidates. As a newly formed political group, the performance of ZPM in the 2018 election is not disappointing, out of the total 40 seats, ZPM could secure 8 seats. The respondents who voted for ZPM also counts to 10.9 per cent from the 5 constituency. Constituency-wise, the ZPM has the highest vote share from Aizawl West-I Constituency at 34.64 percent, 9.34 percent from Mamit Constituency, 6.66 percent from Lawngtlai East Constituency and 1.34 percent from Saiha Constituency. The vote share of BJP has also increased from 0.53 percent in the 2013 election to 4 percent in the 2018 election. The study found that the Constituency from the Non-ADC area has less support for the BJP however, the BJP has more vote bank in the ADC area of Mizoram. The study also revealed that the number of respondents who voted for the same political party in both the 2013 and 2018 elections was much higher at 61.34 percent than those who did not vote for the same political party in both the election which counts at 38.66 percent.

One of the most important elements in a voter's voting decision is the influence of family, friends, and oneself or 'own choice'. The study also revealed that in deciding who to vote in the election, 83.18 percent of the respondent made their voting decisions on their own without the influence of others. 16.52 percent of the respondents made their

voting decision based on the influence of family and, only 1.06 percent of the respondents made their voting decision on the influence of friends. The influence of family and friends usually happens through discussions before the election, family influence is also very prevalent because when the big family comes together and supports a particular candidate or political party, they usually become an important vote bank. This is the main reason why most politicians in Mizoram base themselves on family and always play the family card, especially in the ADC elections. However, voting is an individual act and the individual makes an independent decision while voting.

Among the factors that influence the voting decision of a voter are the support of a particular party, the candidate's quality and personality, party manifestos, etc. The study also revealed that among the respondents, the quality and personality of a candidate have the highest influence at 34.13 percent, though voters usually cast their votes on the preference of a candidate, indeed, the party affiliation of a candidate is also quite important. The number of respondents who voted or made their voting decision due to the support of a political party was 30.38 percent. Though the decision to vote is usually influenced by the support for a particular political party, the party's leadership, policies, and manifestos. The past electoral success of a party also plays an important factor as it could establish a strong base among the masses and earn the trust of the voters. A political party without a strong and charismatic leader and electoral success would not be able to establish a strong vote base. As such, political parties in Mizoram often tend to win the different Zo-ethnic tribes that inhabit the State of Mizoram through the politics of re-unification of Zo-ethnic tribes, Zo Nationalism, etc. Moreover, the manifestos of political parties also target each and every section of society through their policies and programmes.

The study also found out that based on certain parameters laid down for characteristics of candidates such as senior politician, active party member, well-educated, good speaker, wealthy candidate, active community member, and young and energetic candidate are identified as the voter's choice on the type of the candidate that they prefer to choose. Among the qualities set out, the most preference is given to the candidate who is an active member of the community which stands at 67.2 percent.



Mizoram is a close-knit society, in times of grief and happiness, the members of a society come together to share their grief and happiness. As a matter of fact, one who is an active community member is highly respected and as such the respondent also gives more preference to such candidate. On the other hand, a candidate who is well educated and one who is an active and energetic candidate is given the same preference at 55.46 percent each.

Occupation wise govt. employees and daily labourer give their utmost preference to a well-educated candidate and the least preference to a wealthy candidate. The highest preference is given to candidates active in the community by self-employed and farmers. Student on the other hand give their most preference to young and energetic candidates. In overall ratings, among the qualities of the candidate, the candidate who participates in the community actively has the highest preference by all the occupations and the lowest preference is a wealthy candidate. Among the qualities of the candidate, a candidate who is a good speaker and senior politician stands among the lower preference qualities that the voters seek to follow or vote in an election.

### **Patterns of voting behaviour in Autonomous District Council and Aizawl Municipal Corporation.**

For the purpose of the study of voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram, two elections for each Autonomous District Council are selected. For Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC), the Tenth election to MADC held in 2012 and the Twelfth election to MADC held in 2017 is selected as the study period. For the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC), the Tenth election to LADC held in 2015 and the Eleventh election to LADC held in 2020 is selected as the study period, and for Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC), the Ninth election to CADC held in 2013 and the Tenth election to CADC held in 2018 is selected as the study period. For the study of voting behaviour in Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), the second election to AMC was held in 2015 and the third election to AMC in 2021 was selected as the study period.

The study revealed that in both the Ninth and Tenth CADC elections, both Congress and MNF received the highest votes from the respondents. In the Ninth

election to CADC, MNF received the highest vote at 54.6 percent and Congress at 38.66 percent, in the Tenth election to CADC, MNF received 49.32 percent votes and Congress received 39.96 percent from the total respondents. The respondents who voted for MNF declined to 49.32 percent in the tenth election. Congress vote share had a slight increase from 38.66 percent to 39.96 percent in the tenth election. The vote share of BJP had also increased from 2.66 percent to 6.66 percent in the tenth election. The study also revealed that in the CADC area, the respondents who voted for the same political party in both the State Legislative Assembly election and CADC election was quite high at 86.75 per cent and those who did not vote for the same party was only 13.32 percent.

Likewise, in the tenth and eleventh elections to MADC, Congress had the highest vote share among the political parties among the political parties that contested the election. 57.31 percent of the respondents voted for Congress, 31.92 percent of the respondents voted for MNF and 7.99 percent of the respondents voted for 'Others' in the Tenth election to MADC. The respondents who voted for the same political party in both the State Legislative Assembly election and MADC election was lower in the MADC area at 39.99 percent and those who did not vote for the same political party in both the State Assembly election and MADC election was much higher at 58.66 percent. This clearly shows that the voting pattern of the respondent is different from that of the State Assembly election.

In the 2015 LADC election, there was not much difference in the percentage of those who voted for MNF and Congress. Both the party received a vote share of 47.98 percent each in the 2015 LADC election. Other than MNF and Congress, the respondents voted for ZNP at 6.65. in the 2020 LADC election, the respondents who voted for MNF declined to 43.98 percent and those who voted for Congress showed a slight increase to 50.65 percent. ZNP also experienced a decline in vote share in the 2020 election to 3.99 and BJP also received a vote at 1.33 per cent. The study also reveals that there is not much difference between the respondents who voted for the same political party in the State Assembly election and the LADC election was 56.64 percent and those who did not vote for the same political party in both elections was 45.36 percent.

Elections to the Mara Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council are usually held before the Mizoram State Assembly elections. At the time when the Tenth election to MADC was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012, Congress was the ruling party in the State government. In the tenth term of MADC, Congress also held a majority in the MADC election and formed the government in MADC. The Seventh State Assembly election was held on 25<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2013 and Congress became the majority party by winning 34 seats out of 40. Dr. K. Beichhua from MNF was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Saiha Constituency though Congress was the ruling party in MADC. In the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018, MNF emerged as the single majority party by winning 26 seats and forming the government in the State, Dr. K. Beichhua from MNF was again elected as MLA from Saiha constituency, though Congress was the ruling party in MADC.

Likewise, in the Ninth election to CADC held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013 just 7 months before the Seventh election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, Congress won 17 seats and formed the government. When the State Assembly election was held in the same year on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 Dr. Buddha Dhan Chakma who resigned as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) was elected as MLA from Tuichawng constituency. In the Tenth election to CADC held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018, as there was no single majority party, a coalition government was formed by the two ideologically opposite parties Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian National Congress. It was the first instance of any coalition government as any political alliance between BJP and INC all over the country and it was indeed an unnatural political development that shocked and all including the political pundits. The reason is, the BJP and INC are never expected to enter into any political alliance as a coalition government. This development proved that political principle at the cost of the hunger for political power. However, the coalition government was short-lived.

In the same year, the Eight Mizoram State Assembly election was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and Buddha Dhan Chakma was elected as MLA from Tuichawng constituency. It is worth mentioning that Buddha Dhan Chakma who was elected as MLA from Tuichawng constituency in the Seventh State Assembly election from

Congress was re-elected as MLA from Tuichawng constituency in a BJP ticket after he defected to BJP. He resigned from Ministership of Congress government led by Lalthanhawla and he also resigned from membership in membership from Legislative Assembly. His defection help BJP to open its account in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly. The change from one political party to another party is not a new thing, especially in the Autonomous District Council areas of Mizoram. The reason being most of the politicians in the Sixth Schedule Area of Mizoram are chameleon-like politicians who can change their political parties.

The elections to the Lai Autonomous District Council are usually held when the State government is halfway to its ongoing term. The Tenth election to LADC was held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 and Congress emerged as the single majority party and formed the government in LADC. Before the tenth election to LADC, the Seventh term to the State Legislative Assembly led by Congress was ongoing and H. Zothangliana from INC was the elected MLA from Lawngtlai East Constituency. Before the expiry of the Tenth term to LADC, the Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and MNF emerged as the single majority party by winning 26 seats and formed the government led by Shri Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister and H. Biakzaua, an MNF candidate was elected as MLA form Lawngtlai East constituency. When the Eleventh election to LADC was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 MNF emerged as the largest winning party with 19 seats and formed the government led by Manghmunga Chinzah as the CEM, however, Manghmunga Chinzah-led government was defeated in the no-confidence motion by dissident MNF MDCs and opposition MDC which comprised of INC, BJP and Independents. As a result, V. Zirsanga from MNF was sworn in as CEM after the defeat of Manghmunga Chinzah in a no-confidence motion. Based on the data, it is evidently clear that the politics of LADC are dependent largely on State politics. Looking at the Tenth and Eleventh elections to LADC, the party that holds power in the State also formed the government in LADC. On the other hand, the electoral politics of MADC and CADC showed a slightly different pattern because elections to both CADC and MADC are usually held before the State Assembly elections, the State Assembly elections do not have much impact in the elections of the two ADCs.

The Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram are often characterized by political instability where instability is experienced mostly in coalition government. Since the formation of Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram, political instability has been experienced since the first term of LADC and CADC which was caused by the power tussle between politicians and the defection of elected members which was also the result of power hunger. Coalition governments in the ADCs are also characterized by instability. In ADC elections, independent candidates often appeared in the electoral fray and captured the seats and often acted as an important deciding factor in the formation of government. In the Tenth election to LADC held in 2015, 1 Independent candidate won from Lawngtlai AOC constituency and in the Eleventh election to LADC held in 2020, 3 independent candidates also won the election. On the other hand, in the tenth election to MADC held in 2012, 2 independent candidates also won the election and gave their support to Congress which won 15 seats in the election. In the Eleventh election to MADC, there were no Independent candidates and Congress emerged as the single majority party. However, there were no independent candidates that contest both the Ninth and Tenth elections to CADC.

In the Tenth term to LADC, the government was formed by Congress and functioned smoothly till the end of its term and in the Eleventh term to LADC, the government was formed by MNF and functioned smoothly till date. In the tenth term of MADC, the government was formed by Congress with the support of 2 independent candidates and functioned smoothly till the end of the term. In the eleventh term of MADC, the government was formed by Congress but before the completion of the eleventh term, MADC experienced a change of government due to the defection of all the elected members from Congress to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Surprisingly BJP government was formed, though the BJP could not even win a single seat in the eleventh election. In the meantime, the tenth term of CADC also experienced political turmoil due to the constant change of Chief Executive Member (CEM) which led to inefficient administration. In the tenth term of CADC, as there was no party that could secure a majority, the biggest rival in Indian politics, Congress and BJP formed a coalition government which was followed by political instability for 3 months, resulting in the frequent resignation of Chief Executive Members. This occurrence has resulted in the

imposition of the Governor's rule with effect from 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and appointed the Deputy Commissioner of Lawngtlai as the Caretaker on behalf of the Governor of Mizoram for a period of six months.<sup>263</sup> The frequent change in government has a negative impact on the people as the people are largely dependent on the ADCs which on the other hand have affected the welfare of the people.

The study also revealed that in the Second and third elections to Aizawl Municipal Corporation, the vote share of MNF was 39.98 percent each and the respondents who voted in favour of Congress was 49.39 percent in 2015 which declined to 23.99 percent in 2021. It is clear from the study that respondents did not favour political parties other than MNF and Congress in the 2015 AMC election. But in the 2021 AMC election, the number of respondents who have voted for ZPM is quite high at 37.31 percent. When the respondents were approached with the question of whether they had voted for the same political party in both the AMC and State Assembly elections, the response also showed that the percentage of those who did not vote for the same political party in both elections was much higher at 61.32 percent and those who voted for the same political party in both the election was 38.33 percent. This clearly shows that the voting pattern in the AMC and State Assembly election from the Aizawl West-I constituency does not have much difference.

The study also revealed that in the Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections, the factors that influence the voter's decision in deciding who to vote, in the Aizawl West-I constituency the voter's decision is mostly influenced by the quality and personality of the candidate which was the highest at 69.31 per cent and was also the highest among the self-employed respondent. Respondents from Tuichawng constituency on the other hand were more influenced by the political party at 54.66 per cent, which is also the highest among the daily labourers. The respondents from Lawngtlai East constituency also made their voting decision based on the quality and personality of the candidate which is 43.99 per cent, which is also the highest among self-employed respondents. Likewise, the respondents from Saiha constituency are also highly influenced by the candidate's quality and personality at

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<sup>263</sup> Government of Mizoram, District Council, and Minority Affairs Department. Notification No. A. 43016/3/2018-DC & MA@ /232.

46.65 percent which was also the highest among the farmers and daily labourers. The influence of kinship in the decision of the voter to vote was not very high though the influence can be seen more in the Autonomous District Council area which was 5.33 percent in Tuichawng constituency, 13.32 percent in Lawngtlai East Constituency and 11.99 percent at Saiha constituency while it was only 2.66 percent at Aizawl West-I constituency. On the other hand, when the respondent is approached with the question if the candidate from the same locality or same village has any impact on their voting decision, 15.99 percent of the respondents from Aizawl West-I, 9.31 percent of respondents from Lawngtlai East and 5.32 percent of the respondent from Saiha constituency mentioned that they have usually voted for the candidate who belongs to the same locality or same village of the respondent. Some respondent also stated that there is no specific reason that influenced their voting decision but still cast their votes as they consider voting as important.

One important fact that emerged from the study is that the respondents from the study area do not necessarily vote for the political party that is the ruling party in the State during elections in AMC or ADCs. 74.65 percent of the respondents from the Aizawl West-I constituency did not vote for the State ruling party in the AMC election. During MADC elections, the majority of the respondents 85.32 percent of the total respondent did not vote for the State ruling party. The same goes for the respondents from Lawngtlai East constituency, the majority of the respondents i.e. 51.98 percent did not vote for the ruling party in the State. Respondents from Tuichawng constituency also did not vote for the ruling political party in the State which was the lowest at 69.33 percent.

The study clearly shows that in both the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and the Autonomous District Council, the respondents have shown great importance to voting as it is evidently clear from the voters' turnout in the elections so far. The study revealed that even when a voter did not receive any freeship or assistance from the State government this does not bar the voters from casting their votes as they consider voting as an important duty for responsible citizen. Another factor is that, though most of the respondents do not register or affiliate themselves with political parties, this does not necessarily mean that the voters have no support for a particular

political party or have no interest in the political aspects of the State. Indeed, the respondents' side of support can be seen from the political party that they vote for in the elections. However, the support for a political party also in most of the case of support of leaders, family members and friends. A candidate's party affiliation is also an important factor that influences the voter's behaviour in casting his votes.

For the purpose of understanding the voting pattern in the State Legislative Assembly election, the study also revealed that in both the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, ADC and AMC elections, among the political parties that contest the elections, MNF and Congress parties are still the two largest political parties that could capture the votes at a larger number. Since the 2018 election, with the appearance of the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) in the electoral fray, the voter's attitude also witnessed a shift toward ZPM mostly in Aizawl i.e. Aizawl West-I constituency both in the State Assembly election and Aizawl Municipal Corporation. However, in the ADC area, both Congress and MNF still exist as the two largest political parties that the voters give their support. Other parties like ZNP, ZPM, MPC, PRISM, etc. could not perform well in the election. In other words, the BJP which could not establish its support in the Non-ADC area of the State, started appearing in the electoral scene in the ADC area of the State. In the 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, Buddha Dhan Chakma from Tuichawng Constituency won on a BJP ticket.

The pattern of voting behaviour in the State Legislative Assembly election and both the ADC and AMC elections is also characterized by the voter's choice of a candidate. The quality and personality of a candidate act as one of the most important elements in the voting behaviour of the voters. When the respondents were approached with various parameters to identify their preferences, the voters chose the candidate as their first priority in their voting decision. Moreover, a candidate who is well-educated is also highly preferred by the respondents.

Party manifestos are also one of the most important elements used by various political parties to win the support of voters in the election. In both the State Legislative Assembly election and both the AMC and ADC election, the manifesto of a political party has influenced almost all of the voters at 48.26 per cent of the total respondents. In



the meantime, those respondents who were not influenced by party manifestos were higher at 51.2 percent in the State Legislative Assembly election. In the ADC area, political parties particularly the National and State party whose party headquarter is in Aizawl issue their manifestos for elections but use the same manifestos issued by the party headquarters. However political parties during ADC elections usually have a different type of unwritten election manifestos based on local issues and aspirations. In AMC elections, various political parties to win elections issue manifestos which usually touch on local issues and development.

**Findings:** The findings of the study are summarized as:

**Similarities:**

- Characteristics of candidates play a crucial role in influencing voting behaviour in the State Legislative Assembly elections in both the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule Areas.
- Party identification plays a bigger role in influencing voting behaviour in the State Legislative Assembly elections. this identification is largely associated with the support of a candidate and party affiliation. Individual attachment and support towards a political party also influence the voting decision.
- Manifestos of political parties play a bigger role in the State Legislative Assembly elections.
- Due to the large area of constituencies and larger number of voters, the role of familial ties and relationships is minimal in State Legislative Assembly elections.
- Clan-based politics is minimal in State Legislative Assembly elections.
- The activities of MPF in elections of the State Legislative Assembly, Autonomous District Councils, and Aizawl Municipal Corporation show positive support from the voters except in the CADC election.

**Dissimilarities:**

- In ADC elections, rather than political party manifestos, campaign methods based on local issues have greater impact on voting behaviour.
- Party identification is less in local elections like ADC and AMC elections. the support and attachment toward a Candidate have more impact on voting behaviour.
- Familial ties and kinship relationships play a bigger role due to the smaller size of constituencies and smaller number of voters in ADC and AMC.
- Clan-based politics is prominent in the ADC elections, particularly in MADC and LADC elections.
- Factors like the use of money power, promise of jobs, etc., are more impactful in ADC elections.

**Role of Mizoram People Forum (MPF) in elections:**

Since the introduction of a formal electoral process in Mizoram, the State has witnessed a tranquil election and the participation of the masses in voting is also quite positive. However, since the 1970's the State has started witnessing an unhealthy electoral pattern like the use of money and muscle power in the election which was unknown in the past. The Churches in Mizoram felt the need to interfere in the electoral process. The role of the Church in the initial stage was concentrated on imparting awareness to the masses through appeals, election speeches, and requests to political parties to put up only upright and honest candidates in the elections. The scenario changed after the 2003 Mizoram Legislative Assembly election when unusual activities that were unheard of in the past began to surface in the said election. One such activity was when the media detected for the first time the indirect involvement of certain armed groups and the rampant use of money that resulted in huge election expenditures. Another incident that gave immense shock to the people of Mizoram was the Suangpuilawn kidnap case where candidates from the Suangpuilawn Constituency were kidnapped before the 2003 State Assembly poll. In the wake of the incident, the Synod

Social Front conducted a survey and came to realize the rising problems of unfair election practices.

As such, with the initiatives of Synod Social Front, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church in consultation with various churches, civil societies, political parties, etc., agreed upon the necessity to form a non-political social reform forum body for initiating campaigns and awareness for the conduct of free and fair election. With this initiative, the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was formed on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Though MPF was the initiative of the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, other Church denominations in Mizoram and voluntary organizations of Mizoram also became a member.<sup>264</sup>

The main focuses of MPF are on areas such as electoral reforms, political education, good governance, and political awareness. Since its inception, the MPF has taken up the role of election watchdog under the Church's influence for the conduct of free and fair elections. The activities of the MPF are extended through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with various political parties before the elections. The activities of MPF are taken up through its headquarters and its various bodies at the District level, Constituency level, and Local Level. For the successful conduct of the free and fair poll, the MPF also engages itself in spreading political awareness to the masses and the success of the activities of MPF also largely depends on the morality upheld by the general masses.

The role played by the MPF in monitoring the conduct of free and fair elections in Mizoram is unique and is one of the rarest cases in India. With regards to the role and activities of the MPF in conducting the free and fair election, leaders of the MPF at the headquarters, district forum, and political leaders were interviewed and expressed their opinions that the MPF could act as a watch-dog for free and fair election because of the involvement of various Church and voluntary organization, within the State as majority of the population are Christian, the respect for Church leaders is widely witnessed. On the other hand, the smooth working of the MPF is also hindered due to the non-participation of the Baptist Church of Mizoram in MPF in Lunglei District. After the appearance of the MPF, the state witnessed a fairer and freer election. Major Political parties with the initiatives of MPF could reach a

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<sup>264</sup> Opt. cit. p.1-3.

consensus in facing the election which minimized the unnecessary and extravagant expenditure of candidates.

Most of the leaders interviewed expressed their opinion that the MPF has done a great job and without the activities of the MPF elections would become more expensive and the practice of unfair and unhealthy means would become more and more unavoidable. On the other hand, there is a split opinion on the effectiveness and the success of MPF's activities by different leaders and politicians. There are few who opine that the existence of MPF indeed has reduced the number of electoral malpractices which result in the conduct of free and fair election. However, unfair electoral practices like the use of money power, transport of voters by candidates, and huge expenses on election campaigns is still prevalent in elections though these activities are not practised openly. The successful operation of the MPF is also largely due to the involvement of various Church organizations. As a majority of the population belongs to Christianity, the Church and the MPF are intertwined and day mas service became an important platform to educate and spread awareness among the voters and urge people of the State to reform themselves morally and ethically through biblical teaching and to implement Christian morality for cleansing politics as well as introduction of good governance.

The study also revealed that there exists a split in the opinion of the voters when it comes to the effectiveness and the success of MPF's activities as a watchdog for free and fair elections. The majority of the respondents i.e. 59.72 percent are aware of the activities of MPF while 34.91 percent of the respondents are not aware of the activities of MPF. Among the study areas, respondents from Tuichawng constituency are least aware of the MPF's activities. The reason may be the absence of the involvement of the Church of MPF in this area. The majority of the respondents i.e. 64.81 percent also opined that the MPF is not effective enough for the conduct of free and fair elections in the State. while 35.91 percent of the respondents on the other hand believed that MPF is effective enough for the conduct of free and fair elections.

Despite the diverse opinions on the role of the MPF as an effective election watchdog, certain groups of people have praised and criticized the MPF's extensive

efforts to help ensure a free, peaceful, and fair election. There has been a perception that the MPF is not very powerful in the post-election period. Their efforts have essentially been limited to achieving the organization's goals of establishing good governance, administrative reforms, or initiating a long-term, inclusive process of economic development. In 2018 the Wire wrote about how the Church-backed MPF set an example in monitoring the conduct of free and fair elections that subdued the rest of India with a mechanism to name and shame the wrongdoing by a candidate in the community. The Wire also appreciated the absence of no blaring loudspeakers, no raucous party, no violence, and less visibility of party flags and candidate posters that reflect a free and fair election.

The Economic Times also writes on how the Church-backed MPF stole the limelight to ensure adherence to all election-related activities of both the voters and political parties to ensure free polls. The Economic Times also writes that the Mizoram Chief Election Officer (CEO), Madhup Vyas appreciated the MPF for doing “Stellar work” in having a peaceful and ethical campaign. The CEO expressed “I am really happy to have the participation of a social organization like MPF. The ECI has also recognised their contribution in earlier elections. The involvement of social groups is essential in democracy”.<sup>265</sup>

Concerning the various elections such as the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, elections to the Autonomous District Councils and Aizawl Municipal Corporation the respondents have made various suggestions as given below:

**Suggestions:**

1. Use of money power is a prevalent practice during elections that has the potential to influence voters' independent decisions. As such, stringent steps need to be taken by Civil Societies to reduce such unethical practices.

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<sup>265</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/elections/assembly-elections/mizoram-assembly-elections/church-backed-watchdog-mpf-hogs-limelight-in-mizoram-polls/articleshow/105043323.cms> accessed on 23-12-2023.

2. Political parties in Mizoram must agree to abstain from nominating candidates with a record of corruption or who engage in unethical electoral practices.
3. During election campaigns, political parties and candidates must refrain from making unrealistic promises to influence the voters.
4. Voting is an intimidating task for older voters and illiterate voters; therefore, steps must be taken up to assist them in casting their ballots so they can exercise their right to vote confidently and worry-free.
5. The presence of MPF in the electoral scene has resulted in numerous reforms and unethical electoral practices. However, to serve as a watchdog for the holding of free and fair elections in the State of Mizoram, the MPF needs to be strength structurally and financially.
6. Political parties and candidates need to abstain from personal attacks and accusations and concentrate more on propagating party manifestos, policies, and programs.
7. MPF should monitor the activities of candidates and political parties in social media as social media is used for allegations and personal attacks on opponents which cause confusion among the voters.

With regards to the voting behaviour in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, the voters in the early period of Statehood cast their votes on the basis of their support for political parties but in recent years the voting pattern of the voters has shifted to the support of good leadership. The pattern of voting in the local elections and State elections are different so, political parties need to focus more on mobilizing voters from different sections of society through their manifestos and policies (Lalsawta, President MPCC: Personal Communication). On the other hand, to bring change and development in the State the people have no more faith in MNF and Congress and that is why the people started to vote for the Zoram People Movement (ZPM). The people of Mizoram also have faith in the policy of ZPM to bring about the change and development that they longed for, for a very long time. (Liansawta, President ZPM, Headquarter, Aizawl: Personal Communication).

The voting pattern in the State Legislative Assembly elections, due to the large area of Constituencies and the diversity in voters, the behaviour of the voters depended more on State politics rather than MADC politics. Leadership and candidate quality have contributed more to the voter's decision. In MADC elections, factors like the promise of jobs, energetic and active candidates, kinship, and clan linkage have contributed more significantly. There is not much party consideration while deciding who to vote for in the MADC election. The party leader's leadership style has an immediate impact on a voter's decision to cast a vote and a candidate's intellectual capacity is also crucial. (N. Chakhai, Working President, Mara Pradesh Congress Committee: Personal Communication)

Voters are more proactive and place higher value on the Autonomous District Council elections since they are the ones who will decide their fate for the next five years. The salaries of the ADCS employees have a significant impact on the economy of the Autonomous District Councils. Who will win the most seats and form the government has a significant influence on the voting behaviour of voters in ADCs. The voters do not think about an election manifesto or a party's policies; instead, they focus on whether a candidate will give them or a member of their family a job. Additionally, he said that the ADC region is a place where using financial power played a key role in winning the elections. Despite the fact that MPF's efforts are publicly visible, politicians and candidates used money to win the voters and promising voters to provide them with jobs and other benefits. Consequently, it is crucial to conduct house-to-house campaigns during election campaigns because it is one of the few opportunities for a candidate and voter to engage in a close conversation. (C. Lalsawmzuala, Treasurer MNF District Headquarter, Lawngtlai: Personal Communication)

The voters in the ADC region are more influenced by familial ties and relationships. A candidate frequently plays the politics of family cards and has a good probability of winning if they have a huge family network. The second is financial power. Regarding the use of money, majority of the voters believe that, regardless of how many times they vote for a candidate, neither they nor their community will gain benefit since a politician is always blinded for power and money. The election period

is therefore a time when voters believe they may exchange votes with money or extort money from candidates. (Rajesh Chakma, General Secretary, BJP Chakma District Core Committee: Personal Communication). The use of money power is common in elections. However, it is not the only element that affects how voters decide to cast their ballots. Candidates' personalities, intelligence levels, and other traits can also influence voters. The electorates are tired of candidates and political parties that run their campaigns on empty slogans like amending the Sixth Schedule for greater power, providing direct funding, etc. (Durya Dhan Chakma, Vice President MNF, Chakma District: Personal Communication) the politics of MADC are more influenced by national politics than state politics. The party will have more support in the future as a result of voters' perceptions that the Mizoram State government has consistently ignored the desires of ADC people and for the advancement and development of ADCs in Mizoram, it is more likely to support the national party than join hands with State or regional parties. (N. Beikhai, Vice President, BJP Saiha District)

Despite the diverse opinions on the factors that influence the voting behaviour in the Mizoram State Assembly elections, Autonomous District Councils, and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections, the pattern of the voting behaviour shows more or fewer similarities in State Legislative Assembly election in the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule area. But the voting behaviour shows a different pattern in local elections like Autonomous District Councils and Aizawl Municipal elections as voters are more influenced by local issues, familial ties, and kinship relationships. Looking at the electoral history of the State of Mizoram, the Mizo National Front and Indian National Congress are the two political parties that could establish their support base throughout the State of Mizoram and have electoral success. There are times when region-based political parties, especially in the Autonomous District Councils area make their appearance and have a success in the electoral fray but they are short-lived. Another important factor is the influence of a candidate on the voters has played a significant role but still the party's affiliation of a candidate cannot be side-lined.



Voting behaviour is a dynamic process and this study is solely based on the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, the Tenth and Eleventh elections to Mara Autonomous District Council and Lai Autonomous District Council, the Ninth and Tenth elections to Chakma Autonomous District Council and the Second and Third elections to Aizawl Municipal Corporation.

## Appendix

### Survey Questionnaire

#### Elections in Mizoram: A Study of Voting Behaviour

#### Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, Mizoram University. The data collected through these questions will be used to understand the voting behaviour of the people in the Seventh and Eighth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, 2013 and 2018, and the voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Councils and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections. The information obtained will be used for academic purposes only. Please be assured that your response will be held completely confidential.

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Constituency:

AMC Ward/ADC:

Occupation:

1. Govt. Employee      ()
2. Self-employed      ()
3. Farmer              ()
4. Daily Labourer     ()
5. Student             ()

Educational Qualification:

1. HSLC
2. HSSLC
3. Graduate
4. Master Degree

1. Do you consider voting as important?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
2. Do you register in any political party?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
3. Do you receive any freeship (NLUP/SEDP) from the government?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. Which party do you vote for in the 2013 MLA election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
5. Which party do you vote for in the 2018 MLA election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZPM
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP

f) Others

6. Do you vote for the same party in both elections?

a) Yes

b) No

7. Who influences you in your voting decision?

a) Myself

b) Family

c) Friends

8. Do election manifestos of political parties influence you in your voting decisions?

a) Yes

b) No

9. Which factor influences you the most in your voting decisions?

a) Political party identification

b) Candidate

c) Party Manifestos

d) No specific reason

10. What type of person do you prefer as your MLA? (Select not more than three)

a) Senior Politician

b) Active Party Member

c) Well educated

d) Good Speaker

e) Wealthy Candidate

f) Socially active person

g) Young and energetic person

11. Any suggestion relating to elections can be written here

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**Questionnaire for Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) elections, 2013 and 2018.**

1. Which party do you vote for in the 2013 CADC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
2. Which party do you vote for in the 2018 CADC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
3. Do you vote for the same party in the MLA and CADC elections?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. What influences you the most in your voting decision?
  - a) Political party
  - b) Candidate
  - c) Kinship
  - d) Locality or Village
  - e) No specific reason
5. Do you vote for the political party in the CADC election who holds power in the State?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No

**Questionnaire for Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) elections, 2012 and 2017.**

1. Which party do you vote for in the 2012 MADDC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
2. Which party do you vote for in the 2017 MADDC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
3. Do you vote for the same party in the MLA and MADDC elections?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. What influences you the most in your voting decision?
  - a) Political party
  - b) Candidate
  - c) Kinship
  - d) Locality or Village
  - e) No specific reason
5. Do you vote for the political party in The MADDC election that holds power in the State?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No

**Questionnaire for Lai Autonomous District Council elections (LADC), 2015 and 2020.**

1. Which party do you vote for in the 2015 LADC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
2. Which party do you vote for in the 2020 LADC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
3. Do you vote for the same party in the MLA and LADC elections?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. What influences you the most in your voting decision?
  - a) Political party
  - b) Candidate
  - c) Kinship
  - d) Locality or Village
  - e) No specific reason
5. Do you vote for the political party in the LADC election who holds power in the State?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No



**Questionnaire for Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections, 2015 and 2021.**

1. Which party do you vote for in the 2015 AMC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
2. Which party do you vote for in the 2021 AMC election?
  - a) MNF
  - b) Congress
  - c) ZNP
  - d) MPC
  - e) BJP
  - f) Others
3. Do you vote for the same party in the MLA and AMC elections?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. What influences you the most in your voting decision?
  - a) Political party
  - b) Candidate
  - c) Kinship
  - d) Locality or Village
  - e) No specific reason
5. Do you vote for the political party in the AMC election who holds power in the State?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
6. Any suggestions relating to elections can be written here \_\_\_\_\_

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**ABSTRACT**

**ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF VOTING  
BEHAVIOUR**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY**

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## Abstract

### Introduction

In a contemporary political system, democracy or otherwise, elections are the most significant aspects for they remain the first and foremost touchstone based on which the parameters of representation and legitimacy of a system are to be judged. Elections though complicated, provide a link between the society and the polity and between the traditional social systems and evolving political structures. Therefore, the elections must be analyzed within the context of the complete political and social systems.

Besides being a formal act of collective decision, they involve a stream of connected antecedent and subsequent behaviour and a concatenation of thousands of events, significant and trivial. Nevertheless, elections perform different roles in different political systems. In some situations, they are the central while in others they may be peripheral. Thus, the Elections are devices for legitimacy, identification, integration, communication, political education, participation, socialization, mobilization, conflict resolution, political choice, and political control, and are inextricably linked with the distinctive characteristics, traditions, experiences, values and goals of different political systems. Broadly, an election may be regarded as the procedure for authoritatively aggregating the political preferences of the mass electorate.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the new states in the developing world, elections in India have been central, not peripheral to the system. They have no doubt, been conditioned by the ancient, heterogeneous and basically traditional nature of the social system and the general environmental factors; they have also greatly influenced the nature and evolution of the entire political system termed as “the immense transformational impact of our electoral system” by Imtiaz Ahmed in Sushma Yadav’s *Election Commission and Electoral Process*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sushma Yadav. (2018). *Election Commission and Electoral Process*. Pearson Publication: Uttar Pradesh, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> Opt. cit., p. 278.

Voting is one of the most commonly used terms in contemporary age of democratic politics. The ever-increasing popularity of democratic theory and practice has even made this term a household name. In democratic system, and their number is quite large and ever increasing, each adult citizen uses "voting", as a means of expressing his approval or disapproval of government decisions, policies and programmes of various political parties and qualities of candidates who are engaged in struggle to get the status of being the representatives of people.<sup>3</sup>

The study of voting behaviour has different connotations for different academic disciplines and the factors/variables they probe and compute are also different from each other. The sociological or social contextual approach refers to the social settings in which the individuals or voters function and their voting behaviour is affected by it. On the other hand, the discipline of political science computes voting behaviour using political factors such as electoral issues, political programs, electoral campaigns, and the popularity of the political parties and leaders based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The focus of political science on enquiry in election study has focused on three main areas: the structure and motivations of the electorate, the operation and effect of the party and election system, and the impact of social and political institutions on voting behaviour. Political theorists are concerned with understanding the political community and the political animal, and to understand them eventually by means of precise and general statements.<sup>4</sup>

Samuel S. Eldersveld in his "*Theory and Method in Voting Behaviour Research*" writes the term "voting behaviour" is not new. But it has been used of late to describe certain areas of study and types of political phenomenon which previously had either not been conceived or were considered irrelevant." The study of electoral behaviour constitutes a very significant area of empirical investigation. The electoral behaviour displays the astounding fact that the behaviour of man is influenced by several irrational

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<sup>3</sup> Biraj Hazarika. Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Vol. 20. Issue.10, Ver. IV (Oct, 2015). p.22.

<sup>4</sup> Sanjay Kumar Measuring Voting Behaviour.P.7



factors, influence of money or charismatic personality of a leader and a host of irrational factors can have their influence on the minds of the voters.<sup>5</sup>

India is the largest working democracy in the world. In the latest Lok Sabha election in 2019, the voter's turnout was 67.11 per cent beating the previous turnout of 65.95 per cent notched up in 2014, according to the data released by Election Commission of India. Generally, India as a whole, the voting behavior is influenced by various factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, purpose of the polls, extent of franchise and the like political parties and groups make use of these factors for the sake of winning the battle of ballot box. Politicians despite making their professions for enlightened secularism, can be found making appeals to religious and communal sentiments of the people, and are also found involved in exploiting the factors of language and money to achieve the purpose of emerging successful in the war of votes.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Theoretical aspects of voting behaviour:**

The scientific study of voting behaviour is marked by three major research schools: the sociological school, often identified as School of Columbia, with the main reference in Applied Bureau of Social Research of Columbia University, whose work begins with the publication of the book *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944) and focuses on the influences of social factors; The Psychological model, also identified as School of Michigan, which has its major reference in the work of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960)- *The American Voter*-and assumes that party identification is the main factor behind the behaviour of voters; and rational choice theory also referred to as a model of economic voting, or even as School of Rochester, whose landmark work is the work of Anthony Downs (1957)- *An Economic Theory of Democracy*-and that puts emphasis on variables such as rationality, choice, uncertainty and information.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Zahida Akhter, Younis Ah. Sheikh. (2014). Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, Vol 4. No. 8, 2014. p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> Opt.cit. p.23.

<sup>7</sup> Rui Antunes. Theoretical Models of Voting Behaviour. Escola Superior de Educacao-Instituto Politecnico de Coimbra. P.146.

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF MIZORAM**

To understand the electoral history of Mizoram, the electoral politics of Mizoram since Mizo District Council era, electoral politics in Union Territory era and after Statehood should be traced back. Since the formation of the Lushai Hills District Advisory Council in 1948, the Mizo Union completely dominated the electoral scene. An Advisory Council election was held, out of 35 members 10 seats were reserved for the Chief's Representatives and 25 were reserved for commoner representatives. The Advisory Council was changed into Advisory Committee in 1949, which functioned till 1951.<sup>8</sup>

From the first election to the third election to the District Council, Mizo Union dominated the electoral scene and formed the Executive Committee (government).<sup>9</sup> The Fourth election was to be held in 1967 but it was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1970 due to Mizo National Front (MNF) Insurgency. At the fourth and last election to the Mizo District Council, the Congress party won 10 seats. But the Congress was unable to form a stable government (Executive Committee) in the District Council. As a result, the Mizo Union formed a coalition government headed by Ch. Chhunga as the Chief Executive Member which lasted till the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972.<sup>10</sup>

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE UNION TERRITORY OF MIZORAM**

The first election to the Legislative Assembly of the newly elevated Union Territory of Mizoram was held on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1972 and total number of elected seats in the Legislative Assembly was 30. The Mizo Union won 21 seats, Indian National Congress (INC) won 6 seats and Independent candidates won 3 seats.<sup>11</sup> The first government of the Union Territory of Mizoram was formed by the Mizo Union with Ch. Chhunga as the first Chief Minister.<sup>12</sup> In the second election to the Legislative Assembly election, the People's Conference (PC) got a landslide victory by winning 22 seats out of

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<sup>8</sup> Jankhongam Doungei. (2010), *Evolution of District Autonomy in Mizoram*. Spectrum Publication: Guwahati, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Lalrintluanga. (2016). *The Genesis and Functioning of the Mizo District Council*. Spectrum Publication: Guwahati, P. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Op.cit., p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> K. C. Lalthansanga, op.cit., p. 10

<sup>12</sup> A.P.K Singh. (2016), *Political Scenario of Mizoram: Past and Present*, Mittal Publication: New Delhi, p. 84.

30 seats, a PC government was formed with Brig. T. Sailo as the Chief Minister. The third election was held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1979, it was a mid-term poll. Out of 30 seats, PC won 18 seats, INC won 5 seats, People's Conference (B) won 4 seats and Janata Party won 2 and Independent candidate won 1 seat.<sup>13</sup> The fourth and the last election to the Union Territory Legislative Assembly was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1984. The election resulted in a decisive victory for the Congress by winning 20 seats and formed the government under the leadership of Lalthanhawla and remained in power till Mizoram became a full-fledged State.<sup>14</sup>

### **ELECTORAL POLITICS AFTER STATEHOOD**

After Mizoram become a full-fledged State, the electoral scene was more or less characterized by two party dominant system wherein Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) were interchangeably voted into power. Even though there were times when smaller parties joined either INC or MNF to form coalition government, the dominant parties happened to be either INC or MNF. The first election of the State Legislative Assembly was held in 1987 and MNF formed the first State Government with Laldenga as Chief Minister by winning 24 seats. However, Laldenga's Ministry could not survive a year due to internal party problems.<sup>15</sup> As a result, a mid-term election was conducted in 1989 and Congress formed the State government with Lalthanhawla as Chief Minister by winning 23 seats.

The third Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election which was held on November, 1993 and coalition government was formed by the Indian National Congress (INC) led by Lalthanhawla and the Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) led by Brig. T. Sailo were the coalition partners. However, before the coalition ministry had completed its full term, the MJD was thrown out from the Ministry and it subsequently became pure INC Ministry.<sup>16</sup> In the fourth Mizoram Legislative Assembly held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1998,

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<sup>13</sup> K. C. Lalthansanga, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> A.P.K. Singh, op.cit., p. 112.

<sup>15</sup> K. C. Lalmalsawmzauva, Which Political Party is Where: Voting Behaviour in Aizawl City, *www.researchgate.net*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340571606>. accessed on 01-04-2021.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph C. Lalremruata. (2018). *Assembly Elections in Mizoram: A Study of Fifth to Seventh Assembly Elections (2003-2013)*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Mizoram University, p. 27.

the MNF led by Zoramthanga won 21 seats and MPC led by Brig. T. Sailo won 12 seats and they formed coalition government.<sup>17</sup>

The Fifth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2003. The MNF won 21 seats and formed the government again with Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for the second time. After the MNF Ministry led by Zoramthanga had completed its full term, the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008. In this election, the then ruling party MNF party could secure only 3 seats and this poor result of MNF had surprised not only the voters but also its party workers. The Congress had a thumping majority by winning 32 seats from the total 40 seats. The Congress had formed new Ministry with Lalthanhawla as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for the Fourth time. The essentiality of the Sixth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly was that the Mizoram People Forum (MPF) which was formed way back in 2006 could play a constructive role in the conduct of free and fair elections.<sup>18</sup>

The Seventh State Legislative Assembly election was successfully held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013. The Indian National Congress led by Lalthanhawla returned to power in this election with an unexpected victory by securing 34 seats out of the total 40 seats.<sup>19</sup>The Eight State Legislative Assembly election of Mizoram was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018. In this election, the MNF returned to power by winning 26 seats. The MNF led by Zoramthanga formed the government. In this election, the newly formed political forum Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) surprisingly won 8 seats out of nowhere and emerged as the second-largest party in the State Legislative Assembly.

## **ELECTORAL POLITICS OF THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AREA OF MIZORAM**

Since the formation of the first executive Committee, the ADCs has faced political instability due to the desire for coveted post by the politicians and defections of elected members. The Indian National Congress (INC), and Janata Party start dominating the electoral scene since the first two terms of MADC and LADC. In the first term of MADC, the Mara Freedom Party (MFP) which was formed in 1963

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

dominated the election by securing majority seats but the MFP was merged with Indian National Congress (INC) in 1975. The MFP which was merged with Congress was later merged with Janata Party in 1977. In 1980, when the INC came to power in the Central, Janata Party was again re-merged to INC. Since then Congress has been dominating the electoral politics of MADC till the Sixth term of MADC.

The first term of LADC was contested between Congress led by F. Manghnuna faction and Congress led by L. Chinzah faction. Both the Party emerged as result of split in the Congress Party. The second term witnessed the appearance of Mizoram People's Conference (MPC), Janata Party and United Pang's People Party (UPPP). Janata Party was later merged with Indian National Congress. Since the Third term of LADC, Congress started dominating the electoral scene. Mizo National Front (MNF) also start dominating the electoral politics of LADC since the Sixth term of LADC. Since the first term, LADC had faced political instability due to the desired for coveted post by the politicians and defections of elected members. there was no party politics in the first two terms of CADC. Since the third term party politics paved its way in CADC politics and Congress dominated the electoral politics with minor opposition from other parties.

### **Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC)**

The AMC started functioning from July 1, 2008 at its office at Thuampui Veng, Aizawl. The Council office was headed by Chief Executive Officer. And on June 12, 2007 the State Government of Mizoram, Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Department of Mizoram and the Union Ministry of Urban Development signed a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The MoA explicitly binds the state government to implement reform agenda under the JNNURM (such as establishment of ULB under 74th Amendment), failure to do so would entail withholding subsequent installments of grants given from the Central government to the state of Mizoram. There are 19 wards in Aizawl Municipal Corporation, 6 wards are reserved for women. The total number of 6 (Six) seats/wards nearest to 1/3rd out of the number of 19 seats in Aizawl Municipality shall be reserved for women by

rotation and the Scheduled Castes population in Aizawl Municipality mainly consists of the persons employed in various Departments of the Government of Mizoram.<sup>20</sup>

The Aizawl Municipal Corporation (formerly Council) started functioning from July 1, 2008 at its office at Thuampui Veng, Aizawl. The Corporation office is headed by a Municipal Commissioner. The first election to the 19-member AMC held in November 2010 saw the Indian National Congress and Zoram Nationalist Party alliance forming the council (INC =5, ZNP =5) and the opposition alliance Mizo National Front and the Mizoram People Conference trailing by just one seat (MNF=5, MPC=4).<sup>21</sup>

In the 2015 AMC election, though MNF was the opposition party in the State Legislative Assembly, MNF could secure 11 seats out of the total 19 seats it contested. The remaining 8 seats went to the Congress-MPC alliance. The Congress bagged 7 seats out of 14 seats it contested while the MPC could managed to garner only 1 seat out of the 5 seats it contested. Unlike the previous election, the MPC and ZNP suffered a setback in terms of the seat won and vote share. The ZNP made an electoral alliance with the BJP and contested 12 seats and 4 seats respectively in which both the party drew blank. The MNF party had performed very well in terms of seats won though it was an opposition in the State and formed the government in AMC by voting out the ruling Congress-led alliance after the completion of one term which is unlike the trend that people witnessed in the State Legislative Assembly elections.

The first election to the 19-member AMC held in November 2010 saw the Indian National Congress and Zoram Nationalist Party alliance forming the council (INC=5, ZNP=5) and the opposition alliance Mizo National Front and the Mizoram People Conference trailing by just one seat (MNF=5, MPC=4).<sup>22</sup> The third election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation was held on 16.02.2021. Out of the 19 seats, MNF won 11 seats, ZPM won 6 seats and INC won 2 seats.<sup>23</sup> Since the formation of

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/94392205/Municipality-Mizoram#>

<sup>21</sup> <https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/amc-inthlanna-results>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> <https://sec.mizoram.gov.in/page/party-wise-result-of-ge-to-amc-2021> retrieved on 14-11-2023.

Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), the performance of MNF is quite good and could form the government since the first term of AMC.

## **VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN MIZORAM**

The political landscape of Mizoram in the erstwhile Mizo District Council and the early part of Union Territory of Mizoram, was more or less dominated by the Mizo Union. After Statehood in 1986, it was more or less characterized by the two-party dominant system of politics wherein Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) captured power interchangeably voted to power even though there was a time when smaller political parties were joining the bandwagons on and off. Before statehood, political issues like abolition of Chieftainship, independence, peace accord, etc., dominated Mizoram electoral politics and have now become issues of the past.

Apart from development issue, unification of the Zo-ethnic tribes and to put them under one common platform or administrative unit, greater power for the Autonomous District Council in the ADCs area are still one of the common interested zones among political parties during elections. Hence, this issue has been raised in every election by major political parties through their election manifestoes and campaign speeches. Since 2003, it has been possible to state that the main issues of elections in Mizoram have been development, corruption, agricultural sector, education and unemployment problem.<sup>24</sup>

In the State Assembly Election held in 2008, the INC secured 32 seats out of 40 seats, the victory of the INC shows the influence of Congress's New Land Use Policy (NLUP) which was the main poll plank of the party. NLUP, which was the flagship programme of the State Government led by INC, was largely still attractive and convincing to voters which subsequently led to the victory of the INC in the 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election. In the post-Statehood period, the MNF and the Indian National Congress formed the government alternately alone or in coalition with other parties in the State as well as the ADCs. MNF and Congress were the two largest parties that could cover the whole of Mizoram, though regional parties and sub-regional parties other than MNF were formed and captured the political arena,

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph C. Lalremruata, *op.cit.*, p. 316.

they were short-lived. From past experience, it is evidently clear that the voters give more preference to the MNF and INC and regional political parties like ZNP (merged to Zoram People's Movement), MPC could not gained much ground in the ADC areas.

### **Role of Mizoram People Forum in Elections:**

The role played by the MPF in monitoring the conduct of free and fair elections in Mizoram is quite unique and is one of the rarest cases in India. With regards to the role and activities of the MPF in conducting the free and fair election, leaders of the MPF at the headquarters, district forum and political leaders were interviewed and expressed their opinions that the MPF could act as a watch-dog for free and fair election because of the involvement of various Church and voluntary organization, within the State as the majority of the population are Christian, the respect for Church leaders is widely witnessed. On the other hand, the smooth working of MPF is also hindered due to the non-participation of the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM) in MPF. After the appearance of the MPF, the state witnessed a fairer and freer election. Major Political parties with the initiatives of the MPF could reach a consensus in facing the election which minimized the unnecessary and extravagant expenditure of candidates.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Raisa Ali in his book, "*Representative Democracy and Concept of Free and Fair Elections*" deals with the evolution of democracy in India and the electoral process, free and fair elections, evolution and nature of universal suffrage. The author also gives a brief introduction about the general electoral Roll in India and explains the importance of electoral roll, and also points out the concept of universal right to contest election. He also stresses on the importance of secret voting and explains the various components of election such as electoral office, electorates, candidates, political parties, constituencies, mass media, electoral machinery and electoral system. The author also highlights the power, functions and role of the Election Commission of India in preparation of the electoral roll, superintendence, direction and control over the conduct of elections etc. The author also evaluates the various electoral corrupt practices and offences such as bribery, undue influence, appeal on the ground of religion, race, caste, etc. The author also gives valuable suggestion on how to enforce free and fair election.



Biraj Hazarika in his article “*Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants*” highlights the various determinants of the behaviour of Indian voters such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, purpose of the poll, extent of franchise, political wave, etc. In this paper, the author also points charisma as one of the important element in winning elections especially when the group is weak. He also states how other elements like caste, religion and language are used by political parties to woo the voter by politicizing these factors, formulating policies and programme and strategizing elections. Other factors like money, sub-nationalism and performance of party in power, mass literacy, factionalism and public esteem of the candidate, election campaign are also analyzed.

Heinz Eulau in his “*The Columbia Studies of Personal Influence: Social Network Analysis*” makes an analysis of the contribution of the Columbia studies, the influence of social networks which is quite relevant in today’s world. He also critically analyses upon the Columbia studies where he states that the findings of Erie County investigators falsified the image of autonomous and rational voters. The voters often made up their minds rather early in campaigns. He also states that personal and face-to-face communication seems to be more effective in determining the vote decisions than direct exposure to media. He also makes a critical analysis on the personal influence and social interaction method of the Columbia studies to understand the psychological model of voting behaviour.

Jungug Choi in his article “*Strategic Voting in India: Its Extent and Determinants in the 2004 General Election*” make an analysis on the strategic voting in India based on individual voter’s preference. The study shows that the strategic voting is determined by logistic function of information, participation in partisan activities, education, middle class identification, Scheduled caste membership, being Muslim and strategic alliances. The study also tend to identify whether the strategic voting of the Muslim and Scheduled Caste contradict. This study also mainly focuses on how the voters cast their ballots when their favorite parties are unlikely to win the election.

L. H. Chhuanawma in “*Determinants of Voting Behaviour in Mizoram*” made an illuminating study on the various factors that determined the voting behaviour in

Mizoram. He pointed out how the people voted based on the partisan attachment to his/her party and the “Delhi factor” or “Delhi syndrome acts as an important political determinants. He also observes how the economic condition of the voter acts as a factor in influencing his choices which is evidently clear from the 2008 and 2013 Assembly Election. The performance of the Congress in this election was beyond expectation due to its flagship programme, NLUP. L. H. Chhuanawma also observes that factors like religion, social and cultural, regionalism, personality and role of public opinion and mass media acts as an important factor in determining the behaviour of the voters.

Mulyana Abdullah, Kama A. Hakim, Wilodati and Ratnafitria made an insightful study on the influence of party identification among the voters in Indonesia in their paper “*Analysis of Vote Behaviour: Psychological Study of Vote Behaviour on Young Generation*”). The study identifies that voting behaviour among young voters has been planted through interaction with social site and can emerged from themselves as novice voters. Party identification of the younger generation also emerged out of the loyalty and alignment towards party policies and programmes. The psychological power of political participation of society through voluntary of people also acts as part of choosing who to vote.

Sanjay Kumar and Praveen Rai’s book titled “*Measuring Voting Behaviour In India*” is an important guide in understanding the voting behaviour, tracing the origin of election survey in India and measuring the voting behaviour and attitudes through pre-poll and exit polls. The study clearly pointed out how election surveys were conducted by media and polling organizations to measure the popular mood of the voter during elections, the voter’s choice of political parties and leaders, and the voting intentions of the electorates. The authors also pointed out the various research methods for studying the voting behaviour of the electorates like sample survey, case study and participation observatory study. The modes of interview techniques, importance of scientific sampling in election survey, methods of sampling used in election survey and the basic parameters that need be followed in framing a good questionnaire for measuring voting behaviour and attitudes were found in this book.

Staffan I. Lindberg and Minion K. C. Morrison in their research article “*Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic? Survey Evidence from Ghana*” focus mainly on individual voter, the influence of clientelism or ethnic and family ties. The study brings insightful knowledge on the voting behaviour of the Ghanaian based on evaluative rational and non-evaluative rational voting. The authors focus mainly on the voter’s judgment of the performance of the party or representatives on policies. The two possible voting behaviour based on clientelistic voting base on personal effective ties of family, ties or patronage and proxy voting influenced and driven by ethnic, clan or family ties. The study reveals that the conventional study on African voting often point out the role of ethnic card however, in reality this has been overrated and only few voters seem to think in terms of tribal loyalties which cannot be explained as the outcome of voting. The average Ghanaian voters are more mature and look to national and general policies concern.

The book “*Electoral Politics in India: The Resurgence of the Bharatiya Janata Party*” is a book edited by Suhas Palshikar, Sanjay Kumar and Sanjay Lodha which contain Eighteen essays by prominent authors. This book deals with the analysis of the historic win of the BJP in the elections of 2014 Lok Sabha and the humiliating defeat and failure of the Indian National Congress (INC) in this election. They also focus on why and how the BJP saw massive win in the State of Uttar Pradesh which contributed over 26 percent seats to BJP by winning 71 out of 80 seats. Besides this, they also attended to those States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha why the BJP could not performed well. This book also focuses on leadership, locality, age, class and media exposure as important determinants in these elections.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, Economic and Political Weekly published “Special Statistics: 2013 State Election: *2013 Legislative Assembly Election, Mizoram.*” In this article, an analysis on the 2013 State Legislative Assembly Election was done. It highlights the number of candidates, voters’ turnout and the outcome of the said election. This article also analysis the seats contested, votes secured by major parties and highlights the change in seats won, voters’ turnout from the previous election i.e., 2008 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Election.

Lallianchhunga in his article “*Mizoram: The Congress Holds Its Ground*” made a study on the election to the Lok Sabha in Mizoram seat held in 2009. He observes that the people in Mizoram give privileged to their local issues over the national issues and remained largely unaffected by fluctuations in national politics. He also observes that people voted mostly based on the state government performance and the voters in deciding whom to vote, the candidate mattered more than the parent political party on whose ticket the candidate stood for. He also stated that the Congress was able to consolidate its support base among the minority communities in the state such as the Hmars, Chakmas, Lais, Maras and Brus who all voted for the Congress Party.

Ayangbam Shyamkishor in his article “*Electoral Performance of the Mizo National Front*” evaluates the electoral performance of the Mizo National Front (MNF) since the post-statehood era. The author made a critical evaluation on the performance of MNF in the State Assembly election and that factors like championing of Mizo Identity and Nationalism, the charismatic leadership of Laldenga , the promise to implement all the terms and conditions in the Peace Accord, makes MNF popular in the early period of Statehood. However, the internal crisis within the party, the demise of Laldenga, the charge of corruption, nepotism and maladministration of MNF Ministry reduced the popularity of MNF. The author made a critical evaluation that the party needs to change its leadership, revived, reviewed and modified its policies to suit the pulse of the people so as to strengthen the party.

“*Electoral Politics in Mizoram: Emerging Issues and Trends*” is an important book on the study of electoral politics in Mizoram edited by Lalmalsawma Khiangte and F. Lalramhluni. This book contains research based work of 22 authors who solely focused on an in depth analysis on the various issues and trends, particularly the Eight State Legislative Assembly Election held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. This book discusses various electoral issues like counter charges of political alliances, attempts for establishment of alternate fronts, analysis of political manifestos and policies, political participation of women in politics, a study on voting behaviour etc.

Praveen Rai “*Electoral Participation of Women In India: Key Determinants and Barriers*” make an analytical study on the female participation in the lower house of

Parliament and in Legislative assemblies, candidature in electoral competition participating as members and functionaries of political parties, active campaigners for political parties and women as single time voters. The only level where women achieved some degree of parity are as voters in election. Various determinants like media exposure, social networking, interest in politics, voting discretion, the importance of the vote and demographic variables determined women's participation in electoral competition both as voters and campaigners.

Pravin H Sheth in his article "*Indian Electoral Behaviour: Patterns of Continuity and Change*" explains about the various functions of elections in India. He analyzed the major trends in the 1967 and 1971 Lok Sabha elections. He explained how the Indian electorate had begun to show a consciousness of the meaning and power, how the electorate exercised his vote without being conditioned by caste and local influences, and how Congress still enjoyed mass support. In the 1971 Lok Sabha election, the major trends that set forth the election were the rejection of unpolarized and unprincipled coalition politics, rejection of rightist forces at the poll, decline of 'vote banks' and the key men. He also analyses various vote banks such as caste, heads of leaders of sects and communities, princes, landlords, industrialists and the influential persons who acts as intermediary between their pockets and functioned as link between the voters and the party or the candidate lost their influence and power. He also explained on the various pattern of mass mobilization, development of mass politics, elite-mass relationship etc.

"*Election Manifesto is the Key Determinant of Voting Behaviour in Tamil Nadu Electoral Politics*" is a research article written by K. Saravana Rajasena and A. Thanikoda in which the authors explained how voting bahaviour in India is influenced by various factors such as religion, community, caste, language, ideology etc. The authors also highlight how current events like problem faced by common man and new political development has been used by opposition parties which contribute to the voting behaviour in a major way. Local issues in Tamil Nadu also acts as a major determinants in voting behaviour.

"*Political Development in Mizoram: Focus on the Post Accord Scenario*" authored by Padmalaya Mahapatra and Lalngaihkawia Zote is an article on the political

development in Mizoram which highlights the electoral politics in the First to the Fifth State Legislative Assembly Election. The authors also highlight the Lok Sabha election held in February, 1998. In this election, Dr. H. Lalungmuana backed by MNF and MPC was elected. In the 1999 Lok Sabha election held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, Vanlalawma, the common candidate of MNF and MPC won the election. The authors also highlight the role of civil societies like Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) etc. and the Churches and their influence on the policies of the government for e.g. The Mizoram Total Liquor Prohibition Act which was passed under the influence of the Churches and other Civil Societies in the State.

Sushma Yadav in her essay “*Election Commission and Electoral Process*” gives an insightful discussion on elections as an important element that makes it possible for the citizens to exercise a genuine and meaningful degree of political choice and control. The author gives an overview of the basic constitutional provisions regarding the franchise and elections. He also highlights the jurisdiction of the Election Commission as wide enough to include all powers necessary for the smooth conduct of elections. The author also observes that the electoral politics in India is very much influenced by religion, linguistic and regional cleavage that act as the most powerful factor in determining party choice. He also makes an in depth study on the factors that caused drawbacks and malpractices to the working of the Indian electoral system such as multiplicity of political parties, personality cult in party system, exploitation of caste and communal loyalties, role of muscle and money power, misuse of government machinery, fraudulent practices including booth-capturing, intimidation and impersonation. The author also highlights the necessary agenda for electoral reforms such as change in the Electoral System, restructuring the Election Commission, strengthening the Electoral Machinery, curbing the influence of money and muscle power to ensure free and fair election.

Waiphot Kulachai, Unisa Lerdtomornsakul and Patipol Homyamyen make a comprehensive literature review on the factors influencing voting decision in their paper “*Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour: A Comprehensive Literature Review*” in which they highlight the various elements that influence the voting decision such as the individual level factors, socio-cultural factors, and political factor. Income, education,

gender, age, political ideology, personality traits, intelligence traits and issue concern are the individual level factors. Social identity, ethnicity and race, religion, media influence and social influence constitute the socio-cultural factors. Party identification, candidate characteristics, policy positions, campaign strategies and economic conditions are the political level factors. These factors collectively shape the democratic process and have the implications for the functioning of democratic system. Some of the key implications are representation, accountability, policy outcomes, democratic legitimacy, political culture and engagement, social cohesion.

Zahida Akhter and Younis Ah. Sheikh make an insightful study of determinants of voting behaviour in *Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective*. The authors stresses out that voting behaviour of men is influenced by several irrational factors and pressure groups in invoking religious and communal factors, the influence of money or the charismatic personality of a leader. The authors also identify the main political and socio-economic factors such as caste, religion, language, money factor, current events, election campaigns, local issues, and mass illiteracy as the major determinants of voting behaviour in India.

## **RESEARCH GAP**

The study of voting behaviour in Mizoram conducted so far has been limited to the study on Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and specifically concentrated on a particular election or area. So far, no study has been conducted on the voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram. To identify the factors that influence voting behaviour, and to identify the similarities and dissimilarities in how the voters vote in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, the Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal elections the study has been conducted. The absence of literature also makes it necessary to conduct the study of voting behaviour in the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule with an aim to contribute literature on the body of knowledge relating to this area.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study of voting behaviour in Mizoram needs to be examined from the political context as well as the socio-economic context. The economic condition, social,

cultural, regional and communities need to be taken into account because the voter's action and choices may vary based on their economic and social status, the community and the area to which an individual voter belong. The political aspiration for greater political power always acts as a key role in building vote base mainly in the Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram. On the other hand, family ties, clan and ethnic groupism also determines the voting behaviour in some part of the state.

In other words, the role of civil society groups in Mizoram have been recognized as important determiners of electoral politics in the state. As such, there were often changes in the voting behavior of different districts, regions or villages. Accordingly, due to these changes the voting pattern of the Sixth Schedule area and the non-Sixth Schedule area in electoral politics of Mizoram lies with several factors, namely, the role of civil society groups, pressure and interest groups, party policies and manifestoes, etc.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To study the pattern of voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections (2013 &2018) in the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule areas.
2. To study the pattern of voting behaviour in the Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections.
3. To study the role and impact of Political Parties manifestos.
4. To analyze the role and influence of the Mizoram People Forum on voting behavior.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the factors that determine the voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections?
2. What are the factors that determine the voting behaviour in Autonomous District Council elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections?
3. What is the influence of the political parties manifestos on the voting decisions of the voters?
4. What is the influences of Mizoram People Forum's activities on the voting behaviour of the voters?



## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research study is a mixture of both Qualitative and Quantitative. Data is collected from both Primary and Secondary data. Primary data is obtained through unstructured interviews. Political leaders, Leaders from Civil and prominent citizens are interviewed. Survey method through a structured questionnaire is also employed. Secondary data mainly consist of manuscripts, articles, journals, government records, statistical data published by the State Government, Government Archive, Gazette notifications, internet, and other related sources etc.

In selecting the sample, a random sampling technique is used to draw the necessary sample. Samples are drawn from Aizawl West-I Constituency, Mamit Constituency, Lawngtlai East, Tuichawng and Saiha Constituency.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The research work focuses on the study of the voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly and elections to the Autonomous District Councils and Aizawl Municipal Corporation. From the Non-Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram, Aizawl District and Mamit District are covered for the purpose of the study. From the Sixth Schedule area Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council, and Chakma Autonomous District Council are the study area.

For this study, Aizawl District and Mamit District are selected for the study of voting behavior from the Non-Sixth Schedule area. Out of the 40 constituencies, Aizawl District has 12 constituencies out of 40 and also Aizawl District is the most populous and urbanized district with different communities from the Zo-Ethnic tribe which played a significant role in understanding the electoral process and the voting behaviour. Apart from this, Aizawl, the Capital of Mizoram is under the civic administration of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation which played a great role in analyzing the voter's choices and preferences in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and the AMC elections.

Mamit District is the least urbanized District of Mizoram with 17.25 per cent of the total population i.e. out of 86,364 only 14,899 people live in urban areas, and is also the second least Literacy rate with 84.9 per cent out of all eleven districts of Mizoram. The Seventh and Eighth Election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly are the main focus of this study. From the Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram, the three Autonomous District Councils are selected for this study. The study of the voting behaviour in the Sixth Schedule area in the election to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and election to the Autonomous District Councils are the main focus.

For the purpose of the study the year between 2012 to 2021 is selected as the study period. The main reason for the selection of these years is that in 2013 and 2018, elections to the State Legislative Assemblies were held. Elections to Aizawl Municipal Corporation were also held in 2015 and 2021 during the selected study period. The Ninth and Tenth elections to CADC were held in 2013 and 2018, the Tenth and Eleventh elections to MADC were held in 2012 and 2017 and the Tenth and Eleventh elections to LADC were held in 2015 and 2020 also fall within the selected study period.

## **CHAPTERIZATION**

### **Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION:**

The first Chapter deals with the introduction of the study. This chapter highlights the theoretical aspects of voting behaviour as propounded by three major research schools. The sociological school, often identified as the School of Columbia, the Psychological model, also identified as School of Michigan, and rational choice theory also referred to as a model of economic voting, or even as School of Rochester. The first chapter also gives a brief account of the electoral politics in Mizoram. The history of electoral politics in the Mizo District Council era, the Union Territory era, and the Statehood era are dealt with in the first chapter. The electoral history of the Autonomous District Councils such as the Mara Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, and Chakma Autonomous District Council are included. The research

problems, scope of the study, review of related literature, research objectives, research questions, and research methodology are also included in this chapter.

**Chapter 2: THE SEVENTH AND EIGHT MIZORAM STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AND NON-SIXTH SCHEDULE AREAS**

The second Chapter analyzes the factors that influence voting behaviour in the Seventh and Eight Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections. This chapter deals with identifying the various elements like the preferences of the political parties, the candidate's quality, and personality, and political party manifestos, in the voter's decision to vote. The study mainly focus on identifying the voting behaviour in the in the Sixth Schedule area and Non-Sixth Schedule area of Mizoram.

**Chapter 3: A STUDY OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCILS IN MIZORAM AND AIZAWL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION ELECTIONS:**

The Third Chapter deals with the study of the factors that influence voting behaviour in the elections to the Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram and elections to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation.

**Chapter 4: ROLE OF MANIFESTOS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ELECTIONS:**

The Fifth Chapter analyzes the manifestoes of political parties in the Seventh and Eight elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections and Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections. It analyzes how manifestos have influenced the voters in their voting decisions.

**Chapter 5: ROLE OF MIZORAM PEOPLE FORUM IN ELECTIONS:**

The election watchdog Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was founded to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the State. This chapter identifies the level of awareness among the voters, the activities of the MPF in reducing the various elections malpractices.

## **Chapter 6: CONCLUSION**

The final chapter presents the overall outcomes of the research as well as the suggestions incorporated by the respondents are presented in this chapter.

### **FINDINGS: The findings of the Study are:**

#### **Similarities:**

- Characteristics of candidates play a crucial role in influencing voting behaviour in the State Legislative Assembly elections in both the Sixth Schedule and Non-Sixth Schedule Areas.
- Party identification plays a bigger role in influencing the voting behaviour in the State Legislative Assembly elections. this identification is largely associated with the support of a candidate and party affiliation. The individual attachment and support towards a political party also influences the voting decision.
- Manifestos of political parties play a bigger role in the State Legislative Assembly elections.
- Due to the large area of constituencies and larger number of voters, the role of familial ties and relationships is minimal in State Legislative Assembly elections.
- Clan-based politics minimal in State Legislative Assembly elections.
- The activities of MPF in elections of the State Legislative Assembly, Autonomous District Councils and Aizawl Municipal Corporation show positive support from the voters except in CADC election.

#### **Dissimilarities:**

- In ADC elections, rather than political party manifestos campaign method based local issues have much more impact on voting behaviour.
- Party identification is lesser in local elections like ADC and AMC elections. the support and attachment toward a Candidate has more impact on the voting behaviour.
- Familial ties and kinship relationships play a bigger role due to the smaller size of constituencies and smaller number of voters in ADC and AMC.

- Clan-based politics is very much prominent in the ADC elections, particularly in MADC and LADC elections.
- Factors like use of money power, promise of jobs etc., are more impactful in ADC elections.

**Suggestions:**

1. Use of money power is a prevalent practice during elections that has the potential to influence voters' independent decisions. As such, stringent steps need to be taken by Civil Societies to reduce such unethical practices.
2. Political parties in Mizoram must agree to abstain from nominating candidates with a record of corruption or who engage in unethical electoral practices.
3. During election campaigns, political parties and candidates must refrain from making unrealistic promises to influence the voters.
4. Voting is an intimidating task for older voters and illiterate voters; therefore, steps must be taken up to assist them in casting their ballots so they can exercise their right to vote confidently and worry-free.
5. The presence of MPF in the electoral scene has resulted in numerous reforms and unethical electoral practices. However, to serve as a watchdog for the holding of free and fair elections in the State of Mizoram, the MPF needs to be strength structurally and financially.
6. Political parties and candidates need to abstain from personal attacks and accusations and concentrate more on propagating party manifestos, policies, and programs.
7. MPF should monitor the activities of candidate and political parties in social media as social media is use for allegations and personal attacks on opponent which cause confusion among the voters.

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### **List of Interviewees**

Interview with Serbuanga, Convener ZPM, Mamit District at his residence, Mamit on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with H. Lalthlengliana, Vice President MNF, Mamit block at his residence Mamit on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with PC. Lalthanzuala, Block President, MPCC, Mamit at his residence on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Liansawta, President ZPM Headquarters, at his Office Chamber, Aizawl on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with K. Lalchangliana, State Vice President, BJP, Aizawl at his Office Chamber, Aizawl on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Lalsawta, President, MPCC, Aizawl at his Office Chamber, Aizawl on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with H. Vanlalhluaana, Secretary, Mizoram People Forum, District Forum Mamit at his residence on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Rev. Lalramliana Pachaua, General Secretary, Mizoram People Forum Headquarter, Aizawl at his Office Chamber on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with N. Chakhai, Working President, MPCC Saiha District, Saiha at his Office Chamber on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with N. Beikhai, Vice President, BJP Saiha District, Saiha at his Office Chamber on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with T. Zakunga, Vice President, BJP Lawngtlai District, Saiha at his residence on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Rajesh Chakma, General Secretary, Chakma District Core Committee, BJP Chawngte 'C', Chawngte 'C' at his Office Chamber on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Durjya Dhan Chakma, Vice President MNF Chawngte 'C', Chawngte 'C' at his residence on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Rev. Sangliana, President MPF, District Forum Lawngtlai, Lawngtlai at his residence on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with C. Kapzauva, Vice President, MPCC District Headquarters Lawngtlai, Lawngtlai at his residence on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Sangvuana, Vice President, MNF District headquarter Saiha, Siaha at his Office Chamber on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with C. Lalsawmzuala, Treasurer, MNF Lawngtlai District, Lawngtlai at his Office Chamber on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023.

Interview with Rev. T. Salaw, President, MPF District Forum Saiha, Saiha at his Office Chamber on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2023.

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