URBAN LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM

BY

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DECLARATION

I, F. Lalhriatpuii, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation 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 dissertation has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science.

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CONTENTS

Declaration

Certificate

Acknowledgement

Chapter – I

Introduction

Urban local body (ULB) is an institution that governs the urban area of a state. It manages the urban affairs which are local in nature and character. It is constituted for maintenance and plan development of urban areas.[1] The ULB is responsible for planning and delivery of civic amenities in the area or region under its control. The ULB is actually at the bottom of Indian democracy in the urban areas. It is responsible for providing proper public facilities and public convenience in the urban area. The members or the Councilors of the ULB are directly elected by the people. The power and function of conducting and supervision of the elections in ULB are vested in the State Election Commission. The State Election Commission announces the polling date by considering the convenience as well as the time of the incumbent government in the urban areas. The first chapter discussed and analyzed the concept of Urban Local body; the concept of elections and importance of election in democracy. It also highlighted a brief political profile of Mizoram with reference to Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC).

1.1 Concept of Urban Local Body

Urban local body (ULB) is the management of urban affairs where the national political decisions are reshaped to fit local conditions. It is the process of decentralization at the local level. It also refers to the political mechanisms

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[1] R. Aijaz. (2007). Challenges of Urban Local Goverments in India. *Asia Research Centre.* Working Paper 19.

through which local public decisions are made.[2] Urban local bodies function as an institution to increase people's participation in policy formulation and its implementation. It is an institutional arrangement through which democracy becomes a reality. In today's world, ULBs play an important role in the daily life of the urban dwellers than the state or the central government; as their requirements are local in nature, character and scope. These local issues and local requirements can be tackled by involving the locals. At the same, the urban communities demand for a proper establishment of urban local body to address and represent the issues of the urban community in a more efficient way. The ULB is responsible for planning, programming and integrating basic civic amenities in terms of region or area inhabited by the community of people. It also functions as a two-way communication between the state government and itself, where desires and aspirations of the urban community are articulated and carried upward to the state government; and plans and programmes of the state and the central government flow in the reverse direction.[3]

Urban local body is also responsible for public facilities and conveniences. It tries to bring solution to the problems by training and educating the masses in the art of self-government and it also undertakes development schemes in various spheres of public life. It inculcates national and social spirit among the people and also imparts civic, social and moral

[2] D. Lockard (1968). Local Government. In D.L. Sills (ed). *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 9 & 10*. Collier-Macmillan Publishers: London. p.456fff.
[3] S.R. Maheshwari. (2013). *Local Government in India*. Lakshmi Narain Agarwal: Agra. p.5ff.

education to the people.[4] Its purpose is to promote responsiveness and accountability and to provide responsive policy guidance and assistance to the urbanites.

1.2 Emergence of Urban Local Body in India

In India, local government forms the bottom tier of democracy, the first two being the Central Government and the State Governments. It functions within the provisions of the statute and enjoys a limited jurisdiction with restricted powers and functions. According to International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, "Local Government may be loosely defined as a public organization authorized to decide and administer a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory which is a subdivision of a regional or national government".[5]

India has been witnessing an accelerated growth in its urban population which demands for a proper institutional arrangement to cater to the needs and redress the grievances of the urban dwellers. ULB becomes the most potential means to promote the benefits of development in the urban area and enables better accessibility with the urban administration.[6] The key to sustaining urban

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[4] P.N. Parashar. (2003). *History and Problems of Municipal Administration in India.* Sarup & Sons: New Delhi. p.10ff.

[5] D. Lockard. (1968). Local Government. In D.L. Sills (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.Vol.9 & 10.* Collier-Macmillan Publishers: London. p.451.

[6] R.N. Prasad. (2006). Urban Administration-Democratic Decentralised Governance Perpectives in Mizoram-Municipalities. In R.N. Prasad (ed). *Urban Local Self Government in India.* Mittal Publications: New Delhi. p.12f.

local body lies in the effective decentralization of planning process so that the benefits of development are carried to the smaller urban areas.[7]

The institution of local government in India has its roots in the British rule. The local government though existed in the ancient times acquired new form during the British period as a representative organization. The first Municipal Corporation was established in Madras (presently Chennai) in 1687 which marked the beginning of local government in India.[8] The Charter Act of 1793 established a Municipal administration in the three presidency towns of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Others such ULBs were created in India after 1842. The evolution of local government in India began in 1870 with the famous resolution of Lord Mayo which advocated the financial decentralization from the centre to the provinces. Later in 1882, the local government was made self-governing by Lord Ripon's resolution which laid the democratic forms of Municipal governance in India.[9]

Further, the Government of India Act, 1919 introduced the system of dyarchy and local government was brought under the control of Indian Ministries. Certain functions which were developmental in nature like local government, cooperation, agriculture etc. were transferred to the control of the popularly elected ministers who were responsible to the legislature.[10] The Government of India Act 1935, stressed on the democratization of local

[7] M. Pal. (2008). *Decentralized Planning and Development in India*. Mittal Publications: New Delhi. p.61.
[8] Op cit, S.R. Maheshwari, p.16.
[9] P.W. Purushotham & M. Karamatullah. (1993). *Development Administration: A rural perspective.* Kanishka Publishing House: Delhi. p.5.
[10] Op cit, S.R. Maheshwari, p.22.

government and introduced provincial autonomy. In the post-independence period, the Constitution of India brought local government under the purview of State Government in 1950 incorporated in the State List of functions and in the Directives Principles of State Policy.[11] However, these institutions did not enjoy any Constitutional status of its own, except statutory status under the state law since the Constitution of India did not specify anything so far as the rural or urban local bodies was concerned. The institution of ULB was exclusively a state subject and the structure and power of the ULBs were defined by the Municipal laws enacted by the concerned state. As a result of which, they could be superseded at will for indefinite periods. This meant that election to ULBs could not be held within a specific time limit in case of supersession, there was no regularity in the holding of elections. [12]

Further, the structure and composition of ULBs have been faulty, their powers were limited and circumscribed, the state supervision and control of government over them was excessive. Moreover, the ULBs were not financially independent and funds were limited. They were not granted the autonomy which the local democratic institutions should enjoy through active participation in the formation and execution of plans for the development of local areas. The Government of India and the state governments had appointed commissions and committees from time to time to examine the problems of ULBs and to make recommendations for their effective functioning.[13]

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[11]S.L. Goel. (2011). *Urban Local-self Government – Adminstration and Management in the 21st century.* Deep and Deep Publications: New Delhi. p.12f.

[12] Op cit, S.R. Maheshwari, p.217.

[13] Local Finance Enquiry Committee (1951), Committee on the Training of Municipal Employees (1963), Committee of Ministers on Augmentation of Financial Resources of Urban Local Bodies

However, the Central Government began to show their interest and sincerity interest in this direction only after 1989. [14]

Consequently, the Central Government brought a Constitutional Amendment Act relating to the urban government (Municipalities) and passed it by the Parliament in December 1992 and became operative on April 1993 which came to be known as the 74th Amendment Act, 1992. The provision has been inserted in Part IXA of the Indian Constitution. The Act is envisaged to achieve grass-roots democracy by ensuring people's participation in the urban administration.[15] It is designed to address the inadequacies of the existing system of municipalities, redefine the relationship between states and urban local bodies and lay the foundations of a new approach to urban management and governance.

According to the 74th Amendment Act of 1992, every state should constitute three types of municipalities in urban areas, that is to say, Nagar Panchayat for a transitional area (areas in transition from a rural area to urban area); Municipal Council for a smaller urban area and Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area. The Governor of the state may declare the type of area based on the population therein, the revenue generated for local administration,

(1963), Rural-Urban Relationship Committee (1966), Committee on the Service Conditions of Municipal Employees (1968), Committee on Budgetary Reform in Municipal Administration (1974) and Study Group on Constitution, Powers and Laws of Urban Local Bodies and Municipal Corporations (1982).

[14] Op cit, S.R. Maheshwari, p.218.

[15] R.N. Prasad. (2006). The Seventy-Fourth Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 and Urban Local Government Perpectives in Mizoram. In R.N. Prasad (ed). *Urban Local Self Government in India.* Mittal Publications: New Delhi. p.150.

the percentage of employment in non-agricultural activities, the economic importance and other factors as he may deem fit.[16]

Urban Local Bodies in India are governed by the municipalities and corporation laws of the respective states in accordance with the 74th Amendment Act. They are empowered with powers and responsibilities to enable them to function as effective institutions of self-government. These powers and responsibilities are specified by the state legislature in respect of preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and for implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them. The Act envisages that the functions of the ULB would go beyond the mere provision of basic civic amenities. Article 243W of the Constitution provides an illustrative list of eighteen functions to the ULB and has been incorporated in the 12th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.[17] It performs certain functions such as essential municipal functions, environment management functions, planning functions, agency type functions and functions relating to the governance.[18] Article 243U deals with the duration of ULBs, which shall be of five years, from the date of its appointment.[19]

Many ULBs are either reconstituted or newly constituted after the 74th Amendment Act of 1992 in India. In Mizoram, there was no ULB until the Mizoram Municipalities Act was passed by the Government of Mizoram in

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[16] Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation: www.mospi.nic.in
[17] Op cit, S.R. Maheshwari, p.223ff.
[18] Op cit, S.L. Goel, p.134.
[19] Ibid. p.19.

2007. So the village councils[20] had its presence both in rural and urban areas with limited powers and resources which was in accordance with 'The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act, 1953'.[21] Although the Mizo District Council enacted the Mizo District (Administration of Town Committees) Act in 1955, it was neither introduced nor adapted by the Government of Mizoram.[22] Therefore, the imperative need to set up urban local body in Mizoram was lately felt by the State Government in order to bring about the socio-economic development in the urban area. Soon after the Mizoram Municipalities was passed by the State Government in 2007, the first ULB known as the Aizawl Municipal Council was established in Aizawl and started functioning from 1st July 2008. The first election to the Aizawl Municipal Council was held on 3rd November 2010.

1.3. Concept of Elections

Elections constitute an important element in the democratic process. It enables the citizens to intervene directly in the political process, select their representatives and express their policy preferences. Elections legitimize the power exercised by the governments and make them more representative and accountable. Broadly speaking, election is simply a choice. But equally, a choice is not a 'vote in an election' unless the chooser conforms to the

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[20] Village Council is a form of village administration at the grassroots level in Mizoram. it is a democratic institution of decentralised governance which came to exist in 1953 in accordance with Lushai Hills District (Village Council) Act passed by the Mizo District Council.
[21] R.K. Satapathy. (2006). Seventy-Fourth Constitutional Amendment and Need for Municipal Government in Mizoram. In R.N. Prasad (ed). *Urban Local Self Government in India.* Mittal Publications: New Delhi. p.171.
[22] Op cit, R.N. Prasad, (2006). p.159.

specified legal procedure.[23] In a narrower sense, the term is limited to the choice of person for political offices, or for nomination to such offices, by the people, or by a somewhat numerous body as distinguished from appointment by a single person, or the determination of other questions submitted by law to popular vote.[24]

The Social Science Encyclopedia defines election as "A form of procedure, recognized by the rules of an organization, (government or private) whereby all or some of the members of the organization choose a smaller number of persons or one person to hold office of authority in the organization".[25] This definition raises a number of points as it attempts to embrace both formal and social significance both "rules" and "choice". Ideally, both elements should be present in an election.[26] According to The Representation of the People Act, 1951, "Election means an election to fill a seat or seats in either House of Parliament or in the House or either House of the Legislature of a State".[27]

Election also means an opportunity for voters to hold elected officials accountable for their actions or to choose between competing candidates or their policies. Election is a method for drawing public opinion. Public opinion is supposed to be the source of and guide to know what public official or political leaders do. The democratic system requires that election contestants

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[23] W.J.M. Mackenzie. (1968). Elections. In D.L. Sills (ed). *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 5.* Collier-Macmillan Publishers: London. p.2.
[24] J.C. Ruppenthal. (1906). Election Reforms: The trend toward Democracy. The Municipal Problems. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.Vol.28.* p. 53-83.
[25] Op cit, W.J.M. Mackenzie. p.2.
[26] Ibid.
[27] R. Ali. (1996). *Representative Democracy and Concept of Free and Fair Elections.* Deep and Deep Publications: New Delhi. p.20.

should consult the public and should try to follow its mandate. So election is a means of telling to an elected official whether he has received a mandate from the people for his policies. Election is also defined as a process through which the authority of Government clothed with legitimacy, peaceful and orderly transfer of power to new rulers is ensured and effective control by the people over the Government is exercised. Election creates a sense of involvement and participation in public affairs among the citizens.[28] It deals with persons acting within systems of ethical norms and legal procedures. It is also argued that election is one of many procedures used to ensure legal succession to office in different organizations and societies. There are ambiguities in the usage of election, appointment or co-option. It can be pointed out that in an election the choosers are a relatively numerous body in which the voters act independently of one another and more or less simultaneously where as the appointing body act in consultation.[29]

1.4. Origin of Elections

The idea of election originated in the ancient Greek city-states. In fact, elections took a central place in politics for the first time in the Greek city states during the fifth and sixth centuries BC.[30] Voting in Greek city-states was held directly on policy proposals and governments were not elected but drawn by lot.[31] The tradition of ancient elections was preserved in the church rather than in the state and continued in the Roman Catholic Church. Later on, many

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[28] Ibid. p.20.
[29] Op cit, W.J.M. Mackenzie, p.2f.
[30] Ibid. p.3.
[31] M.D. McDonald & I. Budge. (2005). *Elections, Parties, Democracy- Conferring the Median Mandate*. Oxford University Press: New York. Loc.198. (Kindle edition).

national and nonconformist churches used elections as the basis of a legitimate claim to hold office. The most ancient and continuous tradition has been that of the election of superiors (popes, bishops, deans, priors and so on) by a relatively small electorate consisting of those next in rank. [32]

The modern form of elections began in the 17th century in Europe and North America due to the emergence of a representative government in the contemporary world.[33] In England, the process of equalitarian electoral democracy took more than one hundred years, from the Reform Act of 1832 to the abolition of multiple votes in 1948. In Sweden, the extreme inequalities of electoral influence were maintained until 1921. The Belgians went through an intriguing phase of multiple voting from 1893 to 1917 where all men over 25 were enfranchised. In France, the Law of January 1789 maintained a system of indirect elections and the constitution of 1793 went straight to the stage of manhood suffrage. The Revolution of 1848 brought a sudden thrust toward maximal democracy in France and the first modern mass election took place on Easter day in 1848. Denmark went through a brief period of estate representation after 1831 and then moved straight into a system of nationwide elections under a very extensive manhood suffrage in 1849. Similarly, Finland stuck to the inherited Swedish system of four estates until 1906 and then passed on to the maximization of universal and equal citizenship rights to not only all men but also all women. Iceland saw the re-establishment of its parliament in 1874 and the stage of near-universal suffrage for men and

[32] Op cit, W.J.M. Mackenzie, p.4.

[33] Brian Duignan. (2013). *Political Parties, Interest Group and Election*. Britannica Educational Publishing: New York. p.94.

women was reached in 1915. By the end of World War I, manhood suffrage was opted by the majority of European and European-settled polities; many of them even opted for universal suffrage for women as well. [34]

1.5 Elections in India

Like other modern democratic countries of the world, India has also adopted a constitutional democracy. Elections in India dates back to the British era. The British Rulers, in pursuance of their policy of divide and rule, introduced the system of Communal Electoral Rolls in India under the Indian Councils Act of 1909. The separate electorates were created for Muslims together with a system of weighted representation. The system was extended to other communities by the Government of India Act, 1919 and 1935.[35] The then Indian political leaders particularly, the freedom fighters found the system unjustified; the Parliament of India abolished it and introduced the principle of "one voter – one vote – one value". The said principle is provided in Section 62 clauses (3) and (4) of the Representation of People Act, 1951.[36] On the basis of "one voter – one vote – one value", the first general election (Lok Sabha election) in India was held in 1952.

In the post-independence India, elections are conducted at various levels of the federal structure. There is the nation-wide election for Lok Sabha (House of the People) that consists of 545 members. At the state level, there are elections for the State Legislative Assemblies. At the grass-roots level,

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[34] Op cit, W.J.M. Mackenzie, p.7ff.
[35] Op cit, R. Ali, p.85.
[36] Ibid. p.49.

there are elections for local bodies like the three-tiered Panchayati Raj system in rural areas and Municipal governments in urban areas.[37] One level of election is related to other level of election. As a whole it constitutes a network of electoral politics in contemporary India and is the basic framework of India's democratic regime.[38]

In the Constitution of India the term "election" is not defined. However, in Punnuswami Vs Returning Officer, the Supreme Court of India while interpreting the provisions of Part XV of the Constitution held that the word 'election' has by long usage in connection with the process of selection of proper representation in democratic institutions, acquired both a wide and a narrow meaning. In the narrow sense it is used to mean that final selection which may embrace the result of the poll when there is polling or a particular candidate being returned unopposed when there is no poll. In the wider sense, the word is used to connote the entire process culminating in a candidate being declared elected.[39]

It can be mentioned here that Section 2(d) of the Representation of People Act, 1951 has defined the term election, though it does not lay down the guideline for free and fair elections in India.[40] The idea of conducting free and fair elections in India was mooted by the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution. They thought that the responsibility to hold free and fair election in the country should be entrusted to an independent body which would be

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[37] N. Kondo. (2007). Election Studies in India. *Institute of Developing Economies. No.98.*
[38] Ibid.
[39] A.B. Kafaltiya. (2007). *Democracy and Election Laws*. Deep and Deep Publications: New Delhi. p.43.
[40] Ibid. p.43.

insulated from political or executive interference. With the object of ensuring efficient and impartial functioning of the electoral machinery, the Constitution provides for an independent Election Commission, a permanent body under Article 324.[41]

Elections are conducted according to the constitutional provisions, supplemented by the laws made by Parliament. The major laws are Representation of the People Act, 1950, which mainly deals with the preparation and revision of electoral rolls, the Representation of People Act, 1951 deals in detail all the aspects of conduct of elections and post-election disputes. The Supreme Court of India held that where the enacted laws are silent or make insufficient provision to deal with a given situation in the conduct of elections, the Election Commission has the residuary powers under the Constitution to act in appropriate manner.[42] The Election Commission of India evolved a Model Code of Conduct after consulting with the representatives of all the political parties. It was designed to regulate the general conduct of political parties and candidates in holding election meetings, arranging processions, entry in the polling booths and taking remedial measures to prevent corrupt practices, etc.[43]

1.6 Democracy and Elections

Elections form an integral and inseparable part of democracy. As democracy contemplates free and fair elections, it can function only upon the faith that

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[41] Ibid. p.11
[42] Election Commission of India: www.eci.nic.in (Retrieved on 17/02/2016 8:40pm)
[43] Op cit, A.B. Kafaltiya, p.11.

elections are free and fair. [44] Every citizen in a democracy must be free to vote and his vote must count and be of value. Hence the right to vote must be protected and for this purpose a democratic government must develop a just system of representation. Elections to the legislature are not private affairs of the contestants. They are matters of public interest and of national importance. Democracy needs participation of the people in the governance of the country and this participation is possible only when every qualified citizen is given the right of franchise to enable him to elect the representative of his choice to the legislature. Therefore, no right is more precious in a free country than that of having a choice in the election of those who make laws under which the people live. [45]

Simply conducting elections is not a sufficient condition for political representation, but there is no doubt that they are a necessary condition. Indeed some thinkers have gone further and portrayed elections as the very heart of democracy. This was the view developed by Joseph Schumpeter in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942), which portrayed democracy as an 'institutional arrangement'. Election is a means of filling public office by a competitive struggle for the people's vote. He further writes, "Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them". [46] In interpreting democracy as nothing more than a political method, Schumpeter in effect identified it with elections, and specifically with competitive elections. The mandate of the people to form an

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[44] Op cit, R. Ali, p.7.

[45] Op cit, A. B. Kafaltiya, p.36.

[46] Cited in, A. Heywood (2002). *Politics.* Palgrave Foundations: London. p.229.

elected government depends on free and fair elections which is a basic postulate of democratic process. The absence of confidence of the people in the verdict through ballot box may endanger the whole democratic system.[47] Samuel P. Huntington has rightfully observed that free and fair elections are the essence of democracy. He argued that elections may produced governments which are inefficient, corrupt, short-sighted, irresponsible, dominated by special interests and incapable of adopting policies demanded by the public good, but these qualities do not make them undemocratic.[48]

It is argued that electors in a large state could not decide directly on policy as was the case in the Greek city states. But they could elect representatives and choose among policy stances indicated by the parties' election programmes. Thus, election plays a key role in a democratic polity as it gives mandate to elected members for forming the government, on obtaining their majority, control the government, ascertain public opinion on various issues and choose law-makers periodically.[49] No political system can be held as democratic unless the representatives are chosen through elections. As democracy involves electoral competition and widespread voting participation, elections had to be not only universal and equal but also secret in order to qualify as democratic.[50]

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[47] Op cit, A.B. Kafaltiya, p.4.
[48] S.P. Huntington. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.* University of Oklahoma Press: Norman. p. 9f.
[49] Op cit, A.B. Kafaltiya, p.43
[50] Op cit, W.J.M. Mackenzie, p.10.

1.7 Political Profile of Mizoram

Prior to British annexation of the Lushai Hills (the present Mizoram) in 1890, chieftainship was the only form of administrative organization in the Lushai Hills. Each village was ruled independently by the autocratic chiefs having hereditary right to rule. The Chief was assisted by a group of *Upa* (Council of elders). These *Upa* were nominated by the Chiefs themselves without consulting the villagers.[51] The institution of Chieftainship continued even during the British and post-independence India with some minor modifications in the power and functions of the Chief. The age old traditional institution of the Chieftainship was abolished by The Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Bill in 1954.[52]

During the British period in the Lushai Hills, any kind of political activity was kept at bay until the administration gave permission to form political organisation in 1946. It was from the mid 1940s that the Mizo witnessed political development in the direction of modern political system. The first political party, the Mizo Union came into existence on 9th April 1946 and became popular among the commoners because of its basic and unofficial anti-chiefs orientation.[53]

In the meantime, the Mizo commoners started to realize the oppressive autocratic chief's rule and began to assert their grievances. The leaders of the

[51] K.M. Zakhuma. (2001). *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989: A study with special reference to Political Parties in Mizoram.* J.R. Bros: Aizawl. p.34
[52] C. Hermana. (1999). *Zoram Politics Thli Tleh Dan. Vol.1.* Prescom: Aizawl. p.38
[53] Lalchungnunga. (1994). *Mizoram Politics of Regionalism and National Integration.* Reliance Publishing House: New Delhi. p.33,73.

Lushai Hills particularly the leaders of the Young Lushai Association (YLA) consulted the then Superintendent A. McDonald to deliberate upon the matter of grievances of the Mizo.[54] On January 1946, the Superintendent A.MacDonald established a body of District Conference to advise him on matters of administration of customary law. The first election to the District Conference was held on 14th January 1946, which became the first election held in the Lushai Hills.[55] There were separate electorates (one for the Chiefs and the other for the commoners) in order to elect 20 chiefs and 20 commoners representing each circle. The chiefs voted for the election of 20 chiefs and the commoners voted for the election of their representatives. The election of the commoners' representative was based on 'household franchise' at the rate of one vote for ten houses.[56] In the post-independent India, the last Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, L.L. Peters established an interim District Advisory Council to manage its local affairs and minor works. An election to the District Advisory Council on the basis of adult franchise was held on 15th April 1948.[57] These two elections were the only elections held during the British period in Lushai Hills.

In the post-independence period, the Indian Constitution under Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1) set up the Mizo District Council and Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1952 and 1953 respectively in the erstwhile Lushai Hills (the then Mizo Hills District of Assam).[58] The first election to the Mizo District

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[54] K.L. Chhuanvawra. (2009). *Mizo Union Kha (1946-1974)* Lois Bet: Aizawl. p.22.
[55] Op cit, K.M. Zakhuma, p.56.
[56] R.N. Prasad. (1987). *Government and Politics in Mizoram*. Northern Book Centre: New Delhi. p.75f.
[57] Op cit, C. Hermana, p.25.
[58] Op cit, R.N. Prasad. (1987). p.103.

Council was held on 3 – 4th January 1952 on the basis of adult franchise.[59] There were 24 seats out of which 18 were elected directly from the single member constituencies and 6 were nominated by the Governor of Assam on the advice of the Chief Executive Member, for a term of 5 years.[60] After the Chieftainship was abolished in 1954, the District Council constituted an administrative set up in the form of village councils on the basis of universal franchise.[61] The first election to the village council was held in April 1954.[62]

The Mizo district of Assam was upgraded to the status of Union Territory in 1972 and named it as Mizoram. The first general election to the Assembly of Mizoram was held in 1972. The Mizo Union won 21 seats out of 30 seats and formed the ministry with Ch. Chhunga as the first Chief Minister of Mizoram.[63] After 14 years, Mizoram was again upgraded to a full-fledged state of Indian Union in 1986. The first election to the State Legislative Assembly was held on 16th February 1987. Since then Mizoram witnessed seven State Legislative Assembly elections till date.

The ULB in Mizoram is of recent origin brought forward by the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007 which gave a head start to the constitution of the Aizawl Municipal Council on 1st July 2008. With the implementation of Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007, Aizawl is converted to a city from a cluster of villages (Village Council) in the true Constitutional sense as per the 74th Amendment Act and the transition from the administration of village councils

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[59] Op cit, K.L. Chhuanvawra, p.66.
[60] Op cit, R.N. Prasad, (1987). p.103.
[61] Op cit, K.M. Zakhuma, p.68.
[62] K. Lawmzuala. (2002). Mizo District Council Kha (1952-1962). Lengchhawn Press: Aizawl. p.94.
[63] Op cit, K.M. Zakhuma, p.76.

to the administration of Municipal government is taken as a positive step towards urban development and administration by the people. Mizoram experienced its first election to the ULB on 3rd November 2010. As per the 74th Amendment Act, six wards have been reserved for the women candidates which shall be rotated after every five years. The Aizawl Municipal Council consists of 19 elected members representing 19 wards of the Aizawl city and other 12 members appointed by the Governor of Mizoram, collectively known as the Board of Councilors (BOC). The BOC is the highest decision-making body of the Aizawl Municipal Council and is headed by the Chairman. Both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman are elected by the elected Councilors. Besides the BOC, there is an Executive Council (EC) consisting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and other three members known as the Executive Councilors appointed by the Chairman. The EC exercises all the executive powers.

In 2015, the Aizawl Municipal Council crossed the limit of 3 lakhs population in terms of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007. It states that an urban area with a population of 3 lakhs or more may be declared as a larger urban area. As a result, it was upgraded to a Municipal Corporation and named it as Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) in October 2015.[64] Subsequently, the election to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation was held on 26th November 2015. So far, the urban local body in Mizoram has witnessed two elections since its existence.

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[64] Aizawl Municipal Corporation: amc.mizoram.gov.in (Retrieved on 03/03/2016 07:05pm)

1.8 Statement of the problem

Various scholars are of the view that the trend of election studies in India has been influenced by the evolution of actual electoral politics, especially those of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections. Indian election is said to be a complex one because of its cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religion diversity of the Indian society. Some scholars argue that electoral studies in India have unique features because of its peculiar elements such as caste. While caste, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity are characteristic of Indian society and have been recognized as important realms for studies in Indian voting behavior. There are scholars who argue that Mizoram has a unique political identity and remained largely unaffected by the fluctuations in national politics. It has been observed that in Mizoram elections, the accessibility and personality of the candidates is more important than the parent party on whose ticket the candidate stood.

The study intends to focus on the urban local body elections in Mizoram. The Aizawl Municipal Council started functioning from 1st July 2008. The voter turnout in the 2010 Aizawl Municipal Council election was recorded 63.60 percent and that of the 2015 Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) election was 63.55 percent.[65] The turnouts in both of the urban local body elections are significantly lower than that of the State Assembly elections held in the preceding years. Mizoram has been witnessing a high voter turnout in the State Legislative Assembly elections. In fact, in the last three Assembly

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[65] State Election Commission, Mizoram: sec.mizoram.gov.in (Retrieved on 08/03/2016 8:30pm)

elections held in Mizoram, the voter turnouts were 78.67%, 80.02% and 80.82% in 2003, 2008 and 2013 respectively.[66] It is a cliché in India that the turnout does not go down as one goes down the tiers of democracy. This shows that the turnouts in the AMC elections did not follow the national trend where the bottom tier of democracy records higher participation. Given the turnouts of the State Legislative Assembly elections, the AMC elections are expected to record a turnout of over 70 percent. Therefore, it is proposed to study the voting behavior in the AMC elections to understand the nature and trend of urban local body elections in Mizoram. Moreover, it will also examine the connection between urban local bodies and state level politics.

1.9 Review of Literature

The review of literature is arranged in a thematic manner: The first part discusses literature relating to urban local bodies and the second part deals with elections and electoral politics. The third part consists of those literature related to voting behavior and election studies in India. The last part focuses on democracy and the importance of elections in democracy.

A.

Illuminating information on the various aspects of urban local government is found in the work of P. Sachdeva (1993), in his *Urban Local Government and Administration in India.* The book deals with the meaning, scope and significance of urban local government covering the latest facts and

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[66] Election Commission of India: www.eci.nic.in (Retrieved on 03/03/2016 07:00pm)

figures, policies and programmes of urban development and the mechanism of their administration.

Indian Administration by S.R. Maheshwari (2000) is an attempt to understand the administrative system in India. The author discusses in detail the machinery of government and its functioning at the Central, state and local levels. The book gives a detail description of the role and functions of the Centre and State Governments along with the role of rural and urban local government, its significance and how it came into existence. The author stresses on the administrative purpose of local government which provides a deeper understanding of local government in India.

In Civic Elections: Politics from Above, R. Thirunavukkarasu (2002) discusses the factors that influenced the voting patterns in the local body elections of Tamil Nadu in 2001. The author delineates that besides the arrest of former chief minister and DMK president M. Karunanidhi and the installation of Jayalalitha to the chief minister's post, the change in the character of politics may have influenced the voting patterns. He argues that ideological debate and crafting of politics on the basis of ideology have been replaced by 'person-centred' politics in the state where locally specific issues begin to have a vital and determining role. The article reflects upon the performances of different parties in order to bring out the factors influencing the voting patterns in the local body elections. As the author points out, individual popularities seem to have a crucial influence on the voting patterns

which can be seen in the victories of independent candidates, especially in town panchayat councils.

Urban Local Self-Government in India – With Reference to North Eastern States by R.N. Prasad (2006) includes twenty scholarly research papers which deal with the concept of local self-governance, various issues and problems, challenges and constraints concerning a set up of the Municipal administration in the growing urban areas of the North Eastern states. The book offers positive suggestions to tackle the growing urban problems and it emphasizes more on the 74th Amendment Act, 1992 relating to the set up of the urban local bodies.

S.L. Goel (2011) in his work, *Urban Local Self Government: Administration and Management in the 21st Century* made an attempt to examine all issues of urban local government in detail. The book consists of five parts focusing on the traditional municipal structures and functions, urban infrastructure and development, urban reforms, slum improvement and development, trust areas and new trends. The author highlights the significance of local government in establishing democracy at the local, state and Union level. He argues that urban local government in India has vast potential to improve the quality of life of citizens in urban areas.

B.

The book *Representative Democracy and concept of free and fair elections* by Raisa Ali (1996) made an in-depth study of the burning issue of

elections in India. It is a critical study of all the issues relating to representative democracy and free and fair elections. It provides an illuminating study on the constitution of Election Commission and the multi-facet role of judiciary in the electoral process. It also discusses the various offenses in the light of relevant judicial decisions and makes necessary suggestions and recommendations.

A.B. Kafaltiya's (2007) book *Democracy and Election Laws* made an attempt to evaluate Indian Constitutional democracy and the purity of elections to the Legislatures. He focuses on the factors which cause instability of the government and which directly affect the outcome of elections. He examines the democratic values, its principles and practices being exercised under the Constitution of India and an analytical examination on the law of election. This book offers a better understanding of election law from the standpoint of corrupt practices control perspective or the individual liberty to vote perspective.

In *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election*, by Stephen J. Wayne (2011) focuses on American electoral politics. It explores the critical and controversial issues that confront the American Political system. It looks at American democracy in theory and practice, notes where and why practices deviate from theory, and then proposes reforms to close the gap. It discusses democratic theory in general and the democratic electoral process in particular and examines the key aspects of electoral politics and electoral process itself. It presents interesting and sometimes disturbing facts about democratic election practices and processes.

C.

W.H. Morris Jones (1957) highlights the difficulty of understanding the Indian electoral behavior in his work *Indian Voting Behaviour,* where the majority of the population is illiterate with a low level of democratic political experience. He elaborates upon the work of various scholars and claims, 'of the sex of the voter, a great deal can be said about what type of voter votes for what type of candidate simply by an analysis of figure'. He cites the study of Nuffield surveys which contribute a detailed description of the campaign process which was done largely on the basis of an examination of press reports and comments. He proposes the use of sample surveys in restricted areas to probe into the motivation of particular groups of voters.

In his article *Election Studies in India*, Imtiaz Ahmad (1977) elaborates upon the electoral trends and the growth of election studies in India. This article focuses on the need to change our approach to election studies. The author argues that the large majority of the researches on electoral behavior have been the usual run-of-the-mill exercises based either on thoughtless lumping together of disparate questions or wholesale borrowing of questionnaires and schedules from scholars engaged in the study of elections in Western countries. The paper attempts to leave aside a general critique of the survey methodology and points out the survey as a technique or tool of research which relies upon the individual as the unit of research. It provides a good insight of the survey approach which could be applied to the study of electoral behavior.

H. Himmelweit, P. Humphreys, M. Jaeger and M. Katz (1981) put forward what they called a Consumer Model of Vote Choice in their book *How Voters Decide: A Longitudinal Study of Political Attitudes and Voting Extending Over Fifteen Years*. They proposed that the same principles hold in voting as in purchasing consumer goods where the voter searches for the best fit or the least misfit between his or her views and preferences and the parties' platforms. The authors have developed a societal psychological approach, a systems approach which takes more account of the interdependence of the individual and society than is usual in traditional social psychology. They examine both the social reality and the individual's experience of reality by observing information about the same individuals over a long period, from their early twenties to their middle thirties to be able to examine the influence of both societal changes in their own lives on outlook and vote choice. The book has relevance for the information it provides on the process of decision-making in voting.

Yogendra Yadav (1999) in his essay *Electoral Politics in the Time of Change: India's Third Electoral System, 1989-1999* made an attempt to understand the politics of electoral choice during the time. This period represents the full unfolding of the contradiction between the logic of political equality and that of social inequality. The essay analyses the participatory upsurge during the decade under study which leads to the downward spread of democracy, where the lower sections of the society begin to participate in the political process. The author gives an overview of the electoral politics of the

previous decade which is merely a story of the rapid decline and the impending collapse of Indian democracy. The essay highlights the transitions of the third electoral system mark by the three M's: Mandal, Mandir and Market which creates an extraordinary opportunity for reworking the established political alignments. The essay provides a deep understanding of our electoral system, its transition from the era of Congress dominance to the post-Congress polity.

R.K. Satapathy (2004) in his *Positive Vote for the State Government* illustrates the overwhelming popularity of the Mizo National Front (MNF) in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections in Mizoram. The author gives a detailed survey report of the National Election Study, 2004. He observes that the victory of the MNF was an appreciation of the people for the work done by the MNF government in the state in the last five-six years, as well as Zoramthanga's leadership. This essay analyses the factors which contributed towards the popularity of the MNF party. It examines the voting trends among voters belonging to all economic classes and proves to be an effective tool to gain a deeper insight of Mizoram electorate.

Studying Elections in India: Scientific and Political debates by Stephanie Tawa Lama-Rewal (2009) focuses on the methodologies and approaches deployed for the studies of elections in the world's largest democracy. The study seeks to attempt the scientific and political debates around election studies. The paper argues that election studies are really in between science and politics, and is important to contextualize them. It starts with a quick overview of the different types of election studies which have

been produced in India and goes on to analyze a series of dilemmas and debates attached to election studies, which highlight the intricate nature of the political and scientific issues at stake. The author discusses the study of elections from the vantage point of a relatively limited political territory. The paper ends with the scientific and political debates around the study of Indian elections which underline that no method is politically neutral and that they illustrate the particularly problematic relationship of one discipline, political science, with the political sphere and with the media.

A good deal of information on Mizoram elections can be seen in the work of Lallianchhunga (2009), *Mizoram: The Congress Holds its Ground.* The author elaborates upon the voting behavior in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections in Mizoram by referring to the National Election Study 2009. He argues that Mizoram has a unique political identity and remained largely unaffected by the fluctuations in national politics. He observes that the accessibility and personality of the candidates seem to be more important than the parent party on whose ticket the candidate stood. Here, the author refers to the NES 2009 which revealed that voters tended to give primary to the candidate when deciding whom to vote for.

Zahida Akhter and Younis Ah. Sheikh (2014) give a detailed discussion on the determinants of voting behavior in India in their essay *Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective.* The authors give an overview of election studies in India from the first General Elections where studies on elections lack methodological rigor and sophistication. The authors

claim that the tools employed in the studies of election politics and voting behavior became increasingly sharpened. They argue that the increased use of survey method and observation technique has improved the quality of election studies in India. The study finds out that election studies in India were mainly inspired by Western studies on voting behavior, especially the Columbia and Michigan studies in the United States.

D.

Samuel P. Huntington (1991) in his book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* characterizes the extension of democracy beginning from 1974. The book mainly discusses on the transition from authoritarian or dictatorship to democratic political regime between 1974 and 1990. The author gives three general approaches to the concept of democracy. For this study, he uses the procedural definition of democracy which he largely drew from the Schumpeterian mode of procedural concept. He argues that the central procedure of democracy is the selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern. The book offers a great deal of information on how elections work for democracy. The author claims that elections, open, free and fair are the essence of democracy, the inescapable sine qua non.

Michael McDonald and Ian Budge (2005) in their article *Elections and Governance* highlight the role of elections in a democracy. The authors argue that elections are the distinguishing institution of democracy translating individual voter preferences into collective choices that can in some sense be

said to reflect them. The article elaborates on how the preferences reflected in votes and how they combined to produce the overall election result. In their assertion on how democracy should entail popular specification of public policies, the authors draw on the oldest conceptions of democracy in Greek city-states. The article has been useful in providing the role that elections play in democracy and suggests that elections the median (majority) preference of the population, plus the overall policy structure or space within which it is embedded.

The above review of literature shows that there are immense literatures on elections. However, there are very few literatures available on elections in Mizoram, particularly Urban Local Body elections. Moreover, there is no research work or project undertaking in the Department of Political Science at Mizoram University to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, the scholar studied Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram with an aim to contribute a literature on the body of knowledge relating to elections in Mizoram which is very few at the moment.

1.10 Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the nature and trend of Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram.
2. To examine the election campaigns and manifestos of the AMC elections.
3. To examine the voting behavior in the AMC elections.
4. To analyze the connection between Urban Local Body and state level elections.

1.11 Research Questions

1.   What are the nature and trend of Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram?

2.   What are the electoral strategies employed by the political parties and candidates?

3.   What are the factors that influence the voting behavior in the AMC elections?

4.   Does the result in the AMC elections have any bearing on Legislative Assembly elections?

1.12 Methodology

The research work is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The study uses both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are collected using schedule questionnaire. The study uses systematic random sampling for selecting the respondents from four different wards; viz., Ward III, Ward VIII, Ward XIII and Ward XVIII. The size of the sampling is 60 representing the 19 wards which are selected from the electoral roll of AMC, 2015. From each ward, one polling station is taken up for the purpose of selecting 15 respondents. Interviews were also conducted to four candidates of the AMC election, 2015 so as to get firsthand knowledge about the electioneering process in the AMC elections.

Primary sources also include party leaflets, pamphlets, election manifestos, statistical reports published by the Election Commission of India, orders and notifications published by the State Election Commission.

Secondary sources include articles in journals, articles in newspapers, books etc.

1.13 Chapterisation

Chapter-1: Introduction.

The first chapter studies the meaning of elections, concept of urban local body, meaning and importance of elections in democracy, a brief political profile of Mizoram with reference to Aizawl Municipal Corporation, review of literature, objectives of the study, research questions, methodology, etc.

Chapter-2: Elections in Mizoram.

The second chapter focuses on the nature and trend of elections in Mizoram. It lays emphasis on the evolution and elections of the urban local body in Mizoram.

Chapter-3: Campaign and Manifestos.

The third chapter examines the strategies employed by political parties and candidates in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections.

Chapter-4: Voting behavior.

The various factors that influence the voting behavior in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections are discussed in the chapter. It also examines the relationship between the AMC elections and State Legislative Assembly elections.

Chapter-5: Conclusion.

The last chapter summarizes the study and also includes the findings of the research

Chapter – II

Elections in Mizoram

Elections in Mizoram are not affected very much by the national politics. In other words, the outcome of the national elections does not have a significant impact on local politics in the state.[1] The study of the nature and trend of elections in Mizoram is done by studying the performances of the various political parties participated in the state legislative assembly elections held since 1987. However, the prime focus here in the chapter is on the urban local body elections of 2010 and 2015.

The Indian national politics have moved from the one-party dominance to the multi-party politics. The current Central government is led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in association with other regional parties though BJP won 282 seats alone.[2] The first elections in India during 1951-52 were the first ever polls to be held under the Indian Constitution. The Congress obtained an absolute majority of seats in parliament in the first four general elections before the party split in 1969.[3] The famous 'Congress system' by Rajni Kothari described the Indian system as a system of one-party dominance which is very different from the one-party system. The Congress system was a bold attempt to theorize the unique party system that India had developed during the mid-sixties. In spite of its one-party dominance, the Congress system was a

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[1] Lallianchhunga. (2009). Mizoram: The Congress Holds its Ground. *Economic and Political weekly Vol.44. No.39.* p.168.

[2] Election Commission of India: www.eci.nic.in (Retrieved on 04/12/2016 10:42am)

[3] Z. Hasan. (2002). Introduction: Conflict Pluralism and the Competitive Party System in India. In Zoya Hasan. (Ed.) *Parties and Party Politics in India*. Oxford University Press: New Delhi. p.8.

competitive party system but one in which the competing parts played rather dissimilar roles. It did allow inter-party and intra-party competition within the confines of consensus because the Congress party was occupying the centre.[4]

Before Independence, the Congress party functioned as a broad-based nationalist movement which later on transformed itself into the dominant political party of the nation. It was soon recognized as the chief party, representing a historical consensus and enjoying a continuing basis of support and trust. This was possible because the Congress system encompassed all major sections and interests of the society. The first five general elections yielded one-party dominance in which the Congress received more than 40 percent of the vote, while the second largest party could win 10 ten percent. With the exception of the 1967 elections, the patterns in the states were similar, with Congress dominating the state arena as well. [5]

However, the Congress system was challenged in 1977 in which the Congress lost power to a coalition of opposition parties at the Centre. The Janata government formed in 1977 was the first non-Congress government and the first coalition experiment at the Centre.[6] With the passage from one-party dominance to a multi-party system, the coalition trend has become increasingly evident at the Centre since 1989 when state-based parties joined together to form a minority National Front government led by the Janata Dal. The era of coalition politics at the centre began in India with the elections of 1989. Since

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[4] R. Kothari. (2002). The Congress System in India. In Zoya Hasan (Ed.) *Parties and Party Politics in India*. Oxford University Press: New Delhi. p.40.

[5] Op cit, Z. Hasan, p.27.

[6] N.J. Chander. (2204). *Coalition Politics: The Indian Experience.* Concept Publishing Company: New Delhi. p.30.

then, Indian national elections have been experiencing coalition governments or minority governments supported by other regional parties. The growing power of regionalism and regional parties and the pursuit of political power have led to the multiplication of parties.[7]

The 1990's were characterized by the emergence of the state as the effective arena of political competition. India's third electoral system, the period between 1989-1999 has brought a sea change in the Indian electoral system. According to Yadav (1999), the most obvious and easily identified characteristic of the third electoral system is the change in the choice set available to the voters. Under the Congress system, the voter exercised only one choice, whether to vote for or against the Congress. With the rise in regional parties, there are many non-Congress alternatives set available before the voters. Yadav in his *Electoral Politics in the Time of Change: India's third electoral system 1989-1999,* argue that Congress ceased to be the pole against which every political formation is defined and that India is now in a post-Congress polity.[8] Electoral politics since the 1990s have undergone a major transformation and there has been a federalization of the party system with a bipolar party system emerging in most states.

2.1 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections

The Mizo were deprived of any kind of political activities during the colonial rule (As discussed in detail in Chapter 1). The first political institution known as the District Conference was established in 1946 to represent and express the

[7] Op cit, Z. Hasan, p.30.
[8] Y. Yadav. (1999). Electoral Politics in the Time of Change: India's Third Electoral System, 1989-1999. *Economic and Political Weekly. Vol.34, No.34*. p.2394f.

political ideas and demands of the people. Subsequently, the election to the District Conference conducted on January 14, 1946. It was the first election held in the Lushai Hills on democratic lines. After the Mizo District Council was constituted in 1952, the traditional institution of Chieftainship was replaced by an administrative set up in the form of village councils. The first election to the village council was held in April 1954, which marked the beginning of local body elections in Mizo Hills District of Assam. The Mizo Hills District was upgraded to the status of Union territory in 1972. Eventually, the first ever Mizoram Assembly election was held in 1972.

Again in 1986, Mizoram was elevated to the status of a full-fledged state and the first State Legislative Assembly was held on February 16, 1987. There have been seven state legislative assembly elections till date. At present, there are 40 assembly constituencies which are distributed among the eight districts of Mizoram. There are thirteen assembly constituencies in Aizawl district, seven in Lunglei district, five in Champhai district and four in Mamit district. Serchhip, Kolasib and Saiha districts have three constituencies each while Lawngtlai district has only two constituencies.[9] Out of the 40 constituencies, only one constituency, Lunglei South is open for general seat.

2.2 The First State Legislative Assembly Election, 1987

The first State Legislative Assembly election was held on 16th February 1987.[10] In the election, the Indian National Congress was the lone national party

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[9] Elections: www.mizoram.nic.in (Retrieved on 25/11/2016 09:45pm)
[10] Vanlalhruaia. (2004). *Mizoram MLA leh MP Inthlan Result (1973-2003).* Lengchhawn Press: Aizawl. p.63.

contesting the 1987 election and the rest were state parties – the Mizo National Front (MNF), the People's Conference (PC) (recognized) and the Mizo National Union (MNU) (unrecognized). While four political parties and independents were in the election fray, the actual contest was between the Congress and the MNF.

Table 2.1: Performance of Political Parties in the first State Assembly Election, 1987

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
INC	40	13	76152	32.99
MNF	37	24	84549	36.62
PC	36	3	54717	23.70
MNU	21	NIL	7688	3.33
IND	11	NIL	7759	3.36

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 1987 to The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram).

There were 145 candidates contesting the election including the independent candidates. The MNF contested the Assembly elections for the first time and managed to secure 24 seats out of 37 seats it contested. The party secured 36.62 percent of the total votes polled while the ruling party suffered a heavy setback securing only 13 seats out of the 40 contested seats. The People's Conference bagged only 3 seats out of 36 seats it contested and secured 23.70 percent of the votes polled. While the Mizo National Union (MNU) party which championed the cause of the poor section of the society drew blank though it fielded 21 candidates, it could obtained only 3.33 percent of the votes cast. The voter turnout was remarkable in the sense that 74.80 percent of the electorates cast their valuable votes in the very first election after

granting statehood to Mizoram. The first state assembly election was also very significant because the MNF party, after twenty years of underground signed a memorandum of settlement to bring peace and good will in the Mizo society and contested the Mizoram Legislative Assembly for the first time. The people of the state were willing to give a chance to sit on the coveted seat of power to try their worth in state administration. The MNF fought the election mostly on the local issues and pledged to implement all terms, conditions and other stipulations contained in the memorandum of settlement. [11]

2.3 The Second State Legislative Assembly Election, 1989

Within 19 months of the MNF ministry was sworn in, intra-party factionalism took place within the party. The factionalism within the party ultimately brought a split in the MNF in 1989 into two – MNF and MNF (D). Consequently, the House was dissolved in September 1988. Therefore, the second Mizoram Legislative Assembly election was scheduled to be held on January 21, 1989.[12] In the election, seven political parties contested the election – the Congress (I), People's Conference (PC), Mizo National Front (MNF), and other unrecognized parties like Mizo National Union (MNU), Chakma Jati Parishad (CJP), Hmar People's Conference (HPC) and the breakaway Mizo National Front (D) as well as few other independents. Most of the independent candidates came from the unrecognized parties.

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[11] K.M. Zakhuma. (2001). *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989: A study with special reference to Political Parties in Mizoram.* J.R. Bros: Aizawl. p.238.
[12] Ibid. p.247.

Table 2.2: Performance of Political Parties in the second State Assembly
Election, 1989

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
INC	34	23	93561	34.85
MNF	40	14	94763	35.29
PC	38	1	52813	19.67
IND	50	2	27353	10.19

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 1989 to The Legislative
Assembly of Mizoram).

The above table shows the performance of the participating political
parties in the 1989 election. The ruling party, the MNF suffered a heavy blow
which was mainly due to the split in the party. However, the Congress gained
the maximum due to the internal schism of the MNF party. The Congress
managed to secure 22 seats and got 34.84 percent of the votes polled. The
breakaway MNF (D) did perform their role, they made an electoral alliance
with the Congress and also managed to secure 2 seats. All political parties
fought the battle of ballots mainly on local issues like the re-unification of the
Mizo inhabited areas of India, Burma and Bangladesh, and laid emphasis on
regional grievances and problems as well as the interest and separate identity of
the Mizos.[13] The polling percentage increased from 74.80 in 1987 to 81.30
percent in 1989. The Mizo electorates have once again displayed their belief in
the Indian Constitution, electoral system and political awareness. They voted
not only for the interest in partisan politics but also for peace, stability,
progress and socio-economic development.[14]

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[13] Ibid. p.248.
[14] Ibid. p.250.

2.4 The Third State Legislative Assembly Election, 1993

Table 2.3: Performance of Political Parties in the third State Assembly
Election, 1993

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
BJP	8	0	10004	3.11
INC	28	16	106320	33.10
MNF	38	14	129813	40.41
IND	47	10	75097	23.38

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 1993 to The Legislative
Assembly of Mizoram).

The third state assembly election was held on 30th November 1993.[15] In the
1993 election, there were two national parties in the election fray viz. the
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the INC. Other state parties included the
MNF and other unrecognized parties, the rest came from independent
candidates. The election witnessed pre-poll alliance between the Congress and
the People's Conference (PC). The PC had joined the Janata Dal right after the
State Assembly election of 1989 and renamed itself as Mizoram Janata Dal
(MJD), thus forming an alliance with the Congress in the 1993 election. The
ruling party managed to garner 16 seats, 7 seats less than the previous election
securing 33.10 percent of vote share. The MNF party bagged 14 seats with a
vote share of 40.41 percent. In the election, the voter turnout was 80.75 percent
which is above the national average in General elections. Although, the ruling
Congress party won only 16 seats but formed the government with the support
of its ally the Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) which managed to secure eight seats.

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[15] Op cit, Vanlalhruaia, p.89.

2.5 The Fourth State Legislative Assembly Election, 1998

The 1998 election witnessed the emergence of new political parties and the number of the contesting political parties increased drastically with four national parties, three state parties and three unrecognized parties. The contesting political parties were the BJP, INC, MNF, Janata Dal (JD), Samata Party (SAP), Lok Shakti (LS), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Maraland Democratic Front (MDF), Mizo National Front (Nationalist) MNF(N), Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) and independent candidates. A total of 337938 votes were cast with a polling percentage of 76.32.

Table 2.4: Performance of Political Parties in the fourth State Assembly Election, 1998

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
BJP	12	0	8448	2.50
INC	40	6	100608	29.77
JD	10	0	947	0.28
SAP	10	0	940	0.28
LS	15	0	774	0.23
MNF	28	21	84444	24.99
RJD	8	0	588	0.17
MDF	2	0	7721	2.28
MNF(N)	24	0	31190	9.23
MPC	28	12	69078	20.44
IND	44	1	33200	9.82

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 1998 to The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram).

The message of the electorate in the 1998 election was clear. The ruling party, the Congress suffered a humiliating defeat securing only six seats. The Congress who was in power for the last ten years was voted out of power. It was clear that the electorate wanted a change of government to put an end to

the Congress party's decade-long rule in the state. The MNF and MPC formed a pre-poll alliance and the alliance swept the assembly election, securing a majority of 34 seats in the 40 member state assembly. The MNF party gained the maximum by securing 21 seats while the MPC won 13 seats, including a party supported independently. The 1998 election witnessed another coalition government in the state.

2.6 The Fifth State Legislative Assembly Election, 2003

There was a change in the 2003 election in the sense that Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) was used for the first time in the state election. There were four National parties in the election, the BJP, INC, Janata Dal (United) (JDU) and Communist Party of India (CPI). Other state parties were the MNF, MPC and Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) (formerly MNF(N)).Other registered (unrecognized) parties included the Ephraim Union (EU), Hmar People's Convention (HPC) and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF). There were 192 contesting candidates with 418561 valid votes polled. The voter turnout has increased from 76.32 to 78.67 percent in 2003.

Table 2.5: Performance of Political Parties in the fifth State Assembly Election, 2003

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
BJP	8	0	7813	1.87
CPI	4	0	124	0.03
INC	40	12	125944	30.09
MNF	39	21	132505	31.66
MPC	28	3	67784	16.19
ZNP	27	2	61465	14.68
JD(U)	28	0	1864	0.45
EU	3	0	123	0.03
HPC	1	1	2195	0.53
MDF	2	1	8146	1.95
IND	12	0	10598	2.53

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2003 to The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram).

As the voters in the state had often given the ruling party a second chance, the MNF party also got another chance by securing a simple majority. It is interesting to note that the vote share of the MNF party, with 31.66 percent had fetched the party 21 seats. While for the Congress, their vote share of 30.09 percent could be translated into only 12 seats.

2.7 The Sixth State Legislative Assembly Election, 2008

Table 2.6: Performance of Political Parties in the sixth State Assembly election, 2008

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
BJP	9	0	2222	0.44
INC	40	32	195614	38.89
NCP	6	0	538	0.11
MNF	39	3	154132	30.65
MPC	16	2	52222	10.38
ZNP	17	2	51403	10.22

JD(U)	2	0	196	0.04
LB	5	0	43	0.09
LJP	38	0	3307	0.66
MDF	1	1	4206	0.84
IND	33	0	38684	7.69

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2008 to The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram).

The peculiar feature of the 2008 election was the contribution of the Mizoram People Forum (MPF), a social wing of the Presbyterian Church to reform politics and electioneering. All political parties including the independent candidates have strictly adhered to the appeals made by the MPF in order to ensure free and fair elections. The MPF erected pandals in each polling station where voters without voter identity cards were being helped to find their names in the voter lists. The political parties in the election fray were the BJP, INC, MNF, MPC, ZNP, JD(U), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Moreover, there were three registered (unrecognized) parties – Lok Bharati (LB), Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF). The electorate strength was 611618; out of which 309129 were female and 302489 were male. Women voters outnumbered their male counterpart.

The voter turnout was as high as 80.02 percent. The three main contenders of the election were the ruling MNF party, the Congress and the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), a pre-poll alliance formed by different parties consisting of the MPC, ZNP and Zoram Kuthnathawktu Pawl (ZKP). In this election, the ruling MNF party was again voted out of power after its completion of two terms. The MNF got 21 seats with 31.66 percent of vote share in the previous election; however, the MNF's 30.65 percent of vote share

could only be translated into 3 seats in the 2008 election. Meanwhile the opposition, the Congress party have secured an absolute majority, its 38.89 percent of votes could fetch 32 seats out of the 40 member assembly.

2.8 The Seventh State Legislative Assembly Election, 2013

There were three national parties, three state parties, two registered (unrecognized) parties and few independent candidates. National parties included BJP, INC and NCP. The state parties were MNF, MPC and ZNP. The two registered (unrecognized) parties were Jai Maha Bharath Party (JMBP) and Maraland Democratic Front (MDF). In the previous election, the Congress had managed to win 32 seats with the help of their main poll plank, the New Land Use Policy (NLUP). In the 2013 election, the electorate showed their satisfaction in the performance of the ruling party and voted the Congress back to power for the second term. The party bagged 34 seats and secured 44.63 percent of the votes polled. The rest of the seats went to the MNF which won 6 seats and the MPC won only 1 seat. The voter turnout has reached a historic high of 83.41 percent in the State Assembly election of 2013, and the female voters once again outnumbered the male voters by 2 percent.

Table 2.7: Performance of Political Parties in the seventh State Assembly
Election, 2013

PARTY	SEATS		VOTES POLLED	
	Contested	Won	Votes	%
INC	40	34	255917	44.63
BJP	17	0	2139	0.37
NCP	2	0	4835	0.84
MNF	31	5	164305	28.65
MPC	8	1	35269	6.15
ZNP	38	0	99916	17.42
MDF	1	0	5433	0.95
JMBP	1	0	29	0.01
IND	4	0	1764	0.31
NOTA	40	0	3810	0.66

(Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 2013 to the Legislative
Assembly of Mizoram).

From the above State Legislative Assembly elections, it can be said that
Mizoram is a state having two-party effective system in the sense that the
Assembly elections in Mizoram have always been a battle between the two
rival parties, the Congress and the MNF; even though at times they were
supported by other parties in forming an electoral alliance. It is true that
Mizoram is no stranger to coalition politics. However, the voters are virtually
unwilling to vote for an untried party to power. The electorates prefer the
change of government after the completion of two terms in which the Congress
and the MNF had been alternated in power since the first State Assembly
election till date. The voter turnout in the state has always been very high
ranging from 74 to 83 percent. The voters have been constantly displaying their
mature state of awareness and consciousness in the political process by
participating in the electoral process. Elections in the state have been peaceful
with a satisfying polling percentage.

The State Assembly elections are mainly fought on local issues where different political parties make almost similar appeals and promises to the voters, like the integration of the contiguous areas inhabited by the Mizos with Mizoram. The Congress' flagship programme – the NLUP in 2008 has been a game changer in Mizoram Assembly polls. The NLUP was introduced to replace the shifting cultivation with sustainable farming model. Under the scheme, the farmers are promised to give Rs. 1 lakh per family to give up shifting cultivation and start a new mode of cultivation to earn their livelihood. Given the status of the Congress which secured 32 seats and 34 seats in 2008 and 2013 Assembly polls respectively; the NLUP is proved to be a game-changer among the voters. The people of Mizoram enjoy and privilege the local issues over national issues.

2.9 The Mizoram Municipalities Act

The first urban local body in Mizoram, the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (formerly Council), was first established in the year 2008. The AMC owe its existence to the Mizoram Municipalities Act. The Act was enacted in the year 2007 to pave way for the establishment of urban local body in Mizoram. Major amendment of the Act was made in the year 2009 by the First Amendment Act, 2009.[16] Many original provisions were amended and new provisions were inserted. The Second Amendment was passed again in April 2015.[17] Under

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[16] Notification No. H. 12018/120/03-LJD the 19th November, 2009. (vide, the Mizoram Gazette, Extra Ordinary; Vol. XXXVIII Issue No. 534) viz., The Mizoram Municipalities (Amendment) Act, 2009. (Act No. 14 of 2009), received the assent of the Governor of Mizoram on 09.11.2009.
[17] Notification No. H. 12018/120/2013-LJD the 16th April, 2015. (vide, the Mizoram Gazette, Extra Ordinary; Vol. XLIV Issue No. 155) viz., The Mizoram Municipalities (Second Amendment) Act, 2015. (Act No. 5 of 2015), received the assent of the Governor of Mizoram on 25.03.2015.

Section 3.2 (a) of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007 (as amended in 2015), provides that an urban area with a population of 3 lakhs or more shall be declared as 'a larger urban area'. Further, Section 7 of the Principal Act the State Government may by notification determines that there shall be a Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area. Since the population of Aizawl city has crossed the threshold limit of three lakhs, the city has become a larger urban area in terms of the Act. As a result, the then Aizawl Municipal Council was upgraded to Aizawl Municipal Corporation in October 2015. Under Section 3(7) of the Principal Act, the urban local body in Mizoram is divided into three forms:

   i.   A Municipal Board for a transitional area.

  ii.   A Municipal Council for a smaller urban area.

 iii.   A Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area.[18]

Further, under Section 8 of the said Act, the State Government has the power to determine the number of wards in Municipal areas, with regard to population, dwelling pattern, geographical condition and economic considerations of the area included in each ward.[19] However, the Act provides that the number of wards in any municipal area shall be:

   i.   In the case of a Municipal Board, not less than five but not more than nine.

  ii.   In the case of a Municipal Council, not less than eleven but not more than twenty-three.

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[18] The Mizoram Municipalities Act 2007, p.10f.
[19] Ibid. p.11.

iii.   In the case of a Municipal Corporation, not less than fifteen but not more than thirty-one.

Under the present system, Aizawl Municipal Corporation is divided into 19 wards. Provision has been made for the constitution of Ward Committees in every ward so as to reduce the distance between the electorate and the elected representatives and to provide for the increased participation of the people in the Urban Local Body. The composition, the territorial jurisdiction and the manner in which the seats to Wards Committees shall be filled, has been left to the State Legislature to specify by law.

The Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007 provided for adequate representation of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (SC and ST) and of women in the ULBs. There are provisions for reservation of seats; Section 13(7) of the Act provides the reservation of seats for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and the number of seats so reserved shall bear, as nearly as may be the same proportion to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election as the population of the scheduled caste or scheduled tribes in the Municipal area bears to the population of that area and such seats shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies.[20] Further Section 13(8) provides that not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) of Article 243T of the Indian Constitution shall be reserved for women belonging to scheduled caste or scheduled tribes.[21] Again, Section 13(9) provides that not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for

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[20] Ibid. p.14.
[21] Ibid.

women belonging to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality. Also, provisions are made under Section 13(10) for the reservation to the offices of Chairman in the Municipalities for the scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and women in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide.[22]

Regarding the elections to ULB, Section 26, 27 and 28 of the Act deal with the election of the Councilors in the Municipality.[23] Further, Section 345 provides that there shall be a Commission, to be called the Mizoram State Election Commission, consisting of the State Election Commissioner appointed by the Governor under clause (1) of Article 243K of the Constitution.[24] The State Election Commission, Mizoram is a constitutional authority created by the State Government of Mizoram under Article 243K and Article 243ZA of the Constitution of India read with Section 345 of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007.

The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and conduct of all elections to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation are vested in the State Election Commission, Mizoram (Section 346 of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007).[25] The Commission ensures the conduct of free, fair, smooth and peaceful election in the State. It appoints

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[22] Ibid. p.15.
[23] Ibid. p.21.
[24] Ibid. p.163f.
[25] Ibid. p.164.

Observers who monitors, supervises and oversees the elections to the AMC on behalf of the State Election Commission with a view to ensuring the establishment of strong and democratic Council which will provide strong and sound democratic base for administration. The Commission had successfully conducted two General Elections to AMC in 2010 and 2015. In accordance with the provision of Article 243T of the Indian Constitution, the State Government and the Election Commission of Mizoram determine the number of Municipal Wards of the AMC elections and also make reservation for the scheduled tribes and women.[26]

2.10 Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram

All the seats in ULB are filled by direct elections except for the 12 members nominated by the Governor of Mizoram. Each seat represents a ward in the Municipal area. The list of the number of wards in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections is given below in Table 2.8 and Table 2.9.

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[26] R.N. Prasad. (2006). The Seventy-Fourth Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 and Urban Local Government Perpectives in Mizoram. In R.N. Prasad (ed). *Urban Local Self Government in India.* Mittal Publications: New Delhi. p.168.

Table 2.8: No. of Wards in 2010 AMC election

Sl. No.	Ward No.	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
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: Compendium of General Election to Aizawl Municipal Council, 2010)

Table 2.9: No. of Wards in 2015 AMC election

Sl. No.	Ward No.	Status
1.	Ward No. I	ST(Women)
2.	Ward No. II	ST
3.	Ward No. III	ST
4.	Ward No. IV	ST
5.	Ward No. V	ST
6.	Ward No. VI	ST
7.	Ward No. VII	ST(Women)
8.	Ward No. VIII	ST
9.	Ward No. IX	ST(Women)
10.	Ward No. X	ST
11.	Ward No. XI	ST
12.	Ward No. XII	ST
13.	Ward No. XIII	ST(Women)
14.	Ward No. XIV	ST
15.	Ward No. XV	ST(Women)
16.	Ward No. XVI	ST
17.	Ward No. XVII	ST
18	Ward No. XVIII	ST(Women)
19.	Ward No. XIX	ST

(Source: Compendium of General Election to Aizawl Municipal Council, 2015)

In the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), there are 19 wards with six reserved seats for women which were determined by draw of lots. In the 2010 AMC election, Ward No. IX was open to General which can be contested by any person from SC/ST/General category. The population as per 2001 census in respect of Aizawl Municipal area is 229386 and the total population of scheduled caste in Aizawl Municipality is only 0.6% of the total population in Aizawl Municipality, the reservation of seats for SC was treated as zero. Whereas, the scheduled tribes population in Aizawl Municipality consist of 91.94% and therefore, 18 seats out of the total 19 seats were reserved for ST population. The population of persons belonging to others category other than SC/ST consisted of 8% of the total population in Aizawl Municipality; therefore 1 seat having the highest population of other categories was placed as General seat. However, no seat was open to General category in the 2015 AMC election.

The State Election Commission prescribes the setting up of polling stations in a manner that it should be located more or less permanently for electors residing in a well-defined area covered by a part of the electoral roll. The optimum number of electors per polling station is prescribed as 1200. The number of polling stations increased from 174 in 2010 to 211 in 2015 AMC election. In order to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections to AMC, the Commission issues a Model Code of Conduct to be followed by Political parties, Contesting candidates, Ministers, Member of Parliament, Members of

Legislative Assembly and any other public servants connected with AMC elections.

Table 2.10: Voter turnout in 2010 and 2015 AMC Elections

Ward No.	No. of electors (2010)	Polling percentage (2010)	No. of electors (2015)	Polling percentage (2015)
Ward No. I	8899	71.82	10398	67.04
Ward No. II	1157	49.43	13472	52.35
Ward No. III	9506	67.78	10696	62.16
Ward No. IV	9853	64.48	10472	60.64
Ward No. V	8216	60.05	9280	58.34
Ward No. VI	6100	67.82	8011	67.87
Ward No. VII	9566	62.35	11768	62.85
Ward No. VIII	6123	64.53	6468	62.97
Ward No. IX	8614	64.38	9899	61.87
Ward No. X	6566	70.91	8323	66.59
Ward No. XI	8640	70.74	10258	65.99
Ward No. XII	10336	56.94	11067	67.13
Ward No. XIII	6504	62.72	7645	64.28
Ward No. XIV	9148	54.97	9660	65.37
Ward No. XV	8791	63.50	9533	65.65
Ward No. XVI	9346	67.50	10506	67.03
Ward No. XVII	8699	64.08	9587	63.83
Ward No. XVIII	13291	62.50	15197	62.19
Ward No. XIX	8494	70.24	10125	68.49
Total	159950	63.60	192365	63.55

(Source: Compendium of General Election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation, 2010 & 2015)

From the above table, the turnouts at the AMC elections were 63.60 percent and 63.55 percent in 2010 and 2015 respectively. In India, it is a common trend that the turnout started increasing as we go down the three tiers of democracy. In many cases, the local body elections tend to record higher turnout comparing to the national and state assembly elections. For example, Rajasthan has recorded higher turnout in local body elections comparing to the national and

state assembly elections. Rajasthan recorded a turnout of 63.09 percent[27] in the 2014 Lok Sabha election; the turnout in the state assembly election was 75.04 percent.[28] And the turnout in the elections to 129 urban local bodies held in 2015 was more than 76 percent.[29] Given the turnout in the elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, the election to the AMC is expected to record a turnout of over 70 percent. Nonetheless, the voter turnouts in the AMC elections are significantly higher compared to the developed cities like Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) and Mumbai.[30] It is often lamented that voters in more developed areas are more reluctant to exercise their franchise as compared to the voters in low profile areas. While it would be wrong to make a general statement that all developed cities have a low voting percentage compared to rural areas in India. On the other hand, the voter turnout in each ward in both the elections shows that the wards having high voter turnout belong to the low profile areas. In 2010, the highest voter turnout was Ward No. I (Durtlang, Durtlang Leitan, Zuangtui, Muanna Veng); further in 2015, Ward No XIX (Kulikawn, Tlangnuam, Tlangnuam Vengthar, Saikhamakawn, Melthum, Hlimen) record the highest turnout. Interestingly, both these Wards are from the least affluent and disadvantaged areas located on the edge of the city. The lower turnout in the AMC elections could be due to different factors.

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[27] Press Information Bureau: www.pib.nic.in (Retrieved on 03/12/2016 10:40pm).
[28] Election Commission of India: www.eci.nic.in (Retrieved on 03/12/2016 10:40pm)
[29] Rajasthan voice: www.rajasthanvoice.com (Retrieved on 03/12/2016 10:30pm)
[30] The voter turnout in the election of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) was around 45 percent in 2012. Similarly, the election to the Bengaluru's urban local body known as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) witnessed a low turnout of around 49 percent in 2015. (details in www.indiatoday.indiatoday.in *45 percent voting in Mumbai civic polls*; www.ndtv.com *Bengaluru civic elections voting ends with dismal turnout.*) (Retrieved on 03/12/2016 10:30pm)

The Constitution of India empowers the Municipalities to function as an institution of self-government in respect of plans preparation for economic development and the functions mentioned in the twelfth schedule of the Constitution. However, the ULBs in India still function under the strict supervision and control of the State Government. The ULB in Mizoram at its nascent stage is still believed to be a mere creation of the State Government having little or no direct affect on the lives of the people. Article 243W (12th Schedule) of the 74th Amendment Act consists 18 lists of obligatory functions for the ULBs in India. However, what functions and responsibilities should be assigned to the municipalities in place of or in addition to what they have is still left to the state legislatures.[31] The state governments are not prepared to give up total control over all the subjects.

At present, ULB in Mizoram performs only nine functions which include collection of property tax, control and collection of parking fees, solid waste management, hoardings, street lights, building registration, naming and numbering of streets, issue of trade and food licenses, death and birth certificates.[32] Therefore the issues of autonomy in the ULB in Mizoram still remains incomplete and as a result, the voters of the city tend to trust the State Government over the urban local body due to lack of autonomy of the latter. Urban local body in Mizoram is regarded as of lower status in the minds of the voters and there is less interest in the elections of ULB comparing to the state assembly elections. Studies have shown that turnout increases when the

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[31] S. Bagchi. (1999). Myth of Empowering Urban Local Bodies. *Economic and Political Weekly. Vol.34. No.37.* p.2637.
[32] Interview with Rosiamngheta, AMC Councilor, Ward No. V on 21/11/2016.

officials up for election have more direct control over some of the basic issues that affect city residents' quality of life.[33] However, it is interesting to note that the actions of the Centre or the State Government do not necessarily affect the everyday lives of the citizens, rather the people who are elected in the local elections have more impact and influence on the citizens' everyday lives.

Table 2.10: Performance of Political Parties in AMC Election, 2010

Ward No.	Party	Votes Obtained	%
Ward No. I	BJP	89	1.4
	INC	2675	43.4
	MNF	3552	56.2
Ward No. II	BJP	240	4.0
	MPC	2627	43.8
	ZNP	3124	52.1
Ward No. III	BJP	86	1.3
	INC	3113	47.8
	MPC	3315	50.9
Ward No. IV	INC	2985	46.1
	MNF	3486	53.9
Ward No. V	INC	2457	49.4
	MPC	2513	50.6
Ward No. VI	INC	1980	47.6
	MNF	2178	52.4
Ward No. VII	MNF	2866	47.3
	ZNP	3192	52.7
Ward No. VIII	IND	135	3.4
	INC	1731	43.9
	MNF	2078	52.7
Ward No. IX	INC	2685	48.4
	MPC	2859	51.6

[33] Z.L. Hajnal & P.G. Lewis. (2003). Municipal Institutions and Voter Turnout in Local Elections. *Urban Affairs Review Vol. 38. No. 5. Sage Publications.* p.658.

Ward No. X	INC	2350	52.5
	MNF	2127	47.5
Ward No. XI	IND	372	6.1
	MNF	2819	46.1
	ZNP	2918	47.8
Ward No. XII	INC	3187	53.9
	MNF	2729	46.1
Ward No. XIII	MPC	2067	49.7
	ZNP	2090	50.3
Ward No. XIV	MPC	1798	35.4
	ZNP	3283	64.6
Ward No. XV	BJP	155	2.8
	INC	2854	50.9
	MNF	2588	45.6
	NCP	38	0.7
Ward No. XVI	MPC	3412	53.3
	ZNP	2995	46.9
Ward No. XVII	INC	2825	51.6
	MNF	2652	48.4
Ward No. XVIII	INC	4191	49.1
	MNF	4351	50.9
Ward No. XVIX	INC	3069	51.0
	MNF	2947	48.9

(Source: Compendium of General Election to Aizawl Municipal Council, 2010)

From the above table 2.4, it can be said that the ULB elections in Mizoram are more or less similar to the State Legislative Assembly elections where the main contest is between the two main parties - the Congress and the MNF. However, the two parties also formed a pre-poll alliance with other smaller parties except for the MNF in 2015 when it decided to contest alone. Coming to the 2010 AMC election, the Congress-ZNP alliance managed to secure 10 seats while

the remaining 9 seats went to the MNF-MPC alliance. The Congress contested in 13 seats securing 33.6 percent of the total votes polled while the MNF contested in 12 seats with a vote share of 29.4 percent. While the MPC and ZNP secured 17.3 percent and 16.4 percent of the total votes. However, evaluating the performance of parties on the percentage of vote share on the overall seats could be a wrong description especially for the smaller parties who contested in fewer seats.

The ZNP did perform fairly well in the 2010 election, the party contested in 6 seats and managed to win 5 seats. The vote percentage in the seats contested was very healthy with 52.1 percent. Likewise, the MPC contested in 7 seats and bagged 4 seats securing 48.4 percent of votes in the seats contested. On the basis of this parameter, the smaller parties, the MPC and the ZNP had performed very well in the first AMC election. However, the other parties BJP and NCP could not even secure a single seat.

Table 2.5: Performance of Political Parties in AMC Election, 2015

Ward No.	Party	Votes Obtained	%
Ward No. I	INC	3492	50.5
	MNF	2972	42.9
	ZNP	453	6.6
Ward No. II	MNF	3748	53.3
	MPC	2018	28.7
	ZNP	1269	18.0
Ward No. III	INC	3106	46.9
	MNF	3182	48.0
	ZNP	341	5.1
Ward No. IV	MNF	3386	53.7
	MPC	2917	46.3

Ward No. V	INC	3051	56.1
	MNF	2183	40.2
	ZNP	202	3.7
Ward No. VI	INC	2537	46.9
	MNF	2585	47.8
	ZNP	283	5.3
Ward No. VII	INC	3861	52.7
	MNF	2455	33.5
	ZNP	1013	13.8
Ward No. VIII	INC	1612	39.7
	MNF	2451	60.3
Ward No. IX	BJP	62	1.0
	INC	2551	41.9
	MNF	3466	57.1
Ward No. X	BJP	140	2.5
	INC	2504	45.4
	MNF	2872	52.1
Ward No. XI	MNF	2739	40.9
	MPC	2661	39.8
	ZNP	1284	19.2
Ward No. XII	MNF	3701	50.5
	MPC	3622	49.5
Ward No. XIII	INC	2410	49.5
	MNF	2213	45.4
	ZNP	249	5.1
Ward No. XIV	INC	2742	43.8
	MNF	3256	51.9
	ZNP	265	4.2
Ward No. XV	INC	2706	43.4
	MNF	2270	36.4
	ZNP	1255	20.1
Ward No. XVI	MNF	1994	28.5
	MPC	2651	37.9
	ZNP	2349	33.6

Ward No. XII	INC	2515	41.3
	MNF	2204	36.2
	ZNP	1365	22.4
Ward No. XIII	BJP	433	4.5
	INC	4790	49.7
	MNF	4414	45.8
Ward No. XIX	BJP	112	1.6
	INC	3350	48.6
	MNF	3435	49.8

(Source: Compendium of General Election to Aizawl Municipal Council, 2015)

The opposition party – the MNF managed to win the 2015 AMC election by securing 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 the party drew blank. The MNF had performed very well in terms of seats won and its vote share has also increased from 29.4 percent to 43.6 percent of the total votes polled. The second ULB election witnessed the victory of the MNF in which the ruling Congress-led alliance was voted out of power after the completion of one term which is unlike the trend that people witnessed in the State Legislative Assembly elections.

In 2015 AMC election, there are three candidates who have retained their power in the same wards. In Ward No V, Rosiamngheta contested the AMC election 2010 from Mizoram Peoples Conference party. However, in

2015 AMC election he changed his party to Congress and contested the election from Congress party. He had won both the elections from Ward No.V but from two different parties. In Ward No. VIII, PC. Lalhmingthanga contested the AMC election of 2010 from MNF party and had won the election. Again in 2015, he won the AMC election from the same party, in the same ward. C. Lalsawivunga from Ward No. XVI also won both the elections in 2010 and 2015 from Congress party. The strategies of different parties to win the AMC election 2015 are discussed in detail in the next Chapter (Chapter III).

Chapter III

Campaign and Manifestos

Campaign and manifestos are the most prominent strategies employed in elections; be it local, state or even at the national level. A campaign strategy is a proposed means and ways, driven by the understanding of who will vote for the candidate and why they will do so. Campaign technique includes holding public or group meetings by parties and candidates, processions shouting slogans asking support for the different parties, cultural shows organized by party supporters, displaying posters, door to door canvassing and media advertisements. Election manifesto is a formal statement of programmes, objectives and priorities of parties and candidate. It is basically a declaration or a promise as to how the party or the candidates propose welfare measures for the public. This chapter study the strategies employed by the candidates and different parties in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) election of 2015. It is divided into two parts; the first part focuses on the campaign strategies of different candidates and parties while the second part deals with the manifestos issued by different parties and candidates.

3.1. Concept of Campaign

A campaign is defined as the period before citizens make a real political choice.[1] There are different modes of campaign. Election campaigns differ from place to place and also with time. There is a shift from pre-modern to

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[1] H.E. Brady, R. Johnston & J. Sides. (2006). The Study of Political Campaigns. In H.E. Brady & R. Johnston (ed.) *Capturing Campaign Effects.* University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor. p.2.

modern and then post-modern campaigns have transformed campaign organizations, the news media and the electorate. Norris (2004) has given the three distinct stages of campaigns in her work *The Evolution of Election Campaigns* namely the pre-modern campaigns, modern campaigns and the post-modern campaigns. According to her, the pre-modern campaign is essentially locally active as most campaigning is concentrated within local communities, conducted through more demanding political activities like rallies, door-to-door canvassing and party meetings.[2] The pre-modern campaign organization is based on the direct form of interpersonal communications between candidates and citizens at the local level, with short-term, ad-hoc planning by the party leadership. In these campaigns, local parties selected the candidates, rang the doorbells, posted the pamphlets, targeted the wards, planned the resources and generally provided all the machinery linking voters and candidates.[3]

The pre-modern campaign originated in the 19th century, it was characterized by a campaign organization with the party leader at the apex, surrounded by a few close political advisers, running a relatively short, and ad-hoc national campaign.[4] The base was a loose organizational network of party volunteers dispersed in local areas. It relied heavily upon the partisan press as the main source of mediated information, either directly owned and subsidized by party organs, or independently owned managed but providing sympathetic

[2] P. Norris. (2004).The Evolution of Election Campaigns: Eroding Political Engagement? *John F. Kennedy School of Government: Harvard University.* p.3.
[3] Ibid. p.4.
[4] Ibid.

partisan-spin through editorial columns and political commentary. The direct form of campaigning, that built on personal networks of volunteers and face-to-face candidate-voter communications continues to be common when mobilizing voters for local, municipal and state level elections.[5]

Modern campaigns are defined as those with a party organization coordinated more closely at the central level by political leaders, advised by professional consultants like opinion pollsters. The principle forum of campaign events is televised nationally and is supplemented by other media. Most voters become more distant and disengaged spectators in the process as the main focus of the campaign is located within national television studios. The modern campaign from the early 1950s and 1980s was marked by the move from party officials and volunteers to paid professional consultants specializing in communications, marketing, polling and campaign management; the shift from more partisan newspaper towards national television news; and the development of a more detached and instrumental electorate, less strongly anchored to party loyalties and social cleavages.[6]

Lastly, the rise of the post-modern campaign is marked by the fragmentation of television outlets, with the shift from national broadcasting towards more diverse news sources, talk radio and 24 hour rolling news bulletins; the opportunities for newer forms of party voter interaction facilitated by the rise of the internet; and the attempt by the parties to reassert control in a more complex, fragmented and rapidly changing news environment through

[5].Ibid. p.3ff.
[6] Ibid. p.4f.

strategic communications and media management during the permanent campaign, with the continuous feedback provided by polls and focus groups. The post-modern campaign symbolizes a return to some of the more localized and interactive forms of communication that were present in the pre-modern period. Digital technologies allow different forms of political communication that can be located systematically somewhere between the local-activism of the pre-modern campaign and the national passive forms of communication characteristic of the modern television campaign.[7]

In the context of India, the Election Commission of India defines campaign as the period when the political parties put forward their candidates and arguments with which they hope to persuade people to vote for their candidate and parties.[8] The official campaign in India lasts at least two weeks from the drawing up of the list of nominated candidates, and officially ends 48 hours before polling closes. During the election campaign, the political parties and contesting candidates are expected to abide by a Model Code of Conduct evolved by the Election Commission on the basis of a consensus among political parties. It lays down broad guidelines as to how the political parties and contesting candidates should conduct themselves during the campaign. The Model Code is intended to maintain the election campaign on healthy lines, avoid clashes and conflict between political parties or their supporters; and to ensure peace and order during the campaign and until the results are declared. [9] Political parties and candidates in India try to show that they followed the Code

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[7] Ibid. p.6f.
[8] Election Commission of India: www.eci.nic.in (Retrieved on 03/11/2016 08:19pm)
[9] Ibid.

of Conduct of Election Commission in letter and spirit. However, in reality, people witnessed the violation of the Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission. Moreover, campaign normally begins at least six to seven months prior to the elections. In short, there is a difference between the guidelines and the actual practices during the election campaign.

3.2. Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram

Urban local body (ULB) election in Mizoram is based on the pre-modern campaign, a direct form of communication between the candidate and the voters. Due to a smaller size in area and smaller budgets, local body elections rely on door-to-door campaign by family and friends, party workers and followers of party leaders and candidates. Posters and messages around local development, community and infrastructures have been popular to connect with people. However, the modes of communication may differ from door-to-door canvassing to using social media. With the advent of technology, mobile broadcasts and internet are being experimented upon by many leaders across parties and candidates.

The power and authority of direction and control of ULB elections in Mizoram are vested in the State Election Commission of Mizoram. Therefore, the Commission issues a Model Code of Conduct to be followed in order to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections. On 30th October 2015, the Commission announced the date of the election to be held on 26th November 2015; which

was 26 days before the actual voting day.[10] The Code of Conduct came into force from the date of announcement of elections and applies to all political parties, contesting candidates, ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and any other public servants connected with the elections.[11] It lays down several conducts to be strictly followed by the parties and candidates which include certain activities they should refrain from during the campaign, polling day and throughout the elections. The Commission prevents possession, use of arms and ammunitions, and issue of license for arms, use of loudspeakers within Aizawl city for maintaining peace and tranquility during the elections. It also makes provisions for election expenditure which can be incurred or authorized to be incurred by a candidate i.e., Rs. 1,00,000 for each Ward. The day-to-day accounts on expenditure have to be maintained by the candidate in a register prescribed by the Commission which is to made available for inspection at least on three occasions during the campaign period to the Designated Officers/Election Observers appointed by the Commission.[12]

3.3 Role of Mizoram People Forum

Mizoram has been witnessing a peaceful poll campaign under the watchful eye of the powerful Presbyterian church- sponsored and controlled Mizoram

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[10] Government of Mizoram. (2015). *Compendium of 2nd General Election to Aizawl Municipal Council.* State Election Commission: Mizoram. p.54.
[11] Government of Mizoram. (2010). *Compendium of 1st General Election to Aizawl Municipal Council.* State Election Commission: Mizoram. p.53.
[12] Ibid. p.272.

People's Forum (MPF).[13] The MPF is a conglomeration of several churches and major NGOs including Young Mizo Association (YMA),[14] Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)[15] and Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP)[16]. Its main objective is to work for good governance and to clean up the electoral system of the state of Mizoram.[17] The MPF has been supported by the State Election Commission and shares a similar goal which is to ensure free and fair elections. All registered political parties have signed a covenant with the MPF while keeping a check on any kind of wrong-doings by them.[18] For the Aizawl Municipal Corporation election, an agreement was signed between the contesting political parties and the MPF on 13th February 2015 in order to ensure free and fair election.[19]

The Forum ban lavish campaigning, prohibiting tall promises in manifesto, bans public meetings, protest rallies, feasts, street concerts etc. It prohibits the parties not to arrange vehicles to drop voters to polling booths, and also setting up of campaign offices or organizing public rallies without its consent or participation. It also prohibits door-to-door campaigning within 48 hours of polling day and even order limitations on the numbers and sizes of posters and banners, the number of copies of appeals by political parties and

[13] Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was established on 21st June, 2006 with a purpose of good governance and electoral reforms in Mizoram. The Forum is sponsored and controlled by Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod which is the largest Christian denomination in the state.
[14] Young Mizo Association (YMA) was formed on 15th June, 1935. It is the largest nongovernmental organization in Mizoram.
[15] Mizoram Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) is a women's movement which aims at creating a state of welfare, upliftment of women and children, women rights etc. It was formed on 6th July, 1974 and is one of the biggest voluntary organizations in Mizoram.
[16] Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) is an elders association in Mizoram which was formed in the year 1960 as Zoram Upa Pawl. It was later changed to Mizoram Upa Pawl in 1992.
[17] Mizoram People Forum: www.mizoram.ngosindia.com (Retrieved on 24/11/2016 05:11pm)
[18] Mizoram Synod: www.mizoramsynod.org (Retrieved on 09/11/2016 05:02pm)
[19] Vanglaini daily newspaper, Dated 14th February 2015: www.vanglaini.org (Retrieved on 09/11/2016 6:30pm)

candidates. In every locality, the size of the banner should not be more than 12 X 4 feet, and the size of the poster should not be more than 4 X 3 feet. The MPF has also restricted the number of posters, banners and flags that can be used by the candidates and political parties. In a locality having seven and above local council members, the candidates can use three banners, twenty posters and thirty flags. For a locality having local council members of five and above, the candidate can use three banners, fifteen posters and twenty flags. As for a locality with three and above local council members, the candidate can use three banners, ten posters and ten flags.[20] The role of MPF in ensuring peaceful elections has been successful in the sense that Mizoram has been experiencing a low-key, quiet and colorless electioneering which earlier was once colorful and vibrant. The MPF's role has been lauded by the people and the State Election Commission. However, there have been several criticisms leveled against the MPF and questioned its role in a democratic process in the state.

3.4 Campaign

The campaign management and the nomination of the party candidate at the ULB election are more or less similar to the state level election. In each Ward, the Block Committee and the Unit Committee together suggest and prepare a list of eligible and qualifying candidates to contest from their party. The draft is sent over to the Nomination Committee of the party headquarter where the final decision is made. After the approval of the higher authority, the President of

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[20] A covenant signed between political parties and MPF on 13th February 2015. MPF General Headquarter: Aizawl.

the party officially declares the candidate contesting for their party ticket. As soon as the date of the election is announced, each party forms a Campaign Committee in each locality to manage the whole process of electioneering. The Committee, however, dissolves as soon as the election is over. The party members of the Block and Unit Committee elect the office bearers of the Campaign Committee who in turn select some members from the party to assist them to perform different tasks. [21]

The Committee is further divided into groups and each group is assigned different roles. While some members perform the role of providing transportation to the electorates coming from distant areas, others are responsible for buying and distributing cigarettes, betel-nut, or even liquor among the electorates on polling day (though liquor is ban). The other members reach out for the sick and needy people in the area and assist them with money or pay for their medicines in order to mobilize the voters. Polling agents are also selected by the Office Bearer of Campaign Committee to identify the electorates and provide them with their serial number before entering the polling booth. Media, banners and posters are also taken care of by the Campaign Committee. The Committee assists the candidate in door-to-door canvassing, distributing pamphlets and flyers.

The election strategies of the party and also the intending candidate started three to four months prior to the voting day. However, the real campaign begins as soon as the party headquarter officially announced the

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[21] Interview with Zosangliana Ralte (Treasurer, Aizawl North II, MNF Block) on 11/07/2016, R. Vanlalvena (Aizawl South I, MLA) on 14/07/2016, Rosiamngheta (AMC Councillor, Ward V) on 11/11/2016.

name of the candidate in their respective ward for the Aizawl Municipal Corporation election. The announcement of the candidates was made official on 2nd November 2015 by the MNF party, while the Congress-MPC alliance officially announced their party candidates on 3rd November 2015 and the BJP-ZNP alliance announced their candidates on 4th November 2015.[22] So, the announcement of the candidates was made three to five days after the announcement of the AMC election by the State Election Commission. Since the AMC election was scheduled to be held on 26th November 2015, the candidates were left with roughly 20-23 days for campaigning. Moreover, the MPF restricted door-to-door canvassing ten days before the actual voting day.

3.5 Case Study on Election Campaign of Different Candidates

The scholar interviewed four candidates to study and understand the election campaigns as a case study from four different Wards (Ward III, Ward IV, Ward V and Ward I) in order to analyze the different tactics and strategies employed between the winning and the losing candidates. In 2015 AMC election, the MNF party decided to contest alone, while a pre-poll alliance was formed between the Congress and Mizoram People's Conference (MPC) party and between BJP and Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP). Following is the list of candidates interviewed by the scholar, clause A and B represents the candidates who have won the election while clause C and D are the candidates who have lost the election.

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[22] Vanglaini daily newspaper, Dated 3rd November 2015, 4th November 2015 and 5th November 2015: www.vanglaini.org (Retrieved on 09/11/2016 6:30pm)

3.5.A Case study 1:

Name of the candidate: Laltlanzova Khiangte

Ward No: IV (Ramhlun South, Ramthar North, Ramthar Veng and Aizawl Venglai).

Party: MNF

Laltlanzova Khiangte contested the AMC election, 2015 from Ward IV. He was the youngest male candidate from the unreserved seats. The BJP-ZNP alliance did not contest in this ward and there were only two contestants; the other contestant G.Thuamliana from MPC party lost by 469 votes. In other words, the Congress and the MNF had a straight fight. Laltlanzova Khiangte, a permanent resident of Ramhlun South has won the AMC election of 2015 from Ward IV. He was born on 12th December 1978 in Aizawl and completed his master's degree in History subject in 2002. He is a new entrant in politics; he however, developed a keen interest in politics since his early life. He was involved in several political movements like Youth Movement for Mizoram and Mipui Tangrual Pawl during 2007 to 2009.[23] Right after his post-graduation, he pursued a career in journalism and worked as a news editor in Vanglaini from 2002 to 2006. He then launched a monthly magazine called 'Thlifim' and was an editor from 2006 to 2009. His contributions towards literature are notable, including several articles for the state's leading

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[23] Youth Movement for Mizoram (YMM) and Mipui Tangrual Pawl (MTP) are both political movements, working for free and fair election and to bring an over-all change in Mizoram.

newspaper, Vanglaini. During his time as a journalist, he did not have any close tie or affiliation with any political party.

When the AMC election was nearer in 2015, he claimed that several parties at the local level have constantly requested him to join their party and to contest from their party ticket; the talks and persuasion went on until he finally decided to contest from MNF party one month prior to the election. On 30th October 2015, the State Election Commission announced the date of the election to be held on 26th November 2015 which was soon followed up by the filing of nominations.[24] So, there was hardly a month left between the date of announcement and the polling day. The candidate relied on a direct form of campaigning as well as indirect form in which he employed social media, specifically 'Whatsapp' to woo the voters. He said that he visited as many houses as he could and used posters, business cards and banners for communication and to popularize himself among the electorate in the ward. The party workers, friends and families also assisted him in door-to-door canvassing in different areas. So each group would target different areas within the ward. Since public meetings, rallies etc. were banned by the MPF, the only platform the candidates could express themselves before the public was the joint platform organized by the MPF in every ward on 20th November 2015. In the Joint Platform, the candidates took turn to explain what steps they will take towards the development of Aizawl if elected. When asked about his expenditure during the election, the candidate is of the opinion that almost

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[24] Op cit, Compendium (2015). p.54.

every candidate must have crossed five to six times the ceiling of expenditure prescribed by the State Election Commission. It means every candidate spend around six to seven lakhs amount of money in the AMC elections. It can be noted here that the MPF tried to curb the lavish spending and power of money in the AMC elections but failed because the candidates were spending five to six times more than the ceiling of expenditure.

The candidate is however, satisfied with the role of MPF and the party workers and gives credit to them for his victory in the election. According to him, the main factor behind his victory was "youth power" which was made possible by the MPF. He opines that the role of the MPF has virtually put an end to nepotism, corruption and bribing of voters, and as a result, it has created a better opportunity for the younger and newer generations to actually participate in the field of politics. He also said that the role of the MPF has been made possible for the candidate coming from a middle-class family to win the election without buying and bribing the voters.

3.5.B Case study 2:

Name of the candidate: Rosiamngheta

Ward No: V (Electric Veng, Chanmari and Zarkawt).

Party: Congress

Rosiamngheta contested the election from Congress party and won the AMC election of 2015 in Ward V. He had also won the first AMC election in 2010 when he contested from MPC party. He was born on 7th September 1964 in Aizawl. He got his degree in Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Arts. He was deeply influenced by his father in joining politics and eventually became a

member of Chanmari Village Council in 1993. He also served as Village Council President in Chanmari for nine years. He has been involved in many social works in his locality and also served as Office Bearer in YMA Chanmari branch as well as a leader in Kristian Thalai Pawl (KTP)[25] Chanmari branch. He defines his role in politics as social work oriented and not election-oriented and said "Politics is not a profession, but a mission"[26]. In 2015, he switched his party from PC to Congress which he thought would have a bigger impact on the AMC election rather than the smaller parties. His main objective is to become an efficient politician irrespective of the party he belongs. So, in order to serve and contribute for the betterment of the community and city, he is of the opinion that one should follow the party which will have a bigger impact on the society.

Coming to the campaign, he along with the party leaders set up a Campaign Committee in each locality within Ward No. V. The members and party workers of the Committee are divided into groups and target different areas and took part in house-to-house campaigning, distributing leaflets and flyers. Besides the help from friends, family and the Campaign Committee, the candidate did not employ any other form of campaigning like the use of social media or bulk SMS to mobilize voters. Another strategy which the candidate followed was the 'pick and choose' method in which the party workers, friends and family assisted him in campaigning to pick up a family, who demanded to meet the candidate in person. At times, the candidate often visited the same

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[25] Kristian thalai Pawl (KTP) is a Christian Youth Fellowship under Mizoram Presbyterian Church. It was formed on 22nd February 1954.
[26] Interview with Rosiamngheta, AMC Councilor (Ward V) on 11/11/2016.

house more than once if he feels necessary. He appreciated the role of the Campaign Committee and said that the main factors behind his victory is the party strength as well as his personality, his contributions to the city as a Councilor in the previous term.

The candidate feels that during the campaign process, every candidate should be given an opportunity to address the public and debate on an issue, put forward their ideas, intentions and political stance to the mass so that the voters would be aware of whom to vote for in the election. He said that there should be enough platforms for the candidates to express their views, so that the voters will analyze their views and vote accordingly[27]. It can be noted that during the campaign, the candidate recalled that his total expenditure would have crossed the prescribed limit. He said that although it seems right for the system but in practical, it is not possible for a candidate to maintain his expenditure within a meager ceiling of Rs. 1,00,000. [28]

3.5.C Case study 3:

Name of the candidate: Dalkhena

Ward: III (Ramhlun North, Ramhlun Venglai, Ramhlun Vengthar, Ramhlun Sports Complex and Laipuitlang).

Party: Congress

Dalkhena was born in 1943, in Leisenzo in Chhamphai district. Dalkhena is the oldest candidate in the AMC election of 2015. He moved to

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

Aizawl in 1971 where he completed his degree in Commerce stream in the year 1974. He worked at the Transport Department until his voluntary pension in 1989. In 1997, he joined the Congress party and was elected as a member of Village Council in Ramhlun North. He also became the President of Village Council in 2002 which he held for four consecutive terms. He was also the President of YMA Ramhlun North branch and till date, he remains as an adviser to the said YMA branch. He has done a lot of social works for the development of his locality during his term as Village Council President, his notable work being the construction of Ramhlun Indoor Stadium. His achievements and contributions have made him one of the most prominent men in the locality. He however, lost the AMC election and was defeated by just 76 votes by his competitor from MNF. According to him the MNF party had attracted a lot of voters who were against the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act (MLPC)[29] and saw his defeat as a protest against the wine shop that has been established in their ward.

The candidate was initially very skeptical about contesting the AMC election as he felt that he was too old and would not make a competent candidate. The party members from the block and unit level pressurized him and made a recommendation for him at the party headquarter. As the Congress party insisted him to contest the election, to which he finally agreed. So he started his campaign after his nomination was made official by the party

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[29] Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Bill was passed by the state government in 2014. The Act was enforced on 15th January 2015 ending the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) of 1995. Wine shops are open under strict regulations and people over 21 can drink and purchase liquor after applying for a liquor card. The Churches in Mizoram and local NGOs have made allegations against the Act and warned the people not to sell liquor or allow their properties to be used for storing or selling liquor.

headquarter on 3rd November 2015.[30] When it comes to house-to-house campaigning, the candidate claimed that it was impossible to visit every house in the ward within a short span of time for campaigning. So he mainly targeted the floating voters and skipped some houses which he thought are safe and would vote for him at any cost. He said that Campaign Committee in each locality has performed their task very well in handling the campaign process, from distributing pamphlets, posters, door-to-door canvassing to using social media to attract voters. The candidate also sought help from his family, friends and relatives. There were times the candidate has to arrange dinner or lunch for the party members, his friends and relatives who assisted him in his campaign. He claims that the fixed ceiling of expenditure is very less for the candidate to manage the whole campaign and election affairs even if the candidate refrains from buying or bribing voters. He said that he would not have exceeded the limit it was five times more than the prescribed limit.[31]

The candidate appreciates the role of MPF in maintaining peaceful elections and said that MPF is like a shield that protects us from election malpractices. He however, feels that the MPF should relax some restrictions that have been imposing on parties and candidates during the campaign. He said that there should be more public meetings and more platforms for the candidates to put forward their opinion and their views so that the voters can decide the right candidate to vote for. He also mentioned that he had spoken against the MoU signed by the MPF and different political parties, but no party

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[30] Op cit,Vanglaini, Dated 4th November, 2015.
[31] In other words, the candidate spent at least five times more than the expenditure limit of one lakh.

or individual was on the same page as no one dares to defy the diktats of the MPF. [32]

Though a very prominent man, the candidate somehow lost the AMC election of 2015. The candidate claimed that the opponent candidate from the MNF party has attracted a lot of partisan voters as well as floating voters who are against the opening of a wine shop in Ramhlun Venglai which is within Ward III. The candidate mentioned that he has lost many of his loyal supporters due to the MLPC Act implemented by the Congress party. It can be said that he lost the election mainly because of the party he represents. In ward III, it was rather a party identification than candidate evaluation that influenced the voters.

3.5.D Case study 4:

Name of the candidate: Vanlalrengpuii

Ward No: XVIII (Reserved seat) (Tuikhuahtlang, Mission veng, Model Veng, Salem Veng, Dam Veng, Venghnuai, Thakthing and ITI Veng).

Party: MNF

Vanlalrengpuii who is currently residing in Thakthing Dam Veng have lost the AMC election to her opponent M. Zohmingthangi, an IAS retired, who held several important posts including Lunglei Deputy Commissioner, Transport Director and Chief Executive Officer of AMC in 2010. Vanlalrengpuii was born in Manipur in 1968. She belongs to a traditional

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[32] It means that though the role of MPF is positive, there are some loopholes in the MPF's role in the democratic process. In other words, there are people who do not agree with the role of MPF.

supporter of MNF party. She continued her studies even after marriage and completed her B.Ed in 2004, ten years after she passed her 12th class. She is interested in social works and politics and is an active member of several organizations including Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) and is currently the President of the local MHIP. She is also the current MNF Block President in Aizawl South II Constituency and also holding a post of General Secretary of Women Front at the party Headquarter.

In Ward XVIII, there was no separate Campaign Committee set up in any of the locality within the ward. The campaign process was managed by the members and party workers from the Block and Unit Committee. She said that it was mainly the Unit party workers, who assisted her in door-to-door canvassing at their respective locality. Each Unit Committee within the ward played their own role of canvassing, putting up banners and posters and distributing pamphlets. The candidate solely relied on a direct form of campaigning and said no social media or Bulk SMS were used during the campaign. The candidate claimed that she did not exceed the ceiling of expenditure imposed by the Commission during her campaign. She also said that if everything was done in the right way as per the rules and code of conduct, no candidate would exceed the limit.

According to the candidate, there was no joint platform held by the MPF in Ward No. XVIII. It became a huge disadvantage for the candidate who contested against a public figure like M. Zohmingthangi, who has already earned her name as a prominent citizen among the electorates. As a contestant

in the election, the candidate felt that she should be given an opportunity to a joint platform where she could introduce herself to the public and convey her views and ideas. The candidate claimed that she lost the election mainly because the electorates barely knew her as there was no platform to introduce herself to the voters in public. She mentioned that there should be public meetings to address the voters in every locality so that any person can contest against any candidate who is already popular among the voters.

3.6 Manifesto

Manifesto is the pamphlet or booklet issued by a political party contesting the elections, which directs the voters about its programmes and policies. Concise Dictionary of Politics defines manifesto as "A document in which a political party sets out the programme it proposes to follow if returned to office. The document may reflect compromises between different party groupings, rather than an agreed programme of action. The manifesto can be seen as establishing the mandate for a governing party, although government are often reluctant to be constrained by manifesto commitments".[33] Each political party issues election manifesto before approaching the electorate which declares the aims and objectives of the party and also provides alternative choices to the people. In fact, an election manifesto amounts to a fresh pledge which a political party undertakes to redeem.[34] It also highlights the achievements of the party, usually an election manifesto of the ruling party convey its achievements to the people

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[33] I.McLean and A.Mcmillan. (2009). *Concise Dictionary of Politics*. Oxford University Press: New York. p.328.
[34] M.Roy. (2000). *Electoral Politics in India: Election Process and Outcomes*. Deep & Deep Publications: New Delhi. p.273.

during the last tenure while the manifesto of the opposing party highlights the failures of the ruling party. Therefore, it enables the voter to compare similar stands on issues such as economy, defense, religion, and other general concern.[35]

According to Election Commission of India, manifestos are detailed programmes of party which they wish to implement if elected to government.[36] In this sense, election manifestos can be seen as mere wishes of the parties and not some tall promises. However, it is a powerful tool to exert pressure on the party in power to fulfill the aims and objectives in its election manifesto. They are pressed by the people and the opposition party to implement the policies and programmes issued in their manifesto. The opposition party keeps an eye on the manifestos for criticizing and opposing the government policies and programs. On the other hand, the manifestos are drafted in such a way that legally the politicians cannot be held responsible for breach of faith even if they do not fulfill the objectives after winning the elections. [37]

3.7 Manifestos in AMC election, 2015

Each party contesting the AMC election have 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-

[35] Ibid.
[36] Election Commission of India: www.eci.nic.in (Retrieved on 17/11/2016 09:54pm)
[37] Op cit, M.Roy, p.273ff.

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.

3.7.A Manifesto of MNF Party

The election manifesto of the MNF started with the key achievements under the leadership of Laldenga and Zoramthanga during their rule in the state. It was quite a comprehensive document which consisted of 10 pages and 6 sub-headings. It addressed the need for a better administration, public amenities, youth vision, development works, public health services, social and community services. The most striking feature of the manifesto was the youth vision which included establishing Community Information & Knowledge Centre, provision of free wifi in some areas of the city if voted to power.[38] The MNF tried to mobilize the youth voters even though a lot of voters did not take the pain to read the long-listed manifesto filled with empty promises. Till today, the ruling MNF party in the AMC has not implemented most of the issues mentioned in their manifesto. However, some politicians view manifestos as just intentions and not promises, and that they are not legally bound to implement whatever they have mentioned in the manifesto.

3.7.B Manifesto of Congress-MPC alliance

The joint manifesto of the Congress-MPC alliance consisted of 18 points of their aims and objectives. It included a better administration of the AMC, better

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[38] Election Manifesto of Mizo National Front: AMC election 2015.

traffic by the installation of rope-way in some areas of the city, free wifi hotspot in some areas and institutions within the city, provision of a more efficient supply of energy in the city using solar panel.[39] The Congress-ZNP joint manifesto is another empty rhetoric claiming to complete various developmental works like urban poor housing, Lalsavunga park, Common cemetery at South Hlimen etc. It also claimed to increase the functions performed by the Aizawl Municipal Corporation. However, it was not as specific as the manifesto of the MNF party and somehow lacked ambiguity in providing what steps will be taken and how they will generate the fund to complete the said developmental works.

3.7.C Manifesto of BJP-ZNP alliance (NDA)

The eight pages manifesto with 25 points issued by the NDA alliance has offered a lot of developmental works which included the construction of 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. The joint manifesto was a detailed document of different developmental works rather than a better and efficient administration. It also offered the urban youth a loan of Rs. 50,000 to 10,00,000 under Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency (MUDRA).[40]

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[39] Joint Manifesto of Congress-BJP alliance: AMC election 2015.
[40] Joint Manifesto of NDA alliance: AMC election, 2015.

3.8 Comparisons of the manifestos

The manifestos of the different political parties in the AMC election are remarkably similar on certain issues like public amenities, development works and youth vision. For instance, all the parties have mentioned in their manifestos about the establishment of amusement park and recreational facilities for the urban youth; the setting up of wifi hotspot for a better internet access, even though the joint manifesto of BJP-ZNP alliance is silent on this topic it offers a loan for the urban youth for generating sustainable economic activity. All manifestos included the use of solar energy and efficient power supply. In particular, the manifestos of the MNF and Congress-MPC alliance have similarities on development works, social and community services like the plan for smart city, common cemetery and solid waste management. The joint manifesto of the BJP-ZNP alliance is a compilation of aspirations and tall promises which included the privatization of drainage systems, establishment of Aizawl Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Institute and Permanent Exhibition Centre, establishment of smart parking lot (multi-layer parking) and smart market.

The manifestos of the MNF included the provision of public health services like the control of gas pollution, water pollution, sound pollution, provision of safe drinking water to the schools and institutions. However, the other two joint-manifestos are silent on public health services. The joint manifesto of the Congress-MPC focused mainly on the on-going developmental works which it promised to develop and complete them if voted

to power. Apart from the development works, it also promised to increase the functions of the AMC and establish a stable Municipal Corporation. The joint manifesto of the Congress-MPC is a one-page leaflet which is more simple and transparent comparing to the other two manifestos which contain a long list of promises and aspirations. However, it is argued that good manifestos do not necessarily bring up good governments and good decisions are taken at times in the face of bad manifestos.[41]

Campaigns and manifestos are the election strategies employed by the candidates and political parties in the AMC elections. In general, the campaign in the AMC election follows a direct form of campaigning, where the candidates and party workers carry out door-to-door canvassing and communicate directly with the voters. However, some political parties, party leaders and even the candidates also use the platform of social media to mobilize voters.

Table 3.1: Factors influencing voters' choice

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
What mattered to you more while deciding whom to vote for?				
a) Party	3	12	3	10
b) Candidate	19	76	27	90
c) Manifesto (issues and programmes)	2	8	-	-
d) Others	1	4	-	-

(Source: Field work)

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[41] Op cit, M. Roy, p.277.

According to the field work carried out by the scholar, only 5 percent of the respondents agreed that social media has helped them in deciding whom to vote for, while 15 percent somewhat agreed that the role of social media has helped them to some extent. Only 28.3 percent of the respondents made up their mind about who to vote for during the campaign. While 30 percent made up their mind as soon as the list of contesting candidates is announced and 16.7 percent made their decision before the campaign started. The study shows that the campaign process in the AMC election has a minimal influence on the voters' decision. Similarly, manifestos essentially have no impact on the voters. Only 8 percent of the respondents considered manifestos as an important factor in deciding whom to vote for.

Regarding the three factors- candidate, party and manifestos that are in play in determining the voter's choice, the scholar found that 76 percent of the male and 90 percent of the female respondents considered the candidate to be the most important factor and give secondary position to political party and party manifestos. Nonetheless, 12 percent of male and 10 percent of female respondents view party platform as an important consideration in elections. The present study shows that at local level elections, the voter's party identification and issue position (manifestos) are lower in the rank. Political party or party manifestos do not occupy an important position in the perception of the respondents.

From the above four case studies, it is found that most of the candidates are not satisfied with the rules and restrictions that have been imposed on the

candidates and political parties during the campaign and electioneering process by the MPF. Since public meetings, rallies and the like are banned by the MPF, there was only one joint platform organized by the MPF in the AMC election, which was not even conducted in some of the wards. They are provided only one chance or no chance at all to address the public, introduce themselves to the voters, and put forward their strengths and the failures of their opponent. They feel that there should be more public meetings where the candidates could debate on grounds of different issues so that the voters could decide the right person to vote for after analyzing their views on certain issues. Speaking off the record, one candidate claimed that it is an obligation for the candidates and the parties to follow the Model Code of Conduct issued by the State Election Commission because the Commission has a Constitutional status and legal sanctions. However, he said that the rules imposed by the MPF are not backed by any law and do not have the right to invalid the party who go against their rules.[42]

The form of campaign in the AMC election is generally the pre-modern campaign which involves interpersonal communication between candidates and voters. The campaign was concentrated within local communities and wards and door-to-door canvassing. The candidates and political parties also employ the platform of social media and newspapers which gave rise to a newer, indirect form of communication between the voters and candidates. However, unlike the modern and post-modern campaign, the form of campaign in the

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[42] Interview was held with one of the candidates of the AMC election, 2015. However, the candidate is not willing to disclose his name.

AMC election did not involve any kind of paid professional consultants to manage the campaign process. The party workers at the unit and block level, as well as friends and relatives assisted the candidates in their campaign without any pay. However, the candidates often arranged dinner or lunch for the party workers who assisted them in the campaign process as a token of appreciation.

The present study also found that most of the candidates in the AMC election exceeded the ceiling of expenditure mentioned in the Code of Conduct. Besides spending on posters, banners and flags, the candidates claimed that they spend mostly on arranging lunch and dinner for the party workers at the block and every unit level within their ward. Within one ward, there are at least five to six units, while there are some wards having eight to nine units. So, it means the candidates spend a lot of money for the party workers. However, the MPF does not have any restriction on the candidates on the arrangement of dinner or lunch for the party workers.

Chapter IV

Voting Behavior

Voting behavior is the study of political behavior in the context of voting in the elections. It implies the study of voter's preferences, attitudes, alternative, programmes and ideology on which elections are fought. Voting behavior is a complex subject and there are several factors at play. It has diverse factors that comprise both political and non-political factors and its determinants are vast and wide-ranging which differ from one person to another. A voter's choice is influenced by several factors in invoking religious and communal factors, influence of money or charismatic personality of a leader and other irrational forces seem to have dominated the minds of the voters. This chapter focuses on the factors that determine the voting behavior and chalk out the possible factors that may have influence the minds of the voters in the 2015 AMC election by studying the election results obtained and by analyzing the data collected from the field work by the scholar.

4.1 Concept:

The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines voting as a means of aggregating individual preferences into collective decisions by which the study of electoral behavior can be viewed as concerned more narrowly with the formation of, and expression of individual preferences.[1] The study of voting behavior has acquired a new dimension and a broader meaning with the

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[1] D.E. Stokes. (1968). Voting. In D.L. Sills (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Vol. 15, 16 & 17*. Collier-Macmillan Publishers: London. p.387.

acceptance of the relevance of a host of variables which previously had not been conceived or were considered irrelevant. In *Theory and Method of Voting Behavior Research,* Samuel J. Eldersveld has rightfully observed that "Voting behavior today connotes more than examination of voting records, compilation of voting statistics and computation of electoral shifts".[2] It is the analysis of individual psychological processes (perception, emotion, motivation) and their relation to the vote decision of group structures and their reaction to political action, as well as of institutional process and their impact on elections. He classified voting behavior studies on the basis of several criteria- the types of data examined, the electoral units investigated, the objective pursued by the researcher or the research design and hypothesis employed. He pointed out six types of voting behavior research. They are as follows:[3]

i.   The first category is the hypothesis-testing exploratory study in which the investigator assumes the significance of a proposition on the basis of mere hunch collects and orders voting data in a manner designed to demonstrate the truth or falsity of his proposition.

ii. The second category is the mass tabulation case study, operating with no hypothesis or very vague ones, and concentrating on a single unit.

iii. The comparative statistical survey is the third classification of voting behavior research in which an attempt is made to describe differentials in voting behavior trends in counties, states or nations without clearly expressed hypothesis.

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[2] S. J. Eldersveld. (1951). Theory and Method of Voting Behavior Research. *The Journal of Politics. Vol.13. No.1.* p71.
[3] Ibid. p.74fff.

iv. The fourth category is the single hypothesis trend study in which the investigation explores the validity of a single proposition over a considerable span of election and in many different electoral units.

v. The fifth category known as the hypothesis-testing factorial analysis is an intensive, sustained, systematic effort which is systematically organized and pursued, but applied to one or a few election situations in a single community.

vi. The final category of voting behavior research is the community dynamics type which is basically mass tabulation and recording studies, but they also usually proceed on the basis of a definite set of hypothesis, more or less closely related.[4]

4.2 Models of Voting Behavior

The study of voting has been dominated by normative considerations, ascribing to the average voter a strong sense of rationality with regard to political matters for a long time. The psychological process or the behavior analytic process did not constitute the focus of inquiry into voting behavior. Max Visser developed a behavior analytic approach to examine whether the consequences of voting behavior with the existing psychological approaches to voting. According to him, there are three major schools prominent in social psychological voting research. The first was a group of researchers assembled at Columbia University under the central direction of Lazarsfeld between the early 1940s and the late 1950s. The second school comprised of senior researchers such as Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes located at the University of Michigan

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[4] Ibid. p.74fff.

in 1948. The third school, the cognitive has incorporated insights cognitive psychology in their voting research.[5] These models of voting behavior are discussed below:

Columbia model of voting behavior:

The Columbia model emphasized the particular set of political and social conditions and restricted its studies to one community (The study of Erie County in 1940 and the study of Elmira in 1948). It focuses on the influences of social factors and voting. Lazarsfeld and his team studied the Erie County in the US, and is the first of the two groundbreaking election analyses of the Columbia school of vote choice. From the findings of the Erie County study, people tend to vote as they always have, in fact as their families have. Individual's attitudes are formed and reinforced by their membership in social groups such as their social class, ethnic group, and religious group, and by the associations, they belong to. They found that people under cross-pressures are the most likely to change.[6]

The findings of the Erie County study has been tested and modified by Berelson and his team in their book, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. In their study of Elmira, Berelson and his team found that the people who change most during a campaign also change most between campaigns and they are more likely to be subject to cross-pressures in their

[5] M. Visser. (1996). Voting: A Behavioral Analysis. *Behavior and Social Issues. Vol. 6. No.1.* p.24.
[6] P. F. Lazarsfeld., B.R. Berelson & H. Gaudet. (1948). *The People's Choice: How the Voter makes up his mind in a Presidential Campaign.* Columbia University Press: New York. p.178.

position on subsidiary political matters.[7] The study of Erie County developed the two-step flow of communication which implies that most people receive information from opinion leaders through interpersonal communication rather than directly from mass media. In his article, *The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-to-Date Report on Hypothesis*, Elihu Katz revised the concept of the two-step flow of communication and suggested that opinion leaders and the people whom they influence are very much alike and typically belong to the same primary groups of family, friends and co-workers. While the opinion leader may be more interested in the particular sphere in which he is influential, it is highly unlikely that the persons influenced will be very far behind the leader in their level of interest.[8]

Michigan model of voting behavior:

The Michigan model is said to have individualistic and social psychological orientation. According to Chandler, the Michigan model can be characterized by five general principals-

i.   The fundamental entities of a model of voting behavior are political attitudes, those individual psychological states, beliefs, expectations and values which determine individual vote choices.

ii. Political attitudes can be distinguished from other causes of an individual's vote choice which are outside, or exogenous to the model.

[7] B. R. Berelson., P.F. Lazarsfeld & W.N. McPhee. (1954). *Voting: A study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. p.33.
[8] E. Katz. (1957). The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-to-Date Report on an Hypothesis. *The Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 2, No.1*. p.70ff

iii. Information about political attitudes is obtained by survey research and public opinion polls.

iv. Statistical techniques, enhanced by modern computer capabilities allow researchers to determine causal relationships holding between variables.

v. The Michigan model is fully universal, that is when exogenous variables are excluded, the model reveals those patterns in the attitudes of electorates which determine the result of competitive elections at all times and in all societies.[9]

The Michigan model is divided into two types.[10] The first one is the strong version, in which party identification leads to the development and maintenance of views consistent with the party stand and is casually prior to attitudes. Voters believe what the party wishes them to believe. The second and weaker version of the model is that the views of the partisan, including his beliefs about the past performance and future policies are influenced not only by party identification but also by societal and individual experiences.[11]

Cognitive model of voting behavior:

In the book, *How Voters Decide,* Himmelweit et al. developed and tested a cognitive model which they called a consumer model of voting to emphasize that the same principles hold with regard to voting as those which guide the individual in purchasing goods for consumption. They argue that in order to understand the role that an individual's cognitions play in the decision,

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[9] M. Chandler. (1988). Models of Voting Behavior in Survey Research. *Synthese, Vol. 76. No.1.* p. 28f.
[10] H. T. Himmelweit., P. Humphrey., M. Jaeger & M. Katz. (1981*). How Voters Decide: A longitudinal study of political attitudes and voting extending over fifteen years.* Academic Press Inc.: London. p. 8.
[11] Ibid.

reactions to a sufficiently wide range of political issues need to be assessed such as the major concerns of the society. The model assumes a voter who is responsive rather than dependent, active rather than passive. The most important and central to this model is the individual's cognitions in which the individual with his personal set of attitudes and beliefs looks for the best fit or the least misfit between these and his or her perception of the platforms and the record of the parties. The act of voting like the purchase of goods is seen as simply one instance of decision making and is not different in any kind of the process whereby other decisions are reached. The decision being influenced by a variety of factors whose importances vary with the individual's circumstances, the problems of the country and the distinctiveness of the parties' platforms. It allows for party identification to affect attitudes, nut sees this influence as much weaker and more variable than other influences.

In addition, Himmelweit et al. distinguished between what they called attitudinal fit and attitudinal shift. Attitudinal fit was measured by comparing the attitudes of voters with the mean profile or attitudes held by voters for the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal parties respectively: the closer the attitudes, the nearer the attitudinal fit. Attitudinal shift was measured in their longitudinal sample by comparing attitudinal fit between successive elections: the larger the difference, the greater the shift in attitudes.[12]

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[12] Ibid. p. 11ff

4.3 Voting Behavior in India

Voting behavior differs from one place to another and from time to time. It means that voting behavior in one country or state will not be the same in another country. For example, economic management of the country occupies a prominent place in election agendas and campaigns of political parties in western democracies like the US, because the state of economy is always a potential election issue deciding the election fortunes of the contending parties. However in India, economic issues have never quite been a serious election issue or the focus of media and public attention. Indian elections seem to have been dominated by fundamentalist and divisive issues that surface mostly during the election time.[13] In India, parochial considerations have been playing a dominant role in voting behavior. While deciding whom to vote for, there are several factors that enter the decision-making.

The study on voting behavior identified several political and social-economic factors which act as determinants of voting behavior in India. Since time immemorial, caste always has deep roots in the society and continues to be a determinant of voting behavior in India. It is said that elections have cemented caste and that caste has been politicized and politics uses caste as its base. Votes are demanded in the name of caste and became an important factor in the selection of candidates. The role of religion is also equally influential in India. Votes are sought by playing the religious card with the co-religious voters. Since India is a multi-lingual state, linguistic interests also influence

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[13] R. Sthanumoorthy & L.M. Eapen. (2004). Economic Issues in Elections: Rrecent Trends. *Economic and Political Weekly. Vol.39. No.10.* p.1019.

voting behavior. The charismatic personalities or popular leaders is another determinant. Other determinants of voting behavior include money factor, mass illiteracy, party affiliations, election campaigns, local issues etc.

In India, issues of public policy often play a negligible role in the election campaign and in affecting individuals vote. Indian voters seem to be more influenced by local policies and administration rather than by broad policy pursued by the national government. In the light of the 2014 Lok Sabha election, economic factors played an unusually large role in shaping voting behavior.[14] Irrational patterns of caste-based voting were much less evident. And regional parties, often thought to be gaining ground suffered a setback. However, M. Vaishnav (2015) argued that Indian voters may have changed insofar as they are placing greater emphasis on macroeconomic outcomes when deciding whom to vote for, there seem to be few changes in the personal characteristics of individual candidates on offer.[15] The process of the emergence of an issue-based voting is slowly and gradually taking shape in India.

Studies on voting behavior in India has been inspired by the Columbia and Michigan model. Party identification, issues, candidates, campaigns, socio-economic status of voters have been recognized as important realms for studies on voting behavior. In India, studies on voting behavior had been mainly undertaken by the Indian Council of Social Science Research-Centre for the Study of Developing Studies (ICSSR-CSDS). The CSDS has conducted time-

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[14] M. Vaishnav. (2015). Understanding the Indian Voter. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.* p.5.
[15] Ibid. p.5f.

series National Election Studies (NES) since 1967. In 1997, Lokniti, a research program of CSDS was established. The key focus areas of Lokniti's research are electoral patterns and voting behavior. It has contributed to strengthening the tradition of collaborative research among Indian scholars and researchers.[16] The NES 1967 was the first survey-based national level study of political opinions and attitudes in India, carried out by Samuel J. Eldersveld, Bashiruddin Ahmed, and Dwaine Marvick. They found that the Indian voters were as perspective and interested in political issues and parties at the time of elections as their counterpart in developed countries. They also found that –

1. Political cultures between rural and urban areas were basically continuous, but there were discernible differences between states.

2. Variables of socio-economic status, including education and castes, were important variables for the formation of political perception such as a sense of political efficacy.

3. Those who are more exposed to the campaign, more educated, and who voted regularly, were more interested in politics and more likely to support multi-party democracy with a clearer sense of political efficacy.

4. As in the USA, family was an influential factor in the formation of party identification.

5. Some degree of congruence was found between voter's party-preference on the one hand and voter's concern for political issues on the other.

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[16] Lokniti: www.csds.in/lokniti (Retrieved on 11:50 pm 08/08/2016)

6. The formation of perceptions toward party was susceptible to voters party identification, socio-economic status, exposure to political communication and psychological orientations toward society.

7. Those who are highly educated or from high caste were less likely to be politically involved and participatory.[17]

4.4 Voting Behavior in Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) election, 2015

A number of studies have been engaging in voting behavior and political participation of the people in India. However, there has been a little contribution towards the study of Urban Local Body elections in general and particularly in Mizoram. The present study has made a modest effort to examine the voting behavior in the 2015 AMC election. The study follows the Michigan model of voting behavior which identified three clusters of political attitudes: partisanship, candidate evaluation and issue position. As mentioned in detail in Chapter II, the opposition party in the state assembly, the MNF swept the elections by bagging 11 out of the 19 wards. While the ruling Congress and the MPC combine could manage to garner 8 wards.

The study selected 60 respondents by using systematic random sampling from four different wards, viz., Ward III (Ramhlun North, Ramhlun Venglai, Ramhlun Sports Complex and Laipuitlang); Ward VIII (Armed Veng, Armed Veng South and Chite); Ward XIII (Dawrpui Vengthar, Vaivakawn and

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[17] Cited in, N. Kondo (2007). Election Studies in India. *Institute of Developing Economies. Discussion paper No.98.* p.8.

Kanan); Ward XVIII (Tuikhuahtlang, Mission Veng, Model Veng, Salem Veng, Dam Veng, Venghnuai, Thakthing and ITI Veng). From each ward, one polling station is taken up for the purpose of selecting the respondents. The polling stations which are selected for the study are Ramhlun North II, Armed Veng South I, Vaivakawn III and Salem Veng I. It can be mention here that the total electorates within the Aizawl Municipality are 192382, out of which 90287 are male and 102095 are female. Thus the male constituted 43.93 percent of the total electorate while the female constitute 53.06 percent. It means that the female electorates outnumber the male voters. In the 2015 AMC election, women have dominated and have shown higher turnout than their male counterpart. Out of the 60 respondents, 28 (46.7%) are male; whereas, 32 (53.3%) are female. There were 211 polling stations spread over the 19 wards.[18]

4.4.1 Classification of voter and non-voter respondents

Table 4.1: Classification of voter and non-voter respondents

Sex	Voter	Percentage	Non-voter	Percentage
Male	25	41.7	3	5
Female	30	50	2	3.3
Total	55	91.7	5	8.3

(Source: Field Work)

From the above table, there are 5 respondents who did not cast their vote in the last AMC election which constitutes of 8.3 percent of the sample electorate, while the remaining 91.7 percent exercised their right to vote. Interestingly, the non-voter percentage is quite low with 3.3 percent of female

[18] Notification No. B. 14015/10/2015-SEC/AMC. Schedule for General Election to Aizawl Municipal Corporation. (vide, State Election Commission: Mizoram)

non-voters while the male non-voters comprise of 5 percent of the sample respondents. When the scholar asked about the reason of their abstention to those who failed to cast their vote, the non-voters said that due to lack of interest in elections or the contesting candidates, due to unavailability of time, while some were posted out of town.

4.4.2 Educational background of the voters

Education plays a key role particularly in a democratic polity as political participation tends to increase with education. It helps the people to become effective decision-makers. It not only enhance political efficacy but also boost the voter turnout. As per 2011 census, the literacy rate in Mizoram is 91.53 percent which implies higher voter turnout and greater participation of the people. It is noteworthy that Mizoram has witnessed seven state assembly elections with a voter turnout of above 70 percent. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) have found that more educated citizens are more likely to vote in elections and participate in campaigns as education gives citizens the skills and resources needed to participate in politics.[19] Verba et al. (1995) argue that education not only directly increases levels of participation but also allows citizens to acquire the civic skills necessary to effectively communicate their concerns to politicians. [20]

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[19] Cited in D.S. Hillygus. (2005). The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship between Higher Education and Political Engagement. *Political Behavior. Vol.27, No.1*. p.27.
[20] Cited in A.J. Berinsky & G.S. Lenz. (2010). Education and Political Participation: Exploring the Causal Link. *Springer Science + Business Media.* p.358.

Table 4.2: Educational Background of the Voters

Sl. No.	Education	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
1	Illiterate	-	-	-	-
2	Below Matric	12	48	14	46.7
3	Matric	2	8	8	26.7
4	Higher Secondary	6	24	7	23.3
5	Graduate	4	16	1	3.3
6	Post-Graduate	1	4	-	-

(Source: Field Work)

From the above table 4.2, all the respondents are literate, however the voters 'below matric category' both male and female voters seem to outscore the 'matric and above category' in political participation. According to civic education hypothesis tested by Hillygus, additional years of education can continue to equip citizens with political information that further eases the costs of political engagement.[21] She further argues that higher education imparts the knowledge, skills, and political familiarity that help in navigating the political world.[22] However, the present study shows that participation tends to decrease as the level of education goes higher. It is indicated from the above table that 48 percent of male and 46.7 percent of female voters are below matric with the highest representation while there are only 8 percent of male voters and 26.7 percent of female voters with matric education. The graduate and above category have a minimal representation particularly in female voters. Again, according to political meritocracy hypothesis tested by Hillygus, intelligence rather than education, is the more important determinant of political sophistication and political sophistication engenders political participation.

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[21] Op cit, D.S. Hillygus, p.27.
[22] Ibid.

4.4.3 Factors influencing the voters' choice

There are several considerations, opinion and other factors that enter the decision-making of the voter. The research scholar asked the respondents through structured questions on how they arrive at their decisions. It is found that the head of the family, the leader of the locality and the like, still determine one's voting preference. Apart from that, there are other factors that are at play in influencing voters decisions. However, the present study stresses on the relevant political issues (highlighted on party manifestos), candidate evaluation and party identification.

Table 4.3: Factors influencing voters' choice

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
1. In deciding whom to vote for, whose opinion mattered to you the most?				
a) Local political leader	-	-	-	-
b) Local YMA leader	-	-	-	-
c) Husband/Wife	-	-	-	-
d) Friends/neighbors	-	-	-	-
e) Other family members/ Colleagues	1	4	-	-
f) No one, I voted on my own	24	96	30	100
g) Others	-	-	-	-
h) Non-response	-	-	-	-

(Source: Field Work)

The above table shows that the respondents are highly politically conscious at arriving decisions for whom to vote at the time of elections. 96 percent of male and 100 percent of female voters have claimed that they decided for themselves without the influence of others. Only one respondent was induced to vote by the influence of others.

4.4.3.1 Perceptions to the candidate

Table 4.4: Respondents' perception to the candidate

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
If voted for the candidate, what was the most important consideration in favor of the candidate?				
a) We have family ties or good relation with the candidate.	1	4	1	3.3
b) My family and I have benefitted, or expect to benefit from the candidate.	-	-	1	3.3
c) I am impressed by the candidate's personality.	16	64	18	60
d) The candidate is accessible.	1	4	3	10
e) The candidate belongs to my community.	1	4	2	6.7
f) Others.	-	-	2	6.7

(Source: Field Work)

People cast their vote on the basis of charisma, personality or talent of the candidate. The above table shows that 64 percent of male and 60 percent of the female respondents are impressed by the candidate's personality. As municipal elections are conducted on ward-basis which is a quite a small unit, it is easy for the voters to understand the personal qualities and background of the contesting candidate. Likewise, the candidates build their own support-base on the basis of their services to the ward or community. In view of this, the voters are more candidate-oriented and are likely to vote for a reliable, capable

and honest candidate, who has been active in the community life and who is likely to get things done for his supporters. However, only four respondents voted for the candidate's accessibility, while three respondents voted for the candidate representing their community.

4.4.3.2 Perceptions to the party

Table 4.5: Respondents' perception to the party

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
If voted along the party line, what was the most important consideration in favor of the party?				
a) My family members are traditional supporters / voters of the party.	3	12	2	6.7
b) My family and I have benefitted, or expect to benefit from the party.	-	-	-	-
c) The party has good leadership.	-	-	1	3.3
d) The overall program / performance of the party is good.	-	-	-	-
e) The party has raised important issues in their manifestos.	-	-	-	-
f) Others.	-	-	-	-

(Source: Field Work)

Even though local level elections are said to be partisan elections in India, party identification or party affiliation seems to have a minimal influence on voter's choice. While it is argued that candidate evaluation, issues and party identification have all influence vote choice; party identification has an

additional effect on the other two attitudes.[23] However, the above table shows that there are only six partisan voters who cast their vote in favor of the party either on the basis of traditional supporter or good leadership of the party. Another question was asked to the respondents (both voters and non-voters) regarding their party identification, to which 28 respondents (46.7%) identified themselves with a particular party. The following table gives the classification of respondents by party identification and age.

Table 4.6: Classification of respondents by party identification and age

Age group	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
21 - 30	6	24	4	13.3
31 - 40	3	12	3	10
41 - 50	2	8	3	10
51 - 60	1	4	2	6.7
Above 60	2	8	2	6.7

(Source: Field Work)

From table 4.6, the younger age group (21 – 30) with 24 percent of male and 13.3 percent of female has shown higher representation in terms of party identification comparing to the other age groups. According to Chandler (1988), party identification is usually acquired from one's parents during early childhood socialization. It tends to increase with age but does not change direction.[24] However, table 4.6 indicates the decreasing level of party identification in the older age group between 51 – 60 and above 60 category. She also argues that partisanship or party identification is not only remarkably stable over an individual's lifetime; it is the single best indicator of an

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[23] Op cit, M. Chandler. p.30.
[24] Ibid. p.30.

individual's vote decision, which influences attitudes toward issues.[25] Partisanship or party identification is often seen as the most meaningful cue to voters in terms of which candidate they should support.[26] The present study has found that candidate evaluation is considered as the most important factor which determines the voter's choice at the AMC elections 2015, while the other two factors, party identification and issue position (manifesto) seem to have a minimal influence on voter's choice.

Table 4.7: Relation between AMC and State Legislative Assembly election

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
In the upcoming 2018 state assembly election, would you vote for the same party you voted in the last AMC election?				
a) Yes	10	40	11	36.7
b) No	3	12	2	6.7
c) Depends on the candidate	6	24	10	33.3
d) Can't say	6	24	7	23.3
e) Non-response	-	-	-	-

(Source: Field Work)

The next question asked to the respondents was whether they would vote for the same party in the next state assembly election. The responses are given in Table 4.7 which indicates that out of the 55 voters, 40 percent of male and 36.7 percent of female voters have answered that in the upcoming 2018 state assembly election, they would vote for the same political party they voted in the last AMC election. It means that while only 10.9 percent of the total

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[25] Ibid.
[26] C.W. Bonneau & D.M. Cann. (2013). Party Identification and Vote Choice in Partisan and Nonpartisan Elections. *Springer Science + Business Media.* p.1.

voters voted on party basis and claimed to be partisan voters, yet 40 percent of the voters are willing to vote on party basis in the next election. In short, the electorates were not willing to identify themselves with any party but they did cast their vote on party line.

4.4.4 Political awareness of the voters

Political awareness refers to the knowledge about political phenomena and constitutes the knowledge about political institutions and processes and is a key concept in the understanding of the political system.[27] Out of the total sample electorate of 60 respondents, 91.7 percent cast their vote while 8.3 percent of the respondents did not cast exercise their right to vote. However, the question is whether the respondents understand the significance of voting or not? The scholar tries to understand their level of awareness, and questions were asked to the respondents regarding the party administration and policies. It can be mentioned here that all the respondents are literate, and they are expected to be aware of the parties and their policies.

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[27] K.S. Paddhy & P.P. Tripathy. (1994). *Voting Behavior of Tribals in India.* Kanishka Publishers: Delhi. p.141.

Table 4.8: Political awareness of the voters with regard to

administration and policies of the party

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Which party do you think is better for the administration of the city?				
a) Congress	2	8	4	13.3
b) MNF	5	20	7	23.3
c) ZNP	3	12	1	3.3
d) MPC	3	12	1	3.3
e) BJP	-	-	-	-
f) None	5	20	-	-
g) Don't know	7	28	17	56.7
Which parties in the last AMC election has raised issues and problems you consider most important?				
a) Congress	2	8	5	16.7
b) MNF	7	28	15	50
c) ZNP	-	-	-	-
d) MPC	1	4	-	-
e) BJP	-	-	-	-
f) All party	1	4	-	-
g) None	5	20	-	-
h) Don't know	9	36	12	40
Thinking of the way election was conducted in the last AMC election how would you rate?				
a) Fair	8	32	9	30
b) Somewhat fair	17	68	12	40
c) Unfair	-		4	13.3
d) Don't know	-		5	16.7
Do you think that the role of MPF has contributed towards free and fair election in the last AMC election?				
a) Yes	21	84	23	92
b) No	1	4	1	3.3
c) To some extent	-	-	-	-
d) Don't know	3	12	6	20

(Source: Field Work)

Table 4.8 has shown that 28 percent of male and 56.7 percent of female voters are ignorant about party administration while 36 percent of male and 40 percent of female voters are ignorant about issues and problems raised by different political parties. On the issue of free and fair elections, 32 percent of male and 30 percent of female voters are of the opinion that the last AMC election was fair; whereas 68 percent of male and 40 percent of female thinks that it was somewhat fair. Only 13.3 percent of female voters find the election unfair while 16.7 percent remains ignorant and could not label the election as fair or unfair. It means almost one-third of the respondents believe that the AMC election was conducted in a free and fair manner. In other words, the majority of the respondents think that the election was not totally free and fair even though the MPF and State Election Commission tried their best to end electoral practices. The role of MPF is worth to consider and their contributions toward free and fair elections are immense. Even though 4 percent of male and 3.3 percent of female voters could not agree, 84 percent of male and 92 percent of female voters agreed that the role of MPF has contributed towards free and fair elections.

4.4.5 Political participation of the voters

The term political participation refers to actual participation in those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of polity. It is the process through which individual plays a key role in the political life of society. It denotes such activities by which the citizens share in choosing the government. The

activities are voting, seeking information about the policy of political parties and of government, attending election meetings, contributing money to the party or election funds of its candidates, enrolment in a party, canvassing for a party and working in campaigns.[28]

Table 4.9: Voters' political participation in various activities.

Question	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
In which activities did you participate in the last AMC election?				
i. Attended election meetings / rallies				
a) Yes	1	4	1	3.3
b) No	24	96	29	96.7
ii. Participated in door to door canvassing				
a) Yes	1	4	1	3.3
b) No	24	96	29	96.7
iii. Contributed or collected money				
a) Yes	-	-	-	-
b) No	25	100	30	100
iv. Distributed election leaflets or put up posters				
a) Yes	-	-	2	6.7
b) No	25	100	28	93.3
v. Attended joint platforms				
a) Yes	1	4	-	-
b) No	24	96	30	100

(Source: Field Work)

The level of political participation particularly election-related activities of the respondents is significantly low while considering the status of literacy and level of education. It can be seen that while respondents' participation in voting is pretty much encouraging, they are reluctant to participate directly in

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[28] Ibid. p.116.

other activities such as attending election meetings or rallies, canvassing for a party, contributing money to the party etc. As often argued that greater the education, higher is the degree of political participation; the present study has however shown that the degree of political participation does not increase with higher education.

The present study reveals that the respondents have excelled in literacy and their level of education is quite satisfying. It is interesting to note that 50 percent of female respondents and 41.7 percent of male respondents have exercised their right to vote. The respondents are highly conscious at arriving decisions for whom they should vote at the time of elections. 98 percent of the voters have decided for themselves without the influence of others. Despite their level of education, the voters' political participation in other activities is not very encouraging. The degree of political participation does not increase with the level of education. Local level elections in the U.S. are nominally nonpartisan but in the case of India, it is different where local elections remain partisan elections. For decades, scholars have been interested in the effect of party identification on vote choice and have seen party identification as the most meaningful factor in both partisan and nonpartisan elections.[29] However, the present study shows that at local level elections, the voters considered the candidate factor to be the most important in determining the voters' choice, while party identification plays a minimal role in influencing vote choice. From the study, it is found that there are only six partisan voters (10.9%) who voted in favor of the party. On the other hand, 46.7 percent of the respondents

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[29] Op cit, C.W. Bonneau & D.M. Cann. p.2.

identified themselves with a particular party. However, with 10.9 percent of the voters who claimed to be partisan voters, 40 percent of the voters have asserted that in the upcoming state assembly election, they would vote for the same party they voted in the last AMC election. While it is true that 40 percent of the voters are willing to vote on party basis in the next election, the victory of the party in local body elections does not necessarily determine its victory in the state assembly elections.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Urban local body (ULB) is an institution that governs the city area of a state. It manages the urban affairs where the national political decisions are reshaped to fit local conditions. It is the process of decentralization through which democracy becomes a reality. It increases people's participation in policy formulation and its implementation. The significance of ULB has been increasing and its role is more important in the lives of the city dwellers than the state or the Central Government. There are public requirements which are local in nature, character and scope and can only be tackled by evolving local institution. As a result, there is a demand for a proper establishment of ULB to address and represent the issues of urban community in a more efficient way. ULBs are mainly constituted for urban planning, urban development and administration in the urban areas. Its purpose is to promote responsiveness and accountability and to provide responsive policy guidance and assistance to the urbanites.

In India, local government forms the bottom tier of democracy, the first two being the Central Government and the State Governments. The ULB functions within the provisions of the statute. The ULB in India enjoys a limited jurisdiction with restricted powers and functions. ULBs are governed by the municipalities and corporation laws of the respective states in accordance with the 74th Amendment Act of 1992. They are empowered with

powers and responsibilities to enable them to function as effective institutions of self-government. These powers and responsibilities are specified by the state legislature in respect of preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and for implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them.

However, the ULBs in India still function under the strict supervision and control of the State Government. Article 243W of the Constitution listed 18 obligatory functions for the ULBs in India. However, what functions and responsibilities should be assigned to the municipalities in place of or in addition to what they have is still left to the state legislatures. The state governments are not prepared to give up total control over all the subjects.

Actually, the success of Indian democracy depends much on the decentralization of power. The local governments are the best institutions for imparting democratic thoughts and education. It is where the citizens obtain their democratic rights and where the voices of the citizens are heard. It is through the local governments that the local problems can be considered and solved adequately. The local governments establish democracy in a wider context. It is believed that the locals know better what is required in their locality whether it is for economic or social issues confronting them.

In Mizoram, the ULB existed only after the Mizoram Municipalities Act was passed by the Government of Mizoram in 2007. Before the coming of ULB in the state, the village councils had its presence both in rural and urban areas with limited powers and resources which was in accordance with 'The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act, 1953. The state government felt

the need to set up ULB in Mizoram to bring about the socio-economic development in the urban area. Then, the Mizoram Municipalities was passed by the State Government in 2007. The first ULB known as the Aizawl Municipal Council (AMC) was established in Aizawl and started functioning from 1ˢᵗ July 2008. So far, ULB in Mizoram has witnessed two elections since its existence.

Elections constitute an important element in the democratic process. It enables the citizens to intervene directly in the political process, select their representatives and express their policy preferences. Elections legitimize the power exercised by the governments and make them more representative and accountable. Elections form an integral and inseparable part of democracy. Democracy needs participation of the people in the governance of the country and this participation is possible only when every qualified citizen is given the right of franchise to enable him to elect the representative of his choice to the legislature.

The study of the nature and trend of elections in Mizoram is done mainly on the basis of the performances among the various political parties contesting the State Legislative Assembly elections since 1987. Mizoram is a state having two-party effective system in the sense that the politics of Mizoram have always been a battle between the two rival parties, the Congress and the MNF; even though at times they were supported by other parties in forming an electoral alliance. It is true that Mizoram is no stranger to coalition politics; however, the voters are virtually unwilling to vote for an untried party

to power. The electorates prefer the change of government after the completion of two terms in which the Congress and the MNF had been alternated in power since the first State Assembly election till date. The voter turnout in the state has always been very high ranging from 74 to 83 percent. The voters have been constantly displaying their awareness and consciousness in the political process by participating in the electoral process. Elections in the state have been peaceful with a satisfying polling percentage. The State Assembly elections are mainly fought on local issues where different political parties make almost similar appeals and promises to the voters, like the integration of the contiguous areas inhabited by the Mizo with Mizoram. The Congress' flagship programme – the New Land Use Policy (NLUP) in 2008 has been a game changer in Mizoram Assembly polls. Voters in Mizoram are more consumable to the local issues rather than national issues.

The State Election Commission of Mizoram had successfully conducted two General Elections to AMC in 2010 and 2015. In both the elections, there are 19 wards with six reserved seats for women which were determined by draw of lots. In the 2010 AMC election, Ward No. IX was open to General which can be contested by any person from SC/ST/General category. However, no seat was open to General category in the 2015 election

In India, it is a common trend that the turnout started increasing as it goes down the three tiers of democracy. In many cases, the local body elections tend to record higher turnout comparing to the national and state assembly elections. For example, Rajasthan have recorded higher turnout in local body

elections comparing to the national and state assembly elections. Rajasthan recorded a turnout of 63.09 percent in the 2014 Lok Sabha election; the turnout in the state assembly election was 75.04 percent. And the turnout in the elections to 129 urban local bodies held in 2015 was more than 76 percent. Given the turnout in the elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, the AMC election is expected to record a turnout of over 70 percent. However, the turnouts at the AMC elections were 63.60 percent and 63.55 percent in 2010 and 2015 respectively. It means the voter turnouts in the AMC elections are lesser when compared with the State Assembly elections. Nonetheless, the voter turnouts in the AMC elections are significantly higher compared to the developed cities like Bengaluru and Mumbai. The voter turnout in the election of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) was around 45 percent in 2012. Similarly, the election to the Bengaluru's urban local body known as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) witnessed a low turnout of around 49 percent in 2015.

At present, ULB in Mizoram performs only nine functions which include collection of property tax, control and collection of parking fees, solid waste management, hoardings, street lights, building registration, naming and numbering of streets, issue of trade and food licenses, death and birth certificates. Therefore the issues of autonomy in the ULB in Mizoram still remains incomplete and as a result, the voters of the city tend to trust the State Government over the urban local body due to lack of autonomy of the latter. Urban local body in Mizoram is regarded as of lower status in the minds of the

voters and there is less interest in the elections of ULB comparing to the state assembly elections.

It is often lamented that voters in more developed areas are more reluctant to exercise their franchise as compared to the voters in low profile areas. While it would be wrong to make a general statement that all developed cities have a low voting percentage compared to rural areas in India. On the other hand, the voter turnout in each Ward in both the elections has shown that the Wards having high voter turnout belong to the low profile areas. In 2010, the highest voter turnout was Ward No. I (Durtlang, Durtlang Leitan, Zuangtui, Muanna Veng); further in 2015, Ward No XIX (Kulikawn, Tlangnuam, Tlangnuam Vengthar, Saikhamakawn, Melthum, Hlimen) recorded the highest turnout. Interestingly, both these Wards are from the least affluent and disadvantaged areas located on the edge of the city.

Coming to the ULB elections in Mizoram, it is more or less similar to the State Legislative Assembly elections where the main contest is between the two main parties, the Congress and the MNF although they did form an alliance with other smaller parties except for the MNF in 2015 when it decided to contest alone. In 2010, the Congress-ZNP alliance managed to secure 10 seats while the remaining 9 seats went to the MNF-MPC alliance. The opposition party, the MNF had made a comeback in the 2015 AMC election securing 11 seats out of the total 19 seats it contested. The second ULB election witnessed the victory of the MNF in which the ruling Congress-led alliance was voted out

of power after the completion of one term which is unlike the trend that the people witnessed in the State Legislative Assembly elections.

In 2015 AMC election, there are three candidates who have retained their power in the same wards. In Ward No V, Rosiamngheta contested the AMC election 2010 from Mizoram Peoples Conference party. However, in 2015 AMC election he changed his party to Congress and contested the election from Congress party. He had won both the elections from Ward No.V but from two different parties. This means that the candidate personality is considered more important than party identification as people cast their votes irrespective of the candidate's party. In Ward No. VIII, PC. Lalhmingthanga contested the AMC election of 2010 from MNF party and had won the election. Again in 2015, he won the AMC election from the same party, in the same ward. C. Lalsawivunga from Ward No. XVI also won both the elections in 2010 and 2015 from Congress party.

The strategies followed by different political parties to win the AMC election are different but not very much. Campaigns and manifestos are actually the election strategies employed by the candidates and political parties in the AMC elections. In general, the campaign in the AMC election follows a direct form of campaigning, where the candidates and party workers carry out door-to-door canvassing and communicate directly with the voters. However, some political parties, party leaders and even the candidates also use the platform of social media to mobilize voters. According to the field work carried out by the scholar, only 5 percent of the respondents agreed that social media

has helped them in deciding whom to vote for, while 15 percent somewhat agreed that the role of social media has helped them to some extent. Only 28.3 percent of the respondents made up their mind about who to vote for during the campaign. While 30 percent made up their mind as soon as the list of contesting candidates is announced and 16.7 percent made their decision before the campaign started. The study shows that the campaign process in the AMC election has a minimal influence on the voters' decision. Similarly, manifestos essentially have no impact on the voters. Only 8 percent of the respondents considered manifestos as an important factor in deciding whom to vote for.

It is found from the case study in four wards, that most of the candidates are not satisfied with the rules and restrictions that have been imposed on them as well as political parties during the campaign and electioneering process. Public meetings, rallies and the like are banned by the Mizoram People Forum (MPF). There was only one joint platform organized by the MPF in the AMC election, which was not even conducted in some of the wards. They are left with only one chance or no chance at all to address the public, introduce themselves to the voters, and put forward their strengths and the failures of their opponent. They feel that there should be more public meetings where the candidates could debate on grounds of different issues so that the voters could decide the right person to vote for after analyzing their views on certain issues.

One of the candidates claims that it is an obligation for the candidates and the parties to follow the Model Code of Conduct issued by the State Election Commission because the Commission has a Constitutional status and

legal sanctions. However, he said that the rules imposed by the MPF are not backed by any law and do not have the right to invalid the party who go against their rules.

The State Election Commission makes provisions for election expenditure which can be incurred or authorized to be incurred by a candidate i.e., Rs. 1,00,000 for each Ward. The day-to-day accounts on expenditure have to be maintained by the candidate in a register prescribed by the Commission which is to made available for inspection at least on three occasions during the campaign period to the Designated Officers/Election Observers appointed by the Commission. However, the study found that most of the candidates have exceeded the ceiling of expenditure. It can be said that both the MPF and State election Commission failed to curb the lavish spending and power of money in the AMC elections.

Education plays a key role particularly in a democratic polity as participation tends to increase with education. It is often argued that higher education imparts the knowledge, skills, and political familiarity that help in navigating the political world. The study shows that the graduate and above category has a minimal representation, particularly in female voters. However, it is surprising to find out that the 'below matric category' both male and female voters seem to outscore the 'matric and above category' in political participation. From the study, a conclusion can be drawn that education increases the participation in the electoral process but with higher education, participation tends to decline.

It is also found that the respondents are politically conscious at arriving the decisions to whom they should cast the vote at the time of elections. 96 percent of male and 100 percent of female voters have claimed that they decided for themselves without the influence of others. Only one respondent was induced to vote by the influence of others. The study shows that at local level elections, the voter's party identification and manifestos are lower in the rank. The candidate factor occupies the most important position in the perception of the respondents.

Actually, people cast their votes by the talent or charisma or personality of the candidates. The study shows that 64 percent of male and 60 percent of the female respondents are impressed by the candidate's personality. As municipal elections are conducted on ward-basis which is a quite a small unit, it is easy for the voters to understand the personal qualities and background of the contesting candidates. Likewise, the candidates build their own support base on the basis of their services to the ward or community. In view of this, the voters are more candidate-oriented and are likely to vote for a reliable, capable and honest candidate, who has been active in the community life and who is likely to get things done for his supporters.

In India it is said that local level elections are partisan elections; however, in the AMC election, party identification or party affiliation seems to have a minimal influence on voter's choice. It is argued that candidate evaluation, issues and party identification have all influence vote choice but party identification has an additional effect on the other two attitudes.

However, the study shows that there are only six partisan voters who cast their vote in favor of the party either on the basis of traditional supporter or good leadership of the party. On the other hand, 28 respondents (46.7%) identified themselves with a particular party.

It can be mentioned here that the study followed the Michigan model of voting behavior which identified three clusters of political attitudes – partisanship, candidate evaluation and issue-position. The present study has found that candidate evaluation is considered as the most important factor which determines the voter's choice at the AMC elections 2015, while the other two factors, party identification and issue position (manifesto) seem to have a minimal influence on voter's choice. The study also indicates that the level of party identification in the older age group between 51 – 60 and above 60 category is decreasing.

The study also found that out of the 55 voters, 40 percent of male and 36.7 percent of female voters have claimed that in the upcoming 2018 state assembly election, they would vote for the same political party they voted in the last AMC election. It means that while only 10.9 percent of the total voters voted on party basis and claimed to be partisan voters, yet 40 percent of the voters are willing to vote on party basis in the next election.

All the respondents are literate, so they are expected to be aware of the parties and their policies. The study however has shown that 28 percent of male and 56.7 percent of female voters are ignorant about party administration while 36 percent of male and 40 percent of female voters are ignorant about issues

and problems raised by different political parties. On the issue of free and fair elections, 32 percent of male and 30 percent of female voters are of the opinion that the last AMC election was fair; whereas 68 percent of male and 40 percent of female thinks that it was somewhat fair. Only 13.3 percent of female voters find the election unfair while 16.7 percent remains ignorant and could not label the election as fair or unfair.

The level of political participation particularly election-related activities of the respondents is significantly low while considering the status of literacy and level of education. The present study has shown that the degree of political participation does not increase with higher education.

The study reveals that the respondents have excelled in literacy and their level of education is quite satisfying. It is interesting to note that 50 percent of female respondents and 41.7 percent of male respondents have exercised their right to vote. The respondents are highly conscious at arriving decisions for whom to vote at the time of elections. 98 percent of the voters have decided for themselves without the influence of others. Despite their level of education, the voters' political participation in other activities is not very encouraging. The degree of political participation does not increase with the level of education.

The present study concludes that at local level elections, the voters considered the candidate factor to be the most important in determining the voters' choice; while party identification plays a minimal role in influencing vote choice. The study found out that there are only six partisan voters (10.9%) who voted in favor of the party. On the other hand, 46.7 percent of the

respondents identified themselves with a particular party. However, with 10.9 percent of the voters who claimed to be partisan voters, 40 percent of the voters have asserted that in the upcoming state assembly election, they would vote for the same party they voted in the last AMC election. While it is true that 40 percent of the voters are willing to vote on party basis in the next election, the victory of the party in local body elections does not necessarily determine its victory in the state assembly elections.

Annexure I

(Questions prepared by the scholar to understand the strategies and voting behavior in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation election of 2015)

Questionnaire

1. In 2015 AMC election, there were some people who were not able to vote because they were not registered, they were sick, they were not interested in voting or they just did not have the time. What about you – did you vote or did not vote in the last AMC election?

    a) I did not vote

    b) I am sure I voted

    c) Did not answer

2. If not voted (specify)

3. When did you finally make up your mind about who to vote for?

    a) On the day of voting

    b) A day or two before voting

    c) Earlier, during the campaign

    d) Even before the campaign started

    e) Can't say

4. In deciding whom to vote for, whose opinion mattered to you the most?

    a) Local political leader

    b) Local YMA leader

    c) Husband/wife

    d) Friends/neighbors

e) Other family members

f) Co-workers/colleagues

g) No one, I voted on my own

h) Others (specify)

i) Can't say

5. What was the time when you voted?

a) Before 9:00 am

b) Between 9:00 am and 12:00

c) Between 12:00 and 2:00 pm

d) After 2:00 pm

e) No answer

6. Did you vote along the party line or the candidate?

a) Party

b) Candidate

c) Others (specify)

7. People have different considerations while deciding whom to vote for. What mattered to you more while deciding whom to vote for?

a) Party

b) Candidate

c) Manifestos

d) Others (specify)

8. If voted for the candidate, what was the most important consideration in favor of the candidate?

a) We have family ties or good relation with the candidate

    b) My family and I have benefitted, or expect to benefit from the candidate

    c) I am impressed by the candidate's personality

    d) The candidate is accessible

    e) The candidate belongs to my community

    f) Others (specify)

9. If voted along the party line, what was the most important consideration in favor of the party?

    a) My family members are traditional supporters / voters of the party

    b) My family and I have benefitted, or expect to benefit from the party

    c) The party has good leadership

    d) The overall programme / performance of the party is good

    e) The party has raised important issues in their manifestos

    f) Others (specify)

10. In the upcoming 2018 State Assembly election, would you vote for the same party you voted in the last AMC election?

    a) Yes

    b) No

    c) Can't say

    d) No answer

    a) No answer

11. Do you support the reservation of seats for women candidates?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Can't say

d) No opinion

12. As compared to five years ago, how would you rate the condition of Aizawl city?

   a) Much better

   b) Better

   c) Remained same

   d) Worse

   e) Much worse

   f) No opinion

13. Is there any political party you particularly feel close to?

14. If yes, which party? And what is your important consideration in favoring the party?

   i. Traditional supporter of the party

   ii. The party has good administration and leadership

   iii. The party has raised important policies and programmes

   iv. Others (specify)

15. If no, what is your reason of not having tie with any political party?

   i. Not interested in politics / political parties

   ii. I am a government servant and do not support any political party in particular.

   iii. Others (specify)

16. Thinking of different political parties contesting in the election, please tell me -

    a) Which party do you think is better for administration?

    b) Which party is better for the security of Aizawl city?

17. During the last five years, please tell me whether the following have impressed or deteriorated?

    a) Pavements/ public streets

improved	Remained same	deteriorated	Don't know

    b) Solid waste management

improved	Remained same	deteriorated	Don't know

    c) Parking and parking fees

improved	Remained same	deteriorated	Don't know

    d) Market

improved	Remained same	deteriorated	Don't know

18. Thinking of the way elections are conducted in the last AMC election, how would you rate?

    a) Fair

    b) Somewhat fair

    c) Unfair

    d) No opinion

19. Do you think that the role of MPF has contributed towards free and fair elections in the last AMC election?

    a) Yes

    b) No

    c) Can't say

    d) No opinion

20. Political parties try a lot of different ways during elections to encourage people to vote. In your experience, which of the following did you observe in the last AMC election?

    a) Candidate / party worker / canvasser came to your house to ask your vote

    b) Party / candidate contacted you or a family member through a phone call or recorded voice or SMS

    c) Party / candidate offering to drive voters in your locality to the polling stations

21. What was the single most important issue for you while voting in this election?

22. In your opinion, which party in the last AMC election has raised issues and problems you consider most important?

23. Some people say that they participate in various activities during the AMC elections, in which activities did you participate?

    a) Attended election meetings / rallies

Yes	No

b) Participated in door to door canvassing

Yes	No

c) Contributed or collected money

Yes	No

d) Distributed election leaflets or put up posters

Yes	No

e) Attended joint platform

Yes	No

24. Do you engaged in any social media?

Yes	No

25. If yes, specify.

26. How often do you use your social media?

     a) Everyday

     b) Quite often

     c) Sometimes

     d) Rarely

27. Do any social media help you in deciding whom to vote for?

yes	no	To some extent

28. Do you read a post or blog in any social media about the elections in

Mizoram?

yes	no	To some extent

29. How regularly do you do the following for news - daily, sometimes,

rarely or never?

a) Watch Television

daily	sometimes	rarely	never	Can't say

b) Read newspaper

daily	sometimes	rarely	never	Can't say

c) Listen to radio

daily	sometimes	rarely	never	Can't say

d) Use internet/facebook/twitter/WhatsApp

daily	sometimes	rarely	never	Can't say

Annexure II

Elections to Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), 2010 & 2015

List of winning candidates

Ward No	2010 AMC Election	2015 AMC Election
Ward No. I	Lalrinenga Sailo (MNF)	R. Zomuanpuii (Congress)
Ward No. II	Hmingthanzami (ZNP)	Lalringliana (MNF)
Ward No. III	Lalthanliana (MPC)	K. Romawia (MNF)
Ward No. IV	Lalmalsawmi (MNF)	Laltlanzova Khiangte (MNF)
Ward No. V	Rosiamngheta (MPC)	Rosiamngheta (Congress)
Ward No. VI	Zamanthangi (MNF)	C. Lalmuanpuii (MNF)
Ward No. VII	Zarzoliana (ZNP)	K. Lalhmingliani (Congress)
Ward No. VIII	P.C. Lalhmingthanga (MNF)	P.C. Lalhmingthanga (MNF)
Ward No. IX	P.C. Lalruatsanga (MPC)	B. Lalawmpuii (MNF)
Ward No. X	Lalzirliana (Congress)	R. Lalbiakthanga (MNF)
Ward No. XI	Lalchhuanmawii (ZNP)	H. Zonunsanga (MNF)

Ward No. XII	Laldinsangi (Congress)	R. Thanglura (MNF)
Ward No. XIII	W. Chhuanawma (ZNP)	Zonunsangi (Congress)
Ward No.XIV	Lal Rimawia (ZNP)	Lalhmingmawia (MNF)
Ward No. XV	C.T. Zakhuma (Congress)	Zodingpuii (Congress)
Ward No. XVI	C. Lalsawivunga (MPC)	C. Lalsawivunga (MPC)
Ward No. XVII	Lalhuthangi (Congress)	H. Vanlalruata (Congress)
Ward No. XVIII	Biakthansanga (MNF)	M. Zohmingthangi (Congress)
Ward No. XIX	Ramhlunsanga Congress	C. Lalthansanga (MNF)

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ABSTRACT

URBAN LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM

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Introduction:

Urban Local Body (ULB) is the management of urban affairs where the national political decisions are reshaped to fit local conditions. It is the process of decentralization on the local level. It also refers to the political mechanisms through which local public decisions are made. Urban Local Body functions as an institution to increase people's participation in policy formulation and its implementation. It is an institutional arrangement through which democracy becomes a reality. In today's world, ULB has much more role to play in the daily life of the urban dwellers than the state or the central government, as there are public requirements which are local in their intensity, character and scope. These local problems and local requirements can be tackled by evolving local solutions which calls for a proper establishment of Urban Local Body to address and represent the issues of the urban community in a more efficient way.

In India, local government forms the bottom tier of democracy, the first two being the Central Government and the State Governments. As it functions within the provisions of the statute which has created it, the local government in India enjoys a limited jurisdiction with restricted powers and functions. According to International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968), "Local Government may be loosely defined as a public organization authorized to decide and administer a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory which is a subdivision of a regional or national government". The first Municipal Corporation was established in Madras in 1687 which marked the beginning of local government in India.

In the post-independence era, there were many ULBs but they were not constitutionally empowered. A Constitutional Amendment Act relating to urban government (Municipalities) was passed by the Parliament in December, 1992 and became operative on April, 1993 which came to be known as the 74th Amendment Act, 1992 and has been inserted in Part IXA of the Indian Constitution. The Act is envisaged to achieve grass-roots democracy by ensuring people's participation to come in contact with the urban administration. Urban Local Bodies in India are governed by the municipalities and corporation laws of the respective states in accordance with the 74th Amendment Act. They are empowered through the Constitution by specifying the powers and responsibilities to enable them to function as effective institutions of self-government.

The ULB in Mizoram is of recent origin and brought forward by the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007 which gave a head start to the establishment of the Aizawl Municipal Council on 1st July, 2008. The commencement of Aizawl to a city in the true Constitutional sense as per the 74th Amendment Act and the transition from the administration of village councils to the administration of Municipal government can be seen as a positive step towards urban development and administration.

The state witnessed the first election to the ULB on 3rd November, 2010. As per the 74th Amendment Act, six wards have been reserved for the women candidates which shall be rotated after every five years. The Aizawl Municipal Council consists of 19 elected members representing 19 wards of the Aizawl city and other 12 members appointed by the Governor of Mizoram, collectively known as the Board of Councillors (BOC). The BOC is the highest decision making body of the Aizawl Municipal Council and is headed by the Chairman. Both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman are elected

by the elected Councillors. Besides the BOC, there is an Executive Council (EC) consisting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and other three members known as the Executive Councillors appointed by the Chairman. The EC exercises all the executive powers.

In 2015, the Aizawl Municipal Council crossed the limit of 3 lakhs in terms of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007. It states that an urban area with a population of 3 lakhs or more may be declared as a larger urban area. As a result, it was upgraded to a Municipal Corporation and named it as Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) in October 2015. Subsequently, the election to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation was held on 26th November, 2015. So far, ULB in Mizoram have witnessed two elections since its existence.

Elections form an integral and inseparable part of democracy. As democracy contemplates free and fair elections, it can function only upon the faith that elections are free and fair. Broadly speaking, election is simply a choice. But equally a choice is not a 'vote in an election' unless the chooser conforms to the specified legal procedure. The Social Science Encyclopedia defines election as "A form of procedure, recognized by the rules of an organization, (government or private) whereby all or some of the members of the organization choose a smaller number of persons or one person to hold office of authority in the organization".

The idea of election originated in the ancient Greek city states. In fact, elections took a central place in politics for the first time in the Greek city states during the fifth and sixth centuries BC.

Elections in India dates back to the British era. The British Rulers, in pursuance of their policy of divide and rule, introduced the system of Communal Electoral Rolls in India under the Indian Councils Act of 1909. The separate electorates were created for Muslims together with a system of weighted representation. The system was extended to other communities by the Government of India Act, 1919 and 1935. The then Indian political leaders particularly, the freedom fighters found the system unjustified; the Parliament of India abolished it and introduced the principle of "one voter – one vote – one value", provided in Section 62 clauses (3) and (4) of the Representation of People Act, 1951.

The first election held in the Lushai Hills was the election to the District Conference on 14th January 1946. The Indian Constitution under Aticles 244 (2) and 275 (1) set up the Mizo District Council and Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1952 and 1953 respectively; and the first election to the Mizo District Council was held on 3 – 4th January, 1952 on the basis of adult franchise. After the Chieftainship was abolished in 1954, the District Council constituted an administrative set up in the form of village councils on the basis of universal franchise. The first election to the village council was held in April 1954.

The Mizo District Council again was upgraded to the status of Union Territory in 1972 and named it as Mizoram. Consequently, Mizoram witnessed the first Assembly election in 1972. After 14 years, Mizoram was eventually upgraded to a full-fledged state of Indian Union in 1986. The first election to the State Legislative Assembly was held on 16th February 1987. Since then Mizoram witnessed seven State Legislative Assembly elections till date.

Statement of the Problem

Caste, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity are the characteristic of Indian society and have been recognised as important realms for studies in Indian voting behavior. There are scholars who argue that Mizoram has a unique political identity and remained largely unaffected by the fluctuations in national politics (Lallianchhunga, 2009, p.168). It has been observed that in Mizoram elections, the accessibility and personality of the candidates is more important than party identification.

The study intends to focus on the Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram. The turnouts in both of the Urban Local Body elections are significantly lower than that of the State Assembly elections held in the preceding years. Mizoram has been witnessing a high voter turnout in the State Legislative Assembly elections. In fact, in the last three Assembly elections held in Mizoram, the voter turnouts were 78.67 percent, 80.02 percent and 80.82 percent in 2003, 2008 and 2013 respectively. It is a cliché in India that the turnout does not go down as one goes down the tiers of democracy. This shows that the turnouts at the AMC elections did not follow the national trend where the bottom tier of democracy records higher participation. It is proposed to study the voting behavior in the AMC elections to understand the nature and trend of Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram. Moreover, it will also examine the connection between Urban Local Bodies and state level elections.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1.   To study the nature and trend of Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram.

2.   To examine the election campaigns and manifestos of the AMC elections.

3.   To examine the voting behaviour in the AMC elections.

4.   To analyse the connection between Urban Local Body and state level elections.

Research Questions

1.   What are the nature and trend of Urban Local Body elections in Mizoram?

2.   What are the electoral strategies employed by the political parties and candidates?

3.   What are the factors that influence the voting behaviour in the AMC elections?

4.   Does the result in the AMC elections have any bearing in State Legislative Assembly   elections?

Methodology

The research work is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The study uses both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are collected using schedule questionnaire. The study uses systematic random sampling for selecting the respondents from four different wards; viz., Ward III, Ward VIII, Ward XIII and Ward XVIII. The sampling size is 60 representing the 19 wards which are selected from the electoral roll of AMC, 2015. From each ward, one polling station is taken up for the purpose of selecting 15 respondents. Interviews were also conducted to four candidates of the

AMC election, 2015 so as to get firsthand knowledge about the electioneering process in the AMC elections.

Primary sources also include party leaflets, pamphlets, election manifestos, statistical reports published by the Election Commission of India, orders and notifications published by the State Election Commission. Secondary sources include articles in journals, articles in newspaper, books etc.

Chapterisation:

The first chapter (Introduction) studies the concept of urban local body, the meaning of elections and the importance of elections in democracy. It also includes a brief political profile of Mizoram with reference to Aizawl Municipal Corporation, statement of the problem, review of literatures, objectives of the study, research questions, methodology, etc.

The second chapter (Elections in Mizoram) focuses on the nature and trend of elections in Mizoram. It lays emphasis on the evolution and elections of the urban local body in Mizoram.

The third chapter (Campaign and Manifestos) examines the strategies employed by political parties and candidates in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections.

The fourth chapter (Voting behavior) discusses the various factors that influence the voting behavior in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections. It also examines the relationship between the Aizawl Municipal Corporation elections and State Legislative Assembly elections.

The last chapter (Conclusion) summarises the study and also includes the findings of the research.

Findings:

The study of the nature and trend of elections in Mizoram is done on the basis of the performances among the various political parties contesting the State Legislative Assembly elections since 1987. Mizoram is a state having two-party effective system in the sense that the Assembly elections in Mizoram has won by the two rival parties, the Congress and the MNF; even though at times they were supported by other parties in forming an electoral alliance. While it is true that Mizoram is no stranger to coalition politics, the voters are virtually unwilling to vote for an untried party to power.

The electorates prefer the change of government after the completion of two terms in which the Congress and the MNF had been alternated in power since the first State Assembly election till date. The voter turnout in the state has always been very high ranging from 74 to 83 percent. The voters have been constantly displaying their awareness and consciousness in the political process by participating in the electoral process. Elections in the state have been peaceful with a satisfying polling percentage. The State Assembly elections are mainly fought on local issues where different political parties make almost similar appeals and promises to the voters, like the integration of the contiguous areas inhabited by the Mizos with Mizoram. The Congress' flagship programme – the NLUP in 2008 has been a game changer in Mizoram Assembly polls. Voters in Mizoram are more consumable to the local issues rather than national issues.

The State Election Commission of Mizoram had successfully conducted two General Elections to AMC in 2010 and 2015. The turnouts at the AMC elections were

63.60 percent and 63.55 percent in 2010 and 2015 respectively. In India, it is a common trend that the turnout started increasing as we go down the three tiers of democracy. In many cases, the local body elections tend to record higher turnout comparing to the national and state assembly elections. However, given the turnout in the elections to the State Legislative Assembly, the city is expected to record a turnout of over 70 percent. Nonetheless, the voter turnouts in the AMC elections are significantly higher compared to the developed cities like Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) and Mumbai. The voter turnout in the election of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) was around 45 percent in 2012. Similarly, the election to the Bengaluru's urban local body known as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) witnessed a low turnout of around 49 percent in 2015.

It is often lamented that voters in a more developed areas are more reluctant to exercise their franchise as compared to the voters in a low profile areas. While it would be wrong to make a general statement that all developed cities have a low voting percentage compared to rural areas in India. On the other hand, the voter turnout in each ward in both the elections has shown that the wards having high voter turnout belong to the low profile areas. In 2010, the highest voter turnout was Ward No. I (Durtlang, Durtlang Leitan, Zuangtui, Muanna Veng); further in 2015, Ward No XIX (Kulikawn, Tlangnuam, Tlangnuam Vengthar, Saikhamakawn, Melthum, Hlimen) recorded the highest turnout. Interestingly, both these Wards are from the least affluent and disadvantaged areas located on the edge of the city.

The ULB elections in Mizoram are more or less similar to the State Legislative Assembly elections where the main contest is between the two main parties, the Congress and the MNF; although they did form an alliance with other smaller parties

except for the MNF in 2015 when it decided to contest alone. In 2010, the Congress-ZNP alliance managed to secure 10 seats while the remaining 9 seats went to the MNF-MPC alliance. The opposition, MNF party had made a huge comeback in the 2015 AMC election bagging 11 seats out of the total 19 seats it contested. The second ULB election witnessed the victory of the MNF in which the ruling Congress led alliance was voted out of power after the completion of one term which is unlike the trend that we see in the State Legislative Assembly elections.

Campaigns and manifestos are mainly the election strategies employed by the candidates and political parties in the AMC elections. In general, the campaign in the AMC election follows a direct form of campaigning, where the candidates and party workers carry out door-to-door canvassing and communicate directly with the voters. However, some political parties, party leaders and even the candidates also use the platform of social media to mobilize voters. According to the field work carried out by the scholar, only 5 percent of the respondents agreed that social media has helped them in deciding whom to vote for, while 15 percent somewhat agreed that the role of social media has helped them to some extent. Only 28.3 percent of the respondents made up their mind about who to vote for during the campaign. While 30 percent made up their mind as soon as the list of contesting candidates are announced and 16.7 percent made their decision before the campaign started. The study shows that the campaign process in the AMC election have a minimal influence on the voters' decision. Similarly, manifestos essentially have no impact on the voters. Only 8 percent of the respondents considered manifestos as an important factor in deciding whom to vote for.

From the case study, it is found that most of the candidates are not satisfied with the rules and restrictions that have been imposed on the candidates and political parties

during the campaign and electioneering process. Since public meetings, rallies and the like are banned by the MPF, there was only one joint platform organized by the MPF in the AMC election, which was not even conducted in some of the wards. They are left with only one chance or no chance at all to address the public, introduce themselves to the voters, and put forward their strengths and the failures of their opponent. They feel that there should be more public meetings where the candidates could debate on grounds of different issues so that the voters could decide the right person to vote for after analyzing their views on certain issues.

One of the candidates claims that it is an obligation for the candidates and the parties to follow the Model Code of Conduct issued by the State Election Commission because the Commission has a Constitutional status and legal sanctions. However, he said that the rules imposed by the MPF are not backed by any law and do not have the right to invalid the party who go against their rules.

According to the Model Code of Conduct, the election expenditure which can be incurred or authorized to be incurred by a candidate is Rs. 1,00,000 for each ward. Three out of four candidates have claimed that they have exceeded the ceiling of expenditure by 5 to 6 times the prescribed limit.

The present study has made a modest effort to examine the voting behavior in the 2015 AMC election. The study follows the Michigan model of voting behavior which identified three clusters of political attitudes: partisanship, candidate evaluation and issue position. Out of the 60 respondents, 28 (46.7%) are male; whereas, 32 (53.3%) are female. There are 5 respondents who did not cast their vote in the last AMC election which constitutes of 8.3 percent of the sample electorate, while the remaining

91.7 percent exercised their right to vote. Interestingly, the non-voter percentage is quite low with 3.3 percent of female non-voters while the male non-voters comprise of 5 percent of the sample respondents.

Education plays a key role particularly in a democratic polity as participation tends to increase with education. It is often argue that higher education imparts the knowledge, skills, and political familiarity that help in navigating the political world (Hillygus, 2005, p. 27), the study shows that the graduate and above category has a minimal representation particularly in female voters. However, the rather surprising picture is that the 'below matric category' both male and female voters seem to outscore the 'matric and above category' in political participation. From the study, a conclusion can be drawn that education increases the participation in the electoral process but with higher education, participation tends to decline.

The respondents are politically conscious at arriving the decisions to whom they should cast the vote at the time of elections. 96 percent of male and 100 percent of female voters have claimed that they decided for themselves without the influence of others. Only one respondent was induced to vote by the influence of others. The study shows that at local level elections, the voter's party identification and manifestos are lower in the rank. The candidate factor occupies the most important position in the perception of the respondents.

People cast their votes by the talent or charisma or personality of the candidates. The study shows that 64 percent of male and 60 percent of the female respondents are impressed by the candidate's personality. As municipal elections are conducted on ward basis which is a quite a small unit, it is easy for the voters to understand the personal

qualities and background of the contesting candidates. Likewise, the candidates build their own support-base on the basis of their services to the ward or community. In view of this, the voters are more candidate-oriented, and are likely to vote for a reliable, capable and honest candidate, who has been active in the community life and who is likely to get things done for his supporters.

Even though local level elections are said to be partisan elections in India, party identification or party affiliation seems to have a minimal influence on voter's choice. While it is argue that candidate evaluation, issues and party identification have all influence vote choice; party identification has an additional effect on the other two attitudes (Chandler, 1988, p. 30). However, the study shows that there are only six partisan voters who cast their vote in favor of the party either on the basis of traditional supporter or good leadership of the party. On the other hand, 28 respondents (46.7%) identified themselves with a particular party.

The study indicates the decreasing level of party identification in the older age group between 51 – 60 and above 60 category. The present study have found that candidate evaluation is considered as the most important factor which determines the voter's choice at the AMC elections 2015, while the other two factors, party identification and issue position (manifesto) seem to have a minimal influence on voter's choice.

The study also indicates that out of the 55 voters, 40 percent of male and 36.7 percent of female voters have claimed that in the upcoming 2018 state assembly election, they would vote for the same political party they voted in the last AMC election. It means that while only 10.9 percent of the total voters voted on party basis

and claimed to be partisan voters, yet 40 percent of the voters are willing to vote on party basis in the next election.

Since all the respondents are literate they are expected to be aware of the parties and their policies. The study has shown that 28 percent of male and 56.7 percent of female voters are ignorant about party administration while 36 percent of male and 40 percent of female voters are ignorant about issues and problems raised by different political parties. On the issue of free and fair elections, 32 percent of male and 30 percent of female voters are of the opinion that the last AMC election was fair; whereas 68 percent of male and 40 percent of female thinks that it was somewhat fair. Only 13.3 percent of female voters find the election unfair while 16.7 percent remains ignorant and could not label the election as fair or unfair.

The level of political participation particularly election related activities of the respondents are significantly low while considering the status of literacy and level of education. The present study has shown that the degree of political participation does not increase with higher education.

The study reveals that the respondents have excelled in literacy and their level of education is quite satisfying. It is interesting to note that 50 percent of female respondents and 41.7 percent of male respondents have exercised their right to vote. The respondents are highly conscious at arriving decisions for whom to vote at the time of elections. 98 percent of the voters have decided for themselves without the influence of others. Despite their level of education, the voters' political participation in other activities is not very encouraging. The degree of political participation does not increase with the level of education.

The present study also shows that at local level elections, the voters considered the candidate factor to be the most important in determining the voters' choice, while party identification plays a minimal role in influencing vote choice. From the study, we find that there are only six partisan voters (10.9%) who voted in favor of the party. On the other hand, 46.7 percent of the respondents identified themselves with a particular party. However, with 10.9 percent of the voters who claimed to be partisan voters, 40 percent of the voters have asserted that in the upcoming state assembly election, they would vote for the same party they voted in the last AMC election. While it is true that 40 percent of the voters are willing to vote on party basis in the next election, the victory of the party in local body elections does not necessarily determine its victory in the state assembly elections.

The ULB elections in Mizoram have witnessed a lower turnout comparing to the state assembly elections. The ruling party is not given a second chance unlike the trend in the state level elections. Campaign and manifestos are the main electoral strategies of political parties and candidates but they have minimal influences on the voters' choice. Candidate evaluation has the most influence on voters' choice. The victory of the party in the ULB election does not determine its victory in the state assembly elections.

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