VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE EIGHTH MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF AIZAWL DISTRICT

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE EIGHTH MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF AIZAWL DISTRICT," submitted by NANCY ZOSANGLIANI for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, is a research work, done under my supervision and guidance. The dissertation, submitted by her has not formed the basis for the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as a dissertation or thesis in any university. I also certify that the dissertation represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

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DECLARATION

I, Nancy Zosangliani, do hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation entitled, "**VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE EIGHTH MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF AIZAWL DISTRICT,**" submitted to Mizoram University for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY.** And, that neither part of this dissertation nor the whole of the dissertation has been submitted for the award of a degree to any University or Institutions.

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I submit this dissertation of mine with great humility and utmost regard.

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Voting is the main form of political participation in liberal democratic societies. Legal equality, freedom and rule of law are the characteristics which are identified to be the foundations of democracy. These characteristics of democracy are reflected in all the citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to legislative processes such as contesting in elections and holding public offices, the right to form political associations and to exercise franchise. Elections hold an important legislative process in the functioning of a democratic government, whereby the electorates appoint their representatives in a government through the process of voting. Most of the sovereign states across the globe have adopted the ideology of democracy in one way or the other over other systems of governments, despite its shortcomings. Behaviour of voters in electing their representatives becomes an important factor as it has direct impact upon the formation of a government.

Voting behaviour is the study of political behaviour of people in the context of voting during elections, be it a local body or a national election. It involves the assessment of voting statistics, data and calculation of electoral shifts and swings, along with an evaluation of individual psychological processes (conception, sentiment and motivation) and their relationship with political action as well as the institutional patterns, such as the delivery process and their influence on the election. According to Plano and Riggs, "Voting behaviour is a field of study concerned with the ways in which

people tend to vote in public election and the reasons why they vote as they do."[1] Voting behaviour comprises of diverse determining factors, each playing relevant role, ranging from social class, religion, caste or charismatic personality to geography, age, gender and many more.

Theoretical Models of Voting Behaviour

Scientific study of voting behaviour has been marked by three major schools of research- the School of Columbia, the School of Michigan and the School of Rochester. These three models are discussed below.

I. **School of Columbia (Sociological Model):** Theoretical assumption of the sociological mode of voting behaviour is explained by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet in *The People's Choice* (1944) by conducting a research in a community called Erie County, Ohio state, for studying the US Presidential elections. The study employed questionnaire as the technique of investigation. It is the first groundbreaking election investigation of the Columbia School of vote choice. Central hypothesis of the study was that voting was an individual act, where decisions were made by individuals and their access to the digital media. But the results contradict this by showing that there was minimal intervention from the media but the voters were mainly influenced by the social groups to which they belong.

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[1] Zahida Akhter and Younis Ah. Sheikh. (2014). Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: Theoretical Perspective. *Public Policy and Administration Research Journal. Vol. 4, No. 8.* p.104.

"There is a familiar adage in American folklore to the effect that a person is only what he thinks he is, an adage which reflects the typically American notion of unlimited opportunity, the tendency toward self-betterment, etc. Now we find that the reverse of the adage is true: a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political reference."[2]

Individual's attitudes are formed and reinforced by their membership in social groups such as their social class, ethnic group, religious group and associations to which they belong. They found that people under cross-pressures were most likely to change.[3] Limitation of this model is that it fails to explain the variation that occurs in a specific election due to economic factors. While social factors may explain the long-term stability of voting behaviour, they do not explain the variations that occur in different elections. In order to overcome this problem, the psychosocial model was developed in Michigan using the concept of partisanship, which seeks to link the long-term historical and social factors and the short-term political and social factors that were characteristics of each election.

II.   **School of Michigan (Psychosocial model):** The psychosocial model originated from a study conducted during the 1948 US Presidential Elections by the Survey Research Centre at the University of Michigan, the results being evaluated by Campbell and Kahn in *The People Elect a President* (1952). This model of

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[2] P.F. Lazarsfeld, B.R. Berelson and H. Gaudet. (1944). *The People's Choice: How the voter makes up his mind in a Presidential Campaign.* New York: Columbia University Press. p. 69.
[3] ibid., p.178.

voting behaviour revolves around the concept of partisanship. Partisanship is designed as a psychological consonance, firm and long-lasting relationship with a political party. This affinity, however, does not necessarily translate into a concrete link like consistency in voting or registration:

"In characterising the relation of individual to party as a psychological identification, we invoke a concept that has played an important if somewhat varied role in psychological theories of the relation of individual to individual or of individual to group. We use the concept here to characterize the individual's affective orientation to an important group-object in his environment. Both reference group theory and small-group studies of influence have converged upon the attracting or repelling quality of the group as the generalized dimension most critical in defining the individual-group relationship, and it is this dimension that we will call identification."[4]

The idea attempts to explicate voting behaviour of a person through the 'funnel of causality,' a metaphor intended to order the different field elements in a converging sequence of causal chains. The funnel idea extends that the act of voting is determined by attitudinal factors like partisanship, evaluation of candidate, issue position and social factor, i.e., the influence of primary groups.[5] The funnel idea posits that social influences and circumstances affect party identification, and party identification in turn influences attitudes and the vote

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[4] Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes.(1960). *The American Voter.* New York: Willey. p 121.
[5] ibid., p. 24.

itself. Party identification structures the estimation of candidates, issues and the supposed abilities of parties to solve potential problems.

The argument against this model is that it overestimated the role of long-lasting partisanship, as voters tend to adjust their relationship with parties with respect to their economic conditions, the leaders and their attitudes towards them for each election, as opposed to the psychosocial model which is based on long-lasting partisan loyalties.

III. **School of Rochester:** This model has been submitted by Anthony Downs (1960) in his work *An Economic Theory of Democracy.* It is an attempt to understand the political activities using economic parameters. It establishes a direct connection between consumers and voters and between companies and political parties. If companies seek to maximize their profits and consumers seek to maximize the utility of goods, one can assume in the same way that the political parties seek to maximize their electoral gains with certain political proposals while the voters sought to maximize the utility of their votes.

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

assumed that citizens behave rationally in politics. This premise is itself a second major hypothesis."[6]

Commonly known as rational choice model, evaluation and non-evaluation perspectives constitute the working of this model. The evaluative voting rationale is based on voters' judgment on the performance of parties or representatives on their management and utility of public goods, while the non-evaluative perspective is operated by clientelistic voting behaviour based on personal dynamic ties based on patronage, promises, clan or ethnic considerations.[7] When the two parties reach upon a promise or implicit agreement about personal favours or goods to be exchanged for political loyalty, a clientelistic relationship is established.

However, there is an underlying requirement that voters should have accurate and detailed information about their interests and proposals of parties, as opposed to making decisions based on little information, and this becomes the main weakness of this model.

Voting Behaviour in India

Elections occupy an important status in any political process. It is the means through which leaders are elected, upon whom the fate of state ultimately rests. It is the process which further gives legitimacy to a government. India is the largest working

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[6] Anthony Downs. (1957*). An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. pp. 295-296.

[7] Lindberg, Staffan, Morrison & Minion. (2008). Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic? Survey Evidence from Ghana. *Political Science Quarterly. 123 (1).* p. 96.

democracy, a parliamentary democracy in the world. Article 326 of the Constitution grants Universal Adult Suffrage to every citizen above 18 years of age.[8] Despite the fact that a large number of voters are illiterates, they have in the past acted wisely and in a mature way to elect their representatives. However, election results have revealed that nearly half of the citizens did not exercise their franchise in the national or state elections.

Elections in India are conducted by a constitutional and independent body known as the Election Commission of India (ECI), created under the provisions of Article 324 of the Constitution. The ECI is headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two other Election Commissioners (EC). The functions of ECI have been included under Article 324 (1) which includes 'the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every state and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President.' Such indicative functions of the ECI boil down to include whole gamut of the electoral process including preparation, maintenance and revision of electoral rolls, the notifications, scrutiny, withdrawals and polling, registration of and recognition to political parties, allotment of election symbols, the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer (a state government official) for each state, Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers and Assistant Officers for each Assembly and parliamentary constituency, and the receiving of election petitions and the appointment of Election

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[8] Gopal Sankaranarayanan. (2018). *The Constitution of India*. Lucknow: Eastern Book Company. p 304.

Tribunals to consider such petitions.[9] Since the ECI plays all such functions, its role becomes critical towards the conduct of free and fair elections in the country.

After the high voter turnout after emergencies and breakout of socio-economic and cultural issues, the voter turnout has continually decreased which signifies that apathetic voters were increasing, who did not believe the political process to be the solution for their problems. This voter apathy needs to be addressed in order to enhance the quality of democracy in India, as lesser voter turnout implies that the elected representatives were not actual representatives of all the people. Studies of voting behaviour in India have concluded factors like caste, ideology of parties, personality of candidate, religion, language, age and gender of candidate, money power, effect of illiteracy, sub-nationalism, election campaigns and local issues to be the main determinants of voting behaviour in India.[10] These factors are considered to play decisive roles in the minds of the people while casting votes.

While all the above factors are considered to be the key determinants of voting behaviour in India, there is a slight difference in the Mizoram context due to certain differences in the society. Although the factors like religion, caste and language play significant roles in the Indian context, these are not regarded as pragmatic determinants of voting behaviour in Mizoram for the present study.

Mizoram Profile

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[9] Bidyut Chakrabarty and Rzajendra Kumar Pandey (2008). *Indian Government and Politics.* New Delhi: SAGE Publications. pp. 154- 156.

[10] Biraj Hazarika. (2015). Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. 20 (10).* pp. 23-25.

Mizoram is a hilly terrain located on the southern-most part of north-eastern India. Originally a district of Assam till 1972 when it was lifted to the status of Union Territory, it became the 23rd state of the Indian Union on February, 1987, consequent upon the signing of the Mizo Accord between the Mizo National Front and the government of India in 1986. Sandwiched between Myanmar in the east and south and Bangladesh in the west, it has a total of 722 km. boundary with the two. Mizoram covers an area of approximately 21,087 square kilometres, and 91% of the state is forested. Three Autonomous District Councils, namely, Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC), Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) and Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) exist within the state for the ethnic tribes of Mizoram. The state is divided into eight constituent districts, viz., Aizawl, Lunglei, Serchhip, Champhai, Mamit, Lawngtlai, Siaha and Kolasib.[11] Three other districts namely, Saitual, Khawzawl and Hnahthial emerged soon after the formation of the new MNF ministry in 2018, increasing the total number of districts in Mizoram from eight to eleven.

The Mizos came under the influence of British missionaries during the nineteenth century, who eventually introduced the Roman script and formal education to them. The state's literacy as per the 2011 census stands at a high 91.33%. Mizoram has a population of 1,091,014 (2011 census) and is the second least populous state in the country. It, however, has the highest concentration of tribal people among the states of India with 95% being classified as Scheduled Tribe (2011 census). The sex ratio is 976

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[11] Rintluanga Pachuau. (2009). *Mizoram: A Study in Comprehensive Geography*. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre. pp. 7-20.

females for every thousand males, which is higher than the national ratio of 940. The density of the population is 52 persons per square kilometre.[12] The state of Mizoram is one of the most peaceful states in India, which always portrayed moral responsibility in times of elections.

Local writers are of the opinion that politics began in Mizoram with the formation of Mizo Union, a political party in 1946. This, however, should only be identified with the concept of electoral politics in particular and not politics in general, as politics had very much prevailed even during the era of chieftainship. Some forms of electoral politics had prevailed even before the formation of the Mizo Union but with limited franchise. The Mizo Chiefs on the guidance of the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills in October, 1940 had elected their representatives from each of the 18 Lushai circles, but the commoners were not a part in the said elections. Later on, a legislature-like body was set up known as District Conference for which the chiefs and the commoners had their respective representatives. Electoral College was formed separately for the chiefs and the commoners for each group to elect their representatives in the District Conference.[13] Hence two separate colleges existed for the commoners and the chiefs, displaying the gap between the two in the Mizo society.

The electoral history of Mizoram dates back to 1946 when the first political party Mizo Union was formed with the avowed objective of abolishing the Chiefs whose rule was becoming tyrannical and oppressive to the commoners which was achieved in the

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[12] ibid

[13] Jangkhongam Doungel. (2011). "Genesis and Development of Electoral Politics in Mizoram." *Historical Journal Mizoram Volume- XV.* pp. 181-182.

year 1955 when the chiefs were abolished with effect from 1st April of that year by an act called "The Lushai Hills (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954. The Autonomous Mizo District Council which was instrumental in the abolition of Chiefs came into existence on April 25, 1952 for the attainment of which the Mizo Union fought tooth and nail. The Council ceased to exist with the inauguration of Union Territory of Mizoram on January 21, 1972. Again, Mizoram Union Territory was raised to a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987 as a result of the Peace Accord signed between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the government of India on June 30, 1986.[14] The Peace Accord put an end to a 20-year- long insurgency in the area, restoring peace and normalcy in the region, and Mizoram has remained a peaceful state ever since.

Elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly began in 1972. Mizoram was not yet a state then, and the first state assembly with 40 members was constituted in 1987. With that, eight elections have been conducted till date, i.e., 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018, with Mizo National Front (MNF) and Indian National Congress (INC) winning four times each, making the two parties the key players among the Mizoram political parties.

Aizawl is the state capital which is both the largest and most densely populated of all districts of Mizoram. It is the centre of administration, business and houses maximum number of important government offices, hospitals, institutions, the Assembly House and civil secretariat. Located in the north of Tropic of Cancer in the northern part

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[14] P. Lalnithanga (2006). *Political Developments in Mizoram.* Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press. p- 191.

of Mizoram, Aizawl is situated 3715 feet above sea level. Its population amounts to 2,93,416, which is roughly 25% of the population of the entire state. The civic administration of Aizawl is authorised by the Aizawl Municipal Council (AMC), the only municipal body in the state, under which Aizawl is divided into 19 wards. Formed in 2010, the AMC has tenure of five years and is administered by a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and three executive members.[15] The localities of Aizawl which fall under AMC are administered by Local Councils, while villages are administered by village councils.

The eighth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly were held on 28th November, 2018. A total of 209 candidates, 67 higher than the 2013 elections contested the polls, 15 of them being women. MNF won the elections by bagging 26 seats out of 40, and formed the government on 15th December, 2018 with Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister. Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), a merged entity of six parties emerged as the second front with a total seats of 8, 6 of them being within Aizawl district, and the incumbent government, the INC was pushed to the third front with 5 seats. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) marked its entry into the assembly by winning a seat from Tuichawng constituency.

In Aizawl district, there are 14 constituencies, viz., Tuivawl, Chalfilh, Tawi, Aizawl North- I, Aizawl North- II, Aizawl North- III, Aizawl South- I, Aizawl South- II, Aizawl South- III, Aizawl East- I, Aizawl East- II, Aizawl West- I, Aizawl West- II and

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[15] Aizawl- The State Capital https://mizoram.nic.in (Retrieved on July 4, 2019).

Aizawl West- III. 2,88,338 voters were enrolled in the Final Electoral Rolls, 2018, out of which 1,36,739 (47.42%) were males and 1,51,599 (52.58%) were females. The voter turnout rate for the assembly segment was 2,28,751 (79.03%), where males constituted 46.35% and females, 53.65%. There were 328 polling stations spread across the 14 constituencies. 14 women-managed booths were arranged in order to encourage the participation of women in elections. There were 10 women in the fray within the district, but none won the seats.[16] The elections across the state were conducted without undue circumstances under a peaceful environment.

A number of non-governmental organisations have been established in Mizoram with Aizawl as their headquarters. These organisations play significant roles in the political process despite their non-political principles and objectives. Amongst these non-profit organisations, the Young Mizo Association (YMA) is of the largest influence which enrolls membership from willing Mizos around the globe. The role of YMA in determining voting behaviour is of great significance as can be seen from the Hnam Hnatlang, a sit-in protest against the then CEO of Mizoram just prior to the elections, which aroused the emotions of people and led to political awareness. The student associations, mainly the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and the Mizo Students' Union (MSU) act as vocal pressure groups which put pressure on the government for the welfare of students, as well as the social, economic and political affairs that affect the well being of Mizos as a whole. These student bodies are significantly vocal as they comprise of educated youth who play important roles in the political process.

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[16] CEO Mizoram. https://ceomizoram.nic.in (Retrieved on January 29, 2019).

Role of the church in Mizoram politics is one which cannot be undermined. The church acted as the medium in putting an end to the Mizo insurgency. The church constantly conveys messages to its members in order to maintain free and fair elections in Mizoram. The Mizoram People Forum (MPF), a conglomeration of several churches and voluntary organisations was established on the initiative of Presbyterian Church. The MPF acts as a poll watchdog, issuing a model code of conduct in agreement with the political parties, candidates and the electorates, and supplementing the efforts of Election Commission of India in ensuring free and fair elections. Thus it is largely credited for the sustenance of peaceful, free and fair elections in Mizoram as it is highly regarded by the people. So, it is expected to exert significant influence towards the voting behaviour of the people if a candidate or party acts against the code of conduct laid out by the MPF.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

W.H. Morris Jones (1957) highlights the difficulty of understanding the Indian electoral behaviour in his work *Indian Voting Behaviour,* where majority of the population is illiterate with a low level of democratic political experience. This is an article which provides some information towards the present study in understanding the voting behaviour in India. Jones draws a brief outline of modern Indian history so as to help explain the difficulty of understanding the Indian electoral behaviour, and claims that the British experience is less complicated in comparison. He cites the Nuffield

surveys that contributed a detailed description of the campaign process in India, which was done largely on the basis of examination of press reports and comments.

Voting Behaviour in a Changing Society by S.P. Varma, Iqbal Narain and associates (1973) is a study which unveils the mystique of voting behaviour in the specific context of interaction between electorates and parties. The study assumes that it was this interaction which is basic to the voter's sense of efficacy about the political system in general and the election process in particular as also for his sense of stake and encouragement to exercise the right to vote. However, the scope of the study is much wider than what is indicated by the basic assumption identified here, as the study covers a wide ranging scope varying from proportion of voters to non-voters to the election campaigning processes. It provides essential information in understanding the electorate-party interaction.

The book *How Voters Decide: A Longitudinal Study of Political Attitudes and Voting Extending over Fifteen Years* by Hilde T. Himmelweit, Partick Humphreys, Marianne Jaeger and Michael Katz (1981) uses the societal psychological approach, a systems approach which takes account of the interdependence of individual and society and examines both the social reality and the individual's experience of that reality through longitudinal study to determine the voting behaviour. The book discourses itself to several audiences- to political scientists interested in political socialisation and the concept of elections, to the social psychologists in understanding the process of decision making, in the relation of perceptions to behaviour and the individual's depiction of the

social world, and to the sociologists interested in the evolving capacity of social class membership and social mobility. The study throws light on voter's awareness and assessment of political issues and the appeal of different parties, which is of importance to some extent for the present study.

In *Political & Economic Development of Mizoram,* R.N. Prasad and A.K. Agarwal (1991) provide a comprehensive study of the government and politics in Mizoram in different dimensions. The evolution of party politics in Mizoram is discussed in detail by the authors, along with the factors leading to the elevation of Mizo Hills District to the status of union territory of Mizoram. The book throws light on the political socialisation of the state, social base of the constituencies, role of ethnic forces, presence of voter apathy and the voter turnout issues. The book also deals with the Mizo National Front (MNF), its growth process over the years, aims and objectives, background of its leaders and many more. It portrays a study of the electoral politics of the state, participation of the parties in national and regional politics, their electoral strategies and the constant involvement of money power along with some ethnic forces. It is a book which provides an insight into the history of Mizoram politics which proves to be of relevance to the present study.

Meenu Roy (1996) provides an indepth statistical review of the entire electoral process of 1996 elections in *India Votes, Elections 1996: A Critical Analysis.* The book gives an account of five years of Rao government in India with various significant events that took place during that time. Manifestos of different parties are also analysed.

Unique features of the 1996 elections like filial politics, caste politics, shabby treatment to women, unholy alliances, high-tech electioneering, role of Election Commission and role of RSS have all been dealt with in detail. It is a critical study of the 1996 elections which covers the pre and post poll election scenario in both the centre and the states, which is helpful in understanding the entire electoral politics of democratic India.

Corrupt Practices in Elections by Hans Raj Jhingta (1996) is a book based on a study of the provisions contained in Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, which defines corrupt practices in relation to elections to Parliament and legislative assemblies. Basic theme of the book highlights the role of corrupt practices committed by the candidate or his election agent during elections so as to influence the voters. The book examines the role of judiciary in interpreting the provisions of Section 123 of the Act in cases coming before it. The author's approach to study the impact of various corrupt practices through a sociological survey adds new dimensions to the study, which makes it interesting to those in the study of election law and politics.

Raisa Ali (1996) in *Representative Democracy and Concept of Free and Fair Elections* presents a critical study of all issues relating to elections including the fundamental principles of election like universal suffrage, equality of suffrage, general electoral roll, secrecy of voting and universal right to contest elections and the components of elections, namely, electoral office, electorate, candidates, political parties, constituencies, mass media, electoral system and electoral machinery. It contains a critical study of powers, functions and independence of election commission including

the role of Chief Election Commissioner and the debated issue of equal status or otherwise of the members of multi-member election commission. Various electoral corrupt practices and offences are discussed in the light of relevant judicial decisions. Role of judiciary in the electoral process is a special feature of the book. It also makes recommendations like limit of constituencies from where a candidate may be allowed to contest election, reducing the role of money and muscle power, compulsory identity cards and observance of model code of conduct.

Chitta Ranjan Nag (1998) covers two eras of politics and administration of the Mizo people in his work *Mizo Polity and Political Modernisation.* These two eras are-the era of the Mizo traditional politics and administration, which is the rule of the villages by chiefs (chieftainship) and the era of modernisation that took place after the abolition of chieftainship under the British colonial rule in Mizoram. The descriptions of traditional politics of chieftainship and its related aspects like the institutions of Zawlbuk and slavery are given in the book, which provides knowledge of traditional importance. The book, however, particularly highlights the second era of political change which was a huge step towards modernisation in Mizoram. Following continuous raids and attacks by the Mizos on the British frontiers, the British government annexed Mizoram in the nineteenth century and administered the area till independence of India in 1947. They introduced formal education, and had left huge impacts on the Mizo society in various aspects. This book is significant to some extent towards the present study in understanding the modernisation of Mizoram politics.

In *Electoral Politics and General Elections in India 1952-1998*, ML Ahuja (1998) discusses the situation which was responsible for the dissolution of the 11th Lok Sabha just within 18 months of the general elections. The role of Election Commission and the growth and effect of regional parties has been examined. It also provides a glimpse of the electoral scene in all the then states and union territories. It surveys the programmes, activities, strategies and performance of the national and state parties that participated in the 12th general elections. It explains the background and circumstances leading to the politicisation of women, Muslim and Dalit voters, the situation leading to the projection of Nehru-Gandhi family, and the use of innovative campaigning. An assessment of the 1998 verdict, the functioning of democracy in India and the hundred days experience of the Vajpayee government is also presented. The events and activities till June 1998 are covered by the book.

The book *Electoral Politics in India* by Meenu Roy (2000) covers all aspects of elections like electoral behaviour, caste politics, regional influences, defections etc which constitute the basis of the ballot battle. It gives an indepth study of the election machinery and electoral process in India, highlighting the important constitutional provisions regarding electoral process in India and the role of Election Commission. It analyses several cases that attributed to the downfall of BJP under Vajpayee, their achievements and promises and the BJP's existential dilemma between identity and power. It also highlights the Congress under Sonia Gandhi and identifies it as a party in retreat, showing the division of Congress and how they later sought for alliances, along with their various beliefs, strategies and campaigns. It gives a detail of the election

panorama across the country with regard to the 1999 elections and the various factors that contributed to the victory of BJP-led coalition. It gives a brief review on the electoral manifestos of different parties, showing their areas of consensus. It also gives an account of the flaws of electoral process in India, and proposes the remedies to overcome such flaws in the system.

Political History of Mizoram by Chaltuahkhuma (2001) is a book of great relevance to the present study in many ways. It gives a detailed account of the Mizoram politics, starting from the origin of the Mizos and their contact with British India. It is a book which gives the first-hand experience of the author about the District Council days of Mizoram in an elaborate manner. The author explains the challenges encountered by Mizoram preceding its statehood, and gives details of all the elections in Mizoram between 1972 and 1987. Administration of the state and inauguration of the state are also discussed in detail. The book explains the ultimate steps that put an end to the Mizo Insurgency and the outcome of restoration peace in the region, the steps taken by the ministries towards development, the challenges before the leaders all in local language, which makes it a valuable contribution towards the Mizo society.

Emergence of Mizoram is a book by P. Lalnithanga (2005) which covers the events of crucial periods in Mizoram when vast changes took place politically and administratively, culminating in the ultimate emergence of Mizoram as a full- fledged state from being a district under Assam. It gives an account of the outbreak of insurgency in Mizoram and the inauguration of Mizoram Union Territory. Major events

which have impacted upon the social, political and cultural lives of the people are discussed in this book. The role of students in Mizoram politics, the spiritual rebirth in Mizoram, ethnic violence, the issue of drugs and liquor, corruption and other social issues are highlighted in this book. Political events which took place after statehood, performance and achievements of different ministries, and important landmarks in the history of Mizoram are given by the author, which proves to be of great significance in understanding the political history of Mizoram till 2005.

In the book *Political Developments in Mizoram,* P. Lalnithanga (2006) gives a detailed account of the political developments in Mizoram based on a book on Mizoram history by Chaltuahkhuma. The book covers the position of Mizoram at the time of independence, and how politics emerged in the state with the formation of first political party in Mizoram. It provides a general understanding of the status of Mizoram during the period of insurgency, how the Mizo leaders on one hand and the government of India on the other tackled issues which emerged between them. The author discusses the formation of District Council and Regional Council, along with the birth of different political parties. All these events took place during the time of insurgency, which ended as a result of the Peace Accord signed between the Mizo National Front and the government of India. The author then describes the political situation of Mizoram after attainment of statehood with special reference to the Fourth and Fifth Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections. The book covers the Mizoram political scene till 2006, which is of great significance to the present study as it offers a wide range of knowledge in understanding the Mizoram political scene.

Why Electoral Integrity Matters by Pippa Norris (2014) is a wide-ranging study which draws together an impressive array of evidence to provide a comprehensive analysis of the consequences of problems in elections. Pippa Norris argues that one should take commitments and norms related to elections seriously and use them as the basis for evaluating elections, as failing to do so can undermine political legitimacy and public confidence in the process. By using new sources of data for mass and elite evidence with a global perspective, it addresses and provides insights into issues regarding why electoral processes matter, under what circumstances failed elections undermine legitimacy, and the ultimate consequences of flawed and failed elections.

Genesis and Development of Electoral Politics in Mizoram is an article by Jangkhongam Doungel (2011) which offers a comprehensive understanding of electoral politics in Mizoram, covering the different phases that the state had undergone to achieve its present status. In pre-independent era, electoral politics had taken shape but with limited franchise, which expanded with the formation of Interim District Council. This was followed by the attainment of Mizo District Council, and then the status of Union Territory. Eventually as a result of the Peace Accord signed between the Mizo insurgents and the government of India, Mizoram achieved statehood after which 8 elections have taken place till date. The author gives a brief account of all the important elections and agendas that came up in the process, which proves to be of valuable information towards the present study.

Zahida Akhter and Younis Ah. Sheikh (2014) give a detailed discussion on the determinants of voting behaviour in India in their essay *Determinants of Voting Behaviour in India: A Theoretical Perspective*. The authors give an outline of theoretical models of voting behaviour, stating that the Michigan and Columbia models of study are the main inspirations behind the study of voting behaviour in India. They mention that the election studies in India since the first general elections lacked methodological rigor and vigour. However, it has improved over the years with the introduction of survey method and observation technique. They present a comprehensive study of the influential factors that are responsible in shaping the Indian voting behaviour, which is a significant contribution in understanding and differentiating the determining factors of voting behaviour in India and that of Mizoram for the present study.

In the article *Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants,* Biraj Hazarika (2015) focuses attention on voting behaviour in India and the factors that influence the Indian voters to make their choices in elections. The author opines that man is a rational creature in the philosophical sense of term, but not so in the realms of his economic or political behaviour. He mentions that India mainly follows political and socio-economic factors to determine the voting behaviour of people, and concludes that factors like charisma, caste, religion, language, money, sub-nationalism, performance of the party in power, mass illiteracy, factionalism, election campaigns and public esteem of the candidate are the important factors that determine the voting behaviour in India, which is important for the present study as it offers an insight in understanding voting behaviour in India.

Indian Electoral Politics: A critical Analysis is an article by T. Arumugam (2015) which highlights the unchecked unpleasant downfall of the Indian democracy as reflected by the electoral politics in India. The contemporary change of the Indian voters represent the challenge of disagreement of opinion in-between the political equality and social inequality. Present day Indian politics has become inclusive representative in the form of caste, class, communal, regionalism dynasty, nepotism and self-oriented. Electoral speeches often incite violence and derogator challenges before the electoral process due to political apathy of the people. There exist deadly cocktail of crime and corruption. Such trends need to be curtailed and in this backdrop, the article analyses and highlights on constitutional provisions of delimitation, delimitation commission and its power and political parties and criminalization with regard to the present trend of electoral politics in India.

Rajbir Singh Dalal (2015), in his article *Indian Democracy: An Evaluation from Electoral Aspects* highlights the salient features of Indian democracy with special reference to its electoral process. The organizational setup of the Election Commission of India alongwith its powers and functions ranging from preparation of electors list to its relations with the political parties are discussed in detail. The model code of conduct developed by the commission is also analysed by the author. The paper outlines the constraints before the Election Commission of India for conducting free and fair elections, and presents suggestions to overcome the challenges faced by the Indian democracy with respect to electoral process. The article is of certain relevance towards the present study in understanding the concept of free and fair elections.

Democracy and Elections in India Today by Ng. Ngalengnam (2016) is an article which describes the natural diversity and unity of India covering its variegated variety of culture,custom, tradition, race, colour, caste, geographical location among others, as well as the equality of all in rights, status and constitutional protection of the country. The paper is based on the ethnographic, descriptive and analytical method of studies which covers the historical as well as the present situation covering the whole practical experiences of present day elections in India. It questions as to why India, the biggest democracy in the world, has become the democracy of few capitalists and political elite. It also stresses on the problems of elections in India with the use of Electronic Voting Machine, suggesting certain points to the Election Commission of India for necessary modification in its elections model code of conduct so as to make our democracy an infallible one.

The article *Democratic Polity and Electoral System in India: Issues and Challenges* by Joseph Benjamin (2016) focuses on the people's participation in democratic polity. The article studies the present pattern of electoral process in India despite numbers of diversities. Issues such as issue-based politics, caste politics, communalism, criminalization of politics and money power are discussed in detail. The study analyses the electoral pattern, various issues concerning people's participation, especially that of women, lower castes, linguistic minorities, religious minorities and number of challenges faced by the Indian democracy. The electoral reforms required for sustaining a healthy democracy in India is also highlighted in the article. The article

proves to be of some relevance to the present study in understanding different issues of electoral politics.

Even though there are immense numbers of literatures on elections available for access, the study of voting behaviour in Aizawl District on the Eighth Mizoram Assembly Elections is still a scarce one, it being a very recent event. Therefore, the scholar undertakes a study on the topic with an aim to contribute a literature on the body of knowledge relating to the voting behaviour in elections in Mizoram which is very few at the moment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Aizawl district is selected for the study. Aizawl is the capital of the state, and the most densely-populated of all the districts. Aizawl district is classified into rural and urban areas. Out of the total population of Aizawl, 3,14,754 (78.63%) reside in the urban area, having a high literacy rate of 98.27% (2011 census). The rural area of Aizawl accounts for 21.37% of the population amounting to 85,555 population with literacy rate of 81.56% or 69,775 of the population.[17] Aizawl is the political centre as well as the centre of trade and commerce, and houses maximum number of government offices, educational institutions, skill-training institutions, hospitals and residences of officials. People across the state migrate to the district in search of better opportunities and livelihood. As such, it becomes an ideal place for studying the voting behaviour of

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[17] Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram. (2011). *District Census Handbook Aizawl- Village and Town wise Primary Census Abstract.* pp 12-28.

people. Since it is a densely-populated area, the results will be most representative of the state as compared to other districts.

The results of Eighth Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections in Aizawl district took a somewhat unexpected turn with the emergence of ZPM as the second front. The MNF won 8 out of the 14 seats in the assembly segment, while ZPM bagged the other 6. The incumbent government, the INC failed to grab any seat within Aizawl district, and performed rather poorly across the state. The emergence of ZPM, a newly formed political alliance, the victory of MNF after being out of power for 10 years and the downfall of Congress show that the voting behaviour of people had greatly changed as compared to the seventh assembly elections. The factors that influenced the voters to make their decisions need to be analysed in order to find out the reasons for change in the voting behaviour of people.

Since Aizawl district comprises of both rural and urban areas, there is believed to be a considerable pattern of difference in the voting behaviour of two areas. Rural Aizawl comprises of three constituencies, viz., Tuivawl, Chalfilh and Tawi while urban Aizawl comprises of eleven constituencies, namely, Aizawl North- I, Aizawl North- II, Aizawl North- III, Aizawl South- I, Aizawl South- II, Aizawl South- III, Aizawl East- I, Aizawl East- II, Aizawl West- I, Aizawl West- II and Aizawl West- III. The urban Aizawl is more densely-populated (78.63%) as compared to rural Aizawl (21.37%).[18] Most of the educational institutions, government offices, skill training institutions,

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[18] ibid., pp. 12-28.

hospitals and political offices of Aizawl district are located in urban Aizawl. This suggests that the lifestyle, access to basic necessities and occupational activities of people between the two areas are relatively different from one another. It further implies that the residents of rural and urban Aizawl would act differently in their voting behaviour. Since most of the people are dependent upon the government for livelihood in one way or another, this factor is believed to be of great influence upon the electorates.

Therefore, it is imperative to study the voting behaviour of people of Aizawl district in the Eighth Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections to find out the factors that influenced the voters to make their decisions, and the implications of voting behaviour on the election process. Comparison of voting behaviour in rural and urban Aizawl is expected to show the trends which are influential in one but not so in the other.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate the factors that influenced the voting behaviour in Aizawl district.
2. To compare the voting behaviour of urban and rural voters.
3. To study the implications of voting behaviour in Aizawl district.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the factors that influenced the voters of Aizawl district to make their decisions?

2. What are the differences in the patterns of voting behaviour in rural and urban areas of Aizawl District?

3. What are the implications of voting behaviour in Aizawl district?

METHODOLOGY

The study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyse the voting behaviour in Aizawl district. Data is collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include data and information collected through surveys, questionnaire and interviews. Secondary sources comprise of written information in the form of books, magazines, articles in journals and relevant documents issued by concerned authorities. Accessing the internet is a predominant methodological exercise.

As part of the field study in Aizawl district, four assembly segments in urban areas from different geographical locations, namely, Aizawl West II, Aizawl East I, Aizawl South II and Aizawl North III have been selected and from rural areas, the assembly segment Tawi has been selected. AMC Ward-V from Aizawl North III, Ward-IX from Aizawl East II, Ward-XIII from Aizawl West II and Ward-XIX from Aizawl South II and Seling Village Council area from Tawi constituency are the selected wards/village council for field study. 10 respondents from each assembly segment, selected through simple random sampling, were approached for studying voting behaviour. These respondents are comprised of various educational backgrounds, age groups and occupational interests.

CHAPTERISATION

CHAPTER- 1 : INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER- 2 : ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM

CHAPTER- 3 : VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN AIZAWL DISTRICT

CHAPTER- 4 : IMPLICATIONS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR ON ELECTORAL OUTCOME

CHAPTER- 5 : CONCLUSION

To sum up, voting behaviour is the study of political behaviour of people in the context of voting during elections. It comprises of diverse determining factors, each playing relevant role ranging from factors like social class, religion, caste, charismatic personality to geography, age, gender and many more. The factors vary from region to region based on the existing situation of each region, hence a dominant factor in one area may not be so in the others. There are three major schools which mark the scientific study of voting behaviour, which are the School of Columbia or the sociological model, the school of Michigan or the psychosocial model and the School of Rochester or rational choice model. All these models have each their own limitations and flaws, so the best suited model for a particular area under study has been selected.

In India, several studies have been conducted to analyse the voting behaviour of people in local and general elections. These studies have concluded that

factors like caste, ideology of parties, personality of candidate, religion, language, age and gender of candidate, money power, effect of illiteracy, sub-nationalism, election campaigns and local issues to be the main determinants of voting behaviour. However, this is not necessarily the case in Mizoram context due to differences in the Indian and Mizo society, and factors like religion, caste, language and the likes are not pragmatic determinants in the the area.

Mizoram, located on the southernmost part of northeast India became the 23rd state of Indian Union on February 1987. The entire state is divided into eleven districts for administrative purpose, and Aizawl is the capital of state. Eight state legislative assembly elections have been concluded till date, where the INC and the MNF have won four times each, making the two parties key players in Mizoram politics. Aizawl, the area under study, is the centre of administration, business and houses maximum number of important institutions. Its population amounts to roughly 25% of that of the entire state's.[19] The eighth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly resulted in the formation of MNF government, bagging as much as 26 seats out of 40. Out of the 14 seats in Aizawl district, MNF won 8, while ZPM secured 6.[20] It is thus imperative to find out the factors that influenced the voting decisions of people in order to understand the shift in electoral behaviour of people as compared to the previous elections.

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[19] Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram. (2011). *op.cit.* pp 12-28.
[20] CEO Mizoram Official Website. https://ceomizoram.nic/in/

CHAPTER – 2

ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM

The state of Mizoram, previously known as the Lushai Hills during the British Rule in India is situated between 22"19' north latitude and 92"26' east longitude with an area of 21,081 square kilometres, being bounded on the north by the states of Assam and Manipur, on the west by Bangladesh and the state of Tripura, on the east and south by Myanmar having an international boundary 710 kilometres long with Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Tropic of Cancer cuts right across the state. The people inhabiting Mizoram are known as Mizos to the outside world as well as to the insiders. The word 'Mizo' is a generic term meaning hillmen or highlanders. The Mizos consist of several clans such as Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Ralte and Pawi. Sailo is the clan of chiefs and during the days of chieftainship, Sailos ruled most of the villages with few exceptions here and there. Under the clan Lusei comes several clans such as Sailo, Hauhnar, Pachuau, Chhakchhuak, Rokhum, Rivung among others. Likewise, under the terms, Hmar, Paite and Pawi also come several clans. Apart from these, there are Lakhers and Chakmas also inhabiting the southernmost parts of Mizoram and the western areas bordering Bangladesh respectively. The Lakhers also identify themselves as Mara. There are also a sizeable number of Nepalis scattered in the whole of the state.[21] The unification of these scattered Mizos always occupies important status in election manifestos of various parties.

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[21] P. Lalnithanga. (2005). *Emergence of Mizoram.* Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press. p. 1.

As per the provisional figure of 2011 census, the total population stood at 10,97,206 registering a growth rate of 23.48% over 2001 census. The Mizoram population amounts to 0.09% of the total Indian population of which it is a part. Out of the total population, 52.11% reside in urban regions while 47.89% live in rural areas. The sex ratio is 976 females per 1000 males. About 94.46% of the state population belongs to the Scheduled Tribe, and the Scheduled Caste population comprises of about 0.03% of the State's population. The literacy rate is 91.33% as per the 2011 census, where male literacy is registered at 93.35% and female literacy at 89.27%.[22] The high literacy rate is mainly due to the efforts of Christian missionaries who introduced formal education in the area and subsequent efforts of the Department of Education under the government of Mizoram.

Mizoram is a land of rolling hills, rivers and lakes, contributing to its interesting topography. Steep and rugged, the hill ranges of Mizoram are in sharp contrast with the major mountain ranges of the country. They run north to south and tend to grow higher in the eastern side and taper off to the north and south. The state has perhaps the most variegated topography in the North-East with the majority of hills rising above 900 meters on an average. 'Phawngpui' or 'Blue Mountain' towering 2065 metres above sea level is the highest peak of Mizoram. Meandering rivers flow through the deep valleys and divide the mountains. Of the rivers and streams crisscrossing the mountain terrains of state, the best-known are the Tlawng, the Tut, the Teirei and the Tuivawl. All of them fall eventually in the Barak river of Cachar District of Assam, in the Chhimtuipui in the

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[22] District Census Handbook, Mizoram.

southern and the Khawthlangtuipui in the northern side. The hills have two fascinating lakes namely Tam Dil and Palak Dil. The river routes via Cachar in the north and Chittagong in the south were the only transport means with other parts of the country before independence.[23] Road transport has improved significantly over the years, but most of the roads are in dilapidated conditions which became a big electoral issue.

The Mizos are practically all Christians by faith and this Christianity has a huge impact on their way of life. The church plays a vital role in the Mizo society, and the life of every Mizo is in one way or the other connected to the Church and its activities. Christianity was first introduced to the Mizos by the British missionaries in 1894 during the British Colonial Rule in India. Agriculture is the main occupation of people. Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation is done where the cultivators harvest the paddy. New areas of land are being burned and cleared every year, and this practise is called 'Shifting' by which the cultivated areas change from year to year. Paddy is regarded as the main crop of the Mizos and a staple food, apart from which other crops like corn, maize, pumpkins among others are also cultivated by which the people keep themselves sustained throughout the year.

The Mizo traditional belief holds that Mizos originate from a covering rock or 'Chhinlung' in local dialect. Legend tells that various clans of Mizo come from the earth underneath the stone. Some people opine that Chhinlung is Silung in reality which is in China bordering the Shan state of Burma, hinting that they are of Chinese origin. Then

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[23] KM Zakhuma. (2001). *Political Development in Mizoram from 1946 to 1989.* Aizawl: JR Bros' Offset Printer and Paper Works. p.15.

they migrated to Burma from Silung in China, and then moved further west which is where Mizoram is presently located. The history of Mizos could not be traced very far back, only as much as 500 years. They are assumed to have lived in the valleys somewhere between Tiau and Run rivers, meaning within the hill tracts of Burma. They lived in an egalitarian society at first, where supremacy was held by the person with a dominant physical strength, and Lusheis were the dominant tribe. They were then frequently raided by the Chin tribe (or Pawi) in Burma. Then Chieftainship began where Zahmuaka, a poor and unwilling man was made the Chief, as the people wanted one. He was forced to be so, as no one else wanted to be Chief, assuming that the Chief would be the primary target in case of attack by the Pawis. However, he succeeded as a chief and his sons became chiefs of different Lushei clans, and their sons after them, thus starting a lineage. Towards the eighteenth century, the Mizos moved westward and settled in Mizoram in search of areas for jhum cultivation.[24] This shows that occupational interest was the driving factor behind the westward shifting of the Mizos, as cultivation was the primary occupation during that time.

The British administration in those days did not extend to most areas in tribal hills due to negative revenue. Thus the Lushai Hills was placed under 'Excluded Area' by the British. However, the hill tribals often raided the plains, forcing the British to extend their administration to these areas. In 1871, the Mizos attacked a tea garden in Cachar, killing a tea planter named James Winchester and taking his young daughter Mary Winchester captive. So the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72 came into force, and the

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[24] P. Lalnithanga (2005). *op. cit*., pp. 3-24.

Chin-Lushai Expedition was launched in 1889-90. The Expedition of 1890 resulted in the division of Lushai Hills into two districts- North Lushai Hills District and South Lushai Hills District. By 1895, the Mizos were officially brought under British control by a proclamation, and placed as a district under Assam from April 1, 1898, and the two districts of Lushai Hills were amalgamated into one district under a Superintendent. Aizawl was made the Headquarters and Lunglei, a sub-division.[25] These two divisions became district capitals after Mizoram became Union Territory.

The Mizos observe three main festivals or 'Kut' every year, which are celebrated with much zeal. These are- Chapchar Kut, Pawl Kut and Mim Kut. Chapchar Kut is celebrated after the clearance of jungles for cultivation. It is a thanksgiving festival, owing to the great risks and dangerous tasks that the people had to overcome while clearing and cutting down thick trees for cultivation. Rice beer is drunk freely throughout the area during such occasion with the festival lasting for seven days. But with the advent of Christianity, the practise eventually died down and is now commemorated and celebrated in name only. March 20 is observed every year as Chapchar Kut in Mizoram.

Mim Kut is celebrated in the month of September for one or two days in celebration of reaping of crops besides paddy. The samples of harvested crops are sanctified to the dead members of community, which is no longer practised today. Pawl Kut is a festival of hay celebrating the harvest of paddy at the end of year for a day or

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[25] Chaltuahkhuma (2001). *Political History of Mizoram.* Aizawl: David Memorial Press. pp. 11-14.

two. It is the most prominent of all the festivals, celebrated with feasts and dances ensuring food to be served to everyone in the community in abundance. But as mentioned above, with the advent of Christianity, all these festivals lost their importance and are now observed only in commemoration, as Christianity changes the social lives of people in many ways, particularly regarding the banning of liquor.

When India attained independence from British Rule on August 15, 1947, administration of the entire country underwent a drastic change. Two nations, Pakistan and India were created. The princely states ruled by Rajas and Maharajas merged with free India easily by the persuasive capacity of the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel, except for states like Hyderabad and Kashmir, and Police action had to be adopted for the merger of Hyderabad to India, while the Kashmir issue was resolved through an instrument of accession between India and the Maharaja of Kashmir by giving Kashmir a special status in the Indian Union.

At the time of independence, Mizoram was only a district under Assam, and one of the Excluded Areas. The district was under the administration of a Superintendent, being outside the purview of Legislative Assembly of Assam. Mizoram was then known as the Lushai Hills District, being governed directly by the Governor of Assam through the Superintendent. For administrative purpose, the Lushai Hills District was divided into 18 Circles, 11 in Aizawl area and 7 in Lunglei. Each circle was under the charge of Circle Interpreter (CI) who was the eye and ear of the Superintendent. It was through the instrumentality of CIs that the Superintendent ruled over the Chiefs and the CIs were the

go-between the Superintendent and the Chiefs.[26] The Mizo Chiefs were instrumental in administration of the people together with the CIs. They were given various privileges by the subjects in the form of tributes and in the late 1920s, the subjects brought to the notice of Superintendent that they were tyrannical in their rule and ruthless with the commoners.

On April 25, 1946, the first political party in Mizoram christened Mizo Union was born. The man who conceived the idea was R. Vanlawma, who was a matriculate (which was then scarce), brilliant and one of the few educated Mizos available in those days. The first General Assembly was held on September 24, 1946 where fresh elections of office bearers were held. Lalhema became the President, R. Vanlawma, Secretary and Lalbuaia, Treasurer with Aizawl as Headquarters, Lunglei as Sub-Headquarters and Lakhipur as Division. [27] This was a time when the Superintendent and Chiefs were the most superior and defying them was not considered an option. The people of Mizo Union were most reassured to have Lalhema as their leader, a person who was afraid of neither the Chiefs nor the Superintendent. The party ultimately abolished chieftainship by a Resolution in the Autonomous District Council and the Resolution to that effect was approved by the Legislative Assembly to be in force with effect from August 16, 1954.[28] The impact of Mizo Union was also felt when most of the proposals submitted by them for the Mizos to the Advisory Sub-Committee before independence were

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[26] P. Lalnithanga. (2006). *Political Developments in Mizoram.* Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press. pp. 2-3.
[27] ibid., pp 7-8.
[28] Lalchungnunga. (1994). *Mizoram Politics of Regionalism and National Integration.* Delhi: Efficient Offset Printers. p.39.

accepted and incorporated into the Sixth Schedule of Constitution of India, and following that the District Council was created.

The first elections to the District Council of Mizoram were held on January 4, 1952. Main contenders of this election were the Zalen Party (UMFO) and the Mizo Union. Mizoram was divided into 17 circles during this time, and Mizo Union captured 15 seats and Zalen, 1. Lalsawia became the first Chief Executive Member. About this time, elections to Assam Legislative Council were also held on January 5, 1952 just a day after the District Council elections, and the three elected candidates were all from the Mizo Union. Thus the first Mizo District Council and the first Assam Legislative Assembly were consequently formed.[29] On April 25, 1952, the Assam Chief Minister Bishnuram Medhi officially inaugurated the First Mizo District Council at Aizawl and the first session was held on June 23, 1952 at Reid House. Elections to the District Council were held every five years since then until the attainment of status of Union Territory (UT) by Mizoram in 1972.

Mizoram attained the status of Union Territory (UT) from being a district of Assam under the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act on January 21, 1972. Therefore, elections to the First UT Legislative Assembly were held three months later on April 18, 1972. There were 30 elected seats and 3 nominated seats, for which a total of 125 candidates contested. Four political parties contested the elections, viz., the Mizo Labour Party with 27 candidates, the Mizo Union with 25 candidates, the Samyukta

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[29] P. Lalnithanga (2006). *Op.cit.*, pp. 99-100.

Socialist Party with 18 candidates and the Indian National Congress with 29 candidates, out of which the Mizo Union and the Mizo Labour Party were unrecognised parties. Besides, 56 independent candidates also contested the polls. The Mizo Union obtained absolute majority with 21 seats and formed the first UT ministry, headed by Ch. Chhunga who became the first Chief Minister of Mizoram on May 13, 1972.[30] The other elected members included 6 Congress candidates and 3 independent candidates.

During this period, the Indian politics was in turmoil under the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who imposed the internal emergency and imprisoned several leaders who refused to go as her will. The Mizo insurgency led by the Mizo National Front (MNF) was also in full swing then. Indira managed to convince the leaders of Mizo Union to merge with the Congress, which was opposed by several members across the then UT of Mizoram. This led to the start of decline of political discipline in the area. In the meantime, Peoples Conference (PC) party had emerged, which was joined by many members of the Mizo Union. However, some members came together to revive the Mizo Union, which was joined by two MLAs who came to stand as opposition members in the merger government. Another party, the Mizo Democratic Front (MDF) also emerged in a few years. Many leaders of the PC and the MNF were imprisoned during the time of emergency as they opposed the Congress.[31] On July 1, 1976, with the initiatives of Chibber, the then Lt. Governor of Mizoram, the MNF insurgents and the government of India arrived at a text agreement where the MNF

[30] Chaltuahkhuma (2001). *op. cit*., pp. 247-250.
[31] ibid., pp. 256-258.

resolved to accept a settlement of all the existing problems within the framework of Constitution of India. As a result, emergency was repealed within the UT and imprisoned politicians were also released.

In 1977, the Janata government was formed at the centre, whose branch also emerged in Mizoram. The new Prime Minister Morarji Desai and the MNF leader Laldenga continued the peace talk, much to the excitement of people. However, since Laldenga demanded interim government which would be later lifted to the status of statehood and Desai failed to agree, they ended the talk without yielding positive results. Amidst all these, the second UT Legislative Assembly elections were scheduled for May 17 & 20, 1978. 113 candidates from five parties contested this time, viz., PC (28), Janata (28), INC (26), MU (15) and MDF (16). The PC party was supported by the MNF, and were keen on winning the elections. The elections were held and PC secured maximum seats of 21 and formed the ministry.[32] The Congress secured 4, Janata 1 and independent candidates, 4.

The new government was formed headed by Brig. Thenphunga as Chief Minister. But few months later, situation arose where 8 PC MLAs along with other MLAs filed a no-confidence against the PC government to LG Mathura on October 25, 1978. PM Desai conducted a talk with the opposition leader where he told him to resolve the issue politically. But matters could not improve and then the President's Rule was imposed on Mizoram on November 10, 1978. The PC (B) was born as a faction of PC

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[32] ibid., pp. 269-273.

party joined some members of the party who had lost faith in Brig. Thenphunga. Fresh elections were to be held on April 24 & 27, 1979. 129 candidates from 6 political parties, viz., PC (27), PC (B) (23), Congress I (25), Janata (30), Mizo Union (20), Mizo Democratic Front (4) and 21 independent candidates, a total of 150 candidates contested this time.[33] After being kept under the President's Rule for 4 months, it was repealed and the elections were conducted in Mizoram. The PC party secured majority with 18 seats once again and formed the government on May 8, 1979. Congress secured 5 seats, PC(B) secured 4, Janata, 2 and independent, 1.

The Mizo insurgency was ongoing then, and the people were desperate for peace. The PC government was slowly losing popularity among the people as it could not contain the disturbances. Other parties than the PC then firmly believed that only talks between the MNF and Indian government could restore peace within the region. Thus, the Mizo Union, Janata, Congress, the PC (B) and the MDF were all united with the purpose of representation of the Mizo people and to have more relevance to the central government under the name 'Steering Committee.' But Lal Thanhawla left the steering committee with some Congress members and stood separately as a political party later on.[34] Lal Thanhawla led Congress grew to become one of the key players among different political parties in Mizoram.

Brig. Thenphunga led government worked hard and did not hesitate nor shrink from approaching influential and powerful people in important positions in the interest

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[33] ibid., pp. 201-205.
[34] ibid., pp. 281-286.

of Mizoram. The possible high-handedness of the security forces in view of the disturbed conditions of Mizoram was reduced to the minimum and a situation was created which brought great mental relief to the general public in several ways. The Chief Minister maintained that power was the main source of development and thus Serlui Hydel Project was taken up at his initiative. The ministry did not get much criticism from the public. A calm atmosphere without liquor which the church and the public were yearning for was maintained, making the overall performance of the PC ministry quite satisfactory, having done their utmost as far as possible as judged from the public point of view.[35] The PC had built a firm impression among the Mizos and proved itself to be worthy.

The fourth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly (UT) were scheduled for April 25, 1984. Two parties, the PC (B) and Janata had earlier merged to form the Mizo Convention Party in 1982. A new party, the Mizo Peace Forum had also come up in the meantime. A total of 138 candidates contested the elections. The voter turnout was at 63.38%. Lal Thanhawla-led INC obtained majority by securing 20 seats and formed the first Congress government in Mizoram on May 4, 1984.[36] The other parties secured seats as follows- PC 8, MC 1 and independent 2.

During the PC ministry, the government of India and the MNF had been holding talks for the attainment of peace. However, these never succeeded in bringing the desired outcome and Laldenga, President of MNF had even fled to London. The Mizo

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[35] P. Lalnithanga. (2005). *Op.cit.*, pp. 83-85.
[36] Chaltuahkhuma (2001). *Op. cit.*, pp. 297-301.

people had reposed great hope and expectations on the solution for problems availing in the region, but all their hopes and expectations had dissolved to nothing when the peace talks ended abruptly, leading to their sore disappointment. The party in power, PC, regarded the MNF as a group of miscreants who had to be finished off through the power of Security Forces. The party had a very low opinion of Laldenga and charged him as being irresponsible. The fact that any solution to the problems of Mizoram lies in the adoption of political means was not accepted by the party. However, the consensus interest of the people, voiced strongly by public leaders having involvement in politics and the church leaders remained that peace and normalcy be returned to Mizoram.

After the PC ministry came to an end, the Congress-I came into power in Mizoram. Realising the urge to restore peace in the region, the election commitment of the Congress-I was to bring about resumption of talks between the MNF and the government of India, to which they stayed true and succeeded post elections. Negotiations went on and both parties were keen on restoration of peace. The church leaders too went to meet the Prime Minister themselves for the same purpose, showing that the Mizos as a whole offered and contributed their utmost for the success of talks. Thus the historic Peace Accord came about on June 30, 1986 between the MNF and government of India, and peace and tranquillity was restored in Mizoram after 20 long years of insurgency.

In compliance with one of the terms of Agreement reached between the MNF and the government of India in the Peace Accord, Lal Thanhawla, the Chief Minister

stepped down and became Deputy Chief Minister. In his place, Laldenga became the Chief Minister as envisaged in the agreement. The position of Minister was divided between the incumbent government and the MNF and an Interim Mizoram government was formed with 5 Congress and 4 MNF Ministers altogether 9 including the Chief Minister. The interim government became operational from August 21, 1986.[37] Its lifetime being limited to only six months, elections had to be held in any case before the expiry of six months, the reason being that the MNF ministers not being elected by the people, they should be duly returned by the electorate in elections necessarily.

Thus fresh elections were held on February 16, 1987. The MNF won overwhelmingly and captured power, owing to the public's appreciation of the freedom fight. There were 134 candidates from four parties, viz., MNF, INC, PC and MNU and 9 independent candidates. The MNF won overwhelmingly by securing 24 seats and thus captured power, with Laldenga as Chief Minister. The Congress captured 13 seats and PC, 3. In the meantime, Mizoram was raised from the status of UT to full-fledged statehood by the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi who inaugurated the state on February 20, 1987. This was a direct outcome of the Peace Accord between the MNF and government of India. Another outcome was that the strength of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram was increased to 40, which remains so till date.[38] Thus the MNF attained power and formed the first state Assembly.

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[37] ibid., pp. 157-158.
[38] ibid., pp. 317-325.

The new MNF government proceeded rather smoothly till August 29, 1988 when eight members of the Legislative Assembly elected on MNF tickets namely, Hrangdawla, R. Vanlalhruaia, Andrew Lalherliana, Chawngzuala, P. Siamliana, Zahungliana, Lalrinmawia and K. Thanfianga publicly announced their withdrawal of support to the MNF ministry headed by Laldenga. These dissidents announced the formation of MNF (Democratic) party and with it their complete disassociation with the MNF led by Laldenga.[39] The dissident MLAs had already come to terms with the Congress who were looking forward to the formation of a new ministry. The Chief Minister pleaded the Governor to summon the Assembly to prove the strength of his party which the Governor did not accede to. The Speaker had firmly held that the dissident MLAs could no longer be MLAs in case of show of strength in the Assembly floor, as per the Anti-Defection law, upon which he claimed to have absolute power, far above that of the Governor's. The public were filled with mixed feelings and anxiously waiting for the outcome of the rather tangled political situation in the state when the Governor announced the promulgation of President's Rule in Mizoram on the night of September 7, 1988. Dissolution of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, dismissal of the ministry itself and the exercise of powers of administration by the President through the Governor were also announced simultaneously.[40] Promulgation of the President's Rule was done by the Governor on the ground that even if the present ministry was allowed to continue or a new coalition government was formed, neither will be able to function smoothly under the spirit of Constitution.

[39] ibid., p. 169.
[40] ibid., p. 172.

Following the President's Rule, fresh elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly were conducted on January 21, 1989. In total, there were about 333,733 registered voters in 1989, out of which 168,570 were male electors and 165,163 were female. The electorate of 1989 registered a marginal increase from 321,557 voters during the 1987 elections, when 72.63% polling was recorded. A total of 162 candidates contested in the assembly elections.[41] The MNF suffered a setback and captured only 14 seats out of 40, while the Congress bagged 23 seats. The MNF (D) managed to gain 2 seats and PC, 1. The Congress ministry headed by Lal Thanhawla was sworn in on January 24, 1989.

Third elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly was due on 1994, but had to be preponded to 1993 as Mizoram was to observe Gospel Centenary in the year 1994. Thus the elections were held on November 30, 1993. 121 candidates contested the elections this time. The outcome was that the INC secured 16 seats, the MNF bagged 14 seats, the PC (B) (independent), 8 and 2 seats were captured by independent candidates. The MJD were the former PC who allied with the Janata Dal Party just after the 1989 elections. They later abjured their alliance and formed the MJD. The MJD and the Congress then formed coalition government and secured power along with five defected MNF MLAs.[42] Thus Lal Thanhawla became the Chief Minister and led the coalition government.

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[41] Elections.in http://www.elections.in/mizoram/assembly-constituencies/1989-election-results
[42] P. Lalnithanga (2005). *op. cit.*, pp. 241-244.

However, the coalition government did not go well as expected. Within few months of its inauguration, two ministers of the Congress were sacked from their position, while two MJD ministers formally joined the Congress and established themselves firmly in the ministry. Later on, three remaining ministers of state from MJD were also dropped from their position. Prior to this, 5 MLAs had defected from the MNF and joined the Congress. Attempts were made to disqualify the defected MLAs using the Anti-Defection law but this proved to be of no avail. The MJD then formally changed their name to Mizo People's Conference (MPC). This ministry also witnessed the resignation of three Cabinet Ministers of the Ministry. Despite such events, the ministry managed to complete its term and fresh elections were held on November 25, 1998 under a peaceful and calm environment, which is a significant characteristic of elections in Mizoram which makes it distinct from the rest of India.

In the 1998 elections, MNF and MPC combined formed the ministry by bagging 33 seats out of 40. In terms of the agreement entered into by the two parties, the elections were fought on the basis of 20 seats under common zone, the two parties contesting the common 20 seats on friendly basis. The remaining 20 seats were equally distributed between the partners, 10 exclusively for the MNF and the other 10 for the MPC. The elections resulted in the successful return of 21 MNF candidates and 12 MPC candidates, thus obtaining clear 33 seats for forming coalition ministry out of the total 40. The Congress on their part secured only 6 seats, all the former Ministers including the Chief Minister himself having lost without exception much to the utter amazement and bewilderment of public at large. The new ministry was sworn in on December 3,

1998 with Zoramthanga from MNF as Chief Minister and Lalhmingthanga from MPC as Deputy Chief Minister.[43] Coalition government thus led the state again.

Having inherited from the previous ministry crores of debts and liabilities to be cleared, the new ministry was confronted with an incredible task. The previous ministry had recorded negative impact in the minds of people, as they had not achieved anything worth mentioning despite having spent enormous sum of money. The discernment of people was thus reflected in voting the MNF-MPC combined to power, as a resort to a better future. On December 9, 1999, the coalition came to an abrupt end as a result of the discovery of alignment of the MPC with Congress, the arch- political foe of the MNF in village council elections. The Chief Minister thus asked the five MPC ministers to resign and the deck was cleared for the formation of a pure MNF ministry with one independent MLA supporting the MNF. The term of ministry expired and on November 20, 2003, the fifth elections to the state assembly were held.[44] The elections were held under a peaceful atmosphere except in Suangpuilawn where three candidates from MPC, MNF and Congress were kidnapped by unidentified armed-persons. They were however abandoned later and were freed with no harm shortly after the incident.

In this election, Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was introduced for the first time in Mizoram to ensure fairness. The MNF once again returned with victory in 21 candidates, while the Congress won in 12 constituencies. The MPC allied with the Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) led by Lalduhawma, former MP of Congress and won 5

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[43] ibid., pp.243-244.
[44] ibid., pp.301-304.

seats. The Mara Democratic Front (MDC) also won one seat from Tuipang constituency. The swearing in of new ministry was held on December 4, 2003 and Zoramthanga continued as the Chief Minister.

The MNF thus led the state of Mizoram for two consecutive terms. The voting behaviour of people in the area is such that no party ever rules for more than two terms in a row. Mizoram went to the polls again on December 2, 2008, with the completion of 5 years by the MNF Ministry. Nomination papers were submitted by candidates from national and state parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), INC, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), MNF, MPC, ZNP, Janata Dal (United), MDF, Lok Bharati, Lok Jan Shakti and other independent candidates. The MNF suffered a major setback and won only in 3 constituencies, with even the incumbent Chief Minister himself unable to make it to the Assembly. The Congress led by Lal Thanhawla won with a thumping victory by gaining absolute majority with 32/40 seats, after 10 years of political wilderness. MPC and ZNP won in two constituencies each, and the MDF secured one seat.[45] So, Congress once again formed ministry in the state.

The Congress Ministry assumed power for five years. The MNF and Congress were then considered as key players in Mizoram political scene, as other parties could no longer grab power. The MPC which was once a dominant regional party was no longer a key player as its leader has aged relatively and no competent successor has come up. Other political parties were not large enough to form ministry, so the MNF and Congress

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[45] CEO Mizoram https://ceomizoram.gov.in/ (Retrieved on July 11, 2019).

remained the two main competitors. The MNF allied with MPC and MDF, hoping to win the poll battle against the incumbent government. The BJP, Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and the NCP also contested and fielded many candidates, but were not expected to win as these are all minor parties in the area. In that scenario, Mizoram went to the polls on November 25, 2013. Over 81% of the total 690,860 voters decided the fate of 142 candidates, including six women. The outcome was that Congress won by a large majority of 34 seats, with its President Lal Thanhawla winning in both the constituencies he contested in, making an entry into the Assembly for a record ninth time. While the MNF won 5 seats, the MPC managed to grab one.[46] The Congress formed ministry and led the state for the second time in a row.

Eighth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Elections.

The Eighth Mizoram Legislative Assembly Elections were held on 28th November, 2018. A total of 209 candidates, 67 higher than the 2013 elections contested the polls, 15 of them being women, belonging to INC, MNF, ZPM, NCP, NPP, BJP, People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM) and Zoramthar. In Aizawl district, 73 candidates contested, out of which 10 were women. The voter turnout was recorded at 80.15% The Mizo National Front (MNF) won the elections by bagging 26 out of the 40 state assembly seats. Out of the 14 assembly seats in Aizawl district, the MNF won 8 seats while the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), a merged entity of seven parties, grabbed the remaining 6 seats.

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[46] ibid.

Total number of electors in Mizoram stands at 7,84,405, out of which 3,81,991 (48.7%) are male and 4,02,408 are female (51.3%). There are a total of 4428 service voters in Mizoram. Third gender electors are 6 in number. First time voters who are in the age group 18-19 years stand at 52,556. Sex ratio of voters in Mizoram is 1053. EP ratio stands at 61.29. Total numbers of polling stations are 1175, out of which 455 fall in urban areas and 720 in rural areas, and 15 of these are temporary, specially erected for the Bru voters in Mizoram-Tripura border. There is 100% PER and EPIC coverage.[47] Preparation of electoral rolls, management and conduct of elections and all other election-related activities fall upon the hands of State Election Commission headed by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

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

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[47] ibid.

Main Issues Preceding the Elections

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

A major issue in the pre-polls was one concerning liquor. Since the advent of British missionaries in 1894 and the ultimate conversion of people to Christianity, liquor had always been regarded as a sin by majority of people. The Church with its mighty influence has always opposed the ease of the Mizoram Liquor (Total Prohibition) (MLTP) Act of 1995 by the milder Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) (MLPC) Act of 2014 during the Congress rule, resulting in the entry of liquor shops within the

state. Major NGOs operating in the area were also against the MLPC Act, but the government went on with it regarding it to be promising of positive revenue.[48] The MNF and the ZPM had promised prohibition of liquor if they were brought to power, while Congress leader Lal Thanhawla opined that liquor itself was overestimated, and that all thriving economies are ones where liquors are sold freely. The opinion of people was dispersed regarding alcohol as shown in opinion polls by the media.

The state of infrastructure was also a major concern. Despite the developments happening in the state, the roads were neither properly constructed nor maintained. Since roads are essential in the daily lives of people, as also a channel of development there had been grievances from the public regarding the highly dilapidated road networks. On October 13, the opposition MNF had called a state-wide bandh to protest against the bad roads, claiming that the Congress in its 10-years rule did not improve the road conditions in Mizoram. This view was shared by the public in general, and thus hampered the image of ruling ministry to some extent. Many civil societies had also called upon volunteers to repair roads which connect villages and the city. Numerous blockades also happened during the Congress rule by different agencies to protest against the road conditions, which proved to be of no avail.

Illegal immigration has also been a topic of discontentment among the people. There are claimed to be over 10,000 illegal Chakma immigrants in the region who migrated from Bangladesh. The Chakmas had always been a minority in the region, and

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[48] Utpal Parashar. (2018, November 19). Mizoram assembly elections 2018: Liqour ban a poll issue for all parties. *Hindustan Times,* p.8.

reside in the south-western part of the state. Besides those legally residing Chakmas, there had been reports of illegal influx judging from the enormous increase in the Chakma population in the last census. A separate Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) had been formed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India in 1972, and thus the CADC has executive power over certain departments in the area.[49] The Chakmas being immigrants from neighboring countries were never considered as insiders by the public, and thus movements and protests had been going on for scrapping of the CADC, who had demanded the status of UT.

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

The Congress was preparing to rule for three consecutive terms when they faced defection in the party where the Home Minister and one MLA defected to MNF, the

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[49] Ezrela Dalidia Fanai (2018, November 4). Mizoram polls: Mizos' demand that Chakma candidates be denied tickets gets ignored by Congress, BJP. *Firstpost,* p.4.

regional rival of Congress in the pre-polls. The MNF's membership in the BJP-led alliance was used against them by other parties, and Congress' rule over the Chakma Autonomous District Council in coalition with the BJP was thrown against them. The Congress and MNF had also fished out the ZPM's Lalduhoma's conversation with BJP leaders for striking a deal, all events showing the unpopularity of the BJPs among people. All such issues unfolded in the run up to the polls, making the election an interesting one.

Role of Mizoram People's Forum (MPF)

Elections in Mizoram often betray some signs of elections as portrayed by other states of India. Different party flags, posters portraying the names and signs of candidates and election-related graffiti are not found in abundance as compared to other states. Big election rallies and gatherings are rarely found. Free and fair elections take place in such subdued atmosphere, and the role of MPF is of chief importance for the occurrence of such. The MPF was set up on June 21, 2006 by the Mizoram Synod, the biggest church denomination in the state with the support of other major churches and civil societies as an election watchdog to strive for electoral reforms. Thus the MPF is functional only during elections.

The MPF issues guidelines for all elections, viz., State Legislative Assembly Elections, Lok Sabha Elections, Village and Local Council Elections, the AMC Elections and District Council Elections in Mizoram. Leaders of all political parties

come to terms with the rules laid out by the MPF through a Memorandum of Understanding, pledging to uphold free and fair elections in the state without undue taints. Volunteers of the MPF ensure that no rallies were held but door-to-door campaigns and that no party or individual would hold feasts or lure voters with the promise of government jobs or cash. The expenditure of parties, candidates or their agents with respect to campaign activities, flags, banners and posters in each neighbourhood was restricted to a certain limit and with specifications in size, even to those mounted on cars and two-wheelers. Use of loudspeakers was banned, and the political parties were encouraged to frame only realistic and applicable policies. The MPF in their guidelines also mentioned that parties should put up only eloquent and eligible candidates free from corrupt activities and the influence of liquor and drugs. In the course of election campaigning, any public meeting by candidates or parties was chaired by a member of MPF,[50] ensuring that the politicians did not indulge in any form of malpractice.

The guidelines laid out by the MPF were agreed upon with by leaders of all major political parties operating in Mizoram, including, INC, MNF, MPC, ZNP and BJP through a Memorandum of Understanding. The guidelines and moral code of conduct were not legally binding but the political parties and candidates were found to abide by them. On the day of poll, volunteers of the MPF set up benches in front of polling stations across the state helping the voters to identify their numbers in the voters' list, which was earlier done by political parties. The MPF took the role of civil society steps

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[50] MPF leh Political Party te Thawhhona Thuthlung. Published by MPF Gen. Hqrs. Aizawl, 2017. pp. 1-6.

ahead in improving the quality of governance and making it more accountable to the people, while supplementing the role of Election Commission in ensuring free and fair elections to a large extent.

Election Manifestos of Different Parties

Election manifestos are published by the political parties prior to the elections which formally state the programs and objectives of the respective parties if brought to power. Manifestos of parties form an important strategy of election campaigning as they form the basis of the parties' vision for the state. It consists of the promises made to sections of the society, if any. Following are the highlights of election promises or manifestos of the major contending parties in the Eighth Mizoram Legislative Assembly Elections which were published by them.

Mizo National Front (MNF)

Manifesto of the MNF which ultimately led them to power was broadly divided into six categories:

i.   Political: This consists of promises to protect the rights of indigenous people, their culture, language and society. Actions would be taken upon the terms of agreement in the Peace Accord, 1986 which were not yet implemented. Special Scheme would be set up for martyrs and their families. Mizoram Village Level Citizen Registration would be implemented. The rights of minorities would be

protected and the Border Trade would be made functional as per the Peace Accord.

ii.   Administration: Lok Ayukta would be established and transparency of government would be maintained. Free and fair public examinations would be conducted through the Employment Exchange and the Mizoram Public Service commission which would be amended and empowered accordingly. E-governance was to be initiated. The Assam Rifles would be shifted away from the city.

iii.   Economic Development: The Special Economic Development Policy (SEDP) would be adopted for self-sufficiency in consumption. It would be beneficial for farmers and marketing would be taken care of by the government. Skilled persons would be supported by the government through the Special Development Scheme. Insurance Scheme would be set up for daily labourers and farmers. Industrial development would be processed under the SEDP.

iv.   Infrastructure: The conditions of roads across the state would be improved. Economic/Agricultural Link roads would be well-maintained. New airports would be built in different parts of the state, and Lunglei would be established to occupy a more important status. The FCI godown sufficient to feed the state and Rail-fed LPG Bottling Plant and Oil Depot would be established. Steps would be taken for extraction of oil and gas.

v.   Social Security: The MLPC Act, 2014 would be terminated and liquor would be prohibited. Health Centers and Hospitals would be better equipped. Mizoram

State Health Care Scheme would be revised. The rights of women and children would be protected and they would be promoted. Proper relief and rehabilitation management would be set up.

vi. Education and Prospects of the Youth: This section consists of several revisions to be made regarding scholarships, educational institutions, hostels, incentives, centrally sponsored schemes. Development of sports and several entrepreneurship developments were promised to the youth.[51] Implementing the SEDP, banning of liquor and developing the dilapidated road conditions across the state were given top priorities by the MNF leaders.

Congress

The Congress Party declared that the New Land Use Policy (NLUP) and the New Economic Development Policy (NEDP) adopted by it would be continued and revised as required. The manifesto includes the improvement of health care schemes, proper maintenance of Ambulance Network for rural areas, lifting the status of MIMER, social security for the disabled and poor, distribution of laptops to successful candidates of HSLC and above, reformation of the Mizoram educational system, establishment of rehabilitation centres, revision of disaster management plans, protection of natural resources, generation of solar energy, establishment of Project Assessment and Monitoring Committee to look into the expenses of various departments of the government, promotion of tourism, music and fine arts and motor sports and revision of

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[51] Official Manifesto of MNF.

the implementation of the 'Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees Condition of Service Act, 1955' in Mizoram.[52] The Congress never intended to implement a new liquor policy, despite desperate cry from church and civil societies of the state to ban liquor.

Zoram People's Movement (ZPM)

The ZPM had shown distinctiveness from the past ministries and tried to lead the government in a new order, like exempting the Chief Minister from looking after any specific works department so that he could be vigilant over the works of his entire ministry. Decentralization was given importance in the manifesto for better and more effective administration. They had resolved to introduce the Work Permit System to generate taxes from outsiders working in Mizoram, and to computerize the Inner Line Permit (ILP) for better efficiency. Anti-corruption measures occupied significant status in order to eliminate any chance of corruption by any individual or agency. They decided against illegal immigrants and resolved to end the boundary issues faced by Mizoram. They pointed out that liquor would be prohibited if they assume power, and social security from the minor sections of the society was sought for. They put forth the Six Basic Needs as designed by former Chief Minister Brig. Thenphunga and to meet with them. In terms of economy, they laid emphasis on lifting the difficult conditions of farmers and workers in different sectors like animal husbandry, fishery, sericulture and floriculture. Any development taken up by the government would be sustainable in

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[52] Official Manifesto of Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee.

nature. They laid out the Industrial Policy especially for the youth to enhance their opportunities and to enable them to expand their horizons.[53] The ZPM manifesto concluded that the party politics prevailing in the region would be exterminated and a true government of the people would be established, thus bringing change to Mizoram political system.

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

The PRISM declared in its manifesto to uphold and protect the state, identity and religion of the people and to explore and expand the natural resources available to the state. Over 1.5 lakh employment would be generated and proper policies would be implemented for the present and future generations. It also promised to reform the educational system and sports policy benefitting the youth. Like the ZPM, the PRISM also exempted the Chief Minister from works and departments and would reduce the facilities and wages of the MLAs. It included administrative and financial reforms in their agenda, encouraging decentralization of power to the lowest level. Rules would be strictly followed in all possible manners, and transparency of government would be maintained. The PRISM promised to fight against corruption and the corrupted officials and give general consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation. Health care schemes for the public, welfare of labours, elderly, women and the poor were also part of the social welfare program. Improvement in the available infrastructure and providing the basic necessities of people were given importance. The Look West Policy would be adopted

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[53] Official Manifesto of ZPM.

enhancing trade with Bangladesh through the Tlabung Border Trade Center.[54] The UN Sustainable Development Goals would be adopted to achieve, and protection of environment would be a great concern if they came to power.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

The BJP in its manifesto promised to include the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. Rice would be sold at Re. 1/kilo, housing would be provided to the homeless, the roads would be free of all potholes in the next six months and that Aizawl would be traffic congestion-free within three years. Two medical colleges and three engineering colleges would be established in the state, and many nursing training institutes would be established. 50,000 jobs would be generated to the youth within the five-year term. It also promised the construction of trans-boundary highway linking Myanmar and Bangladesh borders through Aizawl, and to promote trade, tourism and industries in the region. Multi-specialty hospitals were to be established in every district under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme. Setting up of eco-parks for promotion of tourism and building of football stadiums in every district were also part of the election promise.[55] The BJP, however, was unpopular among the people as they were seen as a threat to minorities and Indian secularism.

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[54] Official Manifesto of PRISM.
[55] Official Manifesto of BJP Mizoram.

National People's Party (NPP)

Human development was the central concern of the NPP. While developments in different areas take place, none of these would matter if humans do not develop. The NPP sought to appeal to this through quality education, and by revising education service rules free from narrow party politics. A work culture would be established which should be quality-assured. The NPP also expressed to expand market economy by exporting local products like corn, bamboo, rice, with the government involved in manufacturing, processing and marketing. Food park would be established. Higher electrical generation and better infrastructure, especially roads, were also part of the manifesto. There would be a health care scheme properly maintained, with a special package for the poor. Social services for the aged and children would be delivered. There would be a youth welfare policy covering all aspects of interests and development for the Mizo youth. Tourism was to be developed where the government would assist those interested in eco-tourism. Decentralisation of power was given a place, and local development works would be in the hands of local authorities as far as possible. Better packages for ex-servicemen, development of ayush and land revenue were also part of the election promise.[56] The NPP appealed to the tribal and Christian sentiments of people of Mizoram by seeking to expand the affairs of tribals and keeping separate pilgrimage budget for Holy Land tour.

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[56] Offcial Manifesto of NPP Mizoram.

Zoramthar

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

Election Campaigns

Election campaigns are the means by which political parties and candidates present their ideas and prospects for the state or country in the period preceding the elections. In India, such campaigns often indulge violence and undue circumstances so in order to avoid such mishaps, the Election Commission of India had laid out a Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates, by which the said parties should abide. The first part is a general conduct guideline including creating no tension and hatred between communities, religion or castes, avoiding corrupt practices, avoiding criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified allegations, respecting the right of every individual for a peaceful and undisturbed home, no obstruction to processions organized by other parties and regarding usage of individual property without prior permission for erection of flags, posters, banners or canvasses. The other part is confined to conduct in meetings, processions, polling day, polling booth and general guidelines on election manifestos. The party in power must not use its

official position for purposes pertaining to election campaigning, and observers are appointed by the Election Commission so that misconduct on any part of the parties or candidates may be brought to their notice.[57] The parties and candidates in Mizoram had another conduct to abide by, laid out by the MPF as already mentioned above. The MPF's code of conduct was largely supplementary to that of the ECI's, which was exemplary towards the rest of country.

Election campaign started with all the political parties striving to capture the hearts of people. Allegations were thrown against one another as part of the process. The ZPM as expected performed rather well in Aizawl, whereas their achievement did not expand to other districts. This may be because of the failure of ZPM to establish units in the villages, who altogether form a large section of the society. Also being a newly formed group, their influence did not reach the corners of state, which clearly highlights the importance of election campaigning in the electoral process. The MNF and Congress being firmly established in the length and breadth of Mizoram were rather confident on winning. Other parties were relatively smaller, so chances of them capturing any seat were rather meager. The BJP was eager to enter the Assembly, buoyed by its success in the recently concluded elections in the Northeast region. However, the BJP is regarded in Mizoram as anti-secular and a threat to the national unity and religious minorities. Their only hopes of winning were in the Chakma and Bru-dominated areas.

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[57] Model Code of Conduct. *Election Commission of India* eci.gov.in/mcc/

The elections took place on November 28, 2018 in a peaceful environment once again. It could be considered one of the most heated and most watched elections Mizoram has ever had, with the Congress trying to retain power for the third time in a row with the slogan of New Economic Development Programme (NEDP). The MNF tried to come back to power with the Socio-Economic Development Policy (SEDP), and distanced itself from the BJP, its parent party in the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), which is very unpopular among the Mizos as BJP is regarded as a fundamentalist Hindu party.[58] The counting of votes happened on December 11, 2018, and the results brought the MNF back to power after 10 long years, by winning 26 of the 40 Assembly seats. The Congress suffered a major setback and captured only 5 seats as compared to 34 in the last elections, with its Chief Ministerial candidate Lal Thanhawla losing in both the seats he contested in. The ZPM managed to capture 8 seats, out of which 6 were in Aizawl district. The BJP made its debut in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly by winning a seat from Tuichawng constituency, a constituency dominated by Chakmas. The performances of these parties are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of seats in the Eighth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Elections

Sl. No.	PARTY	NO. OF SEATS	% OF VOTES
1.	Mizo National Front (MNF)	26	37.6

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[58] Prof. Jangkhongam Doungel. (2019). "Mizoram MNF Clinches Back." *Eastern Panorama Volume XXVI* No. 10. Pp. 24-27.

2.	Zoram People's Movement (ZPM)	8	22.9
3.	Congress	5	30.1
4.	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	1	8

(Source: CEO Mizoram Official Website)

During British rule in India, Mizoram was only a district under Assam and placed under the Excluded Areas. In 1946, the first Mizo political party was born under the name Mizo Union, who fought for a District Council and succeeded ultimately. The first elections to the Mizo District Council were January 1952, and for every five years since then till Mizoram was lifted to the status of Union Territory in 1972. Four elections were conducted during the UT period, and in 1987, the state of Mizoram was officially inaugurated followed by first state assembly elections where the MNF won. Since then, eight elections have been concluded till date, where MNF and INC formed ministry for four times each. Other parties, both regional and national, had always been functional within the state, but were never successful enough to form ministry.

The Eighth Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections resulted in the formation of an MNF government, who came back to power after 10 years of political wilderness. There were many issues that emerged preceding the polls, some of which were the issue of liquor, boundary issues, infiltration issues, state of infrastructure among others. Election campaigns were conducted under the watchful eye of the MPF, who laid down rules with which the leaders of political parties came to terms. Thus elections were held

in free and fair manner without undue taints. Different parties published their respective manifestos which contained their plans and proposals for Mizoram and the people, and common platforms where candidates shared a podium, delivered speeches and took questions from the audience, were organized by the MPF. The contending parties gave their best efforts to win the hearts of people, and the outcome was that the MNF rose to power by securing 26 seats out of 40. Also, the ZPM secured 8 seats, INC 5 seats and BJP 1 seat.

The new ministry was sworn in on December 15, 2018 with Zoramthanga as Chief Minister and Tawnluia as Deputy Chief Minister. The MNF's return to power resulted in the formation of three new districts in Mizoram, namely, Hnahthial District, Khawzawl District and Saitual District. It is significant to mention here that the granting of three full fledged districts was one of the major MNF's election promises which resulted in the ultimate victory of MNF party in the 2018 state Legislative Assembly Elections. Also, steps have been taken to improve the road conditions in Mizoram. Likewise, liquor has been prohibited once again, much to the relief of church and civil societies. Flyovers as promised by the Chief Minister to be constructed in the city for reduction of traffic jams, as far-fetched as they appear to be, are highly anticipated by the people. Since it has only been months since inception of the new ministry, it is still too early to review the works carried out by them, so the overall performance and achievements of the government in general is yet to be evaluated.

CHAPTER – 3

VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN AIZAWL DISTRICT

Behaviour of a voter may be influenced by elements like party orientation, candidate orientation, issue position, family, incumbent performance, the media and other such factors. Political parties and candidates make use of these variables for the sake of winning the ballot. Voting behaviour is defined as a set of personal electoral activities, including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at the polls and choosing for whom to vote.[59] There are various factors and variables that determined the voting behaviour of people of Aizawl district in the 2018 assembly elections. Since there is no long-term tracking of what the determining issues exactly are, this survey is conducted for the collection of data of voting behaviour and the reasons why the respondents gave for voting for a particular candidate. The political awareness of voters, political status, emotions, political socialization, the role of media among others are all considered important when it comes to key public influences. Different political activities constantly take place in days, weeks or even months preceding the elections, and these activities tend to have significant impact upon the voting decisions of people. Impact of all these factors upon the voters have to be understood so as to gain insight on the voting behaviour of people of Aizawl district in the Eighth Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Elections.

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[59] M. Bratton. (2013). *Voting and Democratic Citizenship in Africa.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. p. 17.

3.1 Character-wise Data Analysis

As part of field study, 50 samples, selected through simple random sampling, were approached by the scholar employing structured questionnaire, where 10 represent the three rural constituencies of Aizawl and 40 represent the 11 urban constituencies. 50% of them are females and the other 50% are males. The respondents are from various age groups, occupational interests and educational background. The respondents have been divided into three categories based on their age- youth, middle age and old age, where respondents in the age group of 18- 35 fall in the youth category, 36- 60 are categorized as middle age and those above 60 years are placed under the old age category. Occupation-wise, the respondents are classified into four groups, students, government job, private job and others, where students include those studying in schools, colleges, universities and research scholars, government job comprises of those serving in public sector, private job covers those engaged in business (both big and small), private ownership, farmers, labourers and daily workers and wagers. The others are the ones not engaged in any specific occupational activity and retired personnel. The respondents can also be placed under three categories based on their educational backgrounds, school, graduate and post graduate, where school comprises of those receiving education upto 12th standard, graduate are those completing graduation course in any academic stream, and post graduate comprises of university graduates and above. The samples are classified into these different categories for evaluative purpose, and the occupational status is mainly used as unit of categorization for the present study, as occupational status of a person is believed to be of most relevance to one's attitude

towards a particular candidate or party, in a world where everyone seeks to increase and expand their best interests.

The percentage of samples derived from the survey on the basis of occupation comprises of students 20%, government job 36%, private job 36% and others 8%. These respondents were approached with structured questionnaire comprising of 12 questions as mentioned earlier, and their responses are illustrated in the form of tables for better understanding, and the variables are given in percentage.

Table 3.1.1: *How important was voting to you?*

Character	Percentage of respondents	Variables			
		Very Important	Important	Not Important	Makes No Difference
Students	20	100	-	-	-
Private Job	36	94.4	5.6	-	-
Government Job	36	55.6	44.4	-	-
Others	8	50	50	-	-

(Source: Field Study)

As shown in Table 3.1.1, all the samples agreed that voting in the last elections was either very important or important to them. This is indicative of the fact that the level of political awareness of people is high, increasing the level of participation of people in terms of voting, as the implications of voting are experienced directly or

indirectly by the people. It must be noted here that all samples are vote-casting actors in the 2018 state assembly elections. The fact that all students and large majority of the private job holders consider voting to be very important illustrates that students and private job holders are largely aware of politics as they are potential beneficiaries of government schemes and policies.

Table 3.1.2: *Why did you cast your vote in the 2018 elections?*

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables					
		It is a right and responsi-bility	To elect whom I trust	Follow-ing Others	My Sacred Duty	For the Good of the Society	Other Reasons
Students	20	80	20	-	-	-	-
Private Job	36	61.1	5.6	-	11.1	22.2	
Govt. Job	36	94.4	5.6	-	-	-	-
Others	8	75	25	-	-	-	-

(Source: Field Study)

The people of Aizawl had exhibited a conduct of good citizenship by asserting that majority of them voted in the last elections with a sense of right and responsibility. This shows that the citizens are becoming more responsible, supplemented by the increase in voter turnout as compared to previous elections. While 80% of the students voted with a sense of right and responsibility, the remaining 20% voted to elect the person they trust, someone who they believed would bring the changes that the youth of

today look forward to, in terms of development, better living conditions and better job opportunities.

Citing their reasons for voting, 61.1% of the private job holders voted to exercise their rights and responsibilities, 5.6% voted to elect the potential person to represent their interest, 11.1% voted as they felt that it was their sacred duty to do so, while the remaining 22.2% voted for the good of society, mainly for the development of their respective areas and better occupational opportunities.

Among the government servants, 94.4% were obligated to vote with a feeling of right and responsibility, while 5.6% voted the person who they believed would be most worthy of bringing positive impact to their area or the state. Among the others character, 75% voted with a sense of right and responsibility while 25% voted to elect the person who could best fight against corruption existing in the state.

Table 3.1.3: *Why did you vote for whom you voted?*

Character	Percentage of Respon-dents	Variables					
		Can repre-sent my interest	Can speak on behalf of common people	Kin-ship ties	Can solve existing/ potential issues of my state/ area	He/She is well-respec-ted	Party affilia-tion
Students	20	-	40	-	50	10	-
Private Job	36	11.1	38.9	-	38.9	-	11.1

| Govt. Job | 36 | 5.6 | 55.5 | - | 33.3 | 5.6 | - |
| Others | 8 | - | 100 | - | - | - | - |

(Source: Field Study)

The responses to the third question illustrate the variables that determined the voters' choices in deciding whom to vote for. The student respondents have shown a high percentage of concern about the solution to the existing and potential issues of the state or their respective areas. Among these, the Chakma infiltration issue, boundary issue and lack of job opportunities were highly dominant factors that raised the concern of students. 40% opted to vote for a candidate who could speak on behalf of common people, while 10% students decided to vote for a candidate who is well-respected in the society.

Among the private job holders, 38.9% voted for a candidate who was deemed potential of solving issues like farmers' distress, can create more opportunities for the youth in terms of outlook and job opportunities, the Bru and Chakma infiltration issues, the liquor issue and boundary issues. Meanwhile another 38.9% decided that a candidate who could speak on behalf of the common people was most suitable. Also, 11.1% private job holders voted for a candidate who could be of personal benefit to them, while another 11.1% voted for a candidate based on the party he/ she represented.

Diverse responses are seen from the government job holders, but majority of them (55.5%) voted for a candidate who could be most representative of the common

people. 33.3% were concerned about issues like liquor, dilapidated road conditions across the state and inequality between women and men in the Mizo society, hence they voted for the candidates who stood for these issues. 5.6% government servant respondents chose a candidate who could represent their interests, while another 5.6% opted for a candidate who is well-respected in the society.

All the respondents from the others character voted for a candidate who could speak on behalf of common people. The fact that none of the respondents from this category decided based on a specific issue, despite the high percentage of votes from other categories is indicative of the verity that this set of character is less politically socialized than other characters, as they are comprised of home-makers and retired personnel.

Table 3.1.4: *How did you make your voting decision?*

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables		
		Based on party	Evaluation of Candidates	Candidate/Party's stand on specific issue
Students	20	20	70	10
Private Job	36	22.2	61.1	16.7
Govt. Job	36	-	83.3	16.7
Others	8	50	50	-

(Source: Field Study)

This question seeks to find out the attitude of voters based on the variables set out by the psychosocial study of voting behaviour, which recognizes these three as the dominating factors that influenced voters' choices. The responses have shown that candidate evaluation occupies an important status among the people while making voting decisions. 70% of the student respondents chose to vote for a candidate based on his educational background, political background and age, while 10% decided based on the party's outlook on the issue of corruption. The remaining 20% voted on party line, indicating that they were affiliated to a particular party.

61.1% of the private job holders evaluated a candidate and eventually voted for him/her based on the candidate's gender, political experience, educational background, family background and age. 16.7% voted based on specific issues concerning programmes/ schemes of party for the poor and entrepreneurs, liquor issue and party's relationship with the BJP, while 22.2% of private job holders have voted on party line.

Given the fact that government servants are expected to be politically neutral, none of them voted on party line. 83.3% evaluated and voted for a particular candidate based on political experience, age, charismatic personality, educational qualification and potential, and 16.7% voted for a candidate based on the party's stand on liquor issue and ability to reconstruct the dilapidated road networks.

50% of the others voted on the basis of party, showing their affiliation to a party while the other 50% decided based on the party's position on the liquor issue and the party's potential to bring about a change in the Mizo society.

Table 3.1.5: *Which of the following actions by a party, candidate or agent did you experience preceding the 2018 elections?*

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables				
		Door-to-door campaigns	Contacted you or family through phone call/ SMS	Offered to drive you/ others to polling station	Other services promised	None of the above
Students	20	70	-	-	-	30
Private Job	36	66.7	5.6	-	-	27.8
Govt. Job	36	44.4	5.6	-	5.6	44.4
Others	8	75	-	-	-	25

(Source: Field Study)

This question was designed to find out the level of efforts given by the parties, candidates or agents to win the elections and its impact on the outcome. As is shown by Table 3.1.5, door-to-door campaigning is still very relevant, and is a conventional practice by parties all over India so as to ensure high percentage of voting as it enhances awareness among the electorates. 70% of student respondents, 66.7% private job holders, 44.4% government servants and 75% others witnessed this act preceding the 2018 elections, and this proved to be of positive impact towards voter turnout on

election day. Also, it is an effective means of alluring the voters as it involves direct personal contact with them and listening to their problems and concerns.

While telephone networks have been well-established across the area of study, only 5.6% each from private job and government job holders experienced telephone related campaigns, and 5.6% of government servants were promised services or favours in exchange for their votes. The fact that only 5.6% were promised such services shows that elections in Mizoram are relatively fair as compared to other parts of the country where malpractices avail on a large scale.

Table 3.1.6: Which of the following influenced your decision the most?

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables				
		Election awareness campaign	Party meetings / rallies/ canvasses	Election manifestos of parties	Joint platform organized by MPF	The media (mass/social, internet etc.)
Students	20	10	-	20	30	40
Private Job	36	33.3	5.6	38.9	11.1	11.1
Govt. Job	36	5.6	-	44.4	22.2	27.8
Others	8	25	-	-	25	50

(Source: Field Study)

Table 3.1.6 is an indicative question that helped suggest the political process that influenced the voters in making their choices. The different sets of characters were

influenced in diverse manner. For students, it was none of the actual political factors but the media in the form of newspapers, television, mobile phones, computer and internet facilities that had major influence (40%), implying that majority of them made their choices based on their own decisions. The joint platform organized by the MPF prior to the elections influenced 30% of them, while 20% made their decisions after analysis of election manifestos of different parties. The efforts taken by NGOs such as the MPF in creating election awareness had impact on only 10% of the student respondents.

Evaluation of different manifestos of parties emerged as the key factor that determined the choices of private workers (38.9%), followed by election awareness campaigns on the initiative of NGOs at 33.3%. Joint platform organized by the MPF stood as a decisive factor for 11.1% of private job holders, while another 11.1% made their choices personally based on information gathered through different forms of media. Also, a marginal section of private workers (5.6%) decided through the election campaigns of a particular party/candidate/agent.

Maximum number of government servants (44.4%) made their voting decisions after analysis of manifestos of different parties, and voted for the party which they believed would serve the best interest of all. 22.2% of them decided after observing the performance of different candidates in joint platform organized by the MPF, while 5.6% were mainly influenced by the election awareness campaign by MPF. 27.8% government servant respondents actually made decisions based on information collected through newspapers, television and mobile phones.

Among the homemakers and retired personnel, 50% decided without any influence from political processes but the media, while election awareness campaign by the MPF had impact on 25% of them and performance of candidates on joint platform organized by the MPF emerged as a key deciding political process for another 25%.

Table 3.1.7: When did you make up your mind regarding whom to vote for?

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables		
		Before election campaigns started	**After election campaigns**	**Election day**
Students	20	20	70	10
Private Job	36	27.7	66.7	5.6
Govt. Job	36	5.6	88.8	5.6
Others	8	25	75	-

(Source: Field Study)

The responses to this question is supplementary to that of the question discussed in Table 3.1.4 above, as the timing when a voter decides whom to vote for suggests the position of that voter politically. A voter who decided even before election campaigns started is believed to be affiliated to that particular party, while a voter who decided after election campaigns was influenced by various political processes and specific issues. The voters who decided on election day were the ones to whom services/ promises were offered by parties, candidates or agents and the ones who were just following others.

Majority of all the different sets of characters decided after election campaigns started. For students, it is 70%, for private job holders- 66.7%, for government servants- 88.8% and 75% for others. 20% of the student respondents, 27.7% private workers, 5.6% government servants and 25% others decided on whom to vote prior to election campaigning process. The voters who decided on election day is seen to be the least in number, with students at 10%, private job and government job holders at 5.6% each and none of the others, suggesting a high level of moral responsibility among the electorates in general.

Table 3.1.8: *Did any specific issue (Eg: Chakma issue, liquor etc.) help shape your decision in the process of voting?*

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables		
		Yes (Specify)	No	Don't know
Students	20	70	30	-
Private Job	36	33.3	66.7	-
Govt. Job	36	50	44.4	5.6
Others	8	50	50	-

(Source: Field Study)

The question in Table 3.1.8 was designed to find out if specific issues raised before the elections had any implications on the outcome of elections and the impact of those issues, if any, on voting behaviour of people. Issue-based voting is common in the Indian context, and the responses of electorates have shown that it has taken shape in the

area of study. The respondents had discussed the issues of impact to them, with some giving more than one. These issues had maximum impact among the students of all the characters under study (70%), and the major issue of dominance (60%) was the Chakma issue discussed before in Chapter 2. 10% each were also concerned about the various parties' stand on liquor policy and the boundary issues faced by the state.

Among the private workers, specific issues had the least impact of all characters, with 66.7% stating that these issues did not help in shaping their voting decisions. Among the other 33.3%, 50% of the respondents' voting decisions were influenced by the Chakma issue, 33.3% by boundary issues and 5.6% each by the dilapidated road networks and the welfare of farmers and daily wagers.

Half of the government servant respondents (50%) claimed to have made their decisions with some impact from these specific issues arising prior to the elections. Among these 50%, 27.8% were concerned with the Chakma issue, 16.6% with liquor issue, 11.1% with boundary issue and 5.6% with the deteriorating road conditions across the state. Also, 5.6% of the government servant respondents had no opinion on the subject. The specific issues helped shape the decisions of 50% of the other respondents, where all were unanimously concerned about the liquor issue and their favour of the liquor ban policy, while these issues had no impact on 50% of them.

Table 3.1.9: *Was gender of a candidate an issue to you while voting?*

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables		
		Yes	To some extent	No
Students	20	30	-	70
Private Job	36	5.6	55.6	38.8
Govt. Job	36	27.8	44.4	27.8
Others	8	25	50	25

(Source: Field Study)

Since the debate about women in politics emerged in the pre-polls, this question was deliberated to find out the opinion of people regarding their stand on whether they believe women should be involved in politics. By asking if gender of a candidate was an issue to them while voting, the scholar explained that the question intended to ask if they agreed to having female representatives. The responses have shown that majority of people did have concerns regarding having women as their representatives, at least to some extent, and that they preferred men over women when it comes to representation in the assembly. This is attributed to the patriarchal nature of Mizo society, where families and societies are headed by men.

Among the students, as opposed to all the other sets of characters, majority of them which is 70% had no issue when it comes to female representatives, while 30% definitely chose men over women to represent their respective constituencies.

The gender of a candidate was a definite issue to 5.6% of the government servants and an issue to some extent to 55.6%, while it was of no relevance to the remaining 38.8%. Among the private workers, 27.8% found it a definite issue and 44.4% considered it to some extent, while 27.8% did not have any problem regarding the gender of a candidate. Majority of the others (50%) were also reluctant to some extent to have female representatives and 25% did not want female representatives, while 25% were hassle-free when it comes to gender of a candidate.

Table 3.1.10: *Did the social media have any impact upon your voting decisions?*

Character	Percentage of Respondents	Variables		
		Yes	To some extent	No
Students	20	70	20	10
Private Job	36	11.1	50	38.9
Govt. Job	36	50	22.2	27.8
Others	8	50	25	25

(Source: Field Study)

The social media is now used by parties as a tool for dissemination of political information, as it is a convenient means which delivers far-reaching impact, as majority of people, especially in urban areas, have direct access to them and have digital equipments in their personal possessions. The information carried by the social media

tends to have impact upon the decisions of voters, and the responses to this question are expected to prove or disprove this assumption.

The social media did have a huge impact upon the students with 70% agreeing that the social media had influence upon them and to some extent for 20%. However, the information carried by the social media did not affect the voting decision of 10% of students. 11.5% and 50% of the private workers agreed that the social media did have impact upon their voting choices and to some extent respectively, while it was of no influence to 38.9%.

Among the government workers, 50% and 22.2% revealed that the social media did affect their voting decisions and to extent respectively, but it was of no significance to 27.8%. Also, the impact of social media on voting decisions was a reality for 50% others and to some extent for 25%, and it was of no weight to the remaining 25%.

Table 3.1.11: *What type of media would you consider your main source of political information?*

Character	Percentage of Respon- dents	Variables				
		Mass Media	Social Media	The Internet	Inter- Personal Media (through others)	Election- Specific Media (campaign- ers, manifestos etc.)
Students	20	10	80	-	-	10
Private Job	36	38.9	50	-	5.6	5.6

| Govt. Job | 36 | 61.1 | 38.9 | - | - | - |
| Others | 8 | 25 | 75 | - | - | - |

(Source: Field Study)

The media in different forms has always been the main source of political information for the people, be it mass media (television, newspapers, radio), social media (twitter, instagram, whatsapp, facebook among others), the internet, inter-personal media (through spouse, friends, families and relatives) or election-specific media (through campaigners, manifestos and election awareness campaigns). It is imperative to understand the type of media which constitutes the main source of political information, as that particular media is regarded to be of influence towards the voting behaviour of people, who more or less make their choices based on the information received through different channels. Analysis of the responses has shown that the mass media and the social media are the main sources of political information to different characters of respondents. Among the students, 10% asserted that television as a form of mass media was their main source of political information, while a large majority, 80% received political information through different forms of social media, mainly facebook (30%) and whatsapp (50%). Also, election-specific media through campaigners was the main source of political information for 10% student respondents.

Among the private job holders, the social media emerged as the main source of political information at 50%, with facebook at 38.9% and whatsapp at 11.1%. This was followed by the mass media (38.9%), where newspapers were the main source for 22.2%

and television for 16.7%. Also, 5.6% each received their political information through their families and election awareness campaigns.

The mass media has shown to be the main source of political information for majority of the government servant respondents at 61.1%, with newspapers at 38.9% and television at 22.2%. The only other source of political information for this category was the social media used by the remaining 38.9%, where 22.2% regarded facebook as their main source of political information and 16.7%, whatsapp.

For the others, the social media was the largest source of political information at 75%, with whatsapp in particular at 50% an facebook, 25%. The remaining 25% regarded the news imparted through television to be the leading source of all their political information received.

The respondents were asked to rate a given set of factors the extent to which they had impact upon their voting behaviour. They were asked to choose five of the given factors in order of influence they had upon them. The mean score of all the factors are taken, and percentages further evaluated. These set of factors were confined to the qualities possessed by a candidate, those qualities which voters normally look for in a candidate, ranging from political experience, well-respected person, young and energetic and good educational background to relationship with candidate, promises/gifts offered, accessibility of the candidate, accountability of candidate, wealthy and popular and good leadership. The percentage mean score of all the factors are given in Figure 3.1.1 below.
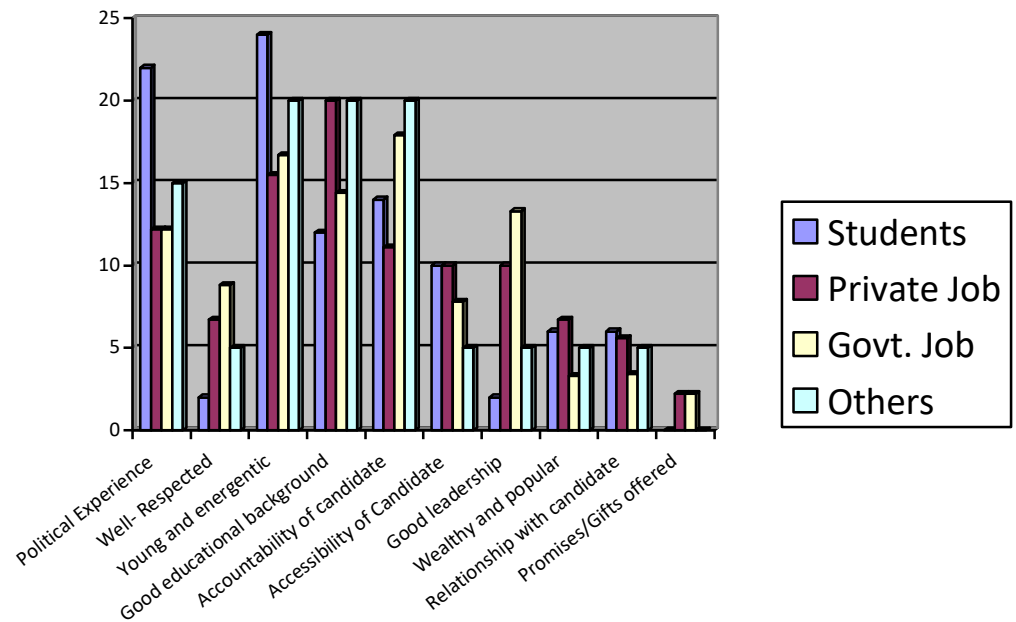
Figure 3.1.1 Percentage mean score of qualities possessed by a candidate

Analysis of the responses to this question, as shown in Table 3.1.1, indicates that for the students, young and energetic candidate was their priority when it comes to the qualities of a candidate (24%). Also, the political experience or background of a candidate was considered before voting to a large extent (22%). The other qualities of a candidate that the students preferred were accountability of a candidate (14%), good educational background (12%) and accessibility of a candidate (10%). Meanwhile, promises/gifts offered by a candidate or party had no influence on the voting decisions of students.

The private job holders mostly opted for a candidate with good educational background at 20%, followed by those who were young and energetic at 15.5%. The political experience of a candidate was also considered (12.2%), along with qualities of a candidate like accountability (11.1%), accessibility (10%) and good leadership (10%). This set of character was least affected by the promises/gifts offered by a candidate or party at just 2.2% out of all the given factors.

Among the government servants, quality of a candidate with the largest influence was accessibility (17.9%). The next choice was young and energetic candidate (16.7%), followed by good educational background (14.4%), good leadership (13.3%) and political experience of a candidate (12.2%). Promises/gifts from candidate or party was of least influence at 2.2%. The others were equally influenced by qualities possessed by a candidate like young and energetic, good educational background and accountability at 20% each. Also, political experience of a candidate was considered by them (15%), while promises/gifts from party or candidate had no impact upon their voting behaviour.

3.2 Cross-Sectional Analysis of Urban and Rural Voting Behaviour

Incidentally, Aizawl district comprises of both urban and rural areas, where urban comprises of 11 constituencies, viz., Aizawl North I, Aizawl North II, Aizawl North III, Aizawl South I, Aizawl South II, Aizawl South III, Aizawl East I, Aizawl East II, Aizawl West I, Aizawl West II and Aizawl West III and rural, 3 constituencies namely Tuivawl, Chalfilh and Tawi. Thus the samples were taken in the proportion 4:1

respectively, and these samples are considered as accountable and rational actors who have clear knowledge about the reasons behind their choices. Since the lifestyle and occupational interests of these are comparatively different from one another, this is expected to reflect upon the voting behaviour of people. The urban respondents amounted to 40 while the rural respondents were 10 in number. The respondents from each area were comprised of different age groups, gender, occupation and educational qualification for representative purpose. Occupation-wise classification of respondents has shown that among the urban respondents, 20% were students, 37.5% were private job holders, 35% were government servants and 7.5% fell in the others category. Among the rural respondents, 20% were students, 30% were private job holders, 40% were government servants and 10% were characterized as others.

For analysis, the responses to each question are presented below in percentage in the form of tables.

Table 3.2.1: *How important was voting to you?*

Area	Variables			
	Very Important	**Important**	**Not Important**	**Makes No Difference**
Urban	80	20	-	-
Rural	80	20	-	-

(Source: Field Study)

The responses to the question above has shown that the people of both urban and rural Aizawl were equally aware in political sense, where 80% each alleged that voting was very important to them and for 20% each, it was important. The people of both the areas actively participated in the last elections by exercising franchise, resulting in 79.03% voter turnout.

Table 3.2.2: *Why did you cast your vote in the 2018 elections?*

Area	Variables				
	It is a right and responsibility	To elect whom I trust	Following others	My sacred duty	For the good of the society
Urban	77.5	10	-	5	7.5
Rural	80	10	-	-	10

(Source: Field Study)

Both the urban and rural areas are more or less equally responsible in their reasons for voting. 77.5% urban and 80% rural respondents voted because they felt that voting is their right and responsibility, displaying a sense of good citizenship. 10% each in both the areas under study voted to elect whom they trust, someone who they believed would be worthy of bringing development, better living conditions, job opportunities, positive impact to their area in general and fight against corruption. 5% urban respondents believed that voting was their sacred duty, while 7.5% and 10 of urban and rural respondents casted their votes with a sense of contribution towards electing

representatives who could be useful and constructive towards the society. It is interesting to note here that none of the respondents voted as an act of following others, which signifies that the voters were accountable actors having clear knowledge behind the reasons for their voting.

Table 3.2.3: *Why did you vote for whom you voted?*

Area	Variables					
	Can represent my interest	**Can speak on behalf of common people**	**Kinship ties**	**Can solve existing/potential issues of my area/state**	**He/ She is well-respected**	**Party affiliation**
Urban	10	45	-	40	2.5	2.5
Rural	-	70	-	10	10	10

(Source: Field Study)

For the urban respondents, their reason for voting for whomever they voted was quite diversed, where 45% opted for someone who could speak on behalf of common people and 40% for a candidate who they believed could solve the existing issues of state like infiltration issues, boundary issues, liquor issue, gender inequality and lack of job opportunities for the youth. 10% voted for someone who could represent their interests, while a marginal section (2.5% each) voted for a well-respected candidate and a candidate of their own party.

Majority of rural respondents (70%) voted for a candidate who could speak on behalf of the common, while 10% each voted for a candidate who could solve the infiltration issues and road conditions in their area, a respectable member of the society and a candidate of their own party.

Table 3.2.4: *How did you make your voting decision?*

Area	Variables		
	Based on Party	**Evaluation of Candidates**	**Candidate/Party's stand on specific issue**
Urban	15	70	15
Rural	20	70	10

(Source: Field Study)

Both the urban and rural areas followed a rather similar trend while making their voting decisions as can be seen from the responses in the table above. 70% each from both the areas made their decisions after evaluation of different candidates in different aspects. 20% rural and 15% urban respondents casted their votes on party line, while 15% urban and 10% rural respondents made their decisions based on the candidate or party's position on a specific issue.

Table 3.2.5: *Which of the following actions by a party, candidate or agent did you experience preceding the 2018 elections??*

Area	Variables				
	Door-to-door campaigns	**Contacted you or family through phone call or SMS**	**Offered to drive you or others to polling station**	**Other services promised**	**None of the above**
Urban	67.5	5	-	2.5	25
Rural	40	-	-	-	60

(Source: Field Study)

      The door-to-door campaigns were experienced by 67.5% of the urban respondents, 5% were contacted by candidate through phone call/SMS, and other services were promised by candidate, party or agent to 2.5%. None of these were experienced by 25% of urban respondents. On the other hand, maximum number of rural respondents (60%) did not experience door-to-door campaigns, phone contact from candidate, agent or party, drive to polling station nor any services promised by a candidate, agent or party. However, a significant amount (40%) did experience door-to-door campaigns by candidate or party. This shows that candidates, agents and parties were in fact more active in the urban areas than they were in rural areas, which could be attributed to the disparity in number of electorates, where the urban electorates amount to 82.6% and rural, 17.4% only.

Table 3.2.6: *Which of the following influenced your decision the most?*

Area	Variables				
	Election awareness campaigns	**Political party meetings/ rallies/ canvasses**	**Election manifestos of parties**	**Joint platform organized by MPF**	**The media (social/mass, the internet etc.)**
Urban	22.5	2.5	37.5	12.5	25
Rural	-	-	20	60	20

(Source: Field Study)

The political activities that influenced the urban voters were diverse in nature. 37.5% were mostly influenced by the manifesto of a particular party, 22.5% by election awareness campaigns, 12.5% by the joint platform organized by the MPF and 2.5% by political party meetings. 25% of the urban respondents were hardly influenced by any of these activities but instead by the media (social/mass, the internet etc.). Meanwhile, 60% of the rural respondents were influenced by the joint platform organized by the MPF the most, while 20% laid emphasis on the election manifestos of different parties. None of the rural respondents were influenced by election awareness campaigns nor political party meetings, rallies and canvasses, while 20% had been under the influence of media in different forms.

Table 3.2.7: *When did you make up your mind regarding whom to vote for?*

Area	Variables		
	Before election campaigns started	**After election campaigns**	**On election day**
Urban	15	75	10
Rural	20	80	-

(Source: Field Study)

Both the urban and rural areas were highly influenced by election campaigns as is evident from Table 3.2.7, with 75% and 80% respectively making their decisions after election campaigns started, hinting that majority of voters made their choices on the basis of candidate or manifesto evaluation. 15% urban respondents and 20% rural respondents made up their minds regarding whom to vote for even before election campaigns, which shows sign of party affiliation or personal ties with the candidate. No rural respondent waited till election day to make decision while 10% urban respondents made up their minds only on election day, indicating a sign of vulnerability to promises/gifts from candidate/party or influence of others.

Table 3.2.8: *Did any specific issue (Eg. Chakma issue, liquor issue etc.) help shape your decision in the process of voting?*

Area	Variables		
	Yes (Specify)	**No**	**Don't know**

Urban	30	70	-
Rural	70	30	-

(Source: Field Study)

The issue-based voting turned out to be a common phenomenon in the rural area while it was the opposite in urban area. 70% rural respondents alleged that specific issues like infiltration issues, liquor issue, farmers' well-being and boundary issues helped shape their voting decisions, while these issues did not have any impact on the decisions of 30%. It was the reverse in case of urban Aizawl. 30% of the urban respondents' voting choices were impacted by the dilapidated road conditions, boundary issues, infiltration issues and liquor issue, whereas 70% were not under the influence of issue-based voting.

Table 3.2.9: *Was gender of a candidate an issue to you while voting?*

Area	Variables		
	Yes	**To some extent**	**No**
Urban	25	35	40
Rural	-	60	40

(Source: Field Study)

The responses to this question affirm that gender of a candidate was indeed an issue to the voters when it comes to their representatives in the state assembly. It must be

noted that by asking if gender of a candidate was an issue to them, the scholar emphasized on the issue of having female respondents. To 25% urban respondents, females were not acceptable as leaders while 35% were concerned to some extent. Also, 60% rural respondents were not confident about having female representatives. Meanwhile, 40% from both the areas had no issue in having female representatives and were least bothered.

Table 3.2.10: *Did the social media have any impact upon your voting decisions?*

Area	Variables		
	Yes	To some extent	No
Urban	42.5	30	27.5
Rural	40	40	20

(Source: Field Study)

The survey has shown that the social media did play significant role in determining the voting behaviour in the 2018 elections. The extent of this impact was somewhat similar in the urban and rural Aizawl but with slight variations. The social media had definite impact upon the decisions of 42.5% urban and 40% rural respondents. It was of influence to some extent upon 30% urban and 40% rural respondents. However, the social media played no role in determining the voting behaviour of 27.5% urban and 20% rural respondents. It can be comprehended that the

impact of social media is slightly larger in rural Aizawl than that of urban in comparison.

Table 3.2.11: *What type of media would you consider your main source of political information?*

Area	Variables				
	Mass Media	**Social Media**	**The internet**	**Inter-personal media (through others)**	**Election-specific media (campaigners, manifestos, etc.)**
Urban	42.5	52.5	-	-	5
Rural	30	60	-	10	-

(Source: Field Study)

The social media emerged as the main source of political information for the urban and rural voters, followed by the mass media. For 52.5% urban respondents, the social media was their main source of political information. Among the different platforms of social media, facebook was the most popular platform for political information with 30% alleging to have received most of their information regarding politics using facebook, and 22.5% using whatsapp. 42% urban respondents utilized the mass media, newspapers (22.5%) and television (20%) in particular, as a means of political information. Also, 5% have claimed that their main source of political

information was through election awareness campaigns, which shows that their level of political awareness is quite low in general.

In rural Aizawl, it was the social media as well which served as the main source of political information for majority (60%) of the respondents, with facebook and whatsapp at 30% each. This was followed by the mass media (30%) in the form of newspapers (20%) and television (10%). 10% rural respondents were the politically unaware group who received political information mainly through their family members.

When asked to rate five qualities possessed by a candidate from a given set of factors the extent to which they had impact upon their voting behaviour, the results show relatively similar trend between the two areas, while there are slight deviations as well. The qualities which appealed most to the urban respondents were youth and energetic (21%), good educational background (18%), accountability (14%), political experience (12%) and accessibility of a candidate (10.5%), while to rural respondents, qualities like young and energetic (18%), political experience (16%), good educational background (14%), accountability (14%) and good leadership (12%) were of high importance. Promises/ gifts offered by candidate or party were of least significance in both the urban and rural areas at 1% and 2% relevance respectively. The percentage mean score of the different qualities of candidates the extent to which they had impact upon voting behaviour in the two areas is as shown in Figure 3.2.1.
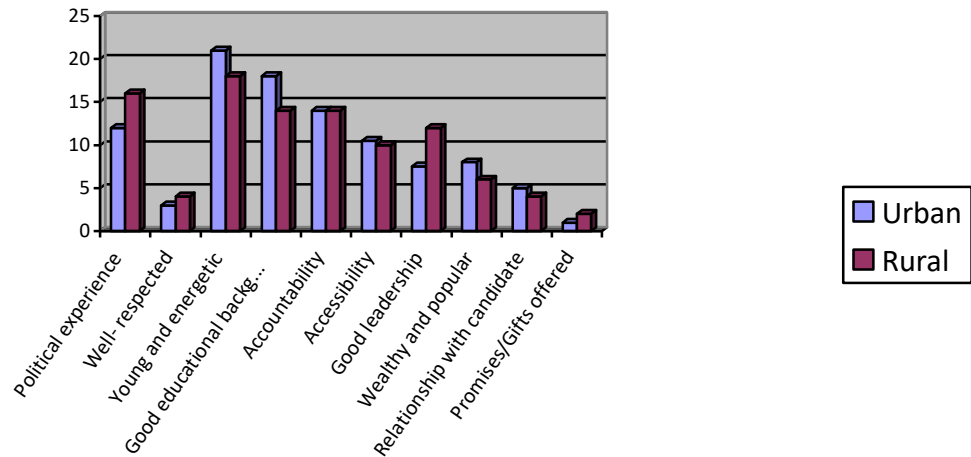
Figure 3.2.1: Percentage mean score of qualities possessed by a candidate

Comparison of voting behaviour in urban and rural areas of Aizawl has revealed that there is not much difference in the voting pattern of two areas. While it was believed that the difference in lifestyle, access to basic necessities and luxuries and occupational interests of two areas would have impact upon the voting decisions of people, the responses as discussed above has shown that the two areas follow a similar trend when it comes to their voting behaviour, even though there are certain variations here and there.

The most significant difference in the voting behaviour of urban and rural voters was regarding the impact of specific issues. Analysis of responses of the respondents reveals that issue-based voting was very common in rural Aizawl, while it was relatively scarce in urban Aizawl. The rural areas were more deeply influenced by the issues that emerged prior to the elections, which in turn reflected in their voting behaviour. Also, the joint-platform organized by the MPF where the various candidates

of their respective constituencies stood on one podium, delivered speeches and took questions from the audience within a time-frame proved to be an important factor that determined the voting behaviour of rural areas, while it was not much of an influence to the urban voters in comparison. Election awareness campaigns by MPF among others had considerate amount of impact on the urban voters instead, while it was of no influence to the rural voters.

Also, good leadership by candidate was an important factor that determined the rural voters' choices, while accessibility of a candidate was one factor to ponder upon by the urban respondents. The present study also shows that political activities were more widespread in urban areas than in rural areas, which is not a surprise considering the population of the two. Rural Aizawl amounts to only 21.37% of the entire Aizawl population, so parties and candidates were more active in the urban areas as a result, as urban voting behaviour would have larger implications on the electoral outcome in comparison. However, the two areas show similar characteristics in terms of political awareness, mode of political socialization, impact of the social media, reasons for casting votes, general perception to the candidates and many other fields as discussed above.

3.3. Overall Analysis of Voting Behaviour

Character-wise and urban-rural analysis of voting behaviour of Aizawl District have shown the variations in decision making process of different characters and areas of Aizawl. The overall voting behaviour of respondents has to be anlysed as well in

order to find out the position of population at large, considering the samples to be representative of the entire electorates. The overall analysis is expected to show how, when and why the people decided to vote for whom they voted, which will help in understanding the real reason why the party in power surpassed the others in convincing the people to vote for them. Analyses of different questions are presented in tables for the same purpose and better understanding, and the variables are given in percentage.

Table 3.3.1: *How important was voting to you?*

Number of Respondents	Variables			
	Very Important	**Important**	**Not Important**	**Makes No Difference**
50	80	20	-	-

(Source: Field Study)

The act of voting proved to be important to all the respondents, with 80% considering it to be very important, which shows the active political participation of people of Aizawl district in terms of voting.

Table 3.3.2: *Why did you cast your vote in the 2018 elections?*

Number of Respondents	Variables				
	It is a right and responsibility	**To elect whom I trust**	**Following others**	**My sacred duty**	**For the good of the society**

50	78	10	-	2	10

(Source: Field Study)

The people of Aizawl district acted responsibly in their reasons for voting. 78% voted as they felt it was their right and responsibility, while 10% each voted to elect the person they trusted and for the good of society. Also, 2% felt that voting was their sacred duty, and it is interesting to note that none of the respondents voted simply because they followed others, meaning that all the respondents had voted out of their free will.

Table 3.3.3: *Why did you vote for whom you voted?*

No. of Respondents	Variables					
	Can represent my interest	Can speak on behalf of common people	Kinship ties	Can solve existing/potential issues of my area/state	He/ She is well-respected	Party affiliation
50	8	50	-	34	4	4

(Source: Field Study)

Half of the respondents elected the candidate whom they believed could speak on behalf of or best represent the common people. 34% voted for the candidate who they believed was capable of solving the existing issues of state including infiltration,

boundary, gender inequality, lack of job opportunities for the youth and dilapidated road conditions across the state. Meanwhile, 8% voted for a candidate who could represent their personal interests, while 4% each voted for a well-respected member of the society and a member of their own party, but no one voted in the line of kinship interests.

Table 3.3.4: *How did you make your voting decision?*

No. of Respondents	Variables		
	Based on Party	**Evaluation of Candidates**	**Candidate/Party's stand on specific issue**
50	16	70	14

(Source: Field Study)

Based on the responses to this question, it may be concluded that majority of voters of Aizawl, as much as 70%, voted after deliberation of the candidates' profiles. This section of the society made its decisions after considering the character, reputation, capability or background of the candidates. 16% in the meantime voted in party line, while 14% made their decisions based on a candidate or party's position on specific issues.

Table 3.3.5: *Which of the following actions by a party, candidate or agent did you experience preceding the 2018 elections?*

No. of	Variables				
	Door-to-	**Contacted**	**Offered to**	**Other**	**None of**

Respondents	door campaigns	you or family through phone call or SMS	drive you or others to polling station	services promised	the above
50	62	4	-	2	32

(Source: Field Study)

From the above table, it is evident that the door-to-door campaigning played an important role as a part in the process of election campaigning, with as much as 62% having experienced it. 4% were contacted by party, candidate or agent through phone calls, and 2% were promised certain services. A rather large section of 32% did not experience any of these activities by party, candidate or agent during the course of election campaigning.

Table 3.3.6: *Which of the following influenced your decision the most?*

No. of Respondents	Variables				
	Election awareness campaigns	Political party meetings/ rallies/ canvasses	Election manifestos of parties	Joint platform organized by MPF	The media (social/mass, the internet etc.)
50	18	2	34	22	24

(Source: Field Study)

The election manifestos of different parties had a large role to play in shaping the voting behaviour of Aizawl district. 34% were mostly influenced by the manifestos of different parties out of all the political activities, which imply that manifestos of different parties shaped the decisions of people to a great extent. The joint platform organized by the MPF had influence upon 22% of the respondents, and the election awareness campaigns by MPF had impact upon 18% voters. A small section of just 2% was influenced by political party meetings, rallies and canvasses. Meanwhile, 24% were influenced by none of these political activities but rather by the information received and channeled by the media, be it social, mass or the internet.

Table 3.3.7: *When did you make up your mind regarding whom to vote for?*

No. of Respondents	Variables		
	Before election campaigns started	**After election campaigns**	**On election day**
50	16	76	8

(Source: Field Study)

As indicated by the table above, 76% had made up their minds regarding whom to vote for after election campaigns started, while 16% had decided even before the initiation of election campaigns. Only 8% made up their minds regarding whom to vote for on the day of elections.

Table 3.3.8: *Did any specific issue (Eg. Chakma issue, liquor issue etc.) help shape your decision in the process of voting?*

No. of Respondents	Variables		
	Yes (Specify)	No	Don't know
50	38	62	-

(Source: Field Study)

As per Table 3.3.8, the issue-based voting was not very significant phenomenon in Aizawl district in the 2018 elections, with only 38% being influenced by issues like infiltration, boundary, liquor, farmers' well-being and road conditions in the process of decision making. The remaining 62% asserted that such issues did not help them or influence them while they made their decisions regarding whom to vote for.

Table 3.3.9: *Was gender of a candidate an issue to you while voting?*

No. of Respondents	Variables		
	Yes	To some extent	No
50	20	40	40

(Source: Field Study)

The gender of a candidate proved to be a variable that had impact upon the decisions of voters of Aizawl. 20% admitted that they preferred male over female candidates when it comes to representation in the state assembly, and for 40% it was a

preference to some extent. This shows that 60% preferred males over females as their leaders, at least to some extent, while it was no issue to 40% of the respondents of Aizawl district.

Table 3.3.10: *Did the social media have any impact upon your voting decisions?*

No. of Respondents	Variables		
	Yes	To some extent	No
50	42	32	26

(Source: Field Study)

The social media had definite impact or impact to some extent to 42% and 32% respondents respectively, which means that 74% were under the influence of social media in one way or the other while in the process of decision-making, while 26% denied any impact by the social media upon their voting decisions.

Table 3.3.11: *What type of media would you consider your main source of political information?*

No. of Respondents	Variables				
	Mass Media	Social Media	The internet	Inter-personal media (through others)	Election-specific media (campaigners, manifestos, etc.)

50	40	54	-	2	4

(Source: Field Study)

The social media was a major source of political information to 54% of the respondents, implying that it shaped their voting behaviour to a certain extent, with facebook as the main platform of political information for 30% and whatsapp, 24%. The mass media still remains the major source of political information for 40%, where 22% utilized newspapers and 18% made use of television as a channel of political information. 4% were unaware of politics besides those imparted by election awareness campaigners, while 2% received all their political information through their family members only.

Upon rating 5 most influential of the given qualities of a candidate desirable to the respondents including political experience, well-respected, young and energetic, good educational background, accountability, accessibility, good leadership, wealthy and popular, relationship with candidate and promises or gifts offered, it has been developed that young and energetic candidate was most appealing to the respondents. The respondents each rated five of the given qualities in order of preference, and the mean score of each factor is taken, from which percentage is further evaluated. Thus the leading qualities of a candidate desired by the voters of Aizawl were young and energetic (19.5%), good educational background (16%), political experience (15%), accountability (13%) and accessibility (10.25%). In the meantime, promises/gifts offered by candidate was of least influence towards voting behaviour of Aizawl with just 1.5%

mean score. The percentage mean score of all the factors are illustrated in Figure 3.3.1 below for better understanding.
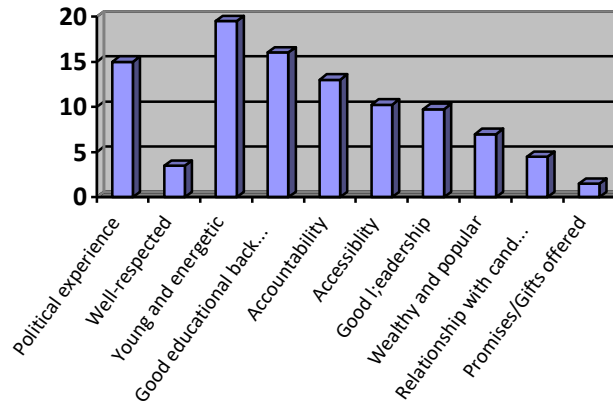

Figure 3.3.1: Percentage Mean Score of qualities possessed by a candidate

Thus, overall analysis of voting behaviour has shown that all the respondents considered voting to be either very important or important, and voted with a sense of right and responsibility, indicating a high level of political awareness and moral responsibility among the people. Majority voted for a candidate who could speak on behalf of common people, which suggests the elected representatives to be efficient and true representatives of their respective constituencies. The door-to-door campaign by political parties was still very relevant as majority of the respondents had experienced. Election manifestos of different parties had impact upon majority of the people, which shows the importance and influence of parties' policies and programs towards electoral outcome, and majority of people had in fact made their decisions after election campaigns started, highlighting the relevance of election manifestos as influencing factor.

Even though many issues emerged before the elections, these had no significant impact upon the electoral outcome as majority of people were not influenced by them in their decision-making process. Gender of a candidate was an issue to majority, resulting in all-male representatives in the state assembly. The social media emerged as the main source of political information to majority, and had definite influence on voting behaviour of people. Candidate evaluation occupied an important status in decision-making process of people, and the leading qualities of a candidate desired by the voters of Aizawl were young and energetic, good educational background and political experience.

To sum up, voting behaviour of the different set of characters showed interesting variations from one another. All the characters considered the act of voting to be either very important or important, resulting in high voter turnout rate in Aizawl district. The fact that majority of all the characters voted with a sense of right and responsibility is indicative of high political awareness and moral responsibility among the people of Aizawl. The student respondents have shown a high percentage of concern about the solution to the existing and potential issues of the state or their respective areas while casting their votes, while all the other characters opted for candidates who could speak on behalf of common people. The door-to-door campaign by political parties was experienced by majority of all the characters. Election manifestos of different parties influenced the decisions of majority of private and government job holders, while the campaigning processes had no impact on majority of students and others. Majority of all characters made their voting decisions after election campaigns started, which indicated

that they made their decisions based on their opinions of different parties and candidates. The different issues that emerged prior to the polls had impact upon the voting decisions of all characters with the exception of private job holders, and gender of a candidate was an issue to all except student respondents. The social media had influenced the decisions of all the characters, and served as the main source of political information to all except government servants, to whom mass media served the purpose.

Candidate evaluation formed an important aspect of determining the decisions of all characters. For the students, young and energetic candidate was their priority when it comes to the qualities of a candidate (24%). Also, the political experience or background of a candidate was considered before voting to a large extent (22%). The other qualities of a candidate that the students preferred were accountability of a candidate (14%), good educational background (12%) and accessibility of a candidate (10%). Meanwhile, promises/gifts offered by a candidate or party had no influence upon the voting decisions of students.

The private job holders mostly opted for a candidate with good educational background at 20%, followed by those who were young and energetic at 15.5%. The political experience of a candidate was also considered (12.2%), along with qualities of a candidate like accountability (11.1%), accessibility (10%) and good leadership (10%). This set of character was least affected by the promises/gifts offered by a candidate or party at just 2.2% out of all the given factors.

Among the government servants, the quality of a candidate with the largest influence was accessibility (17.9%). The next choice was young and energetic candidate (16.7%), followed by good educational background (14.4%), good leadership (13.3%) and political experience of a candidate (12.2%). Promises/gifts from candidate or party was of least influence at 2.2%. The others were equally influenced by qualities possessed by a candidate like young and energetic, good educational background and accountability at 20% each. Also, political experience of a candidate was considered by them (15%), while promises/gifts from party or candidate had no impact upon their voting behaviour.

Comparison of voting behaviour in urban and rural areas of Aizawl has revealed that there is not much difference in the voting pattern of two areas. While it was believed that the difference in lifestyle, access to basic necessities and luxuries and occupational interests of the two areas would have impact upon the voting decisions of people, the responses as discussed above has shown that the two areas follow a similar trend when it comes to their voting behaviour, even though there are certain variations here and there.

The most significant difference in the voting behaviour of urban and rural voters was regarding the impact of specific issues. Analysis of responses of the respondents reveals that the issue-based voting was very common in rural Aizawl, while it was relatively scarce in urban Aizawl. The rural areas were deeply influenced by the issues that emerged prior to the elections, which in turn reflected in their voting

behaviour. Also, the joint-platform organized by MPF where the various candidates of their respective constituencies stood on one podium, delivered speeches and took questions from the audience within a time-frame proved to be an important factor that determined the voting behaviour of rural areas, while it was not much of an influence to the urban voters in comparison. Election awareness campaigns by the MPF had considerate amount of impact on the urban voters instead, while it was of no influence to the rural voters.

Also, good leadership by candidate was an important factor that determined the rural voters' choices, while accessibility of a candidate was one factor to ponder upon by the urban respondents. The present study also shows that political activities were more widespread in urban areas than in rural areas, which is not a surprise considering the population of two. Rural Aizawl amounts to only 21.37% of the entire Aizawl population, so parties and candidates were more active in the urban areas as a result, as urban voting behaviour would have larger implications on the electoral outcome in comparison. However, the two areas show similar characteristics in terms of political awareness, mode of political socialization, impact of the social media, reasons for casting votes, general perception to the candidates and many other fields as discussed above.

Overall analysis of voting behaviour of Aizawl district has shown that majority of respondents were responsible actors in the process of voting by considering voting to be very important and regarding the exercise of franchise as their right and

responsibility. When it comes to the reasons for voting for a particular candidate, the ones who could speak on behalf of the common people were most desirable. The role played by parties in the events leading up to the day of the poll were very crucial, where the parties employed the door-to-door campaigning as a main act of convincing and begging the people for votes. The election manifestos published by different parties were of high influence to the people in making their decisions, as these contain the prospects and visions of different parties for the state and its people.

While many issues emerged prior to poll day, these issues did not have major impact upon the electoral outcome as majority of respondents, who are considered to be representatives of the entire Aizawl electorates, alleged that these issues did not help them in shaping their voting decisions. However, the issue-based voting is slowly taking shape as is seen from the study where more than 30% made their decisions with impact from specific issues. The gender of a candidate proved to be an issue, at least to some extent in Aizawl district, and the study has shown that majority of people of Aizawl district did not consider women as eligible representatives and preferred men over women when presented with a choice, attributing to the patriarchal nature of Mizo society.

In the present day, the political parties resort to the social media as a means of dissemination of political information and to lure the voters towards their parties. The mass media used to be the main channel of political information for the people. But today, it has been replaced by the social media. Different platforms of the social media,

particularly facebook and whatsapp were regarded to be the main channels of political information for majority of respondents. These social media platforms were important channels of political information to the people as they are now easily accessible using the internet through mobile phone which are in the possession of majority of people of Aizawl today.

The study also shows that majority of people made their decisions based on candidate evaluation rather than parties or issues, and upon candidate evaluation, they came to their voting decisions after considering the different qualities of a candidate. These qualities which were considered by the people of Aizawl in the 2018 elections were young and energetic, good educational background, political experience, accountability and accessibility. The people opted for candidates possessing such qualities and this was reflected in the electoral outcome. The people of Aizawl district had exhibited good moral behaviour by not succumbing to promises or gifts offered by candidates or parties. The Eighth Elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly showed high voter turnout in Aizawl district, signifying a high level of political awareness in the area.

CHAPTER- 4

IMPLICATIONS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR ON ELECTORAL OUTCOME

The eighth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly recorded a poll percentage of 81.61, while the poll percentage of Aizawl district in particular was slightly lower than the state average at 79.03%. There were 1170 polling stations spread across the state, out of which 328 were located in Aizawl district. Among the 14 constituencies of Aizawl, the highest poll percentage recorded was Aizawl South III with 86.75%, followed by Tawi at 84.20%.[60] Even though the voter turnout in Aizawl was lower than the state average, it still surpassed the national average at the Lok Sabha elections, 2019 (67.11%) to a large extent. The study has shown, as discussed in Chapter-3, that the people of Aizawl district were very conscious and active when it comes to voting, which indicates general political awareness among the people, which is a good sign in liberal democracies, as greater participation of people in elections is indicative of true representation in the assembly.

The present chapter focuses on the implications of voting behaviour of Aizawl district on electoral outcome. The implications are analysed based on the overall analysis of voting behaviour in Chapter-3, without considering the occupational variations of respondents or geographical areas. This means that the bio-data of the 14 elected members of Aizawl district are assessed so as to understand why and how they were chosen by people as their representatives over the other candidates.

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[60] Voters Turnout for Assembly Segments, CEO Mizoram Official Document.

Since candidate evaluation was an important factor considered by the voters over party affiliation and issue position, a deliberation is made upon the qualities of the candidates which helped them win the hearts of people. There were 73 persons in the fray, out of which 9 were women. According to the responses received, the four most relevant qualities that the respondents looked for were young and energetic, good educational background, political experience and accountability. However, accountability is a quality linked to emotions of the people which cannot be assessed systematically, but reflected in the voting behaviour of people. The bio-data according to the affidavits filed by each candidate prior to the elections are given below, consisting of their names, party, age, occupation and educational qualification each. The elected candidates are highlighted in red for each constituency.

Table 4.1: Bio-data of Candidates of Aizawl District

Constituency	Sl. No.	Name	Party	Age	Occupation	Edn. Qualification
Tuivawl	1.	Judy Zohmingliani	BJP	62	Business	BA
	2.	Lalchhandama Ralte	MNF	46	Politician	MA
	3.	RL Pianmawia	INC	59	Politician	PU
	4.	HK Hlimpawlthanga	ZRT	44	Business	Middle
	5.	TK. Romawia	ZPM	60	Pensioner	D.Civil Engg.
Chalfilh	6.	LT Hrangchal	INC	61	Pensioner	BA
	7.	Lalrinliana Sailo	MNF	59	Politician	BA
	8.	P. Sanghmingthanga	BJP	57	Business	BA
	9.	F. Rualhleia	ZPM	62	Pensioner	PU
	10.	Prof. JV Hluna	BJP	66	Politician	Ph. D

Tawi	11.	R. Lalzirliana	MNF	69	Politician	HSLC
	12.	Rosiamngheta	INC	54	Politician	BA
	13.	H. Lalremsiama	PRISM	34	Business	BA
	14.	Lalthatluanga	ZPM	52	Business	BA
	15.	Lalzenghaki	ZRT	45	Farmer	M.Sc.
Aizawl North I	16.	David Lalfakzuala	BJP	42	Business	PU
	17.	C. Lalhlimpuia	INC	43	Social Activist	MA
	18.	Lalringliana	MNF	63	Pensioner	BA
	19.	Vanlalruata	PRISM	43	Business	BA
	20.	Lalruatfeli Hawndo	ZRT	26	Unemployed	B.Th
	21.	Vanlalhlana	ZPM	59	Politician	MA
Aizawl North II	22.	C. Lalnunziri	BJP	56	Unemployed	HSLC
	23.	Laltlanzova Khiangte	MNF	39	Politician	MA
	24.	H. Liansailova	INC	76	Pensioner	MA
	25.	Rochungnunga	PRISM	41	Business	Under Matric
	26.	Lalhrilzeli Hlawndo	ZRT	28	Unemployed	B.Th
	27.	Vanlalthlana	ZPM	40	Govt. servant	Ph.D
Aizawl North III	28.	VL Awia	BJP	64	Pensioner	B.Th
	29.	C. Lalmuanpuia	MNF	45	Politician	BA
	30.	Lal Thanzara	INC	69	Politician	MA
	31.	Lalhmingthanga	ZPM	64	Pensioner	MA
	32.	Lalremsiama Ralte	ZRT	54	Business	B.Com
Aizawl East I	33.	Laldinliana Sailo	BJP	44	Business	B.Th
	34.	K. Lalrinpuii	NCP	41	Business	HSLC
	35.	K. Vanlalrawna	INC	56	Politician	MA
	36.	Zoramthanga	MNF	74	Politician	BA
	37.	K. Sapdanga	ZPM	59	Journalist	BA
	38.	Zosangliana	ZRT	60	Business	Class V
	39.	T. Lalmalsawmi	BJP	52	Business	Under Matric
	40.	Lalsawta	INC	72	Politician	MA

Aizawl East II	41.	Robert Romawia Royte	MNF	51	Business	M.Phil
	42.	B. Lalchhanzova	ZPM	42	Business	MA
Aizawl West I	43.	Lalhruaia	NCP	48	Business	Class VIII
	44.	Lalrodinga Colney	BJP	55	Social Worker	Ph.D
	45.	PC Laltlansanga	INC	45	Self-Employed	MA
	46.	K. Sangthuama	MNF	78	Business	PU
	47.	Lalduhoma	ZPM	69	Politician	BA
	48.	Zaichhawna Hlawndo	ZRT	55	Pensioner	Ph.D
Aizawl West II	49.	C. Lalchawimawia	BJP	71	Pensioner	HSLC
	50.	Dr. Lalmalsawma Nghaka	INC	36	Business	MBBS
	51.	Lalruatkima	MNF	46	Politician	BA
	52.	C. Laltanpuia	PRISM	33	Business	HSLC
	53.	Lalhmangaiha Sailo	ZPM	68	Pensioner	MA
	54.	DR Lalmuana	ZRT	47	Missionary	Ph.D
Aizawl West III	55.	R. Lalzamliana	BJP	56	Contractor	PU
	56.	Dr. CT Tluanga	INC	69	Medical Prac.	MBBS
	57.	Vanlalzawma	MNF	62	Politician	MA
	58.	VL Zaithanzama	ZPM	60	Business	HSLC
Aizawl South I	59.	K. Liantlinga	MNF	65	Politician	PU
	60.	R. Vanlalvena	INC	53	Politician	BA
	61.	Dr. Zonuntluanga	BJP	38	Principal	Ph.D
	62.	HK Liansawta	PRISM	65	Pensioner	Praveen
	63.	C. Lalsawivunga	ZPM	56	Politician	BA
	64.	Lalthlamuani	ZRT	63	Self-Employed	Nil
Aizawl South II	65.	Denghmingthanga	MNF	50	Social Worker	BA
	66.	Lt. Col. Zosangzuala	INC	75	Pensioner	Inter. Arts
	67.	R. Lalchhuanawmi	ZRT	55	Unemployed	Class VI
	68.	Lalchhuanthanga	ZPM	61	Business	BA
	69.	F. Lalnunmawia	MNF	45	Professor	Ph.D
	70.	F. Lalremsangi	BJP	40	Business	MA

Aizawl South III	71.	KS Thanga	INC	58	Politician	PU
	72.	RD Lalrammawia	ZPM	47	Business	MA
	73.	Tlangngaihthanga	ZRT	51	Pensioner	Under Matric

(Source: Election Commission of India, Candidate Affidavit. https://affidavitarchive.nic.in)

4.1 Constituency-wise Analysis

In Tuivawl constituency, there were 16237 electorates out of which 13094 (80.64%) exercised franchise. There were five candidates contesting the seat, one each from BJP, MNF, INC, Zoramthar (ZRT) and ZPM, out of which four were males and one, female. Lalchhandama Ralte from the MNF party was elected as their representative by the people. Analysis of bio-data of the candidates shows that only the MNF and Zoramthar candidates were young and energetic, and that the MNF and INC candidates were career politicians having good political experience. BJP, MNF and ZPM candidates had good educational background, and the MNF candidate having conformed to all the qualities desired by the people, got elected as the representative.

In Chalfilh constituency, there were 18410 electorates out of which 14842 (80.64%) turned up for the polls. There were four contenders from INC, MNF, BJP and ZPM, all of whom were males. All the candidates were basically in the same age-group, and all of them with the exception of ZPM candidate had good academic qualification. However, the MNF candidate Lalrinliana Sailo was the only candidate with political experience, which gave him the edge of winning the contest.

There were six contenders from BJP, MNF, INC, PRISM, ZPM and Zoramthar in Tawi constituency, which recorded the highest percentage of votes polled among rural Aizawl with 84.20%. The PRISM and Zoramthar were relatively younger than the others. BJP, MNF and INC candidates were career politicians indicating political experience, and all the candidates except the MNF candidate had good educational background. Despite not conforming to the qualities of young and energetic and good educational background that the people looked for in a candidate, the MNF candidate R. Lalzirliana won the elections in terms of political experience and accountability, as he fought the election with the promise of district to a large section of the Tawi constituency.

Aizawl North I witnessed six candidates from BJP, INC, MNF, PRISM, ZPM and Zoramthar, where one candidate was female. The constituency recorded 75.08% votes polled. All candidates except the MNF and the ZPM were young and considered energetic. Only Vanlalhlana, who was a career businessman, had political experience, having being elected as MLA years ago. All the candidates with the exception of BJP possessed good educational background. Being the only contender with political experience, Vanlalhlana from the ZPM got the edge of being elected from this constituency.

Six candidates from BJP, MNF, INC, PRISM, ZPM and Zoramthar contested from Aizawl North II, among which two were females. There were 22510 voters enlisted in the electoral rolls, and the voter turnout for the constituency was recorded at 78.20%.

The MNF, the PRISM, the ZPM and the Zoramthar candidates were all young and energetic as desired by the people, but only the MNF candidate possessed political experience as well. However, the ZPM candidate Vanlalthlana got elected by the people as their representative, attributing to his high degree of educational qualification, surpassing the rest in this field.

From Aizawl North III, five candidates from BJP, MNF, INC, ZPM and Zoramthar, all males, were on the fray. 18876 were enlisted in the electoral rolls, out of which 76.07% exercised franchise. All the candidates from this constituency possessed good educational background. Two candidates from MNF and INC were career politicians having political experience, but being a young and energetic contender of 45, the MNF candidate C. Lalmuanpuia won the contest, having possessed all the important qualities that the electorates looked for in a candidate.

Zoramthanga, the party president and chief ministerial candidate of the MNF party contested in Aizawl East I, and won over his contenders from BJP, NCP, INC, ZPM and Zoramthar. There were 24116 electorates registered in this constituency which recorded voter turnout of 80%. The winning candidate was the eldest amongst his fellow candidates, who, with the exception of Zoramthar and NCP candidates, all possessed good academic backgrounds. The success of Zoramthanga is therefore attributed mainly to his experience in the political field, despite his old age as compared to others. He joined the Mizoram Legislative Assembly as Minister in 1987 and had served as the Chief Minister of Mizoram for two consecutive terms during 1998-2008.

Four candidates from BJP, INC, MNF and ZPM contested the seat in Aizawl East II constituency, which recorded polling percentage of 77.37% from the 17681 electors. Except for the BJP candidate, all the candidates acquired good academic records desired by the people. The INC candidate, a standing MLA and Minister in the Congress ministry was the only career politician, but his old age could be attributed to reason behind his fall, as he was relatively older than his fellow contestants, who were all otherwise young and energetic. The seat was grabbed by Robert Romawia Royte, the MNF candidate who was a career businessman with certain political experience. His young age was regarded to be his weight over the INC candidate, who was more or less equally qualified otherwise, in terms of the qualities desired by the people.

There were six contenders from NCP, BJP, INC, MNF, ZPM and Zoramthar in Aizawl West I constituency, the constituency where 80.04% polling was recorded. Besides the NCP and MNF candidates, the rest had good educational background. Lalduhoma, Chief Ministerial candidate from ZPM won the seat, having been the only candidate with political experience as desired by the people, despite his old age as compared to other candidates. His accountability is also credited for his win, as a large section of the people considered him to be eligible of bringing the change he promised to the people of Mizoram, as portrayed by the media through opinion polls in the pre-polls.

Among the 20980 electorates of Aizawl West II, 78.49% exercised franchise to elect their representative from among the six candidates from BJP, INC, MNF, PRISM, ZPM and Zoramthar. Academic-wise, most of the candidates, except for

PRISM and BJP had good records. Besides the ZPM and BJP candidates, all the others were considered young and energetic as well. However, the MNF candidate Lalruatkima, a standing MLA in the same constituency, had the edge over the others attributing to his political experience, a trait which none of his contenders possessed.

Aizawl West III constituency witnessed four contenders from BJP, INC, MNF and ZPM, for which 76.26% of the 21443 electors casted their votes to elect their representative. All the candidates were in a more or less similar age group, so the people did not have a choice in this respect. The MNF candidate was the only one with political experience, and being a prominent politician (an ex-MP and standing MLA), he was expected to win by analysts. However, the results contradicted this and the ZPM candidate VL Zaithanzama, the one with the lowest educational qualification of all the contenders in this constituency, rose to power and won the seat. Despite ranking relatively lower than his fellow candidates in terms of desirable qualities like political experience and educational background, his win is attributed to his accountability. Moreover, being a resident of the area himself, he was considered easily accessible by the people, which was the next asset considered by the people after the above mentioned ones.

C. Lalsawivunga from ZPM won the seat over MNF, INC, BJP, PRISM and Zoramthar candidates in Aizawl South I where 77.69% of the 21529 registered voters exercised franchise. He was adequately educated, and a Councillor in Aizawl Municipal Council, which implies that he was a politician. There were two other career politicians

besides him in this constituency, out of whom the INC candidate was considered more qualified than him in terms of age. However, C. Lalsawivunga was perhaps considered more accountable than the INC candidate, resulting in the ultimate victory of ZPM in this constituency.

The seat in Aizawl South II was contested by four candidates from MNF, INC, Zoramthar and ZPM, out of which one was female. 24472 electorates were registered out of which 77.26% casted their votes. Except the Zoramthar candidate, the rest had good educational records. There was no experienced politician among the contenders, occupation could not be a factor here. ZPM candidate Lalchhuanthanga won the seat, despite there being two other contenders younger to him. However, his win is attributed to the fact that he possessed accountability, that he had won the trust of people who ultimately elected him over the others.

In Aizawl South III where there were 19816 registered voters, the highest percentage of votes polled in the whole of Aizawl district was recorded at 86.75%. Five candidates, four males and one female, from MNF, INC, ZPM, Zoramthar and BJP were on the fray. The winning candidate F. Lalnunmawia was a professor by career, and possessed the highest educational qualification of all the contestants. Besides, he was young and energetic. Considering the qualities desired by the people in a candidate, there was the INC candidate, a minister in the incumbent ministry, an experienced politician who had a high edge of winning. He, however, was ranked lower in terms of

age and educational qualification, which resulted in the victory of MNF candidate in this constituency.

Variables like young age, good educational background and political experience were the attributes which the people mainly looked for while evaluating candidates, and making up their minds regarding whom to vote for. Having won majority of the seats in Aizawl district, it is evident that the MNF candidates possessed these attributes and thus had better chances of winning as compared to other candidates.

In Aizawl district, 71.4% of the elected candidates were below 60 years of age, 21.4% were below 70 years and only one candidate had attained the age of 70. This one candidate was Zoramthanga, leader of the MNF party, who ultimately became the Chief Minister. He had been involved in politics since the period of insurgency, and continued as MLA and Chief Minister of Mizoram after attainment of independence. His edge as a prominent and experienced politician gave him the chance of winning despite his old age.

With the exception of two candidates, all the elected candidates were graduates and above in the academic field, which implies that they all possessed good educational background. The two exceptions were VL Zaithanzama, ZPM candidate from Aizawl West III and R. Lalzirliana, MNF candidate in Tawi constituency, both of whom attained education up to HSLC. VL Zaithanzama was a businessman, but he was an energetic candidate who had just attained the age of 60. Besides, he was accountable and moreover, accessible to the people, which can be assumed from the fact that he was

a resident of the same constituency he contested in. R. Lalzirliana, on the other hand, was neither young nor energetic, but was a prominent and experienced politician. He had been a member of the legislative assembly since 1998 till date. He had acquired recognition from the public on this ground, which helped him win the seat in the 2018 elections.

Majority of elected candidates were career politicians, possessing adequate amount of experience in the political field. All these elements have supplemented to the responses of people of Aizawl, which had shown that variables like youth and energy, educational background and political experience of candidates played important roles in influencing the decisions of the people, and were considered positive attributes which played decisive roles among people. Even though Zoramthar candidates were the youngest set of candidates in average, their lack of political experience and low educational qualifications had reduced their chance of winning, while old age and lack of political experience was the key factor for losing for the BJP candidates. Even though the INC candidates had a good chance of winning with respect to educational background and political experience of candidates, they were relatively older in general as compared to the MNF candidates, which gave the INC candidates away. The ZPM candidates were a group of young and energetic persons possessing good educational background, but lacked political experience in comparison with the MNF candidates. This ultimately resulted in them coming to the second front after the MNF, having won 6 seats in Aizawl district.

All the respondents considered voting to be either important or very important. This was an outcome of political mobilization and socialization, owing to the relevant contribution of social media in creating voters' awareness. Politics is one of the largest driving forces in the world, and has direct impact on the lives of people on a daily basis. When people become aware of this, it is a sign of political development in a liberal democratic society like ours. The fact that 79.03% voters turned out on the day of poll is a direct outcome of voters' awareness which was experienced by Aizawl district in the 2018 assembly elections. The fact that majority of respondents, who were considered to be the representatives of entire electorates of Aizawl, voted as a feeling of right and responsibility indicates the moral responsibility of people while casting their votes. It signifies the political participation of people and their involvement in politics, which in one way or the other dictates everything that happens around us. These responsible voters can further be assumed to have casted their votes rationally, with a clear knowledge about the reasons behind their votes, making the study further consistent.

Majority of people also voted for a candidate whom they believed could best represent the interest of common people, the ones who could speak on behalf of masses. This is an important aspect of democracy, where the representatives are expected to stand for the best interest of people and speak on their behalf. Since majority voted for candidates with such trait, the present government can be assumed to be representative of the interests of common people, and that the state of Mizoram is operating under a

true democracy, which is a government of the people, by the people and for the people as asserted by Abraham Lincoln.

Candidate evaluation emerged as an important factor that determined the voting behaviour of the people. People resorted to candidate evaluation over party affiliation and issue orientation while casting votes. Thus the personality and assets possessed by the candidates played decisive role in the last elections, and the candidates possessing desired personal traits won the elections, as is seen from the survey. The political parties had important roles to play with regard to exerting influence over the public. They are important mechanisms of political awareness and mobilization among the people, as they are important agents of political socialization. Even in the last elections, they played relevant role in the form of door-to-door campaigns. The political parties were bounded by the regulations of MPF even with regard to door-to-door campaigning, by which such acts were done only under the supervision of MPF. The purpose of this specific regulation was to ensure that the candidates did not indulge in unfair practices or make undue promises to the people in the course of direct interaction. The candidates of major parties made sure to visit all the houses within their respective constituencies, spreading awareness to the people while doing so.

The election manifestos of different parties exerted most influence out of all the election-related activities performed by the parties while trying to lure the voters. This shows that the people did not merely cast their votes based on what they saw or heard, but by analysing the contents of manifestos of different parties, weighing upon

their prospects and visions for the state and the people. The fact that most of the respondents made up their minds regarding who to vote for after election campaigns started indicates the impact of election campaigning among the people. The process of election campaigning, including the publications of manifestos by various parties had significant impact upon the voting behaviour of people, and the fact that only few people made up their minds on the day of election shows that people decided for their own selves. It also indicates that the people were acting responsibly without the involvement of unfair practises, as voters who decided on the day of elections are regarded to be those lured by parties, candidates or agents who promised something in return for their votes, or are the ones just following others.

As already discussed in Chapter-2, there were several issues that emerged prior to the elections as part of the election campaigning process. Allegations were thrown against one another by the various parties in order to maximize their chances of winning. These allegations were disseminated to the public in the form of various media, and were expected to have significant impact upon the electoral outcome. However, the study has disproved this assumption by showing that majority of the respondents representing the people of Aizawl were not affected by these issues while making their decisions and that such issues had no impact upon their voting behaviour. The issue-based voting had seldom been of large influence in the history of state assembly elections in Mizoram, but in the meantime, a considerable section of the society were influenced by these issues in the process of decision-making, indicating that issue-based voting is slowly taking shape in Mizoram.

Looking at the list of the past legislators of Mizoram, it can be seen that the state assembly had always been dominated by males. There were only few female leaders in the past, and this trend was taken further by the last concluded elections wherein none of the female candidates won any seat. With regard to women participation in politics, 40 women-managed booths, one in each constituency, were arranged in order to encourage the participation of women in elections. However, all these actions had no positive impact upon the chances of winning for the female candidates, as none of the female candidates managed to grab a seat. This was because majority of people were not interested in having female representatives, and preferred males over females when presented with a choice, as can be seen from the survey. This could be attributed to the patriarchal nature of Mizo society, where men dominate over women since time.

The social media played an important part in mobilizing the masses, as all the political parties now use the social media as a tool for disseminating information to woo the voters. The social media acts as a platform for election campaigning, wherein the masses could actively participate in the form of comments and interaction, making the citizens some sort of political activists. From the study, it has been established that majority were under the influence of social media, at least to some extent, in the process of decision making. This is very much relevant in the Indian context, where the political parties make use of platforms like Facebook and Twitter in order to engage the citizens and keep them aware in the process of election campaigning. Since a large section of population now have easy access to the social media through mobile phones, computers

and the internet, the political parties ought to take advantage of this so as to popularise their slogans and objectives. This way, even people who hardly take time to engage in traditional forms of media like the mass media, who have direct access to the social media in the palm of their hands, are more likely to engage themselves in politics. This was the case in Mizoram in the last elections, where political parties employed two platforms, facebook and whatsapp as tools for disseminating political information and wooing the voters, as these are the two social media platforms where the Mizo people of all age groups were most commonly engaged in, thus having implications upon the electoral outcome in the 2018 elections.

CHAPTER- 5

CONCLUSION

Voting occupies an important status in electoral politics, as it is the main form of political participation for common people in liberal democratic states. The representatives are directly elected by the people through voting, so it is an exercise which requires deliberate consideration and rational thinking. The behaviour of people in deciding whom to vote for constitutes an important aspect of study, as that behaviour results in the formation of a government, upon whom the fate of state ultimately rests. Voting behaviour is the study of behaviour of the people during elections. It comprises of diverse determining factors, all of which play relevant roles upon the electoral outcome. These factors may vary from region to region based on geographical location, issue orientation or several other variables. The factors which influenced the voting behaviour of people need to be identified so as to understand how a particular party rose to power, and why the people decided to vote for the elected candidates over the others.

Elections in India are conducted by a constitutional and independent body known as the Election Commission of India (ECI), created under the provisions of Article 324 of the Constitution. The ECI is headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two other Election Commissioners (EC). The functions of the ECI have been included under Article 324 (1) which includes 'the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every state and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-

President.' Such indicative functions of the ECI boil down to include whole gamut of the electoral process including preparation, maintenance and revision of electoral rolls, the notifications, scrutiny, withdrawals and polling, registration of and recognition to political parties, allotment of election symbols, the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer (a state government official) for each state, Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers and Assistant Officers for each Assembly and parliamentary constituency, and the receiving of election petitions and the appointment of Election Tribunals to consider such petitions.[61] Since the ECI plays all such functions, its role becomes critical towards the conduct of free and fair elections in the country.

Local writers are of the opinion that politics began in Mizoram with the formation of Mizo Union, a political party in 1946. This, however, should only be identified with the concept of electoral politics in particular and not politics in general, as politics had very much prevailed even during the era of chieftainship. Some forms of electoral politics had prevailed even before the formation of Mizo Union but with limited franchise. The Mizo Chiefs on the guidance of Superintendent of the Lushai Hills in October, 1940 had elected their representatives from each of the 18 Lushai circles, but the commoners were not a part in the said elections. Later on, a legislature-like body was set up known as District Conference for which the chiefs and the commoners had their respective representatives.

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[61] Bidyut Chakrabarty and Rajendra Kumar Pandey (2008). *Indian Government and Politics.* New Delhi: SAGE Publications. pp. 154- 156.

The electoral history of Mizoram dates back to 1946 when the first political party Mizo Union was formed with the avowed objective of abolishing the Chiefs whose rule was becoming tyrannical and oppressive to the commoners which was achieved in the year 1955 when the chiefs were abolished with effect from 1st April of that year by an act called "The Lushai Hills (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954. The Autonomous Mizo District Council which was instrumental in the abolition of Chiefs came into existence on April 25, 1952 for the attainment of which the Mizo Union fought tooth and nail. The Council ceased to exist with the inauguration Union Territory of Mizoram on January 21, 1972. Again, Mizoram Union Territory was raised to a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987 as a result of the Peace Accord signed between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the government of India on June 30, 1986.[62] The Peace Accord put an end to a 20-year- long insurgency in the area, restoring peace and normalcy in the region, and Mizoram has remained a peaceful state ever since.

Elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly began in 1972. Mizoram was not yet a state then, and the first state assembly with 40 members was constituted in 1987. With that, eight elections have been conducted till date, i.e., 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018, with Mizo National Front (MNF) and Indian National Congress (INC) winning four times each, making the two parties the key players among the Mizoram political parties.

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[62] P. Lalnithanga (2006). *Political Developments in Mizoram.* Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press. p- 191.

The eighth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly were conducted on November 26, 2018. The Congress was the incumbent ministry having 34 members in the state assembly out of total 40, and the MNF, the second front with 5 members. There was also one member from the MPC party. These members from three parties formed the incumbent assembly. The Congress and MNF were the two key players out of all the political parties operating in Mizoram, as these are the only two parties to have ever formed ministry in Mizoram since statehood. Seven political parties, namely, MNF, Congress, BJP, PRISM, NPP, NCP, Zoramthar and ZPM, a conglomeration of seven parties contested the elections.

A number of non-governmental organisations had been established in Mizoram with Aizawl as their headquarters. These organisations play significant roles in the political process despite their non-political principles and objectives. Amongst these non-profit organisations, the Young Mizo Association (YMA) is of the largest influence which enrolls membership from willing Mizos around the globe. The role of YMA in determining voting behaviour is of great significance as can be seen from the Hnam Hnatlang, a sit-in protest against the then CEO of Mizoram just prior to the elections, which aroused the emotions of people and led to political awareness. The student associations, mainly the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and the Mizo Students' Union (MSU) act as vocal pressure groups which put pressure on the government for the welfare of the students, as well as the social, economic and political affairs that affect the well being of the Mizos as a whole. These student bodies are significantly vocal as they comprise of educated youth who play important roles in the political process.

Role of the church in Mizoram politics is one which cannot be undermined. The church acted as the medium in putting an end to the Mizo insurgency. The church constantly conveys messages to its members in order to maintain free and fair elections in Mizoram. The Mizoram People Forum (MPF), a conglomeration of several churches and voluntary organisations was established on the initiative of the Presbyterian Church. The MPF acts as a poll watchdog, issuing a model code of conduct in agreement with the political parties, candidates and the electorates, and supplementing the efforts of Election Commission of India in ensuring free and fair elections. Thus it is largely credited for the sustenance of peaceful, free and fair elections in Mizoram as it is highly regarded by the people. So, it is expected to exert significant influence towards the voting behaviour of the people if a candidate or party acts against the code of conduct laid out by the MPF.

Aizawl district is selected for the study. Aizawl is the capital of the state, and the most densely-populated of all the districts. Aizawl district is classified into rural and urban areas. Out of the total population of Aizawl, 3,14,754 (78.63%) reside in the urban area, having a high literacy rate of 98.27% (2011 census). The rural area of Aizawl accounts for 21.37% of the population amounting to 85,555 population with literacy rate of 81.56% or 69,775 of the population[63]. Aizawl is the political centre as well as the centre of trade and commerce, and houses maximum number of government offices, educational institutions, skill-training institutions, hospitals and residences of officials. People across the state migrate to the district in search of better opportunities and

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[63] Aizawl- The State Capital https://mizoram.nic.in (Retrieved on July 4, 2019).

livelihood. As such, it becomes an ideal place for studying the voting behaviour of the people. Since it is a densely-populated area, the results can be most representative of the state as compared to other districts.

The results of Eighth Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections in Aizawl district took a somewhat unexpected turn with the emergence of ZPM as the second front. MNF won a total of 26 seats, ZPM grabbed 8 seats, the Congress secured 5 seats and BJP marked its entry into the Mizoram Legislative Assembly by securing one seat. The MNF won 8 out of the 14 seats in Aizawl district, while ZPM bagged the other 6. The incumbent government, the Congress failed to grab any seat within Aizawl district, and performed rather poorly across the state. This, however, simply compliments the election history in Mizoram where no single party has won three times in a row.

As can be seen in Chapter- 3, structured questionnaire was employed by the scholar in order to find out the reasons behind the voting decisions of people of Aizawl district. The respondents were selected from both rural and urban Aizawl, and were comprised of diverse age groups, educational backgrounds and occupational activities, for representative purpose. For analysis, the respondents were categorised into four characters based on their occupational activities, viz., students, private job holders, government job holders and others. Voting behaviour of different set of characters showed interesting variations from one another. All the characters considered the act of voting to be either very important or important, resulting in high voter turnout rate in Aizawl district. The fact that majority of all the characters voted with a sense of right

and responsibility is indicative of high political awareness and moral responsibility among the people of Aizawl. The student respondents have shown a high percentage of concern about the solution to the existing and potential issues of the state or their respective areas while casting their votes, while all the other characters opted for candidates who could speak on behalf of common people.

The door-to-door campaign by political parties was experienced by majority of all the characters. Election manifestos of different parties influenced the decisions of majority of private and government job holders, while the campaigning processes had no impact on majority of students and others. Majority of all characters made their voting decisions after election campaigns started, which indicated that they made their decisions based on their opinions of different parties and candidates. The different issues that emerged prior to the polls had impact upon the voting decisions of all characters with the exception of private job holders, and gender of a candidate was an issue to all except student respondents. The social media had influenced the decisions of all characters, and served as the main source of political information to all except government servants, to whom mass media served the purpose.

Candidate evaluation formed an important aspect of determining the decisions of all the characters. For the students, young and energetic candidate was their priority when it comes to the qualities of a candidate (24%). Also, the political experience or background of a candidate was considered before voting to a large extent (22%). The other qualities of a candidate that the students preferred were accountability of a

candidate (14%), good educational background (12%) and accessibility of a candidate (10%). Meanwhile, promises/gifts offered by a candidate or party had no influence upon the voting decisions of students.

The private job holders mostly opted for a candidate with good educational background at 20%, followed by those who were young and energetic at 15.5%. The political experience of a candidate was also considered (12.2%), along with qualities of a candidate like accountability (11.1%), accessibility (10%) and good leadership (10%). This set of character was least affected by the promises/gifts offered by a candidate or party at just 2.2% out of all the given factors.

Among the government servants, the quality of a candidate with the largest influence was accessibility (17.9%). The next choice was young and energetic candidate (16.7%), followed by good educational background (14.4%), good leadership (13.3%) and political experience of a candidate (12.2%). Promises/gifts from candidate or party was of least influence at 2.2%. The others were equally influenced by qualities possessed by a candidate like young and energetic, good educational background and accountability at 20% each. Also, political experience of a candidate was considered by them (15%), while promises/gifts from party or candidate had no impact upon their voting behaviour.

Comparison of voting behaviour in urban and rural areas of Aizawl has revealed that there is not much difference in the voting pattern of two areas. While it was

believed that the difference in lifestyle, access to basic necessities and luxuries and occupational interests of the two areas would have impact upon the voting decisions of people, the responses as discussed in Chapter-3 has shown that the two areas follow a similar trend when it comes to their voting behaviour, even though there are certain variations here and there.

The most significant difference in the voting behaviour of urban and rural voters was regarding the impact of specific issues. Analysis of responses of the respondents reveals that the issue-based voting was very common in rural Aizawl, while it was relatively scarce in urban Aizawl. The rural areas were more deeply influenced by the issues that emerged prior to the elections, which in turn reflected in their voting behaviour. Also, the joint-platform organized by MPF where the various candidates of their respective constituencies stood on one podium, delivered speeches and took questions from the audience within a time-frame proved to be an important factor that determined the voting behaviour of rural areas, while it was not much of an influence to the urban voters in comparison. Election awareness campaigns by the MPF had considerate amount of impact on the urban voters instead, while it was of no influence to the rural voters.

Also, good leadership by candidate was an important factor that determined the rural voters' choices, while accessibility of a candidate was one factor to ponder upon by the urban respondents. The present study also shows that political activities were more widespread in urban areas than in rural areas, which is not a surprise

considering the population of two. Rural Aizawl amounts to only 21.37% of the entire Aizawl population, so parties and candidates were more active in the urban areas as a result, as urban voting behaviour would have larger implications on the electoral outcome in comparison. However, the two areas show similar characteristics in terms of political awareness, mode of political socialization, impact of the social media, reasons for casting votes, general perception to the candidates and many other fields.

Overall analysis of voting behaviour of Aizawl district has shown that majority of respondents were responsible actors in the process of voting by considering voting to be very important and regarding the exercise of franchise as their right and responsibility. When it comes to the reasons for voting for a particular candidate, the ones who could speak on behalf of the common people were most desirable. The role played by parties in the events leading up to the day of the poll were very crucial, where the parties employed the door-to-door campaigning as a main act of convincing and begging people for votes. The election manifestos published by different parties were of high influence to the people in making their decisions, as these contained the prospects and visions of different parties for the state and its people.

While many issues emerged prior to poll day, these issues did not have major impact upon the electoral outcome as majority of respondents, who are considered to be representatives of the entire Aizawl electorates, alleged that these issues did not help them in shaping their voting decisions. However, the issue-based voting is slowly taking shape as is seen from the study where more than 30% made their decisions with impact

from specific issues. The gender of a candidate proved to be an issue, at least to some extent in Aizawl district, and the study has shown that majority of people of Aizawl district did not consider women as eligible representatives and preferred men over women when presented with a choice.

Out of factors including party affiliation, candidate evaluation and issue-based voting, candidate evaluation emerged as the main factor that determined voting behaviour of people of Aizawl. This means that the MNF had won on the ground of possessing desirable individual qualities, rather than party affiliation or issue position. When asked to rate their most desired qualities in a candidate, the respondents were inclined towards young and energetic candidates, candidates possessing good educational background and political experience. Accountability and accessibility of a candidate were qualities that followed. These two, however, were linked to emotional behaviour and cannot be assessed systematically other than assumption.

Since variables like young age, good educational background and political experience were the attributes which the people mainly looked for while evaluating candidates, having won majority of the seats in Aizawl district, it is evident that the MNF candidates possessed these attributes and thus had better chances of winning as compared to other candidates.

In Aizawl district, 71.4% of the elected candidates were below 60 years of age, 21.4% were below 70 years and only one candidate had attained the age of 70. This one candidate was Zoramthanga, leader of the MNF party, who ultimately became the

Chief Minister. He had been involved in politics since the period of insurgency, and continued as MLA and Chief Minister of Mizoram after attainment of independence. His edge as a prominent and experienced politician gave him the chance of winning despite his old age.

With the exception of two candidates, all the elected candidates were graduates and above in the academic field, which implies that they all possessed good educational background. The two exceptions were VL Zaithanzama, ZPM candidate from Aizawl West III and R. Lalzirliana, MNF candidate in Tawi constituency, both of whom attained education up to HSLC. VL Zaithanzama was a businessman, but he was an energetic candidate who had just attained the age of 60. Besides, he was accountable and moreover, accessible to the people, which can be assumed from the fact that he was a resident of the same constituency he contested in. R. Lalzirliana, on the other hand, was neither young nor energetic, but was a prominent and experienced politician. He had been a member of the legislative assembly since 1998 till date. He had acquired recognition from the public on this ground, which helped him win the seat in the last elections.

Majority of elected candidates were career politicians, possessing adequate amount of experience in the political field. All these elements have supplemented to the responses of the people of Aizawl, which had shown that variables like youth and energy, educational background and political experience of candidates played important roles in influencing the decisions of people, and were considered positive attributes

which played decisive roles among people. Even though Zoramthar candidates were the youngest set of candidates in average, their lack of political experience and low educational qualifications had reduced their chance of winning, while old age and lack of political experience was the key factor for losing for the BJP candidates. Even though the INC candidates had a good chance of winning with respect to educational background and political experience of candidates, they were relatively older in general as compared to the MNF candidates, which gave the INC candidates away. The ZPM candidates were a group of young and energetic persons possessing good educational background, but lacked political experience in comparison with the MNF candidates. This ultimately resulted in the ZPM coming to the second front after the MNF, having won 6 seats in Aizawl district.

In the present day, the political parties resort to the social media as a means of dissemination of political information and to lure the voters towards their parties. The mass media used to be the main channel of political information for the people but today, it has been replaced by the social media. Different platforms of the social media, particularly facebook and whatsapp were regarded to be the main channels of political information for majority of respondents. These social media platforms were important channels of political information to the people as they are now easily accessible using the internet through mobile phone which are in the possession of majority of people of Aizawl today.

The study also shows that majority of people made their decisions based on candidate evaluation rather than parties or issues, and upon candidate evaluation, they came to their voting decisions after considering the different qualities of a candidate. These qualities which were considered by the people of Aizawl in the 2018 elections were young and energetic, good educational background, political experience, accountability and accessibility. The people opted for candidates possessing such qualities, this was reflected in the electoral outcome. The people of Aizawl district also exhibited good moral behaviour by not succumbing to promises or gifts offered by candidates or parties. The Eighth Elections to the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly showed high voter turnout in Aizawl district, signifying a high level of political awareness in the area.

Mizoram had experienced peaceful and free elections wherein the people participated freely without undue circumstances. The voter turnout was also recorded at a high percentage, which signifies the enthusiasm of people in the political field. The study has shown that majority were under the influence of the social media, which was unheard of few elections ago. The social media now has significant impact upon the lives of people, as majority of them are engaged with it in one way or the other. Especially in the national scene, elections have widely become digital, with all major parties showing their presence in the social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter. India's elections lately were often referred to as Twitter Elections in the sense that so much of them took place online. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was one of the first Indian politicians to have employed the social media platform to reach his audience, and

make the citizens aware of their voting rights. As such, the social media has now occupied important place in the Mizoram political scene, where political parties channel their activities and information to the people through it. However, if directed in the wrong way, the social media can have adverse impact upon the enthusiasm of people in politics. The social media was employed by parties and agents as important campaigning platform, and was also widely used for throwing false allegations against their opponents. This is an area which needs to be looked into, as social media had influence upon the voting behaviour of people. If people are further misled this way in future elections, it could be of hindrance towards political development of the area, of which political participation of people is an important characteristic.

Regarding the participation of women in politics, steps have been taken by the authorities to encourage the participation of women in elections. Women-managed booths were arranged in all the 40 constituencies, showing the enthusiasm of the government towards the inclusion of women in political field. This had significant impact upon the voter turnout rate in Aizawl district, where 53.65% of the total votes polled was composed of female voters.[64] However, the fact that none of the female candidates won a seat in the last concluded state elections was an issue which attracts one's attention. Out of the 73 candidates in the fray in Aizawl district, only 9 were women. Zoramthar had fielded maximum number of women candidates (5), followed by BJP (3). There was also one female candidate from NCP. The other parties failed to field any women candidate in Aizawl district. The reason for this, according to Lal

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[64] Official document, Election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, Voter Turnout Report. p.1

Thanhawla, President of Congress, was that Mizo society was not ready for the involvement of women in politics, and that they had to field male candidates since their goal was to win the elections. The MNF leaders expressed that there were no suitable female candidates in their women's wing. Steps have to be taken in order to deconstruct the popular mindset of people with regard to involvement of women in politics. Mizo society being a patriarchal one, people tend to disapprove of women being actively involved in politics, which is a barring issue towards the progress of women with regard to representation. Systematic changes are required for Mizos to be aware of the fact that women are equally eligible and that women should share equal opportunity as men. Reservation of seats for women in the state assembly, as in the AMC would be a great step ahead to achieve this purpose, so as to present women with better opportunities in future elections.

Elections in Mizoram often betray some signs of elections as portrayed by other states of India. Different party flags, posters portraying the names and signs of candidates and election-related graffiti are not found in abundance as compared to other states. Big election rallies and gatherings are rarely found. Free and fair elections take place in such subdued atmosphere, and the role of MPF is of chief importance for the occurrence of such. The MPF was set up on June 21, 2006 by the Mizoram Synod, the biggest church denomination in the state with the support of other major churches and civil societies as an election watchdog to strive for electoral reforms. Thus the MPF is functional only during elections.

The MPF issues guidelines for all elections, viz., State Legislative Assembly Elections, Lok Sabha Elections, Village and Local Council Elections, the AMC Elections and District Council Elections in Mizoram. Leaders of all political parties come to terms with the rules laid out by the MPF through a Memorandum of Understanding, pledging to uphold free and fair elections in the state without undue taints. Volunteers of the MPF ensure that no rallies were held but door-to-door campaigns and that no party or individual would hold feasts or lure voters with the promise of government jobs or cash. The expenditure of parties, candidates or their agents with respect to campaign activities, flags, banners and posters in each neighbourhood was restricted to a certain limit and with specifications in size, even to those mounted on cars and two- wheelers. Use of loudspeakers was banned, and the political parties were encouraged to frame only realistic and applicable policies. The MPF in their guidelines also mentioned that parties should put up only eloquent and eligible candidates free from corrupt activities, and the influence of liquor and drugs. In the course of election campaigning, any public meeting by candidates or parties was chaired by a member of MPF,[65] ensuring that the politicians did not indulge in any form of malpractice.

The guidelines laid out by the MPF were agreed upon with by leaders of all major political parties operating in Mizoram, including, INC, MNF, MPC, ZNP and BJP through a Memorandum of Understanding. The guidelines and moral code of conduct were not legally binding but the political parties and candidates were found to abide by

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[65] MPF leh Political Party te Thawhhona Thuthlung. Published by MPF Gen. Hqrs. Aizawl, 2017. pp. 1-6.

them. On the day of poll, volunteers of the MPF set up benches in front of polling stations across the state helping the voters to identify their numbers in the voters' list, which was earlier done by political parties. The MPF took the role of civil society steps ahead in improving the quality of governance and making it more accountable to the people, while supplementing the role of Election Commission in ensuring free and fair elections to a large extent. So long as the MPF continues to play such active and positive role in Mizoram elections, elections in Mizoram would always continue to portray exemplary behaviour towards the rest of the country, where unfair and illegal practices often play active roles.

APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE EIGHTH MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ELECTIONS: A STUDY OF AIZAWL DISTRICT

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science, Mizoram University. The data collected through these questions will be used to understand the voting behaviour of the people of Aizawl District in the eighth elections to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, 2018. The information obtained will be used for academic purpose only.

Please be assured that your response would be held completely confidential.

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Constituency:

AMC Ward/ Village Council:

Occupation:

  i.   Student.

    ii.   Private job.

  iii.   Government job.

  iv.   Others.

Educational Qualification:

    i.   School.

   ii.   Under-Graduate.

  iii.   Post-Graduate.

Read the following questions and select the answers that best describe your activities.

1. How important was voting to you?

    i.   Very important.

   ii.   Important.

  iii.   Not important.

  iv.   Makes no difference.

2. Why did you cast your vote in the 2018 elections?

    i.   It is a right and responsibility.

   ii.   To elect whom I trust.

  iii.   Following others.

  iv.   My sacred duty.

   v.   For the good of the society.

3. Why did you vote for whom you voted?

    i.   Can represent my interest.

    ii.   Can speak on behalf of common people.

    iii.   Kinship ties.

    iv.   Can solve existing/potential issues of my area/state.

    v.   He/ She is well- respected.

    vi.   Party affiliation.

4. How did you make your voting decision?

    i.   Based on party.

    ii.   Evaluation of Candidates.

    iii.   Candidate/Party's stand on specific issue.

5. Which of the following actions by a party, candidate or agent did you experience preceding the 2018 elections?

    i.   Door-to-door campaigns.

    ii.   Contacted you or family through phone call or SMS.

    iii.   Offered to drive you or others to polling station.

    iv.   Other services promised.

    v.   None of the above.

6. Which of the following influenced your decision the most?

    i.   Election awareness campaigns. (Eg. MPF).

    ii.   Political party meetings/ rallies/ canvasses.

    iii.   Election manifestos of parties.

    iv.   Joint platform organised by MPF.

    v.   The media (social/mass, the internet etc.)

7. When did you make up your mind regarding whom to vote for?

    i. Before election campaigns started.

    ii. After election campaigns.

    iii. On election day.

8. Did any specific issue (Eg. Chakma issue, liquor issue etc.) help shape your decision in the process of voting?

    i. Yes (Specify).

    ii. No.

    iii. Don't know.

9. Was gender of a candidate an issue to you while voting?

    i. Yes.

    ii. To some extent.

    iii. No.

10. Did the social media have any impact upon your voting decisions?

    i. Yes.

    ii. To some extent.

    iii. No.

11. What type of media would you consider your main source of political information?

    i. Mass media.

        a) Radio.

        b) Television.

        c) Newspaper.

    ii. Social media.

        a) Twitter.

        b) Facebook.

        c) Whatsapp.

        d) Instagram.

        e) Others.

   iii. The internet.

   iv. Inter- personal media (through relatives, friends or neighbours).

   v. Election- specific media (campaigners, manifestos, awareness etc.).

12. Rate five of the following qualities possessed by a candidate in order of importance to you while making voting decisions-

   i. Political experience.

   ii. Well-respected.

   iii. Young and energetic.

   iv. Good educational background.

   v. Accountability.

   vi. Accessibility.

   vii. Good leadership.

   viii. Wealthy and popular.

   ix. Relationship with candidate.

   x. Promises/gifts offered.

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