CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Human society goes through certain cyclic changes of days and nights and of climates. With this cyclical way, society gradually moves to an even higher stage of civilization and that it advances in a linear fashion and in the direction of improvement. There are certain forces, social or natural or both, which bring about social change. It is not reason or intellect but the presence of certain forces and circumstances which determine the course of social change. Simply, social changes can be brought about by means of conscious and systematic efforts.

Today’s society is called "scientific age" or "age of power". Science and technology affects society greatly in that a variation in technology causes a variation in some institutions or customs. Attitude, beliefs and traditions have crumbled before technological advances. The spirit of craftsmenship, the devine ordering of social classes, traditions regarding the spheres of the sexes, the prestige of birth all have felt the shock of mechanisation. Industrialisation has destroyed the domestic system of production, brought women from the home to the factory and the office and distinguished their earning, creat a new social life
for women. The changes in the means of transport and communication have variously affected the social relationship. The rapid means of transport and communication have broken the barriers to cultural isolation and played a significant role in the diffusion of cultural elements. Technological inventions may also give rise to social inventions. By social invention we mean any invention that is not material and that is not a discovery in natural sciences. Boycott, women, suffrage, non-co-operation movement, proportional representation, old age pension, juvenile court, matrimonial bureau, civil service, bonus to wage earners, visiting teachers, psychological clinics, rotary club, research institute, United Nations Organisation etc are some of the examples of social inventions.

The state has varied roles apart from the role of providing safety and security for committees or societies, in initiating and sustaining social change of various types. The state has generally allowed or encouraged particular constitutions or political set ups in various countries. It has allowed or encouraged various types of political parties, lobbies or pressure groups. It has also encouraged in the economic field private sector or public sector or even joint sector of the two.
In the process of social change, the role of the state is more important in underdeveloped countries than in a developed country. In an underdeveloped country, there are limitations of economic and educational facilities due to backwardness and shortage of science, technology, trained manpower and resources in general and also the general shortage of patience. Generally they stand for multisided rapid development or modernisation support from the United Nations and are opposed to racialism, colonialism or imperialism. The states in these societies generally accepted overall responsibility of attaining the goals of successful foreign policy, stable and fairly efficient administration and at least a tolerably educated population and decent educational and living standard for it. Since the states in these societies are hectically busy formulating and working the programmes for these goals, politics and influence of the state have generally overwhelmed the non-political aspects or sectors of life.

In an underdeveloped countries, like India, political parties have acted as key agencies of social change. In such countries parties are generally the ex-freedom fighting organisations and umbrella organisation. The umbrella organisations have sometimes evolved or split into more limited
or specific organisations or parties in course of time. In India, for example there was a time, around 1940s when most non-congress parties except the communist party worked inside the Congress. After independence one by one a number of separate, smaller parties came to be established, like socialist parties, Jana Sangh, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Parishad, Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam and so on. The non-political aspects or sectors such as economics, industry, education, religion, culture, literature heavily depend on politics. Simply, the political parties acts as the instruments of social change by assuming a crucial significance in this process of political development in a modern world. But religion has a great role to play in the political modernisation of the traditional societies in India generally and particularly in Manipur. In India, from the world of the traditional orthodoxy, people have acquired some light with the help of religious sanskritisation. Religious sanskritisation brought somewhat better means of livinghood. Religious sanskritisation in course of time changed into a political form - i.e. secularisation. In secularisation men are not in the hands of religion. On the other hand,

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1 Singh K.S., A Simple Study of Political Sociology, Ajanta Prakashan, Delhi, 1989, p.274.
religion is controlled by human beings. As a first step in the process of politicisation in Manipur a social organisation called Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha was established in 1934. Later on, it became a political party by deleting the word Hindu in 1938. It was also a process of secularisation in Manipur. By establishing this political organisation, the traditional political culture of Manipur which was based on monarchical system was replaced by new behavioural political orientation. As highlighted by this organisation as well as under the impact of the changing pattern of the socio-political system of India, a political party came into existence in Manipur. In this socio-political changes, majority of the people in Manipur have played a great role. The Manipur Constituent Assembly of 1947 was the product of the social and political changes brought by the people as a collective force. The people participated very actively either as a member of the groups or associations or political parties etc. Before 1947, there was monarchical system of Government in Manipur, but from the last part of 1930s, the political elites have started to take active part in the development and changes of the social and political conditions of Manipur. The Manipur Congress Party came into existence in the later part of 1946. Almost all the members of the Nikhil Mahasabha became the members of
this party. Manipur became independent from the British Colonial Yoke in 1947. The Congress Party, the Socialist Party and the Manipur Krishak Sabha with a bulk of Independent candidates contested for the Legislative Assembly in 1947, under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947. During this period, the Manipuris became fully acquainted with political conditions of the country. They have earned a good experiences regarding the defects and the demerits of a monarchical system of Government in Manipur. As a matter of fact the process of political development was dragged by the monarchical system of Government. Inspite of many criticisms against the British Colonialism, one good advantage was the creation of a common political consciousness or patriotism among the people of Manipur. This spirit of patriotism and consciousness helped in achieving independence for India. After independence, a larger Indian Union consisting of provinces and princely states was formed. In the process of integration of the princely states, Manipur also got merged into the Indian Union on 15th October 1949. Under the Constitution of India which came into force on 26th January 1950, Manipur was given the status of Part C state and it was ruled by a Chief Commissioner. The popular Ministry ceased to function, the State Legislative Assembly dissolved and the entire administration was taken over by the Chief Commissioner.
The new system of administration under part C state category was not to the expectation and satisfaction of the people. The Advisory Council had no legislative, executive and judicial powers in the real sense of the term. So the people started to demand for the restoration of responsible Government established in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act 1947.

The people of Manipur were influenced by the democratic practices established in other states of India. People were successful in throwing out the imperialist, dictators and authoritarian regimes which were against the interest of the people. The members of the Advisory Council were not elected by the people and they did not possess any power in the decision making process of the state. From the 1950s up to the middle of 1960s, the political picture in Manipur was characterised by the demand for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur.

Upto 1967, the political activities was shown only by the National Political parties. But in the 1960s, regional political parties emerged with a strong force demanding autonomy and higher political status for Manipur. The main cause for the emergence of such regional political parties was due to the policy of the Congress Government at the centre.
The centre still turned deaf ear to the basic problems of this small mountain region thereby neglecting the people's legitimate demands. The demands of the people like the removal of Arm Forces Special Power Act 1958, the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, to control the Inner Line Permit system under the Bengal Frontier Regulation Act 1873 and other safeguards to preserve the ethnic identity of the Manipuris were not taken seriously by the Central Government. With this political background in the state, a regional political party called Manipur People's Party was formed in 1968 by some politicians who had recently defected from the Congress Party. The main objective of the party was to safeguard the interest of Manipur for its political, economic and social upliftment and for preserving its cultural and racial identity within the constitutional framework of the country.

In the late 1960s i.e. in 1969, the demand for a full fledged statehood was joined by the Congress Party when Manipur was under President's rule. At last, the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha announced, on the 3rd September, 1970, the acceptance of granting statehood to Manipur in principle. And Manipur became a full fledged state of India on 21st January 1972.
The Assembly elections were held in February 1972 and popular coalition Ministry led by MPP was formed. As a full fledged legislative body, the 60 membered Manipur State Legislative Assembly discussed about the socio-political and economic conditions of the state and passed Bills for the necessary socio-economic and political changes and development in the state. All the problematic matters of the society of Manipur like religion, (Hinduism or Meiteism) are discussed thoroughly by this legislative body. And with proper amendments and changes, the Assembly passed bills in various matters of socio-economic and political nature.

Some of the important bills that became Acts were Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, Panchayati Raj Act, Secondary Education Act, Shri Shri Govindajee Temple Board Act etc.

A democratic welfare state cannot adopt an attitude of indifference to the challenges of social inequality and economic injustice. With the equal treatment and attitude of the government towards the subjects as well as with the full participation of the people, the society changes smoothly and to a better future. The political conditions of the society has a great role in the input as well as
output functions of the social system. In a simple sense, the society cannot change or develop without the political change.

In ancient time, one could hardly differentiate between the social system and the political system. All the social structures, norms etc, were handled by the ruler. But the political system as a part of the social system, had not been in a stagnant position, it changed from time to time. With the developing and changing of the political system, the ruler or the authority also started to set free the subjects of the society. And the subjects started to enjoy their rights step by step, slowly and steadily.

The political participation of the people does not end with the elections. The political activities constantly go on between the voters and the legislators on the one hand and the legislators and the local leaders on the other. The legislators who fail to do so or who do not maintain public contact has lesser chance for victory in future elections. Not only the political issues, but even non-political problems become the bases of political movement. Meetings are organised, processions taken out, memoranda submitted and demonstrations held. Such type of political participation as a part of social changes and developments are going on in every city in some form or the other in almost all the time.
In earlier times, Manipur being a monarchical state did not have political development and political participation in the democratic sense of the time. The arrival of Hinduism in the 18th century marked a great change in the social and political matters in Manipur. The king or the Maharaja was the supreme ruler of the country. The subjects also regarded him as a God-sent person. As Hinduism strengthened the position and the authority of the king, he exercised supremacy over social and political matters. In course of time, the young educated Manipuris were influenced by the prevailing world political atmosphere and more especially by the national movement in India.

In 1940s, youths, students etc also started to participate in the political movement in Manipur. The Manipur Mahila Sanmelleni was reconstituted with new college educated girls who returned from Bengal. The Manipur Student Federation was also established. Now, in this stage, the political counteraction also started. As an answer to the Student Federation, the Manipur Students Congress was organised and formed.

The social and political situation in Manipur from 1950 onwards was characterised by a sense of resentment with different demands and pressures. As a result of the step motherly attitude of the Indian Government, the Revolutionary
Nationalist Party raised the banner of independence on the Polo ground Imphal in 1939. They were resentful of Manipur's loss of responsible Government and independence.

Voluntary organisations, pressure groups, youth forums etc played a very important part in the political as well as social process of Manipur.

As a reaction of the socio-economic conditions, the 'All Manipur Students Union' was formed on 28th August 1965. In addition to the cause of the students, this Union have been trying to tackle all the problems which may be harmful to the society. In Manipur, there are a number of voluntary organisations and clubs, which are non-political bodies. They are giving help to the Government directly or indirectly. The government from time to time also welcome and help such type of voluntary organisations. Because such organisations have a great role in the socio-economic and political development of the society. There are also a number of multinational bodies which are ready for giving help to such organisations. A voluntary organisation of any state can contact with other foreign country or multinational company or organisation for aid.

In present day world HIV infection and AIDS has become very common throughout the world. Manipur is also affected by
this disease. The government alone will not be able to solve these problems. The voluntary organisations has to take up steps for the prevention and for providing safeguard to this disease. Some of the Voluntary Associations which are working in this direction are the Manipur Voluntary Health Association, Imphal, Rural Development Organisation, Lamshang, Imphal, Manipur Rural Institute, Imphal, SEWA, Imphal, Citizen's Volunteers Training Centre, Palace Compound, Imphal etc. World Health Organisation and other health forums are also giving help for such programmes to these associations.

Groups of people, in the name of ethnicity, community or religion form organisations or associations to pursue their objectives. Some of them are Apokpa Manup, Imphal, the Shree Shree Govindajee Temple Board, Imphal, the Kuki Christian Association of Churachandpur, Churachandpur, Manipur etc. They have contributed in the fields of social development in the form of community development programmes, establishment of mission schools, prevention of drug problems by means of counselling and organising camps etc.

The well maintenance of the status of women in society through social educational services and cultural activities so as to understand the place of morality in social order with the help of mutual understanding and friendship is very
much needed in Manipur society. A number of women's associations was established as a voluntary socio-cultural organisations for the betterment of the women of Manipur and India at large.

The working of the democratic system of Government can be successful only when the people are in support of the political system. If there is no response from the people, then the government however democratic cannot be successful. Eversince 1948, Manipuris have exercised their franchise, and the electoral and voting behaviour are influenced by social factors from time to time. The influence of the social factors towards the electoral behaviour can be known from the results of different elections held from time to time.

The peoples, not individually, but in groups have been taking a tremendous role in the social and political changes of Manipur. Peoples from clubs, associations and societies in every nook and corner of Manipur for the social and political development of the society. Different clubs or associations of different areas also sometimes cooperate among themselves and try to tackle the problems of the society.

The demand for the inclusion of Manipur Language in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution became very
strong and serious from the beginning of the 1980s. In the 1970s, there was a great tense in Assam, neighbouring state of Manipur in connection with the foreigners issue. This issue has given a highlight to the Manipuris. As a result, there was also foreigners issue in Manipur. The important impact of this foreigners issue in Manipur was the awareness of the people to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity.

A number of youth organisations have started to appeal to the people to preserve their cultural identity and traditions. They have pointed out the disadvantages of imitation of the culture and traditions of the people of other countries in the form of dress, religion etc. With this new trend regarding the preservation of identity, the demand for the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eight Schedule became very strong. Earlier this demand was confined only to the political parties, but in the 1980s people joined in this demand very strongly through clubs, voluntary associations etc. As a result, in the Assembly election of 1989, the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution became a very important electoral issue. The candidates and the workers of the political parties as well as independents could not sideline this issue. Students organisations and different youth forums convened meetings in most constituencies inviting candidates to give
their opinion on this issue. A Coordinating Committee was also formed on 7th January 1990 consisting of Congress(I), B.J.P., M.P.P., C.P.I(M), Congress(S). Election was over, but the issue was not materialised. So strike, bandhs, hartals etc. called by different groups from different areas characterised the social and political scene of Manipur. Different groups and organisations formed the Manipuri Language Demand Coordinating Committee to pursue the demand more vigorously.

The political parties also took a keen interest in the social phenomena. The Manipur unit of the B.J.P. has called a 14 hour Manipur Bandh from 5 a.m. on Thursday, 20th August, in protest against the non-introduction of the Bill for including Manipuri in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution in the Parliamentary session held in August, 1992. At last the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (C.C.P.A) took a decision on 17th June 1992 for the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eight Schedule. The meeting of the C.C.P.A. was attended by opposition leaders of the Lok Sabha, L.K. Advani, opposition leader of the Rajya Sabha, Jaipal Reddy (Janata Party), CPI(M) member Shaihuddin Chaudhuri, Cheturanand Misra CPI, and some ruling members of the Indian Parliament.\(^2\)

The bill for the inclusion of three new languages - Nepali, Manipuri and Konkani in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution was passed in both Houses of Parliament. In both the Lok Sabha as well as the Rajya Sabha, the Bill was passed without any opposition. In the Lok Sabha all the 343 members supported the Bill, while in the Upper House it was passed without a dissension and all the 130 members present, voted in favour.³ This shows the legitimacy of the language for inclusion in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

It was informed to the members of the Manipur State Legislative Assembly session on 15th September 1992 that the Indian President Dr. Sangkar Dayal Sharma has given his assent to the Bill for the inclusion of Manipuri, Nepali and Konkani languages in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution.⁴

Thus the social and political changes in Manipur had undergone many changes since the pre-British days. In the pre-British days, it may be said that the social and political changes went hand in hand. The king was the supreme ruler in social as well as in political matters.

The people of Manipur had no voice in social and political matters of the state. This trend has changed in a different form when Manipur came under the British control in 1891.

Important political matters, like defence, foreign affairs, communication, coinage etc. were in the hands of the British whereas the internal administration including social matters were given into the hands of the Maharaja. The policies of the Maharaja in social matters especially in religious aspects affected the people to a great extent. The people who did not follow or observe the religious norms of Hinduism were punished severely. As a reaction, Hijn Irabot who married a princess of the royal circle came forward to fight for the cause of the people against the authority or the Maharaja. Simultaneously the people under the leadership of Irabot demanded political changes in favour of democratic government instead of monarchy.

After Indian Independence, with the introduction of Parliamentary democracy the people of Manipur hoped for a better social and political changes. The social and political aspects underwent changes in a loose directions. The Meiteis, adopting Meiteism, fought for the revival of Meitei culture, religion etc. So there was frequent interaction between Meiteis embracing Hinduism and Meiteis who still adopts Meiteism. But on the whole, the Manipuris fought for
the preservation of old social norms, culture of Manipur like the preservation of Kangla etc. On the other hand, the political changes in Manipur was brought mainly by the demands of the people led by political parties, for higher political status of Manipur. When compared the social and political changes from 1947 to 1972 with the changes in the 1970s and 1980s, we can say that the pace of political changes was fast in the earlier period than the social change. From the middle of 1970s and in the 1980s, the removal of Assam Rifles from Kangla became very important social and political issue. Different groups and associations like, Peoples Movement Committee of Manipur, Peoples Democratic Movement, Manipuri National Federation, Poranlan Apunba etc. took a great role on this issue. There were number of strikes, bandhs and hartals for removing the Assam Rifles from the Kangla.

There are more than 108 laiphams (Worshiping Centre) of traditional Meitei deities. In the process of the demand, different groups organised one body called 'Kangla Kanba Lup' in 23rd June, 1991. The main aim of this Lup was to preserve cultural and traditional heritages of Manipur. Such a great pressures from all sides of the masses, the Government was unable to remain in silence. As a result Kangla was open
to the masses on 13th August 1992. Thus social and political changes always interacted with one another. And in the process of interaction both influence with one another. The study of political changes in Manipur cannot be complete without the study of social change and vice-versa.