CHAPTER – V

ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR
In a democratic country the political formula of the political parties is best manifested in the electoral behaviour. Election offers a very important political situation to political actors. If we analyse the electoral behaviour of individuals including the politicians, in election we understand clearly the important role and level of political participation. It is this behaviour which determines periodically, continually or frequently the taking or giving of political power in various senses of the term on various scales. In this sense, electoral behaviour may be said to be a very basic feature or attribute of political behaviour. Voting behaviour is a behaviour which indicates the voters' choices, preferences, alternatives, agreements, concerns, ideologies, programmes and so on in respect of the various questions or issues on which the various elections of fought.¹

The successful working of democracy largely depends on the effectiveness of the various elements involved in the electoral behaviour. The role of the political parties, the attitude, behaviour and role of the candidates put up by the political parties in the elections, the nature of the role of the party workers under the control and supervision of the party organisations and candidates constitute very important aspect of electoral

¹ Jangam, R.T., Political Sociology, 1980, p.199.
behaviour. The next important aspect is the essential features of the election campaign conducted by various political parties and candidates. The last and the most important is the behaviour of the voters in choosing their favourite candidates. If one studies the electoral behaviour, one has to take into account the above mentioned factors. Then only one can arrive at the real political behaviour and can even predict the future democratic, political process in the country.

**Election Campaign**

There are many methods of election campaign. However, some of the common methods of election campaign are :-

i) Door to door campaign,

ii) Flag-flying contest,

iii) Public meeting,

iv) Community feast,

v) Election procession,

vi) Role of money and

vii) Role of Press, Radio and Television, etc.

On the eve of election i.e. just 15 to 20 days before the elections, the candidates along with party workers, both male and female usually go for
door-to-door campaign. The door-to-door campaign is one of the effective methods of campaign in Manipur. The candidates and party workers are the main agencies. Educated youngsters also played an important role. They are supported by political workers, neighbours, relatives, friends and voluntary candidate organisations, etc. They distributed manifestoes of a particular political party or to the voters with an appeal to vote. In addition, they also pasted leaflets on the wall of the houses voters. This method enables the candidate to convince the voters better as he has direct contact with the voters.

The voting behaviour was greatly influenced by these personal contact in all the elections held during 1980 to 1995. The technique of door-to-door campaign or personal contact with the voters is superior in its effectiveness because it imparts a personal touch. But due to the size of the electorate and its scattered location with bad communication particularly in the hills, it was not possible to make this technique on a wider scale in the hill constituencies. But in the rural and urban valley constituencies, it is easy to conduct door-to-door access in all around campaign because of good communication and with the help of party workers, social workers and elites of the concerned constituencies.
Flag-flying contest:

Flag-flying contest is very popular in Manipur. It is commonly believed that if a particular house flutters the flag of a particular political party or candidate at the top of a bamboo on his house, the family is identified as supporter of that particular party or concerned candidate. It has visual impact. The workers of other political parties normally did not enter into that particular house for canvassing. But it was not certain and difficult to predict the number of votes likely to be secured by the particular political party or candidate on the basis of the number of flags. In the last general elections beginning from 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1995 we have seen maximum number of flags of the Congress party and flags of the Manipur Peoples Party in many constituencies of both the hills and the valley. Other party flags are rarely seen. The party workers, youths and students pasted postures on the walls of the local clubs, streets in the bazar area and in the walls of the shops and public places, etc. In some place also, we see party flags and postures hanging with thread across the road or on the branches of the trees and on the body of the vehicles. When a comparison is made amongst the various national and regional political parties in the elections held during the period of the study i.e., from 1980 to 1995, quantitatively the
Congress-I tops the list. The other political parties are poor in the posture campaign.

However, the flag of Janata Dal, the BJP and the CPI were also seen in large numbers. Among the regional political parties the flags of MPP were seen in maximum number in every constituency of the valley. In 1995 Assembly elections the party flag of FPM were also seen in many constituencies of the valley. The Samata Party and the KNA contested elections mostly in hill constituencies. These parties also participated in the flag flying contest.

Public meetings:

Public meetings play an important role in election campaign. It was generally organised by party workers, social organisers and educated youths. In the meeting, speakers expressed their views, aims and objectives of the party to influence the voters. Loud speakers were generally used during the course of the meetings.

Another peculiar feature is to announce, explain and address through loud speakers in the jeeps or other small vehicles. It was mostly seen in the valley constituencies and not in the hills. The practice continued till late in the night without caring for the disturbances created for the sleeping voters.
The party workers appealed to the voters to cast their valuable votes for their candidates concerned.

The law prescribed by the Election Commission provides that no person shall convene, hold or attend any public meeting in any polling area during the period of 48 (fortyeight) hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll for any election in the polling area.²

In the hill constituencies, the leader of the party or the chief of the village or Khullakpa usually decided the venue of election meeting. They gathered and discussed about the party and the candidate. In such cases, the voice of the Khullakpa always carried a meaningful understanding.

The speeches delivered by the candidates and their supporters in the election meetings always influenced the minds of the voters. Sometimes local clubs organised meetings in which the candidates of different constituencies were invited to speak. However, one does not come across usually with any untoward accident in these meeting. The electorate accepts the game in a sporting spirit.

The candidate was usually present in all the meetings organised by his party workers and delivered speeches highlighting the existing social and political situations. He also assured the electorate that if elected he would devote all his energy and mind in order to promote the welfare of the people.

Community Feast:

It is an old method of election campaign. Voters of a constituency were invited to a community lunch in the traditional Manipuri style. The candidate tried to touch the minds of the voters before or after the lunch through personal contacts. After lunch the voters were invited to an open air drama (Sumang Lila or Dance and Music). This method was mainly applied in some of the rural constituencies of the valley in 1980 and 1984 Assembly elections. This method of election campaign is very expensive. Of course, very few candidates can afford this costly method of campaign.

In the hills too, the party workers arranged pigs or cows for the leaders and voters. The leaders of the important villages were invited to a community feast. The candidate tried to touch the heart of the voters. But now-a-days as the people are educated and politically conscious this method of campaign does not come as an effective means in some areas of the hills.
Election Procession or Rally:

Election procession or rally was mostly seen in the valley constituencies than the hill constituencies. This technique of campaign was mainly used in urban and rural constituencies when the date of election was knocking at the door i.e. about seven or eight days before the election. The candidates usually led such election rallies. If rallies were organised in more than one constituency for a particular candidate, cut out picture of the candidate was in the front of the election rally. The aim of the candidate was to show the majority strength of the voters in the constituency. In the procession the voters carried flags, symbols, flastoons and appealed to vote for their party candidate. Many men, women, boys and girls participated in the campaign. The rival parties usually felt anxious about the majority of the voters. But it was not sure that such a candidate would succeed in the election. It may have a dramatic effect on the side of the candidate and the rival parties. It is a collective technique for catching votes.

In 1980 Assembly election in 28-Thanga Constituency, there was a mass rally of electorates in support of Shri H. Kangjamba Singh, Independent candidate. Many old men, women and educated or uneducated voters participated in the rally. People were surprised to see about the huge
member participating in the rally. Other parties thought that Shri H. Kangjamba Singh would win the vote. This was cent percent true that Shri H. Kangjamba Singh, an independent candidate was elected. Similarly in 1995 Assembly elections in Naoriya Pakhanglakpa constituency, election procession was held in favour of Shri W. Angou Singh, Congress candidate. Large number of voters including women participated in the rally. As a result he got successful in the election. Hence election rally or mass rally played a very important role for the candidate to win the election.

Role of Money:

Like other states of India, money plays a very important role in the Assembly as well as Parliamentary elections in Manipur. Money factor in election was one important aspects in electioneering. Before or after the date of nomination till the election results are out, a candidate spent money as a major instrument for winning election.

A major malady in the operation of election process in the 1980s and 1990s was the rackless use of money received by the political parties and individual candidates from the big or rich houses, businessmen and other individuals from time to time for the furtherance of the election prospects. It may be included or may not be included in the election expenditure limit
fixed by Election Commission. The step rise in election expenditures had legitimised the money power to play a crucial role for the success of a particular candidate or a political party.

Consequently, money power which in most cases uncounted black money has deeply eroded the trust of voters that the people’s will has been fairly recorded in the elections.³

Purchase of voters through money had become an open secret. Candidates through his workers very often offered money to the voters. In the past elections before 1980 Assembly and Parliamentary elections poor voters were reported to have received money ranging from Rs. 10 to 20/- per vote. But after the 1980 elections it was reported that money received by the voters ranged from Rs.20 to Rs.50/-. And in the 1990s, the amount of money offered to the voters by the candidates raised to Rs.100/- and in some polling boots higher amount i.e. more than Rs.100/- per voters was offered especially in Assembly Elections, 1995.

The two or three days before the date of election were the most crucial period for the distribution of money to the voters. Thus money is the most

elusive factor in an election. An attempt was made to examine this factor in some constituencies during the period of the study. The following points may be noted:

First – Money had become an important means of bargaining between certain sections of the electorate, the candidates or the party. Expectation to receive payment for voters by party workers was considered as a routine matter in every elections both Assembly and Parliamentary. The non-committed voters continued to wait for money from the candidates till the polling day. They usually did not cast their votes if not given money. They considered it more important than the development of the constituency or the party manifestos. These voters did not consider the voting right as a political right but as a 'deal'. In some voters a mixture of the two attitudes was also found. There were also cases where money was taken from both the parties, the vote being given not to the highest bidder but on the basis of other considerations.

Secondly, the most usual form of payment in cash or in kind was to organisations, welfare institutions or groups etc. Most of the parties used this method in order to win over the voters of the locality or institutions or organisations. It is found that giving money by itself did not produce the
desire result. It succeeded only when it is used as a timely instrument of election strategy. It is a part of master plan for winning election.

Election are becoming expensive and almost serious candidates needs “black money” to finance the campaign, yet another cause of worry is the increasing role of musclemen in capturing election booths. Ballot papers of Moirang constituency in Bishenpur District were taken away from a postman on 18th February, 1995 afternoon by unknown persons.4 In the 12th Lok Sabha election 1998 also, there were instances to disrupt polling by carrying off ballot papers or burning of election materials etc.

On 7th May 1996 four armed persons took away poll related papers and ballot boxes from polling stations 8/13; Telou within Lamlai Assembly Constituency at about 1.30 p.m. As a result polling was discontinued.

At the polling station 46/25-Laikoi Ching Jr. High School within Sekmai Assembly Constituency some armed miscreants over-powered the polling station and made away all the polling materials.

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4 The Telegraph, 19.2.95.
Some unknown miscreants burnt ballot papers at 17/1 Awang Leikinthabi Polling Station. Election materials were destroyed by exploding a bomb at 8/9 at Chalou Central High School within Lamlai Assembly Constituency.

Similar incidents happened at polling stations 8/19 and 8/20 at Nongdren L.P. School under Lamlao Police; 26/27 Madan Mohon, Kongba, 5/19 Children School, Khongman Takhok Mapan Primary School, Uchekon Khunou Primary School, Uchekon etc.\(^5\)

**Poll Violence**: Poll violence assumed vast dimensions. For instance in the 10\(^{th}\) Assembly Election held in 1995, the poll campaign in Manipur were not without share of violence.

On February 5, 1995 five Meitei extremists were killed in an encounter leading to a series of bomb attacks in Imphal area. Later unknown people threw a bomb at the Police Outpost of Kwaikethel. The police personnel were injured. Similarly an unknown persons hurled a bomb at the police Outpost at Singjamieei but there were no causalities.\(^6\)


\(^6\) Chowdhury, N.K., Assembly Election, 1994-95, p.211.
On February, 1995 one person was killed in the Kangpokpi Assembly Constituency in Senapati District in an encounter with the Security personnel. The man who was travelling with his friends in a jeep with a Congress flag refused to stop when asked to halt by the Security personnel. It is said that the man opened fire when asked to halt at the Security man. He was killed and three of his friends were arrested.

On February 17, 1995 two Security personnel on poll duty were shot dead and eight were injured by unknown persons.  

Besides, there were many more incidents. S. Madhumangaol Sharma, a candidate of BJP was shot dead at his residence at Sagolband Tera Bazar by some unknown peoples. M. Deben Singh, sitting MLA and a candidate of MPP for 1995 in Lamsang Constituency was also killed by some unknown persons.

A Congress worker whose name was Kojjam Hemanta Singh (36) S/o (L) Nilamani Singh, Yumnam Khunou was shot dead at Mongjam

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7 Freedom, 21.2.95.
Khuningthek Tera Makhong at Heingang Police Station by some unknown persons on 26th February, 1995.8

The office of the Sub-Deputy Collector, Bishenpur was set fire by some unknown persons.9 And the office of Joint Electoral Office, Lamphel was bomb blasted on 15th February, 1995 by some unknown youths.10

Press, Radio and Television:

Some of the political parties like the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India and Regional Party like the Manipur People’s Party have their own its daily newspapers. The newspaper of the Congress Party is the ‘Simanta Patrika’ and the daily news of the C.P.I. is the ‘Khollao’ and that of the Manpur Peoples Party is ‘Ehou’. The party or the candidate published their political aims and objectives in their concerned newspapers with their respective election symbols allotted by the Election Commission of India. Through the newspapers, the candidates appealed to the voters to cast their votes in their favour. But on the whole newspapers do not exercise any decisive influence upon the voters. Because the percentage of the newspaper readers in the rural areas is very low. However,

8 Poknapham, 28.1.95.
9 Ibid., 15.2.95.
10 Ibid., 16.2.95.
a small percentage of floating voters may come under the influence of such mass media like newspapers. But in the urban and semi urban areas the number of newspaper readers is very high in comparison to the rural areas. The newspapers of the political parties exercised a great impact in the urban and semi urban areas only.

Broadcasting as an agent of mass media has become comprehensive and stimulating means of communication in modern democracy. The political parties desire to make use of this media as an election earning means of poll prospects. The Election commission and the elected members, political parties and other leaders have discussed about the importance of such media to acquaint the electorate with the manifestoes and machines of election. It may be recalled that on the eve of First General Election 1951-52 the Election Commission examined the feasibility of broadcasting the election news and information through AIR. In 1956 the Election Commission formulated a scheme, suggesting that all recognised political parties should have a basic quota of minutes of broadcasting time to the electorate through the AIR. As the Government did not display much interest in the matter, the plan did not materialise.\textsuperscript{11}

However, the possibility of affording broadcasting facilities to political parties was again approved on the eve of third General Elections. Accordingly, the Election Commission circulated a scheme on December 1, 1961 giving the broadcasting facility to the Sixth National Political Parties namely the Indian National Congress, the Communist Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh, etc. A Committee consisting of a person from each political party participating in the broadcasting programme was set up with the Chief Election Commission as its Convenor. But the scheme was rejected by the Praja Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India. Efforts were made during 1966-72 but there was no progress.

The initiative in this matter was taken for the first time in the country by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the AIR in 1980 during the Janata rule in consultation with other political parties regarding the frequency, duration and content of election broadcast.¹²

Accordingly, facility for broadcasting on TV and RADIO to all recognised political parties contesting the election were given. The

¹² Ibid., p.107.
opposition parties demanded that the Election Commission should have power to monitor official media from the date of notification to the date of poll so as to avoid undue advantage. Moreover the opposition parties demanded autonomy of AIR and doordarshan. The Election Commission suggested to the Government of India in 1985 for subsidies hiring time on TV and Ratio. The Government rejected the proposal in November 1987 including the demand for autonomy. However, the Election Commission and the opposition parties stressed the need of formulating a fair policy on mass media.

In Manipur for the first time the recognised political parties got the chance of appealing to the voters through Radio in 1995. In the Parliamentary elections, 1996, 15 minutes time was given to the contesting candidates of the recognised political parties for broadcasting through Telelvision. Simultaneously, the candidates of recognised political parties got the chance of appealing to the voters through Radio. Such mass media like Radio and Television did not exercise any decisive influence to the voters. But it enlightened the minds of the electorate. A small percentage of non-committed voters might have come under such influence.
The talks given by the contesting candidates through Television and Radio did not exercise any decisive influence to the voters. It, of course, enlightened the minds of the educated and non-committed voters. Out of these, a very small percentage were influenced in exercising their franchise.

**Participation of Voters:**

The Research Scholar tried to assess the degree of political participation of voters in the last Assembly Elections, 1995. The degree of political participation has been termed as ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of political participation</th>
<th>Nature of political participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. High</td>
<td>Members of political parties and those who cast their vote on the basis of ideology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Medium</td>
<td>Those who cast their vote on the basis of personality and relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Low</td>
<td>Those who do not cast vote due to ignorance about the candidate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the above three groups of voters, majority belonged to the second category i.e. candidate oriented. The number of voters who cast their
votes on the basis of party principles and ideologies were lesser. This kind of electoral trends had given rise to the emergence of Independent candidates coming out successful.

Out of 159 candidates in 1980 Assembly elections 19 seats were secured by the Independents. In the Assembly elections 1984 out of 192 Independent candidates contested 21 were elected. But there were a change in the next Assembly elections 1990. Out of 40 (forty) Independent candidates contested, only one was elected. In the Assembly elections 1995, there were as many as 62 Independent candidates in the electoral battle. Only three candidates were elected.

In the Assembly elections 1995, 80 per cent of the voters exercised their franchise. The reasons for non-participation in voting of the remaining 20 per cent were due to many factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nobody approach</td>
<td>10 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Physical limitation</td>
<td>4 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Out of station</td>
<td>3 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>No included in voter list</td>
<td>3 p.c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decision for voting - To a Candidate:

The voters took time in choosing or deciding their own candidates. Majority of the voters observed the electoral trends changing from time to time, from one constituency to another constituency, the attitude and the activities of the candidates and their workers. They usually decided to cast their votes to a particular candidate or candidates on the eve of elections. Most of the voters followed their own judgement. The following table shows how decision was taken by the voters in the Assembly elections 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Own judgement</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Head of family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Influence of others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100 p.c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figure shows that 60 p.c. of the voters followed their own judgement. 25 p.c. of voters were influenced by the youngsters of the families, 10 p.c. of voters exercised their vote on the advise of the head of the family. The percentage of voters influenced by others were only 5 per cent.
Consideration in voting for a particular candidate:

Voting is based on personal merit, ideology, affiliation with other political parties. The following table shows the percentage of votes polled on the basis stated above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Personal merit</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Affiliation with political party</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20 p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100 p.c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus it is found that majority of the voters cast their votes on personal Merit. The percentage of voters who cast their vote on the basis of Ideology is low when compared with personal Merit. Some floating voters were gained by the other party workers and candidates by means of money power.

Impact of National and Regional Politics:

The Thanga Assembly constituency in Bishnupur district had an impact of both national and regional politics. Because the contesting candidates belongs to both national and regional political parties. The political leaders, the candidates, the political workers and the social workers
of both the political parties deeply involved themselves in the electoral scene of the constituency. The voters always expressed their desire that their elected MLA should join in the formation of Government irrespective of regional political party or national political party he belongs to. The contested candidates were not inferior to one another qualitatively. After examining the electoral trend in Thanga constituency, one can conclude that the voters always felt the impact of national and regional politics. The voters closely examined the political trend at the national as well as at the state level and formed their own political opinion about the party or parties likely to form government in the Centre and in the State.

**Role of Regionalism in voting behaviour in Manipur:**

If frustration arises due to continuous neglect of a particular region by the ruling authorities, people began to think for their region only. Regionalism means love for a particular region or area in preference to the country or to the state as a whole. K.J. Azam defines regionalism as a subsidiary process of political integration in India. It is manifestation of those residual elements, which do not find expression in the national policy and national culture, and being excluded from the centrality of the new policy, express themselves in political discontent and political exclusionism.
It would include forces that the gravitational or the centripetal forces of a society to absorb, assimilate and internalise.  

Regionalism is not a new phenomena in Manipur. In British days, Manipur began to think for self rule because Manipur was under the British rule since 1891. After merging Manipur with the Indian Union, the feeling of regionalism arose. Regionalism is based of two types i.e. subjective and objective. The subjective components of regionalism are customs, traditions, art, language, literature, social heritage, belief, attitude and values related to Manipuris. The objectives components are the territorial and the environmental complex of the Manipuris.

This feeling of regionalism in the mind of the voters greatly helped the Manipur Peoples' Party to capture sizable number of Assembly seats in the elections of 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1995.

Political information:

We may now turn to political information as voting behaviour differential. At the outset, it may be worthwhile to define political information and identify its scope in the specific content of the present

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13 Azam, K.J., Political aspects of National Integration, 1980, p.82.
study. Political information is factual in character and relates to one or other aspects of the political processes and institutions. Political information is to be distinguished from the attitudes and opinion of the respondents in regard to political issues. The scope of political information has been rather limited. The political information relating to elections may broadly classified into six categories:

a) Knowledge of the date of election,
b) Knowledge of being a voter,
c) Identification of a party symbols and candidates,
d) Knowledge about sitting M.Ps and MLAs,
e) Familiarity with poll verdict, and
f) Problems pertaining to the nation and the constituency.\(^{14}\)

The respondents or the voters should have the knowledge of the date of election, about the candidates, the political parties and symbols. It may be through self knowledge or it may be through public information like mass media, election campaign, etc. Voting behaviour of the electorate is by large

or partially influenced by the information gathered through radio, mass media, election campaign, meetings, discussions, etc.

On the other hand, there are similarities in the electoral behaviour of both the valley and the hills. During the time of election campaign in the Hills Areas a loud speaker mobile team moves from place to place in and around within the constituency distributing leaflets among the people. In the rural areas of the Hill, the electors had to follow their respective candidates for piece-meal of schemes and beneficiaries. The political parties and Independents published attractive manifestoes before the election. It has a great impact in the mind of the voters.

The candidates in the hills adopt the same method of election campaign. The main feature of the election campaign are holding of public meetings, house to house campaign, poster campaign and public feast etc. The candidates moves from one village to another while canvassing for vote. The village Chief summon public meeting whenever any candidate visited the place. With the permission of the village Chief, the candidates expressed his desire for the well-being of the people. The voters listen the speech of the candidate patiently. Sometimes, questions are put for clarification in a constructive manner. This inter-action between a candidate and a voter
proved to be very fruitful. The villagers welcome all the candidates. In turn the candidate offered a big feast for the villagers. The party workers and Agents went from house to house to seek for vote of the candidate. Posture campaign was not a new thing in the Phungyar Constituency. Banners and flags can be seen on the top of the houses.

**Voting behaviour in the hills:**

For the electoral purposes the state has been divided into sixty single member constituencies of which 40 lie in the central valley, 19 in the hills, and one in the Barak basin. All the hill constituencies have been reserved for Scheduled Tribes. One of the valley constituencies i.e. Sekmai has been reserved for Scheduled Caste. The rest 40 constituencies are general constituencies.

The reserved constituencies are mostly populated by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. The valley constituencies are mostly populated by the Meiteis, the Muslims, the Brahmins, the Kshetries and the Rajkumars. The political behaviour of the electorate had differed from district to district and particularly in between the valley and the hills.

In the tribal belt the electoral behaviour was more on community lines. The tribal councils influence the voters and in many cases they field
their own candidates. The political participation of the Scheduled Tribes in the elections have been much greater than the Scheduled Caste because of their numerical strength and dominance of the socio-politic of their region.

In the hills, the voting behaviour of the electorate was much affected by the clan prejudices and preferences.

Factors like religion, race, caste or clan, language, etc. are influencing the voting behaviour of the voters. Though it is very much against the electoral law, it is still practised all over India as well as in Manipur.

The church in the tribal areas had played a deciding role in the shaping of political behaviour of the people. In the general elections held from 1980 to 1995, the candidate belonging to a particular church had a greater chance of getting more votes than those of other denominations. The voters as the active members of the church like the pastors, church elders, etc. usually judged the candidates from the angle of their religious behaviour and personal moral character and cast their votes for the candidate who bears a good moral character.

16 Ibid., p.56.
17 View of K. Gailangam, Project Officer, ACEE.
Clan factors also played a decisive role in influencing the electoral behaviour in the hill areas. A person belonging to a particular clan usually had cast his/her vote to the candidate of his own clan. The youths seem to have more respect for their elder’s ideas and opinions. They usually accept the opinions of the elder as final and vote for their candidates according to their wishes.

Besides, the members of youth clubs, students, union and various social organisations met separately to decide their support for a particular candidate. In this way, the voting behaviour of the electorate was influenced by these organisations. The moral character and personality of the candidate was also a very important factor determining the voting behaviour of the voters in the hills.

Majority of the women in the hills did not exercise their own choice regarding the selection of candidates. They usually followed the voting pattern set by the menfolk and leaders of the villages.

**Voting behaviour in the valley:**

The valley constituencies consist of urban and rural constituencies. The voters in the urban constituencies are by far well educated and well
informed than the voters in the rural constituencies. The characteristics of
the urban voters may be described as follows:

1. In an urban constituency the voters generally prefer to remain outside
the orbit of party politics. Only a fraction of them were having the
party affiliation.

2. Voters in general were enlightened for reasons of higher literacy rate
and their connections with public services. Their awareness, not open
commitment, was relatively high.

3. Majority of the voters in the urban constituencies were committed
voters. They were more or less immune from cross-pressurisation and
suffer less from alienation and anxiety. They had already chosen their
candidates in whose favour they were to vote.

4. Most of the voters judge the contestants from their personal merits
and images. Personality factor was of dominant consideration. Caste
and wealth could not influence the electoral behaviour of the voters.

5. The urban voters were not politically involved and avoid participation
in practical politics. They were more job-oriented and remained free
from political activities.
6. The voters except a few were not well aware of the ideologies and programmes of the political parties and were not much ideologically oriented but had sufficient information about the candidates.

7. The urban voters were more interested in the national politics. Their preference for the all India political parties and dislike for the regional political parties may be viewed in this perspective.

8. The urban voters were polite and peaceful than their rural counterparts. There were less of factionalism. The voters were less influenced by propaganda machinaries of the political parties.

Slightly opposite voting behaviour was the case with the rural voters. The rural voters were not politically involved to a desired degree and were not well aware of the ideologies and programmes of the political parties. But they were well acquainted with the candidates. Majority of the voters expressed their preferences to the candidates of their own locality and blood related ones. They were sometimes influenced by propaganda of political parties.

**Caste and Religion:**

In Manipur there is no caste system as understood in other parts of India. There are the Hindus, the Muslims, the Brahmans, the Kshetriyas and
the Scheduled Caste, the Scheduled Tribes, etc. These different communities have different customs and traditions inherited from the past. These customs, traditions and religions background did not affect the voting behaviour of the voters in the four Assembly elections held in 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1995. Of course in the Assembly elections of 1995, with the joining of BJP in the electoral scene, the caste factor among the Brahmins was felt in a lesser degree. Among other communities like the Meities, the Rajkumars the caste factor could not influence the voting behaviour. The candidates might belong to one religion or another, but the voters did not differentiate one candidate from another candidate on the basis of religion.

Other factors like age, sex, educational qualification, locality factor, blood relationship, personality, political experience, party principle and ideology had influenced the voters in different levels and political situations and circumstances.

As a case study, let us examine the voting behaviour in the Assembly election 1995 in two constituencies, one in the valley i.e. Thanga Constituency, Bishnupur district and another in the hills i.e. Phungyar Constituency, Ukhrul district, Manipur.
28 Thanga Constituency (Valley):

The Thanga Constituency is one of the sixth Assembly constituency in the Bishnupur District. It was formed only after Manipur attained statehood in the year 1972 by the way of delimitation. Prior to this, it was so called the Thanga Kumbi Constituency which was formed in 1948 for the first democratic election under the Manipur State Constituency Act, 1947. Now the Thanga Assembly constituency is the smallest constituency in terms of electorate in Manipur valley. It has a total electorate of 15,542 out of which 7,953 are male and 7,589 female voters. There are 23 polling stations in the constituency.

The number of candidates contested in the 28 Thanga Assembly Constituency, Manipur along with their political parties and votes polled from 1980 to 1995 are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Votes polled</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>H. Kangjamba Singh</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>3711</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>H. Sanayaima Singh</td>
<td>Janata (S)</td>
<td>2958</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>S. Ibohal Singh</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>S. Jayantakumar Singh</td>
<td>Janata</td>
<td>1398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>L. Kondum Singh</td>
<td>MPP</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>H. Sanayaima Singh</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>2628</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>S. Ibohal Singh</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>2529</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H. Kangjamba Singh</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S. Jayantakumar Singh</td>
<td>Janata</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>T. Mangibabu Singh</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S. Ibohal Singh</td>
<td>MPP</td>
<td>3210</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>H. Sanayaima Singh</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>2845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H. Kangjamba Singh</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>2786</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T. Mangibabu Singh</td>
<td>JD</td>
<td>2532</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S. Jayantakumar Singh</td>
<td>Congress (S)</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T. Mangibabu Singh</td>
<td>JD</td>
<td>4277</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>H. Sanayaima Singh</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>3414</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>S. Ibohal Singh</td>
<td>MPP</td>
<td>3310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>H. Kangjamba Singh</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>3166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the last Assembly Election 1995 the candidates belonged to different age group ranging from 48 to 55 years. H. Kangjamba Singh was
the oldest among the candidates. He was 55 years of age at the time of
election.\textsuperscript{18} Heisnam Sanayaima Singh who 50 years old at the time of
election in 1995.\textsuperscript{19} Salam Ibohal Singh was 49 years old\textsuperscript{20} whereas
Tongbram Mangibabu Singh was 48 years old age at the time of election.\textsuperscript{21}
Tongbram Mangibabu Singh was elected by defeating his three rivals. It
seems that the voters of the Thanga Constituency were wise enough in
exercising their franchise by electing different candidates in different
elections showing their preferences. Keeping in view, in the year 1980 H.
Kangjamba Singh was elected. In 1984 H. Sanayaima Singh was elected. In
1990 S. Ibohal Singh was elected and in 1995 T. Mangibabu Singh was
elected by the voters of the Thanga Constituency. It shows that there is no
impact of age in the Thanga Constituency.

43 Phungyar Constituency (Hill) :

The Phungyar Assembly Constituency is one of the Hill
Constituencies in Ukhrul District, Manipur. It was formed after Manipur
attained Statehood in 1972. Prior to this, it was so called Phungyar Phaisat

\textsuperscript{18} Interview with H. Kangjamba Singh, Ex-MLA.
\textsuperscript{19} Interview with H. Sanayaima Singh, Ex-Deputy Speaker.
\textsuperscript{20} Interview with S. Ibohal Singh, Ex-MLA.
\textsuperscript{21} Interview with T. Mangibabu Singh, MLA.
Constituency, when Manipur was a Union Territory of India. The total number of electorate has been increasing election after election. In 1995, there was a total electorate of 18,555 of which 9378 were males and 9177 females.

The number of candidates contested in the 43 Phungyar Constituency, Manipur along with their political parties and votes polled from 1980 to 1995 are given below:

**1980**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Votes polled</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rishang Keishing</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>5440</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>M.C. Ngaithingkhui</td>
<td>Janata</td>
<td>3045</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>K. Prongo</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>2281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Hungyo Ngaithingkhui</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Yamkhothang</td>
<td>Congress (U)</td>
<td>171</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1984**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Votes polled</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rishang Keishing</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>6881</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>S. Stephen</td>
<td>Congress (S)</td>
<td>5389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ngaithingkhui</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1990

1. Rishang Keishing Congress (I) 6798 Elected
2. Ngaithingkhui Hungyo Janata 4107
3. A.S. Stenien MPP 1879
4. M.C. Ngaithingkhui MHPC 381

1995

1. Rishang Keishing Congress (I) 7467 Elected
2. N. Solomon MPP 3328
3. Paul JD 2023
4. Ngaithingkhui Hungyo SP 1937
5. M.C. Leishingson IND 17

In this constituency, it seems age had played an important role in choosing the candidate. Because Rishang Keishing who was oldest candidate was elected continuously from 1980 election to 1995 Assembly election.

Sex was not an important factor in determining the voting behaviour in the Parliamentary and Assembly elections held from 1980 to 1995 in both Thanga and Phungyar Constituencies. It is observed that male candidates contested in the elections held from 1980 to 1995 in Phungyar Constituency.
Similarly, there was no female candidate in Thanga Constituency in the Assembly elections held from 1980 to 1995.

**Educational Qualification:**

The educational qualification of the candidates is one important factor, which attracts the minds of the voters in the early stage of every elections in Manipur from 1980 to 1995. The voters usually asked and enquired about the educational qualification of the candidates and discussed among themselves about the qualifications and political experiences of the candidates. And in the last phase i.e. on the eve of elections the voters were usually led by other factors rather than educational qualifications.

For example, in the Assembly elections 1980, H. Kangjamba was elected from Thanga Constituency by defeating more educationally qualified candidates namely, H. Sanayaima, Graduate and S. Ibohal, Post-graduate. But in the next Assembly election, 1984 and 1990 educational qualifications seem to be the deciding factor in choosing the candidates. In 1984 Assembly elections, H. Sanayaima, Graduate was elected by securing 2628 votes and in 1990, S. Ibohal, Post-graduate degree holder was the choice of the voters of Thanga Constituency. The same trend was repeated in 1995 Assembly elections by electing T. Mangibabu, who was Post-graduate degree holder from the same constituency.

Educational qualifications as the deciding factor in the Assembly elections can also be seen in the hill constituencies like Nungba and Chingai Constituencies. Prof. Gangmumei Kamei and Prof. M. Horam, both
University Professors got elected by defeating less educationally qualified candidates in 1990 Assembly elections from Nungba and Chingai Constituencies. On the other hand, we can see the opposite trend in the valley of Manipur. Two University Professors namely, N. Khagendra and Prof. N. Mohendra were the most educationally qualified candidates in Keishamthong and Patsoi Assembly constituencies in 1990 Assembly elections. But both were defeated by the candidates possessing lesser educational qualifications. This proves that educational qualification had no impact in the mind of the voters of Manipur valley. It was the personality and long experience in the field of politics which determined the voting behaviour in most constituencies of Manipur valley.

**Locality and Blood Relationship:**

Locality and blood relationship played an important role in voting behaviour of all voters of the constituencies in Manipur including Thanga Constituency. There are many leikais and villages in the Thanga Constituency, Manipur. The places are interlinked with roads. The voters of the leikais and villages preferred the candidate of their own areas i.e. locality. They were not guided by any party principles or ideology or any other factors. And when we compared the locality factor with blood relationship, blood relationship is more important than the local factor. The voters of the blood relationship voted to their own candidates without any consideration. They even rendered physical, mental and monetary help to them. Thus locality and blood relationship plays a very important role in
determining the voting behaviour in all the elections held during the period 1980 to 1995.

**Personality:**

The personality of a candidate was also one of the most important determining factor in the selection of the candidates by the voters. This happened in both the hills and the valley constituencies. The voters were conscious of the value of a single vote. They considered the personality of the candidates and the name of the party, which will bring the progress of the state and the constituency in particular. For example, in 40 Jiribam Constituency and 43 Phungyar Constituency Th. Debendra Singh and Rishang Keishing were elected repeatedly from 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1995 Assembly elections. This was due to the degree of personality of such MLAs. But in Thanga Constituency, personality has less impact to the mind of the voters. There are many constituencies which has the same condition. It is mostly seen in rural and semi-urban areas.

**Party Principles and Ideology:**

The principles and ideologies of the political parties are considered to be a very important factor in determining the voting behaviour of the voters. In Manipur during the period of our study i.e. from the 1980 elections to the
1995 elections, the principle and ideology of the political party did play an important role in the early stage of the electoral politics. The voters usually enquired and discussed about the ideologies of the political parties along with the name of the candidates. In the process of electioneering, the candidates and their workers focussed the attention of the voters to the ideologies and principles of the concerned party. But when they came in contact with the voters directly e.g. at the time of house to house campaign, community feast, group meetings, etc. the principles and ideologies were not discussed seriously. On the other hand, the personality factor, the local factor, the blood relationship factor were considered more important than the ideologies and principles of the political parties. It may be noted in this connection that there were always a small percentage of voters in majority of the constituencies in the valley of Manipur, taking always a serious views of the ideologies of the Communist Party of India. Except these small percentage of voters and the party workers of the political parties, including the left parties, majority of voters were not guided by the principles and ideologies of the political parties.

Observation:

The electoral trend in Manipur in both hills and valley had similarities as well as dissimilarities. The different method of campaign played different
roles in influencing the voting behaviour of the people of Manipur. Over and above money plays an effective role in the success of the candidates in the elections. There is general feeling that elections are so expensive that a common man cannot think to join active politics because he has no money to buy voters and to meet other election expenditure. Many social workers and political activists gradually started withdrawing from electoral politics. It does not mean that all voters are bought by black money but undoubtedly some of them do so in a secret way through workers. The educated and elite voters were not under the influence of black money. They usually voted on party principles and ideology.

T.N. Seshan, the then Chief Election Commissioner had taken various steps to make election free and fair. He had brought many changes to curb the role of money power. The Supreme Court judgement delivered on 4th Arpil, 1996 on this issue will have far reaching effect in cleansing the political and electoral system of the country. The Election Commission has started taking action on the basis of the judgement. However, it is assumed that it would not be possible to achieve the desired goals unless Section 77 of Representation of People Act 1951 is amended suitably and ceiling on election expenditure is increased realistically.