CONCLUSION

Elections are the backbone of democracy. The two are like the opposite face of the same coin. It involves people’s participation in the political affairs. The electoral process is the most vital part of Indian democracy. Free and fair elections indicate the success of the working of democracy. The Constitution of India ensures elections to be free and fair. Part XV of the Constitution of India contains articles providing an Election Commission, adult suffrage, electoral rolls and other matters relating to the holding of elections. The Representation of Peoples Act of 1950 deals with the allocation of seats, Constituencies, Electoral rolls, Election officers, etc. And the Representation of Peoples Act 1951 relates to qualifications, disqualifications of the elected members to the Parliament and Legislative Assemblies. The administrative machinery for the conduct of elections, its conduct rules, corrupt practises and disputes, etc. are also mentioned. Thus India enjoys a unique distinction of being the largest democratic country in the world.

The electoral politics of Manipur become very important as it indicates the degree of stability and instability of the political system. The importance of the study of electoral politics also increased in due course of
time. Elections for both Parliamentary and Assembly were held regularly since 1952. Prior to this, the Manipur State Assembly Elections were held in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947.

The importance and significance of electoral politics increased from 1972 onwards after Manipur attained the status of full fledged state, having a Legislative Assembly consisting of 60 members. Since then, there were six Assembly elections indicating the degree of political awareness and political consciousness of the people of Manipur. And there were 12 parliamentary elections since 1952.

Political parties and its election manifestoes too played very important role in the electoral politics of Manipur. During the period of our study i.e. from 1980 to 1995 there were many national political parties and regional or state political parties which contested in the elections. The manifestoes of the national political parties had a broader political outlook than the regional political parties. The study of election manifestoes constitute a very important aspect of electoral politics. Election manifestoes are a kind of promises and assurances of the political parties and candidates. If they come to power, they would fulfil the promises in the manifestoes. But in Manipur,
majority of the voters especially the rural ones were not guided by the promises in the election manifestoes.

The methods of campaign adopted by the political parties are of varied nature. Some of the common methods are; holding of public meetings, hoisting of Party flags and postures, door to door campaign, community feast, Press Meet programmes and speech through the Radios. Television also plays an important role in the election campaign of the political parties. Of all the methods of election campaigns, the use of black money seems to be the most important method. It plays a positive role for a candidate or for a political party to win elections.

The electoral behaviour when compared between the hills and the valley of Manipur, certain dissimilarities are noted. In the valley elections were influenced by the factors like party organisations, personalities and influences of the candidates, ideologies of parties and to some extent wealth. The urban voters preferred the candidates of the national political parties and had a broader and wider perspective. They could not be simply influenced by party propaganda. In the hills voting behaviour was much influenced by clan factor, prejudices and preferences and personalities and outlook of the candidate. The locality factor plays an important role in both the hills and
the valley. Educational qualifications, age, religion, etc. could not influence the mind of the voters in the hills.

Electoral politics in Manipur may be examined in three phases i.e., (a) Election before the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union, (b) Elections after the merger and (c) Elections after the attainment of statehood.

**Election before Merger**: Manipur was a princely state. The then political parties like the Nikhil Manipuri Mahasova, the Praja Sammelan, the Praja Sangha, the Krishak Sabha were the products of the political situation of Manipur in 1940s. Manipur State Congress came into existence on 4th October, 1946. It had demanded for the introduction of a responsible government before independence.

Elections to the State Assembly were held in March 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. The whole valley was divided into 29 constituencies. Out of these, three constituencies like, Lilong, Mayang Imphal and Yairipok had plural voting.

The voters had to exercise their franchise electing two candidates, one Mohamedan and the other non Mohamedan. The hill areas were also
divided into 18 constituencies. There were also two special constituencies for Education and Commerce and Industry.

In the elections, the Manipur State Congress, the Manipur Krishak Sova, the Socialist party and the Praja Socialist party contested in the valley. In the hills, there were only independent candidates.

The Manipur State Congress, though an offshoot of the first political party i.e., Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasova was not able to capture majority of votes or the largest member of seats. On the other hand, the Praja Shanti, though formed on the eve of elections with the blessings from the Maharaja of Manipur was able to secure the largest number of seats. In the hills of Manipur, there was no root of the Political parties as shown from the list of the candidates contested as well as from the election results.

**Elections after Merger**: After the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union, the first Parliamentary elections were held in 1952. There were no elections to the Advisory Council as it consisted of only nominated members, instead elections to the Electoral college were held for the election of one member to the Council of States. For the parliamentary elections, there were two constituencies i.e., Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency and Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. The Outer
Manipur consisted of Manipur hill areas Parliamentary constituency and some parts of the central valley. And the Inner Manipur comprises of Central valley and a small portion of Sadar hill circle. Nine political parties including Independents contested the elections. The Congress and the Socialist party got one seat each.

For the election of Electoral College members, the State was divided into 30 constituencies, 20 in the valley and 10 in the hills. Fifteen political parties including Independents contested in the election. The Congress party got 10 seats, the Socialist – 1, the Communist – 2, the Gandhi Sevak Sabha – 1, the Praja Shanti – 3, the All Manipur National Union, the Kuki National Association – 2, the Mao Maram Union – 2, the Mizo Union – 1, the Manipur Zaleirong Union – 2, the Achumba Pamba Congress – 2, the Independent – 1.

The elections to the Electoral College was characterised by the emergence of many local/state political parties based on ethnically.

Manipur became a Union territory and was provided with a Territorial Council under the provision of the Territorial Council Act, 1956. Manipur went to poll to elect 30 members of Territorial Council, 20 in the valley and 10 in the hills and 2 members of Lok Sabha. In the Lok Sabha election the
Congress and the Socialist party got the Inner and Outer seats respectively.

In the Territorial Council election, the Congress got 12 seats, the Socialist – 7, the Communist 4 and Independents – 7.

The first elections to the Territorial Council after the merger of Manipur into the Indian Union shows the political interest of the national political parties. This was also the voting trend in the Parliamentary elections, 1957.

The third general election was held on 19th, 23rd, 27th February and 6th March, 1962 for 30 Territorial Council members and two parliamentary seats. The election to Territorial Council was contested by 4 national political parties like – the Congress, the Communist, the Socialist, the Praja Socialist and the Independents. N. Tombi Singh, Congress, Rishang Keishing, Socialist were elected from the Inner and Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituencies. In the Territorial Council election the Congress got 15, the Socialist 5 and the Independents – 10.

The third general elections to both Territorial Council and Parliament was also marked by the electoral trend favouring the national political parties.
The fourth general elections, 1967, both Parliamentary and Assembly, were held on February 1967, M. Meghachandra Singh, C.P.I. candidate and Paokai Haokip (IND) were elected to the Lok Sabha. Many national political parties contested in the Territorial Legislative Assembly election. The Congress secured - 16, the S.S.P. got 4, the CPI – 1, the Independents – 9. There was no election in one Assembly Constituency (ST) which returned the Congress nominee unopposed.

The mid-term poll for Lok Sabha were held in 1971. In the election many political parties contested in the election. However, N. Tombi Singh and Paokai Haokip, Congress were elected as the member of the Lok Sabha. The Indian National Congress dominated the electoral trend in both Territorial Assembly and Parliamentary elections.

For the Assembly elections held in 1972, the State had been divided into 60 constituencies of which 40 were in the valley, 19 in the hills and 1 in the Barak Basin. The election were held on 6th, 9th and 11th March, 1972. In the election the Congress emerged as the single largest party securing. The Manipur Peoples Party, a regional political party formed in 1968 was the next one capturing 15 seats. The political trend favouring regionalism was
proved when the MPP was able to form coalition Government with other like minded political parties and Independents.

Second Mid-term Assembly Election, 1974.

The electoral trends favouring regionalism was strengthened in the mid term Assembly elections, 1974 when the Manipur Peoples Party came out as the largest single party capturing 20 seats. Another newly formed regional political party, Manipur Hill Union also secured 12 seats. The Congress Party suffered, securing only 13 seats.

In 1977 Parliamentary elections, Yangmasho Shaiza and N. Tombi Singh, Congress were elected as members of parliament. The Parliamentary elections, 1977 indicated the influence of national politics in Manipur. With the formation of Janata Government at the centre, the Janata Candidate, Yangmaso Shaiza was elected and the Congress candidate, N. Tombi Singh won Inner Manipur parliamentary seat.

The third Assembly election was held in 1980. In the election the Congress (I) got 13, the Congress (U) – 6, the Janata – 10, the CPI – 5, the CPI (M) – 1, the MPP – 4, the KNA – 2 and the Independents – 19. R.K. Dorendra Singh again became the Chief Minister of Congress (I) led coalition government. The parties were congress (I), MPP, Congress (U) and
Independents. This coalition government was in power from January 14, 1980 to November 26, 1980. The government fell due to infighting within the Congress (I) legislature party. Rishang Keishing became the Chief Minister on November 27, 1980. He ruled up to February 28, 1981. His government fell and President’s Rule was again imposed. But Rishang Keishing again came to power on June 19, 1981. He ruled the state till 1984-85.

The Lok Sabha election were also held in 1980. Many political parties contested the election. Ng. Mohendro Singh, CPI and Gouzagin, Congress were elected from the Inner and Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituencies.

The fourth Assembly Elections was held on 27th December, 1984. In the election the Congress (I) got 30, the Janata – 4, the MPP – 3, the KNA – 1, the CPI – 1 and the Independents – 21. The Congress (I) was one short of majority. But with the help of Independents Rishang Keishing became the Chief Minister of Congress (I) Government on January 4, 1985. He continued till March 4, 1988 when R.K. Jaichandra Singh, Union Minister was installed by Congress (I) High Command as a consensus candidate for the Chief Ministership.
In the parliamentary election, 1984 N. Tombi Singh, Congress and Meijinglung Kamson, Congress were elected.

In the 1989 parliamentary elections, N. Tombi Singh and Meijinglung Kamson, Congress were elected from Inner and Outer seats respectively for the second time.

The fifth Assembly election was held on 12th and 14th February 1990. Many political parties contested the election. The Congress (I) got 25, the Congress (S) – 6, the Janata Dal – 11, the Manipur Peoples Party – 11, the Communist Party of India – 3, the Kuki National Assembly – 2 and the National Peoples Party – 1. On February 23, 1990 a United Legislature Front (ULF) coalition government headed by R.K. Ranbir Singh was installed. The coalition partners were the Manipur Peoples Party, the Janata DAL, the Congress (S), the Communist Party of India, the Kuki National Assembly and the National Peoples Party. But it lasted only for about 2 years. On January 6, 1992 the government fell and President’s Rule with animated suspension of the House was imposed. Then, the Congress (I) lead coalition government came to power on April 9, 1992. The government fell on December 31, 1993 and President’s Rule was imposed on 1st

The 1991 mid-term Parliamentary election was held in Manipur on 12th June, 1991. Y. Yaima Singh, Manipur Peoples Party and Meijinglung Kamson, Congress (I) were elected from Inner and Outer Parliamentary constituencies.

In the sixth Assembly elections held on 16th February and 28th February, 1995 the Congress (I) got 22, Manipur Peoples Party – 18, Janata Dal – 7, Federal Party of Manipur – 2, Samata Party – 2, National Peoples Party – 2, Communist Party of India – 2, Congress (S) – 1, Bharatiya Janata Party – 1, Independent – 3. Rishang Keishing became the Chief Minister on 25th February, 1995 with the support of like minded parties. But his government fell on December 15, 1997 after the split in the ruling Congress (I). The breakaway group led by W. Nipamacha Singh formed a new political party called Manipur State Congress. W. Nipamacha Singh was then sworn in as the new Chief Minister of the United Front coalition ministry led by Manipur State Congress with effect from 16th December, 1997.
Impact of the Election Results on the formation of Ministry

Since Manipur attained statehood, there had been at least six Assembly elections. And no political party got absolute majority. The Congress party was the only party which had managed to obtain majority with defectors. But not a single congress chief Minister had not been able to serve the government for a full term due to dissent and internal leadership crisis. Thirteen Chief Ministers ruled the State since 1972 till 1998.

There is close interaction between the election results and the formation of governments in Manipur. As no party secured majority, the single largest party or the second largest party always depends on the support of other parties for the formation of government. Hence, the coalition governments since 1972 were always unstable. From the middle of 1980s when Anti-defection law was implemented the ruling party was always suffered from split, factionalism and political dissent. This indirectly encouraged horse trading business in the politics of Manipur.

There were always poll violence in every Assembly elections since 1972, more so in the late 1980s and beginning of 1990s. Election expenditures were very high when one takes into account the small size of the electorate.
The following points may also be noted for evaluation and analysis of electoral trends and formation of Ministries in Manipur.

First, the Governor plays an important role after the election results in the formation of government. He is one who judge things from different angles. As the state suffers from political instability, he has to see the infrastructure of the Manipur political system minutely. The political direction of the State can be shaped by the Governor to a great extent.

Secondly, in the midst of political instability in Manipur, the Chief Minister has to take proper care in the distribution of portfolios amongst the ministers. The duration of a government largely depends on the success of distribution of portfolios. He has to know the political experiences of the elected members.

Thirdly, the voters are not guided by the principles and ideologies of the political parties. They do not elect the right men as their representative. Excepting very few most of the voters do not possess the political knowledge for exercising their franchise in the right direction. They can be swayed away by money and other benefits.
Fourthly, minisrtial instability greatly affects the process of development in the state. No developmental programme can be taken up satisfactorily and to its full completion by any government as it could not complete its full term due to its coalition nature.

Fifthly, the MLAs should have a broad outlook for the betterment of the society. He should not think for self but for others. Before splitting or before joining any group on changing his party affiliation, he should consider the interest of the society as a whole.

Sixthly, the coalition partners should work towards the fulfilment of the promises and assurances made in their respective election manifestoes.

Lastly, all the political parties in their election manifestoes promised to fight corruption, favouritism and nepotism. However, the degree of corruption has increased among the elected members on the eve of the formation of governments and when they are in power. It does not mean that all politicians are corrupted but political education to the elected members as well as to the people is necessary for the betterment of the society and to make democracy a meaningful one.
Suggestions:

In a democratic country like India voters are supposed to exercise their franchise in a free and fair manner. Elections are also to be conducted in a free and fair manner. The following suggestions may be noted in order to improve the present electoral system.

(i) Election Commission should be an autonomous body. The decision of the Election Commission shall be binding in all matters of election.

(ii) Election for both the Parliamentary and the Assembly elections be held simultaneously. It will save money, time energy and all other factors for election.

(iii) Security deposits should be doubled without distinction of General and Reserved seats.

(iv) No candidate should be allowed to contest election in more than one constituency.

(v) Campaign period needs to reduce to seven days for saving election expenditure and time.
(vi) Candidates are to be a man of character, highly academically qualified. He should be physically fit, morally, mentally sound and socially good relations.

(vii) Two party system is desirable to make election easy and beneficial to the formation of the Government. It will also reduce election expenditure.

(viii) Independent candidates should be eliminated.

(ix) The members of Legislative Assembly and the members of Parliament should resign before filing nominations for election.

(x) Political parties should hold public meetings at public places on different dates.

(xi) Personal canvassing should be banned. However, a maximum number of 72 hours could be provided before the actual date of polling.

(xii) Candidates indulged in mal-practice of offering free liquor to voters should not be allowed.
(xiii) Political parties should be made to publish their accounts and such accounts should be checked and audited by an autonomous body.

(xiv) Election meetings, except street corner meetings should be organised by civil authorities who should prepare a calendar of such meetings much in advance and publicise it.

(xv) Candidates who makes a false returns of election expenses and failure to submit accounts of election expenses should not be allowed to be a candidate for three years consecutively.

(xvi) The voters should be given identity cards with photographs to curb the growing evils such as impersonation, manipulation, booth capturing and destruction of ballot boxes or the electoral rolls. If possible electronic voting machine be introduced.

(xvii) Candidates defeated three times consecutively should be debarred from contesting election again in the next term.

(xviii) Criminals and case pending persons including disqualification cases should not be allowed to be a candidate unless the case is settled.
(xix) Candidates violating the Code of Conduct should be debarred from contesting elections.

(xx) Poll officials and observers should closely observe the poll campaigning by each candidate. Violation if any should be dealt with severely.

(xxii) Electoral rolls should be made up to date with the help of enumerators by going from house to house but not on table basis.

(xxii) The assets of the contesting candidates should be declared along with the filing of nomination papers.