CHAPTER-IV

VOTING BEHAVIOUR
In democracy, the real political drama of the political parties is best manifested in the electoral behaviour. Election offers an important political situation to political actors. 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, candidates’ behaviour, ability, attitude in the election, the nature of the party organisations, etc. constitute an important aspect of electoral or voting behaviour.¹

In modern democracy electoral voting is generally considered the right of all citizens. In the past, however, voting was often a privilege limited to stringent property qualifications and restricted to the upper classes, and it is

only in recent times that universal suffrage has become a fact. Now-a-days elections continue to be held in various authoritarian systems, both Communist and non-Communist. Every individual is faced with the problem of choice – a choice out of several alternative actions. There should be public decisions in which citizens make an explicit choice between alternative courses of public action. This can be done through political voting. Usually the act of voting is voluntary.

Vote is an individual expression of choice in the making of a group decision. The process of voting is called an election. Voting is the base of the political pyramid in democracy. It may be treated as the basic decision-making process in a democracy as the decisions made at the base have the capacity to topple those at the apex. Voting refers to the function of electing representatives by casting votes in elections. It is the method of registering collective approval or disapproval of a person or a proposal. It is the process by which citizens choose the candidates for public office or decide controversial questions submitted to them. In fact, it is a means of transforming numerous individual desires into a coherent and collective basis for decision. Voting in elections is the most obvious and direct way in which a whole population can affect government, a sort of mass revolution.

Voting or polls give regular information on who supports whom and on the relationship between voting intentions and opinion on political issues. In

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public legislative bodies a proposed law usually has to receive the votes of more than half of all the members while in certain cases a vote of two-thirds of the members is frequently required for approval.

Voting is not limited to public office only but it expands to such private organisations as social clubs, trade unions, professional societies, and corporations in choosing their officers. As men are called by different kinds of elections to different offices in different societies, election is the best method of giving power by citizens to their representatives. Choices that citizens make in an election have effects on public policy, either over the course of a government's term in office or over longer periods. The formation of either a single ruling group or a coalition of ruling group is the reflection of the choice of voters. To influence the choice of voters, political parties, candidates and campaigners have used varieties of technique. Thus, in the electoral process, voters are the main actors.

The understanding of voting and party competition is of interest for its own sake as well as for what it may reveal in the way of improving or defending democracy. Voting may be by paper ballot, by voting machine, by computer punch card or by dropping a marker in a designated container. The voting behaviours of the people determines periodically, continually or frequently the taking or giving of powers in various senses of the term on various scales.

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8 Idan Budge, n. 4, p. 1.
9 *Thè Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 10, New York: Americana Corporation, 1829, p. 120.
The term "Voting Behaviour" is very vast in its scope. It is not confined to the examination of voting statistics, records and computation of electoral shifts and swings. It also involves analysis of individual psychological processes and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as communication process and their impact on elections.\textsuperscript{10}

The term "voting behaviour" has recently been expanded in meaning and is taken as one major and broad area of study subsumed within the broader designation of political behaviour. It involves a study of human political behaviour in the context of voting in elections. Now-a-days voting behaviour has been explained through large scale studies and experiments. Voting behaviour, for example, may be interpreted as (a) a mode of legitimizing democratic rule, (b) instancing participation in the political process involving integration into the political community, (c) instancing an act of decision making, (d) a role-action involving definite political Orientation imbedded in a particular type of political culture, or (e) a direct relation of the individual citizen to the formal government.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus, the study of voting behaviour constitutes an important area of political science in which theory can be systematically and qualitatively measured and tested. The voters' intention to vote is a dynamic changing and even fluid mental situation which is subject to influence and manipulation by factors which can be internal as well as external. The complex role of elections in the political system is underlined by an examination of the voting behaviour of electorates. The classical liberal view of a rational elecor choosing between

the competing programmes of several candidates and selecting a representative on the basis of his, the elector’s economic self interest, his appreciation of what he rationally deduces to be the national interest, or what he believes to be his own political values, no longer can be substantiated.\textsuperscript{12}

In fact, voting behaviour indicates the voters’ choices, preferences, alternatives, agreements, concerns, ideologies, programmes and so on in respect of the various issues on which the various elections are fought. So, this voting behaviour really indicates the dynamic role that one plays in the achievement of a collective end. Thus, it implies the essential assertion of the voters’ rights and commitments to the society and the nation.

**Determinants of Voting Behaviour**

Voting behaviour is a complex process affected by diverse influences, political and non-political. There are various factors for determining voting behaviour of individuals. The following are some of the important determinants of voting behaviour.

**Party Ideology and Principles**

The ideologies and principles of the political parties are considered to be a very important factor in determining the voting behaviour of the electorate. From our study of the elections in Manipur from 1984 to the present 2002, it is known that the ideologies and principles of the political parties have played a significant role in the electoral politics. The voters will enquire about the name of the candidate and discuss the ideologies and principles of the political party. But when the candidate meets the voters directly at the time of house-to-house campaign, community feast, public

meetings, etc., are arranged; the ideologies and principles are not discussed seriously. In such time, the personality factor, the local factor, the blood relationship factor, etc. are more important than the ideologies and principles. But in Manipur majority of voters are not guided by the ideologies and principles of the political parties.

Voting behaviour is more easily explained by emphasising party loyalty.\textsuperscript{13} To survive, the political parties must have a loyal group of supporters. Almost unthinking loyalty by a part of the electorate helps to maintain the competitive party system. In developed political systems like those of America and Britain, political parties have their committed and known affiliations.\textsuperscript{14} These determine the voting behaviour of the people and also an individual's choice of representatives and his view on key national and international issues. In India also, the parties have their committed supporters who always accept the views and actions of their respective parties. But, sometimes, in India, people do not hesitate to shift their votes from one party to another and thereby party identities are not very strong. If party loyalty is taken as one of the key indexes of political considerations, it may be assumed that the parties play a marginal role in determining the preference of the voters.\textsuperscript{15}

**Personality Factor**

Personality is another factor influencing the voting behaviour of individuals. It is very important in the selection of the candidates by the voters. This is true both in the valley and hill Constituencies. Voters consider the

\textsuperscript{13} *Ibid.*, p. 129.


personality of the candidates and the name of the party which will bring the progress of the state as well as the constituency. For example, in 40 Jiribam and 43 Phungyar Constituencies, Th. Debendra Singh and Rishang Keishing were elected repeatedly from 1980 to 2002 Assembly Elections. This was due to the excellent personality of such candidates. But Thanga constituency has less impact on the mind of the voters as not a single candidate has been elected repeatedly. There are many constituencies having the same situation and are mostly seen in the semi-urban and rural areas.

The personality of the leader at the top of the party has always been a remarkable factor of popular support. A positive image of a party’s candidate is a source of popular support for the party. A voter prefers to vote for a candidate who is approachable and who can help him in any way. The role of the public image of a candidate as a factor of voting behaviour is justified by the winning of seats by the independent candidates.

Sex Factor

Voting behaviour is often shaped by the sex factor also. Women voters are more likely to be religious and, therefore, show a greater tendency to vote for right-of-centre-parties. Women voters tend to be more wavering about their intention to vote as also in the voting act itself than the male voters. But, the commitment is more to candidate than to party among both males and females. Village consensus and advice of the village headman work more with female voters than with male voters, while merit of the candidate attracts more males than females, as do on local issues.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{16}}\text{ Alan, R. Ball, n.12, p. 130.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{17}}\text{ S.P. Varma, n. 15, p. 76.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{18}}\text{ Ibid., p. 308.}\]
Women as a class are relatively more apathetic politically than men as a class. This apathy springs from women’s deep involvement in the private and familial sphere. In the ideal case, a woman to whom her home is the abode of self sufficiency and constitutes the entire universe is perfectly apathetic politically. If some women are politically active, it only means that they have transcended this situation defined by the ideal case.\textsuperscript{19} Sex provides a base for diversity where modernism is a significant issue, since in most societies women’s role is more involved in religious institutions and less in modern economic ones. Consequently, where there is a difference between the voting patterns of the two sexes, women tend to support traditionalist parties more than modernising ones.\textsuperscript{20}

**Blood Relationship**

Blood relationship is a very significant determinant of voting behaviour in the constituencies of both the hills and the valley. It is more important than the locality 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.\textsuperscript{21} In the elections from 1980 to 2002, blood relationship has influenced the voting behaviour of the voters in Manipur.

**Locality Factor**

Locality factor plays a very important role in the voting behaviour of all the voters in all the constituencies of Manipur. There are many localities (Leikais) and villages in the constituencies of Manipur. These places are interlinked with roads. The voters of the localities and villages preferred the

\textsuperscript{19} M. Suresh Kumar, n. 10, p. 250.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 251.
candidates of their own areas to those of the other places or villages. They were not guided by any party ideology or principles of any other factors. Without any consideration of other factors the voters cast their votes to the candidates from their own areas. This fact has been proved by Assembly elections in Manipur from 1980 to 2002.

Educational Qualification

Educational qualification of the candidates plays a very important role in shaping the voting behaviour of the voters. The voters always asked about the educational qualification of the candidates and their political experiences. However, the voters are usually led by other factors rather than educational qualifications in the last phase i.e. on the eve of elections. In spite of some people’s choice on the basis of educational qualification of the candidate, educational qualification of the candidate had no impact in the mind of the voters of Manipur valley. It was the personality and long experience of the candidates in the field of politics which determined the voting behaviour in most constituencies of Manipur valley.

Money Factors

Money plays a vital role in determining the voting behaviour of the people. A rich candidate or party has always better chances of winning the elections. Bribery in vote giving is an open secret. Rich and affluent candidates or candidates of the affluent party are alleged to have offered money to the voters. Poor voters are reported to have received money. Postal ballot voters are said to have been offered money. Businessmen are said to have entered into a deal, or an agreement with a dominant party to throw their

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
weight in favour of it. This varies on the estimates or anticipations of poll prospects of the political parties. Various other interest groups also enter into the bargaining counter. Sometimes it shifts its alignments, moving primarily between the different political parties. But it is to be pointed out that it happens only in normal circumstances and not during a wave election or when other key issues are involved.  

Voting Behaviour in Manipur, 1948-1984

The first election in Manipur was held in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. Influenced by the ideology of the Manipur State Congress most of the voters cast for its candidates and the party got the highest number of seats. But as twelve independent candidates were elected, the influence of the personality cult of the candidates was also justified. In 1952, the first General Election under the Constitution of India was held in Manipur. It was a period of social and political movements influencing the electoral behaviour of the voters. All the local and national forces joined hands together in demanding for a responsible government in Manipur.

In the second General Election held in 1957 also the political movement of the time influenced the voting behaviour with the demand of a responsible government. In the third General Election of 1962, there was the same impact on the voting behaviour of the voters. In the hill areas as there were no reserved seats for the scheduled tribes, the elections were fought on the tribal lines. The political parties had sent up only tribals as their candidates except in Jiribam, where half of the voters were non-tribals. The same phenomenon was noticed in the valley also.

The Assembly Election was held in Manipur in 1967. As it was the first time, the voters were very enthusiastic and the political parties also contested keenly to form their own government. The Congress Party gave a crushing defeat to the left party. It was due to the lack of electoral understanding among the various opposition parties. The electioneering was quite brisk except in the cease-fire bound northern hill areas where it was restricted to a whisper campaign for fear of underground Nagas who boycotted the elections.\textsuperscript{26} Besides, the voting behaviour of the people was influenced by the demand for full fledged statehood in the state.

In 1972 statehood was granted to Manipur and the Assembly Elections were also held in the same year. The period witnessed the emergence of the Manipur People’s Party, a regional Political Party. The idea of regionalism crept in the political arena of the state. The anti-India wave had swept the poll and the Congress suffered a setback in the 1972 election. One possible reason for this might be the voters’ intention for a change or the people’s being fed up with the rule of the Congress.

In 1974, Manipur went through a mid-term poll in which the regional parties as a whole had put up a better show mainly because of their regional appeal.\textsuperscript{27} In this election, most parties emphasised on the local social and political issue of the inclusion of Manipuri in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The voting behaviour of the people was mainly influenced by this issue.

The next Assembly election was held in 1980. In this election money factor became very active. As the Indira Gandhi wave was revived by that time,
the Janata Party Government collapsed at the Centre. Its impact reached in Manipur also. The election of 19 independent candidates showed the impact of personality of the candidates on the mindset of the voters.

There could be seen a slight change in the voting behaviour of the people in the Assembly election, 1984. Due to the assassination of Indira Gandhi, a strong sympathy wave swept in favour of the Congress. On the other hand, the charming personality of Rajiv Gandhi was another factor for the success of the Congress. Other factors like money, religion, etc. too played significant role. But the sympathy wave of Indira dominated the political scene. However, some sections of the electorates were always committed to the ideology of other parties that they still managed to win some seats inspite of the sympathy wave.\textsuperscript{28}

Voting Behaviour in the Assembly Election, 1990

Various factors have influenced the voting behaviour in the 1990 Assembly election. To ascertain these factors, a questionnaire was administered on the 100 selected voters each in the urban, rural and hill areas respectively. The sample electorates were asked about the factors influencing them before they cast votes for a particular candidate. The following table shows the responses of the sample voters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determining Factors</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Total percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality factor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party loyalty</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money factor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local issues</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family factor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election campaign</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{28} M. Suresh Kumar, n. 10, p. 254.
The above table shows that 16.7% of the voters were influenced by personality factor, 16% by party loyalty, 15.7% by money factor, 13.3% by local issues, 20.3% by family and 18.0% by election campaigns. Thus, family factor influences the voting behaviour in the highest percentage. The elders or the head of the family had influenced the voters to vote for a particular candidate. As the table shows 18% of the urban, 22% of the rural and 21% of the hill voters voted for a particular party and candidate as a result of the family influence. Mostly for female voters voting decision is taken by the other family members. The influence of the family as a determinant of voting behaviour is the highest in the rural areas where most of the family members make their voting decisions on the advice of the elders or heads of the family. Generally in rural society with high rate of illiteracy and traditionalism, many voters tend to take their voting decision through discussion in the family. Majority of womenfolk is influenced by menfolk in taking voting decision.

Compared to the rural and hill areas, family influence on the voting behaviour in the urban areas is very low. As most of the voters are literate, voting decisions are taken by themselves. So, the family influence on taking voting decision is becoming very low. However, in the hill areas family plays a very important role in influencing voter’s decision to vote for a particular candidate because of the lack of communication facilities and illiterate nature of the voters.

As seen in the above table, the personality factor is very important in the urban areas. As most of the voters in the urban areas are educated and politically conscious, they are rather concerned with the experience and educational qualification of the candidates. But the voters of the rural and hill
areas give less importance to personality factor as they are mostly uneducated and politically less conscious.

Party loyalty factor is of the highest percentage in the hill areas. The percentage is 20. This is due to the lack of political education and political communication in the electorate of the hill and the same is found in the electorate of the rural areas also. But there are political awareness and effective political communication in the urban areas. So, the impact of party loyalty on the voting behaviour is marginal there. Therefore, there is only 13 percent there while in the rural areas it is 15 percent.

Further, the above table shows that 18 percent of the urban voters, 16 percent of the rural and 13 percent of the hill voters in the selected sample electorate had accepted money, or was influenced by the money factor. Some voters demanded money even before entering the polling station while some waited for the highest bidder till the last minute of polling. The above table also shows that the influence of money on urban voters is the highest during election times. The amount of money demanded by the urban voters is also higher than that of the rural and hill voters. Purchase of voters with money has become an open secret. As stated by some party workers, the amount of money offered to the voters by the candidates range from Rs. 100/300 per voter.

Rural electorates also are influenced by the money factor. The two or three days before the date of election are the most crucial period for the distribution of money to the voters. The amount of money offered to the voters by the candidates range from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100. The non-committed voters remained waiting for money from the candidates till the polling day. Money
lenders have great potentials to influence the people who are depending on them to vote for a particular candidate. There are also cases where money is taken from both the parties while the votes are not given to the highest bidder but on the basis of some other considerations.

Money factor also plays a great role in determining voting behaviour in the hill electorates. Though the amount of money received by voters in the hill areas is low in comparison with that of the urban and rural voters, money has become an important means of bargaining between certain sections of the electorate. Here, the amount received by a voter ranges from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100.29

The above table also indicates the influence of local issues on the voting behaviour of the electorate. It is 15 percent in the urban, 13 percent in the rural and 12 percent in the hill areas. The higher percent in the urban areas is due to the higher percent of political awareness among the urban voters. On the other hand, the lower percent in the rural and hill areas is the result of less political awareness among the voters in these areas. As most of the voters in these places are illiterate, they are not fully aware of the political issues.

Election campaigns also influence the voting behaviour of the electorates. Its influence on voters' choice of candidates in the election differs from hill to valley areas. It is 19 percent in the urban areas, 18 percent in the rural and 17 percent in the hill areas respectively. When the election campaign starts, conflicting loyalties start working upon the minds of the voters. The influence of election campaigns on voters is much higher among the urban and rural voters as compared to the hill voters. Women are found to be more

29 Ibid., p. 259.
susceptible to such campaign stimuli. The low percentage of election campaign on the hill voters is due to the size of electorate and its scattered location with bad communication system.

Voting Behaviour in the Assembly Election, 1995

As per a questionnaire based investigation conducted on 100 selected voters each in the urban, rural and hill areas respectively about the type of factors influencing them in the exercise of their franchise, the following table is prepared. This table shows the responses of the sample voters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determining Factors</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Total percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality factor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party loyalty</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money factor</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local issues</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family factor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election campaign</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown by the above table money factor played the most significant role in influencing the voters both in the valley and hill constituencies. But we see that the urban voters are more guided by money factor during the election than those of the rural and hills. As reported by some party workers, in the urban areas the amount of money received by the voters ranges from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 per voter. Voters openly go the house of the candidates and demand money by making false promises to vote for them by putting their hands upon
religious books. The candidates also organise various election feasts, Shumang Lila, Thabal Chongba, etc. in order to secure votes in their favour.  

Money factor greatly determines the voting behaviour in the rural areas too. In these places, the amount of money accepted by each voter ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. Sometimes, the payments are either in cash or kind. In the hill areas, the amount accepted by voters ranges from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200 per voter.

The above table shows that personality factor influenced 16 percent of the urban voters, 14 percent of the rural and 16 percent of the hill respectively. In the urban and hill areas the personality of a candidate is very much considered.

Further, the above table shows that 12 percent of the urban, 15 percent of the rural and 17 percent of the hill voters are influenced by party loyalty. In the urban areas, as the voters are influenced by other factors also, the percentage of party loyalty is low. It may be because of the fact that voters are politically aware or the emphasis on local issues. The above table shows that local issues have influenced 16 percent of the urban voters, 14 percent of the rural and 13 percent of the hill voters. The high percentage of voters’ knowledge about local issues in urban areas is because of the higher percentage of literacy in the urban electorates. So the voting behaviour of the urban people has been greatly influenced by the local issues.

The family factor also has played a significant role in influencing the voting behaviour of voters. Seventeen percent of the urban voters, 21 percent of rural and 21 percent of the hill voters respectively are influenced by the same. The low percentage of the family influence on urban voters may be due their

30 Ibid., p. 262.
exposure to political awareness, communication and education. In the rural and hill areas, the degree of political communication is so high.

Election campaign also is a great determining factor of voting behaviour. It has influenced 15 percent of the urban, 14 percent of the rural and 12 percent of the hill voters. Good communication system has attributed high percentage of influence of election campaign on the voting behaviour of the urban voters.

**Voting Behaviour in the Assembly Election, 2000**

An interview was conducted on a 100 voters each in the urban, rural and hill areas respectively and they were asked whether they were influenced by any of the factors mentioned in the following Table No. 26. The following table shows the responses from the sample electorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determining Factors</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality factor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party loyalty</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money factor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local issues</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family factor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election campaign</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table we come to know the factors influencing the voting behaviour in the 2000 AD Assembly Election. The above table shows that 15.7 percent of the voters were influenced by personality, 13.3 percent by party loyalty, 23.7 percent by money, 20.3 percent by local issues, 16.7 percent by family and 10.3 percent by election campaign respectively.
Money factor is the most influential factor of the voting behaviour. Election has become an expensive affair. The table reflects that 26 percent of the urban, 23 percent of the rural and 22 percent of the hill voters were apparently influenced by money factor. The influence of money factor on the voters is the highest in the urban area. The amount of money received by each voter ranges from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500. On the eve of election, various associations, clubs, organisations, etc. also take money from the candidates in the name of undertaking developmental works. Sometimes even the head of a family or the workers demand money from the candidates for their kids who are voters in the name of exercising their franchise for a particular candidate. In the rural areas the amount of money for each voter ranges from Rs. 100 to 300 while in the hill areas the amount of money exchanged for votes ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 per voter. However, in all the urban, rural and hill areas money factor has swayed the floating voters.

We know from the above table that personality is also a strong determinant of the voting behaviour. The personality factor has influenced 17, 16 and 14 percents of the urban, rural and hill voters respectively. As opined by an MLA, the higher percentage of personality influence on the urban voters is mainly the result of effective political socialisation.31 They are politically aware and concerned with the personality of the candidates. Even in the rural areas, the candidates’ personality is also a strong factor in determining the voting behaviour. However, the percentage is low as compared to the urban areas. The process of political socialisation and its impact on the voters is very slow. Most of the people are occupied in their personal affairs and have no time for their political involvement. So the personality of the candidates is not

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31 Ibid., p. 265.
much concerned with the mind of the voters. In the hill areas, due to the sparseness of population, growth of the political awareness of the voters is hindered. The voters, as confined to a particular area only, do not have much political knowledge. There is also lack of political communication due to bad communication system.

Party loyalty also influenced on the 13 percent of the urban voters, 12 percent of the rural and 15 percent of the hill voters respectively. As most of the urban voters are literate, they are politically conscious. Besides, they do not usually stick to a particular party, but keep on changing with time. However, in the rural and hill areas, people usually keep faith in those parties backed by their forefathers and remain loyal to them.

Local issues of the time of election also influence the voting behaviour. The percentage of voters influenced by local issues is 22 percent in the urban, 20 percent in the rural and 19 percent in the hill respectively. The higher percentage in the urban areas can be explained in the terms of higher literary rate, better communication facilities and greater concentration of electioneering. This is a view expressed by a former M.L.A.\(^{32}\)

Family factor also has influenced 10 percent of voters in the urban, 19 percent in the rural and 21 percent in the hill areas. In the urban areas, there is no influence of the head of the family on the other members as families are nuclear families. Most of the voters are also committed voters and are not politically involved in practical politics. On the other hand, the rural and hill voters are more influenced by the family factor. Family ties in these areas are

\(^{32}\) Ibd., p. 226.
relatively high as compared to the urban areas. So, the influence of family as a
determinant of voting behaviour is very high in these places.

$\checkmark$ Election campaign also has a strong impact on the voting behaviour. It
is found that 12 percent of the urban voters, 10 percent of the rural and 19
percent of the hill voters respectively are influenced by the same. The above
table shows that campaigning is more intense and consequently, political
education more effective in the urban areas than in the rural and hill areas. It is
easier to campaign in the urban constituencies than in the rural and hill
constituencies for reason of communication facilities. Another feature is that
in the rural and hill constituencies’ political parties have better organisational
nucleus.

Voting Behaviour in the Assembly Election, 2002

Unlike in the earlier Assembly Election, the 8th Manipur Legislative
Assembly Election was seen quite different in its voting behaviour. For the
first time in the electoral history of Manipur, use of electronic voting machine
was introduced in six assembly constituencies of Imphal i.e. Khurai, Yaiskul,
Keisamthong, Wangkhei, Sogolband and Thangmeiband.

With the nearing of election many leaders changed their political
parties. Political parties newly contesting elections mainly DRPP and MNC
also became stronger in their electoral activities. An important feature in this
election, which is different from the earlier elections, was the projection of
their respective leaders by the political parties before the election. For
example, Dr. L. Chandramani Singh for FPM, Th. Chaoba for MSCP, W.
Nipamacha Singh for MNC, R.B. Koijam for Samata Party and R.K. Dorendra
Singh for BJP were projected as leaders to become C.M. by their respective parties.

On the eve of the election, there prevailed very frequently tense-ridden situations and highly unwanted incidents in the state like the attempts to set fire on the houses of political leaders, firing at their homes without warning or reason by unidentified gunmen.

In this election out of a total of 2001 polling stations in the state, 532 were hyper sensitive, 821 were sensitive and only 648 were normal. Among the 9 districts, Senapati district had the highest rate of hyper sensitive polling stations. In Mao Assembly Constituency all the polling stations were hypersensitive.\(^{33}\)

There happened a series of terrible and unwanted incidents including the closure of offices of many political parties by unidentified gangs. On 15 January, 2002 at 10.30 a.m. Congress office was forcibly put under lock and key. By 7.50 p.m. of 18 January, there were firings at the house of R.B. Koijam. On the same day at 3.15 p.m. in the broad daylight unidentified people started setting fire on the house building of W. Nipamacha Singh at Wangoi.

On 15 January, 2002 there were shootings and hurling of bombs at the residence of Th. Chaoba Singh at Utlou at 6.05 p.m. On 20 January a jeep belonging to P. Achou, former Cabinet Minister and FPM candidate for Uripok Assembly Constituency was hijacked and burnt to ashes. At the little hour of 21 January, 2002 (at 3.30 a.m.) the house building at Thangmeiband

\(^{33}\) *Poknapham*, Imphal, January 28, 2002.
used as office of Samata Party was about to be set on fire. On 30 January, 2002 there were gun shots at the house of the INC candidate of Wangjing Tentha, Shri S. Suresh Singh.\textsuperscript{34}

The election campaign of Th. Chaoba and his elder brother Th. Bira Singh was banned by Kanglei Yaol Kanna Lup (KYKL), a militant outfit group with effect from 2 February 2002. On 5 February, 2002 also bullets were shot at the residence of the FPM candidate I. Hemochandra, former Minister and there was also threat at the house of the candidate for Keishamthong Assembly Constituency of the very party.\textsuperscript{35}

On 7 February, 2002 the United Naga Council called all the Naga candidates to Senapati and let them sign on a declaration. The declaration was based on the agenda of Greater Nagaland taken up by NSCN (IM). On 9 February at night some people self identified as KYKL(O) distributed bullets to every house of Ishok Village, Nambol Assembly Constituency with the warning of not to vote for MSCP candidate, Th. Bira Singh.

On 11 February, 2002 DRPP organised a torch rally at night against the Senapati Declaration of UNC. On 12 February, 2002 at broad daylight (at 2.30 p.m.) bullets were shot at the residential house of Shri L. Jayantakumar Singh, INC candidate for Keishamthong Assembly Constituency and also at the house of L. Ibomcha, FPM candidate of the same Constituency.

On 6 February, 2002 for hoisting flag in favour of Th. Bira Singh against the ban of KYKL, one E. Shyamchand from Kabowakching village of Nambol Assembly Constituency was shot on the leg as punishment and next

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., January 30, 2002.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., February 6, 2002.
day, on 7 February, 2002 L. Nabadwip from Naorem village of the same Assembly Constituency was also shot on the leg for the same reason as punishment.\(^{36}\)

On 14 February, 2002, the election day, Th. Chaoba, Lok Sabha MP sat in the polling station No. 24/18 Nambol Makha Leikai as Election Agent of his elder brother Th. Bira Singh. This followed by many quarrels and fights.

On 16 February, 2002 there were re-polls in 31 polling stations of 40 Assembly Constituencies (election of which was performed on 14 February. On the same day, Naga youth Ceasefire Support Group, Ukhrul Unit released copies of a written message in Tangkhul language not to vote for INC and not to elect Rishang Keishing in the election for 20 hill Assembly Constituencies that would have been held on 21 February, 2002.

On the night of 17 February, 2002 3 (three) vehicles belonging to the INC candidate A.S. Arthur, Ex-Minister were hurled down the deep gorge by some people suspected to be of ISCN(IM) cadres.

On 20 February, 2002 in Saikul Assembly Constituency 1 IRB, 2 polling personnel dead and other persons were injured in the ambush of Kuki rebels. On 24 and 25 February, 2002 there were re-polls in 17 hill constituencies at 73 different polling stations. At one polling station in Mao Assembly Constituency there was re-poll twice.\(^{37}\)

There were several factors constituting the voting behaviour in the 8th State Legislative Assembly Election of Manipur, 2002. Important factors are discussed below:

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Money Factor

In the former elections money was an important influential factor. But in this election of 8th Assembly, there seemed to be some different features. Despite the high rate of involvement and use of money, it could not influence the voting of the people much. Rich candidates, able and powerful candidates – former C.Ms, R.K. Kojiam, W. Nipamacha, Rishang Keishing, and other prominent Ex-Cabinet Ministers - Dr. L. Chandramani Singh, Th. Chaoba’s elder brother Th. Bira and some others could not win the election. They were defeated by candidates poorer than each of them. The defeated candidates spent huge amount of money to win election. Though the people accepted/took money from them, yet they did not vote for them. In place of these candidates, new candidates who were never elected earlier were preferred.

Personality Factor

Personality factor could not bring a big and significant change in the 2002 Assembly Election. But at some constituencies though candidates frequently changed their parties, because of their personality, they were easily elected. Some such candidates, for example, R.K. Dorendra of Yaiskul Assembly Constituency; I. Hemochandra Singh of Singjamei Assembly Constituency; C. Doungel of Saikul Assembly Constituency; O. Joy Singh of Langthabal Assembly Constituency; and Dr. Nimaichand Luwang of Wangkhem Assembly Constituency were worth mentioning.

Party Loyalty

In the 2002 Election party loyalty gave a great influence on the voting behaviour. Though there was BJP led NDA Government at the Centre, in this election not more than 4 BJP MLAs were elected. In this election, people kept
their confidence more in Congress Party. Out of 58 contesting Congress candidates, only 20 could win the election. This is because of the people’s loyalty to their party. People were seen to keep more confidence in the Congress Government for stability.

Local Issues

In this election local issues were very important. The matter of Ceasefire extension for a Greater Nagaland taken up by NSCN(IM) was the issue of Naga candidates in the Naga inhabited constituencies for fighting election. Prior to the election United Naga Council (UNC), the Naga apex NGO called the Naga candidates at Senapati and made them sign a declaration accepting extension of Ceasefire in the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur on 7 February, 2002. There were 47 Naga candidates signing the declaration. The Naga candidates who did not sign the declaration were the veteran Congress leader Rishang Keishing, the BJP candidate of Nongba Assembly Constituency Achinpau Gangmei and two candidates of Chandel Assembly Constituency. The candidate who was the first to sign the declaration was the BJP candidate Dany Saiza of Ukhrul Assembly Constituency. He was the former MLA of the constituency. He won the election. But for Rishang, a resolution was taken for not electing him by UNC, as he did not sign the declaration. So he was defeated. Before this time on the pressure of NSCN(IM) in Chandel and Tengnoupal Assembly Constituencies Congress candidates did not file nomination papers. Making a big issue against this declaration DRPP organised a torch rally on 11 February, 2002. DRPP made people know more about their stand for the territorial integrity of Manipur. Though it was a new political party, its performance in the election was quite good. So two MLAs were elected for the party.
Family Factor

Family factor did not play very important role in the 8th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election, 2002.

Election Campaign

In the 2002 Assembly Election, campaigning of election gave a strong influence on the voting behaviour. It gave immense help and benefit to political parties. Political parties took up hectic political campaign on various political issues. Many Regional or State parties like MPP, FPM, MSCP, MNC, etc. did their campaign on regional or local issues while leaders of National parties like INC, CPI, BJP, JD(U), Samata Party, RJD etc. came to Manipur and took up hectic election campaign. The tragic incident of 18 June, 2001 was used as a political issue by most of the parties. Because of this issue BJP and Samata Party got serious setback.

Many National campaigners who came and did campaign in Manipur along with their respective dates of arrival are mentioned below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Campaigner Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 January, 2002</td>
<td>Jana Krishna Murthy, BJP President and P.B. Acharya, General Secretary (North-East in-charge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 February, 2002</td>
<td>I.D. Swamy, Union Minister of State (Home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 February, 2002</td>
<td>Sanga Priya Gautam, National General Secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 February, 2002</td>
<td>Devdas Aapte, National Executive member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 February, 2002  Karia Munda, Union Minister (Rural Development) and Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of State (Mines).  

16 February, 2002  Pyarelal Khandewal, General Secretary

CPI  
18 January, 2002  A.B. Bardhan, General Secretary, CPI  
09 February, 2002  A.B. Bardhan, General Secretary, CPI

NCP  
18 January, 2002  P.A. Sangma, General Secretary, NCP

Samata Party  

JD(U)  
04 February, 2002  Mohan Prakash, National Secretary and Spokesperson.

INC  
22 January  Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then Opposition Leader, Rajya Sabha and today's Prime Minister of India. He published Congress Party Election Manifesto.

05 February, 2002  Mani Shankar Aiyar, General Secretary, North-East in-charge.

08 February, 2002  P.K. Mukherjee

09 February, 2002  Sonia Gandhi, President, AICC; Ambika Soni, General Secretary, AICC.

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38 Ibid., 13 February, 2002.  
40 Ibid., 2 February, 2002.  
41 Ibid., 5 February, 2002.  
41 Ibid., 23 January, 2002.