Chapter 4

POLITICAL CULTURE AND POLITICAL SOCIALISATION
Chapter IV

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The people of a society share a common human nature like emotional drives, intellectual capacities and moral perspectives. The common human nature expresses itself in the form of certain values, beliefs and emotional attitudes which are transmitted from one generation to another, though with greater or lesser modifications, and thus constitute the general culture of that society. Social relationships are subject to an endless process of transformation, of growth and decay, of fusion and separation. Since they are all expressions of human nature, the social relationships of the present are found in germ at least in the past, and those of the past survive, if only as relics, in the present.¹

Culture, is therefore, a profound possession that ramifies throughout human life. No matter what aspect or part of society is considered, the presence of a cultural mode of transmission is of paramount importance.² Each political system is embedded in a sociological and psychological environment - the set of values, beliefs, orientation and attitudes of the people towards politics, i.e. the political culture. Political systems thus operate within the framework of a set of meanings and purposes - the political culture of the society. The political culture of a society defines the situation in which political action takes place. It provides the subjective orientation to politics. The political culture is of course but one aspect of politics.³

Political culture includes not only the attitudes to politics, political values, ideologies, national character and cultural ethos, but also the style, manner and substantive form of politics. The political culture of a nation, derives from, among other things, the experiences that individuals have with the political process. One way to learn about political beliefs is to observe the ways in which political structure operate. These beliefs affect and are affected by the way in which the structures operate and there is a close circle of relationship between culture and structure.

The political culture of a people gives them an orientation towards their polity and its processes. To be politically oriented would mean, in general, knowing how our government operates, having a 'cognitive map' of the polity and also knowing how it ought to operate and what is ought and ought not do, having a 'normative map'. Insofar as people share such a cognitive and normative map, they will usually be able to act together, understanding what each is doing and avoiding conflict and dissension.

Political culture encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members.

of that system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experiences. In brief, political culture is to the political system what culture is to the social system.\textsuperscript{7}

**Growth of Political Culture**

The term political culture is of recent origin in Political Science. A pioneering contribution regarding political culture has been made by G.A. Almond, to whom goes the credit of introducing this concept. The term political culture was first used by Gabriel Almond in "Comparative Political System" which appeared in the Journal of Political System Vol. 18, 1956. Political system operates within the framework of a set of meanings and purposes, which are described by Almond as the political culture of a society.\textsuperscript{8} Several others like Samuel Beer, Adam Ulams, Sidney Verba, Lucian Pye, Dennis Kavanagh etc. have been responsible for popularising it. Gradually, this term became popular and now it has come to stand as a very important touchtone for a morphological study of the political system.

**Definitions of Political Culture**

In the words of Almond and Powell "Political culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics among the members of a Political System."\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (New Delhi : Amerind, 1972), pp. 104 - 105.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Comparative Politics : A Developmental Approach* (New Delhi : Amerind, 1972), p. 50.
\end{itemize}
According to Beer and Ulam, it is said that certain aspects of the general culture of a society are especially concerned with how government ought to be conducted and what it shall try to do. This sector of culture is called political culture.¹⁰

According to Alan R. Ball, "A political Culture is composed of the attitudes, beliefs, emotions and values of society that relate to the political system and to political issues. These attitudes may not be consciously held but may be implicit in an individual or group relationship with the political system."¹¹

Sidney Verba defines political culture as "the subjective orientation to politics" or "the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which define the situation in which political action takes place."¹²

Lucian Pye writes that "Political Culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give orders and meaning to a political process and that provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics."¹³

Dennis Kavanagh observes that Political Culture is an expression to denote the emotion and attitudinal environment with which the political system works.

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Robert A. Dahl has singled out political culture as a factor explaining different patterns of political opposition whose salient elements are:

i) Orientations of problem solving.
ii) Orientations to collective action.
iii) Orientations to the political system and
iv) Orientations to other people.

Foundations of the Political Culture

A political culture, whether diverse or homogenous, is a product of many interrelated factors. Changes in political culture come under the influence of these factors. Further, the general culture influence the political culture and in turn gets influenced by it. Moreover, the political culture, is not static, it is dynamic and thus responds to the needs generated within the political system or imparted or imposed from outside. Let us examine the factors that constitute the foundations of the political culture:

History. History plays an important role in the making and evolution of political culture. Historical events always influence the shaping on political culture in a big way. In the case of British political culture, the signing of Magna Carta, 1215, Petition of Rights, 1628, and the 17th Century struggle between the king and the Parliament over the issue of sovereignty, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 etc. have all played a deterministic role. French political culture bears a

deep impact of the French Revolution and the “Declaration of Rights of Man and of Citizen”. Likewise, the American Declaration of Independence, the War of Independence and the Civil War of mid 19th Century exercised a big influence upon the American political culture. The Indian political culture shows an influence of colonial domination, the freedom struggle and the gradual introduction of the Westminster model of government. Thus, the political culture of each society is greatly influenced by the historical events.

**Geography.** Beside historical development, geography is another important factor in fashioning a political culture. Britain's island insularity protected the country from foreign invasion. The vast size and diversities have helped the Americans to accept the values of equality and freedom for all. The limitless frontier of a country like India opened the ways for the foreigners to invade and even stay here with the result that we have developed the values of independent and secular egalitarianism in the midst of sharp ethnic difference.

**Ethnicity.** The existence of ethnic differences and ethnic conflicts among several ethnic groups or minorities which live in the society always determine the nature of political culture. However, the impact of ethnic differences on a particular political culture varies. Ethnic differences have recently begin to affect attitudes in Great Britain. Yet the United States, with a more polyglot population has succeeded in assimilating the vast number of immigrant, at least the voluntary ones, so that different ethnic groups think of themselves primarily as Americans. However, European immigration into Canada and South Africa has not removed entirely the

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16. Ibid.
consciousness of being members of different ethnic groups and the party systems reflect this consciousness.17 Ethnic differences give rise to the emergence of sub-political cultures within the natural political culture.

**Ideology.** The ideological factor is another determinant of the political culture. The concept of political culture refers to orientations-cognitive, affective and evaluative, towards political objects and actions.18 These orientations are greatly influenced by the ideologies that are popular with the people. Ideology of Marxism has determined the nature of political cultures of several states which later on adopted socialism as the value. The influence of the ideology of Liberalism has now been instrumental in changing the orientations, of the people of socialist states, towards their socialist political systems. The impact of the democratic socialist ideology is seen in the case of the Indian political culture. Ideological movements, when successful, attempts to translate their political beliefs into specific structures, such as institution, procedures, and roles. Sometimes the differences of ideological interpretations may lead to internal discontent and disaffection and eventually destroy, rather than enhance the unity of the collectivity.19

**Socio-economic factors.** The socio-economic factors always play a deterministic role in laying down the foundations of the political culture. A predominantly urban, industrialised society is a more complex society, putting a premium on rapid communication.20 Educational standards are higher, groups proliferate, and participation

17. Ibid., pp. 55 - 56.
in the decision-making process is, of necessity, wider. Rural societies are not geared to change and innovation and states with a predominantly peasant population tend to be more conservative. The development of agriculture and industry always influences the political culture. The developments in the field of science and technology have their impact on the process of transportation and communications, migrations and immigrations, imports and exports, revolution and warfares. All these factors in turn lead to change in political values and beliefs of the people. In societies in which peasants form the major part of the population, there tends to be linked with conservative attitudes a resentment of governmental activity and an ignorance of its scope.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Development of Political Culture}

A political culture is not static but will respond to new ideas generated from within the political system or imported or imposed from outside. Industrialisation is an important factor in changing values and attitudes. Rapid influences of immigrants, war and especially defeat in a major war, revolution, all may provoke changes in political values and beliefs with subsequent strains on the political system. The stability of a political system is underlined by the relative success or failure of the assimilation of new attitudes into the existing value structure, and for this there is the need to examine the means of effective transmission of the political culture from generation to generation.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 57.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., pp. 61 - 63.
\end{itemize}
As individuals interact with one another, they generate ideas, expectations, attitudes and beliefs about their common activities, in short, they create a culture. Although, of course, the vast majority of people are born and socialised into a culture which they take as given. These cultural ideas come to be associated with particular patterns of social behaviour. Political culture co-ordinates political action. 23

The political culture is the product of the history of both the political system and the individual members of the system, and, thus, is rooted in public events and private experienced. In this sense, the development of the concept of political culture is an attempt to bridge the gap between micro and macro sociological analysis. 24

Types of Political Culture

The political culture are of various types. Almond specifies three distinct types of political cultures-parochial, subject and participant cultures.

**Parochial political culture.** It characterises traditional societies in which the people are backward and ignorant about their political systems. Here the orientations of the citizen towards political objects are extremely weak and he does not relate himself in any positive way to national political institutions, to national questions and policies, nor does he see himself as affecting them. In this system, the citizen may, nevertheless, be intensely involved in local, tribunal or village politics, i.e. in African tribal societies and other societies within which institutional and role

differentiation are relatively simple. For him, the political system remains, at most, on the border line of awareness.

Subject political culture. It exists where there is a high frequency of orientations to the system as a whole and to its specifically output aspects. Here the citizen is strongly aware of the political system and its outputs and he may like or dislike them but, he has only a weakly developed sense of the institutions through which societal demands are channelled and only a limited sense of personal political efficacy. The citizen interprets his role as one in which he must accept the system as it is, not try to change it, and obediently follow the instructions of his political leaders. Society is seen as possessing an essentially hierarchical structure in which all individuals and groups have a well-defined place which they ought to be content.25 This type of political culture is found in developing societies.

Participant political culture. In a participant political culture new attitudes emerge in society at large. The individual is seen and sees himself, as an active member of the polity. He has rights and duties which he is expected to be consciously aware of, and where necessary, to exercise. He is oriented to all types of political objects. Evaluation and criticism of the system exists at all levels, and it is generally accepted as desirable that political activity should be under the close scrutiny of individuals and groups within society.26

However, these three types of political cultures are extreme types. No society is characterised by a single variety of political culture. In every society a mixture of

26. Ibid., p. 117.
these varieties is also found. Further, the following political cultures have been typified by several other political scientists:

**Civic culture.** Civic culture is a mixed type of all the three pure types of political culture. In this type of political culture the decision-making powers are vested with an elite and people who do not participate in the input process. People express their sentiments through their representatives but at the same time representatives are responsible to the public opinion. Such type of culture exists in a democratic set up. Civic culture includes the notion of participation in structures widely regarded as legitimate but, in which, for most people at least, life offers a range of opportunities for commitment which helps to develop both a sense of potential personal competence and a sense of trusting other people. The sense of competence and trust allows the citizen to feel at ease with the government, in that he will not feel it necessary to oppose the government on all issues but does not feel competent to associate in opposing it on issues he feels to be important. Similarly, the norm of participation allows the government to act fairly and freely but it is also a constraint on government abusing its freedom to act, citizens are both capable of associating and willing to associate when they perceive the government acting against their interest. This type of political culture characterises developed societies like the American society.

**Secular political culture.** This type of political culture characterises a society in which people are secular in their outlook. People participate in the decision-making process in a rational and analytical manner. There are group of electors with votes to sell for policies. Politics is seen by the participants as a set of give-and-take

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27. Ibid., 118.
interactions, in which each side bargains for a set of more or less limited objectives. The traditional and orientational attitudes give way to more dynamic decision-making processes involving gathering of information, the evaluation of information, the laying out of alternative course of action, the selection of course from among these possible courses and means whereby one tests whether or not a given course of action is producing the consequences which were intended. In general, a political culture must be increasingly secularized if the new, differentiated structures are to operate effectively.

**Ideological political culture.** Ideological political culture is a culture in which free tendencies do not find a scope for development rather a particular ideology is encouraged and a particular type of political orientation finds a way for development. Through controlled political socialisation, propaganda and educational system the desired orientations are sought to be developed among the people of the political system. Such a culture is opposed to secular political culture. People having particular ideology, do not make political life dynamic rather it becomes static.

**Homogeneous political culture.** Homogenous political culture exists where the people have been living under a political system continuously characterised by the same set of values, beliefs, orientations and attitudes towards a political action. In such type of political culture, there are different political parties, and groups but they shared common long-cherished values, ideas and ideologies. The politics of America and England are the example of such a political culture. To concentrate

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30. Ibid., p. 59.
only on shared beliefs might lead one to overlook situations where significant political beliefs were held only by certain groups, and where the very fact that these attitudes were not shared by most members of the system was of crucial importance. This is particularly a problem as one begins to deal with societies as large and complicated as the nation-state.\(^{31}\)

**Fragmented political culture.** Fragmentation of political culture is due to an uneven pattern of development, to significant survivals or "outcroppings" of older cultures with their own political manifestations, though they also have common roots and a common heritage, unlike many of the pre-industrial systems.\(^{32}\) This type of political culture is found in such countries in which different people and their groups share different types of values or ideologies. In this type, different sections of societies have different patterns of cultural development and political unity in impossible. Such political culture is found where multi-party system exists, as it is in France.

**Political Socialisation**

The concept of political socialisation is very closely related to the concept of political culture. It is through the process of socialisation that political culture passes from one generation to the next. It is through the performance of this function that individuals are inducted into the political culture; their orientations towards political objects are formed. Changes in the patterns of political culture also come about

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through political socialisation. Political cultures are maintained and changed through the process of socialisation. Without the process of socialisation, the society could not perpetuate itself beyond a single generation and culture could not exist.

Though the study of socialisation is not a new field, the investigation of political behaviour as a consequence of socialisation is relatively new. This does not mean that those interested in politics have not been aware of its importance. However, only in recent years have the results of empirical investigations about the relations between the socialisation process and political behaviour begun to appear in the literature.

The study of political socialisation seems to be one of the most promising approaches to understanding political stability and development. Its special significance in the modern world is a consequence of the great changes which are affecting so many contemporary societies. The traditional socialisation structures must compete with new ones and with new, immediate experiences.

The socialisation process goes on continuously throughout the life of the individual. Political socialisation is not a process confined to the impressionable years of childhood, but one that continues throughout adult life. Attitudes are not

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established during infancy and untouched after the age of ten. They are always being adopted or reinforced as the individual goes through his social experiences. Early family experiences can create a favourable image of a political party, for example, but subsequent education, job experience, and the influence of friends may alter that early image to a hostile and unfriendly one.\textsuperscript{38}

The process of political socialisation generally acts in a causal or imperceptible manner. That is, it operates in a quiet or smooth manner without people's being aware of it. The people take the norms for granted without questioning their legitimacy. Political socialisation encompasses all political learning whether formal or informal, or whether deliberate or unplanned, at every stage of the cycle of his life, including not only explicitly political learning which affects political behaviour, such as the learning of politically irrelevant social attitudes and the acquisition of politically relevant personal characteristics. Thus, society is really a collectivity of those who are still receiving primary socialisation and those who are teaching them while they themselves undergo various, if slow and subtle kinds of adult socialisation.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Development of Political Socialisation}

Political socialisation has been studied in the political theory of almost every era. Its current incarnation, however, dates mainly from American studies of civic education in 1920s. But it had a delayed entry into the empirically oriented political


behaviour literature when Lipset and other scholars analysed the concept in their 'Handbook of Social Psychology'. Greater focus was rapidly made on the analysis of political socialisation in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In 1959, a social psychologist Herbert H. Hyman gave further impetus to this field with publication of an inventory of recent empirical psychological studies. It was Hyman, who coined the term 'political socialisation'. He laid emphasis on the perpetuation of political values across generations. No one used this term prior to 1960. However, by 1970s, anyone who had any connection with political science not only recognised it, but was expected to deal with the idea.

Following Hyman several political scientists, prominent among them being Lasswell, Easton, Hess, Almond and Verba, came forward to use the concept for studying various phenomena of politics. In contemporary political studies, it is increasingly being used for studying such phenomena as political change, political development, political modernisation and political culture. The study of socialisation turns behaviourists away from studies of ideology to how orientations are instilled by society in the individual. These fundamental orientations, according to the scholars, help determine his or her political personality. And since then, research output has increased at a geometric rate resulting in the publication of several texts and readers. Now, political socialisation is an inter-disciplinary field of study and activity which has attracted the interest of researcher and writers in a good many countries, but especially the USA.  40

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Meaning of Political Socialisation

Herbert H. Hyman defines political socialisation as a continuous learning process involving both emotional learning and manifest political indoctrination, and as being mediated by all of the participations and experiences of the individual and not simply by early family experiences. It is the process of induction into political culture.

According to Almond and Powell, "Political socialization is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed." 41

In the words of Dennis Kavanagh, political socialisation is the term used to describe the process whereby an individual learns and develops orientations to politics.

Robert Lenin defines it as the means by which individuals acquire motives, habits and values relevant to participation in a political system.

David Easton describes political socialisation as those developmental processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behaviour.

Kenneth P. Langton, observes, "Political socialization in the broadest sense, refers to the way society transmits its political culture from generation to generation." 42

According to Eric Rowe, political socialisation is the process by which the values, beliefs and emotions of a political culture are passed on to succeeding generations.

Peter H. Merkl defines that, "the scientific study of the acquisition of political attitudes and behaviour patterns by members of a political system or sub-system is generally called the study of political socialization."^43

Alan R. Ball defines political socialisation as "the establishment and development of attitudes and beliefs about the political system."^44

According to Greenstein, "political socialisation is a process which would encompass all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned at every stage of the life cycle, including not only explicitly political learning but also nominal non-political learning that affects political behaviour, such as the learning of politically relevant personality characteristics."^45

According to Stephen L. Wasby, the subject matter of this concept "is the process by which people acquire political values not simply during active political participation, but also in the period before they engage in an explicitly political activity."^46

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Types of Political Socialisation

Political socialisation may be broadly divided into two types, namely manifest and latent. Political socialisation is manifest when certain values or feelings towards political objects are put into the mind of others directly, clearly and manifestly. The civics course in public high schools exemplify manifest political socialisation.47

On the other hand, latent political socialisation is the transmission of non-political attitudes which affect attitudes toward analogues roles and objects in the political system. Such latent political socialisation may occur with particular force in early experiences. For example, the child acquires certain general attitudes of accommodation or of aggression toward other individuals. Such orientations will affect his attitudes toward political leaders and his fellow citizens. They will shape his view of politics as a process of struggle for dominance or as a means of attaining legitimate goals.48

Agents of Political Socialisation

Political socialisation refers to the developmental processes whereby each person acquires the knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, attitudes and dispositions which enable him or her to function as more or less effective, though not inevitably compliant member of society.49 Political socialisation is the process, mediated

48. Ibid., p. 66.
through various agencies of society by which an individual learns politically relevant attitudinal dispositions and behaviours patterns. Each political system aims at maintaining its political culture from generation to generation. This is chiefly done through evolving different agencies for achieving political socialisation of the people which would ensure the political culture. Thus, in the process of political socialisation several elements or institutions play a part which are called agencies or agents of political socialisation. Some like family, school, colleges, work institutions are sometimes called primary agents because they are the first to provide orientations of the people in the initial years of their lives. The orientation influenced or determined by agents, like mass media, peer groups, etc. are called secondary agents. However, the difference between primary and secondary socialisation is not organic.

Thus, the individuals, as members of a political system, acquire certain orientations, namely, cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations towards the political system in general and its various constituting aspects in particular. All these orientations are structured with the help of the agencies of political socialisation, which are both political and non-political in nature. The process of socialisation is channelised through numerous agencies and every agencies have their respective contributions. Let us discuss some of the important agencies of political socialisation one by one.

Family. Family is the first primary specialisation structure that an individual comes in contact. The family is the child's first window on the world outside, it is the child's first contact with authority, it is here that the first difference in the role expectation

between the sexes are implanted, and surveys have shown the strong link between the voting behaviour of parents and their children.\textsuperscript{51}

It is true that most of the fundamentals of political orientation are learned in the first dozen years of a person's life. The family more than any other agent perform most of the teaching of politics, as the child, after all, spends these years mostly in a state of physical and emotional dependance upon his family. The best teaching of politics seems to occupy rather subtly and inadvertently by way of imitation and identification, on the part of the child as well as by off-hand remarks and the osmotic effect of views strongly held by the parents or other persons of influence.\textsuperscript{52}

The family makes collective decision, and for the child these decisions may be authoritative - failure to obey may lead to punishment. An early experience with participation in family decision making process can increase the child's sense of political competence, can provide him with skills for political interaction, and make him more likely to participate actually in the political system as an adult. Further, the child's pattern of obedience to decisions at family can motivate him to the norms of the political system as a political subject.\textsuperscript{53}

The family also shape future political attitudes by locating the individual in a vast social world, establishing his ethnic, linguistic, religious ties and social class, affirming his cultural and educational values and achievements and directing his

occupational and economic aspirations. Thus, the attitudes and behaviour patterns established in the family will constitute the base for future socialization experience.  

Children are oriented towards the ideology, political groups, political parties and political values which their parents posses. Party preference is perhaps the aspect most easily transmitted from parents to children even if the parents are making no explicit efforts to do so. This is particularly true if the parents agree with each other and have strong views. Interest in politics is transmitted almost as readily as political preference. The impact of the family as a moulder of personality also has drawn recently attention, with particular attention given to personality abnormality resulting from an unhappy childhood, and its effect on political attachment.

**Educational Institutions.** As the individual matures and begins to explore beyond the family environment, he confronts other groups and institutions which also socialise him to politics. Many of these experiences take place within the content of the school. Such secondary agencies often support the attitude and behaviour patterns established in the family environment, but they can also foster new political orientation. Schools can inculcate political beliefs formally through conscious, planned instruction, as well as informally through inadvertent, casual experiences in the school milieu.

School provide the adolescent citizens with knowledge about the political world and his role in it. They provide children with more concrete perception of political institution and relationships. They also transmit the values and attitudes of the society. Mostly, the schooling pattern is turned in conformity to the political ideology of a country. Schools can bring an awareness of other values and circumstances, providing a basis for new political aspirations. They can reinforce affection for the political system, and can provide common symbols for the expressive response to the system.  

The young adult attending college encounters diverse ideas and acquaintances, opportunities for political instruction, and challenges to compare the perceived world with the academic conception of it to a degree unprecedented in most primary and secondary school experience. On the surface, there is a difference, persons with college education have a higher sense of civic awareness and competence than other citizens. They are far more likely to vote. They have a greater tendency to be independent rather than party loyal. And they are more likely to split their tickets between parties in voting.

The educated persons are more aware of the impact of government on their lives, pay more attention to politics, have more information about political processes, and manifest a higher degree of political competence. This is presumably the effect both of manifest transmission of political knowledge, and of the development of general awareness of one’s social environment and of experience participating in it.  

The school contains a particular pattern of authoritative decision-making to

58. Ibid.
which all students are exposed. Participating in decision making at school can do something to make up for a lack of it at home - or can reinforce the previous patterns. This problem of participation and authority patterns is important at the adult as well as the primary level of education.

Formal institution by professional teachers is probably also a profound moulder of future citizens. The institutions of mass education in modern nations have been developed to increase the capabilities of all the members of a society, and of the society itself as a system. The goals are not only the acquisition of useful skills, but also the development of a literate communication system among all the members, between the political leadership and dormant masses, and between the modernising government and the traditional and transitional parts of the population. The communication system is one of the functional prerequisites of a modern polity and is particularly important for continuing adult socialization.  

Peer groups. The peer groups are reference groups which include childhood play groups, friendship cliques and small work groups, in which members share relatively equal status and close ties, play an important role in shaping values and orientations. Peers are those one can deal with on the same level as oneself, tease, insult, let imagination loose upon, share dreadful mistake with, and so on, but without the heavy emotional overlay of the family relationship.

Particularly where family ties are loosened in an industrial society, or where family training seems in congruous with the youth's social environment, we may expect the formal and informal peer groups to have considerable impact on individual views of politics. Since orientation to other political actors constitute a particularly important area of political culture, the ways in which peer group contacts affect these orientations has a bearing on future political behaviour. Such relationships may build or break down attitudes of hostility and aggression. They may develop skills in human interaction and participation in group decision making.

The early childhood friends in the neighbourhood are first persons with whom the children interact outside the family world, and they appreciate their friends and the friend circle to a great extent. Interaction with other children influence the behaviour of the children and help construct their personalities. At school level the peer group provides vast stores of important knowledge. These peer group have a definite impact on children behaviour patterns, the sense of discipline, obedience to authority and their familiarity with a routine life. Even in adulthood peer groups are important agents of socialisation. 61 A peer group socialises its members by motivating or pressurising them to conform to the attitudes or behaviour accepted by the group. An individual may become interested in politics or begin to follow political events because his close friends do so.

As peer groups provide a student with a feeling of integration and help him adjust to school life, they tend to make his opinions subject to their influence. Studies have documented the influence of high school peer groups on social norms and aspirations, school achievement, so on and so forth. Many scholars have

61. Ibid., pp. 117 - 118.
concluded that the student culture is one of the prime educational force at work in the schools, and that assimilation into it is the primary concern of most students.\textsuperscript{62} Thus the patterns of co-operation with and conformity to one's peer established at high school age continue to cast their spell as the young, newly enfranchised adult strive to conform politically to their associates at work, to their neighbours at home, or to their crowd of friends.\textsuperscript{63}

**Mass media.** In the earlier time, parents, friends and teachers would comprise the list of primary childhood socializers. Children's books, comics, and magazines might also have been mentioned as sources of information on norms and role models. Today one must add such powerful indirect socialisation agents like radio, movies, television, press materials like newspapers, magazines, journals and books. Many people learn about politics, form a vision of the good life and develop attitudes toward others from what they see on the screen and hear through loudspeakers.\textsuperscript{64} Today's mass communication is the outcome of the slow and steady growth of mass media.

Although, the role of mass media elicits diverse opinions from the exponents of political socialisation, most of them agree that the mass media are the storehouse of political information, distributors of political messages, and powerful leaders of public opinion. Both the mass and elite in a society depend upon the mass media for their knowledge, belief and value-formation on the political system.


\textsuperscript{64} Beth B. Hess, Elizabeth W. Markson and Peter J. Stein, *Sociology* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1982), p. 120.
The media operates both manifestly and latently. It is manifest when specifically political views are presented, it is latent when it presents a view of the world and portrays aspects of the popular culture. The media play a direct role in shaping the basic orientations as well as the specific opinions of most people in all nations with technological mass communications. They may play or have the potential of playing even greater role in developing nations for there the media provides the best tool for regime that seek to change their citizens' traditional orientations and behaviour. The mass media can react the largest number of the people, adults as well as the children in the shortest time. The best short-run technique available is socialization through mass media and it is crucial to modernisation.

A controlled system of mass media is a powerful force in shaping political beliefs of the people. It is particularly so used in authoritarian, totalitarian or dictatorial systems. In addition to providing information about specific and immediate political events, the mass media act over the long run to shape the individual's basic "cognitive Map". Certain facts are emphasized, other facts are not. Certain symbols are conveyed in an emotive context, and the events juxtaposed with them take on the effective colour. A controlled system of mass media can be a powerful force in shaping political beliefs, and can provide bases of support to a totalitarian state as its police forces.65

The mass media functions at various levels — help to set the agenda of issues for public debate, define the contexts for popular evaluations of cooccurrences, transform happenings into events, influence popular expectations of how events will turn out and portray the images of political leaders in different

ways. On the whole, the cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations results from exposure to the mass media. Thus comes a close relationship between a person’s general interest in politics and manner in which he follows it in the mass media.

**Direct contact.** When the individual and political system come in direct contact with each other, the process of socialisation becomes more powerful. Direct formal and informal relationship with specific elites in political system are a powerful force in shaping orientations of individuals to the system. In this connection, the direct contacts between the individual and government as well as political parties play a significant role. Political parties are the most important agents of political socialisation. Through political propaganda, electioneering presenting their views in written and spoken political language, by recruiting people and by articulising and aggregating their political interests, political parties become the direct agent of political socialization. The political parties are one of the few social structures potentially capable of involving large number of people in political action on a sustained and controlled basis.66

Direct formal and informal relationships with specific elites in the political system are inevitably a powerful force in shaping orientations of individuals to the system. No matter how positive the view of the political system which has been inculcated by family and school, when a citizen is ignored by his party, cheated by his police, starved in the bread line and finally conscripted into the army, his views of the political realm are likely to be altered.67

66. Ibid., p. 120.
67. Ibid., p. 69.
Political Culture and Socialisation : A Case of Manipur

Political culture is undoubtedly connected with the study of politics. The ability of a political system depends on political culture. The political system of a country having standard political culture can easily face grave dangers. But political socialisation contributes a lot to the making of political culture. So the study of politics of any country is incomplete without the study of political culture and political socialization of that country. So inorder to have a better idea of Manipur politics it would be ideal if we have a brief idea of the nature of political culture and socialization in Manipur.

Manipur enjoyed a rich and long historical tradition with a different cultural and separate political identity of her own. In ancient period the form of government was monarchical; however, there were some elements of federalism. There was no separation of powers and the three functions of the government were combined in the hands of one person. But there was division of labour. From the modern point of view, the government was neither representative nor responsible.68

The king was the head of the state and he was assisted in the administration by his ministers and sixty four Phamdous. The king was not an autocrat though all departments circle round the figure of the king. He was bound by customs and conventions; any violation of which resulted in house imprisonment and cutting of the permission to attend to his royal functions. The king himself took no direct part in the administration except on formal occasions when he presided over the Darbar.69

The nobility exercised tremendous influences over him. But later on, when unification and consolidation was complete; the influences of the nobility began to decline. The king remained the final appellate judge. The king was the God incarnate as the title Lainingthou (King of Gods) indicated though the king and the queen had to observe certain moral precepts strictly.\footnote{N. Ibobi Singh, \textit{The Manipur Administration, 1709 - 1907} (Imphal: 1976), p. 49.}

In ancient days the people were thus completely ignorant of their political and civil rights due to lack of education and poor communication. The political consciousness of the people was considerably low. Therefore political culture was parochial in nature. Politics was confined to a very restricted circle, covering the king, his nobles and a few ambitious men. The principal officers in the state were in constant rivalry awaiting a chance to usurp his position and power. In such a political atmosphere, there was no question of political development.

The political background during the time of monarchy was not conducive to a vigorous political movement. The isolated geographical position of Manipur checked the widening of the mental horizon of the people. Besides, the economy of the people being very low, they could not think of their own political status, as they were deeply engaged in the hard struggle for existence. On the other hand, the underdeveloped communication system of the state, stood in the way of the growth of political consciousness of the people as the conduct of government and politics generally required a flow of information from the people to the government and from the government to the people. Again due to the lack of education the
people remained completely ignorant and loyal to the ruler. As a consequence, the nature of politics was very limited. There was little scope for the people to get themselves involved in politics as they were engaged in economic pursuits only. The people were satisfied with their position and they were unchanging in political fields.

During the year 1755 - 1758, the subversive invasion of Manipur by Burma compelled the ruler of Manipur to seek the external aid and finally it led to the establishment of relationship between Manipur and the British. In the year 1819, Manipur lost her independence to the Burmese and the state was placed under the Burmese suzerainty for seven years. Manipur took help from the British to liberate itself from the Burmese. The Burmese occupation of Manipur thus ended in 1826, by the Treaty of Yandaboo signed between the British East India Company and the king of Manipur. This treaty left of the king of Manipur as a semi-independent ruler of Manipur and this was the beginning of the end of the sovereignty of the Manipuri monarchies as the region was incorporated to British rule after 1826. In 1935, an office of the British Political Agency was established in Manipur in order to preserve friendly relation between Manipur and Britain.

In 1890, the outbreak of palace revolt in Manipur gave a very good opportunity to the British to interfere in the domestic affairs of Manipur. After the death of Maharaja Chandrakriti, his eldest son Surchandra became the ruler of Manipur and Kulachandra became the Jubaraj. But very soon, rivalry, arose between the brothers and an open revolt broke out on September 21, 1890. Maharaja Surchandra abducted the throne and Kulachandra became the king of Manipur. Meanwhile the ex-king Surchandra requested the British authorities to restore him again as the
king of Manipur. A fierce fighting took place between the British forces and Manipuri troops. And finally on April 27, 1891 Manipur lost her sovereignty to the British and it became a colonial dependency of the British. Then for the establishment of a native rule the British Authority selected Churachand Singh, a minor boy, as the king of Manipur.  

Manipur, thus entered into a new phase where the administration of the state was under the close control of the British government. The king was assisted in the administration of the state by a Darbar. The British authorities brought several changes in the administrative system of the state. These changes, in fact, greatly effected the traditional practices in the state.

The Political Agent in Manipur abolished the system of Lallup on April 29, 1892. However, the revival of the Lallup by the then Political Agent Lt. Colonel H. St. Maxwell in 1904 led to the outbreak of violent women agitation. The Lallup was a feudal service rendered by the adult subject to the king for ten days out of every forty days. The service might be in the form of performing military duties or constructing roads or working in the king's estate etc. As a token of their services to the king they were exempted from paying revenue taxes.

There was a wide spread agitation against the system of Pothang - a form of forced labour towards the end of 1913. Those labourers were forced to carry

bags or baggages of the officers/members of the royal families but they were never paid their wages. However, it was abolished in the same year. Following an oppressive policy, the Maharaja forced upon the people a number of formalities eg. the undoing of the umbrella and tucking up the flowing portion of the dhoti before the Maharaja and the British administrators. Beside these courtesies, a number of extortions were made from the people in the name of religion. Whenever government officers toured in the remote villages, the villagers were bound to be their sentries. For no reason, a person was outcast and he could be purified only after payment of a sum of money to the king. In most cases, the British Government supported the administrative policy of the king. The Britishers wanted to follow the containment policy so that the Manipuris might not rise against them.73

During the period of Maharaja Churachand Singh, several types like Chandon Senkhai, a subscription for Chandon mark which was a sign of Vaisnavism; Panchanapet a kind of tax levied from the people at the time of the first earing ceremony, etc. were introduced. Apart from this the government also introduced some other system like Peon Chakthak, rations for touring peons and officials, yarek santry, keeping vigil over officials on tours which ultimately gave a heavy burden to the people. Another interesting role of the government was the interference in the private life of the common people. It is recorded that if there were a divorce case between husband and wife, then they had to pay a sum of Rs. 1 as fine to the authority. But the value of one rupee of that time was very big. Majority of the common people was not in a position to give this amount of money to the government. Thus the feudal ruler introduced various heinous social evils in the state. On the other hand, the common people did not have enough

courage to fight against the king/social evils. This shows that the orientations of political culture of that time was exhibited in the form of a subject political culture. The citizens were aware of the political system but had only a limited sense of political efficacy. They accepted the system as it was, but did not try to change it. The basic reason for their inability was lack of their political conciousness.

Manipur witnessed the occurrence of two different types of tribal movements during the colonial period. They were the Kuki Rebellion of 1917 - 1919 and the Zeliangrong Movement of 1930 - 1932. Basically these two movements aimed against the feudal system and colonial policy of the imperialist. The most significant contribution of these two movements was that they created a stepping stone for the rapid growth of political conciousness in the state.

There were some men like H. Irabot Singh, H. Angou Singh etc. who got western education and could not be taken in the fold of royal powers. They very much resented the religious exploitation and social persecution carried out by the Brahmims and the Maharaja on the common people and wanted to form a socio-religious organisation for the upliftment and promotion of the social and religious life of the people. Accordingly, an organisation known as the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha was formed in 1934 under the Presidentship of the then Maharaja.74

The formation of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha marked a turning point in the political history of Manipur because the agitation for constitutional reforms

emanated from the same platform. The Mahasabha extended its network among the people and tried to impress upon them the long standing necessity of democratisation of political process and state machinery. Then some radical members led by Irabot made realise the people the prevalence of social evils in the state. He further propagated that the welfare of the people could not be achieved unless democratic constitutional reforms were immediately introduced in the state. The political mobilisation of the Meiteis had hitherto been somewhat slow and it now received a stimulus in his efforts. The Mahasabha opened its branches in all the important centres of the state and in the places where there were large numbers of Manipuri settlers. The Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha, later on, became the first political party in Manipur in the year 1938 under the name of Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha.

We could see the first political involvement of the Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha during the women’s agitation of 1939. The women demanded that the government should stop the practice of exporting local rice outside the state. With the Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha’s participation in the movement, gradually it took a political shape. Consequently, the party started demanding the introduction of full responsible government in the state.

In the meantime, other different political parties were formed in the state. The main objectives of these political parties were the abolition of the colonial and feudal administrative system and establishment of a popular government in her future. As the movement grew stronger, day by day the Maharaja under people’s

76. Ibid.
pressure announced his desire to introduce a fully democratic and constitutional form of government in Manipur. Accordingly, the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and the Manipur Hill Regulation Act, 1947 were passed. Under the provisions of the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 the elections were held for the first time in 1948. As no party got majority a coalition ministry was formed. The Legislative Assembly constituted by the elected representatives of the people on the basis of democratic principle, was a great landmark in the political history of Manipur. It fulfilled a long-standing desire of the people for a full responsible government.77

With the coming of Indian Independence, the political scenario of Manipur was completely changed. Manipur was to Indian Union on October 15, 1949. Under part 'C' state Act, Manipur was declared as a part 'C' state with effect from 1952 till it became a Union Territory in 1957. Under the Constitution of India, the first general election was held in January, 1952 on the basis of adult franchise. The people of Manipur who had popular government under the Maharaja of Manipur with a Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers, whose members were elected on adult franchise for the first time in the whole of India, could not remain satisfied with the rule of the bureaucrats and they remain discontent and started agitation to restore the responsible government which they once enjoyed. The formation of State Re-organisation Commission created apprehension in the minds of the local politicians and intelligentsia regarding the fate of Manipur. Under the Territorial Council Act, 1956, provision was made for a Teritorial Council for Manipur.78

78. Ibid., p. 176.
Though the establishment of Territorial Council in Manipur seemed to be a step towards the formation of a responsible government, it did not fulfil the aspiration of the people of Manipur and they demanded restoration of responsible government. A mass Satyagraha movement under the auspices of the Assembly Demand Co-ordinating Committee, was launched for the restoration of responsible government in Manipur. All bazars in Imphal and suburbs observed complete hartal and cinema and amusement houses remained suspended. The agitation for the establishment of Legislative Assembly further increased, and normal work in all government offices, courts, Posts and Telegraph office remained suspended due to blockade of the gates by batches of agitators. Transport services were disrupted, several hundred movements paraded the streets in procession shouting slogans for the establishment of legislative assembly. The movement was conceived, by the socialist party, whose leader L. Achou Singh, M.P. was quite popular to exploit the widespread discontent among the people.

The demand of the people of Manipur for a popular government and responsible government was irresistible and the ten years of Chief Commissioner rule had not been able to improve the condition of Manipur. The people had not a proper forum to ventilate their grievances, and the administration was not answerable to the people, but to its masters in Delhi, which caused a psychological irritation amongst the people of Manipur. According to the local politicians the central government had no moral force behind its policy of delaying the introduction of fully representative government in the Union Territory.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., pp. 178 - 179.
With the passing of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, the existing Territorial Council constituted under the Territorial Council Act, 1956 had been converted into the Territorial Legislative Assembly in June, 1963. The political atmosphere in Manipur continued to be tense reaching the climax gradually. When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi paid a short visit to Imphal, various demonstration in support of the demand for a full-fledged statehood for Manipur was taken out. In a series of clashes between the police and the leftist demonstrators many people were killed and injured.

The agitation for full statehood continued in full vigour. Ultimately on January 21, 1972, Manipur emerged in the political map of India as a full-fledged state headed by a Governor. The political aspiration of the people of Manipur far more than twenty years have at last been fulfilled.

After getting its statehood, Manipur had gone through several elections. Due to continuous political socialisation among the people of Manipur, the political orientation of the people also changed from time to time. Thus, the political culture of the people before getting statehood had changed when Manipur attained its statehood. When we analyse the election results of 1972 and 1974, we can see that the regional political parties played a very important role in the politics of Manipur. The political ideologies of the regional political parties influenced the peoples' choice of candidates and their political orientations. Again, the people's political orientation was changed, as we can see from the election results of 1980

and 1984. The Congress ideology, values and beliefs changed the political beliefs of the people and there was a strong Congress wave in the state during this period. The political socialisation of the people, thus kept on changing.

However, the election results of 1990 show the return of regional party in power again. But, this attitude soon changed and the Congress again returned in power, in the election of 1995. However, the election results of 2000 show the emergence of another regional political party in power i.e. MSCP.

Thus, the kind of political culture that exists nowadays in the state is participant political culture. The people of the state are fully aware of their rights and duties and are active members of the polity. They participate in the activities of the political system and are continuously engaged in evaluation and criticism of the system.

The following are some of the chief agents of political socialisation in Manipur:

**Family.** The process of political socialisation in Manipur begins in the family. Here the parental influence on the child is very great. The intimate relationship between the mother and the child has a great impact on the shaping of child's abilities and capabilities. The parents are the first persons to introduce to the child the culture of his group. The child receives additional communications from his older siblings i.e.

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brothers and sisters, who have gone through the same process with certain
differences due to birth order and to the number and sex of the siblings.

In Manipuri society, the father dominates the household. He is the symbol of
authority and propriety. His commands must be obeyed by wife or children equally.
The role of the mother in the family cannot be ignored. The mother rears the children
and performs the family works. The children see their mother as the source of indulgence,
love, humour and understanding. There is little doubt that the family molds the basic
personality structure of the individual whether he accepts its strictures or tends to
rebel. In facing the outside world, the family is largely assimilated into the personality of
child's head.

As opined by a senior politician, the child tends to identify with his parents
and to adopt their outlook towards the political system. Most of the individual's
political personality has been determined at home, several years before he can
take part in politics as an ordinary adult citizen.\textsuperscript{84} Within the family, individuals learn
their first set of social role and in doing so, take a major step in the process of
socialisation. In general, young children's attitude towards people, things and life
in general are patterned by their family set-ups. In Manipuri society, the grandfather,
uncles and aunts also exert a major influence in the process of political socialisation
of the children.

The political socialisation by father is the highest compared to mother and
siblings. This is because, the political participation of the mother is very low, as

compared to the fathers. The mothers are mostly occupied in their household works and there is little time to participate in the political activities. However, the political socialisation of women is much higher in the urban areas nowadays due to the higher rate of literacy among the women in these places. But, the women in rural and hill areas, being mostly illiterate are unaware of political happenings in the state and thus deter the political socialisation process. This was expressed by an MLA from Wangjing-Tentha Assembly Constituency.\textsuperscript{85}

On the other hand, the father being the head of the family, his decisions are binding on the other members of the family. The dominant character of the father, influences the political socialisation process of the children. The reason for the higher rate of political socialisation by male members is due to higher rate of literacy among the male members as compared to the female. This view was expressed by a senior advocate from an urban area.\textsuperscript{86}

**Educational Institutions.** The educational institutions are also chief agents of political socialisation. There are different schools in Manipur. It is in the different educational institutions of Manipur, that the culture is formally transmitted and acquired, in which the lore of learning, the science and arts, of one generation is passed on the next. It is not only the formal knowledge of the culture that is transmitted, but most of its premises as well - its ethical sentiments, its political attitudes, its customs and taboos.

The children in the earlier school may - uncritically absorb the culture to which their teachers give expression. They may in the high school, respond with


increasing accepticism. But, wherever they are, and at whatever age the communication they receive from their teachers help them in acquiring and digesting political knowledge. In this way their ideas and activities are moulded towards a particular belief. A good education can make them good citizens, while a bad education can turn them into a criminal. A well planned system of education can fruitfully socialise the young people upto our expectation.

The various schools in Manipur help in bringing about psychological revolutions in the minds and spirits of the pupils, which create a necessary condition for the emergence of better society. By developing a free and socially sensitive personality, the schools not only enrich the lives of their pupils as individuals but also train them to be disciplined workers and leaders. The schools assimilate the cultures of society required as heritage. Younger generation learns what man has learned through the struggle of ages. Thus, the schools transmit cultural heritage from generation to generation and give continuity to society. It gives social conformity to society and presents its traditional modes of life. Thus schools play a vital role in the process of political socialisation.

According to the opinion of a teacher of Manipur University, it is said that other higher educational institutions like colleges and universities also play a vital role in politically socialising the grown up young minds of the state. Undoubtedly, the course contents and personality of the teachers can also influence the minds of the students.\textsuperscript{87}

At college and University level, we could see political involvement in the Student's Union elections. Somehow or other, there is a sign of political affiliation of the student leaders. It is very common throughout the state. Therefore, the case of educational institutions of Manipur cannot be singled out.

Political socialisation process is the highest at the college level compared to schools and University. College-going students are mainly youths who actively participate in the politics and they are more aware of the political happenings of the state. Those students who studied in the schools and colleges of the rural and hill areas are not so much exposed to politics. That is why the percentage of the participation in politics is considerably low in comparing to the students reading in the schools and colleges situated at urban areas. Manipur being a hilly region, the communication gap between the valley and hills is always there. The people living in the rural and hill region could not get adequate university education due to bad communication. Hence, the students living in the urban areas have an advantage over the students living in the hill and rural areas.

**Peer groups.** Although the family and the educational institutions are the agencies, most obviously engaged in the political socialisation process of the people living in Manipur, several other social units also shape the political attitude. One of these is the peer group, which are made up of the contemporaries of the child, his associates in school, in playground and in street. The child acquires something from his friends and playmates which he cannot acquire from parents. The child learns from his associates, facts and facets of culture that they have previously learnt at different times from their parents. The child becomes less selfish, less self-centred and less aggressive but more co-operative and outgoing when the child associates himself with his peer group. The member of the peer groups have other sources of information
about the culture – their peers in still other peer groups – and thus the acquisition of ideas goes on.

The peer or friends who are located in the academic institution to which the children are attached have a definite impact on children’s manner, behaviour pattern, the sense of discipline, obedience to authority and their familiarity with a routine life. The students groups or Unions act as an important agent in all the matter regarding the affairs of the students.

As expressed by a police officer, the peers interact in a markedly informal way and influence the behaviour of the children and help construct their future socio-political personality in the context of vast political system of which today’s children of Manipur become the responsible members.88

The socialising influence of parents and teachers begins to wane in early adolescence and from then on peer groups become increasingly important influences on political attitudes and behaviour. As the persons grows older, some peer groups that were highly influential in his adolescence were superceded by others made silent by his new life circumstances like work-associates, neighbours and above all a husband or wife.

**Mass media.** The mass media play a direct role in shaping the basic orientations as well as the specific opinions of most people of Manipur. It acts as a tool which can change the people’s traditional orientation and behaviour. The messages that

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are received from the media helps in the process of socialisation. The traditional media of communication in Manipur was limited to the group which could see and hear the narrations of the story. This is one of the means by which the various folklores have been transmitted from generation to generation throughout the state. It has been very effective in spreading the basic traditional values of the society, throughout the length and breadth of the state.

Radio and newspapers are the earliest forms of media which communicates messages to the various people of Manipur. Before the introduction of TV, political socialisation was a slow process. However, after the communication revolution of the 20th century, the mass media have started acting as powerful agents of political socialisation. With the introduction of TV in the state in the 80s, the role of media as a means of political socialisation becomes more prominent. The various mass media has brought the politicians close to the people. They give a major source of political information for different segments of the population of the state. The radio and newspaper have been one of the most important sources of information for the people in the rural areas. Due to bad economic conditions, most of the people in the rural areas could not afford to buy TV and Computers. So most of the people depended on radios and newspapers. This view was expressed by a senior teacher from rural area.89

The exposure to mass media as a means of political socialisation varies from one place to another. The advantages of the mass media are limited in the hill

and rural areas. In these places, the use of TV and computers are very limited compared to the urban areas. Besides, due to bad communication system, the daily newspapers cannot be reached properly in proper time in the hilly places. This view was expressed by a Professor from the Department of History, Manipur University.\footnote{Statement by Lal Dena, \textit{Personal Interview}, September 30, 2003.}

\textbf{Direct contact.} In Manipur, political parties play an important role as a means of direct contact between the people and the political system. The government and the party agencies influence and shape the political orientation of the people. Nothing can be as influential in shaping the attitudes and orientations of the individuals as their direct contact with the political system under which they live and work. This view was expressed by the Joint Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Manipur).\footnote{Statement by L. Sotin Kumar, \textit{Personal Interview}, February 2, 2004.}

The political parties supply both goals and criteria against which to measure existing political and economic realities. In addition to stimulating awareness about other modes of existence, the party may present a specific ideology with goals for the future and a programme for achieving them. The dominating mass political parties are frequently oriented around a political ideology and a charismatic leader. This orientation can make them agencies for the controlled transformation of a political way of life.

As opined by a former Chief Minister of Manipur, the effectiveness with which political parties carry on socialisation activities depend upon the internal characteristics of the party as well as on the conditions of the political and social
environment. The style of adherence to the party subculture, the nature of the party organisation, the solidarity of the party leaders and other factors could be considered.

Thus the various political parties in Manipur are capable of involving large number of people in political action on a sustained and controlled basis, involvement may encompass both communication and participation. Such political stimulation either reinforces existing political attitudes and beliefs, or inculcates new ones.