Chapter 7

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Elections are the means by which the people choose and exercise some degree of control over their representatives. Elections in any political system are a form of political communication between governments and the governed, a means by which political decision-makers become sensitive to the electorate's political demands, and in turn are in a position to educate the electorate on important political issues.

The origin of election as a means of choosing among alternatives achieved a classical institutional form in Athens. The Greek society witnessed the emergence of several democratic ideas and beliefs. However, during the medieval period there was a decline in democratic beliefs and practices. In the present century, the right to participate in the election of the representatives has been greatly extended and it is no more the privilege of a small minority.

In the ancient Indian society, various democratic practices were known to the people. Many democratic institutions also existed and our Panchayat system is a legacy of this period. When the Indian administration was taken over by the British Crown in 1858, the British Government slowly introduced democratic reforms as a step for establishing rapport with public opinion. The Indian Council Acts of 1861 and 1892, the Minto-Morley Reforms Act, 1909, and the Chelmsford Reforms Act, 1919, were some of the landmarks under the British Crown in the parliamentary history of India. The Government of India Act, 1935 was an important landmark in India's march towards self-government. However, under the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 16, 1946, a Constituent Assembly of India was formed for framing a

The Indian political system is characterised by a well structured independent and efficient election system. The efficacy of the electoral process in India can be assessed from the fact that it has been used several times for holding elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. The important constitutional provisions regarding the conduct of elections in India are briefly discussed in chapter I. The sole responsibility for conducting election in India is vested upon the Election Commission. The Election Commission superintends, directs and controls all aspects of electoral process. The Constitution of India has incorporated several steps for ensuring the independence of the Election Commission from any possible influence. The Election Commission also formulates and enforces a code of conduct to be observed by the political parties and candidates during the time of election. The contestants are to refrain from electoral corrupt practices and offences.

From the foregoing discussion, we can draw a clear picture about the electoral process as it operates in India. The electoral process in India is operationalised in several stages. The holding of elections in India is a gigantic task as it involves the employment of a large number of people setting up of a large number of polling stations and making of elaborate arrangements for ensuring a free and fair conduct of elections.

Regarding Manipur, elections in the modern sense of the term was not practised in its ancient period where monarchy was the form of government. With the coming of the British rule in the State, the people started various movement against the monarchical
government for the establishment of a democratic and responsible system. When the British left Manipur in August 1947, a constitutional monarchy was established in the State under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 and elections on the basis of universal adult franchise and secret-ballot system were held in 1948, much before the first general election in the country in 1952.

Democratic politics provides for the existence and functioning of various political parties. They are needed both for the formation of the government as well as for criticising it. The functions and the methods which political parties employ to realise their aim of capturing or retaining political power are related very closely to the party structure. There are many determinants of the party structure. The structures of political parties and the factors that assist in determining those structures are only one set of factors that guide us in determining how political parties function in the political system.

The ancient Indian society, provided hardly any ground for the development of the party system from within. However, during the time of the British rule, the people became politically aware and resulted in the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. With the adoption of a democratic form of government, India has set the room for developing several political parties, which later on have started actively in engaging power struggle.

The Indian party system is yet a developing multi-party system. It has come out of the age of one-party-dominant-multi-party system and is now developing as a real multi-party system. The existence of a large number of political parties makes the Indian political party-scenario complex and even confusing. As a result many
regional parties have sprung up and even some of them have come to power in several states of India.

Regarding Manipur, the growth of political consciousness among the people has resulted in the formation of a social organisation called the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha in 1934. However, after its Chinga Session at Imphal in 1938, it was converted into a political party named Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha, for the first time in Manipur. Since then various political parties — national and regional — with different ideologies have formed. The objectives and roles of different political parties are discussed in the second chapter. The election manifestoes of these parties are also briefly analysed. It is a very strange thing that most of the party manifestoes are almost all the same, even though their ideologies are quite different.

For bringing better understanding about the workings of the political parties, some national and regional political parties have been focussed. Mention may be made about national parties like, Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India, Bharatiya Janata Party, etc. About regional parties, we can mention about Manipur People’s Party, Federal Party of Manipur, Kuki National Assembly, etc. Among the national parties, the Congress Party is the most popular one, and it could form the government many times in the state. The regional parties too played a very important role in the electoral politics of Manipur. Almost all the regional political parties in Manipur are always confined either in the valley or in the hills as their geographical support-base is very limited. The life of these regional parties are very short, as they often got merged with a national party, especially the ruling national party in the State. Except the MPP and the KNA none of the regional parties has completed a decade. The regional political parties in Manipur failed to give a far-reaching impact on the State politics; it may be that most of the politicians
are guided by their own interests and not by their political commitment. However, regional parties like the MPP and MSCP have acted as an alternative to the Congress.

The communication of political information and the voting behaviour are closely related. All that occurs at the political level must be communicated to the people in some form or the other. Political Communication is the vital transmission belt between the aspiring political elites and the common people. Every citizen is dependent upon the information he receives and the effectiveness of the messages he transmits. The purpose of communication is to influence the conduct and behaviour of the receivers which in turn by a feed-back process guides and educates the transmitters. The communication involves all the various procedures and techniques by which one can affect or influence another.

Political Communication is performed through various structures. Some of the communication structures are, opinion leaders, traditional social structures, formal structures, the political parties and the organised groups, mass media comprising newspapers, radio, films, public meetings, posters, hand-bills and the like, etc. The said structures of communication are discussed in the third Chapter. The presence or absence of certain communication structures greatly affects the possibility of effective interaction, and the limitation upon available information affect rational, directed activity. The effectiveness of communication and audience response are subject to various factors.

An important technique of political communication is election campaign. It is generally assumed that the electorate which has been exposed to election campaigning in good measure would turn up for voting to a greater extent.
Campaigning assumes a different form in predominantly urban constituencies from what it is in predominantly rural constituencies. Campaign constitutes a vital phase of the electoral process, it arouses voters' curiosity, identifies issues of debate, spread information, mobilises voters into the system, helps their politicisation, facilitates voters' choice and performs an educational function. Its major aims are to strengthen loyal voters, win as many undecided voters as possible and convert or demoralise rival party supporters. Each party launches a vigorous election campaign for influencing the voters in its favour. Campaigns vary greatly according to the nature of specific electoral systems.

The candidates of different political parties may have adopted various methods of campaigning; however, their objectives are to win the elections. Some of the common techniques mentioned in our study are, meetings, procession, flag-flying contest, door-to-door campaign, publications, personal contact, election feast, role of money, role of mass media, wine, etc. An attempt is made to study the degree of voters' participation in the process of campaigning during the period of 1990 to 2000 elections with regards to the urban, rural and hill areas respectively. From our study, we may abruptly infer that money-factor cannot be ignored.

The study of politics can never be concluded without referring to political culture. Every political system operates within a framework of a society. The participation of each of us in the political system is always influenced by values, beliefs, attitudes and orientations about politics and political objects i.e. sociopsychological environments around political system. Thus, the political culture of a society defines the situation in which political action takes place. The political culture of the people gives them an orientation towards their polity and its processes.
The term political culture is of recent origin in political science. Political culture is a product of many interrelated factors. Changes in political culture come under the influence of these factors. The factors that constitute the foundations of the political culture are, history, geography, ethnic, ideology and socio-economic factors respectively. All the factors play an important role in the making and evolution of political culture. Political culture is not static but will response to new ideas generated from within the political system or imported or imposed from outside. 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.

Political culture are of various types. Almond specifies three distinct types of political cultures - parochial, subject and participant cultures. Further, several other political scientists classified the political cultures as, civic culture, secular political culture, ideological political culture, homogeneous political culture and fragmented political culture. Thus, the political systems operating in different societies of the world can be classified in terms of their political cultures.

We are also well aware of the fact that political culture is learnt through the process of 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. Thus, political cultures are maintained and changed through the process of socialisation. The individual's orientations towards political objects are found through the process of political socialisation.
Though the study of socialisation is not a new field, the investigation of political behaviour as a consequence of socialization is relatively new. The study of political socialisation seems to be one of the most promising approaches to understanding political stability and development. Political socialisation is a continuous process and goes on continuously through the life of the individual. Attitudes are always being adopted or reinforced as the individual goes through his social experiences. The process of political socialisation operates in a quite or smooth manner without people's being aware of it. The people take the norms for granted without questioning their legitimacy.

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. Herbert H. Hyman had coined the term political socialisation. Political socialisation may be broadly divided into two types, namely manifest and latent. In the process of political socialisation several elements or institutions play a part which are called agencies or agents of political socialisation. Some of the important agencies of political socialisation being discussed here include family, educational institutions, peer groups, mass media, direct contact, etc.

In order to have a better idea of Manipur politics, a brief idea of the nature of political culture and process of socialisation is being discussed here. 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. The government was neither representative nor responsible. 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 the supreme head of the State though the king and the queen had to observe certain moral precepts strictly. In ancient days, 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. From time to time the Raja introduced various heinous anti social rules in the State. The common people did not have enough courage to fight against the king. Undoubtedly the people were aware of the existence of a political system but they hardly understand the meaning of political efficacy. They accepted the system as it was, but did not try to change it. When Manipur came under the British rule, they brought several changes in the administrative system, which greatly affected the traditional practices of the State.

Thus the power of the Maharaja was automatically restricted. In the real sense of politics, the growth of political consciousness in the minds of the people of Manipur was of late origin. We could see only in 1930s and 1940s, various types of socio-political movements against the feudal administrative system and colonial rule, were organised. People demanded the immediate establishment of responsible government. The administration had to face a tough challenge posed by the people of Manipur. After the British left India, Manipur soon merged itself to India. On the other hand, the demand of the people for a popular and responsible government became irresistible. As a result, after a long struggle, Manipur became a full-fledged State on January 21, 1972.

The State had gone through several elections, after getting its statehood. As the non-stop process of political socialisation continues, people's orientation towards political understanding is also changed from time to time. The kind of political culture that exists now-a-days in the state is participant political culture.
People have become more aware of their rights and duties. They are now actively involved in politics.

The fifth Chapter deals about the formation of government in Manipur. Though our area of study concerns about the Assembly Elections of 1990, 1995 and 2000 respectively, a brief sketch of the previous elections starting from 1948 to 1984 is also discussed here. The first general election in Manipur was held on 1948 on the basis of adult franchise and joint electorate, under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. The tenure of the Assembly was 3 years. As no party could get absolute majority in the election, a popular coalition government was installed.

Under the Constitution of India, the first General Election was held in January, 1952 on the basis of adult franchise. Consequently, elections were held in 1957 (TC), 1962 (TC) and 1967 (TLA). In all the elections, the Congress Party came out with flying colours. Accordingly, the Congress Party formed the ministry.

With the attainment of Statehood, the first State Assembly Election was held in 1972. MPP succeeded in forming the government. However, the ministry could not last long as a result of defection. Therefore, a mid-term Assembly Election was held 1974. Fortunately, the MPP managed to return to power. But their image/popularity did not regain the same. Assembly Elections of 1980 and 1984 had sealed the faith of the MPP. The Congress won both the elections and form the government. Maybe, the misdeeds of the Congress has affected its popularity. As a result in the Assembly Election of 1990, it could not return to power.

As no party got absolute majority, a coalition government under the name of United Legislative Front was formed in 1990. However, due to the deterioration of
the law and order situation in the State, President’s Rule was imposed on January 7, 1992. But it was revoked on April 8, 1992. On the same day a Congress (I) led government was installed. The ministry was however short-lived, subsequently, President’s Rule came on December 31, 1993. But it was revoked on December 13, 1994. This time Rishang could managed to form the government.

The General Assembly Election of 1995 had showed a peculiar feature. No doubt, the Congress came back to power. Rishang became the Chief Minister, but he was betrayed by his own party-men. The Speaker, Nipamacha, enter into clandestine understanding with some of the opposition party members and formed a new political party called MSCP. Nipamacha and his party became so popular that he came back to power in the next election of 2000. It so happened, Nipamacha’s popularity could not remain the same. Some infighting developed within his party. As a result, this ministry collapsed. Out of it, a new Front had sprung up under the name of People’s Front. This Front also could not pull over for a long time, it also met with the same fate. It shows that politics is a game of power struggle.

The last chapter focusses on the voting behaviour of the voters of the state. In modern democracies voting is generally considered to be the right of the adult citizens. However, in the past, voting was often limited to a few and it is only in recent times that universal suffrage has become a fact. Usually, the act of voting is voluntary. The percentage of persons of voting age who participate in elections varies considerably from country to country.

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. The decisions made at the base have the capacity to topple those at the apex. Voting is the function of electing representatives by casting votes in elections. Methods of voting may vary, depending partly on the object to be accomplished. Sometimes there are special restrictions in voting.

Election is the best method of giving or taking power by citizens to their representatives. Voting as such is a function of immense significance for the voters and the candidates. The voters are the backbone of the success or failure of a democracy. To influence the choice of the voters, the political parties, candidates and campaigners have used varieties of techniques. In the electoral process, voters are the main actors. Thus, the study of voting behaviour has come to be regarded as one of the important aspects of contemporary political research.

The study of voting behaviour involves an analysis of individual psychological processes and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections. The term voting behaviour is not new. The first study of voting behaviour were made by historians and political scientists seeking to explain past elections. 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 in the context of voting in election. The meaning assigned to voting behaviour differs from one frame of reference to the other. Voting behaviour is concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public elections and the reasons why they vote as they do.

The process of voting behaviour is a complex one. Diverse influences—political and non-political—affect it. The voting behaviour of individuals are determined
by various factors. Some of the factors analysed in the last chapter are, religion, party loyalty, money factor, election campaigns, issues, social factors, sex factor, age factor and illiteracy.

The voting behaviour of the people in the election of 1948, was mainly guided by the ideology and personality factors. The 1952 General Elections, witnessed the influence of the social and political factors on the voter's choice for candidates. In the Second General Election of 1957, the voting behaviour of the electorate was greatly influenced by the political movement - a demand for the establishment of responsible government- of that time. The next General Election of 1962 had the same impact on the voting behaviour of the voters. In the General Election of 1967, the absence of an electoral understanding among the various opposition parties resulted in the victory of the Congress over the other parties. Besides, the demand for a full fledged statehood in the State also influenced the voting behaviour of the people. The voting behaviour of the people in the Assembly Election of 1972, was oriented towards parochial regional outlook, as the success of the MPP in this election clearly indicated. Besides, the people were also fed up with the Congress rule. They wanted a change in the 1974 mid-term poll, the regional parties as a whole had put up a better show in this election mainly because of their selective context and regional appeal. The main determinants of the voting behaviour of the people were the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eight Schedule, local problems and money factor. In the next Assembly Election of 1980, money, a strong Indira wave, and the impact of personality of the candidate played an important role in shaping the voter's choice of candidates. The next Assembly Election of 1984, witnessed a strong sympathy wave for the Congress (I) due to the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the charming personality of Rajiv Gandhi. However, money, religion and ideology also played a great role.
In 1990 Assembly Election, most of the voters were influenced by the elders or head of the family to vote for a particular party or candidate. It is the female voters for whom other members of the family have taken decision to a larger extent. The influence of the family on the voting behaviour is lower in the urban areas compared to the rural and hill areas, as most of the urban voters are literate and usually take their own voting decisions. Again as most of the voters in the urban areas are educated and politically conscious, they are more concerned with the personality and educational qualifications of the candidates compared to the rural and hill voters. As there are political awareness and effective political communication in the urban areas, the impact of party loyalty on the voting behaviour is marginal. But in the rural and hill areas, the percentage is quite. Our analysis further shows that, most of the urban voters are influenced by money during election times, and the amount of money accepted is also high in comparison to the rural and hill areas. In rural areas, many leaders have great potentials to influence the people who are depending on them. Further the influence of local issues on voters, is greater in the urban areas compared to the hill and rural areas. The reason is due to the higher political awareness of the urban voters. The influence of election campaigns on voters is much higher among the urban and rural voters as compared to the hills. The lower percentage in the hills, is attributed to the size of the electorate and its scattered location with bad communication system. It is not possible to make door-to-door campaign in the hills on a wider scale because of the bad communication system.

An analysis of the voting behaviour of 1995 Assembly Election shows that, money as a determinant of voting behaviour was considered to be more significant than the other factors. The urban voters were more guided by the money factor
during the election than the rural and hill ones. The importance of personality of a candidate is very much considered among the voters of the urban and hill areas. In the urban areas the percentage of party loyalty is low, as the voters are influenced by other factors also, may be, the voters are politically aware. The influence of local issues on the voters is much higher among the urban voters compared to the rural and hill voters. The reason is attributed to the higher percentage of literacy among the urban voters. The percentage of the influence of family on the voters is higher among the rural and hill voters than among the urban voters. The lower percentage among the urban voters may be that they were educated or politically conscious. Further, the influence of election campaign on the voters is higher among the urban voters compared to the rural and hill ones, the reason being good communication facilities in the urban areas.

In the Assembly Election of 2000, money as a determining factor played a great role in shaping the voting behaviour of the electorate. The influence of money on the voters was the highest among the urban voters compared to the rural and hill voters. The personality factor has more impact on the urban voters than the rural and hill ones. This is the result of effective political socialisation in the urban areas, as most of the rural and hill people are occupied in their own personal affairs and have no time for their political involvement. In the rural and hill areas, people usually keep faith in party-loyalty supported by their forefathers. But in the urban areas, most of the people are educated and are politically conscious, and they do not usually stick to a particular party but keep on changing with time. The percentage of voters influenced by local issues was much higher in the urban areas than the rural and hill areas. The higher percentage in the urban areas can be explained in terms of higher literacy rate, better communication and greater
concentration of electioneering. The rural and hill voters were more influenced by the family-factor because family-ties in the rural and hill areas were relatively high compared to the urban areas. The election campaigning was more intense and effective in the urban constituencies than the rural and hill constituencies. It is easier to campaign in the urban areas than the rural and hill ones because of geophysical and communication problems.

The voting behaviour of three constituencies i.e. 9-Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency, 27-Moirang Assembly Constituency and 43-Phungyar Assembly Constituency in the Assembly Elections of 1990, 1995 and 2000 are briefly analysed as a case study. 9-Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency, which forms a part of the inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency is located in the main urban tract of Imphal. In the Assembly election of 1990, the voting behaviour of the people were greatly influenced with the belief of regionalism. Hence it is proved that an MPP (a regional political party) candidate won the election. The success of the MPP may also be attributed to the electorate’s loss of faith in the Congress. However, the Congress Party returned to power in 1995 and 2000. It proved the voter's renewed faith in the Congress Party. The personality factor of the candidate also proved to be another reason for the Congress Party's success. The role of other factors cannot however be denied.

The 27-Moirang Assembly Constituency, which forms a part of the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency is located in Bishnupur District. In the 1990 Assembly Election, an INC candidate succeeded in capturing this seat. The success of the Congress (I) is mainly attributed to party-loyalty. The strong personality of the candidate influenced the voters. The family factor also proved to be another
cause. In the election of 1995, an MPP candidate succeeded in capturing the seat. This time the policies and programmes of the party had mattered a lot. Further, the local issues also had played a great extent. The family's influence on the voting behaviour was a matter of concern. The success of an INC candidate in the 2000 Assembly Election, proved to be renewal of faith in the Congress ideology. At the same time party affiliation proved to be fruitful in the near futures.

The 43-Phungyar Constituency located in Ukhrul District forms a part of the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. In all the three elections i.e. 1990, 1995 and 2000 Assembly Elections, the INC candidate, managed to win the elections. In the said elections, the personality cult proved to be effective. Moreover, the electorates were overwhelmed by the Congress credos. However, we cannot deny other factors which considered played in moulding the public opinion towards the Congress fold.

Thus, we can conclude that though the Indian Constitution provides for a well structured Election System, there is every need to reform this system in the light of our election experiences. The time has come to come out of the conservatism which justifies simple majority system as really simple and best available system. A big seat-vote gap has been a recurrent feature of elections and the time has come to learn the lesson and analyse the possible alternatives and incorporate these in the system. In order to check the low voter turn-out, compulsory voting should be introduced. The spread of political education and more vigorous direct political socialisation of the masses is also needed. Besides, the issuing of the identity cards to all the voters is an imperative necessity to check impersonated voting, plural voting and bogus eliminations from the electoral rolls. On the other hand, the
introduction of electronic voting and computing machines in elections can make the election system more efficient and relatively less expensive in the long run. Simultaneous elections of the Parliament and State Assemblies should be held to save money, time and energy. The evil of political defection should be checked. The provision for round - the-year-revision and updating of electoral rolls must be introduced. Steps are further needed to check frivolous candidates from contesting the elections just for personal satisfaction. The independents, who keep their options open for joining any party particularly the ruling party after the elections, should not be allowed to contest elections. The rules governing the control of election expenses of the candidates need more vigorous, honest and effective implementation. Special courts for settling election disputes should be established. Thus, to make our election system effective and efficient instrument for establishing truly representative relations between the government and the governed, some changes are needed.

The existence of a large number of political parties makes our party system complex and even confusing. No doubt political parties have certain weaknesses, they are inevitable for a representative government. They play an important role in running the government or opposing it and it also gives political education to the masses. Abuses of party system can diminish only if improvements are made in the standards of public morality and sound public opinion is developed.

Political communication in the urban areas are very much advanced compared to the rural and hill areas. The poor communication system in the rural and hill places hinders the growth of political awareness of the people in these places. Election campaigns are also not effective as the means of transport system in these areas are bad. So, in order to enhance political communication and proper election campaign in this areas the transport system should be properly developed.
The political culture that exists in our State is not based on value-system. Multi-cultural approach to politics should be basis of socialisation. The political socialisation in rural and hill areas are very slow when compared with the urban areas. The members of the political parties in the State are mostly guided by their own self-interest and not by the principles and ideologies of their parties. The frequent defections by members of the various political parties in the State, cause political instability; thus, due to such atomosphere, they cannot fully implement their policies and programmes. This hampers the process of development in the State; so, there is every need to check such frequent defections.

The voting behaviour of the people are usually guided by many factors. However, money and family plays a major role. The role of money and family in determining the voting behaviour is very high in the rural and hill areas when compared to the urban area. So, in order to check such influence right political education should be given to the masses.