Chapter 3

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND ELECTION CAMPAIGN
Chapter III

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND ELECTION CAMPAIGN

There is a relationship between voting behaviour and the communication of political information. The majority of the electorate are not interested in public affairs, do not involve themselves directly in the political process apart from voting, and possess little political knowledge. It is, therefore, important to know as much as possible about how political information is conveyed to the electorate, and to be able to assess the effect of these messages on the recipients. Political parties have channels of communication to the electorate, and this ability to convey both information and opinion is not merely confined to election periods but is a continuing process.¹

Every citizen and office-holder is dependent upon the information he receives and the effectiveness of the messages he transmits. Democratic theorists have insisted on the necessity of freedom of press and of speech in order that the people may check the activities of their rulers. Totalitarian leaders have invariably attempted to dominate such institutions and to manipulate the information available to the citizens. The great historical empires, as well as modern large states, have been characterised by the appearance of specialized communication structures and by the expenditure of important resources to facilitate communication flows. Communication is so pervasive an element in all human life that it is encountered within every facet of social activity.² At every step political communication plays a fundamental part in mobilizing the individuals involved.³

---

Messages are the raw material of political communication. The method of passing or distributing messages may be written, oral or visual. It may be direct or indirect. The communication may also be a glance, an expression, a display of emotion, or total science thus words, oral or written, are not a prerequisite of communication, although they may, of course, help to clarify the message.

The mass media should not be seen as the only means of political communications in a political system. Other agencies, such as leaders, representatives, parties and pressure groups, contribute to this communications network at various levels. Moreover, the movement is not only one way; ideas, demands, opinions are being communicated upwards from below as well. Public opinion polls are another means of estimating opinion on various matters, including election results. However, their lack of sophistication in handling complex issues and their inability to measure intensity of opinions, and whether those opinions will be translated into election demands, have allowed political leaders to pick and choose in the same way as the electorate selects opinions offered by the mass media.

Political communication is the deliberate passing of a political message by a sender to a receiver with the intention of making the receiver behave in a way that he might not otherwise have done. This definition contains three components: a political message; the method of passing or distributing the political message; and an intention to make the receiver respond in a particular way.

According to Warren Weaver, the word 'Communication' defines as all the procedures by which one mind may affect another. This of course, involves not only written and oral speech but all human behaviour.

Robert C. North writes that, communication refers to a body of basic concept underlying several contemporary approaches to human behaviour - including the interaction of national states.

Ross Ashby defines that it may be used with reference to the ways in which the physical environment excites signals in the central nervous system - together with the ways in which the human being operates upon the physical environment. In these terms the organism and the environment form a single system; the organism affects the environment and the environment affects the organism.

**Communication Structures**

Political communication is the most powerful and significant link that joins the input and output functions in a political system. Inversely, it performs the feedback function. Communication function can hamper or magnify the development of other kinds of system activity. Information obtained from the mass media about the conditions prevailing in the political system or about actions of political leaders may determine the types of support rendered to and demands initiated by the various interest groups. Similarly, the output functions of rule-making and rule-application, even the rule-adjudication are dependent on accurate information and successful communication of messages throughout the political system.
All forms of human interaction involve communication. Communication plays a very important role in international affairs and even in domestic politics. The mass media, such as radio and television, form only the most specialized and differentiated communication structures in a society. The informal structures are equally important and significant, particularly in the Indian political system. The types of communication structures and their role in the Indian political system are briefly discussed below:

The leaders of articulated interests, who have greater interest in following political events; serve as “opinion leaders.” It is they who generally communicate information and opinion to friends, neighbours and co-workers. They interpret the information received through the media and other sources and in turn shape the knowledge and beliefs of other members. The decision makers usually influence and are influenced by these “opinion leaders.” The leaders of the national federations of trade unions perform the similar communication function in respect of workers. The message passes in a descending order and ultimately reaches the professional local trade union leaders who communicate it face-to-face to workers. The ex-ruling chiefs, the rich agriculturists, the Sarvodaya leaders, the student leaders and the like have a face-to-face communication with the group members and the petty leaders or the headmen of the area as the case may be. On the other hand, they have a direct link with the decision-makers. Either they operate on the base of the institutional groups or like student leaders they forge their way to meet the

---

decision-makers on bargaining terms. Reluctantly they influence to a great extent the functions of the rule-making and rule-application. The party bosses and candidates woo these "opinion leaders" during the election campaigns. It is through them that a face-to-face contact is established with the voters to obtain their votes.

In a modernizing society like India, the role of the traditional social structures is inextricably remarkable. It is often experienced that the traditional community leaders stand between the national elite and the people, and may hinder or ease the transition to national unity. Caste and community operate actively on the base of political institutions including party organisations. The status, class, lineage and religious groups also perform the communication function. Tribal heads and councils of elders, the extended family and religious leaders may play a powerful role as initiators and interpreters of information for large sections of the nation. The impact of family ties, even among the modernized elites, is usually remarked upon by political observers of the developing nations.\textsuperscript{11}

The formal structures in a political system constitute a particularly important channel of communication and information. The government structures of the Indian political system, particularly the bureaucracy, make it possible for the traditional leaders to communicate directions for rule-application to various political office-bearers. Many of the communication linking political leaders and the general public also flow through these structures.

First of all, the bureaucracy supplies the information and date on the basis of which the policies are formulated. In the second instance, it transmits the

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 168
governmental decisions to the public, mostly through the group leaders. The Directorate of Information and Publicity and the Public Relations Personnel are supposed to work as active channels of communication.

The parties and the organised groups are, thus, established a network of personal contact with people on the one hand and Government on the other. The communal organisations, such as Muslim Majlis, VHP, Bajrang Dal, RSS etc. often exploit the potential for mobilizing the consciousness and political activity of the like-minded citizens, particularly in the election campaigns.

The last but the most important in the list is the mass-media comprising newspapers, radio, films, public meetings, posters, hand-bills and the like.\textsuperscript{12}

These are the most specialised and differentiated structures of political communication. The reactions of listeners or readers or their audience members are certainly not the same, but depend in large measure on their experience and attitudes and judgements.\textsuperscript{13} In any predominantly illiterate community the conventional mass media of communication touch only a comparatively small proportion of the population, especially when wireless sets are beyond the means of the average man. At the same time, ideas and news spread very quickly in such communities by word of mouth, and it is important to analyse the mass media of communication which has an effect upon the election.\textsuperscript{14}

\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} R.M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, \textit{Society : An Introductory Analysis} (Madras : Macmillan India, 1952), pp. 432 - 433.
\end{itemize}
The press is an important specialized structure of communication which greatly influences the decision-making both at the state and national level. However, due to vast percentage of illiteracy and backwardness, most of the people are untractable by newspapers. The newspapers play their part to the full in the campaign.\textsuperscript{15} Newspapers as one of the media of information can be said to play an important role mostly in the urban areas, this is not true of the rural and reserved areas. This is mainly because the literacy rate of urban areas is higher in comparison to rural areas. The difference in the role of newspapers as media of election information is only marginal as in the case of the rural and reserved areas.

Radio is also an important popular media of political communication and during the time of election liberal factual coverage of election news by the radio makes it all the more popular, though, of course, its use is limited by the problem of the availability of radio set to the electorate. It is for this reason that it is a common sight even during normal times that people would throng around a pan-shop or a public place having government or municipal radio booths to listen to radio news. This spectacle become more common and larger number of people are notice as collecting even in remote villages around places which have battery run radios or transistors to listen to the election news. On a comparative relative scale, however, radio lost its earlier importance which may be due to the fact that the news bulletins just give bare non-controversial election information which may not always satisfy the electorate which may be interested in details regarding candidates, parties, etc. particularly in their narrowly local context which may be having just a meagre coverage in radio news.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 66.
Public meetings are one of the important media of political information. The parties and the candidates have organised public meetings to reach the electorate in a collective manner. This in turn serves to spread political ideas to the people. Public meetings are a factor in strengthening the intention to vote as also in determining voting preferences. Like public meetings election posters also play a significant role in popularising parties, their symbols and their candidates. They are also used by way of drawing a caricature of parties and candidates in opposition. Posters can be better appreciated by the literate electorate, though their impact is not entirely lost on the illiterate masses also because they can be influenced by the visual impact if not the written word. It is therefore not surprising that extensive use of election posters have been made.16

The purpose of communication is to influence the conduct and behaviours of the receivers which in turn by a feedback process guides and educate the transmitters. For example, the leaders, political parties and the campaigners. The communication involves all the various procedures and techniques by which one can affect or influence another. The procedural or technical aspect is concerned with the way the messages or information are transferred by symbols and messages through various media.

In a democratic country like India the exposure to communication is open and varied. Certain types of information seem to be less amenable to accurate transmission, or are more influenced by the prejudices and attitudes of the individual conveying them. Obviously, the presence or absence of certain communication

structures greatly affects the possibility of effective interaction, and the limitations
upon available information affect rational, directed activity. The effectiveness of
communication and audience response are subject to various factors.

The educated and enlightened voters in the urban areas are influenced by
policy issues, manifestoes and ideologies. They want to be presented with various
sides of an issue or problem through communication media like newspaper, radio
and public meeting. But less educated or uneducated audience avoid many sided
arguments and logic and represents a sleeper-effect of sophisticated media of
communication like press and the radio. Their responses are quicker to face-to-
face communication and various kinds of attractive audio-visual aids.

Election Campaign

Reaching the electorate personally is almost an impossible undertaking.
While local influential and potentates are cajoled and wooed by the candidates
and their lieutenants, the rest of the electorate is reached through various other
means. 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.
It is, however, necessary to identify the limitations which qualify this assumption as
also the variations in campaign techniques and patterns which may change from
party to party, from candidate to candidate and from constituency to constituency.
Thus, uniformity is not the key-note of campaigning in elections.

17. Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics : A Developmental
18. Yogesh Atal, Local Communities and National Politics (Delhi : National Publishing
Campaigning assumes a different form in predominantly urban constituencies from what it is in predominantly rural constituencies. It is common knowledge that population density is much higher in urban constituencies than in rural constituencies where the electorate is scattered over thinly populated vast areas. Thus campaigning can assume a concentrated form in urban areas and such media as public meetings, election procession, demonstration and the like can be more effectively used here than in rural areas. The means of communication being easier and more readily available in urban constituencies, the urban electorate is exposed to election campaigning to a greater extent and more directly and systematically than otherwise.19

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 perform an educative function. Its major aims are to strengthen loyal voters, win as many undecided voters as possible and convert or demoralise rival party supporters, Campaign produce greater degree of politicisation and involvement ultimately leading to political participation. Exposure to campaign leads to high score of political information, political efficacy and participation in campaign.20

The variation in election campaign of different candidate and parties in different areas also depends on the resources and contacts that they can muster. A comparatively unknown party or candidate may think it admissible to organise more public meetings, processions and demonstrations, publish more reading

material and bring out more election posters than a comparatively well-known party or candidate which may decide to conserve its resources and concentrate on those areas which have more floating votes from their point of view.21

Each party launches a vigorous election campaign for influencing the voters in its favour. The whole campaign process is a set of stages adopted by the candidates or political parties during the time of elections. Election campaign is designed to make a voter believe that his interest can be best served by the party, the candidate of the party contesting from his constituency. The dictionary meaning of the term campaign is connected series of operations designed to bring about a particular result.

Election campaign is a kind of strategy and tactics involving a two-way process in which, negatively, the adversaries or opposite party candidates are to be pulled down and given a smashing blow, and positively, to build up his success and emerge victorious. Each political party wants to establish a positive image of itself and a negative one of demolition of opposition parties. This battle of ballots is a merciless competition in which one advances at the expense of others. A party which is in a position to create an impression through its election campaign that it has a chance to win, can earn some additional votes as several voters try to side with the side which they perceive to be a winning side.

The content of political debate is supplied by the issues - statements that allege differences between the contending parties or candidates with reference to

such matters as domestic and international policy, the nature of a party’s support, or the capabilities of the nominees. In a campaign the issues are articulated by party leaders, and they are the stuff in terms of which a democratic political campaign is rationalised, in both senses.\textsuperscript{22}

Campaigns can test the candidate’s skill for democratic politics, his ability to work with other political actors, to grasp the political “facts of life”, and to make the best use of available resources. The length and strenuousness of the campaign serves to involve the public, inform it on public issues, and increase its active participation in politics.\textsuperscript{23}

Campaigns vary greatly according to the nature of specific electoral systems.\textsuperscript{24} At the start of any political campaign the individual voter agrees with some issues, disagrees with some, and is indifferent to some. As a result there are potential or actual conflicts over issues within individuals, within social groups and strata, and within parties. Then the campaign goes on, and somehow the combination of internal predispositions and external influences, brought to bear on the content of the campaign leads to a decision on election day that one or the other party shall control the parliament for the following five years.\textsuperscript{25} We give below a couple of


techniques or means adopted by the political parties or candidates during the time of election campaign.

Methods of Election Campaign

_Election meetings._ Meetings during the time of election provide an important technique of electioneering. Among the various campaign techniques, election meetings had a higher impact. Election meetings are one of the important media for approaching the electorate collectively which is used to inform the electorate about the party, its programme and symbol, as also for introducing the candidates to the electorate. This is also important because it gives an opportunity to the candidates or parties to demonstrate their strength or people's support against their rivals. It is for this reason that an effort is made to mobilise as large number of people to attain a public meeting as possible.

The various political parties organise election meetings during the time of election. In the election meetings, the spokesperson of the various political parties express their views to influence the voters in their favour. During the course of the meetings loudspeakers are generally used. Usually, the candidates hold meetings in the selected areas so to bring the view points of the electorate before the people. These meetings and corner-meetings get the support of the people through the


efforts made by the candidates' workers or party workers. Sometimes meetings are organised in which the candidates of different constituencies are invited to speak.

It is usual practice in India to start campaigning one month before the polling date and then gradually picked up the momentum as days passed. However, the hectic campaigning has to be ended before the 48 hrs. of the date of polling as prescribed by the election law. The campaign is also subject to some other legal restraints. According to the election law, it is not to be conducted in such a way as to create hatred against the government or between religious groups or the disturb law and order.28

In a pre-poll survey of the electorate in the urban, rural and hill constituencies respectively an attempt was made to study the degree of voters' participation in the election meetings. For this purpose a questionnaire was administered on 100 selected voters representing both the valley (urban and rural) and hill constituencies respectively. The electorate was categorically asked whether they attended any public meeting addressed by the candidates or their supporters and the answer provided was “Yes” or “No” or “No Response”. The results thus obtained was tabulated, analysed and interpreted. The attendance at public meetings has not been very encouraging as it can be seen in the table given below.

Table No. 1

Participation of Voters in Election Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether participated or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that about 24% of the voters attended the election meetings while 56.7% had not attended. On the other hand, 19.3% of the voters have not responded. In the opinion of a former Chief Minister, the reason behind the poor attendance of the voters in the election meetings might be, they were preoccupied with their scheduled programmes and many of them were not interested.29

Regarding the rural areas, the election meetings were not properly organised. This view was expressed by an MLA from Wangjing Tentha Assembly Constituency.30 Besides in both urban and rural areas, small gatherings may not have struck the electorate as election meetings, did not serve their interest.

---

The electors in the urban constituencies attended more election meetings than the rural constituencies. The reason is that population density is much higher in the urban constituencies than rural constituencies where the electorate is scattered over the thinly populated vast areas. In the hill areas, on the other hand, election meetings are not usually and properly organised mainly because of bad communication. The area to be covered in the hills being vast and scattered and the means of communication being difficult, the party candidates usually prefer to influence the voters through the institutional leaders.

According to the opinion expressed by the President of the Manipur People’s Party, the percentage of males, who attended election meetings was more in comparison with females’ percentage. The smaller proportion of female participation may be attributed to the timings of such meetings, which were generally organised in the evenings, when the women were busy in their household works, especially in kitchens, as people usually take their dinner in the late evening. Thus only some women, mostly the old and young voters who were rather free attended such meetings. Besides women do not usually stay upto the late hours of the night to attend the election meetings. Among the male voters, the attendance of the election meetings was higher among the males below 30 years of age. The reason is that, they have no particular work to do and they devote full time to such election meetings. The males between 31 to 50 years of age could not properly attend the election meetings because most of them were not free from the burden of the family. On the other hand, the old age groups could be often mobilised by the candidates and party workers to attend the election meetings. The attendance of

the election meetings is much higher among the literate voters than among the illiterate ones. However the educated un-employed youths were the people who attended the election meetings in large number.

**Election procession.** Another technique of election campaign is election procession. Quite often, long processions taken out in support of the candidate indicate the popularity of the person contesting the elections. During the time when the processions are taken out, numerous rickshaws, jeeps, cars, vans, motor-cycles, scooters and cycles are pressed into the arena. Processions with slogans - shouting bring the process of electioneering into its active form.

Propaganda was done through loudspeakers fitted on vehicles - jeep, van, rickshaw, etc. Propagators went on announcing the name of the candidates of their respective parties and requesting people for support.32

Election procession is treated as a close ally of election meetings in intent and purpose. Election procession aims to popularise the party, its symbol and the candidate and also bring into bold relief the strength of each rival with a dramatic affect. Moreover, to some extent at least, association of the electorate with election procession may also be taken as an index or his interest, if not of involvement in election politics.33

Table No. 2
Voters’ Participation in the Election Procession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether participated or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No., Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that about 59.3% of the voters attended the election processions while 30% not. On the other hand, 10.7% of the voters gave no response. It is heartening to note that 70% of the voters had either seen or participated in the election processions in the urban constituencies, 59% in the rural and 49% in the hills. The fact is that it was easy to organise election procession in the urban areas than the rural. The reason is very simple: the majority of people in the rural areas were illiterate as well as politically not conscious. This view was expressed by a former Member of Parliament.\(^{34}\) Besides, the political parties and the candidates prefer to approach the electorate of the rural and hill areas through the contact persons. In fact, they can be instrumental in catching vote-banks.

---

Nowadays the election processions are usually carried out in vehicles, with their respective party flags flying on the vehicles. This system of procession is usually practised in the urban areas. However, such method is very rare in the rural and hill areas, it may be because of poor communication system. As reported by one of the voters from the hill constituencies, a teacher from Manipur University, the election procession is usually done on foot. The same method is also adopted in the rural area constituencies, as said by a rural voter.

**Flag-flying contest.** An important phenomenon of the election campaign is the flag-flying contest. The house owner who condescends to raise a bamboo pole with a party flag on the top, is usually identified as the supporter of the party concerned. The active members of the parties put such flags on their shops and house tops. The party vehicles also carried the flags. Ironically it may be mentioned that even some of the people allow to fly the party flags in their shops without any objection. Perhaps this might be their intention to use those flags as duster afterwards. It is understood that the house where flag-hoisting ceremony is done by a particular party, another party's workers may not enter into the house for canvassing. One starts gauging the popularity of the party or its candidate on the basis of competitive flag-flying contest. But one should not misunderstand that the numbers of flags hoisted on the roofs would be a deciding factor in the elections.

The sample of electorate comprising of 100 persons in the urban, rural and hill areas respectively were asked whether they participated in a flag-flying contest during the time of election. The following table shows their response to this questionnaire.

---

Table No. 3

Voters' Knowledge about the Flag-flying Contest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether participated or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly reads that about 58.7% of the voters fall in the 'Yes' category as they had seen the flags fluttering on the rooftop of the houses in connection with election, whereas 16.3% voters categorically denied so. In the case of 25% voters there was no response to the questionnaire. Now it is obvious as 71% in the urban constituencies, 57% in the rural and 48% in the hills positively responded.

A former Chief Minister of Manipur expressed his view that the percentage of the flag-flying contest was high in the urban areas because the electors were educated and politically conscious. The statement was supported by another active campaigner from the Wangkhei Assembly constituency. On the other hand, flag flying contest in the rural and hill areas are very low due to the non-involvement

---

of the electors in active politics and also because the houses in these areas are usually far from each other.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{Door-to-door campaign.} Another effective technique is the door-to-door campaign for eliciting voters. The candidates along with their party workers usually indulge in door-to-door campaign in order to get votes.\textsuperscript{39} The candidates even bow before the old voters and try to win their hearts by giving them false promises. Besides the party workers and candidates usually carry manifestoes and leaflet and personally distribute them directly to the voters. Appeals are made in the name of the party. Each party try to convince the people that its candidate is the best one. The electors are subjected to cross pressures and identical promises and assurances emanate from various candidates. The candidates would fold their hands and show courtesy and respect to the voters and they try their best to establish kinship relationship with voters. Such a technique is used to win the public sympathy and support of the people.

Participation in door-to-door campaigning is a more specific activity which perhaps indicates a higher degree of political involvement than mere canvassing on an adhoc basis.\textsuperscript{40} As a sample, the questionnaire was administered on the 100 voters, each in the urban, rural and hill areas respectively. The voters were asked whether they participated in the door-to-door canvassing on behalf of any candidate or party. Their response to this question is shown in the table below.


Table No. 4

Voters' Knowledge about the Door-to-door Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether participated or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it is observed that about 37.3% voters participated in house-to-house campaign, while 46% of the voters did not. Only 16.7% of voters gave no response. The percentage of voters exposed to the door-to-door campaign was much higher in the urban areas than in the rural and hill areas.

A candidate from the Wangjing Tentha Assembly Constituency belonging to the Thoubal District, a rural area, expressed his view that the house-to-house campaign could not be conducted successfully because of the various factors: territorial vastness, the scattered pattern of settlement, thin population, difficult means of transport and temporary absence of voters from their homes. As majority of women-folk remained at home, the female voters were found to be more exposed to door-to-door campaign than male voters. At the same time, the youths were more interested in the campaign.41

Printed materials. For the advantage of the voters, and to ensure a better spread of the message, written material was issued by each of the contestants. Apart from the parties and candidates some other agencies also participated in the process. Thus local weeklies, and regional and national dailies, weeklies and monthlies included items pertaining to election. Some of the papers committed to particular party policies contributed more directly to their propaganda. Others conveyed somewhat factual information about election process. Compared to the local newspapers it goes without saying that the national papers devoted very little space to the news about local elections.\textsuperscript{42}

In the urban areas, great emphasis was placed on the distribution of printed materials such as posters and hand-outs. Thousands of printed materials carried party symbols, political cartoons and slogans. These were distributed by the party workers in their concerned constituencies. The party manifestoes were also widely distributed. Space was purchased in local dailies and journals by the candidates for publishing campaign articles and slogans. Some writers were specially engaged to write articles. Circulation of many journals and newspapers went up sharply as candidates purchased hundreds of copies for free distribution. The local press thus played a vigorous role in the campaign. Hundreds of small flags were also distributed both in the urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{43}

The audio-visual techniques of propaganda like election meetings and processions appear to have an edge over the use of printed material. Quite often,


we see posters bearing the photos of the candidates along with the photos of the national leaders appearing on the wall. Sometimes, the posters bear a long list of the supporters of the candidate. The whole idea is that the candidate is brought before the public so as to enable him to muster his support during the elections. The pamphlets and manifestoes are distributed among the voters by the various candidates.

Political contenders utilize available appropriate wall space in the town to inscribe the election message. Election symbol and name of the candidate are prominently displayed. These inscriptions are made by professional painters who also use stencils to facilitate quick duplication available, wall space is also utilized for pasting the posters and leaflets. There are certain sites where posters of several candidates are displayed. Such sites are strategic and every competing party try to exploit this available space for the display of its material. To an onlooker, a comparative view is readily available on such spots. Sheet of cloth varying in length from 3 to 4 metres are used as banners to be hung across the road. These banners contain the request for vote, the election symbol, and the names of the party and candidate are indicators in the message.44

A survey was made in the urban, rural and hill areas. Accordingly 100 voters, as sample from each area, were interviewed on the question whether they had come across any printed material in connection with the election. Their response to this question is given in the table below.

Table No. 5
Voters' Knowledge about the Printed Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether the voters had seen printed materials or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it is observed that 57.3\% of the voters accepted that they had seen some printed material with regard to elections, while 12.7\% voters categorically denied the statement. On the other hand, 30\% of the voters fall in the no-response category.

So far as the urban, rural and hill constituencies are concerned, the percentage of exposure to the printed materials is 67, 58 and 47 respectively. If we examine the category of 'No Response', it is found that illiteracy among the people is one of the reasons. Many of them are unconcerned with reading and writings. That is why they could not be drawn attention towards the printed materials i.e., election posters, leaflets etc. When the respondents were asked why they did not take notice of the
posters which were to be seen in abundance on the walls, the reply in most cases was that they did not attach any importance to posters because there were all types of posters from family planning to cheap type of cigarettes. This view was expressed by an active campaigner of a candidate from the rural area.\textsuperscript{45}

**Personal contact.** The means of personal contact is another way of influencing people. The technique of personal contact with the voters is superior in its effectiveness and precision to other techniques because it imparts a personal touch to campaigning, but due to the size of the electorate and its scattered character, limited resources in terms of time and money at the disposal of the candidates and difficulties of the means of communication, it is not possible to make use of this technique on a wider scale.\textsuperscript{46}

At the time of personal contact with the voters, the various candidates made personal promises either to the individuals or to groups. Sometimes, the decision of a voter's choice for a candidate is conditioned by such promises.

The sample electorate comprising of 100 voters each in the urban, rural and hill constituencies respectively were asked a direct question whether any one or any one on behalf of the candidate approached them for support. Their response to this question is shown in the table below.


Table No. 6
Voters’ Knowledge of Personal Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether exposed to personal contact or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table given above, it is found that the total personal contact percentage was 39.7% while 34.7% gave a negative reply and 25.6% gave no response. The number of personal contact was much higher in the rural areas than in the urban and hill areas. The reason for the high percentage of personal contact in the rural areas may be due to the institutionalised form of set-up in the form of the vote banks which may have been operating through the Panchayati leaders or other formal and informal elite groups. This is a view point given by a candidate belonged to the Thoubal District.47

Election feast. Another popular method of election campaign in Manipur is election feast. 48 This technique of election campaign is an old one in which the candidates and their campaigners throw feasts to the voters during the election days. Some of the voters of a constituency are invited to a community lunch where food is served in traditional Manipuri style. Before or after lunch the candidate tries to woo the members in a very congenial social setting. Some voters regard election times as free lunch days. These view was expressed by a voter from the Konthoujam Assembly constituency, a rural constituency. An advocate from the urban area expressed his opinion that the candidates and their campaigners in order to get votes they organised community feasts. However, this expensive method of campaigning cannot be afforded by the poor candidates. 49

As expressed by the Head of the Department of Political Science, Manipur University, some candidates adopted a new and interesting way of influencing voters. They organised music parties to go round in a constituency in order to entertain people and exhort them during their moment of relaxation to vote for a certain candidate. Besides these musical nites, various Sumang lilas and Thabal Chongba are also organised in different localities for the voters at the expense of the candidate. 50

The sample electorate comprising of 100 voters each from the urban, rural and hill areas respectively were asked whether they had participated in any election feasts given on behalf of a candidate by the candidate himself or his campaigners. The following table shows the response of the sample electorate.

Table No. 7  
Voters’ Knowledge about the Election Feast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether participated or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that 31.7% of the voters had given a positive reply while 43% not. Here 25.3% did not responded. It is very clear that the percentage of the election feasts is much higher in the urban areas than in the rural and hill areas respectively.

However, the election feasts nowadays as a method of election campaign are not becoming effective because the voters are becoming educationally and politically conscious day-by-day. This view was expressed by a teacher from the Department of Political Science, Manipur University.51

Role of money. Money plays a very important role in the process of electioneering. Voter bribing is an open secret. Candidates, affluent ones or belonging to an affluent party, have been always alleged for using money power to influence the voters. At the same time, the voters also expect money from the candidates. A rich candidate has always better chance of winning the election. But such technique does not work every time. If a leader/candidate is charismatic, then it is difficult to defeat him. Or if there is wave of a particular party, then money power does not play a big role.

Sometimes, there are cases of bargaining between the voters and the candidates for money in exchange of the vote. Receiving money at the time of election is considered as a part of the election routine nowadays, mostly in the poor and backward areas but it is also found in the more prosperous localities. Usually, voters who exchanged votes for money are looked down upon but in reality the voters temptation to exchange vote for money is very high among some voters. Sometimes, some voters even take oath while payments are received as desired by the payers.

Thus, the sample electorate comprising of 100 voters each in the urban, rural and hill constituencies were asked whether they had accepted money in exchange of their vote from any candidate or candidates or from any active worker of a candidate or candidates. The following table shows us the result of the question.

### Table No. 8
Knowledge about Voters’ Acceptance of Money

| Whether the voters accepted money or not | Valley | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                                        | Urban  | Rural  | Hill   | Percentage |
| Yes                                     | 32     | 23     | 27     | 27.3    |
| No                                      | 54     | 60     | 57     | 57.0    |
| No Response                             | 14     | 17     | 16     | 15.7    |
| **Total**                               | **100**| **100**| **100**| **100.0**|

Thus, from the above table, we can see that the percentage of voters who have not accepted money in exchange of vote is 57% while only 27.3% of the voters have accepted that they have received money during the time of election. However, only 15.7% of the voters does not respond to the question.

Most of the voters refused to give the direct answer regarding the acceptance of money from the candidate as they considered it a matter of prestige, which should be kept as a secret. The payments were either in the form of cash or kind. In the opinion of an active campaigner from the Moirang Assembly Constituency, a rural constituency, the voters usually received money ranging from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 during the time of election. Another view was expressed by a voter from the hill constituency, regarding the range of money in the hill areas, that, the rate of

---

53. Statement by Ph. Mangilal, Personal Interview, April, 15, 2002.
money ranges between Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. The payment of money usually ranges from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 in the urban area. This view was expressed by a voter from the Uri pok Constituency, an urban constituency.

Role of mass media. The mode of election campaigns has been changed considerably in recent years. The campaigns are becoming expensive. The use of mass media and the adoption of new technologies has become a common feature. The strategies of the parties and candidates place greater reliance than even before on the use of mass media as a means of election campaign.54

Mass media has brought the politicians closer to the people. For the first time, all voters can actually see their candidates and hear them with the help of television. Television brings it all into the living room: the debates, the political advertisements, the daily news from the campaign trial, political discussion programmes, and most recently, political talk shows.55 More recently, the development of computers and cable and satellite television has contributed to professionalizing of the campaign process, making campaigning even more capital intensive. Campaign organization are making use of the opportunities provided by the new computer and broadcasting technologies.

The newspapers can play a great role before or during the election.56 Some of the political parties have their own daily newspapers. Politicians gear their daily campaign activities to meet the constraints and deadlines of the news. They know

55. Ibid., p. 269.
that people have tendency to turn to print or broadcast sources for information. Not bound by the rules and regulations concerning impartiality in broadcasting, the newspapers and magazines are free to express their partisan sympathies.\textsuperscript{57}

Radio is also a major source of political information for different segments of the population. It has long been one of the most important sources for political information for residents of rural areas, particularly in less developed states. Generally the political parties use to appeal the voters through the radio.

The sample electorate comprising of 100 voters each in the urban, rural and hill areas were asked whether they got any information from the mass media at the time of election campaign. The following table shows us their response to the question.

\textbf{Table No. 9}

\textbf{Voters' Exposure to Mass Media}

| Whether the voters were influenced by the mass media or not | Valley | | Hill | | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Urban | Rural | | | |
| Yes | 70 | 56 | 42 | 56.0 |
| No | 17 | 24 | 31 | 24.0 |
| No Response | 13 | 20 | 27 | 20.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100.0 |

Thus, in the above table, we can see that 56% of the voters were exposed to mass media, while 24% voters were not. On the other hand, 20% of the voters gave no response to the question.

In the urban areas, 70% voters were exposed to the mass media. 56% voters in the rural areas and 42% voters in the hill areas respectively. The reason for the high percentage of exposure of the voters to the mass media in the urban areas is mainly because of good communication system in these areas. As expressed by an executive magistrate from the urban constituency, the voters in these areas are highly exposed to computers, television, radio, newspapers, etc.\textsuperscript{58}

In the opinion of a voter from the Khangabok Assembly Constituency (Thoubal District), the voters in the rural areas were mostly influenced by the radio and newspapers. However, the role of the computer in influencing people in the rural places are almost insignificant. In the hill constituencies, on the other hand, most of the voters were not exposed to mass media because of bad communication. The impact of the newspapers and radio is felt in these areas. However, the effect of the television and computer in these areas are very low compared to the urbanised places. This view was given by a senior voter from the Karong Assembly constituency (Senapati District).

It is learn that the male voters receive more information from the newspapers or radio, while female voters receive greater information from the relatives and neighbours. Voters of the young age group are more responsive to newspapers and radios while voters of the old age group are more influenced by neighbours. Also, urban voters, as compared to the rural voters, are more exposed to mass media of communication.

Wine. Wine has been an effective instrument of enticement of the voters at the time of election. The candidate, even if he does not drink, has to buy liquor for his voters. During the election days, reserved stock of wine are usually kept by the vendors. The candidates spend a lot of money on wine during the election times to gain support of the voters in their favour. The wine which is served to the voters during the time of election is of two types- Red wine (Yungang) and local made white wine (Yungou). The consumption of wine is much higher among the youths. At the time of election, since it is available freely at the expense of the candidates, the consumption of wine is much higher during these days.

The sample electorate comprising of 100 voters each in the urban, rural and hill areas respectively were asked whether they consumed wine or not at the time of election. The following table shows us their response to the question.

**Table No. 10**

**Voters' Knowledge about the Consumption of Wine at the time of Election**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether the voters consumed wine or not</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, from the above table, we can see that the percentage of voters who consumed wine during the time of election was 64.7%, the percentage of voters who did not take wine was 20% only 15.3% voters did not responded to the question.

It is found that the consumption of wine as a means of election campaign is much higher in the rural areas, the percentage being 72%. In the urban areas, however, percentage of voters who consumed wine was 65% and 57% in the hill areas.

According to the opinion expressed by an active campaigner from the urban areas, the consumption of wine at the time of election was a common phenomenon. Red wine is served on special occasion related to election. However, white wine is commonly served to the voters as the expense is much lower than red wine.

In the case of the rural areas, the percentage of wine consumption is higher because most of the voters are farmers who are fond of drinking wine after their hard work. In these places, the consumption of white wine is very much higher and the consumption of red wine is very limited. It is a common practice that a candidate or a campaigner has to serve wine to the voter in order to gain support of the voters. This was confirmed by a teacher of the Moirang Assembly Constituency (Bishnupur District).59

A voter from Churachandpur District, a hill area, opined that wine consumption in the hill areas during the time of election used to be common practice. However, the consumption of wine in the hill areas is much lower as compared to the urban and rural areas.

Chapter 4

POLITICAL CULTURE AND POLITICAL SOCIALISATION