Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1:- The Problem

The constitution of India is federal in structure with strong unitary features. The areas of jurisdiction of the Union and the States are clearly defined and demarcated. Though the government of India enjoys more power than state governments, the states occupy an important role. The effectiveness and efficiency of administration depend on the competence with which the state governments function. The responsibility for implementation of planned programme rests mainly with the states and most subjects which constitute the ingredients of development administration are within the jurisdiction of the states. The system of local self government makes people’s participation in government and administration. Thus, the key to the nation’s progress on economic and social fronts lies with the states. Under normal conditions the states enjoy a considerable measure of autonomy and the conditions under which the Union can encroach upon the sphere of the state autonomy are defined in the constitution.

Manipur is now politically at par with other states. It has a unicameral legislative Assembly with total seats of sixty. The Governor is the constitutional head and the council of ministers is the real executive who is answerable to the legislature. The entire administration of the state is divided into a number of ministries and departments. The state ministries are headed by secretaries as their administrative heads. Departmental heads carry out the policy and programme of the government at the state headquarters as well as in the district through its field staff. The executive head of the state is the Governor and all the executive actions are carried on in the name of the Governor. The Governor is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Union council of ministers and holds office at the pleasure of the President. He carried on the administration of the state on the advice of the council of ministers. The Chief Minister is
the head of the council of ministers of the state. He exercises power as the Prime Minister of the Indian Union but his authority is limited within his state.

The Governor appoints the Chief Minister. Normally, the leader of the majority party in the State Assembly is appointed as the Chief Minister. If no party secures the majority required for the formation of the ministry or parties jointly are unable to form the government, the Governor can use his discretion in choosing a Chief Minister but he must see that the person appointed is able to get the majority support from the House. Even though the Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor, the Governor cannot remove him from office. He will continue in office as long as he is able to get the majority support in the Assembly. Once he loses his majority in the Assembly, he will have to resign. The Governor appoints the other ministers on the recommendation of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister can ask for the dissolution of the House on the plea that the members of the legislature do not represent the views of the people. He can also advice the Governor to dissolve the Assembly if it does not cooperate with him. The resignation of the Chief Minister is considered to be the resignation of the council of ministers. He decides on matters on which party whips should be issued. It is also his duty to see that decorum is maintained in the House.

The State Assembly is empowered to frame laws on all matters included in the state list – public order, police, administration of justice, prison, local government, public health and sanitation, pilgrimages, agriculture, communications, education, forests, fisheries, markets and fairs etc. Apart from the matters included in the state list, the state can make laws on the subjects included in the concurrent list also, but if the Union Parliament passes a law on a subject given in the concurrent list, the state legislature is forbidden to pass a law on the same subject. If the state legislature passes a law on a subject given in the concurrent list, the Union Parliament can pass a law on the same subject and the state law becomes inoperative and it is repugnant to the Union law. However, if a state law has been forwarded to the President for his assent and also got the same, it does not become inoperative.
The State Assembly has full control over finances of the state. It controls the state budget. Money bill originates only in the Assembly. The State Assembly votes upon all the heads of expenditure mentioned in the budget except those items which are charged on the Consolidated Fund of the state. All demands for grants and supplementary grants are laid down before the Assembly for sanction. The Assembly can reject or reduce any grant/demand but cannot increase the same. No tax can be levied without its approval. It exercises real and complete control over the council of ministers. Ministers are collectively responsible to the Assembly and hold office during the pleasure of the Assembly. Manipur also has a strong and impartial judiciary which is part and parcel in a democratic system. Thus, Manipur has a democratic form of government in which people rule themselves through their elected representatives.

In a representative democracy, the political power is always exercised by the group of top elected leader. Despite being a minority group, it effectively controls all the effective centres of political power. There is a strong assumption that however much one may try to be democratic in one’s political system, there is a strong element of oligarchy in every organization. The larger the organization is, so it is argued, the greater the tendency towards oligarchy.¹ A.R Ball puts the same in a better way. He adds: ‘But there is agreement that forms of representative government are merely disguises to cover minority control; the majority cannot control this ruling minority. There are problems of who actually constitute the political elite and whether it is defined narrowly or widely; also there are differences on the means of recruitment, but there is unanimity on the inevitability of minority rule’.² In reality, every society is governed by an elite, either chosen or non-chosen. It has been remarked that the formula – ‘government of the people by the people and for the people’ stands replaced by the formula ‘government of the people by an elite sprung from the people’.³

Political elite is a minority group which exercise power in society. The elite in modern times and in democratic system emerge out of the masses and rule with tacit and

general approach of the masses. The political elite structure of a society, no doubt, represents not only its political value but also the extent to which this value finds a concrete expression in the power structure and decision making process of the society. By learning the nature of the elite, we learn much about the nature of the society. The changes in elite structure, therefore, might also reveal the essential nature of social change taking place in the society.

The structure of elites in a society undergoes the process of differentiation with changes in the social system as a whole. This is especially true when a traditional society passes into the stages of modernization. Innovations in science and technology create value domains and spheres of skill which did not exist before and offer new opportunities of role excellence or elite role in the society. This leads to the growth in the number of elite groups, which to some extent breaks the ‘exclusiveness’ of traditional elites. As the elite pyramids multiply, a competition goes on between elite representative of one value domain with those who have control over another and this process is regulated and determined by the power structure of the society. It is in this context that political elites generally constitute the most important segment of the elite structure of any society, since they have direct access to political power which is over-riding among all other forms of power. What motivates the political elites to play an active role in politics is the inevitable and irrepressible urge in human being to come to power. Political elites exercise power and influence because they possess some superior qualities, intellectual ability, administrative capacity, higher positions, military power, popular legitimacy and credibility or moral authority.

Political elites of a democratic system are backed by the general support and consent of the masses. The actual shaping of policy is in the hands of the elites, but this does not mean that the society is not democratic. In democracy the individual citizens, though prevented from taking a direct part in government all the time, have at least the

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possibility of making their aspiration felt at certain intervals. The governed can always act to remove the political elites or leaders or force them to take decisions in the interests of the many. It is mostly through elections that the political elites establish their popularities and the right to exercise power in society. The mass of the population is able to participate in ruling the society at least in the sense that it could exercise a choice between the rival elites. In a representative democracy there is a competition between two or more sets of political elites, organized in political parties, for votes which will enlighten them to rule until next election. Political elites occupy big positions and control decision making mechanism. They take important decisions with regard to diverse fields – politics, economy, religion, social welfare, science and technology, national security and so on and their decision made far reaching changes in society.

In democratic system, the memberships of political elites are open to all the people and there is an ever present circulation or alteration in the political elites. The top leaders of elites usually are in a position to remain in power only for a limited period. New members continuously keep on replacing the old members. Within every elite group, there is always present an inherent struggle for power and leadership. This fact as well as the existence of counter elites in the social system are together responsible for changes in nature, leadership and activities of the elite. Political elite emerge, dominate, fall into decadence and will be replaced by new non-decadent elites.

There are many important queries such as who are the political elites in Manipur? Do the political elites in Manipur possess the qualities of elite in the true sense of the term? What is the socio-economic and professional background of political elite? Is the rise of political elites in Manipur coincided with the growth of educated middle class in the state? Do they stand for modernization of economy, social reform, policy of equalitarianism, social justice and for the welfare and equal rights of women and backward classes? Are they fascinated by the modernization process or in favour of preserving the age-old tradition and wanted to preserve it? How are elites related with political parties? Are the political elites accountable to the public? Are the status and importance of political elites related to their educational attainment? Is there circulation
of political elites and how does it takes place? What role do the political elites play to resolve inter-ethnic conflict? Is there any clash of interest among the political elites? If so, is it then a factor of ethnic crisis in Manipur? What are the perceptions and perspectives of political elite with regard to various issues faced by the state? Answers to these different but interrelated questions are important as well as essential to fill up the gap of knowledge about the political elites and their roles in Manipur. The present study is a humble attempt to address these issues, which in turn will go a long way in understanding the contemporary Manipur society from a sociological perspective.

Though, Manipur attained statehood in 1972 and is politically now at par with other states, no concrete and systematic study has so far been done on the political elites in Manipur. This is indeed a huge lacuna in terms of academic and intellectual exercise in Manipur. The present study is a first ever attempt to fill this gap so as to understand the emergence, the nature and characteristics of political elites and their role and impact in the contemporary Manipuri society.

1.2 A Brief Profile of Manipur

1.2.1 Geographical features

Manipur, literally meaning a ‘Jeweled land’, lies in a lush green corner of North-East India. It is a state of exquisite natural beauty and splendours that late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described it as ‘Jewel of India’. Manipur is bordered by Nagaland on the north, Cachar of Assam in the west, by Mizoram in the south-west and by Burma (now Myanmar) on the south and east. Manipur is the birth place of Polo and it lies between 23°50' and 25°42' latitudes north and between 92°59' and 94°45' longitudes east. It is one of the smallest states of India with an area of 22,327 sq. km. The state of Manipur is well depended on roads for its transportation. Aviation has its own share while the railway is still in its early days. Manipur is joined by road by NH-2 (earlier NH-39) with Nagaland on the north and Myanmar on the east and on the west with Assam by NH-37 (earlier NH-53) and Mizoram on the south by NH-150.
Manipur is made up of two regions namely the Plains/valley and the hills. The Manipur valley consists of four districts and occupies only one-tenth of the total geographical area and houses nine-tenth of the total population. The hill region consists of five districts and covers about ninety-two percent of total geographical area. Manipur is drained by two river systems namely, the Barak-Bramhaputra system and the Chindwin-Irrawaddi system. The Barak is the largest and longest river of Manipur which originates in the Senapati district of Manipur. Its source is Mt. Iso on the Nagaland-Manipur border about 16 km east of Mao township. It follows a south-westerly course forming the boundary of Nagaland and Manipur and then turns southward to flow through Manipur by collecting water of its tributaries Irang and Makru. The Barak is joined by the Tuvia River at Tipaimukh in the south-western corner of Manipur and the combined flow drained northward forming the boundary of Manipur and Mizoram and then Assam and Manipur. It is again joined by the Jiri River at Jirimukh and it enters in the Cachar plain of Assam. The Imphal or Manipur River meanders through the Manipur valley in north-west and south-east direction and its important tributaries are the Kongba, the Iril, the Thoubal, the Heirok, the Sekmai, the Khuga and the Chakpi rivers. The tributaries of Imphal and Thoubal rivers flow toward south and meet one another to become Turel Achouba or Manipur River or Imphal River. Then, it flows into the Chin hills of Myanmar by cutting a deep gorge to the south of Sugnu town and in Myanmar it joins the stream of Myitha, a tributary of river Chindwin.

The mountains of Manipur are divided into the western hills comprising the Koubru, Laimaton, Makin-Longbi, Kala Naga and Vangai ranges and the eastern hills comprising the Siroi, Mapithel and Yanudoing ranges. The highest peak in the state is Mt. Essau or Tenipu.

1.2.2 Demographic features

According to 2011 census, Manipur has a total population of 27, 21, 756 persons out of which 13, 69,764 are males and 13, 51,992 are females. The sex-ratio (number of females per thousand males) is found to be 987 and is higher than the national norm of

7 *Provisional Censuses of Manipur, 2011*, Directorate of Census Operation, Manipur.
Manipur is inhabited by various ethnic communities having their own distinctive cultural affinity. These ethnic groups can be broadly divided into Meiteis, Naga tribes and Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes. There is also a sizeable Muslim population who are called Meitei Pangal. The government of Manipur has recognized 32 (thirty-two) scheduled tribes and 7 (seven) scheduled castes in the state. There are also Sikhs, Nepali, Biharis, Bishnupuris, Panjabi (non-Sikh Panjabi), Marawaris, South-Indians, Bengali, and Assamese etc in the state. Thus Manipur is having different groups of people. The distribution of population in Manipur is uneven having large concentration of population in the valley districts like Imphal West (5,14,683), Imphal East (4,52,661), Thoubal (4,20,517), Bishunapur (2,40,363) and scattered in the districts such as Senapati (3,54,972), Churchanpur (2,71,274), Ukhrul (1,83,115), Chandel (1,44,028) and Tamenglong (1,40,143). In the year 2001, the population density of the state was 103 per sq. km. But it differs from 25 persons per sq. km. in Tamenglong district to 856 per sq. km. in Imphal West district. The other valley districts like Imphal East, Bishunapur and Thoubal have also higher density with 557, 420 and 708 persons respectively. The density of population in the hill districts is low ranging between 25 per sq. km. and 50 per sq. km. except Senapati district where density of population was 87 per sq. km. The main reasons behind high density of population in the valley districts are location of urban centres, better transport and communication facilities including trade and commerce. The hills of Manipur consist of forests and mineral resources but these areas are still economically underdeveloped. Majority of local people in these areas are not much aware of the economic value of the natural resources. Cultivated lands are limited with poor means of transport and communication in most areas.

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8 Ibid.
10 Seven recognized scheduled castes in Manipur are Dhupi Dhobi, Lois, Muchi Ravindan, Nama Sudra, Patni, Sarudhara and Yaithibi
Up to 1951 the state of Manipur experienced a steady growth of population but after 1951, there has been a continuous increase of population in Manipur. This is mainly due to natural increase, decline in death rate with the improvement of medical facilities and emigration from other states of India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar. Only 30.21% of the total population live in towns (fifty one in number as per 2011 census) while the remaining 68.79% live in 2,588 villages. The majority of villages in the hill districts are small, having less than 500 populations, and medium sized villages with the population of 500-999 are confined in the hill districts of Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Churchandpur and the central valley. The large sized villages having 1000-1999 population and very large villages having over 2000 persons are mostly located in the valley districts of Manipur. Although, Manipur is a small state, it represents a diversity in religious persuasion, faiths and belief system from tribal forms of religion to Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhs, Buddhist, Jains and others.

1.2.3 Administrative features

For administrative purpose, Manipur is divided into nine districts, four in the valley and five in the hills. The districts are sub-divided into thirty-eight sub-divisions. The state has a two-tier Panchayati-Raj system – gram panchayat at the village level and zila parishad at the district level. There are about one hundred sixty-six gram panchayats and four zila parishads in Manipur. There are also altogether nine municipalities being headed by the Municipality commissions. However, the hilly areas of Manipur excluded from the operation of the 73rd Amendment Act of the constitution. But, there is a council of elected representatives of the people to take care for the development work in each hill districts. Manipur is represented by two members in the Lok Sabha and by one member in the Rajya Sabha. The state is within the jurisdiction of the Gauhati High Court which came into existence on 21st January, 1972, the day Manipur attained its statehood. Now, the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) and Other Related Laws (Amendment) bill for

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12 Statistical Abstract of Manipur, 2004, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Manipur, Imphal. – (Figures as per 2011 Census Report are not available as yet.)

13 Zila Parishads in Manipur are Imphal-West Zila Parishad, Imphal-East Zila Parishad Thoubal Zila Parishad and Bishunupur Zila Parishad.
Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur was passed in the Lok Sabha on 11 May, 2012 and subsequently in the Rajya Sabha. Manipur, thus, will be having a separate High Court as the President of India has given assent to the bill on 7 June, 2012.

1.2.4 Historical Background: Origin of Manipur

The Manipuri Puyas\(^\text{14}\) say that the valley region of the state was once under water. Lord Shiva and his consort Pravati wanted to perform their dance here. He pierced the hill, ‘Chingnunghut’, with his trident and drained out the water and thereby rendered the valley habitable. When they perform their dance the place was all bright with their rays. Hence, the term Manipur.\(^\text{15}\)

The belief of the Manipuri Puyas is supported by the geologist who stated that Manipur, Cachar, Tripura and Garo Hills and a considerable portion of Bengal were under water. On the north-east of these stood the hill ranges of Assam. At that time there was a great continent in the present Pacific Ocean. Owing to some cataclysmic change in the surface of the earth, the Pacific continent was submerged and the submerged lands of Manipur, Cachar, Tripura, Garo Hills and Bengal came above the sea level as the water receded from these places. According to Geological calculations this happened not long before hundred million years. The discoveries of various fossils of marine fishes in these places have amply proved the theory.\(^\text{16}\) One school of thought opines that the valley of Manipur had been formed out of the Loktak lake in the south-western part of Manipur. When the lake dried up in course of time it became a place fit for habitation. Another school of thought, on the other hand, hold the view that the valley is of comparatively ancient date and has been filled in gradually to its present level by debris brought down from the hills by the tributaries of the Imphal River.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{14}\) Ancient sacred scripture of Manipur.
1.2.5 Different names of Manipur

The existence of independent state of Manipur goes back to unhistorical and unrecorded times. It was formerly known by various names. The Shans called it Ka-se (Cassay). To the Burmese, Manipur was known as Ka-the, a corruption of same ward. The Ahoms called it Mekhli and the Kacharis, Magli while the old Assamese name for it was Moglan.\footnote{Sir Edward Gait, \textit{A History of Assam}, 1963, p.321} Imphal, the capital, was known as Inthaphal from the royal throne in Kangla, the coronation hall. Formerly Manipur was also known as Kangleipak as Kangla was considered as its centre.

1.2.6 Origin of Meiteis (The Manipuri)

The Meiteis or the Manipuri belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. According to Colonel McCulloch, ‘the Meiteis were the strongest of the several clans inhabiting the Manipur valley who eventually obtained the mastery and give their name to all other clans’.\footnote{Quoted in T.C. Hodson, \textit{The Meitheis}, (first published in 1908) Delhi, B.R. Pub. Corporation, 1975 (Reprint), p.95.} Captain Pemberton, an authority of the region, believed that the Meiteis hailed from China. The race of Meiteis had been continuously developed by intermarriage with and additions from various hill peoples surrounding the valley. The Manipuri proper (meaning the Meiteis) were regarded by Pemberton as the descendants of a Tartar colony which emigrated from the north-west borders of China during the sanguinary conflicts for supremacy which took place between different members of the Chinese and Tartar dynasties in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.\footnote{R.B. Pemberton, \textit{The Eastern Frontier of India}, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1979, p.14.}
1.3 Literature Reviewed

The term ‘elite’ has its roots in the French word elire (select). It has been in common usage in France since the 17th century and was adopted into the German language in the 18th century. The elite is defined as a social group distinguished by its high levels of qualification and its ability and willingness to achieve or by its particular value or performance. Elites are furthermore seen as groups that have a decisive influence on the development of society. Historically, the concept of the elite was developed in the 18th century by the aspiring French bourgeoisie as a democratic rallying cry in the struggle to break the hegemony of aristocracy and clergy. Individual achievement as opposed to family origin was to be the decisive requirement for assuming leading positions in society. The 19th century experienced profound changes in the use of the term elite, with the concept now serving as a contrast to the term mass. The middle classes and the middle class academic intelligentsia of the time were deeply troubled about the phenomenon of the urban masses which had evolved as a result of population explosion in Europe and went hand in hand with the development of industrial working class. In their eyes, the political unrest and revolutionary aspirations of the masses served only to endanger the ruling order. The classic elite theories formulated against this background were later to provide an important basis for the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany. The conviction that a small elite was bound to dominate the large majority was used by the fascist parties as a central justification of the principle of authoritarian leadership.

The concept of elite was discredited by fascism and the conflict with the socialist camp. It was comprehensively redefined after the Second World War. The term elite is now understood as a minority group distinguished by certain moral and ethical qualities. A balanced and objective analysis was made and elite theories were accepted as explanations used as actual functioning of political processes and not only as justification of fascism. In the context of politics an elite is called a political elite and it consists of the persons who wield political power in the political system. Despite being a minority

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group, it effectively controls all the effective centres of political power. The chief exponents of elite theories include Pareto, Mosca, Michels, C. Wright Mills, Ortega and James Burnham etc. According to elite theory, men are born equal and only a few are born to rule. From Plato to modern thinkers, so many distinguished scholars have supported the theory of political elite. Plato in his famous book ‘Republic’ maintained that the most superior persons should be distinguished and specially educated to rule the state. Since his time, political elite have ruled everywhere. In modern times, they rule as representatives of the people, in the name of the people and apparently for the welfare of the people. Such group is known by some of the popular terms as Elites, Political Class, Ruling Elite, Governing Elite, Power Elite, Top Leadership and so forth.

Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) in his ‘The Crowd: A Study of Popular Mind’ analyzed the fears of the middle class intellectual circles – the fear that no good was to be expected of the masses and stated that up to the end of the 19th century, the ‘rivalries of sovereigns’ were the driving force behind events, with the opinion of the masses playing as good no role whatever. But the tables had turned completely within the span of one century. The voice of the people was now the decisive factor, dictating how monarchs were to act. The mission of the masses in history had lain essentially in the destruction, not in the creation of ancient civilizations. Until now civilizations had only been created and led by a small intellectual aristocracy. According to Bon, the rule of the masses was tantamount to a phase of dissolution because civilization required traits such as reason, impulse control or in general terms an ‘elevated degree of culture all of which the masses, left to themselves have invariably shown themselves incapable of realizing.

Le Bon used neither the term elite nor the term ruling or political class in his book. In his view the masses instinctively seek a leader. The mass is a servile flock that is incapable of ever doing without a master; one that always follows a strong willed leader. The rule of leaders is accordingly extremely despotic.

Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) places particular emphasis on psychological characteristics as the basis of elite rule. He said that there are two main types of

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22 Michael Hartmann, op.cit, p.9.
governing elite which, following his intellectual ancestor and country man Machiavelli, he calls ‘Lions’ and ‘Foxes’. Lions achieved power because of their ability to take direct and incisive action and they tend to rule by force. Foxes, on the other hand, rule by cunning and guile, by diplomatic manipulation and wheeling and dealing. Members of governing elite owe their positions primarily to their personal qualities, either to their lion-like or fox-like characteristics.

When one elite replaces another, a process Pareto calls ‘the circulation of elites’, major changes in society occurs. All elites tend to become decadent. They decay in quality and lose their ‘vigour’. They may become soft and ineffective with the pleasure of easy living and the privileges of power. An elite of lions lacks the imagination and cunning necessary to maintain its rule and will have to admit foxes from the masses to make up this deficiency. Gradually foxes infiltrate the entire elite and so transform its character. Foxes lack the ability to take forceful and decisive action which at various time essential to retain power. An organized minority of lions committed to the restoration of strong government develops and eventually overthrow the elite of foxes. History, to Pareto, is a never ending circulation of elites. History is and will always be ‘a graveyard of aristocracies.’

Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) believed that in all societies two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first. He claimed that the ruling minority is superior to the mass of population and is distinguished from the latter by qualities that gave it certain material, intellectual or even moral superiority – a product of the social background of the elite. He maintained that the qualities required for elite rule varied from society to society. In some societies, courage and bravery in battle provide access to the elite, in others, the skill and capacities needed to acquire wealth.

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Mosca argued that democracy was government of the people, it might even be government for the people but it could never be government by the people. Elite rules remain inevitable. The masses lacked the capacity for self-government and required the leadership and guidance of elite. Mosca also believed in the circulation of elite as an inevitable process. New members keep on coming into it as old members keep on going out of it. When the ruling class loses its aptitude to command and to exercise political control and the people outside the ruling class cultivate it in large numbers, there is every possibility that the old ruling class will be disposed and replaced by the new one.

Robert Michels (1874-1936) also advocated the view that rule of minority (governing elite) over the masses is a national phenomenon in all societies. All systems of government are oligarchic in ultimate reality. Justifying the growth of oligarchy, Michels insisted that the majority of the mass are apathetic, indolent, slavish and prone to flattery. They are, therefore, permanently incapable of self-government. Leadership becomes ‘technically inevitable’ and the leaders take advantage of these shortcomings of the masses to perpetuate themselves in power. They use all kinds of methods – oratory, persuasion, playing upon mass sentiments – in order to dupe the masses. He considered an aristocracy of virtue and wisdom to be the ideal form of government and argued that the chief fault in democracy is the character of the masses, their apathy, submissiveness and helplessness, which provide ideal condition for a handful of people with ability and capacity to lead and dominate the masses.

Ortega Y. Gasset places his theory of elite upon his theory of masses. A nation is an organized human heap, given structure by a minority of selected individuals – the elite. The primary social fact is the organization of human heap in leaders and led. This supposes in some, a certain capacity to lead, in other a certain capacity to be led. The leaders are the ‘selected people’ or the ‘chosen people’ by virtue of the fact of their being ‘outstanding people’. A man is effective in society as a whole not so much because of his

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individual qualities as his social energies which have been deposed in him by the mass. This rise of the chosen people in a society is a natural and universal phenomenon. A nation without such a group always suffers a decline.

According to Oretega, the masses revolt when the aristocracies become corrupt and inefficient. The motive behind the revolt, therefore, is not a preference to be ruled by an aristocracy, but it is a preference to be ruled by a more competent aristocracy. History shows a perpetual swinging back and forth between the two kinds of epochs – the period in which the aristocracies and therewith the society are being formed and the period in which these same aristocracies are decaying and the society is dissolving along with them. Thus, the progress and existence of the society depend on the capacity of the elite and it is amount of confidence of the mass over the aristocracy which facilitates the same to lead.

Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), in his earlier writings rejected the elite theory equating it with fascism and anti-intellectual but later stated that the actual shaping of policy is in the hands of elites, but this does not mean that the society is not democratic. He distinguishes three types of elites: political and organizational elites, intellectual and aristocratic elites and moral and religious elites. He sees the first two types principally in business, administration and politics where they are responsible for the integration of various volitions. The task of the other four is to spiritualize mental energies, that is to say, to develop and unfold a nation’s science and culture. Both types of elites are assumed to be indispensible for a society. Mass society which is basically open and democratic is now assumed to ensure the growth of both the number and size of the elite groups. According to him, the elite groups become less exclusive and the third of the three major principles of selection in the history of mankind – birth, property and performance – gradually assume predominance, more and more frequently becoming the sole criterion of selection. He believed the fact that the essential planlessness of contemporary society italicizes economic planning, which is inevitably democratic.

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planning, is absolutely necessary if social stability is to be preserved. He intends to place the entire responsibility of essential democratic economic planning on the responsible elite. He further explains that the masses always take the form which the creative minorities controlling society choose to give them.\textsuperscript{29} Mannheim came to believe that Pareto was right in stressing the fact that political power was always exercised by a small group of people.

C. Wright Mills—an American Sociologist—uses the term ‘power elite’ and explains elite-rule in institutional terms. He maintained that the structure of institutions is such that those at the top of institutional hierarchy largely monopolize power. Certain institutions occupy key ‘pivotal positions’ in society and the elite comprise those who hold command post in those institutions. He identified three institutions – the major corporations, the military and the federal government. The interests and activities of the elites are sufficiently similar and interconnected to form a single ruling minority which Mills terms ‘the power elite’. The inner core of the elite is ability, potentiality to determine the roles both it and others will play in society. Mills’s definition of ‘power elite’ is to some extent, similar to Pareto’s ‘Governing elite’. Mills is less inclined to use the Marxian term ‘ruling class’, which according to him, denotes only economic determinism and must be supplemented by ‘political and military determinism’.\textsuperscript{30}

James Burnham in his theory of elite made an attempt to combine the theory of elitism with the principles of Marxism. He argued that the present capitalist system would ultimately be replaced by a society in which the income and political institutions are controlled by a few persons only. He called these persons the managerial elite. The basis of elite power is control over production, that is, income.\textsuperscript{31} The easiest way to discover the ruling elite in any society is usually to see what groups get biggest income. But unlike Marx, he advocates that means of production are destined to be in the hand of elite. This group of persons controlled the means of production and income of the society.

Harold D. Lasswell (1902-1978) in his, \textit{‘World Politics and Personal Insecurity’ (1934)} and \textit{‘Politics: Who Gets What, When and How’ (1936)} reveal the pronounced

influence of Pareto. He not only follows Pareto in his contrasting of elite and mass but like Pareto, concentrates primarily on the psychological conditions required to capture and hold positions of power, nearly wholly neglecting socio-structural process. He argued that in order to secure their power, elite must above all be able to manipulate the masses with all the means at their disposal including symbols, force or material goods. For Lasswell, the science of politics is the science of power. He stated that the few who get the most of any value are the elite and the rest the rank and file.\textsuperscript{32} A revolution, according to him, is a shift in the class composition of elites. The French Revolution marked the rise of the bourgeoisie, the Russian Revolution marked the rise of the less bourgeois, the skill group. The next major revolutionary impulse may come in the name of the manual workers against the bureaucratic state of affairs, fostered by socialism.

William Kornhauser in his ‘Politics of Mass Society’ (1959) sees democracy as threatened not by ruling elites but by the masses and the counter-elites to which they give rise. He maintained that it is only the established elites that have an interest in the stability of the dominant democratic order and that it is only internal competition among the various sub-elites that prevent them from abusing their power. The masses and the counter-elites are not bound in the same way to this order and its values and in view of their susceptibility to populist ideals and efforts at mobilization; they thus represent a real danger for the democratic system. He stated that a system in which there is easy access to elites generates pressure on the part of the masses which then prevents elites from performing their creative and value sustaining functions.\textsuperscript{33} It is important to counter any direct influence on the part of the masses because the masses inhibit or even prevent the elites from autonomously addressing the tasks at hand. This is a state of affairs that calls for so called ‘mid elites’ (specialists like lawyers) that form a buffer between elites and non-elites.\textsuperscript{34}

Robert Dhal (1915) advocated the political equality of the citizens and at the same time accepted that the individual who command over one source of power also automatically succeed to control other sources of power. He further accepts that a small

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid.} p.99.
but a significant minority is much more involved in political thought, decision, discussion and action than the rest of the population.\textsuperscript{35} Such leaders have direct influence on decision making in the sense that they can both directly initiate proposals for policies and successfully thwart the proposals of others.\textsuperscript{36} Dhal believed in the historical development of what initially was a largely homogeneous elite into a socially and ethnically mixed pluralist elite and also pointed out that even today the chances individuals have of participating in political decision making processes grow in proportion to the resources – income, education, profession etc. – available to them.

Otto Stammer\textsuperscript{37} (1900-1978) in a 1951 article on the ‘Elite Problem in Democracy’ criticizes the anti-democratic tendency in the works of Mosca and Pareto who have a very powerful influence on the political and ideological practice of elite formation in various totalitarian systems. He contends that in democratic systems, the social and political competition between individual elites and their obligation to justify themselves and be held accountable for their actions by their ‘mother groups’ as well as by the people ensured that the existing psychological tendency toward isolation did not as a rule come to bear. According to him, elites are socially or politically influential groups from a variety of areas that arise from the population in the system and take on certain political leadership functions. These groups are all on a footing of mutual competition and their primary role is that of a functional intermediary between the people and the government. Stammer asserts that only these groups are able to guarantee the functioning of mass democracy, not only because the selection of the state’s top leaders lies entirely in their hands but also because only they are in a position to ensure that the masses are able to control these leaders and conversely, to successfully convey the latter’s decision to the masses. In contrast to the ruling classes of the past, the leading stratum of democratic mass society is no longer an upper social class or aristocracy or a closed and privileged group defined in terms of family, property or education. In contrast, it functions on behalf of and under the control of the people.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid.} p.102.
\textsuperscript{37} Otto Stammer quoted in Michael Hartmann, \textit{op.cit.} p.26.
Ralf Dahrendorf\(^{38}\) (1929) in his essay ‘A New German Upper Class’ distinguishes between the prestige upper class, the economic upper class and the ruling class or power elites as the three crucial leadership groups and points out that the composition of these groups can overlap. He maintained that there is no longer a unified upper class but simply a multitude of competing leadership groups or functional elites.

He maintained that notions of a unified power elite or upper class no longer reflect the conditions given in modern industrial society. High income does not necessarily secure great power and such power does not necessarily mean high prestige. In the same way, the sizable overlaps between the groups of the economic upper classes and the power elite do nothing to alter the principle difference between the two groups or the competition between the economic upper classes and other groups when the power elite has important decisions to make. Dahrendorf classifies four basic types of elite: authoritarian (established and uniform), totalitarian (abstract and uniform), liberal (established and multiform) and an unspecified type which is abstract in its social embodiment and multiform in its political attitude. He argued that there will no longer be any truly coherent classes but only fearful rulers, divided among them, uncertain to their positions.

Hans Peter Dreitzel\(^{39}\) (1935) stated that democratic industrial society is based on a continuous increase in productivity and standards of living and that its hierarchical structure centres on performance-related qualification rather than on possession of capital. Meritocratic qualification has replaced capital as the key factor of production. As a result, not only has class antagonism lost its significance but this has also led to a multiplication of elites. The meritocratic selection process which governs access to elites is institutionalized in the form of a professional structure and the schooling and professional training which precedes it. In principle, it is possible for anyone to acquire the educational or vocational qualifications conferred here and hence to advance into elite positions. However, these opportunities are open in principle and not, in fact, to everyone because of existing inequalities of opportunity in education and the professional world.

\(^{38}\) Ralf Dahrendorf quoted in *ibid.* p. 28.
\(^{39}\) Hans Peter Dreitzel, quoted in Michael Hartmann, *op.cit.* p. 29.
Dreitzel maintained that the term elite society does not necessarily mean that all top positions are filled exclusively on the basis of performance criteria but merely that society shows an increasing tendency to proceed in this way. For Dreitzel the upper stratum of democratic industrial society is made up of two components: one with inherited positions of power and prestige and the other consisting of those who have earned their position by dint of their achievements and professional careers. The latter group and its elites are dominant in society whereas the former is clearly diminishing in importance.

Suzanne Keller (1930) maintained that elites are effective and responsible minorities that are entrusted with the task of realizing society’s principle goals and securing the continuity of the social order, and that are efficient in the pursuit of these goals. Elites are, thus, one primary force supporting any organized society. The growing internal differentiation of modern industrial society leads to an appreciable increase in both the number and the significance of elites, which can no longer be adequately described using outmoded concepts like ruling class, cast, or aristocracy.  

She therefore introduces the term ‘strategic elites’ to represent those who are of significance for the society as a whole because their decisions and actions have consequences for many members of society.

For Keller the transition from the ruling class of the past to the strategic elites of modern industrial society involves coexistence of a number of elites instead of a single elite and has key consequences for the central characteristics of elites. The strategic elites are always, by reason of their functional specialization, smaller, more short-lived, of more limited authority and above all more open than ruling classes because access to

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41 They are product of four social forces effective in society: increase in its size, its internal division of labour, its formal organization and its moral diversity. These forces ensure that individual functional elites – the political, economic, academic, religious, cultural elites – become increasingly autonomous in organizational, professional and moral terms. In modern industrial society this differentiation has advanced so far that the central tasks of elites symbolizing moral unity, coordinating various activities, resolving conflicts and providing protection from external enemies can no longer be realized by a single uniform elite. A single hierarchical pyramid with an elite at its top is replaced by a multitude of parallel pyramids, and hence of elites. – Suzanne Keller, *ibid*, pp. 82-83.
them is based on specialized knowledge and individual effort rather than on birth and wealth. Keller categorizes strategic elites into external and internal elites.\textsuperscript{42}

The external elites are considerably better organized than the internal elites since they are far more dependent for their success on the direct cooperation of a large number of other people. The recruitment base is becoming broader in social terms. Elite position can no longer be filled by members of a single class. Depending on the function in question candidates for elite positions must be recruited from the various strata. There is a marked trend toward social opening with the circulation of members of the elite today proceeding at a faster pace than ever before. Elites are also in the end forced to open up to candidates of ‘lower class and lower status.’ This serves to weaken and possibly even break the age-old connection between elite status and upper-class status.\textsuperscript{43} The age-old dream of a society ruled by achievement and not by force is gradually becoming reality. But the danger of tyranny of experts over laypersons has not yet banished forever. Keller concluded that the best approach is simply to assume that all members of society and above all members of elites are in possession of an adequate understanding of our complex social order.\textsuperscript{44}

Field and Higley (1980) concur with the classic theorists like Michels, Mosca and Pareto in asserting that elites are inevitable in societies of any complexity. They also deem it necessary to reject the notion of a universal and objective validity of values like equality, liberty and freedom. Elites, according to them, inevitably show a tendency to assert their positions and to pass some of their advantages on to relatives, friends and associates.\textsuperscript{45} It is necessary because it is the only inducement for elites to keep up their

\textsuperscript{42} Following Talcott Parsons’ well-known AGIL (adoption, goal attainment, integration, pattern maintenance) she distinguishes four basic types of strategic elites which she sees as providing the necessary link between the abstract model of society and its actual reality. They are (1) the political elite who is primarily responsible for the decision as to which goals are to be pursued and by what means, when and where they are to be pursued (2) the economic, academic, military and diplomatic elites who are responsible for providing the necessary means (3) the integrative elites consisting of outstanding representatives of church, philosophy, education, and the first families who assume the task of formulating moral standards and conviction and (4) the elite consisting of artists, writers, entertainers, film stars and athletes who provide for the maintenance of individual citizen’s everyday morals.

\textsuperscript{43} Suzanne Keller, \textit{op.cit}, pp.216-17
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 269-79.
interest in their positions and to ensure that they continue to function smoothly. It is for this reason that it is difficult to forge links between the normative notions of freedom and equality.

They maintained that elite formation is dependent on levels of socioeconomic development. Today’s Western industrial societies are characterized by non-elites with a managerial orientation and uniform elite geared to consensus. The existence of consensus elites is an indispensable prerequisite for today’s western democracy. Field and Higley concluded by stating that it is essential to combat the ideology of the welfare state and to avert any escalation of future threats of confrontation by ensuring that elites are given the frame of reference which they urgently need for self-assured political action.

In India, social scientists especially social anthropologists, political scientists, historians and sociologists have shown their interests focusing on structure, recruitment pattern, role, socialization, background etc. Yogendra Singh, in his ‘Modernization of Indian tradition’ made an analysis of elite structure in India and observed that we learn much about the nature of society by learning the nature of elite. He maintained that political elites generally constitute the most important segment of the elite structure in any society since they have direct access to the political power which is over-riding among all forms of power. He also studied the manner in which the leadership is chosen, the breadth of social of the social base from which it is recruited, the way in which it exercises the decision making power, the extent and nature of its accountability and other attributes as indicators of the degree of shared power, shared respect, shared well being and shared safety in a given time. He maintained that the structure of elite in a society undergoes the process of differentiation with changes in the social system as a whole. He

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46 Both elites and the attitudes of non-elites can be assigned to four different stages of development. A largely uniform ruling class and a good measure of egalitarianism on the part of non-elites were typical of the underdeveloped agrarian society’s characteristic of Europe up to the 16th century and for the rest of the world up to the 20th century. Industrial societies on the other hand are typified equally by an egalitarian or managerial orientation, i.e. one that accepts hierarchies and three types of elites: the consensus elite (as in UK or the US), the incomplete unified elite (as in the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Japan in the 1950s) and the ideologically unified elite (as in fascism).

47 G.L. Field and J. Higley, op.cit. pp. 130.

has given three stages of transformation to highlight the changes taking place in the elite structure of Indian society.\footnote{They are – (1) the traditional monarchical feudal elites to whom elite role was ascribed on religious, patrimonial and other particularistic grounds or on the basis of wealth. They less creative and more wedded to ideology of the status quo and the source of legitimating of their authority was in the traditional status, honour and charisma. (2) The new nationalist liberal elite, who emerged as a result of the British rule in India, led to the growth of western education, contact with western ideology of liberal humanism, democracy, equalitarianism, nationalism and industrialism. Most of the new elite belong to an emerging professional group. Most of them were highly westernized and faced hostile response from the elites of the older disposition. (3) The new elite of political populist orientation in independent India. They have more pragmatic and specific policy orientation in political goals, their ideology is specific and they made appeal on specific issues which form part of the social structure of the contemporary interest groups in their community or region. They are also now increasingly recruited from rural, agricultural and lower middle caste or class backgrounds. The new political populist elites are seldom intellectuals and they rarely claim such pretensions}\cite{Beteille}

Beteille\footnote{Andre Beteille, quoted in Panigrahi, P.K., Political Elite in Tribal Society, Commonwealth Publishers, new Delhi, 1998, p.21.} in his ‘Caste, Class and Power: Changing Pattern of Stratification in a Tanjore Village’ tried to point out the characteristics of the elites and their changing pattern. He maintained that there are three tiers of the elites namely the elites in the sphere of politics, bureaucracy and the business executive. He also tried to find out the position of the caste groups in the traditional societies and the emerging new status groups due to the contribution of westernization and urbanization in India.

In his ‘The Brahminical Culture and Modernity’, Moddie\footnote{A.D. Moddie, The Brahminical Culture and Modernity, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.} discusses the ‘Brahminical’ ethos of the political and administrative elite in India and focused on the two characteristics style – hesitation and evasion – in making hard choices with regard to country’s modernization.

Desai\footnote{I.P. Desai, “The New Elite”, in T.K.N. Unnithan and others (eds.), Towards a Sociology of Culture in India, Prentice Hall of India, Delhi, 1965, quoted in Panigrahi, P.K., op.cit. p.22.} studied the major causes of the emergence of new elite in India and observed that due to our contact with the Britishers and the new education system the new elite have been born. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit\footnote{Vijay Laxmi Pandit, “Elites and Urban Politics: A Case Study of Delhi”, Inter-India Publication, New Delhi, 1984,} analyzed the role of local political elites with reference to Delhi Metropolitan Council and revealed the socio-economic background of the local elites, their pattern of recruitment, functioning and political affiliations. She also discussed the extent of their awareness of local problems and the
solutions, their perception of national ideals and the mode of interaction with the masses. Singh\textsuperscript{54} has identified the emergence of a new and young leadership by the late 1940s in Uttar Pradesh because of land reforms, education and democratization. The new leadership was adequately interested in community development project as a people’s programme with government participation. The source of recruitment of the new leadership were also wider, not confined to traditionally entrenched land lord village chief and a few caste Hindu families.

Jones\textsuperscript{55} in his work entitled ‘Parliament in India’ examined the socio-economic background of the members of the first parliament. Bhawani Singh\textsuperscript{56} in his ‘Council of States in India’ took the same line in studying the background of members of the Rajya Sabha till 1962. Sashilata Puri \textsuperscript{57} in her ‘Legislative Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan’ of the legislative elites in Rajasthan attempted to relate the socio-economic background of the elites, their political orientation and values, role perception and the patterns of interaction and linkage with their constituency. Ambedkar\textsuperscript{58} made an attempt to analyse the socio-economic profile of the elites in Andhra Pradesh and to provide a sketch of the perception of the elites concerning various issues of national and local importance.

Dayadhar Jha\textsuperscript{59} studied the fourth Bihar Legislative Assembly and explained the socio-political milieu of the legislative elites, the motivations and training they had prior to their election. He also incorporated in his study the attitude and orientation of the elites

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Her important findings include (1) There is an upper caste domination in the legislative structure; (2) educationally the legislature is dominated by matriculates and undergraduates; (3) representation of women in the state legislature is almost nil; (4) the legislators belong mostly to middle and lower income groups; (5) majority of the members have had some political exposure; and (6) belong to the age group of 36-55 years.


The findings of his study are – (1) majority of the elites are middle aged, belonging to agriculturist and professional groups; (2) most of them are born and brought up in the urban areas and educated in the western educational system and understand Hindi apart from their mother-tongue; (3) most of the elites are first time entrants to the Assembly; (4) the elites are well aware of the various issues of national importance and (5) they also have offered various solutions to the challenges faced by the nation.

towards the socio-economic and political challenges. He highlighted that age has no
decisive influence on perceptions and ventilating the grievances of the constituents is
considered by the respondents as the appropriate function of the legislators.

Shashishekhar Jha’s 60 ‘Political Elite in Bihar’ highlighted the structural
composition of Bihar Legislative elite. It is found that majority of the legislative elites are
middle aged, born in rural areas, belong to backward classes but are from the most
educated sectors of population and proficient in multiple languages. The composition of
the Assembly is male dominated who have never changed their party affiliation.
Swarankar 61 pointed out that the legislative elites in the state have been a heterogeneous
group as they differ in age, educational standard, economic background, caste
composition, legislative experience and socialization patterns. Only few women
candidates could come forward to contest in election fray and still fewer succeeded due to
the social orthodoxy which believes in the power function as the male domain. The
scheduled caste and scheduled tribe elites are less educated than their counterparts from
higher castes but they are more educated than the population they represented. The
legislative elite mainly involved of higher caste groups and they led the participation in
the legislative proceedings. The debates in the assembly were more in the hostile
atmosphere.

Reddy and Prasad 62 in their study made during 1956 to 1974 noticed that in Andhra
Pradesh, the politics of regionalism led to the distribution of the office of Chief Minister
by turns among Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telengana regions with more than
proportionate share to Telengana region and unequal representation of districts of the
state in the council of ministers till 1967. It is also found that no single caste has
represented itself constantly and absolutely in all these council of ministers till 1971 but
some preference to Reddys is seen.

60 Sashishekha Jha, Political Elite in Bihar, Vora and Company, Bombay, 1972, pp. 60-117.
61 R.C. Swarankar, Political Elite: A Sociological Study of Legislators in Rajasthan, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1988,
pp. 35-80.
62 G. Ram Reddy, and D. Ravindra Prasad, Recruitment to the Council of Ministers in Andhra Pradesh, Journal of
Vijayatilakam’s study reveals that the minorities, Muslims, Christians, were not represented in the House in the population ratio in Andhra Pradesh. Agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of representatives and most of them entered the legislative run without having any political background. Influences of the national leaders, circumstances and self motivation have been the main factors responsible for entering active politics. Majority of the legislators expressed their commitment to party ideology and the values and norms that the system envisaged. Economic development is crucial issue for the respondents and caste plays an important role the state politics.

Vijay kumar and Ramesh Vhandra Ray in their analysis of the social background of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes legislators in the Eight Legislative Assembly of Bihar pointed out that all the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes legislators were elected from the reserved constituencies and this resulted in the lack of competitive spirit on their part. A majority of them were young with higher educational qualifications. The study finds that a high majority of the representatives prefer Congress (I) and identified agriculture as their main occupation. The economic status of the legislators was far higher than that of the people they represented but they had no legal and professional experience. More than 76 percent of scheduled castes and 62 percent scheduled tribes legislators were involved in social work before stepping into the decision making institution.

In his article ‘Legislative Elites in Haryana: Representation of Agricultural Castes’ Randhir Singh reviews the leadership pattern during 1952-77 and highlights the predominance of agricultural castes comprising of Jats, Ahirs, Rajputs and Gujjars in Haryana politics. Due to their economically superior status, they have exploited the weaker sections of people in the social, economic and political fields. They have been dominating most of the Vidhan Sabha elections of the state.

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63 K.J. Vijayatilakam, Legislators in Indian Politics, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1998, pp.46-187
While studying the political decision makers, Rout\textsuperscript{66} highlights the socio-political variables of the members of the West Bengal Council of Ministers of 1969 and observed that in most case, place of birth determines the candidate’s success and position and that there was no single minister in the council of ministers who was born outside the state. The Council of Ministers was represented by more middle aged. It was a conglomeration of highly educated and learned personalities. A majority of the ministers were having leftist ideology and had the background of politics and social service. The representation of Hindu community in the council of ministers was the highest. Almost all the ministers had political involvement at various levels of party organization with varying levels. The study concluded that experience in local self-government administration had been an important variable in the recruitment process of political elites and legislative experience was the most vital factor to be minister. The legislators, who had completed two terms, had higher chances of becoming ministers. The attachment of a majority of the ministers with the trade unions was also clearly noticed in the study.

Abraham Raju\textsuperscript{67} in his study of the socio-economic and political background of legislators of Eight Kerala Legislative Assembly pointed out that in a large number of cases; it is student’s organizations that encouraged entering politics. The influence of parents, youth organizations, trade unions, agrarian and national movements have also been agents that cause entry into politics. The various groups from which the respondents come include farmers, teachers, lawyers, businesspersons and daily wage earners.

Tewary’s study\textsuperscript{68} about Uttar Pradesh Legislature mentioned that it is upper caste, middle aged group elite that have provided the embryo of legislative texture in the state. Most of the legislators have had their birth in the constituencies they contested from. The influence of political leaders is the most important motivating factor to contest followed by ideology and organizational factors. Krishna Iyer\textsuperscript{69} writes that the emergence of new

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item I.N. Tewary, \textit{State Politics in India}, Anmol Publications, Delhi, 1985,pp.70-86
\end{itemize}
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breed of criminalized politicians and politicized criminals without any ethics have posed severe threat to the process of good governance and clean political life.

Pillai\(^{70}\) in his book ‘Social Background of Political Leadership in India’ made an extensive study of the political leaders of Kerala since independence. The study emphasized on the role of family in building leadership qualities in an individual and found that the joint family and extended families were conservative in their ideology whereas the nuclear family supported the radical ideology. The nuclear family also produced more state level leaders than local level leaders while the extended and joint families produced local level leaders.

Rout\(^{71}\) shows that the performance, standard and status of the Orissa state Legislature have been deteriorating. It is not the number but the quality of the legislators that determine the effectiveness of the legislatures. The educated persons should be elected to the legislatures and they should perform their duties with decorum and restraints. A few legislators of the state legislature perform their duties satisfactorily. The study observed that one of the reasons ascribed to the backwardness of the state is the poor level of politics in the state.

Mahapatra\(^{72}\) revealed that most of the legislators have constituency oriented perceptions. They considered that they got elected because they had rendered service in their constituencies. A small number of them held that they were elected due to committed party membership and others were of the opinion that feudal loyalty and traditional ties were the secrets of their success. It was also maintained that an increasing

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The decline in the number of old legislators, the use of communities as weapons by political parties, influence of parental occupation on the affiliation and the level of leadership of the son are some important findings of the study. A positive relationship was marked between the income of the father and political party of the respondent. There were very few people who got elected without political background of their family. In anticipation of fulfilling their political ambition, some people married in a family which had strong political base. Most state level leaders mentioned that the relatives of their wives were in politics. Education above the graduation level had a positive relation or impact on the leadership position. There are more arts graduates than the graduates of science. The higher economic of a candidate facilitates him for climbing up to higher levels of political leadership hierarchy.


number of accused and convicted persons are getting elected as legislators without inviting moral protest. It has been pointed out that those who are convicted for serious offences should not contest in the election until their names are cleared. Convicted criminals should not pollute the electoral process until acquittal. Indian democracy is more important than any individual politician’s career.\footnote{See Rajeev Dhavan, \textit{A Convicted Democracy}, The Hindu, May 4, 2001.}

Having given an analytical discussion of relevant literature on political elites, it can be concluded that elite rule in every society is inevitable. Each and every society is divided into two groups: the elite and the masses where the elites govern over the masses. The political elites, particularly the governing elite, enjoy widespread influence and power. They occupy key positions and control the decision making mechanism. Their decisions made far reaching impact in the society. Political elite structure of the society is subject to change, i.e. there is circulation of elite. In a democratic setup, the political elites are the representatives of the people and it is through the process of election that they establish the legitimacy of their authority and popularity in society. The studies on political elites also revealed the socio-religious, economic and political background of the political elites. It is within this theoretical paradigm given above that the present study entitled “A Sociological Study of Political Elite in Manipur” is made.

1.4 Objective of the study

The political elites generally constitute the most important segment of the elite structure of Manipur. Democracy could be no more than representative government with an elite representing the interests of the people. Therefore, there is a strong need for scientific and systematic study and understanding of the political elites of Manipur. The present study gives emphasis on the following main objectives:

1. to delineate the political elites in Manipur and examine the socio-economic and professional base from which the elites are chosen.
2. to analyse the linkage between social system and political elite.
3. to study the role of political elites as members of Legislative Assembly and Parliament, as leader of ethnic community and other attributes.
4. to study the trends of change in the political elite structure of Manipuri society.
5. to study the impact of political elites on contemporary Manipuri society.

1.5: Scope of the Study

There is no aspect in contemporary Manipuri society which is not touched by some form of political activity. The main elements in the study of political elites in Manipur include the description about who are the elites, the power and function of the political elites, their impact on society and the trend of change in the political elite structure etc. The present study tries to bring out a concrete picture of the political elites in Manipur since 1972 AD, the year in which Manipur attained its statehood. The present study also tries to trace the emergence of first batch of Manipur political elites since early 1930s.

1.6: Methodology

In order to have a scientific and systematic search for pertinent knowledge about the political elites in Manipur, the present study used both primary and secondary data but emphasizing more on primary sources. I collected primary data from the respondents in two phases; one from February 2008 to October 2008 and the other from January, 2009 to March, 2010 but with the addition of one more respondent in the early part of 2012. To meet this end, I have visited different places of Manipur where the respondents live, including the official residences of sitting MLAs/MPs at Babupara, Sanjenthong and Lamphel and MLA hostel in Imphal. While collecting the primary data, special attention and care was given on the population structure/composition of Manipur so that political elites representing different social categories like scheduled tribes, scheduled caste, minority community, general category and women were included as respondents in the present study. It is mostly senior political leaders who appreciated and extended their
cooperation when I approached them for personal interview. Some of them also provided me some relevant secondary data so that the same may be used in the present study. However, some of the respondents seemed to be so ignorant about the significance of empirical research work that they kept on postponing the date when I approached them to seek a date for personal interview citing one reason or other. They also pretended to be so busy and it seemed they have no time to be interviewed by a research scholar for academic purpose. Some of them even asked whether I approached them to seek some donations, perhaps money, for some personal purposes in spite of my introduction, with proper credentials, as a research scholar. I have also visited offices of various political parties, both national and regional, to meet various political leaders and other activists of the state and obtained many important information.

For the purpose of collecting primary data the present work employs personal interview with a questionnaire/schedule and take interview of hundred respondents consisting of the former and sitting MLAs and MPs, the defeated candidates who aspired to get elected at one time or the other, eminent political leaders/activists and intellectuals/academicians of the state. Tape recorder is also used so as to record the statement made by the respondents at the time of interview and this proved very beneficial at the time of data analysis. The present work does not leave the observation method unutilized so that information related to political behaviour of the political elites is gathered by first hand observation. Analysis of primary data is made through statistical process of classification, tabulation, percentage calculation and correlation etc. Some of the tabulated data are also represented diagrammatically in the form of pie-chart, bar diagram.