CHAPTER - IX
ELECTION EXPENSE

INTRODUCTION:

In all Democratic Countries of the World, the expenditure incurred by a Candidate in seeking Election to the Legislative is statutorily controlled. Quite often a ceiling is fixed beyond which the expenses must not exceed. The ceiling on Election expenditure is an endeavour to diminish the precedence of wealth over poverty in the Political field. ¹ It is meant to ensure that a candidate with moderate income or even poor income, is not swamped by a candidate who is a money bag. This ceiling eliminates unfair expenditure and reduces, as far as possible, the disparity between the

rich and poor contestants and between rich and poor organisations. The ceiling is usually enforced by requiring every contesting candidate to maintain and submit the account of his Election expenditure. The statement of Accounts serves two purposes: one, it ensures that maximum permissible expenditure has not been exceeded, and second, it shows that money has been used only for the purposes which are permissible under the Election Law.

In India, every contesting candidate to the House of the People (Lok Sabha) or State Legislatures is required to maintain and file the accounts of his Election expenses within a prescribed period after the publication of the result of his Election, the Provisions of which are laid down in the Representation of the people Act, 1951 and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

LEGAL PROVISIONS:

ACCOUNT OF ELECTION EXPENSES:

Every Candidate, either by himself or by his Election Agent, shall keep a separate and correct account of all expenditure in connection with the Election incurred or authorised by him or by his Election Agent, between the date of publication of the Notification calling the Election and date of the Declaration of the Result thereof. The account shall contain such particulars as may be prescribed.2

Rules 89 - 90 (Part VIII) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 deals with Election expenses. The total expenses in connection with an Election in any one of the Parliamentary Constituency and in any one Assembly Constituency shall not exceed the prescribed minimum.

**MAXIMUM ELECTION EXPENSES** :

The total of the expenditure of which account is to be kept under Section 77 and which is incurred or authorised in connection with an Election in a state or Union Territory shall not exceed.

(a) in any one Parliamentary Constituency of that State or Union Territory, the amount specified in the corresponding column 2 of the said table; and,

(b) in any one Assembly Constituency, if any, of that State or Union Territory, the amount specified in the corresponding column 3 of the said Table.3

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TABLE - 23

Maximum limit of elections expenses in States/Union Territories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State or Union Territory</th>
<th>Maximum limit of Election expenses in any one Parliamentary Constituency</th>
<th>Assembly Constituency</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. STATES</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
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<td>2. Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<td>3. Assam</td>
<td>1,30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<td>4. Bihar</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
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<td>5. Goa</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<td>6. Gujarat</td>
<td>1,30,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<td>7. Haryana</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>1,30,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1,30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Karnataka</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Kerela</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1,30,000</td>
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<td>13. Maharashtra</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<td>14. Manipur</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Meghalaya</td>
<td>70,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Mizoram</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<td>17. Nagaland</td>
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<td>18. Orissa</td>
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<td>40,000</td>
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<td>19. Punjab</td>
<td>1,50,000</td>
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<td>20. Rajasthan</td>
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<td>21. Sikkim</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<td>22. Tamil Nadu</td>
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<td>23. Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>24. West Bengal</td>
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II. UNION TERRITORIES

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<th>UNION TERRITORIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andaman and Nicobar Islands</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dadra &amp; Nagar Havely</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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PARTICULARS:

According to the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, the account of Election expenses is to contain the following particulars in respect of each item of expenditure from day to day, namely:

(a) the date on which the expenditure was incurred or authorised;

(b) nature of the expenditure (as for example, travelling, postage or printing and the like);

(c) the amount of expenditure -

   (i) the amount paid, and,

   (ii) the amount outstanding

(d) the date of payment;
A Voucher is to be obtained for every item of expenditure, unless from the nature of the case such as postage, travelling by rail and the like, it is not practicable. All the vouchers are to be lodged along with the account of Election expenditure and arranged according to the date of payment and serial number by the candidate or his agent and such serial numbers are to be entered in the account under item (f) above. It is necessary to give particulars mentioned in item (e) in regard to the items of expenditure for which vouchers have not been obtained.

CORRUPT PRACTICES:

Incurring of expenditure beyond the prescribed limit is a corrupt practice. It is not sufficient for the Petitioner to prove merely that the expenditure, more than the prescribed limit, has been incurred in connection with Election; he must go further and prove that the excess expenditure was incurred with the consent or under the authority of the returned candidate or his Election Agent; it is also essential for the Petitioner to prove that the expenditure was incurred in connection with the Election by the
candidate or his Election Agent or was authorised by them. Expenses incurred by any other agent or person on their own need not be included in the account or return, as such incurring or expenditure would be purely voluntary.\(^5\)

**LODGING OF ACCOUNT WITH THE-DISTRICT-ELECTION OFFICER :**

Every contesting candidate shall, within thirty days from the date of Election of the returned candidate lodge with the District Election Officer an account of his Election expenses which shall be a true copy of the account kept by him Election Agent.

Reference to the Election Officer shall in relation to a Constituency in a Union Territory, be constructed as a reference to the Returning Officer for the Constituency.\(^6\)

As soon as may be after the expiration of 30 days the District Election Officer is to report to the Election Commission-

(a) the name of each contesting candidate;

(b) whether each candidate has lodged his account of Election expenditure and, if so, the date on which such account has been lodged; and,

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\(^5\) In Mubarak Mazdoor V.Lal Bahadur (1958), 20 ELR 176, Allahabad High Court, held that the expenditure incurred by the friends and supporters of the returned candidate cannot come within Section 123 (6), Act of 1951, even though the returned candidate was aware of the fact that his friends and sympathisers were incurring expenditure in connection with his election at the time of election. The Supreme Court as well as the High Courts have taken the view that the expended incurred by a political party to advance the prospects of the candidate put up by it do not of all within Section 77, Act of 1951. (M. Patadia V.R.K. Birla, AIR 1971 SC 1295).

\(^6\) Section 78 pf the Representation of the People Act, 1951. op cit
(c) whether in his opinion, such account has been lodged within the time and in the manner required by the Act of 1951 and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961. If the District Election Officer is of the opinion that the account of Election expenses of any candidate has not been lodged in the manner required by the Act of 1951 and the Rules he is not to forward with his report to the Election Commission the account of the Election expenses of the candidate with the vouchers lodged along with it. The District Election Officer shall published a copy of the report by fixing the same to his Notice Board.\textsuperscript{7}

\textbf{DISQUALIFICATION}:

As soon as may be after the receipt of the Report, the Election Commission shall consider the same and decide whether any contesting candidate has failed to lodge the account of Election expenses within the time limit and in the manner required by the Act and the rules. If the Election Commission decides that a Contesting Candidate has failed to lodge his account of Election expenses within the time and in the manner required by the Act and the Rules, it shall, by notice in writing, call upon the Candidates to show cause why he should not be disqualified under Section 10-A of the Act of 1951 for the failure.

The contesting candidates, who has been called upon to show cause, may, within 20 days of the receipt of such notice, submit in respect of the matter a

\textsuperscript{7} Rule 89. Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961. op. cit
representation in writing to the Election Commission and shall at the same time send to
the District Election Officer a copy of his representation and the account, if any, with
such comments as he wishes to make thereon. If the Election Commission is satisfied,
after considering the representation submitted by the candidate and the comments made
by the District Election Officer and after such enquiry as it thinks fit, that the candidate
has no good reason or justification for his failure to lodge his accounts, it shall declare
him to be disqualified under Section 10 - A of the Act. 1951 for a period of three years
from the date of the order and cause the order to be published in the official Gazette.8

EXPENDITURE BEFORE NOMINATION :

Expenditure before the date of Nomination need not be shown in the return of
expenses. Nor would the amount be taken into consideration in calculating the total
expenses of the successful candidate for determining whether the Election expenses
exceeded the prescribed limit.9

ENFORCEMENT (1972-1989)

It was to the credit of the contesting candidate and in particular to the successive
returning Officers that not a single case of disqualification on the ground of failure to
submit the Election expenditure accounts by the candidates was ever reported in all the

8 Ibid
six General Elections held from 1972-1989. In all, there were 12 unsuccessful candidates who were served a show cause notice by the Commission for not submitting their Election return within the stipulated time, but who however made representation to the Commission and was accepted accordingly.\textsuperscript{10} Despite the efforts of the Returning Officers in briefing the contesting candidates to submit their Election expenditures soon after the Election, there were several unsuccessful candidates, who were needed to be given constant reminders by the Returning Officers to submit their returns within the time limit of 30 days from the date of Election of the returned candidate. The number of such candidates, who would otherwise have also been served a show cause notice or might have even been disqualified under Section 10-A of the Act 1951 were as follows.\textsuperscript{11}

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTY SPONSORED CANDIDATES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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\textsuperscript{10} The names of these 12 unsuccessful candidates could not be obtained as the file record was destroyed along with other important documents in the fire that broke out at the Deputy Commissioner's Officer (Election Branch) Aizawl in 1995.

\textsuperscript{11} File Records (Election Expenses): Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl, Mizoram.
The above Table Figures revealed first and foremost of the fact that, the Returning Officers were all out to render their help and guidance even to those frivolous and non-serious candidates in as much as helping them submit a return as several of them submitted incomplete and incorrect returns as also issuing constant reminders to them. Secondly, these non-serious candidates as might be called, comprised of those independent and other candidates of minor political parties, who all along were aware of their impending defeat and hence, the majority of them did not even bother to go through the various legal Provisions that clothed the electoral processes. It was fortunate that the number of such non-serious candidates composition declined in each succeeding Elections. This perhaps was due to the emergence of stable major Political Parties as also the high cost of electioneering that accompanied each General Election. The hypothesis that the Mizo electorates preferred as their representatives, Party sponsored candidates over the Independent and candidates of minor Political Parties continued to be true in all the Elections.

CEILING VERSUS ACTUAL EXPENDITURE:

Following the Recommendation of the Commission, the Government notified on January 17, 1971 the new ceilings on expenditure for Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies in the different States and Union Territories. The permissible expenditure for Mizoram Parliamentary Constituency was fixed at Rs.12,500/- and Rs.2,500/- for Assembly Constituency. In June, 1983, action to revise the maximum limit
was initiated with a letter to all Political Parties suggesting enhancement of the limit by 30 percent, keeping in view the increase in the wholesale price index during the period November 1979 to June 1983. There proposals were thereafter discussed in a meeting with the Political Parties. On the basis of the consensus arrived at the meeting, the Commission recommended to the Government the revision of maximum limits. The Ministry of Law issued the Notification on 5th September, 1984 revising the limits as proposed by the Commission.\textsuperscript{12} (the revised limits was as shown in Table - 22). Upward revision of the ceiling would be a step in the right direction for the limits were low even after the last revision made in 1984 and since then had become even more devisory because of the growth of the electorate to be reached with every successive Election. Moreover, voters in Mizoram have got to be contacted not merely through public Meetings or Radio but on individual basis. It was during the personal canvassing by the candidates that the really serious candidates have to, and do in fact, spend much more than non-serious candidates. Poll after poll, it has been practiced and proved that the legal provisions relating to Election expenditure are unrealistic and provided for evasion. Excepting for the Independent candidates and other candidates of smaller Political Parties, all the candidates sponsored by major Political Parties openly admitted their exceeding of the prescribed limit in almost all the Elections.

The main source of funds collected by Political Parties varied. In the case of the Congress Party by virtue of its being a National Party, the bulk of funds came forth from its Central and Parent Party, namely the A.I.C.C. Besides the funds received in

\textsuperscript{12} Election Commission of India. Second Annual Report, 1984. New Delhi April, 1985. p - 83
cash from its Central Headquarters, the Congress Party was fortunate in a way in that Election materials such as banners, badges, posters and the like were despatched from its Headquarters in all the Elections. Also, excepting for the first and fifth General Elections of 1972 and 1987 and in the Bye-elections, the A.I.C.C., in collaboration with other Congress ruled neighbouring States requisitioned one light vehicle each for the use of all Congress contesting candidates. Apart from these, the fund Raising committee created before every Election sought to collect funds from the local businessman, Government Suppliers and Contractors. The source of funds for other Political Parties was also much the same as with the Congress. The only difference was that, these State and Regional Parties did not have the financial backing or support of any Central Party like the Congress. Hence, in terms of Election funds and its organisations thereof, the Congress Party was by far always better placed than the other parties in all the Elections.

In the absence of any big business groups and Industries in Mizoram such funds collected by Parties was very meagre. It was left upon the shoulder of the Candidates themselves to bear the greater portion of their Election expenses, which was all the more true for Candidates of the Regional Parties.

Publicmen are not agreed regarding the precise influence of money on Mizoram Elections. This is because the determinants of voting behaviour are numerous as well as complex and a cause and effect relationship between expenditure and results cannot be established. Election results, as Richard Rose points out, are determined by three
interrelated factors viz; material and social environment, individual values and party activity.  

Nehru, for instance, strongly felt that money had a negative rather than positive influence on Elections. “It is my firm conviction” he once observed, “that the more money you spend, the worse it is for you. People are thinking that it is money that counts. I hold a very strong reverse opinion”. A contrary view was expressed by Rajagopalachari and a host of other eminent persons, one in the like of M.C. Setalvad (the former Attorney General of India) who maintained that money had exercised a definite influence on Election results. Money influenced Elections not only in India but in other Countries as well. In cities and politically awakened regions, money may not be exercising much influence over the outcome of Elections, but in backward areas its influence remains unabated.

The thesis that money does not substantially influence the outcome of Election, is substantiated by the fluctuating fortunes of various political parties in Mizoram. In the first general election in 1972, the money factor was submerged by the issue of Mizo Culture and its identity which the Mizo Union sought to champion and advocate. Against this background, the Congress Party was portrayed as a Party of outsiders and defectors. In this election, most of the candidates including the Congress sponsored candidates did not exceed the prescribed limit of Rs. 2,500/-. From the accounts record maintained by one of the Mizo Union returned candidates, his total expenditure

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amounted to rupees one thousand only which was rupees one thousand five hundred less than the prescribed ceiling of Rs. two thousand five hundred. This candidate opined that most of the returned candidates must have spent much less than himself, as he was then financially better off than the other contesting candidates.

In the second general Election of 1978, the main issue was development, in the field of which the outgoing Congress Ministry had little to boast of. On the other hand, the newly-formed Peoples Conference Party which placed development as its top priority was fully accepted by the people as the alternative party to the Congress. In the Elections thereof, the Peoples Conference Party crushed the Congress bagging as many as 22 seats out of the total of 30 seats. The Congress was able to retain only 4 seats. This feat was again repeated in the Mid - Term General Elections in 1979, in which the Peoples Conference party retained 18 seats and the Congress increased its tally to 5 seats. In the Fourth General Elections of 1984, the Congress Party turned the table towards its favour by securing an absolute majority. Although without doubt, Congress as always was backed up by its Central Party namely the A.I.C.C., the Congress Party in Mizoram won the Election not because of its sound resources, but that the people of Mizoram, tired and fed up with the aged old insurgency votes to power a party which they thought would take up peace negotiations sincerely, as the fact remained that the P.C. Party during its five years term due to its suppressed political adopted towards the Mizo National front personnel had alienated the people of Mizoram, who were on the look out for a more moderate Political Party. This vacuum was filled in by the Congress party in the Election of 1984.
In the Fifth General Elections held in 1987 it was thought that since the ultimate desire of the People for Peace in Mizoram was achieved, the main issue confronting the Election would be an all-round development for Mizoram in all spheres of life and work. It was taken as an accepted belief even among the intellectual circle that it was on this particular issue that the various political parties would face the Election. But in the ensuing Election thereafter, all such aspirations and beliefs were set aside and in its place came the emotional sympatic factors and the ‘welcome home boys’ slogans. As a result of these sympatic waves tilted in favour of the M.N.F., the party swept the polls winning twenty-four seats out of the forty seats total. The Congress party geared up its full potential and fought hard the Election. However, it was simply onslaught by the MNF wave. At the end, the Party was able to secure thirteen seats out of the 40 seats it contested.

Following the intensive studies that the scholar made in the analysis of Election results and the factors that determined its outcome, there was a differing factor involved during the sixth General Elections of 1989. For the first time in the history of Mizoram Legislative Assembly Elections, here was an Election fought on equal footing in terms of issues. Unlike the previous Elections none of the parties had a particular popular issue or appeal going to its favour. Hence all the Political Parties confronted the Election with ‘DEVELOPMENT’ given the top most importance in their manifestoes. The fund raising Committees set up by all the parties were in its peak, as each of them tried to collect as much as they could both in and outside Mizoram. Money influence infiltrated the Elections in Mizoram for the first time depicting its true colours amongst
the once healthy minds of the Mizo electorates, who had in all the previous elections exercised their right of franchise with a sense of duty and purpose in their mind. It was estimated that, on an average, a successful candidate spent rupees seventy thousand in rural and forty five thousand in Urban Constituencies. Moreover, the Party sponsored candidates spent huge amount of money on electioneering through their agents and workers, which expenditure was not reflected to their Election accounts or the accounts of their Parties.

The recklessness spending without doubt reached its zenith during the 1989 Elections. However, the ultimate victory of the Congress Party in the said Election could not be contributed solely to its better finance position. None of the parties could not be single out as all of them utilised whatever means and ways they could while trying to capture the seat of power. The Congress by dint of its being a National Party was as usual better organised in all terms. The success of the Party was also due to the fact that, development being the main issue, the Congress was seen as the best choice available which could usher in the much needed developmental projects and schemes in the State, as in the Central, its parent party the A.I.C.C. was in the helm of affairs.

To sum up, the high cost of electioneering leads to corrupt practices and bad Government, since funds have got to be raised from various sources, including the dubious ones. This is often at the expense of cherished principles and policies of the Party.
SUGGESTIONS FOR REDUCING ELECTION COSTS:

By far the most baffling problem before the Election commission has been the devising of suitable measures to keep within the prescribed limits the expenditure by candidates on their Elections. The Commission’s Report on the Third General Elections in India, 1962, contained a note of helplessness in as much as the Commission observed that although the heavy expenditure then incurred by Parties and candidates on their Election Campaign was undesirable, it was not easy to find practical, effective and generally accepted methods which would make them spend less. The fact that the expenses incurred by the Political Parties on the electioneering campaign of individual candidates or a group of candidates were not required to be included in the accounts of the latter made the prescribed maximum unreal and meaningless. The same views were reiterated by the Commission in almost identical terms in its fourth reports which still stands true in the present set up of electoral laws, even after a long gap of sixteen years or more. This highlighted the needs for reforms in order to prevent democracy from degenerating into plutocracy.

In the Elections held to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, the campaigning methods adopted by Political Parties was more or less similar in all other Constituencies excepting for a few Constituency areas dominated by the minority groups such as the Chakmas and Bru’s where the literacy rate was low and the pace of development was slow. Nevertheless the items on which candidates usually incur huge expenditure in Mizoram Assembly Elections were as under:
1) Transport (Poll) : Motor Vehicles used by the Candidates and their agents/workers during Election Period.

2) Public Meetings which was normally followed by a Community feast (Barakhana).

3) Payment made to Party Units/Blocks to meet the Expenditure incurred during Election campaign.

4) Payment made to full time canvassers and various Polling/Counting Agents.

5) Entertainments/Public processions in vehicles.

6) Banners, leaflets (appeals), posters and PA System.

7) Personal canvassing (door to door campaign).

To advance suggestions for the trimming of costs on all these items, the views and ideas of Political Leaders, eminent publicmen and publicists was sought which may be summed up as in the following item-wise:

With regard to the first item, it was all agreed that the present allotment of vehicles to the contesting candidates with a maximum of two light vehicles and one heavy vehicle each be continued with no increase or decrease made in the numbers, as the fact remained that vehicles are the only means of transport available in the torn hilly regions of Mizoram. Apart from these maximum limits, hiring or procuring of any other type of vehicle for use by the Candidates or on his behalf or to further the cause of his Election Campaign be prohibited and these be made a cognisable offence punishable with a fine of Rupees two thousand or more for each act committed. In order to
implement this effectively, the State Government must see to it that it deploys more buses or vehicles to all the routes covered by its transport services with a concessional rate from the period of two days preceding the poll and two days after the poll. As for those interior villages beyond the vehicles reach, more polling booths be opened in order to ensure that no one has to walk for more than one mile to cast votes. Moreover, on the polling day there should be regulation of plying of vehicles restricting the use of specified number of vehicles by candidates and Political Parties under permissible authorization. This of course shall not include those Government Vehicles required for the use of officials and others connected with the Elections.

The second suggestion concerned the arrangements of Public Meetings to which, it was unanimously felt by all that the Organisation of Public Meetings best be handed over to the Young Mizo Association (YMA) as was already practiced in several Constituencies. The YMA Branch of each ward or locality covering the Assembly Constituency shall make an arrangement to conduct two joint public Meetings within its areas. The first Meeting shall be held not later than two days after all the names of contesting candidates of the Assembly Constituencies are announced by the Returning Officers. The second Joint Meeting shall be convened towards the end of the Campaign Period. This meant that, say if there are 7 wards or locality within one particular Assembly Constituency, each of the contesting candidates from the Constituency would then have the opportunity of addressing fourteen Meetings altogether, which was quite sufficient even from the point of view of the Political Education to the electorate, which are essentially considered important. In these Meetings, serving of refreshments shall
not be permitted, as in the present practice Public Meetings organised by Political Parties were usually followed by a feast, which was a burden on the Candidates. It was further suggested that, apart from the Joint Public Meetings arranged by the YMA and house corner-meetings of Political Parties, no other meeting or entertainment of any kind in public in connection with the Election must not be held during the Election Period.

On the question of payments made by the Candidates to their Party Units and blocks, it was commonly agreed that all such payments excluding those forwarded to the Election agents be completely be banned by the Election Commission. Although there were no paid canvassers in its real term, there certainly were those group of persons who offered themselves to canvas on behalf of the Candidates and who often received payments from the Candidates. This was particularly related to the more serious candidates. The suggestion that was brought forth in this regard was that, since the possibility of purchases of voters on a large scale through this medium cannot be ruled out, the practice of having such paid workers should be discouraged as it would ultimately lead to the existence of real paid-canvassers. To effect these charges, the Party funds and their administration be made a matter of public knowledge through their publication and auditing. This would help, it was stated, the parties themselves in collecting more funds as its workers or people sympathetic to a Party will contribute more liberally when they know how their money was spent. The Party workers and units would cease to demand payments from the candidates when they themselves are the contributors of the Party Fund. As for those persons or workers who canvassed on
behalf of the candidates, it would make them hesitate or at least give them a second thought in demanding payments from the candidates, when also belonged to the group of contributors towards the Party Funds. However, the chances that the more serious candidates would still employ such group of persons cannot be ruled out, merely on this factor. Nevertheless, it might be considered as one of the steps taken and suggested to minimise such unscrupulous spending of the candidates through this medium. Mackenize while subscribing to the theory of the publication of the Party accounts, pointed out.15

“The idea of publicity for party accounts is more promising .... its advantage is that once established it is, to some extent, self enforcing .... if accounts of some sort, in some official form, are published by all Parties, the matter is thrown open to debate .... other parties are given a strong point for analysis and criticism .... publicity for party accounts cannot stop secret expenditure on Political objects, but it can do something to control it, if conditions are otherwise favourable.”

In support to this, it is true that a Party can circumvent this Provision by various dubious accounting procedure. Nevertheless, in any Organisation as widespread as a political party, it would be extremely difficult to have recourse to such devices without serious risks of committing a fraud at the expense of the Party itself.

To solve the two-fold problem of maintenance of peace and order and the reduction of Election expenses of candidates, it was fully endorsed by all to recommend

to the Commission, a blanket ban on Public processions and demonstrations of any kind in public during the Election period, which may be extended even after the declaration of results, for one week or more as the case compelled. It was felt by such group of learned and eminent persons thus interviewed, that, these type of Election campaign often adopted by Political Parties in Mizoram were low and unintelligent form of propaganda which was a burden on the Candidates and the Parties themselves. While being doubtlessly a waste of money, material and manpower, they also appeal to only a few and further more, these constitute a potent threat to Law and Order.

In matters of printing of posters, pamphlets and other Election materials required by the Candidates and Parties, it was decided that, these be left to the discretionary wills of the parties and candidates themselves who should however bear in mind not to exceed the prescribed ceilings. With regard to the last item concerning the personal canvassing by the candidates, there emerged two contradictory views. The first view expressed by the group was that, it was through this practice of door to door campaign by the Candidates that the link between the voters and their representatives was maintained. Through the system, the Candidates came to know the real living conditions and plight of their Constituents. It also enables the voters to be regarded by the Candidates not merely as their tools and instruments in their bid to capture power, but as their Constituents to whom they shall have to answer for their actions. In a way, it was also a sort of privileged bestowed upon the voters once in five years, and hence this should not be denied to them. A contrary view maintained by some members of the group was that, in all the past Assembly Elections, though there was no concrete
evidence available, it was highly suspected that huge sums of money charged hands during the personal canvassing of the candidates. This was all the more rampant in prestigious constituencies from where the Party Leader and well-to-do candidates contested. The group suggested that, important as it was the personal canvassing of candidates should not be discontinued nor any hindrances be made that could obstruct the free movements of the Candidates. However, the Commission should appoint observers even during the Election campaign, to check the possibilities of purchase of voter or money charging hands through this medium.

To sum up, it is, doubtless, true that there is excessive expenditure on electioneering in Mizoram, but this is equally true of other States where the rate of expenditure was exceedingly much higher than in Mizoram. It is another matter that upward revision of the ceiling on Election expenditure of candidates would be fitting in the right direction in the light of the fact that only two to five percent of the returns are said to be correct. The most important thing, however, for trimming the Election expenses is the development of political morality, because opinion rather than Law is the main source of control. The standards of Political morality are set by the Government, the Political Parties and the People. The need of the day is that there ought to be a voluntary agreement among the various political parties not to supercede the limit covertly in any case. The major political parties like the Congress, MNF and PC should take the initiative and set high standards of public morality to be emulated by other smaller parties including the Independent candidates. This certainly is not
unattainable, for the mere fact that the level of Mizos' Political consciousness is highly developed as reflected in all the Elections.