Chapter 7
POWER STRUCTURE

The Loi villagers are intensely related with one another in a network of various social relationships. Political power is one of the patterns of relations among them. For Max Weber, power is the probability that a person in a social relationship will be able to carry out his or her will in the pursuit of goals of action, regardless of resistance (Bhushan 2000:239). The power is found relatively distributed among the individuals as well as organized in a community, i.e., at micro and macro levels. These two patterns of power distribution, micro and macro, are interrelated and interacting with each other. The power organized into associational and institutional structures appears to be manifest and expressive. Generally, people are seen involved in actions related to attaining, retaining or exercise of power in a community structure. The power structure of the two Loi villages; namely, Koutruk and Leimaram is being analyzed here in terms of changes in power relations, emerging leadership and political participation. In the villages, there is found two types of power structure; viz., (i) traditional power structure and (ii) emerging power structure. These two types of power structure are not totally separable in the villages and therefore one can see some kind of combination of the two. Yet, the changes in power structure are quite apart along with some streaks of continuities. Before a discussion on change in the power structure is taken up, the traditional power structure of the villages is depicted here.

Traditional Power Structure

Traditionally the Loi villages were administered by Khullakpa along with other village officers. In Manipuri (Meitei) language, the word Khul means village and Lakpa means head. Thus, Khulakpa means head of village. Khullakpa and other village officers were appointed by the succeeding Meitei kings since early period (Singh 1988:105). In the two villages, there were seven traditional village officers who assisted the functioning of Khullakpa. The names of the village officers who constituted the village authority are: (i) Khullakpa, (ii) Luplakpa, (iii) Khunjahanba, (iv) Yupalba, (v) Pakhanglakpa, (vi) Naharakpa, (vii) Loumilakpa and (viii) Lai-Salungba. Their power and functions in the village administration were as follows:
Khullakpa

Khullakpa was the controller of the village, who executed both the administrative and religious functions. During the monarchial rule in Manipur, the Khullakpa enjoyed much power in administration of the village. He was the head of the village and supreme executive authority of the village. He was the arbitrator in the small matters in the village and, also, a religious priest. With the help of other officers of the village he disposed of cases such as divorce, theft, elopement and other cases in the village. Also, he had the power to investigate the quarrels, occurring within the village. Decisions made by him and other village officers were used to be taken as final. Moreover, Khullakpa enjoyed a very high socio-religious status in the village. During the village Lai-Haraoba, he used to be the chief for the management of the celebration of Lai-Haraoba rituals. A special seat was reserved for him at the time of other social and ritual ceremonies of the village.

Luplakpa

Lup means organization and Lakpa means controller. Luplakpa was, thus the controller of village organization. He was the second in rank in the village, next to Khulakpa. He was appointed by the king of Manipur. His function was to assist the Khullakpa in his work.

Khunjahanba

The literal meaning of Khunjahanba is the oldest villager. He was the chief organizer of meetings, festivals etc. in the village. The proposals of the villagers were mainly communicated through him and he had to inform all the matters, decided by the village officers, to the villagers. However, at present, he is consulted in socio-religious matters only.

Yupalba

Yupalba was the fourth ranking officer of the village. He was the manager of wine brewed from rice, who tasted the quantity and quality of the brew every year. He was also responsible for entertainment of strangers and sometimes performed the duties entrusted to the Kullakpa in the absence of the latter.

Pakhanglakpa

Pakhanglakpa is the officer in-charge of the Pakhang-unmarried men of the village. T.C. Hodson (1908:60-61) wrote, “the Pakhanglakpa (lakpa of the young unmarried men) is the man who looked after the young men’s club and the custom of
keeping the young men in one dormitory is known to have been at no distant date common among the Loi communities”.

**Naharakpa**

Naharakpa was the in-charge of *Naha*-the young lads who were younger than the *Pakhang*. He had the same powers and functions as those of the Pakhanglakpa. The only difference was the age group under their control. Generally, in most Loi villages, there was no exact line of demarcation of the age of *Naha* and *Pakhang*.

**Loumilakpa**

Loumilakpa was the officer who looked after all the properties of the village as a whole as well as individual property of the villagers. He leased the village lands to the villagers and collected revenues from the leased out cultivated fields and home land.

**Laiselungba**

Laiselungba was the officer-in-charge of the village gods. So, his main duty was to look after and maintain the gods worshipped by the villagers, like Koubru in Koutruk and Loyalakpa in Leimaram.

These village officers enjoyed the elite status and respect in the village. Khullakpa usually discussed all the matters and problems with his officers. The members were given different types of functions relating to administration, judicial, customary laws, entertainment for the villagers and were also allotted functions relating to the welfare of the youth in the village. In this way, Khullakpa along with his officers were responsible for maintaining law and order in the traditional Loi villages of Koutruk and Leimaram. However, at present, due to the introduction of modern administrative system, specially the Panchayati Raj in the villages, the position and status of the Khullakpa and other village officers has lost most of their power and status. Even the Khulakpa cannot now impose strict actions and discipline the villagers. Thus, these officers enjoy the high prestige and status only during the socio-religious festivals of the village.

There were also village organizations in Koutruk and Leimaram like Singlup, Leirup and Keirup which took responsibility of development or security of the respective villages.

The Singlup took the responsibility for development of the village and it was more interested in the construction of roads, bridges, digging of tanks, cleaning of lakes etc. Besides, it also took the responsibility of sending representatives to the
house where death or illness took place in the village. It helped the bereaved family with wood, money and labour for cremation (Singh 1968:97).

The Leirup took the responsibility for development of every Leikais (lane) like construction of roads, embankment of rivers and digging of channels in the fields.

Keirup was a military organization. Persons belonging to Keirup were messengers of war. When a war broke out, they went to the battle field. Besides, they were also responsible for catching tigers which were coming to the villages. Therefore, they could be considered as village guards (Devi 2000:67-74).

However, with the development of a new system of administration specially after Manipur became a part of the Indian Union, all of these but singlup gradually ceased to function. However, the function of Singlup is now limited only to helped the bereaved family with wood money and labour for cremation. Even today, when a member of a family dies, the villagers help the bereaved family in the form of giving wood and money for cremation. It is obligatory for every family to send at least one person to attend the funeral procession to the cremation ground. Now, each village is look after by its Panchayat members and Pradhan.

After India’s Independence, Manipur was governed by the non-elected Chief Commissioner and Council of Ministers till 1971. It was only after the enactment of the North-Eastern Area (Reorganization) Act, 1971, that the state was granted statehood with a responsible government. Since the people of this state were able to directly choose their government through elections in 1972 onwards. As a consequence, the traditional administrative pattern of Manipur also changed. Likewise, the Scheduled Caste people including the Loi also experienced a new era of political life. It marks the beginning of modern political system in the Loi villages as well. The traditional village chiefs, Khulakpa and his village officers, who enjoyed earlier political and social power have lost their positions and status in some degree. On the other hand, the common people started to enjoy democratic rights and freedoms.

Thus, in the environment of the democratic governance after Independence, the traditional village (caste) panchayat structure has also been immensely influenced. The traditional village organization, though still persists, has almost lost its authority over the villagers. They are now concerned only with the religious matters of the Lai-Haraoba of their respective villages, e.g., deciding the number of days for performance of the Haraoba, selecting the persons to serve the gods and goddesses,
arranging the programme of the Haraoba etc. Previously, the village officers were
appointed by the king for administrating the village, but now Khulakpa and other
members of the traditional village (caste) council, such as Luplakpa, Yupalba,
Pakhanglakpa, Nahalakpa, Loumilakpa and Laishelungba are elected by the villagers
for a period of four years, out of the most responsible persons of the village who have
attained the age of over forty years. However, even now, no women is elected as the
officer and all of them are men only. Therefore, traditional structure is continuing
with dominance of patriarchy and male bias against the women.

Emerging Power Structure

After Independence, in 1947, a responsible form of government was
established in Manipur under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. The
constitution was enacted by the caretaker who was nominated by the Maharaja of
Manipur, Shri Bodhachandra Singh, along with 7 members from 14 August 1947 to 7
August 1948 (Singh 1992:28). Under the Manipur Constitution Act, there were held
first time elections in Manipur on 11 June 1948 known as Manipur State Assembly
Elections. The elections were based on adult franchise and on the principle of joint
electorate for three types of constituencies, viz, General, Hills and Muslim constituencies at the ratio of 30:18:3. However, in spite of the introduction of election
based on adult franchise, there was no full-fledged democracy under the Manipur
State Constitution Act, 1947, because the Maharaja of Manipur appointed his younger
brother, M.K. Priyobrat Singh, as the Chief Minister of Manipur (Singh 1981:18-19)

For these elections, Koutruk was included in Sekmai Legislative Assembly
Constituency and Leimaram was included in Oinam Legislative Assembly
Constituency. In the elections political parties were not regarded as important by the
people; rather, symbols and the candidates played an important part in the elections.
Thus, the people of the two villages learnt the election principles, voting behaviour,
political participation and methods of campaigning for the first time. It marked the
beginning of the modern political system based on western democracy in Manipur,
especially in the Loi villages of Manipur. However, the new form of government did
not disturb the traditional form of administration in the Loi villages, due to the non-
introduction of the modern system of local self-government especially the Panchayati
Raj.
The Manipur State Assembly did not function for long as Manipur was merged with India as Dominion on 15 October 1949, under the Merger Agreement between Government of India and Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh of Manipur. Since the merger of Manipur into Indian Union, the people of Manipur, including the Loi have been gradually influenced by the Indian mainstream.

The first General Elections of India were held in 1952. Manipur had then two Lok Sabha constituencies; viz., Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency and Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. One member of the Rajya Sabha was elected from the Manipur by an electoral college constituted by 30 elected representatives. The State was divided into 30 constituencies, out of which 20 were in the valley and 10 were in the Hills (Singh 1981:22).

The State was graduated from a Part C State to a Union Territory with a provision for elected Territorial Council in 1956. However, there was no change in the strength of members. The second General Elections were held in 1957. In 1963, the Territorial Council was upgraded to Legislative Assembly under the provision of the Government of Union Territories Act 1963 (Singh 2002: 208-213).

Manipur became a full-fledged State of Indian Union on 21st January 1972. The state was divided into 60 single member assembly constituencies, out of which 40 were in the valley, 19 in the hill areas and 1 in the Barak basin of Manipur, i.e., Jiribam sub-division of Imphal-West district. Out of the 40 constituencies in the valley, one (Sekmai Assembly Constituency) was reserved for the Scheduled Castes (http://www.e.pao.net).

Gram Panchayats

Panchayat system of elected representatives in Manipur was introduced in the year 1960 under the provisions of the united Province Panchayati Raj Act 1947 with two-tier system. However, the first elections of Panchayats were held in 1964. Under the Act, the Chief Commissioner might establish a Gram Sabha for every village or a group of villages based on the population of the area. Every Gram Sabha also elected its own executive body called Gram Panchayat. In Gram Panchayat elections, one ward of Panchayat should be reserved for one woman member of the Gram Panchayat. This reserved ward should be rotated for every election held for a new term.

Since 1964, the local self-government institutions had been established in the Scheduled Caste villages, which took over the administrative system of the villages.
The members including Pradhan, Up-Pradhan and other 13 members were nominated. There were no elections for the membership of the newly established local self-government institutions up to 1974. Because of lack of infrastructure, and adequate funds as well as non-cooperation from the existing government departments in sharing power with them, these panchayat institutions and the nominated members remained merely as advisory bodies rather than vibrant democratic institutions from 1964 to 1974. After the attainment of statehood in 1972, the state government enacted Manipur Panchayati Raj Act 1975 which provided for a three-tier system of panchayats in the State comprising Gram Panchayat at the gram Sabha level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zila Parishad at the district level. From 1975, a new phase ushered in the development of Gram Panchayat institution. For the first time, elections for the local self-government institutions were held (http://www.ifp.co.in). Gradually, people started to participate in the politics and in the political processes of the state.

Functions of the Gram Panchayat

As part of the infrastructure of the democratic system in India, Panchayat plays a very important role in the village. The Gram Panchayat plays major role in village administration. In the village, it exercises the functions like sanitation, public health, street lighting, maintenance of burning and burial grounds, keeping records of birth and deaths, establishment of the centres for child welfare, propagation of family planning, promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry, construction of public building and tanks, organization of co-operative societies, hearing and settling of minor disputes etc.

The Gram Panchayats in Koutruk and Leimaram

Since the introduction of Panchayati Raj System in Manipur, the two villages, each, came under the jurisdiction of a village panchayat, namely, Phayeng Gram Panchayat and Irengband Gram Panchayat respectively. Koutruk falls under the jurisdiction of Sekmai Legislative Assembly Constituency and and Leimaram falls under Oinam Legislative Assembly Constituency of the state. Each village is looked after by its panchayat members and Pradhan who are elected by the adults’ voters under the respective panchayat. Since there is a provision which says that the Deputy Commissioner shall, for the purpose to conduct elections of a Panchayat members, may divide the area of the Gram Sabha into territorial constituencies in such a manner
that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, as far as practicable, be the same throughout the Gram Sabha area. Again, there is also a provision of the composition of a Gram Panchayat not exceeding to 13 elected members, including the Pradhan (http://www.e.pao.net).

Phayeng Gram Panchayat consist of two Loi villages; namely, Phayeng and Koutruk. Similarly, Irengbam Gram Panchayat has three constituent villages; namely, Irengbam, Leimaram and Heinoubok. Of these three villages, Irengbam and Heinoubok are general caste villages. Being a small village, with a numerical strength of 429 persons, Koutruk does not have an electoral strength to elect a Phadhan of Panchayat from the village because the neighbouring Phayeng village has population strength of 2475. Therefore, if the villagers are willing to contest the seat for Pradhan in Panchayat election, they automatically lose the election. Therefore, the villagers from Koutruk decided not to put up a candidate from the village in panchayat elections for the seat of Pradhan. However, a woman from the village has already become Pradhan by unanimity in the reserved seat for women in the Gram Panchayat Elections of 2002. She was elected as Pradhan by unanimity because she was good social worker and contesting election in the party ticket of Communist Party which is very popular among the villagers of Phayeng. Therefore, the people of phayeng decided to not contesting the election and gave her a chance to serving the villagers in both the two villages.

Leimaram falls under the Irengbam Gram Panchayat. The village has a population of 2093 which is a little less than its neighbouring and bigger village, Irengbam. Moreover, the people of its neighbouring Meitei village Heinoubok has always supported them during the election as the two villages have a good close relationshiped. Therefore, the villagers are interested in contesting panchayat elections and are trying to hold power at least for the position of Pradhan. They have also won the election. Thus, out of the eight Panchayat elections held from 1969 to 2010, the candidates from Leimaram have held six times the position of Pradhan in the Irengbam Gram Panchayat.

In the democratic process, the government activity is one aspect of political life of the villagers. Therefore, besides the Gram Panchayat, there have also come up other social organizations in the two villages involving people in various activities directly or indirectly oriented to attain, and retain power or exercise it in the
community structure. These organizations, one each, in the two villages are the Koutruk Youth Club and the Leimaram Yaipha Lamjing Lup.

The Koutruk Youth Club

Koutruk Youth Club is a social organization, registered in 1976, the office of which is in Koutruk Mamang Leikai. It has 20 members, out of which six members occupy the executive positions; viz., President, General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Game Secretary and Social and Cultural Secretary. The office bearers are elected by vote from amongst the members for a particular period of one year. This organization has carried out time to time various development activities in the village such as health awareness campaigns like pulse Polio Immunization every year, social service organized to keep the village clean for at least two times in a year and sport competition for every year mainly during the month of March. It has a school committee which included school officials, as well, to look after the school infrastructure and enrolment of the students.

The Leimaram Yaipha Lamjing Lup

The Leimaram Yaipha Lamjing Lup, with its office in the Leimaram Mayai Leikai, is a club established by Leichombam Kuber and Moirangthem Joychandra Singh on 5th June 1980 for welfare of the villagers, to conduct agricultural and horticultural activities, small scale industries, poultry and piggery farming and to give vocational training to the villagers. The two founding persons were the prominent leaders of the village. The club has 22 members, out of which 13 members are the office bearers in the executive body; viz., Honorary President, Working President, Vice President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer, Social and Cultural Secretary, Assistant Social and Cultural Secretary, Games and Sports Secretary, Assistant Games and Sports Secretary, Library Secretary, Publicity and Information Secretary and Office Maintenance Secretary. All of these executives are elected by vote from the members for a period of one year. Besides, the organization has an advisory committee of eight members with a Chairman and three auditors who are elected from among the most responsible persons of the village by vote. The club has organized time to time various activities such as social service in the village for every six months to keep village clean, coaching camps for education etc. It established non-formal education centre in 1981 to give education to the children who
are not able to attend schools and participate in games and sports. It also established relief camps during the Naga-Kuki riots which took place on 13th June 1992.

**The All Manipur Loi Association**

The All Manipur Loi Association is a formal association of the Lois of the state to protect their rights and interests. The association was established in 1951 to provide a formal platform for expressing community solidarity and action among Lois. The following table shows the distribution of the families of two villages by their participation in the All Manipur Loi Association:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership of the Association</th>
<th>Koutruk (%)</th>
<th>Leimaram (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28 (31.82)</td>
<td>147 (35.68)</td>
<td>175 (35.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60 (68.18)</td>
<td>265 (64.32)</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that over one third of the families from the two villages are the members of All Manipur Loi Association and about two thirds (65%) are not. In Koutruk nearly one third (31.82%) are members and over two thirds (68.18%) are not. In Leimaram, over one third (35.68%) are the active members of the All Manipur Loi Association and remaining about two thirds (64.32%) are not.

The size of the villagers’ membership in the association indicates their awareness about the community and caste solidarity. The members of this organizations are the social workers and college students.

**Political Participation in Koutruk and Leimaram**

As a result of the new political set up in the state, people started participating in the politics and political process of the state. Therefore, political behaviour has also undergone change. As the two villages, each, have population of 429 and 2093 persons respectively, they do not dare to contest General or Assembly Elections. But, they fully participate in voting for electing members of democratic bodies at all the levels. The electoral behaviour of the Indian voters is generally influenced by several factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology and the like. The political parties make use of these means to win the battle of ballot box.
However, in Manipur, voting behaviour is generally influenced by the locality of candidate, political ideology, personality of the candidate and, sometimes money. Among the Lois of the two villages, it is mainly determined by caste and class consciousness, localities of the candidates, political ideologies and personalities of the candidates. The members of the family usually cast their votes according to the advice of the head of the family and married women cast their votes according to their husbands’ instructions. Members of a caste cast their vote, to some extent, on the basis of caste and locality which they belong to. For example, people of Koutruk actively participate for N. Biren Singh (Congress (I) candidate) from Phayeng village, who belongs to the same caste as the villagers and is living nearby their locality.

Some supporters of political parties are also found in the two villages. Most of them are the supporters of Congress (I) and Communist Party of India (Marxist). The Congress and Communist party has its age old root in Manipure politics. Hijam Irabot, a prominent leader of Manipur, introduced the communist political trend in Manipur Politics in 1946. Similarly, Indian National Congress has its root in the Manipur also. The Praja Sangha (MPS), established in 1946 worked in tandem with Indian National Congress (Singh 2011:42-42). But no political party office is seen in both the villages. It is only during the time of elections that temporary offices of the political parties are opened, where meetings and tea parties are held to attain sympathy of the villagers. The following table displays the participation of the villagers in the political parties in the two villages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in a Political Party</th>
<th>Koutruk (%)</th>
<th>Leimaram (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 (6.82)</td>
<td>21 (5.10)</td>
<td>27 (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>82 (93.18)</td>
<td>391 (94.90)</td>
<td>473 (94.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>88 (100)</td>
<td>412 (100)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that in the two villages, a small fraction (5.4%) of the families is participating in political parties. In Koutruk, only 6 family members are the active members of political parties while in Leimaram, 21 families’ members are the active members of the political party.
Thus, there is low percentage of the villagers joining political parties in the two villages, showing less interest in political parties, perhaps because the villagers cast their vote to some extent on the basis of caste and locality. Therefore, they do not give so much importance to political parties. They actively work for those candidates who are from their immediate neighbouring Loi or Meitei villages, assuming that the candidate located nearby knows their developmental problems well and will do something for them after his or her success in the elections. This shows low level of interest aggreation on ideological line among the villagers.

The villagers who are active members of the political parties are generally interested either in the political party or a particular candidate from the party. To find out where their interest is located the following table is given:

Table 7.3
Distribution of the Villagers by Reasons forJoining Particular Political Party in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Political Participation</th>
<th>Koutruk (%)</th>
<th>Leimaram (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested in Political Party</td>
<td>3 (50.0)</td>
<td>18 (85.71)</td>
<td>21 (77.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in candidate</td>
<td>3 (50.0)</td>
<td>3 (14.29)</td>
<td>6 (22.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>6 (100)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
<td>27 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data reveal that the people of the two villages participate as members in political party for two reasons; viz., self interest in the party and interest in the leader. Of the politically active villagers, over three fourths (77.78%) participate because of their self interest in the political party and over one fifth (22.22%) participate because of their interest in a leader of the party.

In Koutruk, half of the villagers who work for a political party became its members because of their interest in the party and another half works for the party because of their interest in a candidate from the party. In Leimaram, most (85.71%) of the villagers become the workers of any political party because of their interest in the party and over one tenth (14.29%) become the party workers because of their interest in a leader. The villagers of Koutruk are interested in the political leaders like Ningthoujam Biren Singh form Phayeng of Congress and Borajao Singh of the Communist Party from Khurkhul. In Leimaram, the people are mainly interested in
Congress party both for Indian National Congress and Nationalist Congress Party. Dr. I. Ibohanbi Singh from Irengbam, Y. Jiten Singh from Oinam and Radhakishore Singh from Keinou are the prominent leaders for the villagers.

Although their participation in any particular political party is less, they are fully participating in vote casting during the election period. This indicates that the villagers are politically conscious. Moreover, the villagers are contesting election in the village Panchayat to hold a position of at least Pradhan and that of ward member. In Koutruk, there are two persons, a male (N. Priyokumar Singh) and a female (N. Jamuna Devi) who are the active members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and contested elections on the ticket of this party. They won the elections in 2002 and 2007 and became the Pradhan and the ward member in the Panchayat respectively whereas in Leimaram out of the eight Irengband Gram Panchayat elections from 1969 to 2010, the candidates from the village have won the elections for six times and occupied the position of Pradhan.

Thus, power structure has shifted from traditional to modern way. In this transition no conflict is observed between the traditional and the modern power authority or institutions.

Summary

1. The traditional caste council has undergone democratization after Independence as it is now constituted by members elected by the villagers from among themselves, who look after the religious matters of the village. However, the traditional village officers such as Khullakpa, Luplakpa, Yupalba, Pakhanglakpa, Nahalakpa, Loumilakpa and Laishelungba are still continuing and they perform the rituals related to the religious functions of Lai-Haraoba.

2. Democratic political institutions such as enfranchisement and Panchayat Raj bodies have replaced the traditional political structure of the villagers after Independence and these are concerned with administration and development of the villages. Gram Panchayat has come up as important body of politics and agency of development in the villages. Also singlup organization is continuing because it is related to the cremation of death bodies on the death ceremonies based on the mutual relationship among the villagers while other two organizations like Leirup and Keirup have ceased to exist with the introduction of Local self government and state defence force.
3. The new social organizations such as clubs have come up in the villages for development of education, sports and culture in the democratic environment after Independence of India. This reflects differentiation of power in the village.

4. The political behaviour of the villagers is largely determined by the caste and locality and these traditional factors influence politics of the villagers and political parties. Only small fractions (5.4%) of families have members actively working for political party, as caste and locality predominate over political parties in the villages. Over three fourths (77.78%) of the villagers who are active members of political parties became the members because of their interest in a particular political party or candidate of a party.

5. Out of the eight Gram Panchayat elections held from 1969 to 2010, candidates from Leimaram village, have won six times the elections for the seat of Pradhan in the Irengband Gram Panchayat elections whereas a candidate from Koutruk could be elected as the Pradhan of Phayeng Gram Panchayat once only by uncontest and that, too, when the seat was reserved for a woman candidate. This indicates that numerical strength matters in the democratic politics of the villages. As, it is found that having a population of only 429 persons, Koutruk does not have an electoral strength to elect a Pradhan of the Gram Panchayat from the village.

In sum, the power of traditional caste council over the villagers has almost lost its power. With the introduction of Panchayati Raj in Manipur, Lois have become politically conscious and are trying to seek opportunities to capture political power by vote at the grassroots level. They have understood the significance of democracy and political power for development of the village and, therefore, they strive to capture political power through elections at least at the Gram Panchayat (formal village council) level. Also, a number of social organizations such as the village level clubs and the state level Loi Association work for the development of the villagers and caste as a whole.

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http://www.e.pao.net date 12.9.11 (8.11 pm)

http://www.ifp.co date 12.9.11 (8.00 pm)