CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF THE ZOMIS AFTER STATEHOOD
By political participation we mean direct or indirect participation of the masses in the day-to-day affairs of the state. In a democratic set up political participation of the masses serves as one of the means by which consent is granted or in the event of seeking re-election, withdrawn to the representatives of the people at the time of election. Casting of vote in favour or against a candidate works as an indicator to the efficiency and accountability of the representatives.¹

All men in a modern nation state directly or indirectly participate in the day-to-day administration of the state. Political participation in a narrow sense includes activities like discussion of politics, convincing another person to vote in a particular way, distributing party literature attending political meetings, contributing money to campaign etc.² In a broader sense it includes all behaviour through which people directly express their opinion. It therefore includes conventional activities like voting

and discussion of politics as well as unconventional acts like demonstrations, marches, etc.

Political participation is an essential part of every political system whether traditional or modern, democratic or totalitarian, large or small. In the traditional and monarchical system participation is generally restricted whereas in democratic system there is no restrictions imposed on the public for political participation. It is one of the important tools for understanding the political process of democratic countries. The democratic system rather transforms these prerogatives into rights available to every one. ³

According to the International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (Vol. 11 & 12) the term political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy. These activities are like casting vote, seeking information, holding

discussions with political parties, staging strikes and demonstrations, communicating with the legislators and other leading figures and the like. However, the most active forms of political participations are formal enrolment in a party, canvassing and registering votes, speech making and speech writing, working in a campaigns and competing for public and party office.  

In a democratic country all the citizens can participate in the politics of the state through voting. Voting is one of the most important means of mass participation in politics. According to Robert Dahl, "The voter does not need to participate actively in Government, it is enough for him to participate in election by the simple act of voting. By his vote he registers a preference for the general direction in which governmental policy should move."  

With the down of democracy large number of people in the world demanded entry into the political system. Since, the 20th century political participation has been extended  

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in most of the nation states. This is true in the case of India which got independence on August 15, 1947. Soon after independence Indian states started conducting elections to establish democratic institutions in the country.

In Manipur the first ever election was held in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. After that the State got merged with the Union of India on October 15, 1949. In 1952 the State went to poll to elect two members of the Electoral College constituted for electing a member of the Rajya Sabha. Since then elections were held regularly in Manipur. The second General Election took place in 1957 to elect the two members of the Lok Sabha and 30 members of its Territorial Council. Again, in 1962 election was held for the third time to elect its 30 members Territorial Council and 2 members of the Lok Sabha. But in 1963 the Territorial Council was upgraded to Legislative Assembly and accordingly in the same year for the fourth time the State went to the polls to elect its 30 members Legislative Assembly.

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The fifth Lok Sabha election was held in 1971. In the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency there were 7 candidates but it virtually became a three corner contest with the three leading candidates securing nearly 80 per cent of the total votes polled. In the Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency the Congress candidate N. Tombi Singh got elected by defeating his nearest C.P.I. candidate (the sitting M.P.), M. Meghachandra Singh.

The First Zomi Representative in the Union Parliament:

In the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency Rishang Keishing, the former Socialist and sitting M.P. contested the election as a nominee of the Naga Integrated Council. But Paokai Haokip, the Congress nominee got elected by securing 30.85 per cent of the total votes polled.

Assembly Election 1972:

Manipur became a full fledged state under the Indian Union on January 21, 1972. Since statehood, the people of Manipur witnessed elections in 1972, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1995. Thus since 1972 the tribals in that the Zomis along with the other sections of the society have been participating in the electoral politics of the state.
Soon after statehood preparation to elect its 60 members Legislative Assembly was started in Manipur. The total electorates in the 59 Constituencies of Manipur in 1972 Assembly election was 5,95,842. Out of the total electorate 1,97,821 were in the hill areas.

Constituency Delimitation:

Constituency delimitations for the 1972 Assembly election was done on the basis of 1961 General Census. The state was divided into 60 Assembly Constituencies of which 41 were in the plain areas and 19 in the hill areas. Out of the 41 constituencies in the plain areas one (Sekmai Assembly Constituency) was reserved for Scheduled Castes. A number of tribes dominated the electorates of the 19 hill constituencies. These hill constituencies, therefore, have been reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. The following table shows the districtwise distribution of constituencies with the number of reserved constituencies for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

7 The number of constituency does not include Jiribam Assembly Constituency in the Central District where there was no election due to the un-opposed return of the Congress nominee.

### Table 4:1

**Distribution of Assembly Constituencies in 1972**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>No. of seats in the Dist.</th>
<th>No. of constituencies</th>
<th>No. of constituencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Manipur Central</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Manipur East</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manipur North</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manipur West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Manipur South</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tengnoupal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The size of the hill constituencies are much larger in the hill areas and on the average they comprised 1066 sq.km each against 45.6 sq.km. for each valley constituency. The following table shows the districtwise distribution of constituencies in relation to the average area per constituency in the district and the number of voters.

Ibid.
Table 4:2

Electoral Density, Average Area, No. of Voters in 1972\(^{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Area Sq.Km</th>
<th>Average area per sq.Km</th>
<th>No. of Const.</th>
<th>No. of Voters</th>
<th>Voters Density per Sq.Km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Manipur Central</td>
<td>2230</td>
<td>45.65</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>398021</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Manipur East</td>
<td>4409</td>
<td>1102.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33239</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manipur North</td>
<td>3417</td>
<td>683.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60632</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manipur West</td>
<td>4344</td>
<td>1448.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23094</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Manipur South</td>
<td>4581</td>
<td>916.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>57755</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tengnoupal</td>
<td>3375</td>
<td>1751.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23101</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,356</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,95,842</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hill tribes of Manipur have their own Unions or Councils on the basis of dialect. These Unions were very influential in exerting political pressure on their respective tribes. The tribal Unions or Councils which participated in the 1972 Assembly election and the number of seats were shown in the following table.

Table 4:3

Electoral Participation of the Tribal Union in 1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribal Union/Council</th>
<th>No. of candidates</th>
<th>Seat Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. United Naga Integration Council</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mizo Integration Council</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Zaliangron Naga Union</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kuki National Assembly(K.N.A.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Paite National Council(P.N.C.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hmar National Council (H.N.C.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gangte Tribal Union(G.T.U.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Paomei Progressive Party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight Zomi Representatives in the State Assembly:

In that election the tribals favoured the Congress and the independent candidates. The MPP, Socialist and Jan Sangh which had contested in the hill areas fared very poorly in the election. In the Southern part of the state lies the Manipur South District. Among the hill districts it is the

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biggest in area and stood second in respect of population (the highest being North District). All the Zomi sub-tribes such as Paite, Hmar, Mizo, Zou, Gangte, Kuki, Vaiphei, Simte etc. inhabited this district and among them the Paite are the majority. The district population according to 1971 Census was 98,114 out of which the Zomi or the Chin-Kuki-Mizo group constituted 86,015 which is 88 per cent of the district's total population. The district was divided into 5 constituencies coinciding with the sub-divisions and are known by the names of its sub-divisional headquarters. Congress was the only political party which set up candidates in all the constituencies of the Manipur South District but won only one i.e. Singhat Assembly Constituency. Dhingjaneng Gangte the only woman candidate among the Zomi group of people fought the election from Henglep Constituency as a Congress candidate. But she was defeated by Holkhomang Haokip an independent candidate by a margin of 1,936 votes. In that election 8 candidates from the Zomi group got elected to the Manipur Legislative Assembly and the other 11 tribal reserved seats went to the Naga groups.


13 Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat, *List of the members of Manipur (Both M.Ps and M.L.As.*)* (Government of Manipur, Imphal 1985), pp. 21 & 22.
Non of the parties could form the ministry. The MHU (Manipur Hills Union) and MPP formed the ULP (United Legislature Party). The ULP formed the government under the leadership of Md. Alimuddin(MPP). Among the Zomis Ngurdinling and Holkhomang became Cabinet and Minister of State respectively.

But the ULP Ministry could not last long due to the defection of some of its members. Alimuddin charged some of the defected legislators as professional defectors and said some of them had defected as many as six times in a year. Thus President's Rule was introduced in the state and the Legislative Assembly was dissolved with effect from March 23, 1973.

Mid Term Poll 1974:

After a ten month long spell of President's Rule, Manipur went to a Mid term Poll in early 1974. Before that election the constituencies were re-adjusted according to the 1971 General Census. In that seat re-adjustment Manipur North and Manipur South District got one more seat each.

whereas Manipur East and Manipur Central district lost one seat each.\textsuperscript{15} The number of assembly seats in the rest of the two hill districts Manipur West and Tamenglong districts remained the same.

In the 1974 Mid Term Poll there were 7,20,124 electorates in Manipur of which 3,57,142 were male and 3,62,982 female voters. In that election the total number of votes polled was 6,09,122 which formed 84.58 per cent of the total electorate. Five National Parties such as Congress, Congress(O) Socialist, C.P.I., C.P.I.(M) three regional parties M.P.P., M.H.U. and KNA contested in the election. Besides the above mentioned parties a number of independents also contested in the election.

The two main contestant parties - the Congress and M.P.P. contested in 49 and 40 seats respectively in the 1974 Mid term poll. The Congress secured 12 seats with 27.62 per cent of the popular votes and the M.P.P. under the leadership of Yangmaso Shaiza stood in the third position by securing 11 seat out of 15 seats contested in the

\textsuperscript{15} Manipur Gazette, Extra Ordinary, No.112 (Government of Manipur, Imphal, July 2, 1973), p.6.
hill areas of the state by polling 8.78 per cent of the popular votes and the K.N.A. got 2 out of 6 seats contested. The independent candidates got 3 seats only though 46 of them had contested.

Nine Zomi Representatives in the State Assembly:

In the Mid-term poll of 1974 too none of the parties could get majority to form the government. Out of the 19 Scheduled tribe reserved seats 9 went to the Zomi groups and the rest 10 went to the Naga groups. The MPP and MNU formed the United Legislature party (U.L.P.) which formed the Government on March 4, 1974 under the Chief Ministership of Md. Alimuddin, the former Chief Minister. In that Ministry, among the Zomi group, N. Gouzagin, Haokholal Thangjom and Kiulengpao became Cabinet Ministers and Ngulkhohao and T. Gougin became Minister of State and Deputy Minister respectively.

16 Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat, List of M.Ps and M.L.As. Since 1947, op. cit., n. 17, pp. 7 & 12.
17 Ibid.
The U.L.P. Ministry survived for about four months only. Disappointed with the selection of Md. Alimuddin as the Chief Minister, Yangmaso Shaiza the M.H.U. leader and his followers caused the collapse of the Ministry in four months. Yangmaso and his party formed the P.D.F. (Progressive Democratic Front). Yangmaso became the Chief Minister on July 10, 1974. But that P.D.F. Ministry too could not last long which collapsed again on December 6, 1974 and D.L.P. (Democratic Legislature Party) led by R.K. Dorendra Singh was formed again and from the Zomi group Kiulengpao and Haokholal Thangjom became Cabinet Ministers. But this U.L.P. Government survived for about eight months only. In the wake of the National Emergency the D.L.P. Government was replaced by Congress Government on July 23, 1975 which too was headed by R.K. Dorendra Singh. From the Zomi group Kiulengpao and N. Gouzangin became Cabinet Ministers.

Parliamentary Election 1977:

Towards the end of the Emergency, General Election to the Lok Sabha was held in March 1977. In that parliamentary election Congress got the two seats of Manipur. But the performance of the party was very bad in that election and lost its hold over the masses. The Janata Party won 298 seats
by polling 43.17 per cent of the total voter polled.  

Thus the Janata Party under the leadership of Morarji Desai formed the first ever non-Congress Government in India in March 1977. The change in the Centre Government had its repercussion in the state politics of Manipur too.

In June 1977 the entire Congress Legislature Party defected to Janata Party. The Janata Legislature party elected Yangmaso Shaiza, the Congress M.P. from the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency, who defected to Janata Party in the Lok Sabha, as its leader. Thus Yangmaso Shaiza formed the first Janata Government of the state on June 29, 1977. Ngurdinglien and Haokholal Thangjom became Cabinet Ministers from the Zomi Group.

Due to the split in the Janata party and the formation of the Janata (Secular) the Morarji Desai Ministry lost at the centre its majority and went out of office in July 1979. A coalition government of Janata (Secular) and Congress(O) under the leadership of Charan Singh was formed. But this coalition government could not face the

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Lok Sabha and resigned in August 1979. The President on the advice of the Prime Minister dissolved the Lok Sabha. The Janata government in Manipur too lost its command and with the imposition of President's Rule the State Assembly was dissolved on November 14, 1979. After 1974 election in Manipur four short lived governments were formed mainly because of the defection of the legislators from one party to the other. The Indian Express while commenting on the defections in Manipur wrote, "In Manipur .... M.L.A's change their party more often than they do their underwear."\(^{20}\)

**General Election, 1980:**

Parliamentary election was held in January 1980 and along with it Manipur went to the polls to elect its 60 members state Legislative Assembly also. In that election there were 9,09,270 voters in the state of which 4,37,620 were male voters and 4,71,650 female voters.\(^{21}\) Of the total electorate 7,49,403 exercised their franchise which was 82.4 per cent.

\(^{20}\) The Indian Express, April 11, 1973.

Parliamentary Election 1980:

In the Parliamentary election there were 15 contestants for the two Lok Sabha seats, 10 for the Inner Manipur and 5 for the Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency. Of the national Parties Congress(I), Congress (U) and Janata Party contested for the two seats. There were 7 Independent candidates, 2 for the Inner and 5 for the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. 22

In the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency the C.P.I. candidate Ngangom Mohendro Singh defeated his nearest Congress (I) rival Ningthoujam Binoy Singh by a margin of 13,046 votes. In this election the former State Agriculture Minister N.Gouzagain contested from the Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency on Congress(I) ticket. He got 1,06,749 votes and unseated the sitting M.P. and Janata Dal rival Kaiho by a margin of 22,326 votes in a 5 cornered contest. 23

22 Chief Electoral Office, Manipur, op.cit., n. 25, p. 42.
23 Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur, op.cit., n. 25, p. 42.
Legislative Assembly Election, 1980:

In the 1980 Manipur Legislative Assembly election, elections to the 56 constituencies were held because one of the constituencies - Keishamthong constituency in Central District went to poll a little later as one of the candidates in that constituency was murdered before the polls.

In that election, 6 National Parties such as Congress(I), Congress(U), Janata, Janata(Ś), C.P.I., C.P.M., and 2(two) state parties M.P.P. and K.N.A. contested for the 60 Assembly seats. Moreover 159 Independent candidates were also in the fray. The Congress(I) contested 58 seats but secured 13 seats only. Janata Party, which ruled the state prior to the President's Rule got 10 seats only out of 57 seats contested. The Congress(U) won 6 out of 40 seats contested and the C.F.I. and C.P.M. got 5 and 1 seats respectively. From the 2 contestant regional parties M.P.P. and K.N.A. got 4 and 2 seats out of 40 and 7 seats contested respectively. Out of 159 independent candidates 19 of them only got elected and 120 of them lost their security deposits. 24

24 Chief Election Officer, Result of the General Elections, Manipur 1980 (Government of Manipur), p. 3. 
25 Ibid.
In the 1980 Assembly Election, 6 National Parties such as Congress(I), Congress(U), Janata, Janata(S), C.P.I., C.P.M. and 2 State Parties M.P.P. and K.N.A. contested in the scheduled tribe reserved seats. The Congress(I) contested all the 19 constituencies but won only 7. The Janata party got 2 seats out of 17 seats contested, the Congress(U) got only 1 out of 9 seats contested and the K.N.A. got 2 out of 7 seats contested. The Janata(S), C.P.I., C.P.M. and M.P.P. got blank in the tribal areas. Out of the 55 Independent candidates in the tribal areas 8 of them got elected. 26

In the 1980 Assembly elections too, the tribal Unions of the Zomis such as the Faite National Council, Hmar National Union, Mizo People's Convention, Kuki National Assembly, Vaiphei National Organisation, Simte National Council etc. had their supported candidates who subsequently contested on regional or national tickets. Although these tribal Unions except the Kuki National Assembly are unrecognised Unions yet their primary support to these candidates before their seeking regional or national party tickets is important. With the assurance of support

from these unions these candidates find themselves more confident of winning the elections at the state or national level. According to H. Khatkhojam (a Zomi leader) the candidates as well as the tribal voters usually preferred the Congress(I) party. It may be because of the fact that the Congress(I) party, most of the time happens to be the party in power at the centre and as such the elected Congress(I) members usually have a good chance of forming the government in the states and become Ministers after the elections. 27

In the 1960 State Assembly Election, T. Phungzathang the Congress(I) candidate from Thanlon Constituency and K. Vungzialian an independent candidate from Churachandpur constituency who were backed by the Paite National Council got elected. The Paite National Council President, H. Haulianthang backed by his union fought the election as the Congress(U) candidate from Singngat Constituency but he was defeated by Thangkhanlal the Congress(I) candidate. In Saikot constituency Ngulkhohao an independent candidate defeated his

27 Interview with H. Khatkhojam (Former General Secretary, Paite National Council), Churachandpur on September 20, 1989.
nearest rival Thangkholly (another independent candidate) and retained his constituency. Hokhomang Haokip an independent candidate retained his constituency by defeating his nearest Congress(I) rival Mangkhothang in Henglep constituency. In Tipaimukh constituency Ngurdinglien the H.N.U. President and the Congress(I) nominee retained his constituency by defeating his nearest independent rival Selkai Hrangchal.

In Chandel constituency of Chandel district Satkhola the KNA nominee defeated his nearest Congress(I) rival L.H. Angno. Another K.N.A. candidate Jainson Haokip got elected in Tengnoupal constituency by defeating his nearest Congress(I) rival K. Leithil. In Saikul constituency Holkholet Khongsai the Congress(U) candidate got elected by defeating his nearest K.N.A. rival K.S. Seiboy.

Nine Zomi Representatives in the State Assembly:

In the 1980 Assembly election out of the 19 tribal reserved seats 9 went to the Zomi group and the rest 10 to the Naga group of people. In that election the Zomi voters favoured the Congress(I) and independent candidates and they
got 3 seats each out of the 9 seats won by the Zomi groups. The rest 3 seats went to K.N.A. and Congress(U) with 2 and 1 seat each respectively.

In the 1980 Assembly election too none of the contesting parties could secure single majority to form the government. The congress(I) which emerged as the single largest party in the Legislative Assembly could secured 13 seats only. But it forged an alliance with the Congress(U) and M.P.P. and after admitting some of the independent members formed the government under the leadership of R.K. Lorendra Singh, Congress(I) on January 14, 1980. In that Ministry among the Zomi groups Ngurdinglien became a Cabinet Minister and Hokholet Khongsai, K. Vungzalian, and Jainson Haokip became Ministers of State. 28

This Ministry also could not last long with the defection of the 10 M.L.As from the Congress(I) to form the Manipur Nationalist Democratic Party (N.D.P.) the Congress(I) led Ministry had to submit its resignation. But on November 11, 1980 a new Congress(I) led Ministry under the leadership

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of Rishang Keishing was sworn in again. But this Ministry too could not last long in the midst of defection. On February 27, 1981 Rishang Keishing had to resign. On February 28, 1981 President's Rule was imposed and the Legislative Assembly was placed under animated suspension. 29 Again on June 19, 1981 a Congress(I) Government was formed under the leadership of Rishang Keishing. In that Government among the Zomi group Kholkhomang Haokip and Ngurdinglien became Cabinet Ministers and T. Phungzathang, Holkholet Khongsai, K. Vungzalian and Satkholal became Ministers of State.

General Election 1984:

Manipur went to the polls to elect its 60 members State Legislative Assembly and 2 members of the Lok Sabha in December 1984. In that election there were 10,13,678 voters out of which 5,09,308 and 5,04,370 were male and female voters respectively. The largest number of voters for the Assembly constituencies registered the figure of 25,274 in Karong (ST) and the smallest number of voters 11,491 in Tipaimukh (ST) constituency. The average number

29 Ibid.
of voters for the Assembly constituencies worked out to 16,894 voters. In that election 8,84,869 voters exercised their voting rights of which 4,33,920 were male and 450,949 female voters. 30

Parliamentary Election 1984:

In the 1984 Parliamentary election there were 9 candidates for the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. N.Tombi Singh the Congress(I) candidate polled 1,04,091 votes and defeated his nearest independent rival Tomba Singh by a margin of 14,729 votes. 31 In the Outer Manipur Parliamentary election there were 5 candidates. But it was mainly a fight between Congress(I) and M.P.P. The Congress(I) candidate Meijinlung Kamson polled 1,89,911 votes and defeated his nearest M.P.P. rival Lhingjaneng Gangte from Zomi sub-tribe by a margin of 40,892 votes. 32

Assembly Election 1984:

In the 1984 Manipur State Legislative Assembly election there were 364 candidates of which 193 were

32 Ibid.
independent candidates. The main political parties which had contested in that election were Congress(I), Janata, C.P.I., C.P.M., B.J.P., Congress(S), Lok Dal (National Parties) and M.P.P. and Regional parties. The Congress(I) got 30 seats out of 60 seats contested and secured 29.82 per cent of the total votes polled. The Janata Party contested 20 seats but got only 4. The M.P.P. got 3 seats out of 34 seats contested and C.P.I. and K.N.A. got one seat each and the rest 21 seats went to independent candidates.33 The Congress(I) being the single largest party formed the Government and T. Phungzathang became a Cabinet Minister with Medical portfolio.

In the tribal areas the Congress(I), M.P.P., K.N.A. and a number of independents contested in the 1984 Assembly election. The Congress(I) contested in all the 19 reserved seats but won 9 seats only. The two regional parties M.P.P. and K.N.A. got one seat each and the remaining 8 seat went to independent candidates.

Mine Zomi Representatives in the State Assembly:

In Churachandpur district Congress(I) got 2 seats out of 6 seats contested. In the semi-urban Churachandpur constituency J.F. Rothangliana who fought the election from jail on K.N.A. ticket defeated his nearest Congress(I) rival and former Minister of State K. Vungzalian by a margin of 90 votes only. In Thanlon constituency T. Phungzathang the Congress(I) candidate retained his seat by defeating his nearest independent rival N. Gouzagin, the former M.P. by a margin of 1822 votes. In Tipaimukh constituency the former Agriculture Minister Ngurlinglien, an independent candidate wrested his constituency by defeating his nearest Congress(I) rival Selkai Hrangchal by a margin of 331 votes. In Singggat constituency Gouzadou the Congress(I) nominee defeated his nearest independent rival Thangkhanlal, the former Minister of State by a margin of 1,884 votes. In Saikot constituency Ngulkhohao the M.P.P. nominee retained his seat by defeating his nearest independent rival Lala Khobung by a margin of 140 votes. Holkhomang Haokip, the Congress(I) candidate and the former Cabinet Minister lost his constituency by a margin of 90 votes to Sehpu an independent candidate. Independent candidates Jaison Haokip and Holkholet Khongsai retained their Tengnoupal and Saikul seats respectively.
Thus in the 1984 election the tribals preferred independents and Congress(I) candidates. Out of the 19 scheduled tribe reserved constituencies independent candidates won 9 seats, Congress(I) 8, M.P.P. and K.N.A. one seat each.\textsuperscript{34} Out of the 19 scheduled tribe reserved seats the Zomis got 9 seats and the rest 10 went to the Naga groups. Out of the 9 seats won by the Zomis Congress(I) got 3, M.P.P. and K.N.A. 1 each and independents 4.

General Election 1990:

Election to the fifth Manipur Legislative Assembly was held in February 1990. In that election there were 12,06,724\textsuperscript{35} voters in Manipur which reflected an increase of 1,93,046 voters since 1984 General Election. The largest number of voters for the Assembly constituencies registered the figure of 32,303 in Mao (ST) Constituency, Senapati district and the smallest number of voters 13,270 in Tipaimukh (ST) Constituency, Churachandpur district. The average number of voters per assembly constituencies were worked out to 20,112 which were 16,894 in 1984 and 10,099 in 1972 General Election.

\textsuperscript{34} Chief Election Officer, Result of the General Election to the Manipur Legislative Assembly 1984 Pt.1, op.cit., n.35, p.14.

\textsuperscript{35} Chief Election Officer, Result of the General Election 1990.
Two national parties Congress(I) and Janata Dal contested all the 60 seats in the 1990 Assembly election. The other national parties which had contested in the election were Congress(S), CPI, CPM, and BJP. Moreover four regional parties MPP, KNA, NPP, MFHC, and a number of independent candidates were also in the fray. But the main contest was among Congress(I) which got 26 seats, M.P.P. and Janata 11 each. Out of the remaining seats Congress(S) won 6, CPI 3, KNA 2 and NPP 1.\textsuperscript{36}

In the 19 tribal reserved constituencies there were 4,31,704 voters which constitute 35.77 per cent of the total voters in the state. Out of the total voters of the 19 tribal reserved seats 2,19,914 were male and 2,11,790 female voters. Mao constituency of Senapati District which had 32,303 voters and Tipaimukh constituency of Churachandpur District which had 13,270 voters had the largest and smallest number of voters respectively in the whole of the state are scheduled tribe reserved constituencies. The average number of voters per constituency in the hill areas were 22,600 which was higher than the states average of 20,112. Voting percentage was high in the hill areas. Saitu constituency in Senapati District had the highest record.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
of 98.4 per cent and Phungyar in Ukhrul District had the lowest record of 83 per cent. Out of the total voters in the hill areas 90 per cent exercised their voting right. \(^\text{37}\)

In the hill areas the fight was mainly between Congress(I) and Janata Dal which got 8 and 4 seats respectively. The other contestants are Congress(S), M.P.P. and K.N.A. which got 2 seats each NPF with 1 seat. The other parties M.H.P.C. and B.J.P. contested in 10 and 2 seats respectively but got blank in the hill areas. None of the 15 independent candidates could get elected.

Eight Zomi Representatives in the State Assembly:

In Churachandpur district Congress(I) candidate T.Phungzathang got re-elected from Thanlon constituency by defeating his nearest Janata rival Songchinkhup by a margin of 1291 votes. In Tipaimukh constituency Selkai Hrangchali Janata nominee unseated the Congress(I) nominee and the former Minister Ngurdingliem who retained the seat for the last four consecutive elections since 1972. In Churachandpur constituency the lone N.P.P. candidate in the hill

\(^{\text{37}}\) Ibid.
areas V. Hangkhanlian defeated his nearest Janata rival S. Ngulsing by a margin of 847 votes. The former M.L.A. Rothangliana an independent candidate secured 2184 votes and stood in the fourth position out of 10 candidates. T.N. Haokip the K.N.A. nominee from Henglep constituency by defeated his nearest Janata rival Vanlalnghak F. Tusing by a margin of 1497 votes. In Singngat Constituency Thangkhanlal the K.N.A. candidate defeated his nearest Congress(I) rival T. Gouzadou by a margin of 2023 votes. The Congress(S) nominee Chungkhokai (a retired I.R.S. officer) unseated the Congress(I) candidate Holkholet Khongsai from his Saikul constituency by a margin of 3485 votes. In Saitu constituency Ngamithang Haokip the M.F.P. nominee defeated S. I. Paokhosei Congress(I) candidate by a margin of 1639 votes. 38

Thus in comparison with the previous elections the Congress(I) party fared badly in the hill areas of Manipur. It may be because of the reason that the former Congress(I) Government in Manipur passed an amendment bill to the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960 in the State Legislative Assembly. The Amendment bill sought for the

38 Ibid.
extension of the Act in the hill areas of the state which the tribals resented very much. The people of Churachandpur district gave their verdict in this election by rejecting all the Congress(I) nominees in the district excepting the party's nominee from Thanlon constituency. According to E. Vungkholian (a student leader) the lone elected Congress(I) candidate T. Phungzathang won the election from Thanlon constituency not because the people were in favour of the party but because of his command over the Paise's as their President of their sub-tribe union. Among the Zomi group, 8 candidates got elected out of which Congress(I) 2, Congress(S) 2, and K.N.A. got 2 each and N.P.P. and M.P.P. 1 each.

The non-Congress(I) parties such as Janata, M.P.P., Congress, N.P.P., K.N.A. had an understanding before the election and thus formed the National Front Government in Manipur. Thus the National Front under the leadership of R.K. Ranbir Singh(MPP) formed the Government on 23-2-1990. In this Government among the Zomis Chungkhokai, T.N. Haokip,

39 Interview with E. Vungkholian (Former President All Tribal Student's Union, Manipur), Churachandpur on November 17, 1993.
V. Hangkhanlian, Selkai Hrangchial, Holkhomang Haokip became Cabinet Minister and Thangkhanlal and Ngamthang Haokip became Ministers of State. 41

The National Front Government under the leadership of R.K. Ranbir Singh could not last long. As such President's Rule was imposed on January 1, 1992 due to the defection of some of the ruling members in the State Assembly. 42 However, Congress(I) Ministry was formed on April 9, 1992 under the Chief Ministership of R.K. Dorendra Singh. 43 Richang Keishing became the Deputy Chief Minister. In that Ministry, among the Zomis V. Hangkhanlian, Holkhomang Haokip, Chungkhokai and Selkai Hrangchial became Cabinet Ministers and Ngamthang Haokip was the lone Minister of State among the Zomis in the State Legislative Assembly.

This Ministry too could not last long and it was suspended again from December 31, 1993 which lasted upto December 13, 1994. 44 On the eve of Assembly Elections a

41 Ibid.
Congress(I) led Ministry was formed again under the leadership of Rishang Keishing and Phungzathang and Thangkhanlal became (from the Zomi group) Cabinet Minister and State Minister respectively. 45

Assembly Elections, 1995:

The 6th State Assembly Election of Manipur was held in the month of February 1995. In that election there were 12,69,000 voters out of which 6,31,597 were male 6,36,307 female voters and 1,096 service voters. In that Assembly Election, elections to 59 constituencies were held because election to the Lamsang constituency was postponed 46 due to the murder of a candidate in that constituency. In the 59 constituencies 11,54,588 voters exercised their franchise and there were 11,392 invalid votes. 47

Ten Zomi Representatives in the State Assembly:

In that election 14 political parties and a number

47 Election to the Lamsang Assembly Constituency was held on May 29, 1995 and the Congress(I) candidate got the seat.
of independents were in the poll fray. The Congress(I) got 22 seats out of 60 seats contested, M.P.P. got 18 seats, Janata Dal 7, C.P.I., S.P., F.P.M. and N.P.P. 2 seats each, B.J.P. and Congress(S) 1 each and the rest 3 goes to independent candidates.48 Out of the 19 tribal reserved seats 9 goes to the Zomi group of people and 10 goes to the Naga groups. In Kangpokpi general constituency Thangminliien (M.P.P.) got elected and thus the two tribal groups - the Zomi group and the Naga group got 10 seats each in the State Legislative Assembly.

In that election too, none of the parties could secure the single majority to form the government. But the Congress(I) led coalition ministry, under the leadership of Rishang Keishing formed the government on February 14, 1995.49 In that ministry among the Zomi representatives V.Hangkhuanlian became a Cabinet Minister and Chaltonlien and Hangkhanpau became Ministers of State.

It may be stated that Assembly and Parliamentary elections were held regularly in Manipur since statehood.

48 The Resistance, March 6, 1995.
The tribals in that the Zomis participated in decision making process of the State as well as in the Central Government through their representatives. But in the state politics defection has become a common feature and as such the tribals were no exception to it. The remarks made by the Yangmaso Shaiza the former M.P. and Chief Minister has been proved true when he said, "All Politicians including myself are opportunists". In the last Assembly(th 5th State Assembly) only, four coalition ministries were formed on different times. The first coalition Ministry under the leadership of R.K.Ranbir Singh with the longest term in Office lasted for 13 months only(February 23,1990 to January 6, 1992). Thus there has always been political instability in the state.

Political Participation of the Zomis through District Councils:

The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act,1971 provides for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill areas of Manipur. Even though there are 5 hill districts in the state 6 Autonomous District Councils were formed because Senapati District was divided into 2 Autonomous

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50 The Resistance, December 6, 1983.
District Councils, the Naga inhabited areas under Senapati Autonomous District Council with its headquarters at Tadubi and the Kuki inhabited areas under Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council with its headquarters at Kangpokpi. According to the Act each Autonomous District shall have a District Council consisting of not more than 18 members elected by direct election on the basis of adult suffrage. The Governor may nominate not more than 2 persons, not being government employees to be the members of such a council. For the purpose of election the Governor of Manipur formulated the Manipur District Councils (Election of Members) Rules, 1972.

The first elections to the Manipur Autonomous District Councils were held in 1973. Thus the District Councils are the newly introduced democratic institutions through which the tribals of Manipur including the Zomis could participate in the decision making process of the district administration. The first election to the Churachandpur Autonomous District Council was held in the later part of 1973. In that election the Paite National Council, one of the Zomi sub-tribe unions backed up 7 candidates out of which 2 got declared elected un-contest and 3 others also got elected.
T. Goukhennpau a former State Minister, who returned uncontested from Tuivai constituency became the first chairman of Churachandpur Autonomous District Council. 51

The second election to the Churachandpur Autonomous District Council was held in 1978. Vanlalnghak P. Tusing became the Chairman of the Council. Again in 1984 the third election to the Churachandpur Autonomous District Council was held. L.B. Sona (the P.N.C. General Secretary) became the Chairman of the Council. During this term the people of the hill areas have started the demand for the replacement of the present District Councils with the District Councils under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The tribal leaders stated that the present Autonomous District Councils are surviving under the mercy of the State Government and they are only in name. These Councils should be made more effective by extending the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Thus the demand was "No Sixth Schedule, no election". 52 As such no election could be held for those Councils whose term was over and the State Government could

51 Interview with P. Kipgen M.C.S. (Chief Executive Officer, Churachandpur Autonomous District Council), Churachandpur on May 20, 1989.

52 Interview with E. Vungkholution, (Former President All Tribal Students Union, Manipur) Churachandpur on November 17, 1993.
only extend their terms. Thus the term of Churachandpur Autonomous District Council was extended for one year and after that the Council was superseded in 1989 and the Deputy Commissioner looks after the District Council.

Political Participation of the Zomis through Municipal Elections:

In 1973, the Government of Manipur introduced Town Committees to look after the administration of 14 towns of the state such as Churachandpur, Moirang, Nambol, Lamlai, Kakching, Bishenpur, Sekmai, Wangjing, Thoubal, Yairipok, Cinam, Tamenglong, Mao and Jiribam. Out of these 14 towns Churachandpur, Ukhrul, Tamenglong and Mao are in the hill areas. Each Town Committee have 10 members out of which one is nominated member. Churachandpur the second town of Manipur is a Zomi majority town and for the purpose of election of the Town Committee members the town was divided into 9 wards. Thus election of the Town Committee Members were held in 1973 itself. H. Thuamzakhom (c College Lecturer) became the first Chairman of Churachandpur Town Committee.

The second election to the Churachandpur Town Committee was held in 1978 and T. Dongzakai became the President. For better administration, the Government of Manipur, in 1980 introduced Municipality administration in three towns of Manipur i.e. Churachandpur, Thoubal and Kakching and they came under the Municipalities Act, 1976. The terms of the three Town Committee members who were elected in 1978 were extended upto 1983 and were designated as Municipality Commissioners.

Meanwhile, the people of Churachandpur in that the Zomis demanded for modification of the Manipur Municipalities Act, 1976. According to E. Vungkholian (a student leader), as the Act was prepared for the plain areas of the state there was no provision to protect the interests of the scheduled Castes and tribes. The Zomi political leaders and student leaders called a meeting and decided to boycott the coming Churachandpur Municipal election in 1983. But the Congress(I) Government wanted to have the elections at any cost. The Government even agreed to provide security guards to their party nominees. Thus the first

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54 Order No. 2/2/52/78-LSG(MUC), Government of Manipur, Imphal, March 26, 1980.

55 Interview with E. Vungkholian (Former President, ATSUM Manipur), Churachandpur on November 7, 1993.
Churachandpur Municipal election was held in 1983 and T. Longzakai became the first elected President of the Churachandpur Municipality. 56

The demand for modification of the Municipalities Act, 1976 was getting momentum. The Zomis of Churachandpur demanded that the state government either modify the Manipur Municipalities Act, 1976 by inserting some new provisions to safeguard the interests of the tribals or withdraw Municipality from Churachandpur town. They also felt that the introduction of Municipal administration in Churachandpur town which is the headquarters of the Churachandpur Autonomous District Council was against the provisions of the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 itself. However, the state government issued a notification on February 11, 1988 stating that the operation of the Manipur Municipalities Act, 1976 is withdrawn from Churachandpur w.e.f. March 1, 1988. 57 The notification further stated that all the assets and liabilities of the Churachandpur Municipal Board stood transferred to the Churachandpur District Council.

56 Interview with Haoneikhup (Executive Officer, Churachandpur Municipality), Churachandpur on April 20, 1989.
Zomi Political Participation through Singngat Small Town Committee Elections:

Singngat village is the headquarter of Singngat Sub-Division in Churachandpur District. The village has been administered by the village chief and its Authority members. The State Government in 1978 introduced Small Town Committee administration in the village. Thus it was another democratic institution among the Zomis through which they could participate in the village administration.  

For the first time the S.D.O. Singngat nominated 7 Town Committee members for Singngat Small Town Committee and V.Pauthuam one of the nominated members became the first Chairman. The first election to the Singngat Small Town Committee was held in 1980. V.Pauthuam the former President of the Small Town Committee got elected as one of the members and he was re-elected as the chairman of the Town Committee. But the state Government of Manipur withdrawn the operation of Small Town Committee in Singngat village along-with the Churachandpur Municipality in 1988.  

58 Interview with V.Pauthuam (1st Chairman, Singngat Small Town Committee) Churachandpur on August 10, 1993.
59 Interview with V.Pauthuam on August 10, 1993.
Zomi Political Participation through Village Authority Elections:

Prior to the enactment of the Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956, the Village Authority members were appointed by the village Chief. But the Village Authorities Act, 1956 introduced a democratic element in the village administration. Under this Act, the village Chief remained the ex-Officio Chairman of the Village Authority but the members were elected by the villagers for a term of 3 years which later on was extended to 5(five) years. Since then village authority elections were held and thus the Zomi Villagers could have better participation in the village administration.

In the village Authority elections the political parties or communal organisations seldom filled their candidates. The villagers in fact choose their representatives without any kind of interference. Sometimes in certain villages the chief was authorised by the villagers to nominate the village authority members instead of conducting elections. Usually there were keen contests in the village

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60 Interview with L.B.Sona (General Secretary, Paite National Council), Churachandpur
authority elections where there are different sub-tribes in a village excepting such villages, the villagers were not so interested in the village authority elections. It may be because of the fact that the village authority members are not entitled to any kind of financial remuneration or allowance to their work. Moreover, the village chieftainship being a hereditary institution, in most of the cases controls the working of the village administration and the authority members became only a puppet in the hands of the village chief.61

Voting Behaviour of the Zomis:

Every person participates actively or passively in the political system in which he lives. The number of citizens who actively participate in the political system is a very small proportion whereas those who do not actively participate in any kind of political activity are rather large. Voting is considered to be a collective form of political participation, through which all the citizens participate in the political process of the country.

The term voting behaviour is quite old but the old conception of voting behaviour has been replaced by a new one in contemporary period. Therefore, voting behaviour connotes today more than examination of the voting records, compilation of voting statistics and compilation of electoral scripts. Thus by voting behaviour we also mean the purpose of voting and determinants of voting preference of a voter. We have to analyse the interaction between the internal stimuli and external manipulation operating on a voter's choice. As there is no instrument to probe into the psychological complex of the voters we have, therefore, to be contented with the opinion expressed by the voters about the purposes and determinants of their voting preference.

Though the election law prohibits any kind of appeal to the voters on the basis of religion, race, caste, clan and language etc. but the voting behaviour of the people in India is very much influenced by these factors. The classical liberal view of the rational voter choosing

between the competing programmes of the candidates is no longer valid. The voters behaviour is influenced by irrational forces. This is true in the case of the Zomis and other tribals of Manipur. After independence the different communities under the Zomi established their own unions such as the Paite National Council, Hmar National Union, Vaiphei National Organisation, Simte National Council, United Zomi Organisation etc. These organisations play important role in influencing the voting behaviour of the Zomi voters. Everyone in the Zomi society is aligned to either of the tribe organisations. A person's loyalty to its tribe organisation is regarded as important as loyalty to its own family. The different tribes usually choose their candidates in their respective constituencies at the time of election. Different unions support their candidates from those areas where they are in majority. In order to ensure success of their union candidates these unions occasionally form an alliance with each other. In this way these unions act as vote banks for their respective candidates. Thus, these community unions play a dominant role in the elections. In short, the community feelings among the tribal unions dominate the voting behaviour of the Zomi voters.

64 Interview with H. Thuamson (General Secretary Paite National Council) Churachandpur, on October 20, 1990.
65 Interview with Dr. L. Chinzakham Ngaihte, (Head of Economics Department, Lamka College) Churachandpur on August 10, 1990.
The clan is an important factor which determines the voting behaviour of the Zomis. There is no caste system among the Zomis. They are divided into different clans:

such as Guite, Ngaihte, Tombing, Tonsing, Hauzel, Hangzo, Hanghal, Naulak, Samte etc. A person belonging to a particular clan normally votes for the candidate of its own clan. 66

In electoral politics money plays an important role. Political Parties normally get its party funds from big businessmen.

The involvement of money in the elections is true with the tribals of Manipur and the Zomis as well. The workers of the different parties try to contact each household directly or indirectly and try to get the support of the voters for their party candidates through all possible means. 67 Sometimes the party workers offer money to the clan or group leader so that the latter could use the money to secure the

66 Interview with H. Khatkhojam (Former General Secretary, Paite National Council), Churachandpur on April 15, 1990.
67 Interview with H. Khatkhojam (Former General Secretary, Paite National Council), Churachandpur on April 15, 1990.
support of its clan or group members. But in some cases such money given to the clan or group leaders have not reached to the voters as the leaders usually keep the money for themselves. Thus in order to avoid such occurrence the candidates or the party workers sometimes try to visit each household personally and offer them money to the voters. Sometimes the candidates offer gifts to the voters in kinds such as foreign jeans pants, jackets, wrist watch etc. 68

There are a number of voters who do not care for the electoral politics. They never bother for those who get elected or rejected but cast their votes for the candidates who offered them money. But there are some other voters who feel that election time is the only time when party workers and the candidates usually approach them. Although such voters although accept money from any candidate yet they cast their votes only for the candidates of their choice, irrespective of the fact whether that particular candidate has offered them money or not. But there are some other voters who will never accept anything from the candidates in whose favour they do not wish to cast their votes.

68 Interview with T.Kaizanang (79 years) Churachandpur, on February 17, 1990.
Thus, some of the voters are purchased with money. As such money becomes an important factor in determining the voting behaviour of the Zomi voters. 69

Religion and the moral character of the candidates also plays an important factor in determining the voting behaviour of the Zomi voters. About 99 per cent of the Zomis are Christians and they count the moral character of the candidates as an important factor. Morality is one of the main teachings of Christianity as such a good Christian is one who has good moral character. They judge the candidates on the basis of their religious and moral personal character. In this way religion and personal moral character of the candidate becomes an important determining factor of the voting behaviour of the Zomis. 70

The prospect of getting government job also sometimes determines the voting behaviour of the Zomi voters. Sometimes a candidate promises certain educated voters that they would be given a job in the government if the former is elected. The educated voters therefore try to convince their

69 Interview with T. Haukholian (Former Churachandpur District Council Member) Churachandpur, May 15, 1993.

70 Interview with G. Khamkam (Principal, Grace Bible College) Churachandpur on August 20, 1990.
relatives and other voters to secure as much votes as possible for the candidate who promised them a job. Not only the educated voters but also the uneducated voters who are influential in the village or community would be promised with IV Grade jobs. Thus the prospect of getting a job sometimes plays an important part in determining the voting behaviour of the voters. 71

Moreover, the different social organisations among the Zomis also play important roles to condition the voting behaviour of the Zomi voters. The different sub-tribes under the Zomi have their own student's organisations such as Siamsinpawlpi (for the Paite student) Hmar Student's Association, Kuki Students Organisation, Zoumi Sangnaupang Pawlpi (for the Zou student), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (for the Mizo students) etc. Such students' organisations have units and branches in the schools, colleges and Universities where their organisation members are there. In addition to these some philanthropic organisations such as Young Paite Association, Hmar Young Association, Young Mizo Association etc. in the villages where their own tribesmen are there. Thus, the leaders of such student's as well as philanthropic organisations, sometimes convince its members as well as other

71 Interview with S.Sumkhanjam (Former M.D.C.Member),Churachandpur on September 25,1992.
voters in favour of certain candidates.\textsuperscript{72}

To conclude it may be stated that the first ever election in Manipur was held in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. After that the state got merged with the Union of India on October 15, 1949. In 1952 the state went to the polls to elect its 2 members of the Lok Sabha and 30 members of the Electoral College constituted for electing a member of the Rajya Sabha. The second General Election took place in 1957 to elect the two members of the Lok Sabha and 30 members of its Territorial Council in Manipur. In 1963 the Territorial Council was upgraded to Legislative Assembly and the State went to the polls to elect its 30 member Legislative Assembly the same year.

On January 21, 1971, Manipur became a full-fledged state under the Union of India. Since statehood the people of Manipur went to the polls to elect the State Legislative Assembly members and the 2 Parliamentary members in 1972, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1995. Thus since 1972 the Zomis along with the other sections of the society have

\textsuperscript{72} Interview with T.Awnzagen (Former General President, Siamsin Pawlpi) Churachandpur on April 17, 1990.
been participating in the electoral politics of the state as well as the central government.

Under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 Autonomous District Councils were introduced in the hill areas of Manipur. Though there are 5 hill districts in the State 6 Autonomous District Councils were formed because Senapati District was divided into 2 Autonomous Districts. Thus Autonomous District Councils, consisting of not more than 18 members, elected by direct election on the basis of adult suffrage were formed. For the purpose of election the Government of Manipur framed the Manipur District Councils (Election of Members) Rules, 1972. The first election to the Manipur Autonomous District Councils were held in 1973. Since then the tribals in that the Zomis have been participating in the district level politics of the state.

Municipalities and Small Town Committees were introduced to administer some of the Zomi inhabited towns of Manipur since 1976. Since then elections to the Municipalities and Small Town Committees were held. But the Government of Manipur withdrew the operation of Municipalities and Small Town Committee in the Zomi inhabited areas in 1988.
Prior to the enactment of the Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956 the village authority members were appointed by the village chief. But the Village Authorities Act 1956 introduced a democratic element in the village administration. Under the Act though the village Chief remains the ex-officio Chairman of the village authority but the member are to be elected by the villagers for a term of three years which was later on extended to 5 years. In this way the Government of Manipur introduced a democratic element in the village administration of the hill areas. Thus elections to the village Authority members have been held since 1956 and the Zomis have been participating in the village administration of the state.

Like the other parts of the country political parties also play an important role in determining the voting behaviour of the Zomis. But the tribal unions which were formed on the basis of community plays an important role at the back in determining the voting behaviour of the Zomis as well as the tribals. These community unions though they are unrecognised used to have their own support candidates and such candidates usually got elected from the
constituency where their own people are in the majority. The Zomi voters were not much concerned with the political parties of the country. Thus we can say that the electoral behaviour of the tribals in Manipur were more based on community line than on party lines.

The different sub-tribes under the Zomi were divided into different clans. These clans also play an important role in determining the voting behaviour of the Zomis. Religion is another important factor which determines their voting behaviour. They judged the candidates on the religious career and the personal character of the candidates. In this regard the Church as an organisation sometimes play an indirect role in determining the voting behaviour of the Zomis.

Money as in the other parts of the country also plays an important role in the voting behaviour of the tribals as well as the Zomis. The other important factors are the different social and student's organisations among them. The leaders of such organisations sometimes convinced its members as well as other voters in favour of certain candidate.