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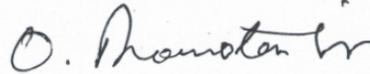
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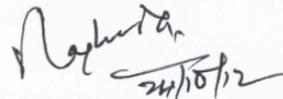
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Preface

The theory of democracy tells that the people rule. But in practice there is a minority group called political elites, who rule the people. In reality, every society is governed by an elite, either chosen or non chosen. Abraham Lincoln's most often quoted line 'government of the people by the people and for the people' now stands replaced by 'government of the people by an elite sprang from the people'. The political elite structure of a society represents not only its political value but also the extent to which the value finds a concrete expression in the power structure and decision making process of the society. Political elite structure generally constitutes the most important segment of the elite structure of a society since they have direct access to political power which is overriding among all other forms of power. What motivates the political elites to play an active role in politics is their inevitable and irrepressible urge to come to power. It is mostly through the process of elections that the political elites establish their popularities and obtain the legitimacy to exercise power in society. They take important decisions with regard to diverse fields and their decisions make far reaching impact in the society. Among other things, people look to their political elites to ensure that the state's economy remains in good shape and its benefits are distributed with fairness to all. They also look to them as guardians of laws and symbols of state/national values, for constructive management of the state's affairs and for justice and a measure of inspiration.

A society faces various problems and crises one after another because of the irresponsibility of so many men and women in power- the product of the lack of intellectual preparation on the part of leadership. There is no denying the fact that the contemporary Manipur is experiencing an acute leadership deficit. The need and necessity of political leaders/elites is less in times and places where the state and society are in good working order. The state of affairs in Manipur from the very time it merged into the Indian union has been in a pathetic and deplorable situation. Manipur is really in need of able and dynamic political leaders/elites who can lead the state and its people in the right path with a vision of making the state one of the developed states in the country. Though Manipur became a full fledged state in 1972 and is now politically at par with other states, no concrete and systematic study has so far been done on the political elites in Manipur. This leaves a huge lacuna in terms of academic and intellectual

exercise in the state. The present study is a first ever and humble attempt to fill this gap by addressing the emergence, the nature and characteristics of political elites and their role and impact in the contemporary Manipuri society.

The present study relies primarily on primary data collected through personal interview method. The respondents who are included in the study as samples of sitting MLA and MP were/are the members of the 9th State Assembly, the 14th Lok-Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Now, the 10th State Assembly has been formed and some of the respondents who were sitting MLAs could not return to the House as people's representatives while some of Ex-MLAs and defeated candidates got elected and are sitting MLAs now. I started collecting the primary data in two phases – first in the early part of 2008 and the second was concluded in 2010 with the addition of one respondent in the early part of 2012. Due care and attention was given on the population structure of Manipur so that political leaders/elites representing different social groups or communities were included as samples in the present study. Some political leaders not only appreciated the present study but also extended their full cooperation when I approached them for personal interview. Mention can be made of Yumnam Yaima Singh (Ex-MLA&MP), Holkhomang Haokip (Ex-MLA & MP), Wangkheimayum Kulabidhu Singh (Ex-MP) and Radhabinode Koijam (Ex-CM & Sitting-MLA) who not only provided me the opportunity for personal interview pertaining to the study by sparing their valuable time but also generously availed me relevant information (their memoirs and others) pertaining to the study. There are also political leaders/elites who understand the importance of academic research that they gave priority to my request for personal interview when I introduced myself as a research scholar. Particular mention can be made of Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP), R.K. Dolendra Singh (Ex-CM /MP), Late W. Nipamacha Singh (Ex-CM), O. Joy Singh (Sitting-MLA), Gangumei Kamei (Ex-MLA), Dr. L. Chandramani Singh (Ex-Deputy CM), Sosho Lorho (Ex-MLA), Valley Rose Hungyo (Defeated candidate), Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting-MLA), Gaikhangam (Sitting-MLA), Md. Helaluddin Khan (Sitting-MLA), Thangso Baite (Ex-MLA & Sitting MP), Y. Erabot Singh (Sitting-MLA), Thangminlien Kipgen (Sitting-MLA) etc. Few of them spent their valuable time in providing relevant information in spite of the fact that they were suffering from general weakness because of their old age. On the other hand, academic research work has not been given any importance by some of the political leaders in Manipur as they out rightly rejected my request to give me personal interview by saying that they are busy

and have no time to spare for the purpose. For instance, I approached Hon'ble MLA, Manga Vaiphei, at his official residence, Quarter No. 5/Type-VI, Lamphel, and seek an appointment for personal interview on 1 March, 2009 with an introduction as a research scholar with proper credentials. However, he not only did not accept my request for personal interview but also did not give appointment on a later date when the same was sought for. The same thing happened in case of Salam Damudar Singh (Ex-MLA) when I seek personal interview on 18 April, 2009, my second visit to his residence at Sagolband as I could not meet him in my first visit on 15 April, 2009. Another sitting MLA, R.K. Anand Singh, adopted the method of postponing the date of personal interview, when it was sought for. I approached him for the first time on 17 July, 2009 but I was asked to come again for the purpose after one week. To serve my purpose, I approached him on 26 July, 2009 but I was again asked to come after few days. Accordingly, I tried twice to meet him for personal interview but met with no positive result. Another problem that I have experienced during my field work occurred when I approached another Sitting-MLA, K. Raina, on 19 June, 2009 at his official residence. His private secretary asked me to come again on some other day. I did accordingly but the security personnel posted at the gate of his residence did not allow me even to enter the gate, forget about availing personal interview, when I approached the Hon'ble MLA twice on 22 and 26 June of 2009 respectively. The most unfortunate and unforgettable experience that I encountered during my field work occurred when I approached Smt. W. Leima Devi who has had the record of becoming the first woman cabinet minister and first woman elected twice in the political history of the state. I went to her residence at Lairenjam Awang Leikai for the first time to get personal interview of her on 25 July 2009 but I was told to come again for the purpose after 28 July, 2009. But my second and third attempts on 31 July and 9 August of 2009 respectively were avoided by citing one reason or other. All these were not what I, as a research scholar, expected from them. They could not even spare few minutes for a research scholar who approached them for academic purpose. This shows how (un)concerned they are for and about the development process in Manipur. It was also revealed during the course of field work that some political elites in Manipur are not in good terms and in loggerhead against one another despite the fact that they belong to the same political party. Some of the respondents also revealed that there are certain factors which compelled them to do certain things which they did not like to accomplish in the larger interest of the state and general public. They did such things and made certain statements just to avoid the disturbances that they and

their party workers would face at the time of election. This in one way indicates that some political leaders are more concerned with fulfilling the demands, including unreasonable ones, of the constituents which often act against the interest of the state and the general public. Vote mathematics is more valuable to them than the interest of the state. It is not a good thing that some organizations, both legal and illegal, are found to resort to the practice of selection rather than election of the representative of the people just to fulfill their latent and manifest goals. This practice contradicts the democratic values and principles as well as the cause and interest of the whole state.

Spread over six chapters, the present study is an attempt to bring out in great detail the socio-political picture of political elites in Manipur by adopting behaviouralist's approach with main emphasis on the attitude, perception, orientation and performance of the political elites in the political arena in particular and in social milieu in general. The present study focuses on the geographical, socio-religious profile of Manipur, its political history since 33 A.D., socio-economic and political background of political elites, their interactional linkages and their role perception and performance vis-à-vis crucial issues of the state.

I will consider my labour spent in the present study to be reasonably awarded if the present study satisfies some of the basic and present curiosities about who are the political elites in Manipur, what are their role, role perception and performance and their significance in the contemporary Manipur society.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1:- The Problem

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

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

the head of the council of ministers of the state. He exercises power as the Prime Minister of the Indian Union but his authority is limited within his state.

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

The State Assembly is empowered to frame laws on all matters included in the state list – public order, police, administration of justice, prison, local government, public health and sanitation, pilgrimages, agriculture, communications, education, forests, fisheries, markets and fairs etc. Apart from the matters included in the state list, the state can make laws on the subjects included in the concurrent list also, but if the Union Parliament passes a law on a subject given in the concurrent list, the state legislature is forbidden to pass a law on the same subject. If the state legislature passes a law on a subject given in the concurrent list, the Union Parliament can pass a law on the same subject and the state law becomes inoperative and it is repugnant to the Union law. However, if a state law has been forwarded to the President for his assent and also got the same, it does not become inoperative.

The State Assembly has full control over finances of the state. It controls the state budget. Money bill originates only in the Assembly. The State Assembly votes upon all the heads of expenditure mentioned in the budget except those items which are charged on the Consolidated Fund of the state. All demands for grants and supplementary grants are laid down before the Assembly for sanction. The Assembly can reject or reduce any grant/demand but cannot increase the same. No tax can be levied without its approval. It exercises real and complete control over the council of ministers. Ministers are collectively responsible to the Assembly and hold office during the pleasure of the Assembly. Manipur also has a strong and impartial judiciary which is part and parcel in a democratic system. Thus, Manipur has a democratic form of government in which people rule themselves through their elected representatives.

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

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

¹ Daughlas V. Verney, *An Analysis of Political System*, Routledge and Kegan Pau, London, 1959, p.10

² A.R. Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, Macmillan, London, 1976, p. 258.

³ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, Methuen, London, 1954, p. 425

general approach of the masses. The political elite structure of a society, no doubt, represents not only its political value but also the extent to which this value finds a concrete expression in the power structure and decision making process of the society. By learning the nature of the elite, we learn much about the nature of the society.⁴ The changes in elite structure, therefore, might also reveal the essential nature of social change taking place in the society.

The structure of elites in a society undergoes the process of differentiation with changes in the social system as a whole. This is especially true when a traditional society passes into the stages of modernization. Innovations in science and technology create value domains and spheres of skill which did not exist before and offer new opportunities of role excellence or elite role in the society. This leads to the growth in the number of elite groups, which to some extent breaks the 'exclusiveness' of traditional elites.⁵ As the elite pyramids multiply, a competition goes on between elite representative of one value domain with those who have control over another and this process is regulated and determined by the power structure of the society. It is in this context that political elites generally constitute the most important segment of the elite structure of any society, since they have direct access to political power which is over-riding among all other forms of power. What motivates the political elites to play an active role in politics is the inevitable and irrepressible urge in human being to come to power. Political elites exercise power and influence because they possess some superior qualities, intellectual ability, administrative capacity, higher positions, military power, popular legitimacy and credibility or moral authority.

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

⁴ Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner and C. Easton Rotuwell, *The Comparative Study of Elites: An Introduction and Bibliography*, Stanford University Press, 1952, p. 1.

⁵ Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1940, p. 86.

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

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

There are many important queries such as who are the political elites in Manipur? Do the political elites in Manipur possess the qualities of elite in the true sense of the term? What is the socio-economic and professional background of political elite? Is the rise of political elites in Manipur coincided with the growth of educated middle class in the state? Do they stand for modernization of economy, social reform, policy of equalitarianism, social justice and for the welfare and equal rights of women and backward classes? Are they fascinated by the modernization process or in favour of preserving the age-old tradition and wanted to preserve it? How are elites related with political parties? Are the political elites accountable to the public? Are the status and importance of political elites related to their educational attainment? Is there circulation

of political elites and how does it takes place? What role do the political elites play to resolve inter-ethnic conflict? Is there any clash of interest among the political elites? If so, is it then a factor of ethnic crisis in Manipur? What are the perceptions and perspectives of political elite with regard to various issues faced by the state? Answers to these different but interrelated questions are important as well as essential to fill up the gap of knowledge about the political elites and their roles in Manipur. The present study is a humble attempt to address these issues, which in turn will go a long way in understanding the contemporary Manipur society from a sociological perspective.

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

1.2 A Brief Profile of Manipur

1.2.1 Geographical features

Manipur, literally meaning a ‘Jeweled land’, lies in a lush green corner of North-East India. It is a state of exquisite natural beauty and splendours that late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described it as ‘Jewel of India’. Manipur is bordered by Nagaland on the north, Cachar of Assam in the west, by Mizoram in the south-west and by Burma (now Myanmar) on the south and east. Manipur is the birth place of Polo and it lies between $23^{\circ}50^1$ and $25^{\circ}42^1$ latitudes north and between $92^{\circ}59^1$ and $94^{\circ}45^1$ longitudes east. It is one of the smallest states of India with an area of 22, 327 sq. km. The state of Manipur is well depended on roads for its transportation. Aviation has its own share while the railway is still in its early days. Manipur is joined by road by NH-2 (earlier NH-39) with Nagaland on the north and Myanmar on the east and on the west with Assam by NH-37 (earlier NH-53) and Mizoram on the south by NH-150.

Manipur is made up of two regions namely the Plains/valley and the hills. The Manipur valley consists of four districts and occupies only one-tenth of the total geographical area and houses nine-tenth of the total population. The hill region consists of five districts and covers about ninety-two percent of total geographical area. Manipur is drained by two river systems namely, the Barak-Bramhaputra system and the Chindwin-Irrawaddi system. The Barak is the largest and longest river of Manipur which originates in the Senapati district of Manipur. Its source is Mt. Iso on the Nagaland-Manipur border about 16 km east of Mao township. It follows a south-westerly course forming the boundary of Nagaland and Manipur and then turns southward to flow through Manipur by collecting water of its tributaries Irang and Makru. The Barak is joined by the Tuvia River at Tipaimukh in the south-western corner of Manipur and the combined flow drained northward forming the boundary of Manipur and Mizoram and then Assam and Manipur. It is again joined by the Jiri River at Jirimukh and it enters in the Cachar plain of Assam.⁶ The Imphal or Manipur River meanders through the Manipur valley in north-west and south-east direction and its important tributaries are the Kongba, the Iril, the Thoubal, the Heirok, the Sekmai, the Khuga and the Chakpi rivers. The tributaries of Imphal and Thoubal rivers flow toward south and meet one another to become Turel Achouba or Manipur River or Imphal River. Then, it flows into the Chin hills of Myanmar by cutting a deep gorge to the south of Sugnu town and in Myanmar it joins the stream of Myitha, a tributary of river Chindwin.

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

1.2.2 Demographic features

According to 2011 census, Manipur has a total population of 27, 21, 756 persons out of which 13, 69,764 are males and 13, 51,992 are females.⁷ The sex-ratio (number of females per thousand males) is found to be 987 and is higher than the national norm of

⁶ N. N. Battacharyya, *Manipur: Land, People and Economy*, Rajesh Publications, New Delhi, 2006. p. 14.

⁷ *Provisional Census of Manipur, 2011*, Directorate of Census Operation, Manipur.

947. The literacy rate is 79.85% out of which male literacy rate is 86.49% and that of female is 73.17%.⁸ It is also higher than the national average of 74.04%.

Manipur is inhabited by various ethnic communities having their own distinctive cultural affinity. These ethnic groups can be broadly divided into Meiteis, Naga tribes and Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes. There is also a sizeable Muslim population who are called Meitei Pangal. The government of Manipur has recognized 32 (thirty-two) scheduled tribes⁹ and 7 (seven) scheduled castes in the state.¹⁰ There are also Sikhs, Nepali, Biharis, Bishnupuris, Panjabi (non-Sikh Panjabi), Marawaris, South-Indians, Bengali, and Assamese etc in the state. Thus Manipur is having different groups of people. The distribution of population in Manipur is uneven having large concentration of population in the valley districts like Imphal West (5,14,683), Imphal East (4,52,661), Thoubal (4,20,517), Bishunupur (2,40,363) and scattered in the districts such as Senapati (3,54,972), Churhanpur (2,71,274), Ukhrul (1,83,115), Chandel (1,44,028) and Tamenglong (1,40,143). In the year 2001, the population density of the state was 103 per sq. km. But it differs from 25 persons per sq. km. in Tamenglong district to 856 per sq. km. in Imphal West district. The other valley districts like Imphal East, Bishunupur and Thoubal have also higher density with 557, 420 and 708 persons respectively. The density of population in the hill districts is low ranging between 25 per sq. km. and 50 per sq. km. except Senapati district where density of population was 87 per sq. km.¹¹ The main reasons behind high density of population in the valley districts are location of urban centres, better transport and communication facilities including trade and commerce. The hills of Manipur consist of forests and mineral resources but these areas are still economically underdeveloped. Majority of local people in these areas are not much aware of the economic value of the natural resources. Cultivated lands are limited with poor means of transport and communication in most areas.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmarm Kabui, Kacha-Naga, Kharam, Koirao, Koireng, Kom, Lamgeng, lusai tribe, Maram, Maring, Mao, Monsang, Mayon, Paite, Paumi Naga, Purum, Ralte, Sema, Semte, Sahlte, Thangkul, Tarao, Thadou, Vaphei, Zou are the recognised scheduled tribes of Manipur.

¹⁰ Seven recognized scheduled castes in Manipur are Dhupi Dhobi, Lois, Muchi Ravindan, Nama Sudra, Patni, Satrudhara and Yaithibi

¹¹ *Statistical Abstract of Manipur, 2002*, Directorate of Economics and Statistic, Government of Manipur. – (District wise figures of population density as per 2011 Census Report are not available as yet).

Up to 1951 the state of Manipur experienced a steady growth of population but after 1951, there has been a continuous increase of population in Manipur. This is mainly due to natural increase, decline in death rate with the improvement of medical facilities and emigration from other states of India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar. Only 30.21% of the total population live in towns (fifty one in number as per 2011 census) while the remaining 68.79% live in 2,588 villages. The majority of villages in the hill districts are small, having less than 500 populations, and medium sized villages with the population of 500-999 are confined in the hill districts of Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Churhandpur and the central valley. The large sized villages having 1000-1999 population and very large villages having over 2000 persons are mostly located in the valley districts of Manipur.¹² Although, Manipur is a small state, it represents a diversity in religious persuasion, faiths and belief system from tribal forms of religion to Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhs, Buddhist, Jains and others.

1.2.3 Administrative features

For administrative purpose, Manipur is divided into nine districts, four in the valley and five in the hills. The districts are sub-divided into thirty-eight sub-divisions. The state has a two-tier Panchayati-Raj system – gram panchayat at the village level and zila parishad at the district level. There are about one hundred sixty-six gram panchayats and four zila parishads¹³ in Manipur. There are also altogether nine municipalities being headed by the Municipality commissions. However, the hilly areas of Manipur excluded from the operation of the 73rd Amendment Act of the constitution. But, there is a council of elected representatives of the people to take care for the development work in each hill districts. Manipur is represented by two members in the Lok Sabha and by one member in the Rajya Sabha. The state is within the jurisdiction of the Gauhati High Court which came into existence on 21st January, 1972, the day Manipur attained its statehood. Now, the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) and Other Related Laws (Amendment) bill for

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

¹³ Zila Parishads in Manipur are Imphal-West Zila Parishad, Imphal-East Zila Parishad Thoubal Zila Parishad and Bishunupur Zila Parishad.

Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur was passed in the Lok Sabha on 11 May, 2012 and subsequently in the Rajya Sabha. Manipur, thus, will be having a separate High Court as the President of India has given assent to the bill on 7 June, 2012.

1.2.4 Historical Background: Origin of Manipur

The Manipuri Puyas¹⁴ say that the valley region of the state was once under water. Lord Shiva and his consort Pravati wanted to perform their dance here. He pierced the hill, 'Chingnunghut', with his trident and drained out the water and thereby rendered the valley habitable. When they perform their dance the place was all bright with their rays. Hence, the term Manipur.¹⁵

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

¹⁴ Ancient sacred scripture of Manipur.

¹⁵ M. Jhulon Singh, *Bijoy Panchali*, 1947, p.2.

¹⁶ Joytirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, Eastlight Book House, Calcutta, 1973. p.3.

¹⁷ N. Ibobi Singh, *The Manipur Administration (1709-1907)*, Horizon Printers, New Delhi, 2003.p.17.

1.2.5 Different names of Manipur

The existence of independent state of Manipur goes back to unhistorical and unrecorded times. It was formerly known by various names. The Shans called it Ka-se (Cassay). To the Burmese, Manipur was known as Ka-the, a corruption of same word. The Ahoms called it Mekhli and the Kacharis, Magli while the old Assamese name for it was Moglan.¹⁸ Imphal, the capital, was known as Inthaphal from the royal throne in Kangla, the coronation hall. Formerly Manipur was also known as Kangleipak as Kangla was considered as its centre.

1.2.6 Origin of Meiteis (The Manipuri)

The Meiteis or the Manipuri belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. According to Colonel McCulloch, 'the Meiteis were the strongest of the several clans inhabiting the Manipur valley who eventually obtained the mastery and give their name to all other clans'.¹⁹ Captain Pemberton, an authority of the region, believed that the Meiteis hailed from China. The race of Meiteis had been continuously developed by intermarriage with and additions from various hill peoples surrounding the valley. The Manipuri proper (meaning the Meiteis) were regarded by Pemberton as the descendants of a Tartar colony which emigrated from the north-west borders of China during the sanguinary conflicts for supremacy which took place between different members of the Chinese and Tartar dynasties in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²⁰

¹⁸ Sir Edward Gait, *A History of Assam*, 1963, p.321

¹⁹ Quoted in T.C. Hodson, *The Meitheids*, (first published in 1908) Delhi, B.R. Pub. Corporation, 1975 (Reprint), p.95.

²⁰ R.B. Pemberton, *The Eastern Frontier of India*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1979, p.14.

1.3 Literature Reviewed

The term 'elite' has its roots in the French word *elire* (select).²¹ It has been in common usage in France since the 17th century and was adopted into the German language in the 18th century. The elite is defined as a social group distinguished by its high levels of qualification and its ability and willingness to achieve or by its particular value or performance. Elites are furthermore seen as groups that have a decisive influence on the development of society. Historically, the concept of the elite was developed in the 18th century by the aspiring French bourgeoisie as a democratic rallying cry in the struggle to break the hegemony of aristocracy and clergy. Individual achievement as opposed to family origin was to be the decisive requirement for assuming leading positions in society. The 19th century experienced profound changes in the use of the term elite, with the concept now serving as a contrast to the term mass. The middle classes and the middle class academic intelligentsia of the time were deeply troubled about the phenomenon of the urban masses which had evolved as a result of population explosion in Europe and went hand in hand with the development of industrial working class. In their eyes, the political unrest and revolutionary aspirations of the masses served only to endanger the ruling order. The classic elite theories formulated against this background were later to provide an important basis for the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany. The conviction that a small elite was bound to dominate the large majority was used by the fascist parties as a central justification of the principle of authoritarian leadership.

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

²¹ Michael Hartmann, *The Sociology of Elites*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York, 2007.p.2.

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

Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) in his *'The Crowd: A Study of Popular Mind'* analyzed the fears of the middle class intellectual circles – the fear that no good was to be expected of the masses and stated that up to the end of the 18th century, the 'rivalries of sovereigns' were the driving force behind events, with the opinion of the masses playing as good no role whatever. But the tables had turned completely within the span of one century. The voice of the people was now the decisive factor, dictating how monarchs were to act. The mission of the masses in history had lain essentially in the destruction, not in the creation of ancient civilizations. Until now civilizations had only been created and led by a small intellectual aristocracy. According to Bon, the rule of the masses was tantamount to a phase of dissolution because civilization required traits such as reason, impulse control or in general terms an 'elevated degree of culture all of which the masses, left to themselves have invariably shown themselves incapable of realizing.

Le Bon used neither the term elite nor the term ruling or political class in his book. In his view the masses instinctively seek a leader. The mass is a servile flock that is incapable of ever doing without a master; one that always follows a strong willed leader.²² The rule of leaders is accordingly extremely despotic.

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

²² Michael Hartmann, op.cit, p.9.

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

When one elite replaces another, a process Pareto calls 'the circulation of elites', major changes in society occurs. All elites tend to become decadent. They decay in quality and lose their 'vigour'. They may become soft and ineffective with the pleasure of easy living and the privileges of power. An elite of lions lacks the imagination and cunning necessary to maintain its rule and will have to admit foxes from the masses to make up this deficiency. Gradually foxes infiltrate the entire elite and so transform its character. Foxes lack the ability to take forceful and decisive action which at various time essential to retain power. An organized minority of lions committed to the restoration of strong government develops and eventually overthrow the elite of foxes. History, to Pareto, is a never ending circulation of elites. History is and will always be 'a graveyard of aristocracies.'²³

Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) believed that in all societies two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first.²⁴ He claimed that the ruling minority is superior to the mass of population and is distinguished from the latter by qualities that gave it certain material, intellectual or even moral superiority – a product of the social background of the elite. He maintained that the qualities required for elite rule varied from society to society. In some societies, courage and bravery in battle provide access to the elite, in others, the skill and capacities needed to acquire wealth.

²³ F. Abraham and J.H. Morgan, *Sociological Thought*, Macmillan India Ltd., Madras, 1994, p.93.

²⁴ G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, McGraw Hill, New York, 1939, p.50.

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

Robert Michels (1874-1936) also advocated the view that rule of minority (governing elite) over the masses is a national phenomenon in all societies. All systems of government are oligarchic in ultimate reality. Justifying the growth of oligarchy, Michels insisted that the majority of the mass are apathetic, indolent, slavish and prone to flattery. They are, therefore, permanently incapable of self-government. Leadership becomes ‘technically inevitable’²⁵ and the leaders take advantage of these shortcomings of the masses to perpetuate themselves in power. They use all kinds of methods – oratory, persuasion, playing upon mass sentiments – in order to dupe the masses.²⁶ He considered an aristocracy of virtue and wisdom to be the ideal form of government and argued that the chief fault in democracy is the character of the masses, their apathy, submissiveness and helplessness, which provide ideal condition for a handful of people with ability and capacity to lead and dominate the masses.

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

²⁵ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, the Free Press, Illinois, 1915, p.417

²⁶ *Ibid.* p.58.

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

According to Oretaga, the masses revolt when the aristocracies become corrupt and inefficient. The motive behind the revolt, therefore, is not a preference to be ruled by an aristocracy, but it is a preference to be ruled by a more competent aristocracy. History shows a perpetual swinging back and forth between the two kinds of epochs – the period in which the aristocracies and therewith the society are being formed and the period in which these same aristocracies are decaying and the society is dissolving along with them.²⁷ Thus, the progress and existence of the society depend on the capacity of the elite and it is amount of confidence of the mass over the aristocracy which facilitates the same to lead.

Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), in his earlier writings rejected the elite theory equating it with fascism and anti-intellectual but later stated that the actual shaping of policy is in the hands of elites, but this does not mean that the society is not democratic.²⁸ He distinguishes three types of elites: political and organizational elites, intellectual and aristocratic elites and moral and religious elites. He sees the first two types principally in business, administration and politics where they are responsible for the integration of various volitions. The task of the other four is to spiritualize mental energies, that is to say, to develop and unfold a nation's science and culture. Both types of elites are assumed to be indispensable for a society. Mass society which is basically open and democratic is now assumed to ensure the growth of both the number and size of the elite groups. According to him, the elite groups become less exclusive and the third of the three major principles of selection in the history of mankind – birth, property and performance – gradually assume predominance, more and more frequently becoming the sole criterion of selection. He believed the fact that the essential planlessness of contemporary society italicizes economic planning, which is inevitably democratic

²⁷ S. P. Verma, *Modern Political Theory*, Vani Educational Books, New Delhi, 1975, p.248

²⁸ K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, Harper and Brothers, Trans., 1936, p.119.

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

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

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

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

²⁹ K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an age of Reconstruction*, Kegan Paul, London, 1940, p.75.

³⁰ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elites*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956.p.277.

³¹ James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, London: Putnam, 1942, p.56.

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

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

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

³² Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society: A Framework of Political Inquiry*, Yale University Press, New Heaven, 1950, p.201.

³³ William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*, Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1959, p.28

³⁴ *Ibid.* p.99.

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

Otto Stammer³⁷ (1900-1978) in a 1951 article on the '*Elite Problem in Democracy*' criticizes the anti-democratic tendency in the works of Mosca and Pareto who have a very powerful influence on the political and ideological practice of elite formation in various totalitarian systems. He contends that in democratic systems, the social and political competition between individual elites and their obligation to justify themselves and be held accountable for their actions by their 'mother groups' as well as by the people ensured that the existing psychological tendency toward isolation did not as a rule come to bear. According to him, elites are socially or politically influential groups from a variety of areas that arise from the population in the system and take on certain political leadership functions. These groups are all on a footing of mutual competition and their primary role is that of a functional intermediary between the people and the government. Stammer asserts that only these groups are able to guarantee the functioning of mass democracy, not only because the selection of the state's top leaders lies entirely in their hands but also because only they are in a position to ensure that the masses are able to control these leaders and conversely, to successfully convey the latter's decision to the masses. In contrast to the ruling classes of the past, the leading stratum of democratic mass society is no longer an upper social class or aristocracy or a closed and privileged group defined in terms of family, property or education. In contrast, it functions on behalf of and under the control of the people.

³⁵ Robert Dhal, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1961, p.90.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.102.

³⁷ Otto Stammer quoted in Michael Hartmann, *op.cit.* p.26.

Ralf Dahrendorf³⁸ (1929) in his essay '*A New German Upper Class*' distinguishes between the prestige upper class, the economic upper class and the ruling class or power elites as the three crucial leadership groups and points out that the composition of these groups can overlap. He maintained that there is no longer a unified upper class but simply a multitude of competing leadership groups or functional elites.

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

Hans Peter Dreitzel³⁹ (1935) stated that democratic industrial society is based on a continuous increase in productivity and standards of living and that its hierarchical structure centres on performance-related qualification rather than on possession of capital. Meritocratic qualification has replaced capital as the key factor of production. As a result, not only has class antagonism lost its significance but this has also led to a multiplication of elites. The meritocratic selection process which governs access to elites is institutionalized in the form of a professional structure and the schooling and professional training which precedes it. In principle, it is possible for anyone to acquire the educational or vocational qualifications conferred here and hence to advance into elite positions. However, these opportunities are open in principle and not, in fact, to everyone because of existing inequalities of opportunity in education and the professional world.

³⁸ Ralf Dahrendorf quoted in *ibid.* p. 28.

³⁹ Hans Peter Dreitzel, quoted in Michael Hartmann, *op.cit.* p. 29.

Dreitzel maintained that the term elite society does not necessarily mean that all top positions are filled exclusively on the basis of performance criteria but merely that society shows an increasing tendency to proceed in this way. For Dreitzel the upper stratum of democratic industrial society is made up of two components: one with inherited positions of power and prestige and the other consisting of those who have earned their position by dint of their achievements and professional careers. The latter group and its elites are dominant in society whereas the former is clearly diminishing in importance.

Suzanne Keller (1930) maintained that elites are effective and responsible minorities that are entrusted with the task of realizing society's principle goals and securing the continuity of the social order, and that are efficient in the pursuit of these goals. Elites are, thus, one primary force supporting any organized society. The growing internal differentiation of modern industrial society leads to an appreciable increase in both the number and the significance of elites, which can no longer be adequately, described using outmoded concepts like ruling class, cast, or aristocracy.⁴⁰ She therefore introduces the term 'strategic elites' to represent those who are of significance for the society as a whole because their decisions and actions have consequences for many members of society.⁴¹

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

⁴⁰ Suzanne Keller, *Beyond the Ruling Class, Strategic Elites in Modern Society*, Roudon House, New York, 1963, p.4.

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

them is based on specialized knowledge and individual effort rather than on birth and wealth. Keller categorizes strategic elites into external and internal elites.⁴²

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

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

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

⁴³ Suzanne Keller, *op.cit.*, pp.216-17

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-79.

⁴⁵ G. L. Field and, J. Higley, *Elitism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980 p.71.

interest in their positions and to ensure that they continue to function smoothly. It is for this reason that it is difficult to forge links between the normative notions of freedom and equality.

They maintained that elite formation is dependent on levels of socioeconomic development.⁴⁶ Today's Western industrial societies are characterized by non-elites with a managerial orientation and uniform elite geared to consensus. The existence of consensus elites is an indispensable prerequisite for today's western democracy. Field and Higley concluded by stating that it is essential to combat the ideology of the welfare state and to avert any escalation of future threats of confrontation by ensuring that elites are given the frame of reference which they urgently need for self-assured political action.⁴⁷

In India, social scientists especially social anthropologists, political scientists, historians and sociologists have shown their interests focusing on structure, recruitment pattern, role, socialization, background etc. Yogendra Singh⁴⁸, in his '*Modernization of Indian tradition*' made an analysis of elite structure in India and observed that we learn much about the nature of society by learning the nature of elite. He maintained that political elites generally constitute the most important segment of the elite structure in any society since they have direct access to the political power which is over-riding among all forms of power. He also studied the manner in which the leadership is chosen, the breadth of social of the social base from which it is recruited, the way in which it exercises the decision making power, the extent and nature of its accountability and other attributes as indicators of the degree of shared power, shared respect, shared well being and shared safety in a given time. He maintained that the structure of elite in a society undergoes the process of differentiation with changes in the social system as a whole. He

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

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

⁴⁸ Yogendra Singh, *Modernization of Indian Tradition*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1994, pp.139-40.

has given three stages of transformation to highlight the changes taking place in the elite structure of Indian society.⁴⁹

Beteille⁵⁰ in his *'Caste, Class and Power: Changing Pattern of Stratification in a Tanjore Village'* tried to point out the characteristics of the elites and their changing pattern. He maintained that there are three tiers of the elites namely the elites in the sphere of politics, bureaucracy and the business executive. He also tried to find out the position of the caste groups in the traditional societies and the emerging new status groups due to the contribution of westernization and urbanization in India.

In his *'The Brahminical Culture and Modernity'*, Moddie⁵¹ discusses the 'Brahminical' ethos of the political and administrative elite in India and focused on the two characteristics style – hesitation and evasion – in making hard choices with regard to country's modernization.

Desai⁵² studied the major causes of the emergence of new elite in India and observed that due to our contact with the Britishers and the new education system the new elite have been born. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit⁵³ analyzed the role of local political elites with reference to Delhi Metropolitan Council and revealed the socio-economic background of the local elites, their pattern of recruitment, functioning and political affiliations. She also discussed the extent of their awareness of local problems and the

⁴⁹ They are – (1) the traditional monarchical feudal elites to whom elite role was ascribed on religious, patrimonial and other particularistic grounds or on the basis of wealth. They less creative and more wedded to ideology of the status quo and the source of legitimating of their authority was in the traditional status, honour and charisma. (2) The new nationalist liberal elite, who emerged as a result of the British rule in India, led to the growth of western education, contact with western ideology of liberal humanism, democracy, equalitarianism, nationalism and industrialism. Most of the new elite belong to an emerging professional group. Most of them were highly westernized and faced hostile response from the elites of the older disposition. (3) The new elite of political populist orientation in independent India. They have more pragmatic and specific policy orientation in political goals, their ideology is specific and they made appeal on specific issues which form part of the social structure of the contemporary interest groups in their community or region. They are also now increasingly recruited from rural, agricultural and lower middle caste or class backgrounds. The new political populist elites are seldom intellectuals and they rarely claim such pretensions

⁵⁰ Andre Beteille, quoted in Panigrahi, P.K., *Political Elite in Tribal Society*, Commonwealth Publishers, new Delhi, 1998, p.21.

⁵¹ A.D. Moddie, *The Brahminical Culture and Modernity*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.

⁵² I.P. Desai, "The New Elite", in T.K.N. Unnithan and others (eds.), *Towards a Sociology of Culture in India*, Prentice Hall of India, Delhi, 1965, quoted in Panigrahi, P.K., *op.cit.* p.22.

⁵³ Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, *'Elites and Urban Politics: A Case Study of Delhi'*, Inter-India Publication, New Delhi, 1984,

solutions, their perception of national ideals and the mode of interaction with the masses. Singh⁵⁴ has identified the emergence of a new and young leadership by the late 1940s in Uttar Pradesh because of land reforms, education and democratization. The new leadership was adequately interested in community development project as a people's programme with government participation. The source of recruitment of the new leadership were also wider, not confined to traditionally entrenched land lord village chief and a few caste Hindu families.

Jones⁵⁵ in his work entitled '*Parliament in India*' examined the socio-economic background of the members of the first parliament. Bhawani Singh⁵⁶ in his '*Council of States in India*' took the same line in studying the background of members of the Rajya Sabha till 1962. Sashilata Puri⁵⁷ in her '*Legislative Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan*' of the legislative elites in Rajasthan attempted to relate the socio-economic background of the elites, their political orientation and values, role perception and the patterns of interaction and linkage with their constituency. Ambedkar⁵⁸ made an attempt to analyse the socio-economic profile of the elites in Andhra Pradesh and to provide a sketch of the perception of the elites concerning various issues of national and local importance.

Dayadhar Jha⁵⁹ studied the fourth Bihar Legislative Assembly and explained the socio-political milieu of the legislative elites, the motivations and training they had prior to their election. He also incorporated in his study the attitude and orientation of the elites

⁵⁴ B. N. Singh, "The Impact of the Community Development Programme on Rural Leadership", in R.L. Park and I. Tinker (eds.), *Leadership and Political Institutions in India*, Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 358-71.

⁵⁵ Morris Jones, *Parliament of India*, London: Longmans, 1957, pp.115-28.

⁵⁶ Bhawani Singh, *Council of States in India*, Meenakshi Prakarshan, Meerut, 1973, pp.50-74.

⁵⁷ Shashilata Puri, *Legislative Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan*, Abinav Publications, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 31-75.

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

⁵⁸ S.N. Ambedkar, *Social Fabric of Legislative Elite in Andhra Pradesh*, Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, Vol. XXIV, Nos. 1-4, 1990, pp.155-75.

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

⁵⁹ Dayadhar Jha, *Role Perceptions of Legislators: An Attitudinal Study of Politicians of Bihar*, Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, Vol. 12. No.2, April-June, 1978, pp.194-210.

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

Shashishekhar Jha's⁶⁰ *'Political Elite in Bihar'* highlighted the structural composition of Bihar Legislative elite. It is found that majority of the legislative elites are middle aged, born in rural areas, belong to backward classes but are from the most educated sectors of population and proficient in multiple languages. The composition of the Assembly is male dominated who have never changed their party affiliation. Swarankar⁶¹ pointed out that the legislative elites in the state have been a heterogeneous group as they differ in age, educational standard, economic background, caste composition, legislative experience and socialization patterns. Only few women candidates could come forward to contest in election fray and still fewer succeeded due to the social orthodoxy which believes in the power function as the male domain. The scheduled caste and scheduled tribe elites are less educated than their counterparts from higher castes but they are more educated than the population they represented. The legislative elite mainly involved of higher caste groups and they led the participation in the legislative proceedings. The debates in the assembly were more in the hostile atmosphere.

Reddy and Prasad⁶² in their study made during 1956 to 1974 noticed that in Andhra Pradesh, the politics of regionalism led to the distribution of the office of Chief Minister by turns among Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telengana regions with more than proportionate share to Telengana region and unequal representation of districts of the state in the council of ministers till 1967. It is also found that no single caste has represented itself constantly and absolutely in all these council of ministers till 1971 but some preference to Reddys is seen.

⁶⁰ Sashishekha Jha, *Political Elite in Bihar*, Vora and Company, Bombay, 1972, pp. 60-117.

⁶¹ R.C. Swarankar, *Political Elite: A Sociological Study of Legislators in Rajasthan*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1988, pp. 35-80.

⁶² G. Ram Reddy, and D. Ravindra Prasad, *Recruitment to the Council of Ministers in Andhra Pradesh*, Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, 1976, Vol. X, No.2, April- June, pp.183-196.

Vijayatilakam's⁶³ study reveals that the minorities, Muslims, Christians, were not represented in the House in the population ratio in Andhra Pradesh. Agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of representatives and most of them entered the legislative run without having any political background. Influences of the national leaders, circumstances and self motivation have been the main factors responsible for entering active politics. Majority of the legislators expressed their commitment to party ideology and the values and norms that the system envisaged. Economic development is crucial issue for the respondents and caste plays an important role the state politics.

Vijay kumar and Ramesh Vhandra Ray⁶⁴ in their analysis of the social background of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes legislators in the Eight Legislative Assembly of Bihar pointed out that all the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes legislators were elected from the reserved constituencies and this resulted in the lack of competitive spirit on their part. A majority of them were young with higher educational qualifications. The study finds that a high majority of the representatives prefer Congress (I) and identified agriculture as their main occupation. The economic status of the legislators was far higher than that of the people they represented but they had no legal and professional experience. More than 76 percent of scheduled castes and 62 percent scheduled tribes legislators were involved in social work before stepping into the decision making institution.

In his article '*Legislative Elites in Haryana: Representation of Agricultural Castes*' Randhir Singh⁶⁵ reviews the leadership pattern during 1952-77 and highlights the predominance of agricultural castes comprising of Jats, Ahirs, Rajputs and Gujjars in Haryana politics. Due to their economically superior status, they have exploited the weaker sections of people in the social, economic and political fields. They have been dominating most of the Vidhan Sabha elections of the state.

⁶³ K.J. Vijayatilakam, *Legislators in Indian Politics*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1998, pp.46-187

⁶⁴ Vijay Kumar, and Ramesh Chandra Ray, *Social Background of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Legislators in Bihar: A Study of the Eight Bihar Legislative Assembly*, Indian Journal of Politics, Vol. XVII, No.2, June, 1983, pp.37-48.

⁶⁵ Randhir Singh, *Legislative Elites in Haryana: Representation of Agricultural Castes*, Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 40, No.4, December, 1979, pp.618-631.

While studying the political decision makers, Rout⁶⁶ highlights the socio-political variables of the members of the West Bengal Council of Ministers of 1969 and observed that in most case, place of birth determines the candidate's success and position and that there was no single minister in the council of ministers who was born outside the state. The Council of Ministers was represented by more middle aged. It was a conglomeration of highly educated and learned personalities. A majority of the ministers were having leftist ideology and had the background of politics and social service. The representation of Hindu community in the council of ministers was the highest. Almost all the ministers had political involvement at various levels of party organization with varying levels. The study concluded that experience in local self-government administration had been an important variable in the recruitment process of political elites and legislative experience was the most vital factor to be minister. The legislators, who had completed two terms, had higher chances of becoming ministers. The attachment of a majority of the ministers with the trade unions was also clearly noticed in the study.

Abraham Raju⁶⁷ in his study of the socio-economic and political background of legislators of Eight Kerala Legislative Assembly pointed out that in a large number of cases; it is student's organizations that encouraged entering politics. The influence of parents, youth organizations, trade unions, agrarian and national movements have also been agents that cause entry into politics. The various groups from which the respondents come include farmers, teachers, lawyers, businesspersons and daily wage earners.

Tewary's study⁶⁸ about Uttar Pradesh Legislature mentioned that it is upper caste, middle aged group elite that have provided the embryo of legislative texture in the state. Most of the legislators have had their birth in the constituencies they contested from. The influence of political leaders is the most important motivating factor to contest followed by ideology and organizational factors. Krishna Iyer⁶⁹ writes that the emergence of new

⁶⁶ Prabas Ranjan Rout, *Political Decision Makers in West Bengal: A Study of their Socio-Political Characteristics*, Indian Political Science Review, Vol.XIV, No.1, January, 1980, pp.65-79.

⁶⁷ Abraham Raju, *Socio-economic and Political Background of Eight Kerala Legislative Assembly*, Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, Vol.22, Nos.1-4, January-December, 1988, New Delhi, pp.164-183

⁶⁸ I.N. Tewary, *State Politics in India*, Anmol Publications, Delhi, 1985, pp.70-86.

⁶⁹ Krishna Iyer in his forward to the book '*India's Political Mould: A fair Franchise and a Federal Framework*', Konark Publishers, Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, 1993.

breed of criminalized politicians and politicized criminals without any ethics have posed severe threat to the process of good governance and clean political life.

Pillai⁷⁰ in his book *'Social Background of Political Leadership in India'* made an extensive study of the political leaders of Kerala since independence. The study emphasized on the role of family in building leadership qualities in an individual and found that the joint family and extended families were conservative in their ideology whereas the nuclear family supported the radical ideology. The nuclear family also produced more state level leaders than local level leaders while the extended and joint families produced local level leaders.

Rout⁷¹ shows that the performance, standard and status of the Orissa state Legislature have been deteriorating. It is not the number but the quality of the legislators that determine the effectiveness of the legislatures. The educated persons should be elected to the legislatures and they should perform their duties with decorum and restraints. A few legislators of the state legislature perform their duties satisfactorily. The study observed that one of the reasons ascribed to the backwardness of the state is the poor level of politics in the state.

Mahapatra⁷² revealed that most of the legislators have constituency oriented perceptions. They considered that they got elected because they had rendered service in their constituencies. A small number of them held that they were elected due to committed party membership and others were of the opinion that feudal loyalty and traditional ties were the secrets of their success. It was also maintained that an increasing

⁷⁰ G. Narayan Pillia, *Social Background of Political Leadership in India*, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, pp.40-168.

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

⁷¹ B.C. Rout, "Origin and Growth of the Orissa Legislature", In A. P. Padhi (ed.), *Indian State Politics: A Case Study of Orissa*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1985, pp.99-105.

⁷² M.K Mahapatra, "Orissa Legislators: Profile and Perception", In B.B. Jena and J.K. Baral (eds.), *Government and Politics in Orissa*, Print House, Lucknow, 1988, pp. 114-121.

number of accused and convicted persons are getting elected as legislators without inviting moral protest. It has been pointed out that those who are convicted for serious offences should not contest in the election until their names are cleared. Convicted criminals should not pollute the electoral process until acquittal. Indian democracy is more important than any individual politician's career.⁷³

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

1.4 Objective of the study

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

1. to delineate the political elites in Manipur and examine the socio-economic and professional base from which the elites are chosen.

⁷³ See Rajeev Dhavan, *A Convicted Democracy*, The Hindu, May 4, 2001.

2. to analyse the linkage between social system and political elite.
3. to study the role of political elites as members of Legislative Assembly and Parliament, as leader of ethnic community and other attributes.
4. to study the trends of change in the political elite structure of Manipuri society.
5. to study the impact of political elites on contemporary Manipuri society.

1.5: Scope of the Study

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

1.6: Methodology

In order to have a scientific and systematic search for pertinent knowledge about the political elites in Manipur, the present study used both primary and secondary data but emphasizing more on primary sources. I collected primary data from the respondents in two phases; one from February 2008 to October 2008 and the other from January, 2009 to March, 2010 but with the addition of one more respondent in the early part of 2012. To meet this end, I have visited different places of Manipur where the respondents live, including the official residences of sitting MLAs/MPs at Babupara, Sanjenthong and Lamphel and MLA hostel in Imphal. While collecting the primary data, special attention and care was given on the population structure/composition of Manipur so that political elites representing different social categories like scheduled tribes, scheduled caste, minority community, general category and women were included as respondents in the present study. It is mostly senior political leaders who appreciated and extended their

cooperation when I approached them for personal interview. Some of them also provided me some relevant secondary data so that the same may be used in the present study. However, some of the respondents seemed to be so ignorant about the significance of empirical research work that they kept on postponing the date when I approached them to seek a date for personal interview citing one reason or other. They also pretended to be so busy and it seemed they have no time to be interviewed by a research scholar for academic purpose. Some of them even asked whether I approached them to seek some donations, perhaps money, for some personal purposes in spite of my introduction, with proper credentials, as a research scholar. I have also visited offices of various political parties, both national and regional, to meet various political leaders and other activists of the state and obtained many important information.

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

Chapter 2

Political Structure of Manipur

2.1 Introduction

The introduction of democratic institutions and principles in Manipur is a new phenomenon. It is coincided with the emergence of educated elite groups in the 1930s when the state was under the British rule. It was this educated elite who organized people against the practices of feudalism and colonialism along with the demand for the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur. The enactment of Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 was the solid foundation for the establishment of a government based on democracy. The political elites as representatives of the people in a democratic setup emerged in the state when it was merged into the Indian union in 1949. It is, therefore, pertinent to study the political history of Manipur, starting from 33 AD, to understand the socio-religious and political background through which the first batch of political elites as representatives of the people emerged in the state.

Manipur has its own long history. Evidences of Old Age; New Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age cultures are available in Manipur.¹ Pre-historic men were said to be settled in a number of caves and rocks in the hills of Manipur. It has been stated that Imphal may be an important zone of Copper-Bronze Age culture. Manipur appear to have received Bronze Age culture traits from Thailand and Upper Burma (now Myanmar).² In pre-historic times, the ancestors of Manipur must have settled in kin groups or scattered villages. Rigid clan customs and communal land tenures governed them. They had leaders who assumed importance as Chieftains under more settled conditions of life.

¹ Gangmumei Kabui, *History of Manipur, Pre-historic Period - Vol. I*, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991, p.48.

² *Ibid.* p. 49.

Before 33 A.D., there were seven clans inhabiting different parts of Manipur.³ Each clan had a head of its own, a territory as its area and a population of its own. The area of each clan was not demarcated but was changing often with the prowess of different Chieftains. The game of politics was confined to a few ambitious men only, who, as commanders of small armies aspired after local rule. No recognized government was there and each clan received tribute and taxes in kind from the land under jurisdiction and maintained there some sort of law and order. Each clan tried to dominate the other and there were frequent wars between the seven clans for the possession of lands or for the capture of human beings. It was only in 33 A.D. that the seven clans came under one suzerain power of king Pakhangba. Feeble attempts were made to consolidate the seven clans in 33 A.D. But it was in 1709 that all the seven clans were merged into one and a single state was brought into existence.⁴

2.2 Rulers of Manipur – A Historical Sequence

Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (33 A.D. – 154 A.D.) was an extraordinarily gifted ruler who introduced many reforms during his reign which laid the foundation of social and political structure as well as cultural and religious pattern of the Meiteis. Since his accession in 33 A.D. the term Meitei had been applied to all persons belonging to the seven clans and the new comers were assigned to one of these in later period.⁵ The king or ruler of Manipur was descendant of king Pakhangba in his male line. However, he was not the master of the whole of Manipur as the Angom, the Khuman and the Moirang revolted frequently and become independent.

³ The Ningthouja (Mangang), Luwang, Angom, Khuman, Moirang, Kha-Nganba and Sarang Leisangthem were the clans inhabiting Manipur.

⁴ N. Iboi Singh, *The Manipur Administration (1709-1907)*, Horizon Printers, New Delhi, 2003, p.235.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 24.

During the reign of Pakhangba, there were two kinds of court – the '*Kucha*' and the '*Pacha*'. The *Kucha* was the highest court and the king presided over its meeting. This court which consists of the king and his nobles tried both civil and criminal cases. The *Pacha* was a court of females and it tried all cases connected with females. It consisted of Pakhangba's wife, Laisna, as president and other ten members. There was the possibility of making appeal against the decision of this court to the *Kucha*. Women criminals were neither imprisoned nor put to death.⁶ The highest punishment was '*Khongoinaba*'.⁷ But male criminals were put to death for offences like treasons and murder by a device called '*Wayen Michap*'.⁸ For the administrative purpose king Pakhangba divided the land into four '*panas*' (divisions) – the '*Ahallup*' pana, the '*Naharup*' pana, the '*Laipham*' pana and the '*Khabam*' pana. He introduced the play of '*Kangjei*' (hockey) and the system of giving rewards and distinction. The institution of '*Lallup*'⁹ (forced and unpaid labour) was also introduced by him.

Khuyai Tompok (154-264 A.D.) succeeded Pakhangba. During his reign there was installation of 64 '*phamdons*' (nobility) and introduction of two '*Shanglens*' (institutions) namely – *Nongdamba Shaglen* and *Ngamdai Shanglen*. Both these institutions were advisory in character and were under the control of *Phathi* (learned men). There were *Keirungba*, *Sharungba* and *Ngarungba* who were in charge of the royal godown, procuring and maintaining animal and fish respectively. There was also a '*Ningollakpa*'¹⁰ who was in charge of *Ningol* or maidens. Bronze making, weaving, printing of design and dyeing, silk rearing, boat making and exploration were said to be developed during his reign.

⁶ N. Ibohi Singh, *op.cit.* p. 25.

⁷ It was a kind of punishment awarded to women criminals in which the head of the culprit was shaved, her bare breast and head were painted red with a mixture of lime and turmeric and she was exposed to the market in an almost naked conditions.

⁸ '*Wayen Michap*' was composed of two stones in the middle of which the convict had to enter. These stones crushed the culprit to death.

⁹ According to the institution of *Lallup*, every adult male had to attend to royal functions for ten days out of every forty.

¹⁰ The main function of *Ningollakpa* was to educate girls in social customs and habits.

Taothingmang became the next king of Manipur and had a successful reign. He was described as one of the makers of Manipur. His wisdom, action, adventure and skill greatly benefited the country. He was well known for his work of draining the marshes of Manipur valley and dredging its rivers and streams. Manipur valley had such topography that rains would cause flood as the marshes could not be drained away by the narrow rivers and streams and this affected the agricultural production. The innumerable lakes and marshes, when properly drained, provided agricultural lands and cultivation. The dredging involved human labour which was possible only with the mass participation of the people of the kingdom. Taothingmang had powerful loyalty of his subjects. It is believed that he conquered *Lokha-Haokha*, a place inhabited by hill men. This conquest was regarded as the 'first contact' between the Ningthouja and hill men recoded in '*Cheitharol Kumbaba*'.¹¹

After the death of Taothingmang, his son Khui Ningomba ascended the throne and he continued his father's works of dredging the rivers and strengthening the embankments of the rivers and stream of the kingdom. He introduced the worship of *Lal Leima* (goddess of war) in the Manipuri month of *Mera* (October) to strengthen the military power of the kingdom. He had a reign of 15 years. His successors, Pongsiba followed by Kaokhagba, had unsuccessful reign.¹²

Naokhomba (411-428 A.D.) introduced the title '*Ningthou*' (meaning king) in place of the old title '*Piba*'. His reign was characterized by expansion of the kingdom which was felt by other tribes.¹³ Naophangba (428-518A.D.), son of Naokhomba, was the next king. He was credited with the construction of a seven storied kangla palace building. During his reign the rules for the construction of the king's palace and temples in kangla were written into a treatise called *kangla Haouba* or *Kanglalon* (construction of kangla) by a scholar named Ashangbam Laiba.¹⁴ Naophangba, under the influence of a religious

¹¹ R.K. Jhalajit Singh, *A Short History of Manipur*, Imphal, 1964, p.43.

Cheitharol Kumbaba is the Royal Chronicle and it is considered to be the most authentic source of history of Manipur from 33 A.D.

¹² Gangmumei Kabui, op.cit. p.100.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Gangmumei Kabui, "Imphal- A Short Historical Account", In Lal Dena (ed.), *History of Modern Manipur (1826-1949)*, Orbit Publishers-Distributors, New Delhi, 1991.p.190.

leader called Pangan Guru who most probably came from Bengal, stop the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the Meiteis and took a new religion, perhaps, a form of popular Hinduism. He stopped the practice of burial of dead and introduced cremation. Meat was declared as a tabooed food and meat eating was banned. This was the first instance of Hindu missionary attempt to convert the Meitei king.¹⁵ The religious Guru as well as the new religion was, however, evidently rejected by the king and the people. Naophangba was a good administrator, a deeply religious man and a good hunter.

Sameirang succeeded his father Naophangba. During his reign (518-568 A.D.), there was consolidation and extension of the Ningthouja political power at the cost of other clan principalities. He along with his half brother Thamanglang carried out the administration of the country. The territory of his kingdom was extended and reached the Maring hills in the east. Ura Konthouba (568-658) was the next ruler. He had extended the Ningthouja kingdom through matrimonial alliance and military aggrandizement. During his reign there was the use of copper and tin sheets in the construction of bridge over Naga stream, the use of cavalry with all the military accoutrements. He also issued bell metal coin in his name and this indicates the beginning of monetization of the barter economy of the country.¹⁶

Naothingkhong (633-763 A.D.) was the next successor. The Royal Chronicle assigned the reign of 100 years to him. Between the death of Ura Konthouba and succession of Naothingkhong, there was an interval of five years when there was no king. He was at that time in Luwang principality. He was called by his mother to accept the throne of Kangla under Ningthouja dynasty. He was a man of high military skill, courage and bravery. Naothingkhong was succeeded by Khongtekcha whose administration made Manipur a stable and prosperous country. His reign of ten years was very brief. He was a very skillful hunter and devoted to the meditation on God and soul. Kairencha (784-99 A.D.) succeeded Khongtekcha. He was succeeded by Yaraba (799-821 A.D.). But no significant event was recorded in Royal Chronicles during their reign.

¹⁵ Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit.*, p.103

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 106.

During the reign of the next ruler, Ayangba (821-910 A.D), there was the beginning of conflicts between the Ningthuoja and the Khumans. He constructed a road in the eastern side of the capital which is even today known as Ayangpalli. Ayangba was succeeded by Ningthoucheng, Chenglei Ipam Langthaba, Yorou Keiphaba and Irengba respectively. Ningthoucheng (910-49 A.D) was not an able ruler but his reign was peaceful. Chenglei Ipam Langthaba (949-69 A.D) who succeeded Ningthocheng defeated the Luwangs on the Luwangyi stream in the west of Imphal. Since this attack the Luwangs were brought under subjugation of Ningthoujas. Chenglei Ipam Lanthaba was succeeded by his son, Keiphaba, who had a short reign of 15 years (969-84 A.D.). Keiphaba was succeeded by his eldest son Irengba, who, during his reign (984-1074 A.D.), invaded and defeated the Moirangs. He was meticulous about royal garments and costumes.¹⁷

Loiyamba (1074-1121 A.D.), the next ruler, in his reign, was engaged in a number of expeditions and consequently, there was consolidation of kingdom by defeating and conquering various hill tribes. He introduced administrative reforms by creating six *Lups* (divisions) – *Angom Lup*, *Nongmai Lup*, *Akong Lup*, *Khurai Lup*, *Chingja Lup* and *Khaija Lup*.¹⁸ During his reign, there was the development of *Lallup* System and this development was the manifestation of the emergence of feudalism in the social, administrative and political structure of the Meitei kingdom. Loiyamba also introduced some sort of functional specialization. The '*Thangjam*' (surname of a clan) had the specific function of making swords, spears, axes and spade etc. while the '*Lourungbam*' was concerned with cultivation and the '*Usham*' was concerned with carpentry and allied industries. Any person who encroached upon the function of another was known as '*Yumdangba*' (parasites). Loitongba (1112-50 A.D.), son of Loiyamba, was the next king and his reign was marked by the development of peaceful cultural activities. He was succeeded by his eldest son named, Atom Yoiremba who reigned for 13 years (1150-63 A.D). Atom Yoiremba was driven out by his brother, Hemton Iwanthaba, who engineered a conspiracy with the help of some nobles of the court. Hemton Iwanthaba reigned for 32 years (1163-95 A.D.)

¹⁷ Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit*, p.123.

¹⁸ N. Ibohi Singh, *op.cit*. p.27.

The reign of the next king, Thawanthaba (1195-1231 A.D.), was a landmark. He had defeated the Khumans and the Heirem Khunjaus, an ethnic group in south-west of Manipur. He was able to penetrate the hill areas inhabited by various tribal groups surrounding the valley of Manipur. He kept his kingdom more unified. Chingthanlanthaba (1231-43 A.D.) succeeded his father, Thawanthaba and defeated the Khumans and the Kabaw, a Shan group from the Chindwin River basin at a hill village known as Mapithen in eastern hills. His reign was not that eventful. He was succeeded by his son, Thingbaishilungba, who had a short reign of five years (1242-47 A.D.). Puranthaba (1247-63 A.D.) ascended the throne of the Ningthouja kingdom in 1247 A.D. The Khumans were totally absorbed into the kingdom of Manipur during his reign. He suppressed the Chakpas of Moiching village and other villages along the Thoubal River.¹⁹

Khumomba's reign (1263-78 A.D.) marked the beginning of further extension of the Ningthouja kingdom to the east and was into immediate hostile contact with Shan dwellers of Kabaw valley in Chindwin basin of Upper Burma. The Khumans were defeated by the Shans and the Khuman sent for military help from the Meitei king. The Meitei forces defeated the Shans. Khumomba also raided the Thangal and Maram villages to the north and west of Manipur valley. Khumomba was succeeded by his son, Moiramba in 1278 A.D. whose reign was characterized by fights with Khumans and Moirangs. He defeated a tribal village called Aibitok in the Maku River basin. He died in 1302 A.D and was succeeded by his son, Thangbi Lanthaba who had reigned up to 1324 A.D. He defeated the Moirangs and invaded the Maring Khunbi village and Sekkuching village in the Koubru hills. Kongyamba (1324-1335 A.D.) succeeded Thangbi Lanthaba and defeated the tribals of Kongyang villag in the western hills. He also raided Tendongyan, Ingenching (Hinglan Ching) to the west of the kingdom. His reign was marked by the invasion of his kingdom by a group of people from the west. The invaders were defeated in the battle fought at Ingenching (Hinglen Ching) and were captured as

¹⁹ Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit.* p.135.

prisoners. These prisoners appear to be group of Bengal refugees who were driven out of Bengal by the Muslims and who came to Manipur through the hill routes for shelter.²⁰

Khongyamba was succeeded by his son, Telheiba (1135-55 A.D.) who was succeeded by his younger brother Tonaba who had a short reign of five years (1355-59 A.D.). He was succeeded by Tabungba (1359-94 A.D.). Tabungba invaded Chingsong village but was killed by the Ching Chief, Khamlanba. He was succeeded by his son Lairenba (1394-98 A.D.) who died without any issue. His death was followed by an interregnum of five years. Punshiba who became the next king was the younger brother of Lairenba. His reign (1404-32 A.D.) was extended to a large number of tribal villages in the surrounding hills, Moirang and Thanga Kambong in the western part of the Imphal valley. The kingdom of Ningthoujas had become greatly strengthened by the military exploits of the king.

The next king Ningthou Khomba (1432-67 A.D.), son of Punshiba, was an aggressive ruler that he was described as ‘a worthy son of a worthy father’.²¹ He was determined to expand the territory boundary of the kingdom by following the policy of aggression and conquer of the neighboring areas. As his father had already expanded the kingdom by covering most part of Manipur valley, north-western, north and north-eastern hills, he had to expand the kingdom by coming into conflict with the principality of southern Manipur valley, the Moirang country or the Shan principalities or villages in the east and in the western part of the Chindwin basin of Upper Burma. His soldiers raided the Shan villages, entered every house and killed the queen of the Shan Chief of Tamu. He also defeated the Moirangs. The Meitei king’s writ was fully established in the whole of Manipur valley. The feudal structure of the land was fully developed during his reign.²²

Thangwai Ningthouba (1467-1508 A.D.), also known as Kyamba, ascended the throne at the age of 24 years. The area between Tripura on the south, Cachar Mulugrun on the west and Assam on the north was under his influence. Being allied with Kikhomba, the Pong king, Thangwai Ningthouba conquered kyang or Kyang Khambat , a

²⁰ Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit*, p.137

²¹ R.K. Jhalajit Singh, *op.cit*, p.70

²² Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit*, p.140.

Shan kingdom in the kabaw valley. The territory of Manipur was extended widely by this time. The kingdom of Manipur was a full-fledged sovereign country with internal and external independence. All the booties of war were kept in the royal barns. For the better collection of revenue, two revenue circles, *Ahallup* and *Nahalup*, each under a supervisor, were created. An image of Durga was worshipped in a specially built temple dedicated to her. The image of Lord Bishnu presented to him by Kikhomba, king of Pong, was worshipped in a temple at Bishenpur. But no records are available to show that he was formally initiated to Vaishnavism.²³

During his reign there was migration of Brahmins to Manipur. They were employed to look after the Hindu temples and to act as astrologers. There were other non-Brahmin migrants, Leirikyengbams, who were employed as royal scribes. The Shans or Pongs or Kabaws also came to Manipur and became the subjects of the ruler of Manipur in Kabaw valley. The rulers who succeeded Thangwai Ningthouba/Kyamba were weak and their reigns were characterized by internal instability and stagnancy. There were six rulers between 1508 A.D. and 1562 A.D.²⁴

Mungyamba (1562-1597), the 45th king of Manipur, was an efficient ruler. He defeated the Mungyang, a principality near the Kabaw valley. He attacked Samsok twice in 1571 and 1591 and returned with war booties. It was during his reign that the Meitei kingdom had fully established suzerainty over Manipur valley and the surrounding hill region, the Tangkhul hills and Kabaw valley. Wax-coated shirts to avoid rain were introduced and silver crowns were also adopted during his reign. The king established '*Ametpa Loishang*' - the department of medicine men. It was a sort of medical department and its head was the queen.

Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.) ascended the throne at the age of twenty four and was fully equipped to preside over the affairs of the state and guide the duties of his people and the empire. During his reign, he tried to consolidate his rule in Kabaw valley, check the Muslim invasion from the west and establish his hold over the whole hill area. According to Chronicles, the Meitei king attacked the principal Chinese village or town

²³ N. Ibohi Singh, *op.cit.* p. 29.

²⁴ The six rulers who ruled Manipur between 1508 A.D. and 1562 A.D. were Koiremba(1508-12), Lam kyamba (1512-24), Nonginphaba (1524), Kabomba (1524-42), Thangjanba (1542-45) and Chalamba (1545-62).

along with many brave Meitei warriors and defeated the Chief Choupha Hongdei.²⁵ The propitiation of animistic deities and the custom of smoking tobacco pipe began in Manipur during his time. The Manipuri script was improved in 1616 and taught to his royal sons. He patronized many Pandits headed by Lourembam Khongnangthaba.²⁶ The feudal system was perfected during his reign. He introduced very elaborate social etiquettes and rules for performance of duties by different officials at the court. The nobility who formed the backbone of the state system was further strengthened with the idea that unity and harmony among the nobles would strengthen the kingdom and enhance the prestige and power of the king. He also gave encouragement and respect to the Chiefs of the hill tribes. *Lallup* system continued to be the steel frame of the state system. But he modified the land tenure and land revenue system within the *Lallup*. The land owners were to pay paddy as tax of rent to the state. Practice of payment in little cash ('*sel*') was introduced and the administration of revenue circles known as '*Panas*' were strengthened.

Khunjaoba (1652-66), son and successor of Khagemba, ascended the throne in 1652 after the death of his father. He improved the town of Imphal. He dug a moat round the palace and made it impregnable. He carried out military expeditions both in Kabaw valley and some hill areas within the kingdom. There was more contact between Manipur and Assam as well as Tripura. Paikhomba (1666-97), son of Khunjaoba's brother Tonaba, succeeded the throne in 1666. He killed many tigers while reclaiming jungles necessitated by the increase in population.²⁷ Manipur had trade relations with Burma, Cachar, and Tripura and the objects of trade were mostly elephants and horses. Many immigrants including Brahmin settlers from Gujarat, Vanarasi, Bridavan and Prayang came to Manipur during his reign. There was improvement of roads and communications in the valley. Salt wells were improved in 1693.²⁸ During his time, the tribute from the Kabaw valley consisted of silver, armour, caps and canopies were obtained. He raided successfully Shamjok and Tripura. Theft was of a very rare occurrence

²⁵ Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.21

²⁶ N. Ibohi Singh, *op.cit*, p.31

²⁷ R.K. Jhalajit Singh, *op.cit*, p.10

²⁸ N. Ibohi Singh, *op.cit*, p.32.

During the period 1697 to 1826, Manipur experienced social, cultural and religious transformation the impact of which changed the whole social and cultural scenario of Manipur. The period was a revolutionary era in which Manipur was converted into Hinduism. The political zenith during this period was associated with a powerful process of sanskritization of society, culture and history and even the identity of Manipur. In this process of change, three kings, - father, son and a great grandson – Charairongba, Garibaniwaza and Bhagyachandra played very important roles.

After the death of Paikhomba, his nephew Charairongba ascended the throne in 1697. During his reign (1697-1709), a large number of Brahmins entered Manipur. He was formally initiated to Vaishnavism and built a brick temple of Lord Krishna at Bramhapur Guru Aribam Leikai which still exists. He was in close contact with the Burmese. He invited the hill Chiefs of the east and made personal friends with them. As Imphal valley was thickly populated with tigers, leopards, wolves and monkey, the tiger menace was really great. Protection from the menace was the responsibility of the state, especially the monarch.²⁹ He enforced strict punishments for crimes. Even thieves were condemned to death.

Garibaniwaza (1709-1748), the next ruler, was a great king of Manipur of whom any country or nation could be really proud of. The fame of him rests on his military conquests which were classified into three fronts – the first was military expedition towards the hill tribes for internal consolidation, the second was the war against Burma and the third was the war against Tripura. He was the greatest conqueror and military leader Manipur ever produced.³⁰ A number of reasons were responsible for the success of Manipur in the wars against Burma and Tripura. Garibaniwaza and his predecessors had built up a strong state system based on sound economy with enough natural resources in Manipur and kabaw valley. The hill tribes gave a strong support to the king and the most important factor was the well organized military force. Manipur's infantry were well known for skill in swordsmanship, use of spear and personal bravery. Every Manipuri soldier was a foot soldier, a horse soldier, a boatman and a sailor soldier. The cavalry

²⁹ Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit*, p.235

³⁰ *Ibid*, p .240.

equipped with the deadly '*arambai*'³¹ was the most effective wing of State force and it became a terror to all her neighbours.

Garibaniwaza was also a great religious reformer and played the pivotal role in the introduction of Hinduism in Manipur. His court was greatly influenced by the Brahmin priests, specially the royal preceptor, Shanta Das, who was involved in all spheres of Manipur's life. However, despite the adoption of Hindu titles, the structure of the monarchy and other government apparatus remained the same. He introduced the Hindu system of ministers known as Mantris. The office of the mantri or minister was an additional post created by him over and above the traditional Meitei court known as '*Ningthou Pongbas*' which were interpreted as something like ministers. The form of punishment continued to be severe, like the cutting of limbs and exile to penal settlements.³² His reign was characterized by burning of '*Meitei Puyas*' (ancient scripture of Manipur), destruction of the abodes of traditional deities, intensification of Sanskritization and identification of Meitei festivals with Hindu festivals. But the efforts of the king and his preceptor to destroy the ancient Meitei religion failed due to opposition by the traditional followers of the ancient religion. Therefore, the king and Shanta Das agreed to the acceptance of '*Sanamahi*' (indigenous religion of Meeteis) as distinct and important God and practice of the old religious ceremony and beliefs though outwardly, the Hindu forms were enforced and accepted.³³

After killing his father, Garibaniwaza, Chit Shai (1748-52) ruled for four years. Though he was a very unpopular ruler, he tried to revive the traditional Meitei religion by persecuting the converts. Chit Shai's brother, Bharat Shai drove out the patricide king from the throne instead of killing him to avoid further bloodshed among royal brothers and exiled him to Cachar.³⁴ Bharat Shai was again driven out of Manipur and exiled to the Shan principality in Upper Burma. After expelling Bharat Shai, Maramba or Goursham (1753-58) ascended the throne of Manipur. He was assisted by his younger brother Bhagyachandra who was made the crown prince and his uncle Ananta Shai was

³¹ It is a little heavier and bigger arrow with string and feather of the cocks, carried in numbers on both sides of the saddle on the horse, on the neck side of the horse, was used for attack and defence against enemy army.

³² Gangumei Kabui, *op.cit*, p.260

³³ *Ibid*, p. 257.

³⁴ Chetharol kumbaba, p.108.

appointed senapati. In 1758, there was Burmese invasion and this led the king and people fled to the hills and after the departure of the Burmese returned to the capital. In 1759, Gourashyam abdicated the throne in favour of his younger brother Bhagyachandra. But in 1762 Bhagyachandra stepped down from the throne as atonement for killing a Brahmin Brahmacharya by his servants and Gourashyam became king again. In 1762 Gourashyam died and Bhagyachandra became the king once again.

In 1764, Bhagyachandra, also known as Jai Singh, had to flee to Cachar due to Burmese invasion. He affected a friendship with the Ahom ruler who agreed to send an expedition to Manipur to drive away the Buremese. In 1767, Bhagyachandra with the help of the Ahoms regained the throne of Manipur by killing the titular ruler, khellemba. In 1769, the Burmese again invaded Manipur and defeated Bhagyachandra. In 1770, Kukila was made the titular ruler of Manipur. However, Bhagyachandra drove away the Burmese and regained the throne. The Burmese under Hsinyu shin continued to harass Manipur by minor skirmishes till 1782. But by 1782, Manipur became completely independent again. Bhagyachandra moved from heaven to earth for forty years to defend against invasion and liberate from foreign rule. He was a good administrator that even during the repeated Burmese occupation of the kingdom; he was able to run the administration very efficiently. He had support from every circle. His reign was also marked by propagation of Vaishnavism, installation of the wooden statue of Sri Govindajee, beginning of Ras Leela and Bengali cultural influence.

After the death of Bhagyachandra in 1799, Manipur experienced political instability due to fratricidal conflicts among the sons of Bhagyachandra. This led to foreign intervention and ultimately, the Burmese conquest of Manipur. The political instability weakened the state structure and the monarchy on which the fortune of the kingdom depended much. There were intrigues and conspiracies among the ambitious princes whose love for power had no limits even at the cost of the country. Manipur also was affected by the Burmese imperialism in the east and the British expansionism in the west.

Labanyachandra (1798-1801), the eldest son of Bhagyachanda, ascended the throne at the age of 44. He tried to restore and revive the important religious places in the ancient Kangla, the capital of the kingdom. He also constructed a royal residential building at the Kangla. In 1799, he was successful driving away the Burmese who invaded the Kabaw valley and burnt down the town of Tamu which was within the territorial boundary of Manipur. He was assassinated by Angom Chandramani. Modhuchandra (1801-1804), the third son of Bhagyachandra, ascended the throne when he heard of the assassination of the king. In order to please his royal brothers who could create trouble he appointed Chourajit, his half brother as Yubaraj and Marjit Singh as Senapati. In 1802, Yubaraj Chourajit revolted against the king but was defeated. He fled to Cachar.

Chourajit Singh (1804-1813) again invaded Manipur and ascended the throne in February, 1804 by defeating Modhuchandra and made him fled to Cachar. He made Marjit Singh, who was an exceedingly ambitious young prince the Yubaraj of the kingdom. Marjit Singh conspired to capture power but failed in his conspiracy and escaped to Burma. In 1813, a Burmese military expedition accompanied by Marjit Singh defeated Manipur and this led king Chourajit and Prince Gambhir Singh fled to Cachar to take refuge. Marjit Singh was installed as the king of Manipur in 1813 by the Burmese who accepted latter's suzerainty and ceded Kabaw valley to Burma. He bargained his independence and Kabaw valley for the kingship of Manipur. Marjit Singh gradually asserted himself as an independent ruler making his vassalage under the Burmese a mere promise. In 1818, he constructed a gilded royal residence with seven rooms and this very act was considered an offence by the Burmese ruler. Burma was at the zenith of power and the new king Bagyidaw (1819-37) summoned the Manipur king to be present at his coronation ceremony at Ava and pay homage to him which was customary for any vassal ruler of Burma. Marjit Singh did not comply the royal summon and refused to attend the ceremony on the plea that he apprehended troubles from his brothers Chourajit Singh and Gambhir Singh. The Burmese invaded and conquered Manipur 1819 and they rule Manipur through puppet rulers for seven years. This period from 1819 to 1826 is still remembered in Manipur as '*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa*' (Seven Years Devastation). It was during this period that the Burmese domination over Manipur reached its extreme height

with a devastating impact that the country was left practically with no ruler.³⁵ The male population was reduced to a very low level as majority of them were forcibly taken to Burma.³⁶

2.3 Power and Functions of the Raja

During the period 33 AD to 1709, the Raja did not exercise autocratic power. He was bound by customs and conventions. Any violation of them had resulted in house imprisonment. He was also not permitted to attend to his royal functions. Even his private life was regulated by laws and customs.³⁷ The nobility exercised tremendous influence over the Raja before 1709. However, since 1709 the influence of the nobility began to decline. The Raja remained the final appellate judge. He could interfere at any time in any case in which he was interested.

During the period 1709 to 1907 the Raja was more concerned with the maintenance of security of his kingdom. He had to meet external aggression on several occasions. Consequently, the administration was more concerned with war preparation than with the administration of local and development was, thus, completely neglected. The law of primogeniture often broke down and any powerful man within the Ningthouja clan could be the Raja. Only males should succeed the throne. Further, the principle of adoption was sometimes resorted to. The Raja was the fountain of honour and the commander in chief. All the honours emanated from him. All officers of the army, cavalry and navy were appointed by, and responsible to, the Raja. However, the Raja did not command armies in civil wars. The Raja was also the Chief-Priest of the country. But his appearance in priestly capacity was infrequent and strongly limited to great calamities.

The Raja was assisted by a council of ministers and the relation between them was cordial. Before 1709, both the Raja and his council of ministers were co-ordinate

³⁵ Kshetri Rajendra, *The Emergence of Meetei Nationalism*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p.30.

³⁶ Lal Dena "Assertion of Resurgent Manipur (1826-1834)" in Lal Dena (ed.), *History of Modern Manipur (1826 - 1949)*, Orbit Publishers-Distributors, New Delhi, 1991, p. 8.

³⁷ N. Ibohi Singh, *op.cit.* p. 236.

authorities. However, after 1709, the powers of the ministers gradually declined and those of the king steadily increased. Most of the ministers were men of capacity, integrity and experience and they rendered sound service to the king. They were selected by the king from among the 32 leaders of the 32 divisions of Manipur. Ministership was not hereditary. Formerly selection was based on merit. But later on, the sons of the Raja became ministers. Security reasons might have been the cause of this arrangement. Ministers were collectively responsible for efficient administration of the state. Individually, they were responsible for the administration of different departments such as revenue, food and jail departments.³⁸ Therefore, the ministers were executive officers. There was no separation of powers. One and the same minister exercised all the powers – legislative, executive and judiciary. The arrangement was not only responsible for the prompt execution of cases but also for the loss of liberties of the people. Ministers were collectors of revenue from their respective circles. New lands would be reclaimed and in this connection the minister was also a record keeper.

All the ministers were expected to command an army in the battlefield. They often led expeditions. The Raja often consulted them in military matters. Each of them exercised almost the same powers in his jurisdiction. Since these high officials exercised tremendous powers there was much room for corruption, favouritism and nepotism. Some of them appropriated a portion of the fines inflicted on convicts and those criminals who could not pay fines were reduced to slavery. The headquarters of administration was in the valley. The hill was divided into five sub-divisions. Due consideration was given for the administration of Imphal. The town was divided into four '*Leikais*' (localities) – Khwai, Yaiskul, Khurai and Wangkhei. The head of each *leikai* (locality) was a minister.

2.4 British officials in the administration of Manipur

From 1819 till the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo 1826, Manipur was under the Burmese occupation for seven years which was/is known as '*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa*'

³⁸ N. Ibobi Singh, *op.cit*, p.240

(Seven Years Devastation) in the history of Manipur. The kings who rule Manipur under the suzerainty of the Burmese include – Yumjaoba (1820), Gambhir Singh (1821), Jadu Singh (1822), Raghu Singh (1823) and Bhadra Singh (1824- 25). By the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, Manipur was liberated from the clutches of the Burmese occupation and Gambhir Singh was recognized as the Raja of Manipur. The treaty however paved the way for British interference in the administration of Manipur. In 1835 Captain Gordon was appointed the political agent of Manipur to advise and regulate the conduct of administration of the Raja. The presence of a political agent was considered necessary to check the frequent and devastating expeditions of the Burmese and to safeguard the country from civil wars.

The posting of a political agent had a far-reaching effect. Before 1835, civil wars, murder, devastation and misery were the order of the day. After 1835 law and order were maintained. It appeared as if that without the political agent at Imphal, there would have been anarchy in Manipur. When there was a temporary vacancy in the office of the political agent after the retirement of McCulloch (1844-62 and 1863-67), Raja Chandrakriti requested the government of India for the immediate appointment of the successor.³⁹

In 1851, the government of India declared their determination to uphold the cause of the then Raja and to resist and to punish any party attempting thereafter to dispossess him of his power. This declaration had resulted in the increase of the powers and functions of the political agent. As the price of protection afforded to him, the Raja had to submit to the increasing control of the British. The responsibility of the political agent was therefore two fold – first, to protect the Raja against internal rebellion and external aggression and second, to protect the subjects against the oppressive rule of the Raja. Beside these, he had to insist upon the Raja for the fulfillment of treaties negotiated between Manipur and the British government. Some of the political agents involved themselves in some social activities. For instance, Captain Gordon introduced English vegetables and fruits. McCulloch prevented the slavery trade of the Kukis and James

³⁹ N. Ibobi Singh, *op.cit*, p.239.

Johnstone was responsible for spreading English education in Manipur. Of course, these functions were optional but they conferred permanent benefit on the people of the state.

Manipur lost her sovereignty in her last war of independence against the British (Anglo-Manipur war) in 1891 and up to 1907, the state was administered by the British officials on behalf of the minor king (only six years old) Churachand Singh. Afterwards, Maharaja Churachand ruled the state and was responsible for the administration of the state as a whole. The king was assisted by a Darbar (an advisory council) consisting of one Indian civil service (ICS) officer and six Manipuri members in the daily administration of the state.

2.5 Turning point

The period from 1938 - 48 marked a turning point in the political history of Manipur. It was during this period that the first batch of educated elites emerged in Manipur. Prominent among them was Hijam Irawat Singh. The socio-political system in Manipur at that time was monarchical under the British colonial rule and people were subjugated to both native monarchy and the foreign imperialism. There were only a few people who stood and fought against the king and who refused to toe line with the establishment. Irawat was the pioneer of such group of people.⁴⁰ He was constantly disturbed about the deteriorating condition of the people under the British imperialism and constantly thought of ways to drive out the imperialists from Manipur and Indian soil.⁴¹ Irawat along with his friends Bankabihari Sharma, Lalit Madhob Sharma, Kanhai, Bijoy, Megha etc started a great revolution against the practice of '*amang-aseng*' (pollution-purity) prevalent in Manipur. Irawat was deeply influenced by the writings of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Tilak, Bhagat Singh, Khudiram, Subash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi and Gorky etc that he was determined to root out all kinds of exploitation and establish a new classless socialist society. The new educated elite groups were against the traditional social system upheld by the traditional elites. They began to question the rights and privileges of the traditional

⁴⁰ For details, see Kshetri Rajendra, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-59

⁴¹ S. Chhatradhari, "*Manipurgi Itihasta Irawat*", Imphal, Manipur State krishak Sabha, 1972, quoted in Kshetri Rajendra, *ibid.*, p. 48.

elites. There was the demand for the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur and this demand was closely related with the birth of a political party in Manipur. The people of Manipur came to know about the working system of a political organization for the first time in the year 1938. Before this, there was no political party in Manipur.⁴² The establishment of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha in 1934 changed the entire scenario. Some of the leading members of this organization, mostly educated elite, had strongly felt the immediate need for a political organization in Manipur and work for introducing a new political and administrative system based on the principle of democracy. Initially, the Mahasabha was established as a social and religious organization with Maharaja Churachand as its president. However, the driving force behind the Mahasabha was Hijam Irawat Singh, the vice-president, who actually wanted a platform for mobilizing the people. Under Irawat's leadership, the Mahasabha at its Chinga session in 1938 demanded, among other things, the introduction of fully responsible government in the state. After this session the Maharaja of Manipur declared the Mahasabha as a political party and no government servant was allowed to be member of this party. The Mahasabha became a political party and its original name "Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha" was subsequently changed into the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha.⁴³

In 1939, a new political party called Praja Sanmelani was formed with Hijam Irawat as the leader. The main objectives of the party were abolition of colonial and feudal rules and establishment of a responsible government in Manipur and the party started a peaceful and non-violent political agitation against the practices of feudalism and colonialism. Again, in 1945 a new party – Praja Sangha party – was established whose main aim and objectives include working for the achievement of independence of Manipur, abolition of feudal rule, establishment of a responsible government and introduction of adult universal franchise in the country. This party also strongly stressed the need for having a classless society in the country. During this time, Krishi Sanmelani – a peasant society – was fighting for the redress of the grievances of the peasants. In the

⁴² N. Joykumar Singh, "Towards Freedom and Integration- 1938-1949", in Lal Dena (ed.), *History of Modern Manipur (1826-1949)*, Orbit publishers-Distributors, New Delhi, 1991 P.154.

⁴³ For details, see Kshetri Rajendra, *op.cit.* pp. 47-59.

year 1946, it was converted into a political organization with a new name – the Manipur Krishak Sabha. It strongly emphasized the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur, introduction of adult universal franchise, the integration of the people of the hills and plains. Another important demand of this party was that all the cultivable land in Manipur should be transferred to the tillers. This party was indeed the only peasant based organization in Manipur.

2.6 Establishment of Congress Party

The Manipur Congress party was established in 4th October, 1946 at the initiative of some individuals, mostly educated people. Later on, this party became a unit of the All India Congress Committee. Like other parties, this party also emphasized strongly for the establishment of a responsible government on the basis of the principle of democracy, abolition of social injustice of the feudal rule. The birth of these political parties increased to a large extent the spirit of political consciousness among the people of Manipur and brought a sweeping change in the political system of Manipur.

The Maharaja of Manipur after sensing the increasing political development in India and the mood of the time issued a formal order to constitute a ‘constitution making committee’ to prepare a new constitution for the governance of the state on 12 December 1946. The said committee submitted the draft constitution to the Maharaja on 27th July, 1947. In fact, the enactment of Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 was the solid foundation for the establishment of a government based on democracy. After the lapse of the British paramouncy in August, 1947, Maharaja Bodhachandra (1941-55), the eldest son of Maharaja Churachand Singh, entered Kangla at Imphal and hoisted the National flag of Manipur bearing the Dragon God ‘Pakhangba’.

2.7 Merger to India

Under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947, assembly elections were held in 1948 on the basis of adult franchise and Manipur incidentally became the first to exercise

adult franchise in free India.⁴⁴ A representative government was formed under the Chief-Ministership of Maharajkumar Priyobrata Singh, the younger brother of Maharaja Bodhachandra. However, the newly independent India and its government in New Delhi pressured the king to sign a merger agreement with India. Maharaja Bodhachandra signed the merger agreement under duress on 21st September, 1949 AD at Shillong.⁴⁵ Following the Merger Agreement Manipur was made a Part-C state. The President of India carried on the administration of the state through a Chief-Commissioner appointed by him. The Lok-Sabha and the Rajya-Sabha reserved the right of making laws of the Part-C state. Manipur from a Part-C state became a Union Territory in 1956.

2.8 General Election/Formation of First Government

The first general elections after the merger were held in January, 1952. Manipur went to the polls to elect two members of Lok-Sabha and 30 members of the Electoral College (20 in the valley and 10 in the hills, constituted for electing a member of the Rajya-Sabha). The congress emerged as the single largest party with 10 members followed by Prajashanti with 3 members.⁴⁶ The Electoral College recommended the names of 5 Advisors who eventually formed the Advisory Council of the Chief-Commissioner. The Advisors held different charges but were not responsible. Except recommending measures they did not enjoy any power.⁴⁷ The will of the people was not reflected in the administration. The people, who had once experienced the rule of responsible government, even though for a brief period, cannot be expected to remain satisfied with the rule of bureaucracy.

⁴⁴ Kshetri Rajendra, *op.cit.* p.46.

⁴⁵ For a detailed account of how the Maharaja was made to sign the agreement, see, Kshetri Rajendra, *ibid.* pp. 34-36.

⁴⁶ Kshetri Rajendra, *op.cit.* p. 39.

⁴⁷ Jyotirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, Eastlight Book House, Calcutta, 1973, p.152.

2.9 Up gradation to Legislature Assembly

Under the 7th Amendment Act (1956) of the constitution of India, a Territorial Council (TC) of 30 elected members was made. In 1957, Manipur went to polls to elect 2 members of the Lok-Sabha and 30 members of the TC in which the congress party emerged as the single largest party with 12 elected members followed respectively by the socialist party with 7 members, communist party with 4 members and 7 independents. The introduction of the TC was an important step towards the formation of a responsible government. But it aroused no or little enthusiasm among the people as the state for all practical purposes was governed by the centre through Chief-Commissioner. Under the Union Territories Act 1963, the TC was upgraded into a legislative Assembly with 30 elected members. M. Koireng Singh, leader of the Manipur congress legislative party who had the largest number of followers in the Assembly formed the government on 1st July, 1963. However, the state continued to be administered by the President through the Chief-Commissioner. The elected representatives of the people had to act under limitations and restraints. The government did not have the right to formulate policies, control finance and lead the executive and most importantly the elected members were denied their rights to take part in the election of the President who was directly responsible for the administration of the territory.⁴⁸

The fourth general elections along with the Lok-Sabha election were held in 1967. The congress under the leadership of M. Koireng Singh formed the government. Almost all the independent members joined the ruling party. Manipur witnessed the politics of horse trading among the MLAs in a large scale after the 1967 election. A large number of the congress MLAs defected from the party and toppled the Koireng ministry. The defected members formed a new political party – Manipur People's Party (MPP) under the leadership of Salam Tombi Singh, the then Speaker of the Assembly. A new Ministry was formed under the Chief- Ministership of L. Thambou Singh which was very short-lived and in fact lasted less than a fortnight again due to defections. Thambou himself redefected to congress which again came to power. There was thus great ministerial

⁴⁸ Kshetri Rajendra , *op.cit*, p.40.

instability in the state due to defection and factionalism after the 1967 elections. Indeed, the 1967 election marked the beginning of a new trend, the politics of defection and redefection, which was to become a constant aspect of Manipur politics in later years. After the fourth general election, the congress began to decline and within a short period the congress ministry fell twice. The other political parties could not provide stable ministry either. The ministerial instability ultimately led to the imposition of President's Rule and dissolution of the Assembly in 1969. And then, Manipur witnessed an all party demand for statehood. Manipur had come a long way from Advisory Council to Territorial Council and from Territorial Council to Territorial Assembly to finally emerge as a full-fledged state headed by a governor in 1972.

The first 'state' assembly elections were held in March 1972. It was fought mainly on local issues like economic development, unemployment, the need for transport facilities and the role played by the political parties in the statehood agitation.⁴⁹ The 1972 election saw the end of congress dominance in the state politics and marked the emergence of a regional party as an alternative to the former. Though the congress remained the single largest party by securing 17 seats out of 60, it could not form the government. The MPP which captured 15 seats formed the United Legislative Party (ULP) with the help of Independents and other non- CPI parties. The ULP under the leadership of Md. Alimuddin, a leading Muslim politician, formed the government and a five member cabinet was inducted into office on 20th March 1972. The Alimuddin led ULP ministry, however, did not last long. It was toppled in March 1973 by massive defection. Indeed, the electoral politics in the state is marked by the politics of defection, redefection, coalition and counter coalition causing great political instability. From 1972 to 2001, three had not been any government which completed the tenure of five years. But the ministry or government formed under the leadership of Shri Okram Ibobi Singh on 7th March, 2002 completed its five years term. The ministry under his leadership has completed its second term in February, 2012. The ministry under his leadership was formed again on 14 March, 2012 for a third consecutive term.

⁴⁹ Kshetri Rajendra , *op.cit.* p. 40-41.

Chapter 3

Socio-Economic and Political Background of Political Elite

3.1 Introduction

The political elites in Manipur are those who have direct and/or indirect access to political power which is overriding among all other forms of power. They are the representatives of the people and they are/were either members of State Legislative Assembly or Parliament at one time or other or defeated candidates who aspired to get elected by entering the electoral fray. They constitute a minority group which exercise power in society and they have inevitable and irrepressible urge to come to power. They establish their popularities and the right to exercise power in society mostly through elections. In a developing society the importance of political elites is a well recognized fact.¹ It is, therefore, very important to study the prevalent socio-economic and political background to which the elites belong. It is assumed that a person's socio-economic background and political training determine his approach to various problems, attitude towards politics and shape his entire behaviour pattern. One can anticipate the capability of the political elites to perform multiple duties and responsibilities bestowed upon them by the electorate by analyzing their socio-economic and political background. A political elite is no doubt a human being and he/she is involved in a variety of relationships with other human beings and his/her behaviour is influenced by the whole series of relationships. The environments, knowledge, group affinity, exposure which influence the behaviour of the political elites often vary from one elite to another. Therefore, an attempt has been made to examine the independent variables like gender/sex, religion, education, social category, occupation, income, place of birth, place of education,

¹ T. B. Bottomore, *Elite and Society*, Penguin Books, England, 1966.p.99

political background, political participation, political socialization and sources of political interest of the political elites in Manipur.

3.2 Gender/Sex Composition

Society rests on the principle of difference. In all societies there is social differentiation of the population on the basis of various factors. Differentiation on the basis of sex is a fundamental feature of human society. The conduct of sexes is canalized in different directions right from the family. No society treats its men and women exactly alike. Women have not been able to lead a life exactly at par with men in spite of their urge for equality. The Indian constitution has provided women two important political rights namely, female enfranchisement and eligibility for the legislature. Women also have developed political awareness and some of them have attained very high positions in political parties, legislatures and cabinets. But there still exist a large gap between the number of male and female representatives. The strength of women members in the Indian Parliament is very less.

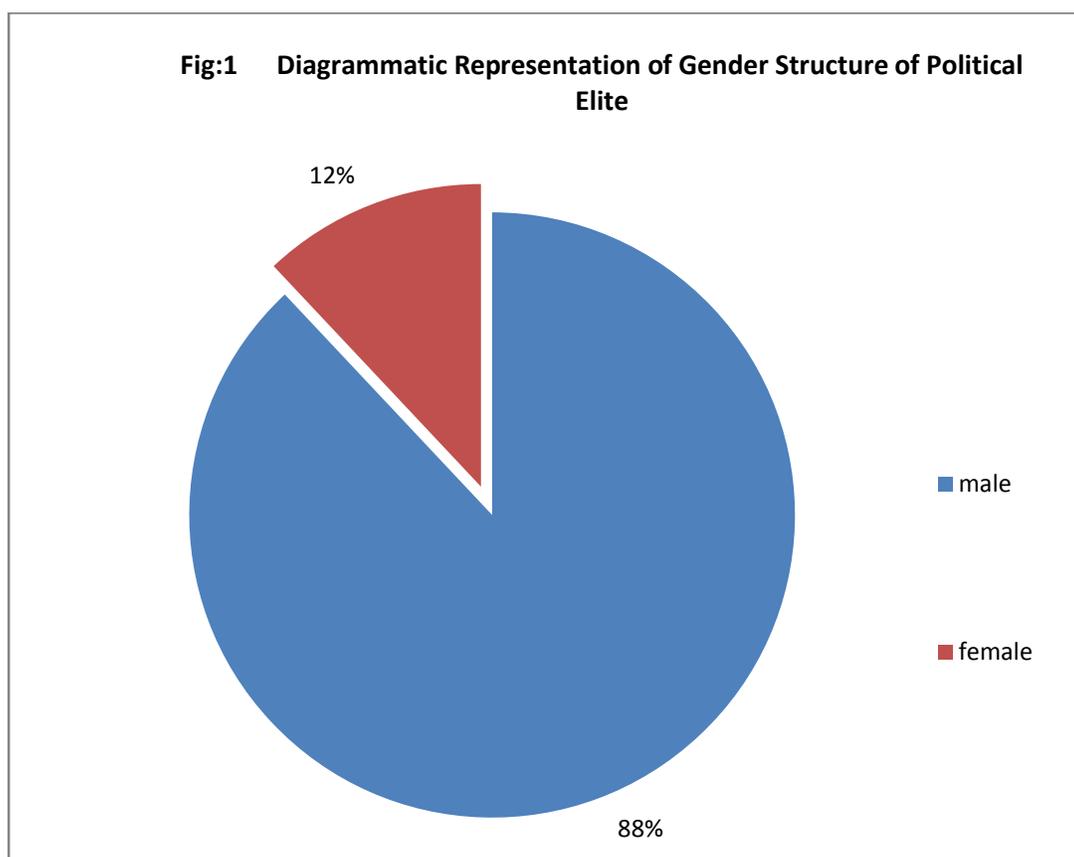
In Manipur also, the sex composition of political elites is heavily weighted in favour of males. Women have been under-represented in the political elite structure. Out of the total political elites under study, eighty eight percent (88%) respondents are males comprising of forty two (42) sitting MLAs/MPs, forty (40) Ex- MLAs/MPs and six (6) defeated MLA/MP candidates while the remaining twelve percent (12%) are females. The sex composition of the political elites under study can be seen in table 3.1 and is also represented by figure 1.

Table: - 3.1. Socio-Economic Background of Political Elite in Manipur

Elite Group	Gender		Social category				Place of birth		Religion			
	M	F	Gen	ST	SC	Minority	U	R	Hinduism	Christianity	Islam	others
Sitting MLAs/MPs	42	1	28	12	1	2	17	26	29	12	2	
Ex-MLAs/MPs	40	3	32	9	1	1	17	26	32	8	1	2
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	6	8	13	1			11	3	13	1		
Sub total	88	12	73	22	2	3	45	55	74	21	3	2
Grand total	100		100				100		100			

Source: Figures in this table and subsequent tables, unless stated otherwise, are compiled from interviews of 100 political leaders, Imphal 2008-2010 (including three in March, 2012).

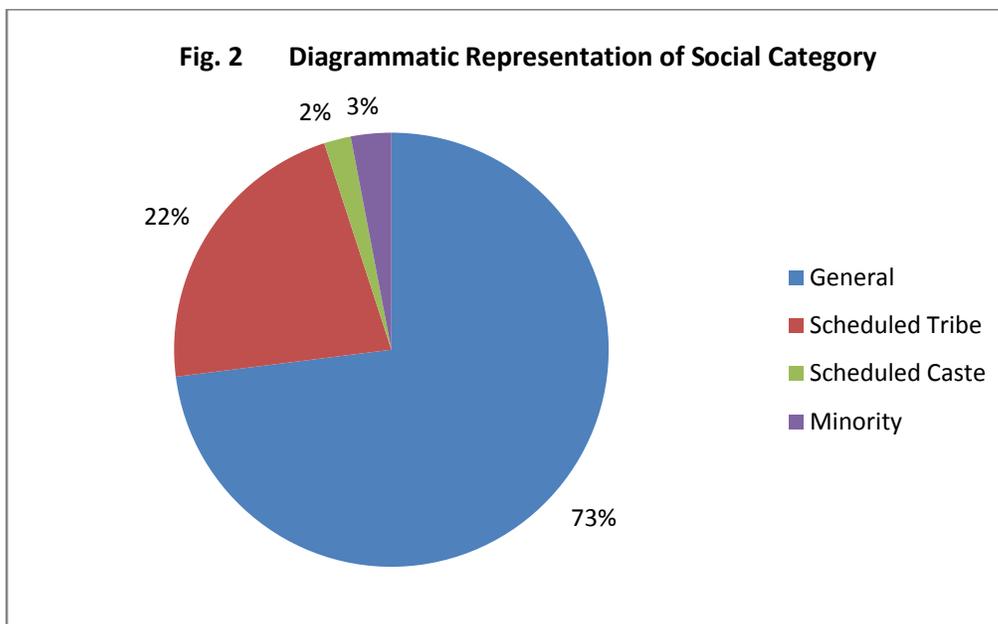
MLA= Member of Legislative Assembly MP= Member of Parliament Gen. = General ST= Scheduled tribe SC= Scheduled caste F=Female M=Male R= Rural U= Urban



The above table 3.1 and figure 1 indicate that men are more likely to attain the elite status than women and that women did not play important role in political process at the community level. Women could not play active role effectively in competitive politics due to socio-economic and cultural barriers and lack of consciousness among their own group. People generally develop a lac-a-dai-si-cal attitude when women enter in active politics. Moreover, there is a strong belief among the women candidates that they cannot compete/contest against male candidates. They have no or little self confidence. There is a clear categorization of what it means to be male or female and this process along with the agents of socialization that transmit knowledge about gender roles influence how individuals define themselves and other in terms of gender and sex roles. Thus women could neither develop an interest in broad political issues nor do they have an opportunity to make contacts that would support a run for office such as financial and organizational support. Men also have been responsible for keeping women away from positions of political power and certainly women have historically been denied access to the educational stepping stones to political offices. The concern about whether women will be taken seriously and viewed as equals by their colleagues in the male dominated political institutions also deterred women from seeking political office. The result of all these factors is the least participation of women candidates in the elite structure of Manipur.

3.3 Social Category

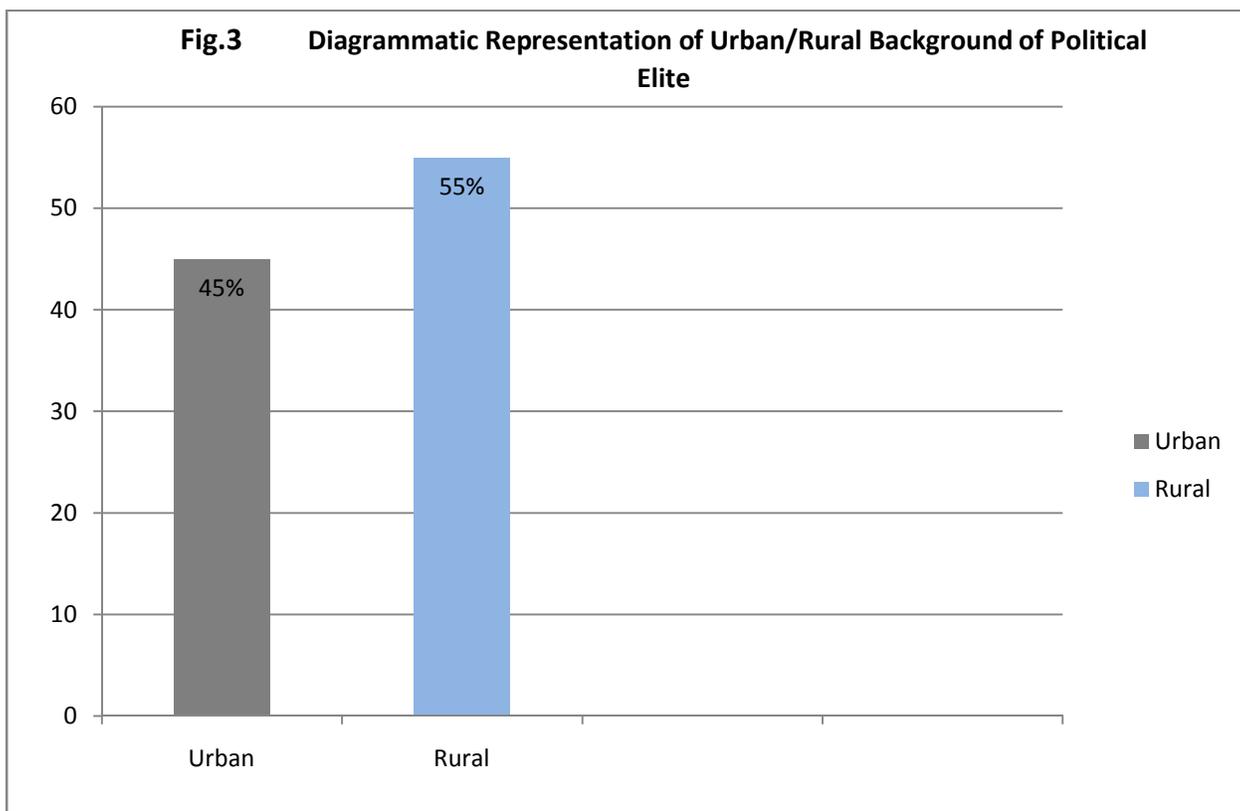
Manipur is one of the smallest states in India with a total area of 22,327 square kilometers. Though small in size, Manipur has a heterogeneous population which is categorized into general, scheduled tribe, scheduled caste and minority community. The classification of population is reflected in the political elite structure of Manipur. The social category to which the political elites belong is computed in table 3.1 above and the data in the table is presented in figure 2 below



3.4 Urban/ Rural Background

The nature of urban/rural background has a strong bearing upon the perception and performance of the political elite. It is considered that the surrounding plays a very important role in the early formative years which shape the belief system and leaves its effect on the mental make-up as well as attitudinal patterns in the maturation age.² India is a village based nation and most of those at the helm of political affairs are from the rural areas. This trend is also true in case of Manipur. Majority of the political elites (55%) under study were born in rural areas while forty five percent (45%) indicated different urban areas of the state as their place of birth. The urban/rural background of the political elites in Manipur is computed in table 3.1 above and it is presented in figure 3 below

² G.A. Almond and J.S Coleman, *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1960.p.27



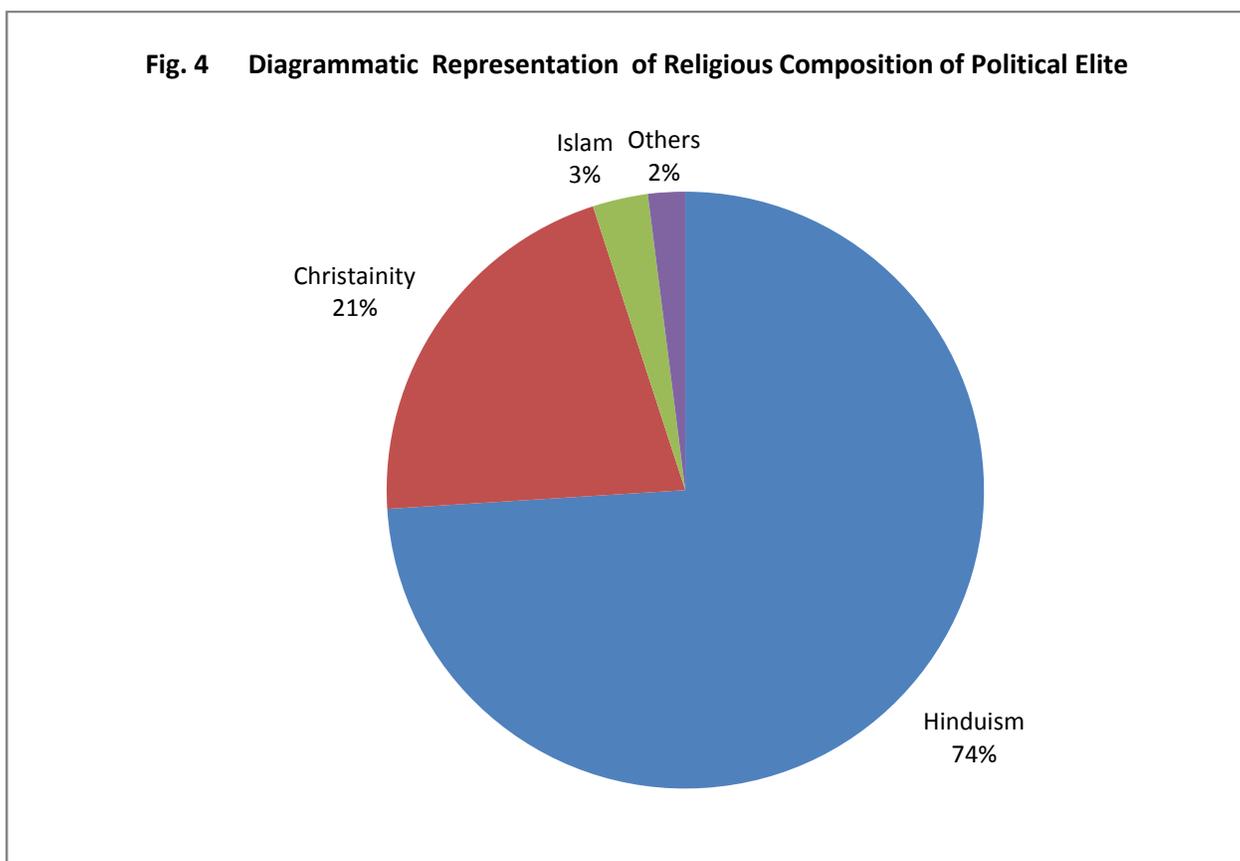
It can be said that the introduction of the universal adult franchise leading to mass participation in electoral politics, improvement of transport and communication, educational facilities, the reservation of seats for scheduled tribe and scheduled caste candidates and the introduction of local self government etc contribute to rural based elite structure in the state.

3.5 Religious Composition

Religion is a universal institution. The social life of man in addition to its economic, political, philosophical, scientific and other aspects also has the religious aspect. Religious dogmas have influenced and conditioned economic endeavours, political movements, educational tasks, scientific inventions and artistic developments. Religion is associated with morality and has elaborate rules of conduct. The worlds of

religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam etc are centers of elaborate cultural systems which have dominated societies for centuries. .

The state of Manipur as a whole is numerically dominated by the Hindus. A significant percentage of other religions are also found in the state. Seventy four percent (74%) of the political elites under study are Hindus and twenty one percent (21%) are Christians. Only three percent (3%) follow Islam and two percent (2%) follow/worship indigenous religion/ deity. The religious composition of political elites in Manipur can be seen in table 3.1 above and it is also highlighted in figure 4.



3.6 Age Structure

Age is an important factor on the basis of which members of society are differentiated. In no society the same norms govern the behaviour of the young, old and adult members in the same way. Age distributes privileges, responsibilities, rights and

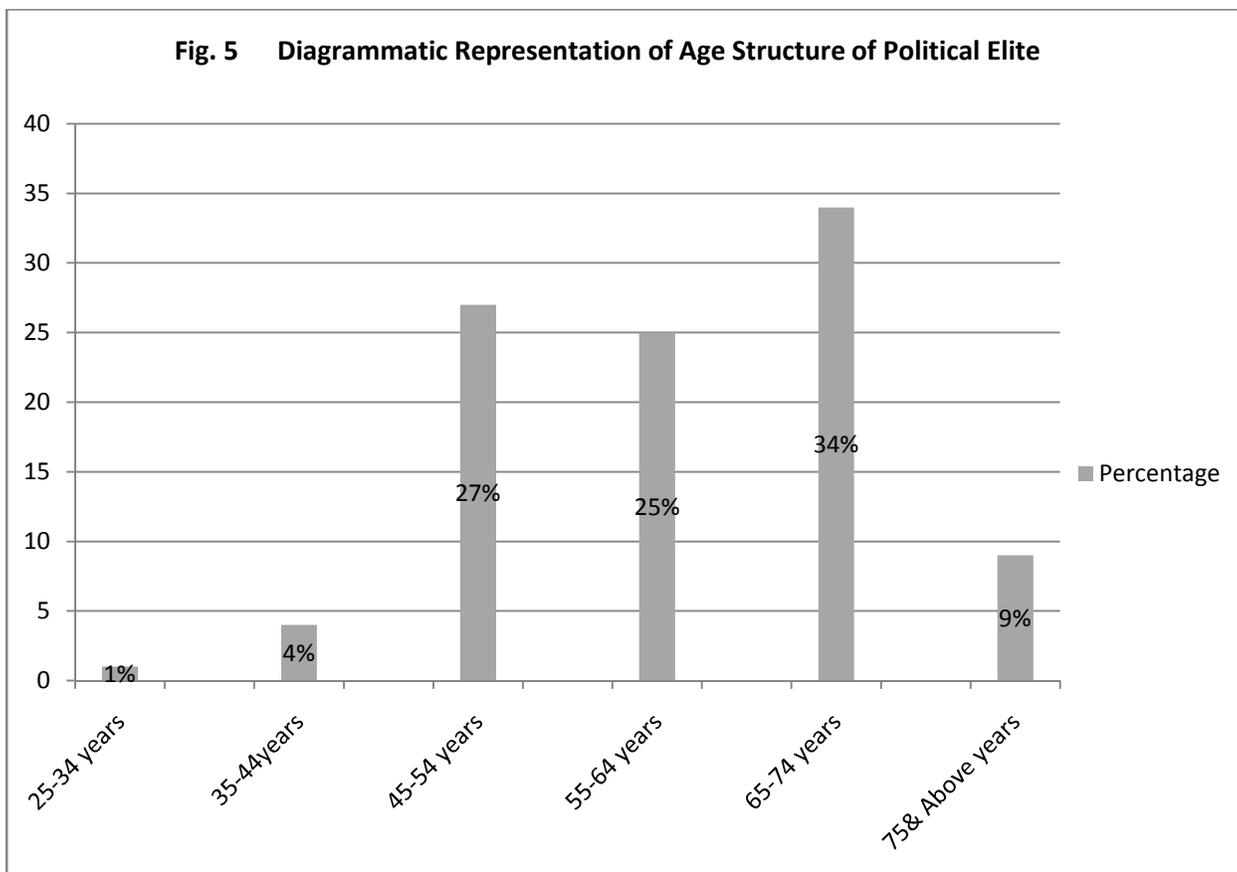


Table 3.2 reveals that political elites (34%) who belong to the age group of 65-74 years are dominating the political elite structure in Manipur. However, in case of sitting MLAs/MPs and defeated MLA/MP candidates, persons belonging to the age group of 45-54 years constitute the majority followed by those who belong to the age group of 55-64 years. It can also be observed that the political elites of younger generation have been preferred by the electorates in Manipur as majority of the sitting MLAs/MPs under study belong to the age group of 45-54 years. This may be due to the faith the mass have in the young leader that they can ventilate the socio-economic grievances of the people.

3.7 Economic Background of Political Elite

It is a general belief that the economically dominants are the most influential social actors in all developing societies. In the representative democratic system, money power plays a vital role in the recruitment of individuals to the political elite structure. The political elites in Manipur do not belong to a homogenous income group. They belong to various income groups. The annual income of political elites under study ranges from less than Rs. 1 lakh to over Rs. 5 lakhs. The annual income structure of political elites can be seen in table 3.3 below

Table: 3.3 Annual Income of Political Elites

Elite group	Below Rs. 1 lakh	Rs. 1- 2 lakhs	Rs. 2- 3 lakhs	Rs. 3- 4 lakhs	Rs.4-5 lakhs	Rs. 5 lakhs & above	Total
Sitting MLAs/MPs		6	6	21	4	6	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs		23	13	7			43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	2	6	3	2	1		14
Total	2	35	22	30	5	6	100

The above table reveals that thirty five percent (35%) of political elites under study have an annual income between Rs 1-2 lakhs, thirty percent (30%) between Rs 3-4 lakhs, twenty two percent (22%) between Rs. 2-3 lakhs, six percent (6%) between Rs. 5 lakhs and above, five percent (5%) between Rs. 4- 5 lakhs and two percent (2%) reported as belonging to the income group of below Rs. 1 lakh. It is also revealed that six percent (6%) of the political elites who are sitting MLAs/MPs belong to the high income group (Rs. 5 Lakhs and above) and twenty one percent (21%) belong to middle income group (Rs.3-4 lakhs). However, twenty three (23%) of the political elites who are Ex-MLA/MP and six percent (6%) who are defeated MLA/MP candidates belong to low income group (Rs. 1-2 lakhs). It is the defeated MLA/MP candidates who constitute two percent (2%)

of the political elites under study that have an annual income below 1 lakh. Thus, it is evident that economic status also counts for recruitment into the political elite structure.

3.8 Occupational Background

Occupation is a continuous pattern of activities through which a person earns his or her livelihood. But it is more than simply a way of earning livelihood. It is an index and symbol of the style that people live and the level of prestige that is accorded to them by others. It influences individual's opinions, attitudes, and behaviour. Some occupations are more suited to the job of legislator. Educationalists/teachers, lawyers, journalists and politicians could be expected to have necessary background to join politics. Since occupation is an index of social stratification in India, it is indispensable to make an enquiry of occupational distribution of political elites in Manipur.

It is found that majority of the political elites (32%) were teachers before their entry into politics and social workers (21%) have been recruited to the elite structure. A significant number of sitting MLAs/MPs belong to this category (social worker) while majority of the Ex- MLAs/MPs and defeated MLA/MP candidates belong to teaching occupational background. Thus it is revealed that teaching occupational background followed by social worker background play an important role for attainment of elite status in Manipur. It is further revealed that the professionals like doctors, lawyers, journalists as well as students, student leaders, businessmen and bureaucrats are also opting for politics. Those who have assumed the representative role have resigned their jobs in pursuit of representative's role. The table 3.4 below shows the occupational structure of political elites before they become legislators or join politics.

Table: 3.4 Occupational Structure of Political Elite before becoming Legislator or Joining Politics

Elite group	Occupation/Profession											Total
	Teacher	Medical Doctor	Lawyer/ Legal Professional	Army	Journalist	Social Worker	Business	Student Leader	Student	Bureaucrat	Other govt. employee	
Sitting-MLAs/ MPs	5	4	5		4	13	2	2	3	3	2	43
Ex-MLAs/ MPs	22	2	2	1		5	2	4	1	1	3	43
Defeated MLA/MP Candidate	5	1				3		1	2		2	14
Total	32	7	7	1	4	21	4	7	6	4	7	100

3.9 Educational Background of Political Elites

Education is a means for the transmission of society's norms and values and it prepares the young people for their adult role. Emile Durkheim maintained that society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity. Education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands.⁴ Education gives mass-media exposure and brings contact with the agents of change outside the community or region. Political elite has not only play elite role in society but also to acquire a thorough understanding of local, national and international issues and events. The ability to woo the voters for success in electoral politics is also related to one's education and consequent ability to convince the political ideology and programmes to the people. Thus, education plays an important role in the acquisition of elite status. The educational qualification of political elites under study can be seen in table 3.5 below. It is evident from the table 3.5 that none of the political elites under study are illiterate and majority of them (43%) are graduates. Twenty five percent (25%) are post graduates followed by seventeen percent (17%) professional degree holders. Among the political elites under study, forty three (43%) are sitting MLAs/MPs and it consists of seventeen percent (17%) graduates, nine percent (9%) post graduates, ten percent (10%) professional degree holders, four percent (4%) MPhil/PhD degree holders and three percent (3%) are under graduates. The elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs consists of eighteen percent (18%) graduates, thirteen percent (13%) post graduates, six percent (6%) professional degree holders, three percent (3%) MPhil/PhD degree holders, two percent (2%) matriculates and one percent (1%) under graduate. The defeated MLA/MP candidates involve eight percent (8%) graduates, three percent (3%) post graduates, one percent (1%) each of under graduate, professional degree holder and MPhil/PhD degree holder. Thus, it can be said that an individual having better educational qualification has more chance of getting elected. Further, it can also be pointed out that more individuals with professional qualification are being recruited into the elite structure. However, education cannot be considered as the sole determinant as there are eight graduates and three post graduates among the defeated MLA/MP candidates.

⁴ M. Haralambos and R.M. Meald, *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1994, p.173

Table: -3. 5 Educational Qualification of Political Elite and Place of Schooling/Education

Elite Group	Illiterate	Matriculate	Under-Graduate	Graduate	Post-Graduate	M Phil./ Ph. D Degree	Professional Degree	Total	Place of Schooling/Education		Total
									Inside the State	Both inside & outside the state	
Sitting MLAs/ MPs	-	-	3	17	9	4	10	43	19	24	43
Ex-MLAs/ MPs	-	2	1	18	13	3	6	43	18	25	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	-	-	1	8	3	1	1	14	7	7	14
Total	-	2	5	43	25	8	17	100	44	56	100

3.10 Place of Schooling/Education of the Political Elites

It is generally believed that those who get education in urban areas in a state or in a more developed area outside the state are more socialized and more familiar with day-to-day situations in the political field and are more likely to achieve elite status. There is no doubt that the educational institutions in urban areas or more developed place outside the state have better facilities in terms of educational aid and instruments as well as availability of teachers. Though majority of political elite (55%) under study reported rural areas as their place of birth, thirty four percent (34%) had their education in urban areas, particularly Imphal, the capital city of the state and the remaining twenty one percent (21%) had their education in rural areas of the state. It is also revealed that majority of the political elites (56%) had their education both inside and outside the state. A significant number among them went to places outside the state for getting education from school level to post graduate level and above and some others from graduation level to above. The places outside the state where the political elites had their education include Gauhati, Shillong, Dibrugarh, Kolkotta, Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, Allahabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Banarus, Bhubaneshwor and Delhi etc. Some of the political elites (4%) also had their education in foreign countries like England and Philippines. The political elites went to places outside the state because not many institutions for professional courses and higher studies are available in the state. The place of schooling/education of the political elites can be seen in table 3.5 above.

3.11 Number of Terms Represented by the Political Elites

The number of terms that the political elites represent their respective constituencies ranges from once to nine time and more. The number of terms that the political elites represent their respective constituencies can be seen in table 3.6 below

Table 3.6 - Number of Terms Represented by the Political Elites

Elite group	Number of terms represented										Total
	None	Once	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 times	6 times	7 times	8 times	9 Times & more	
Sitting MLAs/MPs	-	14	11	7	4	3	2	1	-	1	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs	-	15	8	11	2	3	1	2	1	-	43
Defeated MLA/MP	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Total	14	29	19	18	6	6	3	3	1	1	100

From table 3.6 above, it is evident that only one political leader⁵ represents his constituency more than nine times. Another political leader⁶ who had represented his constituency eight times was a member of Manipur Legislative Assembly from 1972-1995. Only three percent (3%) of the political elites could represent their constituencies seven times.⁷ Another political leader⁸ was a member of Manipur Territorial Council by getting elected in the year 1957 and 1962 and of Manipur Legislative Assembly formed under the Union Territory Act, 1963 by getting elected in 1967. He had been a member of

⁵ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & sitting MP-Rajya-Sabha). He had been a member of First Lok-Sabha (1952-57) and Third Lok-Sabha (1962-67), a member of Manipur Territorial Council twice (1957-61 and 1967-72) and a member of Manipur Legislative Assembly from 1972-2001. He had been a cabinet minister, Government of Manipur, opposition leader in Manipur Legislative Assembly and Chief Minister of the state four times. He was elected to Rajya-Sabha in April, 2002 and re-elected to the same in April, 2008. He joined politics when he was a student

⁶ Th. Chaoba Singh (Ex-MLA & Ex-Union Minister). He got elected in the year 1972, 1974, 1980, 1984 and 1990 and had been a minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and Deputy Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly. He was again elected to the 11th Lok-Sabha in 1996, re-elected to 12th Lok-Sabha in 1998 and again re-elected to the 13th Lok-Sabha in 1999. He had been a minister in the Union cabinet.

⁷ One of them is O. Joy Singh. He has been a member of Manipur Legislative Assembly by getting elected in the year 1974, 1980, 1984, 1990, 2000, 2002 and 2007 respectively and become Deputy Speaker of the State Assembly and minister at different periods of time.

⁸ Y. Yaima Singh (Ex-MLA/MP). He became minister holding different portfolios at different points of time and the Speaker of the House on 18th February, 1980. He was also a member of the 10th Lok-Sabha from 20th June, 1991 to 10th May, 1996.

the State Legislative Assembly from 1972-1980 without any break. Manipur has another political leader⁹ who had represented his constituency seven times.

The data in the table further indicates that three percent (3%) of the political elites represent their respective constituencies six times in the Manipur Legislative Assembly. One political leader¹⁰ had been elected in the year 1980, 1984, 1990, 1995, 2002 and 2007 respectively and has been the Speaker of the House and a minister in each and every term in which he has been elected. A senior political leader¹¹ had been a member of the State Assembly six times by getting elected in 1972, 1974, 1980, 1990, 2002 and 2007. He was followed by another political leader¹² who represented his constituency by winning election in 1972, 1974, 1980, 1985, 1995 and 2000 respectively. Six percent (6%) of the political elites who could represent their constituencies five times include three sitting MLAs and three Ex-MLAs. Among the sitting MLAs, one has been elected in the elections held in 1980, 1984, 1995, 2002 and 2007 respectively and one in 1980, 1984, 1990, 2002 and 2007 respectively. The political leaders who belong to the elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs include one who had been elected in the elections held in 1984, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002 followed by a political leader elected in 1974, 1984, 1990, 1995 and 2000 and another elected in 1972, 1974, 1980 1990 to the State Assembly and in 1991 in the Lok-Sabha.

The table also reveals that six percent of the political elites got elected and represent their constituencies four times followed by eighteen percent three times, nineteen percent two times and twenty nine percent once in their political career. Fourteen percent of the political elites could not get elected and represent their constituencies though they are engaged in political activities including contesting election.

⁹ R.K. Dorendra Singh (Ex-CM/ MP). He became a member of Manipur Legislative Assembly for the first time by getting elected to the second Manipur Legislative Assembly in the year 1974. He was re-elected to the House in 1980, 1984, 1990, 2000 and 2002 and had been the Speaker of the House and Chief Minister of the state twice. He was also elected as a member of Rajya- Sabha in the year 1988.

¹⁰ Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting- MLA).

¹¹ Ph. Parijat Singh (Sitting MLA)

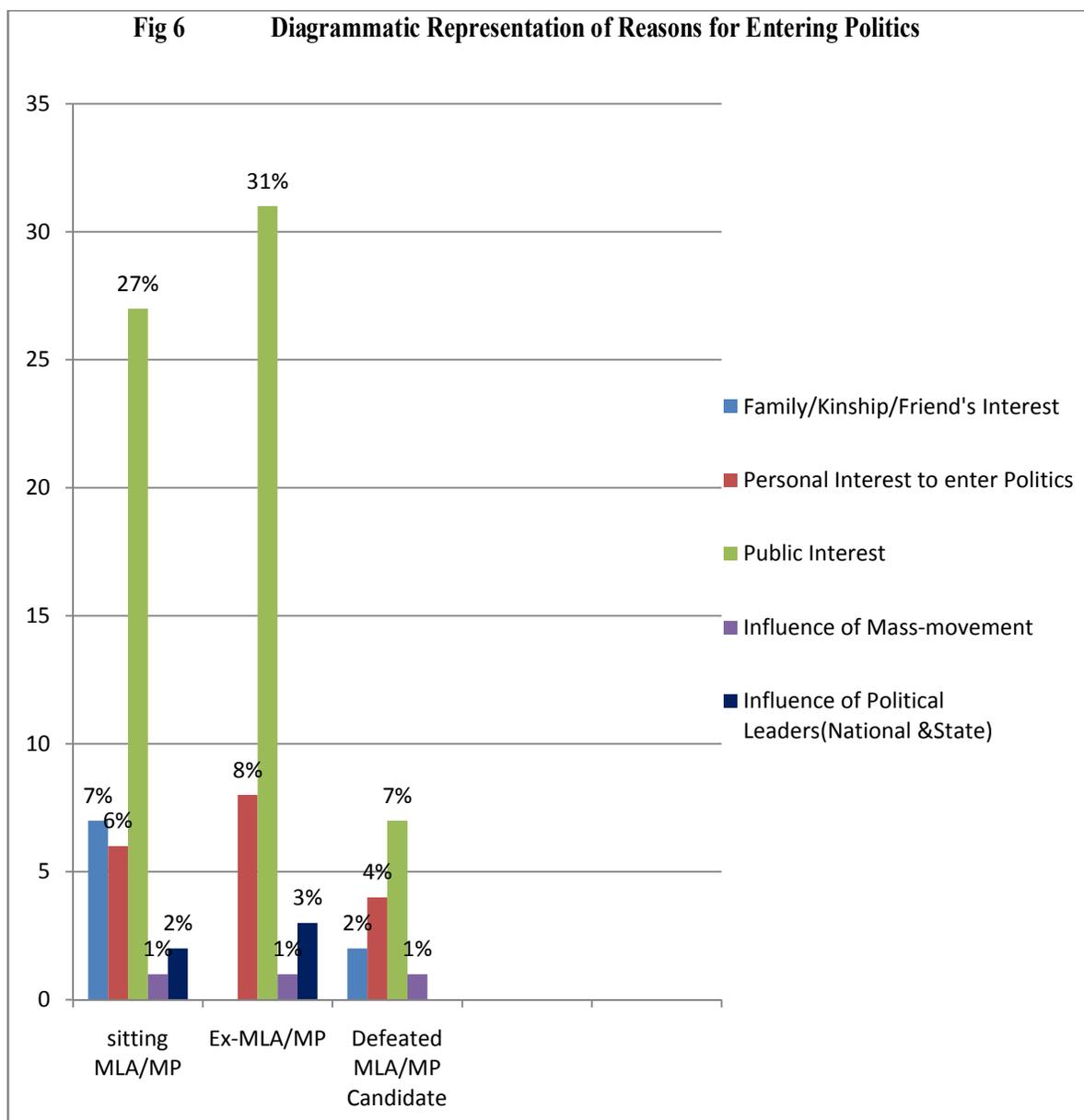
¹² Dr. L. Chandramani Singh (Ex-Deputy CM)

3.11 Reasons for Entering Politics

Man is a social animal. He needs society for his living, working and enjoying life. Society shapes man's attitude, belief, moral ideals and moulds his behaviour and activities. There are certain common factors which influence an individual towards politics. The human urge to be in power, service to the state/nation and its people, influence of mass movement and political leaders are some of the reasons/factors which make an individual enter politics. The common reasons/factors which led to political elite's entry into politics can be seen in table 3.7 and diagrammatically represented in figure 6

Table: - 3.7 **Reasons for Entering Politics**

Elite group	Reasons					Total
	Family/ Kinship/ Friend's Interest	Personal Interest to enter politics	Public Interest	Influence of Mass- Movement	Influence of Political Leaders (National & State)	
Sitting MLAs/MPs	7	6	27	1	2	43
Ex- MLAs/MPs	-	8	31	1	3	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	2	4	7	1	-	14
Total	9	18	65	3	5	100



The data in table 3.7 above reveals that majority of the political elites (65%) entered politics to serve the public interest. A political leader¹³ said, “I entered into politics because I want to uplift the standard of rural people by bringing development in rural areas”. Another political leader¹⁴ said, “I have a political soul and any kind of injustice disturbs me. I entered into politics to bring social, political and economic elevation of the people”. A senior political leader¹⁵ opined that he entered into politics to

¹³ Personal interview with E. Biramani Singh (Ex-MLA) on 13. 5. 2009.

¹⁴ Personal interview with N. Khogendra Singh (Defeated MLA candidate) on 17. 6. 2009.

¹⁵ Personal interview with Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP) on 14.5. 2009.

serve the people and it should be a real sacrificing service. Another senior political leader¹⁶ said that he entered into politics to serve the people of the country in general and of Manipur in particular.

According to a political leader, “I entered into politics to serve local interest by thinking that the fulfillment of it would lead to development of the nation.”¹⁷ A senior political leader¹⁸ opined, “Politics influences everything – nation, community and each and every individual. I entered into politics to give service to the people. We need clean politicians to make good political atmosphere in the state. If a doctor did a mistake, a patient may die and if an engineer committed a mistake, a bridge or building may collapse but if a politician committed mistake, the nation or state as a whole will be in grave” A senior woman political leader said that she entered politics to work for the welfare of the people in general and for the upliftment of women in particular.¹⁹ A political leader²⁰ who has been representing his constituency for the first time opined, “My constituency is very backward and the living condition of the people is very poor. I entered into politics to uplift the downtrodden people of my constituency”. Another political leader²¹ said, “Politics is very important in society. I entered into politics with a view to do something in the present political situation of the state”. A senior political leader²² opined, “I want to do something sincerely and honestly for the people and nation through politics”. Another senior political leader²³ said, “There was indeed a large gap

¹⁶ Personal interview with R.K. Dorendra Singh (Ex-CM/MP) on 11.9.2009

¹⁷ Personal interview with Ch. Manihar Singh (Ex-MLA) on 3. 5. 2008.

¹⁸ Personal interview with H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA) on 24. 2. 2008.

¹⁹ “Women were very backward and illiterate. The social system was such that it did not encourage women’s education. We need a good daughter-in-law but we did not give formal education to our daughters. We need to give formal education to our daughters if we want to have a good daughter-in-law”. - Personal interview with A. Bimola Devi (Ex-MLA) on 29.10.2009.

²⁰ “By joining politics and becoming an elected representative, I could provide service to the people. Tamenglong district from which I am elected has been declared as the most backward district of the state and infrastructural development including road connectivity is being taken up with the Backward Region Development Fund. There is the implementation of other developmental projects in the district”. - Personal interview with Khangthoung Panmei (Sitting -MLA) on 5. 11. 2009

²¹ “Entering into politics for me is a mission for bringing socio-economic development of the state. Most of the politicians in the state are guided by the ambition of becoming a member of State Assembly or Parliament or a minister. I want to bring some changes in this trend”. - Personal interview with Dr. I. Ibohanbi Singh (Sitting -MLA) on 10. 6. 2009.

²² “By taking advantage of the backwardness of my constituency, individuals from outside the constituency represented it as its representative for about twenty years. The situation is out of sight out of mind as they do not know the problem of the constituency”. - Personal interview with Gaikhangam (Sitting- MLA) on 3. 6. 2009.

²³ Personal interview with Dr. L. Chandramani Singh (Ex-Deputy CM) on 27. 1. 2009

between the expectations of the people and the fulfillment of the same by their representatives, particularly in rural areas. I entered into politics to fill this gap”.

Eighteen percent (18%) of the political elites entered politics because they have personal interests. A political leader²⁴ mentioned, “I joined politics on my own consideration. The youths need to enter into politics with new ideas and innovations. The present generation is more advantageous than the old generations and the future generations will be more advantageous than the present generation”. A sitting MLA²⁵ opined, “I want to join politics and fight election. So I have been going along with the public very closely since I was very young”. According to a senior political leader²⁶, “I have sole determination of entering into active politics and become an elected representative of the people. I like politics very much since I was a youth. I want to be a political leader and provide people those facilities which they were/are supposed to get”. Expressing his personal interest in politics, another senior political leader²⁷ said, “There is no particular reason which influences me towards politics. I have the intension of entering into politics since my childhood days”. A senior woman political leader²⁸ said that she entered politics with the personal interest of working for the upliftment of women through politics and also to make woman’s representation in the State Assembly.

It is also evident from table 3.7 that nine percent (9%) of the political elites joined politics under the influence of family, kinship and friends or associates. A political leader²⁹ said, “My father was in politics and there was political zeal in the family. I was inspired by my parents to enter into politics”. Another politician³⁰ mentioned, “After the demise of my father who was in politics, his friends, family members and party workers persuaded me to contest election”. According to a political leader³¹, “My father was in politics and he died in a plane crash. The people of my constituency including my friends

²⁴ Personal interview with Dr. Kh. Loken Singh (Sitting- MLA) on 30. 6. 2009.

²⁵ Personal interview with Wungnaoshang Keishing (Sitting- MLA) on 19 .6. 2009

²⁶ Personal interview with B.D. Behring (Ex-MLA) On 11. 4. 2009.

²⁷ Personal interview with W. Nupamacha Singh (Ex-CM) on 24. 5. 2009.

²⁸ Personal interview with W. Joymati Devi (Defeated MLA candidate) on 28. 6. 2009.

²⁹ Personal interview with Govindas Konthoujam (Sitting MLA) on 14. 7. 2009.

³⁰ Personal interview with Dr. Rebika Naorem (Defeated MLA candidate) on 4. 2. 2008

³¹ Personal interview with I. Hemochandra Singh (Sitting MLA) on 25. 10. 2008.

and family members inspired me to join politics and take the seat of the constituency so as to pursue and complete the tasks already initiated by my father. I also wanted the same”.

The data in the table further indicates that five percent (5%) of the political elites under study entered into politics under the influence of political leaders. A sitting MLA³² stated, “In Manipur, there were conflict and struggle between the peasants and land owners during the 1940s. It was the time when the society was feudal in nature. I learnt the ways in which the communist leader like Jananeta Irawat³³ and my uncle, Kanhai Macha Phingang Shetpa, faced such problem”. A senior political leader³⁴ also echoed the same when he said, “The political activity of Jananeta Irawat influenced me politically. The first Chief Minister of Manipur state, Allimuddin, also inspired me a lot to join politics”. Another political leader³⁵ said, “I was highly influenced by the life history of political leaders like Subash Chandra Bose and Adolf Hitler of Germany. I was particularly influenced towards politics by the way Adolf Hitler changed his position from a soldier to the ruler of Germany. I want to lead the people by entering into electoral politics”.

The political elites who entered politics under the influence of mass movement constitute a mere three percent (3%) of the total political elites under study. A senior political leader³⁶ mentioned, “The Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha, the first political organization of the state, under the leadership of Jananeta Irawat tried very hard to uplift the rural masses. The rural masses were treated differently as if they were untouchables.

³² “In 1948, an event took place in which a police force under the command of Naran Babu came to Lamlai to prevent the protest demonstration of the peasants. The peasants wanted to go to Imphal, the capital of Manipur, to attend a meeting called by Jananeta Irawat. But they were prevented by the police force from going to Imphal and attend the meeting. In the attempt to control the peasants, the police commander shot himself and died. Consequently, the peasants suffered a lot. They were beaten up blue and black and large scale atrocity in Lamlai area (my constituency) by thinking that the police commander was killed by the peasants. This event gave me a great influence towards politics and I entered Communist party of India to face the grievances of the peasants by thinking that this party under the leadership of Jananeta Irawat is the friend of the poor and weaker section of the society”. - Personal interview with Ph. Parijat Singh (Sitting MLA) on 8. 11. 2009.

³³ He was the leader of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha, the first socio-cultural and political organization in Manipur. It was under his leadership that the Manhasabha demanded, among other things, the introduction of fully responsible government in the state in its Chinga session in 1938. The Mahasabha under his leadership brought socio-political consciousness among the people in the state. For details, see Rajendra Kshetri, *The Emergence of Meetei Nationalism*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2006, pp.53-73.

³⁴ Personal interview with Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting MLA) on 17. 11. 2009.

³⁵ Personal interview with K. Tomba Singh (Ex-MLA) on 3. 4. 2009.

³⁶ Personal interview with Y. Yaima Singh (Ex-MLA/MP) on 10. 8. 2008.

There was divide and rule policy by making difference between villagers and urban elites. Many unreasonable taxes were levied from the common people. Jananeta Irawat launched and led the movement against the social injustice and levying of unreasonable taxes. I joined the Mahasabha by thinking that the miseries and sufferings of the rural masses could be solved or minimized by participating in the activities of the Mahasabha". According to a political leader³⁷, "The event of June 18, 2001 which is generally referred to as 'June Uprising' gave a strong impact on me and influenced me towards politics. The June Uprising occurred due to the irresponsible decision of NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government at the centre to extend the ceasefire agreement between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) without territorial limit. There was the apprehension among the people of the state that this agreement between the two would disturb the territorial integrity of Manipur and the result of the agreement was a violent movement of the people in which many valuable lives had been sacrificed, State Assembly building and offices of political parties were burnt down, official residence of the Chief Minister had been ransacked and residences of certain political leaders had been attacked. I realized the important responsibility of politicians in the society after this mass-movement and joined politics to do something for the society through politics".

An examination of the factors/reasons that led the political elite's entry into politics revealed that majority of them entered politics in public interest. Here, it is to be noted that if political elites entered politics truly in the service of the state and its people in the real sense of the term, Manipur would have become what Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru called "the jeweled land of India" by now. Unfortunately, Manipur at the moment is so disappointing and disgusting that the local atmosphere is marked by ethnic politics, transport bottleneck, poor communication links, lack of media attention, poor infrastructural development, influx of migrants and insurgency problem. The political and bureaucratic leadership in Manipur have a dependency attitude. Governance and development to them means implementing central schemes and spending funds. Lack of

³⁷ Personal interview with N. Biren Singh (Sitting- MLA) on 5. 11. 2009.

fund is the excuse used by the leadership in Manipur for not performing their responsibilities including failure to provide even the basic daily requirements like safe drinking water, electricity etc. Manipur virtually lives on the grants of the centre – from infrastructural development to the construction of roads. Had the political elites done a little for the public welfare in the last two/three decades Manipur would not have been a failed state today. The prevalence and practice of nepotism is a part of political culture of the state and is very common among the administrators, bureaucrats and political leaders.

3.12 Political Background

Though all the political elites under study are literate /educated, forty three percent (43%) have illiterate parents and forty seven percent (47%) regard their parental educational background as not an important factor in their socialization. The parents of fifty seven percent (57%) of the political elites are literate and fifty three percent (53%) of them consider their parental educational status as an important factor in their socialization. These findings can be seen in table 3.8 below

Table: 3.8 Parental Educational and Political Status and its Influence on Political Elite

Elite group	Literate	Illiterate	Importance of Parental Educational Status in Socialization		Political involvement/ interest of parents in Politics		Parental Influence in Political Affairs	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sitting MLAs/ MPs	26	17	25	18	16	27	20	23
Ex-MLAs/ MPs	19	24	17	26	6	37	11	32
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	12	2	11	3	5	9	7	7
Sub-Total	57	43	53	47	27	73	38	62
Grand-Total	100		100		100		100	

Table 3.8 reveals that the majority of the political elites (73%) have parents who have/had no involvement or interest in politics and only twenty seven percent (27%) stated that their parents are/were in politics. It is further evident from the table that parents of sixty two percent (62%) of political elites do/did not influence their political affairs while thirty eight percent (38%) reported that their parents exercise influence on their political affairs. Family shapes the political orientation and attitudes of the individuals in the family. If the father or an elder member of the family is in politics, the younger individuals of that family get motivated to join politics, though this is not necessarily the accepted rule.

3.13 Political Socialization

Man's behaviour is a learnt behaviour. An individual becomes a functioning member of the society by learning the rules and practices of the social group through the process of socialization. Political socialization "is a process by which political cultures are maintained and changed. Through the performance of this function individuals are inducted into the political culture, their orientations towards political objects are formed."³⁸ The aim of political socialization is to train or develop the individuals in a way that they become well functioning members of a political community. The stability of a social or political system depends on the political socialization of its members because a well functioning citizen is one who accepts society's political norms and who will then transmit them to future generations. The political elites undergo a process of socialization following their entry into politics and their political behaviour is determined partly by their attitudes, values and knowledge which they obtained prior to their entry into politics and partly by their experiences obtained in the political environment as well as outside of it.

Table 3.9 Views of Political Elite on Political Socialization

Elite group	Participation & Involvement in Political Activities		Political Discussion at Home		Political Discussion with friends and others	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sitting MLAs/MPs	40	3	43	-	43	-
Ex-MLAs/MPs	42	1	43	-	43	-
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	13	1	14	-	14	-
Sub-total	95	5	100	-	100	-
Grand total	100		100		100	

³⁸ Gabriel A. Almond and G.B Powell Jr., *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston: Little Brown, 1996.p.64.

It is evident from table 3.9 that ninety five percent (95%) of the political elites hold the view that recruitment of an individual into political life requires both involvement and participation into political activities such as political meetings and campaigns while five percent (5%) do not consider this factor as important and hold that personal determination of the individual concerned to enter into politics is important for recruitment into political life. Thus, it shows that the socialization of political elites is more through active participation in political activities. They mostly learn political ideology, policies of the government and various socio-economic and political issues of the state and nation through participation and involvement in political activities. It also reveals that all the political elites have political discussion at home as well as along with friends. Discussion with friends on various issues of politics both in formal and informal occasions is a part of political socialization process of the political elites through which they obtain information about the existing situations or issues faced by the community, state or nation.

3.14 Reading Habit of the Political Elite

Political elites are supposed to be knowledgeable, informative and up-to-date with the changing scenario in all fields at local, national and international levels. They need knowledge for various and complex purposes, to lead the people, in making policies and programmes for the welfare of the society as a whole. They were/are politically socialized by reading political books, journals and newspapers. Biography and autobiography broaden one's outlook and enrich the understanding as well as enable the reader to learn the attributes of the great personalities. The reading habit of the political elites and their view about the importance of reading in their political career is tabulated in table 3.10

Table: 3.10 Reading Habit of Political Elite and its Importance

Elite group	Reading items								Importance of Reading in Political Career	
	Books		Magazines/ Journals		Newspaper				Yes	No
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Local		National			
					Yes	No	Yes	No		
Sitting MLAs/MPs	40	3	43	-	43	-	43	-	40	3
Ex-MLAs/MPs	41	2	42	1	43	-	40	3	43	-
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	12	2	14	-	14	-	14	-	14	-
Sub-Total	93	7	99	1	100	-	97	3	97	3
Grand-Total	100		100		100		100		100	

It is evident from the above table 3.10 that ninety three percent (93%) of the political elites under study read various books, biography and autobiography while seven percent (7%) did not do so. The political elites mentioned that they read biographies and autobiographies of political leaders.³⁹ They also read books on democracy, socialism, capitalism, international relations, Panchayati Raj, political economy, constitution of India, parliamentary democracy, presidential form of government, freedom struggle of India etc. They also read political philosophy of Kautilya, J.S Mill, Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and political ideologies of different political parties. It is also revealed that majority of them (99%) read magazines/journals to get knowledge, particularly political knowledge.⁴⁰ Only one percent (1%) did not read magazines and journals. It is also

³⁹ Among the biographies and autobiographies mentioned by the political elites include “Discovery of India” by Jawaharlal Nehru, “My Life in Presidency” by Bill Clinton and others on M. K. Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Indira Gandhi, Lenin, Lal Bahdur Shastri, Abraham Lincoln, Subash Chandra Bose, Napoleon, Adolf Hitler and Nelson Mandela.

⁴⁰ Among the magazines and journals mentioned by the political elites include “India Today”, “Reader’s Digest”, “India This Week”, “Illustrative Weekly”, “Frontline”, “Kamal Sandesh” (BJP bi-monthly publication), “New Age”

revealed that all the political elites read local newspaper daily and ninety seven percent (97%) of them read national papers while three percent (3%) did not read them.

The data in the table further reveals that ninety seven percent (97%) of the political elites consider reading as important for their political career while three percent (3%) did not hold the same view. A senior political leader⁴¹ while highlighting the importance of reading said, “I read lots of books, magazines and daily newspapers, both local and national”. Another senior political leader⁴² also mentioned, “Reading is my habit and I read not only political books but also other books from time to time. Reading is important for political career as it gives information and widens the mental horizon and perspective in different fields”. A political leader⁴³ who had been the Deputy Chief Minister said, “I read political theory advocated by Plato, Aristotle and other political books as well as analyze political ideologies of different political parties not only of India but also of America, England and other countries”. On the other hand, a sitting MLA⁴⁴ said, “I do not read any political books and magazines. My father taught me that if I want to enter into politics, I should learn politics from the people”. Another sitting MLA⁴⁵ who represent his constituency for the first time mentioned, “Politics is new to me and I come to know about politics after three years of becoming an elected legislator. I do not read any political books and magazines”. A senior political leader⁴⁶ said, “There is no specific book that I read in my political career. Reading magazines and journals also involves spending money for buying or subscribing them. I do not depend much on them”.

(a publication of CPI), “Swadesh” (a publication of Congress party), Socialist party weekly and Journal of Janata party etc.

⁴¹ “I spend more than Rs. 2000/- per month on newspaper and magazines. I got a huge personal library with books on different subjects. One should always try to learn something and for this reading is very important. It seems that most of the politicians of younger generation in the state do not read and search for new knowledge. I do not know what will be the faith of Manipur when it is in their hand. Naturally, senior experienced politicians of the state will take rest from active politics and Manipur will be in their hand. They need to read and study new things and accumulate knowledge to lead the society and people in the right path”. - Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁴² Personal interview with Radhabinode Koijam (Ex-CM & Sitting-MLA) on 9. 10. 2009

⁴³ “I am very interested in reading biography of political leaders of the world and listened news of BBC, CNNIBN and NDTV etc. and made myself well informed and up-to-date. They are very important in my political career”. - Dr. L. Chandramani Singh (Ex-Deputy CM), *op.cit.*

⁴⁴ Personal interview with S. Joy Singh (Sitting- MLA) on 12. 2. 2009.

⁴⁵ Personal interview with Th. Nandakishor Sigh (Sitting MLA) on 29.10. 2009.

⁴⁶ Personal interview with M. Bhorot Singh (Ex-MLA) on 21. 3. 2009.

Thus, it is observed that newspapers assume more importance and exercise influence on political elites than books and magazines/journals. Newspapers as such are widely circulated and they serve the political elites as a major source of political socialization.

3.16 Party Affiliation and Defection

Party system is an indispensable factor of modern representative democracy. Political party in one form or another “is omnipresent”.⁴⁷ It always tries to take people at large into confidence either for the sake of observing the backbone of democracy – “*voice of the people is the voice of the God*”, or to justify the legitimacy of their popular leadership and authority. Indian party system is unique with a multi party system. There are both national and regional parties. A party is recognized as a national party if it fulfills one of the two conditions – (i) it secures 3.33% of votes or seats in elections to the legislative assemblies and (ii) it secures 4% of votes or seats in Lok-Sabha elections of four states. The programmes, policies, ideologies and strategies of national parties have a national focus. They establish their organizational structures and contest elections in most parts of the country. A regional party on the other hand is limited to a geographical region which may cover a state or a couple of states. They came into being to defend the identity of a region or on the issue of neglect of region which causes its backwardness.

There was no political organization in Manipur before 1934. The establishment of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha in 1934 changed the entire scenario. The Mahasabha was initially a cultural organization but it became the first political organization in Manipur in 1938. Under the full-fledged leadership of Jananeta Irawat, the Mahasabha gave a stimulus to the political mobilization among the people of

⁴⁷ Joseph la Palombara and Myron Weiner, *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966, p.3.

Manipur, particularly the Meeteis.⁴⁸ Later, Krishak Sabha, the Praja Sangha, the Praja Sammilani and the Anouba Nongpok Maram etc came into being as political parties. The Communist party of India (CPI) was also formed in 1948. In Manipur as elsewhere, there are many national parties like the Indian National Congress (INC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Janata Dal (JD), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Communist Party of India (CPI) etc. Manipur is also having many regional parties like Manipur Peoples Party (MPP), Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) and National People's Party (NPP) etc.

The politics of Manipur is marked by politics of defection, re-defection, coalition and counter-coalition causing political instability in the state. The present party affiliation of the political elites under study and the frequency of their change or defection of party is shown in table 3.11 and presented diagrammatically in figure 7 and 8.

Table: 3.11 **Present Party Affiliation and Defection of Political Elite**

Elite group	Party Affiliation			Total	Defection/change of party						Total
	National Party	Regional Party	No Party Affiliation		Not at all	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Five Times & More	
Sitting MLAs/MPs	34	3	6	43	21	11	7	3	1	-	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs	33	9	1	43	11	8	11	7	3	3	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	10	3	1	14	7	5	1	1	-	-	14
Total	77	15	8	100	39	24	19	11	4	3	100

⁴⁸ For details of Mahasabha, see Rajendra Kshetri, *The Emergence of Meetei Nationalism*, op.cit. pp.37-38.

Fig.7 **Diagrammatic Representation of Present Party Affiliation**

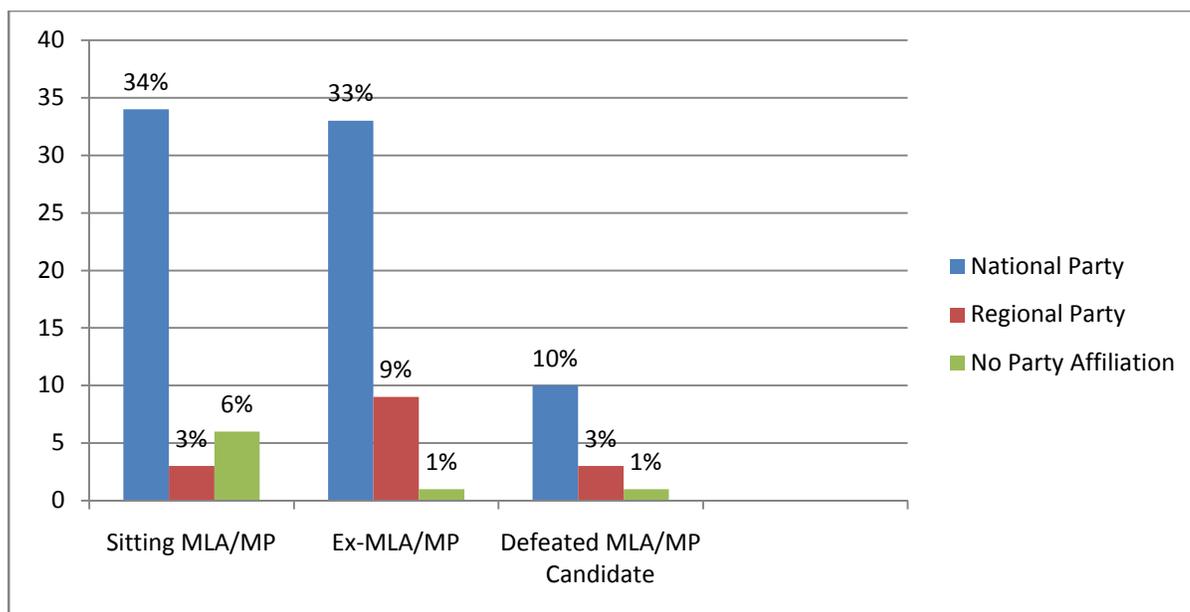
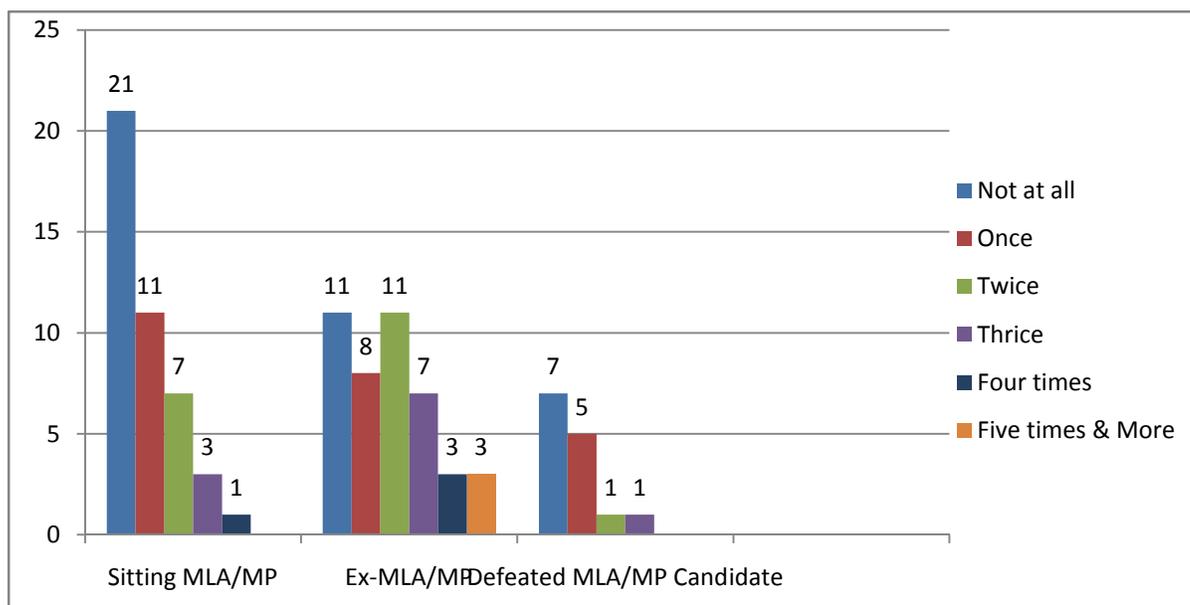


Fig. 8 **Diagrammatic Representation of Frequency of Party Defection/ Change**



From the above table 3.11 it is evident that the majority of the political elites (77%) at present belong to different national political parties while only fifteen percent (15%) belong to regional parties. It is also observed that eight (8%) of the political elites have no party affiliation and they contested as independent candidates. However, seventy five (75%) of these independent candidates had contested on the party ticket of one

political party or another in the earlier elections. The data in the table further reveals that sixty one percent (61%) of the political elites under study do not remain in a party. The frequency of change in party affiliation or defection ranges from one to five and more times. Only thirty nine percent (39%) of the political elites do not change their party affiliation.

It will be interesting to mention here, though briefly, about the politics of defection in the state. Manipur witnessed the politics of defection among MLAs (member of legislative assembly) in a large scale after the 1967 election. The Congress won 16 seats in a House of 30 and M. Koireng Singh formed the government under his leadership. Out of the nine independent candidates, seven defected to Congress, the ruling party, and increased Congress's strength to 23 and the party was in power. However, a large number of Congress MLAs defected from the party and M. Koireng Singh had to resign. The defected members formed a new political party – Manipur Peoples Party (MPP) under the leadership of the then Speaker, Salam Tombi Singh. A new ministry (the United Legislative Front) was formed under the leadership of L. Thambou Singh which was very short-lived and in fact lasted less than a fortnight due to defections. All the Congress members who were defected to the United Legislative Front left the Front except S. Tombi Singh and Kh. Chaoba Singh and joined the Congress. Even the Chief Minister, L. Thambou Singh, re-defected to Congress which again came to power under the leadership of M. Koireng Singh.

Manipur became a full fledged state in 1972 with a unicameral legislature consisting of 60 elected members. The first State Assembly elections were held in March 1972 and no party was able to secure an absolute majority. Though Congress remained the single largest party by getting 17 seats out of 60, it could not form the government. The MPP which captured 15 seats was successful in getting support of independents and other non-CPI parties and formed the United Legislative Party (ULP). The ULP formed the government under the leadership of a leading Muslim politician, Md. Allimuddin, in March, 1972. Here also, massive defections toppled the government in March, 1973. Manipur went through mid-term poll in early 1974. The MPP-MHU (Manipur Hill

Union) led ULP formed the government with Md. Allimuddin as Chief Minister. The MPP-MHU coalition government was short-lived as Yangmaso Shaiza, the MHU leader withdrew his support and caused the collapse of the government in four months. This government was followed by the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) government of Yangmaso Shaiza which was installed on 10th July, 1974 but collapsed in about five months time due to Congress (I) demand for more ministerial berths followed by its defection. Then the Democratic Legislative party led by R.K. Dorendra Singh was formed on 6th December, 1974 which also could survive for about 8 months only. In the wake of National Emergency a Congress-CPI coalition ministry came on 23rd July, 1975 and R.K. Dorendra Singh headed the ministry.

Manipur has been highly influenced by the political wave at the Centre. With the coming of Janata government headed by Moraji Desai at the centre in 1977, the entire Congress legislative party defected to Janata. The Janata legislative party elected Yangmaso Shaiza, the Congress MP who too had defected earlier to the Janata in the Lok-Sabha, and the Janata government was formed under his leadership on 29th June, 1977. In the Assembly election of 1980 also, no party could secure the absolute majority and R.K. Dorendra Singh formed a Congress (I) led coalition government on 14th January, 1980. He was, however, replaced by his Deputy, Rishang Keishing on 27th November, 1980. The Rishang Keishing ministry ran into problems and the political instability continued. His government was suspended on 28th February, 1981 and was returned on 19th June of the same year. The next general election was held in December 1984 and the Congress (I) emerged as the single party majority with 30 elected members. Very soon, 5 independent MLAs joined the Congress and a Congress (I) government led by Rishang Keishing was installed on 4th January, 1985 which lasted up to 4th March, 1988. He was replaced by R.k. Joychandra Singh (4th March, 1988 – 17th February, 1990). The MPP with the alliance parties formed the next government in the state on 23rd February, 1990 under the leadership of R.K. Ranbir Singh which too was short-lived as 5 Janata Dal legislators deserted the alliance in 1992. The President's Rule was imposed on the state later on 9th April, 1992 followed by a short-lived government under R.K. Dorendra Singh and the state was again placed under President's Rule on 31st December, 1993. A Congress ministry came under Rishang Keishing on 13th December, 1994 which

lasted up to 1995 followed by another Congress ministry under his leadership from 25th February, 1995 to 15th December, 2007. In December, 2007, the then Assembly Speaker left the Congress (I) party on the issue of leadership and a new political party, MPSC, formed the government under his leadership. Another government under his leadership came after the Assembly election of 2000 but the government could not last long due to political and various other crises. The state was again placed under the President's Rule. Later, a Janata Party led coalition government under Radhabinode Kojiam came which was also short-lived as he was defeated on the floor of the House on 21st May, 2001. Thus Manipur has no government which completed the tenure of five years till 2001. But the ministry or government under the leadership of O. Ibobi Singh on 7th March, 2002 completed its full five years term. He has also successfully led the government for a full 2nd term and his third term as Chief Minister of the state started in March, 2012.

Though the political elites in Manipur entered into politics with the declared objective of doing something for the state and its people, majority of the political elites do not have political vision, sacrificial spirit, loyalty to political principle and ideology and are guided by selfish interest. Majority of the political elites (90%) under study considered power mongering or hungry as the main reason for the politics of defection, re-defection, coalition and counter-coalition in the state, seven percent (7%) election of incompetent and irresponsible persons by the electorates as their representatives while three percent (3%) of them considered difference in ideology as well as power mongering as the reasons causing such kind of politics in the state. A senior political leader⁴⁹ said, "There was political defection in the state because individual interest dominated over group interest. Political polarization at the national level did not effectively reach Manipur. Local or regional interest prevailed with the belief that local or regional group could be in power. There was no strict anti-defection law when there were large scale defections in the state". Another senior political leader⁵⁰ observed, "As regional party developed in India, any national political party could not get absolute majority. National political parties are seemed to be suppressed by regional political parties and it is a sign

⁴⁹ R. K. Dorendra Singh (Ex-CM /MP), *op.cit*

⁵⁰ Rishang Keishing , (Ex-CM & Sitting-MP), *op.cit*.

of danger. In Manipur, there is politicization of the ethnic identity/community as Nagas do not want to support Kuki Candidate and Kukis also do not like and to support Naga candidate. The Meetei politicians made attempts to derive opportunities from such situation. Development progress goes backward as power mongers, vested interested and narrow and communal minded persons are in the state politics. If we are in politics with certain principles and policies, nothing will happen. It will be a better option to have a two party system as done in UK and USA. There will be competition between two parties only and development will come”. A political leader⁵¹ said, “Power mongering is the main reason for the politics of defection in the state. Anti-defection law makes stability of the government. Otherwise, we might not have a stable government till date. If the legislators were provided those which were supposed to be provided to them, there would have been stable governments in the state. A legislator’s wish to start a particular developmental work with the support of the government depends on frequent request to the concerned minister and the need to have personal friendship with him. If the proposal of the legislator for development work is accepted by the government in the interest of the public, it is not necessary to run for becoming a minister”. Expressing his opinion, a senior political leader⁵² said, “Defection has been so frequent that it has brought political instability and chaos in the state. The public in general do not like such kind of politics. Power mongering was the main reason causing defection and re-defection and political leaders who engaged in such politics does not possess three basic qualities, namely, honesty, sacrifice and determination”.

⁵¹ Personal interview with Danny Shaiza (Sitting- MLA) on 20. 10. 2008.

⁵² “If there had not been politics of defection and if there had been a popular government when there was the issue of ceasefire agreement between Government of India and NSCN (IM) in 2001, there could be a meaningful discussion of the issue by the government formed by the representatives of the people. Unfortunately, there was President’s Rule in the state and the government run by the bureaucrats could not understand the pulse of the people. People’s representatives only can understand the pulse of the people. There was the outburst of the people on 18th June, 2001, not only due to the extension of ceasefire in the state, but also due to dissatisfaction among the people caused by frequent political defection and its associated negative impact which had been occurring for the last 20/30 years in the state. This kind of politics become unbearable and people taught a great lesson to the representatives of the people. There was the need of framing a strict anti-defection law at the national level and accordingly it was enacted. The need of the hour for the people of Manipur is to have a stable government”. - Gaikhangam (Sitting-MLA), *op. cit.*

People got the government they deserved. A political leader⁵³ said, “People elected incompetent and irresponsible persons as their representatives who used to commercialize politics for getting their selfish end by engaging in the politics of defection and re-defection and people suffer. A positive and constructive rethinking among the representatives of the people is very necessary to prevent defection in politics which caused political instability in the state”. Another political leader⁵⁴ said, “Politics is in the hand of those persons who do not know politics properly. People elected individuals who are self deceptive, incompetent and guided by selfish motive as their representatives. Such persons always want to be in power and they engaged in the politics of defection”. A senior political leader⁵⁵ observed, “Difference of ideology and power mongering were the main causes of defection and re-defection in Manipur politics. A frequent change of government is bad. From 2002 to till now, we have stable government and public need to decide a better one between unstable government and stable government. A stable government must be a good government with a good leader. A stable bad government will bring more harm than unstable government”.

The political elites in Manipur did/do not have clear political vision, commitment, principle and sacrificial spirit. Communal politics, selfish interest, absence of strong party system and lack of loyalty to the party etc. were the reasons which led to rampant defection in the state. Election in India and particularly in Manipur is too expensive. Political candidates spent huge amount of money at the time of election. When they get elected, their main task is to earn more and more so that the money so earned is again spent in the next election. No single party also could get absolute majority and horse trading took place in the attempt to form government. The failure of some senior political leaders to keep their words and making wrong promises also led to dissatisfaction among certain members and this phenomenon also caused political defection and re-defection in the state. There was no strict anti-defection law, to prevent politics of defection. It was only in January, 2003 that a strict anti-defection law under the 10th schedule of the constitution of India was enacted at centre. The anti-defection law which was there earlier leaved room for manipulation and therefore it could not prevent politics of defection and

⁵³ E. Biramani Singh (Ex-MLA), *op. cit*

⁵⁴ Personal interview with M. Nabadweep Singh (Ex-MLA) on 10.6.2009.

⁵⁵ Radhabinode Kojiam (Ex-CM & Sitting-MLA), *op. cit*

re-defection in Manipur. It may be incidental but it is true that political defection is not materialized in the state ever since the strict anti-defection was enacted in 2003. Sharing his opinion a senior political leader⁵⁶ confessed, “Honestly speaking, if I have been only in Manipur Peoples Party or Congress Party I might have attained my career goal. I have been changing my party affiliation from one party to another in order to get certain benefit and this has adverse negative consequences. I would like to advice the youths who wish to enter into politics that they should carefully study the political party which they want to join and should also remain stick to that party”.

3.17 Party Sponsorship

Party government is a vital principle of representative government. The working/functioning of any system of democratic government is determined by the nature of political party/parties which run it. Political parties are the chief instruments of informing and influencing the electorates. They work as a bridge that link the political candidates and the public or electorates. They mobilize and organize the electorates for electoral success of their candidates who are in the election fray. They unite, simplify and stabilize the political process. They bring together sectional interests, overcome geographical distance and provide coherence to divisive government structures. They struggle for capturing power and extend the area of their support. They also perform the important function of recruiting political leaders. In political systems with weak and ill-organized political parties, power remains in the hands of the elites that are recruited from traditional groups like hereditary ruling families or military organization. In representative democracy, competitive party system prevails and political recruitment is made from different political parties. The views of political elites in Manipur on party sponsorship for electoral success can be seen in table 3.12

⁵⁶ Dr. L. Chandramani Singh (Ex-CM), *op. cit.*

Table: 3.12. Views of Political Elite on Party Sponsorship for Electoral Success

Elite group	Party Sponsorship		Total
	Yes	No	
Sitting MLAs/MPs	38	5	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs	42	1	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	13	1	14
Total	93	7	100

The data in table 3.12 reveals that ninety three percent (93%) of the political elites regarded party sponsorship as essential for electoral success while seven percent (7%) do not consider it as essential for the same. A political leader⁵⁷ said, “Party sponsorship is a contributory factor for electoral success as it provides manpower, financial and organizational support to the candidate. Independent candidatedship is not regarded as genuine politician”. Another political leader⁵⁸ mentioned, “I do not like to encourage those who enter electoral politics as independent candidates. One should be sponsored by a political party and work under the ideology of the party. One needs to work for the welfare of the people as a group and one cannot do anything without the ambition and ideology of a party or other”. Sharing his view a political leader⁵⁹ said, “I might not have been elected to the Lok-Sabha if I did not fight the election on a party ticket. National party is very important and political party establishes the link between the candidate and the people”. A senior political leader⁶⁰ said, “Party sponsorship is essential for electoral success. But the present electoral politics is characterized by muscle and money power and this bring the downfall of democracy not only in the state but throughout the country. It is better to have the system of proportionate representation of each political party.

⁵⁷ Personal interview with S.Ibohal Singh (Ex-MLA) on 20. 6. 2009.

⁵⁸ Personal interview with T. Mangibabu Singh (Sitting MLA) on 21. 6. 2009.

⁵⁹ Personal interview with Thangso Baite (Ex-MLA & Sitting MP) on 15. 10. 2009.

⁶⁰ Ph. Parijat Singh (Sitting MLA), *op.cit.*

Here, there will be no individual candidate of the party but people will vote for the party which they prefer most. As per the number of votes that a party got, a proportionate number of legislators have to be selected by the party itself from among its members. The party has to decide the persons who can be good legislators”. Another senior political leader⁶¹ mentioned, “Political party means a group of people having common fundamental aims and objectives. It has both vision and mission and gives chances of correcting one’s behaviour and getting new and genuine opinions”.

Contrary to the viewpoints held by the majority of the political elites, a political leader⁶² said, “In the state like Manipur, party sponsorship does not work for electoral success. Electoral success depends mostly on the personality and activities of the candidate. Political party plays an important role at the time of government formation” A sitting MLA⁶³ mentioned, “In the context of Manipur, the personality and activities of the individual concerned is more important than party sponsorship for electoral success Majority of voters do not go by party ideology and principles but by personal, man to man relationship”. A senior political leader⁶⁴ observed, “In Manipur, politics is marriage of convenience and everyone will go for the party which run the government and there is no strict political ideology among the political elites. Getting party ticket of a dominant party is a difficult task and it is exhausting task to run for party ticket and at the same time preparing and engaging in election related activities. If one has determination to fight election, he/she can do it without the support of the party”.

3.18 Political Aspiration of the Political Elites

Every political being would like to be on a proper political platform from which he/she can express his/her ideas of politics and translate what he/she want as political actor into action. Here, position of power becomes important to deliver service to the people or state or nation. But one’s desire to seek a political or governmental position

⁶¹ Personal interview with S. Tiken Singh (Defeated MLA candidate) on 5. 5. 2009.

⁶² N. Biren Singh (Sitting -MLA), *op.cit*

⁶³ Personal interview with Dr. Kh. Loken Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 30.6.2009.

⁶⁴ Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit*.

should be related with the desire to do something for the welfare of the society. It should not compromise with one's political principle. Sixty one percent (61%) of the political elites under study expressed that they want to be elected representative of the people while twenty five percent (25%) said that they have no particular choice. Seven percent (7%) of them want to be Chief Minister of the state and six percent (6%) want to go from state level politics to national level politics by becoming Member of Parliament while one percent (1%) did not like to disclose what political or governmental position he wanted to see seek. Here, it is to be noted that twenty five percent (25%) of the political elites who have no particular political aspiration or choice are those who belong to the age group of 65 and above years.

Table 3.13 Political Elite's View on Political Aspiration, Career Goal and its determinants

Elite group	Political aspiration/ambition					Career goals			Determinants of career goals		
	Elected representative	State politics to national politics	Chief minister	No particular choice	Do not want to reveal	Service for the welfare of the people	Service for constituency, State and nation	Service for egalitarian society	Party objectives and programmes	Free-wheeling political style	Both party objectives & programmes and free-wheeling political style
Sitting MLAs/MPs	32	3	2	5	1	25	18	-	16	5	22
Ex-MLAs/MPs	17	2	5	19	-	26	13	4	15	9	19
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	12	1	-	1	-	9	3	2	3	3	8
Sub-total	61	6	7	25	1	60	34	6	34	17	49
Grand-total	100					100			100		

It is also found that sixty percent (60%) of the political elites under study considered ‘serving the people’ as their career goal, thirty four percent (34%) ‘serving the constituency, state and nation and six percent (6%) considered ‘establishing an egalitarian society free from corruption, unemployment and malpractices’ as their career goal. Further, thirty four percent (34%) political elites stated that their career goal is determined by the objectives and programmes of their respective political party while the career goal of seventeen percent (17%) is said to be determined by their free-wheeling political style followed by forty nine percent (49%) who reported that their career goal is determined by both party objectives and programmes as well as free-wheeling political style. It is also found that all the political elites under study considered service to party, constituency and district as part and parcel of their career goal.

3.19 Qualification/Quality of Political Elites

Nations, communities, cultures rise and fall because of their political leaders. Who are the political leaders and what they do define the future, whether success or failure, of all in their custody. So, political leaders must have some unique personalities including educational and political qualifications available to them to be able to fit most appropriately to any situation they face. Political leadership is not about acting or being big through political power or any other. Without a set of leadership qualities or skills, a political leader cannot maintain himself in the elite structure for long.

The political elites in Manipur have suggested many qualities/qualifications, skills or talents as necessary and desirable for a career in politics. The qualities or qualifications which the political elites claimed as desirable and necessary for a career in politics can be categorized as under

- (a) Personal qualities/skill or talent: This category includes (1) maturity (2) sincerity (3) transparency/accountability (4) oratory power/skill (5) ability to handle socio-economic and political issues (6) desire to serve people (7) no criminal and smuggler (8) non-corrupt (9) hard working and diplomatic (10) close relationship with the people (11) good behaviour – one should not be addicted to drugs, wine and women (12) not aged person – upper age limit should be maintained to be in politics (13) integrity, broad outlook and pleasing personality (14) no person who use money and muscle power.
- (b) Educational qualification: It has been suggested that a person who want to make a career in politics must be (1) a graduate (2) educated and knowledgeable (3) able to understand what is happening around at the national and international levels (4) able to understand and interpret the constitutional laws.
- (c) Political qualification: This includes among others (1) involvement in all round social and political activities (2) political and ideological consciousness (3) enrolment in the political party should be made a little bid formalize so that deserving persons hold important party positions (4) political exposure and commitment and (5) understanding the role and duty of legislator.

Table 3.14 Views o Political Elite on the Qualifications for career in Politics

Elite group	Qualification, talent and skill necessary and desirable for career in politics							Total
	Personal qualification	Political qualification	Educational qualification	Personal & Educational qualification	Personal & Political qualification	Political & Educational qualification	No qualification required	
Sitting MLAs/MPs	13	9	5	13	3	-	-	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs	14	4	4	17	2	1	1	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	4	4	1	3	2	-	-	14
Total	31	17	10	33	7	1	1	100

It is found that thirty one percent (31%) of the political elites under study emphasized the possession of certain personal qualities/talents as necessary and desirable for a career in politics, seventeen percent (17%) political qualification, ten percent (10%) educational qualification, thirty three percent (33%) both personal qualities and educational qualification, seven percent (7%) both personal and political qualities/ qualification and one percent (1%) both political and educational qualities/qualification. But a political leader⁶⁵ said, “Nothing is required for a career in politics. Many illiterate persons have become MLAs/MPs. No doubt, there are certain qualities such as oratory power/skill but such quality should not be considered as essential quality or skill for one’s political career”.

The Indian constitution has not prescribed any minimum educational qualification for contesting candidates. But it makes a contestant eligible if (1) he /she is a citizen of country (2) his/her age is above 25 years for contesting for Lok-Sabha and Legislative Assembly and over 30 years for Rajya-Sabha and Legislative Council (4) he/she must take an oath of allegiance to the constitution at the time of filling nominations (4) he/she must not be suffering from any disqualification like conviction for crimes or corrupt practices (5) he/she must pay security deposit and have required number of proposers. In 1998, the former Election Commissioner, G.V. Krishnamurty had suggested another criteria for eligibility, that is, minimum educational qualification under Article 84.⁶⁶ He might have suggested this criterion because of a genuine concern over declining standards of performance of people’s representatives inside the legislative bodies. It is worth noting here that only ten percent (10%) of the political elites under study emphasized educational qualification, at least graduate, for a person who wants to make a career in politics.

⁶⁵ H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁶⁶ Anjan Kumar Bhanja, *Political Recruitment: Perspective and Perceptions*, Common Wealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2008, p.155.

Chapter 4

Interactional pattern of Political Elite

4.1 Introduction

People are always engaged in action. People in action mean interaction with others in some measure and form. Society exists only when a large number of persons are interacting in the context of social rules, norms and expectations. A political system works within and for a society. It is a sub-system of social system. Despite being a sub-system, it covers all the people and areas of the society and its decisions bind all the members of the social system. In a democratic political system, the interaction of political elites is very important. The interactions that they have with other political elites both within and across party boundaries enlarge their political outlook and experience. The interactions in which political parties are involved not only affect the political but other dimensions of our collective life. The existence and operation of parties “by no means eliminates selfish and unscrupulous motives. The power seeking drives of politician remains constant”.¹ The interactions that political elites have across party boundaries make them acquire finer facets of socialization.

4.2 Interaction of Political Elites across party boundary

Political elites, both tribal and non-tribal, irrespective of their party affiliation belong to Manipur. They need to work co-operatively for the integrity as well as the growth and development of the state. As Manipur has heterogeneous population, the political elites in the state belong to different social categories. They also belong to different political

¹ Sartori, *Parties and Party System: An Framework for Analysis*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1976, p.25.

parties having their respective political ideologies. But political elite's belongingness to different social categories and political parties does not work as an obstacle in their interaction. There are certain common issues which come beyond party line and political elites need to have close interaction both within and across party line and have certain consensus on common issue. Different political parties while forming a government often have common minimum programmes and political elites representing different political parties in the government so formed need to carry everybody around. Thus, it would be wrong to think that there should be untouchability with political leaders of other political parties. It is not necessary that those who are non-ruling elites should always criticize whatever the ruling elite does even if it is good and beneficial to the state. The interactional pattern of political elites across party boundary and the occasions/issues of such interaction can be seen in table 4.1

Table: 4.1 Interaction with Political Elite across Party boundary and Occasions/Issues of Such Interaction

Elite Group	Across Party Boundary		Total	Occasions/Issues			No interaction across party boundary	Total
	Yes	No		Local	Local & Regional	Local & National		
Sitting MLAs/MPs	43	-	43	36 (83.7%)	4 (9.3%)	3 (7%)	-	43 (100)
Ex-MLAs/MPs	40	3	43	37 (86%)	-	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	13	1	14	13 (92.9%)	-	-	1 (7.1%)	14 (100)
Total	96	4	100	86	4	6	4	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

From table 4.1, it is evident that the majority of political elites (96%) under study have interaction with other political leaders, both tribal and non-tribal, across party boundary while only four percent (4%) replied in the negative. It is also revealed that out of the political elites who belong to the elite group of sitting MLAs/MPs, 83.7 percent have interaction with other political elites across party boundary on local issues, 9.3 percent on local and regional issues and 7 percent on local and national issues. In case of Ex-MLAs/MPs, 86 percent of them have interaction across party boundary on local issues, 7 percent on local and national issues while another 7 percent do not have interaction across party boundary. It is also found that among that defeated MLA/MP candidates, those who have interacted across party boundary have such interaction on local issues. A senior political leader² said, “There were/are many tribal ministers, Chief Ministers in the state with whom I had/have closely interacted and they treated me as most trusted person. I also have interaction with other political leaders across party boundary on the issues of the state. I had been a union minister in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government and I had interacted with leaders of all the political parties which were/are the parts of the NDA. I got the opportunity to take part in the decision making not only in the normal business of the government but also in declaring Kargil war against Pakistan”. Another senior political leader³ said, “We cannot remain within the boundary of political party on common issues. When there was the issue of territorial integrity of Manipur due to the extension of Indo-Naga ceasefire in Manipur in 2001 which caused social chaos, political leaders interacted across party boundary and oppose decision of the Indian government. The issue of delimitation was another occasion. The Census of 2001, on the basis of which the delimitation process was to be made, was conducted in a faulty way that in the valley areas of the state many Bengalis, Punjabis and Marwari who were born and have been living in Manipur for the last many years were not included in the census report. But, in the hilly areas of the state, many irregularities were found. It was even said that the unborn child who is in the womb of the mother was also included in the census report. There was an inflated figure of

² Personal interview with Th. Chaoba Singh, (Ex-MLA/MP) on 30.1. 2009.

³ Personal interview with Radhabinode Koijam (Ex-CM & Sitting MLA) on 9. 10. 2009.

population of the hill areas in the census report of 2001. The rate of population growth in some valley areas like Lamphel and Patsoi was about 2.4% whereas the rate as found in the census report in Senapati district, a hill area, was more than 44% and it was only 2% in Tipaimukh area, another hill area. It was such acute variation in population growth rate which caused many defects in delimitation process. Political leaders go together across party boundary in dealing with such common issues”. A political leader⁴ reported that he interacted with political leaders across party boundary on such occasions like the demand for statehood of Manipur, inclusion of Manipuri language in the 8th schedule of the constitution, protection of territorial integrity of Manipur and the issue of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)-1958 and the demand for its repeal from the state and North East region”. On the other hand, a political leader⁵ expressed that he has no formal interaction with other political elites across party boundary and the need for such interaction did not arise. Another political leader⁶ reported the same. The common issues upon which political elites interact across party boundary include social and political issues like social chaos caused by 54 days economic blockade in both national highways which connect the state with other states of India by some groups, insurgency problem, communal tension and clash and others.

There are different political parties as there are people having different ideas and opinions. Belonging to a political party or another is a different thing but it is not possible to separate the political parties completely. There is no friend and no enemy in politics. One may be a good friend today but he may also become an enemy tomorrow while an enemy of today may become a friend tomorrow. There are many like-minded political elites even if they belong to different political parties. Political elites need to co-operate and interact across party boundary to keep their image high in society as well as for dealing the state and national issues. State and national interests are above all other interests and they should be given top priority. Here, mention may be made of the interaction the political elites in Manipur had across party boundary to deal with the

⁴ Personal interview with S. Ibohal Singh (Ex-MLA) on 20. 6. 2009.

⁵ Personal interview with E. Biramani Singh (Ex-MLA) on 13. 5. 2009.

⁶ Personal interview with M. Thohrii (Sitting MLA) on 23. 5. 2009.

social and political chaos associated with the extension of ceasefire between the government of India and NSCN (IM), an underground outfit, in Manipur in 2001. Indeed, there were hue and cry in the state and political elites interacted across party boundary by keeping aside the political or party ambition and reviewed the situation by considering that their first and foremost task was confidence building among the people. It was the time when people of the state were in such a situation that they seemed to have lost their faith in parliamentary democracy. All the elected MLAs and three MPs of the state were driven out of the state. They formed the Elected Representatives Forum and tried very hard to show that it was not the parliamentary democracy which was failed but it were a few people which failed the system. It was good for the state and its people that political elites despite their differences are aware of the issue and work together. There are some groups who work against the interest of the state and political elites need to go together irrespective of their party affiliation to deal with common issues of the state in particular and of the nation in general.

4.3 Interaction of Political Elite with Local Level Functionaries

The government of India took into consideration the economic status of the villagers and made all efforts for establishment of cooperative societies. The Cooperative Planning Committee constituted in 1946 has defined the cooperatives in the context of Indian peasantry as “the form of organization in which persons voluntarily associate together on the basis of equality for the promotion of their common interest”.⁷ The Rural Credit Survey Committee in 1951 suggested that the cooperatives should provide coverage to the rural poor, who have no chance against the vested interests of the land lords-money lenders-traders class. It was also recommended that the state government should participate in the share capital of the cooperatives and also provide managerial support and subsidies. The government, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and other nationalized banks provide assistance to the cooperative societies.

⁷ S.C. Doshi and P.C. Jain, *Rural Sociology*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1999, p.296.

Manipur lives in villages. Out of the total population, 22, 39,896, of the state in 2001, 74.89 percent were living in the villages while 5.76 lakhs people who constitute 25.11 percent of the total population live in urban areas.⁸The cooperative movement in Manipur has been playing its role in the social and economic development of the state, particularly in the rural areas. There are 4901 cooperative societies as on 31st March, 2006 in Manipur out of which 1866 are industrial cooperative societies and remaining 3055 are non industrial cooperative societies. It is to note that farmers, particularly of fruits and vegetables, are facing marketing problems. Export and cold storage facilities are not yet available in the state and farmers could not sale off their products in the way which could provide them reasonable benefit.

All the states in India have legislation with regard to urban local government. Population volume, which varies from state to state, is the criteria on the basis of which urban areas are demarcated into municipal corporations, municipalities and town panchayats. Large cities with population above 10 lakhs are constituted as corporations and cities with lower population, usually below 10 lakhs and above 50,000, are constituted as municipalities while population centers with population above 5,000 but below 50,000 are constituted as town panchayat. In Manipur, there are 28 urban local bodies ((9 municipalities, 18 nagar panchayats and one small town committee) covering a total area of 138, 83 sq. kms. With a population of 5, 75,968 as per 2001 census, Imphal Municipal Council having an area of 31 sq. km with a population of 2, 17, 275 is the largest and most populous among the municipal councils. The smallest Nagar Panchayat is Sekmai Naga Panchayat. Each urban body is divided into a number of wards. The minimum number of wards that each urban body can have is nine and the maximum number is twenty seven. The urban local body is an institute of self government having a Board of Councillors/Commissioners elected from each ward. The chairman elected by the majority of the Councillors/Commissioners is the executive head of the urban local body and he presides over its meetings. The Executive officer sent by the state government is the

⁸ *Economic Survey –Manipur, 2006-07*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Manipur, Imphal, 2007, p.101.

whole time Principal Executive officer for the administrative control of the urban local body.

Manipur has a two-tier Panchayati Raj institution – Gram Panchayat headed by Pradhan at the village level and Zilla Parishad headed by Adhyaksha at the district level. The state has nine districts consisting of five hill districts and four valley districts. The Panchayati Raj Institutions cover the four valley districts only while in the hill districts, Autonomous District Councils are constituted under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 for meeting the interests of the tribal and administrative convenience. There are four Zilla Parishads, one hundred sixty five Gram Panchayats and six Autonomous District Councils in the state. Though Sadar Hill area is a part of Senapati district, it has its Autonomous District Council for administrative convenience.⁹ Each District Council consists of eighteen elected members and two nominated members. It also has its own chairman and vice chairman whom its members elected from amongst them and a Chief Executive officer appointed by the state government. The chairman is the whole time functionary and is entitled to salary and allowances.

It is found that all the political elites under study feel the necessity of interacting with the local level functionaries like the Chairman of municipal councils, the members and the President/Chairman of District Councils and the Chairman/President of various cooperative societies in the state for all matters of public interests and uplift the living conditions of the people. Parliamentary democracy in India covers all local level functionaries and democracy can be established at the door step of each individual through local bodies. All the local bodies are instrumental in implementation of different developmental programmes at the local level and their contribution in the process of nation building should be counted. Unfortunately, political interference on the local bodies is found in the state. Local bodies run by a non-ruling political party always get defeated and disappointed at the hand of the ruling political party. Lack of fund, abuse of power by the elected representatives,

⁹ Rajendra Kshetri, *District Councils in Manipur: Formation and Functioning*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2006, p. 16.

disturbances by external forces and the suppression of local bodies for long period of time are some of the problems associated with local bodies. The political elites should take into account these problems of the local bodies and make them function properly by giving their rights and privileges.

4.4 Vertical Interactional Linkages of the Political Elites

Direct formal and informal interactions with specific elites in the political system constitute a powerful force in shaping individual orientation to the system. Political elites under study get the opportunity of interacting with high ups like Prime Minister, chief Minister, other Central and State ministers and obtain knowledge and experience through such interaction.

Table: 4.2 Interaction with High Ups

Elite Group	Prime Minister		Chief Minister		Central Ministers		State Ministers		Occasions/Issues		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	State	State & Regional	State& National
Sitting MLAs/MPs	30	13	43	-	40	3	43	-	42	1	-
Ex-MLAs/MPs	32	11	43	-	43	-	43	-	41	-	2
Defeated MLA/MP Candidate	7	7	14	-	14	-	14	-	12	-	2
Sub-Total	69	31	100	-	97	3	100	-	95	1	4
Grand-Total	100		100		100		100		100		

From table 4.2, it is evident that all the political elites under study have interaction with Chief Minister and other state ministers at different occasions, sixty nine percent (69%) with Prime Minister and ninety seven percent (97%) with central leaders. It is also evident that thirty one percent (31%) of political elites have not interacted with Prime Minister followed by three percent (3%) who do not have interaction with central leaders. The data in the table further reveals that ninety five percent (95%) have interactions with the high ups with regard to state issues, four percent (4%) on state and national issues and one percent (1%) on state and regional issues. It is also found that eighty one percent (81%) of political elites under study considered interaction with high ups as beneficial while nineteen percent (19%) considered that some of the central leaders are serious about the problems/issues of Manipur and some others are not.

A senior political leader¹⁰ observed, “I have interacted with many Prime Ministers of India and other central leaders from time to time with regard to the issues of the state. They were quite nice, cordial and listen to what I said very carefully. But they did not know what were/are happening in the state. I have also interacted with the Chief Minister and other ministers of the state on many occasions”. A political leader¹¹ said, “I have interacted with the Prime Minister, Chief Minister, some central and state ministers on many occasions and I got lots of experience from them”. A senior political leader¹² expressed, “I have interacted with many Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers, other central and state ministers at different points of time with regard to issues like reservation of seats for women in Panchayat and Municipality, development or upliftment of women in terms of economic and political freedom. We need to make the central leaders know the problems of the state in true spirit”. A senior political leader¹³ said, “I have interacted with many central leaders including the Prime Minister on many occasions. Many of them know me very well and some of them even wanted me to be the Chief Minister of the state. When there was social chaos and unrest in Manipur following the arrest and killing of a woman, Thangjam Monorama Devi, by security forces (Assam Rifles) on 11th

¹⁰ Personal interview with H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA) on 24. 2. 2008.

¹¹ Personal interview with Md. Helaluddin (Sitting- MLA) on 31. 5. 2009.

¹² Personal interview with W. Joymati Devi (Defeated MLA candidate) on 28. 6. 2009.

¹³ Personal interview with Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting MLA) on 17. 11. 2009

July, 2004, I was asked by the central leaders to replace Chief Minister, O. Ibobi Singh. They wanted to use me as a puppet to sideline the problem by imposing Presidential Rule (PR) and appointing me as the Chief Minister of the state. I asked them not to impose PR at any cost but know the ground reality and bring the solution of the problem instead of changing the leadership. Politics should be for the nation but not for self-serving". Sharing his view a senior political leader¹⁴ said, "I am a Manipuri and a citizen of India. I met Jawaharlal Nehru in 1963-64 and I joined congress after meeting him. I had a close association with Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. When there were agitations of All Assam Student's Union and All Assam Gana Sangam Parishad on foreigner's issue in Assam in the late 1970s, R.K. Dorendra Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur at that time, was assigned the task of solving the problem by Indira Gandhi. But she was not satisfied with him and asked me to take the leadership. I had been the Chief Minister of Manipur for twelve years and I met and interacted with many central leaders with regard to various issues of the state and learnt that one who can win the confidence of the people should be the leader".

A senior political leader¹⁵ while expressing displeasure over the central leaders said, "I have interacted with the central leaders including the Prime Minister with regard to various issues of the state including insurgency problem. But they did not have much interest in the North East region. I still feel bad on the step-motherly treatment of the state by the central leaders". Explaining his experience a senior political leader¹⁶ said, "Some central leaders were very serious to understand the problems of Manipur while some others are not. When I asked L.K. Advani (the then Deputy Prime Minister of India) to visit Manipur, he told that he feel ashamed to visit Manipur because the people of state are very angry with the then Bharatia Janata Party led National Democratic Alliance government on the issue of ceasefire agreement with National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM)".

¹⁴ Personal interview with Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP) on 14. 5. 2009.

¹⁵ Personal interview with M. Nilachandra Singh (Ex-MLA) on 19. 3. 2009

¹⁶ Personal interview with M. Bhorot Singh (Ex-MLA) on 21. 3. 2009.

Thus, it is found that the political elites under study interacted with the Chief Minister and other state ministers. Majority of them interacted with different Prime Ministers of India, starting from Jawaharlal Nehru, and other central leaders. They gained experiences by interacting with certain central leaders – the way they function – very systematic with minute details of the issue in hand – and their vision influenced and shaped their political thinking. It is also found that the political elites who belong to the political parties which are in power at the state or national level have more opportunities of interacting with the leaders at top level. It is also found that the political elites who have more interactions with the Prime Minister and other central leaders on state issues belong to older generation of political elites.

4.5 Interaction between Political Elite and Bureaucracy

India is a democratic country and it has a parliamentary system of government. A government official is accountable directly to the political executive and indirectly through him to the Parliament or Assembly and the people. The political elites formulate policy as well as broadly supervise its implementation while the government officials are responsible for carrying it out. Different political parties with different ideologies do come to power from time to time and government officials are to serve different masters. The success of a political system depends on the implementation of the ideological concepts, philosophical values and social policies and programmes at all levels. The bureaucracy and the political elites need to work closely and harmoniously to achieve this goal. A good public official educates the political elites in power not only on policy but on every aspect of governance without misleading the political elites with wrong facts. He also explains the legalities and technicalities involved so that the political elites decide on issues correctly and efficiently. The political elites, on the other hand, must take decisions which are to the benefit of the people.

The political elites who have more interaction with the government officials engaged in the preparation and implementation of various plans and programmes can influence the latter in getting things done. They also have the chance of materializing the aspirations of the people and enlarged their mass support. All the political elites under study reported that they have interaction with government officials at block, district and state or national levels and they did not face any difficulty in such interaction. A political leader¹⁷ said, “I have interaction with government officials with regard to the problems of the people. Interaction with government officials either at block level or district level or state or national level depends on the issue on which discussion is to be made along with the concerned officials”. The political elites under study also revealed that they are better acquainted with the government officials at block level because they are more easily accessible and the state or national level officials do not handle or deal the problem/matter directly but it is passed to the blocks. A political leader¹⁸ observed, “I have more interaction with government officials at block level because my constituency is directly covered by a block. The block development officer is a vital agency in executing the local development programmes. I also have interaction with officials at the district and state or national level on special occasions, not regularly”.

It is also found that some of the political elites under study are not satisfied with the pattern of working of government officials. A senior political leader¹⁹ said, “Indian bureaucracies are not responsive to the people. They mostly wait for the approval and satisfaction of their masters for accomplishing any work. They become more responsive when I interacted with them as a minister or MLA”. A woman political leader²⁰ while sharing her view said, “I have interacted with government officials at block, district and state or national levels and find no difficulty while interacting with them. Government officials at block and district levels very often said that they failed to do many things that they are supposed to do because they were not given the authority or the resources by the

¹⁷ Personal interview with O. Joy Singh (Sitting- MLA) on 14. 4 .2008.

¹⁸ Personal interview with C. Doungel (Ex-MLA) on 23. 3. 2009.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Gangumei Kamei (Ex-MLA) on 19. 5. 2009.

²⁰ Personal interview with Valley Rose Hungyo (Defeated MLA/MP candidate) on 2.6.2009.

state government. This is the main problem and offices remain only for name sake in the districts”.

The bureaucratic system in Manipur is politicized to a considerable extent. It is involved or influenced, consciously or unconsciously by overt or implicit actions in the stream of the politics of the day, whether of the party in power or of the parties in opposition. But the degree of politicization depends upon the extent to which the government officials allow themselves to be influenced by the political elites within or outside the government. As Manipur is a pluralistic society inhabited by different small communities, there is a strong need to have equitable development of all communities. Political elites and government officials at block, district and state levels have to play a great role to meet this end. The government officials should be ideologically neutral and work for the success of the democratic system by simply guiding the political elites and themselves remaining neutral to the political parties. They should think of what they have contributed towards the state as employees of the state and maintain transparency. If one has determination and commitment, even the difficult task can be accomplished for promoting the welfare of the state and its people.

4.6 Power and Influence as Interactional Benefit of Political Elites

An aggregate of individuals becomes a society when there is reciprocal direct or indirect influence. Social interaction is the reciprocal influence mutually exerted by human beings through their stimulation and mutual response. Human beings are engaged in some sort of activities with the expectation of a benefit in one form or other. Majority of political elites (97%) under study think that the interactions that they have with the leaders at state and national levels and with bureaucrats add power and influence as well as open up ways for having better access to influence while three percent did not think so.

A senior political leader²¹ said, “I met Vishnu Ram Bedhi, President of Assam province congress committee and joined congress through him. There was a step of state reorganization after independence and Manipur was to be merged to Assam. At that time, Jawaharlal Nehru made his second visit to Manipur and he did not allow the merger of Manipur with Assam by considering that Manipur has its distinctive culture and tradition and it could not be merged to other state. There was great influence of Nehru in Manipur.” Another senior political leader²² said, “I met and interacted with V.V. Giri, President of India, Vinoba Bhave and other central leaders. Vinoba Bhave advised me to establish a women’s political party in Manipur to strengthen women’s power. I was the chairperson of Manipur State Council for Women’s Education and we work for the upliftment of the women and they are now awakened to a great extent. We organized a two day conference on women’s education in the year 1975 and the resolutions of the conference were sent to the government. From that year onwards, women were appointed as Principal of colleges and Head Mistress of schools. There were no woman principal and head mistress in colleges and schools in Manipur before”. Another senior political leader²³ opined that there are many qualified and experienced persons among the bureaucrats and national leaders from whom we can learn a lot. By interacting with them I got new additional knowledge and ideas and enlarged my influence base”. A senior political leader²⁴ on the other hand said, “I don’t think interaction with leaders at state and central levels as well as with the bureaucrats adds power and influence and opens up ways for having better access to influence. I interacted with all of them and asked certain things both for my constituency and state. It is not that they fulfilled all that we want from them as fulfillment of the demand or need depends on what they think of the demand or issue”..

Power plays an important part in shaping relations among the members of a group. Kingsley Davis defines power as “the determination of behaviour of others in accordance with one’s ends”.²⁵ Max Weber has defined power as “the probability that one actor,

²¹ Personal interview with Y. Yaima Singh (Ex-MLA/MP) on 10. 8. 2008.

²² Personal interview with A. Bimola Devi (Ex-MLA) on 29. 10. 2009.

²³ Personal interview with Dr. L. Chandamani Singh (Ex- Deputy CM) on 27. 1. 2009.

²⁴ H. Bhubon singh (Ex-MLA) op. cit.

²⁵ Kingsley Davis, *Human Society*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963, p.94

individual or group, within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests".²⁶ The distribution of power in society is closely related with the distribution of statuses and offices. A person like Prime Minister or Chief Minister possesses great power. Interactional linkages which provide entry into the power circle enhance the status of the leader. Political elites in Manipur enter into interaction with leaders at national and state levels as well as bureaucrats with the expectation of becoming more powerful and influential. Power motivation is the driving force of political elites in Manipur.

4.7 Political Elite's Visit to Constituency and its Occasions

Political elites make laws of the state on the basis of information communicated to them by their fellow political elites and the community or public of the state or constituency and their decisions affect the daily life of the community. They need to evaluate the needs and grievances of the people and find possible solution. Political elites are viewed as someone capable of bringing development of the society and solve the problem/grievances of the community. The political elites who entered into politics in the interest of the public or who are ready to provide their service to the community are supposed to have close interaction at the grass-root level. They must be accessible to the community so that they are acquainted with the growing problems of the community or constituency.

It is evident from table 4.3 that normally, 86.5% of the sitting MLAs/MPs used to visit their respective constituency four or more times a month, 11.63% thrice a month and 2.32% use to visit once in a month. Among the Ex-MLAs/MPs, 76.75% used to visit their respective constituency four or more times a month, 11.63% once a month, 9.30% thrice and 2.32% twice in a month. Among the defeated MLA/MP candidates, 92.86% used to visit their respective constituency four or more times in a month while 7.14% thrice in a month. It is also revealed that all the political elites under study used to visit their

²⁶ Quoted in Harry M. Johnson, *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*, Allied Publishers Ltd. New Delhi, 1993,p.62

respective constituency on public occasions like political meetings, attending community functions, evaluation of developmental work or project undertaken in the constituency and accessing the genuine grievances of the people with the sole aim of redressing their immediate problem etc. It is also evident that 82% of the political elites visit their respective constituency on private occasions like attending birth, marriage and death ceremonies while 18% of them said that their family members used to attend on their behalf such private occasions. Thus, it can be said that visit to constituency and attending both public and private functions constitute a major factor for electoral success of the political elites under study.

Table: 4.3 Visit of Political Elite to Constituency and Its Occasions

Elite Group	Frequency of visit in a month				Total	Occasions					Total
	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four times & more		Private		Total	Public		
						Yes	No		Yes	No	
Sitting MLAs/MPs	1 (2.32)	-	5 (11.63)	37 (86.05)	43 (100)	39 (90.69)	4 (9.31)	43 (100)	43 (100)	-	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs	5 (11.63)	1 (2.32)	4 (9.3)	33 (76.75)	43 (100)	40 (93.03)	3 (6.97)	43 (100)	43 (100)	-	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate	-	-	1 (7.14)	13 (92.86)	14 (100)	3 (21.42)	11 (78.58)	14 (100)	14 (100)	-	14
Total	6	1	10	83	100	82	18	100	100	-	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

A senior political leader²⁷ said, “I have interaction with the people of my constituency very frequently. They used to come to my place and I also go and meet them. I believe in participatory democracy and want everyone in the constituency to know and involve in the developmental programmes which are being taken up. I used to make appeal to the people of my constituency to make contribution of some amount of money, even if it is only Rs. 10/- so that the same is used in the developmental work of the constituency and make them think that the constructed objects/structures are their own property. They may not have the feeling of ownership of the object/structure if it is made or constructed only by government fund”. A political leader²⁸ said, “I requested the people of my constituency to allow my family members attend social and religious functions and enable me to allot more time on developmental work of the constituency. I used to visit my constituency four or more times in a month to see the progress and defects, if any, of the developmental projects which are being taken up in my constituency and highlight the matter to the concerned officials, minister and honourable Chief Minister”. Another political leader²⁹ observed, “As I am in politics, visiting my constituency and meeting people on both public and private occasions become a part and parcel of my life”. A senior political leader³⁰ said, “Having frequent interaction with the people is just like taking vitamin for healthy body. I interact with the people of my constituency as far as possible with regard to developmental work as well as to find solution of their grievances. Frequent interaction and meeting with the people is very necessary from election point of view. I, therefore, go to my constituency and meet people as much as I can”. Expressing the law and order situation of the state as the major hurdle against the wish of political elite to visit their respective constituency, a senior political leader³¹ said, “Because of the law and order situation in the state, nowadays visiting my constituency or some interior parts of Manipur is almost as difficult as Marco Polo’s journey. I have, therefore, to think of the risks involved and security escort etc. It is not that I don’t like to take any risks. I have been ambushed so many times. I study the

²⁷ Radhabinode Koijam (Ex-CM & Sitting-MLA) op. cit.

²⁸ Personal interview with Y.Surchandra Singh (sitting-MLA) on 11. 6. 2009

²⁹ Personal interview with H. Borobabu Singh (Ex-MLA) on 2.6.2009.

³⁰ Personal interview with Gaikhangam (Sitting-MLA) on 3.6.2009.

³¹ C. Doungel (Ex-MLA), op.cit

situation and when the scenario is at least healthy, I visit my constituency and interact with people once in a month”.

It is true that political elite has to take care of his/her constituency as the role of the political elite is first related to his constituency followed by the state. When he got elected he should first take care of his constituency but not at the cost of the state interests. It is not that one will not work for the constituency if he does not go there and would work sincerely for the constituency if he goes regularly. It depends on how one think of serving the people or community. Some political elites used to keep certain days in a week for their respective constituency on which people from their respective constituency only can meet them. Political elite should not behave in such a way as he is bound to work for the welfare of all sections of people in the state as a whole. It is a lame excuse that political elites could not go to their respective constituency because of the law and order situation in the state. Such practice/excuse only widens the gap between the people and their representatives. It is also found that most of the sitting MLAs/MPs are occupying the official bungalow provided by the government in and around Imphal, the capital of Manipur. Only a few reside at their respective residence and got more opportunity to meet and interact with the people. This may be one of the most important reasons for the widening gap between the people and the people’s representatives.

Chapter 5

Role Perception and Performance of Political Elite

5.1 Introduction

Political elites always try to be representative of the people by entering electoral politics. Representation is the “process through which the attitudes, preferences, viewpoints and desire of the entire citizenry or part of them are, with their expressed approval, shaped into governmental action on their behalf by a smaller number among them, with binding effect upon those represented”.¹ The representative represents individuals, their opinions and interests. He is elected according to geographically demarcated constituencies. The mass of the population exercise a choice between rival elites. The business of the elected assembly is to protect the interests of the constituents.

Majority of the political elites (99%) under study hold that they perform different roles at different situations and their role performance are conditioned or influenced by their socio-economic background, political socialization, prevailing situation and expectation of the public while one percent did not consider so. There is however a lone political elite² who said “a political actor should not perform different roles at different situations. He should put his ideas or ideology before the people and lead them in the right direction. He should not work according to the prevailing situation and expectation of the public or people. One becomes an opportunist if he works according to the prevailing situation”.

¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 19, p. 135

² Personal interview with Dr. L. Chandramani Singh (Ex-Deputy CM) on 27. 1.2009.

Role is the behaviour expected from one who occupies a particular status. The concept of role indicates political elite's perceptual aspects of the phenomenon as well as their manifest physical action. The political elites in Manipur are looked upon not only as the representatives of the people but also as those who can bring development in the state and ventilate the grievances of the people. They are responsible to the people and have to face the parliament or state assembly. They are supposed to follow rules and regulations in order to ensure that there is fairness of administration in terms of functioning, continuity and responsiveness to public interest. In a democratic country, the source of political power is primarily the people and secondarily the legislature which is the representative body of the people. Political elites in Manipur always strive to win and retain the support of the legislature and the electorate. They need to lead the people by putting forth before the legislature and the people the policies and programmes which they considered would serve the state and the nation. The political elites under study also belong to different political background and accordingly undergo a process of political socialization which determined their role performance.

The economic factor of a country also determined the role performance of the political elites. The role of political elites in a free market capitalist economy is confined to the regulatory function while in a mixed economy; the political elites have a greater and different role to play. Political elites under study belong to different economic background and their economic status plays an important role in their recruitment to the political elite structure. The role performance of the political elite is also determined by prevailing situation. They have to decide urgent public issues without waiting the approval of the state assembly or parliament.

The culture and the nature of the society also affect or determine the role performance of the political elites. Though the administration of the state is guided by democratic principles, ethnic group loyalty is still very strong. The social system of Manipur is such that it requires reservation of seats in the state assembly and administrative services for socially disadvantaged sections of the society and the political elites need to perform their role to suit the local conditions. The political elites under study also considered themselves as the representatives of the people, the bridge

between the decision making body and the public in the sense that the grievances of the people are channelized to the decision making body through them.

5.2 Elite's Legislative Role Perception and Performance

The relationship between political elites as the rulers and the public as the ruled is a matter of immediate concern with the development of representative government. The political elites are the representatives of the people whom the people have elected to act for them in matters of legislation. The political elite, if elected as representative, is an agent of the particular constituency and he has to work for the advancement or development of the constituency. He also has to work for obtaining money or fund for undertaking public works in the constituency and other favours which is within the power of the legislature or government. The political elite is also the representative of the whole state and he needs to work in consultation with other representatives for the promotion of general interests.

Table: 5.1 **Views of Political Elite on the role taken or supposed to be taken by them as participants in the legislative process**

Elite Group	Role Types							
	No entry into the process of decision making		Follow strictly rules, procedures & norms of floor debate		Introduce bills & demands for new approaches/policies		Promote/protect the interest of common people	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	-	43	42	1	27	16	43	-
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	-	43	43	-	34	9	43	-
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	-	14	14	-	14	-	14	-
Sub-total	-	100	99	1	75	25	100	-
Total	100		100		100		100	

The above table 5.1 highlights the elite's role perception which indicate the importance and priority they attached to various role types. All the political elites under study stated that they entered or are supposed to enter into the complicated process of decision making inside the legislature and never sit in the assembly or parliament without any participation. The data in the table also indicates that majority of political elite (99%) hold that rules, procedures and norms of the floor debate are followed or should be followed strictly while one percent did not follow the same. It is also observed that 25 percent of the political elites have not so far introduced bills and demands on the floor of the house so that new approaches and policies are framed in finding solutions to various existing problems while 75 percent stated that they have introduced bills and demands. It is also revealed that all the defeated MLA/MP candidates who constitute 14 percent of the political elites under study considered the role of introducing bills and demands for new approaches and policies as solutions of

various existing problems as the role supposed to be performed by the political elites. It is also evident from the table that all the political elites considered promoting or protecting the interest of the common people as the role taken by them.

Following Joseph la Palombara's³ categorization of political elites vis-à-vis their roles, into 'opportunist', 'ritualist', 'inventor' and 'tribune' it can be said at the superficial level, though, that all the political elites under study are not 'opportunist', 99 percent 'ritualist', 75 percent of them are 'inventor' while all the political elites are 'tribune'. Though the political elites claimed themselves to be ritualist, inventor, tribune and non-opportunist, the news items in newspapers and television channels contain such negative news of public grievances, scams, gang activities, corruption involving political elites. These news items in one way indicate that the political elites have utterly failed to provide even domestic security to the people. An essential item of the people is cooking gas. The government fixed its price from time to time but ignores other related aspects of it. It takes 3 to 4 months for a regular consumer to get refilled LPG gas cylinder and common people are compelled to buy cooking gas cylinder from black market where its price reach up to Rs 2000/- . Though Manipur is represented by three MPs in the Parliament, not even a single political leader raised the suffering of the Manipuris when there were 45 days long economic blockade imposed by some groups on two national highways connecting Manipur with the rest of India. There were shortage of all essential items including life saving drugs and the prices of essential commodities were sky high. It was only after the Indian Express highlighted after a 45 day long ordeal that the central government took action, that too tokenism in the form of airlifting the essential items. The political leaders lack the intellectual quality and depth for sailing the ideas, develop the issues and focus on the indispensability of certain steps

³ See, Joseph la Palombara, *Politics within Nations*, Prentice Hall, 1974, p.181.

One becomes an opportunist when he is not interested in law making function of the legislature but tries to raise his status for other purposes.

A ritualist is one whose expertise centers on the process of turning proposals into legislation. He regularly attends the sessions of the Assembly or Parliament as well as its committees and follows the intricacies of procedures very scrupulously.

An inventor is the one who plays major role in the creation of public policies by introducing bills and demands for legislative outputs responsive to many needs and request.

A tribune is one who is deeply involved in the articulation of interests, in the communication of demands, in the task of discovering what is desired by his constituents or the voters in general.

to be initiated. They lack the ability to attract the attention of the house. Political leaders appeared and pretend to work for the state and its people only when the time of election approaches. Power and wealth constitute the main objective of the political leaders and corrupt practices in each and every department are the products of opportunist and corrupt politicians.

5.3 Relation between Age of the Political Elite and their Role Orientation

Age is a definite and clearly visible physiological fact. Each individual is subject to different age statuses during his life span. Society may expect the service of older persons for political and administrative purposes as they are able to hold the superiority based on knowledge and experience. As one grows older, he comes across various socio-political situations and gain experiences from such exposure. Age is one of the indexes of determining one's experience and a factor which influences role orientation.

Table 5.2 indicates the correlation between the age of the political elites and their role orientation⁴. It is evident from the table that 74 percent of the non-opportunists who belong to the elite group of Sitting-MLAs/MPs are from the age group of 45-64 years and 50 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates who considered the non-opportunist role as the role supposed to be taken by them also belong to the same age group. However, in case of the elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs, 70 percent who opted for the non-opportunist role belong to the age group of 65 years and above. Thus, majority of the political elites who belong to the age group of 45-65 years considered that the role of political elites is to enter into the complicated process of decision making inside the legislature. They become opportunists if they do/did/shall not enter into the complicated process of decision making and sit inside the legislature without any participation in the legislature. It is also observed that majority of the sitting MLAs/MPs and defeated MLA/MP candidates who belong the age group of 45-64 years considered that they followed or are supposed to follow the rules, procedures and norms

⁴ For the purpose of meeting this end, the political elites under study have been divided into three age groups: (i) those who are below 45 years of age (ii) those who are between the age of 45-64 years and (iii) those who are 65 years and above.

of the floor debate whereas majority of the Ex-MLAs/MPs who followed the rules, procedures and norms of the floor debate belong to the age group of 65 years and above. The data in the table further reveals that among the sitting MLA/MPs who have introduced bills and demands for new approaches to various existing problems so that new policies and programmes are framed in finding solutions, 42 percent belong to the age group of 45-64 years, 19 percent to 65 years and above age group and 2 percent to the age group of below 45 years while among the political elites who have not introduced bills and demands, 32 percent are from the age group of 45-64 years and 5 percent from the age group of below 45 years. In case of the elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs who have introduced bills and demands, 49 percent belong to the age group of 65 years and above and 30 percent to the age group of 45-64 years while those who have not introduced bills and demands (21 percent) belong to the age group of 65 years and above.

Table: 5.2 Relation between Age and Role Orientation of Political Elites

Role type →	Opportunist						Ritualist						Inventor						Tribune					
	Sitting MLAs/MPs 43		Ex-MLAs/MPs 43		Defeated MLA/MP Candidate 14		Sitting MLAs/MPs 43		Ex-MLAs/MPs 43		Defeated MLA/MP Candidate 14		Sitting MLAs/MPs 43		Ex-MLAs/MPs 43		Defeated MLA/MP Candidate 14		Sitting MLAs/MPs 43		Ex-MLAs/MPs 43		Defeated MLA/MP Candidate 14	
Age Group ↓	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Below 45 years	-	3 (7)	-	-	-	2 (14)	3 (7)	-	-	-	2 (14)	-	1 (2)	2 (5)	-	-	2 (14)	-	3 (7)	-	-	-	2 (14)	-
45-64 Years	-	32 (74)	-	13 (30)	-	7 (50)	32 (74)	-	13 (30)	-	7 (50)	-	18 (42)	14 (32)	13 (30)	-	7 (50)	-	32 (74)	-	13 (30)	-	7 (50)	-
65 years & above	-	8 (19)	-	30 (70)	-	5 (36)	7 (17)	1 (2)	30 (70)	-	5 (36)	-	8 (19)	-	21 (49)	9 (21)	5 (36)	-	8 (19)	-	30 (70)	-	5 (36)	-
Sub-Total	43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)	-	43 (100)	-	14 (100)	-
Grand-Total	100						100						100						100					

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage .of the total of each elite group)

It is also observed that 50 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates belong to the age group of 45-64 years and they considered the role of introducing bills and demands as the role supposed to be taken by them if they got elected followed by 36 percent who belong to the age group of 65 years and above and 14 percent who belong to the age group of below 45 years. Thus, it can be said that the older the political elites are, the more they take the role of inventor. It can also be observed from the table that 74 percent of the tribunes belonging to the elite group of sitting MLAs/MPs are from the age group of 45-64 years and 50 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates who considered the role of tribune as the role supposed to be taken by them also belong to the age group of 45-64 years. However, in case of Ex-MLAs/MPs category, 70 percent who opted for tribune role are from the age group 65 years and above. Thus, majority of the political elites who belong to the age group of 45-64 years considered that the role of political elites as legislators should be directed towards promoting or protecting the interests of the common people.

5.4 Relation between Educational Status of Political Elites and their Role Orientation

The educational standard or status of the political elites is an important factor which influences their role orientation⁵. Table 5.3 reveals that all political elites under study having educational standard of under-graduate, graduate and above and professional degree responded in favour of tribune role. It is also observed that among the elite group of sitting MLAs/MPs, 40 percent who opted for inventor role have educational standard of graduate and above while in case of the elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs 63 percent who opted for inventor role have the educational status of graduate and above. It can also be observed that in case of defeated MLA/MP candidates 86 percent of them having graduate and above opted for the role of inventor

⁵ For establishing the correlation between the educational statuses of the political elites and their role orientation, the educational status is divided into three categories: (i) under graduate (ii) graduate and above and (iii) professional degree holders.

as the role supposed to be performed by political elite. They introduced bills and demands for new approaches or policy as solution to the existing problem or this role is supposed to be taken by political elites. It is also found that the majority of the elite groups of sitting MLAs/MPs and Ex-MLAs/MPs who have opted for this role also have educational status of graduate and above.

The table further reveals that 79 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs having graduate and above qualifications are ritualist and non-opportunists followed by 70 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs while 86 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates having the same educational qualification considered that they are supposed to perform both the role of ritualist and non-opportunists. They are of the view that they followed or are supposed to follow the rules, procedures and norms of the floor debate and at the same time enter or participate in the complicated process of decision making inside the legislature. It is also observed that among the sitting MLAs/MPs, 23 percent have professional degrees and they are made up of 21 percent ritualist and 2 percent non- ritualist.

Table: 5.3 Relation between Educational Status and Role Orientation of Political Elites

Role type →	Tribune						Inventor						Ritualist						Opportunist					
Elite group →	Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate	
Educational Status ↓	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Under-graduate	3 (7)	-	3 (7)	-	1 (7)	-	2 (5)	1 (2)	2 (5)	1 (2)	1 (7)	-	3 (7)	-	3 (7)	-	1 (7)	-	-	3 (7)	-	3 (7)	-	1 (7)
Graduate & above	30 (70)	-	34 (79)	-	12 (86)	-	17 (40)	13 (30)	27 (63)	7 (16)	12 (86)	-	30 (70)	-	34 (79)	-	12 (86)	-	-	30 (70)	-	34 (79)	-	12 (86)
Professional Degree holder	10 (23)	-	6 (14)	-	1 (7)	-	8 (18)	2 (5)	5 (12)	1 (2)	1 (7)	-	9 (21)	1 (2)	6 (14)	-	1 (7)	-	-	10 (23)	-	6 (14)	-	1 (7)
Sub-total	43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)		(43) 100		14 (100)		43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)	
Grand-total	100						100						100						100					

(Figures in the bracket indicates percentage of the total of each elite group)

5.5 Relation between Occupation of Political Elite and their Role Perception

Occupation is one of the determinants of one's social status and an important factor which influences role perception of an individual. It is, therefore, essential to establish the correlation between occupation of the political elites under study and their role perception⁶. It is evident from table 5.4 that 65 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs who were non-government employees opted for tribune roles while 35 percent who were government employees opted for the role of tribune. This trend is reversed with regard to Ex-MLAs/MPs where 65 percent of them who were government employees opted for tribune roles. It is also observed that in case of defeated MLA/MP candidates, 50 percent each of them were government and non-government employees and they considered the roles of tribune, ritualist, inventor and non-opportunist as the roles which are supposed to be performed by them. It is also observed from the table that 61 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs and 65 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs who had non-government occupational background and government occupational background respectively are ritualist. Again 44 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs who opted for the role of inventor and 21 percent of those who did not opt this role had non-government occupational background. In case of Ex-MLAs/MPs, 44 percent of those who opted for the role of inventor and 9.5 percent of those who did not opt for this role also had non-government occupational background. It is also found that 65 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs who had non-government occupational background and 65 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs who were government employees opted for non-opportunist role. Thus, majority of the sitting MLAs/MPs who were non-government employees opted for all types of role while majority of the Ex-MLAs/MPs who were government employees opted for the roles of tribune, ritualist and non-opportunist.

⁶ For establishing the correlation between the two, the occupations of the political elites before their entry into politics are divided into (i) government employee and (ii) non-government employee.

Table: 5.4 Relation between Occupation of Political Elites and their Role Orientation

Role type →	Tribune						Ritualist						Inventor						Opportunist						
Elite group →	Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		Sitting MLAs/MPs		Ex-MLAs/MPs		Defeated MLA/MP candidate		
Occupation Type ↓	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Government employee	15 (35)	-	28 (65)	-	7 (50)	-	16 (37)	-	28 (65)	-	7 (50)	-	8 (19)	7 (16)	16 (37)	4 (9.5)	7 (50)	-	-	15 (35)	-	28 (65)	-	7 (50)	
Non-government employee	28 (65)	-	15 (35)	-	7 (50)	-	26 (61)	1 (2)	15 (35)	-	7 (50)	-	19 (44)	9 (21)	19 (44)	4 (9.5)	7 (50)	-	-	28 (65)	-	15 (35)	-	7 (50)	
Sub-total	43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)		-	43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)	
Grand- total	100						100						100						100						

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

5.6 Factors guiding Representative Role

The political elites are the backbone of a democratic political system. They are politically alive and play an important role in the formulation and implementation of policy. The functioning of any political system largely depends on their perceptions of those factors which guide their representative role. The political elites who are involved in the decision making process are expected to live up to the expectations of the people whom they represent. The acceptance of their decisions by the people gives legitimacy to their decisions. Table 5.5 reveals that 58 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs considered service for the welfare of the people as the factor which guides them while performing their representational role, 30 percent service to the people and for the development of the state or nation followed by 12 percent who considered that accountability, sincerity and transparency guide them while performing their representational role. A senior political leader⁷ said, “I am guided by the idea of promoting the welfare of the public while discharging my representational role”. Another political leader⁸ expressed, “Service to the people particularly the downtrodden section of the population is the main factor which guides me while performing my representative role”. A senior political leader⁹ said, “I perform the representative role with the sole aim of serving the nation through the service to the state and people”. Another political leader¹⁰ opined that he is guided by the notion of performing the representational role for the welfare of the state and people. A political leader¹¹ on the other hand said, “I am guided by transparency, open-mindedness and accountability while performing the representational role”. Another political leader¹² also expressed that he is guided by sincerity, transparency and accountability while performing the representational role.

⁷ Personal interview with Y. Erabot Singh (sitting-MLA) on 21. 5. 2009.

⁸ Personal interview with Wongnaoshang Keishing (sitting-MLA) On 19.6.2009.

⁹ Personal interview with Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & sitting MP) on 14. 5. 2009.

¹⁰ Personal interview with N. Biren Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 5. 11. 2009.

¹¹ Personal interview with Govindas Konthoujam (Sitting-MLA) on 14. 7. 2009.

¹² Personal interview with Md. Helaluddin Khan (Sitting-MLA) on 31. 5. 2009.

Table: 5.5 Factors guiding Representational Role and Decision making

Elite group	Factors guiding representational role				Factors guiding decision making					
	Accountability, Sincerity & Transparency	Service to the people	Service to the people and development of the state	Total	Demand of the people		Total	Compromise between the demand of the people & self independent judgement		Total
					Yes	No		Yes	No	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	5 (12)	25 (58)	13 (30)	43 (100)	43 (100)	-	43 (100)	40 (93)	3 (7)	43 (100)
Ex- MLAs/MPs 43	6 (14)	25 (58)	12 (28)	43 (100)	40 (93)	3 (7)	43 (100)	37 (86)	6 (14)	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP Candidate 14	6 (43)	7 (50)	1 (7)	14 (100)	12 (86)	2 (14)	14 (100)	12 (86)	2 (14)	14 (100)
Total	17	57	26	100	95	5	100	89	11	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

It is also evident from table 5.5 that 58 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs opted service to the people while performing their representational role, 28 percent service to the people and for development of the state and nation while 14 percent of them considered that they are guided by accountability, sincerity and transparency while performing their representational role. A political leader¹³ said, “The welfare of the people, community and nation is the supreme and it is above anything else. Political elites are not above the nation. Therefore, welfare of the people should be guiding me while performing my representational role”. Another political leader¹⁴ said, “My guiding light is the people. I know what my people want and what they expect from me. So, I go with the notion of providing service to the people. A senior political leader¹⁵ observed, “Promoting the welfare of the people and safeguarding the interest of the state should be guiding me while performing representational role”. Another political leader¹⁶ expressed that he should be guiding by sincerity, honesty and accountability while performing his representational role. It is further observed that 50 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidate considered service to the people as the guiding factor while performing their representational role, 43 percent accountability, sincerity and transparency and 7 percent of them opted for service to the people and for the development of the state and nation as the factor which should be guiding them while performing their representational role.

The table further highlights that the elite group consisting of sitting MLAs/MPs take decision as per demand of the people while 93 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 86 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates considered demand of the people as the guiding factor while taking decision. It is also revealed that 93 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 86 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and another 86 percent of defeated MLA/MP candidates make compromise between the demand of the people and their self independent judgment and always remain vigilant in making decision while 7 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 14 percent each of Ex-MLAs/MPs and defeated MLA/MP candidates do not make compromise between the two factors while making decision. A political

¹³ Personal interview with H. Bhuban Singh (Ex-MLA) on 24. 2. 2008.

¹⁴ Personal interview with Kim Gangte (Ex-MP) on 12. 4. 2009.

¹⁵ Dr. L. Chandramani Singh, *op.cit.*

¹⁶ Personal interview with L. Lala Singh (Ex-MLA) on 21. 4. 2009.

leader¹⁷ said, “I take decision on the basis of the demands made by the people. It is such that some demands are right and reasonable while some others are not”. Expressing his opinion, a political leader¹⁸ said, “The voice of the people is the voice of the God and the destiny of political elite depends on the mandate of the people”. Another senior political leader¹⁹ said, “I made decision on the basis of the demands of the people but not by compromising the three principles of honesty, sacrifice and determination”. A political leader²⁰ who belongs to the elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs said, “I made decision as per demand of the people but I do not make compromise between the demands of the people and my own judgement because there are two things in life namely good thing and bad thing and these two cannot be compromised”. A senior political leader²¹ opined, “I made decision on the basis of the people if their demands are rightful demands. I do not have a low opinion about the Meira Paibi²² but sometimes they were misguided and made to express certain opinion”.

Thus it can be said that majority of political elites under study perform their representational role with the idea of providing service to the people for their welfare and take decision on the basis of the demands of the people. It can also be said that people or public made both reasonable and unreasonable demands. People need to see into it that they make the demands which serve the popular interest but not self interest. It can also be said that the political elites are governed by the need to ensure that they retain the loyalty and maximize the support of their supporters. They got themselves elected through various promises to the voters/people and try to fulfill the demands of the people. They also intervene in the implementation of policy and in ordinary day to day administration of the state. They also help their local people to get what they want of administration and give hand when they get into trouble with the officials. The question is how far political elites dare to deviate from satisfying the immediate demands of the

¹⁷ Personal interview with M. Thorii (Sitting-MLA) on 23. 5. 2009.

¹⁸ Personal interview with W. Brajabidhu Singh (Sitting MLA) on 7. 1. 2009.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Gaighangam (Sitting-MLA) on 3. 6. 2009.

²⁰ Personal interview with Sosho Lorho (Ex-MLA) on 14. 10. 2009.

²¹ Personal interview with W. Kulabidhu Singh (Ex-MP) on 3. 8. 2009.

²² They are women who formed voluntary organizations and engaged in social movement in Manipur to prevent gross human right violations by men in uniform and other anti-social people. Women come out and stayed awake late at night holding a torch made of bamboo filled with kerosene and keep a vigil to prevent atrocities of common people.

people without risking their own survival. The first duty of political elites is to ensure that people get in each other's way as little as possible and enable people to provide for themselves, not to rescue them when things go wrong. Elections are considered as a form of demand articulation through which the voters express their demand. Political parties, therefore, formulate policies just to win elections per se rather than win elections in order to formulate policies and political elites are responsible for it. Political elites seek to maximize support by providing public facilities and services, especially where lobby groups which appear to express the view of large number of voters demand it. They view every action they are asked to take in the light of whether or not it will improve their chances of election or reelection. Not whether they can serve the people better.

5.7 Political Elite on the expectation of the people and the techniques to Satisfy it.

People in Manipur are divided into ethnically separate groups and traditional social institutions are working in spite of the fact that people are adopting towards modern way of life. Democracy is the testing ground for political elites and people have the power to replace one political leader by other as their representative. The expectations of the people are more from the political leaders and they have faith on those who can help them solve their personal as well as community problems. It is quite natural that people have "high expectation" from the political elites. They would expect the political elites to develop educational opportunities, roads and transportation, health care centers, water supply schemes and proper implementation of development schemes. They would also expect from the political elites to regulate norms for public safety and provide individual liberty. The expectation of the people from the political elites is often "very high" that the ability and resources at the disposal of the political elites find it difficult to fulfill them. It is, therefore, important to understand the perception of the political elites about the expectations of the people from them.

Table: 5.6 Views of Political Elite on the expectation of people and dealing techniques

Elite group	Expectation of People		Total	Techniques used					Total
	High	Very high		Dealing with open & honest mind	Frequent contact with people	Fulfilling the demands as far as possible	Create understanding by explaining what is possible or not	No answer	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	27 (63)	16 (37)	43 (100)	13 (30.2)	7 (16.3)	9 (21)	13 (30.2)	1 (2.3)	43 (100)
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	32 (74)	11 (26)	43 (100)	16 (37.2)	7 (16.3)	9 (21)	11 (25.5)	-	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	10 (71)	4 (29)	14 (100)	3 (21.4)	1 (7.1)	6 (42.9)	2 (14.3)	2 (14.3)	14 (100)
Total	69	31	100	32	15	24	26	3	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

Table 5.6 above reveals that 63 percent of the political elites who belong to the elite group of sitting MLAs/MPs perceived that people have ‘high’ expectation from them while 37 percent considered that people have ‘very high’ expectation from them. It is also observed that 74 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and 71 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates hold that the expectation of the people from them is ‘high’ while 26 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and 29 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates considered the expectation of the people from them as ‘very high’. A political leader²³ expressed, “Manipur is a poor state. The people/public wants me to develop roads and bridges, provide them certain government schemes”. Another political leader²⁴ said, “People have high expectation that they want me to develop infrastructure like roads and bridges, health care centers, water supply schemes”. A political leader²⁵ said, “When I was minister of Arts and Culture, people wanted me to uplift the culture of the state and provide them the basic necessities of life”. A woman political leader²⁶ sharing her view

²³ M. Thorii (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

²⁴ W. Brajabidhu Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

²⁵ Personal interview with Dr. W. Thoiba Singh (Ex-MLA) on 13. 4. 2009.

²⁶ Personal interview with M. Shakhi Devi (Defeated MLA candidate) on 2.6. 2009.

said, “People expect me to be a member of parliament and work for the betterment of the people particularly women”.

On the other hand, among the political leaders who considered that people have very high expectation from them, a political leader²⁷ opined, “People think that they would become wealthy and their sorrow would be less by being with me. But this is not possible to accomplish”. A senior political leader²⁸ said, “The expectation of the people in general is very high. But there are exaggerated expectations that they want me to do everything for them, even feed them. There are also reasonable expectations like improvement of educational and medical facilities, development of community or state and fulfilling these expectations is a part of my duty and I have to be committed to these also”. Another senior political leader²⁹ observed, “In a poor state like Manipur where there are full of shortages of everything, people’s expectation from their representative is very high that it is not possible to fulfill all the expectations. Many individuals support and work very hard for a particular candidate at the time of election with the expectation of obtaining personal benefit when he or she got elected. This trend adds another interpretation of democracy more than the fact that eligible and deserving candidate should be elected as representative of the people. This also makes political confusion in the state”. A sitting MLA³⁰ said, “People are mostly benefit oriented and they want to depend everything on the MLA. The expectation of the people with regard to development of roads and communication, drinking water scheme, electricity, health care and agriculture is very reasonable and a political leader is supposed to fulfill them. But there are many unreasonable expectations which are difficult to fulfill”.

There is no specific technique to satisfy the public. People can be made satisfied by doing certain things or by saying something. Making people satisfied depends on the issue on which decision is made. Therefore, the technique used by the political elites to satisfy the public changes as per situation and time. But there are some common techniques used by the political elites under study to satisfy the public. They are: - (i)

²⁷ Personal interview with K. Tomba Singh (Ex-MLA) on 3.4.2009.

²⁸ Personal interview with C. Doungeel (Ex-MLA) on 23.3.2009.

²⁹ Dr. L. CHandramani Singh, *op.cit.*

³⁰ Personal interview with Dr. I. Ibohanbi Singh (sitting-MLA) on 10.6.2009.

Dealing people with open and honest mind and making no false promises, (ii) Frequent contact/interaction with the people and share their joy and sorrow and solve their grievances, (iii) Fulfilling the demands of the people as far as possible and (iv) Create/establish mutual understanding with people/public by explaining what is possible or not to materialize into action.

It is evident from table 5.6 above that 32 percent of the political elites under study use the technique of dealing with people with open and honest mind to satisfy them, 26 percent create understanding with the people by explaining what is possible or not, 24 percent fulfill the demands of the people as far as possible while 3 percent do not want to reveal the techniques used by them to satisfy the public. A senior political leader³¹ said, “I try to fulfill those things which I have committed to the public. I am accessible by all and anybody can come and meet me. I take up development work in consultation with the public”. Another political leader³² opined, “I don’t believe in making false promises. I just say very honestly what I can do and what I can’t do to the public”. A senior political leader³³ said, “I have close and frequent interaction with the public and understand their problems and try to find out solution by discussing the issue or problem together with the people”. Another senior political leader³⁴ said, “I try to know what the public want and try to fulfill their wants. But it is not easy to fulfill the want or need of each and every person and doing so is also impossible. Common good for the common people is more important”. A sitting MLA³⁵ on the other hand said, “I don’t like to reveal the technique of satisfying the public and want to keep it to myself”.

Political elites need to work in true spirit for the welfare of the people and lead them in the right path. They should mobilize people and establish mutual understanding with them. Political elite in Manipur are often found making false promises just to satisfy the public and take political mileage. So long as one is honest and accountable, he can

³¹ Personal interview with O. Joy Singh (Sitting- MLA) 14. 4. 2008.

³² Personal interview with Danny Shaiza (Sitting-MLA) on 20.10. 2008.

³³ Personal interview with E. Biramani Singh (Ex-MLA) on 13.5.2009.

³⁴ Personal interview with Radhabinode Kojiam (Ex-CM & sitting-MLA)) on 9.10.2009.

³⁵ I. Hemochandra Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

satisfy the public. There may be momentary misunderstanding and dissatisfaction among the people but working with honesty and transparency will prevail in the long run. People should be allowed to express their expectations and appropriate decision should be taken by analyzing both merit and demerit of the task in hand. It is better to convince people about the difficulty, if any, in fulfilling their expectations. Political elites are those whom the public look upon as somebody they can trust and rely when they are in trouble and approach when they need certain things to be done. Helping people should be a part of their commitment and what they stand for. They should give priority to the maintenances of peace and order, protection of people's rights, providing justice, provision of education, public utility services including public health and social harmony.

5.8 Relation between Political Elite's Age and Perception about the expectation of the people

One's experience grows as he becomes older because he is exposed to various socio-political conditions. Age of an individual determine his experience which in turn influence his perception about the expectation of the people.

Table: 5.7 Relation between the Political Elite's age and perception about the expectation of the people

Elite group →	Sitting-MLAs/MPs 43		Ex- MLAs/MPs 43		Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	
Expectation of the people →	High	Very high	High	Very high	High	Very high
Age group ↓						
Below 45 years	3 (7)	-	-	-	1 (7)	1 (7)
45-64 years	18 (42)	14 (32)	11 (25)	3 (7)	5 (36)	2 (14)
65 years & above	6 (14)	2 (5)	21 (49)	8 (19)	4 (29)	1 (7)
Sub-total	43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)	
Grand-total	100					

(Figures in the bracket indicates percentage of the total of each elite group)

Table 5.7 reveals the correlation between the age of the political elites and their perception about the expectations people have from them. It can be observed from table 5.7 that 42 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs who considered the expectation of the people from them as 'high' belong to the age group of 45-64 years while 32 percent of them considered the same as 'very high'. It is also observed that 14 percent of this elite group who belong to the age group of 65 years and above followed by 7 percent who belong to the age group of below 45 years considered the expectation of the people from them as 'high'. Only 5 percent of this elite group belonging to the age group of 65 years and above hold that the expectation of the people from them is 'very high'.

It is also evident that 49 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs belonging to the age group of 65 years and above followed by 25 percent belonging to the age group of 45-64 years considered that people have high expectation from them. They hold that people expect from them development of educational opportunities, roads and transportation, health care centers, water supply schemes, regulation of norms for public safety and proper implementation of development schemes or projects. However, 19 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs belonging to the age group of 65 years and above and 7 percent belonging to the age group of 45-64 years considered expectation of the people from them as "very high". They perceived that the expectation of the people from them is very high that their ability and the resources at their disposal find it difficult to fulfill the expectation of the people.

It can also be observed that 36 percent of defeated MLA/MP candidates who belong to the age group 45-64 years followed by 29 percent belonging to the age group of 65 years and above and 7 percent of the age group below 45 years perceived that people have high expectation from them. On the other hand, 14 percent belonging to the age group of 45-64 years and 7 percent each of the age group of below 45 years and 65 years and above considered that people have very high expectation from them.

5.9 Relation between Political Elite's age and technique to satisfy public

There is no specific technique which can be used to satisfy the public. The public have different kinds of expectation from the political elites. Political elites use some techniques in order to satisfy the public in one way or other.

Table 5.8: Relation between Age of the Political Elites and the techniques to satisfy public

Elite group	Sitting MLAs/MPs 43			Ex- MLAs/MPs 43			Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14		
Age group →	Below 45 years	45-64 years	65 years & above	Below 45 years	45-64 years	65 years & above	Below 45 years	45-64 years	65 years & above
Type of technique ↓									
Dealing with honest and open mind	2 (4.7)	11 (25.5)	1 (2.3)	-	4 (9.3)	12 (28)	-	1 (7.14)	2 (14.3)
Frequent contact with people	1 (2.3)	3 (7)	3 (7)	-	2 (4.7)	5 (11.6)	-	1 (7.14)	-
Fulfilling the demands as far as possible	1 (2.3)	4 (9.3)	3 (7)	-	4 (9.3)	5 (11.6)	1 (7.14)	3 (21.4)	2 (14.3)
Create understanding by explaining what is possible or not	-	12 (28)	1 (2.3)	-	3 (7)	8 (18.5)	-	2 (14.3)	-
Do not want to reveal	-	1 (2.3)	-	-	-	-	1 (7.14)	-	1 (7.14)
Sub-total	43 (100)			43 (100)			14 (100)		
Grand-total	100								

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

It is evident from table 5.8 that 28 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs who belong to the age group of 45-64 years used the technique of creating understanding with the public by explaining them what is possible or not in fulfilling their expectation while 25.5 percent of the same age group deal with the public with honest and open mind to make them satisfied. It is also observed that 9.3 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs belonging to the age group of 45-64 years used the technique of fulfilling the demand/expectation of the

public as far as possible and 7 percent belonging to the age group of 65 years and above also used the same technique to satisfy the public. In case of the elite group of Ex-MLAs/MPs, 28 percent belonging to the age group of 65 years and above used the technique of dealing people with honest and open mind followed by 18.5 percent belonging to the same age group using the technique of creating understanding with the public by explaining what is possible or not in fulfilling their expectation. 11.6 percent of this elite group belonging to the age group of 65 years and above 9.3 percent belonging to the age group of 45-64 years tries to satisfy the public by fulfilling their demand/expectation as far as possible. In case of defeated MLA/MP candidates, majority of them (21.4%) belonging to the age group of 45-64 years used the technique of fulfilling the demand/expectation of the public as far as possible to satisfy them.

It is also observed that 2.3 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs belonging to the age group of 45-64 years, 7.14 percent of defeated MLA/MP candidates belonging to the age group of below 45 years and 65 years and above do not want to reveal the technique that they used to satisfy the public. They might have considered that the counter elites may challenge them in the competition to be in the elite structure of the society if they made the technique known to the public.

5.10 Relation between Political Elite's educational status and perception about expectation of the public

Education is a means of social transformation and empowerment and it is an important factor influencing political elite's perception about the expectation of the public from them.

Table 5.9 Relation between Political Elite's Educational status and perception about expectation of the people

Elite group	Sitting MLAs/MPs 43		Ex-MLAs/MPs 43		Defeated candidate MLA/MP 14	
Expectation of the people →	High	Very high	High	Very high	High	Very high
Educational status ↓						
Under graduate	3 (7)	-	3 (7)	-	1 (7)	-
Graduate and above	19 (44)	11 (25)	23 (53)	11 (26)	8 (57)	4 (29)
Professional degree	5 (12)	5 (12)	5 (12)	1 (2)	1 (7)	-
Sub-total	43 (100)		43 (100)		14 (100)	
Grand total	100					

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

Table 5.9 reveals that 44 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs having educational status of graduate and above considered that people have high expectation from them while 25 percent having the same educational status considered the expectation of the people from them as very high. It is also observed that 12 percent of this elite group possessing professional degrees considered the expectation of the public from them as high followed by another 12 percent who considered that people have very high expectation from them. Only 7 percent of this elite group who are undergraduates considered people's expectation from them as high.

It is also evident that 53 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs who considered expectation of the people from them as high are the elites possessing graduate and above qualification while 26 percent of the same group considered that people have very high expectation from them. It is also revealed that 12 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs possessing professional degree and 7 percent who are undergraduates hold that people have high expectation from them. In case of defeated MLA/MP candidates, 57 percent having

educational status of graduate and above considered that people have high expectation from them while 29 percent very high expectation from them. Seven percent of this elite group who are under graduate and another 7 percent having professional degrees considered the expectation of the people from them as high. Thus, it can be said 50 percent of the political elites who possessed the educational status of graduate and above perceived that people have people have high expectation from them while 26 percent considered it as very high while 7 percent who are under graduates considered it high and 11 percent of the political elites professional degree considered it as high and 6 percent as very high.

5.11 Relation between Political Elite's educational status and technique to satisfy public

Modern political activities need a thorough understanding of issues and events which is mostly possible through education. Education is an important factor for a political career. The success of political elite depends on the ability to woo the electorates and this ability is related to his educational status. The political elites under study employed some techniques to satisfy the public so that the public stand in their favour in the struggle to be in the elite structure of the society. Table 5.10 highlights the correlation between the educational status of the political elites and the techniques used by them to satisfy the public.

Table: 5.10 Relation between Political Elite's Educational Status and technique to satisfy the public

Elite group	Sitting MLAs/MPs 43			Ex-MLAs/MPs 43			Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14			Total 100
	Under-graduate	Graduate & above	Professional degree	Under-graduate	Graduate & above	Professional degree	Under-graduate	Graduate & above	Professional degree	
Type of technique										
Dealing with honest & open mind	-	11 (26)	2 (4.7)	-	12 (28)	4 (9.3)	-	3 (21.5)	-	32
Frequent contact with the people	-	5 (11.6)	2 (4.7)	-	7 (16.2)	-	-	-	1 (7.1)	15
Fulfilling the demands as far as possible	1 (2)	6 (14)	2 (4.7)	1 (2.3)	8 (18.6)	-	1 (7.1)	4 (28.6)	1 (7.1)	24
Creating understanding by explaining what is possible or not	2 (4.7)	6 (14)	5 (11.6)	1 (2.3)	10 (23.3)	-	2 (14.3)	-	-	26
Do not want to reveal	-	1 (2)	-	-	-	-	-	2 (14.3)	-	3
Total		43 (100)		43 (100)			14 (100)			100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

It is evident from table 5.10 that 26 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 28 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and 21.5 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates who used the technique of dealing the public with honest and open mind possessed the educational status of graduates and above while 4.7 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 9.3 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs having professional degrees used the same technique to satisfy the public. It is also observed that 11.6 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs and 16.2 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs having educational status of graduate and above followed by 4.7 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs and 7.1 percent of the elite group of defeated MLA/MP candidates having professional degrees establish frequent contact with the public as a means or technique to satisfy them.

It is also observed that 14 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 18.6 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 28.6 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates having the educational qualification of graduate and above used the technique of fulfilling the demands of the public/people as far as possible in order to satisfy them and 11.6 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs having professional degrees, 14 percent graduate and above and 4.7 percent under graduate create understanding by explaining what is possible or not in fulfilling their expectation as a technique to satisfy them. It is evident that 23.3 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs who are graduates and above, 14.3 percent of defeated MLA/MP candidates and 4.7 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs who are under graduates create understanding with the people by explaining what is possible or not in fulfilling their expectation. However, 2 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs and 14.3 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates possessing the educational qualification of graduate and above do not want to reveal the techniques they used to satisfy the public. It, thus, can be said that majority of the sitting MLAs/MPs and Ex-MLAs/MPs who are graduates and above used the technique of dealing with people with honest and open mind to satisfy them while majority of the defeated MLA/MP candidates possessing the same educational status fulfilled the demands/expectations of the people as far as possible in order to satisfy them.

5.12 Area Role Perception

The political elites have no similar focus of attention while making decision. The area on which emphasis or focus is given by the political elites while making decision ranges from the constituency to the state. The political elites are expected to serve their constituents but commitment and service to constituents should not undermine the state or national interests. There are political elites who give more emphasis on the respective constituency which they represent because service to the constituency is directly linked to their future political prospect. There are also political elites who focus or emphasize the interest of the state while taking decision and another group of elites emphasize both the constituency and the state interest while taking decision.

Table 5.11 Area on which emphasis is given in decision making by Political Elite

Elite Group	Area Types			Total
	Constituency	State	Both constituency & state	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	2	8	33	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	4	12	27	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	2	2	10	14
Total	8	22	70	100

Table 5.11 reveals that 70 percent of the political elites focused on both constituency and state while making decision followed by 22 percent on state and 8 percent on

constituency.³⁶ Majority of the political elites emphasized both constituency and state because they considered that they, as the representatives of their respective constituency, cannot ignore its interest and at the same time the constituency as a part of the state has no future if the interest of the state is ignored.

All the political elites believed that the protection of state interest can safeguard the interest of the constituency and vice versa. If the interests of the two contradict, they made decision in the interest of the state by sacrificing the interest of the constituency. The public policy and programmes will not get majority support if political elites are concerned with their own constituency only.

5.13 Issue Orientation: Political Elite and Panchayati Raj

Political elites do play a very significant role in society and they are responsible for socio-economic and political development in the society. There are various socio-economic and political issues which need immediate attention of the political elites.

³⁶ “As a representative of the constituency, I have to work for its welfare and as a member of the state assembly, I have to work for the interest of the state”- Personal interview with Dr. Nimaichand Luwang (Ex-MLA) on 24.10.2009.

Emphasizing the interest of the state, a senior political leader said, “I emphasize more on the interest of the state while making decision. Larger interest of the state should accommodate smaller interests of the state and constituency”- Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP), *op.cit.*

Another political leader opined, “I cannot go against the interest of the state. If there is welfare of the state, there will be welfare of the constituency also”- Personal interview with Dr. K. Loken Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 30.6.2009.

A political leader emphasizing the interest of the constituency while making decision said, “It is the responsibility of all MLAs including the Chief Minister and other ministers to emphasize the interest of the state while making decision. But I am responsible for the development of my constituency and if I do not give proper emphasis on the constituency, it may hurt me latter at the time of election”- Personal interview with T. Mangibabu Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 21.6.2009.

A senior political also said, “I give first emphasis to my constituency. When there is development of constituency, there will be development of the state. The representative of each and every constituency should work for the development of the constituency”- Personal interview with Th. Chaoba Singh (Ex-MLA/MP) on 30.1.2009.

Panchayati Raj is the only democratic institution having constitutional status for providing development in rural areas of the country. It is meant for providing basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, electricity, medical facilities and educational institutions to the villages for all round development. In the hill districts of Manipur, there are Autonomous district councils and in the rural areas of the valley districts, there are Panchayati Raj institutions. People's participation and proper functioning of local government are very essential in the working of democracy. A government which does not feel the suffering of the people at the local level will not feel the beauty of democracy. The proper working of the institutions of local self government is needed for social transformation. The institution of Panchayati Raj or Autonomous district council is the key to give people a chance for their involvement in the process of development.

It is evident from table 5.12 that all the political elites fully welcome the introduction of Panchayati Raj and Autonomous district council in Manipur. A political leader³⁷ said that Panchayati Raj gives real taste of politics to the people and it is helpful in bringing communal harmony. Expressing his opinion a political leader³⁸ opined, "We have Autonomous district councils in the hill areas of the state and Panchayati Raj institutions in the valley areas of the state. The representatives of these local bodies know better about the problems of the people and also in bringing solution of the problems at local level. They highlight the problems of the people to the high ups".

³⁷ Personal interview with Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 17.11.2009.

³⁸ Personal interview with Danny Shaiza (Sitting-MLA) on 20.10.2008.

Table 5.12 Views of Political Elite on Crucial Issues

Elite Group			Total	Crucial Issues					
	Welcome the introduction of Panchayati Raj/Autonomous District Council			Reservation of seats for women in State assembly and Parliament		Total	Better to make voting compulsory		Total
	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
Sitting MLA/MP 43	43 (100)	-	43 (100)	28 (65.1)	15 (34.9)	43 (100)	32 (74.4)	11 (25.6)	43 (100)
Ex-MLA/MP 43	43 (100)	-	43 (100)	34 (79)	9 (21)	43 (100)	30 (69.8)	13 (30.2)	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	14 (100)	-	14 (100)	12 (85.7)	2 (14.3)	14 (100)	11 (79.6)	3 (20.4)	14 (100)
Total	100	-	100	74	26	100	73	27	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

Thus, the involvement of people in the administration through local bodies is necessary for healthy democracy. The MLA or MP may not be able to attend the local importance and the local leaders have to deal the local needs. Decentralization of power is essential for inclusive administration and growth. It is often said that the government that administer the least is the best. It is to be noted that though all the political elites under study welcome the introduction of Panchayati Raj or Autonomous district council in the state, some of them (19) are not satisfied with its present working system. A senior political leader³⁹ observed - Panchayati Raj is for decentralization of power so that there is good governance at the grass root level. But there is gap between the concept of Panchayati Raj and its real practice. The functioning of Panchayati Raj institution is not complete and satisfactory in the state. There is Autonomous District Council in the hill areas of Manipur and the last election to elect its members was held after a gap of almost 20 years. The local bodies in Manipur in most of the time do not have functionary and fund for proper functioning. Another senior political leader⁴⁰ welcomes the institutions of both Panchayati Raj and Autonomous District Council for decentralization of power at the grass root level. But he expressed the need to democratize the tribal custom and tradition to make the institution of Autonomous District Council more effective. A senior political leader⁴¹ said – Panchayati Raj is a good institution for decentralization of power at the grass root level. But in Manipur power is centralized and even the distribution of rice, providing old aged pension and appointment of Anganwadi workers and helpers are all done by the MLAs. The institution of Autonomous district council in the hill areas of the state is also good. But the area from which a member of the Autonomous district council is elected has a population of about 500 while the area from which a member of a Zila Parishad is elected has about 8000 population. A sum of Rs. 15,000/- is provided as monthly remuneration to the elected members of the District council while a sum of Rs. 1000/- is provided to the elected members of Zila Parishad as their monthly remuneration. It should be equal.

Thus, it can be said that there is misunderstanding and overlapping of functions between the MLAs and members of local bodies. The institution of local self government

³⁹ Radhabinode Kojiam (Ex-CM & Sitting- MLA), *op.cit.*

⁴⁰ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting-MP), *op.cit.*

⁴¹ Th. Chaoba Singh (Ex-MLA/MP), *op.cit.*

would be the best if it is properly implemented in true spirit. There should not be any kind of interference from the high ups as well as from other external forces in the working of the local bodies. Favouratism and self interest should have no place. The objective of the constitution of Panchayati Raj/District Council is mainly decentralization of power and development of villages. It was created to seek cooperation and participation of people in the process of national reconstruction and development. The election to local bodies has to be conducted regularly. It is obligatory on the part of the Union and the State governments to provide adequate funds to local bodies to enable them function properly.

5.14 Political Elite and Compulsory Voting

Elections form an integral part of the democratic polity. The aspirations of the people in a democracy can be realized through elections held from time to time by making a choice between the candidates who are in the election fray. Elections enable every adult citizen of the country to participate in the process of governance indirectly through their representatives. India has three levels of popularly elected government and people vote to elect their representatives for all these three bodies – the parliament, the state assembly and the village panchayat/ urban municipality. Elections to these three bodies are carried out using the first-past-the post electoral system (it means that to become an elected member, a candidate simply has to win more votes than any rival in their area, not majority of votes cast). Different political parties contest the election though there is no bar on independent candidates for contesting elections. A registered voter can cast one vote each for a candidate of his/her own choice and the candidate who secured the maximum number of votes wins the election.

The Indian constitution provides that the routine election should take place after every five years, but in case of the untimely dissolution of the house for whatever reasons, the next election should take place as early as possible. When elections are held much before the scheduled, it is considered as the mid-term election. All the eligible

voters whose names appear in the electoral rolls in a particular constituency are supposed to vote during the time of election/voting. But practically this does not happen and the large numbers of registered voters do not vote due to different reasons. The percentage of those who vote is known as the polling percentage or turn out of voters. There is no uniform pattern of voter's turnout. Generally, the smaller states and especially the North Eastern hill states had shown higher voter turnout compared to other states.

` Voter's low turnout is a problem as it can make the governing party or coalition less legitimate as its power is based on the support of a small proportion of the population. Most of the democratic governments consider people's participation in elections as not merely the right of citizen but also his civic responsibility. In some countries, voting at elections has been made compulsory and regulated in the national constitutions and electoral laws with the provision of imposing sanctions on non voters.⁴² It has been argued by the advocates of compulsory voting that decisions made by the democratically elected government are more legitimate when higher proportions of the population participate. On the other hand, it has been argued that compulsory is not consistent with the freedom associated with democracy. Many countries with limited financial capacity may not be in a position to justify the expenditure on maintaining and enforcing compulsory voting laws. Forcing the population to vote may also result in an increased number of invalid and blank votes. It may also increase "donkey voting" i.e. one may simply vote for anyone to get out of the way and does not care whom he vote for as long as the government is satisfied that he fulfilled his civic duty.

⁴² Some of the first countries that introduced mandatory/compulsory voting are Belgium in 1892, Argentina in 1914 and Australia in 1942. – <http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory-voting.efm> [Accessed on 25.7.2010]

Figure 5.1 :- Percentage of voter’s turnout in Lok Shaba Elections

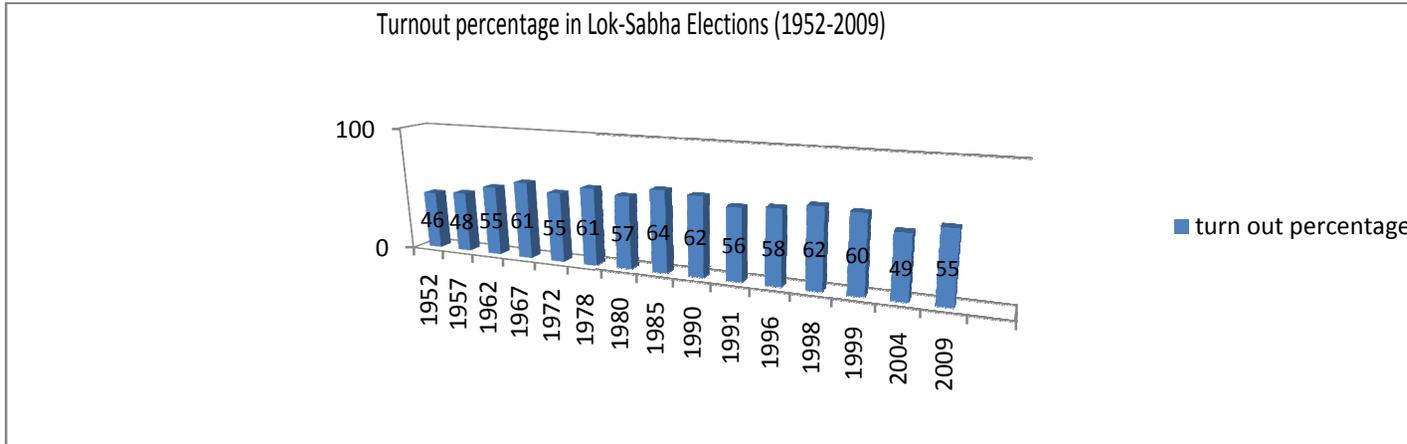
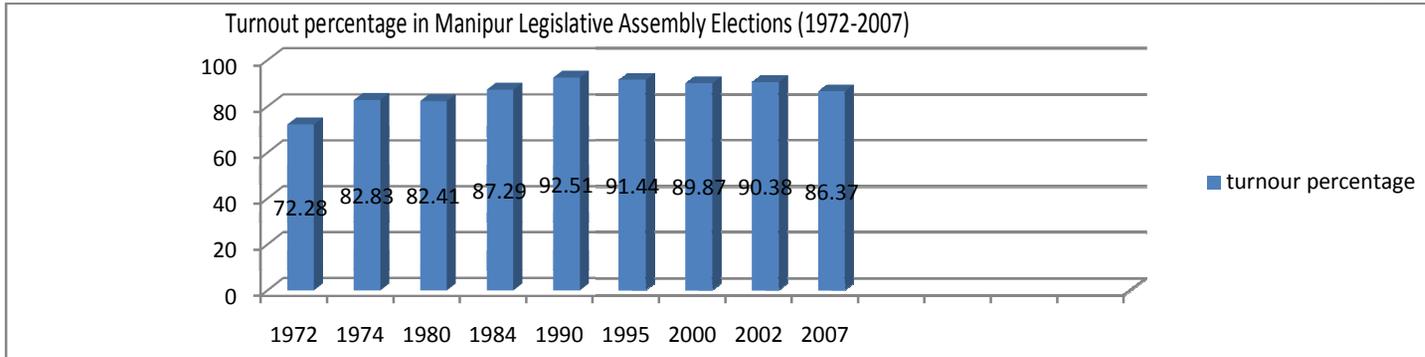


Figure 5.2:- Percentage of voter’s turnout in Manipur Legislative Assembly Elections



Source: Statistical Reports of various elections, Election Commission of India.

It is evident from table 5.12 above that 73 percent of the political elites think it better to make voting compulsory as decisions made by democratically elected governments are more legitimate when high proportions of population participate while 27 percent do not support it. Among the elite group of sitting MLAs/MPs 74.4 percent support the idea of making voting compulsory while 25.6 percent do not support it.⁴³ In case of Ex-MLAs/MPs, 69.8 percent support the same while 30.2 percent do not followed by 79.6 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidate support the idea of making voting compulsory while 20.4 percent are against it.⁴⁴

Thus, it can be said that there is no consensus among the political elites on the issue of making voting compulsory. Whether voting is mandatory or not, eligible citizens need to exercise their voting right. Low turnout of voters at the time of election hurts the ideal sanctity and quality of democracy and it is against the principle of right to vote. It is also necessary to bring a proper awareness among the voters about the importance of exercising their voting right. There is also a strong and urgent need to solve the malpractices found in the electoral politics in Manipur. A culture of dictate has been spreading in the state and some organizations prescribed instructions of “dos” and

⁴³ A senior political leader said, “It is mostly rich and well to do persons, officers who usually do not exercise their voting right. By and large, Indian democracy is sustained by poor people. It will be healthy democracy if every eligible citizen exercises the right to franchise. So, voting should be made compulsory”. - Radhabinode Kojiam (Ex-CM & Sitting MLA), *op.cit.*

A political leader opined that voting should be made compulsory. If the reasons for not casting one’s vote are unreasonable, he/she is ought to be punished. All voters should come out to exercise their voting right and elect the right person as their representative. – I. Hemochandra Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁴⁴ A senior political leader said, “Every eligible citizen should exercise their voting right. If there is low turnout, there would be no meaningful interpretation of democracy. In my assembly constituency, there are about 21 thousand voters and when I was elected, I just secured hardly 7000 votes. The present MLA representing the constituency was also elected to the 9th State assembly by securing the same number of votes. We got elected by getting less than half of the total votes polled and we did not represent the majority electorates. Therefore, voting should be made compulsory”. – Personal interview with Y. Mani Singh (Ex-MLA) on 3.4.2009.

A senior political leader opined that “it is not good to compel voters to cast their votes as democracy is characterized by freedom and liberty. They may not exercise their voting right because they do not want the candidates who are contesting election or they are poor enough that they are more engaged in earning their livelihood”. - W. Kulabidhu Singh (Ex-MP), *op.cit.*

Another political leader observed, “In many parts of the state, estimation of population more than the actual number is made. Moreover, some of the tribal people who are residing in the valley areas of the state are exercising their voting right both in the elections of the Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency and the Inner Parliamentary constituency. They are also voters in some assembly constancies of the hill areas as well as in some assembly constituencies of valley areas. We should not make voting compulsory as there are many discrepancies in the electoral politics in Manipur”. - Personal interview with R.K. Theko (Ex-MLA) on 1.10.2009.

“don’ts” to abide by the electorates and candidates. Many aspirant candidates could not declare their candidature without the support of one organization, whether civil organization or extra-constitutional bodies. Power politics, money power and gun culture have been playing their ugly role in the election. The course of action taken up by some armed groups and their associate is not election but selection. The election manifestos of different political parties played no important role as they are neither widely distributed to reach the voter nor educate the masses. Misuse of funds and official property during and at the time of election were seen in the state. Voters can not exercise their franchise in a free and fair manner if heavily armed security force is not deployed at the polling centers. The aspirant candidates start spending money to woo the voters before their nomination papers are filed. Purchasing votes through money is a common practice and the money offered by the candidates to voters is reported to have increased up to Rs. 2000/- per electorate today. Another common practice found in Manipur is organizing group feasts by the candidates and their so called workers in which attempts were made to woo the people and present a positive image of the candidates. This practice amounts to spending huge amount of money. Spending huge amount of money may work as an important way of attracting voters but it works as the root cause of corruption in the state. All eligible voters need to know the importance of their voting right. They should not go by the influence of money and muscle power. Political elites and political parties should also educate the electorates about the importance of right to franchise.

5.15 Political Elite and Reservation of seats for women

India is a country where women are worshipped as Goddesses on one hand but different forms of crimes are committed against women on the other hand. Discrimination against women is a dark reality and a major threat to India. India is one of the very first countries to grant franchise to women. When the first general election took place in 1952 as many as 22 women got elected for the first Lok Sabha followed by 34 women in the second Lok Sabha. During the next three general elections, the number of women MPs was not encouraging and it got worse when 19 women MPs were elected in

the 6th Lok Sabha. Representation of women improved from 1991 with 59 women MPs and it further improved to 61 in 2009 of the 15th Lok Sabha. However two-thirds of women MPs got elected merely on family connections mainly because of the desire of keeping the circle of power limited and controllable and the belief that women from political family or elite background are considered to have more chance of winning election.

Women in Manipur had enjoyed their political right, i.e. right to vote in the first Manipur Legislative Assembly election held in 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. In the post merger Manipur also, Manipur women had been taking part in the Electoral College and Parliamentary elections since 1952. In the Electoral College election of thirty seats held in 1952, MK. Binodini Devi of All Manipur National Union (AMNU) was elected from Khurai constituency. In the Territorial council election held in 1957, no women candidate got elected and there were no women candidates in the first Territorial assembly election held in 1967. In the elections held to elect the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th Legislative Assembly of Manipur, not even a single woman was elected. No women could get elected without the support of either sympathy vote or election oriented family or royal family. All the women MLAs who were elected up to the 9th State Legislative Assembly were/are wives of former and existing legislators except a woman human right activist, Kim Gangte, who was elected as the first woman MP to the 12th Lok-Sabha. Smt. Iswari Devi, wife of Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh, was the first woman candidate in the Lok Sabha election held in 1952. There were no women candidates in the parliamentary elections held between the year 1957 and 1980. It is unfortunate that in the outer parliamentary constituency, there were no women candidates till the parliamentary election of the 8th Lok Sabha in 1984 in which a woman candidate, Lingjaneng Gangte, was put up as a candidate of Manipur Peoples Party (MPP). There are so far no woman MP from the inner Manipur parliamentary constituency in the Lok Sabha and no woman MP in the Rajya Sabha from Manipur. Women could not play active role effectively in competitive politics due to socio-economic and cultural barriers and lack of consciousness among their own group.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For details of socio-economic and cultural barriers and lack of consciousness among the women, see Oinam Momoton Singh and Kshetri Rajendra Singh, *Women Representation and Reservation: The Manipur Experience*, Journal of North-East India Council for Social Science Research, Vol. 35:1, April, 2011, Shillong, pp.31-32.

The origins of quota policies can be traced back to the United Nation's (UN) Fourth World Conference on women held in Beijing in September, 1995 which called on governments of all 189 member states to make measure to ensure women's equal access and full participation in power structures, decision making and leadership.⁴⁶ It is not that quotas never appeared before this date but the importance of Beijing event can be seen in patterns of quota adoption around the world. Only 10 countries established quota provisions between 1930 and 1980 followed by 12 states in 1980s. However, quotas appeared in more than 50 countries in 1990s and 40 more countries since the year 2000. Now, quotas exist in more than one hundred countries around the world, but more than three quarters of these measures have been passed within the last 15-20 years. There are three kinds of quota policies namely – (i) Reserved seats, (ii) Party quotas and (iii) Legislative quotas.

The 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian constitution provide decentralization of power and one-third reservation of seats for women in the rural and urban local government. Now, the bill for the reservation of seats for women in National Parliament and State Assemblies was passed by the Rajya Sabha. However, every time a government has tried to get it past parliament it has been opposed. The environment of insisting their demands by different political parties is still preventing the bill to pass the parliament.⁴⁷

It is evident from table 5.12 above that 74 percent of the political elites favour reservation of seats for women in parliament and state assemblies to uplift women who belong to the weaker section of the society while 26 percent do not support the provision. It is also observed that 65.1 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 79 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and 85.7 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates support women's reservation while 34.9 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 21 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and 14.3 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates do not support the same. A senior political leader⁴⁸ opined, "My party, congress, is working for reservation

⁴⁶ Mona Lena Krook, *Quotas for Women in Politics*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, p.3.

⁴⁷ For details of the demands of the political parties with regard to reservation of seats for women, see Oinam Momoton Singh and Kshetri Rajendra Singh, *Women Representation and Reservation: The Manipur Experience*, op.cit. pp. 28-30.

⁴⁸ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP), op.cit.

of seats for women in Parliament and State Assembly”. A political leader⁴⁹ while supporting the reservation provision said that women’s participation in politics is very low and to give a push we can begin with reservation for sometimes at least. A senior political leader⁵⁰ opined that reservation of seats for women is very essential both in parliament and particularly in Manipur State Legislative Assembly because women are always in the front in the movement for social and political justice.

On the other hand, it is argued that reservation or not, what needs to happen is a drastic change in our attitude. Legislation, unfortunately, does not alter attitudes. A political leader opined that we will not have the real representative of the people by having reservation of seats for women in the state assemblies and parliament. Women who get elected on reservation basis will be those English speaking, lip sticking, eyebrow penciling, flock and jean wearing women.⁵¹ Another political leader⁵² stated that if undeserving candidate come through reservation, there will be negative impact on the government or administration and such candidate will make no or little contribution to the welfare of the society. Instead of reservation, discrimination against them should be eradicated and made them well qualified citizens. This task should start in the family as discrimination against women started from it. A political leader⁵³ argued that many women who do not have proper knowledge of politics sometimes come as representatives through reservation in urban local bodies and panchayats and they always work and take decisions along with or in consultation with their husbands or brothers, not independently. Women should be in the field of politics by their own and there is no need for reservation. Politics is a team work like a football match which demands the efficiency and ability of all the players. In such team work any person without proper knowledge of politics may be elected through reservation and this will lead to the failure of the system as a whole.

⁴⁹ Personal interview with Valley Rose Hungyo (Defeated MLA/MP candidate) on 2.6.2009.

⁵⁰ Th. Chaoba Singh (Ex-MLA/MP), *op.cit.*

⁵¹ “If women are good enough, we have woman President of India, Prime Minister and other ministers. Let them rise up by their hard work and ability. We should provide them enough facilities so that they get proper education and improve socially and economically. Reservation of seats will uplift already lifted one only”. – H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁵² Personal interview with M. Nilachandra Singh (Ex-MLA) on 19. 3.2009.

⁵³ Personal interview with M. Hemanta Singh (Sitting MLA) on 26.6.2009.

Political leaders are not in consensus about the reservation of seats for women in parliament and state assemblies in spite of the fact that women constitute a disadvantaged group in India. A number of political elites in Manipur do not support the reservation of seats for women though the political parties to which they belong are working to get it passed in the parliament. A combination of political, social and economic incentives is necessary to help better fortunes of one half of our well being. Truly transformative policy would ensure that every girl child gets the same educational push as boys. Whatever be the arguments, one third representation of women in the legislature would definitely change the texture of parliamentary politics in India. There was and will be set of those who are marginalized in every area. Once we open up the question of who to reserve seats for, we will always have reason to consider the merits of one group or another. We need to let democracy do its work. If reservation of seats for women does not do well for society, it may be abolished. Laws are amendable for the welfare of society. Out of the total sixty seats in the state assembly not less than twenty seats should be reserved for women as 50% of the voters in the state are women. But the common practice during election is that women are easily influenced by money and they mostly vote for male candidates. They should not go by such influence and at the same time men also need to educate women.

5.16 Political Elite and Insurgency Problem

One of the most serious issues which need sincere and positive steps to bring an amicable solution is insurgency problem. The problem started slowly in the late 1960s and 1970s and it has now become a big issue in the state. Between 1992 and 2010, at least 5665 people were killed in insurgency related incidents in the state and Manipur remains the most volatile state in the North-Eastern region of India.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Centre of Development and Peace Studies, *Insurgency and Peace Efforts in Manipur* [available at http://cdpsindia.org/manipur_insurgency.asptt.], accessed on 8.9.2011.

The genesis of insurgency in the valley areas of Manipur can be traced to the emergence of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) on 24 November, 1964.⁵⁵ Manipur, as a whole, has been declared a “disturbed area” in 1980 and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) - 1958 was imposed in the state on 8 September, 1980 as a means to contain the activities of the insurgent groups and help the civil administration function properly.⁵⁶ The implementation of the Act has resulted, following the misuse of the Act by some security personnel, in the unprecedented civic uprising against the Act including the “mother’s nude protest” in July 2004 on the discovery of the mutilated body of Thangjam Monorama Devi, after she was picked up by the Assam Rifles and later found dead. Apart from the existing AFSPA-1958, National Security Act (NSA), the Terrorists and Disruptive (Prevention) Act and Punjab Security Act are also imposed upon the people of Manipur.

Table: 5.13 Views of Political Elite on Insurgency

Elite group	Causal factors			Total
	Economic	Political	Both Economic & Political	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	12 (27.9)	9 (20.9)	22 (51.2)	43 (100)
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	11 (25.6)	8 (18.6)	24 (55.8)	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	3 (21.4)	5 (35.7)	6 (42.9)	14 (100)
Total	26	22	54	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

⁵⁵ For details, see Rajendra Kshetri, *The Emergence of Meetei Nationalism*, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 83-111.

⁵⁶ Centre of Development and Peace Studies, *Insurgency and Peace Efforts in Manipur*, *ibid.*

The political elites under study considered political and economic factors as the causes of insurgency problem in the state.⁵⁷ It is evident from table 5.13 that 26 percent of political elites considered economic factor as the causal factor of insurgency problem in the state while 22 percent treated political factor as the cause of insurgency. Majority of the political elites (54%) considered both political and economic factors as the causal factor of the problem in the state. It is also observed that 51.2 percent of the sitting MLA/MPs, 55.8 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 42.9 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates considered both economic and political factors of insurgency problem in the state. It is also observed that 27.9 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs, 25.6 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 21.4 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates considered economic factor as the causal factor of insurgency while 20.9 percent of the sitting MLAs/MPs, 18.6 percent of the Ex-MLAs/MPs and 35.7 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates hold the view that political factor is responsible for insurgency problem in the state.

The political elites suggested various measures to tackle the problem of insurgency in the state. The measures suggested by them can be highlighted in the form of table as under

Table: 5.14 Views of Political Elite on measures to tackle Insurgency.

Elite Group	Measures to tackle insurgency					Total
	Political dialogue	More employment avenues & economic development	Sincerity of Political elite & bureaucrats in administration	Political dialogue & More employment avenues & economic development	Political dialogue & Sincerity of Political elite & bureaucrats in administration	
Sitting MLA/MP 43	30	4	1	6	2	43
Ex-MLA/MP 43	30	6	1	5	1	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	12	1	1	-	-	14
Total	72	11	3	11	3	100

⁵⁷ The economic factors which contribute to the problem of insurgency include (i) unemployment problem, (ii) poor economic condition, (iii) wide disparity between rich and poor etc. The political factors on the other hand include (i) the fact that Manipur existed as an independent Kingdom and it was merged to Indian Union under duress leading to some insurgent groups fighting against India to regain its independence, (ii) long neglect or step motherly treatment of the state by the central government, (iii) corruption, favouritism by certain administrators/officials and political leaders, (iv) failure of the elected representatives of Manipur State Assembly formed under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 to explain the merits and demerits of Manipur's merger to India to the king who signed the merger agreement with India and (v) ethnic politics.

Table 5.14 reveals that 72 percent of the political elites suggested political dialogue with the insurgent groups as the measure to end the insurgency problem and also suggested that the insurgent groups should come together as one group, 11 percent creation of more employment avenues and economic development followed by another 11 percent suggesting both political dialogue and creation of more employment avenues. Figures in the table further revealed that 3 percent of the political elites considered sincerity of political leaders and bureaucrats in the administration of the state and another 3 percent suggested both political dialogue and sincerity of political leaders and bureaucrats in the administration of the state as means to solve the problem.

It is worth noting here that the leaders of the Dominion India failed to take into confidence the opinion of the people's representatives of the then existing Manipur Legislative Assembly. Instead, the merger agreement was forced upon the King in Shillong who signed the agreement under duress. The government of India also failed to provide suitable administrative measures to consolidate the merger of Manipur to India. The merger of Manipur to India, in fact, did not produce any organized revolt immediately and it occurred at a later stage. There was a wide gap between the expectation of the people and their attainment. People need speedy development of the state, increased amenities, better standard of living and a sense of belonging to the state. The political integration of Manipur with India was not followed by the economic development and people after integration had to witness a painful period of neglect and step-motherly treatment. There has been increasing number of educated unemployed youths and they become ready recruits of the insurgent outfits. Creating employment opportunities with a view to channelize the energies of the youths will be a positive step to prevent the educated unemployed youths from choosing the path of violence. Central government has been bearing 90% of the state budget but economic and industrial development is negligible. Public money is shared among ministers, bureaucrats and contractors etc and a very little of it reach the people in the form of development measures.

Corruption, favouratism and nepotism also contribute to the insurgency problem. The magnitude of corruption is so high that it has threatened the existence of society. Majority of the people solely rely upon the state government jobs where getting job is

possible only through bribing bureaucrats and ministers. The political and bureaucratic leadership in Manipur have a dependency attitude. Governance and development to them means implementing central schemes and spending funds only. There is stiff competition to get a ministerial post and for government funds. India, now an economic world power, spends massively on various development and welfare schemes which the centre considers beneficial to the common man. However, these schemes in Manipur serve as mere political weapon in the hands of those in power by way of giving benefit to their workers than any meaningful service. Insurgency in Manipur is a complex problem. It has both historical reasons as well as contributory factors. It is not a law and order problem. Manipur needs some kind of moratorium from killings, monetary demand extortion and violation of human rights. Both the government and insurgent groups need to move some steps backward from their stand and activities against one another and sit together without any conditions with a view to bring a long lasting solution to the problem.

5.17 Political Elite and the Issue of HIV/AIDS

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is a condition in which the in-built defence systems of the body break-down completely. This is a gradual phenomenon which ultimately leads to total depletion of a very important cell component of the immune mechanism. Thus, affected people are unable to combat commonly known diseases like diarrheas and they die due to one or another of such infections. AIDS has established a pandemic situation. It affects many individuals almost all over the world. The virus of AIDS, called human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), infects persons but does not produce illness for a very long time. The time interval between the exposure to HIV infection and the manifestation of disease syndrome, i.e. AIDS, is called the incubation period. During this period, HIV infected persons generally remain healthy but they act as carriers of HIV and can infect others.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The virus enters the body in three major modes – (i) Sexually- from an infected partner, whether heterosexual or homosexual, (ii) Parenterally- from infected blood, blood products, syringes and infected needles and (iii) Prenatally- from infected mother to baby or infant. For details about HIV/AIDS, see Kshetri Rajendra Singh and Oinam Momoton Singh, *Political Elite and the Problem of HIV/AIDS in Manipur: A Sociological Study*, The North Eastern Research Bulletin, Dibrugarh, Vol. XX, December, 2011, pp. 31-42.

One of the alarming issue the state of Manipur faces is that of HIV/AIDS. Because of its proximity to the “Golden Triangle”, Manipur become an alternative route for illegal international drug trafficking with the result that it becomes a drug user state since the 1980s.⁵⁹ The future of young people and society is at stake due to HIV/AIDS. There is a strong need to draw the attention of everyone including political elites in this regard. The political elites under study suggested some measures to tackle the issue of HIV/AIDS in the state.

Table: 5.15 Views of Political Elite on measures to control HIV/AIDS

Elite Group	Measures					Total
	Awareness programmes	Should not hide it	Sincere implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes	Active role of political elite	Others	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	36	-	2	5	-	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	26	2	9	4	2	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	8	2	3	1	-	14
Total	60	4	14	10	2	100

It is evident from table 5.15 that 60 percent of political elites suggested awareness programmes as the sole measure to control HIV/AIDS, 14 percent sincere implementation of HIV/AIDS related programmes, 10 percent active role of political elite in the fight against HIV/AIDS, 4 percent one should not hide HIV/AIDS while 2 percent suggested formulation of strict laws to punish HIV/AIDS affected persons so that others

⁵⁹ The first case of HIV infection was reported from among the injecting drug users in 1990. The HIV prevalence rate among the injecting drug users has shown a decline from 80.7% during 1997 to 19.8% during 2006. But the real problem lies in the fact that HIV is no longer confined to injecting drug users but it has spread to their spouses, children and also to the commercial sex workers and homosexuals. It has spread from people with high risk behaviour to the general population through sexual transmission.

By January, 2011, 31,256 HIV positive cases have been reported out of which 10,109 were females and 2578 (male-1378 and female-1200) were children. The number of AIDS cases reported was 4724 out of which 1343 were females and the number of deaths due to AIDS was 658 out of which 130 are females. – Manipur State AIDS Control Society (MACS), *Epidemiological Analysis of HIV/AIDS in Manipur* [available at manipursacs.nic.in] accessed on 21.2.2012.

try to prevent themselves from HIV/AIDS to avoid severe punishment. Most of the political leaders in the state considered HIV/AIDS as a serious problem and hold that lack of knowledge and ignorance constitute the factors promoting the problem of HIV/AIDS in the state. A senior political leader maintained that people should know the problem of HIV/AIDS and they should not hide it.⁶⁰ Another senior political leader⁶¹ observed that international border should be effectively checked as the origin of HIV/AIDS in Manipur was associated with drug coming from across the border. We need state wide awareness campaigns rather than assigning the task of controlling the problem to some doctors and non-governmental organizations. There is also the need to re-structure the functioning model of Manipur AIDS Control Society (MACS) as there have been reports of misuse of funds and non availability of certain facilities which are ought to be available to the affected persons. Many political leaders also expressed their doubt on the working style of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in the fight to control HIV/AIDS in the state.⁶² Such ill practices found in MACS and some NGOs have prompted some political leaders to suggest extreme measures forgetting human values and human right provision.

In the all political parties conference held on 23 November, 2006, almost all the representatives from political parties have pledged to include HIV/AIDS in their election manifestos in the 2007 Assembly election and accordingly it was done. The State Legislators Forum was formed on 30 June, 2007 with the Hon'ble Speaker as the chairman. A budget provision of Rupees one lakh has been made in the local area development fund of the MLAs so that it may be used in the task for bringing awareness about HIV/AIDS. This is indeed a good start of sensitizing the elected leaders. A political leader⁶³ suggested the need to create more awareness about HIV/AIDS. Treatment to cure HIV/AIDS patients is not possible as yet. Therefore, rehabilitation measures of HIV/AIDS patients should be taken up in a massive way. The political leaders should have political commitment to fight against HIV/AIDS epidemic. They need to work from

⁶⁰ "Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, did not hide the fact that his son was dead because of HIV/AIDS and his very announcement brought a mass awareness about HIV/AIDS in the country". – H. Bhupon Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁶¹ R.K. Dorendra Singh (Ex-CM & MP), *op.cit.*

⁶² For details about HIV/AIDS, see Kshetri Rajendra Singh and Oinam Momoton Singh, *Political Elite and the Problem of HIV/AIDS in Manipur: A Sociological Study*, *op.cit.* pp. 37-38.

⁶³ Personal interview with Gangumei Kamei (Ex-MLA) on 19.5.2009.

the bottom of their heart to extend all possible help to HIV infected widows and solve the problem of stigma and discrimination. They should come out openly and be role model in the efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. In no way must the political leaders leave the fight against HIV/AIDS to the NGOs.⁶⁴

HIV/AIDS knows no boundary. It is important to talk openly about HIV/AIDS and take appropriate measures to tackle this growing menace. It is the duty and responsibility of the political leaders to take decisive and historic measures to tackle AIDS. Such action on the part of political elite will go a long way in ushering new hope for a renewed and active life to HIV/AIDS patients. AIDS is real and it is here to stay. It is a question of life and death for the entire human community. Legal barriers, wherever they are, should be overcome for effective implementation of HIV/AIDS control programmes. It may perhaps be a better idea to legalise commercial sex workers and homosexuals. Necessary steps must be initiated to do away with the stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS. As policy makers, political leaders should revise the AIDS policy to incorporate new and emerging issues. They should mobilize religious leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Political leaders are distinguished by their action, innovation and creative vision. They can activate the community into action. They can influence cultural patterns that lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS awareness. They can and should build up a high moral standard in the society. People engaged in the task of controlling the problem of HIV/AIDS needs to be a little more sincere. Transparency is what is needed in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

5.18 Political Elite and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act-1958

A very crucial issue which needs the attention of political elites is the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) - 1958. The Act has been misused by certain security forces and violations of human rights have taken place/are

⁶⁴ There is strong need to provide fund for staffing and strengthening blood banks and sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinics in the hill and remote areas of the state. Once a person is confirmed as HIV positive, the first and foremost task is to find out his/her CD4 cells count of the person. The types of treatment to be provided is purely based on the results of the CD4 cells count of the person. The normal well being of the HIV positive person and the mental state of mind depends largely on the results of CD4 cells count. But it is disheartening to find that people from remote areas have to come to Imphal, capital of the state, for undergoing CD4 cells count as hospital/health centers at their areas do not have adequate staff and infrastructure to serve the purpose.

taking place in the state under this Act. Manipur witnessed and has been witnessing various agitations against the Act demanding the repeal of the Act from the state. The present Act was enacted by the Parliament in 1958 and it was known initially as Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act-1958. Manipur had been declared a 'disturbed area' in its entirety in 1980 and the AFSPA-1958 was imposed in the state on 8 September, 1980 and it continues to be in place till now. As originally enacted, the power to declare an area to be a disturbed area was conferred only to the state governments. However, such a power can also be exercised by the Central government by virtue of the 1972 Amendment Act.⁶⁵

Table: 5.16 Views of Political Elite on Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA)-1958

Elite Group	AFSPA-1958			Total
	For	Against	Modification	
Sitting MLA/MP 43	17 (39.5)	20 (46.5)	6 (14)	43 (100)
Ex-MLA/MP 43	10 (23.3)	33 (76.7)	-	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	3 (21.4)	11 (78.6)	-	14 (100)
Total	30	64	6	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

⁶⁵ The armed forces under this Act include all the armed forces established and maintained by the Union government. Disturbed area means a area which is for the time being declared by notification under section 3 of the Act to be a disturbed area. In a disturbed area, any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the armed forces may (i) if he is of the opinion that it is necessary so to do for the maintenance of public order, after giving such due warning as he may consider necessary fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death, against any person who is acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being in force in disturbed area prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons or carrying of weapons or things capable of being used as weapons or of firearms, ammunition or explosive substances; (ii) if he is of the opinion that it is necessary so to do, destroy any arms dump, prepared or fortified position or shelter from which armed attacks are made or likely to be made or attempted to be made, or any structure used as training camp for armed volunteers or utilized as a hideout by armed gangs or absconders wanted for any offence; (iii) arrest, without warrant, any person who has committed a cognizable offence or against whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence and may use force as may be necessary to effect the arrest; (iv) enter and search without warrant any premises to make any such arrest as aforesaid or to recover any person believed to be wrongfully restrained or confined or any property reasonably suspected to be stolen property or any arms, ammunition or explosive substances believed to be unlawfully kept in such premises and may for that purpose use such force as may be necessary. It goes without saying that the 'opinion' must be formed honestly and fairly.-Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, "Report of the Committee to review the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act -1958, New Delhi, 2005,pp.13-15.

It is evident from table 5.16 that majority of the political elites (64%) consisting of 46.5 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs, 76.7 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 78.6 percent of defeated MLA/MP candidates stand against the AFSPA-1958 and suggested that the Act should be repealed while 30 percent of elites under study consisting of 39.5 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs, 23.3 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPS and 21.4 percent of defeated MLA/MP candidates considered that the Act is still needed to contain insurgency problem or to maintain law and order in the state. It is also observed that 6 percent of the political elites under study which constitute 14 percent of the elite group of sitting MLAs/MPs suggested that the Act needs some modification to be people friendly. It is also found that all the political elites under study considered that the Act has affected the state severely. The suggestions of the political elites to minimize the controversies associated with this Act include – (i) repealing the Act (ii) proper and meaningful use of the Act (iii) maintenance of well discipline by the security forces and (iv) replacement of the Act by another humane Act.

A political leader⁶⁶ said that the Act has failed completely to contain insurgency or maintain law and order. It leads to rampant killings, harassment and gross violation of human rights inviting serious reactions from the society. The decade old hunger strike launched by Irom Sharmila Chanu⁶⁷ and the agitations of other civil society organizations demanding the repeal of the Act has so far no positive result. This Act which failed to serve the purpose should be scrapped as per recommendation of Justice

⁶⁶ Personal interview with S. Ibohal Singh (Ex-MLA) on 20.6.2009.

⁶⁷ She is shining example of the indomitable spirit of Manipur women and their resolve to establish a just and peaceful society. She has been on an indefinite fast for more than a decade (since 4 November, 2000) demanding the repeal of the Act. She began her protest movement after jawans of the Assam Rifles gunned down 10 civilians at Malom in Imphal West district of Manipur on 2 November, 2000. Having refused food and drinks for more than a decade, she has been called the world's longest hunger striker. Three days after she began her strike, she was arrested by police and charged with an attempt to commit suicide, which is unlawful under section 309 of the Indian penal code and was later transferred to judicial custody. Her health deteriorated and the state government then forcibly had to use nasogastric intubation in order to keep her alive while under arrest. Since then, she has been regularly released and re-arrested every year since under IPC section 309, a person who attempts to commit suicide is punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year. She continues her fast inside the security ward of Imphal's Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences and no one is allowed to visit and meet her without the clearance from the concerned authority. Sharmila, also known as Iron lady of Manipur, was awarded in 2007 Gwangju Prize of Human Rights, which is given for an outstanding person or group, active in promotion and advocacy of peace, democracy and human rights. She was also awarded with the first Mayillama Award (Kerala) in 2009, Sarva Gunah Sampannah Award for peace and harmony in 2010, first Rabindranath Tagore Peace Prize in 2010 and others. She was nominated to the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize by a Guwahati based women's organization, the North East Network.

(Retd) B.P. Jeevan Reddy Committee⁶⁸ and a lenient and humane Act should replace it, if required. He further opined that the Act has affected Manipur severely and the state government should give strict direction to stop the excess of Army operations in the state. A senior political leader⁶⁹ opined that the Act is a draconian act and so long as the Act is there it will continue to affect Manipur. It should be repealed. Another senior political leader⁷⁰ said that there are certain other Acts which can be used against anti-national forces. It is not good to impose the Act only in the North Eastern states and Jammu and Kashmir. Whether the Act is there or not we have to maintain law and order. Peace and tranquility should be maintained. The present situation in Manipur needs a strong Act to clean the anti-national forces and live in peace. A senior political leader expressed that the Act in its present form is defective, inhuman and drastic.⁷¹

On the other hand, a woman political leader⁷² opined that Manipur needs the AFSPA-1958 because without it there is a fear that some unwanted problem may come up which give far reaching negative consequences. She suggested that discipline is a must for the armed forces and there should be proper control over them. At the time of recruitment of armed force personnel, due attention should be given to recruit the well deserving candidates. This measure will minimize the controversies associated with this Act. Another political leader⁷³ said – the present situation in Manipur does not permit to repeal the AFSPA-1958. The government has made an attempt by withdrawing the Act from 7 segments of Imphal Municipality area but there is no improvement in law and

⁶⁸ It is a five members committee under the chairmanship of Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, set up by the Central government vide Ministry of Home Affairs office order No. 11011/97/2004-NE-III dated 19th November, 2004 to review AFSPA-1958. It recommended that the AFSPA-1958 should be repealed. It was set up in the wake of intense agitation by various civil society groups when a thirty years old, Thangjam Monorama Devi, picked up by the Assam Rifles on July 10, 2004 for being a suspected member of a militant outfit, was found raped and murdered the next morning in Ngariyan Hills and the earlier indefinite fast undertaken by Irom Sharmila Chanu since 2000. The incident of Thangjam Monorama Devi prompted the Meira Paibis who were 12 in number to do the unprecedented nude protest demonstration holding banners with “Indian Army Rape Us” written on them in front of the Kangla Fort which then housed the Assam Rifles.

⁶⁹ H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁷⁰ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP), *op.cit.*

⁷¹ It allows even a non-commissioned officer to shoot at sight, search an area without search warrant. But during the British rule in India, an army officer not less than the rank of a Major or Captain was empowered with such authority and power. No doubt, some instruments are essential to maintain order but not this Act. The political leader reported that he raised a question on the floor of the state assembly as to how to bring an end of Irom Sharmila Chanu’s fast up to death demanding the repeal of the Act. The Hon’ble Chief Minister just replied that the government is providing medicine for her but did not say anything to bring an amicable solution of the problem and the main problem lies here. - Radhabinode Kojiam (Ex-CM & Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁷² Personal interview with W. Joymati Devi (Defeated MLA candidate) on 28.6.2009.

⁷³ Thangso Baite (Ex-MLA & Sitting MP), *op.cit.*

order situation in these areas. We have an apprehension that there will be a worse situation in the state if the Act is repealed from the entire state. The Act will automatically go away when there is peace in the state. A sitting MLA⁷⁴ suggested that the Act is too old and need a suitable amendment to be people friendly as well as to contain insurgency problem or to maintain law and order in the state. Another political leader⁷⁵ opined that whether the Act is imposed or not, insurgency problem remain the same. We need help from the Union government to have peace talk with all insurgent groups. The Act is misused by certain security forces. It should be modified or amended to make it more humane. The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has publicly asked for a reform of the AFSPA-1958 to make it more humane. The second administrative reform chaired by V. Moily also recommended the repeal of the Act.

People in Manipur feel that arrests without warrants are a serious encroachment on the right to liberty of a person. The power of search and seizer under the AFSPA-1958 has been extensively used by the armed forces in cordon and search operations leading to wide spread violation of fundamental rights of citizens. The security forces have kept arrested persons for several days in their custody and left the victims without any effective remedy. The Act prohibits any legal or judicial proceeding against armed forces without the previous sanction of the Central government and some members of security force continue to believe that they are above law and therefore can violate human rights with impunity. There are many instances of human rights violations in the state.⁷⁶ Since the Act was imposed, by official admission alone, more than 20,000 people have been killed in Manipur.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Govindas Konthoujam (Sitting MLA), *op.cit.*

⁷⁵ Personal interview with Bijoy Kojam (Sitting-MLA) on 15.10.2009.

⁷⁶ The cases of Naga boys of Oinam village being tortured before their mothers by Assam Rifles jawans in July 1987, the killing of Amina Devi and her child of Naorem Mayai Leikai in Bishnupur district on 5 April, 1996 by a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) party, the abduction, torture and killing of 15 years old Sanamacha of Angtha village by an Assam Rifles party on 12 February, 1998, the shooting dead of 10 civilians at a bus stand in Malom by the 8th Assam Rifles, the arrest, rape and murder of Thangjam Monorama Devi by Assam Rifles are some of the examples that are still fresh in the minds of the people in Manipur

⁷⁷ [Available at http://www.tehelka.com/story_main_23.asp?filename=Ne120906_unlikely_CS.asp] accessed on 12.10.2011.

The AFSPA-1958 has created a culture of impunity for all security forces including the Manipur police force though they are accountable under law of the land. The Manipur government confirmed that more than 260 people were killed in 2009 in the state of Manipur and they were all insurgents.⁷⁸ This means that killing an insurgent was justified under any circumstances and that the police, from being a law enforcing agency, was acting as an executioner without following the due process of law. It would have been far better if all those killed were arrested, if possible, and normal legal procedure was taken up against them. The demand of those protesting against the human right violations and fake encounters has been to investigate the cases and punish the guilty. However, the Manipur government has not made any single judicial enquiry report public and the Manipur Human Rights Commission has also been made apparently dysfunctional.

Political parties and leaders have been using the AFSPA-1958, law and order situation and solution of insurgency problem through political dialogue in the election campaigns but using these issues as the poll plank has not proved beneficial. The Manipur Peoples Party tried to woo the voters on the promise that if it is voted to power then the Army Act would be repealed from the state in the general elections held to elect the 9th Manipur Legislative Assembly but without getting the expected positive outcome in the election result. People have refused to believe the trumpeting of political leaders as they had all been tested and tried before or could have believed the need of the AFSPA-1958 in the state. Election and outcry for justice seemed to be totally unconnected elements of state's socio-political life because in spite of various movements against the machinery of the state, the incumbent political leaders responsible for the state of affairs become victorious in the election fray. It is high time that the government, the civil society groups and the people at large work together to bring peace and order, rule of law and justice for sustenance of healthy democracy.

⁷⁸ Independent Citizen's Fact Finding Mission, *Democracy Encountered: Rights Violations in Manipur*, New Delhi, 2009, p.38.

5.19 Political Elite and Good Governance

Good governance is very important as it plays a determining role in societal well being. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of United Nations stated that ‘good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradication poverty and promoting development.’⁷⁹ Since there is no clear definition of ‘the good’, it is possible for totalitarian regimes to make claims about efficient rule just as corrupt and inept governments can make it look as though they are addressing important issues of statecraft. Governance is generally understood as “the prevailing patterns by which public power is exercised in a given social context”.⁸⁰ The leading lights of India’s anti-colonial struggles spoke about the importance of good government and suggested that power had to be used for and by the people. Therefore, good governance is said to be the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human right in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard for the rule of law. The true test of ‘good’ governance is the degree to which it delivers the promises of human rights- civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights and right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fair justice and personal liberty.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP- Governance and Sustainable Human Development, 1997) there are five principles of good governance, namely (I) Legitimacy and Voice⁸¹ (ii) Direction (Strategic Vision)⁸² (iii) Performance⁸³ (iv) Accountability⁸⁴ and (v) Fairness⁸⁵. It is evident from table 5.17 that

⁷⁹ Quoted in John Graham, Bruce Amos and Tim Plumptre, *Principles of Good Governance in the 21st Century- Policy Brief No. 15*, Institute on Governance, Ottawa, Canada, 2003, p.1.

⁸⁰ R.Jenkins, “The Emergence of Governance Agenda: Sovereignty, neoliberal bias and the politics of international development”, in V. Desia and K. Potter (eds.), *The Champion to Development Studies*, London: Edward Arnold, 2002, p.485-9.

⁸¹ All men and women should have participation and a voice in the decision making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their intention. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech as well as capacities to participate constructively. There should also be consensus orientation. Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and where possible, on policies and procedures.

⁸² Leaders and the public have a broad and long term perspective on good governance and human development along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.

⁸³ Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders and produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.

⁸⁴ Decision makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable as well as to institutional stakeholders. Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.

⁸⁵ Equity and rule of law are the important parts of good governance. All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being. Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws of human rights.

majority of the political elites (88%) considered that there is no good governance in Manipur while 12 percent hold that there is good governance in the state. It is also observed that 42 percent of the political elites suggested transparency and accountability in administration as the measure for establishing good governance in the state, 30 percent good and dynamic political leaders and bureaucrat, 16 percent political dialogue with insurgent groups, good law and order and socio-economic development and 12 percent suggested good and responsible public as the steps or measures for establishing good governance in the state.

A senior political leader⁸⁶ observed that now in Manipur, there is neither good governance nor bad governance. Rather, there is no governance in the state. Another political leader⁸⁷ opined that there is no good governance in Manipur. The practice of using money power as a political means must be stopped. A senior political leader⁸⁸ on the other hand said that there is no good governance in Manipur and people are responsible for it. People will get the government they deserve.

⁸⁶ Radhabinode Koijam (Ex-CM & Sitting MLA). *op.cit.*

⁸⁷ Personal interview with S. Tikendra Singh (Defeated MLA candidate) on 12.6.2009.

⁸⁸ H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

Table: 5.17 Political Elite's View on Good Governance

Elite group	Good governance in the state		Total	Measure for Good Governance				Total
	Yes	No		Transparency & Accountability in Administration	Good & Dynamic Political Leader & Bureaucrat	Good & Responsible Public	Political Dialogue with Insurgent groups, good law & order & socio-economic development	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	11	32	43	21	9	5	8	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	-	43	43	15	16	5	7	43
Defeated MLA/MP Candidate 14	1	13	14	6	5	2	1	14
Total	12	88	100	42	30	12	16	100

Sharing the same opinion, another senior political leader⁸⁹ opined that good governance is yet to come in Manipur. A sitting MLA⁹⁰ however, claimed that there is good governance in the state. It is very essential to have very effective governance in the state. It is not that we do not have good governance in the state. But we need more effective governance than the existing one. The government is trying at its best level to have it in the state.

As democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people, the good or welfare or interest of the people is the necessary and sufficient condition of governance and its legitimacy. Unfortunately, the governance system in Manipur failed on several fronts, the major one being vision and mission, corruption, education, values and integrity, nationalist spirit and frustration of political parties etc. Winning elections and forming governments seem to have defined the goals of all political parties in the state. Manipur is not ungovernable but it is made ungovernable by those who stand to gain by it. The politics of self-style leaders who have no definite principle of their own and keep on changing from one party to another during election time has become suffocating. The state is now characterized by load shedding –not even three hours of electricity, dusty roads including national highways, dying and dysfunctional schools and colleges, large population of unemployed youths, drug addition, problem of insurgency and HIV/AIDS. After a long time, people of Manipur have given a decisive verdict to a single party with absolute majority in the election held to elect the 9th Manipur Legislative Assembly and put to an end the practice of “black mailing” of government by single MLA outfits. The yearning for good governance, end to corruption and extortion, establishment of rule of law, end of misery of common citizens through power cuts, failure to provide safe drinking water, bad roads and avenues of employment are reasonable demands. The government ought to address these issues if its credibility and legitimacy are to be established and sustained.

⁸⁹ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP), *op.cit.*

⁹⁰ Gaikhangam (Sitting MLA), *op.cit.*

The communities, civil society organizations etc. or individual in the society other than the government also have to play a stronger role in addressing the problems of the state. The participation of people for good governance may occur at any level—from village to the state as a whole. Participation may be direct as in community projects or it may be indirect through elected representatives. The degree of indirect participation will depend on the extent to which the election process makes the representative bodies responsible to public opinion.

All the political elites support the provision that bribe taking MPs and MLAs should not have legal immunity. They considered that all are and should be equal before law irrespective of one's status. Bribe taking is unpardonable and sign of irresponsibility, undignified and shameless act. Those who are found in corrupt practices should be punished as per laws of the country. There are no such laws which provide legal immunity to bribe taking MPs and MLAs.⁹¹ Even then, the practice of bribe taking by MPs, MLAs and bureaucrats is an open secret in Manipur.

Corruption has become an obsessive concern of the public life in Manipur. But it has never been an issue of significance in any crucial exercise of public decision making, the most vital one being periodic elections to the state assembly and parliament. By and large, those who can spend a big amount will have the upper hand. Wealth is the undisputed trump card but nobody ever enquires with any seriousness how the wealth has been acquired. Corruption today is generally treated as a service perk than moral erosion. Bribe givers and takers and vote buyers and sellers share the same moral platform. We need to keep criminals out of politics, bring legislators under Right to Information Act, make corrupt pay and make government pay for lies. Transparency, responsibility,

⁹¹ It is to note that it is difficult to catch red-handed those MLAs/MPs who are engaged in corruption and adultery as these acts are done in secret under the table. It is reported that recruitment of police constables in Manipur is based on a bribe of minimum of Rs. 2 lakhs and of Rs. 12 lakhs for recruitment of Assistant Sub-Inspectors.- Independent Citizen's Fact Finding Mission, *op.cit.* p.34.

Politicians in the state adopt patronage principle to win largest amount of political support or vote in exchange of certain appointments. Such appointments are given to persons who can produce results in election without any consideration of qualifications for those assignments. Not a single legislator or political leader has ever volunteered to reveal where the local area development funds provided to him/her for the development of his/her constituency have been spent.

accountability, participation and response to the needs of the people are the need of the hour.

5.20 Political Elite and Territorial Integrity of Manipur

A landmark in the political history of Manipur is June 18 as it has been observed as the “Unity Day” or the Great June Uprising”. It was on 18 June, 2001 that lakhs of people defied curfew and came on the street to safeguard territorial integrity of Manipur. When a ceasefire agreement between India government and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) without territorial limit was signed, there was the fear among the people that it would disturb the territorial integrity of Manipur. One of the conditions put forward by NSCN-IM was the formation of a greater Nagaland by clubbing together the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Eighteen people have sacrificed their life and more than 38 people caught the life bullets fired by the security forces, State Assembly house was burnt down, official residence of the Chief Minister and other MLAs were ransacked and most of the Indian national political party offices were attacked. The uprising of the people forced the Central government to take back its own words ‘without territorial limit’ which was a prerequisite to ceasefire declaration. The other neighboring states, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, also denied the extension of ceasefire to their states. However, on the other side of the coin, June 18 is observed as “Black Day” by many individuals and organizations. Thus the issue of territorial integrity of Manipur is one of the most important issues which needs a clear and wise attention and decision of the political elites in Manipur as well as of those in power in the Union government.

Table 5.18 Views of Political Elite on Territorial Integrity of Manipur

Elite groups	Factors threatening integrity					Total	Measures to uphold integrity			Total
	Demand for Greater Nagaland	Demand for Greater Nagaland & Kuki Homeland	Historical reason and divisive policy of some leaders for political mileage	Worst law & order, insurgency problem & corruption	No threatening factor		Promoting the feeling of brotherhood & peaceful co-existence	Minimize disparity between different ethnic groups & equal development in hill& remote areas of the state	Solution of insurgency problem & the policy of right person in the right place as the basis of governance	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	7	7	20	2	7	43	30	10	3	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	7	11	18	1	6	43	31	7	5	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	2	3	6	1	2	14	10	2	2	14
Total	16	21	44	4	15	100	71	19	10	100

Table 5.18 reveals that 44 percent of the political elites considered historical reason and divisive policy of some leaders for political mileage as the factors threatening the ideal of integrity in Manipur, 21 percent both demand for Greater Nagaland and Kuki homeland/state, 16 percent demand for Greater Nagaland only and 4 percent worst law and order, insurgency problem and corruption while 15 percent considered that there is no factor which threaten the ideal of integration in Manipur. It is also observed that majority of political elites (71%) suggested promotion of feeling of brotherhood and peaceful co-existence as the measure to uphold integrity, 19 percent minimize disparity between different ethnic groups and equal development in hill and remote areas of the state while 10 percent suggested solving insurgency problem and the policy of right person in the right place as the basis of governance as measures to uphold the ideal of integration in the state. Some of the political leaders⁹² said that the divisive policy and communal activities of some well known leaders – infusion and spread of rumour and false propaganda, creation of the atmosphere of hatred and disbelief – and the past mistakes committed by the majority community on the basis of religion towards other communities are the factors threatening the ideal of integration in the state. We need to love one another as our own brothers and sisters and promote the feeling of peaceful co-existence. A political leader⁹³ opined that there are many factors which threaten the ideal of integration in the state. They come up and submerged from time to time. The claim of certain areas of the state as their own and the demand for separate state by a community on the instigation of an insurgent group which is holding peace talk with the Government of India etc threaten the ideal of integration. We need to tackle such issues properly. We also need new land laws. There is pressure on land as population increases and there is the need to allow the valley people settle in the hill areas of the state. There is no consensus on the issue. Development should not be Imphal centric and it is important to have equal development in remote and hill areas of the state. Some of the political leaders⁹⁴ on the other hand opined that worst law and order, insurgency problem,

⁹² Personal interview with M. Nabadweep Singh (Ex-MLA) on 10.6.2008, S. Umananda Singh (Defeated MLA candidate) on 2.6.2009, Y. Shakhitombi Devi (Defeated MLA candidate) on 9.6.2009 and E. Biramani Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

⁹³ I. hemochandra Singh (Sitting MLA), *op.cit.*

⁹⁴ Personal interview with Dr. Rebika Naorem (Defeated MLA candidate) on 30.6.2009, S. Natum Singh (Ex-MLA) on 4.2.2008 and Th. Debendra Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 17.11.2009.

corruption and clash between communities are threatening the ideal of integration and suggested that there is strong need to solve insurgency problem and the policy of right person at the right place as the basis of governance to uphold the ideal of integrity of the state. Some other political leaders⁹⁵ stated that there is no factor threatening the ideal of integrity in the state. Manipur existed as one since time immemorial and Manipur remains one. The task of challenging the integrity of Manipur will not have any positive result. It is not based on facts but only artificial creation. There is no history where there is no Manipur.

The past mistake, allegedly committed, by the majority community under the influence of Hinduism was also an important factor that hurt the feeling of oneness between the hills and plains. The tribals were denied entering the houses of the Meeteis and they were treated as untouchables. Even the slightest touch was declared unclean and that hurt the sentiments of the tribal people. The perceived discrimination or neglect and underdevelopment posed as a threat to the integrity of Manipur. There is an urgent need for a holistic approach to the challenges of development issues both in the hills and remote areas of the state. The government needs to sort out some concrete strategies that can bind all ethnic communities inhabiting in the state towards a peaceful and harmonious life. People now have a broader mind set and outlook and matrimonial relations are established between different communities. It is not that tribal are backward because of Meeteis, Meeties are poor because of tribal, Kukis are miserable because of the Nagas and Nagas are miserable because of the Kukis. All the communities inhabiting in Manipur identify themselves as Manipuri first followed by their community and religion. We all need to enlarge and deepen the reservoir of good will, understanding and amity among different communities that we have since time immemorial.

5.21 Political Elite on Modernization and Tradition

Tradition means the belief and practices handed down from the past. Traditionally transmitted norms are accepted because their non-observance involves sanctions and they perform a stabilizing function in society. It is associated with the

⁹⁵ Personal interview with B.D. Behring (Ex-MLA) on 11.4.2009, M.Bhorot (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*, Dr. I. Ibohanbi Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*, Gaikhangam (Sittin-MLA), *op.cit.* and Thangminlein Kipgen (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

dominance of oral traditions, organizations based on kinship, ascribed status and hierarchical social order. Traditionalists considered tradition as static and traditional values and practices have to be adopted and preserved because they were found useful in the past. They are not ready to accept new innovations that violate previous practices. Modernization, on the other hand, is a process of change.⁹⁶ It was earlier described as a process that changed society from primarily agricultural to primarily industrial economy with consequent changes in values, beliefs and norms of the society. Today, modernization is described as a social change involving the elements of science and technology. It involves change based on rationality. According to Alatas, modernization is a process by which modern scientific knowledge is introduced in the society with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better and more satisfactory life in the broadest sense of the term, as accepted by the society concerned.⁹⁷

At the social level, modernization is sought so that social relations based on equality, human dignity and social values are established to ensure social mobility, removal of disabilities of weaker sections of the society including women. At the economic level, modernization is sought to have technological growth and distributive justice and at the cultural level, secularism, rationalism and liberalism. At the political level, modernization is sought and valued so that people have representative government, decentralization of power, democratic institutions and achievement oriented power structure.

It is found that majority of the political elites (93) under study opined that they are fascinated by the modernization process as well as in favour of preserving the age-old tradition and wanted to preserve it while some (7) are fascinated and in favour of modernization process. A senior political leader⁹⁸ said that both modernization and tradition need to go hand in hand. We need to highlight our tradition through modernization process and this will attract the world towards us. It is up to us what traditions are to be preserved in consonance of modernization process. Loss of tradition

⁹⁶ M.S. Gore, *Education and Modernization in India*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1982,p.7.

⁹⁷ Alatas, Syed Hussian, *Modernization and social Change*, Angus and Robertson Cremorne, Sydney, Australia, 1972,p.22.

⁹⁸ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP)

means loss of identity. A Sitting MLA⁹⁹ while favouring the modernization process more than the age-old tradition said that change is law of nature. Age-old traditions are to be modified to have a better life. Another senior political leader¹⁰⁰ opined that modernization is a good process. There should be modernization process guided by scientific outlook. There should not be corrupted modernization.

Though Manipur is known very little to the outside world because of its topography and geographical location, it has been nevertheless integrated as part of a global village. There is no escape from the all powerful clutches of modernization and globalization. We need to act on the chosen form prepared and carefully work out model based on our own ascertained core competencies of marked comparative advantage. The entertainment industry and global market economy has already encroached upon our traditional culture and life style. Keeping in mind the utilitarian value, a community adopts new ideas and practices and the identities are always hybridized. The impact of modernization is most felt in the area of indigenous cultural products because to meet the national and international standards, the products have to be modified, re-designed and at times even be distorted. For instance, we see jackets made out of the famous Tangkhul shawl selling at tourist spots with least concern for its lore and history. Thus, the process of de-identifying native cultures and their products for the sake of meeting the desired standard maintained by market economy leading to hybridization of the identities in the cultural artifacts is going on in the state.

One major threat to the indigenous people of Manipur which is associated with the modernization process is the heavy influx of migrants. As per 2001 census report, out of the total population of the state (22,93,896), the estimated total number of influx migrants is 7,04,485 which is more than the estimated total indigenous tribal population of 6,70,782. As the outsiders are not assimilated into the culture of the state, the small groups in the state are in danger of getting assimilated themselves to the outsiders and this process, if not checked meticulously, would lead to the extinction of smaller indigenous groups in the state.

⁹⁹ Md. Helaluddin Khan (Sitting-MLA), op.cit.

¹⁰⁰ W. Kulabidhu Singh (Ex-MP), op.cit.

Another unfavourable development in the state is seen in the form of outsiders ready for political takeover of the state by enrolling themselves in the electoral roll. In Thangmeiband assembly constituency, for instance, which is in the heart of capital city Imphal, the number of non-Manipuri electorates who can exercise the voting right is around 4000 out of the total 18,749.¹⁰¹ If this trend continues, it is only a matter of time that one day many outsiders would get elected as people's representatives from as many constituencies as possible and dominate in the important decision making process which will determine the fate of Manipur. It is, therefore, high time for the people of Manipur especially the political elite to take up specific protection mechanisms immediately to prevent the drastic change of the body polity.

5.22 Political Elite on the influence of religion in Manipur Politics

The constitution of India provided that India would remain 'secular'. Each citizen has full freedom to practice and preach his religion. India has no state religion and all citizens, irrespective of their religious faith, are equal. It is expected that the leaders and followers of various religious communities do not use their religion for political purposes. However, in practice Hindu, Muslims, Christians and other religious communities do use religion for political goals. Each political party labels other political parties as non-secular. Thus, there is the influence of religion in Indian politics. This national scenario is also found to have its impact in Manipur politics though the extent to which religion exercises its influence in politics is minimal.

¹⁰¹ A. Brajakumar Sharma and K. Ratankumar Singh, *Influx of Migrants into Manipur – A Threat to the Indigenous Ethnic People*, United Committee Manipur, Imphal, 2005, p.66.

Table: 5.19 Political Elite's View on the Influence of Religion in Manipur Politics

Elite group	Influence of Religion in Manipur Politics		Total
	Yes	No	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	6 (14)	37 (86)	43 (100)
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	13 (30)	30 (70)	43 (100)
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	3 (21)	11 (79)	14 (100)
Total	22	88	100

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage of the total of each elite group)

It is evident from table 5.19 that majority of political elites (88%) opined that religion does not exercise influence in Manipur politics while 22 percent of them considered that religion influences politics in Manipur to some extent. It is further observed that 86 percent of Sitting MLAs/MPs, 70 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 79 percent of the defeated MLA/MP candidates considered that there is no influence of religion in Manipur politics while 14 percent of sitting MLAs/MPs, 30 percent of Ex-MLAs/MPs and 21 percent of the elite group consisting of defeated MLA/MP candidates considered that religion exercises influence in Manipur politics. A political leader¹⁰² said that when the Christians were attacked and killed in Orissa and Karnataka, it was blamed that the Bharatia Janata Party (BJP) was responsible for the killings. This was the time when I was elected as a BJP candidate to the state assembly. In Manipur, the congress party invited the Church leaders in a meeting held for its workers and the Church leaders condemned the BJP as responsible for the killings in same way the congress party did. It is very unfortunate the Church leaders were mixing religion with politics. They criticized me as I was a BJP candidate and even went to the extent of calling the Tangkhuls who elected me as mad in spite of the fact that they are also Christians. Church leaders should

¹⁰² Danny Shaiza (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

not come to the congress platform. Another political leader opined¹⁰³ that in my constituency, both Muslims and Hindus are settled. Muslims prefer to give their support to Muslim candidates while Hindus prefer Hindu candidates. Both Muslims and Hindus need to work together irrespective of religious affiliation so that we move forward. A senior political leader¹⁰⁴ said that BJP's demand for "Hindu Rajya" has an impact in Manipur. It is found that aged Hindus in Manipur supported this demand and give their vote to the party.

A senior political leader,¹⁰⁵ on the other hand, while expressing that there is no influence of religion in Manipur politics said that Md. Allimuddin was a Muslim and he became Chief Minister of Manipur. The Muslim population at that time in Manipur was only 2 percent of the state population. Yangmasho Shaiza and Rishang Keishing are Christians and the population of Tankhul tribe to which they belong is a small one but they became Chief Minister of Manipur. Rishang Keishing became Chief Minister five times.

Communal persons are those who practice politics through religion. Communal is not one who is a man of religion but one who practice politics by linking it with religion. Those power politicians are not good Hindus nor good Muslims or Christians. God and religion to them are merely instruments to get political goals. Political leaders who used to provide help, both in cash and kind, to religious institutions should do it as a religious person but not with the aim of taking political mileage. True religious people never commit sin.

5.23 Political Elite and Social Development

The concept of development indicates the processes of advancement of individual or of collective phenomena or objects or actions. Human society has progressed and developed by passing through various stages – from savagery to barbarism, from barbarism to civilization, from simple to doubly compound, from doubly compound to

¹⁰³ Personal interview with Dr. U. Deben Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 16.6.2009.

¹⁰⁴ Dr. M. Nara Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁵ H. Bhubon Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

heterogeneous, from ancient to feudal, from feudal to capitalist, from pre-industrial marked by mechanical solidarity to industrial society marked by organic solidarity, from agrarian to industrial and so on. Historically, progress has ethical connotation and is taken to mean advance towards the ultimate moral values which human kind had been striving all down the ages to attain.¹⁰⁶

Social development is a process which needs to bring better adjustment between human needs and aspiration on one hand and social policies and programmes on the other. It has the objective of eradicating poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, inequality, irrationality, oppression prevalent in the society and improving the quality of life of all citizens. The political elites under study suggested some measures/steps for bringing social development in Manipur. Majority of the political elites suggested that people oriented perspective; long term scientific planning and proper implementation of the planned projects are social development. Some of them suggested that people in government need to be transparent, some others the need for use of methods curved out by intelligent social engineers while some suggested removal of social evils like illiteracy, poverty, insurgency, problem of drug addiction etc for bringing social development. As a political leader¹⁰⁷ said, “We need to explore the natural resources available in the state and take up development projects through proper planning. A senior political leader¹⁰⁸ opined that there is the need to focus on three areas for both resource mobilization and employment generation namely – tourism, trade and commerce and horticulture. Manipur has the right potential to have a tourism based economy. We can further promote and expand Indo-Myanmar trade via Manipur. Horticulture is another sector which can be developed in a massive scale in the hills of Manipur. There is also the need to develop transportation and communication facilities and speedy progress in development work. We should also explore our natural resources. A senior political leader¹⁰⁹ suggested that appropriate policies and programmes which suit the dynamic nature of society should be adopted. It is better to have meaningful consultation with experts from Planning Commission so that adequate and suitable measures are taken up

¹⁰⁶ P.S.J. Gisbert, *Fundamentals of Sociology*, Orient Longman, Bombay, 1994, p.467.

¹⁰⁷ Personal interview with Khangthuananng Panmei (Sitting-MLA) on 5.11.2009.

¹⁰⁸ Personal interview with Holkhomang Haokip (Ex-MLA/MP) on 6.4.2009.

¹⁰⁹ Personal interview with Y. Mani Singh (Ex-MLA) on 3.4.2009.

for social development in the state. A political leader¹¹⁰ said that politicians who run the government should be crystal transparent in undertaking development projects in the state.

The political elites/leaders who are solely responsible for designing social development need to see and evaluate the need of the people and introduce some structural changes in society – discarding some old institutions and creating some new institutions or changing some existing institutions. They also need to make institutions responsive to all sections of society and associate people with the decision making process. Social development requires policy planning with pre-determined goals, priorities and strategies and allocation of resources. It is necessary to evaluate or measure the gap in performance and goals so that corrective measures are taken up in future planning. Unfortunately, political elites in Manipur neither made attempts to raise revenues, seek advice from experts, be it economists, political scientists, sociologists, planning commission nor cooperation of the public. Security centric approach and obsession with ‘law and order’ by the state by neglecting other aspects are seen to continue in Manipur. It is clearly reflected in the frequent visit of army officers, central home minister, secretary and officials of home ministry. Neglect of other aspects in Manipur can be understood from no visit or unawareness by the central ministers and officials of finance, tourism, surface transport, railways, commerce and industry, youth affairs and sports, health and rural development etc which could have been more relevant for the state. Initiation and completion of developmental project too take much more time than the stipulated time period and political elites justified it and seek excuse by giving explanation citing rainy season, interference from underground outfits and frequent bandhs and general strikes imposed by certain groups. Construction and expansion of few roads in the capital city cannot be called developmental work in the true sense of the term. Rather, these should be considered as normal duty of the political elites which they are supposed to perform as representatives of the people. They even failed to implement and materialize the public distribution system in the state.

¹¹⁰ Bijoy Koijam (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

5.24 Political Elite and India's Look East Policy

India's Look East Policy was launched in 1992 just after the end of Cold War following the collapse of Soviet Union. It is a very important strategic policy decision taken up by the government as a part of its foreign policy. This policy is primarily directed towards improving relations with ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations) with the main focus of India's place in the evolving global economy. The policy is very important for the North East states because it involves provision to facilitate development of the North East by increasing its connectivity to the outside world. The policy is a concrete strategy to create an economic hub in its North Eastern region by exploring the trade and commerce potential with its South East Asian neighbours. The lack of adequate physical connectivity between India's North East and South East Asia, an outcome of skeptic mindset of Indian policy makers, is one of the most important factors that hindered the possibilities of economic development in the region. However, since 1997 when Myanmar was admitted into the ASEAN as a full member, India's North East assumed importance in its Look East policy.¹¹¹

It is evident from table 5.20 that majority of the political elites (91%) considered the policy as good and beneficial to Manipur, 4 percent not beneficial to the state while 5 percent reported that they are unaware of the policy. It is also observed that 44 percent of the political elites suggested active participation in the activities associated with the policy as the measure to provide maximum benefit to the state, 27 percent development of infrastructure, 21 percent broad mindset and sincerity of the people who implement the policy while 8 percent of the political elites did not give any suggestive measure to provide maximum benefit to the state vis-à-vis Look East policy. A senior political leader¹¹² observed that the state government should be very alert to take maximum benefit from the policy. We need involvement in the developmental process undertaken under the policy. Border trade with Myanmar is now legalized and there is an urgent need to modify the list of the trade items so that more items produced in the state are included

¹¹¹ Yogendra Singh, *Connecting India's Northeast with Southeast Asia: Possibilities and Implications*, [available at www.sicassam.in/news/21-feb-08.html] accessed on 19.10.2010.

¹¹² R.K. Dorendra Singh (Ex-CM & MP), *op.cit.*

in the list. We need to work hard to increase these products. A political leader¹¹³ describing the policy as good policy said that the North East region is isolated for many years and isolation is not good. The policy will minimize the isolation as it aims to connect India with South East Asia through North East. Trade and commerce with South East Asian nations will lead to exchange of benefits between India and these countries. Emphasis should be on floriculture, medicinal plants, tourism, hospitality service etc and participation in the activities undertaken under the policy.

A senior political leader, on the other hand, observed that the Look East policy is for India, not for Manipur. It was adopted for searching markets for Indian industries and it would not benefit Manipur.¹¹⁴ Another political leader¹¹⁵ opined that the policy did not give any benefit to the local people. People who live by the road sides in the border areas are living in the same condition or even in worst condition than they were before the Indo-Myanmar Border Trade Agreement¹¹⁶ was signed. It is superficially said that the Look East policy would bring economic development. There is, however, an ardent need to look at those associated issues and challenges posed by the policy. There is indeed an urgent need to produce certain mechanisms to protect women and girls when multi-national companies come to Manipur. It is also needed to promote the indigenous products and search for markets. The government must look at these aspects and prepare the people by providing them education and skill. Otherwise, the policy would be really unfortunate for the state.

¹¹³ Personal interview with Y. Surchandra Singh (Sitting-MLA) on 11.6.2009.

¹¹⁴ "Trading is done mostly in such items like Atlas cycle, products of Honda Company, baby foods from Gujarat etc. The policy gives benefit to some bus drivers, small hotels only. People in Manipur need to produce their own products and export the surplus". - Personal interview with Gangumei kamei (Ex-MLA) on 19.5.2009.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Kim Gangte (Ex-MP) on 12.4.2009.

¹¹⁶ It was signed on January 21, 1994. Shri Parthasarthy, Ambassador of India to Rangoon, inaugurated it on 12.4.1995 at Moreh, a border town in Manipur, India.

Table: 5.20 Views of Political Elite on India's Look-East Policy

Elite group	Look East Policy			Total	Measures to provide maximum benefit to Manipur				Total
	Good & beneficial to Manipur	No benefit to Manipur	Unaware		Active participation	Development of infrastructure	Broad mindset & sincerity of in implementing the policy	No suggestion	
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	41	-	2	43	16	17	8	2	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	37	3	3	43	20	8	9	6	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	13	1	-	14	8	2	4	-	14
Total	91	4	5	100	44	27	21	8	100

It is unfortunate for the state and its people that some of the political elites are unaware about the policy given the fact that they have a great role in decision making and leading the people in the right path. Manipur needs infrastructural development, increase production capacity and motivation of the people. Getting benefit under the Look East policy depends on the ability to take advantage under the policy. Manipur can be a medical hub of South East Asia. It has a good climatic condition. Adequate manpower and development of large hospitals of international standard in the state are needed. People from Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam etc who used to go to hot climatic areas in India like Delhi and Calcutta for the treatment of their ailment would prefer to come to Manipur if it has hospitals of international standard. This will also create many employment opportunities to the people of the state. There is also the need to bring a solution of the insurgency problem in the state and maintain a good law and order situation. Many countries and companies which want to invest huge amount of money in the state are reluctant to do the same because of the law and order situation in the state. It is interesting to note here that Japan which invested for sericulture project in the state is now reluctant to invest for the second phase of the project citing the law and order problem in the state. It is necessary to create conducive atmosphere to attract investors in the state under the policy. People in Manipur need to work together and prepare to meet the changing economic opportunities as well as challenges associated with the Look East policy.

5.25 Political Elite and Ethnic Conflict

The arbitrary human divisions made on the basis of the physical characteristics or cultural traits are often termed as racial or ethnic group. Manipur is ethnically heterogeneous. The Meetei, the Naga and the Kuki Chin Mizo tribes are the major ethnic groups inhabiting in Manipur. There is also a sizeable Muslim population who are called Pangals. Both the Naga and Kuki Chin Mizo tribes represent cluster of different small ethnic communities. The present administrative division of Manipur into districts has in a

way amounted to each district being the area of concentration of particular major tribe.¹¹⁷ The Meetei and the Manipuri Muslims are the main inhabitants of valley districts and the tribes are concentrated in the hills with some tribal pockets in the valley. Though there had not been a single instance of bitter ethnic conflict in the history of Manipur, there was the outbreak of bitter ethnic conflicts like the Naga-Kuki conflict in 1992, the Meetei and Pangal (Muslim) riot in 1993 and the Kuki-Paite clash in 1997.¹¹⁸ It is quite natural in a multi-ethnic society that differences in value judgement and perceptions among the members of different ethnic groups exist. It is evident from table 5.21 that 30 percent of the political elites considered that desire of each ethnic group to dominate over one another, area domination and involvement of underground outfits as the causes of the ethnic conflict and clash in the state, 28 percent ethnic politics of some leaders for political mileage, 14 percent misunderstanding, rumour and ethnic politics of some leaders for political mileage, 13 percent misunderstanding and rumour, 9 percent attempt of each ethnic group to protect its ethnic identity even if it is at the cost of other ethnic groups while 6 percent considered that misunderstanding, rumour, desire of each ethnic group to dominate over one another and involvement of underground outfits in the clash as the causes of ethnic conflict and clashes in the state. It is also observed that majority of the political elites (57%) suggested that all efforts should be made to imbibe the spirit of mutual trust and communal harmony to solve the inter-ethnic conflict. 34 percent are of the opinion that all state machineries should be used to control ethnic conflict as and when it occur and strong political determination to built a society where there is development of all groups while 9 percent suggested peaceful dialogue for mutual

¹¹⁷ Lucy Zehol, *Ethnicity in Manipur: Experience, Issues and Perspectives*, Regency Publications, 1998, New Delhi, p.37.

¹¹⁸ The Naga-Kuki clash was worst during the period 1992-1996. A total of 5724 houses were burned down out of which 3110 belonged to Kukis and 2614 belonged to Nagas; around 15,000 people were internally displaced and 1000 people were killed. – Ratna Tinkoo, “Naga-Kuki Conflict in Manipur” in Girin Phukan (ed.). *Inter Ethnic Conflict in North East India*, South Asia Publishers, 2004, p. 28.

The ethnic clash led to the downfall of the Rishang Keishing led congress government and the installation of W. Nipamacha Singh as the new Chief Minister of the state. In the Kuki-Paite clash, a total of 220 plus people were killed, about 4670 houses were burnt down and more than 10,000 people become homeless. – S. Mangi Singh, “The Kuki-Paite Clash (1997-99) in Manipur: A study”, in N. Joykumar Singh (ed.). *Ethnic Relations among the People of North East India*, Centre for Manipur Studies and Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2006, p.66.

The Meetei-Pangal clash led to killing of hundreds of innocent people and damage of property.

understanding and peaceful co-existence as the measures to solve inter-ethnic conflict in the state.

A senior political leader opined that Manipur is a mini-India inhabited by various ethnic communities. Concrete steps should be taken in order to prevent ethnic conflict.¹¹⁹ A sitting MLA¹²⁰ said that there was no concrete issue that caused Naga-Kuki conflict and clash in 1992. People were guided by emotion and some leaders in their vested interest work on ethnic line to get political mileage. This irrational practice is still found in the state.

A senior political leader¹²¹ opined that the Naga-Kuki conflict and Clash emerged from the Senapati district of Manipur. Recalling the Meetei-Pangal clash, a political leader¹²² said that rumour should not be allowed to spread as it causes great damage. Another political leader¹²³ supporting the viewpoint that rumour played a great role in the clash between the two communities said that he in his own risk went to Lilong (A Muslim inhabited area) during the clash to rescue two Meeties when (mis)informed that they were kept hostage by some individuals of the other community. But he found that the two Meeteis were being kept safe and sound by Muslim brothers.

¹¹⁹ But it cannot be assured that there will be no ethnic conflict. Political opportunism which makes the political leaders give priority to their partisan interests rather than to the state interest led to the outbreak of the Naga-Kuki conflict and clash. They made communal appeal to the voters and keep alive the communal feelings. – Th. Chaoba Singh (Ex-MLA/MP), *op.cit.*

¹²⁰ Danny Shaiza (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

¹²¹ “The opposing interests of the two communities in respect of the creation of Sadar hills district out of Senapati district acted as an important factor for the clash. There were security lapses also at the time of clash leading to many killing and arson. The NSCN (IM) and KNA (Kuki National Army) and other insurgent groups were instrumental in killing, massacre and burning of property. The funny part of the drama was that the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) security force stationed at only a half kilometer away from Tokpa village in the Loktak Project area refused to rush to the spots where crime of arson and shooting took place. The CRPF merely exploded a high sounded bomb near their camp so that the insurgent might go away on hearing the sound. The Army personnel stationed at the Project area at one and a half kilometer away from the scene took no action either”. - W. Kulabidhu Singh (Ex-MP), *op.cit.*

¹²² “A Muslim rickshaw driver from Cachar district of Assam was killed in my locality by unidentified persons during the Meetei-Pangal clash and the cause of the killing was nothing but rumour. There was the rumour that a Meetei girl was killed, many persons who went to attend a marriage ceremony were missing, students had not returned home but these were not reality but only rumour which led to killing and damage of property”. - M. Nabadweep Singh (Ex-MLA), *op.cit.*

¹²³ I. Hemochandra Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.*

Table : 5.21 Political Elite's View on Ethnic conflict and measures to solve it

Elite Group	Causes of Ethnic Conflict						Measures to solve ethnic conflict		
	Misunderstanding & Rumour	Ethnic politics of some leaders for political mileage	Protection of ethnic identity	Misunderstanding, rumour, ethnic politics of some leaders for political mileage	Misunderstanding, rumour, desire for dominance over one another, area domination, involvement of underground outfits	Desire to dominate over one another, area domination & involvement of underground outfits	Peaceful dialogue & co-existence	Activities to imbibe the spirit of trust & communal harmony	Immediate state machinery & strong political determination for a society where there is development of all groups
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	7	13	3	5	3	12	4	21	18
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	4	10	3	8	3	15	4	24	15
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	2	5	3	1	-	3	1	12	1
Sub-total	13	28	9	14	6	30	9	57	34
Grand-total	100						100		

Each ethnic group in Manipur tries to protect its own ethnic identity and even the process of identity reformulation took place in the process. The Purum tribe, for instance, is a community which is referred to as the Old Kuki in the official records by the British but they made redefinition of their identity and prefer to be identified as a Naga community. They might have done so in order to find a viable number by identifying itself as a Naga tribe. The Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes made efforts to maintain and reinforce the Kuki identity. The same holds true for the Meetei who leaves no stone unturned to preserve and protect its ethnic identity. The Pangals are no less in this regard. It is indeed necessary to keep one's own identity but it should not be done at the cost of other communities. Adjustments, understanding, compromises, sacrifices and negotiations etc are the need of the hour. Ethnic conflict brought nothing but losses and damages. The steps such as having lunch together, exchange of gifts etc which are being taken up by many NGOs for peaceful co-existence of different communities in such occasions like Shajibu Cheirouba,¹²⁴ Christmas and Idd etc are appreciable. The non-participation in any kind of ethnic conflict but helping the victims of such conflict as much as one can would perhaps go a long way in containing ethnic conflicts. The leaders of the ethnic groups must exercise their goodwill on the respective ethnic groups and persuade them to maintain peace and harmony. It is necessary for the state to resort to new strategies and plans to hook and book those rioters and instill confidence in the minds of the victims and the innocent people. It is required to see that the political leaders become free from communal attitudes. They, as representatives of the people, should come forward and be role models in containing the inter-ethnic conflicts in the state. They should make decisions which promote peace, solidarity and development of the state. They should not work on communal/ethnic line. Otherwise, ethnic conflict will surely destroy the basic fabric of democratic society which, not too long ago, was the hallmark of the Manipuri society.

¹²⁴ It is the New Year day of the Meetei community and Meetei women/daughters present gift to their brothers on this occasion as a traditional practice exhibiting love and affection among brothers and sisters. Keeping the tradition alive Meetei women/daughters presented a Khudei/towel and a vest or any kind to their tribal brothers in connection with the occasion while their tribal brothers received the gifts with best wishes of long and prosperous life to their valley sisters/daughters.

5.26 Views of Political Elites on Continuation in Politics

People are largely concerned with the taste of politics. The traits of politics – which party/parties will form government, who will get elected, who will be the Chief Minister or will it be the old wine in the new bottle etc attract people given the fact that the political elites are the representatives of the people who make policies and programmes which affect all sections of the society. Political elites in the hold of politics also prefer to know all these aspects of politics. Table 5.21 highlights political elite’s viewpoint with regard to their entry as candidates in the next elections of State Legislative Assembly and Parliament as well as their continuation in politics in different capacities. It is evident from table 5.22 that majority of political elites (74%) have the intension or desire to enter as candidates in the next election for State Legislative Assembly while 6 percent in the next Parliamentary election. It is also observed that 14 percent of the political elites do not want to run again for the state assembly or parliament while 6 percent opined that they have not decided as yet to run again for the next election. It is also observed that 44 percent of the political elites want to be in politics till their health condition permits them to do so, 39 percent lifelong contribution by way of giving political education to the younger generation even if they are in not active politics, 9 percent till the electorates reject and dishonour them while 8 percent opined that they will take rest from political career or activity when they attain the age of 60-70 years.

A senior political leader¹²⁵ said, “The present term will be my last term. I am now 90 years old and when the term is completed, I will be 96 years old. I do not know whether I will survive or not till the term completes its tenure. Though not in active politics, I will continue to give political education to the younger generation as long as I can”. Another senior political leader¹²⁶ said, “I will run again for the State Legislative Assembly and my continuation in politics depends on physical or health condition. Though I am not in active politics, my service will be available for the state. A political leader¹²⁷ opined that he will enter the next electoral fray for state assembly and will continue in politics to fulfill some dreamed projects that he has in his mind. Another

¹²⁵ Rishang Keishing (Ex-CM & Sitting MP), *op.cit.*

¹²⁶ Radhabinode Kojjam (Ex-CM & Sitting MLA), *op.cit.*

¹²⁷ N. Biren Singh (Sitting-MLA), *op.cit.* – his dreamed projects include unity among the North-East states which are referred to as “Seven Sisters” and develop a common platform to express common voice.

senior political leader¹²⁸ opined –“I am now an aged person and I will not run again for the next election. Moreover, contesting election nowadays depends on the ability to make expenditure of a huge amount of money. But I will continue to be in party politics till my last breath. Politics is my life long career.

Table: 5.22 Political Elite’s View on Continuation in Politics

Elite group	Entering as a candidate in the next election				Total	Continuation in Politics				Total
	Yes		No	Not decided as yet		When electorate reject and dishonour me	Till health condition permits	Lifelong contribution by of giving political education to the younger generations	Between 60-70 years of age	
	State legislature	Parliament								
Sitting MLAs/MPs 43	40	2	1	-	43	7	17	15	4	43
Ex-MLAs/MPs 43	26	3	12	2	43	1	18	21	3	43
Defeated MLA/MP candidate 14	8	1	1	4	14	1	9	3	1	14
Total	74	6	14	6	100	9	44	39	8	100

It is apparent that all the political elites under study will be in politics with some purposes or objectives ranging from serving the state and its people to leading the people in the right path. It would be much better for the political elites of younger generations to learn the political and administrative experiences from the older generation of political elites who have been exposed to various socio-economic and political climates. They can enhance their own experience in the field of politics by doing so. It is not that old is not gold but new is diamond

¹²⁸ W. kulabidhu Singh (Ex-MP), *op.cit.*

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusion

The main objective of the present study is to find out the socio-economic, religious and political background of the political elites in Manipur, their role, role perception and performance vis-a-vis crucial issues of the state. All these aspects have been discussed and examined empirically in the preceding chapters with supporting field data. The concluding chapter is an attempt to present the main points of the study in the form of findings.

Manipur is politically at par with other states with a unicameral Assembly of sixty seats. The State Assembly is empowered to frame laws for the administration and governance of the state. The state is being ruled by a group of elected political elites. They were/are elected by the people as their representatives so that they work for the welfare of the state and its people. They constitute a minority group but exercise immense power in the society (c.f. chapter 1). They emerge out of the masses and rule with tacit and general approval of the masses. They have an inevitable and irrepressible urge to come to power and motivated by this urge to play an active role in politics. The memberships of political elites are open to all the people and there is alteration of political elites from time to time. Political elites are the representatives of the people and they are/were members of either State Legislative Assembly or parliament at one time or other or defeated candidates who aspired to get elected.

Manipur has its own long history since 33 A.D. It was during the reign of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (33 AD – 154 AD) that many reforms were introduced which laid the foundation of social and political structure as well as the cultural and religious pattern of the Meeteis. The kings or rulers of Manipur were the descendant of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba in his male line (c.f. Chapter 2). The rulers that ruled Manipur from 33.AD to 1947 were neither representatives of the people nor responsible to the people. They were mostly concerned with the maintenance of the security of the kingdom. As Manipur

society prior to the introduction of democratic institutions was feudal in character, it was only the king and the nobility that exercised autocratic power. The king was the final appellate judge and he could interfere at any time in any case in which he was interested. There had been the involvement of the British officials in the administration of Manipur. In 1819, Manipur lost her independence and it was under the Burmese suzerainty for seven years. It was only by the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826 that Manipur was liberated from the clutches of the Burmese but only to be controlled by the British. In 1835, Captain Gordon was appointed as the Political Agent of Manipur to advise and regulate the conduct of administration of the king. Manipur lost her sovereignty in her last war of independence against the British in 1891. Since then, there had been consequent political development like emergence of educated elite class, establishment of political party, demand for the introduction of fully responsible government, enactment of Manipur Constitution Act, 1947 and conduct of assembly election in 1948 on the basis of adult franchise, formation of representative government and merger of Manipur into India in 1949. Thus, the emergence of a class of political elites in modern democratic term is a new phenomenon in Manipur. It is the product of the democratic values and principles that paved the way for the emergence of the first batch of educated elite groups in the state.

An analysis of the political elite structure in Manipur indicates that political elites belonging to general social category have dominance in Manipur politics followed by those who belong to scheduled tribe category, minority community (Muslim) and scheduled caste category. However, becoming a leader in the elite structure is not at all related to one's belonging to a particular social category or other. Manipur has had Chief Ministers not only from the general category but also from scheduled tribe and minority community.

It is ascertained from the study that the preponderant majority of the political elites in Manipur are male (cf. chapter 3). Women have been heavily under-represented in the elite structure although women constitute almost 50% of the total population of Manipur. Specific decisions have to be taken to end gender disparity and empower women after inviting opinions from all quarters. It is to ensure that women have equal access to basic

infrastructure, health, education and strengthen women's cause to the grass root level. An important component of the study of elite structure, i.e. the socio-economic and cultural barriers and consciousness among women as the reasons for least representation of women, is not covered by the present study in spite of the fact that women in Manipuri society play crucial role in socio-economic processes. This calls for a separate study to find out the reasons that led to the failure of women in Manipur in striving to share power or influence the distribution of power. It is also brought out in the study that majority of the political elites also belong to rural social background, older age group and follow Hinduism. But the changing trend in the political elite structure in the last few decades indicates that the electorates have preferred political elites of younger generation. Income or economic status and educational status of the political elites play a significant role in climbing the ladder to the political elite structure of the state. It is also ascertained that majority of the political elites were teachers before they joined politics and more persons having professional background have been opting for politics in the state. Majority of the political elites, though born and brought up in rural areas, got their education from urban areas. Lack of enough number of institutions for professional courses and higher study in the state compelled the political elites to pursue their educational endeavour outside the state. The findings on the reasons that led political elites entry into politics indicates that majority of them (65%) entered politics to serve public interest. This is purely on the basis of what they have stated in the personal interviews conducted and can be termed as mere lip-service. It stands in sharp contrast to the real state of affairs prevailing in Manipur. Even after 63 years of its merger into Indian Union, Manipur today is perhaps the only state in the country where general public have no access to regular supply of potable drinking water, electricity and good transportation. Had the political elites done a little, if not more, for the public welfare in the last two/three decades Manipur would not have been what it is today. A failed state! A state with more than thirty underground outfits! A free-for-all state! The second reason which determined their entry into politics is their personal determination or interest to enter politics while the third reason happened to be family/kinship/friend's interest. Only 5 percent entered politics under the influence of political leaders followed by 3 percent under the influence of mass-movement.

A systematic examination of political background of the respondents show that 57 percent of them have literate parents and 53 percent considered their parental education as an important contributory factor in their socialization. The analysis of parent's involvement or interest in politics indicates that parents of 73 percent of the political elites did/do not have political involvement or interest in politics and parents of 62 percent did not exercise influence in the political affairs of the political elites. All these findings are highlighted in table 3.8 of chapter 3. The political socialization of political elites is more through active participation in political activities and political discussions at home as well as along with friends. All the political elites are exposed to news items on politics in the local newspapers, 97 percent in national newspapers, 93 percent read various books, biography and autobiography while 99 percent read magazines/journals to get knowledge, particularly political knowledge. Thus, newspapers serve the political elites as a major agent of political socialization. All these findings are reflected in table 3.14 of chapter 3. However, it is unfortunate that political elites in Manipur do not use the knowledge that they have at their disposal in the formulation of policies and programmes which affect the society as a whole. Rather, they used the knowledge to develop a kind of personal dynamism, an ability to inspire trust in their integrity and confidence in their ability to perform. They are more concerned with their political survival and the urge and ability to be in the position of power define their successful political career. The grammar of political elites is 'statecraft' and they must demonstrate to the people that they have a grasp of political reality in the state and are capable of performing concrete political tasks. Legislation is within the control of political elites which is intellectually challenging and problematic. It is the area of political knowledge that most attracts the attention of non-politicians because it involves fundamental question of justice and power.

The analysis of political elite's party affiliation and defection (cf. chapter 3) revealed that majority of the political elites belong to different national political parties and only a few belong to regional political parties. There are political elites in the state who work for regional interests as a means to climb the ladder to the elite structure and some regional political parties formed government in the state at one point of time or another. But political elites representing regional parties could not retain the confidence that people

have from them and consequently regional political parties are experiencing the loss of importance in the political drama of the state. The common practice found in the state is that most of the political elites wish to enter the electoral fray in the ticket of a party or parties which is or are in power in the state and the centre and go by abiding the instructions of the central leaders. They often used an excuse of not performing their representative role which they are supposed to perform in the interest of the state and its people by stating that the proposal is not approved by central leaders. This trend clearly indicates that political elites in the state have a dependency attitude.

It is also found that only 39 percent of the political elites do not change their party affiliation while 61 percent have changed their party affiliation from one party to another. The frequency of change in party affiliation or defection of the political elites ranges from one to five or more times. Politics in Manipur has been characterized by the politics of defection, re-defection, coalition and counter-coalition resulting in political instability in the state. This kind of politics is associated with the lack of development, ethnic divide and mockery of democracy and frequent imposition of the Presidential Rule in the state. From 1972 to 2001, the Presidential Rule has been imposed seven times in the state. Formation of jumbo size ministry had been used as a means by the political elites in the state to continue in the position of power and there is stiff competition for ministerial post among them. The study also revealed that majority of political elites (93%) considered party sponsorship as essential for electoral success while 7 percent did not think the same. Any new political party formed at the national level, be it Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Trinamool Congress (TC) etc, also come up in the state with a set of political elites and engaged in electoral politics with the sole aim of getting into power position. Any political party with a set of politicians may come in power but what the people prefer in the state is a stable government which can provide them justice, peace and development.

The examination of political aspiration of the political elite show that majority of the respondents are looking forward to a better future and want to climb up the staircase of power. Majority of them (60%) also wanted to serve the people and considered it as their career goal, 34 percent serving the constituency, state and nation and 6 percent considered establishing an egalitarian society as their career goal. However, it is

unfortunate for the state and its people that there are certain terms which have been used to describe the tenure of every government in Manipur. From 1990s till 2001, terms such as ‘overdraft’, ‘unpaid salaries’ of the government employees etc became synonymous with the government. It is now the turn of the people to use such terms as ‘percentage cuts’, ‘playing favourites’, ‘fake-encounter’, ‘buying of jobs’ at exorbitant price etc. In recent years, especially after 2005, some very disturbing terms such as ‘Nagalim’, ‘Kuki Homeland’, ‘Meetei government’, ‘economic blockade’ and ‘alternative arrangement of the Nagas living in Manipur’ etc have altered the vocabulary of the people in the state. The prevalence and practice of nepotism is a part of political culture of the state and is very common among the administrators, bureaucrats and political leaders. Family consideration, kinship ties, friendship obligations, ethnic and parochial loyalties get precedence in public servant’s mind and commitment to rules, regulations, laws, values and ideals become secondary. People also expect favours from their relatives who happened to assume public offices. Such practices damage activism and enthusiasm of the really talented people who are discriminated against to favour somebody. There is also nexus between gangsters and politicians. The gangsters often employ some practical techniques such as falsification, substitutes of ballots, kidnapping of workers of other parties and even murder etc to further the cause of their political ally at the time of election because the success of politicians at the polls is an important concern to them as their future and continued enjoyment of special privileges depend upon their success. They are not concerned with the means, whether they are within the laws or not, but are more concerned with getting things done.

It is also ascertained that political elites suggested some personal qualities/skills or talent, educational and political qualifications as desirable and necessary for a career in politics. The preference of those qualities and qualifications as stated by the political elites is reflected in table 3.14 of chapter 3. It is true that something within the individual is the key to become a political leader or elite. It may perhaps be a perceptive or receptive ability to be the right thing at the right time. Personality, character and experience may all play a part in making a career in politics but it is the manifestation of individual’s discretion and choice which ensures that the outcome of his decisions are the correct ones and it is the true barometer of their political leadership. Political elites are the

representatives of the people and if they get elected, they are engaged in legislation or law making and administration. They have to deal with bureaucrats and all sorts of ingredients of administration. A political leader needs to be at least a graduate in the 21st century. If an illiterate political leader leads and guides the public, there will be a very regrettable situation. Important issues are discussed in the Parliament and State Assembly, constitutional provisions are amended to suit the dynamic nature of society and new laws are made. Therefore, a political candidate must be educated and knowledgeable. There are recruitment rules with prescribed qualifications for appointing chawkidars/ care takers of a public institution but there are no such rules prescribing educational qualification for entering into politics and contest election. This fact sometimes makes mockery of democracy in Indian politics. If people with selfish interest and without the knowledge of governance joined electoral politics and get elected, there will be no good governance at all. Here, electorates have to play an important role in electing their representatives. It was earlier said that if the King is good, the people are also good but now it is such that if people are bad, the king is also bad. Indeed, people got the government they deserve. It is true that people have lost some respect for the men and women in public life. But people should not express their anger and dissatisfaction on ethnic and communal line. Collective anger can usher in change in the political arena and strengthen democracy by expressing their anger and dissatisfaction by democratic means particularly at the time of election.

Political elites need to be persons reputed for integrity, straight forwardness, discipline, work ethic and decisiveness in governance. They must be darling of the common people and take decision at the right moment. They must be truly patriotic and interact with people from all walks of life – people in politics and outside politics, from rank to file in the administrative set up and be guardian of the people. History created political elites and they in turn must create history. It is mostly people in distress who actually need the true service of the political elites who need to prove a point to the people that they can provide clean and efficient administration. Political elites/leaders should not make tall promises. They need to make people feel that somebody is looking at them and trying to do the best. Even if they did not succeed in bringing fundamental constructive changes in the society, they should take people into confidence and tell them

why they have not succeeded in certain spheres. But this must not be allowed to become a rationale or excuse for doing little. Political elites would be failing people if they do not take the fullest advantage of space and opportunities available in the changing political environment. They need to advance the interests of the common people, provide relief to them and educate them to uphold the cause of democracy, secularism, promote industrial development and take up the effects of the past neglect and discrimination.

As reflected in table 5.6 of chapter 5, the analysis of interactional patterns of the political elites at various levels indicates that the overall interactional linkage of the elites has been high. Majority of the political elites have interaction with other elites, both tribal and non-tribal, across party boundary mostly on local issues. Only a few have interaction on regional and national issues. This, in a way, indicates that the political elites in Manipur are less significant in dealing with the regional and national issues. The vertical interactional linkage of the political elites is found to be high in case of interaction with the Chief Minister, state ministers and central ministers while a significant percentage of political elites have interaction with different Prime Ministers of India at different points of time. They interact with the high ups mostly on state issues. Further, the interaction of the elites with government officials at the block level is higher than the district and state or national level officials. It is also found that majority of the political elites (69%) considered the expectation of the people from them as “*high*” while 31 percent considered that people have “*very high*” expectation from them. The study further revealed that 32 percent of the political elites used the technique of dealing with the people/public with open and honest mind to satisfy them, 26 percent create understanding with the people by explaining what is possible or not, 24 percent fulfill the demands of the people as far as possible, 15 percent frequent contact with the people while 3 percent did not reveal the technique used by them. With regard to the real role orientation indicating the area of focus of the political elites, it is ascertained that 70 percent of the political elites take decision by emphasizing the interests of constituency and state, 22 percent on state and 8 percent on constituency. Thus, political elites in Manipur are more oriented towards constituency and state in their role perception.

People can have “*high*” or “*very high*” expectations from the political elites. But they also need to know the role and duty of the citizen as well as the role and limitations of the political elites. Problem arises when people make high expectation by forgetting their role and duty. People need to give support to political elites in their honest endeavour to bring development of the state. They should not be guided by narrow self interest while highlighting their expectations to the political elites. There may be gap between the expectation of the people and the ability of the political elites to fulfill the expectation. It is unfair to think that everything is to be done by the political elites. Political elites as representatives of the people must try at their best level to accomplish the reasonable and rightful expectations of the people. What is more important is the desire on the part of the political elites to do something for the welfare of the people. They should not do anything and everything just to please the people. They should make policy and programmes to provide the people good shelter, basic necessities of life and protect them from unwanted artificial oppression from the state and state forces. Political elites should see into that their role performance serves the general interest but not self interest of the people because a man who tries to satisfy all pleases none. It is a must to bring and promote political awareness among the people.

An analysis of the issue orientation of the political elites revealed many important features. All the political elites welcome the introduction of Panchayati Raj while 74 percent support the provision of reservation of seats for women in state assembly and parliament and 73 percent support the idea of making voting compulsory. It is also found that majority of the political elites (52%) considered both economic and political factors as the causal factors of insurgency problem in the state, 26 percent economic factor and 22 percent considered political factor as the causal factor of the problem. Majority of the political elites (72%) suggested political dialogue with the insurgent groups as the measure to bring an amicable solution to the problem. The political elites also consider the issue of HIV/AIDS in the state as a serious problem and majority of them (70%) suggested spreading of awareness about the problem as the measure to control the problem, 14 percent for sincere implementation of the HIV/AIDS programmes, 10 percent for active role of political elites in the fight against HIV/AIDS, 4 percent suggesting that one should not hide it and 2 percent suggested formulation of strict laws

to punish HIV/AIDS affected persons. The analysis of data with regard to controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)-1958 revealed that majority of the political elites (64%) stand against the Act and want to repeal it, 30 percent stand in favour of it while 6 percent want modification of the Act to make it more humane. Majority of them considered that the Act has affected Manipur severely and various controversies have been associated with this Act. The present study revealed only the political elite's view on the Act and therefore one more area for further study could be the impact of the AFSPA-1958 in the state of Manipur. It is also found that majority of the political elites (88%) considered that there is no good governance in the state while 12 percent hold that there is good governance in the state. The study revealed that 42 percent of the political elites suggested transparency and accountability in administration of the state as the measure for good governance, 30 percent good and dynamic political leader and bureaucrat, 16 percent political dialogue with insurgent groups, maintaining good law and order and socio-economic development while 12 percent suggested good and responsible public as the measures for good governance in the state.

The analysis of political elite's view on the territorial integrity of Manipur revealed that 85 percent of them considered that there are some factors like demand for Greater Nagaland and Kuki Homeland, divisive policy of some leaders, insurgency problem threatening the ideal of integrity in the state while 15 percent hold that there is no factor threatening the integrity of the state. Political elites also suggested various measures to uphold integrity of Manipur. The measures include promoting the feeling of brotherhood and peaceful co-existence; minimize disparity between different ethnic groups, equal development in the hill and remote areas of the state, solution of insurgency problem and the policy of right person in the right place as the basis of governance. These findings have been highlighted in table 5.18. It is also found that majority of the political elites (93%) hold that both modernization process and age-old tradition should go hand in hand while 7 percent are in favour of modernization process. Majority of the political elites (78%) also considered that religion does not exercise influence in Manipur politics while 22 percent considered that religion influences politics in Manipur to some extent.

It is also found that majority of the political elites suggested that people oriented perspective, long term scientific planning and proper implementation of the planned development projects are essential for social development. An examination of political elite's assessment of India's Look East Policy revealed that majority of the political elites (91%) considered the policy as good and beneficial to the state, 4 percent not beneficial to the state while 5 percent of the political elites are unaware of the policy. The political elites also suggested various measures to provide maximum benefit to the state via the policy. These findings have been highlighted in table 5.20 of chapter 5. The study of political elite's view on ethnic conflict in Manipur revealed that 30 percent of them considered the desire to dominate over one another, area domination and involvement of the underground outfits as the causes of ethnic conflict and clash in the state, 28 percent ethnic politics of some leaders for political mileage, 14 percent misunderstanding, rumour and ethnic politics of some leaders for political mileage, 13 percent misunderstanding, rumour, 9 percent protection of ethnic identity while 6 percent considered that misunderstanding, rumour, desire for dominance over one another and involvement of underground outfits as the causes of ethnic conflict and clash in the state. It is now crystal clear that some political elites are responsible for ethnic conflict in Manipur. Political elites also suggested various measures such as peaceful dialogue and co-existence, working to imbibe the spirit of trust and communal harmony, immediate employment of state machineries to stop ethnic conflict as and when it occur and strong political determination to create a society where there is development of all groups/sections of population to solve ethnic conflict in the state and these findings have been highlighted in table 5.21 of chapter 5.

The study makes it amply clear that political elites in Manipur are aware of various issues/problems which are found in the state. They are also equipped with some measures to solve or meet the various issues or problems. However what is troubling the state and its people is that they are not able to materialize in action the measures that they have at their disposal to the fullest extent. This is because of the dominance of their self interest over the general interest. It will be much better if political elites, in spite of their differences in party affiliation and ideology, work together in the pursuit of making

Manipur a peaceful and developed state in India. The political elites must be able to create and set vision in such a way that all have a clear direction in which way to travel. This task may require technical expertise and ability to predict and translate the overall strategy of administration into manageable tactics. They should be able to highlight the future of society or state in real and understandable terms. They must develop a proper coordination of all, from rank to file, who are engaged in the governance of the state with personal conviction to the vision. There is also the need to develop a feedback culture which keeps fresh information flowing to the top and increases the likelihood of correct decision making. Nothing is possible without understanding what is going on at the ground level. Political elites need to penetrate into the layers of dynamics, sentiments and emotion which are not readily visible. This will occur only in the right atmosphere of trust and will educate the political elites with the real spirit of what is actually going on under their nose. Political elites in Manipur need to create a political culture where a true bond between the public and the state is established. One of the biggest failures of political elites in the state is their inability to establish a political culture. People not only want to know what to do but they also need to know why they are doing it and where it fits into the bigger picture of the state.

The church or any other religious body has no right to intervene in politics, particularly on the voting choice of the believers. Sometimes, it might have an official stand on a party but it should not be imposed on the faithful. Political leaders often use religion to whip up passions and garner political mileage. The unfortunate part of our democratic system is that no stern action is taken against people who spew venom. Manipur has many militant and civil organizations which seem to be more satisfied by indulging in the affairs of communal and ethnic politics and political and religious identities. Political leaders guided by self interest work and go with such organizations to serve their purposes and take political mileage and in this ugly endeavour they throw the common people in the gamut of uncertainty and suffering. Fake encounter, extortion by personnel in uniforms, conspiring and victimizing upright officials, mistrust in government machinery marked the working of the administration and governance. Failure of the political leaders/elites to redress the grievances of the people has always invited protests and demonstrations from the public which cause frequent unrest disturbing the normal life of the state.

Development or growth means more wealth, more employment, more amenities and more education with a proper and systematic arrangement of things into proper place and in the right time. Focusing only on funds to spend on projects alone will not improve the well being of the general public. Fund allotments to the government are possibly made with good intentions in most of the cases but implementation and monitoring of the said fund is far from the desired level with no concrete result for the general public to see and feel. Job completion on paper has produced no positive result. Public money is for the public and it must be utilized sincerely and honestly in the best interest of the public. The feedback system, monitoring system and physical verification during and after completion of the scheme or project by the concerned authority is very important and necessary. Defaulters must be made to compensate or given exemplary penalty. It requires effective intervention of political elites who are solely responsible for policy making and planning. Manipur urgently needs political leaders who can produce effective mechanism for inclusive growth where the benefits of growth or development reach the largest section of the society and that the maximum numbers of people are able to derive benefits from the developmental projects. Inclusive growth is imperative and it has to be enlarged and expanded. The MP/MLA local area development scheme provides an MLA/MP an opportunity to take care of his or her constituency. However, the scheme, in most cases, is associated with high degree of mismanagement, misappropriation, misuse coupled with irregularities and weak monitoring and improper maintenance of records. No comprehensive evaluation of the scheme has ever been undertaken. There are many constituencies where no concrete evidence on the ground of the utilization of money is seen. The state of Manipur, till now, has not come up to the stage of development which a society should have. Thanks to the political elite in Manipur, the number of hours in load shedding is too long, a record befitting a place in the Guinness Book of World Record. The roads are filled with potholes, the National Highways connecting the state with the rest of India are in deplorable condition, a little drizzle is enough to flood many places, job creation is painfully low and many families have lost their sons and daughters – some to guns and some in search of jobs for survival. The common people learnt and are learning to live with the hard-to-believe situation. It is

really unfortunate for the state and its people that the political elites have turned a blind eye to this highly deplorable and inhuman condition. They made tall promises before they get elected as representatives of the people. But once elected, most of the political elites prefer to stay in their comfort zones and lead irresponsible lives without making a determined and serious attempt to accomplish what they have promised to undertake for the state and its people. They still continue their habit of making things go slow and sluggish in spite of the fact that Manipur now is a part of the global village. They failed to meet the impact of the arrival of the globalization process. Rather, people are kept at such a subsistence level that they keep on engaging in the tasks to make their ends meet. At the same time people are easily carried away by money and muscle power at the time of election. Multiple factors such as political change from feudal autocracy to democracy, religious orthodoxy in the past, self-centered politicians and long neglect of the state by the central leaders are all contributory factors for the present situation of Manipur which Durkheim would have characterized as anomic.

People expect a lot, concrete and worth appreciable works from the three Members of Parliament who represent Manipur. But they failed to put collective effort on the issues of the state and for socio-economic upliftment of the people. Manipur has not, so far, produced a political leader who can question the central leaders as to why they wanted Manipur to be a part of India if they did/do not have energy and time to think about the development of the state and welfare of its people. Political leaders in Manipur did not do anything which can distinguish them from others by giving priority to such areas like generating a potential power source at least for some decades to come, a perennial source for the supply of drinking and hygienic water and a network of standard roads. Water, an essential life supporting basic necessity has become a scarce item in the state though it receives sufficient rainfall. The system of pipeline supply of water to each household, even in the capital city of Imphal, has been a total failure.

The infrastructure of the state is such that common people are deprived of any decent means of livelihood. On the other side of the coin, a handful enjoys rapid increase in financial capacity without a known source and such persons are able to lure the voters at

the time of election and some of them come out as representatives of the people. They lead the people in such a way that the latter are not conscious of ideology of a political party or another and the manifestoes of any political parties have no value to the electorates. Those in power somehow formulate policies but not to solve the problem with a holistic approach, rather to be manipulated for their own vested interests. The policy so far made in the state failed to capacitate the state producers and could not provide those facilities to enable them compete with the producers of other states. Compelling the producers to live and work without availing them the essential infrastructure is an unfavourable state of affairs in the state.

The AFSPA-1958 imposed in the state as a means to contain insurgency problem could not bring a positive result towards the desired end. The insurgency problem could not be totally suppressed and the killing of insurgents and innocent public under fake encounters is not the solution. Justice (Retd.) Jeevan Reddy Committee had minutely studied the provisions of the AFSPA-1958 and recommended the repeal of the Act in its report submitted to the government of India. The Prime Minister of India also did not support the provisions of this controversial Act and expressed his desire of a law which is more humane and justifiable to the people. Therefore, political dialogue between the insurgent groups and the government would be the only means for finding an amicable solution of the problem in the state.

Human resource is the backbone of a society. Without value based and quality education, a society would remain stagnant. Most of the educational institutions which generate human capital/resource are not up to the desired level, particularly in the remote areas of the state and there have been reports of many complains of not having teachers in schools and colleges, of broken school buildings, collapsed walls etc. Government schools exist for name sake only and most parents opt for private schools for the education of their children where teachers are employed with meager salary managed from the fees collected from the students. The role of government aid would have been significant in satisfying both ends but with no determination to check and rectify the grant and usage of government aid, a situation has created that acts against the interests of the schools and teachers. Neither political leaders nor concerned authority has ever taken up any constructive step with a vision for tapping the

potential of the youths of the state. Rather, mismanagement and corrupt practices have manipulated and destroyed this potential which would have been very effective in bringing positive change and progress of the state. Political elites need to show the public especially the youths and students that it is hard work that pays and not anything else. The vast majority of the youths are at a loss with no promise of their future and they have developed contempt of social and political institutions as these institutions have failed to inspire them. The problem associated with the future pillars of the state is a serious problem which can be dealt only by those in the realm of politics whose power is immense. Unfortunately, no government formed by a set of political elites or another that ruled the state did anything which was/is outstanding and could be fondly remembered. There is no bad politics but only bad politicians. Power can correct people and persons in power make all the difference.

Right from day one of its merger into India, Manipur had/ has political elites who are only power mongers – those who work just to be in the position of power by keeping aside the responsibilities bestowed upon them by the public. The resultant and associated problem of irresponsible political elites is manifested in the form of corruption which they shamelessly claimed time and again as the greatest challenge. They neither have the determination nor commitment to solve the problem; instead prefer to point their fingers to their predecessors in order to escape from their responsibilities. They keep the laws toothless on one hand and they have been chanting to curb unwanted corruption whenever they are in a public forum. At one time, bribe was paid for getting wrong thing done but now it is paid for getting things done at the right time. Political elites are responsible to find ways and means for good governance. Corruption subverts all law and order and the delivery of justice. It has to be rooted out, whether by the bureaucracy, political set up or the judiciary so that democracy functions properly in the interest of the state and its people. It is here that political elites of the state have to take the lead and play the most pivotal role.

Very recently, the government of India has taken a decision to reduce the export obligation under Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme to 25% of the normal export obligation. This facility taken up as a part of India' Look East Policy will be available to the North Eastern states and Sikkim. This is being done to promote

manufacturing activity and generating employment in the North Eastern states. EPCG is an export promotion scheme under which an exporter can import certain amount of capital goods at either zero or three percent customs duty for upgrading technology related with exports. Myanmar has also been included in the list Focused Market Scheme (FMS) which aims to offset high freight cost to certain international countries with a view to make India more competitive in these markets. This step is also likely to benefit exports from the north east region as Myanmar borders four North Eastern states including Manipur. Unfortunately, political elites in Manipur neither make any sincere and concerted effort to make people aware of the Look East Policy and provide necessary education to meet the challenges associated with the policy nor lead the people in the right path to get maximum benefit from the policy. There is a lot to be done before the policy fully materialize – from infrastructure development to provision of enabling the people to derive benefit as well as meet the challenges associated with the policy. Though Myanmar is comparatively backward, its highways are broader and well constructed than those of Manipur. Moreh, a town in Manipur bordering Myanmar, has attracted attention of many trans-border traders and it can be a major international commercial hub. But no serious attempt has so far been made by the political elites in the state to develop Moreh as a modern town. When one reaches Moreh, piles of garbage and waste materials can be seen on road sides. And yet, the political elites of the state keep on harping Moreh as the gateway to South East Asia.

The benefit of the policy should not confine to those in power and their close associates only. It should reach the common people. For this, political elites need to understand the Look East Policy thoroughly and take up the necessary steps in proper time and place. However, such political outlook and commitment from the political elites of the state is very rarely seen. Rather, they are engaged more in buying or possessing a piece of plot or landed property in the border town of Moreh. This practice is the highlight of the political elites of the state. Most of the seminars and workshops held in the state to discuss the benefit and challenges of the Look East Policy were organized and participated by academicians. The organization and participation by the political elites of the state in these events could be more significant and relevant because they are the decision makers and their decision gives far reaching impact. The political elites do not

make any constructive suggestions to the central leaders so that the same is incorporated in the policy so as to provide more benefit to the state and its people. Instead, they merely go by the steps that the central leaders adopted under the policy and remained as mere spectators. Indeed, it is a fact that 'high command' or 'Delhi durbar' is the phrase synonymous with the political parties and the political elites of the state. This phenomenon is so pervasive today that no political elites have been able to chart out their own course of action with wisdom sans Delhi or central leaders. This is not to mean altogether that the Delhi centric approach is unhealthy for the state but it also cannot be said that the trend is healthy either. What is to be noted is that this approach has produced a strange belief that Manipur can and will only prosper when the state government is run by the political elites of the party/ parties which is / are in power at the centre. Politics may be about identifying the political party to align with to be in power but one should not forget that there is something called values that we uphold and ideology that we cherish.

The government formed by a set of political elites or other in the state is determined to suppress and eliminate the insurgent outfits operating in the state with an iron hand through any means including the imposition of controversial military Act – the Armed Forces Special Power Act-1958- against the will of the people. Since 1980 the whole of Manipur has been living under its shadow and the Act has brought a series of violence in Manipur and the psychology of impunity. The impact of this Act is such that hundreds of men and women have disappeared, been tortured, raped and killed. No action was taken against the army despite many reports of human rights violation. The frustration and anger of the people produced by the Act are so high that spontaneous agitations against the Act and security personnel involved in the act of human rights violation have been made throughout the state. Mention can be made of the 12 elderly women who stripped themselves naked and demonstrated in front of the Assam Rifles headquarters carrying placards bearing the words 'Indian Army Rape Us'. A lone lady, Irom Sharmila Chanu, has been on fast up to death for more than a decade and another Manipuri, Pebam Chitaranjan, had gone to the extent of torching himself to death on 15 August, 2004 (he received about 85% burn of his body and succumbed to the injuries on 16 August, 2004) demanding the repeal of the Act. The recommendations of the Jeevan Reddy Committee,

set up to review the Act, have still not been implemented by the Union government. Nor are the political elites in Manipur putting any serious pressure to the centre for the same.¹

Our study of the political elites has clearly shown that the state's political elites are not seriously concerned with the sentiment and emotion of the people whom they represent in the democratic setup of the state. It is a constitutional right of the people to undertake peaceful protests with regard to various issues confronting them including the issue of AFSPA-1958. But there are many instances wherein public had to bear merciless torture from the police or paramilitary forces. More than half a dozen human right groups had been branded as terrorists. On August 5, 2010, many human right defenders were arrested and detained under the National Security Act as part of the crackdown to suppress the protest against illegal extra-judicial killing in Imphal by police. The peaceful and democratic agitations of the people were met with brute force because the political elites were/are indifferent to the people's cause and adopted a couldn't care-less-attitude. This is not democracy but demoncracy.

Manipur has been worst affected by militarization and the AFSPA-1958 has affected the state and its people so severely that the demand for repealing the military Act has been tabled in the 19th session of the United Nations at Geneva on March 5, 2012. It can be mentioned here that the government of India had assured the Human Rights Council of the United Nations that it will give a response to the issue of the AFSPA-1958 before the month of September, 2012 during its examination of India at its second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in May 24, 2012 at Geneva. This is a positive step that the United Nations has sought a remedial action from India after the repeal of the controversial Act has been recommended by countries like Slovakia, Switzerland and France. It will be no exaggeration to say that if the government of India either make modification of the Act to make it more humane or repeal the Act from the State of Manipur by understanding the pulse of the people, the credit should go to those individuals and civil society organizations who leave no stone unturned for the repeal of the Act. The political elites in Manipur are hardly related with the efforts to repeal or modify the Act. Rather, they have politicized the Act and used it as an election plank.

¹ The Act, it may be mentioned here, has been removed from the Imphal municipality areas of the state in August, 2004 due to the tremendous mass movement.

They tried to woo the voters on the promise that if they are voted to power then the military Act would be repealed from the state. However, people/voters have refused to believe the trumpeting of the political elites as they had all been tried and tested before.

Politics is the noblest and highest profession in the true sense of the term and it could lead the society and its people towards development. However, political elites in Manipur are misusing politics for their personal gain. Manipur is not ungovernable but is made ungovernable by those who stand to gain by it. When election time approaches, self style political leaders under the garb of 'social worker' came out in every corner of the state. They used all possible means to gain public support, a prerequisite, in achieving their business oriented politics. They are all responsible for the shocking state of affairs in the state. The degradation of the democratic political process in the state is such that entering election fray has become impossible without several crores of rupees and private armies or gangs. Vote mathematics is the highest value for the political elites and they go on dividing the people into pieces on the basis of religion, region, language and ethnic group or community to serve their vested interest. State or national interest is given least priority. Gaining political power to become millionaire/billionaire and serve any interest other than public welfare has become the supreme value of the political elites in Manipur. Political elites are so preoccupied in the fight for ministerships and creamy portfolios that they have no time for serving the people. The need of the hour, apart from transparency and accountability, is that political elites should be endowed with character and competence and motivated by the spirit of public service. Given the characteristics of political elites in the state, as has been shown in our study, it is apparent that Manipur may have to wait for another three/four decades for the emergence of such class of elites who can deliver good governance and serve the people in the way they ought to serve.

APPENDIX – I

Confidential

QUESTIONNAIRE

For Research Purpose only.

Part (A): GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Name
2. Sex
3. Age/Date of birth
4. Category
5. Place of birth – urban/rural
6. Religion
7. Income
8. Educational qualification
9. Sitting MLA/MP or Ex-MLA/MP or Aspired to get elected
10. Assembly/Parliamentary constituency you represent
11. Year/s in which you were elected
12. Number of terms you represent your constituency
13. Where is/was your place of education?
14. What were you before you join politics?
15. What are the reasons that led your entry into politics?

Part (B): POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

16. Are your parents literate or not? Is their educational attainment an important dimension or factor for your socialization?
17. Were/are your parents in politics? Had/have they influenced you in political affairs?

18. Do you think recruitment of an individual into political life requires both involvement and participation in political activities such as political meeting, campaigns etc and why?
19. Do you discuss politics at home?
20. Do you have political discussion with friends?
21. What political books, magazines do you read and why? Do you think reading them is important in your political career?
22. Do you belong to any political party? If so, name of the party (national or regional)?
23. What governmental or party – local, state or national – had you held before becoming legislator?
24. Are there any political or governmental positions – local, state, national – which you would like to seek?
25. Would you regard party sponsorship essential for electoral success and why?
26. Whether interest group or friends or associates sponsor you as a candidate in political career other than political party?
27. What personal occupational and political qualification, skills or talents are necessary and desirable for a career in politics?
28. What career goals do you have? Are your goals determined by party objectives and programmes or by free-wheeling political style?
29. Do you consider service to party, constituency or district as career goals?

Part (C): INTERACTIONAL PATTERN

30. Whether you had ever interacted with the political elites (both tribal and non-tribal) across the party boundary? What are the occasions regarding which you had interaction across party boundary?
31. Do you feel the necessity of interacting with local level functionary like sarpanch/ chairman/president of Municipal Council, the members and president of District Council and the chairman of various co-operative societies?

32. Have you ever interacted with the high ups such as Chief Minister, Prime Minister and other state and central ministers? What are the occasions on which you interact with them and what experience did you get from such interaction?
33. Whether you had ever interacted with government officials at block, district, state or national level with regard to the problems of the people and what difficulty did you face in such interaction?
34. Do you think that interaction with leaders at the state and national level and with the bureaucrats not only adds power and influence but opens up ways for having better access to influence?
35. How frequently do you visit your constituency and meet people and what are the occasions of such visit?

Part (D): ROLE PERCEPTION AND PERFORMANCE

36. Do you agree with the statement that you as a political actor performs different roles at different situations and your role performance are conditioned by your socio-economic background, political socialization, prevailing situation and expectations of the public?
37. Is it true that the expectation of the people or community from you is very high? What do they expect from you?
38. Do you consider yourself as a representative of the people, the bridge between the decision making body and the public in the sense that the grievances of the people are channelized to the decision making body through you?
39. What role the legislators should play in the legislature?
40. What should be guiding you as legislator/political elite while performing your representative role?
41. Are you aggressive in following the rules and procedures and stick to the norms of the floor debate?
42. Do you feel that you do not like to enter into the complicated process of decision making inside the legislature and often sit in the Assembly without any participation?

43. Do you make any attempt to introduce bills and demands for new approach to various problems so that new policies are framed in finding solutions to various existing problems?
44. Do you take independent judgment and take decision with the idea that common people should be benefited and protect the mass from any kind of victimization?
45. Do you take decision as per demands of the people by considering that your role is to channelize the popular interest?
46. Do you take decision by making compromise between your independent judgment and the demands of the public and always remain vigil?
47. What techniques do you use to satisfy the public?
48. While making decisions which interest you emphasize more – constituency, state or both and why?
49. Do you believe that the protection of state interest only can safeguard the interest of the constituency and vice versa?

Part (E): ISSUE ORIENTATION

50. Do you welcome the introduction of Panchayati Raj and why?
51. Is it better to make voting compulsory as low turnout could create governments that lack people's approval?
52. Do you favour the reservation of seats for women in the State Assembly and Parliament and why?
53. Do you support the provision that bribe-taking MPs and MLAs should not have legal immunity and why?
54. Do we have good governance in Manipur? What positive steps would you suggest for good governance in the state?
55. Do we still need the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) as a means to contain insurgency problem or to maintain law and order in the state and why?
56. Do you agree with the statement that the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) affected Manipur severely and what would you do to minimize the controversies associated with this Act?

57. What positive steps would you suggest or take up to control the problem of HIV/AIDS in the state?
58. Though there had not been a single instance of bitter ethnic or communal dispute in the history of Manipur, in recent times there was the outbreak of bitter ethnic conflict like the Naga-Kuki conflict in 1992, Meeties and Pangals riot in 1993 and Kuki-Paite clash in 1997. What according to you were the root causes of such conflict and clash and what did you do or what would you suggest to solve the inter-ethnic conflict?
59. What are the factors that threaten the ideal of integration in Manipur? What measures will you take up to uphold this ideal?
60. What are the main root causes of insurgency problem in the state? What should you do in order to bring an amicable solution of this problem?
61. Are you fascinated by the modernization process or in favour of preserving the age-old tradition and wanted to preserve it?
62. From 1972 to 2001 there had not been any government in Manipur which completed the tenure of 5 years due to the politics of defection, re-defection, coalition, counter-coalition causing great political instability in the state. What do you think is/are the main reason/s behind this kind of politics?
63. Do you find the influence of religion in Manipur politics and in what ways it exerted its influence?
64. Social development is a process which needs to bring better adjustment between human needs and aspiration on one hand and social policies and programmes on the other. What steps do you think are required for designing social development and what methodology are involved in designing social development?
65. How do you read India's Look East Policy?
66. What role would you play vis-à-vis Look East Policy to provide maximum benefit to the state?
67. Whether you expect to run again for the State Legislature or Parliament?
68. When would you like to take rest from political career or activity?

APPENDIX II

LIST OF POLITICAL ELITE INTERVIEWED

1. A. Aza
2. A.K. Merabai
3. Anei Mangsatabam
4. Aribam Bimola Devi
5. B.D. Behring
6. Bijoy Kojiam
7. Chandam Manihar Singh
8. Chungkhokai Doungel
9. D.D. Thaisii
10. Danny Shaiza
11. Dr. Chaltonlein Amo
12. Dr. Haobam Borobabu Singh
13. Dr. Heikham Borajao
14. Dr. Irengbam Ibohalbi Singh
15. Dr. Khumujam Ratankumar Singh
16. Dr. Kwirakpam Loken Singh
17. Dr. Leishangthem Chandramani Singh
18. Dr. Moirangthem Nara
19. Dr. Nimaichand Luwang
20. Dr. Rebika Naorem
21. Dr. Sapam Budhichandra Singh
22. Dr. Usham Deben Singh
23. Dr. Wakabam Thoiba
24. Elangbam Biramani Singh
25. Elangbam Dwijamani Singh
26. G. Joykumar Sharma
27. Gaikhangam
28. Gangmumei Kabui
29. Govindas Konthoujam
30. Haobam Bhubon Singh

31. Haokholet Kipgen
32. Holkhomang haokip
33. Irengbam Hemochandra
34. Karam Babudhon Singh
35. Khangthuanang Panmei
36. Kim Gangte
37. Konsam Tomba Singh
38. Lairellakpam Lala Singh
39. Laishram Nandakumar Singh
40. Laishram Radhakeshor Singh
41. Laisom Ibomcha
42. Lakpolakpam Jayentakumar Singh
43. Lhingjaneng Gangte
44. Loitongbam Tilotama
45. M. Thorhii
46. Mayengbam Manihar Singh
47. Md. Abdul Salam
48. Md. Allauddin Khan
49. Md. Hellaluddin Khan
50. Meinam Bhorot Singh
51. Meisanam Shakhi Devi
52. Moirangthem Hemanta Singh
53. Moirangthem Nabadweep Singh
54. Moirangthem Okendra Singh
55. Mutum Babita Devi
56. Ningthoukhongjam Tombiraj
57. Nameirakpam Nodiyachand Singh
58. Naorem Khogendra Singh
59. Neinam Nilachandra Singh
60. Ningthoujam Bihari Singh
61. Ningthoujam Biren
62. Ningthoujam Mangi Singh
63. Nongthombam Biren Singh
64. Okram Joy Singh
65. Paonam Achou Singh

66. Pheiroijam Parijat Singh
67. R.K. Dorendra Singh
68. R.K. Theko
69. Radhabinode Koijam
70. Rishang Keishing
71. Sorokhaibam Rajen Singh
72. Saikhom Tikendra Singh
73. Salam Ibohal Singh
74. Salam Joy Singh
75. Sanasam Biramani Singh
76. Sanasam Umanada Singh
77. Sapam Tiken Singh
78. Sapam Kunjakeshor Singh
79. Soram Natum Singh
80. Sosho Lorho
81. Thangjam Nandakishor Singh
82. Thangminlien Kipgen
83. Thangso Baite
84. Thankholun Haokip
85. Thoudam Debendra Singh
86. Thounaojam Chaoba Singh
87. Tongbram Mangibabu Singh
88. Valley Rose Hugyo
89. Wahengbam Angou Singh
90. Wahengbam Joymati Devi
91. Wahengbam Nipamacha Singh
92. Waikhom Jagor Singh
93. Wangkheimajum Brajabidhu Singh
94. Wangkheimayum Kulabidhu Singh
95. Wongaoshang Keishing
96. Yumkham Erabot Singh
97. Y. Shakhitombi Devi
98. Yenkhom Surchandra Singh
99. Yumnam Mani Singh
100. Yunam Yaima Singh

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