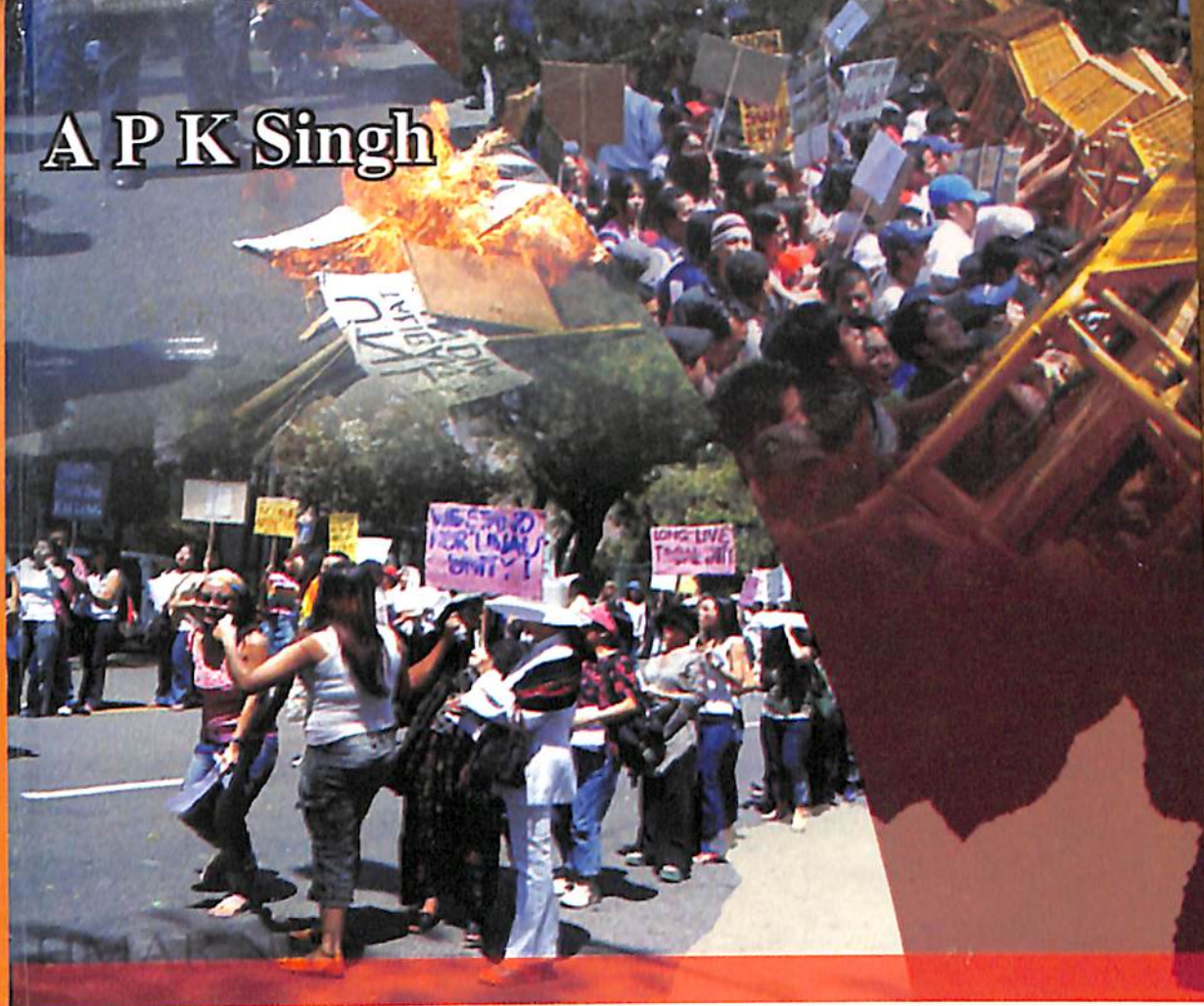


A P K Singh



ELECTION POLITICS IN MANIPUR

A MITTAL PUBLICATION



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A.P.K. SINGH



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'I with admiration dedicate this Book to my younger brother (Late) Shri Arambam Dayananda Singh who left us for heavenly abode in August 1991'.

FOREWORD

I am glad to write these few words about Dr. A.P. Kumar Singh's book on Election Politics in Manipur/1995-2007. It is a revised version of his Ph.D. thesis, which he has updated for purposes of publication.

In Parliamentary democracy, election being a political means helps to mould and promote the public/elector's political opinions and awareness. Election involves people into politics or public affairs through electoral participation, mobilization, provides political linkage, resolves conflicts and also brings about a peaceful transfer of power/authority from the old political masters to the new political masters. The right to govern is achieved/obtained by the political parties contesting elections. A good/free/fair election being a lifebelt of representative democracy serves a significant function for both the people and the political system. Election in India, briefly, appears to be integrative process.

No authentic/empirical study of the elections to the Manipur Legislative Assembly from 1995 to 2007 has been made. Being a resident of Manipur, Dr. Singh has been a close observer of the election politics and processes in the state of Manipur and the writings of this book carry enough evidence of his first hand knowledge of the peculiar electoral politics in the state.

This book has twelve chapters which deal with a various trends/processes of electoral politics, contesting national and regional political parties, their electoral alliances, comparative analysis of election manifestoes, reasons for the success and set backs of the contesting parties, their performances at the polls and prospects in state politics. It also studies/analyses the socio-economic supporting base of the parties, political awareness of the voters, voting behaviour and role of ethnic and regional forces and money power.

For a student of state politics, Dr. Singh's book will be of great help and it is expected that our understanding of election politics will be much wider and area specific than what it has been up to date. Dr. Singh deserves credit.

Dr. Singh's work is a noteworthy and will encourage others to develop the field further. This will be helpful both for academic and practical purposes of Governance.

New Delhi

R.N. PRASAD

*Former Professor of Public Adm. &
Dean, School of Social Sciences,
Mizoram University*

PREFACE

The present study mainly concerns the Assembly elections in Manipur held in February 1995 to February 2007 which analyses the various trends of election politics. The book has been updated by including three Assembly elections recently held in February 2000, February 2002 and February 2007. Since the studies on election politics in Manipur are very rare, the volume deals with a various relevant dimensions of the four Assembly elections. The study contains twelve chapters dealing with a various election—related issues, problems, perspectives and suggestions. Briefly the volume/book is useful to political masters, public administrators, legislators, general readers, students, teachers and researchers.

At the very outset, I would like to express my profound and deep sense of gratitude, sincere and heartfelt respect to my supervisor Prof. R.N. Prasad, Ex-Head, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, Aizawl and Dean, School of Social Sciences for his sincere motivation, encouragement, thought provoking and valuable academic suggestions/guidance/comment and unstinted helps in both in completing the empirical research work and also building up of my consistent academic career without which my Ph.D. research work and its publication in the form of book would have not been possible. He, briefly, deserves my respectfu! regards and appreciations.

I am also thankful to a number of persons belonging to different walks of life who have been greatly help to me in the carry cut of this relevant research work relating to election politics in the state of Manipur.

My younger brothers have also been a great helps in providing a secretarial assistance of many types in getting the work completed in time. They deserved my heartfelt thanks and blessings. I, from the real core of my heart, expressed my gratitude and thanks to my parents, my wife Smt. A. Lalhminghlui, daughters namely, Lucy Zothansangi, Bickyrose, Babyrose, Jennyrose and son

Pradeepkumar for their encouragement, tolerance and assistance in getting my academic pursuits carried on and thereby I have been able to complete the write-ups of the book.

My hearty thanks are due to the Principal and Colleagues (both teaching and nonteaching) of Government Mamit College, Mamit, Mizoram for their academic helps/supports of all sorts.

Shri K.M. Mittal, Mittal Publications deserves my special thanks in bringing out this book to the market within a very short span of time.

A. PRAFULLOKUMAR SINGH

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 2.1 | District-wise Photographed Voters as Reported on 7 February 1995 (Evening) | 44 |
| 2.2 | District-wise Voters, Polled and Percentage-1995 Elections | 49 |
| 2.3 | Region-wise Voters, Polled and Percentage - 1995 Elections | 50 |
| 2.4 | District-wise Break-up of Constituencies | 56 |
| 2.5 | District-wise Break-up of Electors as on 4 January 1995 | 58 |
| 2.6 | District-wise Break-up of Polling Stations in the State | 61 |
| 2.7 | District-wise Break-up of Nominations of Candidates | 76 |
| 2.8 | Nominations of Candidates for Countermanded Lamsang Assembly Constituency | 77 |
| 2.9 | List of Woman Candidates in District-wise | 78 |
| 2.10 | Showing the Largest and Smallest Number of Candidates and Voters | 79 |
| 2.11 | Final Position of Party-wise Break-up of Contesting Candidates in District-wise (Including Countermanded Lamsang Constituency Election) | 80 |
| 6.1 | Khundrakpam Assembly Constituency | 211 |
| 6.2 | Heingang Assembly Constituency | 212 |
| 6.3 | Khurai Assembly Constituency | 212 |
| 6.4 | Kshetrigao Assembly Constituency | 213 |
| 6.5 | Thongju Assembly Constituency | 214 |
| 6.6 | Keirao Assembly Constituency | 215 |
| 6.7 | Andro Assembly Constituency | 216 |
| 6.8 | Lamlai Assembly Constituency | 217 |
| 6.9 | Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency | 217 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 6.10 | Uripok Assembly Constituency | 218 |
| 6.11 | Sagolband Assembly Constituency | 219 |
| 6.12 | Keishamthong Assembly Constituency | 220 |
| 6.13 | Singjamei Assembly Constituency | 221 |
| 6.14 | Yaikul Assembly Constituency | 222 |
| 6.15 | Wangkhei Assembly Constituency | 223 |
| 6.16 | Sekmai (SC) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 224 |
| 6.17 | Lamsang Assembly Constituency (Countermanded) | 224 |
| 6.18 | Konthoujam Assembly Constituency | 225 |
| 6.19 | Patsoi Assembly Constituency | 226 |
| 6.20 | Langthabal Assembly Constituency | 227 |
| 6.21 | Naoriya Pakhanglakpa Assembly Constituency | 228 |
| 6.22 | Wangoi Assembly Constituency | 229 |
| 6.23 | Mayang Imphal Assembly Constituency | 229 |
| 6.24 | Nambol Assembly Constituency | 230 |
| 6.25 | Oinam Assembly Constituency | 231 |
| 6.26 | Bishnupur Assembly Constituency | 232 |
| 6.27 | Moirang Assembly Constituency | 232 |
| 6.28 | Thanga Assembly Constituency | 233 |
| 6.29 | Kumbi Assembly Constituency | 233 |
| 6.30 | Lilong Assembly Constituency | 234 |
| 6.31 | Thoubal Assembly Constituency | 235 |
| 6.32 | Wangkhem Assembly Constituency | 236 |
| 6.33 | Heirok Assembly Constituency | 236 |
| 6.34 | Wangjing Tentha Assembly Constituency | 237 |
| 6.35 | Khangabok Assembly Constituency | 238 |
| 6.36 | Wabagai Assembly Constituency | 238 |
| 6.37 | Kakching Assembly Constituency | 239 |
| 6.38 | Hiyanglam Assembly Constituency | 240 |
| 6.39 | Sugnu Assembly Constituency | 240 |
| 6.40 | Jiribam Assembly Constituency | 241 |
| 6.41 | Chandel (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 241 |
| 6.42 | Tengnoupal (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 242 |
| 6.43 | Phungyar (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 243 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 6.44 | Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 244 |
| 6.45 | Chingai (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 245 |
| 6.46 | Saikul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 245 |
| 6.47 | Karong (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 246 |
| 6.48 | Mao (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 247 |
| 6.49 | Tadubi (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 247 |
| 6.50 | Kangpokpi (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 248 |
| 6.51 | Saitu (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 248 |
| 6.52 | Tamei (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 249 |
| 6.53 | Tamenglong (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 250 |
| 6.54 | Nungba (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 250 |
| 6.55 | Tipaimukh (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 251 |
| 6.56 | Thanlon (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 252 |
| 6.57 | Henglep (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 253 |
| 6.58 | Churachandpur (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 253 |
| 6.59 | Saikot (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 254 |
| 6.60 | Singhat (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 255 |
| 7.1 | Party-wise Position in District-wise Level | 260 |
| 7.2 | Statement of Seats Put up and Won by Political Parties in 1990 Elections | 261 |
| 7.3 | Statement of Seats Put up and Won by Political Parties in 1995 Elections | 262 |
| 7.4 | Party-wise position 1995 Elections | 284 |
| 8.1 | Langthabal Assembly Constituency | 303 |
| 8.2 | Trend of Voting Behaviour in Langthabal Assembly Constituency | 305 |
| 8.3 | Keishamthong Assembly Constituency | 307 |
| 8.4 | Trend of Voting Behaviour in Keishamthong Assembly Constituency | 309 |
| 8.5 | Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 311 |
| 8.6 | Trend of Voting Behaviour in Ukhrul (ST) Reserved Assembly Constituency | 313 |
| 9.1 | The Party-wise break-up of Candidates put up in the First Phase Polls | 345 |
| 9.2 | The Party-wise Break-up of Candidates put up in the Second Phase Polls | 349 |

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 9.3 | Party-wise and Alliance-wise Position | 355 |
| 10.1 | Party-wise Break-up of the Contesting Candidates | 382 |
| 10.2 | Party-wise Position of Eighth Assembly Election Results | 450 |
| 10.3 | Bye-Election to the 18-Konhoujam Assembly Constituency (13 October 2004) | 458 |
| 10.4 | Party Position of Opposition and Ruling in the Eighth Assembly (December 2006) | 458 |
| 11.1 | District-wise Number of Assembly Seats and Voters | 469 |
| 11.2 | Details of Polling Stations in District-wise | 470 |
| 11.3 | Number of Seats put up by Political Parties in Party-wise and District-wise | 534 |
| 11.4 | Number of Seats put up by Political Parties in Phase-wise Elections | 535 |
| 11.5 | Women Candidates in the Election Fray | 536 |
| 11.6 | District-wise Position of the Election Results | 548 |
| 11.7 | Comparative Statement Showing the Seats Secured in 8th and 9th Assembly Elections | 549 |
| 11.8 | Khundrakpam Constituency Bye-election (02.06.2007) | 554 |
| 11.9 | Khangabok Constituency Bye-election (02.06.2007) | 554 |

Figures

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 6.1 | Map Showing Assembly Constituencies of Manipur | 210 |
| 7.1 | Manipur Electoral Behaviour 1995 | 258 |
| 7.2 | Manipur Electoral Behaviour 1995 | 259 |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Foreword</i> | vii |
| <i>Preface</i> | ix |
| <i>List of Tables and Figures</i> | xi |
| 1. Ecological and Political Profile | 1 |
| 2. Preparations for the 1995 Assembly Elections | 39 |
| 3. Analysis of Election Issues, Electoral Strategies and Party-wise Manifestoes | 99 |
| 4. Campaign Methods | 151 |
| 5. Electoral Finance and the Role of Money Power/Muscle Power/Elites | 181 |
| 6. Analysis of Constituency-wise Election Results | 209 |
| 7. Performance of Political Parties at the 1995 Polls | 257 |
| 8. Voting Behaviour/Pattern in the Constituencies of Two Districts—Imphal and Ukhrul | 297 |
| 9. Recent Developments | 317 |
| 10. The Eighth Assembly Elections in Manipur, February 2002 | 371 |
| 11. The Ninth Assembly Elections in Manipur, February 2007 | 465 |
| 12. Concluding Observations/Suggestions | 563 |
| <i>Appendices</i> | 585 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 595 |
| <i>Index</i> | 607 |

ECOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL PROFILE

Geographical

The State of Manipur, with a rugged hilly and mountainous terrain, occupies the twentieth position among the Indian states in respect of area constituting less than one per cent of the total land surface of our country. It is one of the smallest States of the Indian Union situated along the Indo-Myanmar Border. As such the State lies in a strategically important area. The State is divided into two regions—central valley and the surrounding hills.

In historical times, though the territorial boundary of Manipur was periodically fluctuated at various stages extending up to Cachar plains in Assam and the Myanmar depending upon the fortunes of the Princess, but it remained considerably stable and unaltered in the recent past.¹ Presently, as per 2001 Census, Manipur has an area of 22,327 sq.km of which 20,089 sq.km comprise the hills covering around 90 per cent and dominating the regional landscape. The remaining area (2238 sq.km) constituting about one-tenths of the entire areas of the State, forms the Manipur valley. The Barak plains on the western outskirts of the State cover an area of 277 sq.km. As such, the plain area occupies approximately one-tenths of the State's area and the rest nine-tenths by the hills. The climate of Manipur is salubrious. It has a pleasant sub-tropical climate.

The State is bounded on the North by Nagaland State. On the East, it has a long stretch of international boundary (352 km) with the Kabaw Valley of Myanmar, touching a portion of the upper Burma on the East and the Chin Hills of Burma on the South East. In addition, Manipur has 502 km long border with the neighbouring State of Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland. On the South and South West, the State is encircled by the Chin Hills of Burma and Mizoram.

On the west it is adjoined with the Cachar District of Assam. The rivers form the State boundary with Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland as well as Myanmar. Thus, the State of Manipur is sandwiched between Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Myanmar.

According to 2001 census, the State had a total population of 22,93,896 living in 2,391 villages and 33 towns. It comprised 11,61,952 males and 11,31,944 females. The population of the Scheduled Tribes in the State numbered 7,41,141 accounting for 32.31 per cent and the Scheduled Caste population is estimated at 60,037 only constituting around 2.79 per cent to the total population of the State. Other smaller communities like the Muslims, Nepalese, the Bengalis, the Jains, the Sikhs etc. represents a little per cent of the State population. Since the pattern of habitation is largely shaped and influenced by the geography of the State, the valley is thickly populated accommodating about two-thirds of the State's total population with maximum accumulation in Imphal Urban belt. The valley is one of the most thickly populated regions in the country, while the hills areas are sparsely populated accommodating about one-thirds of the people. The hills areas provide an extensive abode for the different colourful tribes consisting as many as 29 recognised Scheduled Tribes and some other unrecognised tribes. The Valley is inhabited by the Meiteis, Muslims, some Kuki-Naga tribes, Sikhs, Jains, etc.

The density of population is very high in the valley districts as against the hills districts. The population density in the Barak plains is moderate. The bulk of the State's population is rural in character with 17,17,928 people (74.89 per cent) living in the villages and the rest 5,75,968 (25.54 per cent) in the urban centres. The State has, however, registered a marked urban growth rate in the recent years. Except Ukhrul and Churachandpur (Hills), all the important towns in the State are located in the Manipur valley with comparatively higher living standards of people than the rest of the State. Today Moreh town in Chandel District along the Indo-Myanmar border has become an important centre for trade and commerce. The percentage of literacy rate in the State was 70.5 with relatively higher proportion in Imphal and other urban areas than the remote and rural areas.² People in the State, now-a-days, pay immense attention to education.

Presently, the State comprised nine Revenue Districts with fluctuating number of Sub-Divisions and Community/Tribal Development Blocks. The nine districts are Imphal West, Imphal

East, Thoubal, Bishnupur (valley), Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur and Chandel (hills) respectively. The Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal and Bishnupur districts are in the heart of the State together forming Manipur Valley. The rest five districts are the hills districts.

To implement the process of autonomy in the hills areas, Autonomous District Councils have been set up. Presently there are six Autonomous Hills Districts in the five hills districts each autonomous district provided with a district council. Only the Manipur North District (Senapati) has been divided into two Autonomous Districts (Sadar Hills and Manipur North). The four remaining districts have each one such Autonomous District. These are Tengnoupal (Chandel), Manipur East (Ukhrul); Manipur West (Tamenglong) and Manipur South (Churachandpur). Recently the Government of Manipur has taken a decision and got prepared to elevate Sadar Hills (in Senapati District) to a full-fledged district despite the strong objections from the Naga communities there against the Government's decision and demand of the Kukis to create it. In the valley, the three-tier Panchayati Raj System has been introduced since 1997 with the holding of elections.

Social Differences

Though the State is very small in size and population, it is composed of different religious and ethnic groups with the Meiteis forming the majority of the total population following different religions and speaking different languages and dialects. Manipur, a polyglot State,³ furnishes a distinctive pattern of polyarchal society in which multi-ethnic people inhabit and believes in various religions. "The Manipuri nation" according to S.N. Parratt, was "a kind of heptarchy".⁴

Under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947, the Foreign Department of the Government of Manipur did not allow any non-Manipuri to enter Manipur. However, after Manipur's merger to India in 1949, the demography of the State become altogether a different picture as the native population had been swamped by the endless influx of immigrants in the North East States causing uncertainty and imbalances in the density of native hill/plain people and high rate of population growth.⁵ Thus the present demographic composition of the State is made up of different communities who have their faiths mainly either in Hinduism or Meiteism, (original religion of the Meiteis) or Christianity or Islam, living side by side culturally and speaking various languages and dialects. Manipur State, however, is free from the strict practice of Hindu Caste System

as prevalent in some parts of India. The Manipuri, rather the Meitei society, is not a caste-ridden society.

However, the present Manipur has been a tri-ethnic State⁶ and its social composition consists of the three ethnic groups—the Meiteis of Manipur Valley and the Nagas and the Kukis of the surrounding hills. The plains-men and hills-men (have) lived in peaceful co-existence for centuries. Thus, they are the indigenous people of the Manipur valley and the hills. Manipur is the home of these three communities—the Meiteis (who are mostly Vaishnavite Hindus) and the various hills tribes (mostly Christians) broadly divided into the Nagas and Kuki-chin tribes. These hill tribes, not only having varied physique and appearance, they also differ culturally, socially and linguistically. In the valley there lived Meiteis and a few hills-men while the hills are inhabited only by hills-men.

Since the population of Manipur is at present a mix of different faiths, besides these three (the Meiteis, the Nagas and Kukis) major social formations, there are other religious minorities and immigrants too. The State, in addition, has a sizeable representation of Manipuri Pangals (Manipuri Muslim). They are valley-dwellers like the Meiteis. The Manipuri Pangals lives mainly in the East, South East, and South of the Manipur Valley concentrating a bulk along the major river banks and in Lilong area in the State. Besides, there is a substantial minority Nepali population mainly found in some hills districts, having its major concentration in Senapati and Chandel Districts. Some Kuki-Naga tribes are also found sparsely dispersed throughout the length and breadth of the valley area. In addition to this, there are immigrants or non-Manipuris known as "Mayangs" mainly centered in Imphal city and suburbs, in other district headquarters and in the important towns of the State as their occupations are primarily concerned with shop-keepers, manual labour, business, trade and commerce, service etc. They belong to different sects such as Sikhs, Jains, Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc.. The "Mayangs" to denote, are the people coming from the west of the country such as the Bengalis, Biharis, Tamilians, Marawaris, Punjabis, Keralites, and Bishnupriyas etc. R. Constantine remarked that "Almost the first word in the local tongue an outsider gets familiar with in Manipur is "Mayang". The non-Manipuris take it to hear ... Originally, the Meiteis, the valley Hindus, used the word to denote the people who belonged to lands of the west, from the Cachar to Tripura-to be precise, a community called Bishnupriya or Bishnupriyas. Gradually, it took in all outsiders. Mayang, however,

in current Manipuri parlance speaks more of the injured and exploited feeling of Manipur...".⁷ The (Manipuri) Bishnupriyas (the lower caste Hindus also known as Mayang kalichas to the Manipuris) mostly live in the Jiribam Sub-Division of Imphal East District. The Barak plain characterises a mixed population of the Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The population of Mayangs in all towns and the State capital is ever increasing. Of the State's total population, the Hindus constitute around 44.46 per cent, the Christians slightly less than one-thirds (32.20 per cent) the Muslims for about 8.33 per cent while the rest belong to other religious persuasions such as Sikhs, Jains, Buddhist etc.

The non-Tribal indigenous Manipuris comprising the Meiteis (General, Rajkumar, Brahmins, OBC), and the Meitei Scheduled Caste along with the Manipuri Pangals predominantly inhabiting the Manipur Valley, together form the backbone of the valley as well as State population. But the Meiteis and the Meitei Scheduled Castes (otherwise called Manipuris) together alone accounted the overall dominant community and also majority of the total population group constituting around two-thirds of the entire State's population. The classified Meitei Scheduled Castes lives in different parts of the valley and the hills, such as the Lois in Sangaitel, Kwatha, Leimaram, Khurkhul, Koutruk, Pheyeng, Andro, Sekmai etc. and the Yaithibis (internally degraded group of sweepers, scavengers) in Thoubal Khunou.

At present, the Meiteis in general, is a conglomeration of three distinct religious denominations—the Meitei Hindus (traditional Gaudiya Vaishnavas religion); the Meitei Sanamahi (the Meitei revivalist group of Sanamahi cult),⁸ and the neo-Meitei Christians. The Meitei Sanamahi (a cult of Meitei forefathers) is a resurgent Pro-revivalist group trying to resurrect their lost religion and culture that had completely been wiped out under the incoming influence of the new faith, (Bengali Vaishnavism associated with the school of Chaitanya, since the 18th century). The revivalist movement denounces the religious faith of Manipuri Vaishnavas, opposes the use of Sanskrit language, the observances of Hindu festivals and the activities of the Brahmins. The movement professes exposition of pure Meitei belief and Meitei way of life to unfold their racial identity. The neo-Meitei Christians are the new converts and are very few in number but likely to increase in bulk in the near future unless the socio-economic imbalances in the Meitei society and the ongoing conflict between the Meitei Hindus and the Meitei

Sanamahi are not properly checked and resolved. The followers of the Christianity are mainly found among the younger generations, in the Scheduled Caste (Lois) Meiteis, and in the socially and economically backward classes of People. M. Kirti observes that "Their decision to accept Christianity was usually a family; community/village conversion. By doing so they thought that they would improve their social position...Baptism among the Scheduled Caste (Lois) went on steadily forward...who seek conversion on grounds of educational and economic facilities... The churches also aim at the penetration among the Meitei Hindus through different medias. It has spread widely among the Meiteis of the valley. Christianity as a people's movement is to make a profound impact on (the tribals) and weaker sections of the society.⁹

The various colourful Scheduled Tribes along with other unspecified tribes like Kharam, Tarao, etc. living in the hills and mountainous sections surrounding the Manipur Valley accounted for nearly one-thirds of the State's total population. There are as many as 12 major tribes all around the hills of Manipur belonging to Naga and Kuki-chin groups. The Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Tangkhuls, Kabuis, Maos and Marams are the most prominent among them. The Government of India, irrespective of Nagas and Kukis has recognised as many as 29 different Scheduled Tribes in the State. They are Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Nagas, Khoirao, Koireng, Kom, Lamgang, Lushei (Mizo), Monsang, Maram, Maring, Mao, Moyon, Paite, Purum, Ralte, Sema, Simte, Sukte (Sahlte), Tangkhul, Thadou, Vaiphei and Zou. Each tribe has its own language or dialect, its own culture and guided by its own customary laws.

The tribes of Manipur, particularly the Nagas are among the earliest inhabitants of the hills of Manipur. They are known by their tribal names and occupy different areas of Manipur hills. The Naga ethnic territory was well maintained till the migration of the Kuki-Chin tribes during the historical period.¹⁰ The Mao, Maram, Rongmeis and Tangkhuls are the most numerous Naga tribes in the State. However, among the Naga-confederation of tribes in the State, the Tangkhuls constitute the most numerous tribes and also the largest sub-group predominantly inhabiting and concentrating the North Eastern Hills of Ukhrul District along the Indo-Myanmar Border.

The Kuki-Chin tribes are broadly divided into the old Kuki clans such as Aimol, Chothe, Chiru, Koireng, Kharam, Kom, Purum, Tarao etc. and the new Kuki clans such as the Hmar, Paite, Simte, and

Zou. According to Col. J. Shakespear, the old Kuki clans migrated to Manipur from the South in the 16th Century and the new Kuki clans in the 18th and 19th centuries A.D. But there is no longer old Kuki in Manipur—Aimol, Chiru, Kom are still oscillating. The Kuki group prefers to be called by their own name rather than Kukis.¹¹ Of the Kuki-Chin tribes, the Thadou constitutes the largest sub-group which along with Paite and Hmar are scattered and concentrated in the Churachandpur District.

The State's northern hills region chiefly the west, north and north-east are mainly occupied by the Naga groups while the Kuki-chin groups mainly inhabit the southern part, where some of the Naga groups are also found interspersed with the dominant Kuki-Chin formation and vice-versa. The Kuki-Chin tribes are scattered all over the hills areas in most places among their traditional and hereditary Naga foes. But the Churachandpur sub-region in the south, south-eastern and south-western hills district of Manipur along the border with Myanmar, Mizoram and Assam are predominantly occupied by the Kuki-Chin tribes. It is the abode of many kuki-Chin sub-groups who are more or less akin to Mizos of Mizoram State. Of the five hills districts, in Churachandpur district alone, the Kukis outnumbered other tribes. Tamenglong and Ukhrul districts are totally Naga dominated, while Chandel and Senapati districts have large Naga population. Further, the Naga tribes constitute the overall majority in the hills districts.

Manipur is technically a multi-lingual State. The people of the State, by and large, speak different Tibeto-Myanmar languages. But the dominant language is Manipuri (Meiteilon) spoken by the Meiteis in the valley. It is the most important language of Manipur valley. It is the only language on the eastern border of India which has its own scripts. The language has a long continuous literary tradition.¹² It is a well-developed literary language recognised by the Sahitya Academy and also included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. The language, in spite of having its own scripts, is written in Bengali script. The old Meitei script is found in ancient and medieval Meitei "Manuscripts". However, due to the tireless persuasion of the "Meitei Revivalist" (and people in general) the Meitei scripts had been approved for use recently by the Government of Manipur and have also been prescribed in the curriculum of the School Text Books.

Manipuri (Meiteilon) has been the common language of the State of Manipur since remote past in the Manipur valley. Almost all the

other communities/ethnic groups in the State including the Scheduled Tribes commonly understood it. Sometimes they speak it as a medium of communication between tribes. It is also the mother language of the Manipuri Pangals in the valley. Though the various hill tribes/Naga-Kuki-Chin tribes in the State, who have adopted Roman script for them, spoken different dialects/languages, but they had generally adopted Manipuri as "Lingua Franca".¹³ Thus the Meitei language have been able to attain the status of being a "Lingua Franca" in the State for the hills tribes as well as for other ethnic communities since very early period. And a number of linguistic minorities in and around Imphal and in the State, besides knowing Meiteilon, speaks their own languages-viz., Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi etc. People in general have a fair knowledge of Hindi and English, mostly being the medium of higher education.

"On the whole, the hill-plain relations had been", according to N. Sanajaoba, "Harmonious, reciprocal and interdependent. The Meitei king had deeper feelings for the hills tribes. Meitei king Pamheiba (also known as Garib Niwaz) maintained the most cordial hill plain relations. Special departments had been opened for the hill people.¹⁴ The Manipur Valley is the ideal example of peaceful co-existence in the long history of the Manipur in spite of the political turmoil in the recent past.¹⁵ It clearly mentioned in the pages of Manipur chronicles that from time immemorial, both the plains-men and hills-men have been under one Administration in Manipur. According to V.V. Rao, "The existence of different races and ethnic groups, each trying to protect its own interest and identity, rendered political development difficult if not impossible. Racial diversity is further accentuated by religious diversity. Although there is religious diversity, there was no religious conflict¹⁶ in the State so far. The problems based on religious or language issues had been almost absent in Manipur till date.

But V.K. Nayar observes that "in any society, there are bound to be differences, friction and agitation due to political, socio-economic, ethnic and religious reasons. It is particularly true of developing countries, which have attained independence from a foreign colonial rule".¹⁷ But, "Religion and culture", according to him, "are the most important instruments for the fusion of races into an integrated community.¹⁸ But the contrast between the Hindu Meiteis and the tribes of the hills was particularly glaring. The boundaries of the State did not enclose a cultural unit. Although the people of Manipur are ethnically similar to each other, however, they exhibit

their distinctive affinities on a tribal and language/dialect basis. "Social problems, peculiar to the State, arise out of different customs, practised by almost all tribes. Meiteis, who are in the majority, follows vaishnavite culture and traditions. Manipuri Muslims and remaining are tribals-both Nagas and Non-Nagas. The Hills tribes have been declared Scheduled Tribes which offers them protection of property and preferential treatment in jobs, competitions and higher education. As a consequence of this, hill tribes have been occupying a large portion of jobs compared to their populations. The resultant Meitei antagonism has strained the social fabrics".¹⁹

Differences also cropped up mainly between the Meiteis and the hills tribes over the introduction of Manipuri as the State language. This has been one of the chief objections of the tribal communities that seem to be against it for all times. The tribals, so far as their English-oriented life-style is concerned, preferred English to Manipuri. They thought English to be the State language. Their contention is that it not only being putting an extra-burden to the tribal students to learn Manipuri other than English and Hindi, it would also make them disadvantageous against their Meitei counterparts as Manipuri is the mother tongue of the Meiteis. However, in spite of their criticism and opposition towards the adoption of Manipuri as a State language, the State Government had approved Manipuri as the official language of the State that precipitated remorse and uneasiness in the minds of the tribal brethrens. Despite its pros and cons, the having of a common language as well as the primacy of a "Lingua Franca" cannot be neglected and underestimated at all.

Social differences in the State of Manipur will remain there so far as demands and movements to preserve identity, space and recognition are becoming its prime concern as well as socio-economic and political dimensions added to it. The deliberate British policy of divide and rule between the plains-men and hills-men to keep the latter away from the mainstream of Manipur's life by developing in them an isolationist psychology from the plains instead of generating amity between the two communities has its lasting imprints till today in the minds of the hills people, begetting highlanders and plains-men and making a major factor of stumbling block in the ways of unifying the two communities. Today, social disparities in the State particularly the Meitei-Tribal divide have become more and more apparent. This has been further strengthened by the better off economic positions and leading socio-

political life of the plains. M. Kirti remarks that "The Manipuri Hindu under the orthodox Maharaja (and his Brahma Sabha) looked down upon the hill people by developing fantastic ideas of cleanliness. It was encouraged by the British Government. They took special care in avoiding the entry into a Meitei house. Taking advantage of Meitei orthodoxy and conservatism, they opened Christian missionaries with full support and created the gap, between the valley and the hills. The primitive tribals resent caste stigma, big-brother complex and label of Adivasi/Junglee. Fear and oppressing have compelled them to embrace Christianity. The overlords/marketing agents victimised them. They resisted exploitation, cruel onslaughts on their land etc. Acceptance of Christianity has help rescue from such abuses and economic enslavement. Christianity endows them with a new sense of identity, well-being and worth. Hindu Vaishnavism has brought changes in the ritual practices of the Meiteis of the valley as different from the Highlanders by the 18th century. In reaction to the same, the tribals embraced Christianity some two centuries later".²⁰

The Meitei-Muslim riots in May 1993 claiming around one hundred lives, the Kuki-Naga conflict in the State and their competition for space and struggle/rivalry for power, dominance gradually emerged and accentuated the ongoing separate movements for recognition of other communities in the State and added more dimension towards the existing social differences. Today, despite the inter-tribal disputes forming a part of their tradition maintaining a constant State of attrition between the various sub-tribes, we experience differences afresh between the Kukis and the Nagas in high magnitude. No doubt, the Kukis and the Nagas have been the traditional foes and enemies in Manipur. And the colonial British Government made use of the traditional Kuki-Naga rivalries for their strategic and imperial interests. The kuki-Naga rivalries of the time and the killing of the two communities each other still alive and has now turned into mass killings, destruction of properties etc. The tension between the two tribes continued to exist still and may not be able to resolve in the near future. The recent Kuki-Paite clash mainly in Churachandpur District also added fuel to the existing differences.

Today, the Nagas in Manipur seemed to be well-prepared to dismember the State of Manipur for United-Naga nationalism under the call of "South Nagaland" or "Greater Nagaland" by taking away the northern parts of the Manipur territory. The mounting differences

and clashes/conflicts between the Manipuri (Tangkhal) Nagas in particular and the Meiteis over the question of territorial integrity of the State of Manipur seem approaching towards unsolvable point, if not impossible. According to R. Gopalakrishnan "Social, Political and economic cleavages accentuated competition, confrontation and conflicts in the society of the State. In spite of the attempts to forge unity, there was a clash of interests, priorities and objections between Meiteis and Naga sub-groups. With so many parameters and dimensions, as present in the State, the solutions to the problems seem to be difficult if not impossible".²¹ With the amalgamation of Manipur into India and the introduction of responsible government, the hills tribes were politically integrated with the State but their emotional integration still remained an open question.

Today, under the capitalist mode of development economy, we notice the emergence of classes of people—the haves and the have-nots within the communities itself. The traditional tribal society has no longer been a closed-knit society today. The same is also true of other communities in the State. The rich person exploits the poor people in a variety of ways and also suppresses them.

"Despite these dimensions of conflicts, there is a distinct cultural-ethnic theme of the conflicts, i.e. conflict and rivalry between the Mongoloids and non-Mongoloids in Manipur. Thus the notion of outsiders (all those who are non-Manipuris) has given a radical and extreme bias to the growing ethnic consciousness in the State. The Meiteis are concentrated in the Imphal Valley and are still the dominant stream in the State".²²

Economic

Manipur, economically, is a very poor State. It is one of the most backward States in the country. The State has agriculture-oriented economy. As such agriculture occupies a dominant place in the economy of the State. Majority of the total population depends upon agriculture and allied activities, being the single largest major source of their livelihood. The agricultural-oriented activities dominate the rural scene while the urban areas have the non-agricultural professions/activities. Apart from the agricultural activities and government employment, the Manipuris are also engaged in various occupations and economic activities such as business, trade and commerce, house-hold industry, construction works, manufacturing industries, labour, transport etc. Though agriculture is the mainstay of the Manipuris engaging a majority of the working population and

though it also directly or indirectly supports a bulk of the State's population, still the State is agriculturally backward. Even after 59 years of independence, agriculture continues to depend on monsoon in the State. It seems that still there has been virtually no successful diversion from agriculture to other activities such as plantation and forestry despite its tremendous scope in the State. Being a State of two regions, settled form of agriculture still continues to concentrate in the valley while the practice of Jhuming/Shifting cultivation by burning the patches of forest is quite prevalent in the hills areas. However, terracing is seen almost absent in the hills unlike in other hills States.

Industrially also, Manipur is very backward, though industry plays a very vital role in the economic upliftment of a nation. It is one of the industrially backward States of the country. In spite of her richly endowed with vast resources such as forest, water, minerals and land, no industrialisation worth the name has taken place in Manipur. Till today, there is no medium and large-scale industry in the State. Moreover, the State's rich natural resources have not yet been systematically surveyed, mapped and exploited on a commercial-scale due to lack of infrastructural facilities like power, skilled man-power, transports and communications, financial institutions etc. The mineral wealth of the State remains entirely unexplored. It seems that industrialisation in Manipur did never receive any priority in any plan though certain impediments such as geographical location isolating the State from the rest of the country by a strong barrier of hills/mountain ranges, poor transport system, limitations in the estimates of raw-material reserves, tendency of adhocism in all the policies and programmes of the successive State governments etc. are working as the major stumbling blocks in the industrial development of the State. Till today, Imphal valley is not connected by Railway. Manipur heavily depends on the mountainous Imphal-Dimapur and Imphal-Silchar route for transporting things it needs from outside the State. There is no alternative to these two routes except air transportation. In fact, industrialisation in Manipur could not pick up the desired speed and progress though a beginning has been made by the State government initiating necessary steps towards industrial development of the State. In terms of infrastructural development is concerned, the State is also lagging far behind the rest of the country. Considering the regional disparities and developmental dichotomy in the State, it requires to take up varying degrees of developmental strategies in the valley and the hills as the former is

more developed while it is inadequate in the latter in terms of road network, medical facilities, educational facilities, agricultural development, power availability etc. However, despite her industrially backwardness, handloom and handicrafts industry, an indigenous traditional industries run on cottage scale, fill the vacuum of the State's industrial picture. It not only forms an important household industry for the womenfolk in the State but also an important economic activity next to agriculture. Weaving has been the main industry in Manipur.

The level of economic development and economic survival of the people expressed and manifested the typed of the government and its efficiency. For economic development and political activities are intricately intertwined together and goes in hand and hand also. However, it has been a harsh reality that during the more than 59 years of our independence, backward economy, ailing and instable economic structure, slow pace of development and frequent political instability have all still been dominating leaving a profound impact in the State. Practically, it seems that nothing was done for improving the economic lot of the people. It is also a reality that the economic development of the State is far lagging behind other States in the country despite claiming of giving huge aids from the Centre. There is hardly any economic growth which can be attributed primarily due to apathy and rampant corruption of the State government. The present State of affairs in Manipur is being characterised by a high degree of social, political and economic instability. It seems that in Manipur, at present, there is no security in all its connotations of life, economic, social and religions. The future of the younger generations especially the educated youths are still in the dark, not finding any suitable employment avenues in the State, thereby swelling an army of unemployed youths. Today, the growing unemployment, most of them educated youths, has been a major problem in the State. The result has been the simmering discontentment with the existing system with a feeling of deprivation and pronounced revivalism. However, apart from others, the principal cause of seething discontentment in Manipur is considered the economic neglect of the State. Moreover another root cause of the prevailing social tension and unrest is indeed considered the rising level of acute unemployment problem. Adding to this injury is the level of corruption in the State Administration which is horrible touching all aspects of our life and also corroding all social fabrics, being another important cause of growing discontentment in Manipur. These emerging unhealthy trends are

causing serious strain in the economy and development efforts of the State.

To overcome these multi-pronged problems, Manipur with a fast increasing population needs to accelerate her economy to such an extent that Manipuris may enjoy the same living standards as envisaged in our plans. Otherwise economic backwardness and disparity may bring more discontentment and political instability. It is also imperative that the economic disparities between the valley and the hills regions should also be removed for a smooth sailing of the State's affairs. An economically stronger Manipur can play a better role in the national politics. Moreover, the various infrastructures required for the development of industries and generation of employment potential in the State has also yet to be built. Generation of more employment avenues and other job opportunities needs to be emphasised to bring down the levels of unemployment and thereby to curb unrest in the State. Increases in the generation of powers are still necessary to facilitate development of industries. In the field of transport and communications, much is desired to be done to meet the growing demands of the State.

Cultural

Manipur, in spite of her hill-girt geographical location and her isolation from the rest of India, had been opened to external influences. It has witnessed immigration of waves of diverse people from the West and East since the very remote past making it a meeting ground of diverse people, cultures, languages, traditions and peculiar ways of life. Aryan cultures penetrated by slow degrees into the Meitei community while the Nagas and Kukis of the hills areas remained comparatively unaffected.²³ Meiteis, Nagas and Kukis constitute the same and single ethnic entity despite the separate development process and pace of growth.²⁴ But the Meiteis were brought into the national mainstream about two centuries ago; they adopted the Hindu religion and Indian cultures.²⁵ As such, the Meiteis of the valley embraced Bengali Hinduism (Vaishnavism) in the post-17th Century period which gave a profound impact to its indigenous/native cultural practices.

The new creed (Hinduism), however, remained comparatively unaffected to the various hills tribes (Nagas and Kukis) in the State. The new faith was confined in the valley areas only. The Hindu religion/culture is not known either to the traditional Kukis or to the Nagas. In contrast, the hills tribes were Christianized during the

British period. Thus Hinduism in Manipur is the post-17th century development while Christianity is of the 20th century. However, despite Manipur's close proximity to Burma, frequent and close contacts with the land, surprisingly, there is almost no trace of Buddhism in Manipur. Buddhism was almost nil in the State. King Khagemba, when he repelled an invasion from the West at the beginning of the 17th century, captured Muslims. The king allowed them to settle in the valley as a separate community in Manipur. And later on, other Muslims who came as peaceful settlers joined them from time to time. Other smaller religions also entered Manipur from time to time.²⁶

With the adoption of Bengali Hinduism and under its due impact, the Meiteis experienced ongoing changes in their cultural outlook, life styles, food habits system etc. The same is also happened and true of the hills tribes who have adopted Christianity. In due course of time, the new faiths entirely transformed the pre-Hindu culture of the Meiteis into a Vaishnavite-oriented culture, while the pre-Christian culture of the hills-men into a Christian-oriented culture, though some relics of the past of both the communities are very much there still today. The spread and consolidation of Hinduism and Christianity in Manipur could not wipe-out completely all the existing indigenous cultural aspects of the Meiteis, the Nagas and the Kukis.

Though Christianity was a late comer to the region and despite its high degree of success among the hills people, it has had practically no effect on the Manipuris of the plains,²⁷ for years together. But recently a new trend among the younger generations of the Meiteis in particular has developed with an inclination to embrace Christianity and to a lesser degree Buddhism. Today, Christianity as a religion has got a place among the Meiteis gradually multiplying the proselytisation/conversion process. In brief, Manipur culture is, therefore, mainly interwoven with that of Sanamahi/Meitei Marup (original religion of the Meiteis); Hinduism; Christianity; and Muslims (along with some other small sects such as Jains, Sikhs of the non-Manipuri outsiders known as 'Mayang'). However, despite its various cultural similarities, adoptions and influences from others, according to M. Kirti, "The culture of Manipur is, for the most part, the culture of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas of Manipur...The whole social, political and spiritual attitudes are governed by these things²⁸ particularly in the valley. On the other side he also observes that "Though Manipur religiously belonged to Bengal but linguistically and culturally it is independent".²⁹ But today,

the Meiteis in general are no longer in the grip of orthodox vaishnavism. With the resurgence of Meitei revivalist movement of Sanamahi cult, the revivalist thinking is threatening and shaking-off the bond of Hindu religion. Even inter-marriages with other religions, caste and tribes are no longer a lasting barrier now.

Manipur is rich in her cultural heritage. The State develops and occupies one of the distinct cultures in India. Contemporary Manipuri culture occupies an outstanding place in the composite culture of India, has also immensely contributed a lot to it and she is famous throughout the world. "Manipur today is proud of her culture and heritage marked by close interaction between the Meiteis and hills tribes in the background of fascinating bounties of nature."³⁰

Manipur is famous and known to the world for her colourful dance, music, polo, handloom and handicrafts products. Polo, a worldwide game today, is identified as originated from Manipur. So, Manipur is the mother of polo.³¹ In dance Manipur remains the premier State in India as the captivating dance style of the Meiteis and hills tribes are unique treasures of mankind.³² Manipur dance is recognised all over the world. Different forms of dances such as Rasa Dance, Khamba Thoibi Dance, etc. are prevalent popularly among the Meiteis. A number of folk dances have also developed among the Kuki-Naga tribes such as Bamboo dance of the Mizo-Kuki-Thadou, Khoibu War Dance; the Mao Naga Dance, the Tangkhul Hunting Dance, etc. The tribal dances are not only numerous but they are reflections of cultural distinctiveness of various groups. Every dance has its picturesque customs and is accompanied by a gala feast. The songs that go with the dances constitute a part of the rich oral traditions of the various tribes but with the inroads of modernization there has been a corresponding decline in their spontaneity.³³ "Of these dances" according to Dev and Lahiri "Ras has come to acquire a distinctive style of its own and due to Royal Patronage in the two centuries preceding the merger of Manipur. This form of classical dance style had given Manipur a pride of place in the domain of Indian classical dances. Today this dance form remains the consolation of the Vaishnavites in Manipur".³⁴

Festivals are almost frequent in this State throughout the year. In fact, Manipur is a land of festivals and hardly a month goes by without festivals. A number of annual great festivals of different origins are celebrated such as Lai Haraoba (Community Dance); Thabal Chongba (dance in moonlight); Cheiraoba (Closing and opening day

of the Manipuri year); Ningol Chakkouba (Parents and brothers bless their married daughters/sisters by feeding them as best as they can); Heikru Hidongba (all indigenous); Ratha Yatra (on the model of Puri); Durga Puja (on the model of Bengal); Deepavali; Holi, Mahashivaratri; Buddha Purnima; Maha Navami; Krishna Jarma; Radha Jarma, etc. (Vaishnava); Christmas, New Year Day, Good Friday etc. (Christianity/of western) and Muharram, Milad-Un-Nabi, Idul Fiter/Zuha etc. (Muslims) and among the hills tribes, the indigenous festivals like Kut of the Mizo-Kuki-Chin origin, Gan-Ngai of the Kabui Nagas, Lui Ngai Ni of the Tangkhul Nagas etc. are great. Lai Haraoba mirrors and reflects the pre-vaishnavite culture of Manipur particularly of the Meiteis reflecting the old culture of Moirang. Moirang is considered as the centre of Meitei culture. Every year, in the month of summer, the traditional Lai Haraoba festival is performed in honour of "Thangjing God" the presiding pre-Hindu deity. The cults and festivals of the land are quite special to the outsiders.

The Manipuris, especially the Meiteis are exceptionally talented in games and sports also. The Meiteis are also talented in martial arts such as wrestling, Thang-Ta; Thang-Yanaba; Ta-Khousaba. The indigenous games like Khong-kangjei; Mukna; Yubi Lakpi; archery etc. were interesting and popular games and sports in the valley for the Meiteis. Today, Manipur has earned a name in games and sports like Hockey, Weight Lifting, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastic etc. In the 5th National Games held in 1999, Manipur became the overall team champion. In the field of theatre and Jatra, Manipur is also not lagging far behind other States. The State has earned reputations and a pride of place in contemporary theatre, drama, one-Act play, Sumang Leela (open air theatre); Ipom (comedy); Folk Songs etc. Sumang Leela is appreciated throughout India/by the foreigners too.

Regarding food habits, fish holds a pride of place in the food items of the plainsmen while for the hillsmen it is meat. Iromba mainly prepared from Laphu (inner bark of the plantain tree); yongchak or bamboo shoot mixed up with flatten fish, potato, pea seeds, chilly and salt, is the favourite item of dish for the Manipuri people.

Daily worshipping of Sri Govindaji in the Royal Palace and Radha Krishna in the village temples by the Meitei Brahmins; Sanamahi, Pakhangba, Panthoibi, Umang Lais (forest deities) etc. by the Meiteis; prayer services in the Churches by the Christians, in the Mosque by the Muslims, etc. are the common cultural traits of the State. Visits to the Shrines of traditional/primitive deities by

the Meiteis, Vaishnava's pilgrimage to religious places, visits of Muslims to Mecca are all part and parcel of their cultural life. These various rites have been characterized by daily activities due to flourishing of many sects in the State. Literary works and other writings of various personalities, celebrities and that of dancers and musicians, etc. added a new impetus to the existing culture of the land.

One of the remarkable example of cultural unity that manifest hill-plain good relations in Manipur since the time of historical kings is that of one-day festival "Mera Houchongba". During the ruling kings in Manipur, this festival was held every year in the month of Mera (October) in the palace of the Meitei Kings. Before 1891, this festival was celebrated in the old Palace "Kangla". This festival is performed by the Hills-men before the presence of the Meitei Kings. Captain E.W. Dun, observes that "This festival in October lasts for only one day, it is a gathering of the hill tribes under the Manipur government; and is a curious sight on account of the great number of different tribes assembled, with their curious dress and weapons differing from each other in feature and language, but all unanimous in one particularly to get drunk as specially, and remain so as long as possible. The hill men indulge in feasts of strength before the Raja, such as carrying heavy weights etc. They also indulge in war dance and sham fights".³⁵

But, today, it is an obvious fact that western culture has a tremendous impact on the present generations of the Manipur society in both the valley and the hills. Though change is a natural phenomenon, the flourishing of western culture in the younger generations of the society is quite apparent. Under the process of modernization, the Manipuri society now seems to be at the mercy of the incoming western influence and also seem approaching towards a transitional period. No doubt, western culture is a well-developed and advanced one. However most of the younger generations have been imitating western life-styles blindly. This growing tendency of imitating life styles of civilised people at random affects one's culture and society under its impact.

Political Organisation of the State

"The tri-ethnic nation State of Manipur passed through the pre-history, proto-history and historical stages that spread over the ancient, the medieval, and the modern periods. It had golden periods as well as upheavals and devastations too in equal measures".³⁶ But the recorded history of Manipur begins with the accession of the

legendary God-King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (the first known historical ruling King of Manipur) in the year 33 A.D. of the First Century. Since then Manipur had been an independent and powerful political entity, ruled by a line of 74 successive Kings one after another till the State was merged with the Union of India in October 1949 despite the brief period of Burmese control in the early part of the 19th century as well as the British paramountcy in Manipur from the latter part of the 19th century till the middle of the 20th century. All the rulers including the two Maharajas appointed by the British during their Paramountcy were the descendants of the King Pakhangba.³⁷

The defeat in the historic Anglo-Manipuri War which is known as the "Last War of Independence" for the Meiteis fought in the year 1891 brought Manipur completely under the British subjugation till the withdrawal of the British from the Indian sub-continent in August 1947. Manipur, after the events in 1891, became a dependency of the British with complete subordination of the State to the Government of India, and made Manipur a princely State ruled by appointed native kings of their choice from amongst the members of the royal family living under the paramountcy of the British crown. The State Administration was taken over by the British till the lapse of their Paramountcy in India by appointing two of its Officers—the Political Agent (who was the Superintendent of the State) and the President of the State Durbar to control and supervise the administration of Manipur, but the paramount power (British Government) had generously given to the State almost complete freedom in respect of the internal management of the administration to the extent that British imperial interest did not suffer. During the long spell of their presence in Manipur (1891-1947) the State was completely, in all respects, under the exploitative control of the British Administration. The President of the State Durbar and the Political Agent always interfered into the internal affairs of Manipur, and controlling important departments by the British. The old institutions and titles were replaced by English models, including the abolition of slavery and forced labour. The king was kept in charge of the States' administration and became the ruler of Manipur. This system continued till 1948 when the King appointed a Chief Minister to administer the State.

During the short period (1947-1949), in between the British departure of India and the merger of Manipur with India, the people of Manipur had their own democratic constitution known as the

"Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947" which came into force in 1948. Under the constitution, elections were held in March 1948 and Manipur became the first native State in India to introduce Assembly elections on Adult Franchise.³⁸ Under the constitution, the first delimitation in Manipur was also carried out in 1948 to secure proper representation of the Meiteis, the tribals, and the Muslims, dividing the entire Manipur into 30 General, 18 Tribals and 3 Muslims constituencies. The whole State was considered as one constituency to secure representation of special interests like Commerce (one) and Education (one). Thus the constituencies were classified into three—General, Tribal, and Communal. There was no woman constituency returning a woman candidate. After the election, the Legislative Assembly was constituted and the elected Legislative Assembly met thereafter. But within a short period, things took a different turn in Manipur. After the constitution was brought into force, it remained in operation till 15 of October 1949 and thereafter the peoples' long-desired democratic constitution in the State was eclipsed forever by the strong integration forces in India resulting in the dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly, Interim Council of Ministers and merger of the State with the Dominion of India. Thus, the State, after the lapse of British paramountcy in India, functioned for a brief period as an independent kingdom with the Maharaja (Bodhachandra Singh) as the ruler (Head of the State) along with his Council of Ministers. The Manipur State Constitution Act would have been democratic had the leader having the largest majority been appointed the Chief Minister. But the Chief Minister was appointed by the Maharaja (his own brother) in consultation with the elected ministers of the Council although they were elected by the Assembly. It was clear that 90 per cent of full-fledged democracy was introduced on a somewhat imperial model.

After the lapse of the Paramountcy of the British Crown over Indian Sub-continent and the transfer of power on 15 August 1947, Manipur also thereafter as other native States during British India, became sovereign which were, according to the British Prime Minister Attlee, completely independent and were free to accede either of the two dominions—India or Pakistan—as they choose or remain free and independent. However, after the end of the British Paramountcy, the whole future of Indian States was in the melting pot. Options were opened to the native States either to join India or Pakistan. If not to join either of the two dominions, the State was to promote the growth of democratic institutions within the State according to the wishes of the people. Manipur being a native State

faced this choice. Beyond any doubt, on the other hand, like other Indian States, it was inconceivable for Manipur also to remain separate as an independent entity. The only alternative option available to Manipur was to join and become an integral part of either of the newly emerged two dominions. In this regard, the wishes of the people of Manipur, geographical contiguity, political and other considerations had much to do a great influence in deciding the issue of accession and choice. Despite the pros and cons of the accession, Manipur held no alternative options other than conceding to the forces and appeals of integration of Indian States to the Union of India. On the other hand, India also needed Manipur for her strategical reasons as the State located in a sensitive north-east bordering with Myanmar. Therefore, the independent entity of Manipur was out of question then. Soon the situation took a different turn and the options were closed in favour of the integration when the Maharaja of Manipur signed the merger Agreement.

Thus this tiny erstwhile princely State under geo-political compulsions arising from the British departure and lapse of their paramountcy led the then Maharaja of Manipur Boddhachandra Singh, who could not ultimately sail against the tide, entered into a Standstill Agreement with the Government of India on 2 July 1947. By 1947, Manipur thus became a part of the Indian Union. The Maharaja, however, did not sign the Instrument of Accession for more than two years. Ultimately, after three days of hard negotiations at Shillong and despite his (Maharaja) convincing arguments against the forces to take the will of the people of Manipur into consideration, under the undue pressure and force of the then Home Minister, Sardar Patel and Sri Prakash, the then Governor of Assam; the then Maharaja of Manipur His Highness Boddhachandra Singh signed the Instrument of Accession (Manipur Merger Agreement) on 21 September 1949 in Shillong with the Government of India, (though the anti-integration block had strongly agitated against the liquidation of the gaddi threatening that any decision in favour of the removal of the Maharaja would create chaos in the State). Any idea of possible integration of the State of Manipur with India was then ruled out. The Maharaja was given an annual pension (Privy Purse) of 3 lakhs of rupees from noon of 15 October 1949 (for his lifetime). The State of Manipur, henceforth, was acceded to the same year by the Maharaja and merged with the Indian Dominion and became an integral part of the Union of India. With this the Administration of Manipur was taken over by the Government of India. Since then Manipur have been the scene of eco-cultural transformation bringing

the State to the threshold of overall development within the framework of the Constitution of India. With the amalgamation of Manipur with the Union of India, the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 became inoperative, the erstwhile Manipur State Legislative Assembly was dissolved, the (Interim) Council of Ministers was dismissed and the Chief Court was abolished by an order of the Government of India, though there were strong protest against the abolition of the Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers and people demanded its restoration.

Manipur, after its amalgamation into the Dominion of India, was made a part 'C' State administered by the President of India through a Chief Commissioner. Under the administration and control of the Chief Commissioner, all the Central acts had been extended in Manipur. Part 'C' States being a centrally administered area; the administration of Manipur was thus vested directly in the hands of the central Government. The Chief Commissioner was assisted by a nominated Advisory Council in the discharge of his functions; consisting of such number of members as the President may think fit for the purpose. On 15 October 1949, a Chief Commissioner was appointed (Major General Rawal Amar Singh being the first Chief Commissioner of Manipur) as Administrator by the Government of India. On 22 January 1950 Manipur was declared a Chief Commissioners' Province. An Advisory Council was constituted by the Centre consisting of the Chief Commissioner and fourteen others nominated by the central Government in consultation with the Chief Commissioner. On 9 October 1950, the nominated Advisory Council was formally inaugurated. Since the council was an Advisory Body, its advice was not binding on the Chief Commissioner. Thus, in 1950-51 an Advisory form of government was introduced. In 1953 a nominated Council of Advisors consisting of five members—three from the valley and two from the Hills was constituted.

But the Socialist Party in alliance with some local parties organised an agitation for installation of Assembly against this Advisory Government, in 1954. A group of youths also formed the "Revolutionary Nationalist Party" and held meeting at Mapan Kangjeibung on 19 April 1953. They demanded the immediate announcement of the introduction of a responsible government in Manipur within 15 days opposing the Advisory Council System. It also insisted upon the appointment of Manipuri as Officer instead of Mayangs (non-Manipuris) and also to reduce the price of rice etc. And it was also resolved as being ready for agitation to become

Manipur an independent State under the United Nations Trusteeship, in case their demands were not conceded to. But the movement discontinued after the arrest of its leaders. After some time they formed a political party "Manipur Nationalist Union".

After the reorganisation of States in India in 1956 following the recommendation of the SRC's report, Part 'C' States ceased to exist and in their place, Territorial Councils³⁹ were established under the Territorial Council Act, 1956. Manipur was also brought under the Territorial Council Act, 1956. A Territorial Council was established in Manipur in 1957 which consisted of 30 elected and 2 nominated members.⁴⁰ It came into existence on 16 August 1957 and the Manipur Territorial Council was inaugurated on 2 September 1957. Thus the Council replaced the Advisory Rule in Manipur.

The whole of Manipur was agitated from time to time for the restoration of an Assembly. The Communist Party and the Socialist Party started an agitation demanding the establishment of a legislative Assembly in Manipur. The belief in the formation of a separate State had been nicely given expression to by the Pan Manipur Youth League, Meitei State Committee, United National Liberation Front, Revolutionary Government of Manipur, Kanglei League and political organisations of the hills' people.⁴¹ To satisfy the aspirations of the people of Manipur under the Government of Union Territories Act of 1963, Manipur was elevated to the status of Union Territory in June 1963. The existing Territorial Council established under the Territorial Council Act, 1956 was converted into a Territorial Legislative Assembly with a Council of Ministers to assist the Lt. Governor who was the repository of all powers, which began to function from 23 July 1963. The Assembly consisted of 30 elected and 2 nominated members (till March 1969) and later on 3 nominated members. The Chairman of the Territorial Council was appointed as the Chief Minister of the Union Territory. The tenure of the Assembly was five years. The Assembly, after functioning for some months, had to be dissolved on 16 October 1969 on account of the unstable party position and President's Rule was imposed.

The people of Manipur were not satisfied with these political developments. They demanded full-fledged Statehood for Manipur. In the following years, the voice of the people for a full-fledged State increased day by day on the pretext that people could have power to legislate themselves, manage financial matters and political powers at their own. People also started conceiving that only when Manipur becomes a full-fledged constituent part of India, these

problems could be solved. This belief increased gradually. All the then political parties in Manipur also started favouring the advantages of being a full-fledged State in Manipur. And from this, movement for Statehood proceeded en-masse. All the political parties joined together and carried on violent agitation. At the same time, there was agitation for Statehood movement in the neighbouring Meghalaya and Tripura. Soon, in the latter part of 1971, an abrupt change took place in the political climate of Manipur. In response to a request made by the Meghalaya Assembly on 30 September 1970 to the Union Government to convert the Autonomous State of Meghalaya within Assam into a full-fledged State, the Parliament passed the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 during the Winter Session of 1971 which came into force in January 1972. With the passing of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 by the Parliament, as visualised under this Act, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura emerged as three separate States and conferred Union Territory status to Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, Manipur became full-fledged State on 21 January 1972 (being the 21st State within the Indian Union). The same day (on 21 January 1972) the State of Manipur with an unicameral legislature was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi in a public meeting at Konung Lampak (Palace Ground), Imphal in fulfillment of the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971 as well as of the peoples aspirations in the State. The strength of the Legislative Assembly was fixed at 60 members directly elected by the people along with a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister. There is no provision for nominated members. For the electoral purpose, the whole of Manipur was divided into 60 single-member constituencies—40 in the valley including the one in the Barak Basin in Jiri and 20 in the hills. Nineteen constituencies in the Hills are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and one Assembly segment (Sekmai) in the valley is reserved for Scheduled Caste. The remaining 40 constituencies—39 in the valley and one (Kangpokpi) in the Hills—are the unreserved general constituencies. Thus after Statehood, the previous 30 member Territorial Assembly Constituency was transformed into 60 member State Legislative Assembly. With the attainment of Statehood, Manipur has contributed its quota of two seats in the Lok Sabha and one seat in the Rajya Sabha. Of the two Lok Sabha seats, one is reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency (Hills Area).

With the conferment of Statehood the long demand for a full-

fledged State was eventually conceded in order to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Manipur. Since Manipur became an integral part of the Dominion of India on 15 October 1949, it took over two decades to become a full-fledged constituent State of the Indian Union. Since then, there has been no change in the constitutional position of Manipur. In joining the Indian mainstream, Manipur is marching well ahead with other States and people of India, in terms of population and size of the State. Thus, from Advisory Council to Territorial Council, from Territorial Council to Territorial Legislative Assembly and then to a full-fledged Statehood in 1972 finally conferred on by the Government of India.

Before 1947, Manipur had no legislature—neither Lower House nor Upper House. Again before 1947, there were no elections in Manipur.⁴² Because, Manipur, since Pakhangba ascended the throne in 33 AD, had been a kingdom ruled by successive kings till the State merged into the Dominion of India. It was during the Interim Period of India's Independence/British departure and Integration of Manipur into the Dominion of India that the First General Elections was held in March 1948 under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 to elect 53 members to the State Legislative Assembly. This was the first election so far held in the political history of Manipur.⁴³ In the election, no political party secured an absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly. People did not vote the Congress Party into power as well as to none of the parties. But the Praja Shanti (rival party of Congress) with the support of Hills MLAs formed the government. The Government formed under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 was a coalition government. Thus, it marked/set on the beginning of coalition Government in the future politics in Manipur. After that elections in 1948, there was no State elections in Manipur till the year 1957 except the General Elections (Lok Sabha) and Rajya Sabha elections held in India. It was from 1957 onwards that periodic elections have been held regularly till today—twice during the Territorial Council period (1957-1963); once during the time of Union Territory (1963-1972); and nine times (1972-2007) after Manipur have attained full-fledged State of the Indian Union.

In the post-merger period, elections in Manipur can be categorised mainly into two—Parliamentary Elections and State (Assembly) Elections. So far as parliamentary constituency is concerned, during the period 1952-2004 Manipur was allotted two seats in the Lok Sabha to represent two distinct regions in the State—the Valley and the Hills—and one seat for the Rajya Sabha.

The whole of Manipur was divided into two Parliamentary Constituencies for the Lok Sabha elections—the Outer and Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituencies whose boundaries were changed from time to time. Though there were changes in the boundaries of the Parliamentary constituencies, there was no change in the number of seats allotted in Lok Sabha for Manipur. One seat is for the Meiteis and others (General) lying in the Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency (Valley) and the other is for the Hills Tribes (Reserved) in the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency. In the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Lok Sabha Constituency, eight General constituencies of the valley are also included. The eight constituencies are Heirok, Wangjing Tentha, Khangabok, Wabagai, Kakching, Hiyanglam, Sugnu and Jiribam.

In the State, General Elections (including the mid-term polls) to the Lok Sabha to elect its 2 members have been regularly held 14 times so far since the First General Elections held in 1952 followed by respectively in 1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004. There was an Electoral College consisting of 30 members for the election of a member to Rajya Sabha. (*Under the part 'C' States Act, Manipur was divided into 30 Electoral College constituencies—20 in the valley and 10 in the hills areas—constituted for the purpose of election of a member to the Rajya Sabha*). The electorates of Manipur also went to polls in 1952 to elect 30 members of the Electoral College constituted for the election of a member to Rajya Sabha. The Electoral College was abolished after the election to the Rajya Sabha was over. The election in 1952 heralded the beginning of democratic participation of the Manipuris in the political process of India in the post-merger era. Since then there have been regular and periodic elections in the State on party basis. When the Advisory Council was upgraded to the Territorial Council in 1957, it had 30 seats and the number of seats remained unaltered during the Union Territory period also. Since then, all the 30 members of the Council, the legislative Assembly of the Union Territory and 60 members after Manipur have attained Statehood, constituted the Electoral College for the election of the lone member to the Rajya Sabha.

As for the State elections are concerned, when Manipur merged with the Indian Union, it became a part 'C' State with no legislature. Elections started with the introduction of Territorial Council system in 1957. Under the provisions of the Territorial Council Act, 1956, Manipur had 30 elected seats in the Council. The State was divided into 30 territorial constituencies of which 20 are in the valley and

10 in the hills areas. There was no reservation of seats. After the passing of the Territorial Council Act, 1956, the first election to the Territorial Council took place in 1957 to elect its 30 members. Four political parties such as the Congress, Socialist, CPI and the Praja Socialist Party including a large number of Independents contested for the 30 seats of the council. In the election, no party was able to secure an absolute majority in the Council but the Congress party won the largest number of 12 seats in a House of 30 members. The election of the Chairman of the Council was held on 5 September 1957. H. Dwijamani Deva Sharma and M. Koireng Singh were the two contestants for the post of Chairmanship. In the election of the Chairman of the Council, H. Dwijamani Deva sharma (Independent) was elected Chairman. Two lady members R.K. Mukhara Devi and Ngalkhokim were nominated to the Council who later joined the Congress. But following the defection, he (Dwijamani) did not command a majority support in the Council and Sibor Lorho (Congress) replaced Sharma as the second Chairman of the council.

For the second time, the Territorial Council election was held in 1962 in which four political parties (Congress, Socialist, CPI and Praja Socialist Party) and Independents were in the election fray for the 30 seats of the Council. This time also, the number of constituencies of the Council in both the valley and hills remained unaltered and no seat was also reserved either for the Scheduled Tribes or the Scheduled Caste. In this election too, all the political parties failed to obtain an absolute majority. But the performance of the Congress was the best among the contesting parties as the party could return 15 out of 30 seats by increasing 3 more seats from the previous 12 secured seats in 1957. M. Koireng Singh (Congress) was elected Chairman of the Council. Though there was no reservation of seats for the Scheduled Tribes in the Hills during the Territorial Council period, elections were fought on the tribal lines in the hills areas and the same phenomena was noticed in the valley too.

When the demand for more autonomy in Manipur gave way to the passing of the Government of Union Territories Bill, 1963 by the Indian Parliament, Manipur was brought under Union Territory from 1963 and converted into the Union Territory status. When the Union Territories Act of 1963 came into force, under its provisions, the existing Territorial Council was elevated into a Territorial Legislative Assembly. Prior to 1963 or in between 1949-1963, Manipur had no Legislative Assembly. Under the Union Territories Act, 1963 also,

the number of constituencies was the same as under the Territorial Council Act, 1956 but there was provision for nomination of not more than 3 members. (At first 2 members were nominated. Later, from 1969 the number of nominated members increased upto three members). Thus, since the Territorial Council in 1957 to the Union Territory period, the number of territorial constituencies/elected members had been fixed at 30 elected seats. As were in the Territorial Council period, out of the 30 elected seats, 20 were in the valley and 10 in the hills. But the 9 constituencies in the hills, except the Jiribam Assembly Segment were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. Thus, reservation of seats for the Scheduled Tribes in the Hills began with the existence of Union Territory in Manipur. A popular Government, being the first Popular Ministry in Manipur, was installed on 1 July 1963, with M. Koireng Singh (Congress and the then Chairman of the Territorial Council) as the first Chief Minister. The Assembly began to function from 23 July 1963. The legislature came into being on 3 August 1963 and became the first Legislature in Manipur after the State merged into the Indian Union. His government which stayed in power till 12 January 1967 has been the first ever popular ministry in Manipur. Thus, the introduction of the first popular ministry in Manipur began when Manipur became a Union Territory in June 1963. Upto this period there was political stability in Manipur as there was no real power struggle as well as the politicians had little experience of the lucrative ministerial posts. Thus, the life of the first ministry of M. Koireng completed with stability. Since the life of the first Legislative Assembly was due to expire in the early part of 1967, a fresh election was ordered. During the period of Union Territory, only one election was held to the Legislative Assembly.

The first election to the Legislative Assembly was held in 1967 and Manipur went to polls on 19 and 20 February 1967 to elect 30 members of the Legislative Assembly. Since the election was the first Assembly Election in Manipur, people were more enthusiastic than the previous elections. The political parties concentrated more on the Assembly elections than the Lok Sabha elections and they were trying to form unilateral government of their own. Altogether five political parties—Congress, Sanghata/Samyukta Socialist Party, Praja Socialist Party, CPI, CPI (M), along with a host of Independents contested for the 30 seats. In this election also the Congress Party still continued to hold on a dominant position in the State politics by securing a working majority of 16 seats in the 30 members Assembly. However, the strength of the Congress was

subsequently increased by 9 members by the admission of the 2 nominated members and 7 Independents to its fold. The Congress government was thus formed. For the second time, M. Koireng Singh was sworn-in as Chief Minister on 20 March 1967. Following the 1967 elections, Manipur, in her political scene, experienced its coalition politics and large-scale repeated defections and redefections over the issue of formation, re-formation and deformation of governments in the name of serving the people and the State. The term heralded the beginning of defections, redefections and coalition government in Manipur which produced three Chief Ministers. And it was also in this term that Manipur experienced prolonged period of President's Rule for the first time which lasted till March 1972. Soon, the Koireng-led second ministry, after hardly seven months in power, was plagued by political instability due to intra-party leadership crisis and power struggle. His ministry fell and he resigned on 4 October 1967 as his government was voted out of power affected by mass scale defection from the Congress party following the growing dissatisfaction among the Congress members of the Assembly over the distribution of portfolios and positions in the ministry. Under the leadership of Kh. Chaoba Singh (Congress) the Deputy Speaker, 8 members defected from the Congress. The defectors, by forming a new party (Manipur Peoples Party) under the leadership of Salam Tombi Singh (the then Speaker of the Assembly) joined hands with some opposition members and forged an alliance known as United Legislature Front having its majority in the House. The Front offered the post of Chief Minister to Longjam Thambou Singh on 13 October 1967. A short-lived ministry of the United Front, under the leadership of Longjam Thambou Singh (as Chief Minister) was thus formed on 13 October 1967. His ministry lasted less than a fortnight due to redefection which remained in power till 25 October 1967. Very soon the Congress could regain one member that caused political instability in Manipur. The life of 12-days old Thambou Ministry came to an end. Disgusted with this horse-trading among the elected representatives of the people and difficult to experiment further with the formation of a new government in the State, on the 13th day of the Thambou Ministry, for the first time, the Central Government imposed the President's Rule in Manipur from 25 October 1967 which continued till 19 February 1968. The Assembly was kept on suspended animation. In the meantime further defection took place. Those who defected from the Congress to the United Legislative Party defected from the Front and rejoined the Congress. Even the

Chief Minister L. Thambou Singh himself also redefected and joined the Congress. After hardly four months, the Congress could manage redefection of other 5 more members and when Congress strength increased to a total of 21 members in a House of 30, the Congress Ministry at the Centre suspended President's Rule in Manipur. M. Koirang Singh again formed his ministry on 19 February 1968, being his last ministry. His ministry, however, could not survive long due to defection of 6 members from the Congress forming into 17-member United Front. On 24 September 1969, before the completion of two years, he resigned as his ministry was defeated following the Opposition attack. The United Legislature Front (Opposition Group) made unsuccessful attempts to form the government. The Front could not form the government. However the Union Government after observing the prevalent political situation in the Union Territory of Manipur, where there was abhorrent practice of large scale horse-trading among the elected representatives of the people, producing chronic and endemic political instability, came to the conclusion of not warranting the formation of further government by the Opposition party. Thus, President's Rule was imposed on 16 October 1969 in Manipur. Though the Assembly was suspended in the beginning, it was later on dissolved and continued till the March 1972 Assembly Elections was held.

As there was a strong demand for full-fledged Statehood, fresh elections to the Assembly did not take place till Manipur attained her Statehood in 1972. When Manipur became a full-fledged State in 1972, the Territorial Legislative Assembly was transformed into the State Legislative Assembly. The strength of the Assembly was increased to 60 seats, dividing the entire State into 60 single-member territorial constituencies. Since then reservation of seats was limited to the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste. Again since 1971, delimitation of constituencies in Manipur has not yet been done till date, except minor changes brought about in the population and boundaries of some constituencies. Sometimes one constituency was shifted from one Parliamentary Constituency to another. Majority of the Assembly constituencies in Manipur Valley and in the Hills areas are located in the rural areas. The numbers of Assembly constituencies located in the urban areas are very few in number.

Thus prior to the first State Assembly Elections held in 1972, Manipur witnessed four General Elections and one mid-term Lok Sabha Poll, two Territorial Council elections and one Union Territory elections. Right from 1952, elections of both the State and

Parliament have been a regular feature in Manipur on party basis, providing the people a sense of maturity in the electoral process and techniques. Since Manipur became a full-fledged State of the Indian Union, elections to the State Legislative Assembly in the State had so far been held nine times including the recently held one in February 2007. Of these, the second and eighth Assembly elections of 1974 and 2002 were mid-term polls.

For the first State Legislative Assembly elections, Manipur went to polls in three phases—on 6 and 9 March for the hills and on 11 March 1972 for the valley constituencies. Six national parties such as Congress-R; Congress-O; CPI; CPI-M; (Samyukta) Socialist Party; Bharatiya Jan Sangh and one regional party-Manipur Peoples Party, along with a large number of Independents were in the election fray. The number of candidates and political parties that participated in the election increased enormously since it was the first State Assembly elections. However, to all's astonishment, no party was able to secure a workable majority in the House. But the Congress-R emerged as the single largest party by winning 17 seats. MPP which entered the electoral battle for the first time followed second with 15 seats. Congress-O captured only one seat; CPI-5, SSP-3 and 19 seats went to Independents. Though the Congress-R emerged as the single largest party, the first State ministry was formed by MPP with the support of Congress-O; SSP and 13 Independents by forging an alliance known as "United Legislatures Party" (ULP) of 32 members. Md. Allimuddin was sworn-in on 20 March 1972 as the Chief Minister of the ULP coalition government. Due to large scale defections from the ULP, his ministry was dislodged from power on 26 March 1973 and resigned on 28 March 1973. The combined Opposition staked its claim to form an alternative government by forging an alliance—Progressive Democratic Alliance (PDA)—under the leadership of Athiko Daiho (CLP leader). However after observing the political situation in the State in which no party/alliance could form a stable government the Centre invoked Presidents Rule by dissolving the Assembly with effect from 23 March 1973 till 3 March 1974. Thus, the first popular government of this young State collapsed and Manipur came under Central rule for the first time after Statehood. However, despite the defection and redefections to form government, the term experienced only one ministry. In the following elections, the State witnessed growing intensity of political competition for power among the various parties. The subsequent six terms were marred by defections and leadership crisis yielding more than one ministry in a term.

The second State Assembly elections were a mid-term poll. The election to constitute a new House was held in three phases—the hills went to polls on 19 and 23 February while the valley on 25 February 1974. For the mid-term elections, the constituencies were readjusted according to 1971 census. As a result, Sekmai constituency (Valley) was reserved for the Scheduled Caste. Kangpokpi constituency (Hills) became a General constituency. The contesting parties were Congress-R, Congress-O; Socialist Party; CPI; CPI-M (National) and three regional parties' viz., MPP, Kuki National Assembly and Manipur Hills Union along with a large number of Independents. The election could not produce a desired result. History repeated itself. No party was able to command an absolute majority; however, MPP improved its position. It performed best by securing 20 seats. Congress-R declined and captured 13 seats. The CPI got 6 seats, KNA 2, SP 2 and MHU 12. Independents could return 7 seats. Soon the State plunged into an era of coalitions and counter-coalitions in the governmental affairs one after the other. The term marked the total beginning of the endless political infighting for leadership and power. This term witnessed the installation and fall of ever largest five ministries. The first was a MPP-led coalition government. Though the MPP had no working majority it mustered support of SP, Independents and 6 from MHU and constituted the United Legislature Party (ULP). The ULP ministry was inducted on 4 March 1974 with Md. Allimuddin as Chief Minister. However defections from the ULP government took place on the ground that Yangmaso Shaiza was not made the Chief Minister. After hardly four months stay in power, Allimuddin ministry was replaced by a Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) coalition ministry headed by Yangmaso Shaiza. His ministry installed on 10 July 1974 consisted of three parties—MHU, CPI and Congress-R. Though a constituent party, even a single minister did not include from the Congress-R. It defected and withdrew support to Yangmaso Shaiza. After having negotiations with the opposition parties, particularly the ULP, the Congress-ULP alliance assumed the name of Democratic Legislative Party (DLP). On 5 December 1974, after about five months time in power, Shaiza ministry collapsed and resigned. The next day, on 6 December 1974, the DLP coalition government was installed in the office with R.K. Dorendro Singh as Chief Minister. Dorendro realised that the Congress has gained enough strength to form a Congress ministry without the support of other parties. So he submitted the resignation of his ministry on 23 July 1975. The same day, a coalition government of Congress-

CPI headed by Dorendro was inducted for the second time. (The CPI was a partner due to State Governor's advice to Dorendro to seek their co-operation). After the sixth General elections to Lok Sabha in March 1977, the Janata Party came to power at the Centre. A change in Delhi brought its impact in the politics of Manipur too. The Congress MLAs in Manipur joined the Janata Party in Manipur. The minority government of Dorendro resigned on 13 May 1977. However, over the issues of leadership, admission of defectors to Janata Party and dissolution of the Assembly as decided by State Janata Party for fresh election, defectors were not allowed to form the government. Since the Centre opposed the decision of the State Janata Party to dissolve Assembly, the President's Rule was imposed on 16 May 1977. The Assembly was kept on suspended animation. Following the resolution of leadership crisis, President's Rule was revoked on 29 June 1977. The same day, Yangmaso Shaiza (who was elected to Lok Sabha on Congress ticket from Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency and defected to Janata Party in the Lok Sabha) was sworn-in as the Chief Minister. Discontentment in the party leading to resignation of some members from the Janata Legislature Party, deteriorated law and order situation, increasing Opposition demand for resignation of Shaiza, dissolution of the Assembly, charges against Janata Party as corrupt etc. provoked the Centre to impose Presidents' Rule and dissolve the Assembly on 14 November 1979.

In the third Assembly elections held in January 1980, altogether nine political parties were in the electoral battle. They included seven national parties—Congress-I, Congress-U, Janata Party, CPI, CPI-M, Janata Party (S), Janata Party (JP) and three regional parties—MPP; KNA; and Ereipak Leishem Party. A host of Independents were also in the election contest. As usual, no party obtained a workable majority in the House. With 13 seats the Congress-I emerged as the largest party. The term produced three ministries. The first was a Congress-I led coalition government, a combination of Congress-I, Congress-U, MPP, KNA and Independents—inducted on 14 January 1980 with R.K. Dorendro as Chief Minister. On 26 November 1980, Dorendro resigned on the ground that he was to be appointed as Indian Ambassador to Norway. The next day on 27 November a coalition government of Congress-I, Congress-U and MPP led by Rishang Keishing of Congress-I was inducted. Within three months, Keishing ministry fell down following defections. Despite the claim of the Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) consisting of MPP, CPI, CPI-M, Congress-I and Janata Party led by

Kh. Chaoba Singh to form an alternative government, the State Governor recommended President's Rule from 28 February 1981 to 18 June 1981 on the ground that PDF would not be able to form a stable ministry. It was revoked on 19 June 1981. For the second time Rishang formed his ministry which survived for the remaining period of the term.

The fourth Assembly elections was held in December 1984 in which nine political parties—Congress-I, CPI, CPI-M, Janata Party, Lok Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party, Indian Congress (S) (National) and MPP, KNA (regional) including a host of Independents were in the electoral battle. The Congress-I did ever performed best by winning 30 seats, might be due to 'sympathy wave' for Indira Gandhi following her assassination. The first Congress ministry was formed on 4 January 1985 headed by Rishang Keishing. However political crisis followed soon in the Congress Legislature Party demanding the removal of Keishing. The State Governor was also pressurised by the Army dealing with the NSCN insurgency activities for Keishing's removal. At last Keishing resigned. He was replaced by R.K. Joychandra, the then Union Minister of State for Petroleum. Joychandra Ministry was installed on 5 March 1988. The Centre sent him as Chief Minister to resolve the intra-party leadership crisis in the State Congress-I. His ministry remained in Office till the next elections.

In the fifth Assembly elections held in February 1990, nine political parties were in the election fray. They were Congress-I, Janata Dal, Congress-S, CPI, BJP, MPP, KNA, NPP and MHPC. A number of Independents were also in the contest. There was a pre-poll alliance of six-parties. The Congress-I did not enter into any alliance. No party secured absolute majority. With 26 seats, the Congress-I was the largest party followed by MPP 11, JD 11, Congress-S 6, KNA 2, CPI 3 and NPP 1. The rest of the parties/Independents could not return even a candidate. The term experienced three ministries. The six non-Congress parties (MPP, JD, KNA, CPI, NPP and Congress-S) formed United Legislative Party (ULP). On 23 February 1990 the MPP-led ULP coalition government was formed by R.K. Ranbir Singh as Chief Minister. Ranbir tried to have a stable government by appointing 27 MLAs out of 34 as ministers and gave other post to the rest. But many MLAs in the Ranbir Camp caught up in the Congress trap. Ranbir Ministry was collapsed with the arrival of President's Rule keeping the Assembly on 'Animated Suspension'. He remained in Office till 7 January

1992. The Central Rule was revoked. On 8 April 1992, a coalition government of Congress-MPP was inducted. Congress led the ministry under the leadership of R.K. Dorendro Singh. Unfortunately Dorendro ministry faced with Kuki-Naga ethnic clash. The communal clash became a means to struggle for power, causing intra-party leadership crisis in the State Congress-I and political instability. Law and order situation deteriorated. In the night of 31 December 1993, Dorendro ministry was toppled and Central Rule was invoked. Following the resolution of leadership crisis in the Congress-I, the President's Rule was revoked on 13 December 1994. The same day, the last ministry of the term, virtually a government of a group of defectors, headed by Rishang Keishing as Chief Minister was installed. His ministry lasted till he was again sworn-in on 25 February 1995 as the Chief Minister of the newly constituted sixth House of the Assembly.

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2. Source: Census of India, 1991, Final Population Totals, Manipur, Extract from the Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 1992 and Statistical Abstract Manipur 2004, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Manipur.
3. V.V. Rao; T.S. Gangte and Ksh. Bimola Devi, A Century of Government and Politics in North East India: Vol. IV: Manipur, S. Chand and Company Ltd, New Delhi, 1991, First Edition, p. 3.
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6. N. Sanajaoba Singh, "The Roots" in N Sanajaoba (ed.) "Manipur: Past and Present", Vol. 3, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1995, p. 1.
7. R. Constantine, Manipur: Maid of the Mountains, Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1981, p. 34.
8. This new creed of Meitei Revivalist Movement started from around the 1930s in Cachar (Assam) under the leadership of Naoriya Phulo. This movement absolutely broke off from the Hindu Meiteis/Hindu Cultures. He was a critic of Hinduism in the form of Bengal Vaishnavism, Bengali and Sanskrit culture and the Manipuri Bamons/Brahmins. His attack on Vaishnavism/Vaishnava Missionaries aroused the Manipuri mind to a strong resolve to throw off the Hindu yoke. Not only the parts of Cachar but Manipur joined his movement though his birthplace continued to be leading among his followers. Phulo's success inspired some Meiteis from Manipur

to contact him in the late 1930s. His disciple from Manipur carried on the same line of thinking of Phulo to refute the Hindu ways and carry conviction to the Meitei masses. Under the Presidentship of Pukhrambam Surchand, the Manipur State Meitei Marup was established in Kangleipak with a Constitution. Apart from others, some resolutions included to substitute the Sanskrit terms, and names by pure Meitei words to adopt Meitei hymns in worships, to abandon Hindu festivals in favour of the Meitei ones etc. This movement upholds the primitive beliefs of the Meitei to its full extent outrightly rejecting the teaching of the Hindu saints. (See also M. Kirti Singh, Religion and Culture of Manipur, Manas Publications, Delhi, 1988, First Edition, pp. 51-52.)

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 59, 61.
10. Gangmumei Kamei "Genesis of the Ethnoses of Manipur", in N. Sanajaoba (ed.) *Manipur: Past and Present*, Vol. 3, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 25-29.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 37-39 and See also B.B. Kumar "The Languages of State", in N. Sanajaoba (ed.) *Manipur : Past and Present*, Vol. 3, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, p. 89.
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17. V.K. Nayar, *Threats from Within: India's Internal Security Environment*, Lancer Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, First Published, 1992, p. 245.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.
20. See, n. 8 (M. Kirti Singh, *Religion & Culture of Manipur*), p. 62.
21. R. Gopalakrishnan, *Insurgent North-Eastern Region of India*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, First Published, 1995, p. 89.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
23. See, n. 12. p. 91 and see also n. 8, p. 149.
24. See, n. 6, pp. 5-12.
25. See, n. 17, p. 190.
26. Cheitharol Kumbaba (CK), pp. 21, 22, 1606 AD. - State Chronicles edited by L. Ibungohal Singh and N. Khelchandra Singh with an introduction by E. Nillakanta Singh, Imphal, 1967, and see also n. 4, pp. 1-2.
27. *Ibid.*
28. See, n. 8, pp. 41-149.
29. *Ibid.*
30. See, n. 13, p. 15.

31. Manipur is the birth place of the famous game of Polo as well as that of the famous Ras Leela dance where the Gods took to dancing. The most authentic account of it comes from Manipur. It is said to have originated in Manipur introduced during the reign of Khagemba (1600 AD) and it was played from before 1550. In 1852, the world's first official Polo game was played at Silchar with participants drawn mostly from Manipur. As early as in 1901, a Polo Team from Manipur visited Calcutta and Delhi on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales in India. For sometime, this inborn Polo game of the Manipuris was persistently neglected, no worthwhile steps were taken up to encourage this sports in the State among the younger generation, and the Manipuris who originated the game of Polo did not figure anywhere in national or international arena. But today, special encouragements have been given to this game (see the Resistance, Imphal 27 July 1982, see, n. 13, p. 45 and also Eastern Panorama, Shillong, March 1995, p. 39).
32. See, n. 13, p. 15.
33. See, n. 13, p. 4.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
35. *Gazetteer of Manipur*, by Captain E.W. Dun, B.S.C.,(1886), Calcutta Reprinted 1975 by Vivek Publishing House, Delhi, pp. 24-25.
36. See, n. 6, p. 15.
37. M. Kirti Singh, "Religion and Culture of Manipur," Manas Publications, Delhi, 1988, First Edition, p. 7. Manipur from 1819-1826 was under the Burmese (Ava) control during the period of seven years devastation. It became a sovereign independent country from 1826-1891. From 1891-1947 Manipur had been a princely State under the British paramountcy. Though Manipur was under British paramountcy but Manipur was not annexed into British India. From 1947-1948 it again became an independent sovereign State. With the merged of Manipur with India, it has been a constituent part of Indian Federation today.
38. See, *Ibid.*, p. XXIV of "Introductory".
39. Before the establishment of a Territorial Council, the Advisory Council was reorganised. In 1956, it was formed with the Home Minister as the Chairman of the Committee, the MP representing Manipur, the Chief Commissioner of Manipur and the members of the Council of Advisors associated with the Chief Commissioner of Manipur.
40. The Territorial Council Act, 1956 lay down that for each Union Territory; there shall be a Territorial Council. The strength of the Manipur Territorial Council was fixed at 30. The Central Government could nominate not more than two non-official persons. The 30 members of the Council should be elected on the basis of adult franchise. They shall hold office for a term of five years. The Territorial Council was a body corporate and had perpetual succession and a seal. It should elect a chairman and a vice-chairman from amongst its members. The members of the Territorial Council should be registered electors.
41. See, n. 38, p. XXXV of "Introductory".