

Strategy Of Alliance : An Analysis of Electoral Victory of BJP In Manipur

By

Nameirakpam Bijen Meetei

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Manipur University, Imphal

Abstract

The Manipur assembly elections 2022 were fascinating from several perspectives. Quite a few scholars deliberate on the election results and offer reasons for not only the defeat of the Congress party in Manipur but also the rise of the current political dispensation at the centre namely, the Bharatiya Janata Party in the state. Many opined that Small state syndrome, leadership problems within the Congress party, political defections, and claims against works initiated and completed during the Congress rule in the state are often cited reasons in most of these discussions. Of course, such issues and narratives certainly provided opportunity for the other parties to question the rule of the congress and undoubtedly became vital factors for the weakening of the grand old party in the state. Nevertheless, there are additional issues and political developments in the state that helped the BJP to win the election and formed the government in Manipur. This paper argues that the political developments such as the rise of ethnic based political parties, diktats of the insurgent groups on the voters, the weaknesses of the grand old party to dissipate the damaging perception over its governance during the 15 years of their rule, coupled with the alliance strategy adopted by BJP have outvoted the Congress in the state. The Congress were outvoted by the BJP both in the valley as well as hill constituencies.

Keywords: political parties, strategy, election, defection, Manipur.

1. Introduction

The last elections to the Manipur Legislative Assembly were held from 28 February to March 2022 in two phases to elect sixty members of the state assembly. The results of the 12th Manipur State Legislative Assembly Election were declared on 10th March 2022. As per the results declared by the Election Commission of India the BJP won 32 seats whereas the once-dominant Congress party succeeded in five constituencies only with a condensed vote share. If one looks at the electoral history of Manipur one will easily see the gradual decline of vote share of the Congress party in the state. Thus, the vote share of Congress progressively deteriorated from 42.4% in 2012, 35.1% in 2017, to 16.83% in 2022 (ECI 2018, 2022). In 2017, notwithstanding being the single largest party with 28 seats the grand old party could not form the government. Eventually, the BJP formed the government with the help of other parties.

The significance of this decline is that at the moment the decline of the Congress has stretched to such an level that the party does not even have the numbers to lead an effective opposition. Intellectuals and onlookers who deliberated on the election results offered various reasons for this trend i.e., decline of the Congress in the Manipur. There are some most frequently cited reasons for this trend. First, the 'small state syndrome'. It simply implies that small states such as Manipur have a propensity to incline in the direction of the main party in the politics of the centre. It is commonly alleged that the change of power at the centre from

Congress to BJP in 2014 has led to change in the government formation at the state as well. Second often cited reason is the problems of leadership within the Congress party. There are other reasons which are also talked about when it comes to the discussions on the decline of the congress party in the state. Political defections and claims against work done in 15 years of Congress rule are also claimed to be the factors of continuing defeat of the congress.

Nevertheless, a serious reading into the recent elections in the state gives the impression that the upsurge of ethnic-based political parties, diktats of insurgents on the voters, 'the powerlessness' of the Congress party, and BJP's political strategies particularly the its alliance approach have contributed significantly to the defeat of the Congress not only in the valley but also in hill constituencies.

2. Negative perceptions of Congress' rule

The failure of the Congress Party to dissipate the negative perception over its management of governance during 15 years of its rule is conceivably the most noteworthy problem that played central role in the just concluded state elections. This negative perception certainly impacted the credibility of the party. It additionally facilitated other parties to be progressively perceived as alternatives to Congress rule. Political parties mainly the BJP kept raising this issue of congress rule in the state during election campaigns. It was claimed that during the 15 years of rule under Okram Ibobi Singh, Manipur was clad with many issues. Rampant corruption, frequent bandhs and economic blockades, extrajudicial killings, awful road conditions and slow infrastructural development are some of the issues that plagued this period (ANI 2022). These public perceptions were well used by BJP in its favour.

It is alleged that during the Congress rule the state is marred by Corruption, Commission and Cruelty (CCC) (Gurumayum 2016). The belief that every governmental job had a price tag, the Congress ministry took a commission in every project, and the memories of fake encounters had deteriorated the image of Congress in the state. Multi crore scandals like the 'Loktak Lake Cleaning Scam' and 'Manipur Development Society (MDS) scam' had further tarnished its reputation (Haokip 2017). These gave reason to the people to seek an alternative government. Some Political analyst's views that people wanted some alternative as the Congress's popularity has declined (Zaman 2022). People also talked about leadership crisis within congress. Some even link the current failure of the Congress in the state with the Congress leadership, notably Okram Ibobi Singh.

He was called '10 per cent CM' (Asianet Newsable 2022). It was alleged that Ibobi took 10 per cent as his commission in every project in the state. The issue of so-called developmental projects is also linked with leadership issues within Congress. Many of the politicians said that the reason for the failure of Congress to form government in 2017, even though they were the single largest party, was because of Ibobi; thus, they lacked trust in his leadership (Outlook 2020). It is rumoured that much of the developmental projects of the state had gone to the Thoubal constituency from which Ibobi was elected and almost all the government contracts were awarded to his relatives. Ibobi's wife, son and nephew, were brought into politics, and his nephew was alleged to have had a hand in the huge consignment of drugs seized from Imphal Airport in 2013 (The Wire 2020). This incident was used extensively by the BJP as an electoral plank in their election campaign in 2017.

The BJP further formalised it into a broad programme known as the 'War on Drugs' under the Biren Singh Government quite effectively. Even in the hills, the passing of three controversial bills, namely the Protection of Manipur People's Bill 2015, the Manipur Land

Reforms and Land Revenue (7th Amendment) Bill, and the Manipur Shops and Establishment (2nd Amendment) Bill, 2015 at the backdrop of the 2017 elections still lingers in the minds of the hill voters. It was alleged that the bills were 'anti-tribals' as they believed that the ancestral land would come under the purview of the Manipur Government to enable the Meiteis to buy and own land in the hills (Hausing 2015). There were a sequence of protests in the hill districts against these bills, specifically the Manipur Land Reforms and Land Revenue.

Again, worsening its relationship was the formation of seven new districts, which the United Naga Council objected to as it assumed that it would bifurcate the ancestral land of the Nagas (Loiwal 2016). It is also alleged that the state government's decision during Ibobi's reign not to allow NSCN (I-M) General Secretary Thuingaleng Muivah to visit his ancestral village in Ukhrul might have hurt the sentiments of Nagas in the state. In their search for an alternative to Congress, community-based parties emerge as a viable alternative to Congress or BJP. The NPF has been working to turn the Naga issue into an electoral number so that they can have a voice of their own.

Likewise, the ethnic-based party KPA is also aligned with the aspirations of the Kuki people for a separate homeland within the Indian Territory (Bhattacharya 2022). In addition, Congress also failed to form alliances with the hills based political parties. For instance, Congress forms a pre-poll alliance with the CPI. This inability to establish a close connection might further harm the image of Congress in the hill areas. It is said that the 'change of party loyalty, shifting alliances, both in the individual and collective levels, are frequent and ruthless' (Oinam and A Bimol 2002).

3. Factionalism And Infighting: The Congress Drama

The Congress had been beset by intense factionalism and infighting specially during Ibobi's second and third terms as the Chief Minister. Still, Ibobi remained the face of the Congress in the state and was said to rule with an iron fist. It is commonly assumed that one of the factors for political defections among the Congress is the bleak opportunity for senior leaders to rise through the ranks without being backed by Ibobi (Phanjoubam 2017). There were no prospects for the other senior party leaders to climb the ladder to become Chief Minister. This point is manifested by the lack of strong infighting for the post of Chief Minister in the party itself. Moreover, the defection of 12 incumbent Congress MLAs to the BJP just five months shy of the 2017 state legislative assembly put a huge dent in the party's image.

Senior party leaders Govindas Konthoujam and Chaltolien Amo resigned when they were the President and the Vice-President of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee. D. Korungthang also resigned from the party membership. At the same time, he was the Working President of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee. Other prominent Congressmen like RK. Imo also followed suit, which made the Congress appear like a sinking ship. Of course, the leadership crisis is not limited to Congress in Manipur only. Besides, Congress today lacks a popular national leader, unlike BJP, which has a strong unchallenged leader in Modi. The issue of the thriving high common culture is substantiated by the lack of a strong cadre base at the grassroots level which has been a severe weakness for the party.

The party workers at the grassroots level felt alienated as the platform to discuss and express their ideas and opinions was severely constricted. This has often resulted in young Congress workers changing their allegiance to a different party that can accommodate and

acknowledge their ideas. One of the former youth leaders of MPCC expressed to the local news that he joined the party as the party ideology deeply influenced him. He performed his duties and responsibilities and contributed to the party's growth in his capacity. However, the party's senior members sidelined him (Manipur Dialogue 2021). NPP leader and Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Yumnam Joykumar Singh opined that Congress does not allow anyone from the younger generation to grow in the party, except for the Gandhi family (Chakrabati 2022). Thus, the party workers at the grassroots level felt alienated.

4. Political Strategy And Party Alliance: BJP's Approach

The emerging political development in the state and the issues surrounding Congress were well used by BJP. Not only the BJP exploited the public perception against Congress, but it also put on a well-planned electoral strategy that happened to be extremely capable of producing the intended electoral results. Accordingly, the weakening of Congress has a close connection with how BJP plays its electoral politics.

In other words, it may be said that the decline of Congress has close connections with the rise of the BJP. BJP has been vigorously campaigning in the northeast for the 'Congress mukt' region (Piscatory 2016). To translate this into action, the BJP designed alliances with prospective regional parties in 2016. This alliance came to be known as the Northeast Democratic Alliance (NEDA), which has been at the forefront of countering Congress in the region. In Manipur, NPP, KPA and NPF are chosen as their alliance partner as parts of NEDA. The BJP coming to power in Manipur in 2017 can be credited to the Narendra Modi wave. The larger-than-life personality aura of Narendra Modi may have influenced the voting behaviour. This factor of a prominent face is lacking in the Congress party. The election strategy of Congress is comparatively much weaker than that of the others, particularly the BJP.

In the 2017 election, Congress was very dynamic in mobilising voters, whereas in 2022, Congress's campaign was dispirited. The Congress campaign was focused on issues which are important in the 2017 election. One such issue was the territorial integrity of the state. It was directed against the Indo-Naga framework agreement, which was a serious issue then. It used the Framework agreement and territorial integrity effectively to counter the BJP. Thus, public perception was in their favour. They made people believe that only Congress could maintain the state's territorial integrity as the BJP at the centre had signed a framework agreement with the NSCN (I-M). The content of the framework agreement was hidden from the public domain. It raised suspicions among the people in the valley.

It might be worth mentioning that one of the reasons for the success of Ibobi has been credited to the popular belief that he is the only one who could stop the disintegration of the state. They also highlighted that the central government is accountable for the protracted economic blockade in the state. In the words of Okram Ibobi, 'Since the central government is in peace talks with the NSCN (IM), they can easily put pressure on the United Naga Council to call off the economic blockade which has caused so much suffering here' (Roy 2016). Congress employed this argument to their benefit, which found resonance among the voters. This was one issue which enabled Congress to arise as the single largest party in 2017.

In the run up to the 2022 election, Congress designed a pre-poll alliance with smaller parties, mostly from the left, with a call to bring an end to the 'dictatorial rule' of the BJP (Levion 2022). Congress could not cobble up an alliance or partner from a party with a considerable following either in the valley or in the hill constituencies. The alliance partners

were not much of sought-after political party. This is a huge oversight on the part of Congress not to have a strategic relationship with any of the political parties or ethnic-based political parties of the hills. Regarding the poll campaign, the criticisms and allegations provided by Congress countering the BJP in the 2022 elections lacked enthusiasm and merit.

The Congress was overconfident in thinking that the misgovernance of the BJP on its own would bring the Congress back to power again. Many even highlight Congress's inefficiencies as the opposition. They kept silent when the opposition should have been more vocal in many instances. The Congress remained silent when journalists critical of the BJP government were detained in Manipur. Moreover, the BJP had actively campaigned, stressing its achievement in the last term, such as its ability to drastically reduce bandhs, protests, and blockades in the state.

Furthermore, BJP had a well-organized plan to connect with the youth. There is a sense of belongingness to the party, especially amongst the younger voters, which is missing in Congress. In the 2022 elections, the BJP also cleverly played its alliance card. BJP cleverly side-lined the issue of NPP's effort to pull out of the BJP government in 2020 in the previous term by not having a pre-poll alliance with NPP on the plank of forming a stable government. Instead, it created room for JD (U) to join the electoral politics in the state. They saw the potential of this alliance with JD (U), which is also a coalition partner of the BJP at the centre. JD (U)'s entry into the state's electoral politics serves three purposes for BJP. One, it could indirectly accommodate these winnable candidates who tried but could not get BJP tickets.

The fierce competition to get BJP tickets for 2022 was bound to upset some supporters if their choice of candidates were denied BJP tickets. Second, they already thought that in case of hung assembly JD (U) would be a better option than NPP as they are alliance partner in the centre. Third, JD (U) entry would undoubtedly affect the vote share of not only Congress but also other parties in the state. To say a little more about JD (U), even popular Congress leaders like Former Vice President Dwijamani, MLA Kh Joykishan Singh and MLA Muhammad Abdul Nasir joined the JD (U).

It is often alleged that the JD (U) is the plan B of the BJP as the BJP does not want to lose its vote share either to Congress or the NPP (Singh and Jimmy 2022). If JD (U) had not been brought in the 2022 election, the outcome of the NPP and the Congress could have been different. Political opportunism helps JD (U) to recruit prominent candidates to contest on their party tickets. There was a high possibility of an elected MLA from JD (U) getting a ministerial post if a coalition government led by the BJP came into the state and needed support from them.

5. The Decline Of The Congress In The Hill Constituencies

Electoral politics in hill constituencies of the state play a vital role in the government formations since one-third of Manipur's total assembly seats come from these areas. Though within the same state, the dynamics of politics in the hills have always been different. Two distinct features characterise the electoral politics in these areas. first is the effect of the insurgent organizations on the result of the elections. This issue played a critical part in the run-up to the recently concluded elections too. Second is the emergence of new ethnic-based political parties and contesting elections. In recent times, NPF (Naga Peoples' Front) was the only active ethnic-based political party entering the electoral politics in the hill districts of Manipur. In the run-up to the 2022 elections, the KPA (Kuki Peoples Alliance) also emerged.

These two features have tremendous role in having national parties fragmented in the hill areas. It certainly has disquieted Congress, the party which won 14 and 9 seats in the 2012 and 2017 state assembly elections, respectively (ECI 2018).

In 2022, the grand old party could not win even a single seat in hill areas (ECI 2022). The Congress, in fact, has been primarily affected by these emerging trends in the hills. It can be argued that the Congress not only incapable to counter the negative public perception against it with a practical narrative even in the hills, the party barely made an effort to lessen its loss (in terms of public perception) even through alliance politics. BJP, on the other hand, got support from tribal voters by allying with ethnically based parties such as NPF and KPA. It not only helped them increase their vote share as they won 7 seats out of the total 20 seats in the hill areas, it even managed to get some hill based non-state groups openly endorsed BJP. This point attracts little more emphasis.

As indicated before, a key factor for the retrenchment of the vote share of the Congress in the hills is the diktats of insurgent groups. It is argued that intimidations from such groups have been taking place the tribal-dominated districts since the beginning of February 2022. Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma's National People's Party (NPP) had made repeated allegations - a charge that the UKLF had instantly denied and later the BJP, too (Bhattacharya 2022). In the Naga dominated areas, it has often been alleged that rival candidates of the NPF were banned from conducting election campaigns.

There are claims that the NPF is the frontal organisation of the NSCN (I-M) and holds overwhelming influence in the Naga dominated areas. In the Kuki dominated areas, the KNO allegedly appealed to all chiefs, CSOs leaders and all voters to support BJP candidates in all KNO operational areas (Bhattacharya 2022). The following day, United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF), another insurgent group, issued a statement supporting the BJP candidates in Tengenoupal and Chandel, the areas where they hold clout.

The same has been echoed by human rights activist Babloo Loitongbam. The activist reckoned that groups known to be key players in the drug trade, like the KNO, have openly supported the ruling BJP. It is said that there are reasons to believe the drug money is exploding on the mainstream political scene (Bhattacharya 2022). The just-concluded election has demonstrated that the so-called reactionary leaders, either directly or indirectly, propped up almost all the entire MLAs who were elected from the Kuki-Chin community. According to the January 26 Declaration by the Kuki Chiefs' Association, if any individual is found supporting a different candidate other than the candidate endorsed by them, the individual will be boycotted and excommunicated from the Kuki society in Chandel district (Bhattacharya, 2022).

Further, AICC senior leader Jairam Ramesh alleged that the BJP led government in Manipur paid Rs. 15.70 Cr to some banned militant groups under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) before the election which could have influenced the militant groups to openly endorse the BJP (Singh, 2022). Thus, the politics in the hills do not stop at the politics of ethnicity. The inter-clan politics within a larger ethnic group play important role in hill politics (Haokip 2012). The clan with the largest population has more considerable political influence over the smaller ones. 'Voters follow the candidate' is a popular saying in Manipur.

It is also claimed that the national political parties often give tickets to candidates belonging to the most influential clans (Mathur 2022). As the relevance of the Congress Party has been downhill, influential candidates have started seeking tickets to other parties. The

candidates who are denied tickets didn't see Congress as an alternative, and instead prefer contesting as independent candidates. This definitely had indirectly facilitated the switch of loyalty of the Congress's voters to other parties and in that way plummeting its chance of winning the elections.

6. The National People's Party: Electoral Effects of its Progress

The progress or the rise of the NPP in Manipur certainly had its own share in the recent electoral development in the state. Though issues of incompatibility between NPP and BJP were played out just before the election, in the previous government, the rise of NPP has not impacted the vote share of the BJP in the state. To talk little more about NPP, the party has been contesting election in the state since the 1990s. In the 1990 state election, when they contested for the first time, NPP got 0.78%, and one was elected (ECI 2018). From here, the vote shares of NPP have increased gradually. In the 2012 state election, NPP received 1.24% votes share with no members elected; however, in the 2017 state election, they won four seats with 5.05% vote share (ECI 2018).

NPP won seven seats in the last election, getting a 17.3% vote share (ECI 2022). The rising popularity of the NPP in the state is an important catalyst in the diminishing Congress vote share. NPP is emerging as a viable alternative to major national parties such as Congress and BJP. The significance of NPP was well-read by the BJP. In the 2022 elections, the NPP emerged as the second-largest party in the state. It has a significant presence in both the hill and the valley constituencies. They were the kingmakers in the 2017 elections. Because of its support, BJP was able to form the government in 2017 even though Congress was the single largest party.

However, when the coalition seemed shaky, cracks began to appear between the then CM N Biren Singh and the Deputy CM Y. Joykumar Singh. Consequently, the BJP did not project the NPP as a challenger but as a potential factor of instability in the next government. Thus, it could retain its support. The augmented vote share of NPP scarcely has anything to do with BJP but can be related to the reduced vote share of the Congress. This definitely has unfavourably impacted Congress's condition. It was commonly thought that the BJP had the best possibility to form the government, and the smaller regional and state parties would be the kingmakers. Therefore, several aspirants who were not given BJP tickets selected to contest from other parties.

7. Conclusion

In fact, the Manipur assembly elections 2022 were certainly fascinating from several perspectives. The outcomes of the 12th Manipur State election indicated the changing voting patterns in the state. The election results are the products of a combine force of the powerlessness of the Congress and the ingenious electoral strategy adopted by the BJP along with some other local factors. First, it highlights that the factors responsible for the downfall of the Congress party consist not only the often mentioned issue of the lack of cadre-based party structure or high command culture. More than anything else the loss of the Congress has a lot to do with its powerlessness to dissipate the negative popular perception over its 15 years rule with a practical counter-narrative and its core alliance strategy. In addition to this, the Congress could not deliver reasonable counter-criticisms against BJP and its rule in the

last five years. The outcomes of the 12th Manipur State election 2022 have also a lot to do with the ingenious electoral strategy adopted by the BJP in the state. Nevertheless, there are additional issues and political developments in the state that helped the BJP to win the election and formed the government in Manipur. The local political developments such as the rise of ethnic based political parties and diktats of the insurgent groups on the voters have also played a major role in the elections in which the BJP outvoted the Congress in the state not only in the valley but also hill constituencies.

References

- ANI (2022): "Manipur was known for corruption and blockades under Congress rule, BJP has ushered peace, development: Amit Shah," 23 February
<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/politics/manipur-was-known-for-corruption-and-blockades-under-Congress-rule-bjp-has-ushered-peace-development-amit-shah20220223213709/>
- Archis Mohan & MJ Antony (2017): "Setback for Congress in Goa and Manipur," Business Standard, 15 March.
https://www.business-standard.com/elections/goa-assembly-elections-2017/setback-for-Congress-in-go-and-manipur-117031500051_1.html
- Asianet Newsable (2022): "Manipur elections 2022: PM Modi slams Congress with 'Mr.10 percent' jibe," 1 March.
<https://newsable.asianetnews.com/india/manipur-elections-2022-pm-modi-slams-Congress-with-mr-10-percent-jibe-adt-r82ent>
- Oinam, Bhagat and A Bimol Akoijam (2002): "Assembly Election: Trends and Issues," Economic and Political Weekly Vol. 37, Issue No. 06, 27, pp 519-524.
<https://www.epw.in/journal/2002/06/commentary/manipur-assembly-electiontrends-and-issues.html>
- Bhattacharya, Snigdhendru (2022): "Manipur: In these tribal constituencies, insurgents bat for BJP," Outlook, 28 February.
<https://www.outlookindia.com/national/manipur-in-these-tribal-constituencies-insurgents-bat-for-bjp--news-184464>
- Chakrabarti, Angana (2022): "Defections, flailing leadership, pockets of hope- how Congress 'Khubak' declined in Manipur," The Print, 27 February.
<https://theprint.in/politics/defections-flailing-leadership-pockets-of-hope-how-Congress-khubak-declined-in-manipur/848257/>
- Election Commission of India (2022): "Manipur General Legislative Election 2022" 10 May
<https://eci.gov.in/files/file/14166-manipur-general-legislative-election-2022/>
- Election Commission of India (2018): "Manipur General Legislative Election 2017" 17 August
<https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3713-manipur-general-legislative-election-2017/>
- Election Commission of India (2018): "Manipur General Legislative Election 2012" 17 August
<https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3712-manipur-2012/>
- Election Commission of India (2018) "Manipur General Legislative Election 1990" 17

- August <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3707-manipur-1990/>
- Haokip, Jalun (2017): "FIR against former CM Ibobi in MDS scam: Dawn of transparent governance and new Manipur," E-Pao.net, 23 September. [http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news_section.opinions.Politics and Governance.FIR against former CM Ibobi in MDS scam By Jalun Haokip](http://epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news_section.opinions.Politics_and_Governance.FIR_against_former_CM_Ibobi_in_MDS_scam_By_Jalun_Haokip)
- Haokip, Ngamkhohao (2012): "Politics of tribe identity with reference to the Kukis," Journal of Northeast India Studies Vol. 2, No. 2, Jul.-Dec. 2012, pp. 64-73.
- Hausing, Kham Khan Suan (2015): "Manipur impasse: the hills are alive," The Indian Express, 22 September. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-hills-are-alive-3/>
- Gurumayum, Maheshwar (2016): "Congress is the enemy of Manipur and an evil force-BJP", Imphal Times, 12 October. <https://www.imphaltimes.com/news/item/6956-Congress-is-the-enemy-of-manipur-and-an-evil-force-bjp>
- Leivon Jimmy (2022); "Manipur: Congress forms pre-poll alliance with Left-wing political parties," Indian Express. 28 January <https://indianexpress.com/elections/manipur-Congress-forms-pre-poll-alliance-with-left-wing-political-parties-7744817/>
- Loiwal, Manogya (2016): "7 new districts formed in Manipur amid opposition by the nagas," India Today, 9 December. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/manipur-7-new-districts-united-naga-council-okram-ibobi-singh-sadar-hills-nagas-356658-2016-12-09>
- "Manipur was known for corruption and blockades under Congress rule, BJP has ushered peace, development: Amit Shah", ANI, 23 February <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/politics/manipur-was-known-for-corruption-and-blockades-under-Congress-rule-bjp-has-ushered-peace-development-amit-shah20220223213709/>
- Manipur Dialogue (2021): "Suresh Kumar's allegation Boomerang," Mami TV Network, 12 October. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w10w1oIhm4>
- Mathur, Aneesha (2022): "Decoding the complicated politics of Manipur ahead of first phase of polling," India Today, 27 February. <https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/manipur-assembly-polls-2022/story/decoding-politics-manipur-first-phase-polling-constituencies-parties-1918422-2022-02-27>
- Meitei, Ahanthem Bishworjit (2022): "Do not let government of 'bandhs', 'blockades' come to power, urges PM Modi during election rally in Manipur," News18, 23 April. <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/do-not-let-govt-of-bandhs-blockades-come-to-power-urges-pm-modi-during-election-rally-in-manipur-4800077.html>
- Outlook (2020): "Six Congress MLAs in Manipur resign, speaker yet to accept resignation," Outlook, 11 August. <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-six-Congress-mlas-in-manipur-resign-speaker-yet-to-accept-resignation/358408>
- Pisharoty, Sangeeta Barooah (2016): "BJP crafts Northeast Democratic Alliance to make the region 'Congress mukt'," The Wire, 25 May. <https://thewire.in/politics/bjp-crafts-north-east-democratic-alliance-to-make-the-region-Congress-mukt>
- Phanjoubam, Pradip (2017): "The other election," The Indian express, 18 February. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/manipur-assembly-election-blockade-irom-sharmila-okram-ibobi-singh-4530630/>

- Roy, Esha (2016): “Manipur CM Okram Ibobi blames Naga groups for violence and center for not putting pressure on them,” The Indian Express, 22 December. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/manipur-violence-okram-ibobi-united-naga-council-manipur-protests-4439290/>
- Singh, Bikash (2022): “Over Rs 16 crore paid to Manipur’s militant groups ahead of elections, alleges Jairam Ramesh,” The Economic Times, 4 March. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/elections/assembly-elections/manipur/over-rs-16-crore-paid-to-manipur-militant-groups-ahead-of-elections-alleges-jairam-ramesh/articleshow/89983724.cms?from=mdr>
- Singh, Santosh and Jimmy, Leivon (2022): “Faint but a silver lining for JDU with 6 MLAs in Manipur,” The Indian Express, 11 March. <https://indianexpress.com/elections/jd-u-sees-manipur-performance-as-way-forward-to-become-a-national-party-7815649/>
- Singsit, Kakai (2022): “The obnoxious system,” The Sangai Express, 15 March <https://www.thesangaiexpress.com/Encyc/2022/3/15/Kakai-SingsitThis-somnolent-hamlet-was-awash-with-exquisite-bikes-zooming-to-and-fro-across-the-vi.html>
- The Wire (2020): “Manipur Congress MLA, whose drug case involvement BJP had made a poll issue, joins saffron party”, The Wire, 20 August. <https://thewire.in/politics/manipur-Congress-okram-henry-singh-biren-bjp-ram-madhav>
- Zaman, Rokibuz (2022): “Party politics alone may not explain the BJP’s victory in Manipur,” Scroll.in, 10 March <https://scroll.in/article/1019225/party-politics-alone-may-not-explain-the-bjps-victory-in-manipur>