

**THE DIALECTICS OF CHANGE IN A TRIBAL SOCIETY  
(A STUDY OF THE TANGKHULS OF MANIPUR)**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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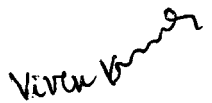
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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled “The Dialectics of Change in a Tribal Society (A Study of the Tangkhuls of Manipur)” submitted by Yuingam Jajo for the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

**We** recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
Prof. Esanul Haq  
(Chairperson)

  
Dr. Vivek Kumar  
(Supervisor)

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## *Acknowledgement*

At the beginning of the course I used to be often carried away by the thought that I have to write a book. I wondered if I could do that and used to be very apprehensive about it. Now sitting down here typing the last line of the conclusion I am amazed that I have accomplished the work. Looking back the year that had gone by I realized this had never been a solo effort. There are many people who have generously contributed towards the success. The first person that I am indebted to is my guide and supervisor Dr. Vivek Kumar. He was tireless with suggestions and continually reminded me of my mistakes, which made the work proceed in the right direction. He also completely changed the texture of the work. What started out as an assignment gradually becomes a passion. 'Thank you so much, Sir'.

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## INTRODUCTION

### SOCIAL CHANGE: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The present study seeks to analyse the changing patterns in Tangkhul society, a tribal community in Manipur, structurally and culturally in a diachronic manner taking its historicity into account. The core issue around which the whole work revolves is the question 'Why is it that despite the overwhelming changes in structure and institutions societies do preserve many elements of their cultural styles, modes of living and the normative and cognitive patterns of thinking?' (Singh 2000: 108). Modernization, at least in the institutional and material aspects, and its incumbent effects have come to stay in the Tangkhul society. New values, attitudes, goal orientations and lifestyles are fast permeating the society. Simultaneously operating with these modern institutions and values are the traditional counterparts. This is the unique phenomenon of modernization in India, which many scholars have often mentioned in their works. Modernization in India, they pointed out, is being mainly carried forward through adaptive changes in the traditional structures rather than structural dissociation or breakdowns. The study begins with the premise that majority of the Tangkhuls are yet to come to terms with the new forces of transformation. Thus, today the chasm between these two counter-posing aspects is clearly visible in the Tangkhul society. The term 'dialectics' as used here is to relate to the interplay of the modernizing forces and the traditional tribal forces which still significantly impinges on the Tangkhul society. In other words, the term refers to the dialogue between the old and the new and the ramifications of such interplay upon the wider aspects of the society. It should be noted that the term does not convey much of epistemological depth nor ideological leaning towards any one of the ideologies in particular.

The conceptual framework followed throughout the study laid relatively greater emphasis on the culture and change in the Tangkhul society. The reason being that change in the society reflects more of changes in the customary standards, which governs social activities of the Tangkhuls. However, such an analysis demands that the structural framework of the society be taken into consideration and that is precisely what is

followed here. In depth and comparative analysis of change have been attempted both from the structural as well as cultural viewpoints. Social structure itself, since it consists of the general or the normal forms of relationships, cannot be described or understood without reference to culture. As Radcliffe Brown puts it "Social relations are only observed, and can only be described, by reference to the reciprocal behavior of the persons related. The form of social structure has therefore to be described by the patterns of behavior to which individuals and groups conform in their dealings with one another" (Brown 1976: 199).

The work here neither claims to be exhaustive nor being the first of its kind in the context of the Tangkhul society. On the contrary, previous researches, for instance, Horam's *Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas* (1977), R.R Shimray's *Origin and Culture of the Nagas*, Khasim Ruivah's *Social Change Among the Nagas (Tangkhul)* (1993), Sothing W. Shimray's *The Tangkhuls* (2000) and few others are available. What the present study seeks to differ from these existing works is basically in two aspects; firstly, it attempts to study the major cultural impact in the 90's of the last century with the large scale influx of modern means of communication in the form of mass media and simultaneously with it the rise of the middle class or the elites in the Tangkhul society. Secondly, the whole work seeks primarily to focus on the Tangkhul youths and understand their nature of negotiating with the massive cultural impact and their future goal orientation.

The Tangkhul society have come a long way from the days of feasting and head-hunting to the conquest by the British colonial rulers who introduced western education and a new faith, Christianity, thereby ushering in new ways of live and outlook. More recently, the growing unhealthy competition in almost all the affairs of human life entailing excessive individualism, materialistic fetishism also characterize the Tangkhuls. Needs of the people have not only multiplied but these needs are totally new and ever changing which implicitly point to the rise of the consumerist culture. Modern values of leisure activities, dietary habits, fashions, etc. have been making conscious or unconscious inroads into a society which until not so long ago was just a simple folk

society, shattering the age old social fabrics around which the Tangkhul society had existed for centuries. All these needs to be taken into notice. In such an environment coupled with political instability, the upcoming generations have been hit the hardest. Even the educated group of people whom the society looks forward to emulate and to steer clear of the present predicaments are themselves caught in rampant corruption and internal conflicts driven, more often than not, by vested interests. Thus, total disillusionment, lack of development and overall regression seem to be the order of the Tangkhul society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The overarching objective is to analyze the disillusionment and an apparent atmosphere of unrest among the younger Tangkhul generation as a symptom of a fundamental socio-cultural crisis. In general terms, the crisis involves a substantial conflict between the emergent technological and other potentialities, accruing to the advance in science, of a society and the established social order and cultural system. If the potentialities of the society are to be realized, new values, new motivational patterns, new rights and new institutions must be established. Unfortunately this has not happened at all or is still yet to take any concrete feature so as to be recognized. In this fluctuating situation, increasing numbers of youth regard the culture as incoherent and the future as undesirable and chaotic. This effects the younger generation the most as they bear the brunt of conflict between the established socializing institution and emerging value system because of social change. For many youths in this situation, the cultural crisis is experienced as a crisis of identity- an inability to define the meaning of one's life and to accept the meanings and models of adulthood offered by parents and other elders. It is in this context that the comparative study of *longshim* (youth dormitory) becomes necessary so as to influence the course of change facing the Tangkhul youth in particular and the tribal youth in general. And the study is a humble effort in this direction.

The other objective of the study is to examine the phenomena of the emergence of the new tribal middle class among the Tangkhuls in the recent years with the coming of modern form of education, employment opportunities and other economic pursuits, and also Christianity to a certain extent. The study of this of this group has been included

because they occupy and play active role in influencing the Tangkhul society. Another aim of the study is to re-consider the placid picture normally portrayed by the Social Anthropologists and Sociologists of the traditional tribal society in opposition to the 'mainstream' society. In other words, it is to critically examine the myth of tribal solidarity and isolation. Attempts will be made to trace the transformation of the erstwhile tribal institutions so as to isolate those factors contributing to the effortless and rampant intrusion of the consumerist culture into the Tangkhul society eroding its age old traditions and culture and threatening to tear the society asunder. Finally, the whole study is taken up with the intention of contributing to the ongoing debate of doing an 'auto – anthropological' study. We shall come to that later.

The subject matter of social change has been a fascinating field of enquiry since half a century if not more, and various scholars have shown interest in this particular field. The subject matter of social change has taken a very prominent place in the disciplines of Social Anthropology and Sociology since long for the proper understanding of the society and its transformation. The sociologists used the term 'social change' to designate primarily alterations in the non-material culture, that is, values, mores, institutions and social behavior (Coomar 1997: 4). Such changes often follow technological and other innovations. These changes in the society are caused by transformation in various areas-economic, political, social, etc. and are the consequences of various processes like diffusion, innovation, acculturation, assimilation, trans-culturation and so on.

Similarly Social Anthropologists and Sociologists in India have done considerable research on social change in India. Srinivas (1962), coined the term 'Sanskritization' and 'Westernization' to explain the change in general and the caste structure in particular while studying the Coorgs of southern India; Majumdar's (1937), study of the problem of social change among the Hos of Chotanagpur; Dube's (1958) study of social change in the village life of Western Uttar Pradesh brought about by the implementation of the community development programmes and the introduction of improved agricultural implements; Bailey (1963) describes the changes ushering in the harmonious relations in the village life in Orissa, especially among the Konds of kondmal



Hills. According to him it was mainly due to the establishment of Parliamentary democracy that these changes have occurred. Further, number of studies were carried out by social scientists regarding the changing tribal society in India due to contact with the dominant Hindu castes, Christianity, education and various other developmental programmes during the fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now this has become one of the fertile domains of research for social sciences.

However, the study of social change is faced with major difficulties. One of the main difficulties in studying social change is its scope and coverage owing to the all-embracing connotation of the term. On the one hand, the term covers almost all the aspects of human life; on the other, it is nearly impossible to deal with all aspects of social change in their variety and richness. So, selection becomes not only necessary but also imperative to confine the discussion to only those aspects that are of intrinsic importance and immediate relevance for a particular study. Therefore, while dealing with social change one has to keep in mind certain categorizations, for instance, changes taking place in the social structure or that in culture. It is also useful to distinguish between macro and micro level changes. Besides observing changes taking place in the society it is important to know why they have taken place, and the broad directions along which they are proceeding. And lastly, the factors of social change, which can be both endogenous and exogenous, should be clearly identified.

In recent years, studies in social change have been conducted both by national and international organizations for various ends. Some of them as preliminary research for implementation of plans and programmes to bring about social and economic changes, which demanded thorough understanding of the social processes. Some studies are academic pursuits which could nevertheless lead to sharpening of theoretical concepts or invention of totally new ones. Studies of social change are thus, directed towards various ends. This brings us to the issue having a clear understanding of the concept of social change.

## **Social Change: Concept**

Moore conceptualizes that “social change is the significant alteration of social structure (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values, cultural products and systems” (Moore 1968: 366). The term ‘significant’ may give rise to certain confusion as to what is significant, to whom it is significant and why and how it is significant. Instead, if we limit our study of social change to the study of ‘conspicuous alteration of social structure’ it becomes practical and manageable. According to Ginsberg, “The social change is the change in social structure, for example, the size of a society, the composition or balance of its parts or the types of its organization. The term social change must also include changes in attitude and beliefs, in so far as they sustain institutions and change with them” (Morris 1958: 205). For Lapeire, the change that occurs within a society is asocial: “That they are not in any sense a product of the society per se or a consequence of some universal and unvarying law of social life. The changes that may occur in society are, on the contrary, far more comparable to those violations of the normal organic process that follow when, for reasons yet unknown, a cell goes wild - when it breaks from the ‘law’ that controls its growth and reproduction and, multiplying, disturbs the functioning of the entire organism. The forces that make for social change are, if the organic analogy be pursued, abnormal - a violation of the normal process by which the social system is transmitted from generation to generation of members. A change in society comes even as does a tumour in an organism, as a foreign and unwanted agent, not necessarily of destruction, but always of disturbance to the established and organizationally preferred structures and processes of life and that all social change is the work of socially deviant individuals acting in asocial ways” (Lapiere 1965: 38-39). However, “Social change, then, must be conceived of not as the replacement of one total structure by another, but by changes in sub-structures within one or another field. The changes and contradictions, in other words, are not between total structures but between sub-structures within one social field” (Bailey 1960: 241).

Sorokin rejected the standard rise and fall approach to the history of civilization. He focused not upon political and related events but upon such cultural phenomena as art forms, music, literature and modes of life and upon the nature and frequency of wars and other evidences of social disorder. "All societies", he decided, "fluctuate through time and between two polar extremes: the ideational (good) and the sensate (the bad). In its ideational phase the members of a society are guided by idealistic considerations and tend therefore to subordinate crass, personal concerns to the social goods; in its sensate phase, on the other hand, they are guided mainly by self interest and put their own individual welfare above that of the common good" (Sorokin 1941: 20). The whole system does not move in one coordinated swing toward one pole or the other; one aspect of the system, such as sexual conduct, maybe moving in the direction of the sensate while other, such as art forms, maybe changing towards the ideational.

Toynbee, on the other hand, is interested in the mode and manner by which people are organized. "Toynbee holds, society", says Lapeire, "change for a time by growing larger, stronger and more productive in a manner somewhat analogous to physical maturation of an organism; but as they in this sense approach maturity, they tend to develop organizational rigidity until at length they become stiff and unyielding even as does an organism in later years. In this condition a society may persist until it encounters some major crisis- war, plague, loss of material resources or the like" (Lapiere 1965: 20-21). Such a crisis constitutes a 'challenge' to which an ageing society may, but not always, will 'respond'. If the society responds, it recaptures something of the dynamics, adaptive quality that it has lost- it is revitalized, reborn; if it does not respond, it continues down the history path to oblivion.

Finally, Ogburn pointed out that social change always originate in the invention by some individual of a new way of doing something or of something new to do. "Historically", he argued, "inventions occur most often in the field of material technology, if only because the advantage of an improvement in technology is self-evident. With each development in technology, there comes, however, some disturbances to the effective working of the existing social order. A strain or stress is set up between

the new technique and various organizational aspects of the social system, changes in which comes slowly if at all. The result, disequilibrium between new technology and old social organization, is social lag” (Ogburn 1922: 31). The core of Ogburn’s theory is the idea that change first occurs in the material technology and the immaterial aspects fails to keep pace with such change in the former aspects subsequently creating cleavage between the two. Therefore, we will use the term social change for the present study of the Tangkhul society in the above light.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology followed throughout the course of the work is primarily a survey of secondary data like textbooks, journals, weekly magazines and so on. In other words, major share of the information used in the work is based on the works previously done on the Tangkhul society available in the university library and personal collections. In certain areas the researcher’s familiarity with the society under study comes as an added advantage though fieldwork, per se is not done. Such an effort brings us to discuss what ‘auto-anthropology’ is in the following pages. It will become evident that the work in hand has been substantiated immensely by this anthropological methodology. Finally, the work here should not be considered as exhaustive. On the contrary, it is to be taken as a pilot study for a more probing and analytically deeper work.

The following is an explanation of the premises upon which auto anthropology as a research methodology rests and the new perspective it can provide in the field of anthropology in general and ethnography in particular.

### **Auto-Anthropology**

Strathern defines the concept of auto-anthropology as “anthropology carried out in the social context which produced it” (Strathern 1983: 17). The concept covers the notion of an anthropological study of one’s own, one’s home and one’s self, and explores that

murky ground, at once physical, phenomenological, psychological, social and personal, which 'an anthropology at home' gives onto (Rapport and Overing 2000: 18). 'Home' is a conceptual category with shifting reference. The only way to measure or define anthropology at home seems to be by way of the resulting writings. They alone show "whether there is cultural continuity between his/her labours and what people in the society being studied produce by way of accounts of themselves. It is this continuity which marks a proper auto-anthropology: the adoption of appropriate local genres of representation, which is not at all a direct consequence of simply being a 'member' of the overarching culture or society in question. The ultimate consequence of auto anthropology would be, say, a Greek anthropological discourse in Greek about the Greeks and for the Greeks" (Hapstrup 1995: 152).

Anthropology, since its beginning, is primarily concerned with the study of the 'exotic' natives living in the remote corners of the world, often untouched by modernity or civilization of the west, and always, though not necessarily, a non-western society. It was concerned with an understanding of other cultures from the 'native's point of view'. Since then, there has been an expectation that ethnographers learn to think, feel and often behave like a native so that he would have access to all the social data as it is played out in the field. And because this can only be achieved through prolonged communication with the natives an extensive period of fieldwork has been essential to the profession. Although it has been claimed that the notion of immersion in the foreign culture is most often totally unwarranted, no anthropologist seems to deny that the closer the better. According to Hapstrup "To know another world one must associate with the natives of that world, even possibly become one of them, at least temporarily" (1995: 147).

Lowie argues that Boas encouraged the training of the native anthropologists on the assumption that in describing the total way of life of a people from the point of the people themselves, it is the trained natives who could best interpret life from within. Materials collected by the trained natives had "the immeasurable advantage of trustworthiness, authentically revealing precisely the elusive intimate thoughts and sentiments of the native, who spontaneously reveals themselves in these outpourings" (Lowie 1937: 133).

In the same spirit that Boas encouraged natives to become anthropologists, he also encouraged women because they could collect information on female behavior more easily than a male anthropologist. This attitude strongly implies that native and female anthropologists are seen as potential 'tools' to be used to provide important information to the "real", white male anthropologists (Jones 1982: 473). Thus, for a long time most of the methodological issues in anthropology centred on problems encountered by the outsiders. But there is another vantage point from which research can be conducted-that of 'insider', the person who conducts research on the cultural, racial, ethnic group etc. of which he himself is a member; the native anthropologist. By a "native anthropology", writes Jones, " I mean a set of theories based on non-western precepts and assumptions in the same sense that modern anthropology is based on and has supported western beliefs and values" (Jones 1982: 471).

It has been argued that the trained native anthropologist can produce the best and most reliable data, since he knows the language, has grown up in the culture, and has little difficulty in establishing rapport with the local people. It has also been suggested that a native anthropologist possibly feels the subtle links and nuances within a culture more easily than a foreigner. It is a fact that to collect data one has to communicate; but communication involves more than verbal exchanges. There are also facial expressions, hand movements, body movements, and tone of voice, to name some of the few subtleties of communication. And in all these acts the native anthropologist by virtue of his membership of the society in question is placed in an advantageous position compared to the outsider for the former have a core of common understanding with the locals.

Notwithstanding these advantages there are many disadvantages involved as well. Among the disadvantages or losses is the immediate positioning of the anthropologist within known social categories, a greater pressure to conform to local social norms and a certain propensity towards preconceived notions. Whether privileged or inhibited by local social boundaries, for the native anthropologist there remains a problem of transforming self-evident cultural knowledge to genuine anthropological understanding (Hapstrup 1995: 158). Furthermore, Hapstrup points out that "unlike the folklorist, the

anthropologist cannot begin to study even the quasitextual elements in the field (such as myth) without the recognition that his or her understanding may be inadequate and perfunctory. Ignorance has to be presumed from the outset. On this presumption, auto-anthropology is unconvincing (Hapstrup 1995: 153). She concludes by stating that "native anthropology", indeed, "is a contradiction in terms" because there is no way in which one can simultaneously speak from a native and an anthropological position. It is logically impossible to speak from an inside and an outside position at the same time. 'For the anthropological results to be theoretically and historically significant, one must reflect upon the objective conditions for the production of knowledge itself. For the native there is no way of incorporating such an objective viewpoint and still speak as native' (Hapstrup 1995: 159). In other words, the native anthropologist is unable to clearly set himself apart from his fellow citizens and creates a discontinuity between his accounts of them and their accounts of themselves. Jones while writing about the methodological issues in undertaking auto anthropology has specifically mentioned the difficulties involve therein. A Black himself, Jones studied a black urban neighbourhood in Denver, U.S.A. One major problem that he outlined is whether or not to withhold certain information from publication, which confronts anthropologists when compiling their data. Many who have done research in the Third World countries have withheld from their reports information, which they thought would displease or embarrass the host country and jeopardize their chances of returning. For the native anthropologist this problem takes on new dimension. " I felt this emotion even more keenly than I did as an outsider (he had also studied a remote village in Thailand, Lahu). As an outsider, you work with people who, because of cultural, racial, or language differences, are always aware that you are an outsider. As an insider, people often do not look upon you as a researcher. You may be a friend, someone who is trusted. In this capacity, people have revealed deeply personal things to me; and in this context also, I am in a position to learn many specific things about the people. Such revelation may be related to the research, but I would be both dishonest and disloyal to reveal such information" (Jones 1982: 477).

Thus, we can see that the native anthropologists are not spared from the research problems, though of a different genre with which the general anthropologists encounter.

Srinivas's, note of caution that 'the sociologist who is engaged in the study of his own society is likely to be influenced by his social position, not only in his observation but also in the problems he selects for the study' is well founded (Srinivas 1998: 161). It goes without saying that most problems studied by native anthropologists are most often necessitated by subjective considerations rather than pure academic standards. However, this need not always be a source of error; it might even turn out to be a source of insight. "Since subjectivity is inescapable as well as serious, a continuous effort must be made to reduce it. This is best done by recognizing its existence and by exposing the student, from the very beginning of his academic career, to the culture and institutions of alien societies. But that alone is not enough. One obvious measure would be to have the problem – any one problem- studied by sociologists with different backgrounds and indeed from different countries. International co-operation among professionals is indispensable for achieving greater objectivity in sociology" (Srinivas 1998:162). Nevertheless, here is a reflexive awareness that 'adequate anthropological accounts cannot be crafted without acknowledging the forces-epistemological and political- that condition their writing' (Whitaker 1997:476). Rapport and Overing concluded that the anthropological resolution would be that 'the discipline cannot continue to be practiced as if self knowledge did not exist, or were irrelevant, or somehow less important or less anthropological than collective knowledge' (Rapport & Overing 2000:28). "People's knowledge of themselves is of critical importance to us for without it we misunderstand them" (Cohen 1992: 230).

Doing social research involve numerous steps which the researcher should follow cautiously and objectively. For instance, right from the research proposal, the selection of field of research, the methodological and theoretical tools to be used for the collection of data, then data analysis, interpretation and subsequently the publication of the research work. The researcher needs to be very objective for his work to be scientific. As pointed out above, studying one's own society presents the researcher with regular chances of letting his/her subjectivity or preconceived ideas come into the research. However, this should not be the cause why one should not study one's own society and rather look forward for some one else to do the job. Perhaps it is not just preferable but also



necessary to study one's own society: Jones point out this necessity when he said 'I have already explained that many people with whom I talked felt that information in the currently available literature about black people is untrue, and it is untrue because it was written by whites who were unable to understand black behavior' (1982:477). Similarly, the erstwhile colonial rulers, who were in the first place political agents of the English government, wrote most of the ethnographical works available on the Tangkhuls. They were given training in anthropology 'to collect information about the subjects so that the administration could be conducted with the least expenditure and man power'. Given such a policy, the works lack methodological precision, theoretical richness and there are wide differences with what actually exists in the society and that is reported in the works. Therefore, it becomes imperative to study the Tangkhul society in a more analytical and probing manner which seeks at sociological explanation rather than being merely descriptive. As pointed out in the previous pages, the present work is well driven by the desire 'to set the record straight' about the images others have of the "Headhunting Tangkhul Nagas". To quote Jones again, "I feel that this point of view should be admittedly biased, in favour of the insider's own social group. Thus, when I seek to set the record straight about some of the things which have been written about black people, this is not only justified but necessary" (Jones 1982: 480). Besides this there are more general considerations, which calls for such studies.

One of the criticisms raised against anthropology, also by natives, and which is more or less related with the growth of auto-anthropology, is the standardized concept of culture. The concept allegedly blurs the selves and personalities of the natives in the search for a common cultural denominator. By their practice of writing cultures anthropologists have leveled individual differences and blurred internal inconsistencies and disorders. It has been suggested that the particular task of native anthropologists, therefore, is 'to write against culture' (Hapstrup 1995: 154). Similarly, Yogesh Atal, while writing about the growth of sociology and social anthropology in Asia and Pacific notes "Earlier studies were viewed by them not only as biased but also full of gaps; furthermore, the passage of time has made them dated. They feel the necessity to correct the image, to re-study and update them, to investigate many of the unexplored areas and

themes, and also document the process of directed culture change initiated by the governments in the post independence era. The rapidity of change has created a need to study existing reality before it is drastically transformed. Despite the devotion of western anthropologists to the study of cultures of this region, they could not cover all the ethnic groups. With the availability of native scholarship trained in the discipline the possibility of total coverage has increased. Problems of resource constraint, language difficulty, and establishing rapport are not so acute for the native anthropologists' (Atal 1985: 15). For Jones it was the 'strong desire to set the record straight' about the negative self-image compared to whites which current literature is filled with (Jones 1982: 447)

Owing to the lack of exhaustive research aimed at theoretical explanation about the Tangkhuls and also the lack of concepts and categories developed in the local context or other similar situations there is always the deliberate glossing over of local facts. There are certain phenomenon and categories locally existing, which the 'standardized' anthropological categories are inadequate for explanation. Therefore, the work here is also driven by the desire to evolve local genres of representing the local events and phenomenon. It is truly an attempt 'to write against culture' and also against time before the rich tradition is lost to the past. Asked, given the same empirical problems faced by the inside researcher and the outside researcher, is there any advantage to the native anthropologist at all? Delmos Jones replied, "My answer is yes, potentially. The problem at this point is that there are native anthropologists, but there is no native anthropology. By this, I mean there is little theory in anthropology which has been formulated from the point of view of tribal, peasant, or minority peoples. Thus, the whole value of the inside researcher is not that his data or insights into the social situation are better but they are different" (Jones 1982: 478). Moreover, the emergence of a native anthropology is part of an essential de-colonization of anthropological knowledge and requires drastic changes in the recruitment and training of anthropologists. To conclude, it is well to reiterate that the study of one's own society while it is changing rapidly—as all developing societies are undergoing – poses a challenge that calls for the mobilization of all the intellectual and moral resources of the sociologists and the anthropologists.

## **Chapter Scheme**

Chapter one is a brief description of the Tangkhuls who are concentrated in the eastern part of Manipur. They are patrilineal living in villages constituted of group of clans with a chief whose office is hereditary. The Tangkhuls ethnically belong to the larger group commonly known as the Nagas. Earlier before the arrival of the British colonial rulers they follow animism and head-hunting was practiced. However, with the eventual introduction of modern education, Christianity and related changes the Tangkhuls have more or less come at par with most of the tribal communities in the region, if not more in certain aspects.

Chapter two deals with the study of institutional changes. The modern forces in the form of growth of new institutions like the democratic structures, new leisure activities, economic institutions etc. are permeating the Tangkhul society, driving the traditional institutions to the background. On the other hand, majority of the Tangkhuls have yet to internalize the values that modernity entails so as to allow a smooth transition from the traditional society to a modern one. Materially, there is tremendous move of the Tangkhul society towards the modern standards. However, at the non-material culture tradition seems to be still very much influential in decision-making. Ogburn's concept of 'culture lag', which refers to the incompatibility between the material and the non-material aspects of a society, can be quite appropriate to explain the situation facing the Tangkhuls. The main concern of the chapter is to explain the interplay of these modernizing forces on the one hand and the traditional values on the other, and its consequences on the Tangkhuls. It is a fact that the Tangkhuls respect their age-old tribal laws and customs. If the old one is done away with all of a sudden it is likely to create vacuum in their social set-up. Therefore, any change has to be gradual and should also be acceptable to the society. For the urgency of formulating a planned transformation will be taken into account in this chapter. Furthermore the present chapter makes an attempt to identify important factors, both exogenous and endogenous, that have contributed in the transformation of the traditional institutions, both at the micro as well as macro levels.

Chapter three deals with the Tangkhul youths and how they, as a socially, politically and economically more vulnerable category, negotiate change. The concept of youth differs from society to society. Youth in this chapter refers to those groups of people, which the Tangkhul society recognizes with reference to the permissible age of entry into the *longshim*. The chapter discusses the reason why the Tangkhul youths are today a confused lot. Why neither the modern institutions are attractive to them or why the traditional footholds do not guide them. The chapter further throws light on the process of their disillusionment and rebellious nature because of lack of avenues of development for them. The process of marginalization of youth in the Tangkhul society has also been discussed towards the end of this chapter.

Chapter four takes into account the emergence of the tribal middle class, in this case the Tangkhul middle class. Until very recently the Tangkhul society did not have this class. However, with the modern wind sweeping across the Tangkhul country this class of people are well entrenched in the fabrics of the society now. Perhaps, they are the 'pioneers' of socio-economic and political transformation by virtue of their economic, political and educational advantages. The chapter dabbles with the term "tribal middle class".

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE TANGKHUL TRIBE

At the outset it is important to note that there is no standard definition for the term 'tribe'. The Government of India Act, 1935, used the term 'Backward tribes'. The Indian Constitution of 1950 has retained the terminology of the 1935 Act, with a slight alteration using 'scheduled' instead of 'backward'. Article 341 and 342 of the Indian Constitution empowers the President to specify certain groups as 'Scheduled tribes'. Article 366 (25) of the Constitution has defined 'scheduled tribes' as 'Such tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within which tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this Constitution'. In India, the term 'tribe' has legal and administrative connotations; therefore, they are called as 'scheduled tribes' (Shah 1984: 5). Since there is no precise sociological definition of the term tribe to guide the policy makers, the latter have categorised certain social groups as tribes on the basis of earlier precedents of the British administrators and geographical locations, economic conditions and life style of the group. Political expediency has also contributed in categorising some group as tribes. In this situation it is a difficult task for social scientists to define the term tribe independently of the administrative-legal category.

By the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, issued by the President in exercise of the power by Clause (1) of the Article 342 of the Constitution of India, 212 tribes have been declared to be scheduled tribes (Shah 1984: 5-6). Their inclusion and exclusion have been a hotbed for political bargaining for quite sometime now. "Purely for the sake of classification and enumeration, the British government in India introduced the category of 'tribe' ...In contemporary India, the word 'tribe' has thus little cultural or social implications. It has become the watchword of the political consciousness of a particular group of people in the country. Like caste consciousness, linguistic consciousness or regional consciousness, tribal consciousness is fast developing to be a political tool which has become symbolic of privileged treatment, separatist tendencies

and in places a barrier to national integration” (Mathur 1969: 460). All these compounded the problem of arriving at a neat category of the tribe in India.

The British-census officials-cum anthropologists for the purpose of enumerating social groups in India first used the term ‘tribe’. The definition given in the Imperial Gazetteer of India is “a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so” (Mazumdar 1961: 367). Mazumdar emphasizes the geographical factor and the endogamous nature of the tribe. According to him “a tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations”. In other words, a tribe is an endogamous unit, the members of which confine their marriage within the tribe. In another context he have defined tribe as “a social group with territorial affiliations, endogamous, with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language and dialect, recognizing social distances with other tribes or castes, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above all, conscious of a homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration” (Mazumdar and Madan 1970:241).

Given such a situation it is not surprising that the term ‘tribe’ still remains a vague, if not a shifting category in social science and among the social scientists as well. Talking about caste and tribe, F.G. Bailey, in his study of the Konds of the Kondmal hills, points out “There is no single and accepted criterion by which to distinguish a tribe from a caste. Yet at first sight the distinction is easily made; Tribal people live in the hills; they are not Hindus but animists; they are economically backward; they are autochthones; they speak tribal language. But none of these criteria are in themselves satisfactory and even when taken together they will not include all the people who are labelled as tribes by the administrators and ethnographers” (Bailey 1960: 263). Bailey goes further to postulate a continuum, which, he argues, is the solution to distinguishing



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tribe and caste. At one end of this continuum is a society whose political system is entirely of the segmentary egalitarian type, and which contains no dependent whatsoever; and at the other end is a society in which segmentary political relations exist only between a very small proportion of the total society and most people act in the system in the role of dependent. Just at what point on the continuum tribe ceases and caste begins is impossible to say, but this way of envisaging the situation does provide a rough and ready way of distinguishing a region and saying whether it is (so far political organisation is concerned) a tribal region or a caste region. Thus, Bailey conclude that since the Konds are a high proportion of the population of the Kondmals and since they typically comprised of about 80 per cent of the total population in their own villages with a small proportion of dependent, the greater part of the population were politically active in the segmentary system of political relations, and this region may, therefore, be counted as tribal (Bailey 1960: 264). What is of import here is Bailey's methodology of distinguishing between tribe and caste: "the methods of establishing whether a particular group is a tribe or a caste are not the same. If they have direct command over resources, and their access to the products of the economy are not derived immediately through a dependent status on others, then they are to be counted as a tribe, providing they fulfil a further condition: that they are relatively large proportion of the total population in the area. If they fulfil the first condition but are a small proportion of the population, then they are a caste" (Bailey 1960:265).

The work hereunder is a study of the scheduled tribe known as the Tangkhul residing in the state of Manipur. Ethnically the Tangkhuls belong to the Naga group, the latter being defined as "A conglomeration of a number of distinct tribes belonging to the Mongoloid racial group that share a set of physical and cultural traits" (Mills 1922: 15-16). Mishra suggests that "a deep attachment to native soil, to local traditions and rejection of outside domination characterize the modern Naga identity" (Mishra 2000: 16-17). There is confusion about the actual number of Naga tribes; the Encyclopedia Britannica mentions 20 main tribes with numerous sub-groups (see website 1). The memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission in 1929 by the Naga Club, mentions 8 tribes within the administered area, and more tribes outside the administered area, 'not

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known at present' (Wetshokhrolo 1999: 87). Vashum gives a complete list of 40 tribes with an area of distribution that spreads over the four states of North-eastern India- Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam- and over the north western part of Myanmar (erstwhile Burma), in Sagaing division, cluttering in the hill villages around Kamti, Layshe Lahe and NanYun Township, down to the Chindwin river in the east, and in Kachin state in western Myanmar (Vashum 2000: 10).

The 'Ancestral Domain' of the Nagas, loosely referred to as the 'Naga Hills,' belong to the north eastern Himalayan wall known as the 'Great Arakan Arc', which consist of very tightly packed parallel ridges, rarely exceeding 2000 metres and narrow valleys with a very high monsoon rainfall, the ranges have dense tropical and deciduous forest. The Nagas traditionally built their huts on hilltops to stay away from malarial valleys and to defend themselves against the raiding groups of head-hunters (see website 2). There are approximately 4,73,191 Nagas in the four hill districts of Manipur (Statistical Report of Manipur 1991). Little is known about the demographic strength, social organization and life circumstances of the Nagas in Myanmar; except that they cling to their original tribal culture and customs more tenaciously than the Nagas across the Indian side. Some report say that their number exceeds 100,000 (see website 3). Vashum estimates the total strength of the Naga population in all areas today to be 3 (three) million (Vashum 2001: 4). However, he is quick to point out that there are no exact figures available.

### **The Tangkhuls: Socio-economic profile**

The Tangkhuls occupies the areas lying roughly between latitude 25°5'N and 25°4'N and longitude 94°E. The area is situated in the north eastern part of India, extending over to the north western part of Myanmar. The Tangkhul country with an area of 3500 sq.miles is bordered by Myanmar in the east, Manipur valley on the west and southwest, and Nagaland on the north and northwest. Its irregular shape main body juts out into the valley of Manipur. Its immediate Naga neighbours are the Somra Nagas of Myanmar, the Chakeshang, the Angami and the Rengma Nagas of Nagaland, and the

Maos, Marams, Kabuis, Zelianrongs, Marings, Anals, Mayon, Monsang, Thangal and Kacha Nagas of Manipur (Horam 1992: 21). The Tangkhuls are dominantly concentrated in Ukhrul district in the state of Manipur. The district covers an area of 4,544sq.kilometres (Shimray 2000: 2); comprising 20.35 percent of the total land area of Manipur (Census of India 1991). The total population of Manipur stands at 1837149; Ukhrul district accounts for 109725 heads, which is 5.95 per cent of the total population for the state (Census of India 1991). The literacy rate of the district, percentage wise, is 62.54 per cent. Of these 72.11 are males and 51.57 are females. According to the census of 1991 the district comes second in the literacy rate in the state.

The Tangkhuls have eight regional divisions: (1) North - *Raphei* (2) North East - *Somra* (3) East - *Ram* (4) South east - *Kaikhang* (5) South - *Kamo* (6) West- *kharao* (7) South West - *Khaorei* (8) North West - *Kharao-Raora* (Horam 1992: 25). These are not administrative divisions created by the British. The above division apparently seems to have existed since time immemorial because the Tangkhul oral tradition speaks about such division. The Tangkhuls living in each region developed distinct characteristics, mainly in terms of economic specialization, of their identification. Thus, it appears to be a division on the basis of economic specialization. For instance, the '*Raphei*' men are expert potters and salt-makers and are known among their fellow tribesmen more for their skill in those crafts than anything else. Similarly the '*Kharaos*' are expert weavers and even today they produced the bulk of the clothes used by the Tangkhuls. The '*Kamo*' are fine workmen with canes and bamboos and produced a variety of baskets and mats.

Climatically, Tangkhul territory remains severely cold in winter while it is moderate during the summer. The area inhabited by the Tangkhul is girded by forested mountains up to 7-8 thousand feet high. The highest peak is the *Siroi kashung*, which is 8,427 feet above the sea level. The rainfall in the area during May to October varies from 56`` to 160`` during a year depending on the elevation. According to one of the legends of the Tangkhuls their origin is traced from a cave at a place called 'Murringhphy' in the hills (Roy and Rizvi 1990: 122). While another legend has it related to a sow owned by two brothers of Hundung village. One day the sow left the village. Later the younger

brother went in search of it and found it near the bank of river *Iril*. That is the place where *oknung*, the pig stone, is found. The brother on finding the patch of land more fertile settled there thus leaving his village of origin. The elder brother, however, lived on in the hills. In the beginning the younger brother maintained cordial relations with his brother in the hills who sent a great many things which grew or were made in the hills as presents to his younger brother. The latter reciprocated by sending novelties manufactured in the plain country. Soon the younger brother grew rich and pride took the better of him. He stopped sending gifts to his elder brother. According to Horam, "this is the reason when Hodson says that the legends explain why the Tangkhuls used to swoop down and loot the women vendors at the market place of Sena Keithel (a Tangkhul village of the same name which stands there now) on the Hao Chongpa Day which means 'the day of the Naga sports'. In Manipuri *Hao* means 'Naga' and *Chongpa* means to jump" (Horam 1977: 23). Later, the descendants of the younger brother who settled in the plains were known as the *meities*. While the descendants of the elder brother who remained at Hundung were referred to as the Tangkhuls. Still another legend has it that the Tangkhul and the Angami were living together in a village called Meikhel. Due to paucity of land for settlement and population pressure a section of them migrated towards north east of the area of present day Angami concentration. Their common origin is ascribed to the prevailing custom of deciding the date for celebration of festivals. To date the priests of the Angami villages (especially of the Kohima village) do not fix the dates of any of the festivals but await the orders of the priest of Mekharomei (Meikhel). The Tangkhuls who claim Meikhel as their place of origin hold similar beliefs and practices. This theory is known as the 'Makhen Theory'. However, the chronological period of migration by Tangkhul and their subsequent is yet to be validated.

The Tangkhuls live in villages with clearly defined territories. A Tangkhul village is an economically and politically independent unit, and each village is well demarcated to avoid inter-villages feud. Moreover, the Tangkhuls enjoy the right of ownership of the fields they cultivate. In each village there is a headman, locally called the '*awunga*', who is supposed to be the descendent of the first man under whose leadership that territory was conquered or exploited. A village consist of group families or '*shangs*' which owe

obedience to the headman. For each *shang* there is a head known as the *Pipa*, and he is subordinate to the village headman. All the *pipa*, depending on the number of *shangs* residing in the village constitute the Village Council, known as the *hangva* among the Tangkhuls, with the *awunga* as the head of the council. There are, as told by the elders, three villages which stand out to be the oldest villages among the Tangkhuls. They are Phungcham, Hunphun and Hundung. "Now there are as many as 200 villages in the 'Tangkhul country' and these were formed supposedly when the oldest villages proved too small to accommodate the growing population" (Horam 1992: 26). The Tangkhuls are primarily agriculturists. However, due to culture contact with plainsmen and other beyond their land, efforts of the voluntary and government agencies for economic development of the Tangkhul territory and education a considerable number of Tangkhuls are shifting to occupations such as trade, farming, petty businesses etc. while some are gradually taking to white collared jobs in offices of the state government. Tangkhuls practice shifting and terrace cultivation depending on the terrain where they live. The Tangkhuls living in east and south mainly practice shifting cultivation while people living in north and west adopted terrace cultivation.

The family is the basic unit of social structure among the Tangkhuls. Nuclear family pattern is the normal pattern among the Tangkhul whereby the sons upon marriage set up new households. In such an arrangement the parents and the unmarried siblings remain with the eldest son who eventually inherits the ancestral house. Shimray classified six types of family structures among the Tangkhuls, on the ground that "they maintained a hearth like any other family; are part of the society and give tax and subscription, if any, to the clan or locality etc. as a family unit. At the same time their houses are included in the census" (Shimray 2000: 34). The Tangkhuls are patriarchal and patrilineal. Thus, the father being head of the family exercises authority and power as per prescribed norms of the Tangkhul society in the maintenance of the family members of the household. He represents the family I every village meeting or community work. He also represents the family in the proceedings of the court whenever the need arises. The Tangkhul women also occupy an important position in the family. Though she is not treated at par with the men, she enjoys much freedom and liberty compared to her

counterpart in the Hindu caste society. She extends her support in the maintenance of the household.

The institution of '*phukreilas*' points to the important role the Tangkhul women plays in the society. Each *shang* is a exogamous unit and thus members are expected to marry outside one's *shang* but within the village. Nevertheless, inter village marriage existed in a limited scale. This happened usually between geographically close villages though this was not a prescribed practice. Relations between villages were restricted due to head-hunting. Inter clan head hunting was also practiced among the Tangkhuls. And it is this context that the role of the *phukreilas* needs to be understood. The name '*phukriela*' refers to the married women of a *shang*, who before marriage belonged to a different group. For instance, when feud or war broke out between her husband's *shang* and her natal *shang* she acted as the peace emissary. It is reported that during such conflicts when bloodshed continues incessantly the *phukreila* would walked in between the warring groups calling them to stop killing each other. In such situations the warring groups dare not harm her for the retribution for it used to be severe as both her kinsmen and her husband's kinsmen normally unite to seek vengeance for her sake. Even in times of peace the Tangkhul women plays important role in the society. She is free to remarry if her previous marriage failed due one reason or the other. Or she can still opt to stay unmarried. The Tangkhul woman has the full backing of her kinsmen. Anyone found outraging her modesty and reputation would invite the wrath of her whole *shang*. If she is married her husband's *shang* will also be involved which altogether normally deters a person from committing such activities. Owing to this liberal upbringing since time in immemorial they still continue to enjoy considerable privilege in the society even today. Primogeniture is the fundamental rule of inheritance and succession. Though the customs were strict about the giving of ancestral properties to women, family land and other property acquired during the lifetime of their parents are given to the daughter at the time of her marriage. Matrilateral cross cousin is the most preferential marriage partner. This is the marriage of one's mother's brother's daughter (MBD). But one cannot marry one's father's sister's daughter (FZD). In other words, the giver's family keeps giving and the taker's family keeps receiving at least for three generations or so to say, until the known

affinal relation has not been lost to time. After that if no further marriage takes place, that is, as the distance became wider due to no further interaction of marriage, the receivers can also be the givers.

*Shangnao* in the Tangkhul dialect reflects the clan solidarity, mutual love affection and cooperation between the members of the same clan. As mentioned above, each clan has its head. The family of the head traces its descent from the original family where the sons and paternal cousins constitute *shang*. The office of the head of the *shang* is hereditary and the eldest son holds the position of the head after the death of his father. The head of the clan not only coordinates the help and cooperation within the households of a *shang* residing within the village but also settles interfamilial disputes. He, after consultation with heads of the families, takes decisions regarding matters related to marriage, birth and death in a family. He is the representative spokesperson of the *shang* in the *hangva*. He also acts as an advisor to the *awunga*. Roy and Rizvi notes that "The mutual rights and duties of kin group and *shang* members are the stable feature of the Tangkhul society" (1990: 129). The widows, destitutes and orphans are maintained by family members of the kin group. Furthermore, during the days of hardship mainly due to poor harvest, damage to houses due fire or inability to work in jhum field owing to illness etc. the *shang* extend help in performing such tasks. They also provide support in performing ritual during marriage and death which entails considerable expenditure. After the death of her husband a widow is allowed to re-marry. But if she wishes to remain a widow her welfare and needs are met collectively by the *shangnao* of her deceased husband.

There is still another functional organization among the Tangkhuls which needs to be mentioned. This is the *long*. The *long* is simply a socio-cultural organization. It does not prevail over the existing customary laws. The *long* is supposedly a very recent development compared to the institution of *shang*. One can say that this is the result of the wider interest of the Tangkhuls to come together and reap the benefits of the various grants extended by the government. However, they also come together for other purposes and objectives. Tangkhul Naga *Long* is the apex organization among the Tangkhuls.

Usually members of the same *shang* also formed *long*. However, in majority of the cases its membership often include members other than one's own *shang*. This organization is gaining momentum and emerging as one of the most powerful 'non-governmental' organization.

From the above pages we see that the *shang* function as the most important institution in exercising control over its individual members within the Tangkhul society. It regulates the rhythm and the activities of social, political, economic and cultural life of its members. However, such absolute control that the *shang* exercises over the members were not regarded stifling as ample freedom is provided as long as one confirms to the practices of the *shang*. Individualism as an established feature did not exist among the Tangkhuls. Nor was there any necessity for it. A person is identified with the group and he received recognition and respect according to the position that he occupies within the group. In the recent years things have changed drastically. Besides the growing sense of individualism there are different and varied changes occurring within the Tangkhul society. All that is traditional is being replaced by the so-called modern and rational ways. The people's outlook, standard of living, taste etc. have greatly been by the processes of modernization, especially westernization by virtue of the Tangkhuls contact with the colonial rulers, education, urbanization, the effects of formal political processes etc. The following chapter is a humble attempt to trace this change that is happening among the Tangkhuls and at the same time to also note the effects that such forces of change engenders for the society in question.



## Notes

1. The word Tangkhul is said to have been derived from the name of a person called '*Tangkhu*' who possessed exceptionally outstanding social and martial qualities. He was good at dancing and also physically fit and adept in various arts such as wrestling and fighting. He had a number of followers. Even the *meiteis* came to learn such arts. They called these people the people of *Tangkhu*, and hence the tribe is known by the name 'Tangkhul'.
2. The *meiteis* are the settlers of the valley, the areas around Imphal, the capital of Manipur. They are more advanced economically, educationally and politically. Even population wise, they comprise more than fifty per cent of the total state's population. Legends have it that the Tangkhuls and the *meiteis* are brothers. However, the authenticity of such claims is easily disprovable due to the lack of historical evidences.
3. '*Hangva*' is the Tangkhul term for the village council
4. *shang* is the Tangkhul word for 'clan' or 'khel'.
5. *Hao* usually is a word used for the tribals by the plainsmen, mainly the meities. For that matter it does not specifically mean the Tangkhul or other Naga tribe alone. The Kukis, Hmars etc are also called by the same name. Moreover, the word is generally used with certain overtones of prejudice against the tribals. Thus, many literate tribals resent being addressed as *haos*
6. Hunphun is the old name for the present day Ukhul, one of the district headquarters in Manipur.
7. *Awunga* literally means 'monarch' in Tangkhul. The office of the *awunga* is passed on to the eldest son, since the chiefship is hereditary. Generally there is one *awunga* in a village on the basis of who traces their ancestor to the first person who had occupied the land. There are cases where there are claims and counter claims to the office. When such

conflicts could not be resolved amicably there is fission of the village often one of the claimants moving out of the village to establish a new one where he can be the head. This is also one of the factors for the existence of so many villages among the Tangkhuls. Very recently there have been moves to install a new office that of the village chairman in the line of the more formal political administration. It is reported that it has been put into trial in some of the Tangkhul villages. This move has not been welcome equally by the Tangkhuls. The *awunga* of the various Tangkhul villages are the most apprehensive. They fear that all their powers and authority, whatsoever have managed to linger on till date will be overridden by the new office. On the other hand, the counter argument advanced for the establishment of the office of chairmanship is that the society needs to be in sync'd with the changing times. Usually the *awungas* are uneducated and thus were inefficient to take advantage of the grants extended by the government. Therefore, in order to be able to exploit the opportunity for development a new leadership on the lines of modern qualifications needs to be installed. The debate is still going on.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

The Tangkhul way of life a hundreds years ago had known little or no variation. In recent years, however, there have been tremendous changes so that many features of Tangkhul life have either drastically changed or completely disappeared. Drastic changes have invaded their daily lives and the effects of these have percolated down from the family to the clan and onward to their villages and thereby to the whole tribe. These changes were initiated by the British rule, which brought Christianity and western education to the Tangkhuls. The introduction of modern economic, political and administrative mechanisms in the post Independent India further augmented the pace of change among the Tangkhuls. More recently the rapid technological revolution in the domain of mass communication have also made considerable impact upon the Tangkhuls in shaping their needs, views and living standards. One important point to be noted at the outset is that the Tangkhul tribe's reaction to the new ideas must be viewed in the light of their almost total isolation from other communities before the British come to these hills. The primary objective of this chapter is to present the changing nature of the institutions of clan, tribe, the economy, the *morung* etc. which have a direct bearing on the youth with regard to social control and sanction. We have treated festivals as an institution in this chapter for better understanding of the Tangkhul culture.

#### Conceptual Definition

As pointed out above, the chapter is basically concerned with some of the primary institutions in the Tangkhul society such as the clan, the *morung*, and the economy. These are the primary domain of social control and sanction. Their changes have contributed to the dying spirit of 'conscience collective' and the growing individualism along with the dwindling social control and sanctions. All these in turn affected the personality development of the younger generation and the world before them is presented as a chaotic and disparate image instead of presenting a coherent and stable social order.

Before proceeding further it would be worthwhile to conceptually define what we mean by 'institution'.

Social institutions are usually conceived of as the basic focus of social organizations, common to all societies and dealing with some of the basic universal problems of ordered social life. They are the established or socially recognized systems of norms or patterns of conduct backed by sanctions. Three basic aspects of institution are emphasized. First, the patterns of behaviour, which are regulated by institutions, deal with some perennial, basic problems of any society. Second, institutions involve the regulation of behaviour of individuals in society according to some definite, continuous and organized patterns. Finally these patterns involved a definite normative ordering and regulation; that is, regulation is upheld by norms and by sanctions, which are legitimized by these norms (Eisentadt 1968:409). Morse defines institution as those "parameters of action" and that all such parameters including language, knowledge, recognized natural resources, skills and not only such things as hospitals, universities, and parliaments are institutions. Technological improvement, the emergence of religious sects, constitutional amendments and revolutions are all examples of institutional changes (Morse 1969: 268). According to him, 'Institutions are bounded, integrated and internalized sets of social components; ideas, concepts symbols, rules, statuses, relationships and so on'. By "bounded" we mean that the relevance of the set of components is restricted in certain commonly understood ways; for example to people in a certain geographical area or kinship group, to those belonging to certain formal or informal organizations, to those engaged in certain formal or informal organizations, to those engaged in certain kinds of behaviour or present at certain time or places, and so on. By "integrated" we mean that there is a logical, an empirically necessary, or a historically sanctioned interdependence, consistency, and appropriateness among the components of a given institution. By "internalized" we mean that the individual whose behaviour is guided by an institution understand its components and their interdependence and that, through emotional attachment or intellectual appreciation, there is a measure of commitment to the institution. Institutions, thus, establish and co-ordinate behaviour patterns, making social action meaningful (Morse 1969: 268-69).

For the present work here, institution, thus, refers to the 'socially recognized and established patterns of activities backed by sanctions which can be either positive or negative for ordered existence of the society'. It is because of this that we have included festival as an institution. Horam observes that 'the Tangkhuls still observe the traditional festivals with only difference that the non-participant is neither fined nor punished as in the pre-Christian days. However there are exceptions, whereas, festivals which smacks of superstition by Christian standards are frowned upon, other festivals, especially having their origin in agriculture are still celebrated enthusiastically. In fact non-observance of such festivals still results in ex-communication of the non-participant' (Horam 1977:38).

The second basic concept, which needs to be elucidated for this study here, is 'social control'. Much of the impetus for the development and use of the concept of social control comes from the sociological adaptation of the Darwinian tradition. Various theories of social control emphasize the dichotomy between individual and society. It is assumed in these theories that society has to control the animal nature of man; if order is to be established and maintained, man's tendency to pursue his self interest to the point of war of all against all must be limited through learning or selection or both. Although social control is essentially an American term, it has its functional equivalents in European sociology. Durkhiem saw the conscience collective as constraining men, with a power directly proportional to the intensity of the interaction around its specific representations, to behave in certain ways, regardless of their own selfish interest. Thus, a major function of social institutions such as the family, marriage, and religious cults were to increase the constraining power of the conscience collective; institutions were essentially agencies of social control (Pitts 1968: 389). In the following pages we will observe how the institutions play an important role in exercising social control over the Tangkhuls.

## The Tangkhul Village Polity

The Tangkhuls live in villages and unlike the kukis they are permanently settled. In fact, all Naga tribes are well settled in clearly defined territories; but the kuki villages are temporal entities and they frequently move from one place to another. For the Tangkhul Nagas, like all other Nagas, the ancestral settlement is something to be preserved and cherished. They are very much attached to their ancestral homes and villages. A village is an economically and politically independent unit, and each village is well demarcated to avoid inter-village feuds. The Tangkhul villages are built on hilltops and they are defended by stonewalls, spiked bamboo palisades, and thorn fences. There are, as told by the elders, three villages which stand out to be the oldest villages among the Tangkhuls- *Phungcham*, *Hunphun* (now *Ukhrul*) and *Hundung* (also called *Hungpum*). Now there are as many as 200 villages in the Tangkhul area as they are supposed to have been formed when the original villages proved too small to accommodate the growing population (Horam 1977: 26).

In each village there is a headman known as *Awunga*, the equivalent of the English term king. He is supposed to be the first man under whose leadership that territory was conquered or exploited. A village consists of groups of families or *shangs* (clans), which owe obedience to the *Awunga*. For each *shang* there is a head and he is subordinate to the *Awunga*. All the heads of each *shang* as is found in the village form the '*hagva*' with the *Awunga* at the top. "Even more interesting is the fact of clear cut boundaries of each *shang* (*khel*) within the same village. Among the Tangkhuls all the clans are exogamous with a distinct name, a specific area of residence and, a clan head. In the olden days, in addition to the fortification and walls all around a village, there used to be walls compartmentalizing the village itself. Gates were provided in these walls to go from one *khel* to another, but just as the main village gate was shut for the night and guarded by the village youth, *khel* gates too had their closing time as well as a night watch. This was done in view of the inter- clan feuds and disputes as well as in the larger interest of village security" (Horam 1977: 19).

A Tangkhul Naga village is a politically organized entity. Villages are generally ruled by headmen (*Awunga*), an institution vested with a great deal of authority but far from being despotic. "The Government of every Naga tribe is a purely democratic one, and whenever anything of public importance had to be taken all the chiefs met together in solemn as to one single chief exercising absolute control over his people, the thing is unheard of" (Barpujari 1970: 7). The village headman is prominent at all social and religious gatherings and festivals of the village. As a token of respect for his high status, he is entitled to a portion of meat of the animals killed during festivals. The youth help him build and repair his house as well as cultivate his fields. He is always offered the best *khor* during festivities. The headman plays a dual role, secular and religious. The headman and the village priest usually share the religious functions. As the headman, he inaugurates the village festivals; he is the first to sow the seeds, first to plant and first to harvest. The secular duties of the headman are manifold. In these, he is assisted by the *Hangva* (Village Council). First and foremost, the headman is responsible for the defence of the village and the general well being of the subjects. He parcel out cultivable to the villagers in consultation with the village councillors. It is interesting to note that the village *awunga* though enjoys special status and extraordinary powers yet the *hangva* (village council) keeps strict vigil on him through exercising control and curbing some of its powers.

Among the Tangkhuls the village council known, as the *Hangva* is another important institution of the village. It is the principal governing organ of the village. The heads of the clans, depending on the number of clans in the village, are the ex-officio members of the council. The village council performs executive, administrative and judicial functions. The executive functions include the deciding of disputes- both private and public. "Every evening, all men gather in spacious Council room to discuss the topics of the day, which means (i) to inform one another of what has been seen or heard; (ii) to discuss the political questions set forth by one of the chiefs and (iii) to settle what the village will do on the next day, for it is understood that no one is free to dispose of his time as he thinks fit; his daily work is cut out, discusses and officially decreed by the majority of the council. Hence every evening between 10 and 11 o'clock boys are sent about the village.



shouting at their top of their voice "Tomorrow a tiger hunt, Tomorrow fishing, tomorrow field labour: Tomorrow a *genna*" (Krick 1913:119). Such was also the case for the Tangkhuls where corporate living was given the top most importance over the personal and selfish considerations. The executive powers of the council also include punishing the villagers who breaks any of the time-honoured laws of the land. The administrative functions of the council include the maintenance of the village water supply and footpaths, construction of new paths and bridges across streams and rivers, which are difficult to cross. Fixing of dates for the village festivals, religious ceremonies and taboo observations, cultivation etc. in consultation with the village priest or the headman are some of the functions performed by the *hangva*. Further, the *hangva* is also very much responsible for the implementation of its decisions for keeping the Tangkhul society in check. According to Horam, the village council is also the custodian of each village's "pool of rice" or "village granary" and uses its discretion in distributing it. The most important function of the council is judicial. The councillors and the headman constitute the 'village court'. The village court is the highest court of justice among the Tangkhuls, just as it is among the other Naga tribes. The clan elders, as far as possible decide all the disputes and differences between the families belonging to the same clan. These disputes usually pertain to marriage, divorce, rape, defamation, inheritance etc. And if elders fail to decide these disputes satisfactorily they are referred to the village court.

## **Festivals**

The early tribal life centred on the soil, the ancestral fields, sowing and harvesting. Village feasts were dictated by the agricultural calendar and the seasons. Most religious ceremonies and festivals were directly connected with fields. Gods and spirits are placated or lured so as not to bring blight and frost and to bless the village with good harvest. *Gennas*, compulsory rest days, mass abstention of work at the height of the agricultural season, sacrifices and prayers, all have the same and the single aim; that of plentiful harvest. The entire Tangkhul social structure is dependent on the economic self-sufficiency and thus everything rests on the paddy-crops. Though rooted in solemnity, all

festivals are joyous occasions of prolonged feasting, copious drinking, and merry making. Indeed, whatever the nature of the festival, food, meaning meat and drink, figure prominently in each of these festivals. Some of festivals are described below:

*Luirra*: This is the main agricultural festival of the year and its celebrations spread over a period of about eleven days and are sometimes stretched to a fortnight. The festival, determined by the full moon, falls in the month of *Marun* (February). It is marked by feasting, *genna* worship and economic transaction. Most importantly, it is celebrated to mark the beginning of seed sowing.

*Thisam*: Also known as *kathi-kasam*, which literally means 'chasing the death.' It pertains to the departed souls. This is celebrated in the month of *tharao* (December). It is as solemn an occasion as *luirra* is gay. The Tangkhuls believe that the soul do not perish with the body. It lives on, but not at the human plane. To enable the soul of the death to leave behind the known and the familiar, the soul's kith and kin engage the service of the village priest.

*Yarra*: This is the festival of the youth. *Yarra* coincides with early spring (April) and lasts for four days. It is a happy time for lovers, newly weds, and ardent suitors courting beautiful maidens. Sighing lovers compose many impromptu songs, and as such this is a season of poetry, song and dance.

Some other festivals of the Tangkhuls are *Mankhap*, *kashong kahao*, and *maiwon zai*. These three festivals are celebrated in that order; and in fact represent frequent reminders to gods for blessings for the crops. The festivals are held at intervals when the paddy stem is at different stages of its growth. *Mankhap* marks the end of paddy transplanting, *kashong kahao* invokes divine blessing on knee high paddy and finally, *Mawon zai* propitiates gods when the paddy is already in ears and flowering. 'Singing comes as naturally to the Tangkhuls as breathing. They always sing in mirth and in sorrow, when alone or in groups, in sunshine or in rain'. (Horam 1977:51). Songs and dances follow the pattern of the

seasons and there as many types of songs and dances as there are seasons, festivals, social, cultural, religious, political and agricultural activities. Many of the songs and dances are symbolic or cognitive expression of the dynamics of the Tangkhul society. Almost anything seems to inspire the Tangkhuls to compose songs. This is evident from the rich variety of songs that the Tangkhuls have. Some major types of songs are listed below;

*Raila*-war song

*Meisumla*-songs sung in the dormitories

*Luishaola*-songs of paddy planting and seedlings and transplantations

*Yarrala*-spring song

*Naokhotla*-lullaby

*Yangyirla*-autumn song

*Chapchatla*-songs for the death

*Petla* –evensongs

*Maranla*-house building song (Horam 1977: 52).

Perhaps songs acted as the means of handing down the knowledge and history of the old generation to the upcoming ones in the absence of scripts and letters. Songs were composed of important events, persons and regions, of bravery, war and so on which were passed on from one age to another. It acted as the repertoire of history for the Tangkhuls and often comes helpful in times of disputes between groups. Many songs bear witness to the arrival of a particular group to a particular area, their forefathers, dispersals and the land they cultivated. Therefore, it can inarguably be stated that more than just being for mirth and lightening oneself from the fatigued of daily works songs, dances and the festivals are intimately link to the Tangkhul social, cultural structure and their knowledge would gives an intimate glimpse of the religious and social life of the Tangkhuls before they embrace Christianity. Most of these festivals have their origin in agriculture but because of the very nature of the Tangkhul beliefs, they have strong religious tones. What needs mention here is the belief that if any of the villagers fail to participate in any of these festivals, most of which is to placate the spirits for good harvest, then the spirits will be offended. Simultaneously, it will mean poor harvest which

in turn would mean hunger and death for the whole village. Therefore, the absentees are treated with contempt. They are held responsible for whatever misfortune befell the village. In such situation most of them dare not violate the collective conscience. Implicitly, this further cements the social ties and obligations to the group. Festivals, thus plays a dominant role in inculcating 'we' feeling and exercising social control over the members of the Tangkhul society.

### **Economy**

It is to be noted that in the hills, which comprise about 90 per cent of Manipur total land area, extensive cultivation on a large scale is not practice able because of the mountainous terrain and lesser quality of soil and also lack of irrigation systems. But this should not be taken to mean that the tribals of Manipur are ignorant of cultivation. The Tangkhuls practice jhumming, mostly in the south and the east. Tangkhuls in the west and the north have permanent terrace cultivation. The sources of livelihood or means of subsistence are the same everywhere in the hills. The villagers of the hill are predominantly cultivators. 'A cultivator is a person engaged in cultivation of his own land or that of another person. Cultivation involves ploughing, sowing and harvesting and production of cereals, pulses, fibre crops like cotton, jute, etc. and other crops such as oil seeds and cash crops such as sugarcane, groundnut tapioca etc.'(Census of India, 1981). Over the years there has been very little diversification in the occupations. The economy is subsistence oriented rather than market oriented which means it is characterized by self-employed workers, their families and unpaid helpers in and around the household.

The area where the Tangkhul settle receives moderately heavy rainfall and is mountainous clad with dense forest. Teak, pine, *Aquilaria Agallocha* (*Agor*), and many other types of tree of economic value grow in the forest where the Tangkhuls are settled. The main economic activities of the Tangkhuls include cultivation, collection of forest products, sale of firewood and charcoal and small-scale cottage industries comprising mainly weaving, handicrafts and pottery. But most of them are predominantly cultivators. The net area sown is, however, hardly 4.51 per cent of the total geographical area while

the area sown more than once constitutes 1.07 percent only (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 1982: 5). The total cropped area forms only 5.58 per cent of the total geographical area. Most of the cropped area is under rice and maize; other crops grown are potato, cotton, citrus fruits, vegetables etc. The Tribal Benchmark Survey reported 55.4 per cent of the Tangkhul households practicing permanent cultivation and 41.3 per cent of house holds practicing shifting cultivation wholly or partly (Ansari 1991: 115). Among minor crops soyabean, millet, cabbage, beans, pumpkins, gourds, chilly etc. may be included. People supplement their income by keeping animals, which include bullocks, cows, buffaloes, pigs, mithun and poultry. Outside cultivation some persons are engaged in cottage industry and as artisans in different crafts. Most of these artisans are weavers and good number of them manufactures bamboo\cane products. Some of the Tangkhuls are also engaged in pottery.

### **The *longshim***

Like other Naga tribes the Tangkhul Nagas have the institution of a bachelors' or young men's dormitory, referred to as the '*morung*'. The Tangkhul name for *morung* is '*longshim*'-*long* meaning group, and *shim* meaning house. The aforesaid institution has almost vanished or has, at best, left only a vestige. Among the Tangkhuls the practice is revived in a limited way during *laira* as also during Christmas (Horam 1977: 68). Most Naga tribes have separate or special houses to be used as the bachelors' dormitory. The youth of a Tangkhul village use their headman's house as their *longshim*. It is so because the headman's house was large and more spacious than the houses of others in the village. In a big village if the headman's house proved too small, the youth from each clan would use the house of the clan head as their clan *longshim*. In this context, the most popular clan head is usually chosen to accommodate the young men in certain villages. The *longshim* used to be decorated with human and animal skulls and other trophies and insignias of war. *Longsim*, as used here, generally refers to the man's dormitory. However there is another type of grouping which belongs to the unmarried women known as '*ngala long*' (ladies' dormitory): '*Ngala*', meaning the young unmarried women, and '*long*' meaning group. But it is true that this later category has been a case of

academic neglect in anthropological writings. Though a detailed study of this relatively neglect domain should have been useful for the subject but the ambit of the present research does not allow us to harp on this relatively virgin area of social science research.

Let us now define the contours of the *longshim*. Membership of a *longshim* is based on age and sex. Generally, a Tangkhul boy is ready to go to the *longshim* while he is quite young- say, about at the age of 12 or as soon as he has attained puberty and remains a member till he is married and sets up a home of his own. Play, singing and dancing are the regular features of the *longshim*. Of all the activities, singing is the most popular as it were, for with the Tangkhuls, as indeed with most of the Nagas, 'singing comes as naturally as breathing' (Horam 1977:51). But for a "yarnao" life is not only song and play. The *longshim* strikes a proper balance between education and fun. Time spent in the *longshim* is divided between pleasure and purpose. The functional aspects of *longshims* assumes more importance as it prepares the young men for all the tasks and responsibilities of life. Discipline, obedience and efficiency are the hallmarks of the *longshim* youth. He is expected to be swift in discharging his duties. *Longshim* is also the centre of all activities during festivals, taboos and religious ceremonies. Still more, the *longshim* served not only as the communal centres of all adult males but also the recruiting ground for any emergency or for works of public utility. Hence the *longshim* educates the tribal youth in its own fashion and to the need of the Tangkhuls. In this context it is, important to note the observation made by Sachchidananda about the dormitory as it exist among the Oroans to draw a parallel with the *longshim*. He opines that 'whenever a Dhumkuria, as the youths dormitory is known among the Oroans, exists it has three important functions; as, a sleeping house, as a school of dancing and music and as providing a co-operative labour unit on request by any member of the village' (Sachchidananda 1958:73). Similarly the *longshim* also functions as the main school for imparting training in martial arts. The senior members of the *longshim* teach the young entrants a variety of arts like singing of heroic songs, dance, use of bows and arrows for hunting purpose and war. All possible guidance is rendered for an overall socialization of the young entrant to make him a responsible youth. The bachelors' dormitory, according to Roy, is the best institution for imparting training to develop "spirit of responsibility,

alertness and habit of taking risk in the face of danger” (Roy 1966:194). Community feeling is also promoted through dormitory which prepares a combined task force to meet any eventuality in the society. Goswami, while discussing the importance of dormitory among the Hill Lalungs states that “dormitory system is built in mechanism in shifting hill cultivation economy both for co-coordinating the activities of the individuals and other social units as well as for perpetuating a smooth functioning of their society. The shifting cultivators have no rooms in their homes where they can entertain or lodge the guest and unknown visitors. The village dormitory serves all these purposes. Shifting cultivation needs the occasional help of a number of individuals than what an individual family can provide. This situation is overcome by extending an invitation to the work group of the dormitory. An outstanding feature of the village dormitory is to keep the inhabitants of the village united in their thoughts and actions through collective participation at the public rituals through the agency of the youths of the dormitory” (Goswami 1972:10-12). These functions found among the Hill Lalungs are also found among the Tangkhul *longshim* in a more or less similar fashion.

### **Recent Changes in the Tangkhul Institutions**

The various institutions of the Tangkhuls, for instance, the *shang*, the *hangva* and the *longshim* etc. have now undergone tremendous changes. These changes have been so overpowering that many features of the Tangkhul life have completely disappeared. There is no aspect of the Tangkhul society, which has not been touched by change. Whether we look at the Tangkhuls economically, politically, socially or in the religious field, changes are not hard to see. In fact, this is true of other parts of India as well, but what hits us at once in the case of the Tangkhul Nagas is the speed of the change. The transition has been far from gradual. Tangkhuls today are no longer insulated from outside influences as they were in the days of yore. The present Tangkhul society has witnessed sudden and drastic changes, and these, and the more gradual changes that are occurring daily have caused unanticipated imbalances in the institutional set-up of the Tangkhul society.

It will be in place if we discuss the factors of change in the Tangkhul society here. Exogenous factors of change in the Tangkhul society in the past were insignificant. Though oral accounts of trade relations with the *meities* existed in the past, they were too few to make any impact on the Tangkhuls. Moreover, their contacts were geographically limited to the villages of the Tangkhuls bordering the Imphal valley, where the *meities* are concentrated for centuries now. Thus, such contacts were too minimal to be of any major impact on the Tangkhuls. The first large-scale contact came with the establishment of the British rule over the Naga Hills in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, the introduction of Christianity through western missionaries, culture contact with the *meities* of the valley (post British rule), introduction of formal education and variety of economic pursuits, invasion of the Japanese army in 1944 during the II World war are some of landmarks in the socio-political history of Tangkhuls which brought about changes in the ways and life of the Tangkhul society (Roy 1990:136). The village council, which operated on a completely different set of principles to those of modern elective bodies, has undergone a silent change in its operative. The council which operated on the basis of unquestionable loyalty, unanimity of decisions, adherence to customs and traditions and respect for age and experience is replacing many of its tenets. Loyalties and adherence to customs have come to be questioned and decisions in the council are being taken by majority rather than unanimity. Education and acquaintance with modern political process of the leaders rather than their age and experience are being given more and more importance in the village. Deliberations in the council have come to be influenced by political considerations. The village council, which has sway over the life and death of the individuals no longer, enjoys the same position today. Unlike in the past, the villagers do not abide by the decisions of the council in all cases, in many villages. Traditional leaders are losing ground and their places are being taken by growing influential persons with numerical supports in the village. The formation of the Autonomous District Councils, under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution after India's independence is also an important landmark which brought some change. These councils were entrusted with the monitoring and maintenance of schools, dispensary, building and construction of roads. The council also acts as advisor to the state government for legislation in respect of the customary laws. It should be noted that, although the district councils were formed



devoid of any provision to control the customary laws it gradually intruded into the domain of the *hangva*, the erstwhile repository of social control and sanction, thereby eroding of the latter of its function and control.

The above-mentioned changes accentuated the process of modernization among the Tangkhuls who gradually started abandoning their old customs, dress and livelihood. The introduction of formal political and other bureaucratic processes and institutions relegated the traditional political system of administration and governance to the background. Cumulatively, these developments have led to the rapid transformation of the leadership structure in the village level. Traditionally, the village priest, the chieftain, experienced people and elders and people with gifts of the gals constitute the leadership structure in the village, depending upon the tribe and the system of village council. Now these ascriptive factors are no longer treated as the sole resources for the village leadership. The social base of the present leadership is different from that of the traditional ones. The present leadership mainly created by the present government, unlike the traditional counterparts, is generally younger in age and has formal education. Many of them belong to comparatively lower income group having small land holding and lesser wealth. Unlike the traditional leaders, they are engaged mostly in modern occupations like contract and business which are usually combined with traditional occupation. The newly emerging leadership in the village displays a higher level of awareness of modern political processes. The leaders are normally well informed. Many of them listen to radio news and radio talks regularly. Politically they are quite active. A great majority of them are approached by the candidates in general elections for enlisting their support. Some of them also have their linkage with higher-level leadership. They take active part in the elections campaigns in support of their candidates, which were totally unknown to the earlier leadership. The present leadership shows a sense of modernism in their political outlook. Moreover, the marriage rules related with *shang*, the village *genna* and other normative rules which were of utmost importance, not so long ago, are gradually ignored by the youth who receive their formal education in urban and metropolitan cities and who had the opportunity of coming into close contact with the modern standards. Horam notes "Under the old Naga life and customs, an individual

must in order to live in the village obey the clan elders and put up with all the curbs put on his activities by them. This accounted for the stern discipline and unity that prevailed within each clan. Both reformers and missionaries undermined the importance of the clan by making every member conscious of his individuality and rights. This has resulted in every man placing his own interests over those of the clan and openly challenging the authority of the clan. The resulting disintegration and indiscipline can be imagined. The spirit of sacrifice and unity at all cost have disappeared and with these are going some of the most noble traits of Naga character" (Horam 1977:40).

The *longshim* in spite of its important function is becoming obsolete due to the spread of Christianity, formal education and the impact of alien civilization which denounce the practices of the *longshim*. The modern winds of change seems to be working in rivalry, and not in cooperation with the older institutions, thus causing irreparable lost on the tribal psyche and social fabric. Taking the harmful repercussions about the demolition of the youth dormitories, which give rise to modern educational institutions, Elwin argued that, contrary to the claim of reformers and missionaries, the disappearance of the youth dormitories would mean a general weakening of tribal discipline, a decay of recreational arts and an increase of sexual promiscuity (Elwin 1959: 246). This is very true of the present Tangkhul youths. Coupled with the rapid technological revolution in the domain of dissemination of information or simply put, communication, the Tangkhul youths are alarmingly becoming victims of the of modern vices like drug abuse, deviants, fashion freaks, uncaring to the parent generations and so on. Like Elwin, Alemchiba also showed great concern over the decline of youth dormitory system. He notes, "With the decline of this institution and its place the discipline and orderliness particularly among the people become deteriorated and a vacuum is thus created in the village social organization. In its place, a rugged individualism is taking the place of cooperation and corporate living in almost all the arenas of social relations" (Ao 1972:482). The young people today are more fascinated by modern values, as is clearly visible in their adoption of new dress pattern, hobbies, music and dance etc. With the sharp decline of youth dormitories some marked changes in the tribal social structure are visible. Individualism, as pointed out above, is gradually

taking place of corporate and cooperative social network. The traditional institution, which stands on the strength of corporate life, cannot withstand the onslaught of individualism consequently leading to petty selfish interests and aspiration, leading to cultural vacuum and tribals' alienation. It is difficult to keep parity with the interest in tribal art and culture without traditional institutions of the kind of youth dormitory. All these factors have augmented the intergenerational gap as the younger generation show scanty respect for the old in their blind appreciation of anything with a tag of modernity. Perhaps the former view the latter as an impediment towards realizing the modern accessories and deliberately try to break all ties with tradition blind to the negative effects caused to the social fabric. More importantly, the dwindling corporateness of the youth dormitory, which used to be the backbone of labour force for cultivation, has negative effect on the Tangkhul economy too. In sum, a radical shift in the existence of youth dormitories has shown a structural change in the Tangkhul social structure, which has further hit the Tangkhul youths the hardest.

As it would be evident from the above discussion, the traditional institutions of social control are fast declining. On the other hand, nothing concrete has come to stay in the Tangkhul society in place of the old. As such, everything is in a state of flux. There is a growing sense of individualism closely on the heels of consumerism. The family, the clan and the erstwhile '*hangva*' have undergone tremendous changes and transformations loosening its hold on the individual members. Against this modern formal institutions of socialization and social control are established. Added to all these, governmental developmental plans and projects have, in a measure, brought the Tangkhul closer to other parts of the country and the world. However, in spite of all the recent developments, change has been far from being adaptive. Rather than being gradual it has been a sudden development. And this is precisely where the ill impacts of change should be sought in the Tangkhul society, as in most traditional tribal societies undergoing rapid transformation. Having discussed the changes in the traditional Tangkhul social institutions and their impact on the social control and sanctions we will analyze the ramifications of these changes within the Tangkhuls in the following chapters.

## Notes

1. The Kukis are an ethnic group belonging to the Kachin group. They are the only tribals living among the Tangkhuls.
2. The walls that used to separate each *shang* have gone but each *shang* still occupy the ancestral area within the village.
3. '*Khor*' is the Tangkhul term for rice beer. It is locally brewed from fermented rice and locally produced yeast and other agents for enhancing the fermentation made of leaves and roots of plants. *Khor* used to be widely consumed by the Tangkhuls before they converted to Christianity. There are still some villagers where it is still consumed popularly as it used to be in the past. Most of them are non-Christians.
4. The word '*Morung*' is probably of Assamese origin. Nagas have their own term for the youth dormitories. Among the Tangkhuls it is known as '*longshim*'.
5. Among the Tangkhuls there is no mention of a separate house for the young unmarried women like the boys' dormitory. Generally, the women select the house of any of their peer group and spend their time there. A spinster's house is a good choice.
6. Before acquiring a full fledged membership of the *longshim* the young entrant is made to undergo and succeed a number of tests and prove his bravery, courage and hard work. Among the Tangkhuls the young entrant is required to run on errands, fetch firewood from the forest for the hearth, and at times send to collect things needed for the *longshim* even in the middle of the night. Only after satisfactorily completing such tasks is the young entrant fully admitted into the *longshim*.
7. '*Yarnao*' refers to the age-set groups among the Tangkhuls.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### YOUTH AND CHANGE

Youth as a concept is a social creation, not a mere product of biological or physical maturation. A neat sociological definition is hard to arrive at. It is impossible to find one universal definition as the concept of youth differs from one culture to another. Generally speaking, today's youth are labeled as rebellious, angry and delinquent with a sub culture of their own in opposition to the prevailing culture of the whole society. Youthful unrests are becoming a common phenomenon in today's age. Almost every society is confronted with an unprecedented recession of the young from the adult life-style. The extent, intensity, and sometimes, ferocity of this new collectivity are astounding. The values, practices and appearances of its members have rocked and puzzled many countries around the world – the developed, the developing, and the underdeveloped more or less in similar fashion. The tribal society is not exempted from this phenomenon. Before coming to that let us first understand the concept of youth and related issues. A general query in today's world is who are the youths? Is youth unrest the symptoms of finer structural disintegration brought about by the rapidly changing world or is it that youths are rebellious by nature? These are some of the issues that will be dealt in detail in this chapter.

#### **Who is a youth?**

The term 'youth' primarily refers to the broad and somewhat non-specific 'younger generation', including children, and young adults. The concept is universally applicable since all societies normally have a younger generation. But at the same time, due to the non-specificity of the term youth, confusions and complications arises in dealing with it. "Youth" is a language category, applied to one segment of the society by another segment with identifiable results including the creation of social roles, attributes and meaning, for those whom it is applied (Manning &Truzzi 1972: 2). Erikson notes

that, "Youth ...has been elaborated as a set of differences from some standard human being, the norm, of course, being usually the adult male. The group is then judged on the basis of what it is not and will never be, or not quite yet, or is not anymore" (Erikson 1965: viii). Kenneth Kenniston studied the increasing numbers of young men and women who experience a particularly delayed entry into full adult status. As he saw it, they move into an emergent stage suspended between adolescence and adulthood. He called this stage "youth", and applied it to the population falling between eighteen-to-twenty six-age category. Presumably, these young adults are psychologically mature and meet the psychological criteria of adulthood: identity is resolved, capacity to work established, proficiency for love relationship proven. However, they have not yet made commitments to the primary social institutions of the establishment, such as marriage, family and vocation. Hence, the prime sociological characteristics of adulthood are lacking (Kenniston 1968: 10-11). On the other hand Eisenstadt (1972: 17) argues that, this is the stage at which the individual's personality acquires the basic psychological mechanisms of self-regulation and self-control. It is also the stage at which the young are confronted with some models of the major roles they are supposed to emulate in adult life and with major symbols and values of their culture and community. David (1988: 193) adds, "Youth is a dependent status, which means that it suffers from special liabilities or penalties and enjoys special protections, indulgences, and privileges". Youth is a period in the temporal ordering of the society. It is a period whose beginning and end are more or less explicitly punctuated. According to David,

The social indications of the start of youth in general have included publicly or privately visible aspects of biological pubescence. Moreover, the beginnings of youth are indicated in the partial subsiding of parental dominance and a concurrent license to utilize guardedly one's new sexual equipment in some pale or playful imitation of adult heterosexuality. Finally in many modern societies the beginning of youth is indicated by a license-not a right- to engage in some imitation of adult work. Thus indicated, youth is a step, albeit a halting one, towards socially defined adulthood.

The conclusion of youth is obviously the assumption of adult status and, within the limits set by other prevalent systems of stratification, the ascription of



first class citizenship. Excellent and persistent social indicators of the time at which the assumption of adulthood is warranted include the formation of new kinship ties by marriage, the begetting of children, the entrance into the labour force by taking or searching for full time and permanent employment, and the establishment of a new and separate place of residence. (David 1988: 192)

It is interesting to note in this regard that often a strict separation is made between the concepts of 'youth' and 'adolescence', yet they are used interchangeably, often referring to the same age-category. Psychologist Stanley Hall created the term adolescent and attributed dependence, pre-pubescence, sexual learning, and pre-legal preparation for responsible social roles as the central elements of this age group (Manning & Truzzi 1972: 3). In terms of etymology, adolescence comes from the Latin word "adolescere", which means 'to grow up' or 'to grow into maturity'. The reference to the growth is nonspecific and could conceivably apply to physiological, psychological or social growth. Adolescence in the sociological sense refers to the experience of passing through the unstructured and ill-defined phase that lies between childhood and adulthood. In other words, adolescence refers to the crisis of discontinuity of statuses, which creates a social environment with uncertain diffuse guidelines. In short, it means social existence without a clear blueprint for behavior. However the purely sociological approach does not complete the portrayal of the adolescent experience. It illuminates only the social aspects of the individual. The concurrent psychological aspects deal with the crisis of identity. Erikson's (1968: 5) concept of 'identity crisis' has been considered to be of much relevance to our epoch as the problem of sex seemed to be to Freud's. The concept deals with the relationship between what a person appears to be in the eyes of others and what he or she feels he or she is. It refers to the dynamics of the search for an inner continuity that will match the external social conditions. Thus, the sociological and psychological definitions of adolescent complement each other in so far as they call attention to the truism that an undefined and confusing social situation will have a corresponding repercussion in the personality of the individual who goes through it. A vacuous or inconsistent social environment is a poor bet for the development of a stable identity, whereas a clearly defined and consistent socio-cultural environment is prone to yield a stable identity (Sebald 1977: 4-5).

Furthermore, the stage of adolescence is conflict-protracted conflict- between the individual and the society. Conflict between the individual and the society is inherent in the development of personality by the standard of western man. And it is in the adolescence that this conflict is critical to individual development. Or to put it another way, and perhaps more truly, adolescence is this conflict, no matter how old the individual is when it occurs. Adolescent conflict is the instrument by which an individual learns the complex and subtle, and the precious difference between himself and his environment. In a society in which differences is not permitted, the word 'adolescence' has no meaning (Trilling 1955: 12-13). But conflict is not war; it need not even involve hostile action. It must, to be sure, produce some hostile feelings, among others. But there be no intent to wound, castrate, or destroy on either side. Conflict between the adolescent and his world is dialectical and leads, as a higher synthesis, to the youth's own adulthood and to the critical participation in society as an adult (Friedenberg 1969: 13). In sum, according to Friedenberg (1969: 9) "adolescence is the period during which a young person learns who he is, and what he really feels. It is the time during which he differentiates himself from his culture, though on the culture's terms. It is the age at which, by becoming a person in his own right, he becomes capable of deeply felt relationships to other individuals perceived clearly as such".

On the other hand, youth has been considered as the product of the post industrial revolution characterized by complex division of labour where the younger generation needs to undergo intensive training or 'preparation before taking up the complex adult roles in the society. Moreover, such societies are characterized by the separation of work from home. The family in such societies ceases to be centre of production. In the tribal societies the presence of youth has been denied on the basis of the absence of the complex division of labour as it is found in the modern societies for training individuals at certain age to take different roles in the society. Therefore, it has been argued that, in the tribal societies the transition takes place directly from child to adulthood surpassing the youth. On such bases it is often argued that tribal societies lacks the 'youth', that is the stage for 'preparation'. However, the presence of youth's dormitory, *longshim* for the

Tangkhus which is a well developed institution for training the youth, as in most of the known tribal societies points to the limitations of such aforementioned claims. For instance, among the Oroans the youth dormitory is known as the *Dhumkuria*, among the Ao Nagas of Nagaland as *ariju* and so on. Among the Tangkhuls, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, the institution of the *Longshim* existed since time immemorial. Though there are no written records available about the existence of 'youth' among the Tangkhuls, the word for the youth as it exists among the Tangkhul is a proof in itself about the existence of youth. Tangkhul have different words for the various stages of life: *anganao* for the infant or those of tender age, *naoshinao* for the children, *yaron nao* for the youth (male), *ngala ano* for the youth (female), *kahar nao* for the married adult, and *kasar nao* for the aged. Likewise they occupy different statuses and perform different roles and also command different expectations in the society.

Festivals, for instance *yarra*, are exclusively the youths' affair. Similarly, song and dances for the youths existed within the rich cultural repertoire of the Tangkhuls. The ritual of *Khana Kasa*, perhaps could be considered as the conspicuous sign of the child entering the youth stage in the Tangkhul society. For the present study we have included the legitimate members of the *longshim* as youth. Let us now discuss the process and function of youth initiation in the *longshim*. Acquiring membership in the *longshim* is based on age and sex. Generally, a Tangkhul boy is ready to go to the *longshim* while he is quite young- say, at about the age of 12 or as soon as he attains puberty and he remains a member of the *longshim* till he marries and sets up a home of his own. In the beginning the new entrant is obliged to perform certain tasks such as running for errands, collecting fuel from the forest for the hearth and so on. And on the basis of his performance of these tasks, which in fact is a test of one's skill, courage, loyalty, co-operation, bravery and discipline, full membership of the *longshim* is extended to him. Thereafter, he shares in all the activities of the *longshim* without any discrimination whatsoever. But as the Nagas converted to Christianity and have given up many traditional practices, which include initiation of youth in dormitories, the process has totally become different and hence irrelevant for the whole society. However, the basic concept of a 'youth' has not been totally lost to the past. As most of the Nagas converted to Christianity the ritual initiation

of Baptism has become a significant event in transition of individual from one stage to another. These rites of baptism, which generally take place at the age of fourteen to fifteen years, are considered as a milestone for a person to have reached the stage of youth. Because after this stage the individual is enrolled as a member of the youth society of the church. And from then onwards, he/she is entitled to get all the privileges of an adult in the society. For example, he/she is paid daily wages at the rate paid to the other adults in the village farming. Besides, it has become obligatory for him/her to participate in all the activities of the society. The youth life continues till he/she gets married and takes up family responsibilities, that is, about the age between twenty five to thirty years. "Hence, taking all aspects of an individual's life into consideration we can call 'Naga Youth' to those who are in the age group of 16 to 35, have crossed Pre- Secondary educational level, are mentally and psychologically active and responsive to situation arising in society, are socially and economically (relatively) free from family responsibility and are able to involve actively in the processes of social, economic and political development of the society of which he or she is a member" (Yaruingam 2002 : 49-50).

The significance of referring to the above conceptualisation in this chapter is to delineate the varying definitions and, more or less, conceptual overlapping of the concept of youth and adolescence. For instance, Hans Sebald asserts "Since adolescence is not necessarily a universal phenomenon, and some societies have youth but not adolescents, the two terms are not interchangeable"(Sebald 1977: 10). Nevertheless, he conceded to the fact that there are many societies where youth and adolescent are merged; these are the industrialized societies. Others like Eisenstadt also use the concept interchangeably. The same usage will be followed while dealing with the Tangkhul youth in this chapter, the sole reason being its practical advantage. Youth is thus, used here in a meaning broader than the usual connotation of "adolescence". It includes adolescence, but needs not culminate with the end of adolescence. Rightly or wrongly, adolescence has come to be associated with the teenage years. Youth, however, may, under certain conditions, last well into the thirties or middle ages. Youth ends with the attaining of potentially self-sufficient adulthood. For the work here about the youth in the Tangkhul society the

concept of youth will be similar to that commonly used with reference to adolescence- 'the period between childhood and adulthood'. Having located the age at which the Tangkhuls can be called as youth we will now look at the social change, which is taking place among them.

### **Social Change And Youth**

Social change, which entails large-scale alterations in ideological, technological and economic system within societies, has significant implications for adolescent development. For instance, social change can affect the structure and dynamics of social contexts that adolescents and youths experience on a daily basis such as family, schools and other peer groups. It can also alter the social institutions and cultural belief system that organize the adolescent period. The effects of social change on youth become all the more crucial because youth, being more than just a sexual maturation, is also a social process whose fundamental task is clear and stable self-identification. The society in which the youth has been brought up and lives shapes the youth's tasks: what he will feel guilty about, what he must strive for, what particular battles he may have to fight and win to achieve adulthood, what the symbols of achievement, status and acceptance, as well as the duration and the intensity of the experience-all these come from the wider environment as much as from the individual experience and interaction. In other words, youths far from being merely a universal, biologically conditioned and inescapable fact is also shaped and determined in its development by the prevailing social and cultural factors of the society that he is located.

We will locate the social change among the Tangkhul youth in the aforesaid perspective. The Tangkhul society has been undergoing rapid changes, touching almost every avenue – social, political, economy, beliefs etc as discussed in the preceding chapter. The advancement in the information technology and the extensive reach of the mass media has made a phenomenal impact on Tangkhul society in general and upon the Tangkhul youths in particular. In the contemporary Tangkhul society the established cultural traits of youth specially the dress pattern, music, group interaction, consumption

pattern are in a state of flux. The Tangkhul youth have imbibed new lifestyle towards fashion, hobbies and leisure activities quite unprecedented which closely resembles their counterparts in the West and elsewhere. Because of such a trend one is apprehensive of the homogenization of the youths around the world at the cost of sacrificing one's own cultural identity. Yaruigam, a Naga scholar writing about the challenges facing the Naga youths at present have pointed out the urgency, on the part of the youths in particular and the society at large, of rejuvenating our traditional identity even in the present age to be able to map out the path of progress that is most closely suitable to the society in question. And the onus of doing so, the author puts it on the youths (Yaruigam 2002: 56).

It would be for sure inadequate to attribute the youths problem as the result of the conflict between the changing lifestyle and the perceptions of the youths on the one hand, and the apparently status quo attitude of the parent generation, on the other. The analysis of the youth's problem needs to take into account the larger affects of structural changes as is evident in the Tangkhul society upon the modern youths. For a wholesome explanation of the problem it needs to be seen as a symptom of institutional breakdowns and the failure of arranging a suitable alternatives on the part of the society.

Rapid social change affects the rules, values and belief systems of the society. The family, clan, and other groups on which an individual used to depend for his or her self-identification and development and other purposes are fast diminishing altogether. Unlike in the past, the youths are no longer presented with solid block of societal and adult unanimity about what is right in important areas of their experience. There is presently confusion about moral standards and the changing climate of opinions about what is right and wrong. And with little or nothing to turn to they tend to withdraw from the adult world and coalesce among themselves. S.N. Eisenstadt notes "age groups in general and youth group in particular tend to arise in those societies in which family or kinship unit cannot ensure (it may even impede) the attainment of full social status on the part of the members. These conditions appear especially in societies in which family or kinship groups do not constitute the basic unit of social division of labour" (Eisenstadt

1972: 20). According to him, several features characterized such societies. First, the membership in the total society (citizenship) is not defined in terms of belonging to any such family, kinship group, or estate; nor does such a group mediate it. Second, in these societies the major social, political, economic, and religious functions are performed not by family or kinship units but rather by various specialized groups (political parties, occupational associations etc.) which individual may join irrespective of their family, kinship or caste. In these societies, therefore the major roles that the adults are expected to perform in the wider society differ in orientation from those of the family or the kinship group. The children's identification and close association with family members of other ages does not assure the attainment of full self-identity and social maturity on the part of the children. In such cases there arises a tendency for peer groups to form, especially youth groups. These can serve as a transitory phase between the world of childhood and adulthood.

Perhaps S.N. Eisenstadt's observation, that is, the development of specific youth organizations is paradoxically connected with the weakening of the importance of age in general and youth in particular, as definite criteria for the allocation of roles in society, can be taken as the causal explanation for the mushrooming of various youth groups among the Tangkhuls. For instance, the four regional sub-divisions among the Tangkhuls have their own youth organizations: *The Tangkhul Aze Katamnao Long*, *The Zingsho Katamnao Long*, *Raphei Katamnao Long* for the south, the east and the north respectively. At the all Tangkhul level there is the *Tangkhul Mayar Ngala Long*, *The Tangkhul Katamnao Saklong*. Higher up at the all Naga level, there is the Naga Students Federation. These are all student groups. Besides these groups there are many other local groups with membership covering students as well as non-students, formed for diverse interests-social, cultural, recreational and at times for political lobbying. These various groups have aimed at mitigating or changing many aspects of the social and cultural life of the Tangkhuls. They have often depicted the present in a rather shabby form; they have dubbed it with adjectives of materialism, restriction, and exploitation, lack of opportunity for development and creativity. At the same time they have held hope for the future when both self-fulfillment and collective fulfillment can be achieved and the materialistic

civilization of the present world can be shaken off. They have also tried to appeal to youths to forge its own self-identity in terms of these new collective symbols, and this is why they have provided a set of symbols, hopes and aims to direct their activities.

Notwithstanding its mass appeal, the various youth groups, whatever its composition or organization, usually stands alone. It does not constitute part of a fully institutionalized and organized series of age groups. Though vestiges of the *longshims* still exist, the full articulation of these elements is lacking and the social organization and the self-expression of youths are not given full legitimacy or meaning in terms of cultural values or rituals. The close linkage between the growth of personality, psychological maturation, and definite role models derived from the adult world has become greatly weakened which has resulted a great potential uncertainty and ambivalence towards the adult world. Tangkhul youths search for identity, for finding some place of its own in the society and its potential difficulties in coping with the attainment of such identity have given rise to many magnified extent of the casualties observed-rebelliousness, cynicism, and other socially disapproved activities. All these factors force us to ask, if, on the one hand, it is really pertinent to claim that the youths' tendency to coalesce in groups is rooted in the fact that participation in the family become insufficient for developing full identity or full social maturity, and that the roles learned in the family did not contribute an adequate basis for developing full identity and participation. And on the other hand we need a deeper analysis of the impact of structural changes happening in the wider universe in relation to the youth to be able to explain objectively the present youth problem in the Tangkhul society. These problems are, undoubtedly, being confronted by all age groups but it becomes more critical for the youth because of their unique physical, biological, psychological and also social location.

### **Youth And Reference Group**

Reference group, here, refers to the group against which an individual evaluates his or her own situation or conduct. In other words, it is also the process whereby individuals can derive norms and values without necessarily being in physical contact



with those persons holding the emulated values. Two aspects need to be emphasized here while dealing with the reference group in relation to the Tangkhul youths. Firstly, it should be noted that the traditional socializing centers have undergone structural changes. The family, the *Longshim*, the clan and other kinship groups have undergone certain amount of transformation structurally. Not less important, are the vacuous and chaotic social, economic and political conditions gripping the whole state, Manipur, which still continues to be disturbing till today. Clubbed together these two factors have given youth a disturbed social milieu and hence the youths are dissatisfied with the leadership and the establishment altogether which is reflected in their violent actions and other destructive gestures.

In the traditional Tangkhul society, the senior members of the family, the *Longshim*, and the village as a whole provided the youths with relatively stable and consistent role models. The Tangkhul family as discussed by Shibani Roy and S.H.M. Rizvi provides a very stable and secured future for the young people in the Tangkhul society. According to them "The Tangkhul family is the basic unit of social structure. The family consists of parents and unmarried children. It is customary to hand over the rights of occupancy of the residential quarters to the eldest son as soon as he gets married. The father in such cases is required to build a new house for himself and his wife and his unmarried children. As soon the second son gets married the parents along with their unmarried children once again move out to construct a new house for themselves. This process continues till all the sons get married. However, among the Tangkhuls of east and south the aged parents stay with the eldest married son during old age. Thus, we find that the joint family system is not much favoured by Tangkhuls" (Roy & Rizvi 1990: 124). Being a patriarchal set-up, the father occupies the highest position in the family. Age is another important social ranking criterion. The adults are obliged to show restraint, sincerity, good moral standards, and sound judgment in their demeanor and the dealings. Therefore the younger generation gets a ready-made reference group made up of the aforesaid cultural traits, which they emulated easily without much questioning. *Longshims* also presented an established reference group with hard work, bravery, courage, and corporateness as esteemed qualities to be emulated by the youths. It came to

them naturally along with their daily association with the adults. Role identifications and the crystallization of self, the basic process for the youths, were thus, not much of a problem in the traditional setting of the Tangkhul society as it was facilitated by the natural institutions like the family and the *longshim*.

These institutions with ready made reference groups, associations and established values and beliefs have been abruptly transformed in a very short span of time. The worrying aspect of this transformation has been that rather being gradual it has occurred at a galloping speed creating a sort of cultural crises. There are many reasons for this transformation. Some of the important ones have been mentioned below. The migration of families to towns and other urban areas, mainly to Imphal and Ukhrul, for employment, children's education and other small enterprising ventures has greatly dismantled the traditional rhythm of social life. The physical distance between families, the separation of work from home and the overtaking of the socializing task by specialized agencies such as the schools, peer groups, clubs and so on have directly curtailed the intervention of the traditional bonds of kinship and clan support in the personality development.

Migration, alien educational system and the succession of the *Longshim* by the Church have all led to the decadence of the *longshim*. Even though the institution has managed to survive to some extent, it has been robbed of its traditional values and appeal to the youth. At the same time the youth is thrown into an uncharted, and unprecedented territory of dangerous freedom. There freedom has itself become a source of burden for the youth because there are too many choices but few guides to provide them assistance and advice. The old signpost has been removed and new ones are yet to come. There exists a situation of normlessness where the old values have not been completely eroded and the new ones have not been firmly established. Instead of smoothly integrating into the society the Tangkhul youths are continually alienated or marginalized. Thus alienated, the Tangkhul youth is under pressure to establish his independence from pressures to conform that he becomes unable to accept the essential normative conditions of a stable system of organized individual freedom. The majority of modern youth

experience great difficulty in deciding which reference group to choose and which group to identify with. The cumulative result of such complexity is that it tends to interfere with the formation of a unified and unambiguous self-conception. The inability to identify clearly with any reference group tends to thwart the formation of a clear and a stable identity. It is therefore unfortunate for the Tangkhul youth that during the period when the quest for identity is most intense, they have been provided with numerous reference groups to identify with creating a crisis of identity among them instead of presenting them with a stable and consistent model to be emulated. Besides the problem of multiple reference groups the Tangkhul youths, are also burdened by the imposition of traditional values of the society which they think are out-dated in the present context. But the older generation, on the contrary, regard them as still functional and thus important for the youths of the society as a whole. Put it in other words, we can say that there is a phenomenon of 'cultural lag' (Ogburn 1922: 31). The youth of the Tangkhul society who identify themselves more closely with the material aspect of the society feels that traditional values and taboos have outlived their utility. On the other hand, the older generation with their roots still firmly grounded in the tradition vouched for its relevance even in the present time. This is one major area of tension between the generations differently placed across time. Tyabji has recorded the cause and the problem of inter-generational conflict in his study. He eloquently portray that "The main result for this revolt seems to be the demonstrated incapacity, in their eyes, of the older generation to deal with problems of age, particularly those most affecting youths. The lack of skills, efficiency, understanding, and above all sincerity, that the youths find in the established order in its handling of these problems, in this new age of scientific discovery and material advancement, provides the revolt with its universal reason d'etre" (Tyabji 1972: 8-9).

### **Youth And Education**

Tangkhuls are, perhaps the most advanced tribal group in Manipur. In terms of development, education, and employment and living standard they are ahead of most of the tribes found in Manipur. Ghosh has also vindicated this, who argues "Tangkhul tribe

is an exception to Naga group of tribes in many ways. It comes third in population amongst Nagas after the konyaks and the Angamis and is settled in Ukhrul district of Manipur. Educationally they come next only to Aos. Politically they have some dominance in Manipur even on advanced Meitheis” (Ghosh 1992: 108). There are hundreds of schools in Ukhrul district which are mostly private English medium schools. Besides most of the Tangkhul villages also have government-aided primary schools. The main educational centres for the students are Ukhrul, the district Headquarter and Imphal, the state’s capital. There are a good number of Tangkhul students in the other parts of India as well, especially in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Shillong etc. They play important role as agents of change by bringing new values into the Tangkhul society and setting new standards for the society and their peers in the state.

In the pre- colonial period, *Longshim* used to be the educational centre. Some Naga scholars call the ‘*morung*’, the Naga schools. It was the place where all the norms, values, ethos and other traditional arts and skills were taught and learned in the Tangkhul society. Unlike the modern day schools, the relationship between the student- teacher was neither formal nor was the *longshim* a child centred institution. On the contrary it was community centred. “The state of the *morung* indicated the state of the village itself. If it was decaying, it mean a decaying village; but if it was well kept and well used, it meant a vigorous and healthy community” (Ao 1972: 482). The lessons taught and learned in the *longshims* were generally of practical utility, though artistic imaginations were also given space. Thus, the learners could harmoniously relate to their immediate environment and derive a sense of belonging and purpose from such a symbiotic relationship. Ao (1973: 24) observes, “Integrity, obedience and discipline of the individual in Naga culture were largely the concern of the village in Naga society in the past. This concern of the village was achieved through the *morung*.” In sum the *morung* function for the achievement of solidarity for all the villagers and relatively satisfy the political, social and religious aspirations of the Nagas. Its discipline inculcated in the Naga youths the qualities of bravery, endurance, self-reliance, group loyalty, and promoted work ethics.

The above scenario of Tangkhul society has completely changed in the recent years. Now most of the youths either join schools or colleges located far away from their villages, in towns and cities or works for earning their living in these places. Children live and grow up in towns because their parents are settled permanently there due to employment and other businesses. The students mostly attend English medium schools run by missionaries and other private groups. What they learn from these schools and colleges seldom reflects the age-old cultural values and traditions of one's own society. This is precisely reflected by Horam (1977: 110) in his comment that "Recently Tangkhul students have fanned out to other seats of learning-Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Ludhiana, Vellore, Bangalore, Poona and yet others have gone abroad. Most of these young men and women belong to the fairly well to do families, some of whom themselves had their education in places other than the northeast. A greater number of these educated young people have made a clean break with their tribal traditions". They are indifferent to the people's needs and are at times condescending in their attitude towards the backward villagers. They take up jobs outside their state and visit their villages only on sufferance. Though these enlightened youths are not expected to conform to the tribal norms at every point yet they are expected to discharge their debt to the immediate society by bringing enlightenment to the ignorant village folk. Their academic achievement, therefore, however beneficial to their own selves, proves a dead loss to the Tangkhul society which remains where it was many decades ago. Neither is there any arrangement to impart the values and traditions of the Tangkhuls outside the school because they have been physically uprooted from their local moorings where the sway of kinship and other parochial ties are minimal or totally absent. The emphasis here is not so much to argue against education per se that is being imparted to the Tangkhul students. Rather the significance of referring to it is to point out the growing disparity between the means-ends relationship. That is, the growing population of the educated unemployed on the one hand, and the shrinking avenues of realizing their goals, on the other hand. Explaining the relationship between education and the increasing youth problems in the America David lucidly points out that "our school system includes in its curriculum liberal, or impractical, subjects. Not all courses, or even most, are directed towards the technical proficiencies necessary for one another career. Liberal education is

an “inefficiency,” but one that is more or less treasured by the professionals most immediately concerned with the school system. Thus, many courses taken in secondary school or college are valued by educational authorities on their own merits, rather than as a means to a job” (David 1988: 197). This asymmetrical relationship fuels the youth problem making them more dissatisfied with the establishment. Such a situation is practically evident among the Tangkhuls too. Years of education fail to yield any worthy means of livelihood to most of the Tangkhul youths. It is quite unfortunate that driven to the wall the youths today are forced to channelize their potentials in a militant and often rebellious or at times pathological manners.

The educational and technological changes in the Tangkhul society have another aspect too. It has made the Tangkhul youths more technologically savvy, western oriented, educationally sounder. In turn we can argue that their and their outlook far transcends the boundaries of the village making them citizens of the so- called ‘global village’. However, beneath this seemingly progressive and advanced surface lays the youths’ dilemma in their attempt to relate the lessons learned in the classrooms to the practical situation of real life. For instance, corruption in almost all the levels of bureaucracy in the state, nepotism and other parochial considerations in the recruitment to jobs without acknowledging merit and competency, the ‘fear-psychosis’ sowed by the long and brutal anti-insurgency campaigns by the armed forces etc. have completely marginalized the Tangkhul youths. Perhaps it would be more correct say that the youths are deliberately withdrawing from the society and wasting their potentials waging a costly battle against the society when they should be doing the opposite.

Though militancy and insurgency have political overtones yet we cannot rule out the relation between unemployment and militants in the state. It is true that unemployed educated youths become soft target of the militant organizations in the state. In this situation increasing number of youths regard the culture as incoherent and the future as undesirable and chaotic. Therefore if the society wants to stop this downslide of a culture then it has to instill hope and trust in the minds of the youth as soon as possible. To start with it can very well reformulate the content of education according to the needs of the

society as has been rightly pointed out by UNESCO. According to UNESCO "A new form of education is needed, which would start from a different conception of economic and social life, of culture and the future of the society. This form of education would be deeply rooted in local realities, and education system would have to be reoriented so as to reflect more fully the most significant values of national cultures and civilizations. Modern education must, therefore, be closely related to the specific characteristics and needs of the society in which it is dispensed. Those responsible for education must, therefore, give increasing attention to the need for educational content to correspond to the needs and aspirations of local communities and of the relation as whole" (UNESCO 1983: 6).

### **Youth And Drug Abuse**

Social change has both positive and negative aspects. Drug use and abuse are both part and parcel of social change within the Tangkhul society. While the proper use of drug per the prescription has saved life the abuse of drug has spoiled many lives especially of the youths. Drug abuse is the use of illicit drug or the misuse of legitimate drug resulting into physical or psychologically harmful effects on the human mind and body. It includes different types of dependence producing drugs such as barbiturate, amphetamine, cannabis, cocaine, hallucinogen, and opiate etc. Drug addiction is the disorder of the modern technological society because drug serves as the auxiliaries for coping with the recurrent psychological stresses of modern living. In the recent years there has been a marked rise in the usage of certain hallucinogens and stimulants, especially among the adolescents. The problem of drug abuse among the Tangkhul youths is of lately becoming a menace to the society. With regard to the causative factors of drug abuse in the Tangkhul society it is interesting to note that the availability of drugs is an important determinant. The close proximity of the north eastern states to "Golden Triangle" where illicit poppy cultivation and opium production continues unabated is a well known fact. Madan C. Paul (1996: 40) notes that India's about 1800 km. border with Myanmar on the eastern frontier from where the deadly heroin enters into the hilly frontier regions of north east India, especially Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and

Arunachal Pradesh has led to large scale local consumption of 'hard drugs' among the youths of this region. Related to this problem is the fast spreading of HIV (Human Immuno deficiency Virus) infection in the society, which is the result of intravenous drug use, and to some extent, the sexual behaviors among the drug users. Sharma and Luwang (1984) conducted study in the hilly state of Manipur and found that there is an alarming increase in the number of drug abusers. Their number increase from 6% in 1972 to 23% in 1982. This study which examined over 1300 drug abusers revealed that the majority of them (43.7%) were using drug for a period of more than one year and used injectable drugs like morphine and pathedine. Only 26.30% of abusers were using oral forms of drugs. People in the age group of 15 – 20 years were the maximum users of drug. In terms of occupation, the drug abusers were maximum from the students group (Lather 1993: 39). Thus today the scenario of Manipur and Nagaland is appalling because along with the culture of drug abuse, HIV and AIDS (Acquire Immuno Deficiency Syndrome) infection, insurgency and other organized crimes are threatening to tear the very fabric of tribal society.

Most of the researches in India show drug abuse to be a menace of urban, affluent and educated elite youth. The phenomenon of higher frequency of drugs in urban areas is explained by researchers in terms of social and personal factors. Personal factors, for instance, neurotic personality leading to neurotic anxiety or depression and to drug addiction. However, more important are the social factors of drug abuse, which includes not just urbanization but also 'westernization' and migration, which have weakened the traditional support system. Peer – group pressure and the need to identify with them, as felt the youth, is another causal factor. In sum, drug abuse is one of the most serious problems being faced by the contemporary societies. It is decidedly the consequence of large numbers of social, familial, and psychological factors – all woven together. Nagi (1996: 2) discusses the issue in the following manner, "Drug abuse is a multi-dimensional problem, and it is not possible to design any single prevention strategy that will be applicable to all cases of drug abuse. It is therefore, important that separate approaches and strategies need to be designed and developed in a manner which should take into



account the socio-cultural status of each drug addict on the one hand, and the specific properties being abused on the other”.

To conclude we can argue that ‘youth’ is the formative years in a person’s life. It is the time of learning and preparation for the complex division of labour of the adult world. Contrary to the claim that youth is a postindustrial product, youth existed in the Tangkhul society since time immemorial. Due to their vulnerability the youth has been thrown into an unprecedented situation in the recent years, which has been further complicated by the rapid change sweeping across the Tangkhul society. The transformation of the Tangkhuls from the tradition to modernity has been very abrupt than gradual and the consequences are mostly felt by the youth leading to the upsurge of youth problems of diverse dimensions and gravity. Education, the establishment, and other agents have not been able to do much about the problems of the youth because they have often failed present to youth a compatible model to be emulated and hence the youth feels that they are marginalized and being driven to the edge. Dissatisfied and cornered they are wasting their youthful potentials in self destroying ways such as using drugs, alcoholism, deliberate withdrawal from the society or have become more militant. It is high time that the society does something tangible to mitigate these problems faced by Tangkhul youths before the society is deprived of its upcoming young generation. Their disappearance would certainly mean some type of disorder in the society. In this endeavor the parents, teachers, counselors – everyone has a share of responsibility for creating conducive socio-economic and educational environment where the Tangkhul youths can develop healthily.

## Notes

1. *Meitheis*- they are the plains people inhabiting the Imphal valley of the state. Majority of them are caste Hindus. They have a different social structure compared to the tribals like the Tangkhuls of the hills. Educationally the meities are far ahead of the tribals
2. *Khana Kasa*: literally refers to 'piercing of the ears'.
3. *Yarra*: this is the festival of the youths among the Tangkhuls. It coincides with early spring, the symbol of youth. It is marked by grand feasting and competitions between the various age set groups in the village.
4. *Aze*: south in Tangkhul. Also used as *Kamo*.
5. *Zingsho*: east in Tangkhul.
6. *Paphei*: north in Tangkhul
7. *Mayar/ Ngala*: the term for the youth in Tangkhul.
8. *Katammao*: Tangkhul term for student.
9. *Saklong* or *Long*: it refers to 'union' or 'association' as used, for instance, in Naga Students' Union.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### TRIBAL MIDDLE CLASS

Middle class among the tribal is of recent development. The factors leading to the development of this group in the Tangkhul society differ markedly from other tribal groups which have some relationship with the caste Hindu society. The relative isolation of the Tangkhuls, absence of caste, collective ownership of land, lack of monetized economy and other related factors have directly or indirectly checked the emergence of the middle class among the Tangkhuls for a long time until recently. However, western education, which was introduced by the Christian missionaries, the achievement of India's independence and the consequent planned efforts of development along with the inroads made by modernization including urbanization led to the emergence of a new structure of tribal group among the Tangkhuls who occupied pivotal positions with the increasing safeguards and other opportunities through the provisions of 'positive discrimination' etc. given to the tribals by the country's constitution. The primordial tribal society, which was known for its undifferentiated social structure suddenly, began to gain inequalities and conspicuous social differentiation. Today, they are a class-conscious lot, playing active role in the Naga national movement as well as in the national politics. The emergence of the middle class among the Tangkhuls is a structural phenomenon and assumes great importance. The chapter deals with these facts, which includes the emergence of the middle class in the Tangkhul society, the crystallization, and the role played by this middle class in controlling and influencing the course of the society at large.

#### Conceptual Analysis

Before we proceed further a note of caution is added here, that is though the middle class and the elite are two different conceptual categories yet on the Tangkhul society it has been observed that these aforementioned middle class have been functioning as the elite of the society as well. Hence to do away with the confusion we

have used the two concepts of middle class and elite simultaneously often to refer to the same class of people.

Let us first have brief outline of the term 'class'. According to Marx, class emerged where the relations of production involve a differentiated division of labour, which allows for the accumulation of surplus production that can be appropriated by a minority grouping, which thus stands in an exploitative relationship to the mass of producers. For Marx classes are an aspect of the relations of production. Classes are constituted by the relationship of groupings of individuals to the ownership of private property in the means of production. This yields a model of class relations, which is basically dichotomous: all class societies are built around a primary line of divisions between two antagonistic classes, one dominant and the other subordinate. The ordering of classes and the nature of class conflict change considerably with the emergence of successive forms of society. The progressive development of capitalism, once it is established, more and more tends towards the creation of two great classes in direct opposition on the market; bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The other classes- land owners, petty bourgeois, and peasantry- are transitional classes, which are increasingly swallowed up by one or other of these two major class groupings. Class relationships are the main axis around which political power is distributed and upon which organization depends (Giddens 1996: 36-39).

Max Weber's conception of class takes its point of departure from his more generalized analysis of economic action in a market. Economic action is defined by Weber as a conduct, which seeks, through peaceful means, to acquire control of desired utilities. In Weber's usage, utilities include both goods and services. A market is distinguished from direct reciprocal exchange (barter) in so far as it involves speculative economic action oriented towards the securing of profit through competitive trading. Classes can exist only when such a market – which may take numerous concrete forms- has come into existence, and this in turn, presupposes the formation of money economy. Money plays an extremely important role in this because it makes possible the estimation of the values exchanged in quantitative and fixed rather than in subjective terms.

Economic relationships thus free themselves from the particular ties and obligations of local community structure, and become fluidly determined by the material chances which individuals have of using property, goods, or services which they possess for exchange on the competitive market.

More specifically, Weber's conception of class denotes an aggregate of individuals who share the same class 'situation'-that is, all are subject to similar economic exigencies which causally influence both the material standards of their existence and what sorts of personal life experiences they are able to enjoy. He, following Marx, distinguishes among those who possess property, between the 'ownership classes' (betsitzklassen) and 'commercial classes' (ewerbsklassen). Ownership classes are those in which owners of property receive rents through their possession of lands, mines etc. These rentiers are 'positively advantage' ownership classes. 'Negatively advantage' ownership classes include all those without either property or skills to offer. Between the positively and negatively advantaged groups falls a range of middle classes who either owned small properties or who possess skills, which can be offered as marketable services. These include such categories of persons as official, artisans and peasants. Commercial classes are those where the positively advantaged groups are either entrepreneurs offering goods for sale on the market, or those who participate in the financing of such operations, such as bankers. Wage labourers constitute the negatively advantaged commercial classes. The middle classes include the petty bourgeoisie and administrative officials in government or in industry (Giddens 1996: 163-164).

The middle class has never comprised a coherent unity even in the classic bourgeois age of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is even more heterogeneous today. According to Bhatia (1994:16) "Middle class means the western educated urban section of the society that is engaged largely in the service sector of the economy for its livelihood". On the other Shah argued that "The middle class is a class between the labour and capital. It neither directly owns the means of production that pumps out the surplus generated by wage labour power nor does it, by its own labour, produce the surplus having use value and exchange value. Broadly speaking, this class consists of petty bourgeoisie and the white-collar workers. The former are either self employed or involved in the distribution

of commodities and the latter are non-manual office workers, supervisors, and professionals. Thus, in terms of occupation, shopkeepers, salesmen, brokers, government and non-government office workers, writers, teachers, self employed professionals such as engineers, pleaders, doctors etc. constitute the middle class” (1987: 155-172). For the Nagas the break up of their society and the development of feudal relationships of production were arrested by the British rule and hence the middle class that finally emerged among the Naga social life had its root neither in the landed aristocracy as is common in other parts of the sub-continent, nor did it evolve through commercial development. The growth of this class is inextricably linked with the spread of western education, primarily at the initiative of the Christian missionaries, and the rise of the professions ranging from teaching to law and medicine. This class is obviously a product of adaptive socio-economic change and is made up of “classes like the small entrepreneurs, salaried bureaucracy of various species, small rentiers, small and middle level technicians, middle level professional groups etc.” (Mishra 1983: 164).

The concept of elite on the other hand, is used to describe certain fundamental features of organized social life. All societies-simple and complex, agricultural and industrial- need authorities within and spokesmen and agents outside who are also symbols of the common life and the embodiments of the values that maintain it. Inequalities in performance and reward support this arrangement, and the inequality in the distribution of deference acknowledges the difference in authority, achievement and reward. “Individuals are not intellectually, morally or physically equal, and society is not homogeneous. On the contrary, it is composed of vastly numerous social groups, mixing in innumerable way. In any particular grouping, some people are more capable than the others. Those who are most capable in their peculiar branch of activity, whether this be playing chess or playing the prostitute, thieving or defending thieves in the law courts, writing poetry or governing the country, are called *le classi ellete*, the ‘select’ persons of their particular groupings: in the French tongue, *l`elite*. And this word elite has been taken over into the English language” (Powers 1987: 51). For virtually every activity and every corresponding sphere of social life, there is an elite: there are elites of soldiers, and of artists, as well as of bankers and of gamblers. This is the sense in which Pareto (1902-



1903) used the term. There is, however, an important factor that differentiates these various elites, apart from their different skills and talents. Some of them have more social weight than others because their activities have greater social significance. It is these elites-variously referred to as the ruling elite, the top influentials or the power elite which arouse particular interest, because they are the prime movers and models for the entire society. Simply defined, "elite" would refer to "those minorities which are set apart from the rest of the society by their pre-eminence in one or more of these various distributions" (Shills 1968: 26).

Elite theory, as first developed by Vilfredo Pareto, is psychological compared to Marx's conception of class which is in social-economic terms. Pareto argued against the Marxist economic determinism by asserting that humans are differentially endowed and by virtue of this differential endowments the society is divided into the rulers and the ruled since time immemorial. He says "we can, crudely, divide society into the lower stratum and the superior stratum. This latter in turn can be divided into two groups: those who "directly or indirectly" play some considerable part in governing (and who are referred to as the governing elite and later-and more frequently- as the governing class or the governing classes), and the rest of the elite not in government: the non-governing elite" (Powers 1987: 51). Pareto goes on to say that 'It is bootless to object that modern parliamentary democracies have no "governing class" and that personal autocracies, by definition, represent rule by one single person and not by a "governing class".....Everywhere there exist a governing class, even in a despotism, it is the forms under which it appears that differs. In absolute governments, there is only one figure on the stage-the sovereign; in so-called democratic government, it is the parliament. But behind the scenes all the time are people who have very important functions in the actual work of government. Whether universal suffrage prevails or not, it is an oligarchy that governs' (Powers 1987: 51-52).

Unlike Pareto, C. Wright Mills explains elite rule in the institutional rather than the psychological terms. He rejects the view that members of the elite have superior qualities or psychological characteristics, which distinguishes them from the rest of the

population. Instead, he argues that the structure of institution is such that those at the top of the institutional hierarchy largely monopolize power. Mills conceives "the power elite is composed of men whose position enable them to transcend the ordinary environment of ordinary men and women, they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions" (Mills 1956: 13). Mills identifies three key institutions; the major corporations, the military and the federal government. Those who occupy the command post in these institutions form the elites. He adds "Today, all three are involved in virtually all widely ramifying decisions. Which of the three types seems to lead depends upon the "task of the period" as they, the elite define them. Just now, these task center upon "defense" and international affairs. Accordingly, as we have seen, the military are ascendant in two senses: as personnel and as justifying ideology. That is why just now, we can most easily specify the unity and the shape of the power elite in terms of the military ascendancy" (Mills 1956: 277). According to Mills the elite are political men of education and of administrative experience, and also "possess a certain largeness of view and dignity of character" (Mills 1956: 270). Mills analysis of elite is confined to American society in the 1950s. Again, quite unlike Pareto, Mills sees the elite as fairly recent development in the USA. In sum, Mills is of the view that the elite cannot be truly thought of as men who are merely doing their duty. They are the ones who determine their duty as well as the duties of those beneath them. They are not merely 'bureaucrats'. They command bureaucracies. They may try to disguise these facts from others and from themselves by appeals to traditions of which they imagine themselves the instruments; but there are many traditions, and they must choose which ones they will serve. They face decisions for which there simply are no traditions (Mills 1956: 286). In sum, we may think of the elites as 'those who are regarded as superior, influential and are held in high esteem by the people; they may not have formal positions in politics and the government, but they are in a position to influence the decision making process, set values and uphold them' (Rajora 1987: 16).

Having gone into length about the categories of elite and class the question that needs to be asked is: which of the two concepts would be most appropriate to explain the structural transformation that has engendered a new category of individuals within the Tangkhul society? The answer is difficult to arrive at. Neither the elite theory as conceptualized by Pareto et al and Mills nor the class as propagated by Marx and Weber seem to describe the new group of tribals emerging from the structural transformation in the Tangkhul society. This difficulty needs to be understood from the unique situation, in time and space perspective, as is found among the Tangkhuls in particular and the Nagas in general.

Loosely speaking, the Tangkhul village headman (*awunga*) and his council of ministers (*hangva*) composed of the clan elders may be considered as the traditional elite. But then, it should be noted that their ascendancy to the seat of power or governance is not due to their possession of higher intellect or other capabilities. On the contrary, as is the case in most other tribal societies, it is by virtue of their being the 'first' in the particular group. These elites or should we say their position in the society, were hereditary. It is also certain that every man of higher mental faculty, skills, physical strength and courage is not given such important seats of power in the society. Therefore, in strict terms, 'traditional elite' does not appropriately explain the local situation as such. Secondly, among the Nagas, of which the Tangkhuls are one sub-tribe, land ownership belongs to the group and not the individual. A monetized economy market also does not exist. These facts disqualify the use of the term class for the explanation of the emergence of the new social group. "The absence of caste as a factor in Naga social life, the relative unimportance of land as a lever to social and political power and the more or less egalitarian build up of Naga tribal society are but a few points which tends to make the issue complicated" (Mishra 1983: 163).

Notwithstanding the inappropriateness of the use of elite or class in explaining the Tangkhul situation the work will use both the concepts interchangeably according to the issue to be explained. For instance, in explaining the political role with regard to the exercise of authority then the concept of elite becomes more suitable. However, in

analyzing the economic aspects it would become clear that class has an edge over the former. This is an arbitrary categorization and it will become obvious in the following pages from the regular overlapping of the two concepts. Similarly other writers have encountered this difficulty of choosing between the two concepts as well. Ghosh writing about the emergence of middle class in Nagaland says "It may be noted that since there is no land or industrial aristocracy in Nagaland technically the term middle class is wrong, because there is no other class above it, although there is one lower. But sociologically, it is correct because nowadays by middle class we understand a certain educated class of people who earn their bread by themselves by brainwork, and do not depend on the interest of the money invested or other's labour, neither on physical labour as most of the lower class people depend on. Thus the middle class of Nagaland is in fact the top class and cream of the society and brain behind all its socio-economic political activities" (Ghosh 1983: 218-219).

### **Tangkhul Middle Class**

Seen in the above light let us now evaluate the formation and existing nature of middle class among the Tangkhuls. Like most of the Naga tribes land ownership among the Tangkhuls, is also communal. The right over the land is either symbolically vested with the chief or it was collectively administered by the village council. Even where there was individual ownership of property, as in some rare cases, this was still at the formative stage. The land settlements introduced by the British in other parts of the sub-continent did not cover the Naga Hills and the tribal pattern of land ownership continued unhindered. Moreover, land was still not a commodity in the sense that there is full free ownership with the right to sell or pledge it. The sale and purchase of cultivable land is yet to become a common practice because other cultural and emotive relations are attached to it. Therefore, Burman argues that, "Although there is a tendency to secure land as private property the process is yet in its very initial stages and has not yet broken up the community character of possession of land in the hills" (1972: 163). This at least partly explains why a landed aristocracy did not emerge in Nagaland and other parts of tribal occupied areas in the northeast region. Moreover, it was through Government

regulation that the right of the tribal councils over village land were finally protected and Acts like the Naga Jhum Land Regulation of 1946 gave the inhabitants absolute rights over their Jhum lands and recognized their rights to practice shifting cultivation as well as to collect forests products from the Jhum lands for domestic use and not for sale. Thus, there were natural socio-cultural and governmental restrictions to the free sale and purchase of land in Nagaland. All these, along with extremely slow growth of money economy, contributed to the halt of in the process of transition of communal ownership of land to private ownership. This partly explains why the ownership of land did not act as an important factor in the emergence of the middle class in a society where ownership is not regarded as a determining factor of the quality of social honour because the permanent ownership of land did not hold much significance in a community, which practiced shifting cultivation. Even in cases where individual ownership had developed, land was yet to assume a commodity character (Ghosh1983: 213).

Thus, it may be said that the emergence of the middle class among the Tangkluls, as among other Naga tribes in Nagaland and elsewhere, is directly linked with the spread of western education under the British and the attendant growth of salaried bureaucracy as well as the growth of the various professions. Today, this class is primarily made of the salaried bureaucracy, businessmen ranging from affluent government contractors to petty shopkeepers, men belonging to various professions such as medicine, teaching as well as owners of urban properties in towns like Ukhrul and Imphal. Among these various groups the salaried bureaucracy is the most preponderant.

### **Western Education and Middle Class**

Writing for tribal population of Bihar Sachchidananda & Mandal have explained in great detail the important functions of education on them. According to them "The phenomenal growth of education has given them enlightenment in all aspects of life. It has paved the way to individual social mobility. This has opened opportunities for getting employment and for the diversification of occupations. Those who have received education rise in the estimate of their fellow men and acquire new social

status.....Education also led to the emergence of a tribal middle class or elite. Its rank was swelled by the educated tribals who were in government services or in professions like teaching, medicine and law. Brought up in the liberal and democratic traditions and conscious of their rights as citizens in free India, these elites are desirous of participating in the process of government. It is keen that its voice receives the attention it deserves. It serves as the mouth piece for tribal aspirations” (1985: 44).

The above analysis of Sachchidananda and Mandal gives an insight about the impact and function of education among the tribals, which holds good even for the Tangkhuls. Let us now analyze it. It is true that Western education came to the Tangkhuls very late at the fag end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century along with the arrival of the Christian missionaries. Western education became the unifying force for the diverse categories of Tangkhuls which came to constitute the new social class, giving them a distinct identity. If we assess the spread of education across the different geographical location of the Tangkhuls then we find that Ukhrul district stand at the top in comparison to other districts. Though the district accounts for 20.35 per cent of the total geographical area of the state and 5.95 per cent of the state’s total population, its literacy rate was 64.54 per cent while it was 59.89 per cent for the whole state in 1991. Along with the high literate population the district also has 36.36 per cent of the main male work force in the non-primary sector (Census of India, 1991).

The middle class in the Tangkhul context came to mean the western educated class. The small group with the knowledge of English language became the epicentre of middle class among the Tangkhuls. Firstly, this was because this small section of population occupied a centre stage in matters of administrations. Secondly they could develop their contacts with the foreign rulers to get government jobs and other benefits because of their familiarity and proximity with the rulers. These opportunities of contact and association with British colonial rulers simultaneously makes the small section of the Tangkhuls highly esteemed and were placed in a higher social status by their fellow tribesmen. Usually these people were referred to as ‘*dobasis*’, usually employed for the service of interpretation of the tribal laws and customs for the English rulers. They acted

as the bridge between the tribals and the rulers because they knew both the language of the Tangkhuls as well as the foreign rulers. They can be, in a way regarded as the first generation of middle class among the Tangkhuls.

Gradually, this group took advantage of the new job and other occupational opportunities in civil administration, commercial activity, and liberal professions thrown open by the British rule and consequently adopted by the independent Indian state. Expansion of liberal professions like teaching, law and medicine coupled with the constitutional provision for 'reservations' further augmented their status and finally led to the crystallization of a minority group, which has come to be called the 'middle class' among the Tangkhuls. Looking at them they seem to perfectly fit Lord William Bentick's (Governor General of India in 1835) aspirations, who anticipated to raise a class of Indians through English education who would be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect or, in short, Indians with modern western minds" (Bhatia 1994:23). Though the 'middle class' among the Tangkhuls is yet to emerge fully they have undeniably started crystallizing. Today they have become more conscious of their class interest and have formed an association of their own like the Tangkhul Employees and Professionals Association etc. (which is an extension of the previous Tangkhul Gazetted Officers Association) to cater to their class needs and interests. It is worth mentioning here that the majority of the members of this middle class belong to the bureaucracy. The other professional groups such as law, medicine, teaching, government contractors, and NGO workers come next. Moreover, another class of technocrats and petty businessmen is emerging slowly though it is at present a microscopic minority.

### **Middle Class and Naga Nationalism**

A close analysis of the Naga movement reveals the most important role played by the elites in seeking greater autonomy for Naga Hills. From the beginning the Naga movement has been led by English educated, christianized and modernized sections of the Nagas, who were essentially oriented towards the Christian western model. The emergence of the first generation of the Naga elite can be traced to the formation of the

Naga Club in the 1918 at Kohima, the present capital of Nagaland. Naga Club Members were mainly drawn from the newly emerging elites including Naga government officials and representatives from several Naga tribes. A few leading headmen of the neighbouring villages who used to come to attend the meetings for the solution of social and administrative problems also become the members of the club. Although not much is written about the activities of the club, its activities and nature can be extracted from the demands in terms of a memorandum it submitted to the Simon Commission in 1929 wherein it demanded that 'the Nagas be excluded from the scope of the proposed constitutional changes and instead be kept under the direct administration of the British'. Further the memorandum presented by the club to the Simon Commission emphasized for keeping their development on the tribal lines, which proves that the club was aware of the democratic rights of their people. Mishra argues that, the club's memorandum appeals to the British government to safeguard the customary rights of the Nagas, which the club felt, would be threatened if the Naga hills were to be included within the reformed scheme (1983:163-165). Not much could be said about the Naga Club at this point in time as there are no available records of the activities of the Naga club. The Naga club was followed by a Lotha council and the Ao tribal council in 1928. All these subsequent organizations set the stage for the emergence and development of amore encompassing organization namely the Naga Hills District Tribal Council in 1945.

The Naga Hills District Tribal Council was formed at the initiative of Mr. C.R. Pawsey, the then Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills. It was the first attempt to form an organization, which would represent all the tribes. But the Naga Hills District Council did not last long, perhaps because it was found to be not duly representative of the tribes. This proves that they were conscious of their independent identity and rights and therefore declines the patronage of Mr. Pawsey. Nevertheless it paved the way to a conference of all the representatives of individual tribal council that was held in February 1946. It was at this conference that the Naga National Council (from here NNC) was formed. It is to be noted here that the term 'national' was used for the first time in 1946. The NNC was composed of twenty-nine members who represented the various tribes on the basis of proportional representation. Its original aim was to foster the welfare and the social aspirations of the Nagas. It was not a political organization in the sense that it had



no paying membership and no pledge of loyalty to the party. As the activities of the NNC widened, it became the sole organized political force in the Naga Hills. Thus, for the first time in Naga's history the various Naga tribes came together under a single political organization. Hence one can argue that the formation of the NNC was decidedly a major step in the consolidation of the Naga nationalistic forces. At the same time NNC contributed immensely towards the lessening of the inter-tribal rivalry and the emergence of an all Naga consciousness, which is today loosely defined as the 'Naga way of life' (Mishra 1983:61). It was the NNC, which, through its social and political demands and its method of organization, paved the way for the emergence of the modern Naga nation. Prior to this most of the Naga tribes live in isolation and the role of the tribal council was limited to the village republics. However, with formation of the NNC such physical, social and political barriers were removed and there emerged a common identity which permeates the erstwhile boundaries.

It is interesting to note that in spite of a large section of the leadership of the NNC being drawn from the newly emerging middle class it did not develop into a typical middle class organization aimed at safeguarding middle class rights and interest as found in other society. A significant aspect in this process of the growth of the Naga nationalism under the NNC is that it posed no threat to the traditional leadership of the tribal councils and the village headmen continue to play an affective role in Naga life as they did in the past. This was, of course, partly due to the economic pattern of the society, which had not undergone any major changes during the British rule. The entire organizational pattern of the NNC was based on the traditional tribal pattern which also kept the authorities of the aforesaid institutions intact. This parallel organization of the NNC along the patterns of the traditional set-up and the character of the Naga middle class which was not born out of either the landed aristocracy or was the result of the commercial activity contributed to NNC's success. Clashes with the interest and the leadership of the traditional chiefs and their council were avoided due to such arrangements and rather received unstinted support from them in furthering the NNC's goals. Over the years since its inception, till date, the middle class continues to provide the leadership to the Naga nationalist movement. More recently there has been the rise of a small but powerful middle class led by the bureaucrats closely followed by the new

economic and political class emerging with the economic development and political leadership because of participation of the Nagas in the democratic political processes under the Indian union. This emerging new social group led by the bureaucrats is presently the ruling class in the society and the lever of all the significant changes among the Nagas and the Tangkhuls as well.

### **Social change and the middle class**

For the Tangkhuls the days of headhunting and inter-tribal warfare are now history. They have come a long way since then. Change has permeated almost every aspect of the society. These socio-political changes within the Tangkhul society have been due to various reasons. Some of them are the introduction of Christianity through the English missionaries, cultural contact with the plainsmen and others from beyond the village boundary, introduction of formal education, and variety of economic pursuits are some of the landmarks in the social political history of the Tangkhuls, which brought a change in the ways, and life of Tangkhul society. Horam has eloquently brought out the factors of change in his own study. According to him "The needs of the average man are multiplying, to meet which the simple farmers have overnight turned to the more interesting occupation of quick money making. This is injuring agriculture in general and weaving in particular, specially when the latter is the only cottage industry extant today in the Tangkhul Hills. Other crafts such as pottery work, basket making, and such others are threatening to disappear altogether. The colourful Tangkhul shawls are no longer a 'must' with the younger people, and very few girls know how to weave them. Used of tailored and ready-made, and often ultra-modern garments is on the increase, and if this state continues shawl making may also disappear altogether. Woodwork and bamboo-work are also becoming rare. But these changes can be reversed and are trivial when compared to the others which are having far reaching adverse affects and are eating into the very foundation of Tangkhul society (1977: 96). Horam also notes the changes affecting the four pillars of Tangkhul society: family, clan, village and tribe which contributes substantially in the development of the middle class in a tribal society like the Tangkhuls. In sum, we can say that the Tangkhul society, for sure is undergoing a very rapid transformation touching every aspect of the society.

Looking at the changing profile of the Tangkhuls it is difficult to say precisely if the process of change should be called westernization or modernization. The models and symbols regularly emulated by the Tangkhuls, especially the younger generation are apparently the western ones. However, a closer observation would make it clear that it is more than just the transfer of western model to a non-western context, in this case the Tangkhuls. Modernization, with its pre-eminent emphasis on the role of rationality in the calculation of means-ends relationship, is also taking shape within the Tangkhul society. However this process of modernization is mainly carried forward through adaptive changes in the traditional structures rather than dissociation or breakdowns. Let us now analyze the role of the middle class in perpetuating and mediating social change among the Tangkhuls. The high ranking officials in the bureaucracy and other white collar workers, the politicians and other professionals who forms the bulk of the middle class command high esteem; their decisions and suggestions are sought after and respected, and their lifestyles are eagerly emulated by the general masses. The old traditional elite, the village headman and his council of ministers, have ceased to enjoy their share of power and authority unless their traditional status is attached with modern education or related to someone in the ruling stratum. Thus, we can see that the traditional statuses of power and authority have been replaced by the modern and secular statuses like bureaucrats, doctors, engineers etc. In spite of these changes happening within the Tangkhul society the traditional institutions such as the village headman and his council have not been totally wiped out. However they have been robbed off their traditional authority and powers and functions. And hence they have lost their primordial hold on the masses. On the other hand, the middle class have wielded much power and respect for itself and have come to possess lots of wealth and the means to become the ruling class in the society. This ruling class is akin to "the class of people who hold and exercise power on behalf of the state" (Bhatia 1994: 19). They are the individuals who have eventually managed to climb to the top. They are urban based, more westernized, more educated and they tend to exhibit conspicuous standards of living.

Materialistic accumulation for show rather than utility per se is becoming the identity of this class. Aram (1969: 127) has argued that with the impact of modern life and culture, there is a strong trend for the Naga people to become more and more

individualistic. He is, further of the opinion that the average Naga is more concerned about his individual advancement and welfare which was not so in the past as earlier the Naga villages were well kit units with strong social cohesion. Today there is loosening of the community bonds and the individual is more and more on their own. In certain respect this is a healthy development because to be a prisoner of the powerful collectivity of a clan or the village was not so good as it is constricting upon the independent development of an individual. But on the other hand, the old values of community solidarity and corporate actions are disappearing. Apparently the dissolution of traditional values and the simultaneous development of an atomized society of the modern type among the Tangkhuls create a situation of ennui or normlessness. Thus, the crucial issue is the question of ascertaining the critical balance for the proper functioning of the society.

Aram further observes that "As the Naga society emerges from the traditional tribal form and moves into modern industrial phase, we visibly see disparities between different sections of the population and between the urban and the rural sector. There is no doubt that during the recent years some have become very rich whereas the bulk of the population is still on the old standard of living. With educated Nagas holding important administrative positions and other prestigious and remunerative job the gap is growing between the educated section and the uneducated section. Not only in matters of financial emoluments and physical facilities but in other respects also, such as cultural standards and ways of living, great disparities are developing. To some extent the growth of disparities are unavoidable in a developing society but then as these disparities goes beyond a certain limit social tensions are bound to arise" (Aram 1969: 127). For some time now such disparities are becoming an everyday reality in the Tangkhul society. It is not to say that these class disparities never existed earlier but it is a fact that in the recent times it has become much more obvious and marked. With the disappearance of customary ways of generosity, paternity and communal feasting the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' has become pronounced.

A worrying aspect about the emerging middle class is that it is preoccupied with their interest and goal. They are hardly bothered about the traditional obligations towards

their less fortunate neighbours. Such a distressing situation is further made worst by the growing dependence of the tribal population on the monetized market. Sayasaachi puts this issue in the right perspective when he argues that "As forests dwellers depend more and more on the market for their livelihood, they acquire values alien to their way of life. These values create a discontinuity between generations. The market also generates a demand for bio-diversity resources that is insensitive to the rate at which these resources are reproduced in nature. Most importantly, it undermines those social and culture that brings forests dwellers in close proximity with nature and thereby prepares the ground for studying and generating knowledge about its bio-diversity" (2001: 83). Except for a handful of petty business establishments owned by the Tangkhul middle class the rest of the trade is controlled by outsiders, both in terms of the quality of goods and the flow of the commodities in the market. With no dearth of industrial set-up in the state (Manipur) all the utility goods are brought from outside the state. The little indigenous production that the local people could produce is no longer sufficient for their subsistence since human needs are multiplying daily and there is literally nothing available locally to satiate these needs. The growing population, modern standards of living, ignorance of the traditional knowledge of nature-man relationship, greed etc. have added to the impoverishment of the Tangkhuls today. The middle classes who are economically better off with a stable source of income are, on the contrary, been able to reap some benefits. Most of them own landed property in urban centres. Through their ownership of such properties in towns and urban areas they are able to accrue some income in the form of rents. Some of them even take to money lending giving out money at exorbitantly high rates of interest. All these taken together signify the worst which is to come if such an unparallel trend of change is not checked. Therefore, on the whole the recent change that is being witnessed in the Tangkhul society is doing more harm to the society than good. It is also disrupting the normative pattern of the Tangkhul society.

Notwithstanding the changes that have ushered in the Tangkhul society, it would be too early to say that the severance from the tradition by this middle class is almost complete. Many of them still maintain relationships with their kinsmen in the remote villages. During festivities and other occasions they usually visit their villages and participate in the celebrations. Leaving aside the younger generations who have been

more or less thoroughly urbanized, the parents are sentimentally and emotionally attached to the old ways of life though with less vigour. In this context it is important to note that in certain measures the Naga movement also reinforces the traditional way of life in their attempt to project a distinct identity of the Nagas from that of the 'mainstream' society. And more recently, the middle class are taking up the initiatives of reviving the rich traditional past that has been driven to oblivion by Christianity, western education and other forces 'With the extension of effective communication and of the paraphernalia of a welfare state in almost all areas and with commercialization of local products in some of these areas, the tribal communities are faced today with "new challenges and response" situations. They perceived that as dispersed entities they would not be in a position to serve as pressure groups to protect their interests. Almost as a reflex, they tend to forge unity among themselves. In northeast India, particularly, one can see attempts to reinterpret, reiterate and elaborate traditional elements of culture and build up unified identities' (Burman 1992: 33).

Thus, we can see how the middle class emerged among the Tangkhul Nagas of Manipur. But the emergence of this class has taken a different trajectory from that of the other communities in the sub-continent. Lack of any monetized economy, lack of market, the non-existence of landed aristocracy and their isolated existence are few important reasons for its development as discussed earlier. In the contemporary times the middle class among the Tangkhuls is becoming the cream layer of the society cornering almost every opportunity and other means provided by the government. Not only their power and influence is growing in the Tangkhul society but their size is also expanding phenomenally in the recent years. They are also taking the maximum advantage of the new educational opportunities and other technological revolution. The middle class of Tangkhuls has also become more economically mobile which further enhances their social status helping them to climb up in the social hierarchy. One can also argue that the Tangkhuls have also become conscious of their class interest and are gradually coming together for furthering it. That is why we can safely conclude that among the Tangkhuls the middle class has not cut themselves completely from their traditional roots. They still maintain some form of relationship with their traditional base and also contribute in

certain measures to revive the same through its role in the political movement. Though the middle class among the Tangkhuls is yet to crystallize.

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## CONCLUSION

Social change in human society is a historical process. The study of social change has begun with the inception of sociology as a discipline. The frequency with which this phenomenon has occurred and still continues to occur warrants its systematic explanation in the human society; a task which has been performed by Sociologists and Social Anthropologists since the birth of the disciplines. The Sociologists have been concerned particularly with the rupture and crises social change entails in the society where it occurs. In the Indian context too there have been substantial works done on social change. It has been studied through the processes like sanskritization, westernization, modernization, secularization, parochialization etc. Yogendra Singh, however argues that most of the work on social change, at least in the Indian context, is mostly cultural rather structural. According to him "A structural analysis of change differs from the cultural one which is in terms of particularities of customs, values and ideational phenomena, their integration, interaction and change. Structural analysis is focused on the network of social relationships, which though culturally distinct share common and comparable attributes at a higher level of abstraction called social structure. A structural analysis of change consists of demonstrating the qualitative nature of new adaptations in the patterned relationship, as when a joint family breaks and becomes nuclear, a caste group is transformed into a class group or when traditional charismatic leadership is replaced by leaders of popular choice etc." (Singh 1988: 16-17). Furthermore, Bailey says "Thus, a structural analysis presupposes formulation of abstract concepts over the ethnographic details through which the facts of social life are not only described but also explained" (Bailey 1959: 90). Singh discusses the need for undertaking a structural approach to study change in the Indian context. He argues, "The focus on social change study, according to Dumont, should be on 'the reaction of Indian minds to the revelation of western culture' and on how the impact of the cognitive elements of western culture such as an individualism, freedom, democracy, etc. The cognitive system of Indian tradition is reacting with rejection or acceptance" (1986: 21). The present work here has attempted to study the dynamics of social change in

the Naga society in general and the Tangkhul society in particular with the help of secondary as well as little bit of primary sources.

By and large we have found in our study that the Tangkhuls are one of the most literate tribal community in Manipur. They have long graduated from the days of headhunting to a more modern form of living. Heads of human are much safer now. We also had seen that the Tangkhuls are concentrated in the Ukhrul district of Manipur, which accounts for 5.90 per cent of the state's total population with a literacy rate of 68.96 per cent (Census of India, 2001). The study has also noted that modern means of communication, transportation, entertainment, recreation, luxurious commodities, education and employments etc. are clearly visible in the contemporary Tangkhul society. But this transition from the traditional structure to the present form has been very rapid and erratic, condensing into a few period of time what actually should have taken much longer.

The present study further analyzes the social change within the Tangkhul society in the present era of globalization and rapid technological revolution which has been continually shrinking the world into a micro system. The erstwhile control and authority that the traditional institutions wielded over their members in the Tangkhul society especially over the youths have waned. The traditional roles have been taken over by the new specialized institutions and groups. Previously with little opportunity for physical and social mobility the village, the kinship and the family used to be the world around which the life of a member usually revolves. The sanctity and the importance of such association were preserved through numerous beliefs, customs and other such institutions. With the modern ways of life, however, it is totally a different picture. The increased opportunity for physical and geographical mobility has loosened the hold of kinship, village and familial ties. And with the settlement in the urban centres for employment and educational and other purposes there comes a certain amount of anonymity usually characterizing life in urban areas which have altogether contributed to the waning of the traditional and customary laws over the members of the Tangkhul society. The study, therefore notes that with the hold of traditional institution relegated to the periphery the Tangkhul society is witnessing the tendency of individualism which is quite alien to them. Similarly as the

individuals are removed from their traditional settings they have also lost the traditional lifestyle and community living very substantially. What is ironical about this type of change, which is registered in the second chapter, very clearly is that the modern institutions that emerged in the Tangkhul society because of rapid changes have not been able to provide substitute of the traditional institution so that the loss can be negated.

However, inspite of these sweeping changes traditional institutions still exist alongside the modern ones. Village land, especially where jhumming is practiced, continue to be owned collectively. The office of the *awunga* (village headman) and his *hangva* (Council of ministers) still exist, although many of its power and functions have been derided by the more formal and 'rational' institutions managed by the bureaucracy. The family still wields much authority upon its members though the influence of clan and the village have diminished considerably. This continuity is due to some of the following important factors. Firstly, it is due to the need to maintain a distinct Naga identity, which form the single most important agenda in the Naga's claim to sovereignty. This has directly necessitated the sustaining of those traditional aspects, which helps to maintain the 'Naga identity', revive those, which have been driven to the backspace and reassert it. At the same time, the politicization of the traditional and parochial ties by petty politicians also indirectly contributes to the persistence of the traditional ties and practices in the modern context. This is a common truth in the sub-continent where clan, village and tribe or caste linkages and affiliations are raised and manipulated by the so-called political leaders to serve their vested interests. This is one major source of the hostility and suspicion within the society. Rather than promoting the traditional aspects and values for the common benefit they are used as tools for pitching one segment of the society against the other so as to harp maximum political benefits. We can possibly argue that they are a threat to the stability and the future of the Tangkhul society. Finally, the un-development as well as the under-development of many areas in the region leaves them with no other options but to cling onto their age-old ways of life. However, this is not to deny the fact that modern winds of change have slowly began penetrating even such remote areas of the Tangkhul society. There is continuous dialogue between the two, which is pushing the society towards a new level of existence.

The study has highlighted the role of Christianity in bringing about far reaching changes in the Tangkhul society. Christianity substituted the traditional values and beliefs with new ways far removed from the local situation without any consideration for the ways in which the Tangkhuls have existed all these years. In the name of the new faith traditional festivities, rituals, beliefs and values were out rightly condemned and uprooted shattering the major aspects of the Tangkhul society. In its place a religion of timidity, selfishness, greed and personal gratification was planted. The encounter between the tradition and modernity, in the form of Christianity, in the Tangkhul context was a clash of unequals where the former completely dominated the latter.

We can also infer from the present study that the British colonialist used Christianity as one of the most successful means of dominating the Tangkhuls. The hangover apparently seems to linger on till now. That is why anything western commands awe and fascinates the Tangkhuls so much so that it has become a problem for the society. This should be evident from the observation made in the study about the younger generation who are very prone to blind imitation of anything that is west. They are being bombarded every moment by images of the 'west' from which there seems to be no escape route but just total submission no matter how much one has to pay for it. Such an attitude allows for unhampered intrusion of materialistic forces creating artificial needs, feelings, standards and so on undermining the corporate ness and the solidarity which characterized the Tangkhuls earlier. As a result of the aforementioned developments the insurance and premium one received from the close association with the clan or the kin group is no longer present.

Chapter three of the present study has highlighted the negative affects of the diminishing social bonds upon youths, who require close and stable relationship in their personality development and identity formation. In the absence of such primordial bonding instances of deviant behavior, violence, and other pathological trends are becoming commonplace among the Tangkhul youths. The present chapter therefore, makes an interesting observation that the Tangkhul youths are facing a situation of normlessness

given the transitional phase that the whole Tangkhul society is undergoing. The Tangkhul youths are in a dilemma whether to cling onto the traditional ways of livelihood or abandon them altogether at the cost of being called deviant. The chapter concludes with the note that the problems faced by the present Tangkhul youths is reflection of the larger systemic dichotomies within the society at large and does not necessarily confine the problem to the youths per se. Rampant corruption, selfish designs, narrow politics which characterized the present Tangkhul society is directly hampering the smooth growth and development of the youths in the society.

Chapter four traces the emergence of new leadership in the Tangkhul society. New leaders who are western educated and urban based have replaced the traditional leadership and authority structure. They are often persons who hold high posts in the government administrative set-up. This group has emerged as the new elites among the Tangkhuls replacing the traditional ones which generally included the village *awunga* and the *hangva*. Often it was observed in the study that due to their inherently recent development within the traditional value system they were found opposed to the folkways and mores of traditional Tangkhuls society. They are western oriented, exhibits modern standards of lifestyle, upwardly mobile and literate and indulge in various professions and occupations. However, within this class, the chapter noted, there were attempts for the preservation of the traditional identity of the Tangkhuls. The most vociferous efforts towards this preservation come from those who are associated with the Naga national movement. Hence, we can argue that amidst the rampant and rapid socio-economic changes ushering in the Tangkhul society one can still the remnants of the past existing alongside the modern ones. This means that the Tangkhuls have undergone only adaptive changes and not that every traditional institutions has been dismantled. Perhaps one can state that modernization, westernization and other process of change have not completely altered the traditions of the Tangkhuls.

Finally we can conclude the study by making two important general observations. Firstly, the study has identified the main factors of change which are primarily exogenous. For instance, the study has pointed out the British rule and the administrative policies of

the colonial rulers, the Christian missionaries who brought the new religion and western education, new employment opportunities in the post independent India as those exogenous forces which have given a flip to the process of social change within the Tangkhul society. These were the forces responsible for the gradual opening up of the Tangkhul country to the rest of the sub-continent and the world through various linkages and developmental programme and plans. It also brought about the in-migration of outside traders and businessmen and other administrative staffs and other related agents of social change from beyond the Tangkhul society. The endogenous factors of changes have also been bracketed in the course of the present research. These are the Naga nationalism and the Tangkhul middle class, although the latter is an offshoot of exogenous factors. We have noted that the state (Manipur) in general and the district (Ukhrul) in particular, does not have a single industrial set-up. Only few households pursue traditional weaving and cottage industry. Hence we can say on the basis of our finding in this chapter that the process of industrialization is hardly relevant to this area when the world around is riding high on industrial development and its profits.

Nevertheless, this is not to deny the genuine attempts made by the government to develop and uplift the tribals. What is of importance is that tribal development to be truly effective cannot depend alone on the charity of social welfare agencies. The emphasis should be on growth with self-reliance. The people will become self-reliant only if they are involved in the development. But this entails a major restructuring of the allocation and distribution pattern of resources between the rural and the urban and a shift in the priorities between capital intensive and technology based industry and those of labour intensive and need based enterprises. The danger of a uniform and stereotyped approach to development should be avoided. Although tribal societies share certain characteristics in common with the larger society, they vary sharply in terms of their social and cultural patterns and the norms and values which sustains them. For tribal development to succeed planners need to keep these variations in mind. For instance, the sanction of bank loans by the governmental agencies depends upon surety of the landed property. But since the land is not exclusively owned by tan individual except the land on which he builds a house. The village heads remains the custodians of the land and has the sole authority for its

distribution for agricultural purposes. In some other instances a clan owns the land. Thus, the resulting trend is that the loan facilities made available by various agencies of the government for socio-economic development remains a mirage to them. Therefore, The basic issue of tribal development is not that nothing has been done for them but that plans have not been framed to suit their needs. In the event, any of the benefits meant for them gets diverted to the pockets of exploiters and corrupt officials.

Secondly, the present study throws light on what Singh said about the process of modernization in the Indian context. According to him "A unique feature of modernization in India, however, is that it is being mainly carried forward through adaptive changes in the traditional structures rather than structural dissociation or breakdown. A form of neo-traditionalization has thus proceeded along with modernization" (Singh 1983: x). Similarly Rudolph and Rudolph argues that "The assumption that modernity and tradition are radically contradictory rest on misdiagnosis of tradition as it is found in traditional societies, a misunderstanding of modernity as it is found in modern societies, a misapprehension of the relationship between them" (Rudolph and Rudolph 1969: 3). Rather than calling for a strict separation for the two processes or treating them as dichotomous, they point to the variation in the meaning of modernity and tradition and suggest how they infiltrate and transform each other. In the study we find similar processes in the Tangkhul social structure that change has been more of adaptation than being total overhauling of the structure. We have also noted the fact that the process of change entails conflicts and confrontations which could threaten the social set up affecting the members of that particular structure to such an extent that could result into pathological ramifications.

In sum, the study is a humble effort to analytically capture the rapidly changing social and cultural topography of the Tangkhul society. This is not an exhaustive research. More probing research should be encouraged to evolve concepts and analytical tools for studying the tribal society India and elsewhere.

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