

ETHNIC RELATIONS
(A CASE STUDY OF MANIPUR)

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DECLARATION

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CONTENT

Pages:

Chapter - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N ... 1 - 14

Chapter - II

M A N I P U R S T A T E ... 15 - 69

- Geographical Factors
- Economy
- Political Set up

Chapter - III

R O O T S O F C O N F L I C T ... 70 - 113

- Race
- Religion
- Language and Culture

Chapter - IV

P O L I T I C A L E X P R E S S I O N O F
E T H N I C I T Y ... 114 - 175

- Meithei
- Naga
- Kuki

Chapter - V

C O N C L U S I O N ... 176 - 188

B I B L I O G R A P H Y ... 189 - 199

* * *

Chapter - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Ever since its merger with the Indian Union, Manipur has been passing through hard times. There has been disturbance and uproar in every nook and corner of the state and this made life very insecure and unpredictable. The problems that confront Manipur today are the result of a long historical development. The Nagas living in the state in collaboration with the other Nagas took up arms in the early fifties to fight for a 'sovereign State'. Thus, the Naga inhabited areas were declared as 'disturbed areas' and are still under military rule. This was followed by a similar demand by the Mizos and Kukis in the early sixties. The result was that they too had to suffer similar fate like the Nagas. The separatist movement of the Nagas and Mizos affected the mind of Meiteis. They considered the movement as dangerous to their security and above all for the integrity of Manipur and so this posed a big problem to them. What exactly disturbed the Meiteis was that, if the Nagas and Mizos were allowed to be integrated either with greater Nagaland or Mizoram, their status would be very much diminished. Manipur would no longer be viable as a state, since it would have to part with

9/10th of the area. This was their biggest concern. Therefore they always opposed tooth and nail, whenever the issue of integration cropped up.

The second question is, why the Nagas and Mizos want to join with Nagaland or Mizoram respectively. This is the problem of 'Ethnicity'. The Nagas and kukis (as they are known in Manipur) have greater affinity with the people living in Nagaland and Mizoram. The Nagas had fought for a 'Sovereign State' but later a section of the Nagas accepted to abide by the Indian Constitution and thus Nagaland State was created. But in the demarcation (boundaries) of the Nagaland State, only a section of the Nagas were included in the new State. This 'dubious policy' of the Government, further aroused the sentiment of the Nagas and they strongly demanded for inclusion of all the Naga inhabited areas in to the new State. After all, the Nagas in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal had paid the same price, endured the same hardship. Therefore they asked why they should be separated once again.

As already indicated the Meiteis had vehemently opposed the integration of the Nagas and Kukis with the respective states of Nagaland and Mizoram. The problem that confronts the state is very peculiar and no other states in India faces such problem. The Meitei, constitute two-thirds of the total population, but they occupy only one-tenth of the total area, while the Nagas and the Kukis occupy nine-tenth of the total area but population-wise they constitute only one-third of the population. This uneven distribution of population and territory has been the prime reason why the Meiteis have always opposed the integration programme of the Nagas and Mizos (Kukis).

The Government of India had hoped to dilute the Naga and Mizo issue by granting statehood to Manipur. Statehood was no solution to the problem, because even after statehood, the issue continued to be raised by the Nagas and Mizos and this has only multiplied problems in the state. As one looks at the problem, it is a difficult and complex problem.

As already mentioned earlier, Manipur consists of three distinct groups, viz. the Meiteis, Kukis and Nagas. These three groups have divergent views about the state of Manipur. The Nagas and Kukis are wanting to separate from the state. The Meiteis are who interested in preserving the integrity of Manipur, because without the Hills Manipur cannot be Manipur. These differences in opinions, have made their relation unstable and unsound. The conflicting demands have also made the people distrustful and suspicious of each other. Looking at the problem, one visualizes that the demands of these two groups are based on 'Ethnic grounds', that they are different from each other and also from the Meiteis. Therefore they should be allowed to integrate with their separated brethren. So here the concept of 'Ethnicity' has been used in order to study and analyse their problems.

The concept of 'Ethnicity' has been used for various reasons: First the groups that inhabit this region are three distinct groups. These groups even after many years of association continue to be

separate and distinct. There has been no cultural inter-action despite their physical closeness. Secondly, (in these groups the concept of 'us' and 'them' is very much prevalent.) Thus a Kuki will identify other known and unknown Kukis as 'us' or 'we' and the other communities as 'them' or 'they'. (This is one of the ways through which communities are distinguished.) Ethnic loyalty among these groups are very much visible and manifested. Thirdly, history has played a major factor in the making of these ethnic groups. Besides the historical factor, there are other factors like social, linguistic, cultural and economic disparities which have further aggravated and widened the gap. Another important factor which has favoured their ethnicity is the geographical factor. This aspect will be discussed in detail later.

That Manipur is not a homogeneous community is obvious from the demands of the different groups. This has contributed very much to the apathy of the different groups, and in a way led to many troubles,

between the various communities. The Nagas and Kukis especially do not feel a sense of belonging to the State, as they always look forward to their union with Nagaland and Mizoram respectively. On the other hand, the Meiteis fighting back in order to preserve the integrity of Manipur. This psychologically, mentally and emotionally, the inhabitants of Manipur do not share a common ideal or goal. Instead they are more dominated by the sense of 'Ethnic groups', 'Ethnic consciousness'. In fact, these past years, ethnic consciousness has played a major role in the state activities. This point will be elucidate later.

'Ethnicity', is generally referred to as the perception of group difference and social boundaries between sections of a population. That is, a distinction is made between groups of people who are living together, in other words, ethnicity is the recognition of significant difference between 'them' and 'us'. / Parson Talcott spoke of ethnicity as focus of group identity; that is the organisation of several persons into distinctive groups

and second of solidarity and the loyalties of individual members to such groups.¹ Here Parson has brought in important aspects, which constitute the meaning and concept of ethnicity. He has brought in the aspects of group identity, that is distinct and secondly solidarity and loyalties of the individual members to such groups. But here, he has not discussed whether 'Ethnicity' means also 'race', because there are some who consider 'Race'² and 'Ethnicity' as one and the same thing. But on the contrary it is not so, because such meaning will only narrow down the meaning and concept of Ethnicity. Since Ethnicity is used in a much wider sense, it transgresses the narrow aspects of race, culture, colour and citizenship. Instead the social scientists have looked upon 'Ethnicity' from a much broader aspect. They do not deny the factors that constitute the making of an ethnic group viz, origin, culture, history but they have also laid emphasis on minority groups, religious groups, interest groups etc, which play vital roles in the formation of various ethnic

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1. Glazer and Mohnihan (eds.), Ethnicity : Theory and Experience, (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1976)
Parson, T., "Some Theoretical Consideration on the Nature and Trends of Change of Ethnicity", p.53.
 2. Race would mean people coming from the same stock, like the Mongoloids, Negroids, Caucasians, etc.

groups. Therefore, there are no hard and fast rules or say the yardsticks to measure the congruity of Ethnicity. /

Let us examine another definition given by Caroline F. Ware. She defines:

"Ethnic communities' as groups bound together by common ties of race, nationality or culture living together within an alien civilization but remaining culturally distinct. They may occupy a position of self-sufficient isolation or they may have extensive dealings with the surrounding population while retaining a separate identity."³

This definition is true of the ethnic communities, living in Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram etc. Till today the assimilation of these groups into the Indian society has not been possible. They have always resisted and fought for the preservation of their own ethnic identity. The Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis have lived next door, but each group has remained unaffected by the presence of the other.

(The ethnic boundary has remained closed practically to

3. Caroline F. Ware, "Ethnic Communities", Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, (New York: Macmillan Company, MCM XLVIII), p.607.

each other, otherwise by now there should have been a better rapport and understanding between the groups.) But people have found it difficult to cross the ethnic boundary because of various factors e.g. social structure, customs, religion etc. (Another problem is that people of a different ethnic group are not willing to accept one another and there is some kind of a reserve and uneasiness. Therefore, there is hardly any possibility of crossing the ethnic boundary, since their group conscious^{ness} is still very strong.)

(Shermerhon also defines Ethnic groups in the same line as Caroline Ware: "collectively existing within a larger society having real or fictional common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements,⁴ defined as the epitome of their peoplehood".⁵ Again Shermerhon has stressed the aspect of common ancestry, history, culture etc, as the factors for determining an ethnic group. These definitions are traditional in their nature, because ethnicity does

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4. Symbolic elements would include kinship, pattern of political contiguity, religious affiliation, language or dialect, forms of tribal affiliation.. etc.
 5. Shermerhon, Ethnic Plurality in India, (Tucson Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1978), p.15.
 6. Glazer and Mohnihan, Ethnicity : Theory and Experience, p.113.

not necessary mean same culture or race. The scope of ethnicity has extended and embraced other aspects. Here is another definition by Donald Horowitz. To him membership in an ethnic group is a matter of social definition, an interplay of the self-definition of members and the definition of other groups.⁶⁾ According to Horowitz, Ethnic group is a matter of social acceptance. Ethnic groups can be formed by any individuals provided it is socially accepted and recognized, (Ethnic boundary cannot remain static, it has to be flexible and dynamic. After all it is the social boundary that accepts or identifies "us" in relation or in opposition to 'them',⁷ and the identity of a group will depend on the acknowledgment by ('them') other groups. At the same time not all ethnic groups shift their boundary. Thus, for instance, a particular (Xs) (group) may interact with but not marry the Ys (group... eat the same food but not cook it the same way... live in the same locality but come from different places. | Thus the Meiteis, Kukis and Nagas have lived side by side but have not shared the same

6. Glazer and Mohnihan, Ethnicity : Theory and Experience, p.113.

7. Sandra, W., (ed.), Ethnicity at Work, (London: The Macmillian Press Ltd., 1979), p.7.

feelings, sentiments and aspirations. They have always identified themselves as separate groups and each group is too conscious of its identity. ¶ This is one of the main reasons why the emotional integration of these communities has not been possible. The feeling of 'us' and 'them', has become so strong that there is no other word than the word 'Ethnicity' to express the recognition of significant difference between them. ¶ "Ethnicity is the process by which 'their' difference is used to enhance the sense of 'us' for purpose of organization or identification."⁸)

In the past, there has been change or shift in the ~~boundaries~~ in the Ethnic boundary, the changes have been slow and imperceptible. People ~~or~~ have voluntarily affiliated themselves to other ethnic communities, this is known as 'voluntary affiliation'. But one thing that must be kept in mind is that ethnic identity is generally acquired at birth.

In the Indian society, the change or shift in boundary has become a common phenomena of one caste or ethnic group

8. Ibid., p.3.

changing to another in order to have a better access or opportunity to identify themselves with a dominant group. Such changes have also taken place in the pluralistic society of Manipur. (With the change in social boundary there has been a shift in the political loyalty as well.) Thus the Anals, Aimols, Lamkangs and Koms, originally categorised by the British Administrators as belonging to the old Kuki group, are today recognized as part of the Naga community.⁹ In the Naga movement for independence, these groups have also participated and shared the hardship with the other Nagas.

The central theme of this discussion is to show through the concept of 'Ethnicity', that difference in this ethnic groups had arose because of the historical past, geographical distribution, cultural, religious and political differences. There are important factors that have contributed very much to the ethnicity of these groups, and lastly difference cannot be cemented unless a concrete follow up is done in this respect,

9. This is not an established fact because often the British Administrators categorised the various groups according to their own administrative convenience. The second point is that these groups had remained indifferent and passive to the Kuki Rebellion of 1917-18. And lastly these communities were on constant war with the Kukis. These tribes are more akin to the Nagas in their social and cultural set up than the Kukis.

that is the reorganization of the states. This means the problem cannot be solved as a law and order problem. There has to be a political solution.

The first chapter will focus on the State of Manipur from the physical aspect. (It shall show how the geographical factor hinders their social interaction and promotes isolation and separation.) Further, the uneven distribution of territory and population have also aggravated the present crisis in the state.) The economic and political aspect will be discussed to show, how geographical factor has also caused economic disparity and further led to differences in political aspirations.) The second chapter will be on the roots of conflict, the main factors that have led to the conflict in the present society. This aspect will be analysed from the historical and cultural aspect; how these societies had developed to be culturally diverse society. In this factors like religion, race or origin, language, etc, will be discussed. In the third chapter, the discussion will be centered around the political expression of ethnicity; that is the various demands of these groups. Why do the Nagas and Kukis want to separate, while the Meitei's still want the integrity of Manipur.

The problems that confront Manipur are real and requires immediate attention. The solution to these problems will depend greatly on the initiative and role of the central government. The people or the ethnic groups have taken their stand and are determined to achieve it even at the cost of bloodshed. The problem is a long standing one. What is the solutions to these problems is a very difficult question to answer. Still something concrete must be done in order to put an end to these long feuds.

Chapter - II

MANIPUR STATE

Manipur means the 'land of gems' and has been referred to as a 'Jewel of India', a little paradise; a flower of lofty heights and the Kashmir of Eastern India. Indeed it is a land of rare jewels, because here are found the largest number of the ethnographically well-known tribes of Manipur. The state has been painted as a land-locked state, situated in the extreme corner of India, bordered by Burma. It has between $24^{\circ} 30'$ and $25^{\circ} 60'$ north and longitude $90^{\circ} 10'$ and $94^{\circ} 50'$ east. The state is geographically encircled by hills with a fertile valley in the centre and splits up naturally into two tracts — Manipur Valley and Manipur Hills. The bordering hills form themselves into a south parallel fold with attitude varying from 833,327 metres to 3017,176 metres above sea level and covering 90 per cent of the whole area of 22,356 sq.kms.¹

Imphal is the capital town and centre of state activity. Its position facilitates the concentration of state economy and political activities. Manipur is bounded

1. Administrative Report 1976-77, Government of Manipur, p.1.

by the State of Nagaland in the North, Mizoram in the South, Assam in the West and Burma in the east. The location of the state itself is unique and the current crisis has a base in relation to all these states.

Describing Manipur, T.C. Hodson² wrote: "...there is an immense variety of climate and scenery which is only equalled by the variety of the types of mankind whose habits form the subject of this monograph."³

The physical geography of the state can be roughly divided into three well defined regions viz, Imphal valley, Hills and the Barak plain. Accordingly, the natural setting of the state has also made a direct impact on the socio-economic and political life of the people. And in the coming pages, the following factors will be discussed, in relation to the people.

The Imphal valley is one of the Himalayan 'midlands' like the Kathmandu and the Kashmir villages. The basin

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2. T.C. Hodson was the late Assistant Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of the State. Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and member of the Folklore society.
 3. Hodson, T.C., The Maitheis; (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1908), Rep. 1975, p.1.

has an area of about 1,800 sq.km. sometimes described as a 'little plateau' surrounded by the Hills. The land is fertile (alluvial soil) like the Great Indian Plain. This has facilitated the heavy concentration of population, posing hosts of problems like, food supply, health, employment, etc. Again, population of this area has played an important role because on account of numerical strength, the valley has more representatives in the state Assembly who dominate the state politics.

The Hills which surround the Imphal valley comprise about 91 per cent of the state area but in population constitute only one-third. Strategically the Hills occupy a very important region not only to the state but also for the sub-continent of India. The altitude in the hills varies from 3,000 metres in the north to 900 metres towards the valley and to the South-West and 1,200 metres to the South-East. Further the region is clothed with dense humid forests, and the lack of proper communication has kept the region's trade and commerce at a comparatively low ebb. The lack of transport and communication have always posed a problem and also the underground activities have

confronted the law and order problem in perpetuity. Another problem is that, on account of the sparse population, the leaders of the Hills have been reduced merely to function as pressure groups, and not as representatives of the people.

The Barak plain joribam sub-division⁴, consists of a small plain surrounded on three sides by hills. It covers an area of 277 sq.km. and the region is clothed with dense bamboo forests and fertile alluvial soil. The area once developed can become the gate-way to Manipur's economic development.

The central valley is the home of the Meitei community, who constitute the bulk (two-third) of the total population, though area-wise, they occupy only one-tenth of the total area. Besides the Meiteis there are pangans (Muslims) mayang (outsiders) and Hill people (Nagas and Kukis). While in the Hills, it is sparsely populated. Here is a district-wise⁵ distribution of the

4. Jhalajit Singh, R.K., Manipur, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1975, p.5.

5. Manipur at a Glance, 1976; issued by the Department of Statistic, Manipur.

DISTRICT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

Item	Unit	Centre- District	North- District	South- District	East- District	West- District	Teng- District	Manipur
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Population	No	724,537	104,175	98,114	62,229	44,975	38,727	1072,753
Density of Population	sq.km.	325	30	21	14	10	11	48

population and also the density of the population. The distribution of the population in the state is very uneven. The valley population (Central-District) is very high, excels those of the hills, thus population density in the valley is 325 persons per sq.km. while in the other district it is very low, the highest comes to 30 persons per sq.km. (North-District) but taking the average the Hills density of population will be 18 persons per sq.km. In this respect the central-district population density stands out higher than those of Bihar : 300 persons per sq.km.⁶

Many factors are responsible for the heavy concentration of population in the valley. In the first place the valley has been favoured with good geographical condition, flatland topography, fertile soils and hospitable climate. On the other hand the hills with their rugged relief with less fertile soils, colder climate and poor transport facilities have not facilitated the growth of population. That is why despite the vast unoccupied land, in the Hills, the valley continued to

6. Singh, R.P., Electoral Politics in Manipur,
(New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1981),
p.14.



be the centre of attraction, in fact many hill people have settled in the valley. Today the hill population represent only 31.28 per cent of the total population in the state. The diagram on page 21a clearly indicates the proportionate representation in the state. And the hill tribes of Manipur have been classified into 29 scheduled tribes⁷ in the Indian constitution, but these tribes can be broadly grouped into two ethnic groups; viz, Kukis and Nagas. The Nagas occupy the West, North, North-East and a part of South-East of Manipur, while the Kukis are scattered all over the state but are concentrated mainly in South district and Sadar hills. Viewing all these different aspects, one finds that the problems that confront is different from the other states. The nature of the problem is peculiar due to unique features of the state.

With the attainment of statehood, Manipur was reorganized into 6 districts, 25 administrative units

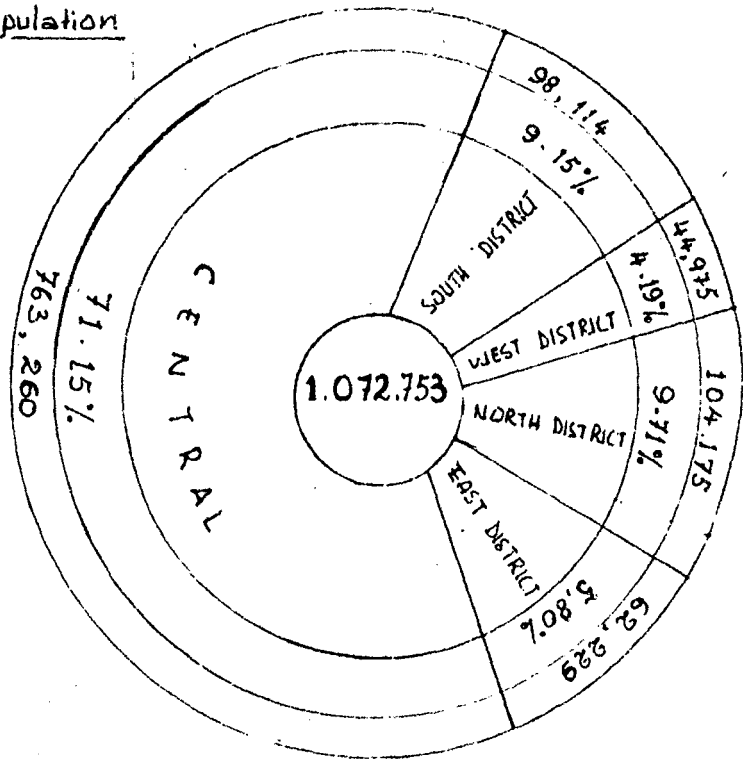
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7. Under the Indian Constitution 29 (scheduled) tribes have been recognized as scheduled tribes of Manipur and they are as follows: Armol, Anal, Angami, Chothe, Chiru, Gaughte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Koirao, Koireng, Kom, Lamkang, Any Mizo, Mao-Maram, Maring, Monsang, Moyon, Paite, Purum, Ralte, Salte, Sema, Simte, Tangkhul, Thandon, Vaiphei and Zou.

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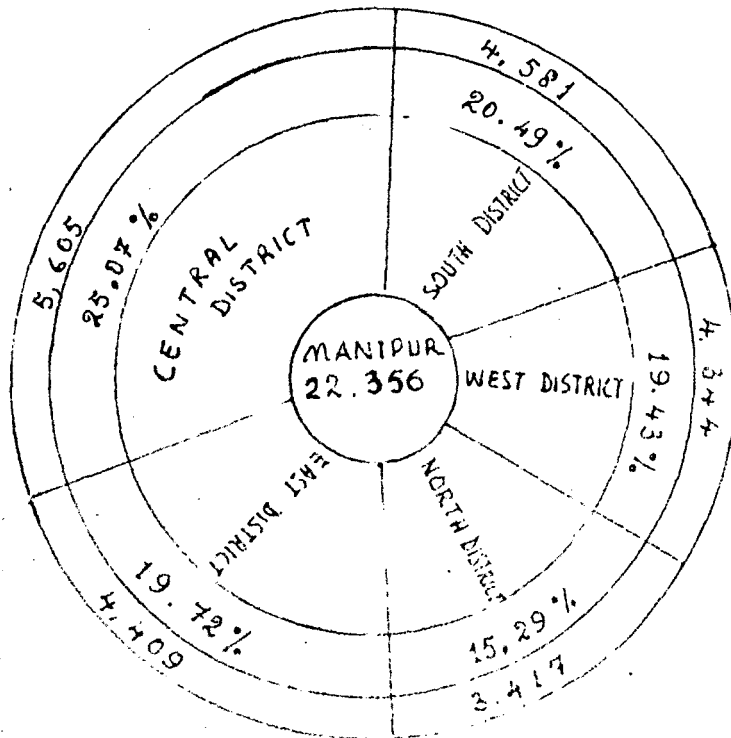


TH-701

Percentage of Population
1971



Percentage of Area (km²) 1971



and 26 Development Blocks.⁸ Each district was headed by a deputy commissioner and the administrative units by the sub-divisional officers. In the hills the Autonomous District Councils were introduced, with the purpose of giving full opportunity to develop themselves according to their own way of life. Further it was also laid down in the Constitution of India that "the Governor shall annually or whenever so required by the President, make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Hill areas in the state of Manipur and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the State as to the administration of the said areas."⁹ By this special provision, the hill 'areas' have been separated from the plains.

A brief glance into the various districts will make the discussion more comprehensive and pertinent to the existing problems. On page 24 is given the bird's eye view of the districts, the administrative units....

8. Administrative Report 1976-77,
Government of Manipur.

9. The Constitution of India, Government of India,
Ministry of Law, Justice and Company affairs,
part xxi, p.264.

etc. Now just the outline of each district will be given as follows.

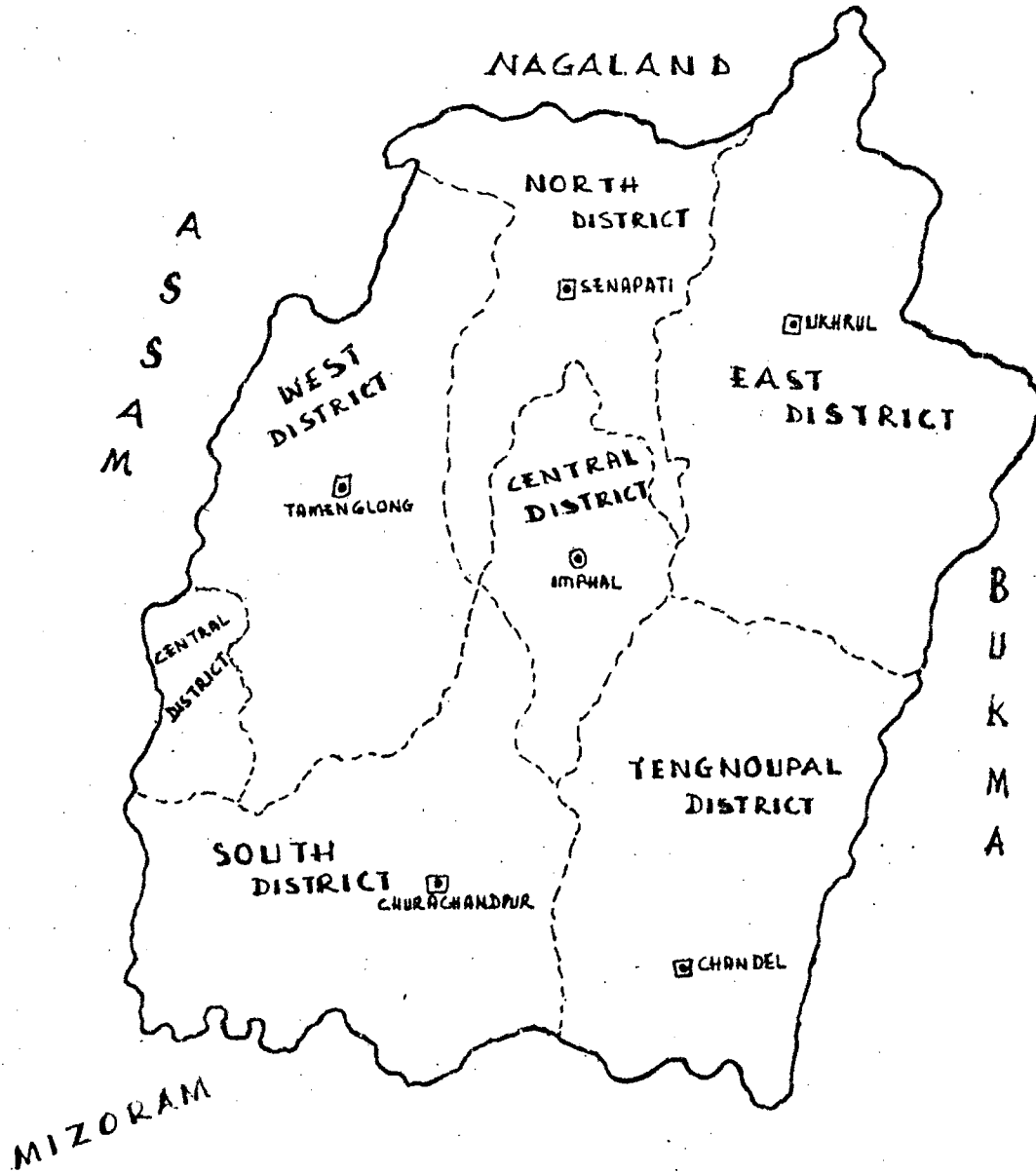
Manipur Central District

The central district (valley) is the most densely populated district of the state. It accommodates about two-thirds of the state population. The Meiteis constitute the major part of the population, though there are also Mayangs and Pangans and Hill people. The Meiteis being the majority dominate and control the activities of the district and the state. Out of the 60 members of Legislative Assembly, 41 are from the central district, while the remaining 19 seats are distributed in the other districts. Therefore there is uneven representation of the territories, and this has been one of the main reasons why the central district has been able to progress, ahead of the other hill districts. Jiribam sub-division also comes under the central district.

Manipur East District

The East District is sparsely populated, it accommodates about 6 per cent of the state's population, giving it a density of 14 persons per sq.km. In this

MANIPUR STATE
DISTRICTS



- STATE BOUNDARY
- - - DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- ⊙ STATE CAPITAL
- ⊠ DISTRICT HEADQUARTER

District Sub-Division	Headquarter	Area sq.km.	No.of villages	Population
1	2	3	4	5
<u>Manipur Central District</u>	<u>Imphal</u>	<u>2230 sq.km.</u>	<u>541</u>	<u>724,437</u>
Imphal West	Imphal	479 " "	146	241,155
Imphal East	Imphal	429 " "	150	169,937
Bishenpur	Bishenpur	530 " "	58	108,306
Thoubal	Thoubal	405 " "	110	181,771
Jiribam	Jiribam	387 " "		23,368
<u>Tengnoupal District</u>	<u>Chandel</u>	<u>3312 sq.km.</u>	<u>217</u>	<u>38,727</u>
Tengnoupal	Tengnoupal	907 " "	94	17,389
Chandel	Chandel	1019 " "	57	10,407
Chakpikamng	Chakpikamng	1386 " "	66	10,927
<u>Manipur South District</u>	<u>Churachandpur</u>	<u>4581 sq.km.</u>	<u>376</u>	<u>98,114</u>
Chumchandpur	Chumchandpur	668 " "	176	46,417
Churachandpur (North)	Henglep	717 " "	72	12,114
Thinghat	Thinghat	1101 " "	62	11,480
Thanlon	Thanlon	1291 " "	30	12,889
Tipeimukh	Parbung	804 " "	36	15,214

<u>Manipur East District</u>	<u>Ukhrul</u>	<u>4409 sq.km.</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>62,229</u>
Ukhrul Central	Ukhrul	1235 " "	66	31,740
Ukhrul North	Chingai	847 " "	31	10,381
Ukhrul South	Kasom Kullen	599 " "	28	4,780
Kanjong Chassad	Kanjong	1036 " "	52	7,151
Phungyar Phaisat	Phungyar	692 " "	39	8,177
<u>Manipur North District</u>	<u>Senapati</u>	<u>3417 sq.km.</u>	<u>404</u>	<u>104,175</u>
Mao-Maram	Tadubi	2376 " "	95	35,424
Sadar Hills West	Kangpokpi		147	30,442
Sadar Hills East	Saikul		162	30,309
<u>Manipur West District</u>	<u>Tamenglong</u>	<u>3664 sq.km.</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>44,975</u>
Tamenglong	Tamenglong	174 " "	46	14,028
Tamenglong North	Tamei	1078 " "	41	7,732
Tamenglong West	Tousem	1078 " "	50	8,888
Nungba	Nungba	1314 " "	58	14,327

district, the Tangkhul Nagas constitute the population, though there are a few Kuki settlements scattered in the district. The East district forms an autonomous hill district governed by an elected council and has its headquarters at Ukhrul. The district has three constituent assembly seats, and this district has two leading politicians¹¹ of the state, Yangmaso Shaiza and Rishang Keishing. The east district people are politically conscious, and the top-ranking men in the underground and overground belong to this area.

Manipur North District

The Mao-Maram Nagas inhabit this district. The north district is the most populous district of the state after the central district. Besides the Mao-Maram Nagas, there are Kuki settlements along with the Nepalees in the Sadar Hills. There are six assembly constituencies in the district, the seats are supposed to be reserved for the scheduled tribes, but in the last election from the Kangpokpi constituency, a Nepalee (Kishore Thapa) was elected.

11. These two leaders belong to the Tangkhul Naga community. They have both served as chief ministers of the state at different periods. Rishang Keishing is the leader of the Congress(I) Party, which is likely to form the ministry after the President's rule. Yangmaso Shaizo belongs to the PDF (People's Democratic Front).

The influx of Nepalees in the reserved areas has posed a threat to the Hill people. The North district has two autonomous district councils, the Sadar hills have become a thorn in the flesh both for the Nagas and Kukis.

Manipur South District

The South district is the second most developed district after the Central district. Here is found a host of tribes — Hmars, Paite, Gaughte, Mizos, etc. All these tribes have been known in Manipur as Kukis¹², but today they no longer want to be called Kuki but as Zomi (zo = Hill; mi = man). The thrust to identify all these as one ethnic group has taken the upperhand. This aspect of the problem will be discussed in the later pages. The district has six assembly constituency seats. There is the autonomous district council to look after the development of the people.

Manipur West District

Among the districts of Manipur, this district has been the most neglected. It is lagging behind in many

12. In the later chapter, the Kukis will be discussed more in detail, as to their origin, how they came to Manipur and the name Kuki.

respects; people are poor, illiterate and backward. The government has been trying to help out the people by introducing a number of developmental programmes through the Community Development Scheme and Tribal Welfare Scheme.¹³ The people who inhabit this region are Rongmei, Lengmei Zemei,¹⁴ Impui and Kuki. The west district has produced a great freedom fighter like Rani Gaidulu.¹⁵ There are three assembly constituencies reserved for the schedule tribes in this district.

Tengnoupal District

Tengnoupal district was formally under the Central district. Only in 1974 it was carved out as a district. It covers about one-seventh of the total area of the state and accommodates 3.61 per cent of the population. Again here there are numerous tribes¹⁶ like the Marings,

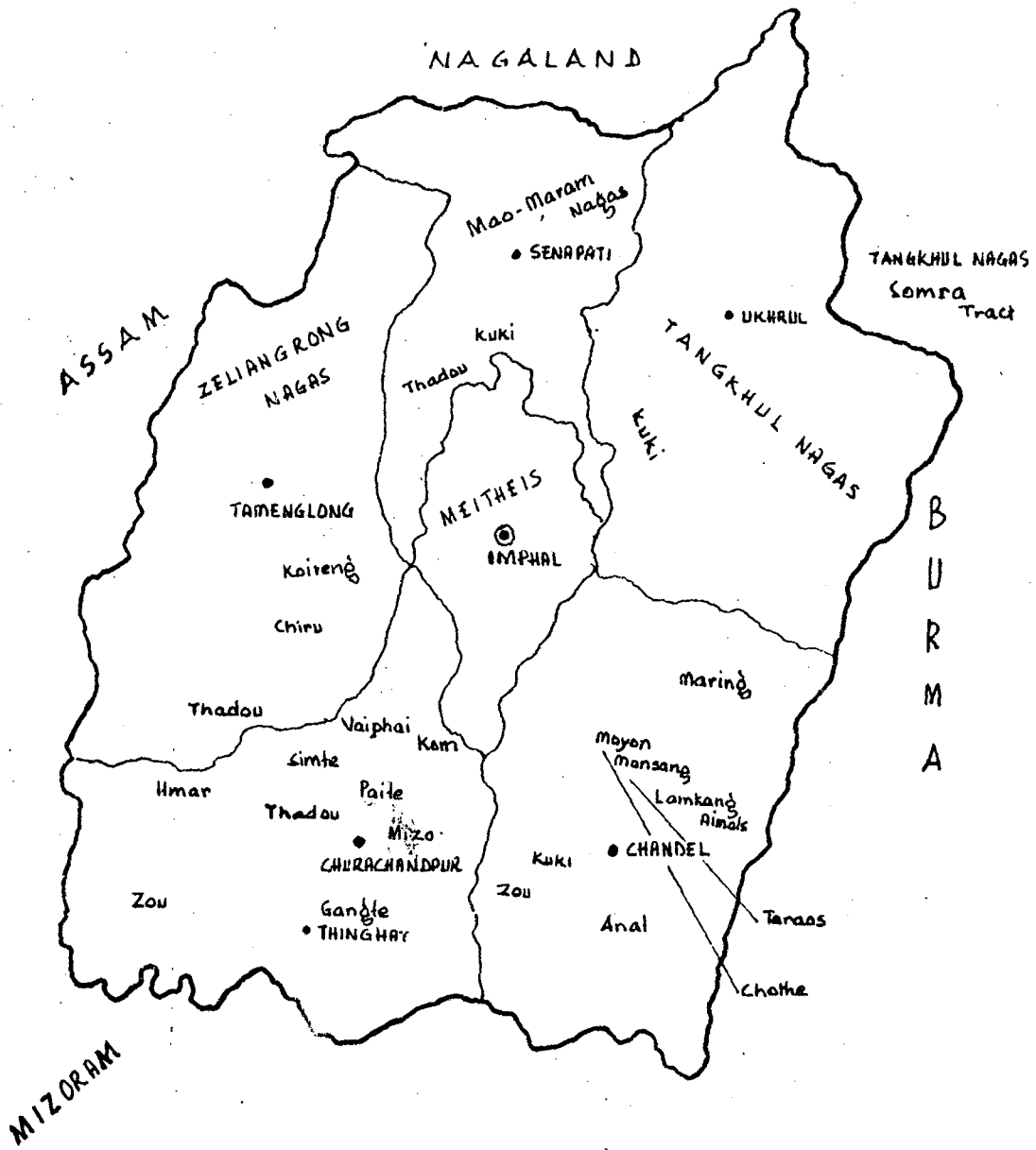
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13. Administrative Report 1976-77, Government of Manipur, p.119.
 14. Today Rongmei, Lengmei and Zemei have grouped together and has a common nomenclature - 'Zelengrong'.
 15. Roy, J., History of Manipur, (Calcutta: Eastlight Book House, 1973), p.140.
 16. Administrative Report, 1976-77, Government of Manipur, p.127.

Anal, Chothe, Lamkang, Kom, Tarao, Moyon, (Punjabi, Marwari, Deshwali, Madraji)...etc. It has two assembly constituencies, the seats are keenly contested by the two ethnic groups viz, Nagas and Kukis. In matters of politics, the ethnic cleavage is very sharp. Again being at the international border line, often the underground activities (Nagas or Mizos) affected the law and order of the district.

Therefore, the nature of the problems faced by the districts, differ from each other. / The dominance of a particular ethnic group has always aroused ill feelings on the part of others. In every respect, the various ethnic groups contest keenly whether it be in job, politics ...etc. this has often aroused mutual jealousy, hostility and thus widened the gap in their relationship. / At state level, too, the competition for survival has become the main feature of the day. Each group is trying to oust the other in every field. Naturally, this has given rise to conflict among the ethnic groups.

As already stated earlier, the inhabitants of the state are geographically distributed according to ethnic groups and this has resulted in the fragmentation of the

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION
OF ETHNIC GROUPS



- MEITHEI POPULATION
- KUKI POPULATION
- NAGA POPULATION

state. The ethnic location also clearly demarcate their affiliation to the various ethnic groups. The Meitheis who constitute the bulk of the population (two-third) are concentrates in the valley. This group has advanced more than the hill people because of the geographical condition. That is one of the reason why they control the government machinery of the state.

The Nagas and Kukis are united, only when they have to face the Meitais, the Meitais are considered as their common enemy for obvious reasons. But their unity ceases to exist. Once their enemy is no longer a threat to their existence. ~~Then both groups are like cats and dogs.~~ One thing is that the Nagas and Kukis are too conscious and aware of their identity. Both these two communities are fighting for the integration with their separated brethren. The Nagas in Manipur cooperated whole-heartedly, when Naga movement for independence was launched. Many joined and willingly sacrificed their lives for the noble cause. The same was the case with the Mizos and Kukis, when Lal denga demanded for 'Sovereign Mizoram'. But the Nagas were very much disillusioned when Nagaland state was given

a small part of the Naga inhabited area leaving aside big chunk of the present state of Manipur. This caused much dissatisfaction and disgruntlement among the Naga people. The demand of the Nagas is naturally going to affect the integrity of Manipur state, because Manipur cannot be Manipur without the Hills.

Ever since the Kukis settled in Naga areas, land has become the burning issue of the day. The Sadar Hills has become the bone of contention between the Nagas and Kukis. Formerly Sadar Hills had belonged to the Nagas but because of the Manipur Maharaja and British Political Agent's policy, this settlement was given to the Kukis in order to act as a buffer between the Meiteis and Nagas. Later, when Manipur attained statehood, the Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council was constituted by an order of the Government of Manipur dated 1st August 1973.¹⁷ Within this short span the Kukis have increased and multiplied and amassed a lot of land from the Nagas. In fact the creation of two autonomous district councils in North district has paved the path for a struggle between

17. Administrative Report 1975-75, Government of Manipur, p.169.

the Nagas and Kukis. The process has been gradual but very noticable. That is why today they are able to raise the issue of creation of Sadar Hills State in the Assembly. This matter has jeopardised the relationship of the Nagas and Kukis. At every level there is crisis endangering the peaceful co-existence of the two communities. As already seen Manipur has become a burning cauldron, the Sadar hills is like adding more fuel to the fire. Both parties are adamant to their demands so the decision of the Government will surely affect one party or the other.

Looking at Manipur, from this perspective, there is hardly any chance of uniting or integrating the state, as it is only adding to chaos and confusion. People of this region seem to project only diversities that are irreconciliable to each other.

Economy

The state's economy is very unbalanced, partly because of the long isolation policy and unaccessibility of the region. Therefore it has remained underdeveloped and neglected. The state is linked with the rest of the

country by a road which passes through Nagaland state and then to Assam. An alternative road link is under construction between Imphal and Jiribam, known as the New Cachar Road. This alternative road from Imphal to Jiribam is entirely within Manipur territory and touches Assam only after crossing Jiribam towards Silchar. There is also an air link with Gauhati and lately a special flight service has been introduced from Delhi to Imphal and the North-east region. But on account of the rugged mountains and hills, introduction of Railways in the state is not possible. Otherwise, it could really boost up her economy. As it is, the state has to depend upon road transport services, operating from Dimapur (Nagaland) to Imphal. On account of the terrain, especially during the monsoon, the roads are often affected by landslides. Therefore transportation becomes a major problem to the state. Secondly, without central assistance, the state on its own is not self-supporting, the entire economy depends on the good will of the centre.

The economy of the state reflects the economy of the people living in the state. To understand it one must take into consideration certain factors, which have

been obstacle to the economic development of these people.

These are :

- (a) Geography : the terrain and the topography, the land forest, rivers and other sources which nature provides
- (b) The people : Each group with its own cultural heritage and distinct features
- (c) Transportation and communications within the state.
- (d) Market and outlets for produce
- (e) Requirements of food and other essential supplies which have to be obtained from other areas.

Taking all these factors into consideration, one can assess the economy of the people and the state.

Manipur is a small mountainous state with a geographical area of 22,856 sq.kms. The state has a small valley of about 1,120 sq.km. where about two-third of the population lives. The remaining 20,500 sq.km. are rocky and sandy, unsuitable for cultivation. Thus about 67 per cent of the land is under forest and uncultivable.

The small valley is fertile and good for cultivation. The flatland stretches for miles and miles, with the

interruption of some hillocks, streams and rivers. The land is suitable for extensive cultivation of various crops. This is the description given by R. Brown years back:

"The scenery in the valley is very uninteresting and monotonous; rice-fields, swamps, small muddy rivers, bamboo chumps barren hills of low elevation, common looking villages — these are the principal features met with, the preserver of the varying outline of the hills surrounding the valley, however, relieves all this, and redeems what would otherwise be tame and uninteresting."¹⁸

Even though it may look monotonous and uninteresting, yet this area constitute the granary of the state. There were times, when Manipur exported large quantity of rice and other crops to other states. It is still the godown of the state and this speaks volumes of the economic condition of the Meiteis. Years ago Captain Pemberton wrote, "...the agricultural produce of the country consists principally of rice, which forms the staple article of food and the fertility of the soil is so great

18. Brown, R., Statistical Account of Manipur, (Delhi: Sanskaran Prakashak, 1975), (Rep.), p.3.

that the crops generally prove most abundant".¹⁹ Nature has favoured the valley people with fertile land. As a result they have an easier means of livelihood than the Nagas and Kukis. The inhabitants of Manipur, are basically agriculturalists. Therefore their economy can be understood only in terms of their profession.

Here is a chart ^(p.37) showing how much land is cultivatable, in the valley and in the Hill districts and their produce. From this one can easily judge the economic condition of the three ethnic groups. The Hill* (Nagas and Kukis) people especially have to rely very much on the valley. Otherwise they are unable to make both ends meet.

As already been in the chart very little land is suitable for cultivation especially in the hills. Therefore in order to sustain themselves, they have to take recourse to various methods of cultivation like jhuming²⁰ or shifting cultivation and 'terrace cultivation'.²¹ Earlier the Kukis

19. Hodson, T.C., The Meitheis, (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1975), (Rep.), p.39.

20. Jhuming cultivation - the villagers after clearing the jungles in a hill-slope burn the patch and then plant paddy and vegetables.

21. Terrace cultivation is a better system of cultivation, terrace, fields are made on the slope of a hill and then water is channelled to the field. It requires long and assiduous labour in order to built up a terrace field, but once prepared, it is a good means for survival. This system can also be considered as a practical engineering skill of the hill people. The Nagas follow this system of cultivation, while the Kukis adhere more to the jhuming system.

AREA AND PRODUCTION OF RICE, WHEAT AND MAIZE IN MANIPUR BY DISTRICTS
FOR THE YEAR 1978-79²²

(area in '000 Hect. Production in '000 tonnes)

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Rice		Maize		Wheat	
		Area	Production	Area	Production	Area	Production
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Central District	113.53	188.07	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.10
2.	North District	10.79	11.36	1.28	2.09	-	-
3.	West District	5.96	6.82	-	-	-	-
4.	South District	14.46	20.06	1.23	2.39	-	-
5.	East District	10.42	22.53	0.50	1.01	-	-
6.	Tengnoupal	4.40	6.37	0.38	0.75	-	-
Total Manipur		159.56	255.21	3.40	6.26	0.10	0.10

22. Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 1980, Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Government of Manipur, p.81.

practiced only jhuming, while the Nagas practiced both methods of cultivation. But now the Kukis have also taken to terrace cultivation and in Manipur terrace cultivation is increasingly becoming popular. In fact terrace cultivation method is more profitable and prosperous than jhuming.

Again the geographical factor has to be taken into consideration in order to assess the prosperity of these groups. The land and soil, where these ethnic groups live differ greatly. The Meiteis have fertile land, and produce double and even triple, without much labour compared to the Hill people. This has made the Meiteis more enterprising and economically sound than the hill people. The Nagas and Kukis on the other hand have to slog, in order to earn their daily bread. It is only because of their strenuous toil that they have been able to survive the forces of nature. A second setback to the economy of the hill people has been that, they had not been able to adapt themselves to the changes. They still practice their primitive, crude method of cultivation. The main reason behind this unadaptability has been because of the inaccessibility of the area. The case of the valley is quite different. The land is accessible, therefore the

started opening the Hills for development and has established Horticulture Research stations at Ukhrul (Manipur east district) and Churachandpur (Manipur south district). And under the aegis of North Eastern Council a Potato development farm has been established at Mao²⁴ (Manipur north district). The situation is really pathetic, because without the collaboration of the valley, the Hills cannot develop, since the whole system has been centralised. Unless an alternate approach is made for the development of the Hills, the situation will not improve; instead it will only deteriorate.

Besides, agriculture, weaving industry is very popular among the Kukis and Nagas. The shawls are very colourful and exhibit as a mark to distinguish one ethnic group from the other. Thus looking at the shawl, the pattern and design, one can easily distinguish a Naga or a Kuki. Every woman in the group has to know the art of weaving. Among the Taungkluls, the following villages were famous for weaving viz, Ukhrul, Tolisi, Ngaimu, Sandaug, Tanem and Phodang.²⁵ These villages provided the traditional

24. Manipur, p.16.

25. Hodson, T.C., The Naga Tribes of Manipur, p.45.

introduction of modern machinery such as tractors, helps the further production of the food grains.

Therefore, comparing the plain and hills, one comes to the conclusion that the valley people enjoy more the gift of nature than the hill people.

In this respect the valley people have gone far ahead of the hill people. The government has also taken interest and introduced new implements for the farmers like, pump sets, tractors power tillers and threshers. Thus an era of green revolution has already been started in the valley. The introduction of modern machinery has not only improves their farming and economy but also partially solved unemployment problem. Further governmental undertakings have been established viz, construction of canals, irrigation projects, state cooperative Banks, Farmers Development Agency...etc.^{23, in the Valley.} There has been a tendency in the past to centralise, the key projects of the state in the valley, making the hill people dependent on the valley people. Only recently the government has

23. Manipur, vol.I, Quarterly special Issue, 1976, (Published by the Directorate of Information and Public Relation, Manipur), p.16.

shawls to the rest of the Tangkhul villages. Another important occupation was pottery. The Tangkhul village of Nungbi had the distinction for making excellent earthen pots. The Tangkhul's earthen pots can be compared to the modern 'pressure cookers'. Even today the earthen pot is still popular and is in high demand among the Tangkhul Nagas. Salt industry, mat and basket weaving were other important occupations of the hill people. These occupations remained confined only in the villages and did not develop very much. Therefore when modern commodities, were introduced at a much cheap rate, gradually the home-made articles were substituted by manufactured goods. Thus there was a shift in the economic value system, from barter system to money system. Money became the deciding factor for their economy. People were forced in a way to exchange their goods with money and thus money became the accepted medium of exchange. Another factor which will be discussed later, will^{be} education, imparted^{to} the hill people. Education changed many from their traditional profession to a more pleasant and easier way of earning their livelihood. This has caused also much imbalance in the economy of the people.

The Meiteis on the other hand have prospered and developed much faster than the hill people. Their advancement can be attributed to many factors, like the accessibility and fertility of the land. Within this short span of thirty years, the Meiteis have gone far ahead of the Nagas and Kukis. Just to cite an example, the infra-structure in the valley has improved, the roads are all metalled and the communication net-work has been well established compared to the hill areas. From the capital, every nook and corner of the valley is approachable and bus-services are made available to the people. This is not all. Other public services, for instance, medical and public health, power, post and telegraphs..etc, extended to the valley people are far much more than the hill people. A comparative study of the district-wise development of the various public services will give a better understanding of the situation. In the Post and Telegraphs, more than half of the offices are located in the central district (valley). The few offices or centres that are open are all at the district headquarters, otherwise many of the interior parts are still far from civilization. There are areas, where postal system has not reached, so they still

POST AND TELEGRAPHS (1974-75)²⁶

Item	Unit	Central district	North district	South district	East district	West district	Tengnoupal district	Manipur
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Head Post Offices	No.	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sub-Post Offices	"	19	N.A.	2	2	3	N.A.	26
Branch Post Offices	"	166	51	56	50	17	N.A.	340
Telegraph Offices	"	20	2	1	1	1	N.A.	25
Telephones in Use	"	1,430	5	87	30	22	N.A.	1,574
Public call Offices	"	12	1	1	1	1	N.A.	16

N.A. = Not available

26. Issued by The Department of Statistics,
Manipur, Manipur at a Glance, 1976.

live in isolation from the others.

The future of the state will depend greatly on the proper care taken for the welfare of the people. In this respect it is sickening to know that the Government has cared little for proper medical and public health. Considering the number of Health centres opened in the various district, it is indeed very discouraging. A look at the chart will reveal the backwardness of the state and the district-wise development. (Pg. 45)

The development in the Hills districts has been very slow compared to the valley. In 1973 as given by the Department of Statistics, when the central district had 15 hospitals (PHCS), the other five districts had altogether 11 hospitals (PHCS). Comparing the number of doctors available in the valley and hills in the hills the ratio comes to, 1 doctor has to look after 9,645 patients. There are altogether 36 doctors in the hill districts for 348,220 patients. While in the valley ~~it will be around~~, for one doctor, there will be 5,843 patients. With such minimal care, one cannot expect the people to live long; especially in the hills. Their

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH (1969-70-73)²⁷

Item	Unit	Central district	North district	South district	East district	West district	Teng-district	Manipur
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
HOSPITALS - 1969-70	No	8	2	2	-	1	-	13
(PHCS) 1973	"	15	3	3	2	2	1	26
DISPENSARIES (PHCS) 1969-70	"	18	9	15	10	6	-	58
1973	"	31	18	25	16	12	10	112
OTHER INSTITUTIONS	"							
Leprosy Subsidiary Units	"	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
NUMBER OF DOCTORS 1969-70	"	84	2	2	1	1	-	90
1973	"	124	5	13	8	6	4	160
POPULATION PER DOCTOR	"	6,273	22,372	8,108	8,352	8,045	10,397	7,200
T.B. HOSPITALS	"	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
LEPROSY HOSPITALS	"	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
V.D. CLINICS	"	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES	"	8	1	-	2	1	-	12
PRIMARY HEALTH SUB-CENTRES	"	24	5	2	5	2	-	38
FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS	"	9	1	1	1	-	-	12

27. Issued by the Department of Statistics, (Manipur).

nature of work also affects their health and ultimately brings about their ruin.

Another area where there has been uneven development, has been in the field of education. The Meiteis were more fortunate to have been colonised and to have received the Western education from the colonisers. Thus recorded in the Administrative Report²⁸ of 1909-10, in the valley there were already 56 primary schools, while in the hills there were only 7 primary schools. Seven decades have already gone by, and considering the number of educational centres that are available is just minimal. In the Hills, the educational development has been main due to Christian missionaries. They were the ones who really opened the eyes of the Nagas and Kukis, therefore whatever educational achievement the hill people have attained due acknowledgment must be given to Christian missionaries. In the next page is given the chart showing the achievement of each district. A closer look at the chart shows that, the educational development in the state has been uneven, and this has resulted in the dissatisfaction of the hill

28. Bhattacharya, M., Gazetteer, (Manipur), (Calcutta, 1963), p.373.

EDUCATION — 1973-74²⁹

Item	Unit	Central district	North district	South district	East district	West district	Teng-district	Manipur
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pre-Primary Schools	No.	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Primary/JB Schools	"	1,486	511	416	255	236	256	3,160
Middle Schools	"	67	10	20	4	8	-	109
Senior Basic Schools	"	145	76	35	39	11	22	328
High/Higher Secondary Multi-purpose Schools	"	139	26	20	15	4	3	207
Secondary Schools with elective Science Colleges	"	11	-	-	-	-	-	11
Colleges	"	24	-	1	1	-	-	26

29. Issued by The Department of Statistics, (Manipur).

people. The students from the hills often cannot afford to go ahead in their studies, because of the nonavailability of schools and colleges. The continuation of the studies depended on many factors, but the most important one would be the economic factor. The hill people, on account of their poor soil, are badly affected in their economy. Therefore often they are unable to send their children for studies out of their own locality or district. The plight of the poor are indeed very pathetic. Often students with bright future have to surrender to the forces of nature and be contented with their lot. The chart on education shows clearly how till today proper educational facilities have not been extended to the hill areas. For post-matric studies, out of 26 colleges, only two colleges are located in the hill areas, viz, in Churachandpur (south district) and Ukhrul (east district). This does not meet the requirement of post-matric students who want to continue in their studies, but on account of nonavailability of colleges, are forced to drop out.

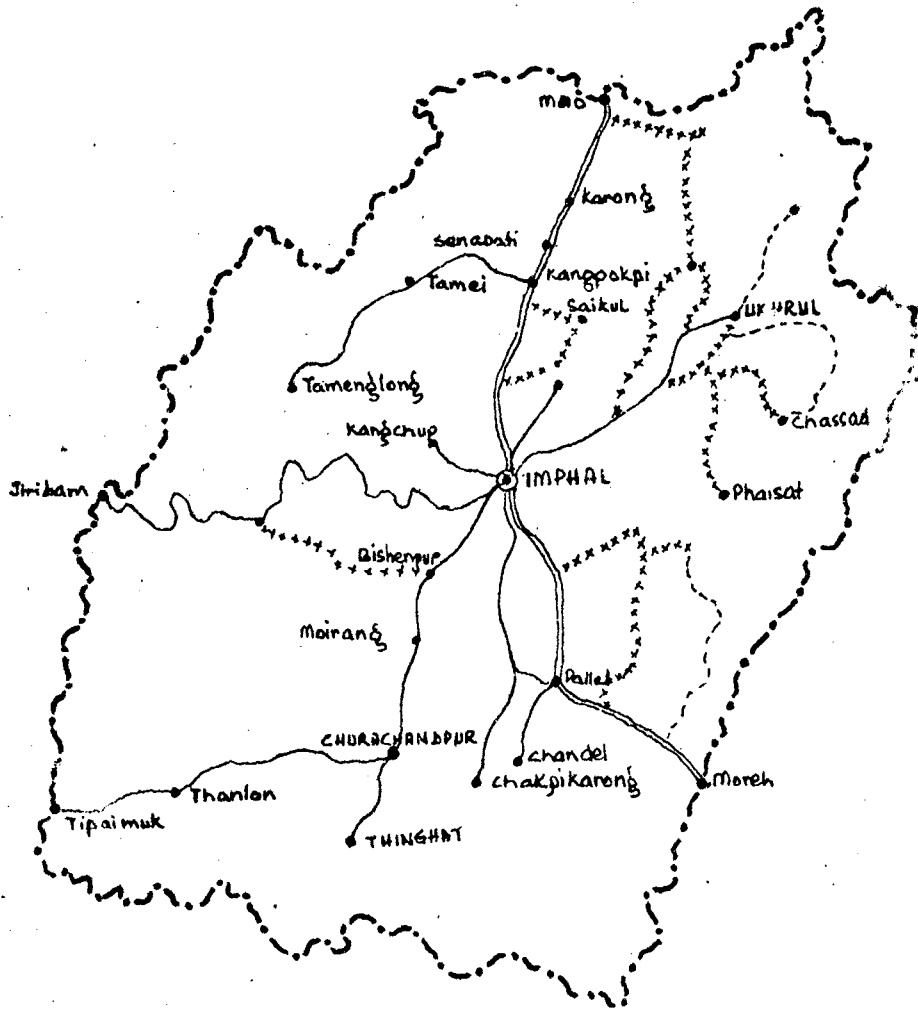
It is true that the valley offers better opportunities for rapid development and the cost of development there are much less than the hills. But this cannot be an excuse for

neglecting the hill areas. Instead more programmes should be taken up in order to improve the region. The hill region offers ample amenities for the development of hydro-electric power, cottage industries like saw mills, paper mills, etc. The people are economically backward and are unable to develop themselves on their own. Only through proper assistance from the government can they improve their economy.

In order to develop the area, the first and most important task of the government should be to improve the road transport in the hills. The only remarkable achievement that so far the government has achieved has been the link-road to the various district headquarters. Apart from it, the infra-structure of the hills had been neglected for the past years. The Manipur Public Work Department has been concentrating only in the valley. That is one of the reasons why, the Central Valley has a very good network of communication compared to the Hills. There are regular bus-services reaching even the remote corners of the Valley. On the other hand there are no regular bus services other than those between the capital and the district headquarters. This is the biggest set back of the hill people. A poor villager has to walk or

MANIPUR

ROAD NET-WORK 1975



- STATE BOUNDARY
- ===== NATIONAL HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- xxxxx DISTRICT ROAD
- VILLAGE

Source P.W.D IMPHAL

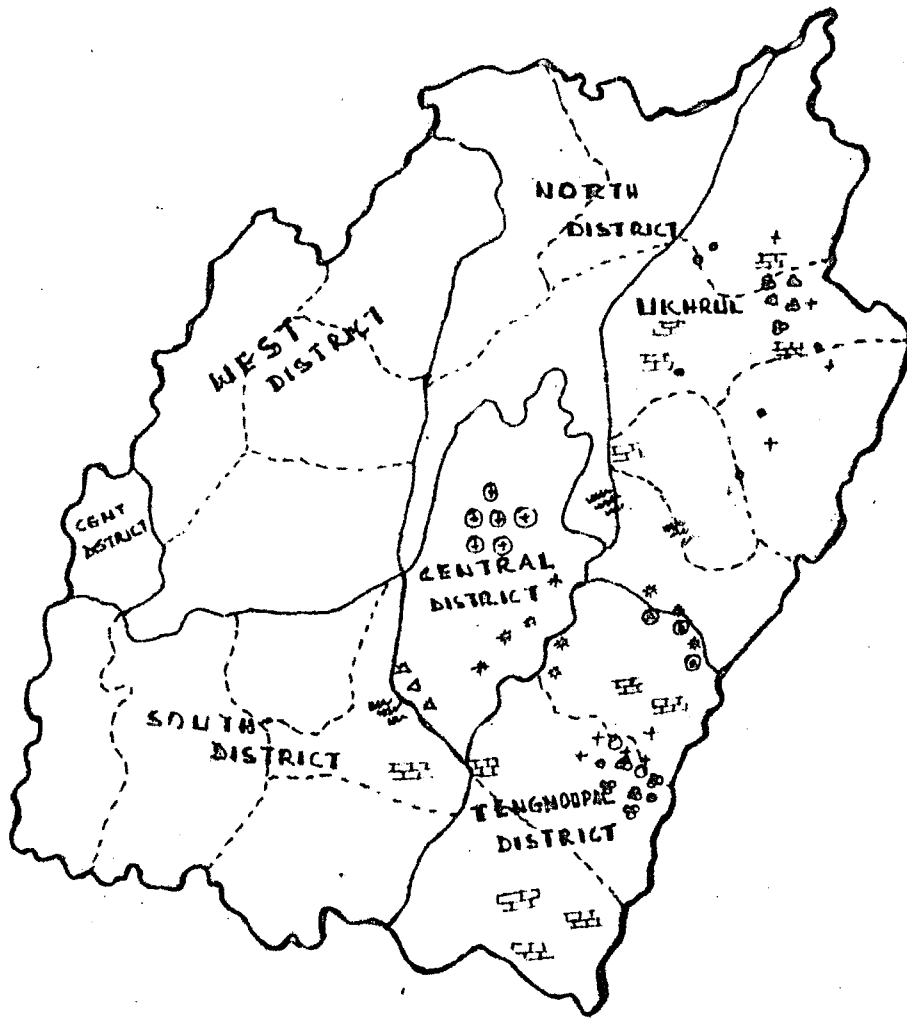
journey many miles on foot in order to get to the nearest bus station. Once the roads are linked properly the economy of the Nagas and Kukis can be improved upon. As it is, they are unable to sell their produce. The fact is clearly shown on the Map. The infra-structure in the hill areas is very poor, there are no roads linking up the various district headquarters. With such poor facilities, one cannot expect the development of agriculture, industry and social services.

The region has different climatic conditions congenial for the cultivation of various types of temperate, tropical and sub-tropical fruits. They provide timber, roundwood and fuel, alongwith bamboos and canes, turpentine and resin, dalchini, gum, fibres, oils, honey, wax and medicinal herbs.³⁰ The fruits found in this area are pineapples, oranges, limes, lemons, pears, peaches, plums, guava...etc.³¹ The people (Hill) have not been able to utilise these natural gifts properly mainly on account of the lack of proper transport. The Agriculture Department

30. Singh, R.P., Electoral Politics in Manipur

31. Manipur, p.14.

MINERALS



- STATE BOUNDARY
- - - DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- · · SUB-DIVISION BOUNDARY

- ⊞ Limestone
- Chromite
- Copper
- + Nickel
- * Asbestos
- ≡ Lignite
- △ Clay
- ⊛ Salt spring
- ⊕ Miner Gas Seepage
- ⊙ Laterite

has established the fruit preservation factory in order to safeguard and preserve the fruits.)

(Again the natural mineral resources of the region has not been tapped.) According to the Geological Survey of India, there are mineral deposited in this region; thus for instance, limestone, asbestos, nickel, copper, lignite, etc, are found in the East district. If due attention is given to the various regions and allowed to develop according to their own potentialities, development would have been more and there would not have been so much disparity in the state either.

(The economic factor has also played an important role in the relationship of the ethnic groups. As one sees it today, the search for economic prosperity, has lead to competition and also conflict.) This is seen between the Valley and Hills, as well as among the hill people themselves, looking back to the past, one can know only the few recorded accounts by the British officers. Nothing specific has been written, as to their social intercourse. It seem that the rapport among the ethnic group was not particularly encouraging. Hodson in his book, the Naga Tribes of Manipur, wrote: "...is found an

explanation of the curious custom which allowed the Tangkhuls to loot the women vendors at the Sena Kaithel of certain articles on the day of the Hao Chaugba³³ or the Naga sports. Others find in it a reminiscence of the frequent Tangkhul raids on the Valley or their pilfering habits."³⁴ Again it has been mentioned that from the earliest recorded chronicles of Manipur dated 1435, said that often the Tangkhuls attacked the Manipuri settlements on the edge of the valley.³⁵ With the establishment of British rule the Nagas were gradually forced to come to terms with the British. This was possible only because of the presence of a superior force in the state under the British Raj. The raids of the Nagas often affected the law and order of the state, so to put an end to them the British promulgated the Inner Line Regulation of 1873,³⁶ to prevent plain people from venturing into the hill areas. If they so desired it, permission of the Deputy Commissioners was necessary violation of (regulation)

33. Hao in Manipuri means Naga and Chaugba = to jump.

34. Hodson, T.C., The Naga Tribes of Manipur, p.9.

35. Ibid., p.11.

36. Gait, E., A History of Assam, (Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co, 1967) (Rep.), p.386.

order was punishable. This prevented the direct intercourse between the Valley and Hill people. Apart from it nothing in particular is known about their relationship.

The Nagas and Kukis did not seem to have good relations as recorded by the British administrators. The two ethnic groups seemed to live in constant fear and tribulation. Suspicious of each other, they raided and plundered each other at the most opportune moments. Thus, during the Kuki Rebellion of 1917-18, the Nagas in the West district and a few villages in the East had to face the wrath of the Kukis. This is what Sir Andrew Clow³⁷ wrote about the Kuki-Naga relation: "...they have a traditional hostility to the Nagas and serious Kuki rebellion of 1917-18 was partly due to this".³⁸ And the Nagas in their turn also avenged their past, especially during the underground movement of the Nagas. Even to this day, they have not settled their account. There are occasional feuds. The latest took place on the issue

37. Sir Andrew Clow was the Governor of Assam.

38. Clow, Sir Andrew, The Future Government of the Assam Tribal People, (Shillong: Assam Government Press, 1945), p.4.

of the creation of Sadar Hills district. They are united only when they have to confront the Meiteis. Otherwise, both are at daggers drawn. This has hampered the development of their own society and others as well. Above all, instability arising out of such hostility has contributed very greatly to their economic backwardness.

Another factor which has affected the economy of the state as a whole has been the introduction of Western education. It is true that education has brought about enlightenment and changes in the society. But at the same time it has rendered many helpless and miserable. The change from an agricultural society to a society of government office seekers, has affected the economy of the state. Earlier people would be educated in the art of cultivation and so there was some sort of self-sufficiency in society. But with the introduction of education people left this occupation, and those who were educated developed a false notion about those who worked in the fields. Another reason was that people looked up to persons, who were educated and due respect was given to them. According to the Census of 1971, literacy in Manipur was 32.91 per cent, and there are over one lakh persons³⁹ who are unemployed

39. Manipur Today, (Government of Manipur: Directorate of Information and Public Relations), p.3.

in the state. Failure to utilize properly the manpower of the state has been a great disadvantage to the state.

Another bone of contention and hotly debated topic is the question of reservation. As laid down in the Directive Principles, the socially and economically deprived communities are to be given reservation of seats in services, posts...etc. in order to raise their social status. Manipur has been no exception to this. The Hill people had been neglected and looked down upon by the Valley people because of religious and social differences. Therefore, to improve their lot, a Directorate for Welfare of Tribals and Backward Classes had been instituted in 1975.⁴⁰ In January 1976 an advisory board for the welfare of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes was formed under the chairmanship of a tribal MIA. Again, to further the interest of the Hill people, a Hill areas committee inclusive of only Hill MIAs has been constituted. In order to safeguard

40. Manipur, p .2.

the rights of the Hill people no legislation can be passed without first consulting the Hill Committee. Then, as proposed by the Committee, provision has been made for the reservation of seats in services:

Scheduled Tribes	:	31 %	(class I to IV)
Scheduled Castes	:	2%	(class I to IV)

However, this has been implemented only in theory. Hardly 5 per cent of the posts reserved for scheduled castes or scheduled tribes are filled. On the other hand there is constant clamour from the Meiteis to scrape out the reservation of seats. It is their contention that the Hills and plain are the same and no differentiation between them should be there. By continuing the British policy of divide and rule, the situation in Manipur would not improve, instead it would only widen the gap. On the other hand, the Nagas and Kukis have a strong feeling that without the reservation policy, they would be totally neglected by the rule of the majority.

Political Set Up

Even prior to the coming of the British, the Princes of Manipur had no real control over the Hill areas. The

Maharajas exercised only nominal control over those hill people who had settled at the foot hills, otherwise the Nagas and Kukis were as independent and sovereign, as the Meiteis. This can be verified from the administrative set up in the hills and plain. The Nagas had a democratic set up, the Kukis had an autocratic chief (hereditary) who commanded the respect and humble obedience of the whole community. The Nagas on the other hand governed the village on the basis of popular consensus. The chief could be either elected or hereditary, but the authority of the chief was checked by the village elders, who constituted the village council. The Meiteis had a monarchical form of government, the monarch was absolute, the prosperity and glory of the kingdom depended very much on the personality of the monarch. After the British took over the Hill areas remain unaffected for various reasons. The British found it almost impossible to control the Hill people, because of their wild nature. Secondly, it was beyond their reach to control completely the Hills. Thirdly, they found the administrative system of the Nagas and Kukis, acceptable and therefore they did

not feel the need to interfere further. They allowed the Nagas and Kukis to continue to administer with their own laws, customs and traditions. The British found^{difficult} to control the wild Hill men,^{therefore} it would be wrong to state that the Hill people were under the administrative control of the Meitei Maharajas.

The dividing line between the hills and plain became more visible, with the consolidation of the British regime in Manipur. The British concern in the hills had been only the submission of the Hill people. Economically the region was not viable and therefore they took no interest in it as such. They foresaw that it would be more a burden than a profit to the economic lust. They only subjugated the Hills and brought them under the aegis of the political agent of Manipur. Through this strategy they hoped to control the Hills and plain and bring about a 'status quo' in the state. Thus, during this period, the relationship was one of friendship and enmity or in other words was an unpredictable relationship.

The situation in the Hills was no better. The Kukis and Nagas continued to remain in constant feuds;

even though they had shared the rocky mountains, bore the burden of hard life, found no common cause and unity in their struggle. Each remained separate and a distinct community. Geographically they lived next door but socially and culturally they lived miles apart from each other. Why the Kukis and Nagas were not able to mingle and lived together was that the Nagas had always objected to ^{the} forceful occupation of the Kukis in the Naga areas. The settlement had been done through the connivance of the British and Manipuri Raj. The Nagas were helpless to oppose such forceful occupation, especially when it was done by a mighty power, the British Raj. In this way the British were able to play a dubious role in order to keep the state of affairs going.

The departure of the British only gave way to another imperialist nation. The constitutional monarchy was introduced but it proved a failure and finally it was merged to India. This aspect of the event will be discussed in a later chapter. It should be said here that all through the years the Meiteis had to put up a strong opposition and struggle in order to attain their goal of

statehood. The problem was with the Hill people, who were indifferent to and unconcerned about statehood. Therefore, when Manipur attained statehood, ways and means were formulated to make the Hill people more a part of Manipur than Mizoram or Nagaland. The existing sub-divisions of Ukhrul, Mao-Maran or Churachandpur were changed to Manipur East District (Ukhrul) or Manipur South District (Churachandpur).⁴¹ This was done in order to conscientize the Hill people of their being a part of Manipur. Therefore, the attainment of statehood was no solution to the existing problem. The people differed in their political aspirations and even the political set up was not satisfactory to the people. The Autonomous Hill District Councils were introduced but till today they have not been able to function as autonomous bodies. State politics often overshadows the proper functioning of the district council, in matters like the election of Chairman, appointments, budget...etc. In a way the district councils function like the weather-cock, there is no autonomy as such when it comes to the practice of

41. Roy, J., History of Manipur, (Calcutta: Eastlight Book House, 1973), p.155.

the powers. The autonomy of the district councils is checked by the Deputy Commissioner of the District. Even the Chairman of the District Council has to give in into the supervision and control of the Deputy Commission. As such, the so-called autonomy is only a nominal power of the district council.

In the five hill districts of Manipur, six autonomous hills district council had been established. The North district has two autonomous district councils, while in the plain the Gram Panchayats are at work. So even in in the field of administration a distinction has been made between the Hills and plain. The authorities are aware that no same pattern of administrative set up would work in the Hills and plain. By introducing the District Council, the authorities had hoped to pacify the demands of the Hills, but quite on the contrary it has only added more fuel to their desire for separation.

Despite their vastness, the Hill areas are very sparsely populated. On the contrary, the valley is densely populated. Thus, in the Legislative Assembly, the valley people are in a position to influence the

Sl.	Item	Central district	North district	South district	East district	West district	Teng-district	Manipur
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	No. of seats (M.L.A.)	41	6	5	3	3	2	60

law-making body. Manipur has a unicameral legislature, consisting of sixty elected seats. Accordingly the Valley has 41 seats and the Hills have 19 seats. The chart on p. 62 shows the district-wise distribution of the constituent seats. It clearly shows the unequal distribution of seats in the state. Being in the majority, the Valley has a better say in the decision-making body than the Hills. As a result the Valley has benefited most ever since Manipur attained statehood.

Another important factor has been the disunity among the Hill MLAs. The ethnic line has played an important role. The Valley politicians have been able to play one group against the other. If the Hill MLAs stood and fought together, their say in the Assembly would have been more. As things stand, they are divided and therefore, operate only as interest groups in state politics. Apart from this, they have not been able to sort out their ideological differences. The demand for integration with Nagaland or Mizoram, has been one of the main drawbacks in Manipur politics. Sometimes politicians have raised

the issue from the other states, as happened in 1978, when Brig Sailo (Chief Minister of Mizoram) and Mrs. Rano Shaiza (MP of Nagaland) demanded for the integration of the two communities to the respective states. The Meiteis felt very tense and uneasy about such statements and demanded immediate retraction and apologise to the people of Manipur for attempting to destroy their integrity. Some even went to the extent of saying that if the Hill people were so keen to integrate, they should leave the State. This problem had been highlighted earlier in the state Assembly by R.K. Dorendro, who had vehemently spoken against the integration of the Nagas of Manipur with Nagaland.

"... In this connection let me mention the background. A large section of people from Naga inhabited areas of Manipur joined the Naga underground movement and some of them died in the struggle. For what cause they have dedicated their lives. It was for the cause of an independent Nagaland including all the Naga inhabited areas. This is the most important background...Shillong Peace Accord has come... It means their demand has failed. Why they agree to such easy terms at the cost of several lives? No they will have to demand something more very

shortly. The Nagas involved in the said struggle are from the West district, East district, North district and even from Tengnoupal. Though they are unable to achieve their demands these lands in Manipur may become part of Greater Nagaland when constituted... Due to difficulties in geographical features Tengnoupal...may not be included but the Naga inhabited contiguous areas like North, East and West district will be included in the proposed Greater Nagaland. If these lands where we have been co-existing with its people since time immemorial have to be separated from us to join Greater Nagaland, then it will be a grave danger to us. That is why my friend Haokholal Thangjom has stated that if the proposed Greater Nagaland has to affect the integrity of Manipur as well as its territory, we will have to revolt against the government. Thus there will be a serious war that will be wage by those who don't like to less the integrity of Manipur. The said war will be more serious than that of the Nagaland underground activities."⁴²

42. Assembly Proceedings Official Report;
Second Manipur State Legislative Assembly,
vol.xxxiv, 26th and 27th October, 1977,
Eleventh Session, p.174.

This is one of the reasons why even the Meitei underground leader Bisheshwar has condemned the theory of 'Meiteis for Meiteis', 'Nagas for Nagas' and 'Mizos for Mizos'. Instead he stands for the unity of all the Mongoloid race as one. Efforts have been made for the unity of the Meitei-Naga-Mizo undergrounds. If such unity takes place, the struggle and liberation of the region, as they put it, from the Delhi Bandits may gradually materialize.

Apart from the underground activities, politicians have capitalised upon the situation. There is hue and cry in the state, because politicians and administrators have not served the people's interest. Instead, they have indulged themselves in all sorts of vices, bribery, nepotism, favouritism...etc. These malpractices have aroused the sentiments of the younger generation. It has been one of the main reasons why youth in their frustration have joined the underground movements.

Another reason why Manipur has remained always a hot spot, or trouble area, is the political stability of the state. The politicians are not guided by

principles and ideologies; instead they^{are} often are guided by personal gains. People are still ignorant and simple, therefore they have fully exploited the goodness of the people. The politicians seek only power and nothing else. Thus in 1977 after the Lok Sabha election, when Janata came to power, almost all MLAs defected to the Janata Party. The same trend was witnessed when Congress-I returned to power in 1980. The politicians have no conviction and so it has led to the political instability of the state, permitting legislative members to defect at their sweet will. The reason behind it is that the politicians have no party conviction nor commitment to the party ideologies, instead they functioned as opportunists, ever ready to change party at the most opportune moment.

Moreover, politics in Manipur is highly influenced by ethnic lines. Thus, a Naga will think, act and exercise his political rights in terms of being a Naga. In like manners would the Kukis and the Meiteis. The ethnic boundary has been drawn very deep and to cement

the crack would require a herculean effort. People are not concerned about ideology of political parties; instead the first consideration is whether a person is a Naga, Kuki or Meitei. Then other factors come into play. Thus in 1972 election a host of ethnic based parties came into being, i.e. United Naga Integration Council, Mizo Integration Council, Kuki National Assembly, who put up their own candidates to fight the elections. Again no plain candidate has dared till today to file his or her nomination in the Hill areas or vice-versa. Nor will a Naga file his nomination in a Kuki or Mizo inhabited area, unless he is sure of his success through party politics. But seldom even national and state parties had succeeded to penetrate through the ethnic boundary's. The Congress Party failed badly in the 1972 election. At Ukhrul district the Congress could not get even a single seat, while the United Naga Integration Council secured three seats (out of four) and one seat went to an Independent, Shri Yangmaso Shaiza. With

the exception of Congress no other political party at the state level contested elections in 1972 in this district. In like manner, other districts had almost the same story. The people are not very enthusiastic about national parties and their ideologies. What the people want is their own man and their own party contesting the election. As such it is difficult to predict and count the chicks before they are hatched.

Chapter - III

ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Manipur is a conglomeration of many tribes, but broadly they can be classified into three dominant groups, the Meiteis, Kukis and Nagas. Besides these three ethnic groups there are also Pangas and Mayangs, who constitute only a small section of the population. This chapter will deal with the roots of conflicts, focussing mainly on the historical and cultural, racial, religious, linguistic aspects. It is an attempt to analyse the various factors that have contributed to the sort of ethnic relations that obtain in the state.

On account of lack of proper historical records and documents, tracing of the origin of these groups is not possible. But there are certain facts, traditions, folklore and stories that facilitate the formulation of theories of the origin of these various groups. As to the historicity of these theories, it will be upto the historians to verify them.

It is an accepted fact that the original inhabitants of Manipur belong to the Mongoloid stock. This is evident from their general characteristics and outlook, even though

some Meiteis refute and deny such an accepted fact and instead trace their origin from the Aryans.

According to Horam, the Meiteis are "...though now forms a distinct group, were once a part of the Naga family. Similar habits, manners, customs and beliefs, many of which still linger inspite of the changes brought by various factors".¹ But this has been denied and refuted by some of the Meitei intellectuals on the ground that the Meiteis belonged to a different ethnic group. There are others who hold the view that the Meiteis were once part of the tribal family, inhabiting the Hill areas. This view is shared by Brown² and McCulloch. They base their view on the traditions and the philosophical affinities and on the fact that the ceremony of ascending the throne was performed in Naga dress and the 'Zimchaw' or great house, the original residence of the hill chief, was built in Naga fashion.³ But there are diverse theories that try to explain the origin of the Meitei community.

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1. Horam, M., Naga Polity, (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1975), p.42.
 2. Brown, R., Statistical Account of Manipur, (Delhi: Sanskaran Prakashak, 1975), p.57.
 3. Allen, B.C., Naga Hills and Manipur, (Delhi: Gian Publication, 1980), p.12.

One such theory is that the 'Meitei Ariba', which trace the origin to the Tibeto-Burman stock and this theory is in line with the belief of the Hill people. As McCulleck puts it "there is far more ground to conclude them (Meiteis) to be the descendants of the surrounding hill tribes".⁴

According to a second theory known as Nongchup Haram (westerner) the Meiteis trace their origin to the aryan stock and thus identify themselves with the westerners. This legend can be traced from the puranic writings and it has become a common belief among the Meitei Hindus that they are the descendants of Arjuna and the present Manipur is the Manipur of Mahabharata, where Arjuna was defeated in a battle by his own son Babrubahana.⁵ This is an untenable story and has caused much controversy among scholars and intellectuals, as well as misunderstanding and apathy among the younger generation. The youth especially consider their descent from Arjuna as a cock and bull story. Until today they had been taught that they belong to the Aryan

4. Singh, L.I., Introduction to Manipur, (Imphal: Mvirangkhom, 1960), p.13.

5. Lenki Singh, N., Manipur and the Mainstream (Delhi, 1975), p.33.

stock. Instead now there is a revival among the youth to go back to their old cult, script and religion. They detest anything of 'Hinduism', so much so that 'Hinduism' and to be an Indian make no difference.

The third theory speaks of their origin as people coming from the east, Nongpok Haram and advocate their ethnic affinity with the Shan tribes of Thailand. To some, the Meiteis immigrated from Southern China Yunnan province across the valley of the river Irrawaddy. According to Pemberton the Meiteis were descendants of a Tar colony which probably emigrated from the North-East borders of China during the sanguinary conflicts for supremacy, which took place between the different members of the Chinese and Tartar dynasties in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Another explanation given by Lairenmayum Iboonghal Singh was that:

"...many people from the east and west were forced to settle in Manipur as war captives. Some were brought by the good kings of Manipur to have the cast duty done by them. Those who came from the West were known as Nongchupharam and those from the east as Nongpokharam. They were all merged to the Manipuri community."⁷

6. Gait, Sir Edward, A History of Assam, p.321.

7. Singh, L.I., Introduction to Manipur, p.11.

Another accept^{ed} theory among the Meiteis is that they are supposed to be the descendants of four old tribes, viz. Khumal, Luang, Moirang and Meitei. This theory is supported by McCulloch and according to him, it is the most credible explanation of their origin. In the course of history, the Meitei 'clan or salai', became very powerful and gradually assimilated the other salais, into their salais. Thus the Meitei (Mei-man, tel = separate or different) society was formed by the amalgamation of the different salais, so today they are able to identify themselves as one community. In Manipur, the Meiteis are the most advanced group and dominate in every walk of life. But like the Hill people their origin is still obscure and difficult to ascertain, unless a correlated analysis or study is made of the Hill people. Therefore a peep into the origin of the Hill people as handed down by tradition will highlight some of the facts, which correspond to ~~the~~ some of the belief of the Meiteis.

Obscurity and uncertain life of the Hill people have made even their origin more obscure and oblivious. The actual recorded history of the Hill people begin

with the coming of the British. Being ignorant and isolated from the other communities, they failed to possess a script of their own. But that did not prevent them from having their history, handed down in the form of folk-lore, stories, customs...etc, from generation to generation. How far are these stories, folk-lore reliable and correspond to history is a matter for study and research. Therefore one cannot simply reject it on the basis of lack of historical evidence, chronology, because these stories give certain hints or clues to their history. So basing on these assumptions or hypothesis one will have to make a deeper study and research on the history of these hill groups.

As already stated earlier the Hill people can be broadly grouped into two groups or communities, the Kukis and the Nagas. The Meiteis call the Hill people by general name of Haow⁸ or Chinomi. To a non-inhabitant of Manipur, the people of Manipur are the same, no distinction is made between various ethnic groups. But a Meiteis will make a distinction between a Naga and a Kuki vice versa.

8. Haow is a term, used by the Meiteis, with some sort of contempt and dispece to the

Geographically, the Nagas have concentrated mainly in West, North and North-east of Manipur state. Only a few Naga communities are found in the South-East, like the Moyas, Lemkangs and Anals. The Kukis have no land of their own, they are a wandering race and they are found everywhere, but today they are mainly found at Sadar Hills (Naga area) and South district of Manipur.

There are several Naga tribes and there are as many versions of their origin, as there are tribes and subtribes. But it is a commonly acknowledged fact that the Nagas belong to Tibeto-Chinese group, mainly to Tibeto-Burman sub-family. It is speculated by many scholars that at one time, the Nagas must have wandered, before they finally decided to settle at the present place. Some are of the opinion that the Nagas are related to the Natives of Borneo. But whatever may be the assumptions and speculations of the scholars, one common feature prevalent in almost all the legends or stories is their place of origin. Most of the Nagas point as their place of origin to Meikhel, a small village between Mao and Maram area, about 10 miles south east of the present town of Kohima. It was from Meikhel that the Nagas

dispersed to the different regions, because by then population had increased, and economically the area was not viable. Another interesting legend handed down was that the Kukis, Meiteis and Nagas were all one people, from a common ancestor, who had three sons, who became the progenitors of these ethnic groups.¹⁰

It is not really possible to trace, exactly from where the Nagas have originated. It still remains in obscurity. But one important factor which must be kept in mind is that, these Nagas had been often subjected to invasions from outsiders.¹¹ Therefore it is quite possible that a particular group or tribe might have accepted and acculturized themselves on account of pressure from the conquerors. Such events can bring about changes or adaptation in the way of living, social structure or even lost of ones culture. This had in fact taken place in with the Meitei society, by their acceptance to Hindu religion, a complete transformation took place. The Meiteis became Hindus. But the Nagas inhabiting the Hills of Manipur

9. Horam, M., Naga Polity, p.30.

10. Hodson, T.C., The Naga Tribes of Manipur, (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1974), p.9.

11. Outsider would include Burmese, shans, Hindus and English.

were not in the least touched by such external forces. They remained a distinct group despite the many hardships that they had to endure.

The Nagas of Manipur are still fighting for the integration with the other Nagas, because they have been separated on account of the British colonial policy. Therefore their aspiration to join with the rest of the Naga brothers, will pose a major threat to the integrity of the Meitei-Manipur.

The second group constitutes the non-Nagas or Kukis. They too belong to the Mongoloid stock, but they differ fundamentally from the Nagas and Meiteis. To some extent their coming and settlement in Manipur can be traced, since they came at a much later stage. According to Sir James Johnstone the Kukis are a wandering race, consisting of several tribes,¹² different from the Nagas and Meiteis. "Their original home cannot be correctly ascertained, but there seem to be traces of them as far as the Malaya Peninsula".¹³ They were first heard of

12. According to the Linguistic Survey of India, vol. III, part III, compiled by G.A. Grierson on 1904, the groups of tribes forming Kuki are: Lushais, Rangkhols, Thadous, Paites, Vaiphais, Hmars, Gangte, Zou, Anals, Chirus, Koms, Aimols..etc.

13. Johnstone, Sir James, Manipur and the Naga Hills, p.27.

as Kukis¹⁴ in Manipur between 1830 and 1840 though tribes of the same race had been subject to the Raja of Manipur. The origin of the word Kuki is not known but it seems that it first appeared in Bengal Rawlins writings of the Cucis or 'Mountaineers of Tipra' in Asiatic Research (ii, xii) in 1992.¹⁵ According to some Zomi scholars, the Kuki and Chinsⁿ are of the same race, having similar appearance, manners, customs and language. The name Kuki and Chin are not nations and have been given to them by their neighbours, Kuki as an Assamese or Bengali name given by them to all hill tribes in their neighbourhood. Chin is the Burmese name to all the people in the country between Burma and Assam.¹⁶

Stewart described two groups of Kukis on the basis of their arrival in Manipur, the first group or the old Kukis clans, emigrated from the jungles of Tipperah, the hilly country south of Cachar some 50 or 60 years that is

14. Kuki is used by anthropologists and administrators to generalize, a group of non-Nagas. Whatever be the origin of the term 'Kuki'. It is clear that this term was used for denoting Hill people pushed away from Lushai Hills. There is some element of contempt, a sense of abuse, an aspersion cast on the people, who are called by this term.

15. Shaw, William, "Notes on the Thadou Kukis", Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, New Series vol. xiv, 1928, (Calcutta), no.1, issued July 1929, p.11.

16. Zomi Today, Quarterly Magazine, p.3.

around 1800 A.D.¹⁷ They consisted of the tribes like Aimol, Anal, Chothe, Chiru, Koirao, Koireng, Kom, Lemkang, Purum, Vaiphei and Hrangkhoh Beite of Cachar district of Assam. The new Kuki clans were the Simte, Thadou, Paite ...etc. who came to Manipur in the mid of the 19th century around 1844. As said earlier, Major Mc. Call view the Kuki tribes as belonging to the same stock as the Chin and Iushais and their original home in the Chin Hills.¹⁸ Therefore, ethnologically, they belonged to the Kuki-Chin family and it is interesting to note that tribes living in the Chin Hills of Burma, still continue to come to Manipur to settle down.

When the second wave of Kuki immigration to Manipur occurred, Colonel McCulloch was the then political agent.¹⁹ He accommodated them in different strategic pockets of the state, and at the same time utilized them as irregular troops to fight against the Nagas. This policy of Colonel McCulloch of planting Kuki settlements, on exposed frontiers induced the Bengal Government to adopt the same measure. By virtue of their policy, they (British) succeeded in stigmatizing in the heart of every Kuki and

17. Dalton Edward Suite, Description Ethnology of Bengal, (Calcutta, 1872), p.49.

18. Sen Gupta, A.K., "Iushai-Kuki Clans — Re-examined", The Eastern Anthropologist, vol. xxii, no.3, September-December, 1969, p.354.

19. Johnstone, Manipur and Naga Hills, p.25.

Naga a feeling of bitterness and hatred against one another. This has further estranged their relationship.

Secondly through their policy of 'divide and rule' they separated the Hills and plain and instilled in their mind, the sense of distinctness and alienation. Thus dividing the hills and plain horizontally and vertically. Had Manipur been a united state, history could have been quite different. But since it was a heterogeneous community, it was easy on the part of the conquerors to play one against the other. In this way, maintain a policy of 'status quo' and pursue their aim and objectives.

Religion

Religion, in the life of these ethnic groups has been an important factor in determining their relationship. Prior to the coming of Hinduism and Christianity, very little is known, but it is an accepted fact that the groups were animists. The division between the Hills and plain became visible, with the acceptance of Hinduism by the Valley people. Further ridge was created, when the Hill people accepted Christianity.

Unlike the Hill people, the Maitels had a recorded history, especially after their baptism to Hinduism. Embracing Hinduism was a landmark in the history of the Maitels. Their King Gharib Nivas patronised the new faith among his subjects.²⁰ Shantl Das was the bearer of this new cult. With the support of the monarch, the new faith was forced upon the subjects and whoever opposed or refused to embrace it were ostracized. Gradually Hinduism became the state religion. This is how N. Tombi Singh described about the advent of Hinduism to Manipur. "Hinduism came almost superficially formalities dominated the social scene. The ruling clan found religion, to be more particular the new cult, a convenient weapon for exploitation of the people. The teachers of the new cult introduced a number of disciplines in the social habits of the people. These new habits divided the people into almost water-tight compartments in the matters of social² religions. Hindu orthodoxy was pushed to the highest pitch so that the relation between the Hindus and non-Hindus became highly strained. The Valley people were socially separated from

20. Roy, J., History of Manipur, (Calcutta: Eastlight House, 1973), p.39.

the hill people, who were more frightened than tempted by the new cult. The daily round of bathings, the slogans of 'touch me not', the self-style superiority of the new converts to the indigenous people who remained outside the new cult either by their refusal or through the rejection of the ruling clan, social scene started in a wrong direction.²¹ The consequences that followed were disastrous because it created an artificial society with social strains and constraint. The Hill people were considered as 'untouchables', and no Hill man was allowed to enter their homes. Thus the concept of purity and impurity became the dominating factor in their relationship.

Further Hinduism produced intra-Meitei stratification. Those Meiteis who remained satisfied with the traditional religion were treated as "out caste". Another section of outcaste comprised of, those punished by the King for their violation of Hindu social customs and marital regulations. The former category of 'outcaste was named Loi²² and the later as Yaithibi. Today both the categories are recognized as the scheduled castes of Manipur under the constitution of India.

21. Tombi Singh, N., Manipur and the Mainstream (Delhi, 1975), p.89.

22. Hodson, T.C., The Meitheis, p.10.

Secondly Hinduism brought caste system in the Meitei society. Unlike the Indian caste system, the Meitei had only two castes viz, the Brahmins and Kshatriya, who were designated by the caste names of 'Sharma' and 'Singh' respectively.²³ This created a psychological barrier within their own society and it became a big impediment to their social intercourse with other groups. Hinduism also blurred the racial and cultural identity of the Meiteis. The Hindu leaders advocated the theory that the Meitei belonged to the Aryan stock and that they were the descendants of Arjuna. To show their total acceptance of the new religion and cult, Garib Niwas²⁴ ordered the burning of all traditional scriptures, and strictly forbade the chanting of religious songs and prayers in the local language. Instead 'Vaisnav Padabali' of Bengal was taught and the faithful were encourage to learn. Bengales script was introduced and gradually the Brahmin class dominated the scene. The irrational exactions of the Brahmin on the common people on the religious duties...etc, made their life miserable. This gave rise to the rivalism of their old cult and religion 'Sanasahi'. Naoria Phullo (1888 b)

23. Dubey, S.M., (ed.), North East India — A Sociological Study, (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1978), p.64.

24. Tombi, Singh, N., Manipur : A Study, p.42.

a young Meitei from Cachar took the lead, after passing his matriculation examination, he entered the police service but resigned from the post of S.I. of railway police. To ~~revive~~ the old cult he founded the Apokpa Marup in Cachar in 1930.²⁵ His activities reached Manipur in late 30's, initially the movement was anti-Brahmin, then anti-Bengalee and later as anti-Hindu. And later it emphasised on the national identity of the Meiteis and gradually it became a political movement. The movement had the support of farmers, businessmen and students. The Sanamahi took definite shape, when Meitei Phurup was established on May 14th 1945.²⁶ The members of Phurup decided to revive the cultural heritage of the Meitei people, to do research in ancient history and other literature and lastly to revive the Meitei script. The fundamental basis of Sanamahi movement is to rive the Sanamahi²⁷ cult, the indigeneous of the Meiteis. The Movement is still strong and dislike anything that is Hindu and Indian. The situation is very pathetic, because, a generation gap has been created between the young and old. The

25. Kabui, G., "Social Reforms and Religious Movements in Manipur Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", Spectrum, vol.I, no.7, January 1977, p.34.

26. Ibid., p.34.

27. Sanamahi is a household god which in Manipur, every family Hindu(family) Meitei, even Manipuri Brahmin worships.

younger generation are infavour of doing away with Hinduism, while the older people prefer to continue in the same religion (Hinduism).

The Hill people on the other hand had not been affected by the proselytization of the Meiteis to Hinduism. They remained attached to the indigenous cult and religion. Prior to the advent of Christianity, religion to the Hill people was centered around their activities and so were governed by many superstitious beliefs. They believed in the existence of (a) the Supreme God; (b) Ancestry worship and (c) the presence of good and evil spirits on this earth. According to Nagas, illness of a person is theft of the soul by an evil spirit.²⁸ So in cases of sickness a medicine man, who is a fortuneteller and a physician is called in to placate the evil spirits who caused the illness.²⁹ Sacrifices are made to appease the spirit.

In times of trouble and pestilence, the spirits of the forefathers are worshipped. They believe that the ancestral spirit have influence over the general prosperity

28. Mills, J.P., The Rengma Nagas, (London: MacMillan and Company, 1937), p.166.

29. Philip, P.J., The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland, (Gauhati: Christian Literature Centre, 1972), p.40.

of their descendants. Therefore, they offer sacrifices to appease the spirits of the ancestors. Their religion was simple, people observed the orders of the priest scrupulously and took the priest as next to God.

The coming of Christianity opened a new world to them. It was a 'providential' blessing in disguise because with their acceptance to Christianity, the Nagas and Kukis turned over a new leaf.

The work in the beginning was not an easy task, everywhere the missionaries were turned down. Besides, because of the traditional rivalry (hostility) between the Nagas and Kukis, prevented and hindered the growth of the new faith. Again in this 'no man's land', communication was extremely difficult and life unsafe. People resisted the spread of Christianity, it was only because of the undaunted spirit of the missionaries that gradually the people accepted the new faith.³⁰

Pettigrew the great apostle and bearer of Christ's light, arrived in Imphal on 6th February 1894. But

30. Inikhan, T., A Short History of Manipur Baptist Christian, (Ukhrul: N.E. Christian Association, 1948), p.5.

Political Agent, Major Maxwell objected to the preaching of Christ's message among the Hindu orthodox, so he was suggested to work among the Hill people. Pettigrew in 1895 toured the Tangkhul area North-East of Imphal and decided on Ukhrul for his centre. The first thing Pettigrew did was start a school. At the start it was a problem to get students, because the parents refused to send their children, only at the insistence of Major Maxwell to the Tangkhul chiefs that 20 boys were enrolled (February, 1897).³¹ Uncustomed to discipline life the students gave a lot of trouble to the missionaries. Only after five years of hard labour in 1901, 12 boys attending the school confessed Christ and were baptized. By 1907 the number had increased to 70 members, situation became critical when Pettigrew forbade the Christians to participate in a village festival, even though they had assured him was quite innocent. Most refused to accept the rules, with the result that the missionary was left only with seven faithfuls. These seven constituted the Tangkhul church were : Hollei, Leishisar, M.K. Shimray, T. Luikham, Kuishon, Machonthei and A. Eromsingh.³² This was the

31. Downs, F.S., The Mighty Works of God, (Gauhati, 1969), p.76.

32. Ibid., p.80.

biggest test for the missionary after which the work continued rather smoothly. The growth of the Christian population had been very rapid since 1901. The chart given below³³ shows the growth of Christianity, within a short period. Today in Manipur after the Meitei Hindus, Christians are next highest in percentage.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Actual No. of Christian</u>
1891	—
1901	45
1911	132
1921	4,050
1931	10,401
1951	68,394
1961	152,043
1971	279,243

Here is a chart showing the distribution of population by religion of the year 1961 and 1971. So if we consider the growth rate of the various religious population, it is visibly shown that the growth of Hinduism has decreased

33. Bhattacharya, Gazetteer Manipur, p.134.

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION OF THE YEARS 1961 AND 1971³⁴

Census	Total Population	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhi	Buddhist	Jain	Other Religion	Religion not stated
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1961	780,037	481,112	48,538	152,043	523	325	778	—	96,668
		61.68	6.23	19.49	0.07	0.04	0.10		12.39
1971	1072,753	632,597	70,969	279,243	1,023	495	1,408	83,167	3,846
		58.98	6.61	26.03	0.10	0.05	0.13	7.75	0.36
1961-1971 Growth rate		31.49	46.06	83.65	96.56	52.31	80.98		

34. Census of India, (Series 1, India), Paper 2 of 1972 - Religion, p.7.

while Christianity has increased considerably.

According to Census 1971, population by religion, the growth of Christians in the hill areas has been considerably fast. Looking at the chart, one can easily notice that in the hill areas, Nagas and Kukis have embraced Christianity and Christians dominate the other religious groups in the Hills. The East district has the highest per centage of Christians in the State and India (Census 1971). Here is a chart^(p. 92) showing the distribution of the various religious groups in the Hill and plain districts of Manipur. While in the plain the Hindus (Meitais) still constitute the majority. The third dominant religious community is the Muslim, they constitute about 6.61 per cent of the population. The other religious groups are outsiders, not natives. So when one consider the religious community it would automatically mean the Hindus and the Christians of the State.

The impact of Christianity on the life of the people was marked by the significant transformation in their social, economic and religious life. The Christian missionaries opened schools in all their mission centres,

DISTRIBUTION OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE HILL AND PLAIN DISTRICTS OF MANIPUR

Item	Unit	Central district	North district	South district	East district	West district	Teng-district	Manipur
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Hinduism	No.	599,875	20,001	5,574	2,076	2,208	2,863	632,597
Christianity	"	15,111	58,470	67,433	57,249	34,906	26,074	279,243
Islam	"	69,774	374	186	30	36	569	70,963
Jainism	"	1,252	5	6	24	4	117	1,408
Sikhism	"	780	54	33	32	18	111	1,028
Buddism	"	116	221	88	24	4	92	495
Other Religions Persuasion	"	37,212	23,880	3,807	2,774	7,780	7,714	83,167
Religion not stated	"	417	1,170	987	20	19	1,233	3,846

in this way, it facilitated the Nagas and Kukis to adapt themselves to the changing world. In the first place the Nagas and Kukis did not have a script, the introduction of the Roman script, enabled them to develop their language. The introduction of education gave rise to a new group in the society. In the pre-Christian times, except for the village chiefs and priests, there was hardly any other class or group other than the agriculturalists. The Nagas and Kukis depended entirely upon the product of the soil for their existence, a failure due to natural calamities, drought..etc. affected the entire life of the community. But with the inflow of this new class (educated) people started looking for other occupations such as, clerical, teachers, governmental, jobs. This helped to improve the standard of the people, a better and more peaceful existence. Today the missionaries are reaping the fruits of their labour. There are many Nagas and Kukis, holding responsible jobs at the state as well as at the national level. This Christianity gave new life both spiritually and physically to the Hill people.

Along with the blessings came disadvantages in the first place, it brought in further break up in among the Hill people in their own communities. Thus a distinction was made between a Christian and non-Christian. Thus, in

late 20s there was the 'Kampai cult'³⁵ movement led by Jedonang of Pailon village. The movement was directed against the imposition of an alien administration that threatened the old way of life. The resentment was directed towards Christians and Kukis as well as the government. In this way a sharp cleavage was created within their own society (Nagas). The Christians had the tendency to look down upon the non-Christians as infidels and despised them for their satanic practices. In like manner, the Hindu Meiteis were considered as idolators and pagans. The Meitei Hindu considered the Hill Christians as collaborators and agents of the British Raj. Thus, gradually the gap was widen, till today there are very few Meitei Christians, and few Hindu Hill men. Therefore to bring about a closer unity on the basis of religion will not be possible nor can they cement the past. The future will depend on the mind and action of the younger generation.

Language and Culture

As seen earlier, the inhabitants of Manipur had lived separately on account of many factors. This isolation had

35. Downs, F.S., The Mighty Works of God, p.179.

brought about many differences, in culture, language, customs and way of life. Only with the coming of British, the life of the Hill people opened upon abit more. They came in contact with other groups. The merger with India, brought further changes in the society. Once each society had remained closed to each other, the need did not arise, because each group or society was somewhat self-sufficient. But ~~with~~ with the introduction of modern commodities and way of life, self-sufficiency was out of question, instead it was substituted by inter-dependence, which became an indispensable factor. All these past years no community had bothered to learn each others language, therefore the medium of communication became a big problem. The Maiteis being the majority and more enterprising than the Hill people gradually started operating in the Hill areas. Thus Maiteilon came into use and today a good percentage of the Hill people know, at least how to speak or can understand something. The Hill people had unconsciously learned and accepted the language. But when it came to the question of recognition as the official language of the state as well as inclusion in the Eight Schedule, it arose the feelings and sentiments

of the hill people. In this respect the Meiteis forgot to consider that Manipur is a multi-linguistic state, having heterogeneous culture, customs...etc. It is true that the language is spoken by about two-third of the population, but still one-third's sentiment cannot be overlooked and impose the majority's decision. This will only lead to further break up and division of the state.

(The language problem had existed long before independence.) During the regimes of the Maharajas resolutions had been adopted and passed for the improvement of the Manipuri language. The Manipur Territorial Council resolutions were passed to make Meiteilon as the de-facto official language of the state. The Meitheis had been clamouring for the recognition of Meiteilon as the state language. According to R.K. Dorendro,³⁶ the language is spoken by eleven lakhs living in various parts of India. (West Bengal, Cachar, Tripura, Bihar, Hojai, Lanka, Gauhati, and Bangladesh). Secondly the language had been recognized upto University and the Sahitya Academy has recognized Manipuri as a modern Indian language.

36. Assembly Proceedings Official Report,
vol. xxxiii, 25th October 1977, Eleventh Session,
1977, p.150.

The issue had been hotly debated in the State Assembly and the Meiteis being in the majority (MLAs) strongly advocated for the adoption of Meiteilon as the official language. The Hill MLAs warned against the hasty passing of the language bill and expressed the opinion that the issue should be referred to the Hill Committee. But the Assembly negated the advise of the Hill MLAs and passed the resolution. Speaking on the language issue R.K. Ranbir Singh said: "...Our culture and language have saved our Manipur. We all know that our immediate neighbour Tripura has lost. To save Manipuri language is the one of the most important task...We have to save Manipur... Manipuri language is not only for us but it is for the whole of Manipur."³⁷ Unfortunately Mr. R.K. Ranbir Singh has used Manipuri language and Manipur synonymously, because Manipuri language is only for the Meiteis and if he views Manipur as the 700 sq. miles (Valley) then he is correct in asserting that by saving Manipuri language, one would be saving Manipur. Otherwise he is taking a very chauvinistic stand by making Manipuri the language of the Nagas and Kukis. In fact this attitude and behaviour of the

37. Ibid., p.154.

THE LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN MANIPUR

Item	Unit	Central district	North district	South district	East district	West district	Tengnoupal district	Manipur	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Bengali	No.	14,629	26	287	69	3	NA	15,014	(1.4)
Hmar	"	2,003	68	20,387	15	332	NA	22,305	(2.1)
Kabul	"	8,208	6,886	1,658	10	34,040	NA	50,802	(4.7)
Kuki	"	2,720	6,480	1,959	3,444	700	NA	14,378	(1.3)
Manipuri	"	671,500	1,415	4,297	815	358	NA	678,385	(63.2)
Mao	"	368	18,950	8	20	--	NA	19,346	(1.8)
Nepali	"	8,212	16,653	788	727	115	NA	26,495	(2.5)
Paite	"	2,201	318	21,206	60	12	NA	23,797	(2.2)
Tangkhul	"	1,503	4,638	61	51,356	13	NA	57,571	(5.4)
Thadou	"	8,087	14,777	13,330	3,223	4,380	NA	44,097	(4.1)
Vaiphei	"	336	2,356	8,392	200	474	NA	11,758	(1.1)
Others	"	43,493	31,608	26,666	1,990	4,548	NA	108,305	(10.1)

* No separate figures are available for Tengnoupal district but the Central district includes Tengnoupal district.
 NA = not available.

Issued by the Department of Statistics (Manipur).

Meiteis have greatly hampered and antagonized the Hill people. It has also jeopardized their peaceful co-existence in the state.

The languages spoken in Manipur are shown in the above chart ^(p.98), this is according to 1971 census.

Accordingly Meiteilon or Manipuri is spoken by 63.2 per cent of the population. The next major language is Tangkhul that is 5.4 per cent followed by Kabui 4.7 per cent and Thadou 4.1 percent. As the Meiteis are are very much attached to the language, so are the hill people. And at the present juncture, when the situation is still critical because of the demands of the Nagas and Kukis, it can create unwanted results for the future.

The language Bill was passed on 27th ⁱⁿ at 1979, the passing of the language Bill has terribly upset the psychology of the Hill people.³⁸ The Nagas and Kukis, feel no longer safe and secure, as a gradual cultural assimilation to Meitei society has already been started

38. A memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the All Tribal students' Union, Manipur on 23.7.1980.

by passing of the language bill. The passing of the bill is only going to benefit the Meiteis, while the Hill people have to bear up the hardship. Secondly if the language is included in the 8th Schedule, the Hill people have no more place in Manipur. It is their contention that the Hills and plain should be separated administratively, so that the Hill people can have their own mode of working out their future. The Nagas and Kukis are not against the language, instead they are for it, but that they should be exempted and be separated³⁹ from the Valley.

Looking at it from the other side, the Meiteis will benefit it most, as it would mean all government transactions will be done in Meiteilon (which means the Nagas/Kukis will have to master the language). Through Meiteilon, they hope to create a better rapport between the government and the people. At the same time, people can have greater access to and understand the governmental machinery. The second is that they (Meiteis) can sit for the All India Competitive examination on Meiteilon. The third advantage

39. A pamphlet issued by the Hill students, Manipur, July, 1980.

is that broadcast from All India Radio can be done in Manipuri language in big cities like Delhi. Fourth, ~~but not the least is that~~ the representatives can speak in Meiteilon in the Lokh Sabha and Rajya Sabha, which will be translated into Hindi and English.⁴⁰ In their enthusiasm to work for the general good of the people, they have bypassed the sentiments of the Hill people, who are opposed to the imposition of Meiteilon, and if such warnings are not taken heed on time, it will ultimately lead to ^{further} break up of the state.

The state of Manipur will remain as a state only when both groups ^{Hills} and valley learn to respect and cooperate with each other. The uniqueness of Manipur lies in her heterogeneity which is unparalleled to any other state of India. Therefore if the Meiteis want to preserve the integrity of the State, they should proceed cautiously, ^{by} less they should fall and experience the same fate as the Assamese, who because of their chauvinism brought about separation between the Valley and the Hills (Meghalaya, Mizoram).

40. Assembly Proceedings,
vol. XXXIX, 13th and 14th June 1978, 12th Session,
p.67.

The an actment of Meiteilon as the state language and the demand for the inclusion of the language in the Eight Schedule have caused much uproar and misunderstanding in the state. The Hill people were at a fix and therefore to counter the demand they demanded for a separate hill state. The imposition of Meiteilon would put them in a big disadvantage as they will be forced to learn;⁴¹ (a) Meiteilon as the state official language; (b) Hindi as the national language; (c) English as the International language and compulsory in higher education; (d) Mother tongue as basic to proper education. This issue created a certain amount of uncertainty and hostility between the hill people and the Valley people. The matter was further aggravated with the demand for a 'Manipur University' by the Valley people. In all the movements, there was never unanimity in the decision, their interests were so conflicting that no decision or work can be undertaken supported by both groups. For pretty long the Meiteis had been demanding for a 'University' of their own. The desire was partially fulfilled in 1972, when

41. A memorandum submitted to Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India by the All Tribal Students Union, Manipur, p.2.

a Post Graduate Centre under Jawaharlal Nehru University was established at Cachipur. And after eight long years, on 1st April, 1981⁴² Manipur University was established at Cachipur, Imphal. The plea for the establishment of a University has been that the poor and needy cannot afford to go ^{outside} ~~outsides~~ the state for higher studies, therefore this University hopes to cater it.

The Nagas and Kukis have played a negative role in the establishment of Manipur University. They showed little interest to be part of Manipur, instead they want to be affiliated to North Eastern Hill University or demand for a separate University. It is their contention that if they remain part of Manipur University, they will be the target for educational and intellectual exploitation. The younger generation, who are more aware of the situation are demanding for some kind of safeguard of their rights. As it is they understand that they have very little chance against the Meitei community because in all aspects they are more advanced and developed.

Another important aspect of the study is their response on social change. That is how have these ethnic

42. Case for a University in Manipur; Published by the Working Group, Manipuri Community, Gauhati Unity, p.6.

groups ^{have} responded and adapted themselves to ^{the} changing world. For this again various factors such as education, religion and economy must be taken into account. Education for instance help the socialization of a child and development of human personality, social mobility, occupational change and the rise of profession. Religion again is another important force of social change. Christianity to the Nagas and Kukis have been a source of social change, while Hinduism has kept the (Hindu) Meiteis society in a status quo, in their social structure.

Analysis of the socio-cultural life of the Nagas and Kukis, there is a positive correlation between conversion to Christianity, high percentage of literacy and social change and modernization. In the hills, prior to the coming of Christianity, the Nagas and Kukis had remained ~~in state~~ ⁱⁿ ignorance. But with the coming of Christianity there has been a gradual improvement and all round development of the Hill areas. Thus, this has been correlation of the past and present: (a) Christianity and high percentage of literacy, (b) and literacy and social change. The Christian missionaries opened schools in all their mission centres and educated the people. Thus within a short span the Nagas

and Kukis have been able to adapt themselves to the changing situation. Just to cite an example East District according to 1961 Census the percentage of literatures was 32.39 per cent and in 1971 it rouse to 36 per cent (the ratio been - male 47 per cent; female 25 per cent, 1971). In the Hill areas, the centre of activity of the Village is Church, and through the Church education and social change has taken place. Again education has caused a gradual break from the past traditions and custom and finally leading to change in the pattern of family and marriage⁶, economy and occupational structure and greater political participation and awareness.

Today, Parents however illiterate, they are, interested that their children should be send to schools and be education^{ed}. Despite their economic backwardness parents willingly undergo the hardships for the sake of their children, so that one day they can reap the fruit of their labour. In fact, this has led to the decrease in the number of persons working on the land. And so the problem of unemployment have adverse effect, on many educated and semi-educated persons. This state of affairs

has already started appearing on the scene, because annually there are many graduates and post-graduate students in search of employment. Unless this problem is tackled at the initial stage, it will lead to many unwanted social, disorder and upheavals. As it is, already the Valley people are badly affected by the problem of unemployment.

Education and high percentage of literacy has influenced the political participation and awareness. The ethnic groups, in fact keenly contest for the leadership in the state. The Nagas and Mizos especially for the last thirty years have been fighting for a sovereign state and the struggle is still being kept up by the underground leaders. While those who have accepted nominally the Indian Constitution, are playing active role in the (Indian politics) state and national politics.

So considering the years of isolation, the change among the Nagas and Kukis have been fast and sudden. Their adaptability to the changing world has been remarkable. Within these short span, their socio-economic condition

have improved for the better, even though still lots more can be done for their welfare.

In the Valley, the change has been gradual, unlike Christianity, Hinduism has followed a status quo policy, and because of their social set up and structure (Hindu) the people have been slow in adapting to the changes of life. Hinduism has tied ^{them} their down to their Hindu way of life and anything Western was considered as Christian, therefore initially Western education was considered as a propaganda to Christian faith. Those who were educated outside the state tried to bring about changes in their society, but on account of the traditional (conservative mind) and adherence to the Hindu system changes have not been as fast and sudden as the Nagas and Kukis. At the same time one cannot say that there has been no change, especially among the younger generation, the impact of education, sporadic change has taken place. For instance the concept of 'pollution', 'untouchability', the biggest obstacle to friendly relation with the Hill people have decreased to a great extent. The ordinary Hindu Meiteis freely welcome and live now with the Hill people. Another important change has been that the Hill people freely

participate in some of the Meitei local festivals like Yousang and the Meiteis too take place in the social festivals of Hill people (Christmas, etc.).

In this respect it must be said that the Hill people have been more adaptable and accomodative than the Meiteis. This may be because of the social structure that the Hill people have, which is more open and receptive to the changing world. The Meiteis, on account of their religious belief and social structure, cannot act independently like the Nagas and Kukis. A study of the social change could be really interesting and enlightening, another thesis could be written on this topic.

Another important point, which must be kept in mind is the purview, the framework of national policy towards the people of Manipur especially the Nagas and Kukis. And to understand the present policy, it is important to refer to the past because in a way it is the continuation of the past policy. During the British regime, the Hill areas had been divided into two groups : excluded and partially excluded areas.⁴³ The excluded areas were the

43. Rao, V.V., A Century of Tribal Politics, (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1976), p.78.

tracts where any advanced form of government was not a possibility because of the backwardness of the area. These areas were administered by the Governor himself. The ministers had no constitutional right to advise Governor in connection with their administration. While in the partially excluded areas the Provincial Legislature could influence the Governor and these areas had representatives in the Legislative Assembly. In order to safeguard the Hill areas the Inner Line Regulation Act (1873) was imposed, by which the plain people were prevented from entering the Hill areas. This policy of the British was further pursued by the Government of India after the departure of the British. The Hill areas of Nagaland and Mizoram remained cut off by the imposition of 'Inner line permit', which every non Naga or ^{non} Mizo had to get in order to visit or even pass through the area.

The Government of India is fully aware of the strategic importance of this area and all possible measures have been undertaken to safeguard and protect the region. There are specific provisions in the Constitution trying to safeguard the interest of the Hill people, for instance the fifth and

sixth schedule of the constitution, wherein it provides provisions as to the administration and control of schedule areas and schedule tribes, and in the sixth schedule specifically mentioning about Assam, Meghalaya and union territory of Mizoram. Besides these two, there are about 24 articles found in the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles ensuring the rights as citizen of India. There is a specific article 371C, which gives specific power to the President of India to have direct administrative control of the area through the Governor:

"... The Governor shall annually or whenever so required by the President, make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Hill areas in the state of Manipur and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the state as to the administration of the said areas."⁴⁴

Thus when Manipur attained statehood still administrative separation was continued. In the Hills, the Autonomous (Hills) District Councils were introduced, while in the

44. Constitution of India, Article - 371C,
Eastern Book Company, 1980, p.144.

plains the gram panchayat was implemented.

The Government of India has shown keen interest in development of the Hill areas. For this purpose a Tribal Welfare Department had been established to cater to the requisite of the Hill people. The Legislative Assembly seats are reserved for the hill areas according to population, both at the state and national level. Thus there are suppose to be nineteen MLAs and one MP in the State of Manipur from the hill areas. As ensured in the constitution (Art.335) about 33 per cent of the posts and services are reserved for the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes in the state.

Two things have featured in the National policy towards the tribal people and tribal areas: protection and development. In order to protect and safeguard the interest of the Hill people, special legislations were passed against economic exploitation. Then special programmes for educational and socio-economic development were undertaken. And since the first five year plan efforts were made to assist the tribal people. Here is the objectives of the sixth

plan for the tribal developments:⁴⁵

1. The entire tribal population, whether living in the areas of tribal concentration or outside will be covered by suitable development programmes during the Sixth Plan period.
2. The gulf between the level of development in the tribal areas and the surrounding areas will be generally bridged by the end of the Sixth Plan and, in the case of more backward tribal areas, in the course of another five years, i.e. by the end of the Seventh Plan.
3. The tribal communities outside the tribal areas will be helped to attain the general level of development in the area by the end of the Sixth Plan, or latest by the end of the Seventh Plan in the case of more deprived communities.

From all these concerns, it is quite understandable that the government is keen on bridging the gap between the tribals and the non-tribals, but things have not gone as the government had planned. An official document

45. Vidyarathi, L.P., (ed.), Tribal Development and Its Administration, (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1981), p.85.

issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs stated:⁴⁶

"In the name of tribal development we have spent a lot of money during the last several plans but when accounting was made at the end of the last period of the safeguards of the tribal in the Constitution, it was found that actual benefits trickling down to the tribals have not been consistent with the promises we have made. Expenditure has not resulted in the benefits that should have accrued to this population. Unfortunately the developmental programmes for tribal areas did not yield the desired results." (p.98).

Unfortunately those entrusted with the task of developing the hills or tribal areas have not been honest and sincere in their undertaking thus even after an elapse of 30 years the tribal areas have remained underdeveloped, despite the good will of the Indian Government.

46. Vidhyarthi, L.P., Tribal Development and Its Administration, p.89.

Chapter - IV

POLITICAL EXPRESSION OF ETHNICITY

From the very outset a clear demarcation was made in the administration of the Hills and plain. The British Administrators took charge of the Hill administration, on the plea that "the hill tribes are not Manipuris and have entirely different customs and language. The Raja in future will not have a bodyguard of about 100 rifles and therefore will be unable to enforce his orders outside the Valley, whereas the political agent will have a military police battalion to support the authority of the Vice-President".¹ Speaking about the Naga-Kuki relation, according to J. Shakespeare, curious enough even prior to the establishment of the British, Manipuris had utilised the Kuki community as levy to counter the Nagas. This policy was further deepened by the British, and reporting about Jenkins wrote: "Our hopes of reclaiming this country appears to rest on these kookies. They are already sufficiently numerous to delay the Nagas if they can be utilised for the purpose of defence."² The main reason was that, the Kukis were more

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1. Scheme for the future Administration of Manipur, (P.D. Ext. A Proc. Aug, 1907, Nos. 18-23).
 2. Jenkins Report on Frontier Tribes in A.J.M. Mills Report on Assam, (Calcutta, 1854), Appendix N.P. CXXIII.

were organized and it was easier to control them through their chief (autocratic) unlike the Nagas (democratic). Therefore for the execution of the policy, the British government counted very much on the cooperation of the Kukis against the Nagas, so much so that the Kukis can be considered as the corner stone of the British empire in Manipur. The British Raj could, therefore play one group (Nagas) against the other (Kukis) wherever it was found necessary to do so.

The outbreak of world war I compelled many Hill people to become labourers and porters for the allies. Many were recruited and deported to France, the Kukis were included and forced join the labour corps. This gave rise to the immediate outbreak of the famous 'Kuki Rebellion', other causes are not far to seek. The Kukis, who were ~~also~~ political allies of the Meiteis Kings were severed after Manipur was completely taken by British in 1891.³ Among the Hill people, the Kukis were the

3. The revolt of 1891 known as 'Palace revolt' was an attempt made by the Manipuri princes to overthrow the British Raj. Tikendrajit and General Thangal were the two heads behind this revolt. Both were executed and from 1891 onwards Manipur came directly under the control of British India. Prior to it was an independent princely state.

first^{to} possess guns,⁴ but when British took over, the Government issued orders forbidding the possession of guns without license and holding of such unlicensed gun would lead to confiscation and severe punishment. Many Kukis openly defied the order and the years between 1907 to 1917, about 1,195 guns were seized from the Kukis.⁵ So gradually tension was being built up and the final explosion came when British tried to raise Labour Corps for France. Secondly it affected the economy of the Hill people, especially the Kukis, when men played a vital role in the economy of the family and society. Reporting about the Kuki-Rebellion Shakespeare wrote in the History of the Assam Rifles: "...the largest series of military operations conducted in the side of India since the old expeditionary days of General Penn Symonds and Tregear in the late eighties, or the futile/ Abhor Expedition of 1911-12, eclipsing from all in casualties and arduousness of active service."⁶ The authorities took more than a year to crush^{the rebellion}. It had

4. Guns had been supplied to the Kukis by the Meitei Maharajas, in order to fight against the Nagas.

5. Yomo, The Rising Nagas, (Delhi: Vivak Publishing House, 1974), p.124.

6. Shakespeare, History of the Assam Rifles, (London, 1929), p.235.

a tremendous impact on the British administrators, the result of their imperialism, even though Furer Haimendorf called it a "defensive primitive uprising". The Kuki-rebellion of 1917-18 made the British realized the necessity of controlling the Hill tribes more effectively, therefore administrative reforms were introduced. Manipur was divided into four sub-divisions, Imphal was the headquarter of one sub-division and the others were Churechandpur (South-West) for Kukis, Tamenglong (West) for Kabuis and Kacha Nagas, Ukhrul (East) for Tangkhul Nagas. This administrative arrangement was introduced in 1919 and it remained in force until 1930. Instead by 1933 a new arrangements were made whereby the Hills were divided into three sub-division. Sadar Hills Ukhrul, and Tamenglong and this continued to remain until 1947.⁷

The Kuki Rebellion of 1918 had a far reaching effect on the life of the other groups. There arose a greater urgency for unity, within the tribe and strengthening of

7. Bhattacharya, M., Gazetteer, (Manipur),
Gazetteer of India, (Calcutta, 1963), p.307.

the ethnic group. Soon after, the Tangkhuls formerly established their Assembly known as Tangkhul Long (Tangkhul Assembly) at Ukhrul (1919). The association was enlarged in membership in 1925 and in 1961 it changed the name to Tangkhul Naga Long. A host of other associations based on ethnic lines were formed, like the Kabui Samiti of Ruongnei (1934) later on Kabui Naga Association and which expanded the Zeliangrong Naga Union, the Vaiphei National Organization (1944), the Hmar Association and the Kuki National Assembly.⁸

During the Kuki Rebellion, the Kabuis and Kacha Nagas had suffered most at the hands of the Kukis. The Nagas had remained loyal to the Government,¹¹ but seeing the inadequate protection given to them, a new movement, spearheaded by Jadohang⁹ (in 1920's) was launched in the West district (Manipur). The movement was political, social and religious. Politically, he wanted to establish a 'Naga Raj' by driving away the foreigners. While the social programme was the integration

✓ 8. Chaube, S., Hill Politics in North-East India. (London: Orient Longman, 1973), p.194.

9. Kabui, G., "Social Reforms and Religious Movements in Manipur Nineteenth and Twentieth Century", Spectrum, vol.1, no.7, January 1977, p.32.

of the three tribes, Zemeis, Liangmeis and Rougmeis as Zeliangrong. Lastly religious reformation, that of abolishing the many unnecessary taboos of birth and death ceremonies or simplify them. But unfortunately he was misrepresented and the government saw in him a dangerous person, therefore he was arrested and executed for his so-called 'crimes' in 1931. But that was the beginning, because his follower, Gaidinliā geared the movement after his death and kept it alive. Speaking about Gaidinliu, Nehru¹⁰ wrote in 1937, five years after her capture by the British:

"....A day will come when India also will remember her and cherish her".

When India achieved her independence, she was set free with the other political prisoners. The foresight of Jadonang had been the cause of unity and integration of the three tribes, and today they stand under a common banner - Zeliangrong.

With the dawn of India's independence, Manipur became an independent princely state. The Maharaja responded to the demand of the people for a responsible

10. Chandra, B., Modern India, (New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1971), p.269.

government, and so a constitutional monarchy was introduced.¹¹
 The Valley people were deeply concern about the integrity of Manipur and also ^{Sensed} the gravity of the situation. Hijam Rabot Singh, President of Manipur Krisak Sabha, dissuaded the Hill leaders from taking disintegrated stand. Even prior to the elapse of British paramounctoy, M.A. Daiho¹² of Mao had started his agitation for secession of Manipur Hill areas to Naga Hills. The Naga Movement for a 'sovereign state' had captured the imagination of every Naga living in Naga Hills, Manipur, Burma and Cachar. The Nagas declared their independence on 14th August 1947¹³ and A.Z. Phiso became their undisputable leader. The NNC¹⁴ demanded the Maharaja to hand over the Naga areas to Naga Hills, so that there could exist a cordial relationship between the two countries.

The Kukis on the other hand, found themselves in a tight-corner, being landless people, they could be easily alienated by the Nagas and Meiteis. Therefore they demanded from the Central Government of India "Kuki State"

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11. Roy, J., History of Manipur, p.148.
 12. Resistance, August 23, 1977, p.6.
 13. Yonuo, A., The Rising Nagas, p.176.
 14. NNC means Naga National Council.

comprising of all non-Naga areas in Manipur.

The attitude of the Hill people endangered the integrity of Manipur, and when the first election to Manipur Assembly took place in 1948 (under Constitutional monarchy) the Hill people boycotted it and remained indifferent to it.¹⁵

During the British regime a political agent had been appointed to further good relation between the Central Government and Government of Manipur. And this had proved a powerful machinery for the control of the State. The same strategy was adopted by the Government of India, by appointing a "Dewan" in place of a political agent. The Manipuris considered this as planting of a "Trojan Horse".¹⁶ Major General Rawal Amar Singh was appointed as the Dewan and all powers were concentrated in his hand. In the Constitution of Manipur there was no such provision as the office of Dewan. Therefore it was unconstitutional, but nobody dared to protest nor bothered to amend the Constitution.

15. Chaube, S., Hill Politics in North-East India, p.194.

16. Resistance, 12 June, 1979, p.3.

Gradually the situation was getting out of hand, some Congress leaders openly demanded integration of Manipur with India. India's independence had been a turning point in the history of Asia. Many princely states were attracted to the India of Gandhi and Nehru like a huge magnet. The Congress leaders saw in the monarch, the old feudal, system, backward and sick, therefore they wanted to merge in order to gain and prosper like other states. They were interested in greater participation and a responsible government.¹⁷ Therefore, in collaboration with the Dewan the Congressmen set to work for integration with India. Their propogandas were very successful and effective and at a certain stage it seemed as though the whole population was rallying behind their banner.

When the question of integration with India was raised, the Hill people flatly objected and a meeting was held under the leadership or chairmanship of Mr. S. Luneh unanimously condemned the idea of integration with India and demanded for separation:

"It is most regretable that the working committee of Manipur State Congress, who

¹⁷ Resistance, August 7, 1979, p.6.

claim themselves to be the leaders of the state, should exist their absolute ignorance of the customs of the Hill people and the administration of the Hills and yet pretend to be their champion. While the Hill people of Manipur have shown tolerance and patience and extended open arms for the better understanding of the Hill people and the Valley people, the Manipur State Congress have not only completely ignored the importance of the Hill people in Manipur state but have widened the gulf of misunderstanding and suspicion by their irresponsible speeches and publications without any iota of truth in it. The M.S.C. have even lowered the reputation of the Congress as a whole before the eyes of the Hill people who most unfortunately ~~knows~~ knows little and understands the principle of the Congress. It is therefore unequivocally declared that the Valley people of Manipur whose area is only about 700 square miles can have no right at all to speak for the

Hill people of Manipur state who occupy more than 7,000 square miles on the issue of integration or merger or any matter which affects the primary interests of the Hill people."¹⁸

It was apparently clear that Indian rulers were bent on swallowing up Manipur. Therefore they turned a deaf ear to the protests and demonstrations of the people. The British imperialistic attitude had been imbibed by them, even though they had fought against such forces. Everything was well measured and calculated, the Maharaja in his ability to tackle the problem sought refuge in the company of Sri Prakasa the Governor of Assam and his adviser Mr. N.K. Rustomji, at Shillong.¹⁹ But unfortunately things turned out to be quite different and unexpected, because he found himself a captive in his own palace at Shillong. It was here that the most dramatic event in the history of Manipur

18. Hill MLA Meetings held under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. Lunnch on 27.7.1949, Resistance, 28.8.1979, p.7.

19. Ibid., 2.10.1979, p.6.

took place. The Maharaja Bodhachandra was forced to signed the term of merger to the Indian Union. Finding no other alternative, the Maharaja with a broken heart signed the merger to the Indian Union on September 21, 1949. The official merger came out a month after on October 15, 1949.²⁰ Then Rawal Amar Singh was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner of Manipur.

With the merger with Indian^{Manipur}, began a new phase of history, a struggle for independence and statehood. The Hill people especially the Nagas joined hand with the Naga Hills in the struggle for a sovereign state. The Meitei leaders who had earlier led the struggle for merger and a responsible government were some what disillusioned, when Manipur was categorised as a part 'C' state to be administered by the Central Government through a Chief Commissioner. In 1956 when the States Reorganisational Commission proposed the merger of Manipur with the neighbouring territories, there were strong objections on the ground that Manipur had remained always a separate entity. Secondly for centuries

20. Ibid., 6.11.1979, p.7.

she had been independent. Thirdly, culturally and linguistically she represented a different group and lastly because of her economic backwardness, that is if she is merged with Assam her economic development could be hindered. ²¹ At the same time the N.S.C. submitted a memorandum demanding that they should be treated differently from the rest of the North-Eastern tribes. ²² And accordingly, the States Reorganization Commission recommended that the advisory council should be substituted by a Territorial Council. So under the States Organization Act and Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act of 1956 Manipur was constituted into a centrally administered

21. Bhat, S., The Challenge of the North-East, (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1975), p.47.

22. To quote: "Manipuris are unique people quite (different) distinct, ethnically, culturally, linguistically from the people of either Assam or the proposed Purbanchal or the proposed North-Eastern Frontier Tribal state. We cannot conveniently be merged with any of these states at risk of antagonising the Manipuris against the state in which Manipuris may forcibly be merged. Merger of Manipur with any state will mean the veritable annihilation of its distinct culture....If Manipur is forcibly merged with any other state against her will the people will find themselves as if let loose from this moorings with the result that Manipur will become a sick spot in the North-Eastern part of India."

Memorandum Submitted to the State Reorganization Commission by Manipur State Congress, (Imphal), April 1954, p.3.

territory. And under these provisions, Parliament enacted the territorial councils Act of 1956 which gave a substantial measure of local self-government to Manipur.²³

In 1957 (October 22) a Naga Convention was held at Ukhrul to voice the demand for the unification of all Nagas and to form the Manipur Naga Council. Meanwhile the Mizos and Kukis responded to the call of Lal Denga to form a 'sovereign Mizoram'.²⁴ This counter move of the Hill people became a big menace and threat to the demand for statehood by the Valley people.

In 1960 the 16 Point Agreement was signed between the Nagas and the Indian Government, and Point 13 dealt on the Consolidation of contiguous Naga area, therefore all Naga inhabited area had to be integrated. But when Naga Hills was given statehood, Nagas living in Manipur, Kachar and Assam were excluded, therefore trouble started all over again. The Valley people (Meiteis) felt very much insolent, when Naga Hills was given statehood, while their

23. Bhat, S., p.48.

24. Ibid., p.67.

demand for statehood had been turned off.

On March 1968, the All Manipur Statehood Demand Conference was held at Imphal. Their demands was further strengthened by Nagaland's statehood, whose economic resources and population were lesser to that of Manipur. "The Neighbouring state Nagaland has become the 16th full fledged state in India. But in comparison of the two states our Manipur is not inferior to Nagaland in many respects. But the statehood of Manipur had been deprived by the Government of India."²⁵ When Shri Y.B. Chavan, the then Union Home Minister and other Central ministers visited Manipur a demonstration was staged by the various parties²⁶, demanding for full fledged statehood.

On 9th May 1970, an All Party Parliamentary Delegation visited Manipur to see its feasibility and viability of it. On this occasion a big rally was organised by the All Parties Statehood Demand Co-ordinating Body. The urge

25. Y. Yajma Singh, Proceedings of the Manipur Legislative Assembly - Fifth Session, 1966-67, vol. XXXVIII, (Imphal, 1967), p.141.

26. Congress, the SSP, the CPI, the CPM, and PSP participated in the demand for statehood.

Piece not approved

129

was too great ^{to go unnoticed} therefore to satisfy the people the centre upgraded the post of the administrator from Chief Commissioner to Lieutenant Governor, hoping that this would pacify the demand. The movement further intensified after the announcement of statehood for Himachal Pradesh on 31st July, 1970. Therefore as a final strategy, the All Parties Statehood Demand Coordinating Body boycotted the 1970 independence day, and civil disobedience movements were organized.

Finally the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi conceded the demand of the Manipur for statehood. It was announced in the Lok Sabha on 3rd September 1970. While the Minister of State for home affairs Krishna Chandra Pant read the statement in the Rajya Sabha as follows:

"The Government is aware of the interest taken by members of this house on the question of the Constitutional status of Manipur and Tripura. We appreciate the aspiration of the people of Manipur and Tripura to have the status of their territories raised to statehood and fully realise the strength of feeling behind these aspirations.

The government also takes note of the special circumstances of these territories of Manipur

and Tripura in which the demand for statehood have been made. We accept the demands in principle, but details have to be worked out keeping in view the importance of co-ordinated approach to the problem of development and security of the North-Eastern region, and we hope to be able to announce our decision within a short period.

The Government earnestly hopes that in the meantime an atmosphere of peace and harmony will be maintained by all sections of the people in the two territories."²⁷

The bill for conferring statehood to Manipur was introduced in Parliament on December 9th 1971 and on January 21st 1972 the President of India gave the assent and the same ^{day} Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurated the State. The statehood day was celebrated with great pomp and grandeur, to mark the long years of struggle for a responsible Government.

The path to statehood was long and tedious, no State in India underwent so much trials and hardships as

27. The Times of India, September 4, 1970.

Manipur. It was a step by step evolution, almost like a struggle for independence. The Meiteis had suffered a big set back in their demand for statehood, because the Nagas and Kukis (Mizos) refused to cooperate in the struggle. By now the ethnic politics had taken root and it was actively working in the various ethnic groups. The early fifties, the Mizo and Naga movements for independent had ~~been~~ started in Hill areas of Manipur, therefore it was a Herculean task for the Meiteis alone to demand for statehood.

Among the Meitei community, there were groups who were dissatisfied with the social, political and religious set up of the society. They wanted to reform their society through revolution and as such their drive for revivalism brought about split in their society. It was their ambition to establish Meitei supremacy not only in Manipur but also in the adjacent area of Burma. In the wake of this consciousness, many organisations came into existence, to accommodate the changing situation. The Pan-Mongoloid Movement²⁸ stressed that

28. Times of India, 5th November, 1979.

the Meiteis are Mongoloids like the Nagas and Kukis. So they clamoured for changes in the social, cultural, language and script, causing emotional and cultural hiatus between the elders and the younger generation. The youth openly attacked the 'cultural imperialism of India' and 'political subjugation'. They consider Manipur as a captive market for India's agricultural and industrial products.

The attainment of statehood in 1972 did not solve the problem, instead the situation was worsen by the mismanagement of the administrators and frickleness of the politicians. Instability marked the day, as ministries were toppled one after the other, after hardly 8 years of statehood, already three elections to the State Assembly were held.

During this period, Naga nationalism was at its peak, followed by Mizos. And it was in this background that in the mid-sixties the Meitei state committee came into being. The Meitei state committee secretly held its convention

and announced the formation of the Revolutionary Government of Manipur.²⁹ And shortly after the formation, the leaders of the Revolutionary Government of Manipur began their pilgrimage to Peking and Pindi. Soon after their return the revolutionaries started the 'Operation Day Break' in Imphal. Some top leaders including O. Suchir Kumar and his closest lieutenant Nameirakpam Bishweshwar were captured and jailed in Agartala. People in Manipur realized the MRG's existence only when the Government cracked down the undergrounds in 1969. And by 1970 the government thought that the group had been liquidated. In Agartala jail, Bishweshwar came in contact with some naxalite leaders and acquired the influences that were to shape his objectives later.

In 1972 M. Alimuddin's government granted a 'restricted' amnesty to the arrested MRG leaders, but those with cognisable offences were retained in custody. But during Dorendro's ministry a universal amnesty was declared and 'rehabilitation' was opened to the MRG. O Suchir Kumar

29. "Is China Helping the Rebels?", New Delhi, June 9-22, 1980, p.10.

and his comrades accepted the term of 'rehabilitation' and worked openly in support of the Government (Dokendo).³⁰ In late 1975 Bishweshwar broke away from Sudhir Kumar and formed his Party. Sudhir Kumar's group came to be known as 'Kangleipak Group' and they shifted their emphasis from armed insurgency to Mass political work though with extreme slogan. The Kangleipak group denounced the Poirai Sena Leipak under the the leadership of Bishweshwar, a Chinese trained reactionary.³¹ The Poirai in return also denounced the Kangleipak group as agents of the Indian 'expansionists and collaborators'. Then in 1978 the Porebi group was baptized as People Liberation Army (PLA).³² In the course of the struggle between the two parties, Sudhir Kumar was killed (January, 1979) at Imphal.

In 1977 another liberation army was formed in Manipur — the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak

30. Himmat, 'The North-East in Turmoil',
'What fuels militancy in Manipur - p.25.

31. Sarin, V.I.K., India's North-East in Flames,
(Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980), p.107.

32. "Is China Helping the Rebels", New Delhi, p.12.

(PREPAK). Its leader was R.K. Tulachandra, young and brilliant management graduate. Like the PLA, prepak adhere to Marxist ideologies but is believed to follow no country, while PLA is aligned to the Chinese line. Some say that the prepak was made up of "disgruntled and anti-social youth", most of them angry at the unemployment and the economic mess, they found themselves confronted with. People on the whole have little sympathy for prepak, if they support it is out of fear of loosing their skin. The prepak boldly loot banks, hold up travellers...,etc. They aim to establish a Socialist Sovereign State in Manipur. In order to achieve this aim, they would "suppress all counter-revolutionary people" and destroy "class enemies".³³ And instead they envisage to set up collectivised farming nationalisation of all trade and business and a judicial system of people's courts. But with the sudden arrest of Tulachandra, the appeal to give up arms struggle (he) made to his comrades, shocked the people. So much so that many consider it as a 'fake statement extorted under duress'. The state government made capital out of it and broadcaste^d the appeal over

33. Ibid., p.13.

"class enemies" include "capitalist politicians, bureaucratic officials, the capitalist sections of society, blood thirsty contractors....religious groups".

Imphal radio three times on February 29 and March 1, 1980. The appeal turned a deaf ear, because his own comrade Malpak Sharma formed a new group. Not only that they executed Tulachandra's closest aide his brother Chiterasen, head of the "Red army" and K. Ibobi "Chairman of Prepak".³⁴ Further a third faction has come out of the prepak known as Kanglepak Communist Party. These groups are sectarian in nature, the very name suggest discrimination of one group from others. And as such, they have lost the respect and support of the people.

Today it is the PLA that commands the respect and sympathy of the people (Maitais) Bisheshwar³⁵ is revered by the PLA like Mao Zedong as "their great leader and teacher". The followers of Bisheshwar are well disciplined and are committed to their cause. The views of N. Bishweshwar Singh represents the PLA philosophy. His writings reflect an unflinching commitment to the communist political and organizational principles;

³⁴ "Is China Helping the Rebels", New Delhi, June 2-29, 1980, p.13.

³⁵ Bishweshwar made series of top-secret trips to Thasa along with his closest aides, in order to obtain ideological and tactical training from the Chinese. Only on the third trip in early 1976 was he found out.

especially of the Maoist Chinese variety. The PLA represents the interest of the people of Manipur who are suppressed, oppressed and colonised. It is their duty to set free the prisoners of colonialism and starvation. The main organ of the PLA is Dawn,³⁶ in it they have expounded their philosophy. Excerpts:

"The future of the revolution is bright.... the unity of all nationalities including the Nagas, the Mizos, the Chins, the Kukis, the Meiteis and so on, can arouse the neighbouring states of India, but also help guide the Indian working class the peasant movements and other progressive forces, so that the Delhi regime can be overthrown with a joint forces, of the vast majority....We can successfully achieve our goal through this strategy...." The PLA plans to "raise high the morale of the people by educating and helping them building up in firm revolutionary base."

"Therefore, the most urgent issue at the present stage is a real Marxist Party, guided by Marxism-Leninism and Mao-Zedong thought - a party, which by mobilising the whole masses, can lead the people to an armed revolution to be persisted till victory is achieved..."

36. Excerpts taken from Dawn, official organ of the PLA, vol.I, 1979, p.7.

The PLA is a non-sectarian group, their ultimate object is to establish the rule of the working class in India. Therefore they have condemned the theory of "Meitheis for Meitheis", "Mizos for the Mizos", and "Nagas for the Nagas". They have constantly appealed to the Nagas and Mizos to join hand to fight against the common enemy - 'the Indian Government'. The PLA have also criticized the Nagas and Mizos for the 'Peace Talks'³⁷ that they had with India. To them "War is the highest form of struggle for resolving contradiction, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, nations, states or among political groups and it has existed ever since the emergence of private property and of classes."³⁸ Therefore to adhere to Gandhian strategy would denote cowardice, since it is a means for the weak and disable.

One of the primary aim of the PLA is to set up the "Revolutionary People's Front" (RPF) which would include, Manipur (Kangleipak) Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. It is therefore clear that the PLA intends to unite forces in the end with the Nagas and the Mizos.

37. They consider 'Peace Talks' as enemy's sugar coated bullet, sweet talks in the face, stab in the back, it is their moral duty to defeat such deceptive weapons of the enemy by raising the consciousness of the revolutionaries groups.

38. Dawn, p.3.

Bisheshwar Singh along with the Ihasa trained Meiteis form the hardcore of the PLA. After their return from Ihasa (training), they followed the typical Communist principle of forming small cells, generally with ten people. It is a well organized unit³⁹, therefore they have been able to carry out successful attacks on the enemy. The Government has taken stern steps to check the insurgents, and today there are four battalions of CRP, three battalions of the army, and half a dozen battalions of the Assam Rifles in Manipur. But they have failed to stem the tide of insurgency. The geographical location of the state has facilitated the activities of the extremists. Their tactics are bold and fast -- gunning down the para-military personnel and snatching away their arms.

39. It is organized hierarchically, categorising from A to E, depending on the length of training, level of development and competence for action. The recruitment is done only among the Meiteis and that too with D & E groups. It is their duty to act as running couriers, carrying stores, procuring rice....etc. While 'C' categories are entrusted with the task of carrying messages or concealing weapons and allied jobs. The 'B' categories are supposed to perform certain assignments and only after successful completion are they promoted to the 'A' category. But how many have so far been inducted is not known. On account of this highly functional organisation, they are capable of surprise actions, quick dispersal....etc.

The continuous presence of the army and the other para-military forces has made Manipur a hotbed of vice, corruption and brutal encounters between the local people and the armed forces. An army officer said that Imphal today is like Saigon during the Vietnam war. The people are disgusted with the whole situation, they ^{want} a solution to these problems. But on account of the political instability in the state, nothing concrete has been able to achieve. From every nook and corner of the state people are demanding for justice, equality and sincere administrators and politicians. Unless the Central and State Government work out together the immediate needs of the people, things will aggravate and soon be out of hand.

NAGA DEMAND

"Freedom is my birth-right, and I will have it", the Nagas lived in (sovereign) villages situated on inaccessible mountains tops, well-fortified forts. Seldom the Naga tribes communicated with each other, they remained isolated and aloof from each other. The outsiders were too frightened to venture ^{ing} into the interior, as nothing was safe in those days of head-hunting. The British were the first aliens, who succeeded to penetrate into the interior (1820). Despite such contacts the Nagas

remained unaffected in their socio-economic and political life. The British were not really interested in the Naga Hills, but because they often plundered and raided the fertile plains of Manipur, Assam and Cachar, which were under the British dominion. It also affected the law and order of the land. Therefore they (British) were forced to undertake punitive expeditions in the Naga Hills. They were able to subdue the Nagas because of their superior force and more equipped arms. To put an end to the long and continuous raids, the Naga Hills was divided and placed under different administrative units. The company Government incorporated the Mao, Taughtul and Naga areas to Manipur in 1842, whereas the Angami areas were placed in Assam, but later in 1886 Naga Hills was created as a district of Assam.⁴⁰ Further in 1862 the British Government demarcated the boundary between Burma and Manipur to prevent conflicts and in the demarcation some were placed in Manipur and others in Burma. The Government tactfully did all these, in order to pursue their self-interest policy and keep the people divided. Therefore the question of Naga unification posed a big

40. Yomuo, A., The Rising Nagas, p.369.

problem, since it was going to touch the international boundaries. Later by the scheduled district Act of 1873 it was declared a 'scheduled district' so that it could be excluded from the general operation of laws in the rest of British India. Their policy of protectionism was further crystallized by an Inner Line Regulation 1873,⁴¹ according to which no foreigner could acquire land within the district.

The advent of the British Raj to Naga Hills was a blessing in disguise. The Nagas were never completely subjugated by the British. Even during British time, each village formed an independent unit, self-sufficient and complete. Among themselves, the Nagas were divided, there was hardly any unity. But with the presence of an alien power, gradually there was some ~~kindness~~ awareness and consciousness, for a common effort in order to repulse the foreigners. This led to the formation of inter-tribal councils or associations, in 1918 in Mokokchung and Kohima known as 'Naga Club'.⁴² Initially

41. Allen, B.C., Naga Hills and Manipur, pp.386-87.

42. Anand, V.K., Conflict in Nagaland, (Delhi: Chanakya Publication, 1980), p.55.

it consisted of government officials and a few leading headmen of the neighbouring villages, who used to come in for meetings, to discuss about the social and administration problems.

The 'Naga Club', gave a new outlook to the Naga, encouraging them to transcend the narrow clan or group loyalties and crystallize a comprehensive 'Naga Identity'. The leaders who geared the club were people who had seen life in Europe during world war-I. So their aim was to raise voice against the social injustice inflicted upon them. Therefore, when Simon Commission⁴³ came to India in 1929, they presented a memorandum in the name of the Naga people:

"We the undersigned Nagas of the Naga club at Kohima, who are the only persons at present to voice for our people, have heard with great regret that our Naga Hills were included within the Reformed Scheme of India without our knowledge.... Before the British government conquered our country in 1879-1880 we were living in a state of intermittent warfare with the Assamese of the Assam Valley to the North-West and the Manipuris to the South of our

43. Ibid., p.55

our country. They never conquered us nor were we ever subjugated to their rule..."⁴⁴

The Naga club further expressed their opposition to any reforms which might seek to integrate them to the rest of India

"...Ethnic distinctiveness and their low level of economic development which they feel would result in an unequal relationship in which they would be swamped by the Indian people, their land seized, their laws and traditions disregarded and identity obliterated."⁴⁵

The Simon Commission did not consider seriously the demand for self-determination and so they wanted to group the Nagas under "backward tracts" but later when Cadogan while addressing the House of Commons in May 1935 demanded that the Nagas were more sophisticated than other tribes, therefore they are suspicious of the commission's should pass laws or regulation which would

44. Yonuo, A., The Rising Nagas, p.132.

45. Ramasubban Radhika, "The Naga Impasse in India", The Eastern Anthropologist, vol.31, no. October-November, 1978, p.397.

do away or affect their customs and laws.⁴⁶ So another appellation was coined — "Excluded areas" instead of backward tracts, though Naga Hills continued to remain part of Assam.

The 'Naga Consciousness' which was based on village 'ethnicity level', received a severe jolt during the second world war. The Naga Hills became an important war arena with the Japanese invasion to India. It was an eye opener to many ignorant and ferocious Nagas, who had for centuries lived an excluded and isolated life. It also marked the birth of 'Naga Nationalism', because with the advent of the Japanese, a new hope glittered in the horizon. The Nagas took to hand more seriously their destiny.

The war brought, misery, poverty bloodshed and reduced many homeless and all seem lost and shattered. But thanks to the initiative of C.R. Pawsey, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, who organized relieve works and established the Naga Hills District Council in April

46. Yonuo, A., The Rising Nagas, P. 134.

1945, in order to help the poor and suffering people. This organisation became the nucleus of the Naga community and a year later it changed the name to 'Naga National Council',⁴⁷ which aimed at promoting welfare, fostering unity and fulfilling social aspirations of the Nagas. The Naga National Council under the leadership of Z. Phizo became more militant and changed the path of non-violence to violence. Since negotiation through table discussion failed to solve the differences, both parties (Indian/Nagas) resorted to arm settlement. The Indian army was deployed to handle the situation and then followed the reign of terror, bloodshed in the Naga inhabited areas.

The Naga contention was that they were ethnically, culturally, historically and religion-wise did not share any commonality with the rest of India. Phizo's ethnic philosophy was "Nagas are not Indians, just as Indians are not Nagas..." The Nagas belong to the Mongolian stock, and for the fifty generations of their remembered history they have lived according to their own proud, simple and

47. Chauke, S., His Politics in North-East India, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1973), p.140.

utterly independent way of life. The Nagas have maintained a society founded on the cooperation of 'extended' families, a society as old as democratic and as real as that of any country in the world. Historically, Nagaland had no connection whatever with India and even the part of Nagaland which for a time came under the British administration was kept separate from India.⁴⁸ The Naga leaders had the vision of establishing the whole of North-East as a separate region. For that purpose, even prior to the departure of the British, Naga leaders like T. Sakhris and Phizo⁵ toured the whole of North-East, encouraging every community to join and cooperate together in order to establish an independent state. But unfortunately those days, the other communities were too suspicious and frightened of the Nagas and so they opted for India. The Nagas on the contrary detested the Indian leadership and boldly fought single handed for a sovereign state. Earlier the British administrators had proposed for the formation of the 'Crown Colony',⁴⁹

48. Nibedon Nirmal, The Ethnic Explosion, (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1981), p.122.

49. The idea of "crown colony" came from the British administrators like Hutton and Parry. The idea was supported by Robert Reid and to put it in his own words: "We have no right to allow this great body of non-Indian

to which Nagas had objected. The idea was supported by Churchill but was vetoed by the Labour Government.

More than thirty years have elapsed, since India's independence and still the Naga problem remain undiluted and undigested portion. The struggle has only caused much poverty, misery and suffering to the innocent people.

The year 1951 was an important landmark in the history of the Nagas, because for the first time a plebiscite⁵⁰ was organized to decide the fate of the Naga people. The Nagas unanimously consented to remain separate as an independent state, free from the great powers. In fact earlier the Nagas had declared their independence on 14th August 1947, the plebiscite only consolidated and reaffirmed the people's aspiration.

As peaceful means failed to settle the bone of contention both parties resorted to arms, which only

animistic and christians to be drawn into the struggle between Hindus and Muslims which is now and will be in future, with ever increasing intensity, the dominating factor of politics in India proper". The areas included were Naga Hills, NEFA, Chittagon Hills Tracts of East Bengal, Assam and some parts of Burma. Rao, V.V., A Century of Tribal Politics in North-East India, p.151.

50. Chaube, S., Hill Politics in North-East, p.145.

further widened the possibility for settlement. The Government of India in her inability to solve it declared the Naga inhabited areas as "disturbed areas" on January 29, 1956 and on March 27th section 144 of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code,⁵¹ clamped down and forbade the people to assemble in strengths larger than four. Such measures only betrayed an amateurish approach to the aggravated situation. With the imposition of section 144 of Indian Criminal Procedure Code began the reign of terror to the most peace peaceful and simple hearted people. By the armed forces (special powers) Regulation of 1958,⁵² any commissioned officer, warrant officer, or non-Commissioned officer not below the rank of Havildar or the Armed Forces could, in a disturbed area -- fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death... arrest, without warrant... search any person... etc. Thus there were a number of rapes, theft, torture etc. of the villagers.

Even before the actual transfer of power, in June 1947, the N.N.C. scheme for an interim government

51. Ramasubban, R., p.400.

52. Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (September 2, 1979), stop Military Rule in Naga inhabited areas, p.10.

assisted by India was negotiated with Sir Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam and formalised into what came to be known as 'Nine Point Hydari Agreement'. Both parties agreed on 8 points but the last point became the most crucial and controversial, it ran as follows: "The Governor of Assam as the agent of the Government of Indian Union will have special responsibility for a period of 10 years to ensure the due observance of this agreement and at the end of this period the Naga National Council will be asked whether they required the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at".⁵³ By the Indian Independence Act of 1947, the Naga Hills District was handed over to India along with the rest of British India. Discontented with the transfer of power, the Nagas once again re-asserted their demand "at the end of this period (10 years) the Nagas will be free to decide their own future".⁵⁴ But the government of India made no pretence about her policy, she clearly stated that Naga Hills was part and parcel of India and therefore the question of self-determination did not

53. Rao, V.V., A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India, p.313.

54. Yomuo, A., p.177.

arise. They would only re-consider the situation and make minor adjustments within the Indian Union.

Along with Naga Hills, the Nagas from Manipur had been fighting hand in hand. It was their contention that Nagas in Manipur should be integrated to form greater Naga Hills. This would include Tamenglong, Mao, Ukhrul and Tengnoupal. The demand had been voiced even before merger with India.⁵⁵ Athikho Daiho (Mao) was arrested and jailed on 27th August 1948 under Regulation III of 1918. The issue on unification of the contiguous Nagas was brought up once again by the Naga leaders. One of the agreements had been the unification of all Naga inhabited areas with Naga Hills.

55. Proceedings of a meeting of hillmen held on 13.8.1947 at Imphal under the Chairmanship of Mr. R. Suissa. The Resolution passed unanimously were:

- (a) The Hill's right of secession from the Valley implied in the phrase of right of freedom of action after the five-years period agreed to in the Draft Constitution is not recognised yet.
- (b) The right of secession from the Valley carries the right of secession from the Indian Union.
- (c) Hills cannot be responsible for any commitment the Valley might to the Indian Union.

A telegram was sent by the President Naga state Kohima to the Maharaja of Manipur on 14.8.1947, stating "South Nagas including Manipur Hill Nagas and Cachar Nagas with Konyak Nagas declared independence today fourteenth August 1947..."

Instead the Government of India treated Naga Hills like any other 'tribal areas' of Assam and so it came under the 'Sixth Schedule of the Constitution'. The N.N.C. rejected the Sixth Schedule as it provided contrary, to the spirit of the Hydari Agreement and declared the agreement default. With the positive affirmation from the people (Plebiscite 1951) the N.N.C. launched the freedom struggle in the Naga inhabited areas. The Indian Constitution was rejected and the first general election of 1952 was boycotted. And on 3rd March 1953 the Nagas staged a walk out, when Nehru and the Burmese Premier Jhakin Ni visited the Naga Hills.⁵⁶ The Government of Assam considered it as a big challenge and declared the situation to be a problem of 'Law and Order'. The N.N.C. leaders were hunted, many were forced to go underground. The police raided many villages in search of arms and ammunition (Viswama, Kignema and Phasama). The presence of the police and their action only aggravated the matter. In no time the Naga Hills became a bloody battle ground. The N.N.C. organized themselves into very

56. Anand, V.K., Conflict in Nagaland, p.91.

powerful units and started sabbotaging, roads were obstructed, bridges damaged and communication disrupted.

On March 1956 the Naga Federal Government was formed and the newly framed constitution declared Nagaland as People's Sovereign Republic.⁵⁷ ^{Kutap} The Parliament consisted of 100 Tatars (MPs) a President and Cabinet Ministers (Kiloners), Governors (Angs) for each tribal area was appointed. Thus a parallel government was set up to that of the Indian Government. Soon after the formation of the Naga Federal Government, the movement gathered momentum, many educated, trained compounders, nurses and some influential village elders joined the movement. More and more thronged to join the struggle and gradually the Naga Federal Army rose to 5,000 men. The Assam Government unable to handle the situation handed over the matter to the Centre. The Assam Police Battalions were replaced by the Indian Armed forces (Special Power Act). At the time of the take over the chief of the Army staff instructed the soldiers as follows:

"You must remember that all the people of the area in which you are operating are fellow-

57. Yomuo, A., The Rising Nagas, p.215.

Indians...Some of these people are misguided and have taken to arms against their own people and are disrupting the peace of this area. You are to protect the mass of the people from these disruptive elements. You are not there to fight the people in the area, but to protect them. You are fighting only those who threaten the people and who are a danger to the lives and properties of the people. You must, therefore do everything possible to win their confidence and respect and help them feel that they belong to India."⁵⁸

The undeclared war went on between the army and the Nagas unabated. The army who were suppose to protect the people terrorised the ^{ml} commoners, who refused to help them. During the operations, they burnt down many villages, destroyed their granaries, causing misery and rendering many homeless and orphans. At this stage, the Church leaders took up the initiative and appealed to all Nagas to work for peace. A meeting was convened at Kohima. Representatives from all over Naga Hills thronged to the meeting. It was an important meeting because it was to decide about their

58. Mankekar, D.R., On the Shippery Shove in Nagaland, (Bombay: Manaktahas, 1967), p.53.

future. The people publicly condemned the use of violence of both parties and suggested to settle the issue through negotiation.⁵⁹ A year later the Naga People's Convention met at Ungma in Mokokchung district and a Drafting Committee was appointed to formulate their demands. On the third session held at Mokokchung from 22nd and 26th October 1959, the 16 Point Draft was discussed and after much deliberations and consultation, it was passed for the tribal settlement of the Nagas political issue. An important aspect of the Draft Constitution was the integration of all the Naga inhabited areas, but this was never actualised.

The underground leaders refused to acknowledge the 16 Point agreement and continued the path of war. Meanwhile preparations were made for the inauguration of the 'Naga State'. On December 1963 Naga Hills became a fullfledge state of India. But there some significant departure from the 16th Point Agreement. The new state was merely the reconstitution of the former Naga Hills, and as such the internal law and order situation continued

59. It was held at Kohima in 1957 from 22nd to 26th August - There were more than 1,760 delegates who attended the meeting.

to remain the same. It only betrayed the Indian double sided policy and increased the tension in region, making it all the more problematic. The Naga Federal Government denied flat and refused to acknowledge the statehood, as the state still depended on the active presence of the Indian armed forces for its maintenance.

The denial to integrate the Naga inhabited areas showed the dubious policy of the Government. The struggle had been staged by all the Nagas, and rewarding only a small group, only furthered widened the gap for peaceful settlement. At the same time, it was the unkindest cut and a big political blunder, on the part of the Indian Government and the leaders of the new Nagaland. The division was too visible to be denied the fact that Indian Government was afraid of Naga's unity. Therefore acceptance of statehood was no solution to an aching problem. The underground group of Naga Nationalists continued to remain active in their demand and refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Nagaland Government. Meanwhile the Nagas from Manipur in a meeting held at Ukhrul (22nd October, 1957) demanded for unification of

all Nagas. They accepted the leadership of Zapu Phizo and during the trouble days^{they} had supported actively and some of the leading leaders were from this region, persons like Ranyo Zimik and T. Muivah. They have been in the forefront of the movement and to this day, they are playing important roles in the Naga politics.

In the meanwhile to normalise the situation the Nagaland Church Council appointed a "Peace Mission"⁶⁰ and a cease fire was declared (May 1964) by the two parties. The peace mission acted as a mid-way between the two but the peace talks could not be continued as the terms were unnegotiable. The Government of India refused to accept any solution outside the Union Constitution. The Naga Federal Government on the other hand demanded for the recognition of their right of self-determination and if necessary to hold another plebiscite⁶¹ under a neutral body's supervision. But the Government

60. The Peace Mission piloted six rounds of talks before it collapsed in 1966. The peace talk ended in a fiasco, because the Indian army took advantage of the cease fire and raided many villages, trying to round up the leaders. This connivance of the Indians caused much distrust to the Indian Government. The Peace Mission team consisted of Rev. Michael Scott, Jayaprakash Narayan, Bimla Prasad Chaliha and (Shanker Rao Deo), who for health reasons did not turn up.

61. Indian Government refused to have a plebiscite, taking the problem as internal, question of law and order. A plebiscite would be dangerous, as all Nagas were

of India turned a deaf ear and categorically stated that there was no question of a voluntary merger with India, the matter had been settled in 1960 and so there was no scope for further talks.

Even though the meeting ended without any solution, still it was an achievement for the underground Nagas. The Government of India by entering into a ceasefire with Naga Federal Government acknowledged the status of the Naga Federal Government as the spokesman of the Naga people. The ruling Government of Nagaland was bypassed and considered a stooge and collaborator of the Indian Government. And that the final settlement of the Naga problem can come only from the underground people.

On 10th October 1967, the Nagaland State Government made a formal representation to the Indian Government demanding that Ukhrul, Mao, Tamenglong and Tengnongpal areas of Manipur inhabited by about 250,000 Nagas should

in favour of separation, therefore, it would be an unwise step to agree to the plebiscite.

be merged with Nagaland.⁶² This issue was taken up by the Naga Integration Committee of Manipur headed by Athikho Daiho and Rishang Keishing. The Government of India expressed willingness to implement the agreement as soon as the situation in the region returned to normalcy.

In the meanwhile, Manipur was in a hotch potch, the Meiteis fought for statehood and the integrity of the state. At this juncture the Government of India shrewdly decided on a new device, that of granting statehood to Manipur. This way, they hoped to help the people divided - the Nagas, then plain and hills. For this purpose they instituted the six supposed to be autonomous District Councils (Hills) and tried to cool off the boiling cauldron of integration.

Another turning point in the Naga movement for self-

62. Earlier M.T. Aliba Inti, President of N.N.C. wrote to the Maharaja : "Political upheaval of the Hill people in your state attracted the keenest interest...give in to the demands of the Hill people...so as to have good relation between the Hills and plain Manipur and N.N.C." (26 August 1947). T. Aliba Inti, suggested if necessary to have a referendum to determine the fate of the Nagas of Manipur. But the fact that they demanded for merger only amplifies, their closer affinity - ethnic, cultural, traditional, geographical configuration and contiguity.

determination was the signing of the Shillong Accord⁶³ on November 11, 1975. The leaders of the Naga Federal Government accepted to discuss the Naga problem within the purview of the Indian Constitution. And finally they signed the Shillong Accord. The other (leaders) including Elizo condemned the signatories as traitors to the cause of the people. A Naga Villager after the Shillong Accord remarked : "Did we fight and suffer all these years for this". T. Mulvahn⁶⁴ and Isaac Suur⁶⁵ denounced the Shillong Accord and have vowed to continued

63. Shillong Accord was signed by -- I. Temjenba, S. Debru,

2. Ramyo M. Ansa and Kevl Valley on behalf of the Naga Federal government. The following were the outcome of the discussions:

1. The representatives of underground organisations conveyed their decision of their own volition, to accept, without condition, the constitution of India.
2. It was agreed that the arms, now underground would be brought out and deposited at appointed places. Details for giving effect to this agreement will be worked out between them and representatives of the government, the security forces and members of the Liaison Committee.
3. It was agreed that the representatives of the underground organisations should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussion for final settlement.

64. T. Mulvahn and Isaac Suur are Chinese trained guerrilla fighters. Along with them were a host of Chinese trained youths, condemning the Shillong Accord.

the struggle, until they attain their final goal. The Naga leaders have always shown willingness to discuss but without any preconditions.

After the Shillong Accord, a schism has taken place in the Naga movement at the most crucial stage. It has been split into Swu-Muivah group and Pro-Phizo group. In August 1978 Swu and Muivah were overthrown by the Pro-Phizo group and detained. But in February, 1980 a counter-coup by Swu-Muivah group freed the leaders and then followed the fratricidal war.⁶⁵ It has been reported that many of the Pro-Phizo members were executed. This has caused much distrust and misunderstanding among the various Naga groups. Tribalism⁶⁶ has seemed to have penetrated and gradual nationalism seem to wane out.

65. T. Muivah is a Tangkhul, while Phizo is an Angami, therefore when the split took place, Tangkhuls, Semas, Changs etc, grouped under Muivah. But mostly Angami became angry when Phizo's leadership was challenged by Muivah-Swu. This how the National movement started under one cause seemed to dilute it to tribal or community loyalty, thus bypassing the question of National identity. This greatly hampered the growth of National struggle.

66. Times of India, 5th September, 1980. "Naga Sharply Divided over Resumption of Insurgency".

In the meanwhile the leaders of the N.N.C. under the chairmanship of Zashle Huire expelled the Mivah-Isaac group from the N.N.C. as offenders of the National Solidarity of the Nagas. Mr. Zashle Huire⁶⁷ has favoured a solution of the Nagas political problem on the basis of the Shillong Peace Accord of November 11, 1975. On the other hand Mivah and Isaac Swu group repudiated the Shillong agreement and even threatened to disown Phizo if he became a party to it. And this is what they have said about the N.N.C. "Indeed Naga National Council is spent, it has turned out to be treacherous and reactionary at the same time. Any effort to revolution it is stified. It has betrayed to carry its solemn national trust to the end... The resort being made to 'peace' and 'unity' is simply a desperate attempt at covering up and making virtue of their obvious treason... We declare the issue is sharp between the reactionary traitors on one side and the revolutionary patriots on the other... Truly, the historic moment of saving Nagaland from the failure of the N.N.C. has

67. "Subtle Moves by Naga Factions",
Times of India, 16th November 1980.

come as the most crucial challenge to one and all."⁶⁸ Therefore Muivah-Swa group in collaboration with Mr. Khaplang formed the National Socialist Council of Nagaland on January 31st last, replacing the N.N.C. Both the groups want to work for the welfare of the people, but difference in ideology⁶⁹ has made it difficult to work hand in hand. The people are also at a lost, even though they still acclaim Phiso as their undisputable leader. Like the Israelites, the Nagas are longing for the expected one, who will bring peace and tranquility to the state. With this feeling they await in great expectancy.

The Naga leaders have always shown signs of willingness to discuss and negotiate with the Government of India. Often they have shifted their stand regarding their status and conditions of their merger with the Indian Union. But unfortunately the Government of India has only treated the matter as a question of

68. Manifesto of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, p.5.

69. The Muivah-Isaac group are ideologically Maist while N.N.C. is anti-Maist and Communist.

"Law and Order" and not a political problem. Therefore violence has been matched with violence and the powerful Indian Army have had to contend with an underground army deeply entrenched in the sympathies of the people. Show of arms and strength will not bring any solution to the Naga issue but only through open mind negotiation, settlement to the problem can be arrive at.

KUKIS

Politicians, public leaders, as well as scholars, analyzethe cause of every problem from the angle of British policy of divide and rule. Unfortunately instead of remedying the maladies, they have 'just step in' to the shoes of their predecessors because they find it more comfortable and convenient. This has been one of the main reason, why the whole system has remained stagnant and people are constantly revolting against the system. Day by day things are changing from bad to worse, everywhere there is hue and cry, people of various ethnic groups are demanding for change of policy and some have even gone to the extent of seceding from the union. For this matter, yesterday the Nagas were

considered to be mad people, but today the Meiteis, Kukis have followed the footsteps and are demanding for their right of self-determination. The Government which is supposed to protect the people no longer exist to protect and safe-guard their rights. Instead there is military rule in the whole of North-east, especially in Mizoram, Manipur and Nagas. ^{Land} People are discontented and this is spreading like an epidemic and, unless proper measures are taken at the initial stage, it will be impossible to remedy it later.

The Mizos like the Nagas are fighting for 'sovereign Mizoram', but as one sees it today the whole issue looks so confused and diluted. The leaders are inconsistent in their demand and it seems as though it is 'ego' conflict that has been the leading factor.

In Manipur the Kukis and Mizos are settled mainly in South district and a few pockets in the other districts. They belong to the Kuki-Chan family. As stated earlier, the Kukis had settled in Manipur only under the protection of the Manipur Maharaja and later under the British

Political Agent. Right from the beginning the British had differentiated the indigenous groups, as warriors (Kukis) and Labourers (Nagas). The Kukis being nomads were faced with the problem of 'land', but settlement had been given with the purpose of checking and countering the raids of the Nagas. This was what Major McCulloch the Political Agent of Manipur wrote:

"...Beyond the Manipur boundary are the Scootie and Loosai tribes. They are both powerful and dangerous but at present they profess friendship, and I encourage them to come and go, though, if it were possible, the Scootie tribe should be attacked. In connection with these people and as a protection to the south of the Valley, the Rajah and I have established in the South, Village of Kukis⁷⁰ to whom are given arms and whom we call sepoy villages..."⁷¹

The Kukis were not original settlers⁷⁰, they came to Manipur at a much later stage.

At one stage the Kukis had tried to overthrow the British yoke (1917-18) but had failed in their attempt.

70. Major McCulloch speaks of Kukis and Scooties. By the Kukis he implies those hillmen living within the Manipur south boundary line laid down by Pemberton in 1834.

71. Carey Bertram, S., and Tuck, H.N., The Chin Hills, Firma KIM Private Ltd, Aizawl, 1971, vol.I, p.18.

After which the Hill areas of Manipur came directly under the control of the British Political Agent of Manipur . As stated earlier the main problem of the Kukis had been 'Land', they found themselves in a shaky position, therefore when the Mizoram problem pictured on the scene, they took advantage and joined the movement.

Under the Government of India Act 1935 the tribal areas were divided into 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas. Like the Naga Hills, Mizo Hills came under the 'excluded area',⁷² and hence the Mizos had no representation in the Assam legislature. The formation of the Mizo union paved the path for Mizo movement for independence. The Mizo leaders popularized the Union not only in Mizo Hills but also in Cachar and Manipur. But the Union members came to a deadlock when it came to the question of joining India; some were for it, others were totally against it. This caused a split in the party in the early part of 1947. Some Mizos supported the proposal of Prof. Coupland, to create a 'Crown Colony of Eastern Agency', quite contrary to the stand of the Nagas. A few

72. Chube, S., Hill Politics in North-East India, p.22. 'Excluded areas' were governed by the Governor 'Partially excluded areas' were those areas where legislative assemblies had jurisdiction to discuss the administrative matters.

leaders emphasized the aspect of ethnology, social stratification and religion as the points of distinction between the Indians and Nagas. This group had the support of the Council of Chiefs, who favoured the joining to Burma. In the meanwhile Naga leaders⁷³ visited Mizo Hills and encouraged them to join hand with Nagas to fight for political independence, but the appeal turn a deaf ear. The Mizo Union leaders politely told Mr. Phiso that it was not acceptable.

The outbreak of famine in 1958 favoured the emergence of a very important and powerful party that was to pilot the political aspiration of the people (M.N.F.).⁷⁴ The organisation proved to be relevant and showed great zeal in the welfare of the people. In no time, it became very popular and hundreds thronged to join the line. Seeing the success of their labour, gradually, they changed their line of action and declared itself as a political party.

73. Sarin, V.I.K., India's North-East in Flame, p.148. Phiso and T. Shkhris visited Mizo Hills in 1946 and 1947.

74. M.N.F. = Mizo National Front, in the beginning it was called Mizo cultural society but later changed it to Mizo National Famine Front in 1959.

Like the Naga movement, the Mizo struggle was based on ethnic line. The Mizo had the further advantage of cultivating the contacts of the Nagas in east Pakistan. A number of clandestine crossovers were made by the Mizos, including the leader of the rebel forces Laldenga, who spearheaded the Mizo National Front and later changed it to Mizo National Front. The ethnicity of the Mizos, came out in a supreme fashion through a Mizo word Tlawngaihna.⁷⁵ The Mizos have echoed the viewpoint, almost similar to that of the Nagas "the Mizos from time immemorial, lived in complete independence without foreign interference, chiefs of different clans ruled over separate hills... Their territory had never been conquered or subjugated by the neighbouring states..."⁷⁶

Like the Nagas, the Mizos theoreticians were fighting for the re-unification of the Mizo-inhabited contiguous

75. Tlawngaihna - Mizo scholars themselves have failed to the equivalent word. There are many stories and legends about it. For example one of the early heroes, Vonapa is said to have preached and practiced this aspect of the ethnic philosophy until the last.

76. Nibaden, Ethnic Explosion, p .41.

belt covering Burmese tracts and portions of the Chittagong Hill tracts, besides parts of Manipur and Tripura. This would mean engulfment of Manipur South District (Churachandpur) with Mizoram. All these demands, made the plain people go crazy because they would be strangled by the hillmen. The Ethnicity of the Mizos to live under one administrative roof provided such discomfort and concern to the Meiteis. To make the demand more effective, a Mizo Re-Unification Committee was established in the heart of Manipur. And the leaders of various political shades converged at Churachandpur in January 1965 and resolved to secure a Mizoram comprising of all the areas inhabited by the Mizo people.⁷⁷

Another important event was the formation of the Kuki National Assembly,⁷⁸ purely based on ethnic line. The main reason for the formation were for the benefit and upliftment of the Non-Naga groups living in Manipur.

- (a) Unity and improvement among the Kukis
- (b) Better understanding with the Naga tribes

77. Ibid., p. 41E

78. The Kuki National Assembly was formed in 1947, for the welfare of the Kuki community.

(c) Close cooperation with Valley people to be loyal and peaceful citizen, under the terms laid down in the Kuki National Assembly resolution.⁷⁹

Beside the Kuki National Assembly, a host of other tribal organizations were established -- Hmar Congress (1954), The Paite National Council (1956), The Gangte Tribal Union (1958), Hmar National Union (1959) and the Baite National Union (1962). The Hmars National Union wanted the integration of all Hmars in Manipur, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram into a single administrative union. While the Paite National Council stood for formation of a buffer state in the form of "Chinland" between Burma and India by integrating the inhabited areas with that of Chin Hills. The Kuki National Assembly on the other hand demanded for the creation of a 'Kuki' state, covering all non-Naga tribes in Manipur, from the Central Government. By the imposition of Manipur Hill areas (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Acts 1967⁸⁰ made the

79. Resistance, July 5, 1977, p.7.

80. Chauhe, S., Hill Politics in North-East India, p. 197.

Kukis consider of their political fate. Therefore in the meeting that followed in 1969, the Kuki National Assembly resolved to demand for a Kuki State (10th and 11th October 1969). The resolution was passed unanimously by the Assembly.

"At the outset Mr. Haokholet Nagailut the General Secretary moved a motion to revival the demand for Kuki state within the Union of India. He explained to the delegates that the Kukis are landless people of India, they have been ignored and neglected....

... Therefore the Assembly unanimously resolved to revive and push forward the demand of the Kuki people for Kuki state within the Union of India."⁸¹

The demand for a 'Kuki State' has caused much uproar in Manipur and Nagaland. The Nagas have strongly opposed it and have declared that not an inch of their land shall be parted with. This issue had caused misunderstanding and revived the old-enmity, and thus have disturbed once again the peace of the people.

81. Goswami, The Mizo Unrest: A Study of Politicisation of Culture, (Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers, 1979), p.68.

For the peace and prosperity of the State will depend very much on the policy of the Government. At the same time the Government has little choice on this matter, because of the nature of the problem, compromise and political settlement is the only solution to the problem. But as it ^{is} both parties are firm on their stand.

Ever since the Kukis demanded for a "separate State" the call of the Mizos for the unification of all Mizo inhabited area have almost become diluted. The Kuki chiefs who in the early sixties had joined the rank of the MNP, are now more in favour of a Kuki state. The establishment of a Kuki state would be a big threat to the integrity of Manipur, as well as other states like Assam, Nagaland and even Mizoram. The Kuki leaders had tried tooth and nail for the attainment of their demand. But with the attainment of statehood by Manipur, it was no longer feasible and acceptable to the people of Manipur. The fruit of their struggle was that they were able to bargain out an Autonomous District Council out of the Naga inhabited areas. The Nagas on their part

have ceaselessly objected to the treatment rendered by the Government to them. The Kukis in Manipur ever since statehood, had demanded for the separation with the Nagas and they were interested in having a Kuki district. Naturally this would involve the Nagas and the Meiteis, but as it is the Meiteis do want to settle in Hill areas because the plain is already overpopulated, therefore they will not be that keen to part with their land unless they will benefit something out of the bargain. The Kukis themselves are very much perplexed as to what will become of their fate, if they continue to be under the Meiteis and Nagas. In fact during the Manipur Foreign National agitations, the Meiteis had categorised the Mizos and Kukis as foreign nationals. The Kukis and Mizos are more akin to the Chin tribes in Burma and also during the past years the influx of Chin tribes into Manipur especially in Tengnongpal district have multiplied the population of the state.

Lastly, the recent demand of the Kukis for a separate district have further disturbed the situation in the Hill areas. The Nagas and the Kukis for the

present are on war path with each other, because the Negas have refused to acknowledge the claim of the Kukis over their land. The situation has been further made more critical by the demand made by the Mizoram National Front, to integrate all Mizo inhabited areas. This would automatically affect, Manipur, Tripura, Assam and Burma. Once again the integrity of Manipur has been challenged by the Mizos.

Chapter - V

C O N C L U S I O N

In the preceding chapters, the problem of Ethnic Relation had been discussed from different aspects. And the problem had been a long standing one. It could not be an over night explosion, but a gradual development in the course of history, which culminated in compartmentalization of the various ethnic groups. This affected their relationship, being isolated, they became practically strangers to each other, living in a world of their own. This has greatly estrange their relationship and in a way have been one of the main reasons of today's crisis. It has their political aspiration that has put them in the disadvantage position. Even though ethnically they may belong to different groups, still had their political aspiration had been united for a particular course, unity among these ethnic groups could have been possible. Instead the demand for separation have been the set back for their unity. And on this issue authority have failed to give a proper solution and satisfy the parties. Today, Manipur presents a fragmented society, irreconcilable and

incompatible to each other. And this has given rise to many factors such as political, social and economic upheaval in the state. There is uprising from every nook and corner of the state, making the state machinery disfunctional, leading to the imposition of Marshal Law.

The existing problem has been further aggravated on account of the lack of employment to thousands of youths. Today in Manipur there are over one lakh of youths registered in the employment exchange office. Unless proper jobs are given, the problem will only be further aflame, leading to the destruction of the state itself. According to Mr. Dorendro Singh, the actual cause of today's crisis has been mainly due to lack of jobs for the youngsters. The educated finding themselves like fish out of water, are forced to take shelter with the insurgents because they can't get an acceptable job. The youth especially are very much frustrated on account of the malpractice for the selection of the candidates to various posts. Jobs are sold like commodities in the market, so only people who

have wealth and influence are able to bargain at reasonable price. The poor have no choice but accept their fate. It is this discriminatory factor, which has forced many Meitei youths to take the path of violence and destruction. The Valley has become the battle ground between the extremists and the Indian army. A big tamasa has been created, the Meiteis want to end the rule of the "Mayang Regime" and instead they want to establish "Kangleipak". This chauvinistic attitude (like the Nagas, Mizos) have isolated the Nagas and Mizos from the struggle. Therefore it is difficult to figure out who is more chauvinistic, whether Nagas, Mizos or Meiteis.

In the Valley the Kangleipak movement has ^{been} successful because there are many eminent and influential leaders supporting it.¹ It has been also reported that the Special Service Bureau (SSB) had link with

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1. The Meitei extremist themselves have confessed that they had been aided by some Meitei VIPs. The extremists belonging to the Maitupha Sharma faction of the People Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak have confessed to have received Rs. 1.40 lakhs from two Manipuri VIPs for their violent activities. Even Raj Kumar Tulachandra - confessed that he had received Rs. 1 lakh from a Manipuri VIP.
Times of India, 25th September, 1980.

the PLA, therefore they had been able to carry out successful operations. The people in general are sympathizers of the extremists, therefore, the army had not been unsuccessful in exterminating the handful of extremists. And as long as, it had the support of the mass, the authority will be only cracking their head without any effect. As it is, people are disgusted and have a strong hatred for the authority and arm forces. Therefore, despite the presence of the army, the extremists successfully carry out many dare-devil feats in the broad day light. The Central Government had thought that a popular government was the main set back for the suppression of the extremist. So President's rule was imposed. But on the contrary the situation had gone from bad to worse, the law and order situation has been deteriorating. The army inspite of their latest equipments and tactics have failed to control and subdue these handful extremists.

The situation in the Hills is no better, the Kukis and Nagas have once again renewed their hostility. The outbreak of hostility has been on the long standing

issue of 'occupation of Naga areas' by the Kukis. The issue has been over the demand of the Kukis for the creation of Sadar Hills District in Manipur. Earlier the demand had been for a 'separate state' but when the demand went unheard, gradually the demand shifted to a district. Many Kukis had settled in the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur east, west and north districts, therefore creation of a new district meant bifurcating it from these districts. Therefore naturally it affected the Nagas and Meiteis, but on this issue the Meiteis have remained silent, only the Nagas have raised their protest against the inclusion of their land in the new district. The creation of this new district will have far reaching effect on the Nagas and Kukis. The Nagas, who constitute the major group in the East, West, and North districts will be further divided, ^{by} the creation of Sadar district. Thus a further break up of the Naga community would mean, the continuation of the British policy of divide and rule. Another thing is that, the Nagas will not accept any solution prior to the final settlement of the Naga problem. Instead it will only inflame their hatred and enmity with the

other communities. In fact already, the Naga students of Manipur had reacted to the creation of Sadar Hills district. They had organized peaceful blockades in the Naga areas of Manipur on December 12 and 13, 1980, which paralyzed completely the activities of the state. Again on February 17 and 18, 1981 another successful blockades were organized in the Naga inhabited areas. Unfortunately, the peaceful blockade was disrupted, by the incident which took place at New Heavens, about sixty defenceless youths were beaten up 28 Bn. Assam Rifles, without any reason. This has further incited both communities.³ No one knows the reasons for the

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2. Naga People's Movement for Human Rights. Memorandum submitted to President of India opposing creation of Sadar Hills District, New Delhi, 3rd April 1981, p.3.
 3. Following the blockades on 12th and 13th December 1980 an inciting event occurred in Sadar Hills at Motbung (a Kuki inhabitant area). The National highway passes through this place (Motbung). A private bus playing from Mao to Imphal was stopped on the way by a big gathering crowd, mostly youngsters. They sought out the passengers and beat up all the Nagas, the lives of the Nagas were saved by intervention of the army convoy that was passing that way. The incident could have started once again the long tribal feuds. The situation in the Hills continues to be very tense and insecure.

interference of the arm forces in this democratic demonstration.

The Nagas have not objected to the creation of Sadar Hills district but instead they have opposed to the inclusion of the Naga areas in the proposed new district. As it is the issue is a real thorn in the flesh, because without the inclusion of the Naga areas the creation of Sadar Hills district is not possible, since the Kukis settlement in Manipur is recent (landless). Therefore, Nagas knowing full well, the issue ^{they} have not favoured ^{it} and since their major problem still remains unsolved. The problem can be solved only through cordial and mutual consent from each group.

The creation of Sadar Hill district will have many advantages to the Kukis. In the first place, they will have a permanent home-land, the land will become theirs, they will no longer be obliged to the Nagas. Secondly, they will be in a better position to reorganize their political, social and economic life.

The creation of Sadar Hills will be bond of unity for the Kukis. In this new district, they will constitute the majority, outnumbering the Nagas and other communities. While the Nagas are faced with the problem of farther division of their community. Taking for instance, the Tangkhul Nagas, their country has been already bifurcated between Burma and India. Now a further break up again in the administrative unit, is a clear sign of the Government's policy to disintegrate the Nagas. The Nagas will be reduced to minority, that means gradually they will be forced to leave their own land. To which the Nagas will never agree, they will surely fight tooth and nail till the last.

All the while the state has been playing a negative role. The Hill areas have remained backward and neglected. The so-called leaders of the people, or representative of the people have only taken advantage of the growing tension in the plain and Hills. The politicians have been the real ^{people} responsible for the outburst of all these crisis in Manipur. Today, whyy

there is political instability and insecurity? It is only because the politicians have been guided by unscrupulous principles. They have not really tried to analyze the problem but instead self-interest, gain has preceded their principle, therefore often they have tried to utilize the community differences during election campaign and while trying to execute their programmes. And this legacy has been continued by the administrators, when especially, it is question of advantage and appointment. This is one of the reason why situation in Manipur has always remained bad and critical.

There is need today for the Government to change her policy towards the Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis. They cannot continue for long if they still persist on divide and rule policy. At the same time view, the problem only from the angle of law and order. The problem exist but it is beyond the mere question of law and order. It requires a political solution, which Indian Government has always neglected to look

into. Therefore as long as the Mizo or Naga problems are viewed from the law and order or as 'internal problem', it will continue, but who knows for how long. As it is the whole of north-east India is already in an uproar. The Government in the past has always been slow in acting. They always regarded the region as a problematic area, a thorn in the flesh. It is all because it occupies a strategic location, with weak communication, geographical specialities...etc. With such feelings of indifference and ^{un}concern for the region, make the co-existence with the mainstream difficult and unreliable.

The Chinese invasion of 1962 betrayed India's concern and attitude towards the North-east. Delhi was too willing to part with the region, but unfortunately the Chinese stopped the advance and thus the region remained an integral part of India. The then Prime Minister Nehru's speech to the nation clearly shows how much India cared for the people of North-east:

"...From the strategic view point this entire region is linked with the rest of India by a narrow corridor. This renders the entire region indefensible by India. For any threat to this single line of

connection will force the Indian Government to withdraw all military forces from the region. A push from the north by China as in 1962 or from the south through the Bay of Bengal by some major power will force India to abandon the entire region to its fate... this military vulnerability of the region as part of India explains the Central Government's reluctance for capital investment in the region. This explains why not even a single heavy industry has been located here despite the abundance of inexhaustible raw materials in the region ... It is thus evident that both for external security and internal economic development the people can expect nothing from Delhi."⁴

With such pretence of concern, loyalty to India can hardly be a question and no wonder the North-east in their struggle shout such slogans as "We have oil and tea in the plains, uranium and other precious minerals lie buried in the hills. We can buy millions of dollars, pound, sterling and yen to make our region the industrial nerve-centre of the far east. We have not grasped our potentialities

4. Nibedon Nirmal, The Ethnic Explosion. (Delhi: Lancer Publication, 1981), p.22.

for the last 30 years. We have been deceived by false promises.⁵ In spite of the cultural and religious affinity to the mainstream the Meiteis and Assamese have refused to accept the leadership of Delhi.

The Ethnic eruption in the North-east has been caused by the prolonged step-motherly treatment given by the centre. It has not been an overnight eruption, instead it has been a gradual development. Today the whole of North east states are demanding for the transportation of foreigners⁶ from north-east and because of the economic boycott especially it has affected greatly the economy of the country. The situation has become more critical with the presence of underground movement all over the region. If the unity of the undergrounds become a reality, India with all her forces will be unable to face and solve the problem. The north-east will become another Vietnam or Kampuchea. Therefore it is high time that the Government should change her policy to the people of north-east.

5. Ibid., p.124.

6. Foreigners - various terminologies used in North-east
 vais = non-Mizos ; Dkhar = non-Khasis;
 Mayang = non-Meiteis (only Indians are referred to as
 Mayangs, Vais or Dkhar, not the other tribal
 communities).

Coming back again to Manipur, the problem which confronts the state is a reality and a hard nut to crack. The only solution would be to give freedom to these groups but such solution would only endanger the security of India. Another measure could be adopted - that of reorganizing the states in the North-east. In this matter only a political solution to the existing problem will solve the problem partially. Thus a Reorganization Committee should be established to study and reorganize the states according to ethnic groups. As already said, the leaders of the various ethnic communities be assembled to discuss out the problem, and a spirit of give and take should adjust their existing difference. As long as the situation continues in this condition, progress and development cannot take place. Instead there will follow a reign of horror and extermination, for which the Indian Government will be responsible.

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