

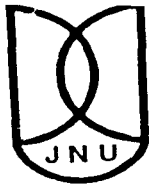
**MINORITIES IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF
MANIPUR: THE TRANSBORDER TRIBES**

**Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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Certificate

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled, **MINORITIES IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF MANIPUR: THE TRANSBORDER TRIBES**, submitted by **Robert Shetkintong**, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work to the best of my knowledge and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Balveer Arora

Supervisor

To my Grandparents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my guide, **Professor Balveer Arora**, without whose patience and advice, I would not have been able to bring out this work. Thank you Sir.

To my wonderful friend, **U.A. Shimray**, for giving me the liberty of drumming his personal computer and directing me throughout the course of my dissertation.

To **Brother Robin, Mr. Sallong (Pu), Angcle Clement, Eno Kekhrie., Kaushik Da and Sangeeta, Dorzi Worngam, and Ami Akhai**, who have helped me throughout my work. My special "thank you" to my classmates **Praveen and Kennedy**.

Love to my **Mother and Father**, for their constant support and encouragement throughout my entire life. Special love to my two sisters, **Maria and Rose**; and, to my **Tobel**, for her enduring love and prayers.

New Delhi

Robert Shetkintong

Dated: 27th July, 2000.

Contents

Acknowledgements

List of Tables

Chapter One -	The Dilemma of the Transborder Tribes: An Overall Evaluation	1-23
	Background Survey	
	Statement of the Problem	
	Overview of Literature	
	Methodology and Chapter Organization	
Chapter Two -	Group Identities and Struggle for Power: A Theoretical Analysis	24-43
	Ethnicity and Identity	
	On Territorial Debate	
	Politics of Difference -- <i>A Demographic Struggle for Power</i>	
Chapter Three -	Political Life of the Lamkang	44-56
	The Country	
	The Origin	
	The Village Polity	
	The Village Council	
	The Lamkang Naga Council	
	Lamkang in the Electoral Politics	
Chapter Four -	The Transborder Tribes in Electoral Politics	57-85
	Objective	
	Introduction	
	Electoral Studies	
	Parliamentary Elections	
	Electoral Politics in Chandel	
	Electoral Campaigning	
Chapter Five -	Conclusion	86-93
Bibliography		94-101
Appendices		102-112

List of Tables

	Page No.
1.1. Result of Election, 1948	5
1.2. Administration Division of Manipur, 1919	8
1.3. Administrative Division in 1933	8
2.1. Territorial and Ethnic Habitation	29
2.2. Ethnic Composition of 41 Chandel	36
2.3. Ethnic Composition of 42 Tengnoupal	36
2.4. Nature of Assembly Constituencies	36
3.1 The Past and Present LNC Office bearers	54
3.2 Comparison of Lamkang with the Total Electorate, 41 Chandel	56
3.3 Comparison of Lamkang with the Total Electorate, 42 Tengnoupal	56
4.1. Meitei and Tribal Assembly Constituencies, 1995	59
4.2. Parliamentary Constituencies, 2000	64
4.3. The Ethnic Composition of Outer Parliamentary Constituency	65
4.4. Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Constituency, 1998	67
4.5. Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 2000	68
4.6. Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 41 Chandel Constituency, 1998	68
4.7. Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 41 Chandel Constituency, 2000	69
4.8. Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 42 Tengnoupal Constituency, 1998	69
4.9. Result of Outer parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 42 Tengnoupal Constituency, 2000	70
4.10. Area and Population by District, 1991	71
4.11. Administrative Units of Chandel District, 1991	72
4.12. Nature of the Constituencies, 41 Chandel and 42 Tengnoupal	72
4.13. Result of Assembly Election, 21 Tengnoupal, 1967	73
4.14. Result of Assembly Election, 41 Chandel, 1972-90	74
4.15. Result of Assembly Election, 42 Tengnoupal, 1972-90	76
4.16. Result of Assembly Election, 41 Chandel, 1995-2000	81
4.17. Ethnic Break up of chandel Constituency	82
4.18. Result of Asembly Election, 42 Tengnoupal, 1995-2000	84
4.19. Ethnic Break up of 42 Tengnoupal Constituency	85

Chapter One

The Dilemma of the Transborder Tribes: An Overall Evaluation

Background Survey

The Transborder tribes are geographically scattered communities without a significant base, and hence lack the territorial cohesion of a group that would enable them to be considered as a potential nation. These tribes are spread over region bordering the major communities, namely the *Meiteis*, the *Nagas* and the *Kukis*. The territorial division of Manipur into the Meitei country, the Naga country and the Kuki country by the authorities like Roy Dev-Burman and G.Kabui¹ imply that these tribes occupy such a geographical situation that they are sandwiched between the Nagas in the west, the Kukis in the south, and the Meiteis in the west. Thus, the geo-political situation has made them a bridge-buffer community between the Nagas, Kukis and the Meiteis, thus leading to the identity problem of the community itself²

There are 29 (Twenty-Nine) tribes recognized by the Government of India as Scheduled tribes in Manipur.

¹ Gangumei Kabui, *Anal: A Transborder Tribe of Manipur*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985. His Status as an authority on Transborder tribes is a contentious issue in the concerned communities. Kabui himself is from a non-Transborder tribe and his conclusions regarding the Kuki origins of these tribes has few takers.

²Ibid, pp. 10-11.

1. *Aimol* 2. *Anal* 3. *Angami*. 4. *Chiru*. 5. *Chothe*. 6. *Gangte* 7. *Hmar* 8. *Kabui* 9. *Kacha Naga* 10. *Koirao* 11. *Koireng* 12. *Kom* 13. *Lamkang* 14. *Lushai* 15. *Maring* 16. *Maram* 17. *Mao* 18. *Monsang* 19. *Moyon* 20. *Paite* 21. *Purum* 22. *Ralte* 23. *Sema* 24. *Simte* 25. *Sahlte* 26. *Tangkhul* 27. *Thadou* 28. *Vaiphei* 29. *Zou*.

The term “Transborder” is controversial. This term is use by scholars like Roy Dev-Burman and G. Kabui, in their attempt to understand the geo-political implication of ethnicity. In the process, Manipur is divided into three major countries (read specific or territorial area of habitation) the Meitei country, the Naga country and the Kuki country. In such a geographical division of ethnic inhabitation, there are major tribes who are often identified as the ‘missing link’ between the major communities-sandwiched between the Meitei country and the major tribal group countries and sandwiched between the Naga country and the Kuki country. These minor tribes are the Komrems (*Aimol*, *Chiru*, *Koireng*, *Kom* and *Purum*) and the Transborder tribes of the Chandel (*Anal*, *Chothe*, *Lamkang*, *Monsang* and *Moyons*) The Transborder tribes of Chandel are considered as unit of the larger Naga platform.

This work will not go deep into the anthropological, cultural and sociological debate into the authenticity of identity of the Transborder tribes. But the attempt of various ‘authorities’ like Shakespeare and Grierson among others to group the Transborder tribes as sub-unit of the Kuki group is flawed and rejected outright by these tribes themselves. G. Kabui contends that these Transborder tribes have joined the Naga for political reason. Such a consensual path undertaken by these tribes in arriving at a common definition of their identity should be understood in the context (read election) against a major group. Such attempt to define themselves is made in

the larger Naga dream, but as long as these communities exist within the political framework, when, democracy is manifested in the periodic election from time to time, this work will command space for consideration.

The Nikhil Manipur Hindu Mahasabha, a social and cultural organization became a political party in 1938. It's original name was also changed as the Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha (hence, NMM). The emergence of this party may be marked as a stepping stone for the further development of political consciousness in Manipur. In 1939, the NMM was split into two over the issue of the Nupilan (women's agitation in 1939). The radical group led by Hijam Irabot Singh wanted to support the movement but the other group did not share his view. The Praja Sanmelan led by Irabot pushed forward it's objective for the abolition of the colonial and feudal rules and establishment of a responsible government in Manipur.³

In 1945, a new party, The Praja Sangha party was established. The fundamental aim and objective of this party was to endeavor for the achievement of independence of Manipur, abolition of feudal rule, establishment of a responsible government and the introduction of universal adult franchise in the state. In may 1946, Manipur Krishak Sabha the political organization of the peasants strongly emphasized the establishment of a responsible government in Manipur, introduction of universal adult franchise, the integration of the people in the hills and plains.⁴ On 4 October 1946, the Manipur State Congress Party (hence, MSCP) came into existence at the

³ Lal Dena, ed., *History of Modern Manipur (1826-1949)*, Orbit Publishers, 1990, pp. 159-166.

⁴ Instance of a hill-valley communion in the administrative and political history of Manipur before Independence. The debate is to show how the hill and the valley have always formed a common political unit, while there are many who argue over the instances as too little or negligible for such a proposition.

initiative of some individuals, mostly educated leaders. All members of the NMM also became the members of this newly established party. Later on this party became a unit of the All India Congress Committee. It also strongly emphasized for the establishment of a responsible government on the basis of the principle of democracy, abolition of social injustices of the feudal order.

After the second world war, Maharaja Buddhachandra wanted to establish a separate administrative unit of his own. On demand from F.F Gimson, the British political agent in Manipur, Maharaja Buddhachandra wrote on 30 October 1946 in which he explicitly expressed his desire to established a democratic system of administration with an elected 'Advisory Assembly' constituted by the representative of both hills and plains.⁵ But the proposal of the Maharaja had no provision for the establishment of the responsible government in Manipur and thus an agitation was launched for the establishment of a Legislative Assembly on the basis of the democratic principle in Manipur. The Maharaja issued a formal order to constitute a 'Constitution Making Committee' to prepare a new constitution for the governance of the state.⁶ All political parties participated in the elections for the constitution of this Committee. On 21 January, 1947 the Committee was constituted of the following members:

- three members from the Durbar nominated by the President of the Manipur State Durbar,

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Bimal J. Dev and Dilip Lahiri, *Manipur: Culture and Politics*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1987, pp. 114-131. And R.K. Snahal in Sanajaoba, *Manipur: Past and Present*, Vol.3, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995 should also be taken into account.

- one member from the palace nominated by the Maharaja one representative deputed by each Tehsil circles from the three Tehsils (valley), and
- one representative each of Ukhrul, Mao, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, and South-east areas.⁷

However the Maharaja was not fully prepared to implement the demands of the political parties and instead established an ‘interim government’ in Manipur. The member of the ‘interim council’ was severely criticised by political parties and urged upon the Maharaja to dissolve it. A movement was started which saw demonstrations and pickettings in front of the state offices. It was only with the assurance from the Chief Minister of the interim council on 23 November that a responsible government would be introduced in Manipur within 6 months that the agitation was called off on 26 November 1947.

The Manipur State Council geared up for the preparation of the elections. According to the rules of the Universal Adult Franchise sub-committee, the valley area was divided into 29 constituencies whereas the hill area was divided into 18 constituencies. The election was fixed on 11 June, 1948 in which no party (refer table no.1.1) could secure an absolute majority.

Table 1.1
Result of Election, 1948

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Name of the Parties/Nomination</i>	<i>No. of seats won</i>
1	Manipur State Congress	14
2	Manipur Krishak Party	05
3	Socialist Party	03
4	Hill (independents)	18
5	Independents (Praja Samiti)	12
6	Nomination	01
	Total	53

Source: Lal dena, 1984, pp. 168-169.

⁷ Lal Dena, *op.cit.*, pp.154-155.

The Assembly was constituted by two groups having different political objectives. The first group was in favor of the integration with India and the other was against such an idea. All the political parties in the Assembly adopted a strong resolution against the merger of the Manipur State Party. In such a conflict between the pro and anti-merger groups, Maharaja Buddhachandra signed the merger agreement on 21 September 1949, which was officially announced on 15 October 1949. With this, the process of the integration of the state of Manipur into the Indian Union was over and Manipur became a Part 'C' State of India.

Statement of the Problem

An attempt into understanding the “the way of life” of Manipur and the dynamics of the demands of social, cultural, and most important political complexities will have to address the questions of Majority-Minority relations as also the more important issues of “minority within the minority” which this work attempts to look into. Efforts have been made to classify the population of Manipur into many groups and sub-groups and the debate as to the authenticity of the criterias that go into such classification will be exposed to an unending debate. A geographical understanding of Manipur necessitates a hill-valley divide, whereas in the hills a “broad” cultural divide of the kukis on the one hand and the Nagas on the other will reveal the nature of the social, cultural, and political life of Manipur.

The Hill-Valley relations is not something peculiar to Manipur. In more advanced countries, it is less accentuated, while in the less developed countries it is more stringent. It presents a poser that baffles attempts to arrive at a working agreement toward a happy co-existence between the two. In the mind of the highlander, the Plainsmen and the Highlanders of Manipur remain different from each other.⁸ A plunge into the past for arriving at a discovery led to the opinion that “two hundred years ago, in internal organization, in religion, in habits and manners, the Meiteis were as the Hill people now are. The successive waves of invasion, Shan Burmese, the Chinese and the Hindus have each left permanent marks on the civilization of the people so that they have finally passed away from the stage of a relatively primitive culture into one of comparative civilization.⁹ But, during the British rule, the hill territory was separated from the general administration of the state on the plea that the hill tribes have entirely different customs and languages.¹⁰ In 1919, three sub-divisions in hill areas were formed with a view to administer the hill people more effectively. Each sub-division was placed under the supervision of a British Sub-Divisional officer who was directly responsible to the president of the Durbar. Thus on colonial departure, the Hillmen were skeptic of having a right place in Manipur. It was argued that there was no similarity in the fields of religion, customs, habits, and usages, and that geographically the hills of Manipur form a part and parcel of the adjacent hill districts of Assam and Burma.

⁸ Proposition made on the basis of the criterias used by them. T.C. Hodson, *The Meiteis*, Neeraj Publishing House, Delhi 1984 (Reprint). And *The Naga tribes of Manipur*, Neeraj Publishing House, Delhi, 1981(Reprint). Grierson, *The Linguistic Survey of India*, vol 3, part 1, Calcutta, 1904. And Shakespeares, *The Lushai-Kuki clan*, Tribal Research Institution, Aizawl, 1975.

⁹ Hodson, T.C, *The Naga tribes of Manipur*, B.R Publishing house, Delhi, 1982 (Reprint).

¹⁰ Lal Dena, *op.cit.*, p.80.

The three sub-divisions formed in the hills in 1919 is given below:

Table 1.2
Administration Division of Manipur, 1919

<i>Sub-divisions/areas</i>	<i>Headquarter</i>	<i>Name of sub-divisional officer</i>
South-west area	Churachandpur	B.C Gasper
North-west area	Tamenglong	W. Shaw
North-east area	Ukhrul	L.L Peter

Source: Administration Report of State of Manipur, 1919-20.

This was abolished in 1930 and the whole hill region was immediately administered by the president of Manipur State Durbar. In 1933, three new sub-divisions were created again in 1933-34 (refer Table 1.3). A large area in the Mao-Senapati region as also today's Chandel region continued to be administered from Imphal under the President of the Durbar for reasons of administrative convenience like good communication on the one hand and to minimize financial expenditure in the administration on the other. The creation of separate hill administration as also leaving some tribal areas under the Durbar has done a lot of harm to the political integrity of Manipur. This could also amount to the political dilemma of the Transborder tribes that are in close contact with the Meiteis in administration but have cultural leaning with the other hill brethren, that this work attempts to look into.

Table 1.3
Administrative Division in 1933

<i>Sub-division/area</i>	<i>Name of Sub-divisional officer</i>
Sadar	S. Arambam Ibungohal Singh
Ukhrul	S.J Duncan
Tamenlong	C.S Booth

Source: Administration Report of State of Manipur, 1934-34.

The British administration deliberately created a “barrier of wall” among the hill people themselves. The colonial administrators and Anthropologists applied a broad yardstick of grouping the hill tribes within the Naga or the Kuki fold. The officials (References can be made of Hodson, Grierson and others) who wrote on the tribes of Manipur were confused about the major identification of the transborder tribes. The division of the highland of Manipur into the Naga country and the Kuki country is accompanied by complexities that defy simple truisms and generalizations. It is still an open question what criteria have gone into this classification and debates will be hurled on works that will attempt to investigate into this delicate issue as to the identification of the Transborder tribes.¹¹

The Transborder tribes are ethnically linked up with the Kuki-Chins and their traditions point to such a conclusion. However, there are strong Naga traits among these tribes. “Originally, the Moyon, the Monsang, the Lamkang and the Anals belonged to the old Kuki clans. These tribes in addition to their Kuki-Chin traits have assimilated some Naga characteristics in their ways of life”.¹² Shakespeare¹³ included the Chothe, as also many other tribes within the old Kuki clan depending on their arrival in Manipur and surrounding areas, He included tribes like Anal, Lamkang, Moyon, Monsang, Chothe etc. in the ‘old Kuki’ sub-group who form a bridge between the Naga and the Kuki-Chin tribes of Manipur while the ‘new Kuki’ sub-group is represented by the Thadous only. “Ethnic identity is not static; it changes with the environment. Group boundaries tend to shift with the political

¹¹ Gangmumei Kabui, *Anal: A Transborder tribe*. Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985.

¹² Rana Chakravarthy, *People of Manipur*. B.R Publishing Corporation: Delhi, 1986, pp.17-18.

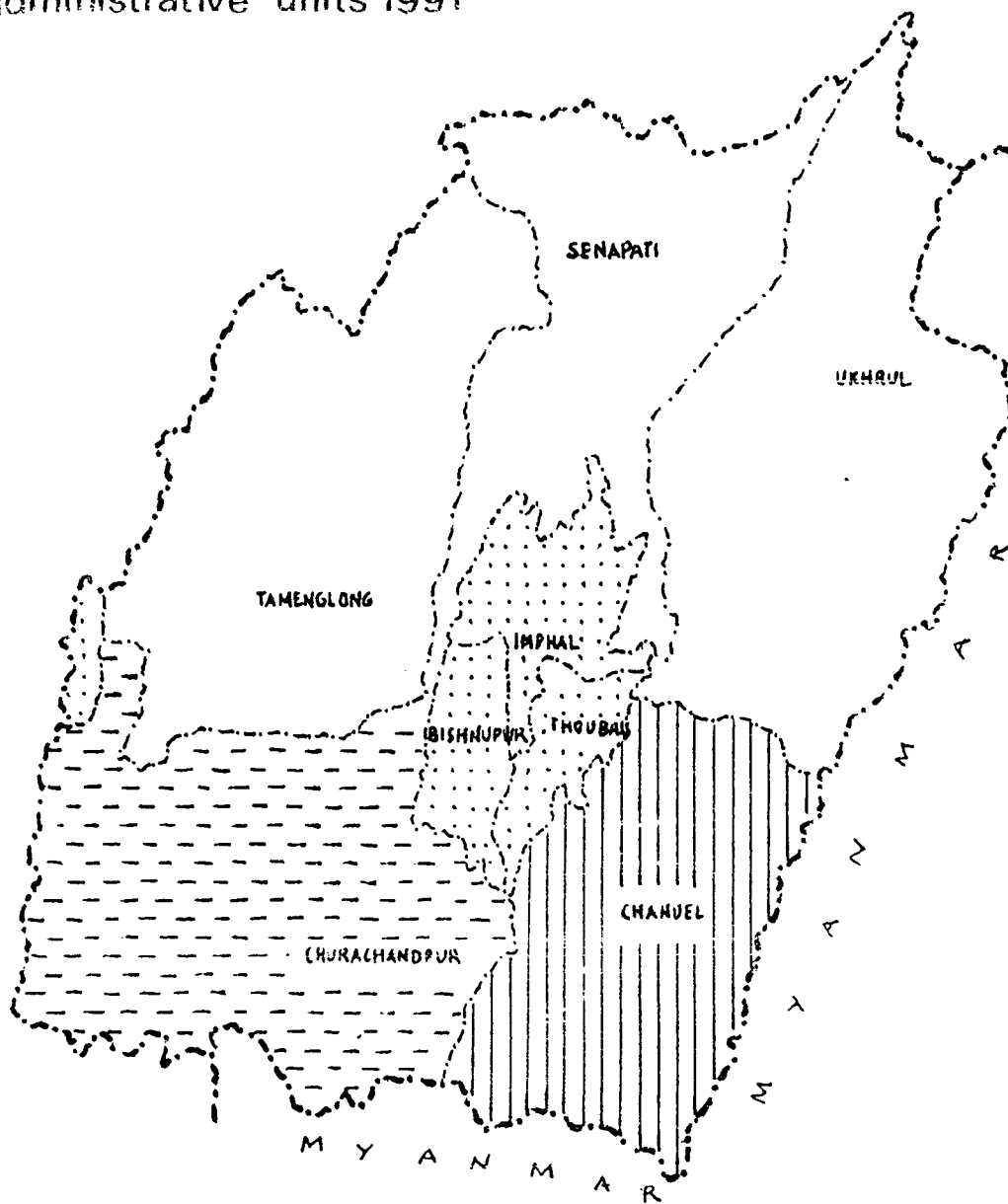
¹³ *Ibid.*, p.18.

context". Thus, political aspirations also determine the identity of a tribe. Of late, these tribes have grouped themselves within the Naga fold . In modern times even the smallest of ethnic communities have adopted an aggressive posture. This is based upon an ideology of cultural distinctiveness, of ethnical homogeneity have sought to ensure that their political demands are met by the state within which historical accident has incorporated them, that, inter-tribal relations and struggle for power is a "political" question by definition.






An attempt to study the social, cultural, and most important political complexities as determined by geography in the hill-valley divide on the one hand and by cultural differences in the hill divide, the investigation of the "way of life" of a "little paradise" inhabited by the transborder tribes, found in today's Chandel district of Manipur will throw some light on the political life of minorities in Manipur. The transborder tribes are found spread over the regions bordering the major communities (Meiteis, Nagas, and Kukis) though the investigation of this work will be limited to Chandel district for reasons, electoral and political. The original homeland of these transborder tribes is not traceable due to the absence of authentic sources of information, either archaeological or otherwise. The nature of their inhabitation made it extremely difficult in places to identify line.¹⁴ This should not however imply that these tribes have not identified their origin from where their long saga of migration started. It is just that an authentic explanation has not been provided as in the case of most of the tribal communities in Manipur. In the context of today's Manipur, These tribes occupy such a geographical situation that they are sandwiched between the

¹⁴ Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1984 (Reprint).

MANIPUR
administrative units 1991



10 0 10 20 30 KM

-  STUDY AREA
-   NAGA DOMINANT AREA
-  MEITEI DOMINANT AREA
-  KUKI-CHIN DOMINANT AREA

nagas in the north, the Kuki-Chins in the south, and the meiteis in the west. The geopolitical situation has made them a bridge-buffer community between the Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis, thus, leading to the identity of the community itself.¹⁵

An anthropological model of boundary process tends to look untidy and rather vague. An ordinary discourse on the dilemma of the Transborder community will rest on ethnic differences, but, social boundaries are fluid because of the fact that the same differences can have a different meaning in another context. The local network for preservation of its integrity is also bounded by its ability to adopt to changes. The criterias that constituted the boundary divide in the hill-valley divide as well as hill-hill relations are many and these criterias change with the changing history and circumstances. In this, There is two basic criteria running through: culture and territory.

In the hill-valley divide, the Transborder tribes are located on the fringes, where, they have inculcated the characteristics of both the regions; the economic characteristics of jhum as well as wet/plain cultivation is prevalent in the Transborder communities. In the hill divide, the division of cultural regions is difficult, for, the Transborder tribes display the “missing link” characteristic of the major tribal communities. Thus, Similarities and differences can be explained in the dynamics of the process that these communities have undergone through decades of co-existence. The Transborder tribes have undergone decades of adjustment and assimilation. But,

¹⁵ Gangmuimei Kabui, *op.cit.*, pp.10-12.

the situation that they are faced with, as necessitated by history and circumstances, can be explained to an extent by the political aspiration of the people.¹⁶

Coming into contact with the major tribe in southern part of Manipur, namely Kuki, does not qualify the classification of Chothes into the old Kuki tribe. The Chothes have great differences with the Kukis in their traditional culture, tradition, religion and social life. If the traditional history of Chothes reflect feuds with the Kukis on the one hand, the genesis of the Meiteis and the Chothes have great similarities rather than that of the Nagas or the Kukis. The Chothes are in favor of joining the Naga platform on account of political reasons.¹⁷ Thus, the ethnic identity vary in time according to social and political factors requiring an insight into both the logic of collective action and the dynamics of political behaviour. Traditional antagonistic relations resulted into gathering a mass sympathy, with the leaders creating sentimental issues whereas history is quoted 'through a series of speeches that serve as flashbacks'. Thus, historical collection of each culture has to be considered, where, each community (tribe) is free to define and redefine its identity. The Transborder tribes are not very different from the Nagas or Kuki-Chins though these tribes are drifting away from the Kuki and non-Naga tribes of Manipur.¹⁸

Great nations were supposed to be the carriers of historical development. The smaller nationalities were backward and stagnant and could participate in modernity by abandoning their national character and assimilating to a great nation. Thus, progress and civilisation required assimilation of backward minorities to energetic

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Purums (Chothe) Revisited. *Anthropological Survey of India*, Calcutta, 1985.

¹⁸ Gangmumei Kabui, Origin of the Nagas, in *Nagas at Work*, Naga Students Union Delhi, 1996, pp. 7-19.

majorities.¹⁹ Our analysis on this line of thinking would reduce our study of inter-ethnic relations to that of a “demographic struggle for power”.²⁰ The Pakan movement of the Anals, Lamkangs, Moyons and Monsangs were aimed at social integration of these tribes and their attempt for a common political aspiration as well.²¹ Such an attempt conveyed that ‘we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone’ and ‘tend to look toward the future with nostalgia’. Symbols and figures are created/invented provoking national sentiment and sympathy. The inventions of their imaginations are rooted in fear and hatred of the other though heightened group consciousness does not necessarily result in inter-group conflict...conflicts arise when a group asserts its identity by attacking the identity of other groups, and, above all when a claim for group rights and group power is perceived by others as threatening.

Overview of Literature

Will Kymlicka wrote that most people today subscribed to the ideal of democracy- that is, most people accept that the political authorities governing a particular community should be accountable to its citizens through periodic elections.²² This looks to be one easy understanding on the process of political governance. The constitution of the “particular community” as given by Kymlicka stands to be properly analyzed and understood. “In many countries two or more ethnocultural communities cohabit, the world’s 184 independent states contain over

¹⁹ Will Kymlicka, ed. *The rights of Minority cultures*, Oxford University Press, 1995 (Introduction).

²⁰ Milica Z Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, London, Frank Cass, 1997, (Introduction).

²¹ Gangmumei Kabui, *op.cit.*, 1985, pp.50-53.

²² Will Kymlicka, *op.cit.*, 1995.

600 living language groups and 5000 ethnic groups. In very few countries can the citizens be said to share the same language, or belong to the same ethno-cultural group".²³ In such a given reality of a society (here, state) being constituted by two or more cultural communities, What is to be further probed is whether the majority has the power to subdue the aspirations of minority cultures, or whether the minority has the power to upset the status quo, and wring political concessions for itself. The community becomes the rallying of one's political activity. The community (ethnic) is a group of persons, predominantly of common descent, who think of themselves as collectively possessing a separate identity based on race or on shared cultural characteristics, usually language or religion; they may or may not think of themselves as a nation, a concept with stronger implications for political autonomy or independence.²⁴ For Benedict Anderson, it is one of an "Imagined community" wherein the community is not given but consciously created. Similarly a 'nation' is imagined because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in their minds of each lives the image of their communion".²⁵

A nation "consists of those who belong together by birth- genetically, lineally, through familiarly inherited language and culture".²⁶ Such an understanding is dictated by the western thinking of nationalism in the past where language and cultural oneness played the part in the creation of nation, nationality and the state.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.32.

²⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, London, Verso, 1991, p.6.

²⁶ John Dunn, *Crisis of the Nation State?*, *Political studies*, 1994, Vol. XIII.

The debate hurled by Partha Chatterjee²⁷ against such an understanding circles around the contextual limitation of their definitions. The 'Nation and its fragments' should be seen as a work on the creation of this national communion arising not out of cultural or lingual but out of a different historical process. Thus the limitation of the western thinking stands exposed though the genesis of such an academic debate and discussion and the applause be given to them.

In such a proposition where do we place the individual? The focus on the individual by the Liberal political theorists is so obvious that it seems almost superfluous to cite evidence.²⁸ In the idea of the Social Contract, the individuals are parties to the contract. There was no place for the groups and associations at the intermediate level between the individual and the commonwealth,²⁹ as Rousseau explicitly held the view that if "...the general will is to be truly expressed, it is essential that there is to be no subsidiary groups within the state...". Each citizen was to 'voice his own opinion and not ting but his own opinion'.³⁰ Rawls assumes that Individuals speak for themselves and never considered ethnic communities as entities with claims for justice.³¹ Utilitarians who emphasize on the greatest good of the gretaeast number obviously have individuals on mind. The consent of the governed is a consensus of the individuals. The Liberal thinking can be thus seen in John Stuart Mill who wrote, "free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of

²⁷ Partha Chatterjee, *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and Post-colonial Histories*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993.

²⁸ Will Kymlicka, *op.cit.*, p.34.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.34

³⁰ Ernest Barker, ed., *Social contract: Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1962, pp.56-57.

³¹ Von Dyke, Justice as fairness: For Groups?, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 69, June 1975, pp. 607-614.

different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary for the working of representative government, cannot exist...It is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities.³² Ernest Barker acknowledges that 'modern state is not always a unitary national society. It may contain national minorities.'³³ This is the major departure of the Liberal thinkers in handling the issues of culture, identity and nationality and reluctant however they may be would have come to terms with the reality of society and more so against the invasion of post-modernity. It was just that the Liberal thinkers were/are concerned about the conditions prerequisite to democracy, and this led/leads them to insist that the boundaries of the nation should determine the boundaries of the state.

This cannot be applied to Manipur state. Kabui³⁴ attempts to discuss on the origin of the various ethnic groups- Meiteis, Kuikis, Nagas, Pangals, Bengalis, Nepalis, Marwaris, Tamils, Punjabis, Biharis etc adding a pluralistic social fabric of Manipur as a Multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual base and civilization.³⁵ It is not possible to agree with McCulloch in his assumption of the Meiteis being the descendants of the hill tribes, his conclusion points to a social and cultural relationship between the Meiteis with the adjacent tribes, like the Tangkhuls, Marings, Anals, Koms, Chirus, Koirengs, etc.³⁶ N. Tombi³⁷ feels that the gap

³² John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1958, pp. 230-233.

³³ Ernest Barker, *Principles of Political and Social Theory*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1951, pp. 3 & 42.

³⁴ Gangmumei Kabui, *History of Manipur Vol. 1, Pre-colonial period*, National, Delhi, 1991.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.32.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.20.

³⁷ N Tombi, *Manipur: A Study, Imphal*, 1972, pp. 17.

between the valley people and the hill people appeared to be very wide. For him, there are two factors that contribute to the widening and also to the perpetuation of this gap: Language and Religion. Lal Dena³⁸ pinpoints that the colonial administration who separated the hill territory from the general administration on the plea that “the hill people are not Manipuris and have entirely different customs and languages. The British employed the well known policy of ‘divide *et impera*’ by emphasizing inter-tribal disharmonies and superficial differences in terms of religion.³⁹ The two books do not discuss on the dynamics of the ‘politics of difference’ the people resort to for their political, economic and social upliftment. These ‘integrationist historians’ put the blame on the colonial masters, religion and geography for the division and in the process forgetting the stark realities of political compulsions that have caused greater havoc.

A nation is a political construct out of the raw materials of culture. Thus, ethnic identity is a variable than a fixed or given disposition.⁴⁰ The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power (and economic) advantage. They become symbols and referents for the identification of members of the group, which are called up in order to create a political identity more easily. The symbols used to create a political identity also can be shifted to adjust to political circumstances and the limitations imposed by state authorities.⁴¹ Elites in competition with each other for control over

³⁸ Lal Dena, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-81.

³⁹ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁰ Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Sage Publications, London, 1991, p. 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.15.

the allegiance or territory of the ethnic group in question strive to enhance or break the solidarity of the group.⁴² Such a presentation presents an 'instrumentalist' rather than the 'primordialist' view of ethnic identity formation. This is not to say that the person's (here, cultural community) attachments to religion, place of birth, kinship, language, etc is not important but that the political leadership simply distort and select those which are politically useful rather than central to the belief systems of the people in question.⁴³ Kabui's work on the Anals throws a light on this 'instrumentalist' line of assumption, for the Anals (as also the other Transborder tribes) who are ethnically and linguistically linked to the Kukis and have been grouped as the old-Kuki tribes by Hodson and others for reasons best known to them, have today joined the Naga platform. The symposium on the Chothes also highlighted how such a transformation, even if painful and tragic (political killings have occurred in the past though the researcher avoids to question the authenticity of such acts for reasons known to himself) have occurred with the wisdom of The Chothe Union implying the activism of the leadership in general and the active participation of young forces from within and without.

P.S Datta's edited volume⁴⁴ emphasizes the 'ethnic connotation' that remains inherent in the movements within Assam. On the same wavelength, Nirmal Nibedan⁴⁵ zeroed on the ethnic, nativistic, and cultural aspects igniting the flames of the Northeast that ever was and is. The two works could not be ignored by persons

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴ P S Datta, ed., *Ethnic Movement in Poly-cultural Assam*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.

⁴⁵ Nirmal Nibedan, *Northeast India: The Ethnic Explosion*, Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1981.

interested in investigating the dynamics of a puzzle that the Northeast is. This will only lead to a primordial understanding of the problem of the Northeast as many people have always attempted to portray. Nevertheless, they are commendable works which ought to be given their due place. V.K Anand⁴⁶ draws one's attention on the psychological factors in geo-political context to be the main cause for insurgency. What weightage should be given to culture, political, economic, alienation, leadership, and other forces that implanted such a psychological imperfection on the people of Nagaland remains unanswered. But on the line of the argument that this attempts to question, S.K Chaube⁴⁷ indicates enough if not more, on the concept of 'nationalism' which partially ignored the smaller identities and territorial boundary, in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. The genesis to the problem is nothing but the 'political' though historical, geographical and sociological aspects were given due importance. Social Scientists have given due importance to the historical roots of the problems in the Northeast (Do they substantiate their propositions with convincing analysis?) but never recognizing the reality (a bitter reality) that the political leadership in their contest for power (here, electoral) have used, invented, and distorted the boundaries of culture and ethnic identity formation within the political realities.

Is the concept of the state system new to the people of the Northeast?. Asok Kumar Ray⁴⁸ traces the crisis of the struggle for leadership amongst the Kuki community as that of a society emerging out of a tribal system into a modern state

⁴⁶ V K Anand, *Conflict in Nagaland*, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1980.

⁴⁷ S K Chaube, *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, Universities Press, Madras, 1985.

⁴⁸ Asok Kumar Ray, *Authority and Legitimacy*, Renaissance, Delhi 1990.

system. This should not be the conclusion for the struggle between the Kuki chieftains and the new middle class leadership is one of which platform appropriates the prestige of having stood for the interests of the community within the apparatus of the system provided by the Indian state. If in the old tribal arrangement, the Chieftains provided the legitimacy, they would not enjoy such an acceptance in the new reality. The new leadership (educated) stepped in to fill the vacuum though with the blessings of the chiefs. Symbolic traditionalism becomes the weapon to bargain for the legitimacy of the people. The Kuki National Assembly (KNA) became the platform of the Kuki political interests under the proposal of the Chiefs. The Nagas of Manipur also have their political arrangement in the tribal set up. Horam⁴⁹ throws light on this recognition of a state system that existed in the tribal set up. The chiefs were very powerful in some of the tribes (Maos, Tangkhuls, etc.) while in some tribes, they were not so (Kabui's work on the Anals) as in the case of the Anals, Lamkangs, Moyons, Chothes, etc. The chothes have gone further in their political arrangements with the provision of 'an opposition leader' whose sole purpose was to criticize and give an overwhole presentation of the opinion of the whole village, thus approving the legitimacy of the proposal of the village Chief. The opposition leader provided the role of 'the roving eye' on the accountability of the work of the village council. Thus, on the emergence of the new state system the tribals had no difficulty in visualizing the stark realities of the dynamics of political competition. In the old tribal arrangements of mutual agreements and consensus, there was never a need for

⁴⁹ Horam, *The Naga Polity*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1975.

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political competition, but in the new system, political competition necessitated resources and ethnicity provided one.

R.P Singh⁵⁰ contemplates on the compulsions of politics and the resulting aspect of political and electoral behavior, voting behavior as influenced by multiple factors like, ethnic factors, hill-valley dichotomy, religion, regionalism, etc. For Oommen, 'if and when an ethnic identifies with a territory, it becomes a nation'.⁵¹ But, the researcher is dealing with a definite territorial base accommodating two or more ethnic communities, of which Oommen has not provided an answer. In any case, the creation of the identity by Leadership still works upon a cultural identity-as the political demand of cultural communities (read, as the political struggle within the legality of the particular state system). This is vintage point of the argument in the fourth chapter.

Methodology and Chapter Organization



The remaining portion of this study is organized along the following scheme:

Chapter Two deals with Theories and Concepts that have relevance to the study. A theoretical analysis of culture and identity is attempted. While acknowledging the elements of construction and invention, the nation (here, political identity) is imagined on a cultural basis; thus the acceptance of 'cultural community' as a unit of analysis/identification in the political behavior within the majority-minority dynamics

⁵⁰ Ravindra P Singh, *Electoral Politics in Manipur: A Spatio-Temporal Study*, Concept, New Delhi, 1981

⁵¹ T K Oomen, *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity: Reconciling competing identities*, Polity, Cambridge, 1997, (Introduction).

of the state of Manipur. The aspects of 'minority within the minority', of culture and identity, and that of the majority-minority has been raised because the political life (here, electoral) is that of a "demographic struggle" for power.

Chapter Three deals with the Political life of the Lamkang. The political characteristic of the Lamkang may be broadly looked at three levels; at the clan lineage, at the village level, and at the tribe level. This is an attempt to see the political life of the traditional Lamkang and the changes or the evolution that the tribe has undergone. At a broad level, the Lamkang polity could resemble the political life of the transborder tribes that this work attempts to look at.

Chapter Four deals with the Electoral politics in Chandel. An attempt to study the two Assembly constituencies of Chandel (41. Chandel and 42.Tengnoupal) is made taking into account the compulsions of electoral politics, the dynamics of political behavior, etc. With the outbreak of the kuki-naga conflict in 1992-93, the community (here, the tribe) is taken as the unit of political /electoral behavior.

The Concluding Chapter attempts to summarise the major findings of this study and make some observations regarding the Political Life of The Minorities in Manipur with special reference to the Transborder tribes.

Methodology: A look at the Chapter organization will make it obvious that the study is basically a historical and explanatory one. Both primary and secondary information are used for this purpose. Secondary information are the records, published and unpublished material wherever available. Though the collection of primary data often involves standardised forms of techniques like questionnaire or schedule, in this case

the researcher did not use either of the two while collecting primary information. Interview has been the sole technique employed.

The second chapter on theories and concepts is based on published material. This cannot be said of the third chapter on the political life of the Lamkang because of my dependence on primary and unpublished materials (unearthed from dusty wooden boxes as scraps and torn pages for we cannot imagine my poor elders affording good book shelves in their homes) as also my tour of interview with the elders of different Lamkang villages⁵². The fourth chapter is based on the available official data prepared on the electoral list of the constituencies of the three general elections (1989, 1995 and 2000) and interviews as also my observation during the election of 2000. All through the work is done with the comparison of electoral works on different states of the northeast which the researcher has been able to come into touch with.

⁵² Most of this Material formed the basis for compiling The Abridged History of the Lamkang Naga Tribe, Published by the Lamkang Naga Council (1999), which has been extensively utilized here.

Chapter Two

Group Identities and Struggle for Power: A Theoretical Analysis

Ethnicity and Identity

It is difficult to give a clear definition of 'ethnicity' at a high level of generality to be analytically useful in the wide variety of situations for which it is commonly applied. However, despite of the difficulty of being specific about critical features and components, according to social scientists, ethnic groups belong to a relatively distinct sociological identity. This is a group of members, which have both with respect to their own sentiments and those of non-members, a distinctive sense of its history. 'Culture' occupies the most important general core in such an understanding. In other words, Culture acts as a frame of reference. Ethnicity is referred to as the perception of group difference and social boundaries between sections of a population. It is the recognition of significant difference between 'them' and 'us'.

Milton Gordon used the term 'ethnic group' to refer to a type of group which is defined or set off by race, religion, or national origin or some combination of these categories¹. For instance, in the Twentieth century nation-state, and particularly in the United States, the competing models of ethnicity are the nation-state itself, race, religion, and national origin or nationality background. The American who answers who he is, answers from an ethnic point of view,

¹ Milton Gordon, *Human Nature, Class and Ethnicity*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1978, p. 111.

example, I am an American, I am a white, Negro, or Mongoloid. I am a Protestant, a Catholic, or Jew and I have a German or Italian or Irish or whatever background. While we can only speculate as to the order in which these layers of ethnic identity are arranged around the 'self', which Milton has illustrated in the diagram given on the next page.

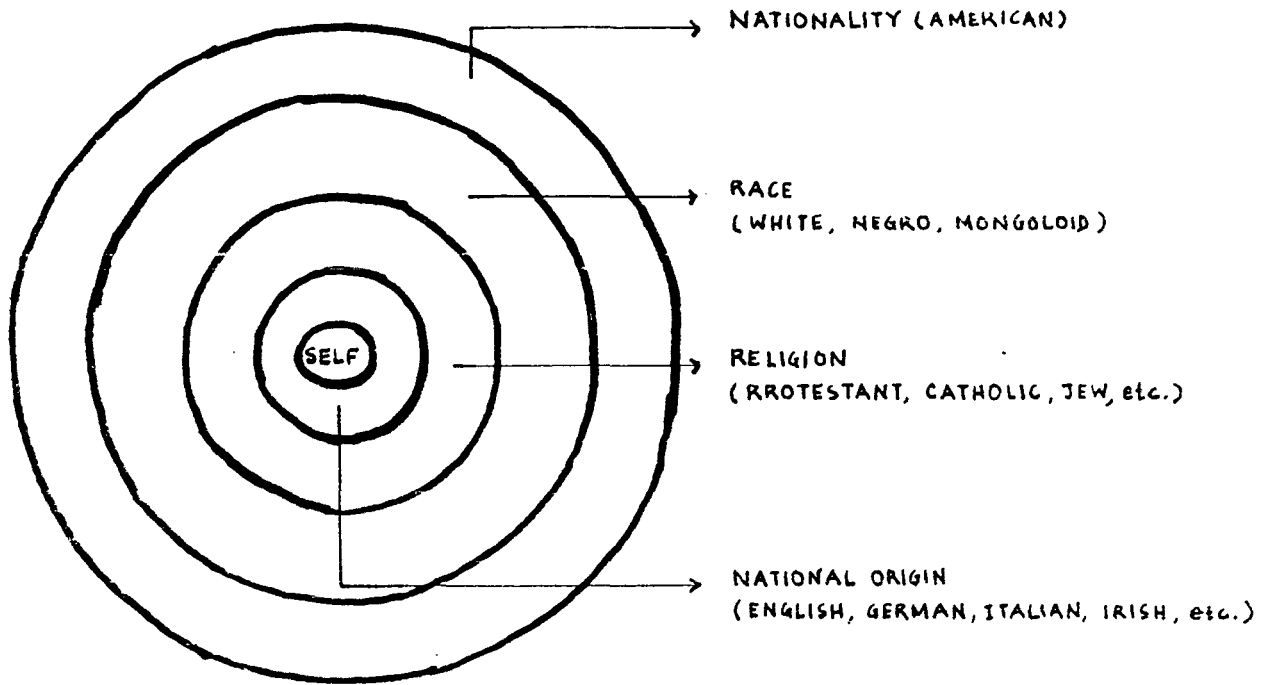
Talcott Parsons focuses on group identity i.e. the organization of several persons into distinctive groups and second of solidarity and the loyalties of individual members to such groups². In such a definition, the concept of cultural distinctiveness marks the ethnic relations here. Schermerhon has defined Ethnic groups as "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, like, religious affiliation, language or dialect, pattern of political contiguity etc. be defined as the epitome of their people hood³. The assumptions of the two definitions given above are very evident in the context of Manipur and its complex ethnic relations.

The assimilation of the North-Eastern ethnic groups into the Indian society has not been encouraging even till today. On the whole, they have always resisted and fought for the preservation of their own identities. In Manipur, the Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis have lived together, celebrating the spirit of a multi-cultural society in which each group has never felt threatened by the presence of the other. Today, the ethnic boundary has practically remained closed to each other and

² Talcott Parsons in Glazer and Moynihan, eds., *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Harvard Press, Cambridge, 1976, p. 53.

³ Schermerhon, *Ethnic Plurality in India*, University of Arizona Press, Tucson Arizona, 1978, p. 15.

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF AN AMERICAN



SOURCE: Milton M. Gordon, 1978, p. 110.

there is a minimum possibility of crossing the ethnic boundary since their group consciousness is very strong. There are various attempts by Social Scientists in Manipur to provide explanations on this aggressive assertion of one's identity. The gap between the valley people and the hill people is caused by two important factors: Language and Religion⁴. Lal dena⁵ traced the genesis of this to the handiwork of the colonial administrators, that the Britishers sowed the seed and the people of Manipur perfected the art is another thing which should have been analyzed at a deeper level. G Kabui through his various works⁶ have emphasized on the political compulsions of this ethnic assertion though he was never clear of what the 'political' meant. Nonetheless the important aspect of this explanation is based on the question of 'territoriality'.

On Territorial Debate

"Membership in an ethnic group is more or less a matter of social definition of other group"⁷. In almost all the states of North-East, one confronts with the word 'outsider' or 'foreigner' in the slogan of almost all the student groups, constituted on the basis of language or ethnic identities. One needs to perhaps examine the cultural implication of this word. Does an 'outsider' mean the cultural 'other' of the Sloganists? Or does it indicate a kind of insecurity on

⁴ N Tombi, *Manipur: A Study*, Imphal, 1972, p. 17.

⁵ Lal Dena, ed., *History of Modern Manipur (1826-1949)*, Orbit Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 80-81

⁶ Gangmimei Kabui, *Anal: A Transborder tribe of Manipur*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985, and Gangmumei Kabui, *Origin of the Nagas in Nagas at Work*, Naga Students Union Delhi, Delhi, 1995.

⁷ Glazer and Moynihan, *op cit.*, p. 131.

the part of the propagandist-economic or cultural?⁸. When one is confronted with the kind of problem (ethnic issues) stated above, the explanations to be given are numerous and social scientists have provided us numerous reasons for them. Ethnic boundary cannot remain static, it should be flexible and dynamic because it is the social boundary that accepts or identifies 'us' from 'others'. Such an assertion meant Social-ethnic homogeneity in the strictest sense of the term 'ethnicity'. In such an assumption of the word 'ethnicity', one is confronted with the choice of opting for one or the other. It looks good in the explanation of the North-East vis-à-vis the Indian heartland 'ethnic' relations and does not provide us with the same satisfaction in the explanation of ethnic relations in Manipur. This application is not possible in the context of Manipur and more so in the context of the Transborder tribes.

The Meitei-tribal contact had some manifestation of cultural similarity. The numerous instances which can be taken as having cultural references have been forgotten though references in the original form if analyzed in the proper will only add to one's argument that the Meitei-tribal origin was that of them having a common similarity if not from the same common root. This provides the vantage point from which this work attempts to look at ethnicity, identity (here, cultural community), and political struggle within the context of the framework provided by the State. How does one explain the ethnic struggle that is being witnessed in Manipur and more so in areas where the ethnic demarcation of social boundaries is very vague if present at all? It is in this context that the attempt to investigate into the social, cultural, and more so the political complexities of the Transborder

⁸ M M Aggrawal, ed., *Ethnicity, Culture and Nationalism in Northeast India*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1996, p. 111.

tribes may help us to understand the political life of Manipur, indulging oneself the liberty of questioning the Majority-Minority complexities because politics (here, electoral politics) could also be seen as that of a 'demographic struggle for power'.

Geographical identification of the ethnic groups in Manipur has resulted in the fragmentation of the state-Meitei and Tribal. The Central Valley is the home of the 'Meiteis' to which they have given the name '*Meitei lampak*' or the country of the Meiteis⁹. The tribals inhabit the mountain tracts of the state. The expansive hills of Manipur which account for nearly 90 per cent of the states' area are inhabited by as many as 29 recognized scheduled tribes and about 15 unclassified tribes, broadly divided into two main ethnic groups- the Nagas and the Kukis. But in this work the researcher has divided the tribals of Manipur into three ethnic groups though framework is provided to increase the number of the ethnic groups in Manipur if be needed or provided with a reasonable explanation. Thus this work recognizes the ethnic division of the tribals into four groups- namely, Nagas, Kukis, Pangals and the Transborder tribes. Of course the transborder tribes have been accepted as constituting part of the Naga tribes of Manipur and there are also tribes like the Komrems who are keen to maintain an artificial difference from some of the major groups. These groups occupy definite areas in these hills, but in the case of the Kukis who are nomadic settlers, they are scattered fairly well in all the regions of the State. The ethnic distribution can be referred to the table below:

⁹ Reid Brown, *Statistical Account of Manipur*, Sanskaran Prakashank, Delhi, 1975, p.2.

Table 2.1

Territorial and Ethnic Habitation

<i>Name of the ethnic group</i>	<i>Area of inhabitation</i>
The Naga group	Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Senapati and Chandel.
The Kuki group	Scattered all over the state but mainly concentrated in Churachandpur, Sadar hills and the area on the chandel-Myanmar border.
The Meiteis	Imphal east and west, Thoubal, Bishenpur and Jiribam
The Pangals	Imphal and Thoubal districts.
The Transborder tribes	Scattered in the fringes of the state but mainly concentrated in Chandel district (erstwhile Tengnoupal).

Social scientists have provided the various factors that constitute the making of an ethnic group- origin, history, and culture as also the equal emphasis on minority groups, interest groups, religious groups, and linguistic differences which play important role in the formation of various ethnic groups. In the anthropological understanding, 'ethnic group' is generally understood to designate the population that is:

1. Large and biologically self-perpetuating,
2. Share fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms,
3. Makes up a field of communication and interaction,
4. Has membership that identifies itself and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order¹⁰.

There are some of us who consider 'ethnicity' and 'race' as one and the same thing. But it is not so, because the concept of ethnicity is much broader in its

¹⁰ Frederick Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries- The Social Organisation of Culture differences*, London, 1969, p. 11.

scope than that of the race. It transgresses the narrow aspects of race, culture and citizenship. Ethnic differences might be based partly on race in the case of Malays, Chinese, and Indians in Malaysia. It also exists in societies that are racially more or less homogeneous as in the case of Pathans in West Pakistan and Afghanistan or in some of the multi-cultural systems as in east Africa. Generally, 'ethnicity' has been interpreted as having a biological base sometimes explicitly stated in terms of racial distinctiveness¹¹.

Language has assumed an important place in the history of the past political evolution and present political situation. Linguistic differences largely coincide with regional differences. Ethnic identity provided by language has both a cultural basis and a political organization. Language provides a bond of unity among the speakers and defines a line of separation making off one speech community from another. Ethnic boundaries based on language are in a way crucial because they restrict communication in the literal sense of the term.

In political situation, ethnicity is a malleable principle of association that can be mobilized for conflict purpose and is connected with many different ideological principles by many different sorts of leaders. Ethnicity is a very potent political resource and a very difficult one to control. These are possible ways of looking at ethnicity in the creation of an individual's identity in the society as also in the system provided in the modern state.

Politics of Difference- A Demographic Struggle for Power

¹¹ Cool and Hunts, in *Ibid.*, p. 54.

When the discussion is based on the assumption that ethnic identity is itself a variable, rather than a fixed or given disposition that an emphasis can be made on political factors/Leadership. The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for Elite in competition for political power (and economic advantage). They become symbols and referents for the identification of members of the group, which are called in order to create a political identity more easily. The symbols used to create a political identity also can be shifted to adjust to political circumstances and the limitations imposed by state authorities¹².

The argument falls clearly into the ‘instrumentalist’ rather than the ‘primordialist’ view of ethnic identity formation in the line of the argument of Paul Brass (*Ethnicity and Nationalism...*) though the framework provided in this work is based on the political (here, electoral) compulsions in the multi-ethnic society of Chandel. Ethnic identity formation is seen as the process created in the dynamics of ethnic competition within the boundaries determined by political realities¹³. This means that Elite in competition each other for control over the allegiance or territory of the ethnic group in question strives to enhance or break the solidarity of the group¹⁴. What we can assume is that two or more ethnicities can grow into one but it takes a long time; equally, one ethnicity can grow into two under political, economic, and geographical pressure¹⁵. The Pakan movement that was initiated by leaders of the smaller tribes could not go beyond cultural implications. This was because the Anal leaders saw it as a threat to their political

¹² Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Sage Publications, London, 1991, p. 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁵ Aldrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, (Introduction).

domination. And today it is the Anal leaders who are initiating the enthusiasm of reviving the Pakan movement. If the Pakan movement has failed, the Naga movement has succeeded. If one ethnicity failed, the other ethnicity has takers and with the political and cultural compulsions, the Naga platform will not break up very easily.

The 'Primordialists' argue that 'every person carries with him through life 'attachment' derived from place of birth, kinship, relationship, religion, language, and social practices that are 'natural' to him, 'spiritual' in character, and that provides a basis for an easy 'affinity' with other peoples from the same background...¹⁶. However, it is quite obvious that there are very few groups in the world today whose members can lay any serious claim to a known common origin, it is not actual descent that is considered essential to the definition to the definition of an ethnic group but a belief in a common descent¹⁷. Thus in the context of the Transborder tribes, a number of questions had been raised and satisfactory replies have never been provided. What are the conditions that determine whether or not one group will emerge into another, or will established or reestablished and redefine its identity? There are a good number of aspects like political, economic, cultural and religious that will have to be taken into consideration, as also the historical circumstances at any given point of time.

Such is an attempt of my work to show how the political leadership simplify, distort, and select those which are politically useful rather than central to

¹⁶ Paul Brass, *op cit.*, p. 69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

the belief systems of the people in question¹⁸. This should not however lead one to discard the Primordial thinking as absurd, because, in any discourse on ethnicity the cultural content always runs through. Many Primordialists concede that some aspects of culture are changeable and that the boundaries of ethnic groups may be shifted in the course of social and political Movements that promote their interests, they stand firm on one point, namely that distinctive cultures or origin or myths...¹⁹. Such an understanding of ethnicity necessitates a high degree of consensus within the community, though the symbols used to define its boundaries have varied depending upon the Leadership who have done the defining. There is scope for free manipulation of cultural symbols by the leadership where primordial symbols are brought forth into the political arena in a game of symbol selection and symbol manipulation. Ethnicity is not 'given' but is social and political construction is an understanding that appears to the explanation of the problem of the study, but would be an error if the aspects of 'primordial' attachments were altogether ignored.

Paul Brass brings out the three ways of defining ethnic groups: in terms of objective attributes, with reference to subjective feelings, and in relation to behavior. There must be some distinguishing cultural feature that clearly separates one group of people from another namely, language, territory, religion, color, diet, dress, etc. The difficulty in such an objective statement is that of determining the boundaries of ethnic categories in this way. In the subjective understanding it is difficult to answer the basic question of how a group of people arrive at subjective consciousness in the first place. The Behavioral definition assumes that there are

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

specific, concrete ways in which ethnic groups behave or do not behave, particularly in relation to and in interaction with other groups. Behavioral definition merely suggests that there are cultural differences between ethnic groups, but that. The critical distinctions reveal themselves only in interaction with other groups. The answer to the complexity of ethnic issues in Manipur can be explained by the assumption of the vintage point of the three definitional understandings. In the case of this work, the importance of the 'instrumentalist' understanding and that of the 'Behavioral' understanding will definitely be relied upon. Thus, ethnicity is reduced to a basic assumption- a Demographic struggle for power.

An 'inter-ethnic war of numbers' is taking place, the goal of which is to increase the political power of an ethnic group relative to other groups, by increasing that specific group's population. This inter-ethnic war of numbers is thus a Democratic struggle for power is an attempt of Milica Zarkovic Bookman to answer three crucial answers:

1. What do ethnic groups think they can achieve by augmenting their numbers,
2. What methods do leaders of ethnic groups actually manipulate demographic characteristics in their struggle for power,
3. How can such demographic struggles be avoided and thus potentially explosive inter-ethnic conflicts be diffused?²⁰

²⁰ Milica Z Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, Frank Cass, London, 1997, (Introduction).

These are the problems that Bookman attempted to investigate in her “The Demographic Struggle for Power”. In a multi-ethnic state, usually there emerges some ranking between the various ethnic groups. Often times, they are simply divided into majorities and minorities. The defining characteristic of a minority ethnic group is usually size: the minority group is simply the numerically the smaller ethnic group²¹. In this understanding, political minority is reduced to that of numerical subordination. In representative democracies characterized by universal suffrage, each person has one vote and power is distributed through balloting. Under the conditions, and when ethnicity is the basis for political choice, the dominant ethnic groups in society retain their power only if they retain the numerical balance in their favor²². In such a system where ethnic voting takes place, according to which members of ethnic groups vote for their ethnic leaders, ethnic considerations take precedence over economic, regional, and social considerations²³. When ethnic parties exist, the size of an ethnic group is crucial in the determination of who rules. Donald Horowitz showed this simply by dividing the population of a country into two ethnic groups, A and B. Group A comprises 60 % of the population; Group B only 40 %. If the two groups have similar rates of natural population increase and similar age structures, and if political parties form along political lines, as they often do in multi-ethnic societies, then Group A will always form the government²⁴. In such a situation, inter-ethnic political compulsion arises because politics is viewed as a Zero Sum Game in which the loss to one ethnic group is perceived as a gain to another. In the case of this

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups and Conflict*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp. 83-84.

work, the researcher is faced with a more complex situation than that of the situation given by Horowitz. The electoral compulsions faced by the Transborder tribes is due to the population composition of the various tribes as given in the table below:

Table 2.2
Ethnic Composition of 41 Chandel

Kuki	14129
Anal	11395
Lamkang	3685
Tarao	265
Chothic	841
Mon-Moyon	1919
Others (Naga)	131
Others	1226

Source: District Election Office, Chandel, 2000.

Table 2.3
Ethnic Composition of 42 Tengnoupal

Kuki-zou	13278
Nagas	14759
Others	1932

Source: District Election Office, Chandel, 2000.

The relationship between the size of an ethnic group and its political power is positive. In the political context of Manipur, the question of size and political is positive as shown in the table below:

Table 2.4
Nature of the Assembly Constituencies

<i>Region</i>	<i>Nature of ethnic groups</i>	<i>Population Electoral (1991)</i>	<i>No. of seats in the Assembly (MLA)</i>
Valley	Meiteis (Non-Tribal)	761785	40
Hills	Tribals	489878	20

Source: State Election Office, Manipur, 1995.

Throughout history, the relative size of a people has been crucial in determining its political strength and thus, the larger the ethnic group within a state the less it can be ignored. Size implies:

1. Enhanced representation in political bodies, which translates into decision making that tends to reflect the interests of that group.
2. Political legitimacy to partake in the political arena and to express ethnic demands in an organized fashion. It is on the basis of size that numerous population groups claim political legitimacy.
3. The participation in the political system.
4. The right to make demands on the political system, as some groups are of insufficient size to even be recognized in the political spectrum as groups.²⁵

This is to substantiate one's argument that the individual is inseparable from his/her background. Individuals shape their 'desires, tastes, and options and aspirations' in the background of their identity. But, those who had the advantage of being in majority or dominant not only tried to impose their own way of life on the weak, the minor and the marginalised, but also tried to derecognize them. In the historical context, the white people not only considered themselves as 'superior people', but also characterized the 'non-white' and the rest as barbarians. The situation in the modern political system is different and this will be investigated into.

²⁵ Milica Z Bookman, *op cit.*, p. 19.

Treating the political community as if made of equal citizens and homogeneous population assumes the political community to be made of the same cultural community. In reality, diverse cultural communities form the political community. French speaking Canadians and English speaking Canadians both constitute Canada. Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Moslems, and Asian migrants etc form Britain. Whites, Blacks, Asians, Migrants etc form America. Hardly any political community can be shown as made up of the same cultural community. If the cultural factor is left out then, the group basis of political life is being ignored by projecting the political community as a 'nation state'. Individual's tastes, desires, and choices are shaped in the background of his/her identity. The culture provides the individual with the background. This gives him/her the feeling of belongingness. It is a sense of security to the individual, a sense of self-confidence. Culture provides the human being with what Chandhoke says 'evaluative resources'. It helps making sense of the world. It provides 'cultural capital' to think with. It helps understanding and interpreting the world. The traditions and shared systems of meaning provided by the community supply modes of evaluation and hence cognition, cultural attaches, values to things and identity²⁶.

If National and ethnic pluralism has been the rule, not the exception, then the whole debate of what problems ethnicity, cultural community assertions, Linguistic demands etc have posed on the viability of Democracy and Governance vis-à-vis self versus the group is given for a discussion. The Marxist argument suggests that the future socialist state (before it withers away) will rest upon the firm base of proletarian unity. The Proletariat is expected to produce a homogenic

²⁶ Neera Chandhoke, *Beyond Secularism: The Rights of Religious Minorities*, Oxford University

culture, of which political life would be merely one expression. Pluralists, on the other hand, imagine a state unsupported by unity or hegemony²⁷. The arguments given above are far from recognition of a world of ethnic multiplicity. Ethno-politics has burst on the scene with such passion and violence that one cannot afford to ignore this aspect of analysis in trying to understand the political, social and cultural compulsions of it. In such a situation, the nature of the minorities, of their position vis-à-vis the dominant culture and the state and their needs are the important considerations for the advocacy of minority rights.

Ted Gurr has discussed about four important groups:

1. They are large and regionally concentrated. They live within the boundaries of one state or of several adjacent states. They are called 'Ethno nationalists' and their movement called 'micro nationalism'. Reference can be made of French Canadians, Basques, Kurds, etc
2. They are the 'indigenous peoples'/ descendants of the original inhabitants of the conquered or colonized region. The Maoris of New Zealand is a classic example of this kind of group. From exploitation and discrimination, protection of culture and language, they seek to regain as much control as possible over their lands and resources.
3. The 'communal contenders' are among a group of culturally distinct groups in plural societies that compete for a share in political power. The Chinese in Malaysia come in this category.

Press, Delhi, 1999, pp. 243-249.

²⁷ Will Kymlicka, *The Rights Of Minorities Cultures*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995, p. 145.

4. 'Ethno classes'. They want equal rights and opportunities to overcome the effect of discrimination resulting from immigration and minority status.²⁸

Kymlicka considers that category of 'minority rights' is relevant to, by and large, most societies witnessing ethno-cultural conflict. Broadly speaking, they can be put in two categories- Multinational and Polyethnic.

1. Pluralism in these societies is 'multinational' when they are the outcome of either voluntary integration of 'nations' such as in Switzerland and Belgium or involuntary such as in the U.S.A, Canada, etc.
2. 'Poly ethnicity' as the result of immigration. The USA, Canada, Britain, etc.

Kymlicka brought about the synthesis of the two given realities with the new concept of Multiculturalism. The issue of rights to the minority cultures in his view is related to the groups only. Issues raised by other groups-Lesbians, Gays, Women, etc cut across the ethnic and national lines. They can be tackled on different plane by different communities²⁹.

Parekh has identified Four different groups that have been struggling for separate and distinct identity. His classification overlaps Gurr and Kymlicka.

1. 'Indigenous peoples' like the Ameriindians, the Maoris, the Aborigines, etc, who want to preserve their distinct and largely pre-modern ways of life. They are generally bound up with the land.

²⁸ Roberts Ted Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, Westview Press Boulder, Oxford, 1994, pp. 15-56.

²⁹ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, 1995, Clarendon, Oxford, 1995.

2. Territorially concentrated and politically self-conscious communities- Francophone in Quebec, the Basques, the Britons, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, etc. They wish to preserve their distinct languages and cultures, if possible within the existing state, if not, by becoming independent.
3. Territorially dispersed but culturally distinct groups- immigrants, indigenous ethnic minorities and religious communities, etc, and
4. Group of men and women sharing in common a self-chosen life style- gays, lesbians, etc. They have evolved distinct sub-cultures within the framework of shared common culture³⁰.

From the given propositions, one is able to realize the difficulty of having to identify the Transborder communities in the political life of Manipur. They are geographically scattered communities without a significant base, and hence lack the territorial cohesion of a group that would enable them to be considered as a potential nation. Even in areas where they inhabit, the debate of 'internal minorities' is being raised and thus the question of 'Minorities within Minorities'. The Minority groups are rarely homogeneous: they often contain other Minorities. The Scots are a minority nation within the United Kingdom and the Gaelic speaking people are minorities among the Scots. The Mennonites are a religious minority, and gays are a minority among Mennonites³¹. There can be many criteria before us in order to classify any given group into a minority, which would also imply that a majority group could be further divided and thus

³⁰ Bikhu Parekh, 'Cultural Diversity and Liberal Democracy', in Gurpreet Mahajan, ed., *Democracy, Difference and Social Justice*, Oxford University Press, Dehi, 1999, pp. 202-205.

³¹ Will Kymlicka, *op cit.*, pp. 257-260.

classified as a minority. The 'minorities inflation' will lead to a realization that even in a small minority, there are many bases for minority classification- religion, culture, class, etc³². But for limitations before the Researcher, the cultural community is taken as the only unit to identify a minority. Even in this line of the research, We have the problem of the Majority versus the Minority as also the Minorities within the Minorities. In the ethnic composition of Manipur, the Meiteis constitute the majority group while the Tribals all together added up even constitute the minority group. Among the tribals, the Kukis constitute a minority group that can also be the case of any tribal group if looked from the tribal group as a whole.

In the case of the Transborder Tribes that are dispersed through out the state, they always fall in the minority group, even more a microscopic minority in any given situation. In the case of the area where this research is being attempted, a different framework will have to be provided. The Transborder tribes are constituted of different cultural communities- Anal, Lamkang, Chothe, Moyon, Monsang, Tarao, etc. For political reasons (alone), a common platform is being attempted and thus the various minority groups have united together to face the Kukis who are the Majority group, politically. This is a situation where the Majority group has been made the minority group politically. The reason why such a possibility has risen is the realization that they are relatively powerless to protect themselves. The majority is strong: the minority is not. The minorities must be organized and disciplined, though the path towards it is difficult, painful and slow in the case of the Transborder tribes of Chandel. In their case, They are

³² *Ibid.*

given a clear voice and have become stronger. They have the power to silence the majority in the society- defend themselves from the majority. As a sum up to the whole argument, the question is whether the majority has the power to subdue the minority (cultures), or whether the minority has the power to upset the status quo, and wring political concessions for itself³³.

³³ Milica Z Bookman, *op cit.*, (Introduction).

Chapter Three

Political Life of the Lamkang

Lamkang is one of the 29 tribes in Manipur recognised by the Govt. of India. The record of the origin and history of the Lamkangs have been handed down from generation to generation orally. References about Lamkang have been made by several authors prejudicially and ambitiously¹

The Country

The Lamkang people inhabit specific 28 recognised villages and 5 co-opted villages that are yet to be recognized². These villages are scattered from the Myanmar border of Chandel district to the western limit of the said district, measuring 75 to 80 km. The Lamkang Tribe is concentrated in the Sub-divisions of Chandel, Chakpikarong and Tengnoupal. The villages in the western part of the district are more concentrated than that of the east. The size of the villages is often small. An average size may consist of 20 to 60 houses. The Lamkang houses are generally *kachcha* type thatched houses. The walls are thinly mud-plastered over bamboo frames or over hill grass frames. Those who can afford, make wooden floor slightly elevated from the ground and with CIC roofings. The following is the sub-division-wise distribution of the Lamkang villages;

Chandel Sub-division:

1. Keithelmanbi 2. Purum Pantha 3. Thamlapokpi 4. Leipungtampa 5. Thamlakhuren
6. Lamkang Khunou 7. Lamkang Khunthak 8. Lamkang Khunkha 9. Lamkang

¹ Lamkang Naga Council, *The History of the Lamkang*, 1998, p.1.(unpublished)

² *Ibid.*, p.7.

Khunjai 10. Purum Lamkhaiching 11. Kongpe 12. Sektaikarong 13. Betuk Shengkreng 14. Kotal Khunthak 15. Leingangching 16. New Chayang 17. Angkhel Chayang 18. Charangching Khunkha 19. Charangching Khunou 20. Charangching Khullen 21. Mantri Pantha 22. Kurnuching 23. Komsen 24. Nungkangching 25. Challong 26. Paraolon.

Chakpikarong Sub-Division:

1. *Thumtam.*

Tengnoupal Sub-Division:

1. *Angbrasu*

The Origin

Like many names of the hill tribes, The origin of the name '*Lamkang*' is obscure. Different theories of this derivation have been given by the Lamkangs themselves. Originally, The Lamkangs called themselves and were known as '*Ksen*' meaning red/red tribe. The word '*Ksen*' was adopted to symbolize their warring nature. The word '*Lamkang*' is deemed to be a reformed word. A popular story of the origin of the Lamkang was that a '*Ksenpa*' (meaning, a Lamkang man) who was clearing a footpath in the jungle with a *Dao* was asked by a passenger - perceived to be a person having connection with the then Raja of Manipur - Who he was?. The *Ksenpa*, ignorant of the language presumed that he was asked what he was doing. Accordingly, he replied that he was making *Lam* (footpath) with *Kang* (dao). These two syllables of *Lam* and *Kang* are combined to form a single word *Lamkang* by

which he and subsequently his tribe was known.³ Besides this, There are various stories about the origin of the word ‘*Lamkang*’ though the majority of the people have accepted this as the most viable explanation.

The Lamkangs have been grouped as one of the old Kuki tribe. The Lamkangs are sandwiched between the Nagas in the north and Kuki-Chin in the south. This naturally produces constraints on their group identity⁴. An element of complication about the problem is injected by the British administrators who were themselves not sure of the identity of these tribes in relation to the bigger neighbors, Nagas in the north or the Kukis in the south. The British colonial rulers applied a broad yardstick of grouping a tribe within the Naga or the Kuki fold. The British officials who wrote on the tribes of Manipur were confused about the major identification of this tribe (Lamkang). While someone called them as Nagas, others called them as old Kuki tribe.

The Lamkangs are ethnically linked to the Kuki-Chin, but the Lamkangs have a distinctive identity. Of course, Political aspirations always are a determining factor in deciding the identity of a tribe. The Lamkangs have common political aspirations with the other Naga tribes. Any strict criteria as yardstick based on similarity and dissimilarity cannot be used to identify a particular tribe as Naga or Kuki. Apart from the physical and linguistic ground, criteria like ownership of land, nature of settlement, nature of village administration are taken into consideration in the identification of the tribe.

³Lamkang naga Council, *Abridged History of the Lamkang*, LNC, 1999, p. 2. (unpublished)

⁴Roy Burman's Foreword in Gangmumei Kabui, *Anal: A Transborder Tribe of Manipur*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985.

The Village Polity

The Political system is confined to the village level. In the study of Naga polity, it is found that the village rather than a group of villages or a tribe is the natural unit of organization and hence the correct basis of investigation⁵. The village, rather than a group of villages or tribe, is the natural unit of organization, and therefore the proper basis of investigation⁶. Among all the Naga tribes, in the days before Christianity came to the Naga Hills, every village was not only a religious unit but also politically and economically a distinct unit. The village is an independent unit in the tribes. A Lamkang village is an indispensable social, economic, and political unit. In the pre-British period, each one of the Lamkang villages, was as good as an independent state. The administrative system of the Lamkangs is an age old institution based on customs and traditions and expression of the Lamkang genius.⁷

In the earliest period of their migration, the administration of the village was carried out by traditional Lamkang heroes like *Benglam, Setnoi, Thamsen, Thamnok*, and so on. They were national heroes who protected the Lamkang country. They were physically strong, skilled in military art and endowed with a strong sense of justice. They are expected to be leaders of their people against any external invasion.⁸ They are also responsible for the settlement of all disputes that may arise within the territorial jurisdiction of the village. Naga society presents a varied pattern of near-

⁵ M Horam, *The Naga Polity*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1975, p. 60.

⁶ T C Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur*, Neeraj Publishing House, Delhi, 1981 (Reprint), p. 74.

⁷ Lamkang Naga Council, op cit., 1998, p. 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

dictatorial and extreme democracy. There is a system of hereditary Chieftainship among the *Semas* and the *Changs*. The *Konyaks* have very powerful Chiefs or *Angs* who are regarded as sacred and whose word is law: before the greatest of them no commoner may stand upright. The *Aos*, however, have bodies of Elders who represent the main family groups in the village and the *Angamis*, *Lothas*, *Rengmas*, and others are so democratic that in the case of the *Angamis*, it is difficult to comprehend how in view of their peculiar independence of character, their village held together at all before the coming of the British government. The *Angamis* have a very open system. They did not have a council. Any matter under dispute was taken before a meeting resembling the Swiss democracy. A capable leader usually opened the proceedings in which every villager had the right to take part in the proceeding/discussion. On the other, There was monarchical form of government that existed amongst the *Konyaks*, *Semas*, *Thadou-kukis* etc. These villages were entirely governed by the chiefs who were also bound by the various customary laws of their people.⁹

The Traditional political system among the hill people of Manipur may be broadly discussed under two types; the Authoritarian type and the Republican type.

The Authoritarian polity existed among the Kuki-Chin tribe, though a section of them believe that '*Zomi*' is the original name, in which the power of administration and control was concentrated in a single person, the chief. The Republican type of polity

⁹ (i) J H Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1921, and *The Angami Nagas*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1921. (ii) W C Smith, *The Ao Naga Tribes of Assam*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1925. (iii) F Haimendorff, *The Naked Naga*, Mithuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1939. (iv) T C Hodson, *op cit.* (v) M Horam, *op cit.* (iv) R R Shimray, *Origin and Culture of Nagas*, New Delhi, 1985.

prevailed among the Nagas. Contrary to the above political organization, the Meiteis had a monarchy with the Maharaja as its head. In the Lamkang society, there existed from the very beginning a Republican form of government. The Lamkangs had no love and regard for monarchy. The ablest and the wisest ruled the society and were chosen on the basis of merit such as intellect, influence, and wealth. Sir James Johnstone wrote, "while the Kukis are monarchist, the Nagas are republican, and their permeates or chiefs are elected, and though they often have great influence, they are in theory only *primus-inter-pares*, and are liable at any time to be displaced."¹⁰ The whole political system of the Lamkangs is centered round the village council. Traditionally, the Lamkang village administration is conducted by a council of elders (*Khuw-Kver*). The chief and the *Khulpu* were always accompanied by a host of others. The village elders were always called and consulted by the chief of the village. And the spirit behind the system was highly democratic, it was a rule through the consent of the people that it looks as though the traditional political system of the Lamkangs was marked by the absence of the idea of a chief. In the traditional polity of the Kuki-Chin tribes, the chief was the supreme head of the council. The councilors were elected by the chief and were rewarded with the most fertile *jhum* land and were also exempted from forced labor. Thus, the chief and the councilors in a sense constituted a privileged group in the society¹¹. The entire law and village belonged to the chief and it was he who distributed the *jhum* land for cultivation to the villagers.

¹⁰ James Johnstone, *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*, London, 1896 pp. 7-15.

¹¹ Lal Dena, ed., *History of Modern Manipur (1826-1949)*, Orbit Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 116-117.

Nevertheless, the chief occupied a very important position in the administration of the village. The chief could not exercise his power without the approval of the council of elders. He could assume office as long as he enjoyed the confidence and consent of his villagers. The Chieftainship in the Lamkang society was not strictly hereditary. They were chosen by the people and approved by the outgoing chief. At time, the Chiefship went from the father to the son, because of the efficiency and popularity of the father, as also the confidence of the villagers on the son to carry out the role of office as done by his father. There were no particular terms and conditions about the tenure of the chief and his councilors. They remained as long as the villagers had confidence in them. However, with the introduction of the Village Authority Act, the tenure has been fixed at 5 years. The chief is not an ordinary person who should possess extraordinary quality and qualification in respect of the land, tradition and customs. The chief was obliged to accept the advice of the council of the village. The responsibilities of a chief are manifold. Only a capable man can control and administer the village as well as command love and respect of the village. And he is given these in good measure. But there are also provisions in the Naga polity for the removal of a chief from office for reasons such as dishonesty, lapse of duty, despotism, general insufficiency, etc.

The Village Council

The village council is the principal organ of village administration - a democratic method for the administration of the village. All disputes, quarrels, and complaints were settled by a meeting of the elders of the village presided over by the

chief. Their decisions were final and binding. The Manipur Hill Peoples (Administration) Regulation, 1947 and The Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas Act, 1956 necessitated that in each village of about 20 tax paying houses or over, a village authority should be constituted, consisting of the Chief (*Khullakpa*) with his council of elders in accordance with the customs of the village. The authority of the chief, however, is not absolute. Though the power to govern is vested in the chief, he rules with the aid of the elected councilors (generally are representatives of clans residing in the village). The village council gives a fair, effective, and constitutional (popular) check on the powers of a chief.

In the case of the Kuki-Chin tribes the council could exercise little or no power because “all people living there (in the village) are subjects to the chief, and only by moving away can they escape his control. But in the subsequent years, The Acts (of 1947 and 1956) reduced the powers of the chief. The village chief with his council of elders used to decide all cases within the village according to the customary laws of the people. However, after the introduction of these Acts, the powers and functions of the village chiefs have slightly declined. The regulations provide little room for the village authority in the administration of the village. Though the regulation also provides judicial powers to the village authority, the village authority court is not the final court.¹²

The Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas Act, 1956 provided that, a village of 20 to 60 tax paying houses shall have 5 members; or, a village comprising of 60 to 100 tax paying houses shall have 7 members; or, a village with 100 to 150

¹² (i) Asok Kumar Ray, *Authority and Legitimacy*, Renaissance, Delhi, 1990. (ii) Lal Dena, *op cit*.

tax paying houses shall have 10 members; or, a village with more than 150 tax paying houses shall have 12 members in the village authority councils respectively. The office of the village authority has been elective. This has to a great extent questioned the Thadou-Kuki Traditional structure, but, on the other hand provided legality to the already existing practice of the Lamkang polity.

Traditionally, the village council was responsible for the administration of the village, tried cases within the village, and settled the disputes within the village. It is also responsible for the defense of the village. But, after the Acts of 1947 and 1956, The village authorities were reduced to insignificance by keeping them as merely watching and reporting authorities in matters of all crimes, violent death and serious accident occurring within their jurisdiction or beyond. They collected house taxes for onward transmission to the government. Whatever may be, The village council is the principal organ of the village. The members of the council are either elected or appointed. Women do not have the right to be elected as Councilors. The functions of the village council even today are broadly Executive, Administrative, and Judicial. The council is the real body in whom the highest power of the village-state is vested. The village council consists of:

1. Khullakpa 2. Luplakpa 3. Ningthou 4. Senapati 5. Mantri 6. Chinsanglak 7. Khulchal 8. Yupal 9. Pakhanglak 10. Meitei Lambu 11. Lanching 12. Naharak 13. Ningol lak 14. Shelung 15. Thougai and 16. Changloi.

Source: The Lamkang Naga Council, 1996.

The Lamkang Naga Council

The Lamkang Naga Council consists of the chiefs and secretaries of the Lamkang villages as along the outgoing president and secretary of the LNC. The executive of LNC consists of:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Joint-secretary
5. Treasurer
6. Social and Cultural secretary
7. Publicity secretary.

The objectives of the LNC are:

1. To safeguard and promote the rights and interests of the Lamkang people.
2. To research, promote, codify, and preserve the intrinsic custom and culture of the Lamkang people/tribe.
3. To see to the development and welfare of the Lamkang people.
4. To settle disputes that may arise.
5. To promote the language and literature etc.¹³

The LNC has executive, administrative, and judicial functions. The LNC coordinates the functions of the various authorities; settle disputes among the units or

¹³ *Constitution of Lamkang Naga Council*, 1999, pp. 2-3.

between any unit and others or even among individuals. It interprets the customary law of the tribe.

Table 3.1
The Past and Present LNC Office Bearers

	<i>1990-93</i>	<i>1993-96</i>	<i>1996-99</i>	<i>1999-2002</i>
President	Th. Wangshul	Kh. Beshot	D. Ringo	D. James
Vice-president		D. Darmeng	Ss. Anglun	Sk. Bunghon
Secretary	Sn. Bunghon	D. Ringo	Sk. Shemi	K. Beshui
Joint-Secretary		Ss. Beshot	Jv. Darshot	Jv. Athing
Music & Culture Secretaty				Ss. Angpol
Finance	Sn. Bunghon	Lv. Thamchut	Sk. Kosmon	Kh. Angshel
Publicity Secy				Sk. Moses

Source: Lamkang Naga Council, Press Release, March, 2000.

Lamkang in the Electoral Politics

The political characteristic of the Lamkangs may be broadly looked at through their social organisation:

1. Political association based on clan lineage
2. Political association based on the village as a unit
3. Political association of a group of a villages of a territory.

The Lamkang political pattern may be viewed along with their political institution. The political structure focuses on certain individuals (Leadership) too. Thus, the institution and the political individuals exercise the political control over the members of the community.

In post-Independent period, the inauguration of statutory village Authority Acts gave a set back to the traditional political system. The headman was now elected and any village could seek election. Now local leaders have come forward to lead the

villagers in the changed democratic set up of Manipur. A few intelligent and newly educated individuals tried to every opportunity to popularize themselves to get the leadership and thus competing leadership emerged as new village leader posed a thread to the traditional leaders. Thus, the accommodation of the traditional village chiefs along with the leaders of the Lamkang Naga council is a consensual accommodation of the competing within the tribe.

With the emergence of the new institutions and their leaders, some of the erstwhile traditional leaders of the tribe tried to swim with the new current, as there was fear of being drowned in the oblivion of the village masses. Some of such leaders have greatly succeeded in the sense that they proved effective in establishing important links the old and the new ideas, values, and institutions and thus operated in the traditional and modern institutions and social structures. In the Lamkang, the leaders are more important as the people have staunch belief and faith in them. They determine the course of political action and its members follow it. The leaders could be grouped in different categories:

1. Village level leaders
2. Sub-regional leaders (read Eastern Lamkang and Western Lamkang)
3. Lamkang Naga Union level

Thus, the political mobilization (read, election) can be identified at these levels. With the outbreak of Naga-Kuki tensions and electorate politics being manifested as a political 'zero-sum game' there was not much of scope of voting free conscience.

Table 3.2
Comparison of the Lamkang with the total Electarate, 41 Chandel

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Electorate</i>	<i>Lamkang</i>
1990	27112	3053
1995	29909	3372
2000	34002	3685

Source: Compiled from the Electoral list, District Election Office Chandel, 1989, 1995 and 2000.

Table 3.3
Comparison of the Lamkang with the total Electarate,42 Tengenoupal

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Electorate</i>	<i>Lamkang</i>
1990	26244	272
1995	28625	216
2000	32329	235

Source: Compiled from the Electoral list, District Election Office Chandel, 1989, 1995 and 2000.

The Lamkang people constitute the third largest ethnic group in 41 Chandel Assembly constituency. The Lamkang electorate is in no position to determine the electoral history of the constituency. In the 42 Tengenoupal Assembly constituency, the Lamkang electorate commands no significance. An instance of a candidate in the election of 1974 in Chandel can be cited where he managed to secure a mere 10% of the electoral mandate. In the final analysis, the Lamkangs play the role of an insignificant minority group in the electoral politics of the two constituencies. The candidates from the major groups, namely, the Anal and the Kuki community have always emerged as the successful candidates. Thus as a community the Lamkang electorate are reduced to the role of casting their votes as good citizens for the candidates of their choice.

Chapter Four

The Transborder Tribes in Electoral Politics

Objective

The objective of this chapter is an attempt to explore and assess:

1. The political factor which influence the election.
2. The factor that affected the choice of a candidate.
3. The importance attached to local issues, vis-a-vis broad national or regional issues.
4. The strength of affiliation to party, ethnic and religion.
5. Campaigning and political participation.
6. The role-played by the local leader in the electoral politics.

Introduction

The framework of this study assume the basic understanding that an 'inter-ethnic' war of number is taking place, the goal of which is to increase the political power of an ethnic group relative to others groups by increasing that specific group's population.¹In such an understanding, there are two very basic question that run through:

1. What do ethnic groups think they can achieve by augmenting their numbers.

¹ Milica K. Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, Frank Cass, London, 1997. Introduction

2. What methods do leaders of ethnic groups actually manipulate demographic characteristic in their struggle for power?²

But, such question can be raised only in specific territorial units where the composition is multi-ethnic groups, thus, naturally will emerged some ranking between the various ethnic groups. Often times, they are simply divided into majorities and minorities. The defining characteristics of a majority ethnic group is usually the size: the minority group is simply the numerically the smaller ethnic group. In this understanding, political minority is reduced to that of numerical minorities.³ This can be referred to that of Manipur where the dominant Meitei populations have power to their favor.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

Table 4.1
Meitei and Tribal Assembly Constituencies, 1995

<i>SL</i>	<i>Meiteis</i>	<i>Electorate</i>	<i>SL</i>	<i>Tribals</i>	<i>Electorate</i>
1	Khundrakpham	18146	1	Chandel	30392
2	Heingang	20025	2	Tengnoupal	26833
3	Khurai	20929	3	Phungyar	18555
4	Khetrigao	21900	4	Ukhrul	25016
5	Thongju	20590	5	Chingai	27126
6	Keirao	18259	6	Saikul	23796
7	Andro	21056	7	Karong	34910
8	Lamlai	18017	8	Mao	36061
9	Thangmeiband	20644	9	Tadubi	31338
10	Uripok	15661	10	Kangpokpi	22312
11	Sangolband	18030	11	Saitu	26418
12	Keishamthong	20613	12	Tamei	21970
13	Singjamei	16070	13	Tamenglong	18031
14	Yaiskul	18617	14	Nungba	15516
15	Wangkhei	25771	15	Tipaimukh	12779
16	Sekmai	17638	16	Thanlon	15588
17	Lamsang	20163	17	Henglep	18880
18	Konthoujam	19616	18	Churachandpur	31047
19	Patsoi	20881	19	Saikot	32897
20	Langthabal	17756	20	Singhat	20413
21	Naoriya Pakhang Lakpa	22001			
22	Wangoi	17036			
23	Mayang Imphal	18318			
24	Nambol	20771			
25	Oinam	18218			
26	Bishnupur	19695			
27	Moirang	24229			
28	Thanga	15389			
29	Kumbi	19046			
30	Lilong	18455			
31	Thoubal	19907			
32	Wangkhem	19103			
33	Heirok	19073			
34	Wangjing Tendha	19676			
35	Khangabok	20986			
36	Wabagai	18492			
37	Kakching	18933			
38	Hiyanglam	17662			
39	Sugnu	19036			
40	Jiribam	21777			

Source: State Election Office, Govt of Manipur, 1995.

A simple understanding of the table given above will only reveal that the relative size of a people is crucial in determining its political strength. Thus, with respect to political power, the larger the ethnic group within a state, the less it can be ignored. Size therefore implies:

1. Enhanced representation in political bodies, which translates into decision making that tends to reflect the interests of that group.
2. Political legitimacy to partake in the political arena and to express ethnic demands. It is on this basis of size that numerous population groups claim political legitimacy.
3. The right to make demands on the political system, as some groups are of insufficient size to even be recognized in the political spectrum as groups.⁴

But the crux of the problem this work attempts to look into is that, in electoral constituencies, where electoral contests are reduced to candidates within a particular group of an ethnic group, that issue of politics and ethnic assertion does not come into foreplay. This has been the case of almost all the electoral constituencies in Manipur. Even in constituencies where the composition of numerous ethnic groups is, the assertion of a major ethnic group has been identified very clearly that the minor groups are reduced to performing the role of a wretched second. It is on this assertion that the Komrem tribes are not included in this study for even if they had all the criterions of a Transborder tribe, they are so dispersed that they are in no position to

⁴ *ibid* p.19

Perform any credible role in the electoral politics. It is also a fact that the Komrems in wherever they live very often sympathize with the Kukis in electoral politics. The electoral politics of Chandel poses a very interesting area of inquiry. It presents an opportunity for the ethnic assertion of the minor tribes to articulate a common identity and platform, for when added together have the potential to harvest the benefits of a politically dominant ethnic group.

When ethno-polities persists in the political horizon, the size of an ethnic group is crucial in the determination of who rules. Horowitz showed this simply by dividing the population of a country (read, electoral constituency) into two ethnic groups, A and B. Group A comprises 60% of the population; B only 40%. If the two groups have similar rates of natural population increase and similar age structures, and if political parties form along ethnic lines as they often do in multi-ethnic societies, then group A will always form the government.⁵ This is a simplistic explanation in a given territorial location, but, has not touched the actual explanation of Chandel. In this case, electoral political compulsions arise out of a different situation for the population will read like this; group A has 40%, B 30%, C 15%, D 10% and E 5%. In such a situation, groups B, C, D and E can always come together under a common and consensual platform to defeat the major group A. Of course, the path undertaken by these minority groups towards a common platform of identity could be hard, painful and slow.

⁵ Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflicts*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985 pp.83-84

Electoral Studies

Party system is but a byproduct of the social system. The nature of the cleavages or contradictions in a given society and the general level of its economic development largely influence the type of party system that will prevail in the society. The social composition comprises these divisions in society that are based on variables such as religion, language, race, caste, economic class and the like.⁶ Generally, historical experience points to the preponderance of the economic variable over other variables in determining the socio-political process. Social differentiation in terms of class is the reflection of the pattern of relationship based on control over the economic resources of a society, his control being exercised in the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of those resources. Control over economic resources has spin-off benefits in other 'non-economic' field as well as in as much as it gives access to education, culture, entertainment and power. Thus other factors being equal, the economic factor is determinant of the power patterns in society. Other variables such as caste, language, race or religion usually cluster round the class variable.⁷

But in the politics of Manipur (especially in multi-ethnic Chandel), 'Ethnic' remains the constant and dominating factor as politics is organized along ethnic lines. The mobilization is based on communal support/ethnic assertion especially after the Naga-Kuki conflict in 1992-93. The electoral contest become the rallying point of ethnic groups to realize who is dominant. In a situation, where various

⁶ V.M. Sirikar and L.Fernandes, *Indian Political Parties*, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1984, p. 29.

⁷ *ibid*

degrees of tension exist between the plain people and the hill tribes and among the hill tribes ... inter se (read, the Nagas and the Kukis).⁸ The process of elections and political development looks interesting.

Parliamentary Elections

For the Lok Sabha, Manipur is allotted two seats, one for the Meiteis and the other for Tribals. The whole of Manipur is divided into two parliamentary constituencies whose boundaries were changed from time to time. Earlier, the Inner Lok Sabha constituencies consisted of 16 Assembly constituencies and the other Manipur Parliamentary constituencies. In 1972, the boundaries of the two constituencies were changed. The Inner Lok Sabha constituency consisted of 32 Assembly constituencies and the outer 28.

⁸ Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers of the Mist : Tales of war and peace from India's North-East*, Viking, 1994, pp.349-354

Table 4.2
Parliamentary Constituencies, 2000

SL.	Assembly constituencies for Inner Lok Sabha (Unreserved)	SL.	Assembly constituencies for outer Lok Sabha (Reserved)
1	Khundrakpham	1	Heirok
2	Heingang	2	Wangjing Tentha
3	Khurai	3	Khangabok
4	Khetrigao	4	Wabagai
5	Thongju	5	Kakching
6	Keirao	6	Hiyanglam
7	Andro	7	Sugun
8	Lamlai	8	Jiribam
9	Thangmeiband	9	Chandel
10	Uripok	10	Tengnonpal
11	Sangolband	11	Phungyar
12	Keishamthong	12	Ukhrul
13	Singjamei	13	Chingai
14	Yaikul	14	Saikul
15	Wangkhei	15	Karong
16	Sekmai	16	Mao
17	Lamsang	17	Tadubi
18	Konthoujam	18	Kangkokpi
19	Patsoi	19	Saitu
20	Langthabal	20	Tamei
21	Naonya Pakhang Lakpa	21	Tamenglong
22	Wangoi	22	Nungba
23	Mayang Imphal	23	Tipaimukh
24	Nambol	24	Thanlon
25	Oinam	25	Henglep
26	Bishnupur	26	Churachandpur
27	Moirang	27	Saikot
28	Thanga	28	Singhat
29	Kumbi		
30	Lilong		
31	Thoubal		
32	Wangkhem		

Source: State Election Office, Government of Manipur, 2000.

Outer Parliamentary Elections

The Ethnic composition of the Outer Parliamentary Constituency is given in the table below:

Table 4.3

The Ethnic composition of Outer Parliamentary Constituency

SL	Meitei Assembly Constituencies	Electorate	SL	Tribal Assembly Constituencies	Electorate
1	Heirok	19073	1	Chandel	30392
2	Wangjing Tentha	19676	2	Tengnonpal	26833
3	Khangabok	20986	3	Phungyan	18555
4	Wabagai	18492	4	Ukhrul	25016
5	Kakching	18933	5	Chingai	271267
6	Hiyanglam	17662	6	Saikul	23796
7	Sugnu	19036	7	Kanong	21970
8	Jiribam	21777	8	Mao	18031
			9	Tadubi	15516
			10	Kangkokpi	12779
			11	Saitu	15588
			12	Tamei	21970
			13	Tamenglong	18031
			14	Nungba	15516
			15	Tipaimukh	12779
			16	Thanbo	15588
			17	Henglep	18880
			18	Churachandpur	31047
			19	Sailot	32897
			20	Singhat	20413
		155635			422723
		26.9%			73.1%

Source: State Election Office, Government of Manipur, 1995

The Meitei electorate of the 8 assembly constituencies which constitute about 26.9% of the total electorate in the outer parliamentary constituency can only vote but not have the right to contest because it is reserved for the schedule tribes. It is basically on this ground that the Meitei electorates have always called for a review by the election commission. None the less, the Meitei electorate has always performed their duty as good citizen by voting during the parliamentary elections despite their unhappiness with the present arrangements. The tribal electorate has been mobile on ethnic lines after the Kuki-Naga clash in 1992-93. Thus much of the excitement, electorate campaigning and activities is witness more in the Meitei constituencies, for, given the ethnic composition of the tribal constituencies, there was not much of scope for candidates belonging to one ethnic community eliciting electoral support in areas inhabited by other ethnic groups. Thus, the Meitei vote would decide on who will emerge at the end of the day.

The campaigning is almost reduced to poster and wall paintings. The candidates also resort to community meetings at the Leikai level, though, door to door campaigning has now been resorted to as it proved more effective. But, the parliamentary elections did not generate much heat, as the courtship candidates have to cover large area. In areas, which are not connected with proper roads/communication, it is usually the supporters though mostly the household members of the candidates who go on campaign for eliciting the popular electorate support. The safest path would be to get in touch with the 'local notables' who command some followings in specific region/areas.

The street corner meetings are held particularly after sunset. The candidates and their supporters proceed from place to place particularly in the valley and meetings. The meetings are usually very short, for, the candidates would be interested in covering as much area as possible. Slogan shouting in general is not usually resorted to, while processions are occasionally resorted to jeeps, lorries, auto-rickshaws and more so cycle processions to show the candidates winning capabilities. The vehicles are fitted with loud speakers and decorated with party flags and the portrait of the candidates. But, this is a costly affair.

In the hills, the Naga electorate boycotted the parliamentary elections for the second consecutive time (1998 & 2000) Thus, the parliamentary electorate contest was reduced to area where the Kuki and Zomi tribes inhabited. It was a foregone conclusion that the candidate from the Kuki ethnic community would emerge successful.

Table 4.4
Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 1998

<i>Name of candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Vote Polled</i>
Kim Gangte	CPI	97007
Meijinlung Kamson	INC	30985
Holkhomang Haokip	BJP	94516
P.T.Haokip	SP	4412
S.Hrangchal	RJD	32315
Soso Lorho	MSC	58384

Source: State Election Office, Government of Manipur, 1998.

Table 4.5

Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 2000

<i>Name of candidates</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes Polled</i>	<i>%age of votes polled</i>
Holkhomang	NCP	120559	26.73
R. K. Theko	INC	91750	20.35
Soso Lorho	MSCP	69030	15.31
Thangkhangin	IND	57679	12.79
T. S. Gangte	CPI	35337	7.84
Kim Gangte	JD (U)	28507	6.32
Gaidon Kamei	FPM	21689	4.81
Selkai Hrangchal	RJD	15645	3.47
Meijinlung Kamson	BJP	9110	2.02
Thangkhanpau	AJBP	1013	0.22
Daili Mao	IND	643	0.14

Source: State Election Office, Government of Manipur, 2000.

In 41 Chandel and 42 Tengnoupal Assembly constituencies, the Naga people boycotted the parliamentary elections. The participation of the Naga people was very negligible as it would run into a negligible 100 or more. The Kuki people on the other hand saw an all out contest between Kim Gangte and Holkhomang Haokip in the election.

Table 4.6

Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 41 Chandel Constituency, 1998

<i>Name of Candidates</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes Polled</i>
Kim Gangte	CPI	5182
Meijinlung Kamson	INC	106
Holkhomang Haokip	BJP	7778
P.T. Haokip	SP	269
S.Hrangchal	RJD	121
Soso Lorho	MSC	30

Source: District Election Office, Government of Manipur, 1998.

Table 4.7

Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 41 Chandel Constituency, 2000

Name of Candidates	Party	Votes Polled
Kim Gangte	JD (U)	145
Gaidon	FPM	205
T.S. Gangte	CPI	126
R.K.Theko	INC	234
Meijinglung	BJP	2
S.Hrangchal	RJD	2
Soso Lorho	MSCP	23
Thangkhampau	AJBP	15
Holkhomang	NCP	13,946
Dali Mao	IND	1
Thangkhangin	IND	47

Source: District Election Office, Government of Manipur, 2000.

Table 4.8

Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 42 Tengnoupal, 1998

Name of Candidates	Party	Votes Polled
Kim Gante	CPI	5557
Meijinglung Kamson	INC	340
Holkhomang Haokip	BJP	6635
P.T. Haokip	SP	1392
S.Hrangchal	RJD	552
Soso Lorho	MSC	142

Source: District Election Office, Government of Manipur, 1998.

Table 4.9

Result of Outer Parliamentary (Reserved) Election, 42 Tengnoupal, 2000

<i>Name of Candidates</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes Polled</i>
Kim Gangte	JD (U)	597
Gaidon Kamei	FPM	154
T.S.Gangte	CPI	319
R.K.Theko	INC	1089
Meijinglung Kamson	BJP	137
S.Hrangchal	RJD	118
Soso Lorho	MSCP	582
Thangkhan pau	AJBP	11
Holkhomang	NCP	13,452
Dali Mao	IND	8
Thangkhingin	IND	5

Source: District Election Office, Government of Manipur, 2000.

The study of the parliamentary elections reveals the fact that political mobilization has definitely gone the ethnic lines. The popular Kuki vote that has been divided in 1998 swung in favor of Holkhomang in 1999. The support of the Meiteis electorate in favor of Kim Gangte in 1998 and then Holkhomang in 1998 has ethnic implications, though a deeper analysis should have been made for such a generalization. Nevertheless, the study of the parliamentary elections reveals only the tip of the politics of ethnicity, and the study of the elections to the state Assembly in 41 Chandel and 42 Tengnoupal constituencies will reveal the dynamics of minority struggle within the political life of Manipur.

Electoral Politics in Chandel

The Tengenoupal district was carved out on May 13, 1974 out of the erstwhile central district. It was a district having been carved out as such for ensuring administrative convenience, and in 1981, has been renamed as Chandel, which is the district headquarter. The district is bounded on the north by the central district; on the east by the east district; on the south by Burma (Myanmar); on the west by Myanmar. It covers about a seventh of the total area of the state (about 3313 sq. km in size). Large tracts in the region are hilly and sparsely populated, are relatively less developed and are inhabited to a large extent by people belonging to various tribal groups.

Table 4.10
Area and Population by District, 1991

Sl.	Name of the District	Area (in sq. km)	Population
1	Imphal	1303	707184
2	Thoubal	405	290393
3	Bishenpur	530	179903
4	Senapati	3271	206933
5	Churachandpur	4570	176043
6	Ukhrul	4544	109952
7	Tamenglong	4391	85572
8	Chandel	3313	70734

Source: Census of India, 1991, series 1, Final Population Table, India.

Chandel district is the least populated district in Manipur, and is also one of the least developed districts in the state. The district is made up of 4 sub-divisions; chandel, Tengenoupal, Machi, and Chakpikarong. The Tengenoupal and Chakpikarong sub-divisions have Moreh and Khengjoi as respective Tehsils.

Table 4.11

Administrative units of Chandel District, 1991

Sl.	Name of the Sub-Division	Headquarters	No. of villages
1	Tengnoupal	Tengnoupal	56
	Moreh (Tehsil)	Moreh	15
2	Machi	Machi	49
3	Chakpikarong	Chakpikarong	108
	Khengjoi (Tehsil)	Khengjoi	62
4	Chandel	Chandel	85

Source: Census of India, 1991, District Census Handbook, Manipur.

Electoral Arena

The Chandel District falls under two constituencies (41. Chandel and 42. Tengnoupal) in the elections for members of the Manipur State Assembly, and, in the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency in the elections for members of Parliament.

Table 4.12

Nature of the Constituencies, 41 Chandel and 42 Tengnoupal

<i>Constituencies</i>	<i>Hill</i>	<i>Valley</i>	<i>General</i>	<i>SC</i>	<i>ST</i>
41. Chandel	1				1
42. Tengnoupal	1				1

The electoral studies of Chandel could be broadly divided into Two phases; 1967-90, and otherwise (1995-2000). Such an attempt looks to be one of an endeavor to bring out the various forces that have played vital roles in the process of group formation that in turn led to the formation or break-up of groups from time to time. In the first phase (1967-90), It will be wrong to write that the voting pattern did not have

ethnic tendencies, though we can comfortably put into record that ethnicity played a very negligible role. Of course, Playing on clan lines (Anal: Mosum and Mulchal/Kukis: Haokip and others etc) as also on primordial sentiments brought dividends that one would have to analyze in depth on this aspect if an attempt is being made to study the electoral politics of Chandel.

Table 4.13

Result of Assembly Election, 21 Tengenoupal, 1967.

<i>Sl</i>	<i>Name of the Candidates</i>	<i>Name of the party</i>	<i>Votes polled</i>	<i>In %</i>
1.	Paokhohang	IND	17917	30.9
2.	K. Leithil	IND	8725	28.5
3.	SK. Neisheil	IND	8428	19.1
4.	N. Mono	IND		18.3
5.	K. Hrangbung	INC		3.3

Source: V. B.Singh and Shankar Bose, *Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections, 1972-85*, Vol 3, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

In the election of 1967, the then district of Tengenoupal had one assembly constituency. In the election, Paokhohang Haokip a candidate belonging to the Kuki community won the contest.

41 Chandel, 1972-90

Table 4.14

Result of Assembly Election, 41Chandel, 1972-90

Year	Name of Candidates	Name of Party	Votes polled	% polled
1972	H.T Thungam	IND	13597	59.3
	L. Liankhohao	INC	10383	40.7
1974	H.T Thungam	MHU	16047	24.5
	Nula Thumsing	INC	14444	23.1
	L. Liankhohao	IND	14272	19.7
	P. Haokip	IND		18.4
	S. Lamkang	IND		14.3
1980	Satkholal	KNA	21036	24.5
	L. Angno	INC	18277	18.1
	H.T Thungam	JNP	17966	17.4
	Thangjalet	IND		11.5
	Rungshung	JNP-S		8.1
		IND-2		11.0
1984	H.T Thungam	IND	22548	22.0
	Paokhohang	KNA	20965	20.0
	Behring	ICS	20579	18.8
	Satkholal	IND		16.9
	L. Angno	INC		13.9
		IND-3		8.4
1990	Behring	JD	6653	
	H.T.Thungam	INC	6633	
	P.Haokip	ICS	5793	
	Richard Pashel	MHPC	3068	
	Satkholal	IND	2357	
	Sonkhojang	KNA	1414	
	Angking Khumlo	MPP	264	

Source: 1. V. B.Singh and Shankar Bose, *Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections, 1972-85*, Vol 3, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

2. District Election Office, Government of Manipur, 1990.

The analysis of the election in 41 Chandel (1972-90) points to an understanding that it was the major communities (Kuki and Anal) that had always

occupied the seats of power. In the political (read electorate) struggle, the minor communities were always reduced to the position of one influencing the difference between victory and defeat. It was in 1974 that candidates from the minor communities/groups (Nula Thumsing from the Mon-Monsang group/S. Lamkang from the Lamkang group) contested the elections. Nula Thumsing came second with 23.1% of the total votes polled, while S. Lamkang garnered 14.3% of the total votes polled. Still, the minor groups have not been able to wrestle the political power (read electoral mandate) from the major communities. H.T.Thungam (1972,74&84) Behring (1990) and Satkholal (1980) belonged to Anal or Kuki communities.

42 Tengnoupal, 1972-90

Table 4.15

Result of Assembly Election, 42 Tengnoupal, 1972-90

Year	Name of Candidates	Name of party	Votes polled	% polled
1972	L. Rongman	JD	9504	50.6
	Solim Baite	IND	6515	19.8
	Thongul	IND	6301	19.5
	K. Maring	MRP		9.9
1974	L. Rongman	MHU	13191	30.7
	Ng. Harmashing	INC	10683	24.4
	Tomba Maring	IND	10465	24.1
	Solim Baite	IND		20.2
	T. Chingkhathang	NCO		0.6
1980	Jainson Haokip	KNA	17990	35.2
	K. Leithil	INC	14742	24.5
	R. Koshang	IND	14352	17.7
	L. Rongman			13.1
	Haokhothang			8.6
	Cr. Dearson			1.0
1984	Jainson Haokip	IND	20986	41.5
	M. Makunga	INC	18644	38.0
	K. Leithil	MRP	18130	20.2
	K. Paolen	IND		
1990	M. Makunga	INC	11626	
	P. Haokip	INC-S	2981	
	Jainson Haokip	KNA	2371	
	Ch. Ngamching	IND	1835	
	Rongman	IND	1604	
	Lunas Alias	JD	856	

Source: 1. V. B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections, 1972-85*, Vol 3, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

2. District Election Office, Government of Manipur, 1990.

42 Tengnoupal Assembly constituency displayed the same trend of political development as in 41 Chandel Assembly constituency. The election between 1972 and 1990 if not mobilised purely on ethnic lines showed that it was always the

candidates from the two major communities (Maring and Kuki) who won the electoral contests: L.Rongman (1972&74), Jainson Haokip (1980&84) and Makunga (1990). In the same trend of political development as in 41 Chandel Assembly constituency, Ng.Harmashing (from the Mon-Monsang communities) came second with 24.4% of the total votes polled in the election of 1974. Otherwise the minor groups are in no situation to throw any challenge towards the major groups in the electoral politics of the constituency. In1990, Ch. Ngamching secured 1835 votes which was insignificant so as to influence any outcome to their advantage.

Electoral Campaigning

Door-to-Door Canvassing

One very effective method of campaign is the door-to-door canvassing in order to elicit votes. Informal face-to-face contacts are most effective. Appeals are made on in the name of candidates, party, group, personality, and performance of the candidates. The candidates themselves move from door to door to canvass in their favour. The voting behavior is influenced by these personal contacts.

Community Feast.

An interesting and novel method of campaign. The 'opinion leaders' and important voters of a constituency are invited to the community feasts where food is served. Of course, The poor candidates cannot afford this costly method of campaigning. Sometimes at the expenses of the candidates, the community dances and festivals, the community dances and festivals are organized in different localities or villages. One is not surprised at all if a buffalo is being presented to a particular

village in lieu of the electoral support if the election falls during festival period as in 1984, that it became a fashion to bargain for the electoral support of the villagers for a fat Christmas meat.

Impact of Money

Voter bribing is an open secret. Candidates, affluent ones, or those belonging to an affluent party are alleged to have offered money to the voters/ and even in extreme cases, even candidates are bought off with money. The number of potential candidates at the time of filing their nominations are numerous, though this would go down at the time of the actual contest after bargains for fat rewards.

Election Meetings

Large gathering election meetings is very rare in this part of the world. Meetings are conducted in localities or villages where men come to hear to the electoral promises of the candidate if he comes out successful at the end of the battle. In these gatherings, the number of womenfolk who attend the meetings is very negligible or almost nil. The entourage of the candidates would arrange for a small tea party of the gathering, and, such a meeting would often start and end with prayer. These meetings do not have much influence on the opinion of the electorate, as the deal that is often made behind is very important. During the election period, It is these potential candidates who attend conferences, sporting events, festivals, and seminars and donate liberally.

Dominance of Local issues

Local issues do play a very important role in determining the sway of the electoral favor of the people of a particular region. The number of roads that is being laid, the tribe of the candidate, the personality of the candidate, the clan to which the candidate belong, the contribution (monetary, or kind) of the candidate to a particular region or village, the village or region to which the candidate comes from, etc are very important credentials that go into determining the success or failure of the candidate.

Party flags and Processions

With the remoteness of particular areas, the intensity of the campaign is inversely related. The more resourceful candidates indeed try to visit all parts of the constituency or send their campaigners, by jeep or even on foot if not, though the effectiveness of their communication with the voters narrows down on chiefly the 'local contacts'. The wall writings/poster campaigns is not very popular, while public meetings are not conducted on a large scale, Campaigning at the household/door to door level is most effective. Candidates in this part of the world hardly beg for votes on party considerations. On the other hand, there are large number of youth organisations and clubs dotted all over the area. In cultural, sporting, and not leaving religious events, the candidates are called upon in financing such events, in the bargain for their electoral support in good faith.

The personality factor

The main assumption is the importance of the party than the candidate. But, people argue that they have to get the work done from the candidate. An influential

candidate can be more of help to them than an average candidate of a good party. Good candidate when elected might be more helpful and dynamic in doing Good to the constituency. Under the circumstances, personality factor of a candidate dominates the election scene. They measure the personality and calibre of the candidate from his record of social work. The moral conducts of the candidates (Public and Private) do come under public scrutiny at the time of elections, for a dominantly Christian constituency as this, a candidate unfaithful to his family's demands is unlikely to succeed.

Women and Elections

Historically, women in Manipur have taken an active part in their political struggles. One of the major struggles against British colonial rule in this century was in 1939 (Nupilan). Though the ideology of the dominant Manipuri (Meitei and Tribal) elite had strong patriarchal elements, the women performed a major share of the household as well as in the family division of labour (Chaube, 132). Women hardly attend election meetings though the active participation of women from the households of contesting Candidates is seen. But, at the time of polling, large number of women (even larger than men) flock to the polling stations to cast their votes.

The Elections, 1995-2000

The election of 1995 was a definite departure from the previous elections; in that, The electoral battle took on ethnic/communal lines. Because of the Kuki-Naga conflict that occurred since 1992-93, the immediate effect on the electoral scene was that the elections of 1995 was one where the electoral victory of a candidate was taken as a victory of one over the other.

The Electorate in 41 Chandel constituency can be very broadly divided into two groups; the Naga group and the Kuki-Zou group. Such a grouping of the electorate will make sense when a deep analysis is done taking into consideration the social, economic, cultural, historical and political aspects as to why the study about the elections has taken a drastic departure after 1995. The aftermath of the Kuki-Naga conflict since the early 90's has its political fallout in the sense that the electoral contest has become a matter of prestige for both the groups. Such a statement looks too simple for there are many aspects that needs a deep analysis.

Table 4.16
Result of Assembly Elections, 41 Chandel, 1995-2000

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name of Candidates</i>	<i>Name of party</i>	<i>Votes polled</i>
1995	Hangkhanpao	JD	13030
	L. Benjamin	FPM	10464
	KL. Khumlo	SP	4868
	Nekhhothang	SJP	103
	Behring	INC	68
	ST. Kolari Anal	IND	51
	WS. Johnson Anal	MPP	43
	Thonglenmang	KNA	24
	Thangjalet	NPP	23
	Jangkhopao	IND	10
	2000	Hangkhanpao	RJD
Behring Anal		MSCP	11333
Rocky Anal		INC	6440
Thangkholun		BJP	1109
Chungjalen		JD-U	646
Solanki Chothe		IND	603
Nenkhothang		CPI	185
John Touthang		SP	18
Ngamlet Baite		NPP	17
Thangjalet		IND	16
Thangkholun (Langching)		MPP	11
Leo Kamchinthang		FPM	10
Chungsei Haokip		IND	1

Source: District Election Office, Chandel, Manipur, 1995-2000.

Ethnic Break-up of Chandel Constituency

Table 4.17

The Naga Group.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Anal</i>	<i>Lamkang</i>	<i>Mon-Moyon</i>	<i>Chothe</i>	<i>Tarao</i>	<i>Others</i>
1989	14939	9393	3053	1502	700	224	67
1995	16176	10096	3372	1635	712	230	131
2000	18200	11359	3685	1919	841	265	131

The Kuki-Zomi Group.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>
1989	11305
1995	12449
2000	14129

Other Groups

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Komrem</i>	<i>Others</i>
1989	868	498	370
1995	1284	323	961
2000	1673	447	1226

Source: Compiled from the Electoral list, District Election Office, Chandel, 1989, 1995 and 2000.

Comparison of the various ethnic groups is necessitated because of political mobilisation based on ethnic lines will bring us to conclude that the candidate from the Naga community would certainly emerged victorious. A trend that emerged after 1995 was an attempt by ethnic group to throw its weight of voting strength on a candidate so as to defeat an unseen candidate thrown up by the other ethnic group. Of course, there were many candidates in the fray, but the number of candidates in the fray seemed to be a part of the tactical play, which is seen more as a façade to throw the strategists of both the sides on a wrong gear.

In the election of 1995, the candidate thrown up by the Kuki-Zomi group came out victorious. The Naga vote was split between Benjamin (10464 votes) and Rocky (4868). With this division in the Naga electorate, any of the candidates belonging to the group could not emerge as the winner. This is an indication that the tribes under the Naga platform have their own contradictions and difficulties at arriving on a common and consensual understanding. Thus in 2000, there was a lot of introspection on the part of the Naga leaders. There were series of meetings of the Naga leaders through the initiative of the Chandel Naga Peoples' Organisation (CNPO) constituted of public leaders, village chiefs and volunteers. An elaborate arrangement was provided where the two Naga candidates (Behring and Rocky) who had filed their nomination for the election will have to go for an early bout to determine who would be the choice of the Naga electorate. The Naga electorate of the 41 Chandel constituency cast their votes on 10 February so as to choose their common candidates for the 12 February elections where the Naga electorate would cast their ballots for their candidates who secured the maximum support of the Naga electorate. Such an elaborate arrangement was made so as that the possibility of "a Kuki candidate was elected in 1995 and this time we (Nagas) wanted to be sure that a Naga candidate is elected". The CNPO successfully conducted the pre-election voting and the counting was done in a village (Monsang pantha) at the district headquarters. In this, Behring won comfortably and as such according to the agreement, the Naga vote would solidly go behind Behring. Such an excitement of the whole process of voting did not come up the way as was expected. The Naga vote was split, for, Rocky went on to contest the election despite the agreement. Behring garnered 11333 votes as against Rocky who got 6440 votes to his credit.

The split in the Naga agreement is often traced to the clan-divide that exists in the Anal society. Behring belonging to the Mosum clan and Rocky belonging to the Muchal clan. In such a divide, it was never easy for the Anal electorate of a particular clan accommodating the very idea of an another competing Anal clan's candidate reaping and enjoying the benefits of political victory and power. In such a situation, the Naga electorate would always be a divided camp. The Kuki electorate was divided, but Thongkholun Haokip (BJP) with about 1000 votes could not give the threat to Hangkhangpao. Never the less it showed a trend that the Kuki electorate was slowly splitting. On the whole, the election of 2000 was based on political mobilisation along ethnic lines. Hangkhangpao emerged as the winner.

42 Tengenoupal, 1995-2000

Table 4.18

Result of Assembly Elections, 42 Tengenoupal, 1995-2000

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name of Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes Polled</i>	<i>% Polled</i>
1995	M.Makunga	INC	13058	52.5
	Holkhomang	MPP	11423	45.9
	Silanki Chothe	IND	368	
2000	Onjamang Haokip	NCP	13900	45.5
	M.Makunga	INC	10018	32.8
	Korungthang	SP	5715	
	Ngamzathang	FPM	486	
	Doukhomang	MSCP	378	

Source: District Election Office, Chandel, 1995-2000.

In 1995, the Naga candidates emerged victorious while in 2000, it was the Kuki candidate who defeated the Naga candidate. It needs an inquiry as to why the

Naga group who constituted the majority of the electorate in the constituency could not throw up a winning candidate in 2000

Table 4.19

Ethnic Break-up of 42 Tengenoupal

Year	Total	Naga	Kuki	Others
1990	23862	11791	10357	1534
1995	27917	13658	12473	1789
2000	29969	14759	13278	1932

Source: Compiled from the Electoral list, District Election Office, Chandel, 1989, 1995 and 2000.

In the election of 1995, the Naga electorate went solidly behind M Makunga. On the other hand, the Kuki group also threw up the candidates of Holkhomang Haokip. In such a given situation, it was an all out contests between the Naga electorate as against the Kuki electorate. It was thus a 'zero-sum game' where the victory for the Naga group, meant the defeat for the other group. Not much of analysis required, M Makunga defeated his rival Holkhomang with a margin of 1635 votes.

Such a united stand of the Naga electorate was not present in 2000. In this case, the Naga electorate was split between M.Makunga (10018 votes) and Korungthang (5715 votes) On the other hand, the candidates of many Kuki candidates was meant as a ploy to throw the strategists of the Naga group on a wrong conclusion, that if the Kuki electorate was eminent, then, a split in the Naga electorate would still ensure the victory of any of the candidates from the Naga community.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Ethnicity is the outcome of a complexity of factors, and, such an enlargement of the scope of our inquiry will enhance the possibility of arriving at a proper understanding of the ethnic problem¹. This is an assumption based on the understanding that an ethnic group attains significance when its members share the sense of identity. In the absence of a collective identity, the group may not function as an ethnic group even though the members are characterized by common factors. It is the sense of shared identity that creates a political ethnic constituency². Thus, it is the rupture between territory and other primordial attributes that creates ethnicity.

Anthony Smith wrote, "ethnic pluralism rather than ethnic homogeneity is the norm in most of the states that emerged after the Second World War". According to him, 'most of them are composed of two or more ethnic communities, jostling for influence and power, or living in uneasy harmony within the state border'³. Suggesting the range of diversity in any given Multi-cultural society, Crawford Young gives a typology of categories that can be given:

1. Homogeneous societies
2. Single clearly dominant groups, numerically and socially with minorities.

¹ Tiplut Nongbri in P S Datta, ed., *The Northeast and the Indian State: Paradoxes of a Periphery*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1995, p.43.

² Thomson and Ronen Dav, eds., *Ethnicity, Politics and Development*, Lynne Rienner Publications, Colorado, 1986 (Introduction).

³ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1981, p.9.

3. Core culture, linked to central institutions, with differentiated groups in the peripheral zones.
4. Dominant bipolar pattern.
5. Multi polar pattern, with no dominant groups.
6. Multiplicity of cultures, with no more than one basis of differentiation (like ethnic, religion, caste and race)⁴.

Cultural Pluralism is now deeply embedded as the organizing principles for politics, and elections are crisis catalyst⁵. Thus, cultural conflict is a political factor. At the same time, its actual mobilization at any point of time is a function of political variables from the overall field of politics within which the cultural community operates. This is an implication that politicize ethnicity has become the crucial principle of political legitimation and delegitimation of systems, states, regimes and governments and at the same time has also become an effective instrument for pressing mundane interests in society's competition for power, status and wealth⁶. Cultural differences are connected into basis for political differentiation between people arises only under specific circumstances that need to be identified clearly. The precipitation of ethnic conflict under specific conditions arises from the political environment and compulsions rather than from the cultural values of the ethnic groups in question. The cultural form, values and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elite competition for political power.

Most people subscribe to this understanding of democracy that political authorities governing a particular community should be accountable to its citizens

⁴ Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, University of Wisconsin Press, London, 1976, p. 95.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.158.

⁶ Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1981, p. 2.

through periodic elections. As democracy provides for majority rule, the numerically strong group gains political power by mobilizing themselves on ethnic line⁷. The genesis of a politicized ethnicity is traced to the majority group, and Rothschild has not gone into a deeper or clearer analysis of the dynamics of minority reaction. Chaklader provided an explanation where the minority groups on the other hand, in their effort to preserve their cultural identity, economic interest, social status and more so political power, move from social space to political space and mobilize themselves on ethnic lines. Within the existing political frame, this endeavor gives them a better bargaining power⁸.

This will take us to be debate on the identity of the transborder tribes. S. T. Das in his "Tribal Life of North-Eastern India" brings to light the classification of ethnic groups in Manipur. For Shakespeare, the old Kuki tribes were not tribes but were clans of the bigger Kuki tribe. Tarakchandra Das verifies such a wrong assumption of Shakespeare by writing that they are definitely tribe and not clan.⁹ Thus, if the later generation of social scientists \ scholars assume that Transborder tribes are linked to the Kuki group because Shakespeare assumed that way, then, they have not been able to correct the malady of error of this debate. The origin of various tribes of Nagas, Kukis and others are different is a matter merely of speculation and one difficult to decide¹⁰. Thus, the most likely criteria that this analysis will consider is the path of discourse that the people themselves have undertaken¹¹ brings about

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ S Chaklader, *Minority Rights: A Socio-Linguistic Analysis of Group Conflicts in Eastern Part of India*, K P Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1987, p. 12.

⁹ S T Das, *Tribal Life of Northeastern India*, Gian Publishing House, Delhi, 1986, p. 294.

¹⁰ Ried Brown, *Statistical Account of Manipur*, Sanskaran Prakashak, Delhi, 1975, p. 2.

¹¹ Naorem Sanajaoba, *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol. 3*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 440-470, 477-482.

this old debate, this time, the debate is the viewpoint of the people themselves. The Pakan tribe is the collective name of Anals, Moyons, Monsangs, Chothes, Taraos and Lamkangs. The people themselves are at present claiming as belonging to Naga. The official declaration was made on the occasion of All Naga Students' Conference, held at Ukhrul in 1974¹². Such a cultural endeavor commands its importance because of the compulsions of electoral politics in Chandel. Ethnic identity formation is seen as a process created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political reality. Thus, the culture aspect has become the rallying point of political activity. In the multi ethnic electoral constituencies of Chandel and Tengnoupal, it becomes a big question to ponder on the very idea of 'whether the majority has the power to subdue the aspirations of minority cultures, or whether the minority has the power to upset the status quo, and wring political concessions for itself'¹³. This sums up the assumption of Paul Brass that ethnic identity is itself a variable, rather than a fixed or given disposition¹⁴.

There are generally three types of ethnic process in North-East India: dominant, calmed and active ethnicity.

1. Dormant ethnicity is 'given' or 'constant' among smaller tribes where ethnic consciousness does not go beyond ethnic quietism. This happens as in the case of various smaller tribes of Arunachal Pradesh where political consciousness has not fully penetrated as in the most interior places of the state.

¹² Ibid., pp. 440-482.

¹³ Milica Z. Bookman, *Demographic Struggle*, Frank Cass, London, 1997 (Introduction).

¹⁴ Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Sage Publications, London, 1991, p. 13.

2. Calmed ethnicity is generally marked with ethnic resentment but suppressed or calmed down by the establishment as in Meghalaya.
3. Active ethnicity (ethnic militancy) leads to Ethnonationalism as amongst the insurgent groups of the region¹⁵.

This looks good if one attempts to study the region as a generalization. But given the compulsions of social, cultural and more so political factors, the Transborder tribes are undergoing the whole process all together. It may be that the weightage given to one form of ethnicity is more than the other forms. All throughout the process, one idea of thought that runs is that the minority develops the fear of losing its cultural identity and so becomes suspicious of the majority. Thus, the minority tribes develop defense mechanisms to safeguard their rights and cultural distinctiveness.

Attempts to reduce ethnic conflicts in Democracies have been proposed by authorities all along. In this regard, Arend Lijphart has proposed a "Consociational" formula to manage the ethnic cleavages of deeply divided societies. This involves power sharing arrangements with key features: grand coalitions at the center, minority veto powers, federalism to provide some autonomy for groups to manage their own affairs, and proportionality in the distribution of legislative seats, government posts and public funds¹⁶. A compromise minded politics has been the focus of Arend Lijphart's studies of Consociationalism. In primordially divided societies, self-government requires cooperation by leaders of different groups that transcend the segmental/subcultural cleavages at the mass level. Paradoxically, elites

¹⁵ B Pakem in M M Aggrawal, ed., *Ethnicity, Culture and Nationalism in Northeast India*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1996, p. 14.

¹⁶ Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977. And Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarianism and Consensus Government in 26 Countries*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984.

must both represent their constituents. They must hold their followed loyalty but not represent their uncompromising attitudes in national negotiations. Despite the sincere attempt at the prospect of reducing ethnic conflict in Democracy, Lijphart's proposition suffers from two basic criticisms¹⁷:

1. The grand, all conclusive governing coalitions as inherently unsustainable amidst the political tensions and jealousies of deep ethnic divisions.
2. Consociational formula as least useful precisely in the most intensely conflictual circumstances, where there did not yet exist traditions of and motivations for 'accomodation'.

But one thing is clear before us that ethnic controversies will be easier to resolve if ethnic schisms do not crystallize into political factions. Ethnic disputes thus cannot always be resolved politically or even rationally. It is a fact that some of the world's most intractable problems arise when primordial ties are politicized. The political (read, electoral) arena in Chandel and Manipur in general has witnessed greater participation and more intense participation than before. Electoral mobilization and socialization is more on community/ethnic lines. The Tribes have their own Tribal unions/ councils that exert political pressure on their communities. The traditionalistic style of interest articulation and aggregation (Tribal Chiefs and their councils playing major role in garnering/influencing electoral support) with low level of communication pattern and mobility indicates one's investigation that 'Ethnicity and politics' will always go together, complementing each other.

The situation in which the Transborder tribes are now put into may have been caused by the natural desires of minorities to have an identity in community status, political aspirations with a major group or the other. Their traditions and folklore

¹⁷Larry Diamond and Marc F Platter, *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1994 (Introduction).

remind them of a continuous fight against the Kukis¹⁸. The initiative of the Pakan movement came from the smaller tribes. It had social, religious and more important political implications that had no support from the Anal community¹⁹. The word Pakan has no takers today. On the other hand, the Anals have appropriated the name and Pakan is synonymous with this tribe²⁰. The problem of the identity of the Transborder tribes is solved, in that, these tribes have joined the Naga platform and as such other people have started accepting it.

Joahna Pfaff - Czarnecka, et al brings a study on India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, showing the varied cases of how intersecting ethnic, religious, caste, class, linguistic and cultural mosaics have been and might be accommodated with the borders of nation states. However, in all four nations, the majority ethno-religious population has enlarged their areas of influence within the governing bodies, while the politics of numbers have become salient as cultural majorities have established or expanded their dominance, usually at the expense of minority groups²¹. Assuming this preposition, Pannalal Dhar provides an argument that the Meiteis are the original people of Manipur, whereas, Nagas and Kukis came later²². Such a statement implies that Manipur as an entity is meant for the Meiteis only. But, we should consider an important aspect where the land inhabited by the Meiteis is confined only to the valley. Thus, the ethnic formulation of territorial homelands, Kukiland for the Kukis,

¹⁸ The Lamkang Naga National Council, 1998, p. 6.

¹⁹ Gangmumei Kabui, *Anal: The Transborder Tribe of Manipur*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1995, pp. 50-53.,

²⁰ Sumpi John, in Naorem Sanajaoba, *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol. 3*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 457-470.

²¹ Joahna Pfaff-Czarnecka et al, *Ethnic Future: The State and Identity Politics in Asia*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 12-13.

²² Pannalal Dhar, *Ethnic Unrest in India and her Neighbours*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 114-115.

Greater Nagaland for the Nagas and Kangleipak for the Meiteis etc results into a conflictual situation between different cultural communities.

The micro level analysis brings out the reality of the situation confronted by the transborder tribes of Chandel. Adrian Hastings brings out the argument that two or more ethnicities can grow into one but it takes a long time; equally, one ethnicity can grow into two under political, economic and geographical pressure²³. Thus the transborder tribes who had attempted the Pakan platform was opposed by some groups within the larger community. The Pakan movement is done away while the Naga platform is being accepted with all the tribes though the path towards it is slow, tragic and painful. Such a cultural aspect has its political compulsions. As long as the situation these tribes confront is within the limitations of the political frame as dictated within the arrangements of the Indian states, ethnic and political struggle will be manifested in the electoral contests at periodic intervals. It becomes the debate of whether it is the ethnicization of politics or the politicization of ethnicity. In the end, the dynamics of minority struggle when confronted against the majority in the political life of Manipur will command space for study and consideration.

²³ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, Cambridge University Press, 1997 (Introduction).

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Appendix 1

The Constitution of the Lamkang Naga National Council

Preface

‘Great is the Lord for He has bestowed us the grace to witness the Constitution of The Lamkang Naga National Council’

The initiative to draft the Constitution of the Lamkang Naga National Council started some times ten years back. It however, could not have been compiled though several Nationalists are learned to have drafted the Constitution. The L.N.N.C felt the need of a Constitution and accordingly formed a Drafting Committee consist of seven individual members and the L.N.N.C Executives. The Committee met several times and finally came out with the compiled draft. The L.N.N.C general assembly for approval of the Constitution was convened and held on 20th December’99 at the Council’s Head Quarter Purum Pantha. The Draft was read, explained, discussed and approved on the same day. Thus the Constitution of the L.N.N.C came in force w.e.f. 20/12/99

Appendix 2

Preamble

We, the people of the Lamkang Naga Tribe, having solemnly resolved to constitute ourselves into an indigenous, sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic nation, do hereby adopt to ourselves this Lamkang Naga National Council Constitution in our constituent Assembly, on this Twentieth Day of December, 1999.

Chapter One

1. This constitution shall be know as the Constitution of the Lamkang Naga National Council, and shall be binding on all Lamkang people and the area they inhabits.
2. In the context of this Constitution unless otherwise expressly provided in this Constitution;
 - i. 'Constitution' means the Constitution of the Lamkang Naga National Council
 - ii. 'Tribe' means the Lamkang Naga Tribe

- iii. 'Council' means the Lamkang National Council
- iv. The 'Executive' means the Executive of the Lamkang National Council
- v. 'Chief' means the Chiefs of the Lamkang Naga Villages
- vi. 'Customary Law' is the law abided by the forefathers of the Lamkang people
- vii. 'People' means the people of the Lamkang Tribe
- viii. 'Women Society' means the apex Women's secular organizations of the Lamkang Women
- ix. 'Students Union' means the apex Students Secular organizations of the Lamkang Students

Chapter Two

Objectives

The objectives of the Constitution are

- i. To safeguard and promote the rights and interests of the Lamkang people
- ii. To secure and provide social and economic justice to the Lamkang people
- iii. To streamline and pilot the development and general welfare of the Lamkang people

- iv. To research, promote, codify, and preserve the intrinsic culture of the Lamkang people
- v. To settle dispute within and without the Tribe amicably
- vi. To foster the spirit of unity, fraternity, secularism, socialism, harmonious existence and aspiration for future welfare
- vii. To promote the cause of Youth and Women and that of language and literature

Chapter Three

Structure and Composition of the Lamkang National Council

The Lamkang Naga National council shall consists of

- i. The Chiefs and Secretaries of the Lamkang Naga National Council recognized Lamkang Villages
- ii. The out-going President and Secretary of the Lamkang Naga National Council

The Lamkang national Council shall have an Executive Body consisting of

- i. President
- ii. Vice-President
- iii. Secretary

- iv. Joint-Secretary
- v. Treasurer
- vi. Social and Cultural Secretary
- vii. Publicity Secretary
- viii. Other designates, the Executive may create from time to time with the approval of the General Body

Appendix 3

The Lamkang Customary Laws

1. Marriage Laws (Section 40-47)

Section 43 : Marriage System.

There are four clans:

- a) Leivon, Sinte and Kangte
- b) Tholung, Janguei, and Silisi
- c) Shongnem and Sankhil
- d) Dilbung and Khular

A rightful marriage can take place only between a boy and a girl from different clan. Exogamy is strictly followed.

Section 56: Incest and Prohibition

In case of Incest the following actions/ fines are imposed

- a) A pig (is to be paid by the guilty party) measuring five feet in circumference from its stomach
- b) A pot of rice beer

2. Divorce

Section 50 : Preliminary Engagement Divorce

- a) In money Rs. 2600.00
- b) A pig (five feet) Rs. 2500.00
- c) A pot of rice beer Rs 100.00

Section 51: Divorce from Male Side

- a) A gong of five feet (2)
- b) A gong of seven feet (2)
- c) A pig of five feet (1)
- d) A pot of rice beer (1)

Section 52: Divorce from the Female Side

- a) Gong of eight feet (4)
- b) Gong of seven feet (2)

- c) Pig (1)
- d) In cash Rs. 100.00

Section 57: Adultery

This applies only to man

- a) Gong four feet in radius (1)
- b) Pig five feet in circumference (1)
- c) Rice beer pot (1)
- d) Money Rs.100.00

Section 63: Widow Re-Marriages

In the event of her husband's death the widow wants to move out of her husband's house and re-marry, the woman can do so after fulfilling certain obligations. She must give:

- a) A pig
- b) A pot of rice beer.

Section 64: Pregnancy before Marriage/ Child out of Wedlock

- a) A pig
- b) A pot of rice beer

3. Village Authority and Function

Section 74: The importance of the village chief and his council is given recognition.

- a) Legal and Judicial paper concerning the Village
- b) Community/Village property under his control
- c) On the economic, educational and political development of the villages

Section 75: Qualification of Village Chief

- a) Should own property within the village
- b) Should be dutiful to demands of the needs and circumstances within the village
- c) Should not be bankrupt, and should be an open person with contacts with the government officials
- d) Should be a person commanding respect from the society
- e) Should be 35 years of age, and should be the choice of the whole villagers

Section 76: Disqualification for the Village Chief

- a) Does not have property/ household in the village
- b) A person not paying house tax and a person who is not altruistic
- c) Of dubious lifestyle and habit
- d) Arrogant person with no respect for other peoples opinions

Section 77: Terms and conditions of the village chief

The Village chief, as long as he performs his duties sincerely would hold the position till his death. But after the publication of this book, the term of the chief would be ten years. If the opinion of the villagers is good, the chief can still stay on. This cannot be said so of an unpopular chief.

Section 78: Selection of Village chief

The four clans traditionally choose the chief. The chief who belongs to a particular clan will work to the welfare of all the clans.

Section 79: Removal of the Village chiefs

- a) Misappropriation of funds
- b) Misuse of positions
- c) Irresponsible to the welfare of the village
- d) Unpopular with the people
- e) Of dubious lifestyle and habits
- f) No respect for the traditional laws and customs

Section 80: Promotion of the Village Officials

In an event of death or resignation the village will choose another person. Usually, the officials below him fill up the position, though there can be instances where a new person can be elected to the position.

Section 81: Resignation

If a person has to resign, it can be accepted only when the villagers have chosen another person.

Section 82: Vacancy

In the death of a person holding position in the village council, the villagers would elect another person to fill up the vacancy.

Section 83: Power of Village chief

- a) For development (culture, economic and social) of the village is in his hand
- b) Property of the community/village in his name
- c) He is the 'foundation of justice'

Section 84: Extraordinary Power of Chief

In situation where the village chief is not able to convene a meeting of the village authority for want of time and urgency of the situation/problem, the chief can resort to his good will.

Section 85: Privilege

There are no monetary benefits for the elders but they command immense respect from the villagers, and in the event of any festival they play an important role without which it is incomplete.

Section 86: Name of Village Officials

- a) Khullakpa
- b) Luplakpa
- c) Ningthou
- d) Senapati
- e) Mantri
- f) Chinsanglak
- g) Khulchal
- h) Yupal
- i) Pakhanglak
- j) Meitei Lampu
- k) Lanching
- l) Naharak
- m) Ningol Lak
- n) Shelung
- o) Thougai
- p) Changloi

Section 87: High Authority

In the event where Khullakpa is not in a position to be present the Luplakpa, Ningthou, Mantri and Senapati will perform duty of the chief, indicating, they are of exalted positions when compared to the other positions in the hierarchy of the village council.

Appendix 4

NAGA NATIONALIST PARTY (Constitution)

Article II: Aims and Objectives

NNP shall bear through faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy and uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India. NNP believes that political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of its social democracy which associates with social activities that means a way of life which recognizes justice, liberty, equality and fraternity.

The main objects of the NNP are:

- 1) To seek emotional integration and unity, building up the spirit of oneness among all the Nagas.
- 2) To help in bringing lasting and peaceful political solution to the age old Naga political issue through dialogue.
- 3) To maintain Naga identity in letter and spirit.
- 4) To adopt good neighborhood with all the neighboring states in north-eastern region in particular and in all other states of India in general.
- 5) To work for the welfare of all the people in the north-east.
- 6) To bring corruptionless society, clean, transparent and effective administration.
- 7) To strive for power decentralization and for power to the people.

- 8) The NNP will work as the common Naga political platform for all the Naga people in the north-eastern region.

Article III: Area of State Units

- 1) The State units of the party shall conform to the state mentioned in the First Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Provided that for administrative convenience the National Executive may with the consent of the State Executive transfer areas of one state to another state unit.

Provided further, that the National Executive may not set up a party unit in any state if exceptional circumstances so warrant.

- 2) The headquarters of the state unit shall be located in the capital of the state concerned provided that a state council may, with previous sanction of the National Executive, change its headquarters.

Article XXVI: Flag

The Flag of the NNP shall be sky blue with five red stripes on the right top corner.

Article XXVII: Election Symbol

The Election Symbol of the party shall be Banyan tree (proposed).