CHAPTER - III
CLASSIFICATION OF ETHNOLINGUAL GROUPS

Among those scholars keenly interested in the study of any autochthonous or tribal communities, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, and psychologists have been the pioneers. Of these, anthropologists excelled through their fieldworks and descriptions of many previously unknown tribes in the most remote and inaccessible parts of the world. Of late Social geographers, also, with the regional or spatial approaches, made an impact upon this old field of interest. Each scholar examines and dilates upon the various involute socio-cultural aspects of this least bothered and studied segment of the society, the so-called "primitive" or tribal communities.

The findings and their interpretations put forth by these scholars vary greatly. Each defines or nomenclates their "actors" differently from their own view-points. These dissimilar conclusions ensued in the inexplicit implicit classification or grouping, often unacceptable to the tribals themselves. The main reason for diverse results surfaced due to internal or within differences among the medley ethnic groups. Such differences, unlike its appearance, are more than simple and not well comprehended by many scholars. Therefore, some named or called them barbarians, primitives, aborigine, autochthonous, animists, forest dwellers, etc. Giving them such pejoratives and classifications arouse their dormant ethnicity and sentiments, coupled with feelings of neglect, suppression, prejudice, etc. The tribals retorted by being obstinate and totally indifferent. Hence, they tried their best to preserve strongly even the minute dissimilarity as

1. The word 'primitive' is derived from the Latin primitivus and means "of or belonging to the first age, period, or state," and as such has no derogatory implications whatsoever (Hallpike, C. R. 1979: p. v.).

2. An ethnic group is used here interchangeably with speech community, tribe, dialect group, as each represents a distinct group although with different definitions. Ethnic group is used to mean a "self-conscious collectivity of people who maintain a distinction between themselves and outside, based on origin or a separate sub-culture and such boundary maintenance may be manifest in circumscribed social participation or in distinctive pattern of thought, sentiment, or action" (Hraba, J. 1979, American Ethnicity, Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers, P.63).
ethnic markers. The discernible corollary appears to be craze for separate
ethnic identity within a discrete territorial unit, ethnocentrism, prejudice (intense
ˈin-groupˈ and ˈout-groupˈ feelings), maintenance of social distances, and as
ˈisolatesˈ.

III.1. NOTES ON CRITERIA OF CLASSIFICATION:

Indian tribes have been classified by many scholars taking different criteria.
Though, most of the groupings appear to conform to the real situation, some
false groupings are also done, usually for better and convenient administration.
Such incident leads to inter-ethnic tensions and makes people to differentiate
on the basis of ˈpure or authenticˈ in-group membership, thereby encouraging
ethnic separatist tendencies. It should be noted that one has to extra cautious
when dealing with any socio-cultural aspects of the tribals because these inborn
traits are much more sensitive than other possessions.

Some of the criteria adopted to classify the tribal population are as follow:

i). geographical distribution by grouping tribals regionally or zone-wise
(Guha: 1938);

ii). racial elements, especially by anthropologists (Risley: 1915; Guha: 1938;
Hutton: 1951; Majumdar: 1955, etc.);

iii). linguistic or dialectal features (Grierson: 1903-27);

iv). economic structure or the different means adopted for survival like hunting,
gathering, cultivation, etc. (Thurnwald: 1933; Herskovits: 1952);

v). religious practices—i.e. as animist, Christian, Hindus, etc. (Census: 1961,
1971); and

vi). stages of cultural contact or degree of acculturation or transformation
while preserving distinctive traits (Elwin:; Majumdar: 1976, Indian Conference

3. The idea (or tendencies to consider) of ˈpure or authenticˈ in-group is experienced in most tribal areas.
Such often occur with those tribes who are conscious about genealogy and pedigrees. It can also be
from false classifications.
MANIPUR
PATTERNS OF FIRST RANKING

Fig.no. 4.
Most scholars base their classification on one indicator. It will be pertinent to stress that each indicator has its own relevance. E.g. in Peninsular India, the economic system, and religious practices may be the best indicators. In the north-eastern region, where the economic structure, religious practices, racial component, etc, remain almost uniform, the best ethnic differentiator appears to be the inherent linguistic or dialectal elements and their ethnicity. Therefore, classification of ethnic groups can not be illustrated satisfactorily by taking one common and uniform criterion, especially when attempting to classify the medley Mongoloid ethnic communities densely concentrating in the North-eastern India.

In this study, importance is attached to the inherent ethno-lingual parameters of the tribals. The medley tribes are hence segregated or classified according to their ethnonlingual identities so as to depict the true ethnic mosaic, as experienced, in a usually assumed homogeneous and contiguous areas. It is also hoped that the criterion adopted will highlight even the intra-tribe differences.

The peopling of Manipur exhibits an interesting ethnic mosaic. Here, each ethnie, tends to concentrate in a "monolithic isolation". Every ethnic group settle as isolates within a delimitable "speech territory" of its own. Within this distinct territorial isolate each tribe preserves its own patois undiluted along with other pristine traits that distinguishes them from other isolates and speech communities. In each distinct territory flourishes what can be called "typical tribal shibboleths" where each group's inveterate ethnicity, custom and traditions, etc, originate, and are maintained. Therefore, it will not be out of place to state that every tribal area or each speech territory is a "centre" (of ethnolinguial traits) of a particular community. Such peculiar tendency of agglomeration of in-group to cluster within a small space, as observed in

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4. 'Ethnie' means ethnic community, i.e. a social group with primordial ties.
5. Patois (pronounced "pah-twah"). a French term, applied primarily to the spoken language. OED defines it as "regional dialect of common people; jargon; dialect differing from the standard language of the country. Haugen (1966) stated that "when dialect ceased to be written, they become patois...". Patois refers to rural from of speech and speech of a smaller unit than dialect. It is used for the characteristics of village or other small communities (Pelyt: 1980).
Manipur depicts the presence of numerous segments of the authochthonous population.

Classification tends to become simpler for such segregated communities. However, experience suggests otherwise because the strictly maintained social/ethnic boundaries are at times spurious but members would not want to be classed with the nearest cognate group, though they know that many of the innate traits are similar. Such apparent disagreement leads to non-acceptance of many classifications by the tribals, which perpetuates the insidious in-group conflicts. The presence of such resentments within most isolates prompts one to be extra careful when dealing with classification or grouping of different communities.

It is attempted here to classify the various ethnic communities on the basis of ethnolingual parameters. By adopting this mechanism it is believed that an explicit and acceptable classification can be established. Ethnolingual parameters used here refer to 'the intrinsic traits' and ethnicity (‘sense of peoplehood’/belonging, and sharing same primordial ties’), linguistic features and inter-ethnic communication pattern.

III.2. SOURCES OF CLASSIFICATION:

The attempt to classify the tribal population based on ethno-lingual parameters is mainly derived from the following sources.

i). Early invaluable accounts written more than a century ago by the British administrators-political agents-cum-scholars, and anthropologists. Among them mentioned may be made of Stewart (1855), McCulloch (1859), Brown (1874) Soppit (1885), Dalton (1855, 1872), Johnstone (1896), Carey & Tuck (1896), Watt (1887), Hodson (1911), Grierson (1903-04), Shakespear (1912), Shaw (1929), MacKenzie (1885), Reid (1912) etc. Besides these there are some recent works dealing with the various ethnic groups of Manipur.

ii). The Census of India publications which give both statistical and historical information. The Tables on mother-tongue and other statistical accounts

Many such incidents are experienced at present in Manipur in regards to the scheduled tribes list. In most cases it is not the grouping that is objected to but the 'label' or nomenclature, usually that of the conspicuous but minority is assigned. E.g. most sub-groups of Kabui prefer to be called 'Roungmei'. Recently, there was a move to include Kuki as separate tribe, or in place of Thadou which was severely opposed. Such incidents occured and will continue because of inaccurate scheduling. There are some distinct communities who are genealogically not related to any existing groups but speak the dialect of some dominant tribes. Since they do not fit anywhere they insist on separate identity.
are of utmost importance.

iii). Information obtained from fieldwork in the state and participant observation. Discussions, interviews, and comments by scholars, from different areas. Based on the materials obtained from the above sources classification is attempted after careful examination of the old accounts.

III.3. NOTES ON ETHNIC GROUPS CLASSIFICATION:

Broadly, the entire tribal population can be segmented into two main distinct groups determined by ethnolingual traits and the tacit `inter-ethnicity' upheld by them. The tribals can be conveniently classed based on their affiliation to the generic names, `given to them by the neighbouring non-tribal communities, like i) Kuki-Chins, and ii) Nagas. Both Kukis and Nagas, along with the Meiteis constitute the `autochthonous or indigenous' population. All of them speak Tibeto-Burman speeches and are racially of Mongoloid stock. The other ethnic population consists of `immigrant Mediterraneans'. This group mainly consists of the Indo-Aryans, who have their origin outside the state. The local indigenous population collectively call them `Mayangs' or `kols' (includes Marwaris, Bengalis, Biharis, Tamil, etc) and `Panghans' (the entire Muslim population, who are totally acculturated or assimilated to Meitei culture). The Mayangs are mainly engaged in the business sector and other services. Although most of the Mayangs are Hindus they do not mix freely with the local Hindus. As pointed out earlier each group maintains certain social distances and classification can be worked out taking the different ethnic elements. The chart below is presented to illustrate the many divisions of communities that constitute the population of Manipur.
MANIPUR
FIRST RANKING GROUPS
(1981)

[ETHNO-LINGUAL GROUPS]

--- Boundaries

BL. Bengali

Fig. no. 5.
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF MANIPUR

A. AUTOCHTHONOUS MONGOLOIDS

1) Plain Dwellers
   a) Meiteis
   b) Scheduled Castes
      (7 in Number)
      i) Old Kukis-Aimol, Chiru, etc.
      ii) New Kukis-Thadou
      iii) Others.-Paite, Gangte, etc

B. IMMIGRANT MEDITERRANEANS

1) Panghans
   2) Mayangs
   a) Kuki-Chins:
      1) Old Kukis-Aimol, Chiru, etc.
      2) New Kukis-Thadou
      3) Others.-Paite, Gangte, etc

III. A. CLASSIFICATION OF THE NAGA GROUPS:

The medley Nagas concentrating and clustering in different parts of Manipur are one of the components of the Autochthonous Mongoloids. Although ramified into many sub-dialectal groups, the Nagas are found concentrating in a more compact pattern than their counterparts-the Kuki-Chins. The areas where they are predominant are in the districts of a) East, b) West, and c) North. Some Nagas are found clustering in the present Tengnoupal and South districts (prior to 1974 Tengnoupal was a sub-division and administered by Central district).

Early documented accounts on the Nagas of Manipur highlight their presence in the state, perhaps before the advent of the Kuki-Chins. Each Naga
sub-group appears to be less nomadic than the Kuki-Chins, inhabiting the same village for decades. Stewart in ‘Notes’ has stated that the Nagas “seem also more attached to the sites of their habitations than the rest of the tribes in those parts.......But nothing short of the direct necessity will force the Nagas of these hills to relinquish their native spot of ground. Sometimes indeed they are obliged to do so, when placed in exposed situation....” This tendency to settle almost permanently makes the identification and classification much simpler. It becomes simpler because the intensity of ethnic ‘territoriality’, maintenance of social distances, and preservation of inborn traits are more prominent and discernible among the Nagas. However, such distinct ‘ethnic-wise monolithic settlement’ has its own disadvantage. It often ensued to assertion of ambiguous identities or ethnicity by the sub-groups and thus enhanced the problems of inter-ethnic relationship. At times it also leads to ignoring ‘cultural pluralism’ and ‘structural pluralism’, and the desire of one dominant group to suppress or neglect other dependent speech minorities.

Before presenting the final mosaic of the Naga classification, it will be of great relevance to dilate upon the earlier invaluable accounts written by Britishers more than a century ago. Their documents gave us the descriptions of the various aspects of the community at different points of time, and which later served as a basis for ‘scheduling’ of the different tribes. It also assists us in understanding the tribal milieu from a closer angle.

One of the earliest literature written on the Nagas of Manipur was by Dalton (1872), and also Brown (1873). Dalton mentioned three dominant Nagas groups at that time. They are i). Koupui, ii). Luhupas, and iii). Mow & Muram. Brown also described three Naga groups giving them different names and spellings. They


9. “Cultural pluralism refers to the existence of distinct sub-culture in a society which affects and make variable the way people think, feel, and act”

10. The tribes mentioned by Dalton should be spelled as i) Kabui ii) Mao and Maram. Luhupas refer to the Tangkhuls, as known to the Meiteis at that time.
are not similar to Dalton's. The Nagas mentioned by Brown are a) Tonkhuls, b) Kowpolis, and Murrings. Besides, McCulloch (1859) had also written about the valley of Manipur and the hill tribes.

Dun (1886) described elaborately the different Naga tribes and their divisions. In his account five Naga tribes are recorded with their total strength in the state. The major tribes in 1881

1). Lahupa ................................................................. 28,552
2). Tankhul ............................................................... 4,400
3). Kolya (also called khoirao) ................................. 17,992
4). Kaupui ..................................................................... 8,476
5). Marring ..................................................................... 484
Total ............................................................................... 59,904

Writing about the Lahupa and Tankhul he stressed that 'There is no perceptible difference between these two. The Manipuris as a rule, apply the name Tankhul to both indifferently'. The Kolyas, he stated are called khoirau by the Meiteis and consisted of nine sections. Some sub-groups do not understand the language of the others. The sub-groups are a). Tangal, b). Mau, c). Maram, d). Upurul, e). Threngba, f). Maithampam, g). Maiyangkhong, h). Tokpa, and i). Kachang or Katcha (includes Liyang; Dun: 1886, p. 29). He includes the Kacha Nagas with Mao-Maram group, which is quite wrong because the Kacha-Nagas are linguistically more related to the Kabuis. Both these tribes are predominant in West district. Besides, Dun mentioned two clans of Kabui who are located in the hills between Cachar and Manipur valley. Their sub-divisions are i). Sungbu, and ii). Poeron (p. 30). The fifth major Naga described was the Marings, with two sub-divisions. Another minority Naga tribe mentioned and designated as "naked Nagas" are the Mellomi, Lapvomi, and Phozameh group (p. 32).

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Watt, G. (1887) also gave five major Naga tribes found in Manipur at that time, with a more elaborate sub-divisions than that of Dun. However, Watt seems to modify Dun’s descriptions. The tribes are: 1). Kaupui, whose clans are Sungbu, Koiveng, and Kaupui proper, 2). Kolya (which have the same 8 sub-clans as given by Dun) barring the katcha, 3). Murring, 4). Tankhul,12 and 5). Angamis. Watt explained about the Tangkhuls that "the Manipuris call these people Lahupas from the basket like helmets which they wear...The Tankhuls and Lahupas are said to number about 20,000. They regard themselves as consisting of many sub-divisions but for the most part these are but the distinctions into villages and districts...".13 The Kabuis or Roungmeis call them "Kourumei". Watt further stated that Mao and Murrum are closer to the Angamis than any other Nagas. he also believed that the Manipuris are "a mixed race between the Kukis and Nagas, and most probably the Kolya Nagas".

Hodson (1911) dealt comprehensively on the various Naga tribes in his work "Nagas of Manipur", in which seven major tribes are described. However his study of the Nagas had been remarked by Elwin (1969) as "a rather confused book which attempts to bring far too much within its compass". The dominant Naga tribes vividly analysed by Hodson are-1). Tankhuls, 2). Mao and Maram, 3). Kolyas (Khoirao or Mayangkhong group), 4). Kabuis, 5). Quoirengs, 6). Chirus, and 7). Marrings. It is strange that mention had not been made of the Kaccha-Nagas as part of Manipur Nagas.

Stewart (1884), Hunter, Dalton (1872), and Soppit (1885) in their account on north Cachar mentioned the presence of Kaccha-Nagas. The Kacha-Nagas of Manipur seem to be either ignored (thought insignificant) or merged with other Naga groups.

Most of the above mentioned accounts, written more than a century ago,

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12. Tangkhul has been spelled differently by many Britishers. Most of them used Lahupa instead of Tangkhul.
concentrate on the various socio-cultural aspects of the tribes. No specific elements has been adopted in their descriptions of the medley or different tribes. Besides, those studies, Grierson (1903-04) made a more systematic attempt to classify the various groups based on their dialectal elements. His work includes, besides linguistic analysis, many other important aspects like history, culture, geography, and social matters.

Grierson divides the entire Naga tribes into 3 main linguistic sub-branches. The tribes included under them are as follow:

1. Naga Languages Proper—Angami, Khezama, Remgma, Sema, Ao, Lotha, Yachumi, Mongsen, etc.
2. Naga-Bodo Sub-group—Empeo (Kaccha-Naga), Kabui, and Khoirao, and
3. Naga-Kuki Sub-group—Sopvoma (around Mao), Maram, Miyankhong, Kwoireng, or Luyang, Luhupa or Tangkhuls, and Marring.

Speaking of this unusual break-up into Naga-Bodo sub-group or Naga-Kuki sub-groups, Grierson explained that "between Angami Naga and Bodo languages there is a group which I call the Naga-Bodo group, bridging over the difference between the characteristic features of the two forms of speech, and similarly between Angami Naga and the Kuki languages there is another group which I call the Naga-Kuki...." 14 He categorized the Kwoireng or Luyang as 'intermediate' one between Naga-Bodo and Naga-Kuki sub-groups. McCulloch (1859) however is determined that "tribes such as the Chirus....and Marring......form connecting link with the true Naga tribes and the numerous Kuki tribes...." 15 On such mixed linguistic structures apparent among the Nagas of Manipur, Grierson further stated, (taking example from the Luhupas or Tangkhul), that "the number of languages spoken by them is said to be very great, almost every village in the interior having its separate dialect. We may select three as typical—Tangkal,

Phadang and Khangoi.... The former closely agrees with Tangkhul, while Khangoi has much more of a Kuki complexion.\textsuperscript{16}

From the century old accounts referred to above the major Naga tribes found in Manipur are as follows:\textsuperscript{17}

1). Kabuis (Koupuis-Dalton, Kowpois-Brown, Kaupuis Watt & Dun, Kabui or Kapwi-Grierson);
2). Tangkhuls (also called Lahupas or Luhuppas by Meiteis and Britishers, Tonkhuls-Brown, Tankhul-Dun, Watt, Hodson-Tangkhul);
3). Mao and Maram (known as part of 'Kolya'-Dun, Watt; Hodson treated Kolyas and Mao-Maram separately; spelled Mow & Murram-Dalto; Grierson preferred to called them Sopvoma, Dun-Mau);
4). Marings (Murrings-Brown, Watt; Marrings-Dun and Hodson)
5). Koirengs (Kwoireng or Luyang-Grierson; Quoireng Hodson).
6). Chirus (Hodson)\textsuperscript{18}

The above mentioned tribes by the British administrators appear to be those encountered by them on their way to Imphal (on those tribes settling along the Highway), because some of the prominent groups or sub-tribes are not described at all. That means only those dominant tribes known to the Meiteis at that time are described by the Britishers. Even the names or nomenclature assigned to some tribes are not appropriate or accurate. Most of the groups themselves did not employ or recognise the given titles or names. It appears that most of the names used by the Britishers are those employed by the Meiteis (as it appeared to them-not necessarily the tribe's true identity)-like Mao, Khoirao, Lahuppa, etc. Such inappropriate use of names to assign ethnic communities ensued to insidious inter-clan conflicts, as experienced at present within many tribes. However, the accounts written a hundred years ago still remain invaluable.

\textsuperscript{16} Grierson, G.A (1903) \textit{op. cit.}, pp 23-24.
\textsuperscript{17} Names of tribes in parentheses show the different spellings as used by various authors.
\textsuperscript{18} The inclusion of Chiru among the Nagas by Hodson is not very, accuracy or satisfactory. Grierson believed that Chiru is linguistically much closer to the Kuki-Chins, which McCulich described as Old Kuki, forming "connecting link with the true Naga tribes and the numerous Kuki tribes" (p. 65).
Though inaccurate they are "unavoidably necessary".

The present ethnic mosaic seen among the Nagas is quite different. They are till today territorially static but the sub-groups have ramified greatly. Out of the 29 scheduled tribes of Manipur the following are the Naga sub-tribes, as per the SC/ST list (modification) Order, 1956:

1. Angami
2. Kabui
3. Kacha-Naga
4. Khoirao
5. Koireng
6. Mao
7. Maram
8. Maring
9. Monsang
10. Sema
11. Tangkhul

These 11 'recognised' Naga tribes can be further classified into sub-groups based on their ethno-lingual parameters (degree of ethnicity and dialectal affinity within them) as shown below:

**ETHNO-LINGUAL CLASSIFICATION OF NAGAS**

Naga Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Angami</th>
<th>B. Kabui</th>
<th>C. Koireng</th>
<th>D. Tangkhul</th>
<th>E. Sema</th>
<th>F. Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mao</td>
<td>Kacha-Naga</td>
<td>Maring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maram</td>
<td>Khoirao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. It is interesting to note that most of the present scheduled tribes were once treated as sub-clans or divisions of one dominant tribe in the 1800's. For instance, Kacha-Naga, Khoirao, Mao, Maram, were part of Kolya-a name not heard or used at present. Also tribes like Monsang and Sema are recognised tribes not mentioned anywhere, or found in Manipur at that time.

20. Most of the tribal groups are not contend about the present existing "scheduled tribe's nomenclature, which they...believe to be ambiguous or inaccurate. E.g., Das (1971) asserts that "Kabuis prefer to be called Roungmi, meaning Southerners" (p. 152). Among the Northern Nagas some of them claim "Puomei" as their true identity rather than Mao or Maram, to which they are now merged. Even within the much more closely related Kuki-Chins some prefer Kuki to other names because they fell none of the present recognised tribal names could include them within that fold. Therefore, the inter-ethnic conflicts and ethnocentrism are inherent and can not be easily erased.

21. Besides the listed Nagas tribes, recently some distinct tribes/clans claimed separate recognition. In the list tribes/clans like Zemi, Jiangmei, Puomei, etc are merged with others, although each of them appears to be an 'isolate' of its own.
Show the grouping of closely related Naga tribes who are given 'scheduled' status in Manipur. It should be noted that Angami and Sema are Naga tribes mainly originating from Nagaland. Grierson (1903) categorised them as speaking Naga Languages Proper.

The above classification can further be re-modified based on dialectal associations as put-forward by Grierson. He had classified them into 3 linguistic sub-divisions. To a certain degree Grierson’s grouping also reflect ethnolinguistic relationship among the various tribes. The dialectal sub-groups are as follow:

i) Naga Languages Proper-consist of those Naga dialects or languages mainly spoken in Nagaland, like Angami, Rengma, Kezhama, Sema, Ao, Lotha, Tengsa, Yachumi, Mongsen, etc.;

ii). Naga-Bodo sub-groups-includes Kabui, Khoirao, Empeo or Kacha-Naga, mainly found in West District;

iii) Naga-Kuki Sub-groups- has Maram, Sopvoma (around Mao Koireng, or Luyang, Lahupa (Tangkhul) and Maring.

Grierson’s monumental work, though invaluable, is not infallible. There are some conspicuous discrepancies occurring in the analysis. The grouping seems to be simply based on territorial contiguity or area of tribe-wise settlement. For example, the linguistic sub-grouping like Naga-Bodo or Naga-Kuki refer to those inhabiting either Western or Northern parts of the state. It shows that the sub-groups called Naga-Kukis are those Nagas settling interspersed with the Kukis in the north and east districts. Grierson also stressed that communities like Quioreng (Koireng) and Maring are intermediate, form connecting link, or approach the Kuki-Chin groups (pp.23-24).

Another distinctive classification can be made from the territorial distribution of the different tribes in the state. This territorial criterion also reflects ethnic-wise concentration. The chart below illustrates the area-wise settlement of the various Nagas:
GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION OF NAGAS

Chart No. IV.C.: Shows the major Naga tribes in the various districts. It does not show the distribution of some of the smaller tribes clustering in the periphery of dominant tribes in some of the districts.

III. B. CLASSIFICATION OF THE KUKI-CHIN TRIBES

The task of classifying Kuki-Chins into sub-groups based on ethno-lingual parameters appears to be comparatively much simpler and easier than that of the medley Nagas. It becomes much unproblematic due to certain discrete factors like i). inhabiting in a ‘nuclear type’ settlement of the sub-groups, ii). territorial contiguity, iii). distinct speech variation from the Nagas, iv). consciousness of their genealogy and pedigrees, v). institutional set-up, vi). ethnicity within, and others.

Till today the origin of the terms ‘Kuki’ and ‘Chin’ remain obscure because the people concerned themselves do not recognise or employ the terms as their nomenclature. Grierson (1903) rightly remarked that “Both the names ‘Kuki’ and ‘Chin’ have been given to them by their neighbours. ‘Kuki’ is an Assamese or Bengali term applied generally to all the hill tribes of this race in their vicinity, while ‘Chin’ or ‘Khyeng’ is a Burmese word used to denote those living in the country between Burma and Assam. Neither of these terms are employed by the tribes themselves. The denomination ‘Kuki-Chin’ for this group of people and for the group of languages which they speak is therefore a purely conventional one, there being no indigenous general name for all of them as a whole”.22 The Kuki-

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Chin is a great race consisting of numerous tribes scattered in Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura (India), Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh), and Chin hills (Burma). The earliest recorded account appeared in 1790 by McCrea followed by Rennel (1800).

Later, towards the close of the 19th century, some literature on the Kuki-Chins appeared. They are mainly written by the British political agents/administrators and scholars. Mention may be made of Stewart (1855), McCulloch (1859), Lewin (1869), Dilton (1972), Brown (1873), Rowney (1882), Mackenzie (1884), Dun (1886), Soppit (1887), Carey and Tuck (1896), and Johnstone (1896). Of these the works of Major McCulloch and Lieut. Stewart gave useful information as regards to the hill tribes of Manipur and the Kuki-Chins. It was Stewart who divided the Kukis into 'Old' and 'New' on the basis of their arrival in Cachar, in the mid-1800's. He stated that the Old Kukis emigrated from the jungles of Tipperah some 50 or 60 years ago, and by 1848 the New Kukis-represented by a single tribe, the Thadou-entered Cachar.

Dun (1886) in his 'Gazetteer' described Kukis as falling into i) Khongjai or New Kukis, and ii) Old kuki clans. The new Kuki clans he listed are Thadou, Vungson, Changsen, Shingsol, Mangvung, Klangam, Chungloe, Changput, Haukib, Simtte, and Kamhau. The old Kuki clans are Kom, Anal, Namfau, Chiru, Koireng, Chothey, Puram, Mantak, and Hroi or Lamgang.

A more descriptive analysis of the Kuki-Chins appeared in the early 20th century. Most of these materials are based on earlier works and actual studies of the tribes. Important among them are the works of Grierson (1903: 1904), Hodson (1906), Shakespear (1912), Vickers (1927), Crawford (1927), Mills (1928),

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24. Major J. Rennel's account was "Cuchis or inhabitants of Tipperah Mountains", written in 1800.
25. Col. Lewin in 1869 changed the spelling of Kukis to 'Kookies' from the earlier 'Cucis', as used by McCrea and Rennel. In his article entitled "The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers There in", he stated that "On the Chittagong side, we find, as early as 1777, records of frontier disturbances ascribed to "Kookies." man who lived far in the interior part of the hills. (p. 21.)
26. Dun had mixed the different clans of Thadou with other related tribes. Simte and Kamhao (also called Sokte or Gwite) are separate ethnic groups, not related to the new-Kuki clans.
and Shaw (1929), etc.

Among the above mentioned accounts, the study of Grierson appears to be more systematic in his analysis of the Kuki-Chins. He, divides the entire Kukis into 4 main branches, consisting of over 30 distinct languages and distributed in parts of India, Bangladesh, and Burma. The sub-groups are as follows:

i). Northern Chins, consisting of Thadou, Sokte, Ralte, Paite, etc.;

ii). Central Chins, who are found in Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma are Tashon, Lai, Lushei, Bangogi, Pankhu, etc.;

iii). Old Kukis, are those inhabiting parts of Manipur and Tripura, consisting of Aimol, Anal, Andro, Chiru, Kolren, Hiroi-Lamgang, Kom, Rangkhol, Hallam, Beite, etc.; and

iv). Southern Chins, found mainly in the hills of Burma. They are Yindu, Sho, That, Khaimi, etc.

J. Shakespear (1912) was more discerning in his description of the relationship among the various Kuki sub-groups. He categorised sub-groups on the basis of their relation or distance from the Lushai-Kukis, calling them ‘non-Lushai’ clans. The non-Lushai clans he mentioned are:

a). Clans included under Lushai: Chaulte, Chongthu, Hnamte, Kawlin, Kawihring, Kiangte, Ngente, Paotu, Rentlei, Vangchhia, Zawngte;

b). Clans Influenced by the Lushai: Fanai, Ralte, Paihte or Vuite, Rangte;

c). The Old Kuki clans: Aimol, Anal, Chawte, Chiru, Kolhen, Kom, Lamgang, Purum, Tikhup, Vaiphei, Khawtlang, and Khawchak (as other old Kuki clans);

d). The New Kuki Clan: represented by a single clan, the Thadous; and
e). Lakher or Mara Clan.

27. The inclusion of Andro among the Old Kuki clans by Grierson is hard to accept. Although there might be certain similarity in dialectal structure between Andro and other Old Kukis, Andro and Sekmai are different communities much closer to the Meiteis. Some believed that these two groups are the oldest clans of Manipuris, who refuse to embrace Hindu at the time of Raja Pantheiba, around the year 1750.

28. Shakespear, J. (1912) described the 4 main clans of Thadou, as Doungel, Shitlhou, Haukip, and Kipgen. However, Shaw (1929) added or included other clans-Shingshon, Chengloi, Hangshing, PhonJ, etc.
Before classifying the Kuki-chins based on their ethno-lingual parameters as seen today, it will be pertinent to point out certain mistakes committed by earlier scholars in their groupings of the old Kuki clans. Chirus have been placed under Nagas by Hodson (1911). McCulloch (1859) stressed that they ‘form connecting link’ between the true Naga tribes and the Kuki tribes. However, Grierson grouped them under old Kukis, which Dun (1886) also described as “an old Kuki tribe”. Another confusion is with regards to the Koireng tribe (also spelled Quoireng or Kwoireng). Grierson classed them as Naga, as part of the Naga-Kuki sub-group, and stated that they are ‘intermediate one between Naga-Bodo and Naga-Kuki sub-groups’. Dun mentioned the presence of two types of Koirengs in Manipur. He stated that “There are two tribes of Koirengs bearing the same name, but entirely discrete; one tribe is of the Old-Kuki stock and its members are scattered here and their in the hills bordering the valley”. The other Koirengs are classed with Nagas by Damant, the late Political Agent of Manipur. One scholar of the present time also includes Chiru, Koirao, and Koireng along with the other tribes under the Old Kukis. The inclusion of Koirao appears to be doubtful. All earlier accounts stated Khoiraos or Koiao as a Naga sub-group. To Grierson Khoiraos are part of those Nagas speaking the ‘Naga-Bodo’ dialects, along with Kabui and Kacha-Naga. Besides, the name Old Kuki itself is rather confusing because in other states like Tripura, Assam, and Nagaland, all the so-called old Kuis are collectively Known as ‘Kuki’. The use of ‘old’ or ‘new’ is but a matter of convenience and of desuetude.

There are altogether 29 recognised scheduled tribes in Manipur. Most of them were described in the earlier historical accounts. The Kuki-Chin groups numbered 17 out of the total recognised tribes. Of the Kuki tribes some have of late claimed Naga identity. Such incidents emerged due to certain institutional similarities and mainly for socio-political identity. The following are the present

29. Dun, E. W. (1886) op. cit., p. 128. The Koirengs he described are a sub-division of the Kom Kuki tribe.
Kuki-Chin tribes found and recognised in Manipur:

1. Aimol
2. Anal
3. Chiru
4. Chaote (spelled Chawte by Shakespear: 1912)
5. Gangte
6. Hmar
7. Kom
8. Lamgang
9. Lushai (Any Mizo tribes)
10. Moyon
11. Paite
12. Ralte
13. Sahte (Known previously as Sokte, Sooties or Kamhau)
14. Simte
15. Thadou
16. Vaiphei
17. Zou.

The above 17 Kuki-Chin sub-grous can be further sub-divided based on their similarities or degree of ethnicity. The break-up of sub-groups into larger divisions has been illustrated below.

**ETHNO-LINGUAL GROUPING OF THE KUKI-CHINS**

**COGNATES OR TRIBES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
<th>Group D</th>
<th>Group E</th>
<th>Group F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thadou</td>
<td>Aimol</td>
<td>Gangte</td>
<td>Paite</td>
<td>Hmar</td>
<td>Anal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiru</td>
<td>Chiru</td>
<td>Vaiphei</td>
<td>Sahte</td>
<td>Ralte</td>
<td>Lamgang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaote</td>
<td>Chaote</td>
<td>Simte</td>
<td>Lushai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kom</td>
<td>Kom</td>
<td>Zou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Puram</td>
<td>Puram</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moyon</td>
<td>Moyon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOUTH DISTRICT
SPATIAL PATTERNING OF MAJOR
ETHNO-LINGUAL GROUPS

INDEX
[Kuki-Chin Ethnic Groups]
1. Hmar
2. Paite
3. Gangte
4. Vaiphei
5. Simte
6. Thadou/Kuki
7. Kabui-Naga
8. Kom
9. Zou
10. Lushai/Mizo

Fig.no. 6.
The above grouping only illustrates the degree of closeness as experienced within sub-groups, also dialectally associated. It does not suggest that no two groups are related at all. Clans of one tribe can be found as claiming or speaking other dialect or identity.

Another conspicuous classification can be sorted out by taking one single dialectal element, i.e. the use of certain phonemes or alphabet. Tribes can therefore be further distinctly categorised by their use of alphabets or 'sounds' like 'r' and 'f'. Out of the 17 tribes listed, 7 do not employ or use either 'r' or 'f' in their vocabulary. The 'r' and 'f' sounds are totally absent. The division is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribes without 'r' and 'f'</th>
<th>Tribes having both either 'r' or 'f'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thadou</td>
<td>Aimol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaiphei</td>
<td>Lamgang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangte</td>
<td>Chiru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simte</td>
<td>Chothe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paite</td>
<td>Kom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahte</td>
<td>Hmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zou</td>
<td>Ralte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lushei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moyon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above division shows that most of the old Kukis fall under one category including Lushei. It is interesting to note that this dialectal affinity also reflects territorial contiguity of the various tribes. This means tribes concentrating in closer vicinity have similar structures.

Yet another ramification can be illustrated taking institutional set-up as the basis. It appears that most Old Kukis have similar institutional structure with the Nagas, e.g. on the nature of Chieftainship which is not strictly hereditary but federal, unlike among the other new Kukis. Thadou, Paite, Vaiphei, etc. always have a chief or 'gaonbura', who is succeeded by his eldest son and the son has the right of primogeniture.
Based on the above descriptions and 'within-similarities', a composite picture or the classification on different tribal communities can be explicitly illustrated. The chart below shows the present existing tribe-wise classification based on their ethnolinguistic elements.

**ETHNOLINGUAL CLASSIFICATION OF MANIPUR TRIBALS**

**Tribe and Cognates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Kuki-Chins</th>
<th>B. Nagas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thadou</td>
<td>1. Mao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aimol</td>
<td>2. Tangkhul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Paite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiru</td>
<td>Angami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaiphei</td>
<td>Kachha-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahte</td>
<td>Maram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chothe</td>
<td>Naga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simte</td>
<td>Khoirao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyon</td>
<td>4. Koireng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Sema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hmar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Anal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralte</td>
<td>Maring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamgang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lushei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chart No. IV, F.*: As shown, this appears to be the present existing classification of the composite Naga and Kuki sub-groups, based on their ethnolinguistic trait. The various groupings indicate the intensity of ethnicity and degree of dialectal affinity as experienced and accepted by its members.

**III.4. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This study on the classification of ethnolinguistic group reflects one important fact about the nature of most tribal areas: that though tribal areas are usually territorially contiguous, they are never socio-culturally homogeneous. The notion of homogeneity in regard to tribal areas as has been prevalent among many scholars interested in tribal society, especially anthropologists, sociologists, etc. As illustrated in the above analysis, ramifications can be explained taking the
various ethnolinguistic parameter, into consideration which each tribe valued greatly and preserved till today. It should be noted that some kind of segmentation within or among the ethnic communities can be further shown taking other elements besides the inherent ethnolinguistic traits like geographical distribution, religious practices, types of material culture, designs or patterns of handicrafts/shawls, etc. The presence of such internally involute socio-cultural traits make tribal areas unique and represent one of the best ethnolinguistic mosaics.