Chapter-2

Methodology and Reflections on Field Work
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This is a continuation of the first chapter. It gives the clear picture of the methods and techniques that the researcher uses to study. As already indicated, the research is intended to be qualitative in nature. Being a qualitative study, this research will involve those techniques that allow for the study of special and unique aspects like what people think, what they do and what they really want to do. And the generalization will emerge out of the specific details of what the researcher observes. For this purpose the use of the materials drawn from both the primary and the secondary sources is the pillar of this research work.

Primary sources will comprise data collected through empirical observation and interview techniques. It will start with the use of the mixture of both the non-probability and probability sampling method at various levels. The person, so selected, will be interviewed.

And the information provided from the interview could be counter-checked through the use of observation method. This method will help the researcher to capture the subjective meaning of the movement as it occurs rather than as it is reported. It will provide a valid process through which to assess verbal report against non-verbal behavior, hence ascertain reliability of data collected.

Universe/Coverage of the Study

The proposed universe of the study is Manipur in three different villages of three districts. They are

(i) Chingmeirong village in Imphal-East District of Manipur.
(ii) Sangaiprou village in Imphal-West District of Manipur.
(iii) Khunjao village in Tamenglong District of Manipur.

The fieldwork will be carried out in these three villages and the selection was based on the following criteria-

- A Kabui village, where pre-Christian religion, custom and tradition are predominant in nature (Chingmeirong, Imphal-East District).
• A Kabui village who have converted into Christianity with rural background (Khunjao, Tamenglong District), and  
• A Kabui village where there is a synthesis of traditional Kabui religion and Christianity (Sangaiprou, Imphal-West District).

Besides these three villages, I will look at some more villages to study the impact of migration, level of identity consciousness, modernization and impact of other religions. This will enable me to do comparative study and arrive at more objective conclusions.

The study was conducted in two phases- one during the normal days and the other during festivals where the degree of identity consciousness is quite high. The period of research was planned from July 2004 to November 2007. As I was awarded an International Fellowship called ‘SYLFF’ (The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund), funded by Nippon Foundation and Tokyo Foundation, Japan for three years (November 2004 to November 2007) to pursue my Ph.D, I have devised a systematic planning to realize my goals.

**Target for my first year (July 2004 to July 2005):**
1. To go for extensive collection of study materials.  
2. To revise and finalize chapterisation.  
3. To involve and participate in many workshops and Seminars.  
4. To complete review of literature.  
5. To complete writing chapter-1 i.e. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework for the Study.  
6. To carry out preliminary field work in Manipur and Delhi.  
7. To prepare for extensive field trips.

**Target for my second year (August 2005 to August 2006):**
1. To write abstract of all chapters.  
3. To identify the required space for the use of primary data.  
4. To write field experiences (from 1st March to end of April 2006).  
5. To revise all chapters (from 1st May to end of August 2006)
Target for my third and final year (September 2006 to November 2007):

1. To continue writing all chapters (from September to end of December 2006)
2. To carry out final field trip (somewhere in Jan/Feb. 2007).
3. To write final chapters (March to June 2007).
4. To submit first draft in June 2007.
5. To revise and submit Second draft in Sept. 2007.
6. To submit Final draft in Dec. 2007.

Keeping these in mind, I started working on the thesis under the guidance of Prof. Anand Kumar. The first task which I undertook was the presentation of a paper 'Problematization of Identity: A case of the Kabui Nagas of Manipur', held on 20th September 2004 at CSSS/SSS Dean’s Committee Room, JNU, New Delhi. It was a workshop organized jointly by IIPA, New Delhi and CPRC, Manchester U.K. It was a fruitful exercise as many experts and students made me think deeper and examine it carefully. Realizing the need for intensive readings, I then decided to go for collection of materials to Manipur in the month of December 2004. As part of my pilot study, I visited Chingmeirong village in Imphal-East on 10th December to see the temple of ‘Tingkao Ragwang Chap-Riak’, which is a symbol of traditional structure and collected small booklets from the office. I also visited the ‘Zeliangrong Union’ building at Paona Bazaar, Imphal and collected some Annual Magazines and booklets. I had the privileged to interact with the senior office bearers of the Union. They were too polite and kind enough to share with all the latest developments of the tribe. On 15th December 2004, I visited Manipur University and collected some books along with M.Phil and Ph.D Dissertations on the Kabui Nagas from the library. I also discussed with Prof. Joy Kumar, Head, Department of History, Manipur University who has worked on ‘Zeliangrong Movement’ in his Ph.D thesis at Manipur University. The most fruitful time I had spent was at Sangaiprou village, Imphal-West (my native place), where I spent and discussed with (late) Mr. Newmei Gaijon from whom I learnt on oral history, legends, folksongs and culture of the tribe. He was such a knowledgeable and learned man and was one of the first convert to Christianity in the village. It was he who provided me the history of Christianity, persecution, relationship with other non Christians and development of church in the village.
With lot of new information and ideas, I came back to my University on the first week of January 2005. I shared all my experiences with my supervisor Prof. Anand Kumar and his timely intervention in pointing out fundamental issues, pertinent suggestions, correct focus, constructive criticisms, crucial moments on the work have enabled me to put the things in a right order.

On 28th January 2005, there was a ‘Gaan Ngai’ festival organized by the ‘Zeliangrong Students’ Delhi’ at OAT, JNU, New Delhi. This festival is a post harvest festival usually performed at the end of the agricultural year celebrated by the non-Christian Kabuis. Though there were not any rituals and ceremonies, the festival in JNU was marked with traditional dance, music and songs. The traditional dance called ‘Pazeimei’ (swaying of traditional shawls by young boys and girls) was the main attraction. What was interesting to see was that the Kabui people (both students and employees) came for the festival with traditional dresses and costumes. The programme included the narration on the history of the Kabui Nagas, migration, various songs and dances and the significance of the Gaan Ngai festival. I interviewed six participants selected through random sampling (by lottery) and 20 audiences on that occasion. Special mention can be made of a JNU foreign student from Spain (Mr. Eric) who said that the tribe was so colourful and distinct and he reflected upon a similar tribe in Brazil. On the question whether we should retain such tradition in the present day metro cities, he opined that through this ceremony and festival, one can reflect on the roots, from where we came and what culture we share. The most amazing incident was the old woman who stood up and started crying when she saw the traditional dances performed on the stage. When I inquired about her emotions she informed me that it had reminded of her younger days in Manipur where she used to take the lead in dancing. Since she resides now in Delhi with her only son who is a central Government officer, she missed all these festivals. When I took interview with the participants (three boys and three girls) on how they felt after performing the traditional dances, they reacted that it was a rarest kind that they had experienced in a new place and encouraged that it should continue to celebrate as tradition. However, what was painful was that majority of the interviewers aged between 18-35 years did not know how to dance and sing traditional songs. They have now either become Christians or away from home for quite sometime.
Soon after the monsoon registration of our University (from 2nd August to 15th September 2005), I visited my field in three villages in three different districts of Manipur. The first study was conducted at Khunjao village of Tamenglong district. It took around 8 hours by private bus to reach the place from Imphal City. I stayed in a simple hotel (only Rs.30 per night for three consecutive days) and conducted a series of interview- the Khunjao Local church pastor, two board members and 10 educated youths from aged 25 to 40 years (5 boys and 5 girls selected through random sampling by lottery after the church service on Sunday morning). The discussions with the church leaders were rather informal and from them I could gather lot of information. This information is again used to counter checked with the existing literature on Christianity. I discussed on many broad issues ranging from the period when first conversion (Baptist) took place in the village in 1929 till the platinum celebration (75 years) in 2004. However, I was informed that the Catholic Church came in the village only in 1958 and they would be celebrating its golden jubilee in the coming 2009. Undoubtedly, I found the village quite westernized and liberal though the people are from the rural background. On the question whether they are still familiar with the traditional festivals and dances, it was surprised to know that they have very less knowledge about the traditional customs and practices as most of their generations were born Christians. Moreover, as most of the younger children go to schools and colleges outside the state, they did not get even a chance to witness these festivals. This was reflected well from the responses of 10 educated youths in a questionnaire I distributed to them. When a question was asked on whether the traditional Kabui culture and festivals are still relevant in the present day times, around 90 per cent of the respondents felt that these traditional festivals and dances are too old and primitive and therefore they are not relevant anymore. Moreover, they argued that many rituals and ceremonies are attached to them (as religion and culture are usually mixed) and therefore they are not very comfortable in participating these festivals and dances. When asked whether the early Christians had done damage to the traditional identity of the Kabui Nagas, 50 per cent of them argued yes. On the question whether identity of an ethnic group is important and should be preserved, all respondents confirmed the question. They argued that identity of a group is manifested in language, religion and culture. They did not mind wearing the traditional dresses in the church
services and other occasions. However, they would like themselves to be called and
known as Zeliangrong and not as Haomei, Kabui and Rongmei. On the question of
retaining the traditional songs and hymns, almost all argued that many tunes and lyrics
have started introducing in the regular church services. But, they would not like to follow
the traditional culture and religion as it is against the principles of Christianity.
Christianity has become a new way of life with new identity.

On 1st September 2005, I visited Chingmeirong village and distributed a
questionnaire to 10 educated youths (5 boys and 5 girls aged between 25 to 40 years). I
was informed earlier by the Youth Secretary that they were having a social service camp
and therefore I could visit in the morning at 8 A.M. I circulated my questionnaire and
soon found out that the youths in this village were quite qualified yet traditionalists. On
the question whether any conversion to Christianity should be allowed to stay in the
village, they argued that Christianity is an alien religion which affects the culture and
religious practices of the Kabui Nagas and therefore they should not be allowed to stay in
the village. Chapter 5 and 6 talk on the persecution of Christians converts in many
villages including Chingmeirong. On the question whether we should preserve our
culture in this present times, they argued that ‘lost of culture is lost of identity’.
Therefore, to promote such culture, they argued that every village should organize and
preserve traditional festivals and dances and should invite outsiders as well. This is well
reflected in this village where I witnessed that during Gaan Ngai festival (see photo 1),
many outside guests were invited and celebrated in a very grand manner. Many leaders in
the village are staunch believers of the tradition and this holds true as the temple of
Tingkao Ragwang (locally known as Tingkao Ragwang Kalum Kai) is constructed right
at the heart of the village. It serves as the meeting place of all Kabui traditional believers
where in every full moon day the followers gather together and pray. Chapter 5 talks
about the origin and growth of this religion.

The experience in the Sangaiprou village is quite interesting. This is one of the
villages where both Christians and non-Christians live together. With regard to the Kabui
Christians, I interviewed the local church pastor, deacon and four educated youths (2
boys and 2 girls between 25 to 40 years) selected by random sampling on 10th September
2005. The total families converted to Christianity were just five households. However,
the regular members of the church included outsiders (especially students and Government servants) who stayed either in the village or nearby areas on rent. The total number who normally attended the church services on Sundays ranges from 60 to 100 people. Some children from the neighborhood (whose parents are not Christians) also attended occasionally (See photo 2). From Pastor and Deacon of the Church, I gathered the history of the church, story of persecution and the relations with the non Christians in the village. Christianity came in this village in the year 1984. On the question whether they have made the right decisions on conversion, they replied by saying that now their children know the Saviour and Creator of earth and heaven. On the traditional festivals and dances, they argued that it brings lot of disturbances in the locality. The educated youths argued that Christianity has given new life and wider outlook that made them better persons. On the question whether the Christians also should wear traditional dresses, they argued that they have no problem. However, they feared that a wrong message could be created to non-Christians if they wear such dresses. On Sundays and festivals such as Christmas and Easter, they wear traditional dresses comfortably. But they did not take part in those festivals celebrated by the non-Christians. I have discussed the conflicting issues between the Christians and the non-Christians of Sangaiiprou in chapter 5.

The next intensive fieldwork was carried on from 2nd January to 22nd February 2006 during the harvesting festival popularly known as the Chakan Gaan Ngai. I witnessed this colourful festival in six villages of Imphal. It was celebrated in Sangaiiprou Kabui village from 16th to 19th January 2006. It is the biggest festival of the tribe. Some villages celebrate for a long week and others in only 3-4 days. I witnessed this in Chingmeirong where the festival was from 16th to 22nd January 2006. Some villages like Kakhulong, Keishamthong, Namdunlong etc. celebrated for only 4 days (17th to 20th 2006). I used participant observation and interview as the tools to study this festival. The first day of the festival was the welcome day. The description of the festival is discussed in chapter 3 (See photo 3). The finding is that during such festival, the identity consciousness of the people is quite high. Many members of the tribe did not mind wearing the traditional dresses for the whole day. I observed that even in the Imphal city, there was no checking or physical frisking (otherwise this is a daily routine in Imphal due
to law and security problems) if they wear the traditional shawls. Consumption of local
drinks called ‘Jungao’ was freely available and the parents did not usually stop their
children to consume such drinks. Since 1998, this festival is declared as a State festival,
as declared on 10th January 1998 by the united Front Government of Manipur led by Shri
W. Nipamacha Singh, the then Chief Minister of Manipur. The latest trend in the
celebration is that they started organizing a beauty contest (a kind of inter village
competition), usually organized by certain organizations or committees of the tribe.
Interestingly, they also invite other communities like Meitei and other tribes. It means
that the festival has a modern impact. However, this festival is not celebrated by the
Kabui Christians.

There was a Naga festival called ‘Lui Ngai Ni’ organized at Ukhrul District of
Manipur from 14th to 17th January 2006. It is the biggest post harvest festival of all Naga
tribes and I went as one of the delegates representing the Kabui tribe. It was a platform
for all Nagas to showcases its colourful dresses, songs, dances and traditional music. In
this festival, I wanted to find out the different interaction of tribes. I found out that there
was a healthy competition among the Naga tribes in various traditional dance and songs
competition. The gatherings were around 30 thousand people from all districts of
Manipur with their respective traditional clothing. What was most exciting was that they
used traditional bamboos to fetch water from the hills where they made a small hole used
for washing hands. (See photo 4).

As the 75th Death Anniversary of Haipou Jadonang falls on 29th August 2006, I
left for Manipur with the permission of my supervisor Prof. Anand Kumar on 9th July
2006. Jadonang was a veteran freedom fighter against the British and a great leader who
aimed at reviving the culture and tradition of the Zeliangrongs. Chapter 5 talks about the
origin and growth of the movement started by him in 1925. The event was held at Puilon
(Kambiron) village, the birth place of Haipou Jadonang in Tamenglong district of
Manipur on 29th August, 2006. The similar occasion was also held at Imphal where many
important personalities came and attended the meeting. The occasion at Imphal was
attended by Ex MP Shri Meijinlung Kamson who spoke on the significance of the day
and narrated on the whole history of Haipou Jadonang. The event was held just beside the
Imphal jail where Jadonang was imprisoned and hanged. On this special occasion, a true photo of Jadonang was released by Shri Meijinlung Kamson. (See photo 5).

As my study is based on many field studies, I was preparing myself to participate in yet another Silver Jubilee Celebration of ‘Makuilongdi Re-Establishment’ at Senapati district of Manipur on 1st December 2006. However, the programme was cancelled due to the problem of law and order in the State. Makuilongdi is the ancestral place (also see chater 2) of the Kabui Nagas and here I quote the writings of the invitation given to me-

"Nestled amidst emerald hills and above 25 Km. North-West of Senapati town is an obscure Zeliangrong Village which bears its original name Makuilongdi, the confluence of Zeliangrong migration after their departure from Makhel and more importantly the cradle of Zeliangrong culture. The present re-established Makuilongdi Village on 01/05/1979, though small comparatively, is a faithful remnant of the glory that was Makuilongdi. Tradition says that during its heyday Makuilongdi had a total of 7777 households. At Makuilongdi, the vibrant Zeliangrong culture and polity got developed and reached its zenith. No doubt even today, those developed customs and rituals are performed by the proud descendants of Makuilongdi. The well established Makuilongdi lay in ruins after the mass exodus. No one is sure of the reason behind the mass exodus, but has to admire and be proud of being the descendants of those magnificent ancestors, whose blood are still running through us and will continue to run through the veins of youths of our tribe in future. Now the soul of our ancestral village is calling us..." "O descendants of Zeliangrong tribe, come again at Makuilongdi, it is your original village, where the umbilical cord of your ancestors lay buried. It is time we discard our alien garments and wear anew clothes that our mother has woven for us with her own hands. Let us try no more but head straight home to the bosom of our village, Makuilongdi."

On 17th December 2006, I participated at the 4th Zeliangrong Folk Festival, organized by “The Society for Promotion of Community Task” (SPCT) at BOAT, Palace Compound, Imphal, Manipur. Mr. Kamei Jenthoi (my elder brother) who was the Organizing
Committee member invited me to take part at the occasion and I had the honour to compere at the function. Around 5000 people from three states (Manipur, Nagaland and Assam) participated in the one day cultural programme which showcases the ethnic culture of the Zeliangrong people. There was folksong competition which was participated by many villages. In this festival I informally discussed with many old men and women and from them I could understand the meaning of various songs and dances. Chapter 3 talks about the festivals, types of folksongs and dances and I translated them from the interviews that I took from three old men. This festival was really benefited me in understanding the traditional oral history, myths, legends and origin. There were many experts who shared on this occasion and it was indeed a rare taste of the impossible.

(See photo 6 and chapter 4 photos).

The next field study was conducted on the Christmas celebration at Sangaiprou village on 24th to 26th December 2006. My study was through the participant observation and I informally discussed on certain issues with (late) Mr. Gajon Newmei, who was the founder of the Sangaiprou Baptist Church and was the Head Deacon of the Church. It was interesting to learn that the church is now expanding and have more than 100 active members. Though, there is still tension with the non-Christians, I found many of them coming and attending the festival of Christ. I also found many young boys and girls wearing traditional dresses, shawls and costumes. Chapter 5 and 6 deals talks about the persecution of early Christians in Sangaiprou village.

(See photo 7).

The final field work was scheduled in the month of Jan/Feb.2007. However, I could not actualize it as I was informed by the JNU Administration that I could go to Peking University, China for a short comparative study financed by the Tokyo Foundation, Japan. As a SYLFF fellow, I negotiated with Peking University and I was sanctioned with US$ 3000.00 (Around Rs.1 Lac and 30 thousand) by Tokyo foundation. I spent at the Peking University from 31st March till 24th April 2007 and was allotted with a host supervisor Prof. Ma Rong, Head, Department of Sociology, Peking University, China. (See Photo 8).
Reflections and Experience in the Field: An Informant relationship

I preferred to give a descriptive note of my personal experiences in the field because this would throw light to arrive at better understanding on my research. Apart from existing literatures, a personal experience brings about certain distinctive interpretation between the researcher and the study.

I felt the need to study on the ‘Kabui Nagas’ as the term itself carries a contradictory meaning to many people. It was confusing for many (especially students) as whether to use Kabui, Rongmei, Haomei or Zeliangrong. Most importantly, not much work has been done to this ancient tribe and many argued that the existing literatures have done damage to the identity of the people. As a result of this, I felt the need to explore and verify the available materials by giving people’s perspective and at the same time come up with my personal findings. As explained above, the analysis of my field study is descriptive and analytical in nature.

Experiences of China: A Comparative Study

As already being stated above, I was awarded the prestigious International Fellowship known as the “SYLFF” (Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund); in JNU known as the “Jawaharlal Nehru Young Leaders Fellowship”, given after the name of the first Prime Minister of India which is being funded by the Nippon Foundation and Tokyo Foundation, Japan. SYLFF fellowship is awarded not only for academic/professional excellence but also for the leadership potential and commitment to promote the common good. I was awarded in November 2004, the first from the whole North East India and the second batch to receive from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Unlike many other fellowship programs, the SYLFF Program offers fellows opportunities for life-long networking and collaboration vis-à-vis research and social engagement, and exercising leadership. The Fellowships has a unique feature called the SYLFF Fellow’s Mobility Programme (FMP). The primary purpose of the SYLFF Fellow’s Mobility Program (FMP) is to contribute to and enrich the academic and cultural learning of SYLFF fellows related to his/her doctoral thesis and must be conducted at another SYLFF institution in another country. As per the list of universities, there are 69 universities across the globe supported by the Foundation. With the suggestion and approval given by my supervisor Prof. Anand Kumar, I chose Peking University, China
because like India it is one of the most ancient civilizations in the world and a mixed haven of tradition and modernity. It is modern in outlook and living, yet traditional in beliefs and practices. In terms of language, dance and food habits, it has successfully carried its tradition without losing its sights of modern development and technology. The Chinese culture has attracted a million of people all over the world and it comfortably has its place in the hearts of the world.

On the 31st March late night, I boarded the Malaysian Airlines (New Delhi-Kuala Lumpur-Beijing). I reached Kuala Lumpur (the capital of Malaysia) around 9 A.M., which is two and half hours different from IST. However, some technical problems delayed my connecting flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing for more than 16 hours. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise for it gave me an opportunity to explore Malaysia in a very short time. As I was checking in my room, I found another two Indian businessmen heading for Shanghai, the hub for trade and commerce in China. As we sat together for breakfast, we decided that we should take transit visa and explore Kuala Lumpur.

Kuala Lumpur is a small beautiful city. It has a pleasant climate with temperature around 20-25 degree Celsius. Of the ethnic composition, Malay constitutes 60 percent of the total population with 15 percent Chinese, 12 percent Indians and remaining others. It is a peaceful place with everything systematically arranged. The law and governance seems very efficient and stable. I discovered that the people are very cultured and have a lot of civic sense. The places are wide and clean. The expensive vehicles plying there reflect their prosperity. We went around the places for more than 6-8 hours. At around 8 P.M. we were all back in KL International Airport and went to our respective rooms. I spent sometime in the lounge and used Internet, which was free for the passengers. I then headed for dinner and waited for my flight for Beijing. I reached the Peking University at around 9 A.M. after 5 and half hours of flying. I headed directly to Peking University and met Ms. Chen Mo the coordinator of my trip. She helped me to locate my apartment where I spent sometime and headed for some snacks nearby restaurant. The initial days in the campus were difficult, as I did not know Chinese language. But, I soon found some trust worthy friends such as Mr. Sui Fumin, a Ph.D candidate in Economics and Mr. Binod Singh from India, who is pursuing his Ph.D in International Studies at Peking.
who became my translators. Staying at Peking University was fabulous. Most of the buildings are built in traditional style, very unique and yet beautiful. But to my surprise, it was built not by Chinese but by two American Christian missionaries. The University was originally called Yanjing University but, since 1952, the Republic of China took over the campus fearing that conversion would affect their society. Actually, Peking University was established in 1898 at Shatan somewhere in the East of Beijing but shifted to the present campus in 1952. The year 1952 is very significant in the history of China. In this year many universities were either closed or shifted to other places and many policies and programs of the Government were either changed or introduced. Likewise, the Department of Sociology was closed in 1952 and it re-opened only in the early 1980’s. At present, the faculty of Sociology headed by Prof Ma Rong who was also my host supervisor is merged with Anthropology and Social Work. Mr. Fei Xiao Tong, a student of Malinowski who expired recently was also associated with this Department.

Peking University at present (as reported in their guide book) has a faculty and staff of 16,000 members of which 58 are academicians, 1400 professors, 1800 Associate Professors and over 40,000 students, out of which 4800 are on the doctorate program, 9000 on the master’s degree, 15,000 undergraduates and over 1900 foreign students. This reveals a popular notion that the atmosphere is very congenial for higher study and research. During my stay at Peking, I learnt many things. I was somehow amazed by the sophisticated technology that the people were using. Laptop was commonly used and every room was fitted with two telephone connections, well-furnished tables and cupboards. I was amazed to see almost all students keeping fridge, oven, washing machine and an electrical coffee jar. Many students in the campus used expensive cars but I could not find any bikes or motorcycles (as it was not allowed due to the Government policy). I interacted with many students and discussed on the social and cultural issues with Prof. Ma Rong, the head of Sociology Department who was also my host supervisor. Under his guidance, I came in direct contact on their society, culture and religion. This was well supported by few readings that I accessed from their library and personal collections on their history and culture. My visit was also coincided with the visit of Bill Gates, the owner of Microsoft and the richest man on earth. He was conferred with Honoree Ph.D on 20th April and presently serves as the Trustee of Peking
University. On the 19th April, I was also invited in the award ceremony of SYLFF Fellows in Peking University. Ms. Ellen Mashiko, the Executive Director of Scholarship Divisions, the Tokyo Foundation, Japan was the Chief Guest of the occasion.

The total population of China is composed of 98 percent Han with around 56 other ethnic groups such as Manju, Huiju, Zhuang etc. Most of these groups identify themselves with Han, as it is very powerful and the most influential ethnic group in the country. Therefore, the question of asserting identities by the smaller ethnic groups never arises in the case of China. Moreover, the minority ethnic groups live in small population in and around Beijing, but concentrating largely in Tibet and Mongolia. Their distinct cultures and identity get manifested only during festivals. Otherwise, the notion of nationality is much stronger than their ethnic identity. Therefore, Prof. Ma Rong himself stated that, “In China, National identity is more important than ethnic identity”. I think, this explains why China in the present day is emerging as one of the fast developing nations in the world. In terms of culture, China is successful in preserving their rich tradition and customs. The buildings with traditional structures are still very popular and most acclaimed. Television and other media like newspapers always depict a program on their culture, history, and development. A series of family related programs are a day today attractions. In the context of religion, the Chinese do not have a particular God. They believe only in principles and philosophy. When inquired, I was reported that they are not happy about many countries that are being controlled by religious head from foreign countries. Religious conversion to Muslims has become a serious issue in a Tsinjiang province in China. At present, there are some Christian followers as well but not very open. Development in China is not proportionate. The regions lying in the East are prosperous and the Western side with 60 percent of the total population still depends on agriculture and lives in rural areas or villages. Before the formation of the ‘People’s Republic of China’ in 1949, there were frequent natural disasters with unstable political situation. Many people were displaced and suffered due to serious shortages of grain. The formation of PRC led to the adoption of a series of resolute measures, restoring and developing agricultural products and increase in the supply of grain drastically. In this relation, Prof. Lu Feng believes that China, at present does indeed have a problem of excess grain. It means that the explosion of population has not yet been a major problem
for the Chinese. In fact, the strength of 130 crore population has been checked through the strict enforcement of one child system. However, this system differs from place to place and family to family. In rural areas, the system of one child is more liberal but not in the case of the city. A family can have more than one child only when the whole lineage of the family has no male successor. Otherwise, huge fine is imposed as penalty. Interestingly, if a child from the rural province or regions wanted to study in a better educational institution, which has better infrastructure, he/she has to pay more fees than their counterparts from city.

There is also a strict enforcement of law on environment. For instance, walking on the grass is never permitted. As already internalized in their mind, the habit of spitting is not at all their habit. They are conscious about the nature and decency. In terms of sports, I think they are much more advanced than many developing countries like India. The campus of Peking University has a beautiful stadium where, many students and professionals from the university practice their sporting events. I found many students who are equally serious in studies representing their country in Table Tennis, badminton and swimming in the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing 2008. I have witnessed the venue for table tennis, which is constructed inside the campus. Not only this, the whole Beijing is lit with colorful lights and I see the people very excited in hosting this summer games. At present, China is at the peak of its beauty. Shops, restaurants, clubs, hotels, transport, and other service facilities are just magnificent. There is a huge drive to learn English and everywhere the people are taught to behave well especially to the foreigners visiting their rich country.

China today stands tall boasting with having super fast train with 200-250 Km per hour running through important cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It shows its pride after the successful launch of Chinghai-Tibet railway. This railway route has the highest tunnel in the world, above 4500 meter from sea level with other 9 tunnels and uses special locomotive whose power is twice the normal train. It carries extra oxygen supplying the passengers and in every 16 Km, there is a communication tower to guarantee safety of train and its passengers. The route also passes through the lowest temperature of below -40 degree Celsius and therefore, covered with snow throughout the year. Passengers are asked not to run or walk fast in the station as they are cautioned that

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they may unconsciously fall down. The Chinese are proud to have this train and in the process of making this real, more than 10,000 people have sacrificed their lives. At the same time, it boasts of having many traditional or historical places such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Tiananmen Square, Ming Tomb, grave of Mao Zedong etc. I came back to my University on 24\textsuperscript{th} April 2007 and reported to my supervisor and shared all my experiences and learnings.

I submitted my first Ph.D draft on 15\textsuperscript{th} June 2005 to my supervisor Prof. Anand Kumar. After 40 days, he gave me back with lot of comments. Every after chapter, he gave me writing comments of about a page and a half. His timely intervention and critical analysis was too excellent. Soon after the discussion, I discovered that I needed to undertake a final field trip to verify and connect all my findings. With his approval, I left for Manipur on 5\textsuperscript{th} August 2007 and continued to stay till the end of September 2007. I finally took some interviews with some officers such as Shri Thaithuilung Pamei I.A.S, Prof. Gangmumei Kamei, Dr. Arun, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Manipur University and visited my field sites. It was very sad to know that Mr. Gaijon Newmei from Sangaiprou who contributed with much needed information was passed away on 26\textsuperscript{th} June 2007. After verifying all the facts and data, I came back to my university and had several rounds of discussions with my supervisor and indeed my journey of Ph.D research though tough, was rewarding.

**Analytical Tools:**

Most of the colonial writers have used interpretative method to study a particular culture. To me, it is insufficient and extension of colonial imperialism as it takes for granted that the respondents are ignorant and illiterate. I think this tool is inadequate today as it could create a wide gap between the existing reality and the object of study. In the present day understanding of one's culture and society, certain knowledge of that culture is required to arrive at objectivity and this can be gathered from the experts of the field who may also belong to the group. Therefore, the analytical tool used in this study is a dialogical approach where the researcher uses both experts on the field (to bring out the people's perspective) and the findings through participant observation and interview schedules. Therefore both primary and secondary sources of data are employed to study the Kabui Nagas of Manipur.
Limitations of the Study:

Any study and its findings are always subjected to further debate and discussions. In the process of writing this dissertation, lot of problems and limitations came in between. The first limitation of my study is that it is not possible for me to cover all the villages in 5 districts of Manipur. The conclusion drawn is from the three villages that I have conducted my field studies. The second limitation of the study is that I found my respondents not comfortable to share freely. As the concept of identity is quite a sensitive issue, somehow they tried to hide their opinion. This made me very difficult in verifying the existing literatures. The fact is that lot of changes have already taken place in the Kabui society and to find out the oral history in the form of legends, folk stories, songs and dances, and to find out the origin and go back to the roots, there is always a difficulty that one encounters. Finally, I found out that while speaking to the people, it seems that there is no problem with living with other faiths. However, the truth is much more. The past incident of persecution and violence confirms that there is always a crisis of adjustment and accommodation with each other.

Structure of the thesis:
The whole thesis is divided into six chapters.

Chapter-1.
It is an introductory chapter. It looks at the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. It examines the concepts like identity and identity-crisis, tradition and modernity and relationship between tribe and nationality etc. It also reviews the existing literature and traces the writings of various thinkers who have propounded such theories. A little description situating the case of North East India in general and Manipur in particular has also been given.

Chapter-2.
This is a second chapter. It deals with methods and techniques used by the researcher to study. It includes the selection of field sites, the reason for the selection, the universe of the study, the planning of the researcher, the time and period in which the study was held along with the experiences and reflections on field work. A study on China is given in order to locate the comparative study.
Chapter-3.
It provides the historical background of the Kabui Nagas. It tries to question as to who are the Nagas. What race they belong to? What is their Identity and so on? This chapter also tries to find out the origin of the word Kabui and the multiple identities in which they are associated.

The chapter also talks about the sources of information-legends, oral history, colonial writings, including the local reports. It divided the history into three phases and explains the significant events in that period.

Chapter-4.
It deals with society and culture of the Kabui Nagas. The first part of the chapter talks about the social living, family and marriage system, divorce, position of women, law of inheritance, dormitory system and so on.

The second part of the chapter is on cultural aspects of the tribe such as food and dressing, festivals, dance, traditional songs, traditional yelling, Ho Hoing etc.

Chapter-5.
This chapter deals with the economy, polity and religion of the Kabui tribe. Under the political system, the study on its evolution and working of the polity has been elaborately dealt with.

The study of economy is classified into three types:

(i) traditional economy
(ii) colonial economy and
(iii) planned economic development.

Besides these, relevant topics such as colonial administration and state employment, monetization of market economy and infrastructure like road and transport are discussed.

The study on religion consists of the nature of worship, rites and ceremonies, code of social and moral conduct, and ancestral worship which are dealt comprehensively.

Chapter-6.
This is a chapter on the consciousness of identity among the Kabui Nagas. It deals with three aspects that help in asserting the identity-

(i) Zeliangrong Movement:
This movement is still perceived as the first step towards identity consciousness. The Zeliangrong movement was carried out through several stages with different objectives. At the first stage, the movement was carried out on the line of revitalization with an objective of regenerating the old religion of the Zeliangrong people against formidable approaching force of Christianity started in 1917. In the second stage, the movement assumed a radical socio-political agitation against the British colonial power. The reason of this second step was very closely related with the growing discontent with the new socio-economic and political policy of the colonial ruler. And later on at present, the objective of the movement is inclined mainly towards the cause for a social unity, cultural resurgence, economic upliftment and political integration of the Zeliangrong tribe.

(ii) Christianization:
The coming of the British is followed by the emergence of Christianity. Christianity has affected the traditional culture of the Kabui Nagas by and large and this has given rise to clashes of cultures as they abandoned the tradition and started adopting the western cultures resulting to asserting new identity which is different from the traditional one.

(iii) Tingkao Ragwang Chap-riak:
Tingkao Ragwang Chap-riak is a religion founded by the Zeliangrong Religious Council under the resolution No.5 dated 16th April, 1994. This religion is formed based on the ancient and historically-evolved practices of the people since time immemorial. Earlier, there was no common religious authority except at the village level called Peikai (similar to panchayat system of governance). Therefore, with the formation of the ‘Zeliangrong Ra Chapriak Phom’ (ZRCP), it aims at propagating, promoting, preserving, and protecting the traditional religion. The followers believe that this movement is for the search of religious identity of the people.

Chapter-7.
This chapter talks about the factors of identity-crisis. The factors such as Migration, the Meitei Expansionism, British Colonialism, Conversion, Modernization and Globalization are dealt at length.
Chapter-8.
This is a concluding chapter. It discussed the concept and all theories of identity and applies in the context of Manipur. The research questions and objectives of the study are discussed and explained here. It also tests the hypotheses whether they are affirmative or negative. Finally, a comparative study is done with other societies to understand the identity-crisis of the Kabui Nagas. It means that this chapter connects all other chapters and analyses them with a suitable perspective.
Photos of Chapter 2:

Photo 1: Chingmeirong Youth with traditional costumes.

Photo 2: Sangaiprou Baptist Church

Photo 2a: Children at the Sangaiprou Church service
Photo 3: Kabui Mothers dancing in a festival.

Photo 4: A traditional way of fetching water from the hills.
Photo 4a: A grand feast at the Naga Festival 14th-17th January, 2006

Photo 5: A true picture of Haipou Jadonang
Photo 6: The Researcher speaking on the Zeliangrong Folk Festival

Photo 7: Sangaiplou BYF singing on the Christmas Celebration (25th December 2006)
Photo 7a: Sangaiprou Christian Youths

Photo 8: The Researcher at the Peking University Library, China
Photo 8a: The Researcher with Prof. Ma Rong at the Peking University, China

Photo 8b: The Researcher at the Peking University, China
Some Important Field Photos:

Kabui women in a traditional chorus

Kabui women witnessing a festival

Kabui elders witnessing a festival
Kabui old man sharing the history of the Kabui Nagas

A man speaking on the meaning of traditional songs

A Kabui beating the traditional gong