CONCLUSION

In the last few chapters a critical analysis has been done about the historical geography of the Ukhrul region. It has border with Burma and Nagaland state. The headquarter Ukhrul is inhabited by the Tangkhul community. It is a hilly terrain with thick forests. The people scattered all over this region and settled down in high altitudinal areas of this mountainous region. The Tangkhuls, Kukis, Nepalis and Mayangs settled in the region. The Tangkhuls have formed the bulk of the population and the kukis come next with few villages. The Nepalis and the Mayangs also settled in the town areas and have formed an important part of business community.

In this background we further established the facts that almost all the notable areas in the region have the same climate with little variations between the low lying and the high places. Heavy rain with foggy weather forms the atmosphere of the Ukhrul central region. The region witnesses cold climate throughout the year. In some parts near the valley and the low lying areas it is warmer than the higher places.
The geographical locations are intermittently broken up into four mountain ranges that stretch to the different parts of Ukhrul region. Among them Shirui hills has one the famous mountain peaks. A unique lily grows in these hills and many people come to visit the place to see the beautiful flower. The border range with Burma is known to people as Angoching hills in the south east of Ukhrul and Tasum hills on the north east of Ukhrul. On the most eastern part of Kachouphung range is the border between Ukhrul and Burma. The people of this region have maintained their association with the mountain ranges. Several folk tales are also associated with these ranges. It is therefore, related with the past legacies.

The lakes like Achau Maki, Khamtak ngayi, and Kachawui are wonders of the region. These lakes lie in the high altitudes where water remains throughout the year. These natural lakes have associated folk stories since the ancient days. The people believe that ‘Kameo’ (Gods) live in this lake. People of the Ukhrul area believe that the word ‘Kameo’ has association with ‘Kamdeo’ the god of love and passion of the Hindus.

The rivers play an important role in the life of the People of Ukhrul. Their migration and settlement follows the riverene course. The people use different ornaments made from sea shells. Their agriculture largely depended on the supply of water from the springs and rivers. During the
course of our field trips we came across agriculture practices which established our assumptions that the people in this region were pastoral entities since the past. Our enquiries from the villagers revealed that their agriculture practices depended on the supply of water for irrigation purposes on the river more than the natural rains. It is an advanced concept found in use among the people of early civilisations. The frequent use of check dams over the rivers also reveals their old practices which they had perfected. At present, most of the sources of drinking water are from the rivers. Besides, small dams are built for the conservation of water for cropping purposes. Today, Thoubal Dam project is in the midway of completion which will benefit the region. Thus, rivers met the different needs and purposes of the residents of Ukhrul.

During the course of our collection of data we found that the forest products such as timber of different types found in Ukhrul were being used rampanty and trees being cut down indiscriminately. As such, the natural environment is being destroyed. With the improvement in the transport system the forest is more exploited and the thick trees in the forests are being cut down which is leading to deterioration in social standards. There are still many unexplored natural resources. In the past the people explored these areas and utilised the resources not at the speed which we find today.
From time to time various vegetation has got denuded in the several sectors of Ukhrul and its adjoining areas, it has had a negative impact upon the people of Ukhrul. Today, the natural resources are being utilized to further boost the economy of this region.

Undoubtedly, the climate in Ukhrul region has undergone great changes due to felling of trees for firewood, timber and on account of jhumming cultivation and also, increase in population. The normal temperatures in the region have increased tremendously when compared to those of the ancient times. In the olden days most of the area understudy was covered by thick forest. The air was fresh and unpolluted and people could see the beauty of nature in different kinds of fauna and flora. After the people’s settlement, gradually there was population growth and they began to destroy the forest for their own survival. During our field survey we saw lots of changes in the environment.

Through oral sources and traditions we learnt that the Tangkhuls had their own script written on the skin of animals. But these were lost and no literature is available for the sources of history. As such we had to search for the oldest man in villages who was knowledgeable and who could recollect and tell what happened in the past to the ecology of the place. Other than the oral tradition we have few agriculture tools as evidence how the agriculture was carried out in the ancient times. Notwithstanding the
Tangkhul’s migration patterns and their lives which passed through various stages of development tell us about their history and of their social, economic and political lives. The Tangkhuls who migrated from the Somsok region had tremendous pressures when they came to settle in the present habitat. Then Ukhrul was covered with thick forest and was full of wild animals. They were the first settlers therefore, they didn’t face any opposition in settling down. The tools that were used in the early days became outdated and gradually new modern tools and weapons were made and used by the peasants. It made cultivation easier over the land and increased their ability to produce more crops.

The people living in the jungles and hills had made all the difference in their rather slow changing ways of life. The contacts with the neighbouring villages were less as there existed cold war between villages. Head hunting deepened the crisis. People were restricted in their free movement. The Tangkhuls though had democratic forms of government in their villages, the people couldn’t cross other village boundaries without prior information extended to the villagers on the other side because of the practice of head hunting. It was due to this that the people who were living in the land of Tangkhuls isolated themselves from other people who lived in their surrounding or in their vicinity. Fear used to engulf the minds of
men as there existed suspicions in their minds. There was lack of transparency and so they lost faith in the neighbors.

With the passing of time the Tangkhuls and other communities recognized far reaching consequences in every activity wherever there was good progress. The inhabitants of Ukhrul have traced their history to the Khangkhui cave where lots of interaction in the field of socio-cultural, economic and political aspects used to take place. The cave culture was abandoned and agriculture became main occupation of the people in due course of time. It registers a shift in the mode of production. Domestication of animals was in vogue. Trade with other neighbouring villages came into existence once faith returned or was re-established. Roads and facilities for transportation of materials and men developed. Gradually new forces of modern lives were set in the later parts of the twentieth century.

In our field survey we found out that there was self sufficient economy in the region. The trade relationship with their neighbouring villages gained momentum and their coexistence became more meaningful. Symbiotic relationships emerged between them. Salt was exchanged for rice and weapons. The barter system was their medium of exchange. These practices got replaced by modern systems of exchange. Today, they do not carry their loads of goods for exchange to the market. They sell and buy
their goods for money in the economy that has emerged. Adoption of new techniques have made their life easier. Thus drastic changes in the life of people in Ukhrul region and its adjoining areas have appeared. We find these emerging from the geographical accounts in the region.

The villages in far flung areas still do not enjoy the modern amenities like good roads. The beaten tracks still exist. People have to walk continuously for even two days to reach their villages. In some of the villages like Kachouphung Matiyang, Tasom, Chamu, Grihang, Ningchou, Kangpat, etc. people still have to walk long distances on foot on account of the rugged terrains.

Despite the fact that the region is intensified with isolated villages, during the course of our visit to far flung areas we found that there was increase in population, more intermingling and understanding of other clan communities. We found during interviews that the contact with outside world had raised their ways of thinking and living. The impact of modern ideas was also discernible. The geographical features had great impact upon the minds of people who had remained either isolated or when they had remained in the midst of bigger settlements.

With regards to emergence of social elite groups in Tangkhul society we maintain that the role of the geographical factors cannot be
underestimated. The control of the land, production and distribution of produce has been behind the progress.

The society in Ukhrul region was brought to light in the early twentieth century. Before the arrival of the British they were backward in many ways. The Britishers also feared to enter in the hill areas of Manipur. But when they entered they took hold of the region and strongly made their impact. They began to spread modern education and Christianity. This had great impact in the society of the Tangkhuls as well as on the other communities living in the area.

The Kukis who came to Ukhrul brought sophisticated weapons, like the musket, that was considered an advance weapon of warfare during those times. It made them easier to raid many villages in the region. Their main profession was agriculture. Mostly they lived in the hill areas and practised jhum as cultivators. Their chief was the leader in the village and the land also belonged to him. As long as he stayed in the village the land was used by his subject but once he decided to shift or desert the village, the land was to be sold out or returned to the landowner without the subject concerned. The chief emerged as the first person in the Kuki community. Later with the coming of the modern education many youngsters sprung out as elite individuals with their high jobs and high income. They settled mostly in the headquarters of their districts or in the city.
The Nepalis who settled in the middle of the Twentieth century also lived as a brother of the Tangkhul community. Their profession was associated with herding and milking the cows. They lived at the outskirt of the village near the cow shed. They supplied milk to nearby villages. With the advancement of modern life and increase in their population they formed villages and now in some areas of the Ukhrul region, Nepali villages have sprung up. These villages are set up with the agreement of certain villagers with those to whom the land belonged. All these villages maintained their records as to how they began and emerged as a village. A gradual shift can be observed in the social mechanism of small elite groups or powerful elites. They played an important role in shaping a business community in the society and extended their role in building up hierarchical societies. Often elite groups also emerged in isolated clusters of villages where the chiefs ascended to higher status and played a role in spreading religious dogmas especially, Christianity.

In the early days the main features of Tangkhul society was equality among its people. Its citizens did not divide their society between rich and poor and retained their customs and traditions. The guilty were equally punished. On the other hand there was a space for everybody to shine according to his ability. The weak, the strong, the wise All had the same opportunity to avail their strength within the society. The legend of heroes
such as Shimreishang and Maitonphi are still remembered. Their heroic love for each other remained till the end of their lifetime. Likewise, in the Tangkhul society the handsome and pretty woman’s names were spread far and wide across the land and everybody wanted to have a glimpse of their beauty. Their names are a living legend till today. So, there is an absence of class if they are handsome and on their capability they could make a niche for themselves. At the time of wars, the head of those men who were handsome and adept in warfare were mostly wanted. Thus, the persons who outshined the others emerged as elites in the society.

The warriors were the backbone of the Tangkhul villages. They were tough and rugged. Through their strength and wisdom the villages of Tangkhuls boosted their strength and revered them. They emerged as the elite groups amongst the Tangkhuls. The trend continues even today.

The emergence of social elite groups in the society gave rise to many factors. The Tangkhul society since the ancient times has seen the absence of feudalism. The land belongs to the tribe as a whole. The villagers could cultivate the land according to their will within the boundary. It is only with the increase of population that in the paddy fields who made terraces in the wet place and near the rivers and streams become the owner of the paddy field. This was also one of the factors which came
into existence with the private ownership and led to emergence of class in the society.

The private ownership began to divide the society among equals. Some of them began to own large paddy fields and their wealth increased. Such people often lavishly invited the villagers for feasts of merits and celebrated to display their newly acquired wealth. Thus, economic forces emerged which began to divide the society in terms of rich and poor among equals.

The real impact and shock of changes which the Tangkhul society is currently undergoing can be appreciated only when we remember that this has been a very tradition-oriented society for centuries\(^1\). The Nagas as a whole are almost the same in their traditions, customs and ways of life. They are related to one another. Each Naga professes the same stages of life. There is a drastic change with the coming of education.

The old ways of trends began to take a different direction. Their old customs and practices gradually look for new reasoning practices. Old costumes were replaced by modern dresses and broaden outlook take shaped. The western influence has great impact on the life of the Tangkhuls. It changed their religion and outlook to the new world. The

\(^1\) M. Horam, op cit p.125.
Tangkhuls who were confined in small geographical areas realised that there were different races and that opened their eyes in the world. At the beginning they were surprised to see the white Europeans since they had not seen such a tall white skin and individual in their life time. The advent of the Europeans in the land of Tangkhuls had far reaching consequences on the life of Tangkhuls.

With the dawn of Christianity the Tangkhul societies underwent changes. In 1896 William Petegrew brought Christianity of Ukhrul. ‘He embarks them on the road of Christianization and westernization’. The British brought with them education and it was imparted to those who had converted to Christianity. In the initial years the Tangkhul society was divided into two Christians and non Christian who are categorised as Hao. Later, all the Tangkhul got converted to Christianity. However, this could not bring social equality in the society. The enlightened group began to occupy an important place in the society. The impact of modern civilisation on the life of Tangkhuls was immediate and speedy.

The Tangkhuls after acquiring western education gave up the old customs and practices which had lost their importance and subsequently scientific knowledge gained ground. There was interaction in every

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activity. Though most people followed the old rituals and customs gradually they could not protect the influence of new ideas based on experiments. The Second World War had more reaching consequences on the life of Tangkhuls. They no longer remained isolated but opened to the new world. Soldiers of various communities of Manipur passed through and many lives were lost in the Naga Hills. For most hill men it was their first brush with outsider the Japanese, Azad Hid Fauz and Allied soldiers\(^3\). Interaction with them had a great impact and they came to realise the knowledge of other countries. Besides the modern weapons and other goods used by them made them wonder and a zeal for knowing more about them ensued.

The elite groups gained ground with the fact of increasing government officials, social workers and contractors in the society. They lived a higher standard comparing to the larger population among the Tangkhuls.

The pressure groups and organisations engaged in different activities of the people such as in developmental works in economics and different issues of the people had an effect on the different sections of the people who were not economically well off. But their influence in the

\(^3\) M.Horam, op cit p. 126.
society brought great changes in the governmental works which in return benefitted the society at large.

In the field of spoken dialects and languages also we see the impact of smaller cultures upon the groups who got incorporated in the big traditions culture groups and those who remained in small tradition culture groups in this region. These who formed the big tradition aligned with the Tangkhuls and entered into a vibrant culture, while others remained outside the fold and retained the conservative outlook till they also merged into the Christian fold.

Establishment of government departments and agencies makes headway for the development of the region with much needed help to those who lived in poverty. Different scheme for weaker section were implemented by today’s government

The nature has its own beauty among many varieties in itself. As there is good and bad in the universal concept the reality of man as it was, there is class of higher and lower. In the mean time there is strong and weak. A section of people are magnificent in their own field. In every activities of man there is a difference. As such the classification as historian describes among many are based upon truth. There is no doubt that from the beginning of existence some people were strong enough to
face the nature forces and there were some who had enough wits to tackle the situation of those times. Though they were not advanced as today they were best suited for those days. The fittest among them lead to the present habitation. Gradually the one who led emerged as the leader of the group. A story of Meizailung group that comes from Somsok was led by the name Phungshoka. His followers have faith in him therefore they followed him. Thus he emerges as the fittest and that is why he became the leader of their group. Among the Nagas every village has its chief which indicates that he is the foremost leader of their village. From the beginning there existed an elite group though it did not realise the real picture of class system or the social structure.

The chief among the societies was the first citizen of its village. He was regarded and respected as the foremost citizen in the early days but with the inset of Christianity their importance degraded. Though the chief remained in the same position his power began to decrease to a great extent. The social elite group began to influence the working system of the administration at the village level as well as in the wider areas of society.

There were some people who were very strong. They worked hard and exerted force for their well being and it became the source of their wealth which was respected by the people. These groups emerged as rich persons or as elites in the Tangkhul society.
The purpose of geo-historical regional study of Ukhrul and its adjoining areas is simply to generate a better understanding of a complex whole by the study of its constituent parts. Our attempt has been to see nature and nurture, physique and personality as closely related and independent elements in this region.