Chapter 4

KINSHIP SYSTEM OF MEITEI-PANGALS
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Talcott Parsons in his analysis of social system considers Kinship as one of the elements of a society. A society which in turn leads to the establishment of the institutions of family and marriage. Hence, in order to know a society properly, it is necessary to understand the Kinship system properly. Man being a social animal is connected with various trends and bonds of relationships. Among these bonds of relationship, the blood relationship has been there in existence since the beginning of a society. Morgan in his study of Kinship explain two types of kinships i.e. (1) Classificatory and (11) Descriptive.

Classificatory type of kinship indicates the relationship which is intimate and near. It does not determine the exact relationship e.g. in India, among the Nagas, one word is used to address the father, brother, mother, sister, husband and so on. All these relations are quite different from other but there is only one system that denotes this relationship. Morgan has rightly said that in the primitive societies, classificatory words were used as the social structure became complex. Descriptive terms showing various types of relationship came much later.

In the present study of the social structure of the Meitei-Pangal, Morgan’s classificatory type of kinship is more suited because even if they had embraced Islam they are still holding on to their primitive social system to a great extent. Before we deal with their kinship system, it is essential to understand their family and marriage systems as the kinship System is based on these two components that is family and marriage.

FAMILY AMONG THE MEITEI-PANGAL

Family as an element of social structure is also important among the Meitei-Pangal because it is universal and is composed
of individual bond on some kind of kindred.

Rad Cliffe Brown (1952) considers family as "a group composed of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption."¹

Similarly G. Peter Murdock (1965) defines family as "A social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and maintainence of a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually cohabitating adults."²

Keeping in view the above mentioned definitions, a family serves as a reproductive or a biological unit. Individuals live together, pools resources and works together, have offsprings, own or adopted. Ross's definition of family includes physical, social and psychological elements. According to her, family is a group of people usually related as some particular type of kindred, who may live in one household and whose unity resides in sharing of rights and duties, sentiments and authority.³

In this way a family gives fundamental importance to socialisation. Individuals in their families learn the norms of the society they live in. Thus, family helps transmission of culture from one generation to other. Talcott Parsons considers family as a factory which produces human personalities that may become the means of primary socialisation which provides warmth, social security and mutual support.⁴

Family, hence, plays the most crucial and important role in the life of an individual in a society. The natural association between man and woman is grounded in all primitive societies. Thus, the family, as rightly pointed out by River, is the point of evolution for the society. Everywhere the husband, wife and children (immature) constitute a unit of family (Robert Lowie 1921).⁵
Family is an important social organization among the Meitei-Pangal of the North-Eastern state of Manipur. A customarily Meitei-Pangal family consists of old grand parents, married sons and their wives, unmarried sons and daughters and children of the married couples. However, with the passage of time, joint families are being replaced by nuclear families which were once widespread among the Meitei-Pangal.

Among the Meitei-Pangals, the family as described by Iravati Karve (1968), is characterized by one or more than one earning member, pooling the resources and income, sharing social and cultural ethos, a common house having a common kitchen is very uncommon.

It has also been seen as a custom on the part of parents to allow, without any ill interest, the married son to start his own family - managing his resources and income for the betterment of his wife and children. The parents give a share of their property and wish him a new prosperous and happily married life. But the youngest son, though also has a share in his parents property is bound to stay along with the ageing parents even after marriage. He, usually, looks after his parents while taking care of his own family at the same time. There are instances where the youngest son does not take responsibilities of his parents and the elder son, seeing no options, takes necessary care of his parents. The nuclear and joint family with the youngest child/son and eldest son may be diagrammatically represented in the following figure:
Fig. No. 1

Ego

△ = ○

△ = Father, ○ = Mother

Nuclear Family

Fig. No. 2 (a)

Ego

△ = ○

△ = ○

△ = ○

△ = Father, ○ = Mother

Joint Family where the youngest child is living along with their parents.
Fig. No. 2 (b)

Ego

△ = ○

Joint Family where the eldest son is staying along with their parents.

Fig. No. 3

Ego

△ = ○

Extended Family
Fig. No. 1 shows a nuclear family where as Fig. No. 2(a) shows a joint family with the youngest son staying along with the ageing parents. Fig.no. 2(b) shows a joint family with the eldest son staying with the ageing parents. Fig. No. 3 shows an extended families found customarily among the Meitei/Meetei-Pangals.

Though the institution of family is age old and common to all societies, yet it has developed varied forms with time and space. Existence of patrilineal, Matrilineal, Polyandrous, Polygamy, nuclear, extended and joint family etc, are noticed among the Meitei-Pangal.

The Meetei/Meitei-Pangal families are patrilocal, patriarchal and patrilineal in nature. Large manpower pool equips an extended family for diversified and extensive activities.

Management of the family with nuclear structure is the main feature in (Manipur) Meetei/Meitei-Pangal. Their lineage is traced from their father side. They belong to their father's clan. Lineal joint family is joint family where ego, children and grand children, unmarried sons and daughters residing together, illustrated in Fig.no.4(a) and 4(b) is very rarely found.

Fig. No. 4 (a)

Lineal Joint Family
Rearing and training of a child is solely borne by the parents. Family helps a child develop his personality - a multifaceted dimension of society and culture. A child gets attention, affection, security, support and sympathy from the parents. He also acts as an economic unit of the division of labour which is also found in Meetei/Meitei-Pangal family. Female members take care of the household chores while male members take care of all happenings beyond the house. Though they hardly take part in productive activities of the land, female members even orchestrated political demands of the state in times of need along with the neighbouring community such as the Meetei/Meitei. For example the Meira-Paibi and the movement of women brought a glorious revolution in this state quoted as Nupi Lal in the history of the state. Female superiority was emphasized in spiritual realm, though male superiority was institutionalized in the family structure. An expression of feminism which encourage women to be individually self reliant and collectively powerful without
necessarily involving sex war, also seen in Meitei and even in Meitei-Pangal patrilineal culture. Arising out of collective spirit, it acts as a moral bashing to men in the society through the organization like Meira-Paibi. It thus acts as an integral part of the patrilineal social system and not against it but with the support of male members of the society. Islam created equality between both the sexes that can be understood by analyzing the rights and the duties that Islam has assigned to each of them. These rights and duties will be discussed later, but here it must be known that being human beings, Islam gave equal rights to both. Qura'n says, "And they (women) have rights, similar to (those of their husband) over them". But the personal importance goes to man because of their activeness in the process of action. Qura'n says, "But Men have a degree over them". Female acts as an important agency of socialization. It is in the family that a child learn much of his behaviors, social and cultural ethos. He initiates knowingly and unknowingly the behavior and attitudes of his elders in the family. Meetei/Meitei-Pangal family is largely a kin oriented unit. Besides the parents, there are the grand parents, uncle, aunt, elders, brothers, sisters to teach and mould in him the desired discipline and attitude. It all helps the child to develop and shape his personality. So, it is in the family that the value of society and culture is handed down from generation to generation.

In a Meitei-Pangal family, the role of the father and the mother is equally important. They share a good responsibility for the development and restructuring (if needed) of the family for the welfare of the members of the family. They have their own duties towards the family. Father is the executive head of the family, according to the Qura'n and the Shari-at (Laws of Islam).

Decision making is taken to have a deep impact on the outcome of a family status in a society. So it has a great
significance and is associated with the maturity and the experience of an individual. Traditionally, decision making is assigned to the head of the family. Generally a decision is taken after consultation with the elder son if he is matured enough. Though fully not accomplished, before taking an important decision, a general discussion on the matter is done and the head of the family takes the ultimate decision. But in cases where the father is no more, than the mother in association with the eldest sibling discusses the matter and takes the ultimate decision if he / she is mature enough. If the children were immature then the decision solely lies with the mother. She may, if she wish, consult well wishers of the family in taking the decision. But in all day-to-day decisions, she does it all alone.

*Organizational Structure of Meitei-Pangal Family:-*

The family is an organized group based on a network of relationship. These relationships provide a base for the definition of the family and the assignment of rights and duties between the integrative bond of kinship. This integration extends universally in two direction viz. the direction of the father's family of origin and the direction of the mother's family of origin. It is obvious enough that a stress may be laid, for reasons given below, on either of these directions but as a general rule they are both recognized. As an example, we have a modern practice of ignoring surname of mother's family of origin. Not only do her children drop this name but she herself also gives it up after her marriage and takes the surname of her husband. However, a family never ignores either of the two contributory sides in any considerable degree or manner. Thus, the family is called a bilateral group of individuals domesticated through kinship relationships. Marriage is the base on which a family is built and structured. There are various forms of marriage system prevalent and practiced. The present study will
analyze the institution of marriage among the Meitei-Pangal as the basis for the analysis of kinship.

Marriage is a socially sanctioned union of persons of opposite sexes to procreate and upbring children. As such marriage leads to the establishment of family as a group\(^{10}\). Marriage implies ceremonies, a union with social sanction. So marriage among human being is always mores\(^ {11}\). Marriage implies relationship of man and woman as husband and wife and modifies the rest of the society of the relationship. Marriage imposes certain obligations on both the partners. The essential things about marriage according to H.M Johnson is that it is a stable relationship in which a man and woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in the community to the children\(^ {12}\).

Its primary function is to produce offspring and the secondary function is the satisfaction of sexual needs of the partners. Though those needs can be satisfied without the institution of marriage. But stable conjugal relationship cannot exist without marriage\(^ {13}\).

Marriage ensure, biological satisfaction (that of sex) and a psychological satisfaction (that of having children) and it ensures a two fold survival viz that of the group and its culture\(^ {14}\).

In this context marriage is important among the Meitei-Pangal. The most common marriages prevalent among the Meitei-Pangal is monogamy. Usually the age for marriage ranges from 18 to 20 years for a girl and 21-22 years for a boy. But it doesn’t mean that there is a strict rule regarding the age of marriage. So, at times girls and boys as young as 15 years and 17-18 years respectively can be witnessed entering the institution of marriage in the Meitei-Pangal.

Meitei-Pangals are the followers of Islam, they always consult Qura’n-the holy book of Islam. Islam encourages marriage
since family is the outcome of marriage and so restriction on the free sexual attachment. The relationship between man and woman are regulated by the principles that have been incorporated in the institution of marriage. The Holy Qura’n is very specific in this regard. Qura’n prohibits free sexual relations by saying that “and come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse”.

Without the institution of family, formed through marriage, it is hard to bring up the children. Marriage in Meitei-Pangal community is exogamous rather than endogamous. A man generally gets married outside the Sagei. Marriage between Sagei members is not so popular but in some areas we witness marriages among the same Sagei. It is thought that marriage between Sagei results in birth of children with genetical diseases. Not only this, Meitei-Pangal as the follower of Islam allow having cross cousin marriage but marriage among close relative is very rare till now. All this practice seems to be the social influence of the Meitei – the neighbouring community who adopt the system of exogamy.

Marriage among Meitei-Pangal of Manipur is also a contract(and not a sacrament as in Hindu religion) as directed by the Holy Qura’n. Islamic text stress a lot on marriage highlighting the importance of this institution. Qura’n stresses on this very aspect on many instances;

“Then marry women of your choice”.

“Wed them with the permission of their own folk”.

In Islam, marriage is considered as the soul legitimate way of carnal satisfaction. “The ceremony of marriage is called Nikah”.

The Meitei-Pangals do not generally marry within close relatives or with Sagei members. It does not mean that it is totally absence. Such cases are rarely found.

Although Islam permits polygamy, it is rarely observed and practiced among Meitei-Pangal. Such cases are usually the
outcome of the first wife being unable to bear children or her uncooperative behaviour towards the family which forces the husband to take a second wife without solving the first marriage. Sometimes love affairs (of the boy) in the past with someone other than the one he married may end up into a second wife.

Again the accepted mode of residence among the Meitei-Pangal is very local but sometimes we can witness uxorilocal marriage (Yaong-Inba) in certain circumstances, say for example, when the girl's parents are relatively well to do and do not have son or she is the only child of their parents etc.

Levirate and Sororate type of marriage are very rarely seen. Normally two type of marriage are found: (1) engagement (2) elopement marriage.

Another notable thing is that marriage system of the Meitei-Pangal is the combination of Islamic law and Manipuri customs. There are very less difference in the ways of marriage proposal being finalized between the Manipuri Hindus (Meetei/Meithei) and Manipuri Muslims (Meitei-Pangal).

Since Meitei-Pangal marriages usually take place outside the sagei, we are tempted to think that formal negotiations are not dispensable with the settlement of marriage. However, marriage negotiations are always formally conducted with a formal proposal and the details of the marriage are worked out, according to the customary rules, between the families concerned before a marriage is finally taken as settled. It is applicable to both engagement marriage or marriage through elopement.

1. Preparations for engage marriages:

The long continuing process of marriage by engagement consists of the following steps:
(a) Haijaba (Nupi Haiba) –

This is the initial stage where the boy’s parent approaches the girl’s family. In the beginning, the boy’s family sends a go ahead to a person, generally a mutual friend of both the families, to visit the girl’s family to place its proposal. If that person returns with a message of the willingness of the girl’s family, the family of the boy will make a formal arrangement to send a group of women to the girl’s family on an auspicious day to negotiate the marriage proposal. This group customarily consists of three women, one of them is usually the mother of the boy. If the boy has no surviving mother, an elderly sister-in-law or paternal aunt acts as the substitute for the mother.

It is worth mentioning that in the past, the parents took the decision of marriage without considering the personal feelings of their daughters. Daughters were expected to obey their parents. In the survey too, one aged woman respondent remarked, “In our times we had to marry the man of our parent’s choice. We had no courage of speaking against the will of our parents though Islam provided many provisions of freedom of expressions”. She further commented by pointing to her daughter, “Look at today’s generation, my daughter does not even care to ask my advice and feelings. They do whatever they like. How can I arrange her marriage? That’s impossible”. Nowadays, a girl has complete freedom to marry the boy of her choice. If the marriage is against her will, we even witness the girl going beyond the customs to get married to her choice through elopement. Going for a better understanding and transformation, the parents, nowadays, are taking the feelings and desire of their daughters into considerations when they are negotiating the marriage proposal of their daughters.
(b) Waroipot Puba: -

It literally means to bring something as a mark of finalizing a matter. In the morning of the Waroipot Puba Day, the boy's party comes to the girl's house bringing fruits and betel leaves and areca nuts, sweets etc., which are distributed among those members gathered in the bride's house.18

(c) Paanuka Puba (Heijingpot Puba):

In the morning or the evening of an auspicious day fixed for the occasion, the boy's party comprising of the boy's parents, relatives and invitees go to the girl's place carrying fruits, kabok, betel nuts and leaves. It is also known as Paanuka Puba. Paanuka Puba is a compound word derived by combining the two words Paan (betel leaves) and Kwa (areca nut). In the earlier days, the groom's party carried paan and Kwa in packets called "Putla" to the residence of the bride for that function. In this function, the members present in the bride's home and friends of the bride (referred to as Goina) are invited to enjoy the party.19

The Mehar or dower money paid by the husband to his wife is an essential feature of Muslim marriages. Mehar is an indispensable part of the marriage. Without Mehar, the validity of marriage will be questioned. Wherever the Holy Qura'n talks about marriage, Mehar always find an unmistakable mention as complementary to it. It says:

"All others are lawful provided you seek with Mehar from your property desiring chastity."20

"So with those of whom you have enjoyed a sexual relationship, give them their Mehar as prescribed."21

"O Prophet, verily we have made lawful to you, your wives to whom you have paid their Mehar."22

"And there will be no sin on you to marry them if you have paid their Mehar to them."23
The essentiality of the Mehar can be realized from the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) was given permission by Allah to marry, without Mehar, with those Muslim women who presented themselves to Prophet (PBUH) and Prophet (PBUH) wished to accept them. The words in Qur’an in this regards are “And a believing woman if she offers herself to the Prophet (PBUH) and Prophet (PBUH) wishes to marry her a privilege for you not for the rest of the believers”.

The amount fixed for the Mehar at the time of marriage can be increased or decreased by the mutual understanding of the husband and the wife. And this can be done at any time after marriage. It is very clearly said in Qura’n “But if after the Mehar is prescribed you agree mutually there is no sin on you”.

Mehar is the right of the bride. Without any special cause it should not be as minimum as it may seem a kind of usurpation in her right. It also should not be as much as that its payment becomes burdensome. The Holy Qura’n conveys this message in a verse “The rich according to his means and poor according to his means a gift of reasonable amount”.

So, after deciding Mehar according to mutual understanding of the both side, a date is fixed for Nikah (marriage) ceremony.

After this function, both the sides (bride and groom) starts preparing for the marriages ceremony. Friends of both the bride and groom gathers at their respective homes and starts celebrating the occasion by singing, dancing and various types of entertainment. Earlier, while on their way to the girl’s place to bring home the wedded bride after a formal Nikah, the groom’s friends referred to as Gayaa, sung songs, gazals etc. Nikah is performed according to Islamic rules provided in the Holy Qura’n. After Nikah, the programs of Rukshatti or Vidaii (meaning See Off) is performed which is locally known as “Kwa Laanba”. In
this the relatives, friends and all near and dear ones give her their Dua(best wishes) for the newly married couple.

(2) Marriage by elopement: -

The elopement of two lovers who have decided to marry is called “Chenba” and the marriage ceremony performed following such as an elopement is known as “Chelhong”. It is a prominent practice in the Manipuri society. The Meitei-Pangal society is no exception to this practice but with much lesser frequency, since it is considered as a sin under Islam. If suppose, both the partner that is, the girl and the boy, wish to marry but the parents disagree and are unable to reach to an agreement, in that case only Chenba (elopement) remains the only option. In this case, Nikah is performed before the formal marriage ceremony.

In order to illustrate this, let’s take an example with the detailed procedures of elopement which is practiced in the Meitei-Pangal society.

A girl whose name is X is in love with a boy name Y. They have decided to become life partners as husband and wife. They disclose their decision to their parents respectively. But the parents do not agree and give reasons that the boy is not yet settled or has some reservations on the character of the boy or the girl or for that matter any reason. Such a decision may leave them aghast and with no other options than to elope. They then decide to elope and start living as fresh as live partners. In this way, both the boy and girl decide not to return to their respective houses. They (boy and girl) generally stay and take shelter at one of the boy’s relatives or boy’s friend’s house, only for a day.

The boy’s friend or the one who is giving shelter informs the parents of their elopement. Here we can note that the eloped partners (the boy and the girl) are not allowed to stay and spend a night together. The boy stay along with the male members and the
girl along with the female members of the shelter house till the parents of both the sides agree for Nikah.

The next morning the boy’s father, along with two elderly person, go to the family of the girl to inform the girl’s father (or the brothers, if the girl does not have a living father) of the elopement of their daughter(sister). They also negotiate the matter with the father (or brother) of the girl for an amicable solution along with the Sagei elders. This generally results in the formal brethren ceremony of the eloped couples. If both the parties can arrive at a successful settlement they informally fixed the Nikah ceremony on the evening itself. This custom of informing the girl’s father about the elopement by the boy’s father and friend is known as Pao Haidokpa (means revealing the news that her girl is now my daughter-in-law).

Sometimes it witnesses violent(sometimes bloody) situation due to various ongoing issues or misunderstandings. If it is settled peacefully then both the boy and the girl had to perform Touba(confession) in front of the elders before the “Nikah” is finally performed.

In order to perform Nikah, the bride and the groom comes to the bride’s house accompanied with some of their elders, relatives and friends. A procession is taken out to the bride’s home carrying sweets, fruits, betel nuts and leaves etc. After Nikah, they(both groom and bride)come back to the house of the groom. After three, five or seven days the bride goes to her natal house with lots of sweets, fruits and eatables. This process is known as Hinam. Hinam is necessary in all types of marriages whether elopement or engagement.

In this type of marriage however, dowry is not given. Even then, some parents try to give some amount of dowry to their daughter. A small function is arranged after a few months or years
where the bride's parents arrange some necessary things and gifts for the bride. This small function is known as "Loukhatpa".

In this way two people are bonded together into a wedlock. The most universal and the most basic of these bond is one that is based on the most inherent human drive of reproduction and is called kinship. This bond gives rise to two types of relationships— the relation between parents and children and those between siblings. The following diagram shows the father's lineage.

**Fig. No. 5**

![Father's lineage diagram]

Father's lineage
From the above figure (5), we can say that every adult individual belong to two nuclear families – family of orientation in which he was born and brought up, and the family of procreation, which he establishes by marriage by the virtue of the fact that individual forms a link between the members of his family of orientation. Say, father (f), mother (m) sister (s) and brother (B) in one's family of orientation, and husband (H), wife (W), Son (S) and daughter (D) in one's family of procreation. Thus individuals are linked to one another through a strong bond which bears a sign of closeness, caring and sharing which we refer to as kinship.

According to Ch. Budhi Singh, "Meetei/Meitei kinship terms for cross cousins bespeaks of the permissibility of symmetrical, direct cross-cousin marriage in the early time"^29. In this way, in the Meitei-Pangal family, there is no clear cut distinction between the family of orientation and the family of procreation, in relation to terminologies used for kins e.g. Eene (Phuphi) is the term used for father's sister as well as maternal uncle's wife (Momani) and Maama is used both for mother's brothers as well as for mother's sister's husband.

In a Meitei-Pangal family structure, an individual's parents, brothers and sisters, along with their respective spouses and children, parents, individual brothers and sisters, along with their respective spouses and children in addition to the wife and children of the individual collectively constitutes a very large group of relatives. But none of them can be considered for matrimonial bondages. In totality, this can be termed as 'The extended family of birth'.

In addition to all these, there are other relatives who have blood relations with his own spouse and of his children. These in totality can be termed as 'The extended family of marriage'.
So, the kinship of Meitei-Pangal forming both the patrilineal and matrilineal lineage are also consanguineous (blood relationship) and affinal (through marriage). The following table shows the kinship terminology used among Meitei and Meitei-Pangal (group of people in Manipur who follow Islam as their religion or are Muslims of Manipur).

**Table No. 9**

Kinship terminology used in the Meitei-Pangal society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Meitei</th>
<th>Meitei Pangal</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Paabung or Epaa</td>
<td>Epaa / Baba</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Pita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Taada / Tamo</td>
<td>Echou</td>
<td>Elder brother</td>
<td>Bada bhaat</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Leche / Cheche</td>
<td>Eche</td>
<td>Elder sister</td>
<td>Badi bahaen</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Echan</td>
<td>Echan</td>
<td>Younger Sister</td>
<td>Chhoti bahan</td>
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<td>Enao</td>
<td>Enao</td>
<td>Younger brother</td>
<td>Chhota bhaat</td>
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<td>Ethou / Pupu</td>
<td>Epu</td>
<td>Grand father</td>
<td>Dada, Nana</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Abok</td>
<td>Ethou</td>
<td>Grand mother</td>
<td>Dadi, Nani</td>
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<td>Emahn-thou</td>
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<td>Endoncha</td>
<td>Ematon</td>
<td>Mother’s sister (Younger)</td>
<td>Khala</td>
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<td>Enumma / Eteima</td>
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<td>Bajee/ Bachou</td>
<td>Epan / Epachou</td>
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<td>Taton/kaka/khaton</td>
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<td>Mamo/mami</td>
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<td>Mother’s brother wife</td>
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<td>Father’s sister’s husband</td>
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<td>Father’s brother’s wife</td>
<td>Chahi / Tai</td>
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<td>Esu-Nupa</td>
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<td>Grandson</td>
<td>Pota</td>
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<td>Esu-Nupi</td>
<td>Esu-Nupi</td>
<td>Grand daughter</td>
<td>Poti</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It can be pointed out that marriages to cousins is strictly prohibited among the Meitei but is found in the Meitei-Pangal society though rarely.
Patrilineal and patriarchal are also seen here. A Meitei-Pangal family also usually consists of grandparents (Epu, Ethou), unmarried sons and daughters and married sons and their respective wives and children (Masu, Esu). It can be represented as in fig. (6).

**Fig. No. 6**

Ego

\[ \triangle = \text{Father}, \quad \circ = \text{Mother} \]

**Joint Family with unmarried and married children with their offsprings.**

Nuclear family is best suited to Meitei-Pangal society, as is the case with the Meitei culture too. Poverty has been a mainstay (main cause) for such a nuclear family as inferred from the interactive session with majority of the respondents. The extended family on the other hand is patriarchal too but engulfed with lots of in-houses. Preferably with the division of the extended family into the nuclear families, the husband takes up more responsibilities for the welfare of his family.

The culture of polygamy is also seen among the Meitei-Pangals. In this, husband usually maintains two or more parallel kitchens. Customarily, as in the case of Meiteis, among the Meitei-Pangals too, a son establishes a new house with a separate kitchen
if it does not affect the interest of his parents after getting married. The youngest son after marriage usually stays with and takes care of his ageing parents in the ancestral home. But in rare cases another son other than the youngest stays along and takes care of his ageing parents.

The Meitei-Pangal traces back their lineage from their own father. They belong to the father's clan. In a family although the father is the executive head but both the father and the mother are equally important for the upbringing of their children and other social, cultural and ritual activities.

The mother (Ema) occupies an important position in the family. She is the keeper of the family and all domestic works. For a Muslim woman in general, her family is the only world. Besides cooking and taking care of her husband and children, she supports her earning husband by taking up kitchen gardening (vegetables cultivation), weaving and other household activities. Not only these, if necessary, she provides support in the field work (agriculture) and other activities too. She also acts as a income earning member if the situation prompts her to by joining different jobs.

As far as decision-making is concerned, the general form of the traditional family is that decisions are taken by the head of the family that is the father. The father commands all actions and decisions over the children and the wife. In cases where the father is not alive then the mother takes the decision after consulting with the eldest son(if he is mature enough). And if both parents are not alive then the eldest son, after consulting with the other member of the family, takes the decision of the family.

In an extended family, the large manpower pool equips it for diversified and extensive activities.
Though the society in which a child lives is important, the training and upbringing of the child rest mainly on the parents. The family helps in the development of the child's personality. A child gets affection, sympathy, security and support from them. The family also acts as a source of all financial back up for the child.

The kinship system of Meitei-Pangal is highly influenced by the culture and social structure of the Meiteis. However, the essentials and basic teaching of Islamic culture are also well blended to make a composite and complete system. By kinship, we mean a principal of social organisation based on a network of relationships created by genealogical connections and social ties modelled on the natural relations of genealogical parenthood (sex and reproduction). However, these may be defined and have an altogether different meaning with a given cultural context. All types of kinship - primary, secondary, tertiary, affinal and consanguineous are found in the social system of the Meitei-Pangal society.

"Sagei" in the strict sense of the term is the clan of a group of people. A "Sagei(lineage)" is a kin group and their members are related to each other through blood. The institution of Sagei is strictly followed by the Manipuri Muslims. Intra-sagei marriages that is marriages among the same Sagei were not seen in the earlier period. Marriage between the members of a particular "Sagei" was regarded as taboo(forbidden). The king of Manipur forbade such practices and punished the defaulters. It was an influence of the social system of the Meiteis. However, as per Islamic values and with modernization, some changes can be seen in the present set up of the Meitei-Pangal social system as intra-sagei marriage can be observed in some sections of the Manipuri Muslim society.
The Pangals used to invite their relatives and members of their Sagei for any customary functions and rituals. Elders and respected members of the Sagei of the bride and groom are consulted prior to their marriage. During marriage (Nikah) the boy's parents or their kin members distribute betel nuts, leaves and sweets to the Sagei members of the girls. It is an age old tradition. On the other hand, members of the same Sagei co-operate in such functions and many others as well. They (sagei members) stand together and maintain solidarity in unity among themselves.

Some Sagei are closely-knit, whereas in some others there are factions and groups within their Sagei. In each Sagei, there are many sub-classes called "Yumnaks". These families forms sub-clans known as "Singlup". There are instances in which two or more different Yumnaks sometimes form a common Sagei e.g. Khulakpham and Shajabam formed a Sagei as they had common forefathers.

According to Badaruddin, there are about 59 sageis (surnames) of the Meitei-Pangal. These surnames are derived from the name of the areas in which they are settled and also from the professions they follow. R.K. Sanahal states that the Manipuri Muslims mostly belonged to the Sheikh, Pathan, Mughal and Syed ancestry etc.

In the neighbouring community of Meitei, there is no clear cut distinction between the family of birth and the family of marriage in relation to the use of terminologies. But unlike in Meitei society, the Meitei-Pangal community has a clear demarcation between the two families. Also, although rare, cousin marriage are practiced in the Pangal society. For example, the children of Ene (Phuphi) can marry with her brother's children. It can be illustrated as in fig. No.7
Cousin marriage

Let's say ego A and B has got three children (C) as Chouba, D as Amir and E as Tahmina. Chouba got two sons Boby and Samir. Tahmina got married to the other Sagei or clan and got two children named Shaheda and Latif. Samir can choose Shaheda as his life partner although they are cousin brother and sister since Shaheda belongs to other sagei. But this system of marriage is very rarely found and not encouraged by the society. This may be the influence of the neighbouring community that is Meitei.

We can also observe that among the kin-relationship, a woman must cover her head if she is in front of her parents-in-law and the elder brothers and cousins of the in-laws whom she refer to as father- in-law and mother-in-law. Towards her husband’s younger brother (Devar), her behavior is somewhat more open and frank even sharing jokes with each other quite often. Similar is the case with the husband’s manners with his wife parents, brothers and sisters. He too shares the same relationship with his wife's younger brother and sisters (Sala and Sali) as his wife does with her Devar, similar to the Meitei community.
WHOM CAN MEITEI-PANGAL MARRY:

Each society has some checks and balance that prevents some relatives to marry each other. The Meitie-Pangal society of Manipur also gives a list of those relatives to whom marriages are prohibited. The list includes some relatives from the lineage side and others are from the in-law’s home. Being the follower of Islam and practitioner of the Holy Qura’n, they strictly follow the restrictions laid down in the Qura’n.

Qura’n says: “Forbidden to you (for marriage) your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your brother’s daughters, your sister’s daughters, your foster mother’s milk sucking sisters, your wife’s mother, your step daughters under your guardianship, born of your wives to whom have the gone in but there is no sin on you if you have not gone in them (to marry their daughters), the wives of your son who spread from your own lines and two sisters in wedlock at the same time except for what has already passed, verily Allah is often forgiving, most merciful. Also (forbidden) women already married, except those (captives and slaves) whom your right hand posses. Thus has Allah ordained for you. All others are lawful provided you seek (them in marriage) with Mehar (bridal money given by husband to his wife at the time of marriage) from your property desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse”.32

Here ‘mother’ includes stepmother, grandmother from father’s as well as from mother’s side, grandmother of the parents and the complete chain of both the lines. In the same way daughter includes granddaughters from the son’s and from daughter’s side with their complete chain, without any different between real and step daughters. Sisters also include stepsister either from father or from another side. Paternal aunt and maternal aunt include the
paternal aunt and maternal aunt of the parents. Nephew, from brother as well as from sister side includes there below link.

Keeping two sisters as wives at the same time is prohibited among the Meitei-Pangal. Above all this prohibitions, the Meitei-Pangal earlier followed not to marry among the cousins and among the sagei. Both types of marriage is still very much rare among the Meitei-Pangal of Manipur. It is strongly believed that it is one of the influences of neighbouring Meitei community.

As far as inheritance is concerned, the inheritance of Meitei-Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) is governed by the Shariat Act, 1937. Muslims do inherit the movable and immovable properties from their parents. The youngest son gets the lion's share of the parental property. A portion of the property is used to be kept in reserve for their daughters and wife. Under Islamic law, the mother, wife and daughters are the three female heirs. The maximum share of the mother is $1/3^{rd}$ (one-third) and minimum $1/6^{th}$ (one sixth) depending on the number of heirs. The share of the wife is $1/4^{th}$ (one-fourth) or $1/ 8^{th}$ (one-eights) depending on the number of children and grand children. The wife is also the owner of the Mehar (dower) given to her at the time of wedding. She is also entitled to be maintenance by her husband. The daughter is a primary heir like the son. Her share fluctuates, depending upon the members of surviving children, grand daughter from a daughter. However it does not stand at par with the grand daughter of a son.

The Holy Qura'n prescribes a list of those relatives whom it assigned legal shares. It says, there is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether the property be small or large. Qura'n give a detailed list of these heirs and says:

(1) "Allah commands you as regards your children's to the male a portion equal to that of two females, if only daughters, two
or more, their share is two third of the inheritance; if only one her share is half, for parents a sixth share of inheritance to each if deceased left Children; if no children and the parents are the heirs. The mother has a third, if the deceased left brothers or (sisters), the mother has a sixth, after the payment of legacies he may have banqueted or Debts. "In That which your wives leave, your share is a half if they have no child; but if they have a child, you get a forth of that which they leave after payment of legacies that they may have bequeathed or debts, in that which you leave their share is a fourth if you leave no child; but if you leave a child they get an eighth of that which you leave after payment of legacies that you have bequeathed or debts. If the man or women whose inheritance is in question has left neither ascendants nor descendents, but has left, a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies he may have bequeathed or debts, so that no loss is coursed.

So, from the above discussion, we can say that the Meitei-Pangal family is generally nuclear in nature. But joint and extended families too exists. They (Muslims of Manipur) follow the verses of the Holy Qura'n regarding the rights and duties equally. However, due to poverty women who were not supposed to work outside of household or work with veil (Purdah) are compelled to come out to the marketplace. They work in the market place just to make their ends meet and feed their family. In Manipur, they (women) have even taken up active part in the political arena just like the Meira-paibi who work for the betterment of the society along with the counterpart community (Meitei).
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