CHAPTER-VII
Summary and Conclusion

To assess the ongoing processes of social change among the Vaiphei, it would be worthwhile to recapitulate the summary and findings of the preceding chapters. The wave of change intruded into the territory of the Vaiphei since the advent of Christianity in the year 1910, and the missionaries used education as their main tool to spread the gospel. The wave of social change does not spare even the most interior areas of the world and the present study on the Vaiphei is a live example. The process of transformation from traditional society to present modern society is influenced by various factors but the affects there of are never uniform. These factors work in one way in one place and in the other ways in other places resulting in a good deal of diversities, which are far from being uniform. ‘Change’ as is understood in the present study is a shift from traditional mode of sustenance, religion and other socio-cultural aspects of life. In the illiterate society, the process of change begins in the ideas to make the people conscious of their rights motivate them to work for a genuine human existence. The process of social change in a given community is to be understood in the given cultural and ecological background. As change is a dynamic process by itself, it stipulates the total human activity in the various aspects of human socio-cultural life to continue but in a new metamorphosed manner.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to understand and analyse the changing social pattern of the Vaiphei society in Manipur, from their traditional institution to the present day. The aspects of change studied here is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative change includes changes in the tools and artifacts; modes of socialization, in their language (writing) and in their moral concepts. The quantitative changes are the changes in population, educational and recreational organizations and occupational structure. The nature, origin and the process of migration of the Vaiphei in the
historical past has been discussed. The present patterns of distribution of the tribe have also been analysed, and their area of Concentration and area of Dispersion in the region have been identified. As a result of which, the nature of their relationship and some of the problems of adjustment that the Vaiphei are facing has also been discussed.

The year 1891 forms a significant landmark in the history of the hill tribes of Mainipur, for in that year the English had come to the state and established their political domination. During the next sixty years till 1947, which marks the end of the British colonial rule in India, far-reaching changes had been introduced into the tribal society transforming from its traditional character to a modern civilized society. The present study examined the process and the level of social change and transformation of the Vaiphei community to the new situation from the old, which had developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910. The study also draws a clear and precise picture of the Vaiphei traditional social structure as it existed during the pre-Christian era.

This study also examined as to what factors and forces brought about the change among the Vaiphei people in its historical and geographical perspectives. Several factors influenced the social change among the Vaiphei. The British colonial rule in the state was instrumental in introducing new ideas among the inhabitants. Soon the Christian teachings appeared in the field. These were responsible for the abolition of feuds and some of the notorious customs like head-hunting. The role of education which was first introduced by the missionaries, as a means of spreading Christianity, was not less significant in the process of social transformation of the Vaiphei society. The present study is not intended to give a theoretical analysis of social change on either of the community or its social evolution: rather, it is an attempt to examine the extent of social change visible in the Vaiphei community through the process of change.
The major summaries derived from the preceding chapters in the present study are described as follows:

Manipur is a small state in the periphery of North Eastern Region covering an area of 22,372 Square Kilometres which constitutes only 0.7 percent of the total land surface of India, with a population of 23,88,634 (2001 census). It is an isolated hill-grit state stretching between Longitudes $93.03^\circ$E and $94.78^\circ$E and Latitudes $23.80^\circ$N and $25.68^\circ$N; bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the west by North Cachar hills and Cachar districts of Assam, on the east by Myanmar and on the southwest by Mizoram. According to the surface configuration of Manipur, the state can be broadly divided into two main regions, viz., the Valley Region and the Hilly Region. The Valley Region is roughly an oval-shaped running about 60 kilometers from North to South and about 32 kilometers from East to West. The hilly region of Manipur which encircle the central valley occupies an area of about 20,571 square kilometers. It has an elevation of about 900 meters to 3000 meters above the mean sea level. They are the off shoots of the mighty Himalayas and constitute the central part of the Indo-Myanmar Mountain system.

Manipur, though small in size, is unique in respect of its ethnic composition, for the unnaturally situated, oval shaped valley that constitutes approximately 10% of the State is populated mainly by the core community-the Meiteis and whereas the hilly regions that are administratively divided into five districts have poly-ethnic populations comprising twenty-nine recognized Scheduled Tribes and some other tribal communities who are still seeking for the official recognition of their ethnic names. In spite of the distribution and concentration of the tribes in specific areas, the question of alienation and alignment is the major problem in Manipur.

District Churachandpur, the area of Concentration of the study tribe is located in the Southern part of Manipur between the Manipur river in the East and the Barak river in the
West; covering an area of 4,570 Square Kilometres. It lies within the latitudes of 24°N to
24°40’N and the longitudes 93°E to 94°E. The whole of Churachandpur district is hilly and
is covered with rough and uneven terrain that has a narrow scope for rapid economic
development. Due to the economic disadvantage, the region is thinly inhabited by several
tribal groups whose main occupation is *jhum* agriculture, which depends solely on the
vagaries of the Monsoon.

The physiographic location of Churachandpur district is of worth consideration when
it comes to climate. It is in the South-West corner of the state, which is the foremost zone of
Manipur in the paths of South-West Monsoon winds. During the summer months, the
districts are under the influence of south-west monsoon and during winter months, they are
under the influence of north-east monsoon. It receives a relatively abundant rainfall, well
distributed over the region; although it is slightly lesser towards the East. The rainfall data
showed that the rainy season is spread over 125 days in a year on an average record. Being
on the leeward side of the monsoon, the eastern side recorded lesser amount of rainfall than
the western part of the district.

Being a hilly region, the temperature in Churachandpur district varies from place to
place and this variation is mostly according to altitude. As a general rule, the temperature
decreases at a rate of 1.6°F at every ascend of 300 feet altitude. It is under the influence of
the out-blowing North-East monsoon winds for about half of the year and the in-blowing
South-west monsoon wind for the rest that exhibits a strong seasonal rhythm in its climatic
pattern. Churachandpur district is drained by many rivers and streams, of which the most
important ones are the Barak, the Manipur river, the Khuga, the Leimatak and the Tuivai.
The river system that originate and flows through the district are grouped into eastward
flowing to the Chindwin river in Myanmar and westward flowing to the Barak river. The
district, except the low lying areas in and around the district headquarters, is covered with
forest of different varieties; mostly of tropical moist evergreen forest types. The hilly terrain nature, the rainfall and other climatic conditions prevailing in the district are conducive to a large and rich range of dense forest and bountiful natural vegetation.

Churachandpur district assumes an isolated entity not only in its geographical settings but also in peopling by virtue of the land. The aerial difference of the district in case of population is such that there are only very few areas of attraction and about 85 percent of the region fall under an area of isolation. These small pockets are thickly populated while large areas are not at all inhabited. It will also, perhaps, be worthwhile to state that there are only three towns in the whole district and even among these three, two of them can barely be called as town. The main ethnic groups such as the Zou, the Paite, the Thadou, the Vaiphei, the Hmar, etc. were in the surrounding hills. The high growth rate of population and relatively slow growth in the economy is proving detrimental to the overall development of the district. Of these the share of rural population is as high as 81.12 percent of the total population in 1991. Considering the ratio between area and population of the district, it can be called as a low population density area with only 50, which is much lower than the state’s i.e. 107 persons per square kilometres.

The physical setting of the region had a large impact upon the migration and settlement pattern of the Vaiphei in the state. One can visualise that the physical environment of the region allowed only particular type of economic development as the technology used by the Vaiphei was quite primitive in nature. The Vaiphei perhaps found that this area were suitable for their way of life and ideal for settlement. They must have been practising primitive jhum cultivation, prior to their entry into the state. And when they entered the region, they opted for hilly and forested tracts of the region that offered them scope to practice jhumming which was the only way they knew to produce food grains. There is another reason for the Vaiphei to settle in the hilly and forested regions, that is, due
to the fact that these areas of the region were less settled as compared to the valley regions. Had they possessed the technology of settled agriculture, they might have settled in the valley regions or even advanced up to Brahmaputra valley. Being settled in the negative region, it was not possible for them to modify the environment according to their needs, but to adjust to the natural physical environment.

Two different views on the meaning and origin of the word ‘Vaiphei’ have been discussed. The first view is based on the ‘Khaw-Vaiphei Theory’. This is widely accepted by the Vaiphei in Manipur and their cognate tribe-Suantak in Myanmar. It is believed that the name ‘Vaiphei’ is derived from the name of the village ‘Khaw-Vaiphei’; ‘Khāw’ means village; ‘Vai’ means breadth and ‘Phei’ means plain: which means the village was at length and breadth and vast. The people, who lived in that village for a pretty long enough time, and moved out last of all, came to be identified as the Vaiphei people.

Another view is the ‘Liankhama Sailo Village Incident Theory’. Liankhama Sailo is said to be the chief of that village during 1850 to 1875. The Suantak people who lived together with other groups in the village had failed to take revenge on a hatred Pawi (a particular group of people) killer, due to the implications of their custom called chemsen bawi; where a killer can escaped punishment by becoming slave of the chief for his whole life. The Suantak people have no more desired to live in that village side by side with their enemy. So, they migrated from that village en masse; which is expressed in Duhlian dialect (Mizo) as ‘an vaiin an phei tawh’ meaning they all left in body or exodus. People started calling them ‘Vaipheihö’ and thence, wherever these people lived, they came to be known as Vaiphei.

Every Vaiphei understands and accepts that ‘Khul’ is his ancient home from where their ancestor originated. Though they have no physical proof of their claim, the Khul tradition is substantiated by their folksongs or songs of brave called Hānḷā. Even though
there exists different views on the name as well as its exact location still controversial, it is believed and accepted that it is somewhere in southern China; and Khul is a place revered among them and were proud to be originated from it.

The sequential order of their migration from Khul is ‘Khaw-Sinlung’, Kale valley, Chindwin valley, Chin Hills and Mizoram-Manipur. This process of migration is due to the inter-tribal feuds, in search of a better land for cultivation, the need for shelter and peaceful settlement. Further, they had to face famine (mautam) at a regular interval of 50 years and consequently they had to change their place of habitation. Apart from all these, nomadism was prevalent among the Vaiphei and this migratory spirit scattered them. All these compelled the Vaiphei people to scatter resulting in dispersion over different areas.

The Vaiphei were one of those tribes who were the first to enter Mizoram. In course of their migration, they settled in a number of villages; some of which still bears the original names, which the Vaiphei people have given. Some of those who stayed back were ultimately absorbed or assimilated to the Mizo society, losing their dialect and distinctiveness. Want of jhumming land and other territorial possessions cause the tribal to be always at war against each other leading the weaker tribes to migrate to neighbouring areas to Manipur, Cachar and other places.

In Manipur, the Vaiphei are found scattering in more than 180 odd rural villages, excluding those who settled in towns and the state capital, Imphal. The distributional pattern of the Vaiphei population in the districts of Manipur is also very uneven. They are found in all the districts of the state. However, their main concentration is in Churachandpur district, where 69.64 percent of them live. A large chunk of Vaiphei people inhabits Manipur North district, i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district that accounts for about 22.14 percent of their total population of the state.
In the present study, Manipur South district i.e. Churachandpur district has been identified as the area of the Vaiphei concentration, as it had a substantially high proportion of the total Vaiphei population in the state. Manipur North i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district, Tamenglong district, Ukhrul district and Chandel district are identified as the Dispersal areas of the Vaiphei distribution as these together constitute about 28.13 percent of the Vaiphei population in Manipur.

It is found that the pattern of migration and settlement of the Vaiphei was influenced by the physical environment of the region. This migration and settlement pattern, in turn, had significant impact on the pattern of the present distribution of the Vaiphei in the state. The present pattern of distribution of the Vaiphei is responsible for the problems of adjustments they are facing in the areas of their occupation. It is observed that the problems of adjustments have been different from one region to another. The main problem of adjustment they are facing is the social problem that is due to the social compositions of the areas of their habitat.

The Vaiphei society has been patriarchal and a male dominated one since time immemorial. Each clan has a chief or head called ‘Upa’, who is of the main head branch of the original stock and to whom great respect is shown by all his clans living in different villages. Their social organization is based in a system of community obligation which exists under the term ‘tawmngaina’ meaning selfless service to others. Every citizen is expected or rather bound to contribute his or her good will towards the society.

In Vaiphei society, family is the nucleus and it is through families that societies present themselves biologically and culturally. The family has patrilineal continuity, each generation being linked to the next in a genealogical succession through males. The position of father in the family carries the highest authority and his decisions are regarded as final in all matter. The practice of child-naming has been given great importance by the indigenous
Vaiphei society. An interesting thing about child-naming was that a name is given to a child with great significance attached to the name apart from the last syllable of their Grand parents’ name.

The status of women, traditionally, was lower than their men counterparts in Vaiphei society, though they enjoyed a good deal of respect. Apart from their overall responsibility in the household chores, they had a busy life, helping their men folks in almost all walks of life. They are under the complete control of their husbands or fathers. There are, generally, four types of marriages in Vaiphei society. It is interesting to note that ‘matrilateral cross-cousin’ (mother’s-brother’s-daughter) marriage system is prevalent among the Vaiphei. This system is not only encouraged but almost obligatory in the past. Monogamy is the most common and the general form of marriage, although there are some exception cases among the well-to-do, who practiced polygamy. Divorce or separation is a rare phenomenon in Vaiphei society. Marriage is considered a sacred bond of union sanctioned by God.

Every Vaiphei village is entirely an independent entity with a well demarcated village land, which is administered by a chief also called ‘Hausa’ or ‘Khawpa’. The words of the chief carried weight and were obeyed respectfully and promptly. The chief appoints council of elders and advisers called ‘Inpi siamang’ from economically well-to-do families who are also experts in traditional customs and rules, and socially in the upper ladder. Besides the Inpi-Siamang (elders and Councillors) and the Pachawng (tax-collector), the Hausa appoints the following officials: Thiampu (Priest), Tangsam (Village Crier), Thiksekpu (Blacksmith), and the Val-Upa (Youth Commanders).

One of the most important and significant social life in Vaiphei society was the practice of bachelor’s dormitory called ‘Sawm’. Traditionally, social control was a village-wide affair and its chief instrument was the institution of Sawm, which occupies a central position in the village organisation and administration. All unmarried young men above
fifteen years of age sleep together at night until they got married. Those young men could respond at any moment’s notice to any emergency, such as fire, surprise attack, etc.

War and head hunting was not only common but also the order of the olden times in Vaiphei society. The method of making war was very simple: to raid the enemy’s village and carry off as many captives and as much loot as possible. They placed great values on heads because of two reasons. The first reason is—each head meant an additional slave for the soul at ‘Mithi-khua’, meaning village of the dead. The second reason is simple—able to take the enemy’s head showed their physical power, if not the power of their clan or village.

Agriculture i.e. jhumming played the most important role in the economy of the Vaiphei. It was, and continues to be, the mainstay of their economy subordinated by handicraft, weaving, pottery, domestication of animals and trade. The food habit of the Vaiphei was simple, but formed an integral part of their social living. Cooked rice is the staple food of the Vaiphei people. They eat it with curry usually with chilies mixed with a local soda known as Changal (salty ash water, drained through wood ash). Rice beer called ‘Zu’ was the most specialized and the chief beverage of the Vaiphei. It was very common and used in every occasion. No important functions or ceremonies can be done without zu.

There were major confluent factors that affected the changes in the socio-economic conditions of the Vaiphei. The agents of change can be broadly grouped into Cultural contact and Christian Missions. With the advent of the British colonial rule in Manipur, the tribal life of Manipur underwent a process of change. The colonial administration marks the beginning of a new historical period which is the dawn of modernized way of life for the tribals. They began to move away from their traditional way; from ignorance, superstitions and isolation to a brighter and better way of life. In fact, the Britishers restructured the traditional economy into colonial lines, introduced new policies and made efforts to exploit the native natural resources to meet their own imperial interest.
Prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries in the tribal areas of Manipur, the people live in their pristine traditional life, unaffected by the wind of change. Therefore, the history of the Christian movement can only be understood as an integral part of a larger process of political, social, economic, cultural and religious change among the tribal people. The response to Christian missionaries contributed to the beginning of socio-economic change in the tribal areas of Manipur. The role of Christian Missions in social change cannot be denied as they were the one introducing modern education apart from the new faith. More than any other elements like the British administration and political force, education and Christianity played a more effective role in transforming the tribal society. Conversion and activities of missionaries had by far one of the most significant impacts on the Hill tribes. While the missionaries realised the importance of propagating Christianity among the tribals, its introduction was seen as a necessity for upliftment.

Education, which is the art of reading and writing, was introduced in the tribal areas of Manipur by the Christian missionaries. The pioneering effort to develop the tribals had started with the introduction of education and health services as part of their missionary activities in the interior part of the hill areas of the state. In Churachandpur district, the first primary school was started in 1912 in Senvon. Due to numerous problems like ignorance, poverty, communications, traditional beliefs and rituals etc. education could not spread fast and it took many decades to produce a 1 percent literacy population among the tribals in general and the Vaiphei in particular. There has been a great deal of accomplishment in the field of education in Manipur since 1950. The total number of literates was 65,895 persons in 1951, including that of the Valley. The literacy rate of the state has gone up from 11.4 percent in 1951 to 68.87 percent in 2001.

The status and position of women have considerably increased with the advent of Christianity. The introduction of formal education laid the foundation of change among the
Vaiphei, especially to the so called ‘weaker-sex’. Today, the change that can be observed in the socio-economic, religious and political life of the Vaiphei people may be largely attributed to the spread of modern education through Christian missionaries. Inspite of their inherent weaker position, in recent years, the hidden hands of Vaiphei women can be seen in any field and have great influence over men folk.

In the traditional Vaiphei society, the choice of marriage was governed by the cultural norms intrinsically connected with and attached to the agriculture work and bravery. A very important change in marriage system of the Vaiphei in the post-Christianity is abolition of Kawnglaw-marriage which is a type of marriage in which a boy served a girl’s family for her hand in marriage. With the advent of Christianity and education, the usual practice of marriage arrangements by parents is gradually disappearing and the girls’ and boys’ consents are becoming deciding factors. Cross-cousin marriage (Neinu); which was very obligatory, also gradually diminished. Marriages, forced by their parents in order to have a family relation or marriage against the wish of the girl’s parents are dying away. In place of all these, love marriage within the tribe or even outside becomes common, but not as a rule.

The dormitory called Sawm has been the most important institution which served as socializing agent in the traditional Vaiphei community life. The prohibition of head-hunting, with the ushering-in of Christianity in the villages, has led to the erosion of this important social and cultural institution of the Vaiphei. Church activities in the form of youth fellowship meetings have came up and the activities of the youths also changed. One of the most important factors that paved the way for the extinction of Sawm was the introduction of formal education along with youth activities in the church. With the abolition of Sawm where men folk assemble regularly, they could now give more attention to more productive activities such as education and domestic affairs.
In the traditional Vaiphei society, Zu was considered as one of the unavoidable items which was consumed, if not daily, in all the important feast, festivals and ceremonies. Moreover, serving Zu to the village chief and his council of elders was a must while dealing with all cases between the aggrieved villagers. With the coming of Christianity, the missionaries took step for social reformation in the Vaiphei society by prohibiting consumption of Zu as it was very closely linked with the animistic sacrifices and uncongenial to Christian principle. The steps taken by the missionaries and the churches, thus, resulted in the gradual reduction of Zu consumption and total cessation of Zu as a common drink on all occasions. With the gradual decline in the consumption of Zu as a common drink which engrossed the agricultural surplus products in Zu brewing, a considerable amount of rice has now turned into regular food for the family, thus improving the economic condition of the society.

With the advent of the new religion, festival and dances gradually lost its significance and popularity among the new converts. Today, Christmas festival, although of recent origin in Vaiphei society, has gained dominant position over the traditional festivals in celebration and observance. The gradual declined and disappearance of festivals and animal sacrifices promoted to the economic growth of the Vaiphei. The reason was that these festivals lasted for several days with Zu and meats abundantly, which consumed a large portion of all the earnings of the people and sucked their material possessions.

Before the advent of Christianity, there prevailed total illiteracy in the Vaiphei society. Not only that, they had no written language of their own. It was the first two Christian of Churachandpur District, Mr. Thangkai and Mr. Lungpau, with the help of the pioneer missionary W.R. Roberts, who initiated to alleviate Vaiphei language into written form. Thus, the traditional oral practices of Vaiphei language got its written form in the hands of missionaries which ultimately paved the way for further progress in the Vaiphei society.
Education was the most important by-product of Christianity. The missionaries devised systems to reduce their language to writing by using roman script in 1911 and subsequently translated a hymn and the Gospel of John. Primary schools were started in the villages by the Christian missions and Sunday school was organized to widen and dispense knowledge of the scriptures and literacy among the people. Formal education of the Vaiphei in reality and practice as we see today has its beginning since the advent of Christianity with the arrival of Watkin R. Roberts, a Welsh missionary, in 1910.

Vaiphei society in general was practically unacquainted with hygienic ways of living before the introduction of education in 1910. With the introduction of formal education, the educated young man and women became flexible to retain the enduring elements of materials and non-material culture and to eliminate that which becomes old. As such, attention was paid to the prevailing unhygienic conditions of the Vaiphei way of living. Today, houses are provided with attached sanitary latrines and bathrooms. The house pattern underwent changes as compared to their traditional patterns with no ventilation, which was stuffy with dark room without separate kitchen, dining room and hardly for bedroom. The presence of fowls in the veranda and the pigs and cows under the floor gives the house an unwholesome smell. The residential houses are now constructed in different patterns- ‘L’-shape, ‘U’-shape, ‘T’-shape and so on.

In the pre-Christian period, to heal the sick, the common practice was by offering bloody sacrifices to the evil spirits by the village Thiampu (priest). The health conditions of the people were poor. However, after converting to Christianity, the missionaries and the evangelists taught the people about cleanliness in their day-to-day life. Care of sickness, simple hygiene and first-aid are included in their education curriculum. They learnt better ways of life. Today, a mother’s chewing food for their babies and unhygienic mouth-to-mouth feeding is replaced by special cooking for babies and spoon-feeding.
Vaiphei economy during the absolute regime of the politics of village chieftainships was not remarkable. It was simply to meet the bare necessities of the people's daily needs. Jhumming continues to be the main occupation of the Vaiphei, but it gradually lost its traditional importance as a means of basic subsistence in the society. In spite of the emotional and sentimental attachment to the village land, people look for non-agricultural jobs and commercial openings offered by the various programs of developmental planning under the state government, thus leading to rural-urban migration. Desire for change and material progress results in the breakdown of traditional boundaries with new socio-economic system. With the spread of educational opportunities, more and more young people are entering into the field of job market, leaving their ancestral villages.

The advent of Christianity and education was an epoch making event in the socio-cultural lives of the Vaiphei of Manipur, for it brought about a sea-change in their life style and world view. Those who got the light of education under the guidance of the Christian missionaries spread political consciousness among the general mass. Christianity brought them deliverance from ignorance of mistaken beliefs and practices. It transforms their cosmology and their scale of values.

Land and land-based activities acted as the economic base of the traditional society, till the time land resources could meet the subsistence of the increasing number of households with traditional technology. Along with emerging crisis of shifting cultivation, there has also been a gradual rise of a unifying political order from the days of British power to the present day. Expanding administration, communication, western education, religion and other exogenous factors started producing their impact on the people. Both the endogenous and exogenous factors providing for push and pull forces of occupational changes has helped the people in organizing an economic order appropriate to their technical capacity, and in affecting such a change, their innovative and motivational faculties have
been able not only to diversify the uses of land but also to go beyond for a shift towards non-agricultural occupation hitherto unknown to the traditional society. There has, thus, been a change in the number of occupations a household can now pursue for its livelihood. Each of the households has, thus, developed different economic interests for its survival and economic stability by diversifying the risks and uncertainties that are inherent in a period of transition.

Observations and Conclusion

An important development that followed the British rule was the gradual weakening of the position and the powers of the traditional leaders under the chiefs. The chiefs and their counselors were effectively used against their own people for holding and administering the hill territory as they collaborated with the colonial authorities. The power and position of the chiefs have diminished with the creation of Church leadership at various levels. Eventually, the traditional leaders were slowly and gradually pushed out of their traditional status until their traditional powers were crushed and chief-ship was legally abolished with the introduction of Manipur Village Authority Act of 1956. Despite the abolition of the chief-ship, the chiefs in the Vaiphei areas continued to exercise their powers and functions in the autonomous village administration as usual. Although legally dethroned, the institution of chief-ship which took deep roots in the society and still accepted as legitimate in the eyes of a large section of the people, and in fact, they continued to function as ex-officio Chairman in the Village Council, interpreting and administering traditional laws and customs. Hence, complete abolition of chief-ship is not possible because of its value as a symbol of established authority and its ritual function as judge in such matters life local dispute over land, marriage, divorce, dispute, etc. Side by side with apparent change in the administrative structure, we find an interesting systematic inter action of traditional chief and modern administration in the Vaiphei village till today.
The early Christian missionaries with their zeal to spread the gospel, labeled the tribal customs as pagan and sinful. The same accusation was bestowed upon cultural dances, folksongs and folklores. Moreover, consciously or unconsciously, the missionaries suggested that their way of life was better and superior. Hence, the socio-cultural background of the native population was not taken into consideration. They were forced to feel inferior and substandard. The community centred life—the joys of sharing, have been relegated to the bottom due to the phenomenal change in which individualism have become the top priority. Many Christians have become the victims to the allurements of the world. They are finding it difficult to maintain the Christian standard of life with all its implications and expectations.

Prior to the advent of Christianity and modern way of life, people obeyed what the village chief or council decided in matters of discipline and justice. Today, no one give much heeds to any authority and everything is interpreted on a convenient hypothesis. Consequently, parental controls over the children have diminished over the years. The parents who are often illiterate seem to give undue respect to their growing youths. The children who go to schools and colleges often take over their uneducated parents. And so, the children grow up to be arrogant, unyielding and often become social misfits.

The gradual decline in discipline and the absence of morality amongst the youths in tribal society foreshadows dim future. There was a conspicuous presence of high morality among the early generations in spite of their uncivilized way of life. They did not go through a school or college, but as such they maintain a good standard of morality in the bachelor’s dormitory—‘Sawm’, where the tribal philosophy tawmngaina—selfless service to community, was inculcated. Excessive emulation of the western way of life without dignity of labour and morality leads the youths of today towards a facade of hollow future. Abolition of the system of Savannah and embracing Christianity as a religion without caring a true Christian life
can safely be regarded as the reasons for the declined in morality and discipline among the Vaiphei youths.

The advent of Christianity did not change the life of Vaiphei as a whole overnight. Instead, Christianity had been existing side by side with the animistic belief for about four decades. Eventually, the morbid fears or phobia that grew out of their animistic belief causing them to perform many ritualistic offerings, especially, demon worship associated with zu drinking have gradually disappeared. The practices of offering food and other of propitiate the spirit of the death and the costly feasts for securing a right place in their life-after-death were totally given up. Christianity has brought faith and hope and has shown the way to overcome fears of demons and superstitions. This led to the gradual disappearance of the traditional village priests.

On the whole, the impact of Christianity on the religious, social and cultural life of the Vaiphei has been remarkable. The community have come out of their ignorance and uncivilized life, aiming to move forward with the modern values. However, it may be noted here that there is one problem, which has divided the Vaiphei for a long long time. This is the division of the Vaiphei people into different Church denominations. This dividend indirectly affects the development of the Vaiphei in general, as they are a divided lot. If the Vaiphei were united as one consolidated front in Church, they would have been more development in all spheres. Recently, there is a movement by some thinking leaders to unite all the Vaiphei into one mainline Church organization. Though this movement is not cent percent successful, majority of the tribe is now under one umbrella. It may be suggested that this movement should be reorganized and encouraged once more to include members of other organizations. Such a movement to unify all the Vaiphei is crucially significant to have a common consensus and to cope up with the ever changing environment.
In the end, it is desirable to mention that this study has its obvious shortcomings and its own limitations mainly due to paucity of materials and vastness of the area under investigation or study. The changes as a result of cultural contact with the British and the Christian missionaries along with education that have been indicated in this study may not be all the major reasons responsible for the changing Vaiphei society. Further studies could be taken up in this respect to ascertain the factors and magnitude of this changing society. It may also be suggested that to clearly understand the present pattern of distribution as well as the area of Concentration and Dispersion of the tribe, such data as pertaining to the tribe’s distribution at smaller levels like Blocks or even villages would have given a clearer picture. It is hoped that this study will provide basic materials for a future in-depth study towards Vaiphei society in Manipur. Nevertheless, there is enough scope for improvement upon the present work and this requires further research and detail field study covering every nook and corner of the Vaiphei settlements in the state.